Complete Works of
MARY SHELLEY

DELPHI CLASSICS

Table of Contents

The Novels
FRANKENSTEIN (1818 version)
FRANKENSTEIN (1831 version)
MATHILDA
VALPERGA
THE LAST MAN
THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK
LODORE
FALKNER
The Short Stories
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
The Children’s Fiction
PROSERPINE
MIDAS
The Poems
LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
The Travel Writing
HISTORY OF A SIX WEEKS’ TOUR THROUGH A PART OF FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, AND HOLLAND
RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY, IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843
The Non-Fiction
NOTES TO THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
An Adaptation
PRESUMPTION; OR, THE FATE OF FRANKENSTEIN by Richard Brinsley Peake
The Biographies
THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY by Florence A. Thomas Marshall
MRS. SHELLEY by Lucy M. Rossetti

The Complete Works of
MARY SHELLEY

(1797–1851)

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THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK
LODORE
FALKNER

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LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

The Children’s Fiction

PROSERPINE
MIDAS

The Poems

LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

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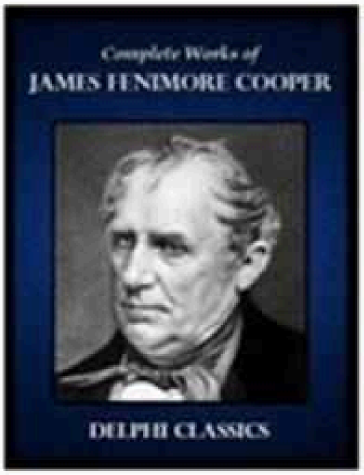
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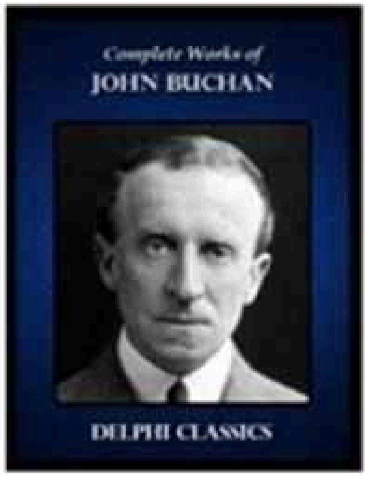
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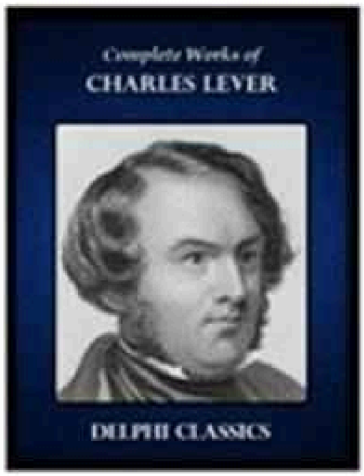
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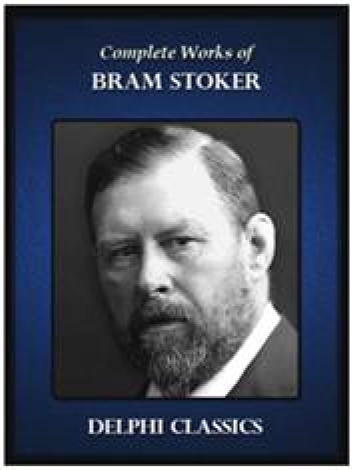

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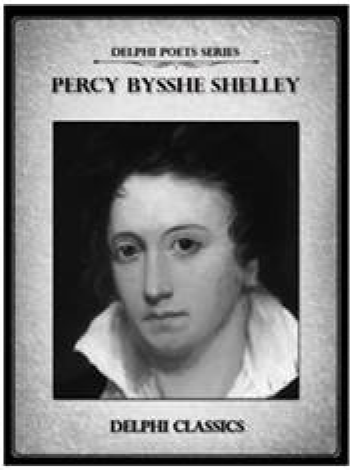

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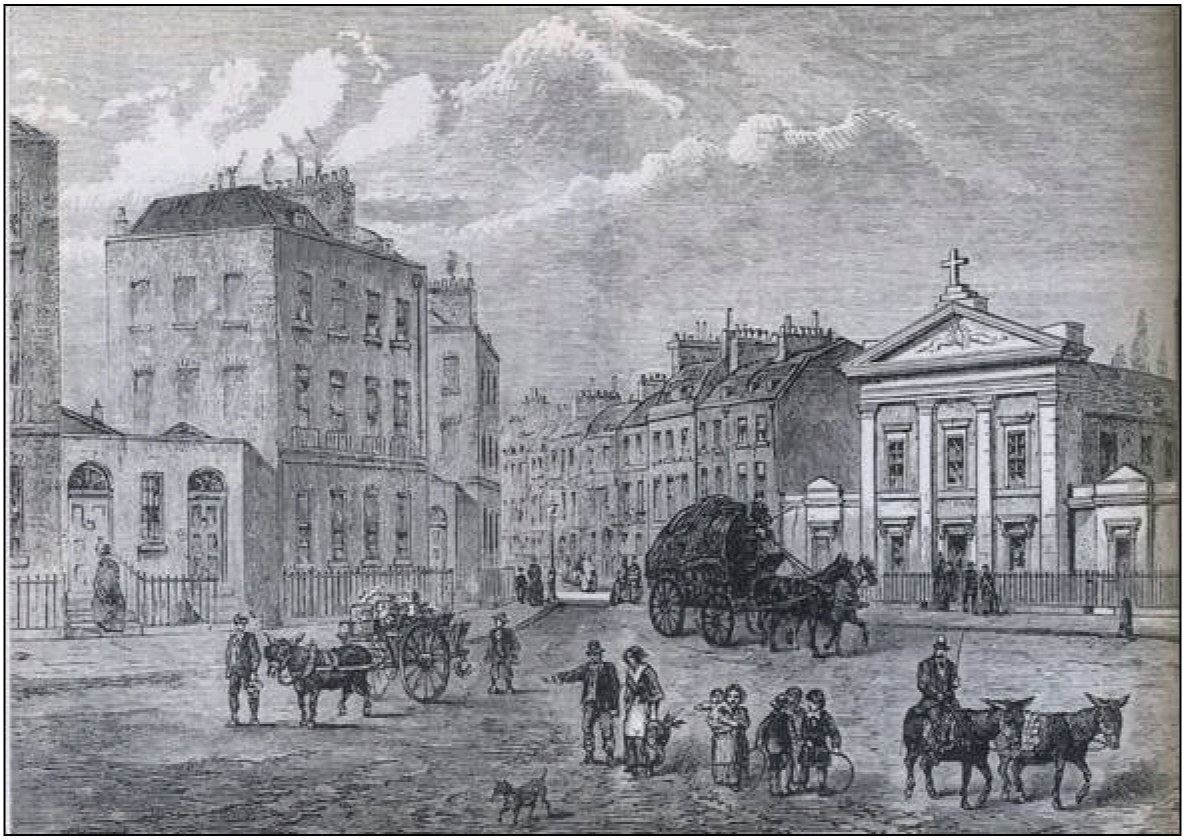
The Novels



The Polygon (left) in Somers Town, London — Mary Shelley's birthplace

ARGYLE HOUSE
TO LET
HSBC

The site of the birthplace today

FRANKENSTEIN (1818 version)

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was first published in three volumes on New Year's Day 1818 by the publishing house Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones. The author was anonymous and the novel was dedicated to Shelley's father, the journalist, political philosopher and novelist, William Godwin. There was a second two volume edition published in 1823 and then a third one volume edition published in 1831 which contained significant revisions to the previous versions. Both the original 1818 version and the revised 1831 version are presented in this edition of Shelley's works.

The origins of *Frankenstein* began in the summer of 1816 when Shelley was staying at the Villa Diodati, near Lake Geneva in Switzerland along with her poet husband Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, her step-sister Claire Clairmont, and Dr John Polidari. They had been enjoying telling each other German ghost stories when they entered into a competition to determine who could create the best fantastical tale. The result of this contest produced Polidari's 1819 novella *The Vampyre,* one of the first stories of the vampire literary genre and Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The inspiration for the novel did not come immediately to Shelley but was formed after she saw a vision of what would become the creature.

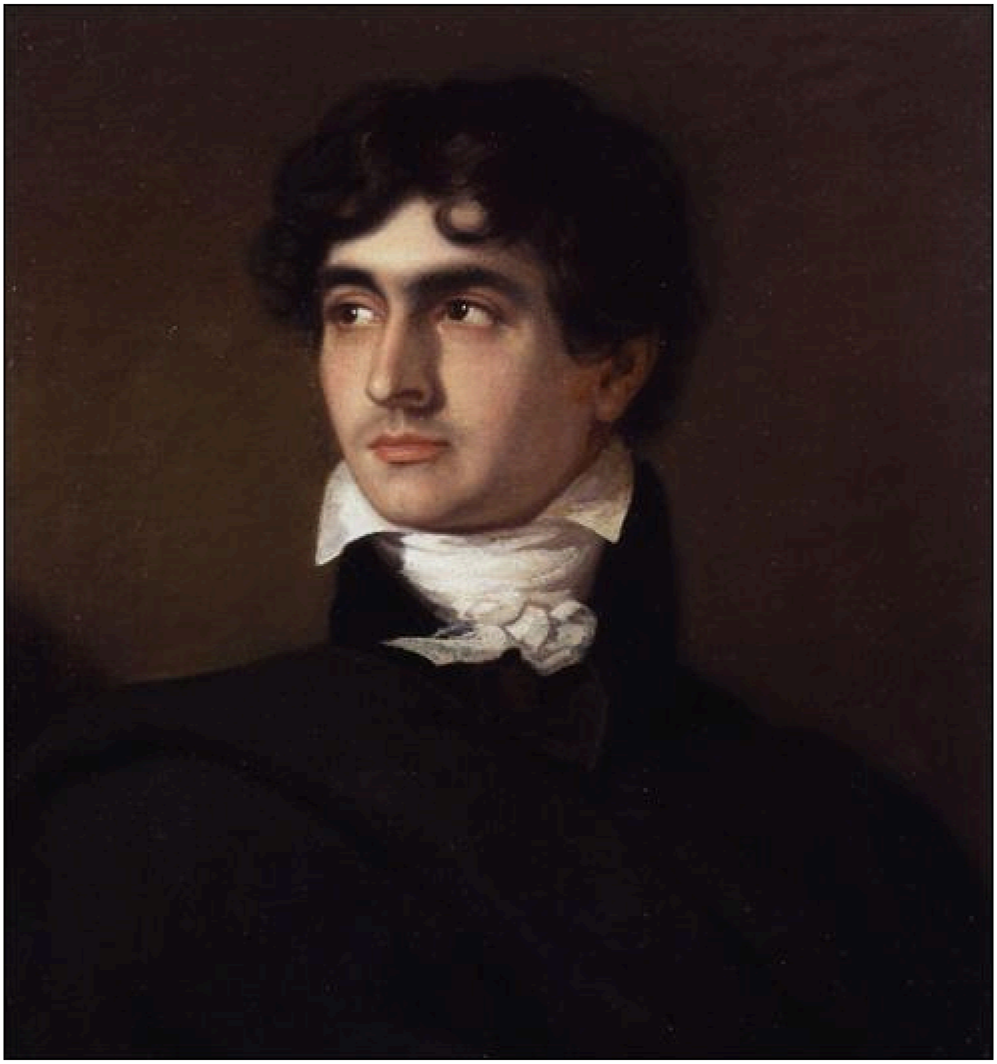
The novel was immediately successful and spawned the play *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* by Richard Brinsley Peake in 1823. Demonstrating the popularity of Shelley's masterpiece, the adaptation is also presented in this collection and can be accessed via this link. Frankenstein's creature has since become iconic and the narrative has been adapted over forty times for film, inspiring more than sixty television series. It remains a classic of the Gothic genre and is by far Shelly's most successful work. The fame of the creature has become so vast that it is not uncommon for it to be believed that Frankenstein is the creation rather than the creator. The novel tells the tale of Frankenstein, a young man who becomes obsessed with the possibility of creating life but is then horrified by the result and must live with consequences of his deed. The subtitle of the novel, *The Modern Prometheus,* clearly establishes the link between

Frankenstein and the Greek Titan who disobeyed God and gave fire to mankind. Frankenstein attempts to usurp God by creating a being in his own image and is punished throughout the novel for this arrogance and deviation from nature.

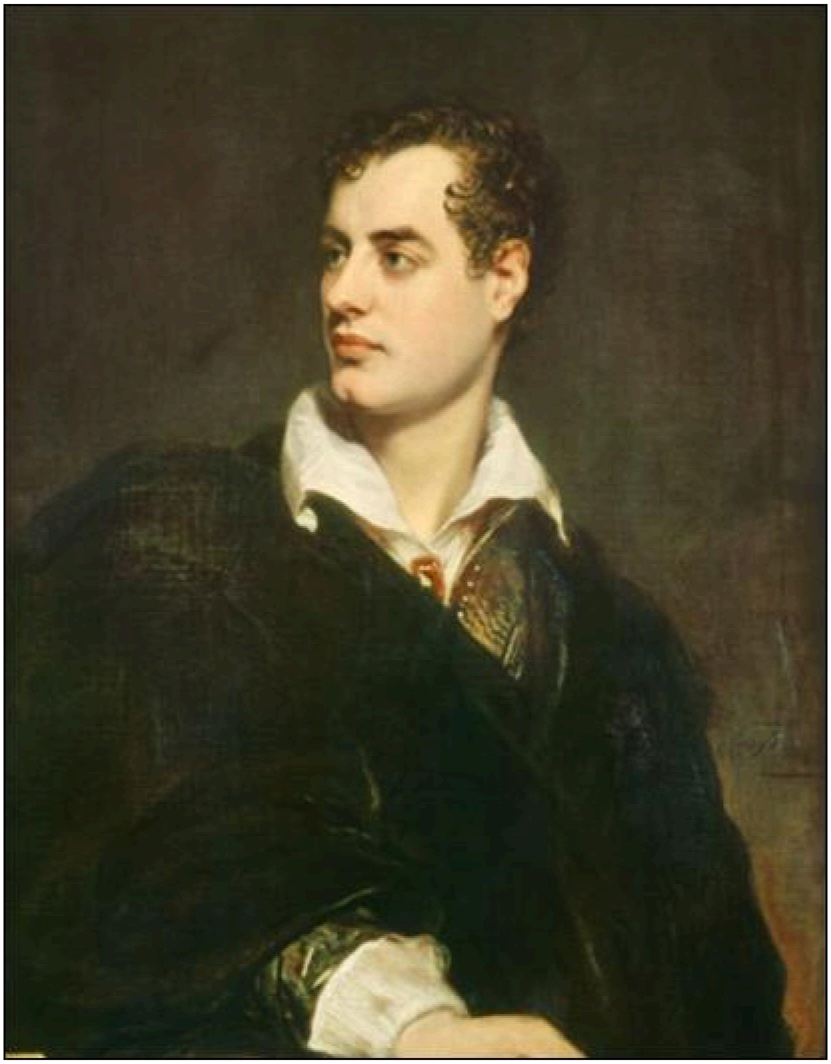
However, while the Promethean myth can be interpreted in solely negative terms as an intention to compete with God, the tale has also viewed Prometheus as a hero that strove to improve humankind and elevate man while resisting the tyranny of God. The positioning of Prometheus as a great figure of lone genius who fought for the rights of mankind was particularly prevalent amongst Romantic writers and Percy Bysshe Shelley's lyric drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) portrays the immortal figure as being able to overcome the tyranny of God with the power of the human heart. Mary Shelley's novel is not a critique on the advancement of scientific experiment or human presumption in questioning God or religion, but it does explore the danger of an obsessive and egotistical pursuit of knowledge and the necessary responsibility that such endeavours entail. One of the creature's bitterest reprimands of Frankenstein is that of desertion; the creator must bear some responsibility for his creation and Frankenstein's abandonment and contempt for the creature is cruel and heartless.

Shelley uses the creature as a literary double for Frankenstein; they are bound together and one becomes the obsession of the other. Broadly both characters can be seen as monstrous due to their actions, being consumed by vengeance, self-hatred, loneliness and despair. While Frankenstein begins his descent by pursuing knowledge to the extent he becomes separated from humanity; the creature's misery is compounded when he learns the nature of the human world and his permanent isolation from it. Shelley further exploits the Gothic fiction technique of doubling with the character of Henry Clerval. Frankenstein's childhood friend is the better image of himself, the one who is able to restore humanity to Frankenstein; he is the idealised version of the fallen creator, who does not become contaminated by the desire for self-regarding glory. Shelley makes the doubling explicit when Frankenstein states that Clerval was the 'image of' his 'former self', the uncorrupted man who is able to revel in the sensations of nature.

Doubling is just one aspect of the Gothic genre that Shelley employs in creating a dark and unnerving novel; horror, revenge, isolation, uncontrollable and unacceptable passions and the intermingling of sex and violence all permeate Shelley's text and help to achieve the pulsating, but disturbing narrative. There is uneasiness and even a sense of revulsion that Frankenstein feels towards the idea of sex, and his relationship with the creature develops matrimonial undertones which highlight the Gothic convention of unnatural and perverse relationships, particularly the notion of incest. The enormous impact of *Frankenstein* continues to this day with the hugely successful 2011 production by Danny Boyle at the National Theatre in England. The acclaimed drama achieved a ten week sold out run and resulted in acting awards for the main two performers, Jonny Lee Miller and Benedict Cumberbatch, proving the popularity and thematic relevance of Shelley's seminal work, retaining its potency for both modern readers and audiences.



John Polidori (1795–1821) was a fiction writer and physician of Italian descent. He is known for his associations with the Romantic Movement and credited by some as the creator of the vampire genre after writing his 1819 short story, as part of the famous writing competition with Shelley.



Lord Byron, a leading figure in the Romantic movement, was also a part of the famous literary writing competition

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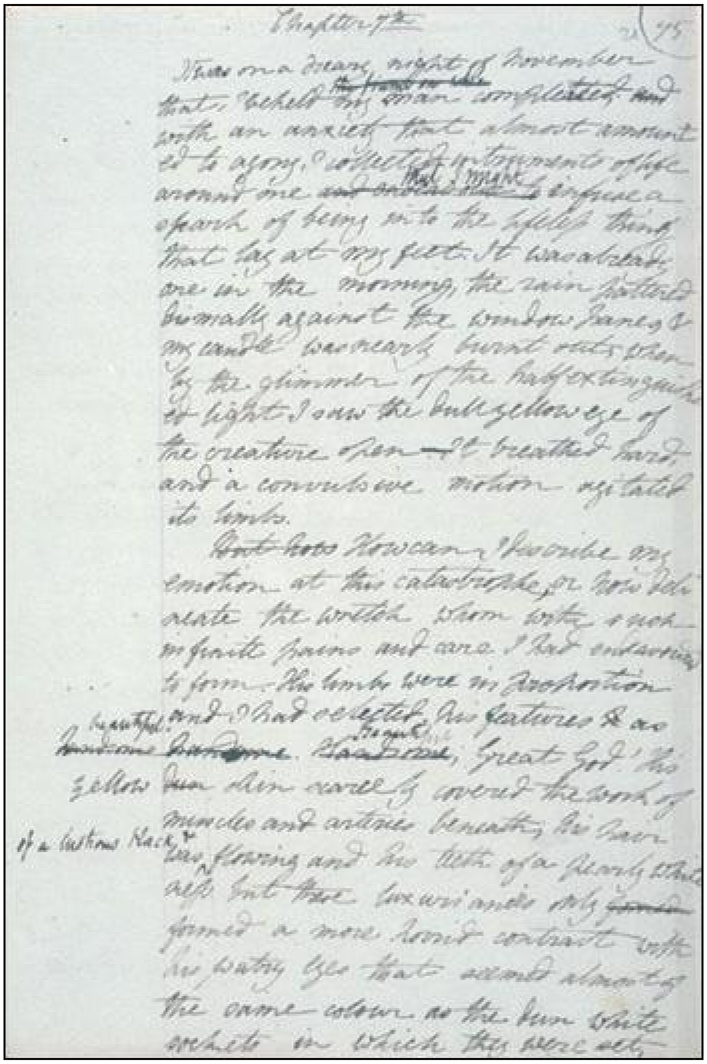
HOTEL
D'ANGLETERRE

Hotel D'Angleterre in Geneva, where Shelley wrote 'Frankenstein'



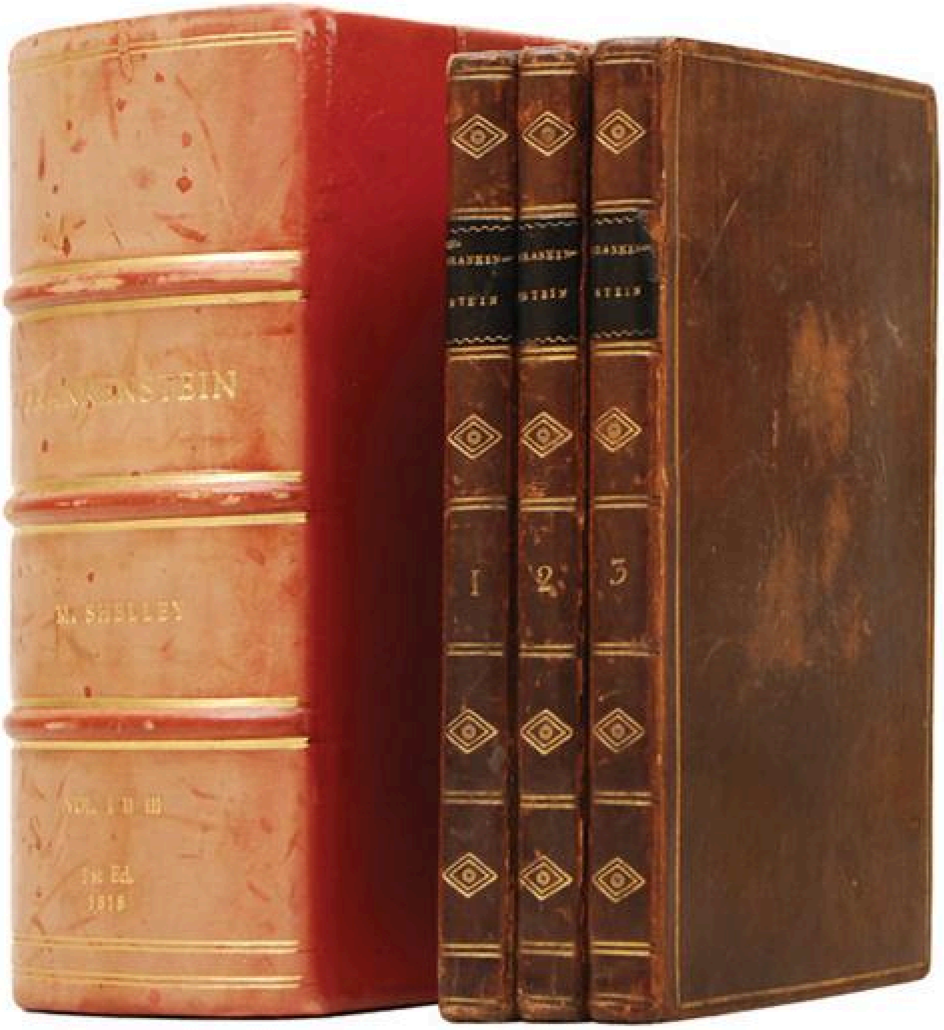
Chapter 7th

95

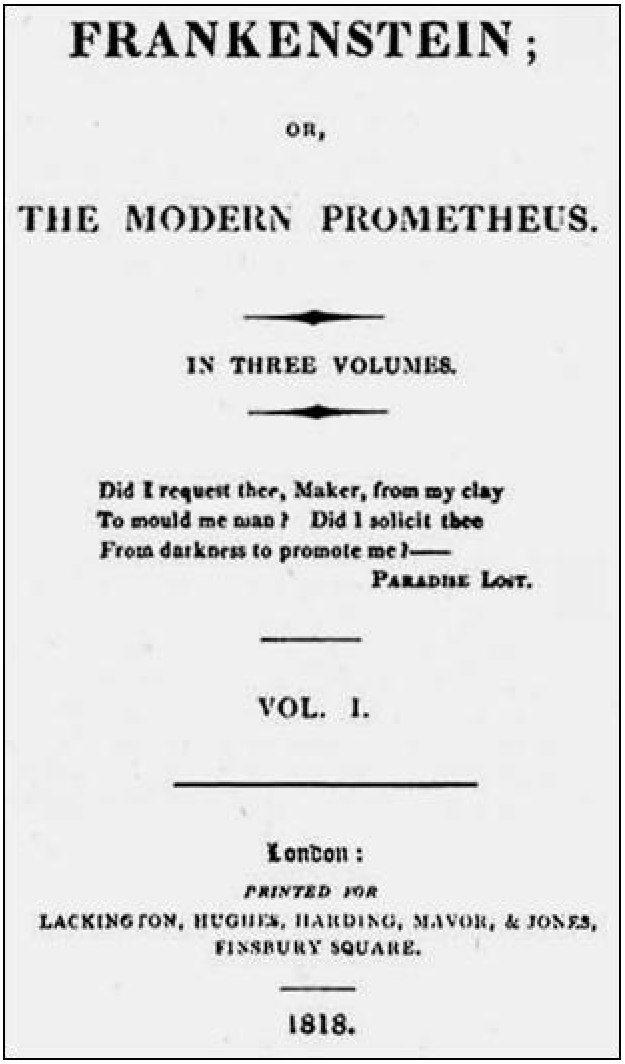
It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld ~~the frame on whic~~ my man completed, ~~and~~ with an anxiety that almost amounted to agony I collected the instruments of life around me ~~and endeavoured to~~ that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning, the rain pattered dismally against the window panes & my candle was nearly burnt out, when by the glimmer of the half extinguished light I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open — It breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

~~But how~~ How can I describe my emotion at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form. His limbs were in proportion and I had selected his features as ~~handsome handsome~~ beautiful! ~~Handsome~~ Beautiful, Great God! his yellow ~~dun~~ skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black & flowing and his teeth of a pearly whiteness but these luxuriances only ~~formed~~ formed a more horrid contrast with his watry eyes that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set,

An original copy of the manuscript



The extremely rare and valuable first edition



FRANKENSTEIN;

OR,

THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

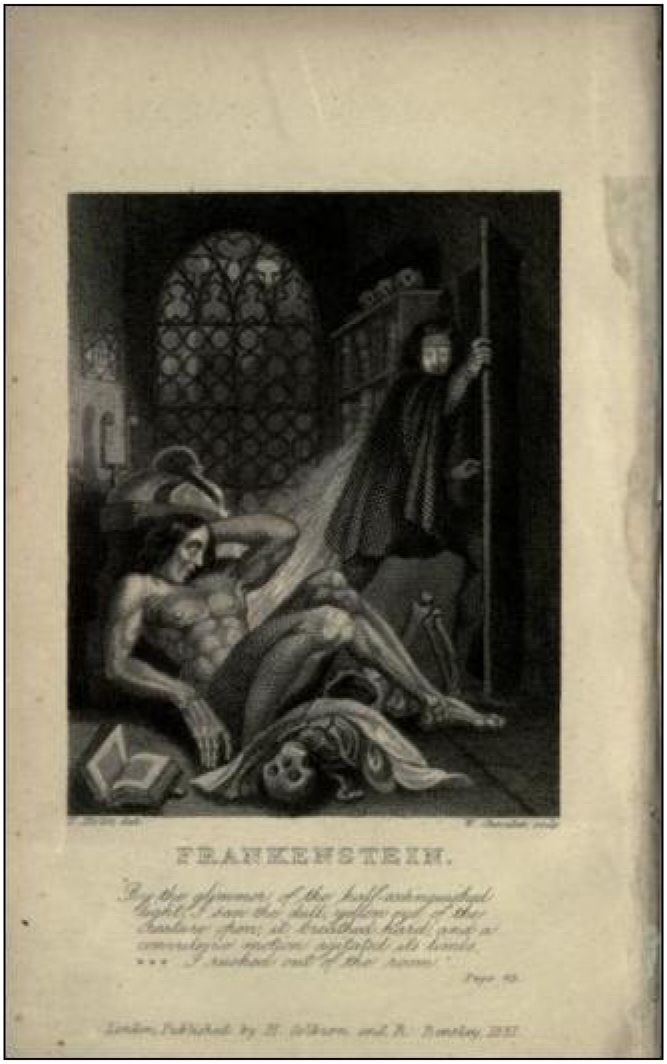
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?——
PARADISE LOST.

VOL. I.

London:
PRINTED FOR
LACKINGTON, HUGHES, HARDING, MAVOR, & JONES,
FINSBURY SQUARE.

1818.

The first edition's title page



FRANKENSTEIN.

"By the glimmer of the half-extinguished
light, I saw the dull, yellow eye of the
creature open; it breathed hard, and a
convulsive motion agitated its limbs.
. . . I rushed out of the room."

Page 43.

London, Published by H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831.

The frontispiece

CONTENTS

PREFACE.

VOLUME I

LETTER I.
LETTER II.
LETTER III.
LETTER IV.
CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.

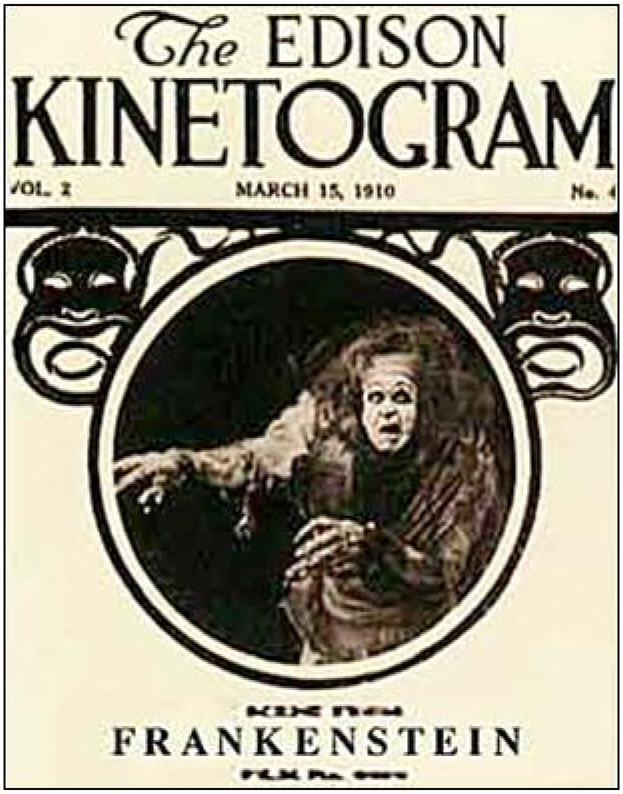
VOLUME II

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.

VOLUME III

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.

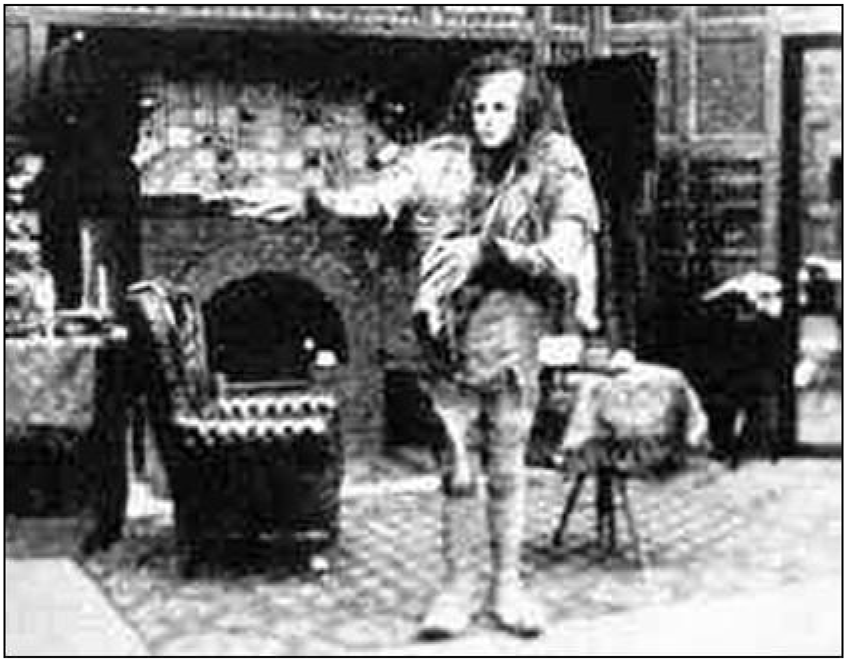


The EDISON KINETOGRAM

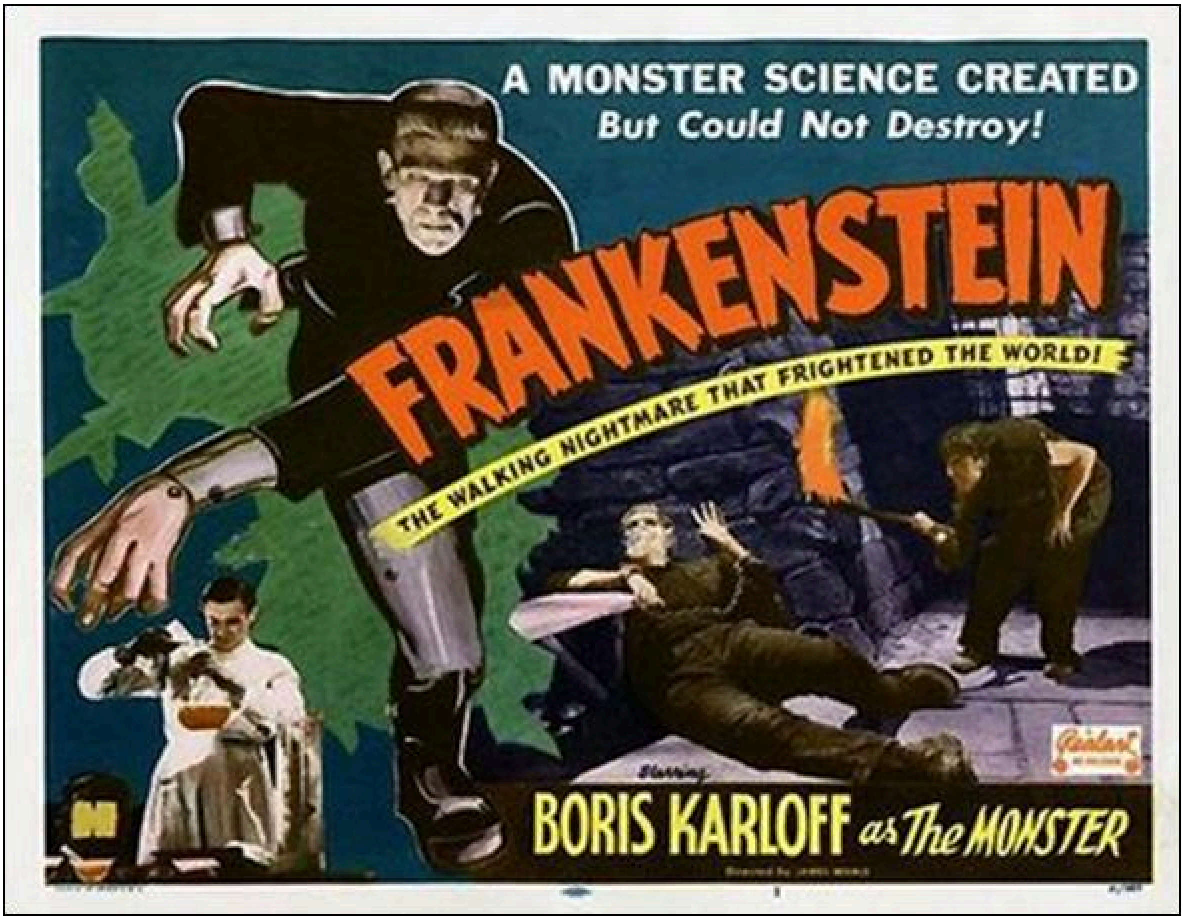
VOL. 2 MARCH 15, 1910 No. 4

FRANKENSTEIN

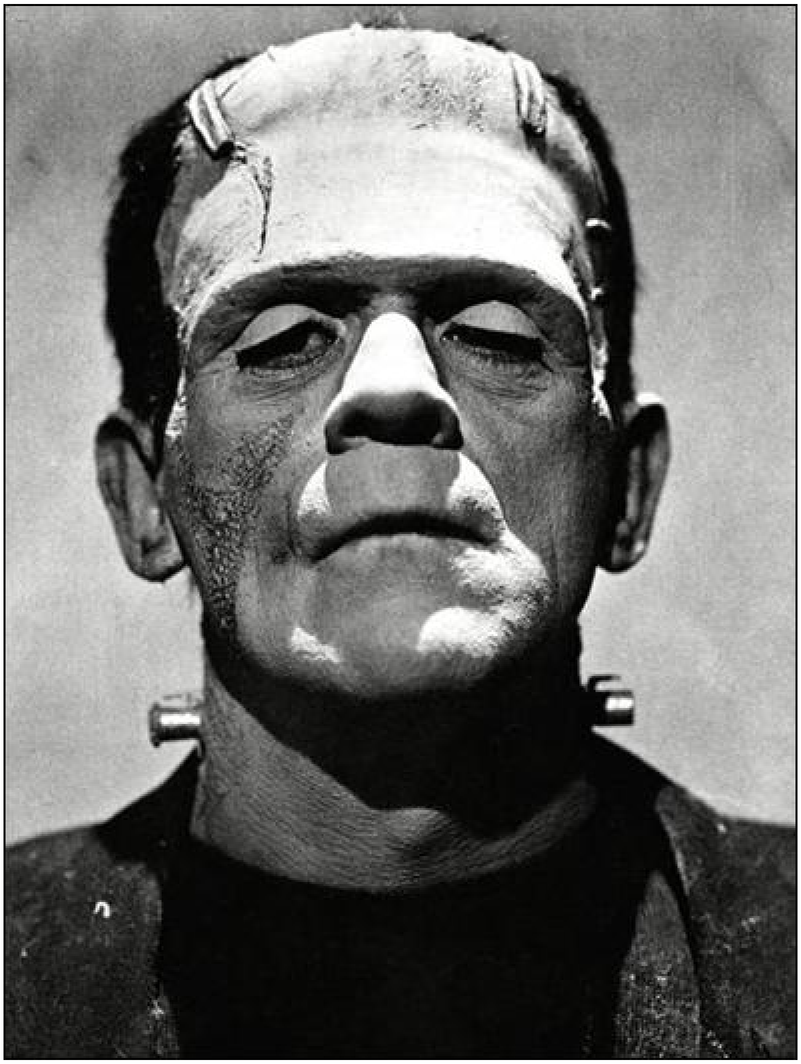
The 1910 film made by Edison Studios was the first motion picture adaptation of ‘Frankenstein’.



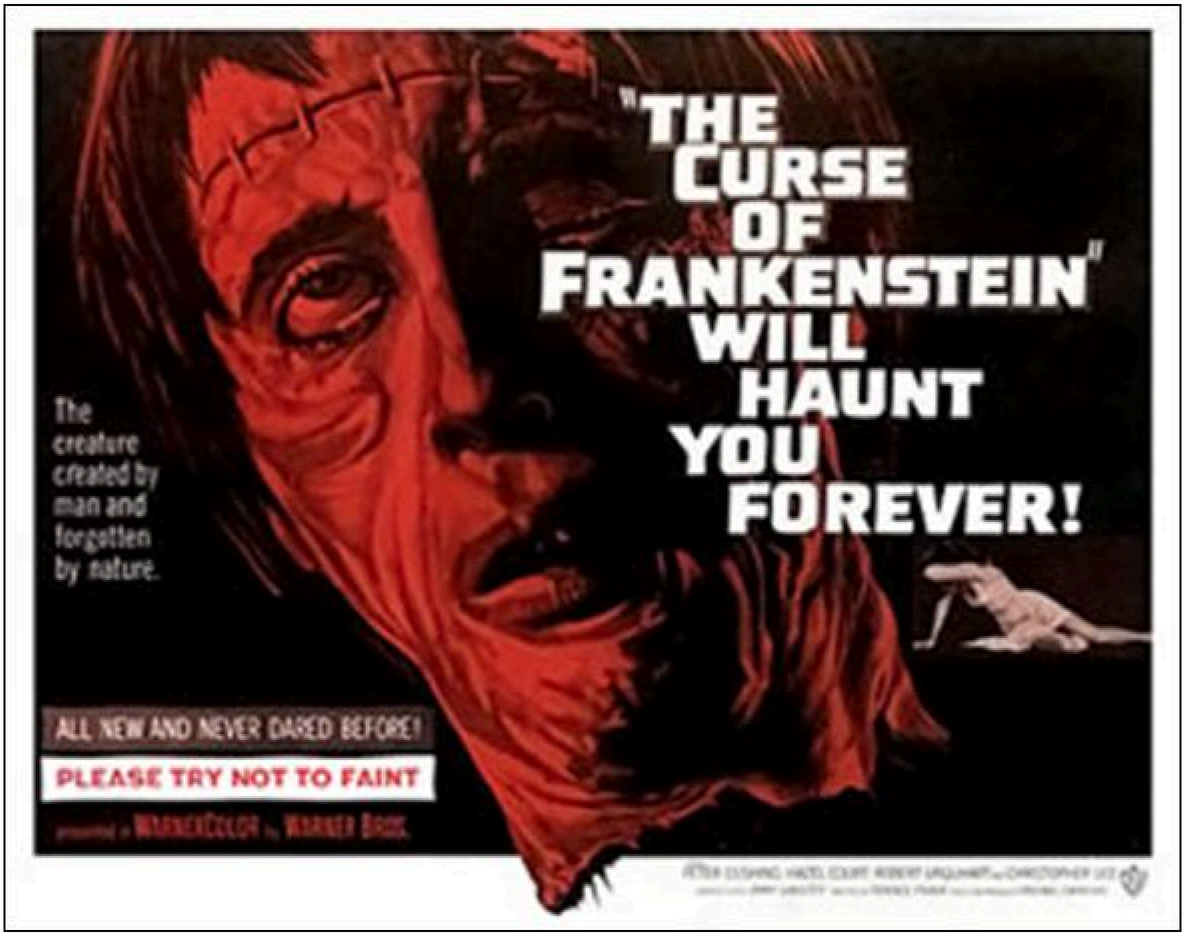
The creature in the film


A MONSTER SCIENCE CREATED
But Could Not Destroy!
FRANKENSTEIN
THE WALKING NIGHTMARE THAT FRIGHTENED THE WORLD!
Starring
BORIS KARLOFF as The MONSTER

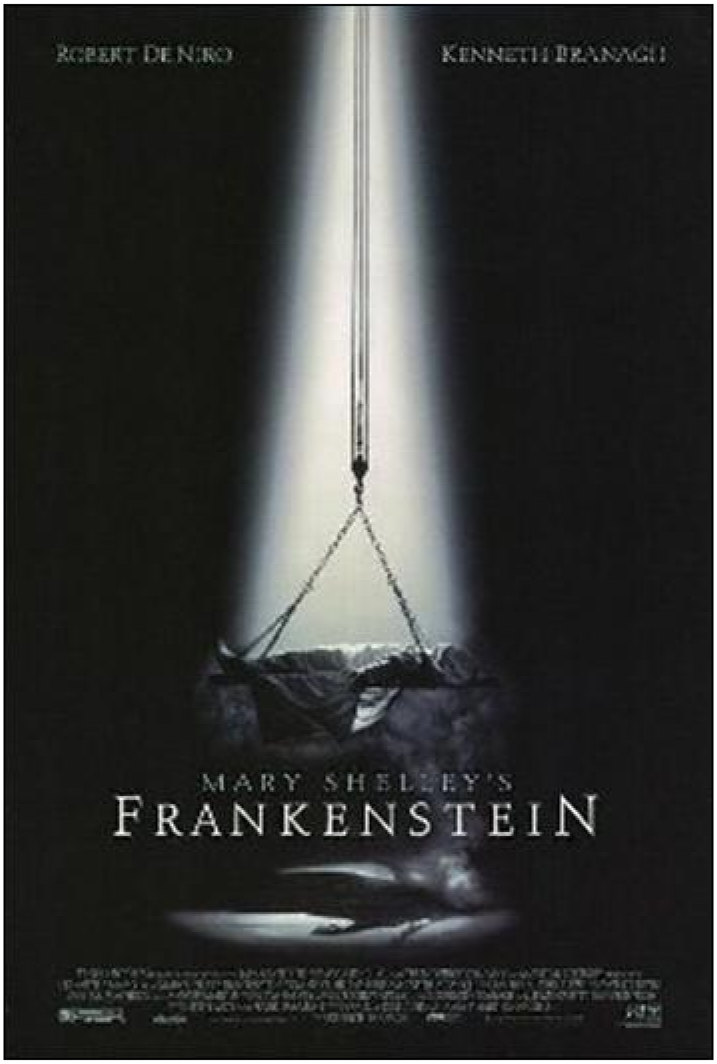
The famous 1931 film adaptation



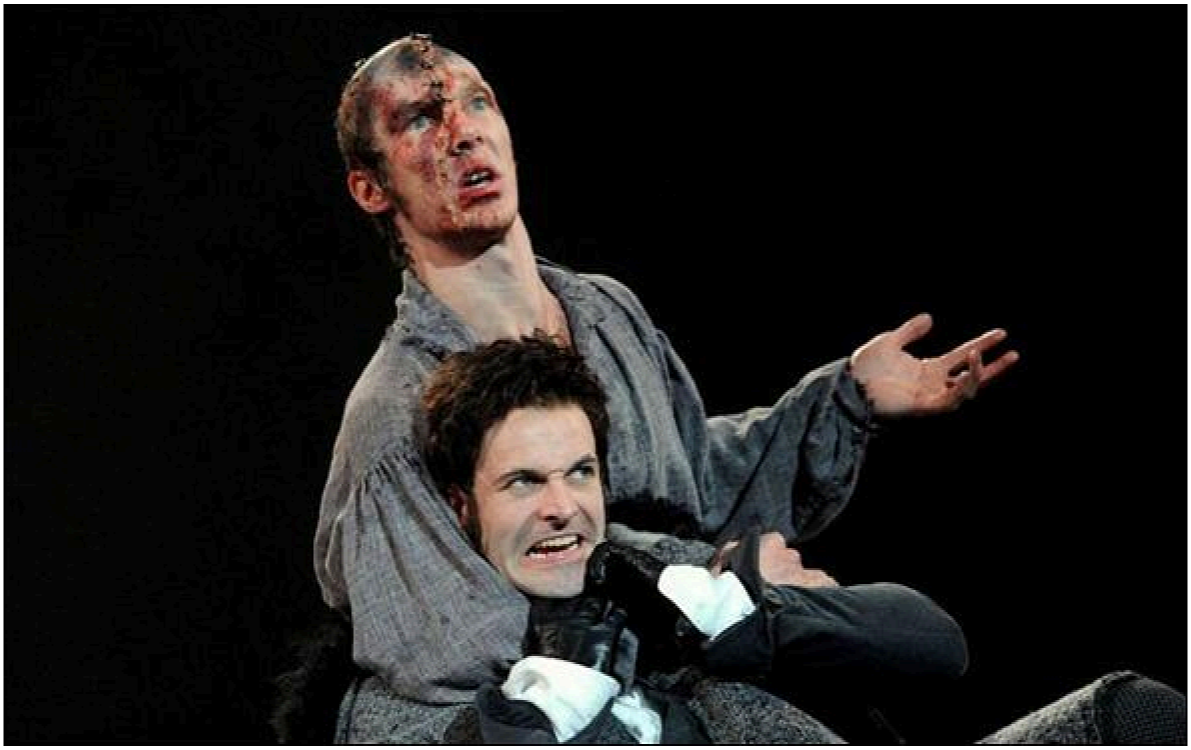
Boris Karloff, who is famous for playing Frankenstein's creature in the 1931 film adaptation


"THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN" WILL HAUNT YOU FOREVER!
The creature created by man and forgotten by nature.
ALL NEW AND NEVER DARED BEFORE!
PLEASE TRY NOT TO FAINT
WARNERCOLOR WARNER BROS.

From 1957-1974 Hammer Films produced a string of Frankenstein films starring Peter Cushing, including 'The Curse of Frankenstein'.


ROBERT DE NIRO
KENNETH BRANAGH
MARY SHELLEY'S
FRANKENSTEIN

The 1994 film directed by Kenneth Branagh and starring Robert De Niro as the creature



A scene from Danny Boyle's hugely successful 2011 theatre adaptation

PREFACE.

The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence. I shall not be supposed as according the remotest degree of serious faith to such an imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors. The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the disadvantages of a mere tale of spectres or enchantment. It was recommended by the novelty of the situations which it developes; and, however impossible as a physical fact, affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield.

I have thus endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations. The *Iliad*, the tragic poetry of Greece, — Shakespeare, in the *Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, — and most especially Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, conform to this rule; and the most humble novelist, who seeks to confer or receive amusement from his labours, may, without presumption, apply to prose fiction a licence, or rather a rule, from the adoption of which so many exquisite combinations of human feeling have resulted in the highest specimens of poetry.

The circumstance on which my story rests was suggested in casual conversation. It was commenced, partly as a source of amusement, and partly as an expedient for exercising any untried resources of mind. Other motives were mingled with these, as the work proceeded. I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader; yet my chief concern in this respect has been limited to the avoiding of the enervating effects of the novels of the present day, and to the exhibitions of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue. The opinions which naturally spring from the character and situation of the hero are by no means to be conceived as existing always in my own conviction; nor is any inference justly to be drawn from the following pages as prejudicing any philosophical doctrine of whatever kind.

It is a subject also of additional interest to the author, that this story was begun in the majestic region where the scene is principally laid, and in society which cannot cease to be regretted. I passed the summer of 1816 in the environs of Geneva. The season was cold and rainy, and in the evenings we crowded around a blazing wood fire, and occasionally amused ourselves with some German stories of ghosts, which happened to fall into our hands. These tales excited in us a playful desire of imitation. Two other friends (a tale from the pen of one of whom would be far more acceptable to the public than any thing I can ever hope to produce) and myself agreed to write each a story, founded on some supernatural occurrence.

The weather, however, suddenly became serene; and my two friends left me on a journey among the Alps, and lost, in the magnificent scenes which they present, all memory of their ghostly visions. The following tale is the only one which has been completed.

VOLUME I

LETTER I.

To Mrs. Saville, *England.*
St. Petersburgh, Dec. 11th, 17 — .

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday; and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare, and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London; and as I walk in the streets of Petersburgh, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves, and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my day dreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is for ever visible; its broad disk just skirting the horizon, and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There — for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators — there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phænomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle; and may regulate a thousand celestial observations, that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent for ever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death, and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But, supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven; for nothing contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose, — a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember, that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good uncle Thomas's library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a sea-faring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul, and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet, and for one year lived in a Paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure, and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day, and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud, when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel, and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness; so valuable did he consider my services.

And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose. My life might have been passed in ease and luxury; but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage; the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when their's are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stage-coach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapt in furs, a dress which I have already adopted; for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburgh and Archangel.

I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June: and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never.

Farewell, my dear, excellent, Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,
R. Walton.

LETTER II.

To Mrs. Saville, *England*.
Archangel, 28th March, 17 — .

How slowly the time passes here, encompassed as I am by frost and snow; yet a second step is taken towards my enterprise. I have hired a vessel, and am occupied in collecting my sailors; those whom I have already engaged appear to be men on whom I can depend, and are certainly possessed of dauntless courage.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy; and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil. I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling. I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me; whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother! I am too ardent in execution, and too impatient of difficulties. But it is a still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common, and read nothing but our uncle Thomas's books of voyages. At that age I became acquainted with the celebrated poets of our own country; but it was only when it had ceased to be in my power to derive its most important benefits from such a conviction, that I perceived the necessity of becoming acquainted with more languages than that of my native country. Now I am twenty-eight, and am in reality more illiterate than many school-boys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more, and that my day dreams are more extended and magnificent; but they want (as the painters call it) *keeping*; and I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind.

Well, these are useless complaints; I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. My lieutenant, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel: finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise.

The master is a person of an excellent disposition, and is remarkable in the ship for his gentleness, and the mildness of his discipline. He is, indeed, of so amiable a nature, that he will not hunt (a favourite, and almost the only amusement here), because he cannot endure to spill blood. He is, moreover, heroically generous. Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady, of moderate fortune; and having amassed a considerable sum in prize-money, the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once before the destined ceremony; but she was bathed in tears, and, throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to spare her, confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover instantly abandoned his pursuit. He had already bought a farm with his money, on which he had designed to pass the remainder of his life; but he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman’s father to consent to her marriage with her lover. But the old man decidedly refused, thinking himself bound in honour to my friend; who, when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations. “What a noble fellow!” you will exclaim. He is so; but then he has passed all his life on board a vessel, and has scarcely an idea beyond the rope and the shroud.

But do not suppose that, because I complain a little, or because I can conceive a consolation for my toils which I may never know, that I am wavering in my resolutions. Those are as fixed as fate; and my voyage is only now delayed until the weather shall permit my embarkation. The winter has been dreadfully severe; but the spring promises well, and it is considered as a remarkably early season; so that, perhaps, I may sail sooner than I expected. I shall do nothing rashly; you know me sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care.

I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you a conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to “the land of mist and snow;” but I shall kill no albatross, therefore do not be alarmed for my safety.

Shall I meet you again, after having traversed immense seas, and returned by the most southern cape of Africa or America? I dare not expect such success, yet I cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture. Continue to write to me by every opportunity: I may receive your letters (though the chance is very doubtful) on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits. I love you very tenderly. Remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother,
Robert Walton.

LETTER III.

To Mrs. Saville, *England*.
July 7th, 17 — .

My Dear Sister,

I write a few lines in haste, to say that I am safe, and well advanced on my voyage. This letter will reach England by a merchant-man now on its homeward voyage from Archangel; more fortunate than I, who may not see my native land, perhaps, for many years. I am, however, in good spirits: my men are bold, and apparently firm of purpose; nor do the floating sheets of ice that continually pass us, indicating the dangers of the region towards which we are advancing, appear to dismay them. We have already reached a very high latitude; but it is the height of summer, and although not so warm as in England, the southern gales, which blow us speedily towards those shores which I so ardently desire to attain, breathe a degree of renovating warmth which I had not expected.

No incidents have hitherto befallen us, that would make a figure in a letter. One or two stiff gales, and the breaking of a mast, are accidents which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record; and I shall be well content, if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage.

Adieu, my dear Margaret. Be assured, that for my own sake, as well as your's, I will not rashly encounter danger. I will be cool, persevering, and prudent.

Remember me to all my English friends.

Most affectionately yours,

R. W.

LETTER IV.

To Mrs. Saville, *England.*
August 5th, 17 — .

So strange an accident has happened to us, that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers can come into your possession.

Last Monday (July 31st), we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving her the sea room in which she floated. Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed round by a very thick fog. We accordingly lay to, hoping that some change would take place in the atmosphere and weather.

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention, and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile: a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge, and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes, until he was lost among the distant inequalities of the ice.

This appearance excited our unqualified wonder. We were, as we believed, many hundred miles from any land; but this apparition seemed to denote that it was not, in reality, so distant as we had supposed. Shut in, however, by ice, it was impossible to follow his track, which we had observed with the greatest attention.

About two hours after this occurrence, we heard the ground sea; and before night the ice broke, and freed our ship. We, however, lay to until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about after the breaking up of the ice. I profited of this time to rest for a few hours.

In the morning, however, as soon as it was light, I went upon deck, and found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to some one in the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night, on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it, whom the sailors were persuading to enter the vessel. He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European. When I appeared on deck, the master said, “Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea.”

On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. “Before I come on board your vessel,” said he, “will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?”

You may conceive my astonishment on hearing such a question addressed to me from a man on the brink of destruction, and to whom I should have supposed that my vessel would have been a resource which he would not have exchanged for the most precious wealth the earth can afford. I replied, however, that we were on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole.

Upon hearing this he appeared satisfied, and consented to come on board. Good God! Margaret, if you had seen the man who thus capitulated for his safety, your surprise would have been boundless. His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. We attempted to carry him into the cabin; but as soon as he had quitted the fresh air, he fainted. We accordingly brought him back to the deck, and restored him to animation by rubbing him with brandy, and forcing him to swallow a small quantity. As soon as he shewed signs of life, we wrapped him up in blankets, and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen-stove. By slow degrees he recovered, and ate a little soup, which restored him wonderfully.

Two days passed in this manner before he was able to speak; and I often feared that his sufferings had deprived him of understanding. When he had in some measure recovered, I removed him to my own cabin, and attended on him as much as my duty would permit. I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness; but there are moments when, if any one performs an act of kindness towards him, or does him any the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing; and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him.

When my guest was a little recovered, I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask him a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body and mind whose restoration evidently depended upon entire repose. Once, however, the lieutenant asked, Why he had come so far upon the ice in so strange a vehicle?

His countenance instantly assumed an aspect of the deepest gloom; and he replied, “To seek one who fled from me.”

“And did the man whom you pursued travel in the same fashion?”

“Yes.”

“Then I fancy we have seen him; for, the day before we picked you up, we saw some dogs drawing a sledge, with a man in it, across the ice.”

This aroused the stranger’s attention; and he asked a multitude of questions concerning the route which the dæmon, as he called him, had pursued. Soon after, when he was alone with me, he said, “I have, doubtless, excited your curiosity, as well as that of these good people; but you are too considerate to make inquiries.”

“Certainly; it would indeed be very impertinent and inhuman in me to trouble you with any inquisitiveness of mine.”

“And yet you rescued me from a strange and perilous situation; you have benevolently restored me to life.”

Soon after this he inquired, if I thought that the breaking up of the ice had destroyed the other sledge? I replied, that I could not answer with any degree of certainty; for the ice had not broken until near midnight, and the traveller might have arrived at a place of safety before that time; but of this I could not judge.

From this time the stranger seemed very eager to be upon deck, to watch for the sledge which had before appeared; but I have persuaded him to remain in the cabin, for he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere. But I have promised that some one should watch for him, and give him instant notice if any new object should appear in sight.

Such is my journal of what relates to this strange occurrence up to the present day. The stranger has gradually improved in health, but is very silent, and appears uneasy when any one except myself enters his cabin. Yet his manners are so conciliating and gentle, that the sailors are all interested in him, although they have had very little communication with him. For my own part, I begin to love him as a brother; and his constant and deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. He must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable.

I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.

I shall continue my journal concerning the stranger at intervals, should I have any fresh incidents to record.

August 13th, 17 — .

My affection for my guest increases every day. He excites at once my admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree. How can I see so noble a creature destroyed by misery without feeling the most poignant grief? He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated; and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence.

He is now much recovered from his illness, and is continually on the deck, apparently watching for the sledge that preceded his own. Yet, although unhappy, he is not so utterly occupied by his own misery, but that he interests himself deeply in the employments of others. He has asked me many questions concerning my design; and I have related my little history frankly to him. He appeared pleased with the confidence, and suggested several alterations in my plan, which I shall find exceedingly useful. There is no pedantry in his manner; but all he does appears to spring solely from the interest he instinctively takes in the welfare of those who surround him. He is often overcome by gloom, and then he sits by himself, and tries to overcome all that is sullen or unsocial in his humour. These paroxysms pass from him like a cloud from before the sun, though his dejection never leaves him. I have endeavoured to win his confidence; and I trust that I have succeeded. One day I mentioned to him the desire I had always felt of finding a friend who might sympathize with me, and direct me by his counsel. I said, I did not belong to that class of men who are offended by advice. “I am self-educated, and perhaps I hardly rely sufficiently upon my own powers. I wish therefore that my companion should be wiser and more experienced than myself, to confirm and support me; nor have I believed it impossible to find a true friend.”

“I agree with you,” replied the stranger, “in believing that friendship is not only a desirable, but a possible acquisition. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. You have hope, and the world before you, and have no cause for despair. But I —— I have lost every thing, and cannot begin life anew.”

As he said this, his countenance became expressive of a calm settled grief, that touched me to the heart. But he was silent, and presently retired to his cabin.

Even broken in spirit as he is, no one can feel more deeply than he does the beauties of nature. The starry sky, the sea, and every sight afforded by these wonderful regions, seems still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth. Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery, and be overwhelmed by disappointments; yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit, that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures.

Will you laugh at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? If you do, you must have certainly lost that simplicity which was once your characteristic charm. Yet, if you will, smile at the warmth of my expressions, while I find every day new causes for repeating them.

August 19th, 17 — .

Yesterday the stranger said to me, “You may easily perceive, Captain Walton, that I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes. I had determined, once, that the memory of these evils should die with me; but you have won me to alter my determination. You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my misfortunes will be useful to you, yet, if you are inclined, listen to my tale. I believe that the strange incidents connected with it will afford a view of nature, which may enlarge your faculties and understanding. You will hear of powers and occurrences, such as you have been accustomed to believe impossible: but I do not doubt that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed.”

You may easily conceive that I was much gratified by the offered communication; yet I could not endure that he should renew his grief by a recital of his misfortunes. I felt the greatest eagerness to hear the promised narrative, partly from curiosity, and partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate, if it were in my power. I expressed these feelings in my answer.

“I thank you,” he replied, “for your sympathy, but it is useless; my fate is nearly fulfilled. I wait but for one event, and then I shall repose in peace. I understand your feeling,” continued he, perceiving that I wished to interrupt him; “but you are mistaken, my friend, if thus you will allow me to name you; nothing can alter my destiny: listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined.”

He then told me, that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure. This promise drew from me the warmest thanks. I have resolved every night, when I am not engaged, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure: but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips, with what interest and sympathy shall I read it in some future day!

CHAPTER I.

I am by birth a Genevese; and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics; and my father had filled several public situations with honour and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business. He passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; and it was not until the decline of life that he thought of marrying, and bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to posterity.

As the circumstances of his marriage illustrate his character, I cannot refrain from relating them. One of his most intimate friends was a merchant, who, from a flourishing state, fell, through numerous mischances, into poverty. This man, whose name was Beaufort, was of a proud and unbending disposition, and could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion in the same country where he had formerly been distinguished for his rank and magnificence. Having paid his debts, therefore, in the most honourable manner, he retreated with his daughter to the town of Lucerne, where he lived unknown and in wretchedness. My father loved Beaufort with the truest friendship, and was deeply grieved by his retreat in these unfortunate circumstances. He grieved also for the loss of his society, and resolved to seek him out and endeavour to persuade him to begin the world again through his credit and assistance.

Beaufort had taken effectual measures to conceal himself; and it was ten months before my father discovered his abode. Overjoyed at this discovery, he hastened to the house, which was situated in a mean street, near the Reuss. But when he entered, misery and despair alone welcomed him. Beaufort had saved but a very small sum of money from the wreck of his fortunes; but it was sufficient to provide him with sustenance for some months, and in the mean time he hoped to procure some respectable employment in a merchant’s house. The interval was consequently spent in inaction; his grief only became more deep and rankling, when he had leisure for reflection; and at length it took so fast hold of his mind, that at the end of three months he lay on a bed of sickness, incapable of any exertion.

His daughter attended him with the greatest tenderness; but she saw with despair that their little fund was rapidly decreasing, and that there was no other prospect of support. But Caroline Beaufort possessed a mind of an uncommon mould; and her courage rose to support her in her adversity. She procured plain work; she plaited straw; and by various means contrived to earn a pittance scarcely sufficient to support life.

Several months passed in this manner. Her father grew worse; her time was more entirely occupied in attending him; her means of subsistence decreased; and in the tenth month her father died in her arms, leaving her an orphan and a beggar. This last blow overcame her; and she knelt by Beaufort's coffin, weeping bitterly, when my father entered the chamber. He came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care, and after the interment of his friend he conducted her to Geneva, and placed her under the protection of a relation. Two years after this event Caroline became his wife.

When my father became a husband and a parent, he found his time so occupied by the duties of his new situation, that he relinquished many of his public employments, and devoted himself to the education of his children. Of these I was the eldest, and the destined successor to all his labours and utility. No creature could have more tender parents than mine. My improvement and health were their constant care, especially as I remained for several years their only child. But before I continue my narrative, I must record an incident which took place when I was four years of age.

My father had a sister, whom he tenderly loved, and who had married early in life an Italian gentleman. Soon after her marriage, she had accompanied her husband into her native country, and for some years my father had very little communication with her. About the time I mentioned she died; and a few months afterwards he received a letter from her husband, acquainting him with his intention of marrying an Italian lady, and requesting my father to take charge of the infant Elizabeth, the only child of his deceased sister. "It is my wish," he said, "that you should consider her as your own daughter, and educate her thus. Her mother's fortune is secured to her, the documents of which I will commit to your keeping. Reflect upon this proposition; and decide whether you would prefer educating your niece yourself to her being brought up by a stepmother."

My father did not hestitate, and immediately went to Italy, that he might accompany the little Elizabeth to her future home. I have often heard my mother say, that she was at that time the most beautiful child she had ever seen, and shewed signs even then of a gentle and affectionate disposition. These indications, and a desire to bind as closely as possible the ties of domestic love, determined my mother to consider Elizabeth as my future wife; a design which she never found reason to repent.

From this time Elizabeth Lavenza became my playfellow, and, as we grew older, my friend. She was docile and good tempered, yet gay and playful as a summer insect. Although she was lively and animated, her feelings were strong and deep, and her disposition uncommonly affectionate. No one could better enjoy liberty, yet no one could submit with more grace than she did to constraint and caprice. Her imagination was luxuriant, yet her capability of application was great. Her person was the image of her mind; her hazel eyes, although as lively as a bird's, possessed an attractive softness. Her figure was light and airy; and, though capable of enduring great fatigue, she appeared the most fragile creature in the world. While I admired her understanding and fancy, I loved to tend on her, as I should on a favourite animal; and I never saw so much grace both of person and mind united to so little pretension.

Every one adored Elizabeth. If the servants had any request to make, it was always through her intercession. We were strangers to any species of disunion and dispute; for although there was a great dissimilitude in our characters, there was an harmony in that very dissimilitude. I was more calm and philosophical than my companion; yet my temper was not so yielding. My application was of longer endurance; but it was not so severe whilst it endured. I delighted in investigating the facts relative to the actual world; she busied herself in following the aërial creations of the poets. The world was to me a secret, which I desired to discover; to her it was a vacancy, which she sought to people with imaginations of her own.

My brothers were considerably younger than myself; but I had a friend in one of my schoolfellows, who compensated for this deficiency. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva, an intimate friend of my father. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. I remember, when he was nine years old, he wrote a fairy tale, which was the delight and amazement of all his companions. His favourite study consisted in books of chivalry and romance; and when very young, I can remember, that we used to act plays composed by him out of these favourite books, the principal characters of which were Orlando, Robin Hood, Amadis, and St. George.

No youth could have passed more happily than mine. My parents were indulgent, and my companions amiable. Our studies were never forced; and by some means we always had an end placed in view, which excited us to ardour in the prosecution of them. It was by this method, and not by emulation, that we were urged to application. Elizabeth was not incited to apply herself to drawing, that her companions might not outstrip her; but through the desire of pleasing her aunt, by the representation of some favourite scene done by her own hand. We learned Latin and English, that we might read the writings in those languages; and so far from study being made odious to us through punishment, we loved application, and our amusements would have been the labours of other children. Perhaps we did not read so many books, or learn languages so quickly, as those who are disciplined according to the ordinary methods; but what we learned was impressed the more deeply on our memories.

In this description of our domestic circle I include Henry Clerval; for he was constantly with us. He went to school with me, and generally passed the afternoon at our house; for being an only child, and destitute of companions at home, his father was well pleased that he should find associates at our house; and we were never completely happy when Clerval was absent.

I feel pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind, and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self. But, in drawing the picture of my early days, I must not omit to record those events which led, by insensible steps to my after tale of misery: for when I would account to myself for the birth of that passion, which afterwards ruled my destiny, I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys.

Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science. When I was thirteen years of age, we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon: the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa. I opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate, and the wonderful facts which he relates, soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind; and, bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. I cannot help remarking here the many opportunities instructors possess of directing the attention of their pupils to useful knowledge, which they utterly neglect. My father looked carelessly at the title-page of my book, and said, “Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash.”

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains, to explain to me, that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded, and that a modern system of science had been introduced, which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical; under such circumstances, I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside, and, with my imagination warmed as it was, should probably have applied myself to the more rational theory of chemistry which has resulted from modern discoveries. It is even possible, that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents; and I continued to read with the greatest avidity.

When I returned home, my first care was to procure the whole works of this author, and afterwards of Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus. I read and studied the wild fancies of these writers with delight; they appeared to me treasures known to few beside myself; and although I often wished to communicate these secret stores of knowledge to my father, yet his indefinite censure of my favourite Agrippa always withheld me. I disclosed my discoveries to Elizabeth, therefore, under a promise of strict secrecy; but she did not interest herself in the subject, and I was left by her to pursue my studies alone.

It may appear very strange, that a disciple of Albertus Magnus should arise in the eighteenth century; but our family was not scientifical, and I had not attended any of the lectures given at the schools of Geneva. My dreams were therefore undisturbed by reality; and I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. But the latter obtained my most undivided attention: wealth was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!

Nor were these my only visions. The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake, than to a want of skill or fidelity in my instructors.

The natural phænomena that take place every day before our eyes did not escape my examinations. Distillation, and the wonderful effects of steam, processes of which my favourite authors were utterly ignorant, excited my astonishment; but my utmost wonder was engaged by some experiments on an air-pump, which I saw employed by a gentleman whom we were in the habit of visiting.

The ignorance of the early philosophers on these and several other points served to decrease their credit with me: but I could not entirely throw them aside, before some other system should occupy their place in my mind.

When I was about fifteen years old, we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunder-storm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura; and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. I remained, while the storm lasted, watching its progress with curiosity and delight. As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak, which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbands of wood. I never beheld any thing so utterly destroyed.

The catastrophe of this tree excited my extreme astonishment; and I eagerly inquired of my father the nature and origin of thunder and lightning. He replied, "Electricity;" describing at the same time the various effects of that power. He constructed a small electrical machine, and exhibited a few experiments; he made also a kite, with a wire and string, which drew down that fluid from the clouds.

This last stroke completed the overthrow of Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus, who had so long reigned the lords of my imagination. But by some fatality I did not feel inclined to commence the study of any modern system; and this disinclination was influenced by the following circumstance.

My father expressed a wish that I should attend a course of lectures upon natural philosophy, to which I cheerfully consented. Some accident prevented my attending these lectures until the course was nearly finished. The lecture, being therefore one of the last, was entirely incomprehensible to me. The professor discoursed with the greatest fluency of potassium and boron, of sulphates and oxyds, terms to which I could affix no idea; and I became disgusted with the science of natural philosophy, although I still read Pliny and Buffon with delight, authors, in my estimation, of nearly equal interest and utility.

My occupations at this age were principally the mathematics, and most of the branches of study appertaining to that science. I was busily employed in learning languages; Latin was already familiar to me, and I began to read some of the easiest Greek authors without the help of a lexicon. I also perfectly understood English and German. This is the list of my accomplishments at the age of seventeen; and you may conceive that my hours were fully employed in acquiring and maintaining a knowledge of this various literature.

Another task also devolved upon me, when I became the instructor of my brothers. Ernest was six years younger than myself, and was my principal pupil. He had been afflicted with ill health from his infancy, through which Elizabeth and I had been his constant nurses: his disposition was gentle, but he was incapable of any severe application. William, the youngest of our family, was yet an infant, and the most beautiful little fellow in the world; his lively blue eyes, dimpled cheeks, and endearing manners, inspired the tenderest affection.

Such was our domestic circle, from which care and pain seemed for ever banished. My father directed our studies, and my mother partook of our enjoyments. Neither of us possessed the slightest pre-eminence over the other; the voice of command was never heard amongst us; but mutual affection engaged us all to comply with and obey the slightest desire of each other.

CHAPTER II.

When I had attained the age of seventeen, my parents resolved that I should become a student at the university of Ingolstadt. I had hitherto attended the schools of Geneva; but my father thought it necessary, for the completion of my education, that I should be made acquainted with other customs than those of my native country. My departure was therefore fixed at an early date; but, before the day resolved upon could arrive, the first misfortune of my life occurred — an omen, as it were, of my future misery.

Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; but her illness was not severe, and she quickly recovered. During her confinement, many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. She had, at first, yielded to our entreaties; but when she heard that her favourite was recovering, she could no longer debar herself from her society, and entered her chamber long before the danger of infection was past. The consequences of this imprudence were fatal. On the third day my mother sickened; her fever was very malignant, and the looks of her attendants prognosticated the worst event. On her death-bed the fortitude and benignity of this admirable woman did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself: "My children," she said, "my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to your younger cousins. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death, and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world."

She died calmly; and her countenance expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance. It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she, whom we saw every day, and whose very existence appeared a part of our own, can have departed for ever — that the brightness of a beloved eye can have been extinguished, and the sound of a voice so familiar, and dear to the ear, can be hushed, never more to be heard. These are the reflections of the first days; but when the lapse of time proves the reality of the evil, then the actual bitterness of grief commences. Yet from whom has not that rude hand rent away some dear connexion; and why should I describe a sorrow which all have felt, and must feel? The time at length arrives, when grief is rather an indulgence than a necessity; and the smile that plays upon the lips, although it may be deemed a sacrilege, is not banished. My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform; we must continue our course with the rest, and learn to think ourselves fortunate, whilst one remains whom the spoiler has not seized.

My journey to Ingolstadt, which had been deferred by these events, was now again determined upon. I obtained from my father a respite of some weeks. This period was spent sadly; my mother's death, and my speedy departure, depressed our spirits; but Elizabeth endeavoured to renew the spirit of cheerfulness in our little society. Since the death of her aunt, her mind had acquired new firmness and vigour. She determined to fulfil her duties with the greatest exactness; and she felt that that most imperious duty, of rendering her uncle and cousins happy, had devolved upon her. She consoled me, amused her uncle, instructed my brothers; and I never beheld her so enchanting as at this time, when she was continually endeavouring to contribute to the happiness of others, entirely forgetful of herself.

The day of my departure at length arrived. I had taken leave of all my friends, excepting Clerval, who spent the last evening with us. He bitterly lamented that he was unable to accompany me: but his father could not be persuaded to part with him, intending that he should become a partner with him in business, in compliance with his favourite theory, that learning was superfluous in the commerce of ordinary life. Henry had a refined mind; he had no desire to be idle, and was well pleased to become his father's partner, but he believed that a man might be a very good trader, and yet possess a cultivated understanding.

We sat late, listening to his complaints, and making many little arrangements for the future. The next morning early I departed. Tears gushed from the eyes of Elizabeth; they proceeded partly from sorrow at my departure, and partly because she reflected that the same journey was to have taken place three months before, when a mother's blessing would have accompanied me.

I threw myself into the chaise that was to convey me away, and indulged in the most melancholy reflections. I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure, I was now alone. In the university, whither I was going, I must form my own friends, and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic; and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances. I loved my brothers, Elizabeth, and Clerval: these were "old familiar faces;" but I believed myself totally unfitted for the company of strangers. Such were my reflections as I commenced my journey; but as I proceeded, my spirits and hopes rose. I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place, and had longed to enter the world, and take my station among other human beings. Now my desires were complied with, and it would, indeed, have been folly to repent.

I had sufficient leisure for these and many other reflections during my journey to Ingolstadt, which was long and fatiguing. At length the high white steeple of the town met my eyes. I alighted, and was conducted to my solitary apartment, to spend the evening as I pleased.

The next morning I delivered my letters of introduction, and paid a visit to some of the principal professors, and among others to M. Krempe, professor of natural philosophy. He received me with politeness, and asked me several questions concerning my progress in the different branches of science appertaining to natural philosophy. I mentioned, it is true, with fear and trembling, the only authors I had ever read upon those subjects. The professor stared: "Have you," he said, "really spent your time in studying such nonsense?"

I replied in the affirmative. "Every minute," continued M. Krempe with warmth, "every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems, and useless names. Good God! in what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies, which you have so greedily imbibed, are a thousand years old, and as musty as they are ancient? I little expected in this enlightened and scientific age to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear Sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew."

So saying, he stept aside, and wrote down a list of several books treating of natural philosophy, which he desired me to procure, and dismissed me, after mentioning that in the beginning of the following week he intended to commence a course of lectures upon natural philosophy in its general relations, and that M. Waldman, a fellow-professor, would lecture upon chemistry the alternate days that he missed.

I returned home, not disappointed, for I had long considered those authors useless whom the professor had so strongly reprobated; but I did not feel much inclined to study the books which I procured at his recommendation. M. Krempe was a little squat man, with a gruff voice and repulsive countenance; the teacher, therefore, did not prepossess me in favour of his doctrine. Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different, when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand: but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.

Such were my reflections during the first two or three days spent almost in solitude. But as the ensuing week commenced, I thought of the information which M. Krempe had given me concerning the lectures. And although I could not consent to go and hear that little conceited fellow deliver sentences out of a pulpit, I recollected what he had said of M. Waldman, whom I had never seen, as he had hitherto been out of town.

Partly from curiosity, and partly from idleness, I went into the lecturing room, which M. Waldman entered shortly after. This professor was very unlike his colleague. He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few gray hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short, but remarkably erect; and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard. He began his lecture by a recapitulation of the history of chemistry and the various improvements made by different men of learning, pronouncing with fervour the names of the most distinguished discoverers. He then took a cursory view of the present state of the science, and explained many of its elementary terms. After having made a few preparatory experiments, he concluded with a panegyric upon modern chemistry, the terms of which I shall never forget: —

"The ancient teachers of this science," said he, "promised impossibilities, and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted, and that the elixir of life is a chimera. But these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pour over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature, and shew how she works in her hiding places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows."

I departed highly pleased with the professor and his lecture, and paid him a visit the same evening. His manners in private were even more mild and attractive than in public; for there was a certain dignity in his mien during his lecture, which in his own house was replaced by the greatest affability and kindness. He heard with attention my little narration concerning my studies, and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus, but without the contempt that M. Krempe had exhibited. He said, that "these were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge. They had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names, and arrange in connected classifications, the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light. The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind." I listened to his statement, which was delivered without any presumption or affectation; and then added, that his lecture had removed my prejudices against modern chemists; and I, at the same time, requested his advice concerning the books I ought to procure.

"I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. Chemistry is that branch of natural philosophy in which the greatest improvements have been and may be made; it is on that account that I have made it my peculiar study; but at the same time I have not neglected the other branches of science. A man would make but a very sorry chemist, if he attended to that department of human knowledge alone. If your wish is to become really a man of science, and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics.”

He then took me into his laboratory, and explained to me the uses of his various machines; instructing me as to what I ought to procure, and promising me the use of his own, when I should have advanced far enough in the science not to derange their mechanism. He also gave me the list of books which I had requested; and I took my leave.

Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny.

CHAPTER III.

From this day natural philosophy, and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation. I read with ardour those works, so full of genius and discrimination, which modern inquirers have written on these subjects. I attended the lectures, and cultivated the acquaintance, of the men of science of the university; and I found even in M. Krempe a great deal of sound sense and real information, combined, it is true, with a repulsive physiognomy and manners, but not on that account the less valuable. In M. Waldman I found a true friend. His gentleness was never tinged by dogmatism; and his instructions were given with an air of frankness and good nature, that banished every idea of pedantry. It was, perhaps, the amiable character of this man that inclined me more to that branch of natural philosophy which he professed, than an intrinsic love for the science itself. But this state of mind had place only in the first steps towards knowledge: the more fully I entered into the science, the more exclusively I pursued it for its own sake. That application, which at first had been a matter of duty and resolution, now became so ardent and eager, that the stars often disappeared in the light of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory.

As I applied so closely, it may be easily conceived that I improved rapidly. My ardour was indeed the astonishment of the students; and my proficiency, that of the masters. Professor Krempe often asked me, with a sly smile, how Cornelius Agrippa went on? whilst M. Waldman expressed the most heart-felt exultation in my progress. Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries, which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity, which closely pursues one study, must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit, and was solely wrapt up in this, improved so rapidly, that, at the end of two years, I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. When I had arrived at this point, and had become as well acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy as depended on the lessons of any of the professors at Ingolstadt, my residence there being no longer conducive to my improvements, I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay.

One of the phænonema which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind, and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome, and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy: but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition, or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy; and a church-yard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analysing all the minutiæ of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me — a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius, who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens, than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires, was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming, that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world, was now within my grasp. Not that, like a magic scene, it all opened upon me at once: the information I had obtained was of a nature rather to direct my endeavours so soon as I should point them towards the object of my search, than to exhibit that object already accomplished. I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead, and found a passage to life aided only by one glimmering, and seemingly ineffectual light.

I see by your eagerness, and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be: listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking; but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect: yet, when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large. After having formed this determination, and having spent some months in successfully collecting and arranging my materials, I began.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve their’s. Pursuing these reflections, I thought, that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardour. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless, and almost frantic impulse, urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest, or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage: but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them; and I well remembered the words of my father: “I know that while you are pleased with yourself, you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me, if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected.”

I knew well therefore what would be my father’s feelings; but I could not tear my thoughts from my employment, loathsome in itself, but which had taken an irresistible hold of my imagination. I wished, as it were, to procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection until the great object, which swallowed up every habit of my nature, should be completed.

I then thought that my father would be unjust if he ascribed my neglect to vice, or faultiness on my part; but I am now convinced that he was justified in conceiving that I should not be altogether free from blame. A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections, and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix, then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say, not befitting the human mind. If this rule were always observed; if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquillity of his domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved; Cæsar would have spared his country; America would have been discovered more gradually; and the empires of Mexico and Peru had not been destroyed.

But I forget that I am moralizing in the most interesting part of my tale; and your looks remind me to proceed.

My father made no reproach in his letters; and only took notice of my silence by inquiring into my occupations more particularly than before. Winter, spring, and summer, passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves — sights which before always yielded me supreme delight, so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. The leaves of that year had withered before my work drew near to a close; and now every day shewed me more plainly how well I had succeeded. But my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade, than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; a disease that I regretted the more because I had hitherto enjoyed most excellent health, and had always boasted of the firmness of my nerves. But I believed that exercise and amusement would soon drive away such symptoms; and I promised myself both of these, when my creation should be complete.

CHAPTER IV.

It was on a dreary night of November, that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! — Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch — the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed down stairs. I took refuge in the court-yard belonging to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly, that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment: dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space, were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned, and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, its white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although wetted by the rain, which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring, by bodily exercise, to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets, without any clear conception of where I was, or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear; and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:

Like one who, on a lonely road, Doth walk in fear and dread, And, having once turn’d round, walks on, And turns no more his head; Because he knows a frightful fiend Doth close behind him tread.

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer, I observed that it was the Swiss diligence: it stopped just where I was standing; and, on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. “My dear Frankenstein,” exclaimed he, “how glad I am to see you! how fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!”

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends, and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. “You may easily believe,” said he, “how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that it was not absolutely necessary for a merchant not to understand any thing except book-keeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch schoolmaster in the Vicar of Wakefield: ‘I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat heartily without Greek.’ But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge.”

“It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth.”

“Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the bye, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself. — But, my dear Frankenstein,” continued he, stopping short, and gazing full in my face, “I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights.”

“You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation, that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see: but I hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end, and that I am at length free.”

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive, and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster; but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him therefore to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused; and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty; and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good-fortune could have befallen me; but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy, and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival; but when he observed me more attentively, he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account; and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter, frightened and astonished him.

“My dear Victor,” cried he, “what, for God’s sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?”

“Do not ask me,” cried I, putting my hands before my eyes, for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; “*he* can tell. — Oh, save me! save me!” I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously, and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! what must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I was not the witness of his grief; for I was lifeless, and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

This was the commencement of a nervous fever, which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father’s advanced age, and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill; and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was for ever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry: he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination; but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses, that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared, and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring; and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

“Dearest Clerval,” exclaimed I, “how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I ever repay you?

I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion; but you will forgive me."

"You will repay me entirely, if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?"

I trembled. One subject! what could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think?

"Compose yourself," said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, "I will not mention it, if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own hand-writing. They hardly know how ill you have been, and are uneasy at your long silence."

"Is that all? my dear Henry. How could you suppose that my first thought would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love, and who are so deserving of my love."

"If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you: it is from your cousin, I believe."

CHAPTER V.

Clerval then put the following letter into my hands.

“*To* V. Frankenstein.

“My Dear Cousin,

“I cannot describe to you the uneasiness we have all felt concerning your health. We cannot help imagining that your friend Clerval conceals the extent of your disorder: for it is now several months since we have seen your hand-writing; and all this time you have been obliged to dictate your letters to Henry. Surely, Victor, you must have been exceedingly ill; and this makes us all very wretched, as much so nearly as after the death of your dear mother. My uncle was almost persuaded that you were indeed dangerously ill, and could hardly be restrained from undertaking a journey to Ingolstadt. Clerval always writes that you are getting better; I eagerly hope that you will confirm this intelligence soon in your own hand-writing; for indeed, indeed, Victor, we are all very miserable on this account. Relieve us from this fear, and we shall be the happiest creatures in the world. Your father’s health is now so vigorous, that he appears ten years younger since last winter. Ernest also is so much improved, that you would hardly know him: he is now nearly sixteen, and has lost that sickly appearance which he had some years ago; he is grown quite robust and active.

“My uncle and I conversed a long time last night about what profession Ernest should follow. His constant illness when young has deprived him of the habits of application; and now that he enjoys good health, he is continually in the open air, climbing the hills, or rowing on the lake. I therefore proposed that he should be a farmer; which you know, Cousin, is a favourite scheme of mine. A farmer’s is a very healthy happy life; and the least hurtful, or rather the most beneficial profession of any. My uncle had an idea of his being educated as an advocate, that through his interest he might become a judge. But, besides that he is not at all fitted for such an occupation, it is certainly more creditable to cultivate the earth for the sustenance of man, than to be the confidant, and sometimes the accomplice, of his vices; which is the profession of a lawyer. I said, that the employments of a prosperous farmer, if they were not a more honourable, they were at least a happier species of occupation than that of a judge, whose misfortune it was always to meddle with the dark side of human nature. My uncle smiled, and said, that I ought to be an advocate myself, which put an end to the conversation on that subject.

"And now I must tell you a little story that will please, and perhaps amuse you. Do you not remember Justine Moritz? Probably you do not; I will relate her history, therefore, in a few words. Madame Moritz, her mother, was a widow with four children, of whom Justine was the third. This girl had always been the favourite of her father; but, through a strange perversity, her mother could not endure her, and, after the death of M. Moritz, treated her very ill. My aunt observed this; and, when Justine was twelve years of age, prevailed on her mother to allow her to live at her house. The republican institutions of our country have produced simpler and happier manners than those which prevail in the great monarchies that surround it. Hence there is less distinction between the several classes of its inhabitants; and the lower orders being neither so poor nor so despised, their manners are more refined and moral. A servant in Geneva does not mean the same thing as a servant in France and England. Justine, thus received in our family, learned the duties of a servant; a condition which, in our fortunate country, does not include the idea of ignorance, and a sacrifice of the dignity of a human being.

"After what I have said, I dare say you well remember the heroine of my little tale: for Justine was a great favourite of your's; and I recollect you once remarked, that if you were in an ill humour, one glance from Justine could dissipate it, for the same reason that Ariosto gives concerning the beauty of Angelica — she looked so frank-hearted and happy. My aunt conceived a great attachment for her, by which she was induced to give her an education superior to that which she had at first intended. This benefit was fully repaid; Justine was the most grateful little creature in the world: I do not mean that she made any professions, I never heard one pass her lips; but you could see by her eyes that she almost adored her protectress. Although her disposition was gay, and in many respects inconsiderate, yet she paid the greatest attention to every gesture of my aunt. She thought her the model of all excellence, and endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners, so that even now she often reminds me of her.

"When my dearest aunt died, every one was too much occupied in their own grief to notice poor Justine, who had attended her during her illness with the most anxious affection. Poor Justine was very ill; but other trials were reserved for her.

"One by one, her brothers and sister died; and her mother, with the exception of her neglected daughter, was left childless. The conscience of the woman was troubled; she began to think that the deaths of her favourites was a judgment from heaven to chastise her partiality. She was a Roman Catholic; and I believe her confessor confirmed the idea which she had conceived. Accordingly, a few months after your departure for Ingolstadt, Justine was called home by her repentant mother. Poor girl! she wept when she quitted our house: she was much altered since the death of my aunt; grief had given softness and a winning mildness to her manners, which had before been remarkable for vivacity. Nor was her residence at her mother's house of a nature to restore her gaiety. The poor woman was very vacillating in her repentance. She sometimes begged Justine to forgive her unkindness, but much oftener accused her of having caused the deaths of her brothers and sister. Perpetual fretting at length threw Madame Moritz into a decline, which at first increased her irritability, but she is now at peace for ever. She died on the first approach of cold weather, at the beginning of this last winter. Justine has returned to us; and I assure you I love her tenderly. She is very clever and gentle, and extremely pretty; as I mentioned before, her mien and her expressions continually remind me of my dear aunt.

"I must say also a few words to you, my dear cousin, of little darling William. I wish you could see him; he is very tall of his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eye-lashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health. He has already had one or two little *wives*, but Louisa Biron is his favourite, a pretty little girl of five years of age.

"Now, dear Victor, I dare say you wish to be indulged in a little gossip concerning the good people of Geneva. The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage with a young Englishman, John Melbourne, Esq. Her ugly sister, Manon, married M. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite schoolfellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered several misfortunes since the departure of Clerval from Geneva. But he has already recovered his spirits, and is reported to be on the point of marrying a very lively pretty Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier. She is a widow, and much older than Manoir; but she is very much admired, and a favourite with every body.

"I have written myself into good spirits, dear cousin; yet I cannot conclude without again anxiously inquiring concerning your health. Dear Victor, if you are not very ill, write yourself, and make your father and all of us happy; or —— I cannot bear to think of the other side of the question; my tears already flow. Adieu, my dearest cousin."

"Elizabeth Lavenza.

"Geneva, March 18th, 17 — ."

"Dear, dear Elizabeth!" I exclaimed when I had read her letter, "I will write instantly, and relieve them from the anxiety they must feel." I wrote, and this exertion greatly fatigued me; but my convalescence had commenced, and proceeded regularly. In another fortnight I was able to leave my chamber.

One of my first duties on my recovery was to introduce Clerval to the several professors of the university. In doing this, I underwent a kind of rough usage, ill befitting the wounds that my mind had sustained. Ever since the fatal night, the end of my labours, and the beginning of my misfortunes, I had conceived a violent antipathy even to the name of natural philosophy. When I was otherwise quite restored to health, the sight of a chemical instrument would renew all the agony of my nervous symptoms. Henry saw this, and had removed all my apparatus from my view. He had also changed my apartment; for he perceived that I had acquired a dislike for the room which had previously been my laboratory. But these cares of Clerval were made of no avail when I visited the professors. M. Waldman inflicted torture when he praised, with kindness and warmth, the astonishing progress I had made in the sciences. He soon perceived that I disliked the subject; but, not guessing the real cause, he attributed my feelings to modesty, and changed the subject from my improvement to the science itself, with a desire, as I evidently saw, of drawing me out. What could I do? He meant to please, and he tormented me. I felt as if he had placed carefully, one by one, in my view those instruments which were to be afterwards used in putting me to a slow and cruel death. I writhed under his words, yet dared not exhibit the pain I felt. Clerval, whose eyes and feelings were always quick in discerning the sensations of others, declined the subject, alleging, in excuse, his total ignorance; and the conversation took a more general turn. I thanked my friend from my heart, but I did not speak. I saw plainly that he was surprised, but he never attempted to draw my secret from me; and although I loved him with a mixture of affection and reverence that knew no bounds, yet I could never persuade myself to confide to him that event which was so often present to my recollection, but which I feared the detail to another would only impress more deeply.

M. Krempe was not equally docile; and in my condition at that time, of almost insupportable sensitiveness, his harsh blunt encomiums gave me even more pain than the benevolent approbation of M. Waldman. "D — n the fellow!" cried he; "why, M. Clerval, I assure you he has outstript us all. Aye, stare if you please; but it is nevertheless true. A youngster who, but a few years ago, believed Cornelius Agrippa as firmly as the gospel, has now set himself at the head of the university; and if he is not soon pulled down, we shall all be out of countenance. — Aye, aye," continued he, observing my face expressive of suffering, "M. Frankenstein is modest; an excellent quality in a young man. Young men should be diffident of themselves, you know, M. Clerval; I was myself when young: but that wears out in a very short time."

M. Krempe had now commenced an eulogy on himself, which happily turned the conversation from a subject that was so annoying to me.

Clerval was no natural philosopher. His imagination was too vivid for the minutiæ of science. Languages were his principal study; and he sought, by acquiring their elements, to open a field for self-instruction on his return to Geneva. Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew, gained his attention, after he had made himself perfectly master of Greek and Latin. For my own part, idleness had ever been irksome to me; and now that I wished to fly from reflection, and hated my former studies, I felt great relief in being the fellow-pupil with my friend, and found not only instruction but consolation in the works of the orientalists. Their melancholy is soothing, and their joy elevating to a degree I never experienced in studying the authors of any other country. When you read their writings, life appears to consist in a warm sun and garden of roses, — in the smiles and frowns of a fair enemy, and the fire that consumes your own heart. How different from the manly and heroical poetry of Greece and Rome.

Summer passed away in these occupations, and my return to Geneva was fixed for the latter end of autumn; but being delayed by several accidents, winter and snow arrived, the roads were deemed impassable, and my journey was retarded until the ensuing spring. I felt this delay very bitterly; for I longed to see my native town, and my beloved friends. My return had only been delayed so long from an unwillingness to leave Clerval in a strange place, before he had become acquainted with any of its inhabitants. The winter, however, was spent cheerfully; and although the spring was uncommonly late, when it came, its beauty compensated for its dilatoriness.

The month of May had already commenced, and I expected the letter daily which was to fix the date of my departure, when Henry proposed a pedestrian tour in the environs of Ingolstadt that I might bid a personal farewell to the country I had so long inhabited. I acceded with pleasure to this proposition: I was fond of exercise, and Clerval had always been my favourite companion in the rambles of this nature that I had taken among the scenes of my native country.

We passed a fortnight in these perambulations: my health and spirits had long been restored, and they gained additional strength from the salubrious air I breathed, the natural incidents of our progress, and the conversation of my friend. Study had before secluded me from the intercourse of my fellow-creatures, and rendered me unsocial; but Clerval called forth the better feelings of my heart; he again taught me to love the aspect of nature, and the cheerful faces of children. Excellent friend! how sincerely did you love me, and endeavour to elevate my mind, until it was on a level with your own. A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me, until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses; I became the same happy creature who, a few years ago, loving and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care. When happy, inanimate nature had the power of bestowing on me the most delightful sensations. A serene sky and verdant fields filled me with ecstacy. The present season was indeed divine; the flowers of spring bloomed in the hedges, while those of summer were already in bud: I was undisturbed by thoughts which during the preceding year had pressed upon me, notwithstanding my endeavours to throw them off, with an invincible burden.

Henry rejoiced in my gaiety, and sincerely sympathized in my feelings: he exerted himself to amuse me, while he expressed the sensations that filled his soul. The resources of his mind on this occasion were truly astonishing: his conversation was full of imagination; and very often, in imitation of the Persian and Arabic writers, he invented tales of wonderful fancy and passion. At other times he repeated my favourite poems, or drew me out into arguments, which he supported with great ingenuity.

We returned to our college on a Sunday afternoon: the peasants were dancing, and every one we met appeared gay and happy. My own spirits were high, and I bounded along with feelings of unbridled joy and hilarity.

CHAPTER VI.

On my return, I found the following letter from my father: —

"*To* V. Frankenstein.

"My Dear Victor,

"You have probably waited impatiently for a letter to fix the date of your return to us; and I was at first tempted to write only a few lines, merely mentioning the day on which I should expect you. But that would be a cruel kindness, and I dare not do it. What would be your surprise, my son, when you expected a happy and gay welcome, to behold, on the contrary, tears and wretchedness? And how, Victor, can I relate our misfortune? Absence cannot have rendered you callous to our joys and griefs; and how shall I inflict pain on an absent child? I wish to prepare you for the woeful news, but I know it is impossible; even now your eye skims over the page, to seek the words which are to convey to you the horrible tidings.

"William is dead! — that sweet child, whose smiles delighted and warmed my heart, who was so gentle, yet so gay! Victor, he is murdered!

"I will not attempt to console you; but will simply relate the circumstances of the transaction.

"Last Thursday (May 7th) I, my niece, and your two brothers, went to walk in Plainpalais. The evening was warm and serene, and we prolonged our walk farther than usual. It was already dusk before we thought of returning; and then we discovered that William and Ernest, who had gone on before, were not to be found. We accordingly rested on a seat until they should return. Presently Ernest came, and inquired if we had seen his brother: he said, that they had been playing together, that William had run away to hide himself, and that he vainly sought for him, and afterwards waited for him a long time, but that he did not return.

"This account rather alarmed us, and we continued to search for him until night fell, when Elizabeth conjectured that he might have returned to the house. He was not there. We returned again, with torches; for I could not rest, when I thought that my sweet boy had lost himself, and was exposed to all the damps and dews of night: Elizabeth also suffered extreme anguish. About five in the morning I discovered my lovely boy, whom the night before I had seen blooming and active in health, stretched on the grass livid and motionless: the print of the murderer's finger was on his neck.

"He was conveyed home, and the anguish that was visible in my countenance betrayed the secret to Elizabeth. She was very earnest to see the corpse. At first I attempted to prevent her; but she persisted, and entering the room where it lay, hastily examined the neck of the victim, and clasping her hands exclaimed, 'O God! I have murdered my darling infant!'

"She fainted, and was restored with extreme difficulty. When she again lived, it was only to weep and sigh. She told me, that that same evening William had teazed her to let him wear a very valuable miniature that she possessed of your mother. This picture is gone, and was doubtless the temptation which urged the murderer to the deed. We have no trace of him at present, although our exertions to discover him are unremitted; but they will not restore my beloved William.

"Come, dearest Victor; you alone can console Elizabeth. She weeps continually, and accuses herself unjustly as the cause of his death; her words pierce my heart. We are all unhappy; but will not that be an additional motive for you, my son, to return and be our comforter? Your dear mother! Alas, Victor! I now say, Thank God she did not live to witness the cruel, miserable death of her youngest darling!

"Come, Victor; not brooding thoughts of vengeance against the assassin, but with feelings of peace and gentleness, that will heal, instead of festering the wounds of our minds. Enter the house of mourning, my friend, but with kindness and affection for those who love you, and not with hatred for your enemies.

"Your affectionate and afflicted father,
"Alphonse Frankenstein.
"Geneva, May 12th, 17 — ."

Clerval, who had watched my countenance as I read this letter, was surprised to observe the despair that succeeded to the joy I at first expressed on receiving news from my friends. I threw the letter on the table, and covered my face with my hands.

"My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed Henry, when he perceived me weep with bitterness, "are you always to be unhappy? My dear friend, what has happened?"

I motioned to him to take up the letter, while I walked up and down the room in the extremest agitation. Tears also gushed from the eyes of Clerval, as he read the account of my misfortune.

“I can offer you no consolation, my friend,” said he; “your disaster is irreparable. What do you intend to do?”

“To go instantly to Geneva: come with me, Henry, to order the horses.”

During our walk, Clerval endeavoured to raise my spirits. He did not do this by common topics of consolation, but by exhibiting the truest sympathy. “Poor William!” said he, “that dear child; he now sleeps with his angel mother. His friends mourn and weep, but he is at rest: he does not now feel the murderer’s grasp; a sod covers his gentle form, and he knows no pain. He can no longer be a fit subject for pity; the survivors are the greatest sufferers, and for them time is the only consolation. Those maxims of the Stoics, that death was no evil, and that the mind of man ought to be superior to despair on the eternal absence of a beloved object, ought not to be urged. Even Cato wept over the dead body of his brother.”

Clerval spoke thus as we hurried through the streets; the words impressed themselves on my mind, and I remembered them afterwards in solitude. But now, as soon as the horses arrived, I hurried into a cabriole, and bade farewell to my friend.

My journey was very melancholy. At first I wished to hurry on, for I longed to console and sympathize with my loved and sorrowing friends; but when I drew near my native town, I slackened my progress. I could hardly sustain the multitude of feelings that crowded into my mind. I passed through scenes familiar to my youth, but which I had not seen for nearly six years. How altered every thing might be during that time? One sudden and desolating change had taken place; but a thousand little circumstances might have by degrees worked other alterations which, although they were done more tranquilly, might not be the less decisive. Fear overcame me; I dared not advance, dreading a thousand nameless evils that made me tremble, although I was unable to define them.

I remained two days at Lausanne, in this painful state of mind. I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm, and the snowy mountains, “the palaces of nature,” were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva.

The road ran by the side of the lake, which became narrower as I approached my native town. I discovered more distinctly the black sides of Jura, and the bright summit of Mont Blânc; I wept like a child: “Dear mountains! my own beautiful lake! how do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?”

I fear, my friend, that I shall render myself tedious by dwelling on these preliminary circumstances; but they were days of comparative happiness, and I think of them with pleasure. My country, my beloved country! who but a native can tell the delight I took in again beholding thy streams, thy mountains, and, more than all, thy lovely lake.

Yet, as I drew nearer home, grief and fear again overcame me. Night also closed around; and when I could hardly see the dark mountains, I felt still more gloomily. The picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings. Alas! I prophesied truly, and failed only in one single circumstance, that in all the misery I imagined and dreaded, I did not conceive the hundredth part of the anguish I was destined to endure.

It was completely dark when I arrived in the environs of Geneva; the gates of the town were already shut; and I was obliged to pass the night at Secheron, a village half a league to the east of the city. The sky was serene; and, as I was unable to rest, I resolved to visit the spot where my poor William had been murdered. As I could not pass through the town, I was obliged to cross the lake in a boat to arrive at Plainpalais. During this short voyage I saw the lightnings playing on the summit of Mont Blânc in the most beautiful figures. The storm appeared to approach rapidly; and, on landing, I ascended a low hill, that I might observe its progress. It advanced; the heavens were clouded, and I soon felt the rain coming slowly in large drops, but its violence quickly increased.

I quitted my seat, and walked on, although the darkness and storm increased every minute, and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head. It was echoed from Salêve, the Juras, and the Alps of Savoy; vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash. The storm, as is often the case in Switzerland, appeared at once in various parts of the heavens. The most violent storm hung exactly north of the town, over that part of the lake which lies between the promontory of Belrive and the village of Copêt. Another storm enlightened Jura with faint flashes; and another darkened and sometimes disclosed the Môle, a peaked mountain to the east of the lake.

While I watched the storm, so beautiful yet terrific, I wandered on with a hasty step. This noble war in the sky elevated my spirits; I clasped my hands, and exclaimed aloud, “William, dear angel! this is thy funeral, this thy dirge!” As I said these words, I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy dæmon to whom I had given life. What did he there? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination, than I became convinced of its truth; my teeth chattered, and I was forced to lean against a tree for support. The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in the gloom. Nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child. *He* was the murderer! I could not doubt it. The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact. I thought of pursuing the devil; but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mont Salêve, a hill that bounds Plainpalais on the south. He soon reached the summit, and disappeared.

I remained motionless. The thunder ceased; but the rain still continued, and the scene was enveloped in an impenetrable darkness. I revolved in my mind the events which I had until now sought to forget: the whole train of my progress towards the creation; the appearance of the work of my own hands alive at my bed side; its departure. Two years had now nearly elapsed since the night on which he first received life; and was this his first crime? Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; had he not murdered my brother?

No one can conceive the anguish I suffered during the remainder of the night, which I spent, cold and wet, in the open air. But I did not feel the inconvenience of the weather; my imagination was busy in scenes of evil and despair. I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done, nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me.

Day dawned; and I directed my steps towards the town. The gates were open; and I hastened to my father's house. My first thought was to discover what I knew of the murderer, and cause instant pursuit to be made. But I paused when I reflected on the story that I had to tell. A being whom I myself had formed, and endued with life, had met me at midnight among the precipices of an inaccessible mountain. I remembered also the nervous fever with which I had been seized just at the time that I dated my creation, and which would give an air of delirium to a tale otherwise so utterly improbable. I well knew that if any other had communicated such a relation to me, I should have looked upon it as the ravings of insanity. Besides, the strange nature of the animal would elude all pursuit, even if I were so far credited as to persuade my relatives to commence it. Besides, of what use would be pursuit? Who could arrest a creature capable of scaling the overhanging sides of Mont Salêve? These reflections determined me, and I resolved to remain silent.

It was about five in the morning when I entered my father's house. I told the servants not to disturb the family, and went into the library to attend their usual hour of rising.

Six years had elapsed, passed as a dream but for one indelible trace, and I stood in the same place where I had last embraced my father before my departure for Ingolstadt. Beloved and respectable parent! He still remained to me. I gazed on the picture of my mother, which stood over the mantle-piece. It was an historical subject, painted at my father's desire, and represented Caroline Beaufort in an agony of despair, kneeling by the coffin of her dead father. Her garb was rustic, and her cheek pale; but there was an air of dignity and beauty, that hardly permitted the sentiment of pity. Below this picture was a miniature of William; and my tears flowed when I looked upon it. While I was thus engaged, Ernest entered: he had heard me arrive, and hastened to welcome me. He expressed a sorrowful delight to see me: "Welcome, my dearest Victor," said he. "Ah! I wish you had come three months ago, and then you would have found us all joyous and delighted.

But we are now unhappy; and, I am afraid, tears instead of smiles will be your welcome. Our father looks so sorrowful: this dreadful event seems to have revived in his mind his grief on the death of Mamma. Poor Elizabeth also is quite inconsolable.” Ernest began to weep as he said these words.

“Do not,” said I, “welcome me thus; try to be more calm, that I may not be absolutely miserable the moment I enter my father’s house after so long an absence. But, tell me, how does my father support his misfortunes? and how is my poor Elizabeth?”

“She indeed requires consolation; she accused herself of having caused the death of my brother, and that made her very wretched. But since the murderer has been discovered — —”

“The murderer discovered! Good God! how can that be? who could attempt to pursue him? It is impossible; one might as well try to overtake the winds, or confine a mountain-stream with a straw.”

“I do not know what you mean; but we were all very unhappy when she was discovered. No one would believe it at first; and even now Elizabeth will not be convinced, notwithstanding all the evidence. Indeed, who would credit that Justine Moritz, who was so amiable, and fond of all the family, could all at once become so extremely wicked?”

“Justine Moritz! Poor, poor girl, is she the accused? But it is wrongfully; every one knows that; no one believes it, surely, Ernest?”

“No one did at first; but several circumstances came out, that have almost forced conviction upon us: and her own behaviour has been so confused, as to add to the evidence of facts a weight that, I fear, leaves no hope for doubt. But she will be tried to-day, and you will then hear all.”

He related that, the morning on which the murder of poor William had been discovered, Justine had been taken ill, and confined to her bed; and, after several days, one of the servants, happening to examine the apparel she had worn on the night of the murder, had discovered in her pocket the picture of my mother, which had been judged to be the temptation of the murderer. The servant instantly shewed it to one of the others, who, without saying a word to any of the family, went to a magistrate; and, upon their deposition, Justine was apprehended. On being charged with the fact, the poor girl confirmed the suspicion in a great measure by her extreme confusion of manner.

This was a strange tale, but it did not shake my faith; and I replied earnestly, “You are all mistaken; I know the murderer. Justine, poor, good Justine, is innocent.”

At that instant my father entered. I saw unhappiness deeply impressed on his countenance, but he endeavoured to welcome me cheerfully; and, after we had exchanged our mournful greeting, would have introduced some other topic than that of our disaster, had not Ernest exclaimed, “Good God, Papa! Victor says that he knows who was the murderer of poor William.”

“We do also, unfortunately,” replied my father; “for indeed I had rather have been for ever ignorant than have discovered so much depravity and ingratitude in one I valued so highly.”

“My dear father, you are mistaken; Justine is innocent.”

“If she is, God forbid that she should suffer as guilty. She is to be tried to-day, and I hope, I sincerely hope, that she will be acquitted.”

This speech calmed me. I was firmly convinced in my own mind that Justine, and indeed every human being, was guiltless of this murder. I had no fear, therefore, that any circumstantial evidence could be brought forward strong enough to convict her; and, in this assurance, I calmed myself, expecting the trial with eagerness, but without prognosticating an evil result.

We were soon joined by Elizabeth. Time had made great alterations in her form since I had last beheld her. Six years before she had been a pretty, good-humoured girl, whom every one loved and caressed. She was now a woman in stature and expression of countenance, which was uncommonly lovely. An open and capacious forehead gave indications of a good understanding, joined to great frankness of disposition. Her eyes were hazel, and expressive of mildness, now through recent affliction allied to sadness. Her hair was of a rich, dark auburn, her complexion fair, and her figure slight and graceful. She welcomed me with the greatest affection. “Your arrival, my dear cousin,” said she, “fills me with hope. You perhaps will find some means to justify my poor guiltless Justine. Alas! who is safe, if she be convicted of crime? I rely on her innocence as certainly as I do upon my own. Our misfortune is doubly hard to us; we have not only lost that lovely darling boy, but this poor girl, whom I sincerely love, is to be torn away by even a worse fate. If she is condemned, I never shall know joy more. But she will not, I am sure she will not; and then I shall be happy again, even after the sad death of my little William."

"She is innocent, my Elizabeth," said I, "and that shall be proved; fear nothing, but let your spirits be cheered by the assurance of her acquittal."

"How kind you are! every one else believes in her guilt, and that made me wretched; for I knew that it was impossible: and to see every one else prejudiced in so deadly a manner, rendered me hopeless and despairing." She wept.

"Sweet niece," said my father, "dry your tears. If she is, as you believe, innocent, rely on the justice of our judges, and the activity with which I shall prevent the slightest shadow of partiality."

CHAPTER VII.

We passed a few sad hours, until eleven o’clock, when the trial was to commence. My father and the rest of the family being obliged to attend as witnesses, I accompanied them to the court. During the whole of this wretched mockery of justice, I suffered living torture. It was to be decided, whether the result of my curiosity and lawless devices would cause the death of two of my fellow-beings: one a smiling babe, full of innocence and joy; the other far more dreadfully murdered, with every aggravation of infamy that could make the murder memorable in horror. Justine also was a girl of merit, and possessed qualities which promised to render her life happy: now all was to be obliterated in an ignominious grave; and I the cause! A thousand times rather would I have confessed myself guilty of the crime ascribed to Justine; but I was absent when it was committed, and such a declaration would have been considered as the ravings of a madman, and would not have exculpated her who suffered through me.

The appearance of Justine was calm. She was dressed in mourning; and her countenance, always engaging, was rendered, by the solemnity of her feelings, exquisitely beautiful. Yet she appeared confident in innocence, and did not tremble, although gazed on and execrated by thousands; for all the kindness which her beauty might otherwise have excited, was obliterated in the minds of the spectators by the imagination of the enormity she was supposed to have committed. She was tranquil, yet her tranquillity was evidently constrained; and as her confusion had before been adduced as a proof of her guilt, she worked up her mind to an appearance of courage. When she entered the court, she threw her eyes round it, and quickly discovered where we were seated. A tear seemed to dim her eye when she saw us; but she quickly recovered herself, and a look of sorrowful affection seemed to attest her utter guiltlessness.

The trial began; and after the advocate against her had stated the charge, several witnesses were called. Several strange facts combined against her, which might have staggered any one who had not such proof of her innocence as I had. She had been out the whole of the night on which the murder had been committed, and towards morning had been perceived by a market-woman not far from the spot where the body of the murdered child had been afterwards found. The woman asked her what she did there; but she looked very strangely, and only returned a confused and unintelligible answer. She returned to the house about eight o'clock; and when one inquired where she had passed the night, she replied, that she had been looking for the child, and demanded earnestly, if any thing had been heard concerning him. When shewn the body, she fell into violent hysterics, and kept her bed for several days. The picture was then produced, which the servant had found in her pocket; and when Elizabeth, in a faltering voice, proved that it was the same which, an hour before the child had been missed, she had placed round his neck, a murmur of horror and indignation filled the court.

Justine was called on for her defence. As the trial had proceeded, her countenance had altered. Surprise, horror, and misery, were strongly expressed. Sometimes she struggled with her tears; but when she was desired to plead, she collected her powers, and spoke in an audible although variable voice: —

“God knows,” she said, “how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me: I rest my innocence on a plain and simple explanation of the facts which have been adduced against me; and I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to a favourable interpretation, where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious.”

She then related that, by the permission of Elizabeth, she had passed the evening of the night on which the murder had been committed, at the house of an aunt at Chêne, a village situated at about a league from Geneva. On her return, at about nine o'clock, she met a man, who asked her if she had seen any thing of the child who was lost. She was alarmed by this account, and passed several hours in looking for him, when the gates of Geneva were shut, and she was forced to remain several hours of the night in a barn belonging to a cottage, being unwilling to call up the inhabitants, to whom she was well known. Unable to rest or sleep, she quitted her asylum early, that she might again endeavour to find my brother. If she had gone near the spot where his body lay, it was without her knowledge. That she had been bewildered when questioned by the market-woman, was not surprising, since she had passed a sleepless night, and the fate of poor William was yet uncertain. Concerning the picture she could give no account.

"I know," continued the unhappy victim, "how heavily and fatally this one circumstance weighs against me, but I have no power of explaining it; and when I have expressed my utter ignorance, I am only left to conjecture concerning the probabilities by which it might have been placed in my pocket. But here also I am checked. I believe that I have no enemy on earth, and none surely would have been so wicked as to destroy me wantonly. Did the murderer place it there? I know of no opportunity afforded him for so doing; or if I had, why should he have stolen the jewel, to part with it again so soon?

"I commit my cause to the justice of my judges, yet I see no room for hope. I beg permission to have a few witnesses examined concerning my character; and if their testimony shall not overweigh my supposed guilt, I must be condemned, although I would pledge my salvation on my innocence."

Several witnesses were called, who had known her for many years, and they spoke well of her; but fear, and hatred of the crime of which they supposed her guilty, rendered them timorous, and unwilling to come forward. Elizabeth saw even this last resource, her excellent dispositions and irreproachable conduct, about to fail the accused, when, although violently agitated, she desired permission to address the court.

"I am," said she, "the cousin of the unhappy child who was murdered, or rather his sister, for I was educated by and have lived with his parents ever since and even long before his birth. It may therefore be judged indecent in me to come forward on this occasion; but when I see a fellow-creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends, I wish to be allowed to speak, that I may say what I know of her character. I am well acquainted with the accused. I have lived in the same house with her, at one time for five, and at another for nearly two years. During all that period she appeared to me the most amiable and benevolent of human creatures. She nursed Madame Frankenstein, my aunt, in her last illness with the greatest affection and care; and afterwards attended her own mother during a tedious illness, in a manner that excited the admiration of all who knew her. After which she again lived in my uncle's house, where she was beloved by all the family. She was warmly attached to the child who is now dead, and acted towards him like a most affectionate mother. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say, that, notwithstanding all the evidence produced against her, I believe and rely on her perfect innocence. She had no temptation for such an action: as to the bauble on which the chief proof rests, if she had earnestly desired it, I should have willingly given it to her; so much do I esteem and value her."

Excellent Elizabeth! A murmur of approbation was heard; but it was excited by her generous interference, and not in favour of poor Justine, on whom the public indignation was turned with renewed violence, charging her with the blackest ingratitude. She herself wept as Elizabeth spoke, but she did not answer. My own agitation and anguish was extreme during the whole trial. I believed in her innocence; I knew it. Could the dæmon, who had (I did not for a minute doubt) murdered my brother, also in his hellish sport have betrayed the innocent to death and ignominy. I could not sustain the horror of my situation; and when I perceived that the popular voice, and the countenances of the judges, had already condemned my unhappy victim, I rushed out of the court in agony. The tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom, and would not forego their hold.

I passed a night of unmingled wretchedness. In the morning I went to the court; my lips and throat were parched. I dared not ask the fatal question; but I was known, and the officer guessed the cause of my visit. The ballots had been thrown; they were all black, and Justine was condemned.

I cannot pretend to describe what I then felt. I had before experienced sensations of horror; and I have endeavoured to bestow upon them adequate expressions, but words cannot convey an idea of the heart-sickening despair that I then endured. The person to whom I addressed myself added, that Justine had already confessed her guilt. "That evidence," he observed, "was hardly required in so glaring a case, but I am glad of it; and, indeed, none of our judges like to condemn a criminal upon circumstantial evidence, be it ever so decisive."

When I returned home, Elizabeth eagerly demanded the result.

"My cousin," replied I, "it is decided as you may have expected; all judges had rather that ten innocent should suffer, than that one guilty should escape. But she has confessed."

This was a dire blow to poor Elizabeth, who had relied with firmness upon Justine's innocence. "Alas!" said she, "how shall I ever again believe in human benevolence? Justine, whom I loved and esteemed as my sister, how could she put on those smiles of innocence only to betray; her mild eyes seemed incapable of any severity or ill-humour, and yet she has committed a murder."

Soon after we heard that the poor victim had expressed a wish to see my cousin. My father wished her not to go; but said, that he left it to her own judgment and feelings to decide. "Yes," said Elizabeth, "I will go, although she is guilty; and you, Victor, shall accompany me: I cannot go alone." The idea of this visit was torture to me, yet I could not refuse.

We entered the gloomy prison-chamber, and beheld Justine sitting on some straw at the further end; her hands were manacled, and her head rested on her knees. She rose on seeing us enter; and when we were left alone with her, she threw herself at the feet of Elizabeth, weeping bitterly. My cousin wept also.

"Oh, Justine!" said she, "why did you rob me of my last consolation. I relied on your innocence; and although I was then very wretched, I was not so miserable as I am now."

"And do you also believe that I am so very, very wicked? Do you also join with my enemies to crush me?" Her voice was suffocated with sobs.

"Rise, my poor girl," said Elizabeth, "why do you kneel, if you are innocent? I am not one of your enemies; I believed you guiltless, notwithstanding every evidence, until I heard that you had yourself declared your guilt. That report, you say, is false; and be assured, dear Justine, that nothing can shake my confidence in you for a moment, but your own confession."

"I did confess; but I confessed a lie. I confessed, that I might obtain absolution; but now that falsehood lies heavier at my heart than all my other sins. The God of heaven forgive me! Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was. He threatened excommunication and hell fire in my last moments, if I continued obdurate. Dear lady, I had none to support me; all looked on me as a wretch doomed to ignominy and perdition. What could I do? In an evil hour I subscribed to a lie; and now only am I truly miserable."

She paused, weeping, and then continued—”I thought with horror, my sweet lady, that you should believe your Justine, whom your blessed aunt had so highly honoured, and whom you loved, was a creature capable of a crime which none but the devil himself could have perpetrated. Dear William! dearest blessed child! I soon shall see you again in heaven, where we shall all be happy; and that consoles me, going as I am to suffer ignominy and death.”

“Oh, Justine! forgive me for having for one moment distrusted you. Why did you confess? But do not mourn, my dear girl; I will every where proclaim your innocence, and force belief. Yet you must die; you, my playfellow, my companion, my more than sister. I never can survive so horrible a misfortune.”

“Dear, sweet Elizabeth, do not weep. You ought to raise me with thoughts of a better life, and elevate me from the petty cares of this world of injustice and strife. Do not you, excellent friend, drive me to despair.”

“I will try to comfort you; but this, I fear, is an evil too deep and poignant to admit of consolation, for there is no hope. Yet heaven bless thee, my dearest Justine, with resignation, and a confidence elevated beyond this world. Oh! how I hate its shews and mockeries! when one creature is murdered, another is immediately deprived of life in a slow torturing manner; then the executioners, their hands yet reeking with the blood of innocence, believe that they have done a great deed. They call this *retribution*. Hateful name! When that word is pronounced, I know greater and more horrid punishments are going to be inflicted than the gloomiest tyrant has ever invented to satiate his utmost revenge. Yet this is not consolation for you, my Justine, unless indeed that you may glory in escaping from so miserable a den. Alas! I would I were in peace with my aunt and my lovely William, escaped from a world which is hateful to me, and the visages of men which I abhor.”

Justine smiled languidly. “This, dear lady, is despair, and not resignation. I must not learn the lesson that you would teach me. Talk of something else, something that will bring peace, and not increase of misery.”

During this conversation I had retired to a corner of the prison-room, where I could conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me. Despair! Who dared talk of that? The poor victim, who on the morrow was to pass the dreary boundary between life and death, felt not as I did, such deep and bitter agony. I gnashed my teeth, and ground them together, uttering a groan that came from my inmost soul. Justine started. When she saw who it was, she approached me, and said, “Dear Sir, you are very kind to visit me; you, I hope, do not believe that I am guilty.”

I could not answer. “No, Justine,” said Elizabeth; “he is more convinced of your innocence than I was; for even when he heard that you had confessed, he did not credit it.”

“I truly thank him. In these last moments I feel the sincerest gratitude towards those who think of me with kindness. How sweet is the affection of others to such a wretch as I am! It removes more than half my misfortune; and I feel as if I could die in peace, now that my innocence is acknowledged by you, dear lady, and your cousin.”

Thus the poor sufferer tried to comfort others and herself. She indeed gained the resignation she desired. But I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation. Elizabeth also wept, and was unhappy; but her’s also was the misery of innocence, which, like a cloud that passes over the fair moon, for a while hides, but cannot tarnish its brightness. Anguish and despair had penetrated into the core of my heart; I bore a hell within me, which nothing could extinguish. We staid several hours with Justine; and it was with great difficulty that Elizabeth could tear herself away. “I wish,” cried she, “that I were to die with you; I cannot live in this world of misery.”

Justine assumed an air of cheerfulness, while she with difficulty repressed her bitter tears. She embraced Elizabeth, and said, in a voice of half-suppressed emotion, “Farewell, sweet lady, dearest Elizabeth, my beloved and only friend; may heaven in its bounty bless and preserve you; may this be the last misfortune that you will ever suffer. Live, and be happy, and make others so.”

As we returned, Elizabeth said, “You know not, my dear Victor, how much I am relieved, now that I trust in the innocence of this unfortunate girl. I never could again have known peace, if I had been deceived in my reliance on her. For the moment that I did believe her guilty, I felt an anguish that I could not have long sustained. Now my heart is lightened. The innocent suffers; but she whom I thought amiable and good has not betrayed the trust I reposed in her, and I am consoled.”

Amiable cousin! such were your thoughts, mild and gentle as your own dear eyes and voice. But I — I was a wretch, and none ever conceived of the misery that I then endured.

VOLUME II

CHAPTER I.

Nothing is more painful to the human mind, than, after the feelings have been worked up by a quick succession of events, the dead calmness of inaction and certainty which follows, and deprives the soul both of hope and fear. Justine died; she rested; and I was alive. The blood flowed freely in my veins, but a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart, which nothing could remove. Sleep fled from my eyes; I wandered like an evil spirit, for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible, and more, much more, (I persuaded myself) was yet behind. Yet my heart overflowed with kindness, and the love of virtue. I had begun life with benevolent intentions, and thirsted for the moment when I should put them in practice, and make myself useful to my fellow-beings. Now all was blasted: instead of that serenity of conscience, which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from thence to gather promise of new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures, such as no language can describe.

This state of mind preyed upon my health, which had entirely recovered from the first shock it had sustained. I shunned the face of man; all sound of joy or complacency was torture to me; solitude was my only consolation — deep, dark, death-like solitude.

My father observed with pain the alteration perceptible in my disposition and habits, and endeavoured to reason with me on the folly of giving way to immoderate grief. “Do you think, Victor,” said he, “that I do not suffer also? No one could love a child more than I loved your brother;” (tears came into his eyes as he spoke); “but is it not a duty to the survivors, that we should refrain from augmenting their unhappiness by an appearance of immoderate grief? It is also a duty owed to yourself; for excessive sorrow prevents improvement or enjoyment, or even the discharge of daily usefulness, without which no man is fit for society.”

This advice, although good, was totally inapplicable to my case; I should have been the first to hide my grief, and console my friends, if remorse had not mingled its bitterness with my other sensations. Now I could only answer my father with a look of despair, and endeavour to hide myself from his view.

About this time we retired to our house at Belrive. This change was particularly agreeable to me. The shutting of the gates regularly at ten o’clock, and the impossibility of remaining on the lake after that hour, had rendered our residence within the walls of Geneva very irksome to me. I was now free. Often, after the rest of the family had retired for the night, I took the boat, and passed many hours upon the water. Sometimes, with my sails set, I was carried by the wind; and sometimes, after rowing into the middle of the lake, I left the boat to pursue its own course, and gave way to my own miserable reflections. I was often tempted, when all was at peace around me, and I the only unquiet thing that wandered restless in a scene so beautiful and heavenly, if I except some bat, or the frogs, whose harsh and interrupted croaking was heard only when I approached the shore — often, I say, I was tempted to plunge into the silent lake, that the waters might close over me and my calamities for ever. But I was restrained, when I thought of the heroic and suffering Elizabeth, whom I tenderly loved, and whose existence was bound up in mine. I thought also of my father, and surviving brother: should I by my base desertion leave them exposed and unprotected to the malice of the fiend whom I had let loose among them?

At these moments I wept bitterly, and wished that peace would revisit my mind only that I might afford them consolation and happiness. But that could not be. Remorse extinguished every hope. I had been the author of unalterable evils; and I lived in daily fear, lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness. I had an obscure feeling that all was not over, and that he would still commit some signal crime, which by its enormity should almost efface the recollection of the past. There was always scope for fear, so long as any thing I loved remained behind. My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him, I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed. When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I would have made a pilgrimage to the highest peak of the Andes, could I, when there, have precipitated him to their base. I wished to see him again, that I might wreak the utmost extent of anger on his head, and avenge the deaths of William and Justine.

Our house was the house of mourning. My father's health was deeply shaken by the horror of the recent events. Elizabeth was sad and desponding; she no longer took delight in her ordinary occupations; all pleasure seemed to her sacrilege toward the dead; eternal woe and tears she then thought was the just tribute she should pay to innocence so blasted and destroyed. She was no longer that happy creature, who in earlier youth wandered with me on the banks of the lake, and talked with ecstacy of our future prospects. She had become grave, and often conversed of the inconstancy of fortune, and the instability of human life.

"When I reflect, my dear cousin," said she, "on the miserable death of Justine Moritz, I no longer see the world and its works as they before appeared to me. Before, I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice, that I read in books or heard from others, as tales of ancient days, or imaginary evils; at least they were remote, and more familiar to reason than to the imagination; but now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood. Yet I am certainly unjust. Every body believed that poor girl to be guilty; and if she could have committed the crime for which she suffered, assuredly she would have been the most depraved of human creatures. For the sake of a few jewels, to have murdered the son of her benefactor and friend, a child whom she had nursed from its birth, and appeared to love as if it had been her own! I could not consent to the death of any human being; but certainly I should have thought such a creature unfit to remain in the society of men. Yet she was innocent. I know, I feel she was innocent; you are of the same opinion, and that confirms me. Alas! Victor, when falsehood can look so like the truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? I feel as if I were walking on the edge of a precipice, towards which thousands are crowding, and endeavouring to plunge me into the abyss. William and Justine were assassinated, and the murderer escapes; he walks about the world free, and perhaps respected. But even if I were condemned to suffer on the scaffold for the same crimes, I would not change places with such a wretch."

I listened to this discourse with the extremest agony. I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer. Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance, and kindly taking my hand said, "My dearest cousin, you must calm yourself. These events have affected me, God knows how deeply; but I am not so wretched as you are. There is an expression of despair, and sometimes of revenge, in your countenance, that makes me tremble. Be calm, my dear Victor; I would sacrifice my life to your peace. We surely shall be happy: quiet in our native country, and not mingling in the world, what can disturb our tranquillity?"

She shed tears as she said this, distrusting the very solace that she gave; but at the same time she smiled, that she might chase away the fiend that lurked in my heart. My father, who saw in the unhappiness that was painted in my face only an exaggeration of that sorrow which I might naturally feel, thought that an amusement suited to my taste would be the best means of restoring to me my wonted serenity. It was from this cause that he had removed to the country; and, induced by the same motive, he now proposed that we should all make an excursion to the valley of Chamounix. I had been there before, but Elizabeth and Ernest never had; and both had often expressed an earnest desire to see the scenery of this place, which had been described to them as so wonderful and sublime. Accordingly we departed from Geneva on this tour about the middle of the month of August, nearly two months after the death of Justine.

The weather was uncommonly fine; and if mine had been a sorrow to be chased away by any fleeting circumstance, this excursion would certainly have had the effect intended by my father. As it was, I was somewhat interested in the scene; it sometimes lulled, although it could not extinguish my grief. During the first day we travelled in a carriage. In the morning we had seen the mountains at a distance, towards which we gradually advanced. We perceived that the valley through which we wound, and which was formed by the river Arve, whose course we followed, closed in upon us by degrees; and when the sun had set, we beheld immense mountains and precipices overhanging us on every side, and heard the sound of the river raging among rocks, and the dashing of water-falls around.

The next day we pursued our journey upon mules; and as we ascended still higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains; the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees, formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings.

We passed the bridge of Pelissier, where the ravine, which the river forms, opened before us, and we began to ascend the mountain that overhangs it. Soon after we entered the valley of Chamounix. This valley is more wonderful and sublime, but not so beautiful and picturesque as that of Servox, through which we had just passed. The high and snowy mountains were its immediate boundaries; but we saw no more ruined castles and fertile fields. Immense glaciers approached the road; we heard the rumbling thunder of the falling avalanche, and marked the smoke of its passage. Mont Blânc, the supreme and magnificent Mont Blânc, raised itself from the surrounding *aiguilles*, and its tremendous *dome* overlooked the valley.

During this journey, I sometimes joined Elizabeth, and exerted myself to point out to her the various beauties of the scene. I often suffered my mule to lag behind, and indulged in the misery of reflection. At other times I spurred on the animal before my companions, that I might forget them, the world, and, more than all, myself. When at a distance, I alighted, and threw myself on the grass, weighed down by horror and despair. At eight in the evening I arrived at Chamounix. My father and Elizabeth were very much fatigued; Ernest, who accompanied us, was delighted, and in high spirits: the only circumstance that detracted from his pleasure was the south wind, and the rain it seemed to promise for the next day.

We retired early to our apartments, but not to sleep; at least I did not. I remained many hours at the window, watching the pallid lightning that played above Mont Blânc, and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which ran below my window.

CHAPTER II.

The next day, contrary to the prognostications of our guides, was fine, although clouded. We visited the source of the Arveiron, and rode about the valley until evening. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling; and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquillized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I returned in the evening, fatigued, but less unhappy, and conversed with my family with more cheerfulness than had been my custom for some time. My father was pleased, and Elizabeth overjoyed. “My dear cousin,” said she, “you see what happiness you diffuse when you are happy; do not relapse again!”

The following morning the rain poured down in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains. I rose early, but felt unusually melancholy. The rain depressed me; my old feelings recurred, and I was miserable. I knew how disappointed my father would be at this sudden change, and I wished to avoid him until I had recovered myself so far as to be enabled to conceal those feelings that overpowered me. I knew that they would remain that day at the inn; and as I had ever inured myself to rain, moisture, and cold, I resolved to go alone to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstacy that gave wings to the soul, and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind, and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go alone, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground; some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain, or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are sombre, and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it, and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds, while rain poured from the dark sky, and added to the melancholy impression I received from the objects around me. Alas! why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows, and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us.

We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep. We rise; one wand’ring thought pollutes the day. We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh, or weep, Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away; It is the same: for, be it joy or sorrow, The path of its departure still is free. Man’s yesterday may ne’er be like his morrow; Nought may endure but mutability!

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock. From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blânc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea, or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aërial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy; I exclaimed —”Wandering spirits, if indeed ye wander, and do not rest in your narrow beds, allow me this faint happiness, or take me, as your companion, away from the joys of life.”

As I said this, I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled: a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me; but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived, as the shape came nearer, (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach, and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. But I scarcely observed this; anger and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.

“Devil!” I exclaimed, “do you dare approach me? and do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! or rather stay, that I may trample you to dust! and, oh, that I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!”

“I expected this reception,” said the dæmon. “All men hate the wretched; how then must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends.”

“Abhorred monster! fiend that thou art! the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! you reproach me with your creation; come on then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed.”

My rage was without bounds; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings which can arm one being against the existence of another.

He easily eluded me, and said,

"Be calm! I entreat you to hear me, before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine; my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king, if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other, and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember, that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Every where I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."

"Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall."

"How can I move thee? Will no entreaties cause thee to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature, who implores thy goodness and compassion? Believe me, Frankenstein: I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity: but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow-creatures, who owe me nothing? they spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow-beings. If the multitude of mankind knew of my existence, they would do as you do, and arm themselves for my destruction. Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness. Yet it is in your power to recompense me, and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others, shall be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me.

The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they may be, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me: listen to me; and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands."

"Why do you call to my remembrance circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author? Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to you, or not. Begone! relieve me from the sight of your detested form."

"Thus I relieve thee, my creator," he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; "thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me, and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind yon snowy precipices, and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story, and can decide. On you it rests, whether I quit for ever the neighbourhood of man, and lead a harmless life, or become the scourge of your fellow-creatures, and the author of your own speedy ruin."

As he said this, he led the way across the ice: I followed. My heart was full, and I did not answer him; but, as I proceeded, I weighed the various arguments that he had used, and determined at least to listen to his tale. I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. I had hitherto supposed him to be the murderer of my brother, and I eagerly sought a confirmation or denial of this opinion. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend: we entered the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart, and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen; and, seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.

CHAPTER III.

“It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original æra of my being: all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt, at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. By degrees, I remember, a stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me, and troubled me; but hardly had I felt this, when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light poured in upon me again. I walked, and, I believe, descended; but I presently found a great alteration in my sensations. Before, dark and opaque bodies had surrounded me, impervious to my touch or sight; but I now found that I could wander on at liberty, with no obstacles which I could not either surmount or avoid. The light became more and more oppressive to me; and, the heat wearying me as I walked, I sought a place where I could receive shade. This was the forest near Ingolstadt; and here I lay by the side of a brook resting from my fatigue, until I felt tormented by hunger and thirst. This roused me from my nearly dormant state, and I ate some berries which I found hanging on the trees, or lying on the ground. I slaked my thirst at the brook; and then lying down, was overcome by sleep.

“It was dark when I awoke; I felt cold also, and half-frightened as it were instinctively, finding myself so desolate. Before I had quitted your apartment, on a sensation of cold, I had covered myself with some clothes; but these were insufficient to secure me from the dews of night. I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but, feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept.

“Soon a gentle light stole over the heavens, and gave me a sensation of pleasure. I started up, and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees. I gazed with a kind of wonder. It moved slowly, but it enlightened my path; and I again went out in search of berries. I was still cold, when under one of the trees I found a huge cloak, with which I covered myself, and sat down upon the ground. No distinct ideas occupied my mind; all was confused. I felt light, and hunger, and thirst, and darkness; innumerable sounds rung in my ears, and on all sides various scents saluted me: the only object that I could distinguish was the bright moon, and I fixed my eyes on that with pleasure.

"Several changes of day and night passed, and the orb of night had greatly lessened when I began to distinguish my sensations from each other. I gradually saw plainly the clear stream that supplied me with drink, and the trees that shaded me with their foliage. I was delighted when I first discovered that a pleasant sound, which often saluted my ears, proceeded from the throats of the little winged animals who had often intercepted the light from my eyes. I began also to observe, with greater accuracy, the forms that surrounded me, and to perceive the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopied me. Sometimes I tried to imitate the pleasant songs of the birds, but was unable. Sometimes I wished to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again.

"The moon had disappeared from the night, and again, with a lessened form, shewed itself, while I still remained in the forest. My sensations had, by this time, become distinct, and my mind received every day additional ideas. My eyes became accustomed to the light, and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and, by degrees, one herb from another. I found that the sparrow uttered none but harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and enticing.

"One day, when I was oppressed by cold, I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars, and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! I examined the materials of the fire, and to my joy found it to be composed of wood. I quickly collected some branches; but they were wet, and would not burn. I was pained at this, and sat still watching the operation of the fire. The wet wood which I had placed near the heat dried, and itself became inflamed. I reflected on this; and, by touching the various branches, I discovered the cause, and busied myself in collecting a great quantity of wood, that I might dry it, and have a plentiful supply of fire. When night came on, and brought sleep with it, I was in the greatest fear lest my fire should be extinguished. I covered it carefully with dry wood and leaves, and placed wet branches upon it; and then, spreading my cloak, I lay on the ground, and sunk into sleep.

"It was morning when I awoke, and my first care was to visit the fire. I uncovered it, and a gentle breeze quickly fanned it into a flame. I observed this also, and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again, I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat; and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food; for I found some of the offals that the travellers had left had been roasted, and tasted much more savoury than the berries I gathered from the trees. I tried, therefore, to dress my food in the same manner, placing it on the live embers. I found that the berries were spoiled by this operation, and the nuts and roots much improved.

"Food, however, became scarce; and I often spent the whole day searching in vain for a few acorns to assuage the pangs of hunger. When I found this, I resolved to quit the place that I had hitherto inhabited, to seek for one where the few wants I experienced would be more easily satisfied. In this emigration, I exceedingly lamented the loss of the fire which I had obtained through accident, and knew not how to re-produce it. I gave several hours to the serious consideration of this difficulty; but I was obliged to relinquish all attempt to supply it; and, wrapping myself up in my cloak, I struck across the wood towards the setting sun. I passed three days in these rambles, and at length discovered the open country. A great fall of snow had taken place the night before, and the fields were of one uniform white; the appearance was disconsolate, and I found my feet chilled by the cold damp substance that covered the ground.

"It was about seven in the morning, and I longed to obtain food and shelter; at length I perceived a small hut, on a rising ground, which had doubtless been built for the convenience of some shepherd. This was a new sight to me; and I examined the structure with great curiosity. Finding the door open, I entered. An old man sat in it, near a fire, over which he was preparing his breakfast. He turned on hearing a noise; and, perceiving me, shrieked loudly, and, quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his debilitated form hardly appeared capable. His appearance, different from any I had ever before seen, and his flight, somewhat surprised me. But I was enchanted by the appearance of the hut: here the snow and rain could not penetrate; the ground was dry; and it presented to me then as exquisite and divine a retreat as Pandæmonium appeared to the dæmons of hell after their sufferings in the lake of fire. I greedily devoured the remnants of the shepherd’s breakfast, which consisted of bread, cheese, milk, and wine; the latter, however, I did not like. Then overcome by fatigue, I lay down among some straw, and fell asleep.

“It was noon when I awoke; and, allured by the warmth of the sun, which shone brightly on the white ground, I determined to recommence my travels; and, depositing the remains of the peasant’s breakfast in a wallet I found, I proceeded across the fields for several hours, until at sunset I arrived at a village. How miraculous did this appear! the huts, the neater cottages, and stately houses, engaged my admiration by turns. The vegetables in the gardens, the milk and cheese that I saw placed at the windows of some of the cottages, allured my appetite. One of the best of these I entered; but I had hardly placed my foot within the door, before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country, and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel, however, joined a cottage of a neat and pleasant appearance; but, after my late dearly-bought experience, I dared not enter it. My place of refuge was constructed of wood, but so low, that I could with difficulty sit upright in it. No wood, however, was placed on the earth, which formed the floor, but it was dry; and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain.

“Here then I retreated, and lay down, happy to have found a shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man.

“As soon as morning dawned, I crept from my kennel, that I might view the adjacent cottage, and discover if I could remain in the habitation I had found. It was situated against, the back of the cottage, and surrounded on the sides which were exposed by a pig-stye and a clear pool of water. One part was open, and by that I had crept in; but now I covered every crevice by which I might be perceived with stones and wood, yet in such a manner that I might move them on occasion to pass out: all the light I enjoyed came through the stye, and that was sufficient for me.

“Having thus arranged my dwelling, and carpeted it with clean straw, I retired; for I saw the figure of a man at a distance, and I remembered too well my treatment the night before, to trust myself in his power. I had first, however, provided for my sustenance for that day, by a loaf of coarse bread, which I purloined, and a cup with which I could drink, more conveniently than from my hand, of the pure water which flowed by my retreat. The floor was a little raised, so that it was kept perfectly dry, and by its vicinity to the chimney of the cottage it was tolerably warm.

“Being thus provided, I resolved to reside in this hovel, until something should occur which might alter my determination. It was indeed a paradise, compared to the bleak forest, my former residence, the rain-dropping branches, and dank earth. I ate my breakfast with pleasure, and was about to remove a plank to procure myself a little water, when I heard a step, and, looking through a small chink, I beheld a young creature, with a pail on her head, passing before my hovel. The girl was young and of gentle demeanour, unlike what I have since found cottagers and farm-house servants to be. Yet she was meanly dressed, a coarse blue petticoat and a linen jacket being her only garb; her fair hair was plaited, but not adorned; she looked patient, yet sad. I lost sight of her; and in about a quarter of an hour she returned, bearing the pail, which was now partly filled with milk. As she walked along, seemingly incommoded by the burden, a young man met her, whose countenance expressed a deeper despondence. Uttering a few sounds with an air of melancholy, he took the pail from her head, and bore it to the cottage himself. She followed, and they disappeared. Presently I saw the young man again, with some tools in his hand, cross the field behind the cottage; and the girl was also busied, sometimes in the house, and sometimes in the yard.

“On examining my dwelling, I found that one of the windows of the cottage had formerly occupied a part of it, but the panes had been filled up with wood. In one of these was a small and almost imperceptible chink, through which the eye could just penetrate. Through this crevice, a small room was visible, white-washed and clean, but very bare of furniture. In one corner, near a small fire, sat an old man, leaning his head on his hands in a disconsolate attitude. The young girl was occupied in arranging the cottage; but presently she took something out of a drawer, which employed her hands, and she sat down beside the old man, who, taking up an instrument, began to play, and to produce sounds, sweeter than the voice of the thrush or the nightingale. It was a lovely sight, even to me, poor wretch! who had never beheld aught beautiful before. The silver hair and benevolent countenance of the aged cottager, won my reverence; while the gentle manners of the girl enticed my love. He played a sweet mournful air, which I perceived drew tears from the eyes of his amiable companion, of which the old man took no notice, until she sobbed audibly; he then pronounced a few sounds, and the fair creature, leaving her work, knelt at his feet. He raised her, and smiled with such kindness and affection, that I felt sensations of a peculiar and over-powering nature: they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window, unable to bear these emotions.

"Soon after this the young man returned, bearing on his shoulders a load of wood. The girl met him at the door, helped to relieve him of his burden, and, taking some of the fuel into the cottage, placed it on the fire; then she and the youth went apart into a nook of the cottage, and he shewed her a large loaf and a piece of cheese. She seemed pleased; and went into the garden for some roots and plants, which she placed in water, and then upon the fire. She afterwards continued her work, whilst the young man went into the garden, and appeared busily employed in digging and pulling up roots. After he had been employed thus about an hour, the young woman joined him, and they entered the cottage together.

"The old man had, in the mean time, been pensive; but, on the appearance of his companions, he assumed a more cheerful air, and they sat down to eat. The meal was quickly dispatched. The young woman was again occupied in arranging the cottage; the old man walked before the cottage in the sun for a few minutes, leaning on the arm of the youth. Nothing could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures. One was old, with silver hairs and a countenance beaming with benevolence and love: the younger was slight and graceful in his figure, and his features were moulded with the finest symmetry; yet his eyes and attitude expressed the utmost sadness and despondency. The old man returned to the cottage; and the youth, with tools different from those he had used in the morning, directed his steps across the fields.

“Night quickly shut in; but, to my extreme wonder, I found that the cottagers had a means of prolonging light, by the use of tapers, and was delighted to find, that the setting of the sun did not put an end to the pleasure I experienced in watching my human neighbours. In the evening, the young girl and her companion were employed in various occupations which I did not understand; and the old man again took up the instrument, which produced the divine sounds that had enchanted me in the morning. So soon as he had finished, the youth began, not to play, but to utter sounds that were monotonous, and neither resembling the harmony of the old man’s instrument or the songs of the birds; I since found that he read aloud, but at that time I knew nothing of the science of words or letters.

“The family, after having been thus occupied for a short time, extinguished their lights, and retired, as I conjectured, to rest.”

CHAPTER IV.

"I lay on my straw, but I could not sleep. I thought of the occurrences of the day. What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people; and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching, and endeavouring to discover the motives which influenced their actions.

"The cottagers arose the next morning before the sun. The young woman arranged the cottage, and prepared the food; and the youth departed after the first meal.

"This day was passed in the same routine as that which preceded it. The young man was constantly employed out of doors, and the girl in various laborious occupations within. The old man, whom I soon perceived to be blind, employed his leisure hours on his instrument, or in contemplation. Nothing could exceed the love and respect which the younger cottagers exhibited towards their venerable companion. They performed towards him every little office of affection and duty with gentleness; and he rewarded them by his benevolent smiles.

"They were not entirely happy. The young man and his companion often went apart, and appeared to weep. I saw no cause for their unhappiness; but I was deeply affected by it. If such lovely creatures were miserable, it was less strange that I, an imperfect and solitary being, should be wretched. Yet why were these gentle beings unhappy? They possessed a delightful house (for such it was in my eyes), and every luxury; they had a fire to warm them when chill, and delicious viands when hungry; they were dressed in excellent clothes; and, still more, they enjoyed one another's company and speech, interchanging each day looks of affection and kindness. What did their tears imply? Did they really express pain? I was at first unable to solve these questions; but perpetual attention, and time, explained to me many appearances which were at first enigmatic.

"A considerable period elapsed before I discovered one of the causes of the uneasiness of this amiable family; it was poverty: and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree. Their nourishment consisted entirely of the vegetables of their garden, and the milk of one cow, who gave very little during the winter, when its masters could scarcely procure food to support it. They often, I believe, suffered the pangs of hunger very poignantly, especially the two younger cottagers; for several times they placed food before the old man, when they reserved none for themselves.

"This trait of kindness moved me sensibly. I had been accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for my own consumption; but when I found that in doing this I inflicted pain on the cottagers, I abstained, and satisfied myself with berries, nuts, and roots, which I gathered from a neighbouring wood.

"I discovered also another means through which I was enabled to assist their labours. I found that the youth spent a great part of each day in collecting wood for the family fire; and, during the night, I often took his tools, the use of which I quickly discovered, and brought home firing sufficient for the consumption of several days.

"I remember, the first time that I did this, the young woman, when she opened the door in the morning, appeared greatly astonished on seeing a great pile of wood on the outside. She uttered some words in a loud voice, and the youth joined her, who also expressed surprise. I observed, with pleasure, that he did not go to the forest that day, but spent it in repairing the cottage, and cultivating the garden.

"By degrees I made a discovery of still greater moment. I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feelings to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers. This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desired to become acquainted with it. But I was baffled in every attempt I made for this purpose. Their pronunciation was quick; and the words they uttered, not having any apparent connexion with visible objects, I was unable to discover any clue by which I could unravel the mystery of their reference. By great application, however, and after having remained during the space of several revolutions of the moon in my hovel, I discovered the names that were given to some of the most familiar objects of discourse: I learned and applied the words *fire*, *milk*, *bread*, and *wood*. I learned also the names of the cottagers themselves. The youth and his companion had each of them several names, but the old man had only one, which was *father*. The girl was called *sister*, or *Agatha*; and the youth *Felix*, *brother*, or *son*. I cannot describe the delight I felt when I learned the ideas appropriated to each of these sounds, and was able to pronounce them. I distinguished several other words, without being able as yet to understand or apply them; such as *good*, *dearest*, *unhappy*.

"I spent the winter in this manner. The gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me: when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys. I saw few human beings beside them; and if any other happened to enter the cottage, their harsh manners and rude gait only enhanced to me the superior accomplishments of my friends. The old man, I could perceive, often endeavoured to encourage his children, as sometimes I found that he called them, to cast off their melancholy. He would talk in a cheerful accent, with an expression of goodness that bestowed pleasure even upon me. Agatha listened with respect, her eyes sometimes filled with tears, which she endeavoured to wipe away unperceived; but I generally found that her countenance and tone were more cheerful after having listened to the exhortations of her father. It was not thus with Felix. He was always the saddest of the groupe; and, even to my unpractised senses, he appeared to have suffered more deeply than his friends. But if his countenance was more sorrowful, his voice was more cheerful than that of his sister, especially when he addressed the old man.

"I could mention innumerable instances, which, although slight, marked the dispositions of these amiable cottagers. In the midst of poverty and want, Felix carried with pleasure to his sister the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground. Early in the morning before she had risen, he cleared away the snow that obstructed her path to the milk-house, drew water from the well, and brought the wood from the out-house, where, to his perpetual astonishment, he found his store always replenished by an invisible hand. In the day, I believe, he worked sometimes for a neighbouring farmer, because he often went forth, and did not return until dinner, yet brought no wood with him. At other times he worked in the garden; but, as there was little to do in the frosty season, he read to the old man and Agatha.

“This reading had puzzled me extremely at first; but, by degrees, I discovered that he uttered many of the same sounds when he read as when he talked. I conjectured, therefore, that he found on the paper signs for speech which he understood, and I ardently longed to comprehend these also; but how was that possible, when I did not even understand the sounds for which they stood as signs? I improved, however, sensibly in this science, but not sufficiently to follow up any kind of conversation, although I applied my whole mind to the endeavour: for I easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language; which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure; for with this also the contrast perpetually presented to my eyes had made me acquainted.

“I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers — their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions: but how was I terrified, when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity.

“As the sun became warmer, and the light of day longer, the snow vanished, and I beheld the bare trees and the black earth. From this time Felix was more employed; and the heart-moving indications of impending famine disappeared. Their food, as I afterwards found, was coarse, but it was wholesome; and they procured a sufficiency of it. Several new kinds of plants sprung up in the garden, which they dressed; and these signs of comfort increased daily as the season advanced.

“The old man, leaning on his son, walked each day at noon, when it did not rain, as I found it was called when the heavens poured forth its waters. This frequently took place; but a high wind quickly dried the earth, and the season became far more pleasant than it had been.

“My mode of life in my hovel was uniform. During the morning I attended the motions of the cottagers; and when they were dispersed in various occupations, I slept: the remainder of the day was spent in observing my friends. When they had retired to rest, if there was any moon, or the night was star-light, I went into the woods, and collected my own food and fuel for the cottage. When I returned, as often as it was necessary, I cleared their path from the snow, and performed those offices that I had seen done by Felix. I afterwards found that these labours, performed by an invisible hand, greatly astonished them; and once or twice I heard them, on these occasions, utter the words *good spirit*, *wonderful*; but I did not then understand the signification of these terms.

"My thoughts now became more active, and I longed to discover the motives and feelings of these lovely creatures; I was inquisitive to know why Felix appeared so miserable, and Agatha so sad. I thought (foolish wretch!) that it might be in my power to restore happiness to these deserving people. When I slept, or was absent, the forms of the venerable blind father, the gentle Agatha, and the excellent Felix, flitted before me. I looked upon them as superior beings, who would be the arbiters of my future destiny. I formed in my imagination a thousand pictures of presenting myself to them, and their reception of me. I imagined that they would be disgusted, until, by my gentle demeanour and conciliating words, I should first win their favour, and afterwards their love.

"These thoughts exhilarated me, and led me to apply with fresh ardour to the acquiring the art of language. My organs were indeed harsh, but supple; and although my voice was very unlike the soft music of their tones, yet I pronounced such words as I understood with tolerable ease. It was as the ass and the lap-dog; yet surely the gentle ass, whose intentions were affectionate, although his manners were rude, deserved better treatment than blows and execration.

"The pleasant showers and genial warmth of spring greatly altered the aspect of the earth. Men, who before this change seemed to have been hid in caves, dispersed themselves, and were employed in various arts of cultivation. The birds sang in more cheerful notes, and the leaves began to bud forth on the trees. Happy, happy earth! fit habitation for gods, which, so short a time before, was bleak, damp, and unwholesome. My spirits were elevated by the enchanting appearance of nature; the past was blotted from my memory, the present was tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope, and anticipations of joy."

CHAPTER V.

“I now hasten to the more moving part of my story. I shall relate events that impressed me with feelings which, from what I was, have made me what I am.

“Spring advanced rapidly; the weather became fine, and the skies cloudless. It surprised me, that what before was desert and gloomy should now bloom with the most beautiful flowers and verdure. My senses were gratified and refreshed by a thousand scents of delight, and a thousand sights of beauty.

“It was on one of these days, when my cottagers periodically rested from labour — the old man played on his guitar, and the children listened to him — I observed that the countenance of Felix was melancholy beyond expression: he sighed frequently; and once his father paused in his music, and I conjectured by his manner that he inquired the cause of his son’s sorrow. Felix replied in a cheerful accent, and the old man was recommencing his music, when some one tapped at the door.

“It was a lady on horseback, accompanied by a countryman as a guide. The lady was dressed in a dark suit, and covered with a thick black veil. Agatha asked a question; to which the stranger only replied by pronouncing, in a sweet accent, the name of Felix. Her voice was musical, but unlike that of either of my friends. On hearing this word, Felix came up hastily to the lady; who, when she saw him, threw up her veil, and I beheld a countenance of angelic beauty and expression. Her hair of a shining raven black, and curiously braided; her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her features of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink.

“Felix seemed ravished with delight when he saw her, every trait of sorrow vanished from his face, and it instantly expressed a degree of ecstatic joy, of which I could hardly have believed it capable; his eyes sparkled, as his cheek flushed with pleasure; and at that moment I thought him as beautiful as the stranger. She appeared affected by different feelings; wiping a few tears from her lovely eyes, she held out her hand to Felix, who kissed it rapturously, and called her, as well as I could distinguish, his sweet

Arabian. She did not appear to understand him, but smiled. He assisted her to dismount, and, dismissing her guide, conducted her into the cottage. Some conversation took place between him and his father; and the young stranger knelt at the old man’s feet, and would have kissed his hand, but he raised her, and embraced her affectionately.

“I soon perceived, that although the stranger uttered articulate sounds, and appeared to have a language of her own, she was neither understood by, or herself understood, the cottagers. They made many signs which I did not comprehend; but I saw that her presence diffused gladness through the cottage, dispelling their sorrow as the sun dissipates the morning mists. Felix seemed peculiarly happy, and with smiles of delight welcomed his Arabian. Agatha, the ever-gentle Agatha, kissed the hands of the lovely stranger; and, pointing to her brother, made signs which appeared to me to mean that he had been sorrowful until she came. Some hours passed thus, while they, by their countenances, expressed joy, the cause of which I did not comprehend. Presently I found, by the frequent recurrence of one sound which the stranger repeated after them, that she was endeavouring to learn their language; and the idea instantly occurred to me, that I should make use of the same instructions to the same end. The stranger learned about twenty words at the first lesson, most of them indeed were those which I had before understood, but I profited by the others.

“As night came on, Agatha and the Arabian retired early. When they separated, Felix kissed the hand of the stranger, and said, ‘Good night, sweet Safie.’ He sat up much longer, conversing with his father; and, by the frequent repetition of her name, I conjectured that their lovely guest was the subject of their conversation. I ardently desired to understand them, and bent every faculty towards that purpose, but found it utterly impossible.

“The next morning Felix went out to his work; and, after the usual occupations of Agatha were finished, the Arabian sat at the feet of the old man, and, taking his guitar, played some airs so entrancingly beautiful, that they at once drew tears of sorrow and delight from my eyes. She sang, and her voice flowed in a rich cadence, swelling or dying away, like a nightingale of the woods.

“When she had finished, she gave the guitar to Agatha, who at first declined it. She played a simple air, and her voice accompanied it in sweet accents, but unlike the wondrous strain of the stranger. The old man appeared enraptured, and said some words, which Agatha endeavoured to explain to Safie, and by which he appeared to wish to express that she bestowed on him the greatest delight by her music.

“The days now passed as peaceably as before, with the sole alteration, that joy had taken place of sadness in the countenances of my friends. Safie was always gay and happy; she and I improved rapidly in the knowledge of language, so that in two months I began to comprehend most of the words uttered by my protectors.

“In the meanwhile also the black ground was covered with herbage, and the green banks interspersed with innumerable flowers, sweet to the scent and the eyes, stars of pale radiance among the moonlight woods; the sun became warmer, the nights clear and balmy; and my nocturnal rambles were an extreme pleasure to me, although they were considerably shortened by the late setting and early rising of the sun; for I never ventured abroad during daylight, fearful of meeting with the same treatment as I had formerly endured in the first village which I entered.

“My days were spent in close attention, that I might more speedily master the language; and I may boast that I improved more rapidly than the Arabian, who understood very little, and conversed in broken accents, whilst I comprehended and could imitate almost every word that was spoken.

“While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters, as it was taught to the stranger; and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight.

“The book from which Felix instructed Safie was Volney’s *Ruins of Empires*. I should not have understood the purport of this book, had not Felix, in reading it, given very minute explanations. He had chosen this work, he said, because the declamatory style was framed in imitation of the eastern authors. Through this work I obtained a cursory knowledge of history, and a view of the several empires at present existing in the world; it gave me an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth. I heard of the slothful Asiatics; of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the Grecians; of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans — of their subsequent degeneration — of the decline of that mighty empire; of chivalry, Christianity, and kings.

I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere, and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants.

"These wonderful narrations inspired me with strange feelings. Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous, and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle, and at another as all that can be conceived of noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or harmless worm. For a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow, or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased, and I turned away with disgust and loathing.

"Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me. While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood.

"The words induced me to turn towards myself. I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were, high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these acquisitions; but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profit of the chosen few. And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endowed with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded their's. When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?

"I cannot describe to you the agony that these reflections inflicted upon me; I tried to dispel them, but sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had for ever remained in my native wood, nor known or felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat!

“Of what a strange nature is knowledge! It clings to the mind, when it has once seized on it, like a lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling; but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death — a state which I feared yet did not understand. I admired virtue and good feelings, and loved the gentle manners and amiable qualities of my cottagers; but I was shut out from intercourse with them, except through means which I obtained by stealth, when I was unseen and unknown, and which rather increased than satisfied the desire I had of becoming one among my fellows. The gentle words of Agatha, and the animated smiles of the charming Arabian, were not for me. The mild exhortations of the old man, and the lively conversation of the loved Felix, were not for me. Miserable, unhappy wretch!

“Other lessons were impressed upon me even more deeply. I heard of the difference of sexes; of the birth and growth of children; how the father doated on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child; how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapt up in the precious charge; how the mind of youth expanded and gained knowledge; of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds.

“But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me, or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans.

“I will soon explain to what these feelings tended; but allow me now to return to the cottagers, whose story excited in me such various feelings of indignation, delight, and wonder, but which all terminated in additional love and reverence for my protectors (for so I loved, in an innocent, half painful self-deceit, to call them).”

CHAPTER VI.

“Some time elapsed before I learned the history of my friends. It was one which could not fail to impress itself deeply on my mind, unfolding as it did a number of circumstances each interesting and wonderful to one so utterly inexperienced as I was.

“The name of the old man was De Lacey. He was descended from a good family in France, where he had lived for many years in affluence, respected by his superiors, and beloved by his equals. His son was bred in the service of his country; and Agatha had ranked with ladies of the highest distinction. A few months before my arrival, they had lived in a large and luxurious city, called Paris, surrounded by friends, and possessed of every enjoyment which virtue, refinement of intellect, or taste, accompanied by a moderate fortune, could afford.

“The father of Safie had been the cause of their ruin. He was a Turkish merchant, and had inhabited Paris for many years, when, for some reason which I could not learn, he became obnoxious to the government. He was seized and cast into prison the very day that Safie arrived from Constantinople to join him. He was tried, and condemned to death. The injustice of his sentence was very flagrant; all Paris was indignant; and it was judged that his religion and wealth, rather than the crime alleged against him, had been the cause of his condemnation.

“Felix had been present at the trial; his horror and indignation were uncontrollable, when he heard the decision of the court. He made, at that moment, a solemn vow to deliver him, and then looked around for the means. After many fruitless attempts to gain admittance to the prison, he found a strongly grated window in an unguarded part of the building, which lighted the dungeon of the unfortunate Mahometan; who, loaded with chains, waited in despair the execution of the barbarous sentence. Felix visited the grate at night, and made known to the prisoner his intentions in his favour. The Turk, amazed and delighted, endeavoured to kindle the zeal of his deliverer by promises of reward and wealth. Felix rejected his offers with contempt; yet when he saw the lovely Safie, who was allowed to visit her father, and who, by her gestures, expressed her lively gratitude, the youth could not help owning to his own mind, that the captive possessed a treasure which would fully reward his toil and hazard.

"The Turk quickly perceived the impression that his daughter had made on the heart of Felix, and endeavoured to secure him more entirely in his interests by the promise of her hand in marriage, so soon as he should be conveyed to a place of safety. Felix was too delicate to accept this offer; yet he looked forward to the probability of that event as to the consummation of his happiness.

"During the ensuing days, while the preparations were going forward for the escape of the merchant, the zeal of Felix was warmed by several letters that he received from this lovely girl, who found means to express her thoughts in the language of her lover by the aid of an old man, a servant of her father's, who understood French. She thanked him in the most ardent terms for his intended services towards her father; and at the same time she gently deplored her own fate.

"I have copies of these letters; for I found means, during my residence in the hovel, to procure the implements of writing; and the letters were often in the hands of Felix or Agatha. Before I depart, I will give them to you, they will prove the truth of my tale; but at present, as the sun is already far declined, I shall only have time to repeat the substance of them to you.

"Safie related, that her mother was a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks; recommended by her beauty, she had won the heart of the father of Safie, who married her. The young girl spoke in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother, who, born in freedom spurned the bondage to which she was now reduced. She instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion, and taught her to aspire to higher powers of intellect, and an independence of spirit, forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet. This lady died; but her lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia, and the being immured within the walls of a haram, allowed only to occupy herself with puerile amusements, ill suited to the temper of her soul, now accustomed to grand ideas and a noble emulation for virtue. The prospect of marrying a Christian, and remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society, was enchanting to her.

"The day for the execution of the Turk was fixed; but, on the night previous to it, he had quitted prison, and before morning was distant many leagues from Paris. Felix had procured passports in the name of his father, sister, and himself. He had previously communicated his plan to the former, who aided the deceit by quitting his house, under the pretence of a journey, and concealed himself, with his daughter, in an obscure part of Paris.

"Felix conducted the fugitives through France to Lyons, and across Mont Cenis to Leghorn, where the merchant had decided to wait a favourable opportunity of passing into some part of the Turkish dominions.

"Safie resolved to remain with her father until the moment of his departure, before which time the Turk renewed his promise that she should be united to his deliverer; and Felix remained with them in expectation of that event; and in the mean time he enjoyed the society of the Arabian, who exhibited towards him the simplest and tenderest affection. They conversed with one another through the means of an interpreter, and sometimes with the interpretation of looks; and Safie sang to him the divine airs of her native country.

"The Turk allowed this intimacy to take place, and encouraged the hopes of the youthful lovers, while in his heart he had formed far other plans. He loathed the idea that his daughter should be united to a Christian; but he feared the resentment of Felix if he should appear lukewarm; for he knew that he was still in the power of his deliverer, if he should choose to betray him to the Italian state which they inhabited. He revolved a thousand plans by which he should be enabled to prolong the deceit until it might be no longer necessary, and secretly to take his daughter with him when he departed. His plans were greatly facilitated by the news which arrived from Paris.

"The government of France were greatly enraged at the escape of their victim, and spared no pains to detect and punish his deliverer. The plot of Felix was quickly discovered, and De Lacey and Agatha were thrown into prison. The news reached Felix, and roused him from his dream of pleasure. His blind and aged father, and his gentle sister, lay in a noisome dungeon, while he enjoyed the free air, and the society of her whom he loved. This idea was torture to him. He quickly arranged with the Turk, that if the latter should find a favourable opportunity for escape before Felix could return to Italy, Safie should remain as a boarder at a convent at Leghorn; and then, quitting the lovely Arabian, he hastened to Paris, and delivered himself up to the vengeance of the law, hoping to free De Lacey and Agatha by this proceeding.

“He did not succeed. They remained confined for five months before the trial took place; the result of which deprived them of their fortune, and condemned them to a perpetual exile from their native country.

“They found a miserable asylum in the cottage in Germany, where I discovered them. Felix soon learned that the treacherous Turk, for whom he and his family endured such unheard-of oppression, on discovering that his deliverer was thus reduced to poverty and impotence, became a traitor to good feeling and honour, and had quitted Italy with his daughter, insultingly sending Felix a pittance of money to aid him, as he said, in some plan of future maintenance.

“Such were the events that preyed on the heart of Felix, and rendered him, when I first saw him, the most miserable of his family. He could have endured poverty, and when this distress had been the meed of his virtue, he would have gloried in it: but the ingratitude of the Turk, and the loss of his beloved Safie, were misfortunes more bitter and irreparable. The arrival of the Arabian now infused new life into his soul.

“When the news reached Leghorn, that Felix was deprived of his wealth and rank, the merchant commanded his daughter to think no more of her lover, but to prepare to return with him to her native country. The generous nature of Safie was outraged by this command; she attempted to expostulate with her father, but he left her angrily, reiterating his tyrannical mandate.

“A few days after, the Turk entered his daughter’s apartment, and told her hastily, that he had reason to believe that his residence at Leghorn had been divulged, and that he should speedily be delivered up to the French government; he had, consequently, hired a vessel to convey him to Constantinople, for which city he should sail in a few hours. He intended to leave his daughter under the care of a confidential servant, to follow at her leisure with the greater part of his property, which had not yet arrived at Leghorn.

“When alone, Safie resolved in her own mind the plan of conduct that it would become her to pursue in this emergency. A residence in Turkey was abhorrent to her; her religion and feelings were alike adverse to it. By some papers of her father’s, which fell into her hands, she heard of the exile of her lover, and learnt the name of the spot where he then resided. She hesitated some time, but at length she formed her determination. Taking with her some jewels that belonged to her, and a small sum of money, she quitted Italy, with an attendant, a native of Leghorn, but who understood the common language of Turkey, and departed for Germany.

"She arrived in safety at a town about twenty leagues from the cottage of De Lacey, when her attendant fell dangerously ill. Safie nursed her with the most devoted affection; but the poor girl died, and the Arabian was left alone, unacquainted with the language of the country, and utterly ignorant of the customs of the world. She fell, however, into good hands. The Italian had mentioned the name of the spot for which they were bound; and, after her death, the woman of the house in which they had lived took care that Safie should arrive in safety at the cottage of her lover."

CHAPTER VII.

“Such was the history of my beloved cottagers. It impressed me deeply. I learned, from the views of social life which it developed, to admire their virtues, and to deprecate the vices of mankind.

“As yet I looked upon crime as a distant evil; benevolence and generosity were ever present before me, inciting within me a desire to become an actor in the busy scene where so many admirable qualities were called forth and displayed. But, in giving an account of the progress of my intellect, I must not omit a circumstance which occurred in the beginning of the month of August of the same year.

“One night, during my accustomed visit to the neighbouring wood, where I collected my own food, and brought home firing for my protectors, I found on the ground a leathern portmanteau, containing several articles of dress and some books. I eagerly seized the prize, and returned with it to my hovel. Fortunately the books were written in the language the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of *Paradise Lost*, a volume of *Plutarch’s Lives*, and the *Sorrows of Werter*. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight; I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.

“I can hardly describe to you the effect of these books. They produced in me an infinity of new images and feelings, that sometimes raised me to ecstacy, but more frequently sunk me into the lowest dejection. In the *Sorrows of Werter*, besides the interest of its simple and affecting story, so many opinions are canvassed, and so many lights thrown upon what had hitherto been to me obscure subjects, that I found in it a never-ending source of speculation and astonishment. The gentle and domestic manners it described, combined with lofty sentiments and feelings, which had for their object something out of self, accorded well with my experience among my protectors, and with the wants which were for ever alive in my own bosom. But I thought Werter himself a more divine being than I had ever beheld or imagined; his character contained no pretension, but it sunk deep. The disquisitions upon death and suicide were calculated to fill me with wonder.

I did not pretend to enter into the merits of the case, yet I inclined towards the opinions of the hero, whose extinction I wept, without precisely understanding it.

"As I read, however, I applied much personally to my own feelings and condition. I found myself similar, yet at the same time strangely unlike the beings concerning whom I read, and to whose conversation I was a listener. I sympathized with, and partly understood them, but I was unformed in mind; I was dependent on none, and related to none. 'The path of my departure was free;' and there was none to lament my annihilation. My person was hideous, and my stature gigantic: what did this mean? Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them.

"The volume of *Plutarch's Lives* which I possessed, contained the histories of the first founders of the ancient republics. This book had a far different effect upon me from the *Sorrows of Werter*. I learned from Werter's imaginations despondency and gloom: but Plutarch taught me high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages. Many things I read surpassed my understanding and experience. I had a very confused knowledge of kingdoms, wide extents of country, mighty rivers, and boundless seas. But I was perfectly unacquainted with towns, and large assemblages of men. The cottage of my protectors had been the only school in which I had studied human nature; but this book developed new and mightier scenes of action. I read of men concerned in public affairs governing or massacring their species. I felt the greatest ardour for virtue rise within me, and abhorrence for vice, as far as I understood the signification of those terms, relative as they were, as I applied them, to pleasure and pain alone. Induced by these feelings, I was of course led to admire peaceable law-givers, Numa, Solon, and Lycurgus, in preference to Romulus and Theseus. The patriarchal lives of my protectors caused these impressions to take a firm hold on my mind; perhaps, if my first introduction to humanity had been made by a young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter, I should have been imbued with different sensations.

"But *Paradise Lost* excited different and far deeper emotions. I read it, as I had read the other volumes which had fallen into my hands, as a true history. It moved every feeling of wonder and awe, that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. I often referred the several situations, as their similarity struck me, to my own. Like Adam, I was created apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with, and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature: but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.

"Another circumstance strengthened and confirmed these feelings. Soon after my arrival in the hovel, I discovered some papers in the pocket of the dress which I had taken from your laboratory. At first I had neglected them; but now that I was able to decypher the characters in which they were written, I began to study them with diligence. It was your journal of the four months that preceded my creation. You minutely described in these papers every step you took in the progress of your work; this history was mingled with accounts of domestic occurrences. You, doubtless, recollect these papers. Here they are. Every thing is related in them which bears reference to my accursed origin; the whole detail of that series of disgusting circumstances which produced it is set in view; the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person is given, in language which painted your own horrors, and rendered mine ineffaceable. I sickened as I read. 'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Cursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even you turned from me in disgust? God in pity made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of your's, more horrid from its very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested.'

"These were the reflections of my hours of despondency and solitude; but when I contemplated the virtues of the cottagers, their amiable and benevolent dispositions, I persuaded myself that when they should become acquainted with my admiration of their virtues, they would compassionate me, and overlook my personal deformity. Could they turn from their door one, however monstrous, who solicited their compassion and friendship? I resolved, at least, not to despair, but in every way to fit myself for an interview with them which would decide my fate. I postponed this attempt for some months longer; for the importance attached to its success inspired me with a dread lest I should fail. Besides, I found that my understanding improved so much with every day's experience, that I was unwilling to commence this undertaking until a few more months should have added to my wisdom.

"Several changes, in the mean time, took place in the cottage. The presence of Safie diffused happiness among its inhabitants; and I also found that a greater degree of plenty reigned there. Felix and Agatha spent more time in amusement and conversation, and were assisted in their labours by servants. They did not appear rich, but they were contented and happy; their feelings were serene and peaceful, while mine became every day more tumultuous. Increase of knowledge only discovered to me more clearly what a wretched outcast I was. I cherished hope, it is true; but it vanished, when I beheld my person reflected in water, or my shadow in the moonshine, even as that frail image and that inconstant shade.

"I endeavoured to crush these fears, and to fortify myself for the trial which in a few months I resolved to undergo; and sometimes I allowed my thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise, and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathizing with my feelings and cheering my gloom; their angelic countenances breathed smiles of consolation. But it was all a dream: no Eve soothed my sorrows, or shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator; but where was mine? he had abandoned me, and, in the bitterness of my heart, I cursed him.

"Autumn passed thus. I saw, with surprise and grief, the leaves decay and fall, and nature again assume the barren and bleak appearance it had worn when I first beheld the woods and the lovely moon. Yet I did not heed the bleakness of the weather; I was better fitted by my conformation for the endurance of cold than heat. But my chief delights were the sight of the flowers, the birds, and all the gay apparel of summer; when those deserted me, I turned with more attention towards the cottagers. Their happiness was not decreased by the absence of summer. They loved, and sympathized with one another; and their joys, depending on each other, were not interrupted by the casualties that took place around them. The more I saw of them, the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures: to see their sweet looks turned towards me with affection, was the utmost limit of my ambition. I dared not think that they would turn them from me with disdain and horror. The poor that stopped at their door were never driven away. I asked, it is true, for greater treasures than a little food or rest; I required kindness and sympathy; but I did not believe myself utterly unworthy of it.

“The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention, at this time, was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects; but that on which I finally fixed was, to enter the dwelling when the blind old man should be alone. I had sagacity enough to discover, that the unnatural hideousness of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly beheld me. My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if, in the absence of his children, I could gain the good-will and mediation of the old De Lacy, I might, by his means, be tolerated by my younger protectors.

“One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that strewed the ground, and diffused cheerfulness, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix, departed on a long country walk, and the old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar, and played several mournful, but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was illuminated with pleasure, but, as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

“My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes, or realize my fears. The servants were gone to a neighbouring fair. All was silent in and around the cottage: it was an excellent opportunity; yet, when I proceeded to execute my plan, my limbs failed me, and I sunk to the ground. Again I rose; and, exerting all the firmness of which I was master, removed the planks which I had placed before my hovel to conceal my retreat. The fresh air revived me, and, with renewed determination, I approached the door of their cottage.

“I knocked. ‘Who is there?’ said the old man—’Come in.’

“I entered; ‘Pardon this intrusion,’ said I, ‘I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me, if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.'

"'Enter,' said De Lacy; 'and I will try in what manner I can relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and, as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.'

"'Do not trouble yourself, my kind host, I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.'

"I sat down, and a silence ensued. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained irresolute in what manner to commence the interview; when the old man addressed me —

"'By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; — are you French?'

"'No; but I was educated by a French family, and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose favour I have some hopes.'

"'Are these Germans?'

"'No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an unfortunate and deserted creature; I look around, and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me, and know little of me. I am full of fears; for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world for ever.'

"'Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate; but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair.'

"'They are kind — they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless, and, in some degree, beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'

"'That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?'

"'I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"'Where do these friends reside?'

"'Near this spot.'

"The old man paused, and then continued, 'If you will unreservedly confide to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind, and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor, and an exile; but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.'

"'Excellent man! I thank you, and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow-creatures.'

"'Heaven forbid! even if you were really criminal; for that can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent: judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"'How can I thank you, my best and only benefactor? from your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be for ever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"'May I know the names and residence of those friends?'

"I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of, or bestow happiness on me for ever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair, and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose; but, seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, 'Now is the time! — save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!'

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man, 'who are you?'

"At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted; and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung: in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground, and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sunk within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed? I know not; despair had not yet taken possession of me; my feelings were those of rage and revenge. I could with pleasure have destroyed the cottage and its inhabitants, and have glutted myself with their shrieks and misery.

“When night came, I quitted my retreat, and wandered in the wood; and now, no longer restrained by the fear of discovery, I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils; destroying the objects that obstructed me, and ranging through the wood with a stag-like swiftness. Oh! what a miserable night I passed! the cold stars shone in mockery, and the bare trees waved their branches above me: now and then the sweet voice of a bird burst forth amidst the universal stillness. All, save I, were at rest or in enjoyment: I, like the arch fiend, bore a hell within me; and, finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.

“But this was a luxury of sensation that could not endure; I became fatigued with excess of bodily exertion, and sank on the damp grass in the sick impotence of despair. There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No: from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery.

“The sun rose; I heard the voices of men, and knew that it was impossible to return to my retreat during that day. Accordingly I hid myself in some thick underwood, determining to devote the ensuing hours to reflection on my situation.

“The pleasant sunshine, and the pure air of day, restored me to some degree of tranquillity; and when I considered what had passed at the cottage, I could not help believing that I had been too hasty in my conclusions. I had certainly acted imprudently. It was apparent that my conversation had interested the father in my behalf, and I was a fool in having exposed my person to the horror of his children. I ought to have familiarized the old De Lacy to me, and by degrees have discovered myself to the rest of his family, when they should have been prepared for my approach. But I did not believe my errors to be irretrievable; and, after much consideration, I resolved to return to the cottage, seek the old man, and by my representations win him to my party.

"These thoughts calmed me, and in the afternoon I sank into a profound sleep; but the fever of my blood did not allow me to be visited by peaceful dreams. The horrible scene of the preceding day was for ever acting before my eyes; the females were flying, and the enraged Felix tearing me from his father's feet. I awoke exhausted; and, finding that it was already night, I crept forth from my hiding-place, and went in search of food.

"When my hunger was appeased, I directed my steps towards the well-known path that conducted to the cottage. All there was at peace. I crept into my hovel, and remained in silent expectation of the accustomed hour when the family arose. That hour past, the sun mounted high in the heavens, but the cottagers did not appear. I trembled violently, apprehending some dreadful misfortune. The inside of the cottage was dark, and I heard no motion; I cannot describe the agony of this suspence.

"Presently two countrymen passed by; but, pausing near the cottage, they entered into conversation, using violent gesticulations; but I did not understand what they said, as they spoke the language of the country, which differed from that of my protectors. Soon after, however, Felix approached with another man: I was surprised, as I knew that he had not quitted the cottage that morning, and waited anxiously to discover, from his discourse, the meaning of these unusual appearances.

"'Do you consider,' said his companion to him, 'that you will be obliged to pay three months' rent, and to lose the produce of your garden? I do not wish to take any unfair advantage, and I beg therefore that you will take some days to consider of your determination.'

"'It is utterly useless,' replied Felix, 'we can never again inhabit your cottage. The life of my father is in the greatest danger, owing to the dreadful circumstance that I have related. My wife and my sister will never recover their horror. I entreat you not to reason with me any more. Take possession of your tenement, and let me fly from this place.'

“Felix trembled violently as he said this. He and his companion entered the cottage, in which they remained for a few minutes, and then departed. I never saw any of the family of De Lacy more.

“I continued for the remainder of the day in my hovel in a state of utter and stupid despair. My protectors had departed, and had broken the only link that held me to the world. For the first time the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom, and I did not strive to controul them; but, allowing myself to be borne away by the stream, I bent my mind towards injury and death. When I thought of my friends, of the mild voice of De Lacy, the gentle eyes of Agatha, and the exquisite beauty of the Arabian, these thoughts vanished, and a gush of tears somewhat soothed me. But again, when I reflected that they had spurned and deserted me, anger returned, a rage of anger; and, unable to injure any thing human, I turned my fury towards inanimate objects. As night advanced, I placed a variety of combustibles around the cottage; and, after having destroyed every vestige of cultivation in the garden, I waited with forced impatience until the moon had sunk to commence my operations.

“As the night advanced, a fierce wind arose from the woods, and quickly dispersed the clouds that had loitered in the heavens: the blast tore along like a mighty avalanche, and produced a kind of insanity in my spirits, that burst all bounds of reason and reflection. I lighted the dry branch of a tree, and danced with fury around the devoted cottage, my eyes still fixed on the western horizon, the edge of which the moon nearly touched. A part of its orb was at length hid, and I waved my brand; it sunk, and, with a loud scream, I fired the straw, and heath, and bushes, which I had collected. The wind fanned the fire, and the cottage was quickly enveloped by the flames, which clung to it, and licked it with their forked and destroying tongues.

“As soon as I was convinced that no assistance could save any part of the habitation, I quitted the scene, and sought for refuge in the woods.

“And now, with the world before me, whither should I bend my steps? I resolved to fly far from the scene of my misfortunes; but to me, hated and despised, every country must be equally horrible. At length the thought of you crossed my mind. I learned from your papers that you were my father, my creator; and to whom could I apply with more fitness than to him who had given me life? Among the lessons that Felix had bestowed upon Safie geography had not been omitted: I had learned from these the relative situations of the different countries of the earth. You had mentioned Geneva as the name of your native town; and towards this place I resolved to proceed.

"But how was I to direct myself? I knew that I must travel in a south-westerly direction to reach my destination; but the sun was my only guide. I did not know the names of the towns that I was to pass through, nor could I ask information from a single human being; but I did not despair. From you only could I hope for succour, although towards you I felt no sentiment but that of hatred. Unfeeling, heartless creator! you had endowed me with perceptions and passions, and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only had I any claim for pity and redress, and from you I determined to seek that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form.

"My travels were long, and the sufferings I endured intense. It was late in autumn when I quitted the district where I had so long resided. I travelled only at night, fearful of encountering the visage of a human being. Nature decayed around me, and the sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard, and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter. Oh, earth! how often did I imprecate curses on the cause of my being! The mildness of my nature had fled, and all within me was turned to gall and bitterness. The nearer I approached to your habitation, the more deeply did I feel the spirit of revenge enkindled in my heart. Snow fell, and the waters were hardened, but I rested not. A few incidents now and then directed me, and I possessed a map of the country; but I often wandered wide from my path. The agony of my feelings allowed me no respite: no incident occurred from which my rage and misery could not extract its food; but a circumstance that happened when I arrived on the confines of Switzerland, when the sun had recovered its warmth, and the earth again began to look green, confirmed in an especial manner the bitterness and horror of my feelings.

"I generally rested during the day, and travelled only when I was secured by night from the view of man. One morning, however, finding that my path lay through a deep wood, I ventured to continue my journey after the sun had risen; the day, which was one of the first of spring, cheered even me by the loveliness of its sunshine and the balminess of the air. I felt emotions of gentleness and pleasure, that had long appeared dead, revive within me. Half surprised by the novelty of these sensations, I allowed myself to be borne away by them; and, forgetting my solitude and deformity, dared to be happy. Soft tears again bedewed my cheeks, and I even raised my humid eyes with thankfulness towards the blessed sun which bestowed such joy upon me.

"I continued to wind among the paths of the wood, until I came to its boundary, which was skirted by a deep and rapid river, into which many of the trees bent their branches, now budding with the fresh spring. Here I paused, not exactly knowing what path to pursue, when I heard the sound of voices, that induced me to conceal myself under the shade of a cypress. I was scarcely hid, when a young girl came running towards the spot where I was concealed, laughing as if she ran from some one in sport. She continued her course along the precipitous sides of the river, when suddenly her foot slipt, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding place, and, with extreme labour from the force of the current, saved her, and dragged her to shore. She was senseless; and I endeavoured, by every means in my power, to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic, who was probably the person from whom she had playfully fled. On seeing me, he darted towards me, and, tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body, and fired. I sunk to the ground, and my injurer, with increased swiftness, escaped into the wood.

"This was then the reward of my benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and, as a recompence, I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound, which shattered the flesh and bone. The feelings of kindness and gentleness, which I had entertained but a few moments before, gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind. But the agony of my wound overcame me; my pulses paused, and I fainted.

"For some weeks I led a miserable life in the woods, endeavouring to cure the wound which I had received. The ball had entered my shoulder, and I knew not whether it had remained there or passed through; at any rate I had no means of extracting it. My sufferings were augmented also by the oppressive sense of the injustice and ingratitude of their infliction. My daily vows rose for revenge — a deep and deadly revenge, such as would alone compensate for the outrages and anguish I had endured.

"After some weeks my wound healed, and I continued my journey. The labours I endured were no longer to be alleviated by the bright sun or gentle breezes of spring; all joy was but a mockery, which insulted my desolate state, and made me feel more painfully that I was not made for the enjoyment of pleasure.

"But my toils now drew near a close and, two months from this time, I reached the environs of Geneva.

"It was evening when I arrived, and I retired to a hiding-place among the fields that surround it, to meditate in what manner I should apply to you. I was oppressed by fatigue and hunger, and far too unhappy to enjoy the gentle breezes of evening, or the prospect of the sun setting behind the stupendous mountains of Jura.

"At this time a slight sleep relieved me from the pain of reflection, which was disturbed by the approach of a beautiful child, who came running into the recess I had chosen with all the sportiveness of infancy. Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me, that this little creature was unprejudiced, and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him, and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth.

"Urged by this impulse, I seized on the boy as he passed, and drew him towards me. As soon as he beheld my form, he placed his hands before his eyes, and uttered a shrill scream: I drew his hand forcibly from his face, and said, 'Child, what is the meaning of this? I do not intend to hurt you; listen to me.'

"He struggled violently; 'Let me go,' he cried; 'monster! ugly wretch! you wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces — You are an ogre — Let me go, or I will tell my papa.'

"'Boy, you will never see your father again; you must come with me.'

"'Hideous monster! let me go; My papa is a Syndic — he is M. Frankenstein — he would punish you. You dare not keep me.'

"'Frankenstein! you belong then to my enemy — to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim.'

"The child still struggled, and loaded me with epithets which carried despair to my heart: I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet.

"I gazed on my victim, and my heart swelled with exultation and hellish triumph: clapping my hands, I exclaimed, 'I, too, can create desolation; my enemy is not impregnable; this death will carry despair to him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him.'

"As I fixed my eyes on the child, I saw something glittering on his breast. I took it; it was a portrait of a most lovely woman. In spite of my malignity, it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips; but presently my rage returned: I remembered that I was for ever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow; and that she whose resemblance I contemplated would, in regarding me, have changed that air of divine benignity to one expressive of disgust and affright.

"Can you wonder that such thoughts transported me with rage? I only wonder that at that moment, instead of venting my sensations in exclamations and agony, I did not rush among mankind, and perish in the attempt to destroy them.

"While I was overcome by these feelings, I left the spot where I had committed the murder, and was seeking a more secluded hiding-place, when I perceived a woman passing near me. She was young, not indeed so beautiful as her whose portrait I held, but of an agreeable aspect, and blooming in the loveliness of youth and health. Here, I thought, is one of those whose smiles are bestowed on all but me; she shall not escape: thanks to the lessons of Felix, and the sanguinary laws of man, I have learned how to work mischief. I approached her unperceived, and placed the portrait securely in one of the folds of her dress.

"For some days I haunted the spot where these scenes had taken place; sometimes wishing to see you, sometimes resolved to quit the world and its miseries for ever. At length I wandered towards these mountains, and have ranged through their immense recesses, consumed by a burning passion which you alone can gratify. We may not part until you have promised to comply with my requisition. I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create."

CHAPTER IX.

The being finished speaking, and fixed his looks upon me in expectation of a reply. But I was bewildered, perplexed, and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently to understand the full extent of his proposition. He continued —

"You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse."

The latter part of his tale had kindled anew in me the anger that had died away while he narrated his peaceful life among the cottagers, and, as he said this, I could no longer suppress the rage that burned within me.

"I do refuse it," I replied; "and no torture shall ever extort a consent from me. You may render me the most miserable of men, but you shall never make me base in my own eyes. Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world. Begone! I have answered you; you may torture me, but I will never consent."

"You are in the wrong," replied the fiend; "and, instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable; am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces, and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? You would not call it murder, if you could precipitate me into one of those ice-rifts, and destroy my frame, the work of your own hands. Shall I respect man, when he contemns me? Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and, instead of injury, I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance. But that cannot be; the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries: if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear; and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care: I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you curse the hour of your birth."

A fiendish rage animated him as he said this; his face was wrinkled into contortions too horrible for human eyes to behold; but presently he calmed himself, and proceeded —

“I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me; for you do not reflect that you are the cause of its excess. If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundred fold; for that one creature’s sake, I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself: the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless, and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!”

I was moved. I shuddered when I thought of the possible consequences of my consent; but I felt that there was some justice in his argument. His tale, and the feelings he now expressed, proved him to be a creature of fine sensations; and did I not, as his maker, owe him all the portion of happiness that it was in my power to bestow? He saw my change of feeling, and continued —

“If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again: I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid, to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself, and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. Pitiless as you have been towards me, I now see compassion in your eyes: let me seize the favourable moment, and persuade you to promise what I so ardently desire.”

“You propose,” replied I, “to fly from the habitations of man, to dwell in those wilds where the beasts of the field will be your only companions. How can you, who long for the love and sympathy of man, persevere in this exile? You will return, and again seek their kindness, and you will meet with their detestation; your evil passions will be renewed, and you will then have a companion to aid you in the task of destruction. This may not be; cease to argue the point, for I cannot consent."

"How inconstant are your feelings! but a moment ago you were moved by my representations, and why do you again harden yourself to my complaints? I swear to you, by the earth which I inhabit, and by you that made me, that, with the companion you bestow, I will quit the neighbourhood of man, and dwell, as it may chance, in the most savage of places. My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy; my life will flow quietly away, and, in my dying moments, I shall not curse my maker."

His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him, and sometimes felt a wish to console him; but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened, and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred. I tried to stifle these sensations; I thought, that as I could not sympathize with him, I had no right to withhold from him the small portion of happiness which was yet in my power to bestow.

"You swear," I said, "to be harmless; but have you not already shewn a degree of malice that should reasonably make me distrust you? May not even this be a feint that will increase your triumph by affording a wider scope for your revenge?"

"How is this? I thought I had moved your compassion, and yet you still refuse to bestow on me the only benefit that can soften my heart, and render me harmless. If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing, of whose existence every one will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being, and become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded."

I paused some time to reflect on all he had related, and the various arguments which he had employed. I thought of the promise of virtues which he had displayed on the opening of his existence, and the subsequent blight of all kindly feeling by the loathing and scorn which his protectors had manifested towards him. His power and threats were not omitted in my calculations: a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers, and hide himself from pursuit among the ridges of inaccessible precipices, was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with. After a long pause of reflection, I concluded, that the justice due both to him and my fellow-creatures demanded of me that I should comply with his request. Turning to him, therefore, I said —

"I consent to your demand, on your solemn oath to quit Europe for ever, and every other place in the neighbourhood of man, as soon as I shall deliver into your hands a female who will accompany you in your exile."

"I swear," he cried, "by the sun, and by the blue sky of heaven, that if you grant my prayer, while they exist you shall never behold me again. Depart to your home, and commence your labours: I shall watch their progress with unutterable anxiety; and fear not but that when you are ready I shall appear."

Saying this, he suddenly quitted me, fearful, perhaps, of any change in my sentiments. I saw him descend the mountain with greater speed than the flight of an eagle, and quickly lost him among the undulations of the sea of ice.

His tale had occupied the whole day; and the sun was upon the verge of the horizon when he departed. I knew that I ought to hasten my descent towards the valley, as I should soon be encompassed in darkness; but my heart was heavy, and my steps slow. The labour of winding among the little paths of the mountains, and fixing my feet firmly as I advanced, perplexed me, occupied as I was by the emotions which the occurrences of the day had produced. Night was far advanced, when I came to the half-way resting-place, and seated myself beside the fountain. The stars shone at intervals, as the clouds passed from over them; the dark pines rose before me, and every here and there a broken tree lay on the ground: it was a scene of wonderful solemnity, and stirred strange thoughts within me. I wept bitterly; and, clasping my hands in agony, I exclaimed, "Oh! stars, and clouds, and winds, ye are all about to mock me: if ye really pity me, crush sensation and memory; let me become as nought; but if not, depart, depart and leave me in darkness."

These were wild and miserable thoughts; but I cannot describe to you how the eternal twinkling of the stars weighed upon me, and how I listened to every blast of wind, as if it were a dull ugly siroc on its way to consume me.

Morning dawned before I arrived at the village of Chamounix; but my presence, so haggard and strange, hardly calmed the fears of my family, who had waited the whole night in anxious expectation of my return.

The following day we returned to Geneva. The intention of my father in coming had been to divert my mind, and to restore me to my lost tranquillity; but the medicine had been fatal. And, unable to account for the excess of misery I appeared to suffer, he hastened to return home, hoping the quiet and monotony of a domestic life would by degrees alleviate my sufferings from whatsoever cause they might spring.

For myself, I was passive in all their arrangements; and the gentle affection of my beloved Elizabeth was inadequate to draw me from the depth of my despair. The promise I had made to the dæmon weighed upon my mind, like Dante's iron cowl on the heads of the hellish hypocrites. All pleasures of earth and sky passed before me like a dream, and that thought only had to me the reality of life. Can you wonder, that sometimes a kind of insanity possessed me, or that I saw continually about me a multitude of filthy animals inflicting on me incessant torture, that often extorted screams and bitter groans?

By degrees, however, these feelings became calmed. I entered again into the every-day scene of life, if not with interest, at least with some degree of tranquillity.

VOLUME III

CHAPTER I.

Day after day, week after week, passed away on my return to Geneva; and I could not collect the courage to recommence my work. I feared the vengeance of the disappointed fiend, yet I was unable to overcome my repugnance to the task which was enjoined me. I found that I could not compose a female without again devoting several months to profound study and laborious disquisition. I had heard of some discoveries having been made by an English philosopher, the knowledge of which was material to my success, and I sometimes thought of obtaining my father's consent to visit England for this purpose; but I clung to every pretence of delay, and could not resolve to interrupt my returning tranquillity. My health, which had hitherto declined, was now much restored; and my spirits, when unchecked by the memory of my unhappy promise, rose proportionably. My father saw this change with pleasure, and he turned his thoughts towards the best method of eradicating the remains of my melancholy, which every now and then would return by fits, and with a devouring blackness overcast the approaching sunshine. At these moments I took refuge in the most perfect solitude. I passed whole days on the lake alone in a little boat, watching the clouds, and listening to the rippling of the waves, silent and listless. But the fresh air and bright sun seldom failed to restore me to some degree of composure; and, on my return, I met the salutations of my friends with a readier smile and a more cheerful heart.

It was after my return from one of these rambles that my father, calling me aside, thus addressed me: —

"I am happy to remark, my dear son, that you have resumed your former pleasures, and seem to be returning to yourself. And yet you are still unhappy, and still avoid our society. For some time I was lost in conjecture as to the cause of this; but yesterday an idea struck me, and if it is well founded, I conjure you to avow it. Reserve on such a point would be not only useless, but draw down treble misery on us all."

I trembled violently at this exordium, and my father continued —

"I confess, my son, that I have always looked forward to your marriage with your cousin as the tie of our domestic comfort, and the stay of my declining years. You were attached to each other from your earliest infancy; you studied together, and appeared, in dispositions and tastes, entirely suited to one another. But so blind is the experience of man, that what I conceived to be the best assistants to my plan may have entirely destroyed it. You, perhaps, regard her as your sister, without any wish that she might become your wife. Nay, you may have met with another whom you may love; and, considering yourself as bound in honour to your cousin, this struggle may occasion the poignant misery which you appear to feel."

"My dear father, re-assure yourself. I love my cousin tenderly and sincerely. I never saw any woman who excited, as Elizabeth does, my warmest admiration and affection. My future hopes and prospects are entirely bound up in the expectation of our union."

"The expression of your sentiments on this subject, my dear Victor, gives me more pleasure than I have for some time experienced. If you feel thus, we shall assuredly be happy, however present events may cast a gloom over us. But it is this gloom, which appears to have taken so strong a hold of your mind, that I wish to dissipate. Tell me, therefore, whether you object to an immediate solemnization of the marriage. We have been unfortunate, and recent events have drawn us from that every-day tranquillity befitting my years and infirmities. You are younger; yet I do not suppose, possessed as you are of a competent fortune, that an early marriage would at all interfere with any future plans of honour and utility that you may have formed. Do not suppose, however, that I wish to dictate happiness to you, or that a delay on your part would cause me any serious uneasiness. Interpret my words with candour, and answer me, I conjure you, with confidence and sincerity."

I listened to my father in silence, and remained for some time incapable of offering any reply. I revolved rapidly in my mind a multitude of thoughts, and endeavoured to arrive at some conclusion. Alas! to me the idea of an immediate union with my cousin was one of horror and dismay. I was bound by a solemn promise, which I had not yet fulfilled, and dared not break; or, if I did, what manifold miseries might not impend over me and my devoted family! Could I enter into a festival with this deadly weight yet hanging round my neck, and bowing me to the ground. I must perform my engagement, and let the monster depart with his mate, before I allowed myself to enjoy the delight of an union from which I expected peace.

I remembered also the necessity imposed upon me of either journeying to England, or entering into a long correspondence with those philosophers of that country, whose knowledge and discoveries were of indispensable use to me in my present undertaking. The latter method of obtaining the desired intelligence was dilatory and unsatisfactory: besides, any variation was agreeable to me, and I was delighted with the idea of spending a year or two in change of scene and variety of occupation, in absence from my family; during which period some event might happen which would restore me to them in peace and happiness: my promise might be fulfilled, and the monster have departed; or some accident might occur to destroy him, and put an end to my slavery for ever.

These feelings dictated my answer to my father. I expressed a wish to visit England; but, concealing the true reasons of this request, I clothed my desires under the guise of wishing to travel and see the world before I sat down for life within the walls of my native town.

I urged my entreaty with earnestness, and my father was easily induced to comply; for a more indulgent and less dictatorial parent did not exist upon earth. Our plan was soon arranged. I should travel to Strasburgh, where Clerval would join me. Some short time would be spent in the towns of Holland, and our principal stay would be in England. We should return by France; and it was agreed that the tour should occupy the space of two years.

My father pleased himself with the reflection, that my union with Elizabeth should take place immediately on my return to Geneva. “These two years,” said be, “will pass swiftly, and it will be the last delay that will oppose itself to your happiness. And, indeed, I earnestly desire that period to arrive, when we shall all be united, and neither hopes or fears arise to disturb our domestic calm.”

“I am content,” I replied, “with your arrangement. By that time we shall both have become wiser, and I hope happier, than we at present are.” I sighed; but my father kindly forbore to question me further concerning the cause of my dejection. He hoped that new scenes, and the amusement of travelling, would restore my tranquillity.

I now made arrangements for my journey; but one feeling haunted me, which filled me with fear and agitation. During my absence I should leave my friends unconscious of the existence of their enemy, and unprotected from his attacks, exasperated as he might be by my departure. But he had promised to follow me wherever I might go; and would he not accompany me to England? This imagination was dreadful in itself, but soothing, inasmuch as it supposed the safety of my friends. I was agonized with the idea of the possibility that the reverse of this might happen. But through the whole period during which I was the slave of my creature, I allowed myself to be governed by the impulses of the moment; and my present sensations strongly intimated that the fiend would follow me, and exempt my family from the danger of his machinations.

It was in the latter end of August that I departed, to pass two years of exile. Elizabeth approved of the reasons of my departure, and only regretted that she had not the same opportunities of enlarging her experience, and cultivating her understanding. She wept, however, as she bade me farewell, and entreated me to return happy and tranquil. "We all," said she, "depend upon you; and if you are miserable, what must be our feelings?"

I threw myself into the carriage that was to convey me away, hardly knowing whither I was going, and careless of what was passing around. I remembered only, and it was with a bitter anguish that I reflected on it, to order that my chemical instruments should be packed to go with me: for I resolved to fulfil my promise while abroad, and return, if possible, a free man. Filled with dreary imaginations, I passed through many beautiful and majestic scenes; but my eyes were fixed and unobserving. I could only think of the bourne of my travels, and the work which was to occupy me whilst they endured.

After some days spent in listless indolence, during which I traversed many leagues, I arrived at Strasburgh, where I waited two days for Clerval. He came. Alas, how great was the contrast between us! He was alive to every new scene; joyful when he saw the beauties of the setting sun, and more happy when he beheld it rise, and recommence a new day. He pointed out to me the shifting colours of the landscape, and the appearances of the sky. "This is what it is to live;" he cried, "now I enjoy existence! But you, my dear Frankenstein, wherefore are you desponding and sorrowful?" In truth, I was occupied by gloomy thoughts, and neither saw the descent of the evening star, nor the golden sun-rise reflected in the Rhine. — And you, my friend, would be far more amused with the journal of Clerval, who observed the scenery with an eye of feeling and delight, than to listen to my reflections. I, a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse that shut up every avenue to enjoyment.

We had agreed to descend the Rhine in a boat from Strasburgh to Rotterdam, whence we might take shipping for London. During this voyage, we passed by many willowy islands, and saw several beautiful towns. We staid a day at Manheim, and, on the fifth from our departure from Strasburgh, arrived at Mayence. The course of the Rhine below Mayence becomes much more picturesque. The river descends rapidly, and winds between hills, not high, but steep, and of beautiful forms. We saw many ruined castles standing on the edges of precipices, surrounded by black woods, high and inaccessible. This part of the Rhine, indeed, presents a singularly variegated landscape. In one spot you view rugged hills, ruined castles overlooking tremendous precipices, with the dark Rhine rushing beneath; and, on the sudden turn of a promontory, flourishing vineyards, with green sloping banks, and a meandering river, and populous towns, occupy the scene.

We travelled at the time of the vintage, and heard the song of the labourers, as we glided down the stream. Even I, depressed in mind, and my spirits continually agitated by gloomy feelings, even I was pleased. I lay at the bottom of the boat, and, as I gazed on the cloudless blue sky, I seemed to drink in a tranquillity to which I had long been a stranger. And if these were my sensations, who can describe those of Henry? He felt as if he had been transported to Fairy-land, and enjoyed a happiness seldom tasted by man. “I have seen,” he said, “the most beautiful scenes of my own country; I have visited the lakes of Lucerne and Uri, where the snowy mountains descend almost perpendicularly to the water, casting black and impenetrable shades, which would cause a gloomy and mournful appearance, were it not for the most verdant islands that relieve the eye by their gay appearance; I have seen this lake agitated by a tempest, when the wind tore up whirlwinds of water, and gave you an idea of what the water-spout must be on the great ocean, and the waves dash with fury the base of the mountain, where the priest and his mistress were overwhelmed by an avalanche, and where their dying voices are still said to be heard amid the pauses of the nightly wind; I have seen the mountains of La Valais, and the Pays de Vaud: but this country, Victor, pleases me more than all those wonders. The mountains of Switzerland are more majestic and strange; but there is a charm in the banks of this divine river, that I never before saw equalled. Look at that castle which overhangs yon precipice; and that also on the island, almost concealed amongst the foliage of those lovely trees; and now that group of labourers coming from among their vines; and that village half-hid in the recess of the mountain. Oh, surely, the spirit that inhabits and guards this place has a soul more in harmony with man, than those who pile the glacier, or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains of our own country."

Clerval! beloved friend! even now it delights me to record your words, and to dwell on the praise of which you are so eminently deserving. He was a being formed in the "very poetry of nature." His wild and enthusiastic imagination was chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections, and his friendship was of that devoted and wondrous nature that the worldly-minded teach us to look for only in the imagination. But even human sympathies were not sufficient to satisfy his eager mind. The scenery of external nature, which others regard only with admiration, he loved with ardour:

—— — —"The sounding cataract Haunted *him* like a passion: the tall rock, The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, Their colours and their forms, were then to him An appetite; a feeling, and a love, That had no need of a remoter charm, By thought supplied, or any interest Unborrowed from the eye."

And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost for ever? Has this mind so replete with ideas, imaginations fanciful and magnificent, which formed a world, whose existence depended on the life of its creator; has this mind perished? Does it now only exist in my memory? No, it is not thus; your form so divinely wrought, and beaming with beauty, has decayed, but your spirit still visits and consoles your unhappy friend.

Pardon this gush of sorrow; these ineffectual words are but a slight tribute to the unexampled worth of Henry, but they soothe my heart, overflowing with the anguish which his remembrance creates. I will proceed with my tale.

Beyond Cologne we descended to the plains of Holland; and we resolved to post the remainder of our way; for the wind was contrary, and the stream of the river was too gentle to aid us.

Our journey here lost the interest arising from beautiful scenery; but we arrived in a few days at Rotterdam, whence we proceeded by sea to England. It was on a clear morning, in the latter days of December, that I first saw the white cliffs of Britain. The banks of the Thames presented a new scene; they were flat, but fertile, and almost every town was marked by the remembrance of some story. We saw Tilbury Fort, and remembered the Spanish armada; Gravesend, Woolwich, and Greenwich, places which I had heard of even in my country.

At length we saw the numerous, steeples of London, St. Paul’s towering above all, and the Tower famed in English history.

CHAPTER II.

London was our present point of rest; we determined to remain several months in this wonderful and celebrated city. Clerval desired the intercourse of the men of genius and talent who flourished at this time; but this was with me a secondary object; I was principally occupied with the means of obtaining the information necessary for the completion of my promise, and quickly availed myself of the letters of introduction that I had brought with me, addressed to the most distinguished natural philosophers.

If this journey had taken place during my days of study and happiness, it would have afforded me inexpressible pleasure. But a blight had come over my existence, and I only visited these people for the sake of the information they might give me on the subject in which my interest was so terribly profound. Company was irksome to me; when alone, I could fill my mind with the sights of heaven and earth; the voice of Henry soothed me, and I could thus cheat myself into a transitory peace. But busy uninteresting joyous faces brought back despair to my heart. I saw an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow-men; this barrier was sealed with the blood of William and Justine; and to reflect on the events connected with those names filled my soul with anguish.

But in Clerval I saw the image of my former self; he was inquisitive, and anxious to gain experience and instruction. The difference of manners which he observed was to him an inexhaustible source of instruction and amusement. He was for ever busy; and the only check to his enjoyments was my sorrowful and dejected mien. I tried to conceal this as much as possible, that I might not debar him from the pleasures natural to one who was entering on a new scene of life, undisturbed by any care or bitter recollection. I often refused to accompany him, alleging another engagement, that I might remain alone. I now also began to collect the materials necessary for my new creation, and this was to me like the torture of single drops of water continually falling on the head. Every thought that was devoted to it was an extreme anguish, and every word that I spoke in allusion to it caused my lips to quiver, and my heart to palpitate.

After passing some months in London, we received a letter from a person in Scotland, who had formerly been our visitor at Geneva. He mentioned the beauties of his native country, and asked us if those were not sufficient allurements to induce us to prolong our journey as far north as Perth, where he resided. Clerval eagerly desired to accept this invitation; and I, although I abhorred society, wished to view again mountains and streams, and all the wondrous works with which Nature adorns her chosen dwelling-places.

We had arrived in England at the beginning of October, and it was now February. We accordingly determined to commence our journey towards the north at the expiration of another month. In this expedition we did not intend to follow the great road to Edinburgh, but to visit Windsor, Oxford, Matlock, and the Cumberland lakes, resolving to arrive at the completion of this tour about the end of July. I packed my chemical instruments, and the materials I had collected, resolving to finish my labours in some obscure nook in the northern highlands of Scotland.

We quitted London on the 27th of March, and remained a few days at Windsor, rambling in its beautiful forest. This was a new scene to us mountaineers; the majestic oaks, the quantity of game, and the herds of stately deer, were all novelties to us.

From thence we proceeded to Oxford. As we entered this city, our minds were filled with the remembrance of the events that had been transacted there more than a century and a half before. It was here that Charles I. had collected his forces. This city had remained faithful to him, after the whole nation had forsaken his cause to join the standard of parliament and liberty. The memory of that unfortunate king, and his companions, the amiable Falkland, the insolent Gower, his queen, and son, gave a peculiar interest to every part of the city, which they might be supposed to have inhabited. The spirit of elder days found a dwelling here, and we delighted to trace its footsteps. If these feelings had not found an imaginary gratification, the appearance of the city had yet in itself sufficient beauty to obtain our admiration. The colleges are ancient and picturesque; the streets are almost magnificent; and the lovely Isis, which flows beside it through meadows of exquisite verdure, is spread forth into a placid expanse of waters, which reflects its majestic assemblage of towers, and spires, and domes, embosomed among aged trees.

I enjoyed this scene; and yet my enjoyment was embittered both by the memory of the past, and the anticipation of the future. I was formed for peaceful happiness. During my youthful days discontent never visited my mind; and if I was ever overcome by *ennui*, the sight of what is beautiful in nature, or the study of what is excellent and sublime in the productions of man, could always interest my heart, and communicate elasticity to my spirits. But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul; and I felt then that I should survive to exhibit, what I shall soon cease to be — a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others, and abhorrent to myself.

We passed a considerable period at Oxford, rambling among its environs, and endeavouring to identify every spot which might relate to the most animating epoch of English history. Our little voyages of discovery were often prolonged by the successive objects that presented themselves. We visited the tomb of the illustrious Hampden, and the field on which that patriot fell. For a moment my soul was elevated from its debasing and miserable fears to contemplate the divine ideas of liberty and self-sacrifice, of which these sights were the monuments and the remembrancers. For an instant I dared to shake off my chains, and look around me with a free and lofty spirit; but the iron had eaten into my flesh, and I sank again, trembling and hopeless, into my miserable self.

We left Oxford with regret, and proceeded to Matlock, which was our next place of rest. The country in the neighbourhood of this village resembled, to a greater degree, the scenery of Switzerland; but every thing is on a lower scale, and the green hills want the crown of distant white Alps, which always attend on the piny mountains of my native country. We visited the wondrous cave, and the little cabinets of natural history, where the curiosities are disposed in the same manner as in the collections at Servox and Chamounix. The latter name made me tremble, when pronounced by Henry; and I hastened to quit Matlock, with which that terrible scene was thus associated.

From Derby still journeying northward, we passed two months in Cumberland and Westmoreland. I could now almost fancy myself among the Swiss mountains. The little patches of snow which yet lingered on the northern sides of the mountains, the lakes, and the dashing of the rocky streams, were all familiar and dear sights to me. Here also we made some acquaintances, who almost contrived to cheat me into happiness. The delight of Clerval was proportionably greater than mine; his mind expanded in the company of men of talent, and he found in his own nature greater capacities and resources than he could have imagined himself to have possessed while he associated with his inferiors. “I could pass my life here,” said he to me; “and among these mountains I should scarcely regret Switzerland and the Rhine.”

But he found that a traveller’s life is one that includes much pain amidst its enjoyments. His feelings are for ever on the stretch; and when he begins to sink into repose, he finds himself obliged to quit that on which he rests in pleasure for something new, which again engages his attention, and which also he forsakes for other novelties.

We had scarcely visited the various lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and conceived an affection for some of the inhabitants, when the period of our appointment with our Scotch friend approached, and we left them to travel on. For my own part I was not sorry. I had now neglected my promise for some time, and I feared the effects of the dæmon’s disappointment. He might remain in Switzerland, and wreak his vengeance on my relatives. This idea pursued me, and tormented me at every moment from which I might otherwise have snatched repose and peace. I waited for my letters with feverish impatience: if they were delayed, I was miserable, and overcome by a thousand fears; and when they arrived, and I saw the superscription of Elizabeth or my father, I hardly dared to read and ascertain my fate. Sometimes I thought that the fiend followed me, and might expedite my remissness by murdering my companion. When these thoughts possessed me, I would not quit Henry for a moment, but followed him as his shadow, to protect him from the fancied rage of his destroyer. I felt as if I had committed some great crime, the consciousness of which haunted me. I was guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime.

I visited Edinburgh with languid eyes and mind; and yet that city might have interested the most unfortunate being. Clerval did not like it so well as Oxford; for the antiquity of the latter city was more pleasing to him. But the beauty and regularity of the new town of Edinburgh, its romantic castle, and its environs, the most delightful in the world, Arthur’s Seat, St. Bernard’s Well, and the Pentland Hills, compensated him for the change, and filled him with cheerfulness and admiration. But I was impatient to arrive at the termination of my journey.

We left Edinburgh in a week, passing through Coupar, St. Andrews, and along the banks of the Tay, to Perth, where our friend expected us. But I was in no mood to laugh and talk with strangers, or enter into their feelings or plans with the good humour expected from a guest; and accordingly I told Clerval that I wished to make the tour of Scotland alone. “Do you,” said I, “enjoy yourself, and let this be our rendezvous. I may be absent a month or two; but do not interfere with my motions, I entreat you: leave me to peace and solitude for a short time; and when I return, I hope it will be with a lighter heart, more congenial to your own temper.”

Henry wished to dissuade me; but, seeing me bent on this plan, ceased to remonstrate. He entreated me to write often. “I had rather be with you,” he said, “in your solitary rambles, than with these Scotch people, whom I do not know: hasten then, my dear friend, to return, that I may again feel myself somewhat at home, which I cannot do in your absence.”

Having parted from my friend, I determined to visit some remote spot of Scotland, and finish my work in solitude. I did not doubt but that the monster followed me, and would discover himself to me when I should have finished, that he might receive his companion.

With this resolution I traversed the northern highlands, and fixed on one of the remotest of the Orkneys as the scene labours. It was a place fitted for such a work, being hardly more than a rock, whose high sides were continually beaten upon by the waves. The soil was barren, scarcely affording pasture for a few miserable cows, and oatmeal for its inhabitants, which consisted of five persons, whose gaunt and scraggy limbs gave tokens of their miserable fare. Vegetables and bread, when they indulged in such luxuries, and even fresh water, was to be procured from the main land, which was about five miles distant.

On the whole island there were but three miserable huts, and one of these was vacant when I arrived. This I hired. It contained but two rooms, and these exhibited all the squalidness of the most miserable penury. The thatch had fallen in, the walls were unplastered, and the door was off its hinges. I ordered it to be repaired, bought some furniture, and took possession; an incident which would, doubtless, have occasioned some surprise, had not all the senses of the cottagers been benumbed by want and squalid poverty. As it was, I lived ungazed at and unmolested, hardly thanked for the pittance of food and clothes which I gave; so much does suffering blunt even the coarsest sensations of men.

In this retreat I devoted the morning to labour; but in the evening, when the weather permitted, I walked on the stony beach of the sea, to listen to the waves as they roared, and dashed at my feet. It was a monotonous, yet ever-changing scene. I thought of Switzerland; it was far different from this desolate and appalling landscape. Its hills are covered with vines, and its cottages are scattered thickly in the plains. Its fair lakes reflect a blue and gentle sky; and, when troubled by the winds, their tumult is but as the play of a lively infant, when compared to the roarings of the giant ocean.

In this manner I distributed my occupations when I first arrived; but, as I proceeded in my labour, it became every day more horrible and irksome to me. Sometimes I could not prevail on myself to enter my laboratory for several days; and at other times I toiled day and night in order to complete my work. It was indeed a filthy process in which I was engaged. During my first experiment, a kind of enthusiastic frenzy had blinded me to the horror of my employment; my mind was intently fixed on the sequel of my labour, and my eyes were shut to the horror of my proceedings. But now I went to it in cold blood, and my heart often sickened at the work of my hands.

Thus situated, employed in the most detestable occupation, immersed in a solitude where nothing could for an instant call my attention from the actual scene in which I was engaged, my spirits became unequal; I grew restless and nervous. Every moment I feared to meet my persecutor. Sometimes I sat with my eyes fixed on the ground, fearing to raise them lest they should encounter the object which I so much dreaded to behold. I feared to wander from the sight of my fellow-creatures, lest when alone he should come to claim his companion.

In the mean time I worked on, and my labour was already considerably advanced. I looked towards its completion with a tremulous and eager hope, which I dared not trust myself to question, but which was intermixed with obscure forebodings of evil, that made my heart sicken in my bosom.

CHAPTER III.

I sat one evening in my laboratory; the sun had set, and the moon was just rising from the sea; I had not sufficient light for my employment, and I remained idle, in a pause of consideration of whether I should leave my labour for the night, or hasten its conclusion by an unremitting attention to it. As I sat, a train of reflection occurred to me, which led me to consider the effects of what I was now doing. Three years before I was engaged in the same manner, and had created a fiend whose unparalleled barbarity had desolated my heart, and filled it for ever with the bitterest remorse. I was now about to form another being, of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man, and hide himself in deserts; but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species.

Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the dæmon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I a right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats: but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price perhaps of the existence of the whole human race.

I trembled, and my heart failed within me; when, on looking up, I saw, by the light of the moon, the dæmon at the casement. A ghastly grin wrinkled his lips as he gazed on me, where I sat fulfilling the task which he had allotted to me. Yes, he had followed me in my travels; he had loitered in forests, hid himself in caves, or taken refuge in wide and desert heaths; and he now came to mark my progress, and claim the fulfilment of my promise.

As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and, trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and, with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew.

I left the room, and, locking the door, made a solemn vow in my own heart never to resume my labours; and then, with trembling steps, I sought my own apartment. I was alone; none were near me to dissipate the gloom, and relieve me from the sickening oppression of the most terrible reveries.

Several hours past, and I remained near my window gazing on the sea; it was almost motionless, for the winds were hushed, and all nature reposed under the eye of the quiet moon. A few fishing vessels alone specked the water, and now and then the gentle breeze wafted the sound of voices, as the fishermen called to one another. I felt the silence, although I was hardly conscious of its extreme profundity until my ear was suddenly arrested by the paddling of oars near the shore, and a person landed close to my house.

In a few minutes after, I heard the creaking of my door, as if some one endeavoured to open it softly. I trembled from head to foot; I felt a presentiment of who it was, and wished to rouse one of the peasants who dwelt in a cottage not far from mine; but I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain endeavour to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the spot.

Presently I heard the sound of footsteps along the passage; the door opened, and the wretch whom I dreaded appeared. Shutting the door, he approached me, and said, in a smothered voice —

“You have destroyed the work which you began; what is it that you intend? Do you dare to break your promise? I have endured toil and misery: I left Switzerland with you; I crept along the shores of the Rhine, among its willow islands, and over the summits of its hills. I have dwelt many months in the heaths of England, and among the deserts of Scotland. I have endured incalculable fatigue, and cold, and hunger; do you dare destroy my hopes?"

"Begone! I do break my promise; never will I create another like yourself, equal in deformity and wickedness."

"Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; — obey!"

"The hour of my weakness is past, and the period of your power is arrived. Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness; but they confirm me in a resolution of not creating you a companion in vice. Shall I, in cool blood, set loose upon the earth a dæmon, whose delight is in death and wretchedness. Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage."

The monster saw my determination in my face, and gnashed his teeth in the impotence of anger. "Shall each man," cried he, "find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man, you may hate; but beware! Your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness for ever. Are you to be happy, while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions; but revenge remains — revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die; but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you shall repent of the injuries you inflict."

"Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable."

"It is well. I go; but remember, I shall be with you on your wedding-night."

I started forward, and exclaimed, "Villain! before you sign my death-warrant, be sure that you are yourself safe."

I would have seized him; but he eluded me, and quitted the house with precipitation: in a few moments I saw him in his boat, which shot across the waters with an arrowy swiftness, and was soon lost amidst the waves.

All was again silent; but his words rung in my ears. I burned with rage to pursue the murderer of my peace, and precipitate him into the ocean. I walked up and down my room hastily and perturbed, while my imagination conjured up a thousand images to torment and sting me. Why had I not followed him, and closed with him in mortal strife? But I had suffered him to depart, and he had directed his course towards the main land. I shuddered to think who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words—"*I will be with you on your wedding-night.*" That then was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die, and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice. The prospect did not move me to fear; yet when I thought of my beloved Elizabeth, — of her tears and endless sorrow, when she should find her lover so barbarously snatched from her, — tears, the first I had shed for many months, streamed from my eyes, and I resolved not to fall before my enemy without a bitter struggle.

The night passed away, and the sun rose from the ocean; my feelings became calmer, if it may be called calmness, when the violence of rage sinks into the depths of despair. I left the house, the horrid scene of the last night's contention, and walked on the beach of the sea, which I almost regarded as an insuperable barrier between me and my fellow-creatures; nay, a wish that such should prove the fact stole across me. I desired that I might pass my life on that barren rock, wearily it is true, but uninterrupted by any sudden shock of misery. If I returned, it was to be sacrificed, or to see those whom I most loved die under the grasp of a dæmon whom I had myself created.

I walked about the isle like a restless spectre, separated from all it loved, and miserable in the separation. When it became noon, and the sun rose higher, I lay down on the grass, and was overpowered by a deep sleep. I had been awake the whole of the preceding night, my nerves were agitated, and my eyes inflamed by watching and misery. The sleep into which I now sunk refreshed me; and when I awoke, I again felt as if I belonged to a race of human beings like myself, and I began to reflect upon what had passed with greater composure; yet still the words of the fiend rung in my ears like a death-knell, they appeared like a dream, yet distinct and oppressive as a reality.

The sun had far descended, and I still sat on the shore, satisfying my appetite, which had become ravenous, with an oaten cake, when I saw a fishing-boat land close to me, and one of the men brought me a packet; it contained letters from Geneva, and one from Clerval, entreating me to join him. He said that nearly a year had elapsed since we had quitted Switzerland, and France was yet unvisited. He entreated me, therefore, to leave my solitary isle, and meet him at Perth, in a week from that time, when we might arrange the plan of our future proceedings. This letter in a degree recalled me to life, and I determined to quit my island at the expiration of two days.

Yet, before I departed, there was a task to perform, on which I shuddered to reflect: I must pack my chemical instruments; and for that purpose I must enter the room which had been the scene of my odious work, and I must handle those utensils, the sight of which was sickening to me. The next morning, at day-break, I summoned sufficient courage, and unlocked the door of my laboratory. The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being. I paused to collect myself, and then entered the chamber. With trembling hand I conveyed the instruments out of the room; but I reflected that I ought not to leave the relics of my work to excite the horror and suspicion of the peasants, and I accordingly put them into a basket, with a great quantity of stones, and laying them up, determined to throw them into the sea that very night; and in the mean time I sat upon the beach, employed in cleaning and arranging my chemical apparatus.

Nothing could be more complete than the alteration that had taken place in my feelings since the night of the appearance of the dæmon. I had before regarded my promise with a gloomy despair, as a thing that, with whatever consequences, must be fulfilled; but I now felt as if a film had been taken from before my eyes, and that I, for the first time, saw clearly. The idea of renewing my labours did not for one instant occur to me; the threat I had heard weighed on my thoughts, but I did not reflect that a voluntary act of mine could avert it. I had resolved in my own mind, that to create another like the fiend I had first made would be an act of the basest and most atrocious selfishness; and I banished from my mind every thought that could lead to a different conclusion.

Between two and three in the morning the moon rose; and I then, putting my basket aboard a little skiff, sailed out about four miles from the shore. The scene was perfectly solitary: a few boats were returning towards land, but I sailed away from them. I felt as if I was about the commission of a dreadful crime, and avoided with shuddering anxiety any encounter with my fellow-creatures. At one time the moon, which had before been clear, was suddenly overspread by a thick cloud, and I took advantage of the moment of darkness, and cast my basket into the sea; I listened to the gurgling sound as it sunk, and then sailed away from the spot. The sky became clouded; but the air was pure, although chilled by the north-east breeze that was then rising. But it refreshed me, and filled me with such agreeable sensations, that I resolved to prolong my stay on the water, and fixing the rudder in a direct position, stretched myself at the bottom of the boat. Clouds hid the moon, even thing was obscure, and I heard only the sound of the boat, as its keel cut through the waves; the murmur lulled me, and in a short time I slept soundly.

I do not know how long I remained in this situation, but when I awoke I found that the sun had already mounted considerably. The wind was high, and the waves continually threatened the safety of my little skiff. I found that the wind was north-east, and must have driven me far from the coast from which I had embarked. I endeavoured to change my course, but quickly found that if I again made the attempt the boat would be instantly filled with water. Thus situated, my only resource was to drive before the wind. I confess that I felt a few sensations of terror. I had no compass with me, and was so little acquainted with the geography of this part of the world that the sun was of little benefit to me. I might be driven into the wide Atlantic, and feel all the tortures of starvation, or be swallowed up in the immeasurable waters that roared and buffeted around me. I had already been out many hours, and felt the torment of a burning thirst, a prelude to my other sufferings. I looked on the heavens, which were covered by clouds that flew before the wind only to be replaced by others: I looked upon the sea, it was to be my grave. “Fiend,” I exclaimed, “your task is already fulfilled!” I thought of Elizabeth, of my father, and of Clerval; and sunk into a reverie, so despairing and frightful, that even now, when the scene is on the point of closing before me for ever, I shudder to reflect on it.

Some hours passed thus; but by degrees, as the sun declined towards the horizon, the wind died away into a gentle breeze, and the sea became free from breakers. But these gave place to a heavy swell; I felt sick, and hardly able to hold the rudder, when suddenly I saw a line of high land towards the south.

Almost spent, as I was, by fatigue, and the dreadful suspense I endured for several hours, this sudden certainty of life rushed like a flood of warm joy to my heart, and tears gushed from my eyes.

How mutable are our feelings, and how strange is that clinging love we have of life even in the excess of misery! I constructed another sail with a part of my dress, and eagerly steered my course towards the land. It had a wild and rocky appearance; but as I approached nearer, I easily perceived the traces of cultivation. I saw vessels near the shore, and found myself suddenly transported back to the neighbourhood of civilized man. I eagerly traced the windings of the land, and hailed a steeple which I at length saw issuing from behind a small promontory. As I was in a state of extreme debility, I resolved to sail directly towards the town as a place where I could most easily procure nourishment. Fortunately I had money with me. As I turned the promontory, I perceived a small neat town and a good harbour, which I entered, my heart bounding with joy at my unexpected escape.

As I was occupied in fixing the boat and arranging the sails, several people crowded towards the spot. They seemed very much surprised at my appearance; but, instead of offering me any assistance, whispered together with gestures that at any other time might have produced in me a slight sensation of alarm. As it was, I merely remarked that they spoke English; and I therefore addressed them in that language: “My good friends,” said I, “will you be so kind as to tell me the name of this town, and inform me where I am?”

“You will know that soon enough,” replied a man with a gruff voice. “May be you are come to a place that will not prove much to your taste; but you will not be consulted as to your quarters, I promise you.”

I was exceedingly surprised on receiving so rude an answer from a stranger; and I was also disconcerted on perceiving the frowning and angry countenances of his companions. “Why do you answer me so roughly?” I replied: “surely it is not the custom of Englishmen to receive strangers so inhospitably.”

"I do not know," said the man, "what the custom of the English may be; but it is the custom of the Irish to hate villains."

While this strange dialogue continued, I perceived the crowd rapidly increase. Their faces expressed a mixture of curiosity and anger, which annoyed, and in some degree alarmed me. I inquired the way to the inn; but no one replied. I then moved forward, and a murmuring sound arose from the crowd as they followed and surrounded me; when an ill-looking man approaching, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Come, Sir, you must follow me to Mr. Kirwin's, to give an account of yourself."

"Who is Mr. Kirwin? Why am I to give an account of myself? Is not this a free country?"

"Aye, Sir, free enough for honest folks. Mr. Kirwin is a magistrate; and you are to give an account of the death of a gentleman who was found murdered here last night."

This answer startled me; but I presently recovered myself. I was innocent; that could easily be proved: accordingly I followed my conductor in silence, and was led to one of the best houses in the town. I was ready to sink from fatigue and hunger; but, being surrounded by a crowd, I thought it politic to rouse all my strength, that no physical debility might be construed into apprehension or conscious guilt. Little did I then expect the calamity that was in a few moments to overwhelm me, and extinguish in horror and despair all fear of ignominy or death.

I must pause here; for it requires all my fortitude to recall the memory of the frightful events which I am about to relate, in proper detail, to my recollection.

CHAPTER IV.

I was soon introduced into the presence of the magistrate, an old benevolent man, with calm and mild manners. He looked upon me, however, with some degree of severity; and then, turning towards my conductors, he asked who appeared as witnesses on this occasion.

About half a dozen men came forward; and one being selected by the magistrate, he deposed, that he had been out fishing the night before with his son and brother-in-law, Daniel Nugent, when, about ten o'clock, they observed a strong northerly blast rising, and they accordingly put in for port. It was a very dark night, as the moon had not yet risen; they did not land at the harbour, but, as they had been accustomed, at a creek about two miles below. He walked on first, carrying a part of the fishing tackle, and his companions followed him at some distance. As he was proceeding along the sands, he struck his foot against something, and fell all his length on the ground. His companions came up to assist him; and, by the light of their lantern, they found that he had fallen on the body of a man, who was to all appearance dead. Their first supposition was, that it was the corpse of some person who had been drowned, and was thrown on shore by the waves; but, upon examination, they found that the clothes were not wet, and even that the body was not then cold. They instantly carried it to the cottage of an old woman near the spot, and endeavoured, but in vain, to restore it to life. He appeared to be a handsome young man, about five and twenty years of age. He had apparently been strangled; for there was no sign of any violence, except the black mark of fingers on his neck.

The first part of this deposition did not in the least interest me; but when the mark of the fingers was mentioned, I remembered the murder of my brother, and felt myself extremely agitated; my limbs trembled, and a mist came over my eyes, which obliged me to lean on a chair for support. The magistrate observed me with a keen eye, and of course drew an unfavourable augury from my manner.

The son confirmed his father's account: but when Daniel Nugent was called, he swore positively that, just before the fall of his companion, he saw a boat, with a single man in it, at a short distance from the shore; and, as far as he could judge by the light of a few stars, it was the same boat in which I had just landed.

A woman deposed, that she lived near the beach, and was standing at the door of her cottage, waiting for the return of the fishermen, about an hour before she heard of the discovery of the body, when she saw a boat, with only one man in it, push off from that part of the shore where the corpse was afterwards found.

Another woman confirmed the account of the fishermen having brought the body into her house; it was not cold. They put it into a bed, and rubbed it; and Daniel went to the town for an apothecary, but life was quite gone.

Several other men were examined concerning my landing; and they agreed, that, with the strong north wind that had arisen during the night, it was very probable that I had beaten about for many hours, and had been obliged to return nearly to the same spot from which I had departed. Besides, they observed that it appeared that I had brought the body from another place, and it was likely, that as I did not appear to know the shore, I might have put into the harbour ignorant of the distance of the town of —— from the place where I had deposited the corpse.

Mr. Kirwin, on hearing this evidence, desired that I should be taken into the room where the body lay for interment that it might be observed what effect the sight of it would produce upon me. This idea was probably suggested by the extreme agitation I had exhibited when the mode of the murder had been described. I was accordingly conducted, by the magistrate and several other persons, to the inn. I could not help being struck by the strange coincidences that had taken place during this eventful night; but, knowing that I had been conversing with several persons in the island I had inhabited about the time that the body had been found, I was perfectly tranquil as to the consequences of the affair.

I entered the room where the corpse lay, and was led up to the coffin. How can I describe my sensations on beholding it? I feel yet parched with horror, nor can I reflect on that terrible moment without shuddering and agony, that faintly reminds me of the anguish of the recognition. The trial, the presence of the magistrate and witnesses, passed like a dream from my memory, when I saw the lifeless form of Henry Clerval stretched before me. I gasped for breath; and, throwing myself on the body, I exclaimed, "Have my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life?

Two I have already destroyed; other victims await their destiny: but you, Clerval, my friend, my benefactor" ——

The human frame could no longer support the agonizing suffering that I endured, and I was carried out of the room in strong convulsions.

A fever succeeded to this. I lay for two months on the point of death: my ravings, as I afterwards heard, were frightful; I called myself the murderer of William, of Justine, and of Clerval. Sometimes I entreated my attendants to assist me in the destruction of the fiend by whom I was tormented; and, at others, I felt the fingers of the monster already grasping my neck, and screamed aloud with agony and terror. Fortunately, as I spoke my native language, Mr. Kirwin alone understood me; but my gestures and bitter cries were sufficient to affright the other witnesses.

Why did I not die? More miserable than man ever was before, why did I not sink into forgetfulness and rest? Death snatches away many blooming children, the only hopes of their doating parents: how many brides and youthful lovers have been one day in the bloom of health and hope, and the next a prey for worms and the decay of the tomb! Of what materials was I made, that I could thus resist so many shocks, which, like the turning of the wheel, continually renewed the torture.

But I was doomed to live; and, in two months, found myself as awaking from a dream, in a prison, stretched on a wretched bed, surrounded by gaolers, turnkeys, bolts, and all the miserable apparatus of a dungeon. It was morning, I remember, when I thus awoke to understanding: I had forgotten the particulars of what had happened, and only felt as if some great misfortune had suddenly overwhelmed me; but when I looked around, and saw the barred windows, and the squalidness of the room in which I was, all flashed across my memory, and I groaned bitterly.

This sound disturbed an old woman who was sleeping in a chair beside me. She was a hired nurse, the wife of one of the turnkeys, and her countenance expressed all those bad qualities which often characterize that class. The lines of her face were hard and rude, like that of persons accustomed to see without sympathizing in sights of misery. Her tone expressed her entire indifference; she addressed me in English, and the voice struck me as one that I had heard during my sufferings:

"Are you better now, Sir?" said she.

I replied in the same language, with a feeble voice, “I believe I am; but if it be all true, if indeed I did not dream, I am sorry that I am still alive to feel this misery and horror.”

“For that matter,” replied the old woman, “if you mean about the gentleman you murdered, I believe that it were better for you if you were dead, for I fancy it will go hard with you; but you will be hung when the next sessions come on. However, that’s none of my business, I am sent to nurse you, and get you well; I do my duty with a safe conscience, it were well if every body did the same.”

I turned with loathing from the woman who could utter so unfeeling a speech to a person just saved, on the very edge of death; but I felt languid, and unable to reflect on all that had passed. The whole series of my life appeared to me as a dream; I sometimes doubted if indeed it were all true, for it never presented itself to my mind with the force of reality.

As the images that floated before me became more distinct, I grew feverish; a darkness pressed around me; no one was near me who soothed me with the gentle voice of love; no dear hand supported me. The physician came and prescribed medicines, and the old woman prepared them for me; but utter carelessness was visible in the first, and the expression of brutality was strongly marked in the visage of the second. Who could be interested in the fate of a murderer, but the hangman who would gain his fee?

These were my first reflections; but I soon learned that Mr. Kirwin had shewn me extreme kindness. He had caused the best room in the prison to be prepared for me (wretched indeed was the best); and it was he who had provided a physician and a nurse. It is true, he seldom came to see me; for, although he ardently desired to relieve the sufferings of every human creature, he did not wish to be present at the agonies and miserable ravings of a murderer. He came, therefore, sometimes to see that I was not neglected; but his visits were short, and at long intervals.

One day, when I was gradually recovering, I was seated in a chair, my eyes half open, and my cheeks livid like those in death, I was overcome by gloom and misery, and often reflected I had better seek death than remain miserably pent up only to be let loose in a world replete with wretchedness. At one time I considered whether I should not declare myself guilty, and suffer the penalty of the law, less innocent than poor Justine had been. Such were my thoughts, when the door of my apartment was opened, and Mr.

Kirwin entered. His countenance expressed sympathy and compassion; he drew a chair close to mine, and addressed me in French —

"I fear that this place is very shocking to you; can I do any thing to make you more comfortable?"

"I thank you; but all that you mention is nothing to me: on the whole earth there is no comfort which I am capable of receiving."

"I know that the sympathy of a stranger can be but of little relief to one borne down as you are by so strange a misfortune. But you will, I hope, soon quit this melancholy abode; for, doubtless, evidence can easily be brought to free you from the criminal charge."

"That is my least concern: I am, by a course of strange events, become the most miserable of mortals. Persecuted and tortured as I am and have been, can death be any evil to me?"

"Nothing indeed could be more unfortunate and agonizing than the strange chances that have lately occurred. You were thrown, by some surprising accident, on this shore, renowned for its hospitality: seized immediately, and charged with murder. The first sight that was presented to your eyes was the body of your friend, murdered in so unaccountable a manner, and placed, as it were, by some fiend across your path."

As Mr. Kirwin said this, notwithstanding the agitation I endured on this retrospect of my sufferings, I also felt considerable surprise at the knowledge he seemed to possess concerning me. I suppose some astonishment was exhibited in my countenance; for Mr. Kirwin hastened to say —

"It was not until a day or two after your illness that I thought of examining your dress, that I might discover some trace by which I could send to your relations an account of your misfortune and illness. I found several letters, and, among others, one which I discovered from its commencement to be from your father. I instantly wrote to Geneva: nearly two months have elapsed since the departure of my letter. — But you are ill; even now you tremble: you are unfit for agitation of any kind."

"This suspense is a thousand times worse than the most horrible event: tell me what new scene of death has been acted, and whose murder I am now to lament."

"Your family is perfectly well," said Mr. Kirwin, with gentleness; "and some one, a friend, is come to visit you."

I know not by what chain of thought the idea presented itself, but it instantly darted into my mind that the murderer had come to mock at my misery, and taunt me with the death of Clerval, as a new incitement for me to comply with his hellish desires. I put my hand before my eyes, and cried out in agony —

“Oh! take him away! I cannot see him; for God’s sake, do not let him enter!”

Mr. Kirwin regarded me with a troubled countenance. He could not help regarding my exclamation as a presumption of my guilt, and said, in rather a severe tone —

“I should have thought, young man, that the presence of your father would have been welcome, instead of inspiring such violent repugnance.”

“My father!” cried I, while every feature and every muscle was relaxed from anguish to pleasure. “Is my father, indeed, come? How kind, how very kind. But where is he, why does he not hasten to me?”

My change of manner surprised and pleased the magistrate; perhaps he thought that my former exclamation was a momentary return of delirium, and now he instantly resumed his former benevolence. He rose, and quitted the room with my nurse, and in a moment my father entered it.

Nothing, at this moment, could have given me greater pleasure than the arrival of my father. I stretched out my hand to him, and cried —

“Are you then safe — and Elizabeth — and Ernest?”

My father calmed me with assurances of their welfare, and endeavoured, by dwelling on these subjects so interesting to my heart, to raise my desponding spirits; but he soon felt that a prison cannot be the abode of cheerfulness. “What a place is this that you inhabit, my son!” said he, looking mournfully at the barred windows, and wretched appearance of the room. “You travelled to seek happiness, but a fatality seems to pursue you. And poor Clerval—”

The name of my unfortunate and murdered friend was an agitation too great to be endured in my weak state; I shed tears.

“Alas! yes, my father,” replied I; “some destiny of the most horrible kind hangs over me, and I must live to fulfil it, or surely I should have died on the coffin of Henry.”

We were not allowed to converse for any length of time, for the precarious state of my health rendered every precaution necessary that could insure tranquillity. Mr. Kirwin came in, and insisted that my strength should not be exhausted by too much exertion. But the appearance of my father was to me like that of my good angel, and I gradually recovered my health.

As my sickness quitted me, I was absorbed by a gloomy and black melancholy, that nothing could dissipate. The image of Clerval was for ever before me, ghastly and murdered. More than once the agitation into which these reflections threw me made my friends dread a dangerous relapse. Alas! why did they preserve so miserable and detested a life? It was surely that I might fulfil my destiny, which is now drawing to a close. Soon, oh, very soon, will death extinguish these throbbings, and relieve me from the mighty weight of anguish that bears me to the dust; and, in executing the award of justice, I shall also sink to rest. Then the appearance of death was distant, although the wish was ever present to my thoughts; and I often sat for hours motionless and speechless, wishing for some mighty revolution that might bury me and my destroyer in its ruins.

The season of the assizes approached. I had already been three months in prison; and although I was still weak, and in continual danger of a relapse, I was obliged to travel nearly a hundred miles to the county-town, where the court was held. Mr. Kirwin charged himself with every care of collecting witnesses, and arranging my defence. I was spared the disgrace of appearing publicly as a criminal, as the case was not brought before the court that decides on life and death. The grand jury rejected the bill, on its being proved that I was on the Orkney Islands at the hour the body of my friend was found, and a fortnight after my removal I was liberated from prison.

My father was enraptured on finding me freed from the vexations of a criminal charge, that I was again allowed to breathe the fresh atmosphere, and allowed to return to my native country. I did not participate in these feelings; for to me the walls of a dungeon or a palace were alike hateful. The cup of life was poisoned for ever; and although the sun shone upon me, as upon the happy and gay of heart, I saw around me nothing but a dense and frightful darkness, penetrated by no light but the glimmer of two eyes that glared upon me. Sometimes they were the expressive eyes of Henry, languishing in death, the dark orbs nearly covered by the lids, and the long black lashes that fringed them; sometimes it was the watery clouded eyes of the monster, as I first saw them in my chamber at Ingolstadt.

My father tried to awaken in me the feelings of affection. He talked of Geneva, which I should soon visit — of Elizabeth, and Ernest; but these words only drew deep groans from me. Sometimes, indeed, I felt a wish for happiness; and thought, with melancholy delight, of my beloved cousin; or longed, with a devouring *maladie du pays*, to see once more the blue lake and rapid Rhone, that had been so dear to me in early childhood: but my general state of feeling was a torpor, in which a prison was as welcome a residence as the divinest scene in nature; and these fits were seldom interrupted, but by paroxysms of anguish and despair. At these moments I often endeavoured to put an end to the existence I loathed; and it required unceasing attendance and vigilance to restrain me from committing some dreadful act of violence.

I remember, as I quitted the prison, I heard one of the men say, “He may be innocent of the murder, but he has certainly a bad conscience.” These words struck me. A bad conscience! yes, surely I had one. William, Justine, and Clerval, had died through my infernal machinations; “And whose death,” cried I, “is to finish the tragedy? Ah! my father, do not remain in this wretched country; take me where I may forget myself, my existence, and all the world.”

My father easily acceded to my desire; and, after having taken leave of Mr. Kirwin, we hastened to Dublin. I felt as if I was relieved from a heavy weight, when the packet sailed with a fair wind from Ireland, and I had quitted for ever the country which had been to me the scene of so much misery.

It was midnight. My father slept in the cabin; and I lay on the deck, looking at the stars, and listening to the dashing of the waves. I hailed the darkness that shut Ireland from my sight, and my pulse beat with a feverish joy, when I reflected that I should soon see Geneva. The past appeared to me in the light of a frightful dream; yet the vessel in which I was, the wind that blew me from the detested shore of Ireland, and the sea which surrounded me, told me too forcibly that I was deceived by no vision, and that Clerval, my friend and dearest companion, had fallen a victim to me and the monster of my creation. I repassed, in my memory, my whole life; my quiet happiness while residing with my family in Geneva, the death of my mother, and my departure for Ingolstadt. I remembered shuddering at the mad enthusiasm that hurried me on to the creation of my hideous enemy, and I called to mind the night during which he first lived. I was unable to pursue the train of thought; a thousand feelings pressed upon me, and I wept bitterly.

Ever since my recovery from the fever I had been in the custom of taking every night a small quantity of laudanum; for it was by means of this drug only that I was enabled to gain the rest necessary for the preservation of life. Oppressed by the recollection of my various misfortunes, I now took a double dose, and soon slept profoundly. But sleep did not afford me respite from thought and misery; my dreams presented a thousand objects that scared me. Towards morning I was possessed by a kind of night-mare; I felt the fiend's grasp in my neck, and could not free myself from it; groans and cries rung in my ears. My father, who was watching over me, perceiving my restlessness, awoke me, and pointed to the port of Holyhead, which we were now entering.

CHAPTER V.

We had resolved not to go to London, but to cross the country to Portsmouth, and thence to embark for Havre. I preferred this plan principally because I dreaded to see again those places in which I had enjoyed a few moments of tranquillity with my beloved Clerval. I thought with horror of seeing again those persons whom we had been accustomed to visit together, and who might make inquiries concerning an event, the very remembrance of which made me again feel the pang I endured when I gazed on his lifeless form in the inn at —— .

As for my father, his desires and exertions were bounded to the again seeing me restored to health and peace of mind. His tenderness and attentions were unremitting; my grief and gloom was obstinate, but he would not despair. Sometimes he thought that I felt deeply the degradation of being obliged to answer a charge of murder, and he endeavoured to prove to me the futility of pride.

"Alas! my father," said I, "how little do you know me. Human beings, their feelings and passions, would indeed be degraded, if such a wretch as I felt pride. Justine, poor unhappy Justine, was as innocent as I, and she suffered the same charge; she died for it; and I am the cause of this — I murdered her. William, Justine, and Henry — they all died by my hands."

My father had often, during my imprisonment, heard me make the same assertion; when I thus accused myself, he sometimes seemed to desire an explanation, and at others he appeared to consider it as caused by delirium, and that, during my illness, some idea of this kind had presented itself to my imagination, the remembrance of which I preserved in my convalescence. I avoided explanation, and maintained a continual silence concerning the wretch I had created. I had a feeling that I should be supposed mad, and this for ever chained my tongue, when I would have given the whole world to have confided the fatal secret.

Upon this occasion my father said, with an expression of unbounded wonder, "What do you mean, Victor? are you mad? My dear son, I entreat you never to make such an assertion again."

"I am not mad," I cried energetically; "the sun and the heavens, who have viewed my operations, can bear witness of my truth. I am the assassin of those most innocent victims; they died by my machinations. A thousand times would I have shed my own blood, drop by drop, to have saved their lives; but I could not, my father, indeed I could not sacrifice the whole human race."

The conclusion of this speech convinced my father that my ideas were deranged, and he instantly changed the subject of our conversation, and endeavoured to alter the course of my thoughts. He wished as much as possible to obliterate the memory of the scenes that had taken place in Ireland, and never alluded to them, or suffered me to speak of my misfortunes.

As time passed away I became more calm: misery had her dwelling in my heart, but I no longer talked in the same incoherent manner of my own crimes; sufficient for me was the consciousness of them. By the utmost self-violence, I curbed the imperious voice of wretchedness, which sometimes desired to declare itself to the whole world; and my manners were calmer and more composed than they had ever been since my journey to the sea of ice.

We arrived at Havre on the 8th of May, and instantly proceeded to Paris, where my father had some business which detained us a few weeks. In this city, I received the following letter from Elizabeth: —

"*To* Victor Frankenstein.

"My Dearest Friend,

"It gave me the greatest pleasure to receive a letter from my uncle dated at Paris; you are no longer at a formidable distance, and I may hope to see you in less than a fortnight. My poor cousin, how much you must have suffered! I expect to see you looking even more ill than when you quitted Geneva. This winter has been passed most miserably, tortured as I have been by anxious suspense; yet I hope to see peace in your countenance, and to find that your heart is not totally devoid of comfort and tranquillity.

"Yet I fear that the same feelings now exist that made you so miserable a year ago, even perhaps augmented by time. I would not disturb you at this period, when so many misfortunes weigh upon you; but a conversation that

I had with my uncle previous to his departure renders some explanation necessary before we meet.

“Explanation! you may possibly say; what can Elizabeth have to explain? If you really say this, my questions are answered, and I have no more to do than to sign myself your affectionate cousin. But you are distant from me, and it is possible that you may dread, and yet be pleased with this explanation; and, in a probability of this being the case, I dare not any longer postpone writing what, during your absence, I have often wished to express to you, but have never had the courage to begin.

“You well know, Victor, that our union had been the favourite plan of your parents ever since our infancy. We were told this when young, and taught to look forward to it as an event that would certainly take place. We were affectionate playfellows during childhood, and, I believe, dear and valued friends to one another as we grew older. But as brother and sister often entertain a lively affection towards each other, without desiring a more intimate union, may not such also be our case? Tell me, dearest Victor. Answer me, I conjure you, by our mutual happiness, with simple truth — Do you not love another?

“You have travelled; you have spent several years of your life at Ingolstadt; and I confess to you, my friend, that when I saw you last autumn so unhappy, flying to solitude, from the society of every creature, I could not help supposing that you might regret our connexion, and believe yourself bound in honour to fulfil the wishes of your parents, although they opposed themselves to your inclinations. But this is false reasoning. I confess to you, my cousin, that I love you, and that in my airy dreams of futurity you have been my constant friend and companion. But it is your happiness I desire as well as my own, when I declare to you, that our marriage would render me eternally miserable, unless it were the dictate of your own free choice. Even now I weep to think, that, borne down as you are by the cruelest misfortunes, you may stifle; by the word *honour*, all hope of that love and happiness which would alone restore you to yourself. I, who have so interested an affection for you, may increase your miseries ten-fold, by being an obstacle to your wishes. Ah, Victor, be assured that your cousin and playmate has too sincere a love for you not to be made miserable by this supposition. Be happy, my friend; and if you obey me in this one request, remain satisfied that nothing on earth will have the power to interrupt my tranquillity.

"Do not let this letter disturb you; do not answer it to-morrow, or the next day, or even until you come, if it will give you pain. My uncle will send me news of your health; and if I see but one smile on your lips when we meet, occasioned by this or any other exertion of mine, I shall need no other happiness.

"Elizabeth Lavenza.

"Geneva, May 18th. 17 — ."

This letter revived in my memory what I had before forgotten, the threat of the fiend—"*I will be with you on your wedding-night!*" Such was my sentence, and on that night would the dæmon employ every art to destroy me, and tear me from the glimpse of happiness which promised partly to console my sufferings. On that night he had determined to consummate his crimes by my death. Well, be it so; a deadly struggle would then assuredly take place, in which if he was victorious, I should be at peace, and his power over me be at an end. If he were vanquished, I should be a free man. Alas! what freedom? such as the peasant enjoys when his family have been massacred before his eyes, his cottage burnt, his lands laid waste, and he is turned adrift, homeless, pennyless, and alone, but free. Such would be my liberty, except that in my Elizabeth I possessed a treasure; alas! balanced by those horrors of remorse and guilt, which would pursue me until death.

Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and re-read her letter, and some softened feelings stole into my heart, and dared to whisper paradisaical dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten, and the angel's arm bared to drive me from all hope. Yet I would die to make her happy. If the monster executed his threat, death was inevitable; yet, again, I considered whether my marriage would hasten my fate. My destruction might indeed arrive a few months sooner; but if my torturer should suspect that I postponed it, influenced by his menaces, he would surely find other, and perhaps more dreadful means of revenge. He had vowed *to be with me on my wedding-night*, yet he did not consider that threat as binding him to peace in the mean time; for, as if to shew me that he was not yet satiated with blood, he had murdered Clerval immediately after the enunciation of his threats. I resolved, therefore, that if my immediate union with my cousin would conduce either to her's or my father's happiness, my adversary's designs against my life should not retard it a single hour.

In this state of mind I wrote to Elizabeth. My letter was calm and affectionate. "I fear, my beloved girl," I said, "little happiness remains for us on earth; yet all that I may one day enjoy is concentered in you. Chase away your idle fears; to you alone do I consecrate my life, and my endeavours for contentment. I have one secret, Elizabeth, a dreadful one; when revealed to you, it will chill your frame with horror, and then, far from being surprised at my misery, you will only wonder that I survive what I have endured. I will confide this tale of misery and terror to you the day after our marriage shall take place; for, my sweet cousin, there must be perfect confidence between us. But until then, I conjure you, do not mention or allude to it. This I most earnestly entreat, and I know you will comply."

In about a week after the arrival of Elizabeth's letter, we returned to Geneva. My cousin welcomed me with warm affection; yet tears were in her eyes, as she beheld my emaciated frame and feverish cheeks. I saw a change in her also. She was thinner, and had lost much of that heavenly vivacity that had before charmed me; but her gentleness, and soft looks of compassion, made her a more fit companion for one blasted and miserable as I was.

The tranquillity which I now enjoyed did not endure. Memory brought madness with it; and when I thought on what had passed, a real insanity possessed me; sometimes I was furious, and burnt with rage, sometimes low and despondent. I neither spoke or looked, but sat motionless, bewildered by the multitude of miseries that overcame me.

Elizabeth alone had the power to draw me from these fits; her gentle voice would soothe me when transported by passion, and inspire me with human feelings when sunk in torpor. She wept with me, and for me. When reason returned, she would remonstrate, and endeavour to inspire me with resignation. Ah! it is well for the unfortunate to be resigned, but for the guilty there is no peace. The agonies of remorse poison the luxury there is otherwise sometimes found in indulging the excess of grief.

Soon after my arrival my father spoke of my immediate marriage with my cousin. I remained silent.

"Have you, then, some other attachment?"

"None on earth. I love Elizabeth, and look forward to our union with delight. Let the day therefore be fixed; and on it I will consecrate myself, in life or death, to the happiness of my cousin."

"My dear Victor, do not speak thus. Heavy misfortunes have befallen us; but let us only cling closer to what remains, and transfer our love for those whom we have lost to those who yet live. Our circle will be small, but bound close by the ties of affection and mutual misfortune. And when time shall have softened your despair, new and dear objects of care will be born to replace those of whom we have been so cruelly deprived."

Such were the lessons of my father. But to me the remembrance of the threat returned: nor can you wonder, that, omnipotent as the fiend had yet been in his deeds of blood, I should almost regard him as invincible; and that when he had pronounced the words, "*I shall be with you on your wedding-night*," I should regard the threatened fate as unavoidable. But death was no evil to me, if the loss of Elizabeth were balanced with it; and I therefore, with a contented and even cheerful countenance, agreed with my father, that if my cousin would consent, the ceremony should take place in ten days, and thus put, as I imagined, the seal to my fate.

Great God! if for one instant I had thought what might be the hellish intention of my fiendish adversary, I would rather have banished myself for ever from my native country, and wandered a friendless outcast over the earth, than have consented to this miserable marriage. But, as if possessed of magic powers, the monster had blinded me to his real intentions; and when I thought that I prepared only my own death, I hastened that of a far dearer victim.

As the period fixed for our marriage drew nearer, whether from cowardice or a prophetic feeling, I felt my heart sink within me. But I concealed my feelings by an appearance of hilarity, that brought smiles and joy to the countenance of my father, but hardly deceived the ever-watchful and nicer eye of Elizabeth. She looked forward to our union with placid contentment, not unmingled with a little fear, which past misfortunes had impressed, that what now appeared certain and tangible happiness, might soon dissipate into an airy dream, and leave no trace but deep and everlasting regret.

Preparations were made for the event; congratulatory visits were received; and all wore a smiling appearance. I shut up, as well as I could, in my own heart the anxiety that preyed there, and entered with seeming earnestness into the plans of my father, although they might only serve as the decorations of my tragedy. A house was purchased for us near Cologny, by which we should enjoy the pleasures of the country, and yet be so near Geneva as to see my father every day; who would still reside within the walls, for the benefit of Ernest, that he might follow his studies at the schools.

In the mean time I took every precaution to defend my person, in case the fiend should openly attack me. I carried pistols and a dagger constantly about me, and was ever on the watch to prevent artifice; and by these means gained a greater degree of tranquillity. Indeed, as the period approached, the threat appeared more as a delusion, not to be regarded as worthy to disturb my peace, while the happiness I hoped for in my marriage wore a greater appearance of certainty, as the day fixed for its solemnization drew nearer, and I heard it continually spoken of as an occurrence which no accident could possibly prevent.

Elizabeth seemed happy; my tranquil demeanour contributed greatly to calm her mind. But on the day that was to fulfil my wishes and my destiny, she was melancholy, and a presentiment of evil pervaded her; and perhaps also she thought of the dreadful secret, which I had promised to reveal to her the following day. My father was in the mean time overjoyed, and, in the bustle of preparation, only observed in the melancholy of his niece the diffidence of a bride.

After the ceremony was performed, a large party assembled at my father's; but it was agreed that Elizabeth and I should pass the afternoon and night at Evian, and return to Cologny the next morning. As the day was fair, and the wind favourable, we resolved to go by water.

Those were the last moments of my life during which I enjoyed the feeling of happiness. We passed rapidly along: the sun was hot, but we were sheltered from its rays by a kind of canopy, while we enjoyed the beauty of the scene, sometimes on one side of the lake, where we saw Mont Salêve, the pleasant banks of Montalêgre, and at a distance, surmounting all, the beautiful Mont Blânc, and the assemblage of snowy mountains that in vain endeavour to emulate her; sometimes coasting the opposite banks, we saw the mighty Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost insurmountable barrier to the invader who should wish to enslave it.

I took the hand of Elizabeth: “You are sorrowful, my love. Ah! if you knew what I have suffered, and what I may yet endure, you would endeavour to let me taste the quiet, and freedom from despair, that this one day at least permits me to enjoy.”

“Be happy, my dear Victor,” replied Elizabeth; “there is, I hope, nothing to distress you; and be assured that if a lively joy is not painted in my face, my heart is contented. Something whispers to me not to depend too much on the prospect that is opened before us; but I will not listen to such a sinister voice. Observe how fast we move along, and how the clouds which sometimes obscure, and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blânc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting. Look also at the innumerable fish that are swimming in the clear waters, where we can distinguish every pebble that lies at the bottom. What a divine day! how happy and serene all nature appears!”

Thus Elizabeth endeavoured to divert her thoughts and mine from all reflection upon melancholy subjects. But her temper was fluctuating; joy for a few instants shone in her eyes, but it continually gave place to distraction and reverie.

The sun sunk lower in the heavens; we passed the river Drance, and observed its path through the chasms of the higher, and the glens of the lower hills. The Alps here come closer to the lake, and we approached the amphitheatre of mountains which forms its eastern boundary. The spire of Evian shone under the woods that surrounded it, and the range of mountain above mountain by which it was overhung.

The wind, which had hitherto carried us along with amazing rapidity, sunk at sunset to a light breeze; the soft air just ruffled the water, and caused a pleasant motion among the trees as we approached the shore, from which it wafted the most delightful scent of flowers and hay. The sun sunk beneath the horizon as we landed; and as I touched the shore, I felt those cares and fears revive, which soon were to clasp me, and cling to me for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

It was eight o'clock when we landed; we walked for a short time on the shore, enjoying the transitory light, and then retired to the inn, and contemplated the lovely scene of waters, woods, and mountains, obscured in darkness, yet still displaying their black outlines.

The wind, which had fallen in the south, now rose with great violence in the west. The moon had reached her summit in the heavens, and was beginning to descend; the clouds swept across it swifter than the flight of the vulture, and dimmed her rays, while the lake reflected the scene of the busy heavens, rendered still busier by the restless waves that were beginning to rise. Suddenly a heavy storm of rain descended.

I had been calm during the day; but so soon as night obscured the shapes of objects, a thousand fears arose in my mind. I was anxious and watchful, while my right hand grasped a pistol which was hidden in my bosom; every sound terrified me; but I resolved that I would sell my life dearly, and not relax the impending conflict until my own life, or that of my adversary, were extinguished.

Elizabeth observed my agitation for some time in timid and fearful silence; at length she said, "What is it that agitates you, my dear Victor? What is it you fear?"

"Oh! peace, peace, my love," replied I, "this night, and all will be safe: but this night is dreadful, very dreadful."

I passed an hour in this state of mind, when suddenly I reflected how dreadful the combat which I momentarily expected would be to my wife, and I earnestly entreated her to retire, resolving not to join her until I had obtained some knowledge as to the situation of my enemy.

She left me, and I continued some time walking up and down the passages of the house, and inspecting every corner that might afford a retreat to my adversary. But I discovered no trace of him, and was beginning to conjecture that some fortunate chance had intervened to prevent the execution of his menaces; when suddenly I heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the room into which Elizabeth had retired. As I heard it, the whole truth rushed into my mind, my arms dropped, the motion of every muscle and fibre was suspended; I could feel the blood trickling in my veins, and tingling in the extremities of my limbs. This state lasted but for an instant; the scream was repeated, and I rushed into the room.

Great God! why did I not then expire! Why am I here to relate the destruction of the best hope, and the purest creature of earth. She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down, and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Every where I turn I see the same figure — her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier. Could I behold this, and live? Alas! life is obstinate, and clings closest where it is most hated. For a moment only did I lose recollection; I fainted.

When I recovered, I found myself surrounded by the people of the inn; their countenances expressed a breathless terror: but the horror of others appeared only as a mockery, a shadow of the feelings that oppressed me. I escaped from them to the room where lay the body of Elizabeth, my love, my wife, so lately living, so dear, so worthy. She had been moved from the posture in which I had first beheld her; and now, as she lay, her head upon her arm, and a handkerchief thrown across her face and neck, I might have supposed her asleep. I rushed towards her, and embraced her with ardour; but the deathly languor and coldness of the limbs told me, that what I now held in my arms had ceased to be the Elizabeth whom I had loved and cherished. The murderous mark of the fiend’s grasp was on her neck, and the breath had ceased to issue from her lips.

While I still hung over her in the agony of despair, I happened to look up. The windows of the room had before been darkened; and I felt a kind of panic on seeing the pale yellow light of the moon illuminate the chamber. The shutters had been thrown back; and, with a sensation of horror not to be described, I saw at the open window a figure the most hideous and abhorred. A grin was on the face of the monster; he seemed to jeer, as with his fiendish finger he pointed towards the corpse of my wife. I rushed towards the window, and drawing a pistol from my bosom, shot; but he eluded me, leaped from his station, and, running with the swiftness of lightning, plunged into the lake.

The report of the pistol brought a crowd into the room. I pointed to the spot where he had disappeared, and we followed the track with boats; nets were cast, but in vain. After passing several hours, we returned hopeless, most of my companions believing it to have been a form conjured by my fancy. After having landed, they proceeded to search the country, parties going in different directions among the woods and vines.

I did not accompany them; I was exhausted: a film covered my eyes, and my skin was parched with the heat of fever. In this state I lay on a bed, hardly conscious of what had happened; my eyes wandered round the room, as if to seek something that I had lost.

At length I remembered that my father would anxiously expect the return of Elizabeth and myself, and that I must return alone. This reflection brought tears into my eyes, and I wept for a long time; but my thoughts rambled to various subjects, reflecting on my misfortunes, and their cause. I was bewildered in a cloud of wonder and horror. The death of William, the execution of Justine, the murder of Clerval, and lastly of my wife; even at that moment I knew not that my only remaining friends were safe from the malignity of the fiend; my father even now might be writhing under his grasp, and Ernest might be dead at his feet. This idea made me shudder, and recalled me to action. I started up, and resolved to return to Geneva with all possible speed.

There were no horses to be procured, and I must return by the lake; but the wind was unfavourable, and the rain fell in torrents. However, it was hardly morning, and I might reasonably hope to arrive by night. I hired men to row, and took an oar myself, for I had always experienced relief from mental torment in bodily exercise. But the overflowing misery I now felt, and the excess of agitation that I endured, rendered me incapable of any exertion. I threw down the oar; and, leaning my head upon my hands, gave way to every gloomy idea that arose. If I looked up, I saw the scenes which were familiar to me in my happier time, and which I had contemplated but the day before in the company of her who was now but a shadow and a recollection. Tears streamed from my eyes. The rain had ceased for a moment, and I saw the fish play in the waters as they had done a few hours before; they had then been observed by Elizabeth. Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. The sun might shine, or the clouds might lour; but nothing could appear to me as it had done the day before. A fiend had snatched from me every hope of future happiness: no creature had ever been so miserable as I was; so frightful an event is single in the history of man.

But why should I dwell upon the incidents that followed this last overwhelming event. Mine has been a tale of horrors; I have reached their *acme*, and what I must now relate can but be tedious to you. Know that, one by one, my friends were snatched away; I was left desolate. My own strength is exhausted; and I must tell, in a few words, what remains of my hideous narration.

I arrived at Geneva. My father and Ernest yet lived; but the former sunk under the tidings that I bore. I see him now, excellent and venerable old man! his eyes wandered in vacancy, for they had lost their charm and their delight — his niece, his more than daughter, whom he doated on with all that affection which a man feels, who, in the decline of life, having few affections, clings more earnestly to those that remain. Cursed, cursed be the fiend that brought misery on his grey hairs, and doomed him to waste in wretchedness! He could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him; an apoplectic fit was brought on, and in a few days he died in my arms.

What then became of me? I know not; I lost sensation, and chains and darkness were the only objects that pressed upon me. Sometimes, indeed, I dreamt that I wandered in flowery meadows and pleasant vales with the friends of my youth; but awoke, and found myself in a dungeon. Melancholy followed, but by degrees I gained a clear conception of my miseries and situation, and was then released from my prison. For they had called me mad; and during many months, as I understood, a solitary cell had been my habitation.

But liberty had been a useless gift to me had I not, as I awakened to reason, at the same time awakened to revenge. As the memory of past misfortunes pressed upon me, I began to reflect on their cause — the monster whom I had created, the miserable dæmon whom I had sent abroad into the world for my destruction. I was possessed by a maddening rage when I thought of him, and desired and ardently prayed that I might have him within my grasp to wreak a great and signal revenge on his cursed head.

Nor did my hate long confine itself to useless wishes; I began to reflect on the best means of securing him; and for this purpose, about a month after my release, I repaired to a criminal judge in the town, and told him that I had an accusation to make; that I knew the destroyer of my family; and that I required him to exert his whole authority for the apprehension of the murderer.

The magistrate listened to me with attention and kindness: "Be assured, sir," said he, "no pains or exertions on my part shall be spared to discover the villain."

"I thank you," replied I; "listen, therefore, to the deposition that I have to make. It is indeed a tale so strange, that I should fear you would not credit it, were there not something in truth which, however wonderful, forces conviction. The story is too connected to be mistaken for a dream, and I have no motive for falsehood." My manner, as I thus addressed him, was impressive, but calm; I had formed in my own heart a resolution to pursue my destroyer to death; and this purpose quieted my agony, and provisionally reconciled me to life. I now related my history briefly, but with firmness and precision, marking the dates with accuracy, and never deviating into invective or exclamation.

The magistrate appeared at first perfectly incredulous, but as I continued he became more attentive and interested; I saw him sometimes shudder with horror, at others a lively surprise, unmingled with disbelief, was painted on his countenance.

When I had concluded my narration, I said. "This is the being whom I accuse, and for whose detection and punishment I call upon you to exert your whole power. It is your duty as a magistrate, and I believe and hope that your feelings as a man will not revolt from the execution of those functions on this occasion."

This address caused a considerable change in the physiognomy of my auditor. He had heard my story with that half kind of belief that is given to a tale of spirits and supernatural events; but when he was called upon to act officially in consequence, the whole tide of his incredulity returned. He, however, answered mildly, "I would willingly afford you every aid in your pursuit; but the creature of whom you speak appears to have powers which would put all my exertions to defiance. Who can follow an animal which can traverse the sea of ice, and inhabit caves and dens, where no man would venture to intrude? Besides, some months have elapsed since the commission of his crimes, and no one can conjecture to what place he has wandered, or what region he may now inhabit."

"I do not doubt that he hovers near the spot which I inhabit; and if he has indeed taken refuge in the Alps, he may be hunted like the chamois, and destroyed as a beast of prey. But I perceive your thoughts: you do not credit my narrative, and do not intend to pursue my enemy with the punishment which is his desert."

As I spoke, rage sparkled in my eyes; the magistrate was intimidated; "You are mistaken," said he, "I will exert myself; and if it is in my power to seize the monster, be assured that he shall suffer punishment proportionate to his crimes. But I fear, from what you have yourself described to be his properties, that this will prove impracticable, and that, while every proper measure is pursued, you should endeavour to make up your mind to disappointment."

"That cannot be; but all that I can say will be of little avail. My revenge is of no moment to you; yet, while I allow it to be a vice, I confess that it is the devouring and only passion of my soul. My rage is unspeakable, when I reflect that the murderer, whom I have turned loose upon society, still exists. You refuse my just demand: I have but one resource; and I devote myself, either in my life or death, to his destruction."

I trembled with excess of agitation as I said this; there was a phrenzy in my manner, and something, I doubt not, of that haughty fierceness, which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed. But to a Genevan magistrate, whose mind was occupied by far other ideas than those of devotion and heroism, this elevation of mind had much the appearance of madness. He endeavoured to soothe me as a nurse does a child, and reverted to my tale as the effects of delirium.

"Man," I cried, "how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom! Cease; you know not what it is you say."

I broke from the house angry and disturbed, and retired to meditate on some other mode of action.

CHAPTER VII.

My present situation was one in which all voluntary thought was swallowed up and lost. I was hurried away by fury; revenge alone endowed me with strength and composure; it modelled my feelings, and allowed me to be calculating and calm, at periods when otherwise delirium or death would have been my portion.

My first resolution was to quit Geneva for ever; my country, which, when I was happy and beloved, was dear to me, now, in my adversity, became hateful. I provided myself with a sum of money, together with a few jewels which had belonged to my mother, and departed.

And now my wanderings began, which are to cease but with life. I have traversed a vast portion of the earth, and have endured all the hardships which travellers, in deserts and barbarous countries, are wont to meet. How I have lived I hardly know; many times have I stretched my failing limbs upon the sandy plain, and prayed for death. But revenge kept me alive; I dared not die, and leave my adversary in being.

When I quitted Geneva, my first labour was to gain some clue by which I might trace the steps of my fiendish enemy. But my plan was unsettled; and I wandered many hours around the confines of the town, uncertain what path I should pursue. As night approached, I found myself at the entrance of the cemetery where William, Elizabeth, and my father, reposed. I entered it, and approached the tomb which marked their graves. Every thing was silent, except the leaves of the trees, which were gently agitated by the wind; the night was nearly dark; and the scene would have been solemn and affecting even to an uninterested observer. The spirits of the departed seemed to flit around, and to cast a shadow, which was felt but seen not, around the head of the mourner.

The deep grief which this scene had at first excited quickly gave way to rage and despair. They were dead, and I lived; their murderer also lived, and to destroy him I must drag out my weary existence. I knelt on the grass, and kissed the earth, and with quivering lips exclaimed, “By the sacred earth on which I kneel, by the shades that wander near me, by the deep and eternal grief that I feel, I swear; and by thee, O Night, and by the spirits that preside over thee, I swear to pursue the dæmon, who caused this misery, until he or I shall perish in mortal conflict. For this purpose I will preserve my life: to execute this dear revenge, will I again behold the sun, and tread the green herbage of earth, which otherwise should vanish from my eyes for ever. And I call on you, spirits of the dead; and on you, wandering ministers of vengeance, to aid and conduct me in my work. Let the cursed and hellish monster drink deep of agony; let him feel the despair that now torments me.”

I had begun my adjuration with solemnity, and an awe which almost assured me that the shades of my murdered friends heard and approved my devotion; but the furies possessed me as I concluded, and rage choaked my utterance.

I was answered through the stillness of night by a loud and fiendish laugh. It rung on my ears long and heavily; the mountains re-echoed it, and I felt as if all hell surrounded me with mockery and laughter. Surely in that moment I should have been possessed by phrenzy, and have destroyed my miserable existence, but that my vow was heard, and that I was reserved for vengeance. The laughter died away: when a well-known and abhorred voice, apparently close to my ear, addressed me in an audible whisper—”I am satisfied: miserable wretch! you have determined to live, and I am satisfied.”

I darted towards the spot from which the sound proceeded; but the devil eluded my grasp. Suddenly the broad disk of the moon arose, and shone full upon his ghastly and distorted shape, as he fled with more than mortal speed.

I pursued him; and for many months this has been my task. Guided by a slight clue, I followed the windings of the Rhone, but vainly. The blue Mediterranean appeared; and, by a strange chance, I saw the fiend enter by night, and hide himself in a vessel bound for the Black Sea. I took my passage in the same ship; but he escaped, I know not how.

Amidst the wilds of Tartary and Russia, although he still evaded me, I have ever followed in his track. Sometimes the peasants, scared by this horrid apparition, informed me of his path; sometimes he himself, who feared that if I lost all trace I should despair and die, often left some mark to guide me. The snows descended on my head, and I saw the print of his huge step on the white plain. To you first entering on life, to whom care is new, and agony unknown, how can you understand what I have felt, and still feel? Cold, want, and fatigue, were the least pains which I was destined to endure; I was cursed by some devil, and carried about with me my eternal hell; yet still a spirit of good followed and directed my steps, and, when I most murmured, would suddenly extricate me from seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Sometimes, when nature, overcome by hunger, sunk under the exhaustion, a repast was prepared for me in the desert, that restored and inspirited me. The fare was indeed coarse, such as the peasants of the country ate; but I may not doubt that it was set there by the spirits that I had invoked to aid me. Often, when all was dry, the heavens cloudless, and I was parched by thirst, a slight cloud would bedim the sky, shed the few drops that revived me, and vanish.

I followed, when I could, the courses of the rivers; but the dæmon generally avoided these, as it was here that the population of the country chiefly collected. In other places human beings were seldom seen; and I generally subsisted on the wild animals that crossed my path. I had money with me, and gained the friendship of the villagers by distributing it, or bringing with me some food that I had killed, which, after taking a small part, I always presented to those who had provided me with fire and utensils for cooking.

My life, as it passed thus, was indeed hateful to me, and it was during sleep alone that I could taste joy. O blessed sleep! often, when most miserable, I sank to repose, and my dreams lulled me even to rapture. The spirits that guarded me had provided these moments, or rather hours, of happiness, that I might retain strength to fulfil my pilgrimage. Deprived of this respite, I should have sunk under my hardships. During the day I was sustained and inspirited by the hope of night: for in sleep I saw my friends, my wife, and my beloved country; again I saw the benevolent countenance of my father, heard the silver tones of my Elizabeth's voice, and beheld Clerval enjoying health and youth. Often, when wearied by a toilsome march, I persuaded myself that I was dreaming until night should come, and that I should then enjoy reality in the arms of my dearest friends. What agonizing fondness did I feel for them! how did I cling to their dear forms, as sometimes they haunted even my waking hours, and persuade myself that they still lived! At such moments vengeance, that burned within me, died in my heart, and I pursued my path towards the destruction of the dæmon, more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul.

What his feelings were whom I pursued, I cannot know. Sometimes, indeed, he left marks in writing on the barks of the trees, or cut in stone, that guided me, and instigated my fury. “My reign is not yet over,” (these words were legible in one of these inscriptions); “you live, and my power is complete. Follow me; I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive. You will find near this place, if you follow not too tardily, a dead hare; eat, and be refreshed. Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives; but many hard and miserable hours must you endure, until that period shall arrive.”

Scoffing devil! Again do I vow vengeance; again do I devote thee, miserable fiend, to torture and death. Never will I omit my search, until he or I perish; and then with what ecstacy shall I join my Elizabeth, and those who even now prepare for me the reward of my tedious toil and horrible pilgrimage.

As I still pursued my journey to the northward, the snows thickened, and the cold increased in a degree almost too severe to support. The peasants were shut up in their hovels, and only a few of the most hardy ventured forth to seize the animals whom starvation had forced from their hiding-places to seek for prey. The rivers were covered with ice, and no fish could be procured; and thus I was cut off from my chief article of maintenance.

The triumph of my enemy increased with the difficulty of my labours. One inscription that he left was in these words: “Prepare! your toils only begin: wrap yourself in furs, and provide food, for we shall soon enter upon a journey where your sufferings will satisfy my everlasting hatred.”

My courage and perseverance were invigorated by these scoffing words; I resolved not to fail in my purpose; and, calling on heaven to support me, I continued with unabated fervour to traverse immense deserts, until the ocean appeared at a distance, and formed the utmost boundary of the horizon. Oh! how unlike it was to the blue seas of the south! Covered with ice, it was only to be distinguished from land by its superior wildness and ruggedness. The Greeks wept for joy when they beheld the Mediterranean from the hills of Asia, and hailed with rapture the boundary of their toils. I did not weep; but I knelt down, and, with a full heart, thanked my guiding spirit for conducting me in safety to the place where I hoped, notwithstanding my adversary’s gibe, to meet and grapple with him.

Some weeks before this period I had procured a sledge and dogs, and thus traversed the snows with inconceivable speed. I know not whether the fiend possessed the same advantages; but I found that, as before I had daily lost ground in the pursuit, I now gained on him; so much so, that when I first saw the ocean, he was but one day’s journey in advance, and I hoped to intercept him before he should reach the beach. With new courage, therefore, I pressed on, and in two days arrived at a wretched hamlet on the seashore. I inquired of the inhabitants concerning the fiend, and gained accurate information. A gigantic monster, they said, had arrived the night before, armed with a gun and many pistols; putting to flight the inhabitants of a solitary cottage, through fear of his terrific appearance. He had carried off their store of winter food, and, placing it in a sledge, to draw which he had seized on a numerous drove of trained dogs, he had harnessed them, and the same night, to the joy of the horror-struck villagers, had pursued his journey across the sea in a direction that led to no land; and they conjectured that he must speedily be destroyed by the breaking of the ice, or frozen by the eternal frosts.

On hearing this information, I suffered a temporary access of despair. He had escaped me; and I must commence a destructive and almost endless journey across the mountainous ices of the ocean, — amidst cold that few of the inhabitants could long endure, and which I, the native of a genial and sunny climate, could not hope to survive. Yet at the idea that the fiend should live and be triumphant, my rage and vengeance returned, and, like a mighty tide, overwhelmed every other feeling. After a slight repose, during which the spirits of the dead hovered round, and instigated me to toil and revenge, I prepared for my journey.

I exchanged my land sledge for one fashioned for the inequalities of the frozen ocean; and, purchasing a plentiful stock of provisions, I departed from land.

I cannot guess how many days have passed since then; but I have endured misery, which nothing but the eternal sentiment of a just retribution burning within my heart could have enabled me to support. Immense and rugged mountains of ice often barred up my passage, and I often heard the thunder of the ground sea, which threatened my destruction. But again the frost came, and made the paths of the sea secure.

By the quantity of provision which I had consumed I should guess that I had passed three weeks in this journey; and the continual protraction of hope, returning back upon the heart, often wrung bitter drops of despondency and grief from my eyes. Despair had indeed almost secured her prey, and I should soon have sunk beneath this misery; when once, after the poor animals that carried me had with incredible toil gained the summit of a sloping ice mountain, and one sinking under his fatigue died, I viewed the expanse before me with anguish, when suddenly my eye caught a dark speck upon the dusky plain. I strained my sight to discover what it could be, and uttered a wild cry of ecstacy when I distinguished a sledge, and the distorted proportions of a well-known form within. Oh! with what a burning gush did hope revisit my heart! warm tears filled my eyes, which I hastily wiped away, that they might not intercept the view I had of the dæmon; but still my sight was dimmed by the burning drops, until, giving way to the emotions that oppressed me, I wept aloud.

But this was not the time for delay; I disencumbered the dogs of their dead companion, gave them a plentiful portion of food; and, after an hour’s rest, which was absolutely necessary, and yet which was bitterly irksome to me, I continued my route. The sledge was still visible; nor did I again lose sight of it, except at the moments when for a short time some ice rock concealed it with its intervening crags. I indeed perceptibly gained on it; and when, after nearly two days’ journey, I beheld my enemy at no more than a mile distant, my heart bounded within me.

But now, when I appeared almost within grasp of my enemy, my hopes were suddenly extinguished, and I lost all trace of him more utterly than I had ever done before. A ground sea was heard; the thunder of its progress, as the waters rolled and swelled beneath me, became every moment more ominous and terrific. I pressed on, but in vain. The wind arose; the sea roared; and, as with the mighty shock of an earthquake, it split, and cracked with a tremendous and overwhelming sound. The work was soon finished: in a few minutes a tumultuous sea rolled between me and my enemy, and I was left drifting on a scattered piece of ice, that was continually lessening, and thus preparing for me a hideous death.

In this manner many appalling hours passed; several of my dogs died; and I myself was about to sink under the accumulation of distress, when I saw your vessel riding at anchor, and holding forth to me hopes of succour and life. I had no conception that vessels ever came so far north, and was astounded at the sight. I quickly destroyed part of my sledge to construct oars; and by these means was enabled, with infinite fatigue, to move my ice-raft in the direction of your ship. I had determined, if you were going southward, still to trust myself to the mercy of the seas, rather than abandon my purpose. I hoped to induce you to grant me a boat with which I could still pursue my enemy. But your direction was northward. You took me on board when my vigour was exhausted, and I should soon have sunk under my multiplied hardships into a death, which I still dread, — for my task is unfulfilled.

Oh! when will my guiding spirit, in conducting me to the dæmon, allow me the rest I so much desire; or must I die, and he yet live? If I do, swear to me, Walton, that he shall not escape; that you will seek him, and satisfy my vengeance in his death. Yet, do I dare ask you to undertake my pilgrimage, to endure the hardships that I have undergone? No; I am not so selfish. Yet, when I am dead, if he should appear; if the ministers of vengeance should conduct him to you, swear that he shall not live — swear that he shall not triumph over my accumulated woes, and live to make another such a wretch as I am. He is eloquent and persuasive; and once his words had even power over my heart: but trust him not. His soul is as hellish as his form, full of treachery and fiend-like malice. Hear him not; call on the manes of William, Justine, Clerval, Elizabeth, my father, and of the wretched Victor, and thrust your sword into his heart. I will hover near, and direct the steel aright.

Walton, *in continuation*.

August 26th, 17 — .

You have read this strange and terrific story, Margaret; and do you not feel your blood congealed with horror, like that which even now curdles mine? Sometimes, seized with sudden agony, he could not continue his tale; at others, his voice broken, yet piercing, uttered with difficulty the words so replete with agony. His fine and lovely eyes were now lighted up with indignation, now subdued to downcast sorrow, and quenched in infinite wretchedness. Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tones, and related the most horrible incidents with a tranquil voice, suppressing every mark of agitation; then, like a volcano bursting forth, his face would suddenly change to an expression of the wildest rage, as he shrieked out imprecations on his persecutor.

His tale is connected, and told with an appearance of the simplest truth; yet I own to you that the letters of Felix and Safie, which he shewed me, and the apparition of the monster, seen from our ship, brought to me a greater conviction of the truth of his narrative than his asseverations, however earnest and connected. Such a monster has then really existence; I cannot doubt it; yet I am lost in surprise and admiration. Sometimes I endeavoured to gain from Frankenstein the particulars of his creature's formation; but on this point he was impenetrable.

"Are you mad, my friend?" said he, "or whither does your senseless curiosity lead you? Would you also create for yourself and the world a demoniacal enemy? Or to what do your questions tend? Peace, peace! learn my miseries, and do not seek to increase your own."

Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history: he asked to see them, and then himself corrected and augmented them in many places; but principally in giving the life and spirit to the conversations he held with his enemy. "Since you have preserved my narration," said he, "I would not that a mutilated one should go down to posterity."

Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed. My thoughts, and every feeling of my soul, have been drunk up by the interest for my guest, which this tale, and his own elevated and gentle manners have created. I wish to soothe him; yet can I counsel one so infinitely miserable, so destitute of every hope of consolation, to live? Oh, no! the only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered feelings to peace and death. Yet he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium: he believes, that, when in dreams he holds converse with his friends, and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries, or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the real beings who visit him from the regions of a remote world. This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth.

Our conversations are not always confined to his own history and misfortunes. On every point of general literature he displays unbounded knowledge, and a quick and piercing apprehension. His eloquence is forcible and touching; nor can I hear him, when he relates a pathetic incident, or endeavours to move the passions of pity or love, without tears. What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin. He seems to feel his own worth, and the greatness of his fall.

"When younger," said he, "I felt as if I were destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound; but I possessed a coolness of judgment that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me, when others would have been oppressed; for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow-creatures. When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this feeling, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing; and, like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea, and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect, without passion, my reveries while the work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! my friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise."

Must I then lose this admirable being? I have longed for a friend; I have sought one who would sympathize with and love me. Behold, on these desert seas I have found such a one; but, I fear, I have gained him only to know his value, and lose him. I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea.

"I thank you, Walton," he said, "for your kind intentions towards so miserable a wretch; but when you speak of new ties, and fresh affections, think you that any can replace those who are gone? Can any man be to me as Clerval was; or any woman another Elizabeth? Even where the affections are not strongly moved by any superior excellence, the companions of our childhood always possess a certain power over our minds, which hardly any later friend can obtain. They know our infantine dispositions, which, however they may be afterwards modified, are never eradicated; and they can judge of our actions with more certain conclusions as to the integrity of our motives. A sister or a brother can never, unless indeed such symptoms have been shewn early, suspect the other of fraud or false dealing, when another friend, however strongly he may be attached, may, in spite of himself, be invaded with suspicion. But I enjoyed friends, dear not only through habit and association, but from their own merits; and, wherever I am, the soothing voice of my Elizabeth, and the conversation of Clerval, will be ever whispered in my ear. They are dead; and but one feeling in such a solitude can persuade me to preserve my life. If I were engaged in any high undertaking or design, fraught with extensive utility to my fellow-creatures, then could I live to fulfil it. But such is not my destiny; I must pursue and destroy the being to whom I gave existence; then my lot on earth will be fulfilled, and I may die."

September 2d.

My Beloved Sister,

I write to you, encompassed by peril, and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England, and the dearer friends that inhabit it. I am surrounded by mountains of ice, which admit of no escape, and threaten every moment to crush my vessel. The brave fellows, whom I have persuaded to be my companions, look towards me for aid; but I have none to bestow. There is something terribly appalling in our situation, yet my courage and hopes do not desert me. We may survive; and if we do not, I will repeat the lessons of my Seneca, and die with a good heart.

Yet what, Margaret, will be the state of your mind? You will not hear of my destruction, and you will anxiously await my return. Years will pass, and you will have visitings of despair, and yet be tortured by hope. Oh! my beloved sister, the sickening failings of your heart-felt expectations are, in prospect, more terrible to me than my own death. But you have a husband,

and lovely children; you may be happy: heaven bless you, and make you so!

My unfortunate guest regards me with the tenderest compassion. He endeavours to fill me with hope; and talks as if life were a possession which he valued. He reminds me how often the same accidents have happened to other navigators, who have attempted this sea, and, in spite of myself, he fills me with cheerful auguries. Even the sailors feel the power of his eloquence: when he speaks, they no longer despair: he rouses their energies, and, while they hear his voice, they believe these vast mountains of ice are mole-hills, which will vanish before the resolutions of man. These feelings are transitory; each day's expectation delayed fills them with fear, and I almost dread a mutiny caused by this despair.

September 5th.

A scene has just passed of such uncommon interest, that although it is highly probable that these papers may never reach you, yet I cannot forbear recording it.

We are still surrounded by mountains of ice, still in imminent danger of being crushed in their conflict. The cold is excessive, and many of my unfortunate comrades have already found a grave amidst this scene of desolation. Frankenstein has daily declined in health: a feverish fire still glimmers in his eyes; but he is exhausted, and, when suddenly roused to any exertion, he speedily sinks again into apparent lifelessness.

I mentioned in my last letter the fears I entertained of a mutiny. This morning, as I sat watching the wan countenance of my friend — his eyes half closed, and his limbs hanging listlessly, — I was roused by half a dozen of the sailors, who desired admission into the cabin. They entered; and their leader addressed me. He told me that he and his companions had been chosen by the other sailors to come in deputation to me, to make me a demand, which, in justice, I could not refuse. We were immured in ice, and should probably never escape; but they feared that if, as was possible, the ice should dissipate, and a free passage be opened, I should be rash enough to continue my voyage, and lead them into fresh dangers, after they might happily have surmounted this. They desired, therefore, that I should engage with a solemn promise, that if the vessel should be freed, I would instantly direct my coarse southward.

This speech troubled me. I had not despaired; nor had I yet conceived the idea of returning, if set free. Yet could I, in justice, or even in possibility, refuse this demand? I hesitated before I answered; when Frankenstein, who had at first been silent, and, indeed, appeared hardly to have force enough to attend, now roused himself; his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks flushed with momentary vigour. Turning towards the men, he said —

"What do you mean? What do you demand of your captain? Are you then so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition? and wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror; because, at every new incident, your fortitude was to be called forth, and your courage exhibited; because danger and death surrounded, and these dangers you were to brave and overcome. For this was it a glorious, for this was it an honourable undertaking. You were hereafter to be hailed as the benefactors of your species; your name adored, as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind. And now, behold, with the first imagination of danger, or, if you will, the first mighty and terrific trial of your courage, you shrink away, and are content to be handed down as men who had not strength enough to endure cold and peril; and so, poor souls, they were chilly, and returned to their warm firesides. Why, that requires not this preparation; ye need not have come thus far, and dragged your captain to the shame of a defeat, merely to prove yourselves cowards. Oh! be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes, and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts might be; it is mutable, cannot withstand you, if you say that it shall not. Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered, and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe."

He spoke this with a voice so modulated to the different feelings expressed in his speech, with an eye so full of lofty design and heroism, that can you wonder that these men were moved. They looked at one another, and were unable to reply. I spoke; I told them to retire, and consider of what had been said: that I would not lead them further north, if they strenuously desired the contrary; but that I hoped that, with reflection, their courage would return.

They retired, and I turned towards my friend; but he was sunk in languor, and almost deprived of life.

How all this will terminate, I know not; but I had rather die, than return shamefully, — my purpose unfulfilled. Yet I fear such will be my fate; the men, unsupported by ideas of glory and honour, can never willingly continue to endure their present hardships.

September 7th.

The die is cast; I have consented to return, if we are not destroyed. Thus are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed. It requires more philosophy than I possess, to bear this injustice with patience.

September 12th.

It is past; I am returning to England. I have lost my hopes of utility and glory; — I have lost my friend. But I will endeavour to detail these bitter circumstances to you, my dear sister; and, while I am wafted towards England, and towards you, I will not despond.

September 19th, the ice began to move, and roarings like thunder were heard at a distance, as the islands split and cracked in every direction. We were in the most imminent peril; but, as we could only remain passive, my chief attention was occupied by my unfortunate guest, whose illness increased in such a degree, that he was entirely confined to his bed. The ice cracked behind us, and was driven with force towards the north; a breeze sprung from the west, and on the 11th the passage towards the south became perfectly free. When the sailors saw this, and that their return to their native country was apparently assured, a shout of tumultuous joy broke from, them, loud and long-continued. Frankenstein, who was dozing, awoke, and asked the cause of the tumult. “They shout,” I said, “because they will soon return to England.”

“Do you then really return?”

“Alas! yes; I cannot withstand their demands. I cannot lead them unwillingly to danger, and I must return.”

“Do so, if you will; but I will not. You may give up your purpose; but mine is assigned to me by heaven, and I dare not. I am weak; but surely the spirits who assist my vengeance will endow me with sufficient strength.”

Saying this, he endeavoured to spring from the bed, but the exertion was too great for him; he fell back, and fainted.

It was long before he was restored; and I often thought that life was entirely extinct. At length he opened his eyes, but he breathed with difficulty, and was unable to speak. The surgeon gave him a composing draught, and ordered us to leave him undisturbed. In the mean time he told me, that my friend had certainly not many hours to live.

His sentence was pronounced; and I could only grieve, and be patient. I sat by his bed watching him; his eyes were closed, and I thought he slept; but presently he called to me in a feeble voice, and, bidding me come near, said—”Alas! the strength I relied on is gone; I feel that I shall soon die, and he, my enemy and persecutor, may still be in being. Think not, Walton, that in the last moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred, and ardent desire of revenge, I once expressed, but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary. During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blameable. In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature, and was bound towards him, to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being. This was my duty; but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards my fellow-creatures had greater claims to my attention, because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery. Urged by this view, I refused, and I did right in refusing, to create a companion for the first creature. He shewed unparalleled malignity and selfishness, in evil: he destroyed my friends; he devoted to destruction beings who possessed exquisite sensations, happiness, and wisdom; nor do I know where this thirst for vengeance may end. Miserable himself, that he may render no other wretched, he ought to die. The task of his destruction was mine, but I have failed. When actuated by selfish and vicious motives, I asked you to undertake my unfinished work; and I renew this request now, when I am only induced by reason and virtue.

“Yet I cannot ask you to renounce your country and friends, to fulfil this task; and now, that you are returning to England, you will have little chance of meeting with him. But the consideration of these points, and the well-balancing of what you may esteem your duties, I leave to you; my judgment and ideas are already disturbed by the near approach of death. I dare not ask you to do what I think right, for I may still be misled by passion.

“That he should live to be an instrument of mischief disturbs me; in other respects this hour, when I momentarily expect my release, is the only happy one which I have enjoyed for several years. The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms. Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity, and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed.”

His voice became fainter as he spoke; and at length, exhausted by his effort, he sunk into silence. About half an hour afterwards he attempted again to speak, but was unable; he pressed my hand feebly, and his eyes closed for ever, while the irradiation of a gentle smile passed away from his lips.

Margaret, what comment can I make on the untimely extinction of this glorious spirit? What can I say, that will enable you to understand the depth of my sorrow? All that I should express would be inadequate and feeble. My tears flow; my mind is overshadowed by a cloud of disappointment. But I journey towards England, and I may there find consolation.

I am interrupted. What do these sounds portend? It is midnight; the breeze blows fairly, and the watch on deck scarcely stir. Again; there is a sound as of a human voice, but hoarser; it comes from the cabin where the remains of Frankenstein still lie. I must arise, and examine. Good night, my sister.

Great God! what a scene has just taken place! I am yet dizzy with the remembrance of it. I hardly know whether I shall have the power to detail it; yet the tale which I have recorded would be incomplete without this final and wonderful catastrophe.

I entered the cabin, where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe; gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy. When he heard the sound of my approach, he ceased to utter exclamations of grief and horror, and sprung towards the window. Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome, yet appalling hideousness. I shut my eyes involuntarily, and endeavoured to recollect what were my duties with regard to this destroyer. I called on him to stay.

He paused, looking on me with wonder; and, again turning towards the lifeless form of his creator, he seemed to forget my presence, and every feature and gesture seemed instigated by the wildest rage of some uncontrollable passion.

“That is also my victim!” he exclaimed; “in his murder my crimes are consummated; the miserable series of my being is wound to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! generous and self-devoted being! what does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! he is cold; he may not answer me.”

His voice seemed suffocated; and my first impulses, which had suggested to me the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend, in destroying his enemy, were now suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion. I approached this tremendous being; I dared not again raise my looks upon his face, there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness. I attempted to speak, but the words died away on my lips. The monster continued to utter wild and incoherent self-reproaches. At length I gathered resolution to address him, in a pause of the tempest of his passion: “Your repentance,” I said, “is now superfluous. If you had listened to the voice of conscience, and heeded the stings of remorse, before you had urged your diabolical vengeance to this extremity, Frankenstein would yet have lived.”

“And do you dream?” said the dæmon; “do you think that I was then dead to agony and remorse? — He,” he continued, pointing to the corpse, “he suffered not more in the consummation of the deed; — oh! not the ten-thousandth portion of the anguish that was mine during the lingering detail of its execution. A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Think ye that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy; and, when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine.

“After the murder of Clerval, I returned to Switzerland, heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror: I abhorred myself. But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness; that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me, he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was for ever barred, then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. I recollected my threat, and resolved that it should be accomplished. I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture; but I was the slave, not the master of an impulse, which I detested, yet could not disobey. Yet when she died! — nay, then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion. And now it is ended; there is my last victim!"

I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was re-kindled within me. "Wretch!" I said, "it is well that you come here to whine over the desolation that you have made. You throw a torch into a pile of buildings, and when they are consumed you sit among the ruins, and lament the fall. Hypocritical fiend! if he whom you mourn still lived, still would he be the object, again would he become the prey of your accursed vengeance. It is not pity that you feel; you lament only because the victim of your malignity is withdrawn from your power."

"Oh, it is not thus — not thus," interrupted the being; "yet such must be the impression conveyed to you by what appears to be the purport of my actions. Yet I seek not a fellow-feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now, that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone, while my sufferings shall endure: when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings, who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of bringing forth. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now vice has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. No crime, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I call over the frightful catalogue of my deeds, I cannot believe that I am he whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendant visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am quite alone.

"You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But, in the detail which he gave you of them, he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured, wasting in impotent passions. For whilst I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were for ever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me? Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the saviour of his child? Nay, these are virtuous and immaculate beings! I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice.

"But it is true that I am a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept, and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator, the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men, to misery; I have pursued him even to that irremediable ruin. There he lies, white and cold in death. You hate me; but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. I look on the hands which executed the deed; I think on the heart in which the imagination of it was conceived, and long for the moment when they will meet my eyes, when it will haunt my thoughts, no more.

"Fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither your's nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being, and accomplish that which must be done; but it requires my own. Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice. I shall quit your vessel on the ice-raft which brought me hither, and shall seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile, and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch, who would create such another as I have been. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me, or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. I shall no longer see the sun or stars, or feel the winds play on my cheeks. Light, feeling, and sense, will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer, and heard the rustling of the leaves and the chirping of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes, and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death?

"Farewell! I leave you, and in you the last of human kind whom these eyes will ever behold. Farewell, Frankenstein! If thou wert yet alive, and yet cherished a desire of revenge against me, it would be better satiated in my life than in my destruction. But it was not so; thou didst seek my extinction, that I might not cause greater wretchedness; and if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hast not yet ceased to think and feel, thou desirest not my life for my own misery. Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine; for the bitter sting of remorse may not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them for ever.

"But soon," he cried, with sad and solemn enthusiasm, "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus. Farewell."

He sprung from the cabin-window, as he said this, upon the ice-raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance.

THE END

FRANKENSTEIN (1831 version)

CONTENTS

Letter 1
Letter 2
Letter 3
Letter 4
Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18
Chapter 19
Chapter 20
Chapter 21
Chapter 22
Chapter 23
Chapter 24

Letter 1

St. Petersburgh, Dec. 11th, 17 —

TO Mrs. Saville, England

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburgh, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is forever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There — for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators — there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent forever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose — a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services. And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs — a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburgh and Archangel. I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never. Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother, R. Walton

Letter 2

Archangel, 28th March, 17 —

To Mrs. Saville, England

How slowly the time passes here, encompassed as I am by frost and snow! Yet a second step is taken towards my enterprise. I have hired a vessel and am occupied in collecting my sailors; those whom I have already engaged appear to be men on whom I can depend and are certainly possessed of dauntless courage.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy, and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil, I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling. I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me, whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother! I am too ardent in execution and too impatient of difficulties. But it is a still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common and read nothing but our Uncle Thomas' books of voyages. At that age I became acquainted with the celebrated poets of our own country; but it was only when it had ceased to be in my power to derive its most important benefits from such a conviction that I perceived the necessity of becoming acquainted with more languages than that of my native country. Now I am twenty-eight and am in reality more illiterate than many schoolboys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more and that my daydreams are more extended and magnificent, but they want (as the painters call it) KEEPING; and I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my mind. Well, these are useless complaints; I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. My lieutenant, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory, or rather, to word my phrase more characteristically, of advancement in his profession. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel; finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise. The master is a person of an excellent disposition and is remarkable in the ship for his gentleness and the mildness of his discipline. This circumstance, added to his well-known integrity and dauntless courage, made me very desirous to engage him. A youth passed in solitude, my best years spent under your gentle and feminine fosterage, has so refined the groundwork of my character that I cannot overcome an intense distaste to the usual brutality exercised on board ship: I have never believed it to be necessary, and when I heard of a mariner equally noted for his kindliness of heart and the respect and obedience paid to him by his crew, I felt myself peculiarly fortunate in being able to secure his services. I heard of him first in rather a romantic manner, from a lady who owes to him the happiness of her life. This, briefly, is his story. Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady of moderate fortune, and having amassed a considerable sum in prize-money, the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once before the destined ceremony; but she was bathed in tears, and throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to spare her, confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover, instantly abandoned his pursuit. He had already bought a farm with his money, on which he had designed to pass the remainder of his life; but he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman's father to consent to her marriage with her lover. But the old man decidedly refused, thinking himself bound in honour to my friend, who, when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations. “What a noble fellow!” you will exclaim. He is so; but then he is wholly uneducated: he is as silent as a Turk, and a kind of ignorant carelessness attends him, which, while it renders his conduct the more astonishing, detracts from the interest and sympathy which otherwise he would command.

Yet do not suppose, because I complain a little or because I can conceive a consolation for my toils which I may never know, that I am wavering in my resolutions. Those are as fixed as fate, and my voyage is only now delayed until the weather shall permit my embarkation. The winter has been dreadfully severe, but the spring promises well, and it is considered as a remarkably early season, so that perhaps I may sail sooner than I expected. I shall do nothing rashly: you know me sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care.

I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you a conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to “the land of mist and snow,” but I shall kill no albatross; therefore do not be alarmed for my safety or if I should come back to you as worn and woeful as the “Ancient Mariner.” You will smile at my allusion, but I will disclose a secret. I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets. There is something at work in my soul which I do not understand. I am practically industrious — painstaking, a workman to execute with perseverance and labour — but besides this there is a love for the marvellous, a belief in the marvellous, intertwined in all my projects, which hurries me out of the common pathways of men, even to the wild sea and unvisited regions I am about to explore. But to return to dearer considerations. Shall I meet you again, after having traversed immense seas, and returned by the most southern cape of Africa or America? I dare not expect such success, yet I cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture. Continue for the present to write to me by every opportunity: I may receive your letters on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits. I love you very tenderly. Remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother, Robert Walton

Letter 3

July 7th, 17 —

To Mrs. Saville, England

My dear Sister,

I write a few lines in haste to say that I am safe — and well advanced on my voyage. This letter will reach England by a merchantman now on its homeward voyage from Archangel; more fortunate than I, who may not see my native land, perhaps, for many years. I am, however, in good spirits: my men are bold and apparently firm of purpose, nor do the floating sheets of ice that continually pass us, indicating the dangers of the region towards which we are advancing, appear to dismay them. We have already reached a very high latitude; but it is the height of summer, and although not so warm as in England, the southern gales, which blow us speedily towards those shores which I so ardently desire to attain, breathe a degree of renovating warmth which I had not expected.

No incidents have hitherto befallen us that would make a figure in a letter. One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents which experienced navigators scarcely remember to record, and I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage.

Adieu, my dear Margaret. Be assured that for my own sake, as well as yours, I will not rashly encounter danger. I will be cool, persevering, and prudent.

But success SHALL crown my endeavours. Wherefore not? Thus far I have gone, tracing a secure way over the pathless seas, the very stars themselves being witnesses and testimonies of my triumph. Why not still proceed over the untamed yet obedient element? What can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?

My swelling heart involuntarily pours itself out thus. But I must finish. Heaven bless my beloved sister!

R.W.

Letter 4

August 5th, 17 —

To Mrs. Saville, England

So strange an accident has happened to us that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers can come into your possession.

Last Monday (July 31st) we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving her the sea-room in which she floated. Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed round by a very thick fog. We accordingly lay to, hoping that some change would take place in the atmosphere and weather.

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile; a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes until he was lost among the distant inequalities of the ice. This appearance excited our unqualified wonder. We were, as we believed, many hundred miles from any land; but this apparition seemed to denote that it was not, in reality, so distant as we had supposed. Shut in, however, by ice, it was impossible to follow his track, which we had observed with the greatest attention. About two hours after this occurrence we heard the ground sea, and before night the ice broke and freed our ship. We, however, lay to until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about after the breaking up of the ice. I profited of this time to rest for a few hours.

In the morning, however, as soon as it was light, I went upon deck and found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to someone in the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it whom the sailors were persuading to enter the vessel. He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but a European. When I appeared on deck the master said, “Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea.”

On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. “Before I come on board your vessel,” said he, “will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?”

You may conceive my astonishment on hearing such a question addressed to me from a man on the brink of destruction and to whom I should have supposed that my vessel would have been a resource which he would not have exchanged for the most precious wealth the earth can afford. I replied, however, that we were on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole.

Upon hearing this he appeared satisfied and consented to come on board. Good God! Margaret, if you had seen the man who thus capitulated for his safety, your surprise would have been boundless. His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. We attempted to carry him into the cabin, but as soon as he had quitted the fresh air he fainted. We accordingly brought him back to the deck and restored him to animation by rubbing him with brandy and forcing him to swallow a small quantity. As soon as he showed signs of life we wrapped him up in blankets and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen stove. By slow degrees he recovered and ate a little soup, which restored him wonderfully.

Two days passed in this manner before he was able to speak, and I often feared that his sufferings had deprived him of understanding. When he had in some measure recovered, I removed him to my own cabin and attended on him as much as my duty would permit. I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness, but there are moments when, if anyone performs an act of kindness towards him or does him any the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing, and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him.

When my guest was a little recovered I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask him a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body and mind whose restoration evidently depended upon entire repose. Once, however, the lieutenant asked why he had come so far upon the ice in so strange a vehicle.

His countenance instantly assumed an aspect of the deepest gloom, and he replied, “To seek one who fled from me.”

“And did the man whom you pursued travel in the same fashion?”

“Yes.”

“Then I fancy we have seen him, for the day before we picked you up we saw some dogs drawing a sledge, with a man in it, across the ice.”

This aroused the stranger’s attention, and he asked a multitude of questions concerning the route which the demon, as he called him, had pursued. Soon after, when he was alone with me, he said, “I have, doubtless, excited your curiosity, as well as that of these good people; but you are too considerate to make inquiries.”

“Certainly; it would indeed be very impertinent and inhuman in me to trouble you with any inquisitiveness of mine.”

“And yet you rescued me from a strange and perilous situation; you have benevolently restored me to life.”

Soon after this he inquired if I thought that the breaking up of the ice had destroyed the other sledge. I replied that I could not answer with any degree of certainty, for the ice had not broken until near midnight, and the traveller might have arrived at a place of safety before that time; but of this I could not judge. From this time a new spirit of life animated the decaying frame of the stranger. He manifested the greatest eagerness to be upon deck to watch for the sledge which had before appeared; but I have persuaded him to remain in the cabin, for he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere. I have promised that someone should watch for him and give him instant notice if any new object should appear in sight.

Such is my journal of what relates to this strange occurrence up to the present day. The stranger has gradually improved in health but is very silent and appears uneasy when anyone except myself enters his cabin. Yet his manners are so conciliating and gentle that the sailors are all interested in him, although they have had very little communication with him. For my own part, I begin to love him as a brother, and his constant and deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. He must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable. I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.

I shall continue my journal concerning the stranger at intervals, should I have any fresh incidents to record.

August 13th, 17 —

My affection for my guest increases every day. He excites at once my admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree. How can I see so noble a creature destroyed by misery without feeling the most poignant grief? He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated, and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence. He is now much recovered from his illness and is continually on the deck, apparently watching for the sledge that preceded his own. Yet, although unhappy, he is not so utterly occupied by his own misery but that he interests himself deeply in the projects of others. He has frequently conversed with me on mine, which I have communicated to him without disguise. He entered attentively into all my arguments in favour of my eventual success and into every minute detail of the measures I had taken to secure it. I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul and to say, with all the fervour that warmed me, how gladly I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope, to the furtherance of my enterprise. One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance. At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion; he placed his hands before his eyes, and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers; a groan burst from his heaving breast. I paused; at length he spoke, in broken accents: “Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!”

Such words, you may imagine, strongly excited my curiosity; but the paroxysm of grief that had seized the stranger overcame his weakened powers, and many hours of repose and tranquil conversation were necessary to restore his composure. Having conquered the violence of his feelings, he appeared to despise himself for being the slave of passion; and quelling the dark tyranny of despair, he led me again to converse concerning myself personally. He asked me the history of my earlier years. The tale was quickly told, but it awakened various trains of reflection. I spoke of my desire of finding a friend, of my thirst for a more intimate sympathy with a fellow mind than had ever fallen to my lot, and expressed my conviction that a man could boast of little happiness who did not enjoy this blessing. “I agree with you,” replied the stranger; “we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves — such a friend ought to be — do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. You have hope, and the world before you, and have no cause for despair. But I — I have lost everything and cannot begin life anew.”

As he said this his countenance became expressive of a calm, settled grief that touched me to the heart. But he was silent and presently retired to his cabin.

Even broken in spirit as he is, no one can feel more deeply than he does the beauties of nature. The starry sky, the sea, and every sight afforded by these wonderful regions seem still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth. Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery and be overwhelmed by disappointments, yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures.

Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been tutored and refined by books and retirement from the world, and you are therefore somewhat fastidious; but this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never-failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music.

August 19, 17 —

Yesterday the stranger said to me, “You may easily perceive, Captain Walton, that I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes. I had determined at one time that the memory of these evils should die with me, but you have won me to alter my determination. You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale, one that may direct you if you succeed in your undertaking and console you in case of failure. Prepare to hear of occurrences which are usually deemed marvellous. Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature; nor can I doubt but that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed.”

You may easily imagine that I was much gratified by the offered communication, yet I could not endure that he should renew his grief by a recital of his misfortunes. I felt the greatest eagerness to hear the promised narrative, partly from curiosity and partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate if it were in my power. I expressed these feelings in my answer.

“I thank you,” he replied, “for your sympathy, but it is useless; my fate is nearly fulfilled. I wait but for one event, and then I shall repose in peace. I understand your feeling,” continued he, perceiving that I wished to interrupt him; “but you are mistaken, my friend, if thus you will allow me to name you; nothing can alter my destiny; listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined.”

He then told me that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure. This promise drew from me the warmest thanks. I have resolved every night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure; but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips — with what interest and sympathy shall I read it in some future day! Even now, as I commence my task, his full-toned voice swells in my ears; his lustrous eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see his thin hand raised in animation, while the lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within.

Strange and harrowing must be his story, frightful the storm which embraced the gallant vessel on its course and wrecked it — thus!

Chapter 1

I am by birth a Genevese, and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics, and my father had filled several public situations with honour and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business. He passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; a variety of circumstances had prevented his marrying early, nor was it until the decline of life that he became a husband and the father of a family.

As the circumstances of his marriage illustrate his character, I cannot refrain from relating them. One of his most intimate friends was a merchant who, from a flourishing state, fell, through numerous mischances, into poverty. This man, whose name was Beaufort, was of a proud and unbending disposition and could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion in the same country where he had formerly been distinguished for his rank and magnificence. Having paid his debts, therefore, in the most honourable manner, he retreated with his daughter to the town of Lucerne, where he lived unknown and in wretchedness. My father loved Beaufort with the truest friendship and was deeply grieved by his retreat in these unfortunate circumstances. He bitterly deplored the false pride which led his friend to a conduct so little worthy of the affection that united them. He lost no time in endeavouring to seek him out, with the hope of persuading him to begin the world again through his credit and assistance. Beaufort had taken effectual measures to conceal himself, and it was ten months before my father discovered his abode. Overjoyed at this discovery, he hastened to the house, which was situated in a mean street near the Reuss. But when he entered, misery and despair alone welcomed him. Beaufort had saved but a very small sum of money from the wreck of his fortunes, but it was sufficient to provide him with sustenance for some months, and in the meantime he hoped to procure some respectable employment in a merchant's house. The interval was, consequently, spent in inaction; his grief only became more deep and rankling when he had leisure for reflection, and at length it took so fast hold of his mind that at the end of three months he lay on a bed of sickness, incapable of any exertion.

His daughter attended him with the greatest tenderness, but she saw with despair that their little fund was rapidly decreasing and that there was no other prospect of support. But Caroline Beaufort possessed a mind of an uncommon mould, and her courage rose to support her in her adversity. She procured plain work; she plaited straw and by various means contrived to earn a pittance scarcely sufficient to support life.

Several months passed in this manner. Her father grew worse; her time was more entirely occupied in attending him; her means of subsistence decreased; and in the tenth month her father died in her arms, leaving her an orphan and a beggar. This last blow overcame her, and she knelt by Beaufort's coffin weeping bitterly, when my father entered the chamber. He came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care; and after the interment of his friend he conducted her to Geneva and placed her under the protection of a relation. Two years after this event Caroline became his wife.

There was a considerable difference between the ages of my parents, but this circumstance seemed to unite them only closer in bonds of devoted affection. There was a sense of justice in my father's upright mind which rendered it necessary that he should approve highly to love strongly. Perhaps during former years he had suffered from the late-discovered unworthiness of one beloved and so was disposed to set a greater value on tried worth. There was a show of gratitude and worship in his attachment to my mother, differing wholly from the doting fondness of age, for it was inspired by reverence for her virtues and a desire to be the means of, in some degree, recompensing her for the sorrows she had endured, but which gave inexpressible grace to his behaviour to her. Everything was made to yield to her wishes and her convenience. He strove to shelter her, as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener, from every rougher wind and to surround her with all that could tend to excite pleasurable emotion in her soft and benevolent mind. Her health, and even the tranquillity of her hitherto constant spirit, had been shaken by what she had gone through. During the two years that had elapsed previous to their marriage my father had gradually relinquished all his public functions; and immediately after their union they sought the pleasant climate of Italy, and the change of scene and interest attendant on a tour through that land of wonders, as a restorative for her weakened frame.

From Italy they visited Germany and France. I, their eldest child, was born at Naples, and as an infant accompanied them in their rambles. I remained for several years their only child. Much as they were attached to each other, they seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me. My mother's tender caresses and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me are my first recollections. I was their plaything and their idol, and something better — their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. With this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life, added to the active spirit of tenderness that animated both, it may be imagined that while during every hour of my infant life I received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control, I was so guided by a silken cord that all seemed but one train of enjoyment to me. For a long time I was their only care. My mother had much desired to have a daughter, but I continued their single offspring. When I was about five years old, while making an excursion beyond the frontiers of Italy, they passed a week on the shores of the Lake of Como. Their benevolent disposition often made them enter the cottages of the poor. This, to my mother, was more than a duty; it was a necessity, a passion — remembering what she had suffered, and how she had been relieved — for her to act in her turn the guardian angel to the afflicted. During one of their walks a poor cot in the foldings of a vale attracted their notice as being singularly disconsolate, while the number of half-clothed children gathered about it spoke of penury in its worst shape. One day, when my father had gone by himself to Milan, my mother, accompanied by me, visited this abode. She found a peasant and his wife, hard working, bent down by care and labour, distributing a scanty meal to five hungry babes. Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock. The four others were dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants; this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features. The peasant woman, perceiving that my mother fixed eyes of wonder and admiration on this lovely girl, eagerly communicated her history. She was not her child, but the daughter of a Milanese nobleman. Her mother was a German and had died on giving her birth. The infant had been placed with these good people to nurse: they were better off then. They had not been long married, and their eldest child was but just born. The father of their charge was one of those Italians nursed in the memory of the antique glory of Italy — one among the schiavi ognor frementi, who exerted himself to obtain the liberty of his country. He became the victim of its weakness. Whether he had died or still lingered in the dungeons of Austria was not known. His property was confiscated; his child became an orphan and a beggar. She continued with her foster parents and bloomed in their rude abode, fairer than a garden rose among dark-leaved brambles. When my father returned from Milan, he found playing with me in the hall of our villa a child fairer than pictured cherub — a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks and whose form and motions were lighter than the chamois of the hills. The apparition was soon explained. With his permission my mother prevailed on her rustic guardians to yield their charge to her. They were fond of the sweet orphan. Her presence had seemed a blessing to them, but it would be unfair to her to keep her in poverty and want when Providence afforded her such powerful protection. They consulted their village priest, and the result was that Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents' house — my more than sister — the beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures.

Everyone loved Elizabeth. The passionate and almost reverential attachment with which all regarded her became, while I shared it, my pride and my delight. On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully, “I have a pretty present for my Victor — tomorrow he shall have it.” And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I, with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally and looked upon Elizabeth as mine — mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me — my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only.

Chapter 2

We were brought up together; there was not quite a year difference in our ages. I need not say that we were strangers to any species of disunion or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my ardour, I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home — the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers — she found ample scope for admiration and delight. While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember.

On the birth of a second son, my junior by seven years, my parents gave up entirely their wandering life and fixed themselves in their native country. We possessed a house in Geneva, and a campagne on Belrive, the eastern shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than a league from the city. We resided principally in the latter, and the lives of my parents were passed in considerable seclusion. It was my temper to avoid a crowd and to attach myself fervently to a few. I was indifferent, therefore, to my school-fellows in general; but I united myself in the bonds of the closest friendship to one among them. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels.

No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed. When I mingled with other families I distinctly discerned how peculiarly fortunate my lot was, and gratitude assisted the development of filial love.

My temper was sometimes violent, and my passions vehement; but by some law in my temperature they were turned not towards childish pursuits but to an eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately. I confess that neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.

Meanwhile Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species. The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home. Her sympathy was ours; her smile, her soft voice, the sweet glance of her celestial eyes, were ever there to bless and animate us. She was the living spirit of love to soften and attract; I might have become sullen in my study, rought through the ardour of my nature, but that she was there to subdue me to a semblance of her own gentleness. And Clerval — could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit of Clerval? Yet he might not have been so perfectly humane, so thoughtful in his generosity, so full of kindness and tenderness amidst his passion for adventurous exploit, had she not unfolded to him the real loveliness of beneficence and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self. Besides, in drawing the picture of my early days, I also record those events which led, by insensible steps, to my after tale of misery, for when I would account to myself for the birth of that passion which afterwards ruled my destiny I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys. Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science. When I was thirteen years of age we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon; the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa. I opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate and the wonderful facts which he relates soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, “Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash.”

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical, under such circumstances I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside and have contented my imagination, warmed as it was, by returning with greater ardour to my former studies. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents, and I continued to read with the greatest avidity. When I returned home my first care was to procure the whole works of this author, and afterwards of Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus. I read and studied the wild fancies of these writers with delight; they appeared to me treasures known to few besides myself. I have described myself as always having been imbued with a fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature. In spite of the intense labour and wonderful discoveries of modern philosophers, I always came from my studies discontented and unsatisfied. Sir Isaac Newton is said to have avowed that he felt like a child picking up shells beside the great and unexplored ocean of truth. Those of his successors in each branch of natural philosophy with whom I was acquainted appeared even to my boy's apprehensions as tyros engaged in the same pursuit.

The untaught peasant beheld the elements around him and was acquainted with their practical uses. The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature, but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. He might dissect, anatomize, and give names; but, not to speak of a final cause, causes in their secondary and tertiary grades were utterly unknown to him. I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature, and rashly and ignorantly I had repined.

But here were books, and here were men who had penetrated deeper and knew more. I took their word for all that they averred, and I became their disciple. It may appear strange that such should arise in the eighteenth century; but while I followed the routine of education in the schools of Geneva, I was, to a great degree, self-taught with regard to my favourite studies. My father was not scientific, and I was left to struggle with a child's blindness, added to a student's thirst for knowledge. Under the guidance of my new preceptors I entered with the greatest diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life; but the latter soon obtained my undivided attention. Wealth was an inferior object, but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death! Nor were these my only visions. The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfilment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake than to a want of skill or fidelity in my instructors. And thus for a time I was occupied by exploded systems, mingling, like an unadept, a thousand contradictory theories and floundering desperately in a very slough of multifarious knowledge, guided by an ardent imagination and childish reasoning, till an accident again changed the current of my ideas. When I was about fifteen years old we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunderstorm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura, and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. I remained, while the storm lasted, watching its progress with curiosity and delight. As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed.

Before this I was not unacquainted with the more obvious laws of electricity. On this occasion a man of great research in natural philosophy was with us, and excited by this catastrophe, he entered on the explanation of a theory which he had formed on the subject of electricity and galvanism, which was at once new and astonishing to me. All that he said threw greatly into the shade Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus, the lords of my imagination; but by some fatality the overthrow of these men disinclined me to pursue my accustomed studies. It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known. All that had so long engaged my attention suddenly grew despicable. By one of those caprices of the mind which we are perhaps most subject to in early youth, I at once gave up my former occupations, set down natural history and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation, and entertained the greatest disdain for a would-be science which could never even step within the threshold of real knowledge. In this mood of mind I betook myself to the mathematics and the branches of study appertaining to that science as being built upon secure foundations, and so worthy of my consideration.

Thus strangely are our souls constructed, and by such slight ligaments are we bound to prosperity or ruin. When I look back, it seems to me as if this almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of the guardian angel of my life — the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars and ready to envelop me. Her victory was announced by an unusual tranquillity and gladness of soul which followed the relinquishing of my ancient and latterly tormenting studies. It was thus that I was to be taught to associate evil with their prosecution, happiness with their disregard.

It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.

Chapter 3

When I had attained the age of seventeen my parents resolved that I should become a student at the university of Ingolstadt. I had hitherto attended the schools of Geneva, but my father thought it necessary for the completion of my education that I should be made acquainted with other customs than those of my native country. My departure was therefore fixed at an early date, but before the day resolved upon could arrive, the first misfortune of my life occurred — an omen, as it were, of my future misery. Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; her illness was severe, and she was in the greatest danger. During her illness many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. She had at first yielded to our entreaties, but when she heard that the life of her favourite was menaced, she could no longer control her anxiety. She attended her sickbed; her watchful attentions triumphed over the malignity of the distemper — Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver. On the third day my mother sickened; her fever was accompanied by the most alarming symptoms, and the looks of her medical attendants prognosticated the worst event. On her deathbed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself. “My children,” she said, “my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world.”

She died calmly, and her countenance expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance. It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she whom we saw every day and whose very existence appeared a part of our own can have departed forever — that the brightness of a beloved eye can have been extinguished and the sound of a voice so familiar and dear to the ear can be hushed, never more to be heard. These are the reflections of the first days; but when the lapse of time proves the reality of the evil, then the actual bitterness of grief commences. Yet from whom has not that rude hand rent away some dear connection? And why should I describe a sorrow which all have felt, and must feel? The time at length arrives when grief is rather an indulgence than a necessity; and the smile that plays upon the lips, although it may be deemed a sacrilege, is not banished. My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform; we must continue our course with the rest and learn to think ourselves fortunate whilst one remains whom the spoiler has not seized.

My departure for Ingolstadt, which had been deferred by these events, was now again determined upon. I obtained from my father a respite of some weeks. It appeared to me sacrilege so soon to leave the repose, akin to death, of the house of mourning and to rush into the thick of life. I was new to sorrow, but it did not the less alarm me. I was unwilling to quit the sight of those that remained to me, and above all, I desired to see my sweet Elizabeth in some degree consoled.

She indeed veiled her grief and strove to act the comforter to us all. She looked steadily on life and assumed its duties with courage and zeal. She devoted herself to those whom she had been taught to call her uncle and cousins. Never was she so enchanting as at this time, when she recalled the sunshine of her smiles and spent them upon us. She forgot even her own regret in her endeavours to make us forget.

The day of my departure at length arrived. Clerval spent the last evening with us. He had endeavoured to persuade his father to permit him to accompany me and to become my fellow student, but in vain. His father was a narrow-minded trader and saw idleness and ruin in the aspirations and ambition of his son. Henry deeply felt the misfortune of being debarred from a liberal education. He said little, but when he spoke I read in his kindling eye and in his animated glance a restrained but firm resolve not to be chained to the miserable details of commerce.

We sat late. We could not tear ourselves away from each other nor persuade ourselves to say the word “Farewell!” It was said, and we retired under the pretence of seeking repose, each fancying that the other was deceived; but when at morning’s dawn I descended to the carriage which was to convey me away, they were all there — my father again to bless me, Clerval to press my hand once more, my Elizabeth to renew her entreaties that I would write often and to bestow the last feminine attentions on her playmate and friend.

I threw myself into the chaise that was to convey me away and indulged in the most melancholy reflections. I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure — I was now alone. In the university whither I was going I must form my own friends and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic, and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances. I loved my brothers, Elizabeth, and Clerval; these were "old familiar faces," but I believed myself totally unfitted for the company of strangers. Such were my reflections as I commenced my journey; but as I proceeded, my spirits and hopes rose. I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place and had longed to enter the world and take my station among other human beings. Now my desires were complied with, and it would, indeed, have been folly to repent.

I had sufficient leisure for these and many other reflections during my journey to Ingolstadt, which was long and fatiguing. At length the high white steeple of the town met my eyes. I alighted and was conducted to my solitary apartment to spend the evening as I pleased.

The next morning I delivered my letters of introduction and paid a visit to some of the principal professors. Chance — or rather the evil influence, the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment I turned my reluctant steps from my father's door — led me first to M. Krempe, professor of natural philosophy. He was an uncouth man, but deeply imbued in the secrets of his science. He asked me several questions concerning my progress in the different branches of science appertaining to natural philosophy. I replied carelessly, and partly in contempt, mentioned the names of my alchemists as the principal authors I had studied. The professor stared. "Have you," he said, "really spent your time in studying such nonsense?"

I replied in the affirmative. "Every minute," continued M. Krempe with warmth, "every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems and useless names. Good God! In what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies which you have so greedily imbibed are a thousand years old and as musty as they are ancient? I little expected, in this enlightened and scientific age, to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew."

So saying, he stepped aside and wrote down a list of several books treating of natural philosophy which he desired me to procure, and dismissed me after mentioning that in the beginning of the following week he intended to commence a course of lectures upon natural philosophy in its general relations, and that M. Waldman, a fellow professor, would lecture upon chemistry the alternate days that he omitted.

I returned home not disappointed, for I have said that I had long considered those authors useless whom the professor reprobated; but I returned not at all the more inclined to recur to these studies in any shape. M. Krempe was a little squat man with a gruff voice and a repulsive countenance; the teacher, therefore, did not prepossess me in favour of his pursuits. In rather a too philosophical and connected a strain, perhaps, I have given an account of the conclusions I had come to concerning them in my early years. As a child I had not been content with the results promised by the modern professors of natural science. With a confusion of ideas only to be accounted for by my extreme youth and my want of a guide on such matters, I had retrod the steps of knowledge along the paths of time and exchanged the discoveries of recent inquirers for the dreams of forgotten alchemists. Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views, although futile, were grand; but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.

Such were my reflections during the first two or three days of my residence at Ingolstadt, which were chiefly spent in becoming acquainted with the localities and the principal residents in my new abode. But as the ensuing week commenced, I thought of the information which M. Krempe had given me concerning the lectures. And although I could not consent to go and hear that little conceited fellow deliver sentences out of a pulpit, I recollected what he had said of M. Waldman, whom I had never seen, as he had hitherto been out of town.

Partly from curiosity and partly from idleness, I went into the lecturing room, which M. Waldman entered shortly after. This professor was very unlike his colleague. He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few grey hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short but remarkably erect and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard. He began his lecture by a recapitulation of the history of chemistry and the various improvements made by different men of learning, pronouncing with fervour the names of the most distinguished discoverers. He then took a cursory view of the present state of the science and explained many of its elementary terms. After having made a few preparatory experiments, he concluded with a panegyric upon modern chemistry, the terms of which I shall never forget: “The ancient teachers of this science,” said he, “promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted and that the elixir of life is a chimera but these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.”

Such were the professor’s words — rather let me say such the words of the fate — enounced to destroy me. As he went on I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein — more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.

I closed not my eyes that night. My internal being was in a state of insurrection and turmoil; I felt that order would thence arise, but I had no power to produce it. By degrees, after the morning's dawn, sleep came. I awoke, and my yesternight's thoughts were as a dream. There only remained a resolution to return to my ancient studies and to devote myself to a science for which I believed myself to possess a natural talent. On the same day I paid M. Waldman a visit. His manners in private were even more mild and attractive than in public, for there was a certain dignity in his mien during his lecture which in his own house was replaced by the greatest affability and kindness. I gave him pretty nearly the same account of my former pursuits as I had given to his fellow professor. He heard with attention the little narration concerning my studies and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, but without the contempt that M. Krempe had exhibited. He said that "These were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge. They had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names and arrange in connected classifications the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light. The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind." I listened to his statement, which was delivered without any presumption or affectation, and then added that his lecture had removed my prejudices against modern chemists; I expressed myself in measured terms, with the modesty and deference due from a youth to his instructor, without letting escape (inexperience in life would have made me ashamed) any of the enthusiasm which stimulated my intended labours. I requested his advice concerning the books I ought to procure.

"I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. Chemistry is that branch of natural philosophy in which the greatest improvements have been and may be made; it is on that account that I have made it my peculiar study; but at the same time, I have not neglected the other branches of science. A man would make but a very sorry chemist if he attended to that department of human knowledge alone. If your wish is to become really a man of science and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics.” He then took me into his laboratory and explained to me the uses of his various machines, instructing me as to what I ought to procure and promising me the use of his own when I should have advanced far enough in the science not to derange their mechanism. He also gave me the list of books which I had requested, and I took my leave.

Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny.

Chapter 4

From this day natural philosophy, and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation. I read with ardour those works, so full of genius and discrimination, which modern inquirers have written on these subjects. I attended the lectures and cultivated the acquaintance of the men of science of the university, and I found even in M. Krempe a great deal of sound sense and real information, combined, it is true, with a repulsive physiognomy and manners, but not on that account the less valuable. In M. Waldman I found a true friend. His gentleness was never tinged by dogmatism, and his instructions were given with an air of frankness and good nature that banished every idea of pedantry. In a thousand ways he smoothed for me the path of knowledge and made the most abstruse inquiries clear and facile to my apprehension. My application was at first fluctuating and uncertain; it gained strength as I proceeded and soon became so ardent and eager that the stars often disappeared in the light of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory.

As I applied so closely, it may be easily conceived that my progress was rapid. My ardour was indeed the astonishment of the students, and my proficiency that of the masters. Professor Krempe often asked me, with a sly smile, how Cornelius Agrippa went on, whilst M. Waldman expressed the most heartfelt exultation in my progress. Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity which closely pursues one study must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit and was solely wrapped up in this, improved so rapidly that at the end of two years I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. When I had arrived at this point and had become as well acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy as depended on the lessons of any of the professors at Ingolstadt, my residence there being no longer conducive to my improvements, I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay.

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analysing all the minutiae of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me — a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world was now within my grasp. Not that, like a magic scene, it all opened upon me at once: the information I had obtained was of a nature rather to direct my endeavours so soon as I should point them towards the object of my search than to exhibit that object already accomplished. I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead and found a passage to life, aided only by one glimmering and seemingly ineffectual light.

I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect, yet when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large. After having formed this determination and having spent some months in successfully collecting and arranging my materials, I began.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardour. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage, but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them, and I well remembered the words of my father: “I know that while you are pleased with yourself you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected.”

I knew well therefore what would be my father’s feelings, but I could not tear my thoughts from my employment, loathsome in itself, but which had taken an irresistible hold of my imagination. I wished, as it were, to procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection until the great object, which swallowed up every habit of my nature, should be completed.

I then thought that my father would be unjust if he ascribed my neglect to vice or faultiness on my part, but I am now convinced that he was justified in conceiving that I should not be altogether free from blame. A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix, then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say, not befitting the human mind. If this rule were always observed; if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquillity of his domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved, Caesar would have spared his country, America would have been discovered more gradually, and the empires of Mexico and Peru had not been destroyed.

But I forget that I am moralizing in the most interesting part of my tale, and your looks remind me to proceed. My father made no reproach in his letters and only took notice of my silence by inquiring into my occupations more particularly than before. Winter, spring, and summer passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves — sights which before always yielded me supreme delight — so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. The leaves of that year had withered before my work drew near to a close, and now every day showed me more plainly how well I had succeeded. But my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; the fall of a leaf startled me, and I shunned my fellow creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime. Sometimes I grew alarmed at the wreck I perceived that I had become; the energy of my purpose alone sustained me: my labours would soon end, and I believed that exercise and amusement would then drive away incipient disease; and I promised myself both of these when my creation should be complete.

Chapter 5

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch — the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, its white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring by bodily exercise to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets without any clear conception of where I was or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear, and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:

Like one who, on a lonely road,
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

[Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."]

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer I observed that it was the Swiss diligence; it stopped just where I was standing, and on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. "My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed he, "how glad I am to see you! How fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!"

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. "You may easily believe," said he, "how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that all necessary knowledge was not comprised in the noble art of book-keeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch schoolmaster in The Vicar of Wakefield: ‘I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat heartily without Greek.’ But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge.”

“It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth.”

“Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the by, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself. But, my dear Frankenstein,” continued he, stopping short and gazing full in my face, “I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights.”

“You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see; but I hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end and that I am at length free.”

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster, but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused, and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty, and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me, but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival, but when he observed me more attentively, he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account, and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter frightened and astonished him.

"My dear Victor," cried he, "what, for God's sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?"

"Do not ask me," cried I, putting my hands before my eyes, for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; "HE can tell. Oh, save me! Save me!" I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! What must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I was not the witness of his grief, for I was lifeless and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

This was the commencement of a nervous fever which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father's advanced age and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill, and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was forever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry; he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination, but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring, and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

“Dearest Clerval,” exclaimed I, “how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I ever repay you? I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion, but you will forgive me.”

“You will repay me entirely if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?”

I trembled. One subject! What could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think? “Compose yourself,” said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, “I will not mention it if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own handwriting. They hardly know how ill you have been and are uneasy at your long silence.”

“Is that all, my dear Henry? How could you suppose that my first thought would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love and who are so deserving of my love?”

“If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you; it is from your cousin, I believe.”

Chapter 6

Clerval then put the following letter into my hands. It was from my own Elizabeth:

"My dearest Cousin,

"You have been ill, very ill, and even the constant letters of dear kind Henry are not sufficient to reassure me on your account. You are forbidden to write — to hold a pen; yet one word from you, dear Victor, is necessary to calm our apprehensions. For a long time I have thought that each post would bring this line, and my persuasions have restrained my uncle from undertaking a journey to Ingolstadt. I have prevented his encountering the inconveniences and perhaps dangers of so long a journey, yet how often have I regretted not being able to perform it myself! I figure to myself that the task of attending on your sickbed has devolved on some mercenary old nurse, who could never guess your wishes nor minister to them with the care and affection of your poor cousin. Yet that is over now: Clerval writes that indeed you are getting better. I eagerly hope that you will confirm this intelligence soon in your own handwriting.

"Get well — and return to us. You will find a happy, cheerful home and friends who love you dearly. Your father's health is vigorous, and he asks but to see you, but to be assured that you are well; and not a care will ever cloud his benevolent countenance. How pleased you would be to remark the improvement of our Ernest! He is now sixteen and full of activity and spirit. He is desirous to be a true Swiss and to enter into foreign service, but we cannot part with him, at least until his elder brother returns to us. My uncle is not pleased with the idea of a military career in a distant country, but Ernest never had your powers of application. He looks upon study as an odious fetter; his time is spent in the open air, climbing the hills or rowing on the lake. I fear that he will become an idler unless we yield the point and permit him to enter on the profession which he has selected.

"Little alteration, except the growth of our dear children, has taken place since you left us. The blue lake and snow-clad mountains — they never change; and I think our placid home and our contented hearts are regulated by the same immutable laws. My trifling occupations take up my time and amuse me, and I am rewarded for any exertions by seeing none but happy, kind faces around me. Since you left us, but one change has taken place in our little household. Do you remember on what occasion Justine Moritz entered our family? Probably you do not; I will relate her history, therefore in a few words. Madame Moritz, her mother, was a widow with four children, of whom Justine was the third. This girl had always been the favourite of her father, but through a strange perversity, her mother could not endure her, and after the death of M. Moritz, treated her very ill. My aunt observed this, and when Justine was twelve years of age, prevailed on her mother to allow her to live at our house. The republican institutions of our country have produced simpler and happier manners than those which prevail in the great monarchies that surround it. Hence there is less distinction between the several classes of its inhabitants; and the lower orders, being neither so poor nor so despised, their manners are more refined and moral. A servant in Geneva does not mean the same thing as a servant in France and England. Justine, thus received in our family, learned the duties of a servant, a condition which, in our fortunate country, does not include the idea of ignorance and a sacrifice of the dignity of a human being.

"Justine, you may remember, was a great favourite of yours; and I recollect you once remarked that if you were in an ill humour, one glance from Justine could dissipate it, for the same reason that Ariosto gives concerning the beauty of Angelica — she looked so frank-hearted and happy. My aunt conceived a great attachment for her, by which she was induced to give her an education superior to that which she had at first intended. This benefit was fully repaid; Justine was the most grateful little creature in the world: I do not mean that she made any professions I never heard one pass her lips, but you could see by her eyes that she almost adored her protectress. Although her disposition was gay and in many respects inconsiderate, yet she paid the greatest attention to every gesture of my aunt. She thought her the model of all excellence and endeavoured to imitate her phraseology and manners, so that even now she often reminds me of her.

"When my dearest aunt died every one was too much occupied in their own grief to notice poor Justine, who had attended her during her illness with the most anxious affection. Poor Justine was very ill; but other trials were reserved for her.

"One by one, her brothers and sister died; and her mother, with the exception of her neglected daughter, was left childless. The conscience of the woman was troubled; she began to think that the deaths of her favourites was a judgement from heaven to chastise her partiality. She was a Roman Catholic; and I believe her confessor confirmed the idea which she had conceived. Accordingly, a few months after your departure for Ingolstadt, Justine was called home by her repentant mother. Poor girl! She wept when she quitted our house; she was much altered since the death of my aunt; grief had given softness and a winning mildness to her manners, which had before been remarkable for vivacity. Nor was her residence at her mother's house of a nature to restore her gaiety. The poor woman was very vacillating in her repentance. She sometimes begged Justine to forgive her unkindness, but much oftener accused her of having caused the deaths of her brothers and sister. Perpetual fretting at length threw Madame Moritz into a decline, which at first increased her irritability, but she is now at peace for ever. She died on the first approach of cold weather, at the beginning of this last winter. Justine has just returned to us; and I assure you I love her tenderly. She is very clever and gentle, and extremely pretty; as I mentioned before, her mien and her expression continually remind me of my dear aunt.

"I must say also a few words to you, my dear cousin, of little darling William. I wish you could see him; he is very tall of his age, with sweet laughing blue eyes, dark eyelashes, and curling hair. When he smiles, two little dimples appear on each cheek, which are rosy with health. He has already had one or two little WIVES, but Louisa Biron is his favourite, a pretty little girl of five years of age.

"Now, dear Victor, I dare say you wish to be indulged in a little gossip concerning the good people of Geneva. The pretty Miss Mansfield has already received the congratulatory visits on her approaching marriage with a young Englishman, John Melbourne, Esq. Her ugly sister, Manon, married M. Duvillard, the rich banker, last autumn. Your favourite schoolfellow, Louis Manoir, has suffered several misfortunes since the departure of Clerval from Geneva. But he has already recovered his spirits, and is reported to be on the point of marrying a lively pretty Frenchwoman, Madame Tavernier. She is a widow, and much older than Manoir; but she is very much admired, and a favourite with everybody.

“I have written myself into better spirits, dear cousin; but my anxiety returns upon me as I conclude. Write, dearest Victor, — one line — one word will be a blessing to us. Ten thousand thanks to Henry for his kindness, his affection, and his many letters; we are sincerely grateful. Adieu! my cousin; take care of your self; and, I entreat you, write!

“Elizabeth Lavenza.

“Geneva, March 18, 17 — .”

“Dear, dear Elizabeth!” I exclaimed, when I had read her letter: “I will write instantly and relieve them from the anxiety they must feel.” I wrote, and this exertion greatly fatigued me; but my convalescence had commenced, and proceeded regularly. In another fortnight I was able to leave my chamber.

One of my first duties on my recovery was to introduce Clerval to the several professors of the university. In doing this, I underwent a kind of rough usage, ill befitting the wounds that my mind had sustained. Ever since the fatal night, the end of my labours, and the beginning of my misfortunes, I had conceived a violent antipathy even to the name of natural philosophy. When I was otherwise quite restored to health, the sight of a chemical instrument would renew all the agony of my nervous symptoms. Henry saw this, and had removed all my apparatus from my view. He had also changed my apartment; for he perceived that I had acquired a dislike for the room which had previously been my laboratory. But these cares of Clerval were made of no avail when I visited the professors. M. Waldman inflicted torture when he praised, with kindness and warmth, the astonishing progress I had made in the sciences. He soon perceived that I disliked the subject; but not guessing the real cause, he attributed my feelings to modesty, and changed the subject from my improvement, to the science itself, with a desire, as I evidently saw, of drawing me out. What could I do? He meant to please, and he tormented me. I felt as if he had placed carefully, one by one, in my view those instruments which were to be afterwards used in putting me to a slow and cruel death. I writhed under his words, yet dared not exhibit the pain I felt. Clerval, whose eyes and feelings were always quick in discerning the sensations of others, declined the subject, alleging, in excuse, his total ignorance; and the conversation took a more general turn. I thanked my friend from my heart, but I did not speak. I saw plainly that he was surprised, but he never attempted to draw my secret from me; and although I loved him with a mixture of affection and reverence that knew no bounds, yet I could never persuade myself to confide in him that event which was so often present to my recollection, but which I feared the detail to another would only impress more deeply.

M. Krempe was not equally docile; and in my condition at that time, of almost insupportable sensitiveness, his harsh blunt encomiums gave me even more pain than the benevolent approbation of M. Waldman. “D — n the fellow!” cried he; “why, M. Clerval, I assure you he has outstript us all. Ay, stare if you please; but it is nevertheless true. A youngster who, but a few years ago, believed in Cornelius Agrippa as firmly as in the gospel, has now set himself at the head of the university; and if he is not soon pulled down, we shall all be out of countenance. — Ay, ay,” continued he, observing my face expressive of suffering, “M. Frankenstein is modest; an excellent quality in a young man. Young men should be diffident of themselves, you know, M. Clerval: I was myself when young; but that wears out in a very short time.”

M. Krempe had now commenced an eulogy on himself, which happily turned the conversation from a subject that was so annoying to me.

Clerval had never sympathized in my tastes for natural science; and his literary pursuits differed wholly from those which had occupied me. He came to the university with the design of making himself complete master of the oriental languages, and thus he should open a field for the plan of life he had marked out for himself. Resolved to pursue no inglorious career, he turned his eyes toward the East, as affording scope for his spirit of enterprise. The Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit languages engaged his attention, and I was easily induced to enter on the same studies. Idleness had ever been irksome to me, and now that I wished to fly from reflection, and hated my former studies, I felt great relief in being the fellow-pupil with my friend, and found not only instruction but consolation in the works of the orientalists. I did not, like him, attempt a critical knowledge of their dialects, for I did not contemplate making any other use of them than temporary amusement. I read merely to understand their meaning, and they well repaid my labours. Their melancholy is soothing, and their joy elevating, to a degree I never experienced in studying the authors of any other country. When you read their writings, life appears to consist in a warm sun and a garden of roses, — in the smiles and frowns of a fair enemy, and the fire that consumes your own heart. How different from the manly and heroical poetry of Greece and Rome!

Summer passed away in these occupations, and my return to Geneva was fixed for the latter end of autumn; but being delayed by several accidents, winter and snow arrived, the roads were deemed impassable, and my journey was retarded until the ensuing spring. I felt this delay very bitterly; for I longed to see my native town and my beloved friends. My return had only been delayed so long, from an unwillingness to leave Clerval in a strange place, before he had become acquainted with any of its inhabitants. The winter, however, was spent cheerfully; and although the spring was uncommonly late, when it came its beauty compensated for its dilatoriness.

The month of May had already commenced, and I expected the letter daily which was to fix the date of my departure, when Henry proposed a pedestrian tour in the environs of Ingolstadt, that I might bid a personal farewell to the country I had so long inhabited. I acceded with pleasure to this proposition: I was fond of exercise, and Clerval had always been my favourite companion in the ramble of this nature that I had taken among the scenes of my native country.

We passed a fortnight in these perambulations: my health and spirits had long been restored, and they gained additional strength from the salubrious air I breathed, the natural incidents of our progress, and the conversation of my friend. Study had before secluded me from the intercourse of my fellow-creatures, and rendered me unsocial; but Clerval called forth the better feelings of my heart; he again taught me to love the aspect of nature, and the cheerful faces of children. Excellent friend! how sincerely you did love me, and endeavour to elevate my mind until it was on a level with your own. A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me, until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses; I became the same happy creature who, a few years ago, loved and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care. When happy, inanimate nature had the power of bestowing on me the most delightful sensations. A serene sky and verdant fields filled me with ecstasy. The present season was indeed divine; the flowers of spring bloomed in the hedges, while those of summer were already in bud. I was undisturbed by thoughts which during the preceding year had pressed upon me, notwithstanding my endeavours to throw them off, with an invincible burden.

Henry rejoiced in my gaiety, and sincerely sympathised in my feelings: he exerted himself to amuse me, while he expressed the sensations that filled his soul. The resources of his mind on this occasion were truly astonishing: his conversation was full of imagination; and very often, in imitation of the Persian and Arabic writers, he invented tales of wonderful fancy and passion. At other times he repeated my favourite poems, or drew me out into arguments, which he supported with great ingenuity. We returned to our college on a Sunday afternoon: the peasants were dancing, and every one we met appeared gay and happy. My own spirits were high, and I bounded along with feelings of unbridled joy and hilarity.

Chapter 7

On my return, I found the following letter from my father: —

“My dear Victor,

“You have probably waited impatiently for a letter to fix the date of your return to us; and I was at first tempted to write only a few lines, merely mentioning the day on which I should expect you. But that would be a cruel kindness, and I dare not do it. What would be your surprise, my son, when you expected a happy and glad welcome, to behold, on the contrary, tears and wretchedness? And how, Victor, can I relate our misfortune? Absence cannot have rendered you callous to our joys and griefs; and how shall I inflict pain on my long absent son? I wish to prepare you for the woeful news, but I know it is impossible; even now your eye skims over the page to seek the words which are to convey to you the horrible tidings.

“William is dead! — that sweet child, whose smiles delighted and warmed my heart, who was so gentle, yet so gay! Victor, he is murdered!

“I will not attempt to console you; but will simply relate the circumstances of the transaction.

“Last Thursday (May 7th), I, my niece, and your two brothers, went to walk in Plainpalais. The evening was warm and serene, and we prolonged our walk farther than usual. It was already dusk before we thought of returning; and then we discovered that William and Ernest, who had gone on before, were not to be found. We accordingly rested on a seat until they should return. Presently Ernest came, and enquired if we had seen his brother; he said, that he had been playing with him, that William had run away to hide himself, and that he vainly sought for him, and afterwards waited for a long time, but that he did not return.

“This account rather alarmed us, and we continued to search for him until night fell, when Elizabeth conjectured that he might have returned to the house. He was not there. We returned again, with torches; for I could not rest, when I thought that my sweet boy had lost himself, and was exposed to all the damps and dews of night; Elizabeth also suffered extreme anguish. About five in the morning I discovered my lovely boy, whom the night before I had seen blooming and active in health, stretched on the grass livid and motionless; the print of the murder's finger was on his neck.

"He was conveyed home, and the anguish that was visible in my countenance betrayed the secret to Elizabeth. She was very earnest to see the corpse. At first I attempted to prevent her but she persisted, and entering the room where it lay, hastily examined the neck of the victim, and clasping her hands exclaimed, 'O God! I have murdered my darling child!'

"She fainted, and was restored with extreme difficulty. When she again lived, it was only to weep and sigh. She told me, that that same evening William had teased her to let him wear a very valuable miniature that she possessed of your mother. This picture is gone, and was doubtless the temptation which urged the murderer to the deed. We have no trace of him at present, although our exertions to discover him are unremitted; but they will not restore my beloved William!

"Come, dearest Victor; you alone can console Elizabeth. She weeps continually, and accuses herself unjustly as the cause of his death; her words pierce my heart. We are all unhappy; but will not that be an additional motive for you, my son, to return and be our comforter? Your dear mother! Alas, Victor! I now say, Thank God she did not live to witness the cruel, miserable death of her youngest darling!

"Come, Victor; not brooding thoughts of vengeance against the assassin, but with feelings of peace and gentleness, that will heal, instead of festering, the wounds of our minds. Enter the house of mourning, my friend, but with kindness and affection for those who love you, and not with hatred for your enemies.

"Your affectionate and afflicted father,
"Alphonse Frankenstein.

"Geneva, May 12th, 17 — ."

Clerval, who had watched my countenance as I read this letter, was surprised to observe the despair that succeeded the joy I at first expressed on receiving new from my friends. I threw the letter on the table, and covered my face with my hands.

"My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed Henry, when he perceived me weep with bitterness, "are you always to be unhappy? My dear friend, what has happened?"

I motioned him to take up the letter, while I walked up and down the room in the extremest agitation. Tears also gushed from the eyes of Clerval, as he read the account of my misfortune.

"I can offer you no consolation, my friend," said he; "your disaster is irreparable. What do you intend to do?"

"To go instantly to Geneva: come with me, Henry, to order the horses."

During our walk, Clerval endeavoured to say a few words of consolation; he could only express his heartfelt sympathy. "Poor William!" said he, "dear lovely child, he now sleeps with his angel mother! Who that had seen him bright and joyous in his young beauty, but must weep over his untimely loss! To die so miserably; to feel the murderer's grasp! How much more a murdered that could destroy radiant innocence! Poor little fellow! one only consolation have we; his friends mourn and weep, but he is at rest. The pang is over, his sufferings are at an end for ever. A sod covers his gentle form, and he knows no pain. He can no longer be a subject for pity; we must reserve that for his miserable survivors."

Clerval spoke thus as we hurried through the streets; the words impressed themselves on my mind and I remembered them afterwards in solitude. But now, as soon as the horses arrived, I hurried into a cabriolet, and bade farewell to my friend.

My journey was very melancholy. At first I wished to hurry on, for I longed to console and sympathise with my loved and sorrowing friends; but when I drew near my native town, I slackened my progress. I could hardly sustain the multitude of feelings that crowded into my mind. I passed through scenes familiar to my youth, but which I had not seen for nearly six years. How altered every thing might be during that time! One sudden and desolating change had taken place; but a thousand little circumstances might have by degrees worked other alterations, which, although they were done more tranquilly, might not be the less decisive. Fear overcame me; I dared no advance, dreading a thousand nameless evils that made me tremble, although I was unable to define them. I remained two days at Lausanne, in this painful state of mind. I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm; and the snowy mountains, 'the palaces of nature,' were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva.

The road ran by the side of the lake, which became narrower as I approached my native town. I discovered more distinctly the black sides of Jura, and the bright summit of Mont Blanc. I wept like a child. "Dear mountains! my own beautiful lake! how do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?"

I fear, my friend, that I shall render myself tedious by dwelling on these preliminary circumstances; but they were days of comparative happiness, and I think of them with pleasure. My country, my beloved country! who but a native can tell the delight I took in again beholding thy streams, thy mountains, and, more than all, thy lovely lake!

Yet, as I drew nearer home, grief and fear again overcame me. Night also closed around; and when I could hardly see the dark mountains, I felt still more gloomily. The picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings. Alas! I prophesied truly, and failed only in one single circumstance, that in all the misery I imagined and dreaded, I did not conceive the hundredth part of the anguish I was destined to endure. It was completely dark when I arrived in the environs of Geneva; the gates of the town were already shut; and I was obliged to pass the night at Secheron, a village at the distance of half a league from the city. The sky was serene; and, as I was unable to rest, I resolved to visit the spot where my poor William had been murdered. As I could not pass through the town, I was obliged to cross the lake in a boat to arrive at Plainpalais. During this short voyage I saw the lightning playing on the summit of Mont Blanc in the most beautiful figures. The storm appeared to approach rapidly, and, on landing, I ascended a low hill, that I might observe its progress. It advanced; the heavens were clouded, and I soon felt the rain coming slowly in large drops, but its violence quickly increased.

I quitted my seat, and walked on, although the darkness and storm increased every minute, and the thunder burst with a terrific crash over my head. It was echoed from Saleve, the Juras, and the Alps of Savoy; vivid flashes of lightning dazzled my eyes, illuminating the lake, making it appear like a vast sheet of fire; then for an instant every thing seemed of a pitchy darkness, until the eye recovered itself from the preceding flash. The storm, as is often the case in Switzerland, appeared at once in various parts of the heavens. The most violent storm hung exactly north of the town, over the part of the lake which lies between the promontory of Belrive and the village of Copet. Another storm enlightened Jura with faint flashes; and another darkened and sometimes disclosed the Mole, a peaked mountain to the east of the lake.

While I watched the tempest, so beautiful yet terrific, I wandered on with a hasty step. This noble war in the sky elevated my spirits; I clasped my hands, and exclaimed aloud, "William, dear angel! this is thy funeral, this thy dirge!" As I said these words, I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life. What did he there? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination, than I became convinced of its truth; my teeth chattered, and I was forced to lean against a tree for support. The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in the gloom.

Nothing in human shape could have destroyed the fair child. HE was the murderer! I could not doubt it. The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact. I thought of pursuing the devil; but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mont Saleve, a hill that bounds Plainpalais on the south. He soon reached the summit, and disappeared.

I remained motionless. The thunder ceased; but the rain still continued, and the scene was enveloped in an impenetrable darkness. I revolved in my mind the events which I had until now sought to forget: the whole train of my progress toward the creation; the appearance of the works of my own hands at my bedside; its departure. Two years had now nearly elapsed since the night on which he first received life; and was this his first crime? Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery; had he not murdered my brother?

No one can conceive the anguish I suffered during the remainder of the night, which I spent, cold and wet, in the open air. But I did not feel the inconvenience of the weather; my imagination was busy in scenes of evil and despair. I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done, nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave, and forced to destroy all that was dear to me.

Day dawned; and I directed my steps towards the town. The gates were open, and I hastened to my father's house. My first thought was to discover what I knew of the murderer, and cause instant pursuit to be made. But I paused when I reflected on the story that I had to tell. A being whom I myself had formed, and endued with life, had met me at midnight among the precipices of an inaccessible mountain. I remembered also the nervous fever with which I had been seized just at the time that I dated my creation, and which would give an air of delirium to a tale otherwise so utterly improbable. I well knew that if any other had communicated such a relation to me, I should have looked upon it as the ravings of insanity. Besides, the strange nature of the animal would elude all pursuit, even if I were so far credited as to persuade my relatives to commence it. And then of what use would be pursuit? Who could arrest a creature capable of scaling the overhanging sides of Mont Saleve? These reflections determined me, and I resolved to remain silent.

It was about five in the morning when I entered my father's house. I told the servants not to disturb the family, and went into the library to attend their usual hour of rising.

Six years had elapsed, passed in a dream but for one indelible trace, and I stood in the same place where I had last embraced my father before my departure for Ingolstadt. Beloved and venerable parent! He still remained to me. I gazed on the picture of my mother, which stood over the mantel-piece. It was an historical subject, painted at my father's desire, and represented Caroline Beaufort in an agony of despair, kneeling by the coffin of her dead father. Her garb was rustic, and her cheek pale; but there was an air of dignity and beauty, that hardly permitted the sentiment of pity. Below this picture was a miniature of William; and my tears flowed when I looked upon it. While I was thus engaged, Ernest entered: he had heard me arrive, and hastened to welcome me: “Welcome, my dearest Victor,” said he. “Ah! I wish you had come three months ago, and then you would have found us all joyous and delighted. You come to us now to share a misery which nothing can alleviate; yet your presence will, I hope, revive our father, who seems sinking under his misfortune; and your persuasions will induce poor Elizabeth to cease her vain and tormenting self-accusations. — Poor William! he was our darling and our pride!”

Tears, unrestrained, fell from my brother’s eyes; a sense of mortal agony crept over my frame. Before, I had only imagined the wretchedness of my desolated home; the reality came on me as a new, and a not less terrible, disaster. I tried to calm Ernest; I enquired more minutely concerning my father, and here I named my cousin.

“She most of all,” said Ernest, “requires consolation; she accused herself of having caused the death of my brother, and that made her very wretched. But since the murderer has been discovered—”

“The murderer discovered! Good God! how can that be? who could attempt to pursue him? It is impossible; one might as well try to overtake the winds, or confine a mountain-stream with a straw. I saw him too; he was free last night!”

“I do not know what you mean,” replied my brother, in accents of wonder, “but to us the discovery we have made completes our misery. No one would believe it at first; and even now Elizabeth will not be convinced, notwithstanding all the evidence. Indeed, who would credit that Justine Moritz, who was so amiable, and fond of all the family, could suddenly become so capable of so frightful, so appalling a crime?”

“Justine Moritz! Poor, poor girl, is she the accused? But it is wrongfully; every one knows that; no one believes it, surely, Ernest?”

“No one did at first; but several circumstances came out, that have almost forced conviction upon us; and her own behaviour has been so confused, as to add to the evidence of facts a weight that, I fear, leaves no hope for doubt. But she will be tried today, and you will then hear all.”

He then related that, the morning on which the murder of poor William had been discovered, Justine had been taken ill, and confined to her bed for several days. During this interval, one of the servants, happening to examine the apparel she had worn on the night of the murder, had discovered in her pocket the picture of my mother, which had been judged to be the temptation of the murderer. The servant instantly showed it to one of the others, who, without saying a word to any of the family, went to a magistrate; and, upon their deposition, Justine was apprehended. On being charged with the fact, the poor girl confirmed the suspicion in a great measure by her extreme confusion of manner.

This was a strange tale, but it did not shake my faith; and I replied earnestly, “You are all mistaken; I know the murderer. Justine, poor, good Justine, is innocent.”

At that instant my father entered. I saw unhappiness deeply impressed on his countenance, but he endeavoured to welcome me cheerfully; and, after we had exchanged our mournful greeting, would have introduced some other topic than that of our disaster, had not Ernest exclaimed, “Good God, papa! Victor says that he knows who was the murderer of poor William.”

“We do also, unfortunately,” replied my father, “for indeed I had rather have been for ever ignorant than have discovered so much depravity and ungratitude in one I valued so highly.”

“My dear father, you are mistaken; Justine is innocent.”

“If she is, God forbid that she should suffer as guilty. She is to be tried today, and I hope, I sincerely hope, that she will be acquitted.”

This speech calmed me. I was firmly convinced in my own mind that Justine, and indeed every human being, was guiltless of this murder. I had no fear, therefore, that any circumstantial evidence could be brought forward strong enough to convict her. My tale was not one to announce publicly; its astounding horror would be looked upon as madness by the vulgar. Did any one indeed exist, except I, the creator, who would believe, unless his senses convinced him, in the existence of the living monument of presumption and rash ignorance which I had let loose upon the world?

We were soon joined by Elizabeth. Time had altered her since I last beheld her; it had endowed her with loveliness surpassing the beauty of her childish years. There was the same candour, the same vivacity, but it was allied to an expression more full of sensibility and intellect. She welcomed me with the greatest affection. “Your arrival, my dear cousin,” said she, “fills me with hope. You perhaps will find some means to justify my poor guiltless Justine. Alas! who is safe, if she be convicted of crime? I rely on her innocence as certainly as I do upon my own. Our misfortune is doubly hard to us; we have not only lost that lovely darling boy, but this poor girl, whom I sincerely love, is to be torn away by even a worse fate. If she is condemned, I never shall know joy more. But she will not, I am sure she will not; and then I shall be happy again, even after the sad death of my little William."

"She is innocent, my Elizabeth," said I, "and that shall be proved; fear nothing, but let your spirits be cheered by the assurance of her acquittal."

"How kind and generous you are! every one else believes in her guilt, and that made me wretched, for I knew that it was impossible: and to see every one else prejudiced in so deadly a manner rendered me hopeless and despairing." She wept.

"Dearest niece," said my father, "dry your tears. If she is, as you believe, innocent, rely on the justice of our laws, and the activity with which I shall prevent the slightest shadow of partiality."

Chapter 8

We passed a few sad hours until eleven o’clock, when the trial was to commence. My father and the rest of the family being obliged to attend as witnesses, I accompanied them to the court. During the whole of this wretched mockery of justice I suffered living torture. It was to be decided whether the result of my curiosity and lawless devices would cause the death of two of my fellow beings: one a smiling babe full of innocence and joy, the other far more dreadfully murdered, with every aggravation of infamy that could make the murder memorable in horror. Justine also was a girl of merit and possessed qualities which promised to render her life happy; now all was to be obliterated in an ignominious grave, and I the cause! A thousand times rather would I have confessed myself guilty of the crime ascribed to Justine, but I was absent when it was committed, and such a declaration would have been considered as the ravings of a madman and would not have exculpated her who suffered through me.

The appearance of Justine was calm. She was dressed in mourning, and her countenance, always engaging, was rendered, by the solemnity of her feelings, exquisitely beautiful. Yet she appeared confident in innocence and did not tremble, although gazed on and execrated by thousands, for all the kindness which her beauty might otherwise have excited was obliterated in the minds of the spectators by the imagination of the enormity she was supposed to have committed. She was tranquil, yet her tranquillity was evidently constrained; and as her confusion had before been adduced as a proof of her guilt, she worked up her mind to an appearance of courage. When she entered the court she threw her eyes round it and quickly discovered where we were seated. A tear seemed to dim her eye when she saw us, but she quickly recovered herself, and a look of sorrowful affection seemed to attest her utter guiltlessness.

The trial began, and after the advocate against her had stated the charge, several witnesses were called. Several strange facts combined against her, which might have staggered anyone who had not such proof of her innocence as I had. She had been out the whole of the night on which the murder had been committed and towards morning had been perceived by a market-woman not far from the spot where the body of the murdered child had been afterwards found. The woman asked her what she did there, but she looked very strangely and only returned a confused and unintelligible answer. She returned to the house about eight o'clock, and when one inquired where she had passed the night, she replied that she had been looking for the child and demanded earnestly if anything had been heard concerning him. When shown the body, she fell into violent hysterics and kept her bed for several days. The picture was then produced which the servant had found in her pocket; and when Elizabeth, in a faltering voice, proved that it was the same which, an hour before the child had been missed, she had placed round his neck, a murmur of horror and indignation filled the court.

Justine was called on for her defence. As the trial had proceeded, her countenance had altered. Surprise, horror, and misery were strongly expressed. Sometimes she struggled with her tears, but when she was desired to plead, she collected her powers and spoke in an audible although variable voice.

"God knows," she said, "how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me; I rest my innocence on a plain and simple explanation of the facts which have been adduced against me, and I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to a favourable interpretation where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious."

She then related that, by the permission of Elizabeth, she had passed the evening of the night on which the murder had been committed at the house of an aunt at Chene, a village situated at about a league from Geneva. On her return, at about nine o'clock, she met a man who asked her if she had seen anything of the child who was lost. She was alarmed by this account and passed several hours in looking for him, when the gates of Geneva were shut, and she was forced to remain several hours of the night in a barn belonging to a cottage, being unwilling to call up the inhabitants, to whom she was well known. Most of the night she spent here watching; towards morning she believed that she slept for a few minutes; some steps disturbed her, and she awoke. It was dawn, and she quitted her asylum, that she might again endeavour to find my brother. If she had gone near the spot where his body lay, it was without her knowledge. That she had been bewildered when questioned by the market-woman was not surprising, since she had passed a sleepless night and the fate of poor William was yet uncertain. Concerning the picture she could give no account.

"I know," continued the unhappy victim, "how heavily and fatally this one circumstance weighs against me, but I have no power of explaining it; and when I have expressed my utter ignorance, I am only left to conjecture concerning the probabilities by which it might have been placed in my pocket. But here also I am checked. I believe that I have no enemy on earth, and none surely would have been so wicked as to destroy me wantonly. Did the murderer place it there? I know of no opportunity afforded him for so doing; or, if I had, why should he have stolen the jewel, to part with it again so soon?

"I commit my cause to the justice of my judges, yet I see no room for hope. I beg permission to have a few witnesses examined concerning my character, and if their testimony shall not overweigh my supposed guilt, I must be condemned, although I would pledge my salvation on my innocence."

Several witnesses were called who had known her for many years, and they spoke well of her; but fear and hatred of the crime of which they supposed her guilty rendered them timorous and unwilling to come forward. Elizabeth saw even this last resource, her excellent dispositions and irreproachable conduct, about to fail the accused, when, although violently agitated, she desired permission to address the court.

"I am," said she, "the cousin of the unhappy child who was murdered, or rather his sister, for I was educated by and have lived with his parents ever since and even long before his birth. It may therefore be judged indecent in me to come forward on this occasion, but when I see a fellow creature about to perish through the cowardice of her pretended friends, I wish to be allowed to speak, that I may say what I know of her character. I am well acquainted with the accused. I have lived in the same house with her, at one time for five and at another for nearly two years. During all that period she appeared to me the most amiable and benevolent of human creatures. She nursed Madame Frankenstein, my aunt, in her last illness, with the greatest affection and care and afterwards attended her own mother during a tedious illness, in a manner that excited the admiration of all who knew her, after which she again lived in my uncle's house, where she was beloved by all the family. She was warmly attached to the child who is now dead and acted towards him like a most affectionate mother. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that, notwithstanding all the evidence produced against her, I believe and rely on her perfect innocence. She had no temptation for such an action; as to the bauble on which the chief proof rests, if she had earnestly desired it, I should have willingly given it to her, so much do I esteem and value her."

A murmur of approbation followed Elizabeth's simple and powerful appeal, but it was excited by her generous interference, and not in favour of poor Justine, on whom the public indignation was turned with renewed violence, charging her with the blackest ingratitude. She herself wept as Elizabeth spoke, but she did not answer. My own agitation and anguish was extreme during the whole trial. I believed in her innocence; I knew it. Could the demon who had (I did not for a minute doubt) murdered my brother also in his hellish sport have betrayed the innocent to death and ignominy? I could not sustain the horror of my situation, and when I perceived that the popular voice and the countenances of the judges had already condemned my unhappy victim, I rushed out of the court in agony. The tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom and would not forgo their hold.

I passed a night of unmingled wretchedness. In the morning I went to the court; my lips and throat were parched. I dared not ask the fatal question, but I was known, and the officer guessed the cause of my visit. The ballots had been thrown; they were all black, and Justine was condemned.

I cannot pretend to describe what I then felt. I had before experienced sensations of horror, and I have endeavoured to bestow upon them adequate expressions, but words cannot convey an idea of the heart-sickening despair that I then endured. The person to whom I addressed myself added that Justine had already confessed her guilt. "That evidence," he observed, "was hardly required in so glaring a case, but I am glad of it, and, indeed, none of our judges like to condemn a criminal upon circumstantial evidence, be it ever so decisive."

This was strange and unexpected intelligence; what could it mean? Had my eyes deceived me? And was I really as mad as the whole world would believe me to be if I disclosed the object of my suspicions? I hastened to return home, and Elizabeth eagerly demanded the result.

“My cousin,” replied I, “it is decided as you may have expected; all judges had rather that ten innocent should suffer than that one guilty should escape. But she has confessed.”

This was a dire blow to poor Elizabeth, who had relied with firmness upon Justine’s innocence. “Alas!” said she. “How shall I ever again believe in human goodness? Justine, whom I loved and esteemed as my sister, how could she put on those smiles of innocence only to betray? Her mild eyes seemed incapable of any severity or guile, and yet she has committed a murder.”

Soon after we heard that the poor victim had expressed a desire to see my cousin. My father wished her not to go but said that he left it to her own judgment and feelings to decide. “Yes,” said Elizabeth, “I will go, although she is guilty; and you, Victor, shall accompany me; I cannot go alone.” The idea of this visit was torture to me, yet I could not refuse. We entered the gloomy prison chamber and beheld Justine sitting on some straw at the farther end; her hands were manacled, and her head rested on her knees. She rose on seeing us enter, and when we were left alone with her, she threw herself at the feet of Elizabeth, weeping bitterly. My cousin wept also.

“Oh, Justine!” said she. “Why did you rob me of my last consolation? I relied on your innocence, and although I was then very wretched, I was not so miserable as I am now.”

“And do you also believe that I am so very, very wicked? Do you also join with my enemies to crush me, to condemn me as a murderer?” Her voice was suffocated with sobs.

“Rise, my poor girl,” said Elizabeth; “why do you kneel, if you are innocent? I am not one of your enemies, I believed you guiltless, notwithstanding every evidence, until I heard that you had yourself declared your guilt. That report, you say, is false; and be assured, dear Justine, that nothing can shake my confidence in you for a moment, but your own confession.”

“I did confess, but I confessed a lie. I confessed, that I might obtain absolution; but now that falsehood lies heavier at my heart than all my other sins. The God of heaven forgive me! Ever since I was condemned, my confessor has besieged me; he threatened and menaced, until I almost began to think that I was the monster that he said I was. He threatened excommunication and hell fire in my last moments if I continued obdurate. Dear lady, I had none to support me; all looked on me as a wretch doomed to ignominy and perdition. What could I do? In an evil hour I subscribed to a lie; and now only am I truly miserable."

She paused, weeping, and then continued, "I thought with horror, my sweet lady, that you should believe your Justine, whom your blessed aunt had so highly honoured, and whom you loved, was a creature capable of a crime which none but the devil himself could have perpetrated. Dear William! dearest blessed child! I soon shall see you again in heaven, where we shall all be happy; and that consoles me, going as I am to suffer ignominy and death."

"Oh, Justine! Forgive me for having for one moment distrusted you. Why did you confess? But do not mourn, dear girl. Do not fear. I will proclaim, I will prove your innocence. I will melt the stony hearts of your enemies by my tears and prayers. You shall not die! You, my playfellow, my companion, my sister, perish on the scaffold! No! No! I never could survive so horrible a misfortune."

Justine shook her head mournfully. "I do not fear to die," she said; "that pang is past. God raises my weakness and gives me courage to endure the worst. I leave a sad and bitter world; and if you remember me and think of me as of one unjustly condemned, I am resigned to the fate awaiting me. Learn from me, dear lady, to submit in patience to the will of heaven!"

During this conversation I had retired to a corner of the prison room, where I could conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me. Despair! Who dared talk of that? The poor victim, who on the morrow was to pass the awful boundary between life and death, felt not, as I did, such deep and bitter agony. I gnashed my teeth and ground them together, uttering a groan that came from my inmost soul. Justine started. When she saw who it was, she approached me and said, "Dear sir, you are very kind to visit me; you, I hope, do not believe that I am guilty?"

I could not answer. "No, Justine," said Elizabeth; "he is more convinced of your innocence than I was, for even when he heard that you had confessed, he did not credit it."

"I truly thank him. In these last moments I feel the sincerest gratitude towards those who think of me with kindness. How sweet is the affection of others to such a wretch as I am! It removes more than half my misfortune, and I feel as if I could die in peace now that my innocence is acknowledged by you, dear lady, and your cousin."

Thus the poor sufferer tried to comfort others and herself. She indeed gained the resignation she desired. But I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation. Elizabeth also wept and was unhappy, but hers also was the misery of innocence, which, like a cloud that passes over the fair moon, for a while hides but cannot tarnish its brightness. Anguish and despair had penetrated into the core of my heart; I bore a hell within me which nothing could extinguish. We stayed several hours with Justine, and it was with great difficulty that Elizabeth could tear herself away. "I wish," cried she, "that I were to die with you; I cannot live in this world of misery."

Justine assumed an air of cheerfulness, while she with difficulty repressed her bitter tears. She embraced Elizabeth and said in a voice of half-suppressed emotion, "Farewell, sweet lady, dearest Elizabeth, my beloved and only friend; may heaven, in its bounty, bless and preserve you; may this be the last misfortune that you will ever suffer! Live, and be happy, and make others so."

And on the morrow Justine died. Elizabeth's heart-rending eloquence failed to move the judges from their settled conviction in the criminality of the saintly sufferer. My passionate and indignant appeals were lost upon them. And when I received their cold answers and heard the harsh, unfeeling reasoning of these men, my purposed avowal died away on my lips. Thus I might proclaim myself a madman, but not revoke the sentence passed upon my wretched victim. She perished on the scaffold as a murderess!

From the tortures of my own heart, I turned to contemplate the deep and voiceless grief of my Elizabeth. This also was my doing! And my father's woe, and the desolation of that late so smiling home all was the work of my thrice-accursed hands! Ye weep, unhappy ones, but these are not your last tears! Again shall you raise the funeral wail, and the sound of your lamentations shall again and again be heard! Frankenstein, your son, your kinsman, your early, much-loved friend; he who would spend each vital drop of blood for your sakes, who has no thought nor sense of joy except as it is mirrored also in your dear countenances, who would fill the air with blessings and spend his life in serving you — he bids you weep, to shed countless tears; happy beyond his hopes, if thus inexorable fate be satisfied, and if the destruction pause before the peace of the grave have succeeded to your sad torments!

Thus spoke my prophetic soul, as, torn by remorse, horror, and despair, I beheld those I loved spend vain sorrow upon the graves of William and Justine, the first hapless victims to my unhallowed arts.

Chapter 9

Nothing is more painful to the human mind than, after the feelings have been worked up by a quick succession of events, the dead calmness of inaction and certainty which follows and deprives the soul both of hope and fear. Justine died, she rested, and I was alive. The blood flowed freely in my veins, but a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart which nothing could remove. Sleep fled from my eyes; I wandered like an evil spirit, for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible, and more, much more (I persuaded myself) was yet behind. Yet my heart overflowed with kindness and the love of virtue. I had begun life with benevolent intentions and thirsted for the moment when I should put them in practice and make myself useful to my fellow beings. Now all was blasted; instead of that serenity of conscience which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from thence to gather promise of new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures such as no language can describe.

This state of mind preyed upon my health, which had perhaps never entirely recovered from the first shock it had sustained. I shunned the face of man; all sound of joy or complacency was torture to me; solitude was my only consolation — deep, dark, deathlike solitude.

My father observed with pain the alteration perceptible in my disposition and habits and endeavoured by arguments deduced from the feelings of his serene conscience and guiltless life to inspire me with fortitude and awaken in me the courage to dispel the dark cloud which brooded over me. “Do you think, Victor,” said he, “that I do not suffer also? No one could love a child more than I loved your brother” — tears came into his eyes as he spoke —”but is it not a duty to the survivors that we should refrain from augmenting their unhappiness by an appearance of immoderate grief? It is also a duty owed to yourself, for excessive sorrow prevents improvement or enjoyment, or even the discharge of daily usefulness, without which no man is fit for society.”

This advice, although good, was totally inapplicable to my case; I should have been the first to hide my grief and console my friends if remorse had not mingled its bitterness, and terror its alarm, with my other sensations. Now I could only answer my father with a look of despair and endeavour to hide myself from his view.

About this time we retired to our house at Belrive. This change was particularly agreeable to me. The shutting of the gates regularly at ten o'clock and the impossibility of remaining on the lake after that hour had rendered our residence within the walls of Geneva very irksome to me. I was now free. Often, after the rest of the family had retired for the night, I took the boat and passed many hours upon the water. Sometimes, with my sails set, I was carried by the wind; and sometimes, after rowing into the middle of the lake, I left the boat to pursue its own course and gave way to my own miserable reflections. I was often tempted, when all was at peace around me, and I the only unquiet thing that wandered restless in a scene so beautiful and heavenly — if I except some bat, or the frogs, whose harsh and interrupted croaking was heard only when I approached the shore — often, I say, I was tempted to plunge into the silent lake, that the waters might close over me and my calamities forever. But I was restrained, when I thought of the heroic and suffering Elizabeth, whom I tenderly loved, and whose existence was bound up in mine. I thought also of my father and surviving brother; should I by my base desertion leave them exposed and unprotected to the malice of the fiend whom I had let loose among them?

At these moments I wept bitterly and wished that peace would revisit my mind only that I might afford them consolation and happiness. But that could not be. Remorse extinguished every hope. I had been the author of unalterable evils, and I lived in daily fear lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness. I had an obscure feeling that all was not over and that he would still commit some signal crime, which by its enormity should almost efface the recollection of the past. There was always scope for fear so long as anything I loved remained behind. My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. When I thought of him I gnashed my teeth, my eyes became inflamed, and I ardently wished to extinguish that life which I had so thoughtlessly bestowed. When I reflected on his crimes and malice, my hatred and revenge burst all bounds of moderation. I would have made a pilgrimage to the highest peak of the Andes, could I when there have precipitated him to their base. I wished to see him again, that I might wreak the utmost extent of abhorrence on his head and avenge the deaths of William and Justine. Our house was the house of mourning. My father's health was deeply shaken by the horror of the recent events. Elizabeth was sad and desponding; she no longer took delight in her ordinary occupations; all pleasure seemed to her sacrilege toward the dead; eternal woe and tears she then thought was the just tribute she should pay to innocence so blasted and destroyed. She was no longer that happy creature who in earlier youth wandered with me on the banks of the lake and talked with ecstasy of our future prospects. The first of those sorrows which are sent to wean us from the earth had visited her, and its dimming influence quenched her dearest smiles.

"When I reflect, my dear cousin," said she, "on the miserable death of Justine Moritz, I no longer see the world and its works as they before appeared to me. Before, I looked upon the accounts of vice and injustice that I read in books or heard from others as tales of ancient days or imaginary evils; at least they were remote and more familiar to reason than to the imagination; but now misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood. Yet I am certainly unjust. Everybody believed that poor girl to be guilty; and if she could have committed the crime for which she suffered, assuredly she would have been the most depraved of human creatures. For the sake of a few jewels, to have murdered the son of her benefactor and friend, a child whom she had nursed from its birth, and appeared to love as if it had been her own! I could not consent to the death of any human being, but certainly I should have thought such a creature unfit to remain in the society of men. But she was innocent. I know, I feel she was innocent; you are of the same opinion, and that confirms me. Alas! Victor, when falsehood can look so like the truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? I feel as if I were walking on the edge of a precipice, towards which thousands are crowding and endeavouring to plunge me into the abyss. William and Justine were assassinated, and the murderer escapes; he walks about the world free, and perhaps respected. But even if I were condemned to suffer on the scaffold for the same crimes, I would not change places with such a wretch."

I listened to this discourse with the extremest agony. I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer. Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance, and kindly taking my hand, said, "My dearest friend, you must calm yourself. These events have affected me, God knows how deeply; but I am not so wretched as you are. There is an expression of despair, and sometimes of revenge, in your countenance that makes me tremble. Dear Victor, banish these dark passions. Remember the friends around you, who centre all their hopes in you. Have we lost the power of rendering you happy? Ah! While we love, while we are true to each other, here in this land of peace and beauty, your native country, we may reap every tranquil blessing — what can disturb our peace?"

And could not such words from her whom I fondly prized before every other gift of fortune suffice to chase away the fiend that lurked in my heart? Even as she spoke I drew near to her, as if in terror, lest at that very moment the destroyer had been near to rob me of her.

Thus not the tenderness of friendship, nor the beauty of earth, nor of heaven, could redeem my soul from woe; the very accents of love were ineffectual. I was encompassed by a cloud which no beneficial influence could penetrate. The wounded deer dragging its fainting limbs to some untrodden brake, there to gaze upon the arrow which had pierced it, and to die, was but a type of me.

Sometimes I could cope with the sullen despair that overwhelmed me, but sometimes the whirlwind passions of my soul drove me to seek, by bodily exercise and by change of place, some relief from my intolerable sensations. It was during an access of this kind that I suddenly left my home, and bending my steps towards the near Alpine valleys, sought in the magnificence, the eternity of such scenes, to forget myself and my ephemeral, because human, sorrows. My wanderings were directed towards the valley of Chamounix. I had visited it frequently during my boyhood. Six years had passed since then: *I* was a wreck, but nought had changed in those savage and enduring scenes.

I performed the first part of my journey on horseback. I afterwards hired a mule, as the more sure-footed and least liable to receive injury on these rugged roads. The weather was fine; it was about the middle of the month of August, nearly two months after the death of Justine, that miserable epoch from which I dated all my woe. The weight upon my spirit was sensibly lightened as I plunged yet deeper in the ravine of Arve. The immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around spoke of a power mighty as Omnipotence — and I ceased to fear or to bend before any being less almighty than that which had created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise. Still, as I ascended higher, the valley assumed a more magnificent and astonishing character. Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny mountains, the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings.

I passed the bridge of Pelissier, where the ravine, which the river forms, opened before me, and I began to ascend the mountain that overhangs it. Soon after, I entered the valley of Chamounix. This valley is more wonderful and sublime, but not so beautiful and picturesque as that of Servox, through which I had just passed. The high and snowy mountains were its immediate boundaries, but I saw no more ruined castles and fertile fields. Immense glaciers approached the road; I heard the rumbling thunder of the falling avalanche and marked the smoke of its passage. Mont Blanc, the supreme and magnificent Mont Blanc, raised itself from the surrounding aiguilles, and its tremendous dome overlooked the valley.

A tingling long-lost sense of pleasure often came across me during this journey. Some turn in the road, some new object suddenly perceived and recognized, reminded me of days gone by, and were associated with the lighthearted gaiety of boyhood. The very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal Nature bade me weep no more. Then again the kindly influence ceased to act — I found myself fettered again to grief and indulging in all the misery of reflection. Then I spurred on my animal, striving so to forget the world, my fears, and more than all, myself — or, in a more desperate fashion, I alighted and threw myself on the grass, weighed down by horror and despair.

At length I arrived at the village of Chamounix. Exhaustion succeeded to the extreme fatigue both of body and of mind which I had endured. For a short space of time I remained at the window watching the pallid lightnings that played above Mont Blanc and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which pursued its noisy way beneath. The same lulling sounds acted as a lullaby to my too keen sensations; when I placed my head upon my pillow, sleep crept over me; I felt it as it came and blessed the giver of oblivion.

Chapter 10

I spent the following day roaming through the valley. I stood beside the sources of the Arveiron, which take their rise in a glacier, that with slow pace is advancing down from the summit of the hills to barricade the valley. The abrupt sides of vast mountains were before me; the icy wall of the glacier overhung me; a few shattered pines were scattered around; and the solemn silence of this glorious presence-chamber of imperial nature was broken only by the brawling waves or the fall of some vast fragment, the thunder sound of the avalanche or the cracking, reverberated along the mountains, of the accumulated ice, which, through the silent working of immutable laws, was ever and anon rent and torn, as if it had been but a plaything in their hands. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling, and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquillized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I retired to rest at night; my slumbers, as it were, waited on and ministered to by the assemblance of grand shapes which I had contemplated during the day. They congregated round me; the unstained snowy mountain-top, the glittering pinnacle, the pine woods, and ragged bare ravine, the eagle, soaring amidst the clouds — they all gathered round me and bade me be at peace.

Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke? All of soul-inspiriting fled with sleep, and dark melancholy clouded every thought. The rain was pouring in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains, so that I even saw not the faces of those mighty friends. Still I would penetrate their misty veil and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm to me? My mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go without a guide, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground, some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are sombre and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds, while rain poured from the dark sky and added to the melancholy impression I received from the objects around me. Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us.

We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep.
    We rise; one wand’ring thought pollutes the day.
We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh or weep,
    Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away;
It is the same: for, be it joy or sorrow,
    The path of its departure still is free.
Man’s yesterday may ne’er be like his morrow;
    Nought may endure but mutability!

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock. From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blanc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea, or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aerial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy; I exclaimed, “Wandering spirits, if indeed ye wander, and do not rest in your narrow beds, allow me this faint happiness, or take me, as your companion, away from the joys of life.”

As I said this I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled; a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me, but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived, as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. But I scarcely observed this; rage and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.

“Devil,” I exclaimed, “do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust! And, oh! That I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!”

“I expected this reception,” said the daemon. “All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends.”

“Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation, come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed.”

My rage was without bounds; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings which can arm one being against the existence of another.

He easily eluded me and said,

“Be calm! I entreat you to hear me before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.”

“Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall.”

“How can I move thee? Will no entreaties cause thee to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature, who implores thy goodness and compassion? Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow beings. If the multitude of mankind knew of my existence, they would do as you do, and arm themselves for my destruction. Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness. Yet it is in your power to recompense me, and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others, shall be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale; when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder, and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me; listen to me, and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands.”

“Why do you call to my remembrance,” I rejoined, “circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author? Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to you or not. Begone! Relieve me from the sight of your detested form.”

“Thus I relieve thee, my creator,” he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; “thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind your snowy precipices and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story and can decide. On you it rests, whether I quit forever the neighbourhood of man and lead a harmless life, or become the scourge of your fellow creatures and the author of your own speedy ruin."

As he said this he led the way across the ice; I followed. My heart was full, and I did not answer him, but as I proceeded, I weighed the various arguments that he had used and determined at least to listen to his tale. I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. I had hitherto supposed him to be the murderer of my brother, and I eagerly sought a confirmation or denial of this opinion. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend; we entered the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.

Chapter 11

"It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. By degrees, I remember, a stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me and troubled me, but hardly had I felt this when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light poured in upon me again. I walked and, I believe, descended, but I presently found a great alteration in my sensations. Before, dark and opaque bodies had surrounded me, impervious to my touch or sight; but I now found that I could wander on at liberty, with no obstacles which I could not either surmount or avoid. The light became more and more oppressive to me, and the heat wearying me as I walked, I sought a place where I could receive shade. This was the forest near Ingolstadt; and here I lay by the side of a brook resting from my fatigue, until I felt tormented by hunger and thirst. This roused me from my nearly dormant state, and I ate some berries which I found hanging on the trees or lying on the ground. I slaked my thirst at the brook, and then lying down, was overcome by sleep.

"It was dark when I awoke; I felt cold also, and half frightened, as it were, instinctively, finding myself so desolate. Before I had quitted your apartment, on a sensation of cold, I had covered myself with some clothes, but these were insufficient to secure me from the dews of night. I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept.

"Soon a gentle light stole over the heavens and gave me a sensation of pleasure. I started up and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees. [The moon] I gazed with a kind of wonder. It moved slowly, but it enlightened my path, and I again went out in search of berries. I was still cold when under one of the trees I found a huge cloak, with which I covered myself, and sat down upon the ground. No distinct ideas occupied my mind; all was confused. I felt light, and hunger, and thirst, and darkness;

innumerable sounds rang in my ears, and on all sides various scents saluted me; the only object that I could distinguish was the bright moon, and I fixed my eyes on that with pleasure.

"Several changes of day and night passed, and the orb of night had greatly lessened, when I began to distinguish my sensations from each other. I gradually saw plainly the clear stream that supplied me with drink and the trees that shaded me with their foliage. I was delighted when I first discovered that a pleasant sound, which often saluted my ears, proceeded from the throats of the little winged animals who had often intercepted the light from my eyes. I began also to observe, with greater accuracy, the forms that surrounded me and to perceive the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopied me. Sometimes I tried to imitate the pleasant songs of the birds but was unable. Sometimes I wished to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again.

"The moon had disappeared from the night, and again, with a lessened form, showed itself, while I still remained in the forest. My sensations had by this time become distinct, and my mind received every day additional ideas. My eyes became accustomed to the light and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and by degrees, one herb from another. I found that the sparrow uttered none but harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and enticing.

"One day, when I was oppressed by cold, I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars, and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! I examined the materials of the fire, and to my joy found it to be composed of wood. I quickly collected some branches, but they were wet and would not burn. I was pained at this and sat still watching the operation of the fire. The wet wood which I had placed near the heat dried and itself became inflamed. I reflected on this, and by touching the various branches, I discovered the cause and busied myself in collecting a great quantity of wood, that I might dry it and have a plentiful supply of fire. When night came on and brought sleep with it, I was in the greatest fear lest my fire should be extinguished. I covered it carefully with dry wood and leaves and placed wet branches upon it; and then, spreading my cloak, I lay on the ground and sank into sleep.

"It was morning when I awoke, and my first care was to visit the fire. I uncovered it, and a gentle breeze quickly fanned it into a flame. I observed this also and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food, for I found some of the offals that the travellers had left had been roasted, and tasted much more savoury than the berries I gathered from the trees. I tried, therefore, to dress my food in the same manner, placing it on the live embers. I found that the berries were spoiled by this operation, and the nuts and roots much improved.

"Food, however, became scarce, and I often spent the whole day searching in vain for a few acorns to assuage the pangs of hunger. When I found this, I resolved to quit the place that I had hitherto inhabited, to seek for one where the few wants I experienced would be more easily satisfied. In this emigration I exceedingly lamented the loss of the fire which I had obtained through accident and knew not how to reproduce it. I gave several hours to the serious consideration of this difficulty, but I was obliged to relinquish all attempt to supply it, and wrapping myself up in my cloak, I struck across the wood towards the setting sun. I passed three days in these rambles and at length discovered the open country. A great fall of snow had taken place the night before, and the fields were of one uniform white; the appearance was disconsolate, and I found my feet chilled by the cold damp substance that covered the ground.

"It was about seven in the morning, and I longed to obtain food and shelter; at length I perceived a small hut, on a rising ground, which had doubtless been built for the convenience of some shepherd. This was a new sight to me, and I examined the structure with great curiosity. Finding the door open, I entered. An old man sat in it, near a fire, over which he was preparing his breakfast. He turned on hearing a noise, and perceiving me, shrieked loudly, and quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his debilitated form hardly appeared capable. His appearance, different from any I had ever before seen, and his flight somewhat surprised me. But I was enchanted by the appearance of the hut; here the snow and rain could not penetrate; the ground was dry; and it presented to me then as exquisite and divine a retreat as Pandemonium appeared to the demons of hell after their sufferings in the lake of fire. I greedily devoured the remnants of the shepherd’s breakfast, which consisted of bread, cheese, milk, and wine; the latter, however, I did not like. Then, overcome by fatigue, I lay down among some straw and fell asleep.

“It was noon when I awoke, and allured by the warmth of the sun, which shone brightly on the white ground, I determined to recommence my travels; and, depositing the remains of the peasant’s breakfast in a wallet I found, I proceeded across the fields for several hours, until at sunset I arrived at a village. How miraculous did this appear! The huts, the neater cottages, and stately houses engaged my admiration by turns. The vegetables in the gardens, the milk and cheese that I saw placed at the windows of some of the cottages, allured my appetite. One of the best of these I entered, but I had hardly placed my foot within the door before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel however, joined a cottage of a neat and pleasant appearance, but after my late dearly bought experience, I dared not enter it. My place of refuge was constructed of wood, but so low that I could with difficulty sit upright in it. No wood, however, was placed on the earth, which formed the floor, but it was dry; and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain.

“Here, then, I retreated and lay down happy to have found a shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man. As soon as morning dawned I crept from my kennel, that I might view the adjacent cottage and discover if I could remain in the habitation I had found. It was situated against the back of the cottage and surrounded on the sides which were exposed by a pig sty and a clear pool of water. One part was open, and by that I had crept in; but now I covered every crevice by which I might be perceived with stones and wood, yet in such a manner that I might move them on occasion to pass out; all the light I enjoyed came through the sty, and that was sufficient for me.

“Having thus arranged my dwelling and carpeted it with clean straw, I retired, for I saw the figure of a man at a distance, and I remembered too well my treatment the night before to trust myself in his power. I had first, however, provided for my sustenance for that day by a loaf of coarse bread, which I purloined, and a cup with which I could drink more conveniently than from my hand of the pure water which flowed by my retreat. The floor was a little raised, so that it was kept perfectly dry, and by its vicinity to the chimney of the cottage it was tolerably warm.

“Being thus provided, I resolved to reside in this hovel until something should occur which might alter my determination. It was indeed a paradise compared to the bleak forest, my former residence, the rain-dropping branches, and dank earth. I ate my breakfast with pleasure and was about to remove a plank to procure myself a little water when I heard a step, and looking through a small chink, I beheld a young creature, with a pail on her head, passing before my hovel. The girl was young and of gentle demeanour, unlike what I have since found cottagers and farmhouse servants to be. Yet she was meanly dressed, a coarse blue petticoat and a linen jacket being her only garb; her fair hair was plaited but not adorned: she looked patient yet sad. I lost sight of her, and in about a quarter of an hour she returned bearing the pail, which was now partly filled with milk. As she walked along, seemingly incommoded by the burden, a young man met her, whose countenance expressed a deeper despondence. Uttering a few sounds with an air of melancholy, he took the pail from her head and bore it to the cottage himself. She followed, and they disappeared. Presently I saw the young man again, with some tools in his hand, cross the field behind the cottage; and the girl was also busied, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the yard.

“On examining my dwelling, I found that one of the windows of the cottage had formerly occupied a part of it, but the panes had been filled up with wood. In one of these was a small and almost imperceptible chink through which the eye could just penetrate. Through this crevice a small room was visible, whitewashed and clean but very bare of furniture. In one corner, near a small fire, sat an old man, leaning his head on his hands in a disconsolate attitude. The young girl was occupied in arranging the cottage; but presently she took something out of a drawer, which employed her hands, and she sat down beside the old man, who, taking up an instrument, began to play and to produce sounds sweeter than the voice of the thrush or the nightingale. It was a lovely sight, even to me, poor wretch who had never beheld aught beautiful before. The silver hair and benevolent countenance of the aged cottager won my reverence, while the gentle manners of the girl enticed my love. He played a sweet mournful air which I perceived drew tears from the eyes of his amiable companion, of which the old man took no notice, until she sobbed audibly; he then pronounced a few sounds, and the fair creature, leaving her work, knelt at his feet. He raised her and smiled with such kindness and affection that I felt sensations of a peculiar and overpowering nature; they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window, unable to bear these emotions.

“Soon after this the young man returned, bearing on his shoulders a load of wood. The girl met him at the door, helped to relieve him of his burden, and taking some of the fuel into the cottage, placed it on the fire; then she and the youth went apart into a nook of the cottage, and he showed her a large loaf and a piece of cheese. She seemed pleased and went into the garden for some roots and plants, which she placed in water, and then upon the fire. She afterwards continued her work, whilst the young man went into the garden and appeared busily employed in digging and pulling up roots. After he had been employed thus about an hour, the young woman joined him and they entered the cottage together.

“The old man had, in the meantime, been pensive, but on the appearance of his companions he assumed a more cheerful air, and they sat down to eat. The meal was quickly dispatched. The young woman was again occupied in arranging the cottage, the old man walked before the cottage in the sun for a few minutes, leaning on the arm of the youth. Nothing could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures. One was old, with silver hairs and a countenance beaming with benevolence and love; the younger was slight and graceful in his figure, and his features were moulded with the finest symmetry, yet his eyes and attitude expressed the utmost sadness and despondency. The old man returned to the cottage, and the youth, with tools different from those he had used in the morning, directed his steps across the fields.

“Night quickly shut in, but to my extreme wonder, I found that the cottagers had a means of prolonging light by the use of tapers, and was delighted to find that the setting of the sun did not put an end to the pleasure I experienced in watching my human neighbours. In the evening the young girl and her companion were employed in various occupations which I did not understand; and the old man again took up the instrument which produced the divine sounds that had enchanted me in the morning. So soon as he had finished, the youth began, not to play, but to utter sounds that were monotonous, and neither resembling the harmony of the old man’s instrument nor the songs of the birds; I since found that he read aloud, but at that time I knew nothing of the science of words or letters.

“The family, after having been thus occupied for a short time, extinguished their lights and retired, as I conjectured, to rest.”

Chapter 12

“I lay on my straw, but I could not sleep. I thought of the occurrences of the day. What chiefly struck me was the gentle manners of these people, and I longed to join them, but dared not. I remembered too well the treatment I had suffered the night before from the barbarous villagers, and resolved, whatever course of conduct I might hereafter think it right to pursue, that for the present I would remain quietly in my hovel, watching and endeavouring to discover the motives which influenced their actions.

“The cottagers arose the next morning before the sun. The young woman arranged the cottage and prepared the food, and the youth departed after the first meal.

“This day was passed in the same routine as that which preceded it. The young man was constantly employed out of doors, and the girl in various laborious occupations within. The old man, whom I soon perceived to be blind, employed his leisure hours on his instrument or in contemplation. Nothing could exceed the love and respect which the younger cottagers exhibited towards their venerable companion. They performed towards him every little office of affection and duty with gentleness, and he rewarded them by his benevolent smiles.

“They were not entirely happy. The young man and his companion often went apart and appeared to weep. I saw no cause for their unhappiness, but I was deeply affected by it. If such lovely creatures were miserable, it was less strange that I, an imperfect and solitary being, should be wretched. Yet why were these gentle beings unhappy? They possessed a delightful house (for such it was in my eyes) and every luxury; they had a fire to warm them when chill and delicious viands when hungry; they were dressed in excellent clothes; and, still more, they enjoyed one another’s company and speech, interchanging each day looks of affection and kindness. What did their tears imply? Did they really express pain? I was at first unable to solve these questions, but perpetual attention and time explained to me many appearances which were at first enigmatic.

“A considerable period elapsed before I discovered one of the causes of the uneasiness of this amiable family: it was poverty, and they suffered that evil in a very distressing degree. Their nourishment consisted entirely of the vegetables of their garden and the milk of one cow, which gave very little during the winter, when its masters could scarcely procure food to support it. They often, I believe, suffered the pangs of hunger very poignantly, especially the two younger cottagers, for several times they placed food before the old man when they reserved none for themselves.

“This trait of kindness moved me sensibly. I had been accustomed, during the night, to steal a part of their store for my own consumption, but when I found that in doing this I inflicted pain on the cottagers, I abstained and satisfied myself with berries, nuts, and roots which I gathered from a neighbouring wood.

“I discovered also another means through which I was enabled to assist their labours. I found that the youth spent a great part of each day in collecting wood for the family fire, and during the night I often took his tools, the use of which I quickly discovered, and brought home firing sufficient for the consumption of several days.

“I remember, the first time that I did this, the young woman, when she opened the door in the morning, appeared greatly astonished on seeing a great pile of wood on the outside. She uttered some words in a loud voice, and the youth joined her, who also expressed surprise. I observed, with pleasure, that he did not go to the forest that day, but spent it in repairing the cottage and cultivating the garden.

“By degrees I made a discovery of still greater moment. I found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experience and feelings to one another by articulate sounds. I perceived that the words they spoke sometimes produced pleasure or pain, smiles or sadness, in the minds and countenances of the hearers. This was indeed a godlike science, and I ardently desired to become acquainted with it. But I was baffled in every attempt I made for this purpose. Their pronunciation was quick, and the words they uttered, not having any apparent connection with visible objects, I was unable to discover any clue by which I could unravel the mystery of their reference. By great application, however, and after having remained during the space of several revolutions of the moon in my hovel, I discovered the names that were given to some of the most familiar objects of discourse; I learned and applied the words, ‘fire,’ ‘milk,’ ‘bread,’ and ‘wood.’ I learned also the names of the cottagers themselves. The youth and his companion had each of them several names, but the old man had only one, which was ‘father.’ The girl was called ‘sister’ or ‘Agatha,’ and the youth ‘Felix,’ ‘brother,’ or ‘son.’ I cannot describe the delight I felt when I learned the ideas appropriated to each of these sounds and was able to pronounce them. I distinguished several other words without being able as yet to understand or apply them, such as ‘good,’ ‘dearest,’ ‘unhappy.’

“I spent the winter in this manner. The gentle manners and beauty of the cottagers greatly endeared them to me; when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys. I saw few human beings besides them, and if any other happened to enter the cottage, their harsh manners and rude gait only enhanced to me the superior accomplishments of my friends. The old man, I could perceive, often endeavoured to encourage his children, as sometimes I found that he called them, to cast off their melancholy. He would talk in a cheerful accent, with an expression of goodness that bestowed pleasure even upon me. Agatha listened with respect, her eyes sometimes filled with tears, which she endeavoured to wipe away unperceived; but I generally found that her countenance and tone were more cheerful after having listened to the exhortations of her father. It was not thus with Felix. He was always the saddest of the group, and even to my unpractised senses, he appeared to have suffered more deeply than his friends. But if his countenance was more sorrowful, his voice was more cheerful than that of his sister, especially when he addressed the old man.

“I could mention innumerable instances which, although slight, marked the dispositions of these amiable cottagers. In the midst of poverty and want, Felix carried with pleasure to his sister the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground. Early in the morning, before she had risen, he cleared away the snow that obstructed her path to the milk-house, drew water from the well, and brought the wood from the outhouse, where, to his perpetual astonishment, he found his store always replenished by an invisible hand. In the day, I believe, he worked sometimes for a neighbouring farmer, because he often went forth and did not return until dinner, yet brought no wood with him. At other times he worked in the garden, but as there was little to do in the frosty season, he read to the old man and Agatha.

“This reading had puzzled me extremely at first, but by degrees I discovered that he uttered many of the same sounds when he read as when he talked. I conjectured, therefore, that he found on the paper signs for speech which he understood, and I ardently longed to comprehend these also; but how was that possible when I did not even understand the sounds for which they stood as signs? I improved, however, sensibly in this science, but not sufficiently to follow up any kind of conversation, although I applied my whole mind to the endeavour, for I easily perceived that, although I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language, which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure, for with this also the contrast perpetually presented to my eyes had made me acquainted.

“I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers — their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions; but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification. Alas! I did not yet entirely know the fatal effects of this miserable deformity.

“As the sun became warmer and the light of day longer, the snow vanished, and I beheld the bare trees and the black earth. From this time Felix was more employed, and the heart-moving indications of impending famine disappeared. Their food, as I afterwards found, was coarse, but it was wholesome; and they procured a sufficiency of it. Several new kinds of plants sprang up in the garden, which they dressed; and these signs of comfort increased daily as the season advanced.

“The old man, leaning on his son, walked each day at noon, when it did not rain, as I found it was called when the heavens poured forth its waters. This frequently took place, but a high wind quickly dried the earth, and the season became far more pleasant than it had been.

“My mode of life in my hovel was uniform. During the morning I attended the motions of the cottagers, and when they were dispersed in various occupations, I slept; the remainder of the day was spent in observing my friends. When they had retired to rest, if there was any moon or the night was star-light, I went into the woods and collected my own food and fuel for the cottage. When I returned, as often as it was necessary, I cleared their path from the snow and performed those offices that I had seen done by Felix. I afterwards found that these labours, performed by an invisible hand, greatly astonished them; and once or twice I heard them, on these occasions, utter the words ‘good spirit,’ ‘wonderful’; but I did not then understand the signification of these terms.

“My thoughts now became more active, and I longed to discover the motives and feelings of these lovely creatures; I was inquisitive to know why Felix appeared so miserable and Agatha so sad. I thought (foolish wretch!) that it might be in my power to restore happiness to these deserving people. When I slept or was absent, the forms of the venerable blind father, the gentle Agatha, and the excellent Felix flitted before me. I looked upon them as superior beings who would be the arbiters of my future destiny. I formed in my imagination a thousand pictures of presenting myself to them, and their reception of me. I imagined that they would be disgusted, until, by my gentle demeanour and conciliating words, I should first win their favour and afterwards their love.

“These thoughts exhilarated me and led me to apply with fresh ardour to the acquiring the art of language. My organs were indeed harsh, but supple; and although my voice was very unlike the soft music of their tones, yet I pronounced such words as I understood with tolerable ease. It was as the ass and the lap-dog; yet surely the gentle ass whose intentions were affectionate, although his manners were rude, deserved better treatment than blows and execration.

“The pleasant showers and genial warmth of spring greatly altered the aspect of the earth. Men who before this change seemed to have been hid in caves dispersed themselves and were employed in various arts of cultivation. The birds sang in more cheerful notes, and the leaves began to bud forth on the trees. Happy, happy earth! Fit habitation for gods, which, so short a time before, was bleak, damp, and unwholesome. My spirits were elevated by the enchanting appearance of nature; the past was blotted from my memory, the present was tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope and anticipations of joy.”

Chapter 13

"I now hasten to the more moving part of my story. I shall relate events that impressed me with feelings which, from what I had been, have made me what I am.

"Spring advanced rapidly; the weather became fine and the skies cloudless. It surprised me that what before was desert and gloomy should now bloom with the most beautiful flowers and verdure. My senses were gratified and refreshed by a thousand scents of delight and a thousand sights of beauty.

"It was on one of these days, when my cottagers periodically rested from labour — the old man played on his guitar, and the children listened to him — that I observed the countenance of Felix was melancholy beyond expression; he sighed frequently, and once his father paused in his music, and I conjectured by his manner that he inquired the cause of his son's sorrow. Felix replied in a cheerful accent, and the old man was recommencing his music when someone tapped at the door.

"It was a lady on horseback, accompanied by a country-man as a guide. The lady was dressed in a dark suit and covered with a thick black veil. Agatha asked a question, to which the stranger only replied by pronouncing, in a sweet accent, the name of Felix. Her voice was musical but unlike that of either of my friends. On hearing this word, Felix came up hastily to the lady, who, when she saw him, threw up her veil, and I beheld a countenance of angelic beauty and expression. Her hair of a shining raven black, and curiously braided; her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her features of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink.

"Felix seemed ravished with delight when he saw her, every trait of sorrow vanished from his face, and it instantly expressed a degree of ecstatic joy, of which I could hardly have believed it capable; his eyes sparkled, as his cheek flushed with pleasure; and at that moment I thought him as beautiful as the stranger. She appeared affected by different feelings; wiping a few tears from her lovely eyes, she held out her hand to Felix, who kissed it rapturously and called her, as well as I could distinguish, his sweet

Arabian. She did not appear to understand him, but smiled. He assisted her to dismount, and dismissing her guide, conducted her into the cottage. Some conversation took place between him and his father, and the young stranger knelt at the old man's feet and would have kissed his hand, but he raised her and embraced her affectionately.

"I soon perceived that although the stranger uttered articulate sounds and appeared to have a language of her own, she was neither understood by nor herself understood the cottagers. They made many signs which I did not comprehend, but I saw that her presence diffused gladness through the cottage, dispelling their sorrow as the sun dissipates the morning mists. Felix seemed peculiarly happy and with smiles of delight welcomed his Arabian. Agatha, the ever-gentle Agatha, kissed the hands of the lovely stranger, and pointing to her brother, made signs which appeared to me to mean that he had been sorrowful until she came. Some hours passed thus, while they, by their countenances, expressed joy, the cause of which I did not comprehend. Presently I found, by the frequent recurrence of some sound which the stranger repeated after them, that she was endeavouring to learn their language; and the idea instantly occurred to me that I should make use of the same instructions to the same end. The stranger learned about twenty words at the first lesson; most of them, indeed, were those which I had before understood, but I profited by the others.

"As night came on, Agatha and the Arabian retired early. When they separated Felix kissed the hand of the stranger and said, 'Good night sweet Safie.' He sat up much longer, conversing with his father, and by the frequent repetition of her name I conjectured that their lovely guest was the subject of their conversation. I ardently desired to understand them, and bent every faculty towards that purpose, but found it utterly impossible.

"The next morning Felix went out to his work, and after the usual occupations of Agatha were finished, the Arabian sat at the feet of the old man, and taking his guitar, played some airs so entrancingly beautiful that they at once drew tears of sorrow and delight from my eyes. She sang, and her voice flowed in a rich cadence, swelling or dying away like a nightingale of the woods.

"When she had finished, she gave the guitar to Agatha, who at first declined it. She played a simple air, and her voice accompanied it in sweet accents, but unlike the wondrous strain of the stranger. The old man appeared enraptured and said some words which Agatha endeavoured to explain to Safie, and by which he appeared to wish to express that she bestowed on him the greatest delight by her music.

“The days now passed as peaceably as before, with the sole alteration that joy had taken place of sadness in the countenances of my friends. Safie was always gay and happy; she and I improved rapidly in the knowledge of language, so that in two months I began to comprehend most of the words uttered by my protectors.

“In the meanwhile also the black ground was covered with herbage, and the green banks interspersed with innumerable flowers, sweet to the scent and the eyes, stars of pale radiance among the moonlight woods; the sun became warmer, the nights clear and balmy; and my nocturnal rambles were an extreme pleasure to me, although they were considerably shortened by the late setting and early rising of the sun, for I never ventured abroad during daylight, fearful of meeting with the same treatment I had formerly endured in the first village which I entered.

“My days were spent in close attention, that I might more speedily master the language; and I may boast that I improved more rapidly than the Arabian, who understood very little and conversed in broken accents, whilst I comprehended and could imitate almost every word that was spoken.

“While I improved in speech, I also learned the science of letters as it was taught to the stranger, and this opened before me a wide field for wonder and delight.

“The book from which Felix instructed Safie was Volney’s Ruins of Empires. I should not have understood the purport of this book had not Felix, in reading it, given very minute explanations. He had chosen this work, he said, because the declamatory style was framed in imitation of the Eastern authors. Through this work I obtained a cursory knowledge of history and a view of the several empires at present existing in the world; it gave me an insight into the manners, governments, and religions of the different nations of the earth. I heard of the slothful Asiatics, of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the Grecians, of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans — of their subsequent degenerating — of the decline of that mighty empire, of chivalry, Christianity, and kings. I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants.

“These wonderful narrations inspired me with strange feelings. Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle and at another as all that can be conceived of noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than that of the blind mole or harmless worm. For a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow, or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased and I turned away with disgust and loathing.

“Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me. While I listened to the instructions which Felix bestowed upon the Arabian, the strange system of human society was explained to me. I heard of the division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty, of rank, descent, and noble blood.

“The words induced me to turn towards myself. I learned that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages, but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few! And what was I? Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant, but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property. I was, besides, endued with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore the extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me. Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?

“I cannot describe to you the agony that these reflections inflicted upon me; I tried to dispel them, but sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had forever remained in my native wood, nor known nor felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat!

“Of what a strange nature is knowledge! It clings to the mind when it has once seized on it like a lichen on the rock. I wished sometimes to shake off all thought and feeling, but I learned that there was but one means to overcome the sensation of pain, and that was death — a state which I feared yet did not understand. I admired virtue and good feelings and loved the gentle manners and amiable qualities of my cottagers, but I was shut out from intercourse with them, except through means which I obtained by stealth, when I was unseen and unknown, and which rather increased than satisfied the desire I had of becoming one among my fellows. The gentle words of Agatha and the animated smiles of the charming Arabian were not for me. The mild exhortations of the old man and the lively conversation of the loved Felix were not for me. Miserable, unhappy wretch!

“Other lessons were impressed upon me even more deeply. I heard of the difference of sexes, and the birth and growth of children, how the father doted on the smiles of the infant, and the lively sallies of the older child, how all the life and cares of the mother were wrapped up in the precious charge, how the mind of youth expanded and gained knowledge, of brother, sister, and all the various relationships which bind one human being to another in mutual bonds.

“But where were my friends and relations? No father had watched my infant days, no mother had blessed me with smiles and caresses; or if they had, all my past life was now a blot, a blind vacancy in which I distinguished nothing. From my earliest remembrance I had been as I then was in height and proportion. I had never yet seen a being resembling me or who claimed any intercourse with me. What was I? The question again recurred, to be answered only with groans.

“I will soon explain to what these feelings tended, but allow me now to return to the cottagers, whose story excited in me such various feelings of indignation, delight, and wonder, but which all terminated in additional love and reverence for my protectors (for so I loved, in an innocent, half-painful self-deceit, to call them).”

Chapter 14

“Some time elapsed before I learned the history of my friends. It was one which could not fail to impress itself deeply on my mind, unfolding as it did a number of circumstances, each interesting and wonderful to one so utterly inexperienced as I was.

“The name of the old man was De Lacey. He was descended from a good family in France, where he had lived for many years in affluence, respected by his superiors and beloved by his equals. His son was bred in the service of his country, and Agatha had ranked with ladies of the highest distinction. A few months before my arrival they had lived in a large and luxurious city called Paris, surrounded by friends and possessed of every enjoyment which virtue, refinement of intellect, or taste, accompanied by a moderate fortune, could afford.

“The father of Safie had been the cause of their ruin. He was a Turkish merchant and had inhabited Paris for many years, when, for some reason which I could not learn, he became obnoxious to the government. He was seized and cast into prison the very day that Safie arrived from Constantinople to join him. He was tried and condemned to death. The injustice of his sentence was very flagrant; all Paris was indignant; and it was judged that his religion and wealth rather than the crime alleged against him had been the cause of his condemnation.

“Felix had accidentally been present at the trial; his horror and indignation were uncontrollable when he heard the decision of the court. He made, at that moment, a solemn vow to deliver him and then looked around for the means. After many fruitless attempts to gain admittance to the prison, he found a strongly grated window in an unguarded part of the building, which lighted the dungeon of the unfortunate Muhammadan, who, loaded with chains, waited in despair the execution of the barbarous sentence. Felix visited the grate at night and made known to the prisoner his intentions in his favour. The Turk, amazed and delighted, endeavoured to kindle the zeal of his deliverer by promises of reward and wealth. Felix rejected his offers with contempt, yet when he saw the lovely Safie, who was allowed to visit her father and who by her gestures expressed her lively gratitude, the youth could not help owning to his own mind that the captive possessed a treasure which would fully reward his toil and hazard.

"The Turk quickly perceived the impression that his daughter had made on the heart of Felix and endeavoured to secure him more entirely in his interests by the promise of her hand in marriage so soon as he should be conveyed to a place of safety. Felix was too delicate to accept this offer, yet he looked forward to the probability of the event as to the consummation of his happiness.

"During the ensuing days, while the preparations were going forward for the escape of the merchant, the zeal of Felix was warmed by several letters that he received from this lovely girl, who found means to express her thoughts in the language of her lover by the aid of an old man, a servant of her father who understood French. She thanked him in the most ardent terms for his intended services towards her parent, and at the same time she gently deplored her own fate.

"I have copies of these letters, for I found means, during my residence in the hovel, to procure the implements of writing; and the letters were often in the hands of Felix or Agatha. Before I depart I will give them to you; they will prove the truth of my tale; but at present, as the sun is already far declined, I shall only have time to repeat the substance of them to you.

"Safie related that her mother was a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks; recommended by her beauty, she had won the heart of the father of Safie, who married her. The young girl spoke in high and enthusiastic terms of her mother, who, born in freedom, spurned the bondage to which she was now reduced. She instructed her daughter in the tenets of her religion and taught her to aspire to higher powers of intellect and an independence of spirit forbidden to the female followers of Muhammad. This lady died, but her lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia and being immured within the walls of a harem, allowed only to occupy herself with infantile amusements, ill-suited to the temper of her soul, now accustomed to grand ideas and a noble emulation for virtue. The prospect of marrying a Christian and remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society was enchanting to her.

"The day for the execution of the Turk was fixed, but on the night previous to it he quitted his prison and before morning was distant many leagues from Paris. Felix had procured passports in the name of his father, sister, and himself. He had previously communicated his plan to the former, who aided the deceit by quitting his house, under the pretence of a journey and concealed himself, with his daughter, in an obscure part of Paris.

"Felix conducted the fugitives through France to Lyons and across Mont Cenis to Leghorn, where the merchant had decided to wait a favourable opportunity of passing into some part of the Turkish dominions.

"Safie resolved to remain with her father until the moment of his departure, before which time the Turk renewed his promise that she should be united to his deliverer; and Felix remained with them in expectation of that event; and in the meantime he enjoyed the society of the Arabian, who exhibited towards him the simplest and tenderest affection. They conversed with one another through the means of an interpreter, and sometimes with the interpretation of looks; and Safie sang to him the divine airs of her native country.

"The Turk allowed this intimacy to take place and encouraged the hopes of the youthful lovers, while in his heart he had formed far other plans. He loathed the idea that his daughter should be united to a Christian, but he feared the resentment of Felix if he should appear lukewarm, for he knew that he was still in the power of his deliverer if he should choose to betray him to the Italian state which they inhabited. He revolved a thousand plans by which he should be enabled to prolong the deceit until it might be no longer necessary, and secretly to take his daughter with him when he departed. His plans were facilitated by the news which arrived from Paris.

"The government of France were greatly enraged at the escape of their victim and spared no pains to detect and punish his deliverer. The plot of Felix was quickly discovered, and De Lacey and Agatha were thrown into prison. The news reached Felix and roused him from his dream of pleasure. His blind and aged father and his gentle sister lay in a noisome dungeon while he enjoyed the free air and the society of her whom he loved. This idea was torture to him. He quickly arranged with the Turk that if the latter should find a favourable opportunity for escape before Felix could return to Italy, Safie should remain as a boarder at a convent at Leghorn; and then, quitting the lovely Arabian, he hastened to Paris and delivered himself up to the vengeance of the law, hoping to free De Lacey and Agatha by this proceeding.

“He did not succeed. They remained confined for five months before the trial took place, the result of which deprived them of their fortune and condemned them to a perpetual exile from their native country.

“They found a miserable asylum in the cottage in Germany, where I discovered them. Felix soon learned that the treacherous Turk, for whom he and his family endured such unheard-of oppression, on discovering that his deliverer was thus reduced to poverty and ruin, became a traitor to good feeling and honour and had quitted Italy with his daughter, insultingly sending Felix a pittance of money to aid him, as he said, in some plan of future maintenance.

“Such were the events that preyed on the heart of Felix and rendered him, when I first saw him, the most miserable of his family. He could have endured poverty, and while this distress had been the meed of his virtue, he gloried in it; but the ingratitude of the Turk and the loss of his beloved Safie were misfortunes more bitter and irreparable. The arrival of the Arabian now infused new life into his soul.

“When the news reached Leghorn that Felix was deprived of his wealth and rank, the merchant commanded his daughter to think no more of her lover, but to prepare to return to her native country. The generous nature of Safie was outraged by this command; she attempted to expostulate with her father, but he left her angrily, reiterating his tyrannical mandate.

“A few days after, the Turk entered his daughter’s apartment and told her hastily that he had reason to believe that his residence at Leghorn had been divulged and that he should speedily be delivered up to the French government; he had consequently hired a vessel to convey him to Constantinople, for which city he should sail in a few hours. He intended to leave his daughter under the care of a confidential servant, to follow at her leisure with the greater part of his property, which had not yet arrived at Leghorn.

“When alone, Safie resolved in her own mind the plan of conduct that it would become her to pursue in this emergency. A residence in Turkey was abhorrent to her; her religion and her feelings were alike averse to it. By some papers of her father which fell into her hands she heard of the exile of her lover and learnt the name of the spot where he then resided. She hesitated some time, but at length she formed her determination. Taking with her some jewels that belonged to her and a sum of money, she quitted

Italy with an attendant, a native of Leghorn, but who understood the common language of Turkey, and departed for Germany.

“She arrived in safety at a town about twenty leagues from the cottage of De Lacey, when her attendant fell dangerously ill. Safie nursed her with the most devoted affection, but the poor girl died, and the Arabian was left alone, unacquainted with the language of the country and utterly ignorant of the customs of the world. She fell, however, into good hands. The Italian had mentioned the name of the spot for which they were bound, and after her death the woman of the house in which they had lived took care that Safie should arrive in safety at the cottage of her lover.”

Chapter 15

"Such was the history of my beloved cottagers. It impressed me deeply. I learned, from the views of social life which it developed, to admire their virtues and to deprecate the vices of mankind.

"As yet I looked upon crime as a distant evil, benevolence and generosity were ever present before me, inciting within me a desire to become an actor in the busy scene where so many admirable qualities were called forth and displayed. But in giving an account of the progress of my intellect, I must not omit a circumstance which occurred in the beginning of the month of August of the same year.

"One night during my accustomed visit to the neighbouring wood where I collected my own food and brought home firing for my protectors, I found on the ground a leathern portmanteau containing several articles of dress and some books. I eagerly seized the prize and returned with it to my hovel. Fortunately the books were written in the language, the elements of which I had acquired at the cottage; they consisted of Paradise Lost, a volume of Plutarch's Lives, and the Sorrows of Werter. The possession of these treasures gave me extreme delight; I now continually studied and exercised my mind upon these histories, whilst my friends were employed in their ordinary occupations.

"I can hardly describe to you the effect of these books. They produced in me an infinity of new images and feelings, that sometimes raised me to ecstasy, but more frequently sunk me into the lowest dejection. In the Sorrows of Werter, besides the interest of its simple and affecting story, so many opinions are canvassed and so many lights thrown upon what had hitherto been to me obscure subjects that I found in it a never-ending source of speculation and astonishment. The gentle and domestic manners it described, combined with lofty sentiments and feelings, which had for their object something out of self, accorded well with my experience among my protectors and with the wants which were forever alive in my own bosom. But I thought Werter himself a more divine being than I had ever beheld or imagined; his character contained no pretension, but it sank deep. The disquisitions upon death and suicide were calculated to fill me with wonder.

I did not pretend to enter into the merits of the case, yet I inclined towards the opinions of the hero, whose extinction I wept, without precisely understanding it.

“As I read, however, I applied much personally to my own feelings and condition. I found myself similar yet at the same time strangely unlike to the beings concerning whom I read and to whose conversation I was a listener. I sympathized with and partly understood them, but I was unformed in mind; I was dependent on none and related to none. ‘The path of my departure was free,’ and there was none to lament my annihilation. My person was hideous and my stature gigantic. What did this mean? Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them.

“The volume of Plutarch’s Lives which I possessed contained the histories of the first founders of the ancient republics. This book had a far different effect upon me from the Sorrows of Werter. I learned from Werter’s imaginations despondency and gloom, but Plutarch taught me high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages. Many things I read surpassed my understanding and experience. I had a very confused knowledge of kingdoms, wide extents of country, mighty rivers, and boundless seas. But I was perfectly unacquainted with towns and large assemblages of men. The cottage of my protectors had been the only school in which I had studied human nature, but this book developed new and mightier scenes of action. I read of men concerned in public affairs, governing or massacring their species. I felt the greatest ardour for virtue rise within me, and abhorrence for vice, as far as I understood the signification of those terms, relative as they were, as I applied them, to pleasure and pain alone. Induced by these feelings, I was of course led to admire peaceable lawgivers, Numa, Solon, and Lycurgus, in preference to Romulus and Theseus. The patriarchal lives of my protectors caused these impressions to take a firm hold on my mind; perhaps, if my first introduction to humanity had been made by a young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter, I should have been imbued with different sensations.

“But Paradise Lost excited different and far deeper emotions. I read it, as I had read the other volumes which had fallen into my hands, as a true history. It moved every feeling of wonder and awe that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. I often referred the several situations, as their similarity struck me, to my own. Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition, for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me.

"Another circumstance strengthened and confirmed these feelings. Soon after my arrival in the hovel I discovered some papers in the pocket of the dress which I had taken from your laboratory. At first I had neglected them, but now that I was able to decipher the characters in which they were written, I began to study them with diligence. It was your journal of the four months that preceded my creation. You minutely described in these papers every step you took in the progress of your work; this history was mingled with accounts of domestic occurrences. You doubtless recollect these papers. Here they are. Everything is related in them which bears reference to my accursed origin; the whole detail of that series of disgusting circumstances which produced it is set in view; the minutest description of my odious and loathsome person is given, in language which painted your own horrors and rendered mine indelible. I sickened as I read. 'Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even YOU turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred.'

"These were the reflections of my hours of despondency and solitude; but when I contemplated the virtues of the cottagers, their amiable and benevolent dispositions, I persuaded myself that when they should become acquainted with my admiration of their virtues they would compassionate me and overlook my personal deformity. Could they turn from their door one, however monstrous, who solicited their compassion and friendship? I resolved, at least, not to despair, but in every way to fit myself for an interview with them which would decide my fate. I postponed this attempt for some months longer, for the importance attached to its success inspired me with a dread lest I should fail. Besides, I found that my understanding improved so much with every day's experience that I was unwilling to commence this undertaking until a few more months should have added to my sagacity.

"Several changes, in the meantime, took place in the cottage. The presence of Safie diffused happiness among its inhabitants, and I also found that a greater degree of plenty reigned there. Felix and Agatha spent more time in amusement and conversation, and were assisted in their labours by servants. They did not appear rich, but they were contented and happy; their feelings were serene and peaceful, while mine became every day more tumultuous. Increase of knowledge only discovered to me more clearly what a wretched outcast I was. I cherished hope, it is true, but it vanished when I beheld my person reflected in water or my shadow in the moonshine, even as that frail image and that inconstant shade.

"I endeavoured to crush these fears and to fortify myself for the trial which in a few months I resolved to undergo; and sometimes I allowed my thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise, and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathizing with my feelings and cheering my gloom; their angelic countenances breathed smiles of consolation. But it was all a dream; no Eve soothed my sorrows nor shared my thoughts; I was alone. I remembered Adam's supplication to his Creator. But where was mine? He had abandoned me, and in the bitterness of my heart I cursed him.

"Autumn passed thus. I saw, with surprise and grief, the leaves decay and fall, and nature again assume the barren and bleak appearance it had worn when I first beheld the woods and the lovely moon. Yet I did not heed the bleakness of the weather; I was better fitted by my conformation for the endurance of cold than heat. But my chief delights were the sight of the flowers, the birds, and all the gay apparel of summer; when those deserted me, I turned with more attention towards the cottagers. Their happiness was not decreased by the absence of summer. They loved and sympathized with one another; and their joys, depending on each other, were not interrupted by the casualties that took place around them. The more I saw of them, the greater became my desire to claim their protection and kindness; my heart yearned to be known and loved by these amiable creatures; to see their sweet looks directed towards me with affection was the utmost limit of my ambition. I dared not think that they would turn them from me with disdain and horror. The poor that stopped at their door were never driven away. I asked, it is true, for greater treasures than a little food or rest: I required kindness and sympathy; but I did not believe myself utterly unworthy of it.

"The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention at this time was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects, but that on which I finally fixed was to enter the dwelling when the blind old man should be alone. I had sagacity enough to discover that the unnatural hideousness of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly beheld me. My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if in the absence of his children I could gain the good will and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might by his means be tolerated by my younger protectors.

"One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that strewed the ground and diffused cheerfulness, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix departed on a long country walk, and the old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar and played several mournful but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was illuminated with pleasure, but as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

"My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes or realize my fears. The servants were gone to a neighbouring fair. All was silent in and around the cottage; it was an excellent opportunity; yet, when I proceeded to execute my plan, my limbs failed me and I sank to the ground. Again I rose, and exerting all the firmness of which I was master, removed the planks which I had placed before my hovel to conceal my retreat. The fresh air revived me, and with renewed determination I approached the door of their cottage.

"I knocked. 'Who is there?' said the old man. 'Come in.'

"I entered. 'Pardon this intrusion,' said I; 'I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.’

“‘Enter,’ said De Lacey, ‘and I will try in what manner I can to relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.’

“‘Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.’

“I sat down, and a silence ensued. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained irresolute in what manner to commence the interview, when the old man addressed me. ‘By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; are you French?’

“‘No; but I was educated by a French family and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose favour I have some hopes.’

“‘Are they Germans?’

“‘No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an unfortunate and deserted creature, I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world forever.’

“‘Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair.’

“‘They are kind — they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.’

“‘That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?’

“‘I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.’

“‘Where do these friends reside?’

"'Near this spot.'

"The old man paused and then continued, 'If you will unreservedly confide to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.'

"'Excellent man! I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.'

"'Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent; judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"'How can I thank you, my best and only benefactor? From your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be forever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"'May I know the names and residence of those friends?'

"I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of or bestow happiness on me forever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose, but seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, 'Now is the time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!'

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man. 'Who are you?'

"At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel.”

Chapter 16

"Cursed, cursed creator! Why did I live? Why, in that instant, did I not extinguish the spark of existence which you had so wantonly bestowed? I know not; despair had not yet taken possession of me; my feelings were those of rage and revenge. I could with pleasure have destroyed the cottage and its inhabitants and have glutted myself with their shrieks and misery.

"When night came I quitted my retreat and wandered in the wood; and now, no longer restrained by the fear of discovery, I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils, destroying the objects that obstructed me and ranging through the wood with a stag-like swiftness. Oh! What a miserable night I passed! The cold stars shone in mockery, and the bare trees waved their branches above me; now and then the sweet voice of a bird burst forth amidst the universal stillness. All, save I, were at rest or in enjoyment; I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me, and finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.

"But this was a luxury of sensation that could not endure; I became fatigued with excess of bodily exertion and sank on the damp grass in the sick impotence of despair. There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No; from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and more than all, against him who had formed me and sent me forth to this insupportable misery.

"The sun rose; I heard the voices of men and knew that it was impossible to return to my retreat during that day. Accordingly I hid myself in some thick underwood, determining to devote the ensuing hours to reflection on my situation.

"The pleasant sunshine and the pure air of day restored me to some degree of tranquillity; and when I considered what had passed at the cottage, I could not help believing that I had been too hasty in my conclusions. I had certainly acted imprudently. It was apparent that my conversation had interested the father in my behalf, and I was a fool in having exposed my person to the horror of his children. I ought to have familiarized the old De Lacey to me, and by degrees to have discovered myself to the rest of his family, when they should have been prepared for my approach. But I did not believe my errors to be irretrievable, and after much consideration I resolved to return to the cottage, seek the old man, and by my representations win him to my party.

"These thoughts calmed me, and in the afternoon I sank into a profound sleep; but the fever of my blood did not allow me to be visited by peaceful dreams. The horrible scene of the preceding day was forever acting before my eyes; the females were flying and the enraged Felix tearing me from his father's feet. I awoke exhausted, and finding that it was already night, I crept forth from my hiding-place, and went in search of food.

"When my hunger was appeased, I directed my steps towards the well-known path that conducted to the cottage. All there was at peace. I crept into my hovel and remained in silent expectation of the accustomed hour when the family arose. That hour passed, the sun mounted high in the heavens, but the cottagers did not appear. I trembled violently, apprehending some dreadful misfortune. The inside of the cottage was dark, and I heard no motion; I cannot describe the agony of this suspense.

"Presently two countrymen passed by, but pausing near the cottage, they entered into conversation, using violent gesticulations; but I did not understand what they said, as they spoke the language of the country, which differed from that of my protectors. Soon after, however, Felix approached with another man; I was surprised, as I knew that he had not quitted the cottage that morning, and waited anxiously to discover from his discourse the meaning of these unusual appearances.

"'Do you consider,' said his companion to him, 'that you will be obliged to pay three months' rent and to lose the produce of your garden? I do not wish to take any unfair advantage, and I beg therefore that you will take some days to consider of your determination.'

"'It is utterly useless,' replied Felix; 'we can never again inhabit your cottage. The life of my father is in the greatest danger, owing to the dreadful circumstance that I have related. My wife and my sister will never recover from their horror. I entreat you not to reason with me any more. Take possession of your tenement and let me fly from this place.'

“Felix trembled violently as he said this. He and his companion entered the cottage, in which they remained for a few minutes, and then departed. I never saw any of the family of De Lacey more.

“I continued for the remainder of the day in my hovel in a state of utter and stupid despair. My protectors had departed and had broken the only link that held me to the world. For the first time the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom, and I did not strive to control them, but allowing myself to be borne away by the stream, I bent my mind towards injury and death. When I thought of my friends, of the mild voice of De Lacey, the gentle eyes of Agatha, and the exquisite beauty of the Arabian, these thoughts vanished and a gush of tears somewhat soothed me. But again when I reflected that they had spurned and deserted me, anger returned, a rage of anger, and unable to injure anything human, I turned my fury towards inanimate objects. As night advanced I placed a variety of combustibles around the cottage, and after having destroyed every vestige of cultivation in the garden, I waited with forced impatience until the moon had sunk to commence my operations.

“As the night advanced, a fierce wind arose from the woods and quickly dispersed the clouds that had loitered in the heavens; the blast tore along like a mighty avalanche and produced a kind of insanity in my spirits that burst all bounds of reason and reflection. I lighted the dry branch of a tree and danced with fury around the devoted cottage, my eyes still fixed on the western horizon, the edge of which the moon nearly touched. A part of its orb was at length hid, and I waved my brand; it sank, and with a loud scream I fired the straw, and heath, and bushes, which I had collected. The wind fanned the fire, and the cottage was quickly enveloped by the flames, which clung to it and licked it with their forked and destroying tongues.

“As soon as I was convinced that no assistance could save any part of the habitation, I quitted the scene and sought for refuge in the woods.

“And now, with the world before me, whither should I bend my steps? I resolved to fly far from the scene of my misfortunes; but to me, hated and despised, every country must be equally horrible. At length the thought of you crossed my mind. I learned from your papers that you were my father, my creator; and to whom could I apply with more fitness than to him who had given me life? Among the lessons that Felix had bestowed upon Safie, geography had not been omitted; I had learned from these the relative situations of the different countries of the earth. You had mentioned Geneva as the name of your native town, and towards this place I resolved to proceed.

“But how was I to direct myself? I knew that I must travel in a southwesterly direction to reach my destination, but the sun was my only guide. I did not know the names of the towns that I was to pass through, nor could I ask information from a single human being; but I did not despair. From you only could I hope for succour, although towards you I felt no sentiment but that of hatred. Unfeeling, heartless creator! You had endowed me with perceptions and passions and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind. But on you only had I any claim for pity and redress, and from you I determined to seek that justice which I vainly attempted to gain from any other being that wore the human form.

“My travels were long and the sufferings I endured intense. It was late in autumn when I quitted the district where I had so long resided. I travelled only at night, fearful of encountering the visage of a human being. Nature decayed around me, and the sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter. Oh, earth! How often did I imprecate curses on the cause of my being! The mildness of my nature had fled, and all within me was turned to gall and bitterness. The nearer I approached to your habitation, the more deeply did I feel the spirit of revenge enkindled in my heart. Snow fell, and the waters were hardened, but I rested not. A few incidents now and then directed me, and I possessed a map of the country; but I often wandered wide from my path. The agony of my feelings allowed me no respite; no incident occurred from which my rage and misery could not extract its food; but a circumstance that happened when I arrived on the confines of Switzerland, when the sun had recovered its warmth and the earth again began to look green, confirmed in an especial manner the bitterness and horror of my feelings.

“I generally rested during the day and travelled only when I was secured by night from the view of man. One morning, however, finding that my path lay through a deep wood, I ventured to continue my journey after the sun had risen; the day, which was one of the first of spring, cheered even me by the loveliness of its sunshine and the balminess of the air. I felt emotions of gentleness and pleasure, that had long appeared dead, revive within me. Half surprised by the novelty of these sensations, I allowed myself to be borne away by them, and forgetting my solitude and deformity, dared to be happy. Soft tears again bedewed my cheeks, and I even raised my humid eyes with thankfulness towards the blessed sun, which bestowed such joy upon me.

"I continued to wind among the paths of the wood, until I came to its boundary, which was skirted by a deep and rapid river, into which many of the trees bent their branches, now budding with the fresh spring. Here I paused, not exactly knowing what path to pursue, when I heard the sound of voices, that induced me to conceal myself under the shade of a cypress. I was scarcely hid when a young girl came running towards the spot where I was concealed, laughing, as if she ran from someone in sport. She continued her course along the precipitous sides of the river, when suddenly her foot slipped, and she fell into the rapid stream. I rushed from my hiding-place and with extreme labour, from the force of the current, saved her and dragged her to shore. She was senseless, and I endeavoured by every means in my power to restore animation, when I was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a rustic, who was probably the person from whom she had playfully fled. On seeing me, he darted towards me, and tearing the girl from my arms, hastened towards the deeper parts of the wood. I followed speedily, I hardly knew why; but when the man saw me draw near, he aimed a gun, which he carried, at my body and fired. I sank to the ground, and my injurer, with increased swiftness, escaped into the wood.

"This was then the reward of my benevolence! I had saved a human being from destruction, and as a recompense I now writhed under the miserable pain of a wound which shattered the flesh and bone. The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments before gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind. But the agony of my wound overcame me; my pulses paused, and I fainted.

"For some weeks I led a miserable life in the woods, endeavouring to cure the wound which I had received. The ball had entered my shoulder, and I knew not whether it had remained there or passed through; at any rate I had no means of extracting it. My sufferings were augmented also by the oppressive sense of the injustice and ingratitude of their infliction. My daily vows rose for revenge — a deep and deadly revenge, such as would alone compensate for the outrages and anguish I had endured.

“After some weeks my wound healed, and I continued my journey. The labours I endured were no longer to be alleviated by the bright sun or gentle breezes of spring; all joy was but a mockery which insulted my desolate state and made me feel more painfully that I was not made for the enjoyment of pleasure.

“But my toils now drew near a close, and in two months from this time I reached the environs of Geneva.

“It was evening when I arrived, and I retired to a hiding-place among the fields that surround it to meditate in what manner I should apply to you. I was oppressed by fatigue and hunger and far too unhappy to enjoy the gentle breezes of evening or the prospect of the sun setting behind the stupendous mountains of Jura.

“At this time a slight sleep relieved me from the pain of reflection, which was disturbed by the approach of a beautiful child, who came running into the recess I had chosen, with all the sportiveness of infancy. Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me that this little creature was unprejudiced and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth.

“Urged by this impulse, I seized on the boy as he passed and drew him towards me. As soon as he beheld my form, he placed his hands before his eyes and uttered a shrill scream; I drew his hand forcibly from his face and said, ‘Child, what is the meaning of this? I do not intend to hurt you; listen to me.’

“He struggled violently. ‘Let me go,’ he cried; ‘monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me and tear me to pieces. You are an ogre. Let me go, or I will tell my papa.’

“‘Boy, you will never see your father again; you must come with me.’

“‘Hideous monster! Let me go. My papa is a syndic — he is M. Frankenstein — he will punish you. You dare not keep me.’

“‘Frankenstein! you belong then to my enemy — to him towards whom I have sworn eternal revenge; you shall be my first victim.’

“The child still struggled and loaded me with epithets which carried despair to my heart; I grasped his throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet.

“I gazed on my victim, and my heart swelled with exultation and hellish triumph; clapping my hands, I exclaimed, ‘I too can create desolation; my enemy is not invulnerable; this death will carry despair to him, and a thousand other miseries shall torment and destroy him.’

“As I fixed my eyes on the child, I saw something glittering on his breast. I took it; it was a portrait of a most lovely woman. In spite of my malignity, it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips; but presently my rage returned; I remembered that I was forever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow and that she whose resemblance I contemplated would, in regarding me, have changed that air of divine benignity to one expressive of disgust and affright.

“Can you wonder that such thoughts transported me with rage? I only wonder that at that moment, instead of venting my sensations in exclamations and agony, I did not rush among mankind and perish in the attempt to destroy them.

“While I was overcome by these feelings, I left the spot where I had committed the murder, and seeking a more secluded hiding-place, I entered a barn which had appeared to me to be empty. A woman was sleeping on some straw; she was young, not indeed so beautiful as her whose portrait I held, but of an agreeable aspect and blooming in the loveliness of youth and health. Here, I thought, is one of those whose joy-imparting smiles are bestowed on all but me. And then I bent over her and whispered, ‘Awake, fairest, thy lover is near — he who would give his life but to obtain one look of affection from thine eyes; my beloved, awake!’

“The sleeper stirred; a thrill of terror ran through me. Should she indeed awake, and see me, and curse me, and denounce the murderer? Thus would she assuredly act if her darkened eyes opened and she beheld me. The thought was madness; it stirred the fiend within me — not I, but she, shall suffer; the murder I have committed because I am forever robbed of all that she could give me, she shall atone. The crime had its source in her; be hers the punishment! Thanks to the lessons of Felix and the sanguinary laws of man, I had learned now to work mischief. I bent over her and placed the portrait securely in one of the folds of her dress. She moved again, and I fled.

“For some days I haunted the spot where these scenes had taken place, sometimes wishing to see you, sometimes resolved to quit the world and its miseries forever. At length I wandered towards these mountains, and have ranged through their immense recesses, consumed by a burning passion which you alone can gratify. We may not part until you have promised to comply with my requisition. I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. This being you must create.”

Chapter 17

The being finished speaking and fixed his looks upon me in the expectation of a reply. But I was bewildered, perplexed, and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently to understand the full extent of his proposition. He continued,

"You must create a female for me with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do, and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede."

The latter part of his tale had kindled anew in me the anger that had died away while he narrated his peaceful life among the cottagers, and as he said this I could no longer suppress the rage that burned within me.

"I do refuse it," I replied; "and no torture shall ever extort a consent from me. You may render me the most miserable of men, but you shall never make me base in my own eyes. Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world. Begone! I have answered you; you may torture me, but I will never consent."

"You are in the wrong," replied the fiend; "and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? You would not call it murder if you could precipitate me into one of those ice-rifts and destroy my frame, the work of your own hands. Shall I respect man when he condemns me? Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and instead of injury I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance. But that cannot be; the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my arch-enemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth."

A fiendish rage animated him as he said this; his face was wrinkled into contortions too horrible for human eyes to behold; but presently he calmed himself and proceeded —

“I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me, for you do not reflect that YOU are the cause of its excess. If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold; for that one creature’s sake I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! My creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!”

I was moved. I shuddered when I thought of the possible consequences of my consent, but I felt that there was some justice in his argument. His tale and the feelings he now expressed proved him to be a creature of fine sensations, and did I not as his maker owe him all the portion of happiness that it was in my power to bestow? He saw my change of feeling and continued,

“If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again; I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. Pitiless as you have been towards me, I now see compassion in your eyes; let me seize the favourable moment and persuade you to promise what I so ardently desire.”

“You propose,” replied I, “to fly from the habitations of man, to dwell in those wilds where the beasts of the field will be your only companions. How can you, who long for the love and sympathy of man, persevere in this exile? You will return and again seek their kindness, and you will meet with their detestation; your evil passions will be renewed, and you will then have a companion to aid you in the task of destruction. This may not be; cease to argue the point, for I cannot consent.”

“How inconstant are your feelings! But a moment ago you were moved by my representations, and why do you again harden yourself to my complaints? I swear to you, by the earth which I inhabit, and by you that made me, that with the companion you bestow I will quit the neighbourhood of man and dwell, as it may chance, in the most savage of places. My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy! My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments I shall not curse my maker.”

His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him and sometimes felt a wish to console him, but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred. I tried to stifle these sensations; I thought that as I could not sympathize with him, I had no right to withhold from him the small portion of happiness which was yet in my power to bestow.

“You swear,” I said, “to be harmless; but have you not already shown a degree of malice that should reasonably make me distrust you? May not even this be a feint that will increase your triumph by affording a wider scope for your revenge?”

“How is this? I must not be trifled with, and I demand an answer. If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing of whose existence everyone will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor, and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being and become linked to the chain of existence and events from which I am now excluded.”

I paused some time to reflect on all he had related and the various arguments which he had employed. I thought of the promise of virtues which he had displayed on the opening of his existence and the subsequent blight of all kindly feeling by the loathing and scorn which his protectors had manifested towards him. His power and threats were not omitted in my calculations; a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers and hide himself from pursuit among the ridges of inaccessible precipices was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with. After a long pause of reflection I concluded that the justice due both to him and my fellow creatures demanded of me that I should comply with his request. Turning to him, therefore, I said,

"I consent to your demand, on your solemn oath to quit Europe forever, and every other place in the neighbourhood of man, as soon as I shall deliver into your hands a female who will accompany you in your exile."

"I swear," he cried, "by the sun, and by the blue sky of heaven, and by the fire of love that burns my heart, that if you grant my prayer, while they exist you shall never behold me again. Depart to your home and commence your labours; I shall watch their progress with unutterable anxiety; and fear not but that when you are ready I shall appear."

Saying this, he suddenly quitted me, fearful, perhaps, of any change in my sentiments. I saw him descend the mountain with greater speed than the flight of an eagle, and quickly lost among the undulations of the sea of ice.

His tale had occupied the whole day, and the sun was upon the verge of the horizon when he departed. I knew that I ought to hasten my descent towards the valley, as I should soon be encompassed in darkness; but my heart was heavy, and my steps slow. The labour of winding among the little paths of the mountain and fixing my feet firmly as I advanced perplexed me, occupied as I was by the emotions which the occurrences of the day had produced. Night was far advanced when I came to the halfway resting-place and seated myself beside the fountain. The stars shone at intervals as the clouds passed from over them; the dark pines rose before me, and every here and there a broken tree lay on the ground; it was a scene of wonderful solemnity and stirred strange thoughts within me. I wept bitterly, and clasping my hands in agony, I exclaimed, "Oh! Stars and clouds and winds, ye are all about to mock me; if ye really pity me, crush sensation and memory; let me become as nought; but if not, depart, depart, and leave me in darkness."

These were wild and miserable thoughts, but I cannot describe to you how the eternal twinkling of the stars weighed upon me and how I listened to every blast of wind as if it were a dull ugly siroc on its way to consume me.

Morning dawned before I arrived at the village of Chamounix; I took no rest, but returned immediately to Geneva. Even in my own heart I could give no expression to my sensations — they weighed on me with a mountain’s weight and their excess destroyed my agony beneath them. Thus I returned home, and entering the house, presented myself to the family. My haggard and wild appearance awoke intense alarm, but I answered no question, scarcely did I speak. I felt as if I were placed under a ban — as if I had no right to claim their sympathies — as if never more might I enjoy companionship with them. Yet even thus I loved them to adoration; and to save them, I resolved to dedicate myself to my most abhorred task. The prospect of such an occupation made every other circumstance of existence pass before me like a dream, and that thought only had to me the reality of life.

Chapter 18

Day after day, week after week, passed away on my return to Geneva; and I could not collect the courage to recommence my work. I feared the vengeance of the disappointed fiend, yet I was unable to overcome my repugnance to the task which was enjoined me. I found that I could not compose a female without again devoting several months to profound study and laborious disquisition. I had heard of some discoveries having been made by an English philosopher, the knowledge of which was material to my success, and I sometimes thought of obtaining my father's consent to visit England for this purpose; but I clung to every pretence of delay and shrank from taking the first step in an undertaking whose immediate necessity began to appear less absolute to me. A change indeed had taken place in me; my health, which had hitherto declined, was now much restored; and my spirits, when unchecked by the memory of my unhappy promise, rose proportionably. My father saw this change with pleasure, and he turned his thoughts towards the best method of eradicating the remains of my melancholy, which every now and then would return by fits, and with a devouring blackness overcast the approaching sunshine. At these moments I took refuge in the most perfect solitude. I passed whole days on the lake alone in a little boat, watching the clouds and listening to the rippling of the waves, silent and listless. But the fresh air and bright sun seldom failed to restore me to some degree of composure, and on my return I met the salutations of my friends with a readier smile and a more cheerful heart.

It was after my return from one of these rambles that my father, calling me aside, thus addressed me,

"I am happy to remark, my dear son, that you have resumed your former pleasures and seem to be returning to yourself. And yet you are still unhappy and still avoid our society. For some time I was lost in conjecture as to the cause of this, but yesterday an idea struck me, and if it is well founded, I conjure you to avow it. Reserve on such a point would be not only useless, but draw down treble misery on us all."

I trembled violently at his exordium, and my father continued—”I confess, my son, that I have always looked forward to your marriage with our dear Elizabeth as the tie of our domestic comfort and the stay of my declining years. You were attached to each other from your earliest infancy; you studied together, and appeared, in dispositions and tastes, entirely suited to one another. But so blind is the experience of man that what I conceived to be the best assistants to my plan may have entirely destroyed it. You, perhaps, regard her as your sister, without any wish that she might become your wife. Nay, you may have met with another whom you may love; and considering yourself as bound in honour to Elizabeth, this struggle may occasion the poignant misery which you appear to feel.”

“My dear father, reassure yourself. I love my cousin tenderly and sincerely. I never saw any woman who excited, as Elizabeth does, my warmest admiration and affection. My future hopes and prospects are entirely bound up in the expectation of our union.”

“The expression of your sentiments of this subject, my dear Victor, gives me more pleasure than I have for some time experienced. If you feel thus, we shall assuredly be happy, however present events may cast a gloom over us. But it is this gloom which appears to have taken so strong a hold of your mind that I wish to dissipate. Tell me, therefore, whether you object to an immediate solemnization of the marriage. We have been unfortunate, and recent events have drawn us from that everyday tranquillity befitting my years and infirmities. You are younger; yet I do not suppose, possessed as you are of a competent fortune, that an early marriage would at all interfere with any future plans of honour and utility that you may have formed. Do not suppose, however, that I wish to dictate happiness to you or that a delay on your part would cause me any serious uneasiness. Interpret my words with candour and answer me, I conjure you, with confidence and sincerity.”

I listened to my father in silence and remained for some time incapable of offering any reply. I revolved rapidly in my mind a multitude of thoughts and endeavoured to arrive at some conclusion. Alas! To me the idea of an immediate union with my Elizabeth was one of horror and dismay. I was bound by a solemn promise which I had not yet fulfilled and dared not break, or if I did, what manifold miseries might not impend over me and my devoted family! Could I enter into a festival with this deadly weight yet hanging round my neck and bowing me to the ground? I must perform my engagement and let the monster depart with his mate before I allowed myself to enjoy the delight of a union from which I expected peace.

I remembered also the necessity imposed upon me of either journeying to England or entering into a long correspondence with those philosophers of that country whose knowledge and discoveries were of indispensable use to me in my present undertaking. The latter method of obtaining the desired intelligence was dilatory and unsatisfactory; besides, I had an insurmountable aversion to the idea of engaging myself in my loathsome task in my father's house while in habits of familiar intercourse with those I loved. I knew that a thousand fearful accidents might occur, the slightest of which would disclose a tale to thrill all connected with me with horror. I was aware also that I should often lose all self-command, all capacity of hiding the harrowing sensations that would possess me during the progress of my unearthly occupation. I must absent myself from all I loved while thus employed. Once commenced, it would quickly be achieved, and I might be restored to my family in peace and happiness. My promise fulfilled, the monster would depart forever. Or (so my fond fancy imaged) some accident might meanwhile occur to destroy him and put an end to my slavery forever.

These feelings dictated my answer to my father. I expressed a wish to visit England, but concealing the true reasons of this request, I clothed my desires under a guise which excited no suspicion, while I urged my desire with an earnestness that easily induced my father to comply. After so long a period of an absorbing melancholy that resembled madness in its intensity and effects, he was glad to find that I was capable of taking pleasure in the idea of such a journey, and he hoped that change of scene and varied amusement would, before my return, have restored me entirely to myself.

The duration of my absence was left to my own choice; a few months, or at most a year, was the period contemplated. One paternal kind precaution he had taken to ensure my having a companion. Without previously communicating with me, he had, in concert with Elizabeth, arranged that Clerval should join me at Strasbourg. This interfered with the solitude I coveted for the prosecution of my task; yet at the commencement of my journey the presence of my friend could in no way be an impediment, and truly I rejoiced that thus I should be saved many hours of lonely, maddening reflection. Nay, Henry might stand between me and the intrusion of my foe.

If I were alone, would he not at times force his abhorred presence on me to remind me of my task or to contemplate its progress?

To England, therefore, I was bound, and it was understood that my union with Elizabeth should take place immediately on my return. My father's age rendered him extremely averse to delay. For myself, there was one reward I promised myself from my detested toils — one consolation for my unparalleled sufferings; it was the prospect of that day when, enfranchised from my miserable slavery, I might claim Elizabeth and forget the past in my union with her.

I now made arrangements for my journey, but one feeling haunted me which filled me with fear and agitation. During my absence I should leave my friends unconscious of the existence of their enemy and unprotected from his attacks, exasperated as he might be by my departure. But he had promised to follow me wherever I might go, and would he not accompany me to England? This imagination was dreadful in itself, but soothing inasmuch as it supposed the safety of my friends. I was agonized with the idea of the possibility that the reverse of this might happen. But through the whole period during which I was the slave of my creature I allowed myself to be governed by the impulses of the moment; and my present sensations strongly intimated that the fiend would follow me and exempt my family from the danger of his machinations.

It was in the latter end of September that I again quitted my native country. My journey had been my own suggestion, and Elizabeth therefore acquiesced, but she was filled with disquiet at the idea of my suffering, away from her, the inroads of misery and grief. It had been her care which provided me a companion in Clerval — and yet a man is blind to a thousand minute circumstances which call forth a woman's sedulous attention. She longed to bid me hasten my return; a thousand conflicting emotions rendered her mute as she bade me a tearful, silent farewell.

I threw myself into the carriage that was to convey me away, hardly knowing whither I was going, and careless of what was passing around. I remembered only, and it was with a bitter anguish that I reflected on it, to order that my chemical instruments should be packed to go with me. Filled with dreary imaginations, I passed through many beautiful and majestic scenes, but my eyes were fixed and unobserving. I could only think of the bourne of my travels and the work which was to occupy me whilst they endured.

After some days spent in listless indolence, during which I traversed many leagues, I arrived at Strasbourg, where I waited two days for Clerval. He came. Alas, how great was the contrast between us! He was alive to every new scene, joyful when he saw the beauties of the setting sun, and more happy when he beheld it rise and recommence a new day. He pointed out to me the shifting colours of the landscape and the appearances of the sky. “This is what it is to live,” he cried; “how I enjoy existence! But you, my dear Frankenstein, wherefore are you desponding and sorrowful!” In truth, I was occupied by gloomy thoughts and neither saw the descent of the evening star nor the golden sunrise reflected in the Rhine. And you, my friend, would be far more amused with the journal of Clerval, who observed the scenery with an eye of feeling and delight, than in listening to my reflections. I, a miserable wretch, haunted by a curse that shut up every avenue to enjoyment.

We had agreed to descend the Rhine in a boat from Strasbourg to Rotterdam, whence we might take shipping for London. During this voyage we passed many willowy islands and saw several beautiful towns. We stayed a day at Mannheim, and on the fifth from our departure from Strasbourg, arrived at Mainz. The course of the Rhine below Mainz becomes much more picturesque. The river descends rapidly and winds between hills, not high, but steep, and of beautiful forms. We saw many ruined castles standing on the edges of precipices, surrounded by black woods, high and inaccessible. This part of the Rhine, indeed, presents a singularly variegated landscape. In one spot you view rugged hills, ruined castles overlooking tremendous precipices, with the dark Rhine rushing beneath; and on the sudden turn of a promontory, flourishing vineyards with green sloping banks and a meandering river and populous towns occupy the scene.

We travelled at the time of the vintage and heard the song of the labourers as we glided down the stream. Even I, depressed in mind, and my spirits continually agitated by gloomy feelings, even I was pleased. I lay at the bottom of the boat, and as I gazed on the cloudless blue sky, I seemed to drink in a tranquillity to which I had long been a stranger. And if these were my sensations, who can describe those of Henry? He felt as if he had been transported to fairy-land and enjoyed a happiness seldom tasted by man. “I have seen,” he said, “the most beautiful scenes of my own country; I have visited the lakes of Lucerne and Uri, where the snowy mountains descend almost perpendicularly to the water, casting black and impenetrable shades, which would cause a gloomy and mournful appearance were it not for the most verdant islands that believe the eye by their gay appearance; I have seen this lake agitated by a tempest, when the wind tore up whirlwinds of water and gave you an idea of what the water-spout must be on the great ocean; and the waves dash with fury the base of the mountain, where the priest and his mistress were overwhelmed by an avalanche and where their dying voices are still said to be heard amid the pauses of the nightly wind; I have seen the mountains of La Valais, and the Pays de Vaud; but this country, Victor, pleases me more than all those wonders. The mountains of Switzerland are more majestic and strange, but there is a charm in the banks of this divine river that I never before saw equalled. Look at that castle which overhangs yon precipice; and that also on the island, almost concealed amongst the foliage of those lovely trees; and now that group of labourers coming from among their vines; and that village half hid in the recess of the mountain. Oh, surely the spirit that inhabits and guards this place has a soul more in harmony with man than those who pile the glacier or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains of our own country.” Clerval! Beloved friend! Even now it delights me to record your words and to dwell on the praise of which you are so eminently deserving. He was a being formed in the “very poetry of nature.” His wild and enthusiastic imagination was chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections, and his friendship was of that devoted and wondrous nature that the world-minded teach us to look for only in the imagination. But even human sympathies were not sufficient to satisfy his eager mind. The scenery of external nature, which others regard only with admiration, he loved with ardour: —

—— The sounding cataract
Haunted him like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to him

An appetite; a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrow’d from the eye.

[Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey”.]

And where does he now exist? Is this gentle and lovely being lost forever? Has this mind, so replete with ideas, imaginations fanciful and magnificent, which formed a world, whose existence depended on the life of its creator; — has this mind perished? Does it now only exist in my memory? No, it is not thus; your form so divinely wrought, and beaming with beauty, has decayed, but your spirit still visits and consoles your unhappy friend.

Pardon this gush of sorrow; these ineffectual words are but a slight tribute to the unexampled worth of Henry, but they soothe my heart, overflowing with the anguish which his remembrance creates. I will proceed with my tale.

Beyond Cologne we descended to the plains of Holland; and we resolved to post the remainder of our way, for the wind was contrary and the stream of the river was too gentle to aid us. Our journey here lost the interest arising from beautiful scenery, but we arrived in a few days at Rotterdam, whence we proceeded by sea to England. It was on a clear morning, in the latter days of December, that I first saw the white cliffs of Britain. The banks of the Thames presented a new scene; they were flat but fertile, and almost every town was marked by the remembrance of some story. We saw Tilbury Fort and remembered the Spanish Armada, Gravesend, Woolwich, and Greenwich — places which I had heard of even in my country.

At length we saw the numerous steeples of London, St. Paul’s towering above all, and the Tower famed in English history.

Chapter 19

London was our present point of rest; we determined to remain several months in this wonderful and celebrated city. Clerval desired the intercourse of the men of genius and talent who flourished at this time, but this was with me a secondary object; I was principally occupied with the means of obtaining the information necessary for the completion of my promise and quickly availed myself of the letters of introduction that I had brought with me, addressed to the most distinguished natural philosophers.

If this journey had taken place during my days of study and happiness, it would have afforded me inexpressible pleasure. But a blight had come over my existence, and I only visited these people for the sake of the information they might give me on the subject in which my interest was so terribly profound. Company was irksome to me; when alone, I could fill my mind with the sights of heaven and earth; the voice of Henry soothed me, and I could thus cheat myself into a transitory peace. But busy, uninteresting, joyous faces brought back despair to my heart. I saw an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow men; this barrier was sealed with the blood of William and Justine, and to reflect on the events connected with those names filled my soul with anguish.

But in Clerval I saw the image of my former self; he was inquisitive and anxious to gain experience and instruction. The difference of manners which he observed was to him an inexhaustible source of instruction and amusement. He was also pursuing an object he had long had in view. His design was to visit India, in the belief that he had in his knowledge of its various languages, and in the views he had taken of its society, the means of materially assisting the progress of European colonization and trade. In Britain only could he further the execution of his plan. He was forever busy, and the only check to his enjoyments was my sorrowful and dejected mind. I tried to conceal this as much as possible, that I might not debar him from the pleasures natural to one who was entering on a new scene of life, undisturbed by any care or bitter recollection. I often refused to accompany him, alleging another engagement, that I might remain alone. I now also began to collect the materials necessary for my new creation, and this was to me like the torture of single drops of water continually falling on the head. Every thought that was devoted to it was an extreme anguish, and every word that I spoke in allusion to it caused my lips to quiver, and my heart to palpitate.

After passing some months in London, we received a letter from a person in Scotland who had formerly been our visitor at Geneva. He mentioned the beauties of his native country and asked us if those were not sufficient allurements to induce us to prolong our journey as far north as Perth, where he resided. Clerval eagerly desired to accept this invitation, and I, although I abhorred society, wished to view again mountains and streams and all the wondrous works with which Nature adorns her chosen dwelling-places. We had arrived in England at the beginning of October, and it was now February. We accordingly determined to commence our journey towards the north at the expiration of another month. In this expedition we did not intend to follow the great road to Edinburgh, but to visit Windsor, Oxford, Matlock, and the Cumberland lakes, resolving to arrive at the completion of this tour about the end of July. I packed up my chemical instruments and the materials I had collected, resolving to finish my labours in some obscure nook in the northern highlands of Scotland.

We quitted London on the 27th of March and remained a few days at Windsor, rambling in its beautiful forest. This was a new scene to us mountaineers; the majestic oaks, the quantity of game, and the herds of stately deer were all novelties to us.

From thence we proceeded to Oxford. As we entered this city our minds were filled with the remembrance of the events that had been transacted there more than a century and a half before. It was here that Charles I. had collected his forces. This city had remained faithful to him, after the whole nation had forsaken his cause to join the standard of Parliament and liberty. The memory of that unfortunate king and his companions, the amiable Falkland, the insolent Goring, his queen, and son, gave a peculiar interest to every part of the city which they might be supposed to have inhabited. The spirit of elder days found a dwelling here, and we delighted to trace its footsteps. If these feelings had not found an imaginary gratification, the appearance of the city had yet in itself sufficient beauty to obtain our admiration. The colleges are ancient and picturesque; the streets are almost magnificent; and the lovely Isis, which flows beside it through meadows of exquisite verdure, is spread forth into a placid expanse of waters, which reflects its majestic assemblage of towers, and spires, and domes, embosomed among aged trees.

I enjoyed this scene, and yet my enjoyment was embittered both by the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future. I was formed for peaceful happiness. During my youthful days discontent never visited my mind, and if I was ever overcome by ennui, the sight of what is beautiful in nature or the study of what is excellent and sublime in the productions of man could always interest my heart and communicate elasticity to my spirits. But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul; and I felt then that I should survive to exhibit what I shall soon cease to be — a miserable spectacle of wrecked humanity, pitiable to others and intolerable to myself.

We passed a considerable period at Oxford, rambling among its environs and endeavouring to identify every spot which might relate to the most animating epoch of English history. Our little voyages of discovery were often prolonged by the successive objects that presented themselves. We visited the tomb of the illustrious Hampden and the field on which that patriot fell. For a moment my soul was elevated from its debasing and miserable fears to contemplate the divine ideas of liberty and self sacrifice of which these sights were the monuments and the remembrancers. For an instant I dared to shake off my chains and look around me with a free and lofty spirit, but the iron had eaten into my flesh, and I sank again, trembling and hopeless, into my miserable self.

We left Oxford with regret and proceeded to Matlock, which was our next place of rest. The country in the neighbourhood of this village resembled, to a greater degree, the scenery of Switzerland; but everything is on a lower scale, and the green hills want the crown of distant white Alps which always attend on the piny mountains of my native country. We visited the wondrous cave and the little cabinets of natural history, where the curiosities are disposed in the same manner as in the collections at Servox and Chamounix. The latter name made me tremble when pronounced by Henry, and I hastened to quit Matlock, with which that terrible scene was thus associated.

From Derby, still journeying northwards, we passed two months in Cumberland and Westmorland. I could now almost fancy myself among the Swiss mountains. The little patches of snow which yet lingered on the northern sides of the mountains, the lakes, and the dashing of the rocky streams were all familiar and dear sights to me. Here also we made some acquaintances, who almost contrived to cheat me into happiness. The delight of Clerval was proportionably greater than mine; his mind expanded in the company of men of talent, and he found in his own nature greater capacities and resources than he could have imagined himself to have possessed while he associated with his inferiors. “I could pass my life here,” said he to me; “and among these mountains I should scarcely regret Switzerland and the Rhine.”

But he found that a traveller’s life is one that includes much pain amidst its enjoyments. His feelings are forever on the stretch; and when he begins to sink into repose, he finds himself obliged to quit that on which he rests in pleasure for something new, which again engages his attention, and which also he forsakes for other novelties.

We had scarcely visited the various lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland and conceived an affection for some of the inhabitants when the period of our appointment with our Scotch friend approached, and we left them to travel on. For my own part I was not sorry. I had now neglected my promise for some time, and I feared the effects of the daemon’s disappointment. He might remain in Switzerland and wreak his vengeance on my relatives. This idea pursued me and tormented me at every moment from which I might otherwise have snatched repose and peace. I waited for my letters with feverish impatience; if they were delayed I was miserable and overcome by a thousand fears; and when they arrived and I saw the superscription of Elizabeth or my father, I hardly dared to read and ascertain my fate. Sometimes I thought that the fiend followed me and might expedite my remissness by murdering my companion. When these thoughts possessed me, I would not quit Henry for a moment, but followed him as his shadow, to protect him from the fancied rage of his destroyer. I felt as if I had committed some great crime, the consciousness of which haunted me. I was guiltless, but I had indeed drawn down a horrible curse upon my head, as mortal as that of crime.

I visited Edinburgh with languid eyes and mind; and yet that city might have interested the most unfortunate being. Clerval did not like it so well as Oxford, for the antiquity of the latter city was more pleasing to him. But the beauty and regularity of the new town of Edinburgh, its romantic castle and its environs, the most delightful in the world, Arthur’s Seat, St. Bernard’s Well, and the Pentland Hills compensated him for the change and filled him with cheerfulness and admiration. But I was impatient to arrive at the termination of my journey.

We left Edinburgh in a week, passing through Coupar, St. Andrew’s, and along the banks of the Tay, to Perth, where our friend expected us. But I was in no mood to laugh and talk with strangers or enter into their feelings or plans with the good humour expected from a guest; and accordingly I told Clerval that I wished to make the tour of Scotland alone. “Do you,” said I, “enjoy yourself, and let this be our rendezvous. I may be absent a month or two; but do not interfere with my motions, I entreat you; leave me to peace and solitude for a short time; and when I return, I hope it will be with a lighter heart, more congenial to your own temper.”

Henry wished to dissuade me, but seeing me bent on this plan, ceased to remonstrate. He entreated me to write often. “I had rather be with you,” he said, “in your solitary rambles, than with these Scotch people, whom I do not know; hasten, then, my dear friend, to return, that I may again feel myself somewhat at home, which I cannot do in your absence.”

Having parted from my friend, I determined to visit some remote spot of Scotland and finish my work in solitude. I did not doubt but that the monster followed me and would discover himself to me when I should have finished, that he might receive his companion. With this resolution I traversed the northern highlands and fixed on one of the remotest of the Orkneys as the scene of my labours. It was a place fitted for such a work, being hardly more than a rock whose high sides were continually beaten upon by the waves. The soil was barren, scarcely affording pasture for a few miserable cows, and oatmeal for its inhabitants, which consisted of five persons, whose gaunt and scraggy limbs gave tokens of their miserable fare. Vegetables and bread, when they indulged in such luxuries, and even fresh water, was to be procured from the mainland, which was about five miles distant.

On the whole island there were but three miserable huts, and one of these was vacant when I arrived. This I hired. It contained but two rooms, and these exhibited all the squalidness of the most miserable penury. The thatch had fallen in, the walls were unplastered, and the door was off its hinges. I ordered it to be repaired, bought some furniture, and took possession, an incident which would doubtless have occasioned some surprise had not all the senses of the cottagers been benumbed by want and squalid poverty. As it was, I lived ungazed at and unmolested, hardly thanked for the pittance of food and clothes which I gave, so much does suffering blunt even the coarsest sensations of men.

In this retreat I devoted the morning to labour; but in the evening, when the weather permitted, I walked on the stony beach of the sea to listen to the waves as they roared and dashed at my feet. It was a monotonous yet ever-changing scene. I thought of Switzerland; it was far different from this desolate and appalling landscape. Its hills are covered with vines, and its cottages are scattered thickly in the plains. Its fair lakes reflect a blue and gentle sky, and when troubled by the winds, their tumult is but as the play of a lively infant when compared to the roarings of the giant ocean.

In this manner I distributed my occupations when I first arrived, but as I proceeded in my labour, it became every day more horrible and irksome to me. Sometimes I could not prevail on myself to enter my laboratory for several days, and at other times I toiled day and night in order to complete my work. It was, indeed, a filthy process in which I was engaged. During my first experiment, a kind of enthusiastic frenzy had blinded me to the horror of my employment; my mind was intently fixed on the consummation of my labour, and my eyes were shut to the horror of my proceedings. But now I went to it in cold blood, and my heart often sickened at the work of my hands.

Thus situated, employed in the most detestable occupation, immersed in a solitude where nothing could for an instant call my attention from the actual scene in which I was engaged, my spirits became unequal; I grew restless and nervous. Every moment I feared to meet my persecutor. Sometimes I sat with my eyes fixed on the ground, fearing to raise them lest they should encounter the object which I so much dreaded to behold. I feared to wander from the sight of my fellow creatures lest when alone he should come to claim his companion.

In the mean time I worked on, and my labour was already considerably advanced. I looked towards its completion with a tremulous and eager hope, which I dared not trust myself to question but which was intermixed with obscure forebodings of evil that made my heart sicken in my bosom.

Chapter 20

I sat one evening in my laboratory; the sun had set, and the moon was just rising from the sea; I had not sufficient light for my employment, and I remained idle, in a pause of consideration of whether I should leave my labour for the night or hasten its conclusion by an unremitting attention to it. As I sat, a train of reflection occurred to me which led me to consider the effects of what I was now doing. Three years before, I was engaged in the same manner and had created a fiend whose unparalleled barbarity had desolated my heart and filled it forever with the bitterest remorse. I was now about to form another being of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man and hide himself in deserts, but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species. Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats; but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race.

I trembled and my heart failed within me, when, on looking up, I saw by the light of the moon the daemon at the casement. A ghastly grin wrinkled his lips as he gazed on me, where I sat fulfilling the task which he had allotted to me. Yes, he had followed me in my travels; he had loitered in forests, hid himself in caves, or taken refuge in wide and desert heaths; and he now came to mark my progress and claim the fulfilment of my promise.

As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost extent of malice and treachery. I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion, tore to pieces the thing on which I was engaged. The wretch saw me destroy the creature on whose future existence he depended for happiness, and with a howl of devilish despair and revenge, withdrew.

I left the room, and locking the door, made a solemn vow in my own heart never to resume my labours; and then, with trembling steps, I sought my own apartment. I was alone; none were near me to dissipate the gloom and relieve me from the sickening oppression of the most terrible reveries.

Several hours passed, and I remained near my window gazing on the sea; it was almost motionless, for the winds were hushed, and all nature reposed under the eye of the quiet moon. A few fishing vessels alone specked the water, and now and then the gentle breeze wafted the sound of voices as the fishermen called to one another. I felt the silence, although I was hardly conscious of its extreme profundity, until my ear was suddenly arrested by the paddling of oars near the shore, and a person landed close to my house.

In a few minutes after, I heard the creaking of my door, as if some one endeavoured to open it softly. I trembled from head to foot; I felt a presentiment of who it was and wished to rouse one of the peasants who dwelt in a cottage not far from mine; but I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain endeavour to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the spot. Presently I heard the sound of footsteps along the passage; the door opened, and the wretch whom I dreaded appeared.

Shutting the door, he approached me and said in a smothered voice, “You have destroyed the work which you began; what is it that you intend? Do you dare to break your promise? I have endured toil and misery; I left Switzerland with you; I crept along the shores of the Rhine, among its willow islands and over the summits of its hills. I have dwelt many months in the heaths of England and among the deserts of Scotland. I have endured incalculable fatigue, and cold, and hunger; do you dare destroy my hopes?”

“Begone! I do break my promise; never will I create another like yourself, equal in deformity and wickedness.”

“Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!”

“The hour of my irresolution is past, and the period of your power is arrived. Your threats cannot move me to do an act of wickedness; but they confirm me in a determination of not creating you a companion in vice. Shall I, in cool blood, set loose upon the earth a daemon whose delight is in death and wretchedness? Begone! I am firm, and your words will only exasperate my rage.”

The monster saw my determination in my face and gnashed his teeth in the impotence of anger. “Shall each man,” cried he, “find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I had feelings of affection, and they were requited by detestation and scorn. Man! You may hate, but beware! Your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness forever. Are you to be happy while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions, but revenge remains — revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die, but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful. I will watch with the wiliness of a snake, that I may sting with its venom. Man, you shall repent of the injuries you inflict.”

“Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable.”

“It is well. I go; but remember, I shall be with you on your wedding-night.”

I started forward and exclaimed, “Villain! Before you sign my death-warrant, be sure that you are yourself safe.”

I would have seized him, but he eluded me and quitted the house with precipitation. In a few moments I saw him in his boat, which shot across the waters with an arrowy swiftness and was soon lost amidst the waves.

All was again silent, but his words rang in my ears. I burned with rage to pursue the murderer of my peace and precipitate him into the ocean. I walked up and down my room hastily and perturbed, while my imagination conjured up a thousand images to torment and sting me. Why had I not followed him and closed with him in mortal strife? But I had suffered him to depart, and he had directed his course towards the mainland. I shuddered to think who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words—”I WILL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT.” That, then, was the period fixed for the fulfilment of my destiny. In that hour I should die and at once satisfy and extinguish his malice. The prospect did not move me to fear; yet when I thought of my beloved Elizabeth, of her tears and endless sorrow, when she should find her lover so barbarously snatched from her, tears, the first I had shed for many months, streamed from my eyes, and I resolved not to fall before my enemy without a bitter struggle.

The night passed away, and the sun rose from the ocean; my feelings became calmer, if it may be called calmness when the violence of rage sinks into the depths of despair. I left the house, the horrid scene of the last night’s contention, and walked on the beach of the sea, which I almost regarded as an insuperable barrier between me and my fellow creatures; nay, a wish that such should prove the fact stole across me.

I desired that I might pass my life on that barren rock, wearily, it is true, but uninterrupted by any sudden shock of misery. If I returned, it was to be sacrificed or to see those whom I most loved die under the grasp of a daemon whom I had myself created.

I walked about the isle like a restless spectre, separated from all it loved and miserable in the separation. When it became noon, and the sun rose higher, I lay down on the grass and was overpowered by a deep sleep. I had been awake the whole of the preceding night, my nerves were agitated, and my eyes inflamed by watching and misery. The sleep into which I now sank refreshed me; and when I awoke, I again felt as if I belonged to a race of human beings like myself, and I began to reflect upon what had passed with greater composure; yet still the words of the fiend rang in my ears like a death-knell; they appeared like a dream, yet distinct and oppressive as a reality.

The sun had far descended, and I still sat on the shore, satisfying my appetite, which had become ravenous, with an oaten cake, when I saw a fishing-boat land close to me, and one of the men brought me a packet; it contained letters from Geneva, and one from Clerval entreating me to join him. He said that he was wearing away his time fruitlessly where he was, that letters from the friends he had formed in London desired his return to complete the negotiation they had entered into for his Indian enterprise. He could not any longer delay his departure; but as his journey to London might be followed, even sooner than he now conjectured, by his longer voyage, he entreated me to bestow as much of my society on him as I could spare. He besought me, therefore, to leave my solitary isle and to meet him at Perth, that we might proceed southwards together. This letter in a degree recalled me to life, and I determined to quit my island at the expiration of two days. Yet, before I departed, there was a task to perform, on which I shuddered to reflect; I must pack up my chemical instruments, and for that purpose I must enter the room which had been the scene of my odious work, and I must handle those utensils the sight of which was sickening to me. The next morning, at daybreak, I summoned sufficient courage and unlocked the door of my laboratory. The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being. I paused to collect myself and then entered the chamber. With trembling hand I conveyed the instruments out of the room, but I reflected that I ought not to leave the relics of my work to excite the horror and suspicion of the peasants; and I accordingly put them into a basket, with a great quantity of stones, and laying them up, determined to throw them into the sea that very night; and in the meantime I sat upon the beach, employed in cleaning and arranging my chemical apparatus.

Nothing could be more complete than the alteration that had taken place in my feelings since the night of the appearance of the daemon. I had before regarded my promise with a gloomy despair as a thing that, with whatever consequences, must be fulfilled; but I now felt as if a film had been taken from before my eyes and that I for the first time saw clearly. The idea of renewing my labours did not for one instant occur to me; the threat I had heard weighed on my thoughts, but I did not reflect that a voluntary act of mine could avert it. I had resolved in my own mind that to create another like the fiend I had first made would be an act of the basest and most atrocious selfishness, and I banished from my mind every thought that could lead to a different conclusion.

Between two and three in the morning the moon rose; and I then, putting my basket aboard a little skiff, sailed out about four miles from the shore. The scene was perfectly solitary; a few boats were returning towards land, but I sailed away from them. I felt as if I was about the commission of a dreadful crime and avoided with shuddering anxiety any encounter with my fellow creatures. At one time the moon, which had before been clear, was suddenly overspread by a thick cloud, and I took advantage of the moment of darkness and cast my basket into the sea; I listened to the gurgling sound as it sank and then sailed away from the spot. The sky became clouded, but the air was pure, although chilled by the northeast breeze that was then rising. But it refreshed me and filled me with such agreeable sensations that I resolved to prolong my stay on the water, and fixing the rudder in a direct position, stretched myself at the bottom of the boat. Clouds hid the moon, everything was obscure, and I heard only the sound of the boat as its keel cut through the waves; the murmur lulled me, and in a short time I slept soundly. I do not know how long I remained in this situation, but when I awoke I found that the sun had already mounted considerably. The wind was high, and the waves continually threatened the safety of my little skiff. I found that the wind was northeast and must have driven me far from the coast from which I had embarked. I endeavoured to change my course but quickly found that if I again made the attempt the boat would be instantly filled with water. Thus situated, my only resource was to drive before the wind. I confess that I felt a few sensations of terror. I had no compass with me and was so slenderly acquainted with the geography of this part of the world that the sun was of little benefit to me. I might be driven into the wide Atlantic and feel all the tortures of starvation or be swallowed up in the immeasurable waters that roared and buffeted around me. I had already been out many hours and felt the torment of a burning thirst, a prelude to my other sufferings. I looked on the heavens, which were covered by clouds that flew before the wind, only to be replaced by others; I looked upon the sea; it was to be my grave. “Fiend,” I exclaimed, “your task is already fulfilled!” I thought of Elizabeth, of my father, and of Clerval — all left behind, on whom the monster might satisfy his sanguinary and merciless passions. This idea plunged me into a reverie so despairing and frightful that even now, when the scene is on the point of closing before me forever, I shudder to reflect on it.

Some hours passed thus; but by degrees, as the sun declined towards the horizon, the wind died away into a gentle breeze and the sea became free from breakers. But these gave place to a heavy swell; I felt sick and hardly able to hold the rudder, when suddenly I saw a line of high land towards the south.

Almost spent, as I was, by fatigue and the dreadful suspense I endured for several hours, this sudden certainty of life rushed like a flood of warm joy to my heart, and tears gushed from my eyes.

How mutable are our feelings, and how strange is that clinging love we have of life even in the excess of misery! I constructed another sail with a part of my dress and eagerly steered my course towards the land. It had a wild and rocky appearance, but as I approached nearer I easily perceived the traces of cultivation. I saw vessels near the shore and found myself suddenly transported back to the neighbourhood of civilized man. I carefully traced the windings of the land and hailed a steeple which I at length saw issuing from behind a small promontory. As I was in a state of extreme debility, I resolved to sail directly towards the town, as a place where I could most easily procure nourishment. Fortunately I had money with me.

As I turned the promontory I perceived a small neat town and a good harbour, which I entered, my heart bounding with joy at my unexpected escape.

As I was occupied in fixing the boat and arranging the sails, several people crowded towards the spot. They seemed much surprised at my appearance, but instead of offering me any assistance, whispered together with gestures that at any other time might have produced in me a slight sensation of alarm. As it was, I merely remarked that they spoke English, and I therefore addressed them in that language. “My good friends,” said I, “will you be so kind as to tell me the name of this town and inform me where I am?”

“You will know that soon enough,” replied a man with a hoarse voice. “Maybe you are come to a place that will not prove much to your taste, but you will not be consulted as to your quarters, I promise you.”

I was exceedingly surprised on receiving so rude an answer from a stranger, and I was also disconcerted on perceiving the frowning and angry countenances of his companions. “Why do you answer me so roughly?” I replied. “Surely it is not the custom of Englishmen to receive strangers so inhospitably.”

“I do not know,” said the man, “what the custom of the English may be, but it is the custom of the Irish to hate villains.” While this strange dialogue continued, I perceived the crowd rapidly increase. Their faces expressed a mixture of curiosity and anger, which annoyed and in some degree alarmed me.

I inquired the way to the inn, but no one replied. I then moved forward, and a murmuring sound arose from the crowd as they followed and surrounded me, when an ill-looking man approaching tapped me on the shoulder and said, “Come, sir, you must follow me to Mr. Kirwin’s to give an account of yourself.”

“Who is Mr. Kirwin? Why am I to give an account of myself? Is not this a free country?”

“Ay, sir, free enough for honest folks. Mr. Kirwin is a magistrate, and you are to give an account of the death of a gentleman who was found murdered here last night.”

This answer startled me, but I presently recovered myself. I was innocent; that could easily be proved; accordingly I followed my conductor in silence and was led to one of the best houses in the town. I was ready to sink from fatigue and hunger, but being surrounded by a crowd, I thought it politic to rouse all my strength, that no physical debility might be construed into apprehension or conscious guilt. Little did I then expect the calamity that was in a few moments to overwhelm me and extinguish in horror and despair all fear of ignominy or death. I must pause here, for it requires all my fortitude to recall the memory of the frightful events which I am about to relate, in proper detail, to my recollection.

Chapter 21

I was soon introduced into the presence of the magistrate, an old benevolent man with calm and mild manners. He looked upon me, however, with some degree of severity, and then, turning towards my conductors, he asked who appeared as witnesses on this occasion.

About half a dozen men came forward; and, one being selected by the magistrate, he deposed that he had been out fishing the night before with his son and brother-in-law, Daniel Nugent, when, about ten o'clock, they observed a strong northerly blast rising, and they accordingly put in for port. It was a very dark night, as the moon had not yet risen; they did not land at the harbour, but, as they had been accustomed, at a creek about two miles below. He walked on first, carrying a part of the fishing tackle, and his companions followed him at some distance.

As he was proceeding along the sands, he struck his foot against something and fell at his length on the ground. His companions came up to assist him, and by the light of their lantern they found that he had fallen on the body of a man, who was to all appearance dead. Their first supposition was that it was the corpse of some person who had been drowned and was thrown on shore by the waves, but on examination they found that the clothes were not wet and even that the body was not then cold. They instantly carried it to the cottage of an old woman near the spot and endeavoured, but in vain, to restore it to life. It appeared to be a handsome young man, about five and twenty years of age. He had apparently been strangled, for there was no sign of any violence except the black mark of fingers on his neck.

The first part of this deposition did not in the least interest me, but when the mark of the fingers was mentioned I remembered the murder of my brother and felt myself extremely agitated; my limbs trembled, and a mist came over my eyes, which obliged me to lean on a chair for support. The magistrate observed me with a keen eye and of course drew an unfavourable augury from my manner.

The son confirmed his father's account, but when Daniel Nugent was called he swore positively that just before the fall of his companion, he saw a boat, with a single man in it, at a short distance from the shore; and as far as he could judge by the light of a few stars, it was the same boat in which I had just landed. A woman deposed that she lived near the beach and was standing at the door of her cottage, waiting for the return of the fishermen, about an hour before she heard of the discovery of the body, when she saw a boat with only one man in it push off from that part of the shore where the corpse was afterwards found.

Another woman confirmed the account of the fishermen having brought the body into her house; it was not cold. They put it into a bed and rubbed it, and Daniel went to the town for an apothecary, but life was quite gone.

Several other men were examined concerning my landing, and they agreed that, with the strong north wind that had arisen during the night, it was very probable that I had beaten about for many hours and had been obliged to return nearly to the same spot from which I had departed. Besides, they observed that it appeared that I had brought the body from another place, and it was likely that as I did not appear to know the shore, I might have put into the harbour ignorant of the distance of the town of —— from the place where I had deposited the corpse.

Mr. Kirwin, on hearing this evidence, desired that I should be taken into the room where the body lay for interment, that it might be observed what effect the sight of it would produce upon me. This idea was probably suggested by the extreme agitation I had exhibited when the mode of the murder had been described. I was accordingly conducted, by the magistrate and several other persons, to the inn. I could not help being struck by the strange coincidences that had taken place during this eventful night; but, knowing that I had been conversing with several persons in the island I had inhabited about the time that the body had been found, I was perfectly tranquil as to the consequences of the affair. I entered the room where the corpse lay and was led up to the coffin. How can I describe my sensations on beholding it? I feel yet parched with horror, nor can I reflect on that terrible moment without shuddering and agony. The examination, the presence of the magistrate and witnesses, passed like a dream from my memory when I saw the lifeless form of Henry Clerval stretched before me. I gasped for breath, and throwing myself on the body, I exclaimed, “Have my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life?

Two I have already destroyed; other victims await their destiny; but you, Clerval, my friend, my benefactor—”

The human frame could no longer support the agonies that I endured, and I was carried out of the room in strong convulsions. A fever succeeded to this. I lay for two months on the point of death; my ravings, as I afterwards heard, were frightful; I called myself the murderer of William, of Justine, and of Clerval. Sometimes I entreated my attendants to assist me in the destruction of the fiend by whom I was tormented; and at others I felt the fingers of the monster already grasping my neck, and screamed aloud with agony and terror. Fortunately, as I spoke my native language, Mr. Kirwin alone understood me; but my gestures and bitter cries were sufficient to affright the other witnesses. Why did I not die? More miserable than man ever was before, why did I not sink into forgetfulness and rest? Death snatches away many blooming children, the only hopes of their doting parents; how many brides and youthful lovers have been one day in the bloom of health and hope, and the next a prey for worms and the decay of the tomb! Of what materials was I made that I could thus resist so many shocks, which, like the turning of the wheel, continually renewed the torture?

But I was doomed to live and in two months found myself as awaking from a dream, in a prison, stretched on a wretched bed, surrounded by jailers, turnkeys, bolts, and all the miserable apparatus of a dungeon. It was morning, I remember, when I thus awoke to understanding; I had forgotten the particulars of what had happened and only felt as if some great misfortune had suddenly overwhelmed me; but when I looked around and saw the barred windows and the squalidness of the room in which I was, all flashed across my memory and I groaned bitterly.

This sound disturbed an old woman who was sleeping in a chair beside me. She was a hired nurse, the wife of one of the turnkeys, and her countenance expressed all those bad qualities which often characterize that class. The lines of her face were hard and rude, like that of persons accustomed to see without sympathizing in sights of misery. Her tone expressed her entire indifference; she addressed me in English, and the voice struck me as one that I had heard during my sufferings. “Are you better now, sir?” said she.

I replied in the same language, with a feeble voice, “I believe I am; but if it be all true, if indeed I did not dream, I am sorry that I am still alive to feel this misery and horror.”

“For that matter,” replied the old woman, “if you mean about the gentleman you murdered, I believe that it were better for you if you were dead, for I fancy it will go hard with you! However, that’s none of my business; I am sent to nurse you and get you well; I do my duty with a safe conscience; it were well if everybody did the same.”

I turned with loathing from the woman who could utter so unfeeling a speech to a person just saved, on the very edge of death; but I felt languid and unable to reflect on all that had passed. The whole series of my life appeared to me as a dream; I sometimes doubted if indeed it were all true, for it never presented itself to my mind with the force of reality.

As the images that floated before me became more distinct, I grew feverish; a darkness pressed around me; no one was near me who soothed me with the gentle voice of love; no dear hand supported me. The physician came and prescribed medicines, and the old woman prepared them for me; but utter carelessness was visible in the first, and the expression of brutality was strongly marked in the visage of the second. Who could be interested in the fate of a murderer but the hangman who would gain his fee?

These were my first reflections, but I soon learned that Mr. Kirwin had shown me extreme kindness. He had caused the best room in the prison to be prepared for me (wretched indeed was the best); and it was he who had provided a physician and a nurse. It is true, he seldom came to see me, for although he ardently desired to relieve the sufferings of every human creature, he did not wish to be present at the agonies and miserable ravings of a murderer. He came, therefore, sometimes to see that I was not neglected, but his visits were short and with long intervals. One day, while I was gradually recovering, I was seated in a chair, my eyes half open and my cheeks livid like those in death. I was overcome by gloom and misery and often reflected I had better seek death than desire to remain in a world which to me was replete with wretchedness. At one time I considered whether I should not declare myself guilty and suffer the penalty of the law, less innocent than poor Justine had been. Such were my thoughts when the door of my apartment was opened and Mr. Kirwin entered. His countenance expressed sympathy and compassion; he drew a chair close to mine and addressed me in French, “I fear that this place is very shocking to you; can I do anything to make you more comfortable?”

“I thank you, but all that you mention is nothing to me; on the whole earth there is no comfort which I am capable of receiving.”

“I know that the sympathy of a stranger can be but of little relief to one borne down as you are by so strange a misfortune. But you will, I hope, soon quit this melancholy abode, for doubtless evidence can easily be brought to free you from the criminal charge.”

“That is my least concern; I am, by a course of strange events, become the most miserable of mortals. Persecuted and tortured as I am and have been, can death be any evil to me?”

“Nothing indeed could be more unfortunate and agonizing than the strange chances that have lately occurred. You were thrown, by some surprising accident, on this shore, renowned for its hospitality, seized immediately, and charged with murder. The first sight that was presented to your eyes was the body of your friend, murdered in so unaccountable a manner and placed, as it were, by some fiend across your path.”

As Mr. Kirwin said this, notwithstanding the agitation I endured on this retrospect of my sufferings, I also felt considerable surprise at the knowledge he seemed to possess concerning me. I suppose some astonishment was exhibited in my countenance, for Mr. Kirwin hastened to say, “Immediately upon your being taken ill, all the papers that were on your person were brought me, and I examined them that I might discover some trace by which I could send to your relations an account of your misfortune and illness. I found several letters, and, among others, one which I discovered from its commencement to be from your father. I instantly wrote to Geneva; nearly two months have elapsed since the departure of my letter. But you are ill; even now you tremble; you are unfit for agitation of any kind.”

“This suspense is a thousand times worse than the most horrible event; tell me what new scene of death has been acted, and whose murder I am now to lament?”

“Your family is perfectly well,” said Mr. Kirwin with gentleness; “and someone, a friend, is come to visit you.”

I know not by what chain of thought the idea presented itself, but it instantly darted into my mind that the murderer had come to mock at my misery and taunt me with the death of Clerval, as a new incitement for me to comply with his hellish desires. I put my hand before my eyes, and cried out in agony, “Oh! Take him away! I cannot see him; for God’s sake, do not let him enter!”

Mr. Kirwin regarded me with a troubled countenance. He could not help regarding my exclamation as a presumption of my guilt and said in rather a severe tone, “I should have thought, young man, that the presence of your father would have been welcome instead of inspiring such violent repugnance.”

“My father!” cried I, while every feature and every muscle was relaxed from anguish to pleasure. “Is my father indeed come? How kind, how very kind! But where is he, why does he not hasten to me?”

My change of manner surprised and pleased the magistrate; perhaps he thought that my former exclamation was a momentary return of delirium, and now he instantly resumed his former benevolence. He rose and quitted the room with my nurse, and in a moment my father entered it.

Nothing, at this moment, could have given me greater pleasure than the arrival of my father. I stretched out my hand to him and cried, “Are you, then, safe — and Elizabeth — and Ernest?” My father calmed me with assurances of their welfare and endeavoured, by dwelling on these subjects so interesting to my heart, to raise my desponding spirits; but he soon felt that a prison cannot be the abode of cheerfulness.

“What a place is this that you inhabit, my son!” said he, looking mournfully at the barred windows and wretched appearance of the room. “You travelled to seek happiness, but a fatality seems to pursue you. And poor Clerval—”

The name of my unfortunate and murdered friend was an agitation too great to be endured in my weak state; I shed tears. “Alas! Yes, my father,” replied I; “some destiny of the most horrible kind hangs over me, and I must live to fulfil it, or surely I should have died on the coffin of Henry.”

We were not allowed to converse for any length of time, for the precarious state of my health rendered every precaution necessary that could ensure tranquillity. Mr. Kirwin came in and insisted that my strength should not be exhausted by too much exertion. But the appearance of my father was to me like that of my good angel, and I gradually recovered my health.

As my sickness quitted me, I was absorbed by a gloomy and black melancholy that nothing could dissipate. The image of Clerval was forever before me, ghastly and murdered. More than once the agitation into which these reflections threw me made my friends dread a dangerous relapse. Alas! Why did they preserve so miserable and detested a life? It was surely that I might fulfil my destiny, which is now drawing to a close. Soon, oh, very soon, will death extinguish these throbbings and relieve me from the mighty weight of anguish that bears me to the dust; and, in executing the award of justice, I shall also sink to rest. Then the appearance of death was distant, although the wish was ever present to my thoughts; and I often sat for hours motionless and speechless, wishing for some mighty revolution that might bury me and my destroyer in its ruins.

The season of the assizes approached. I had already been three months in prison, and although I was still weak and in continual danger of a relapse, I was obliged to travel nearly a hundred miles to the country town where the court was held. Mr. Kirwin charged himself with every care of collecting witnesses and arranging my defence. I was spared the disgrace of appearing publicly as a criminal, as the case was not brought before the court that decides on life and death. The grand jury rejected the bill, on its being proved that I was on the Orkney Islands at the hour the body of my friend was found; and a fortnight after my removal I was liberated from prison.

My father was enraptured on finding me freed from the vexations of a criminal charge, that I was again allowed to breathe the fresh atmosphere and permitted to return to my native country. I did not participate in these feelings, for to me the walls of a dungeon or a palace were alike hateful. The cup of life was poisoned forever, and although the sun shone upon me, as upon the happy and gay of heart, I saw around me nothing but a dense and frightful darkness, penetrated by no light but the glimmer of two eyes that glared upon me. Sometimes they were the expressive eyes of Henry, languishing in death, the dark orbs nearly covered by the lids and the long black lashes that fringed them; sometimes it was the watery, clouded eyes of the monster, as I first saw them in my chamber at Ingolstadt.

My father tried to awaken in me the feelings of affection. He talked of Geneva, which I should soon visit, of Elizabeth and Ernest; but these words only drew deep groans from me. Sometimes, indeed, I felt a wish for happiness and thought with melancholy delight of my beloved cousin or longed, with a devouring maladie du pays, to see once more the blue lake and rapid Rhone, that had been so dear to me in early childhood; but my general state of feeling was a torpor in which a prison was as welcome a residence as the divinest scene in nature; and these fits were seldom interrupted but by paroxysms of anguish and despair. At these moments I often endeavoured to put an end to the existence I loathed, and it required unceasing attendance and vigilance to restrain me from committing some dreadful act of violence.

Yet one duty remained to me, the recollection of which finally triumphed over my selfish despair. It was necessary that I should return without delay to Geneva, there to watch over the lives of those I so fondly loved and to lie in wait for the murderer, that if any chance led me to the place of his concealment, or if he dared again to blast me by his presence, I might, with unfailing aim, put an end to the existence of the monstrous image which I had endued with the mockery of a soul still more monstrous. My father still desired to delay our departure, fearful that I could not sustain the fatigues of a journey, for I was a shattered wreck — the shadow of a human being. My strength was gone. I was a mere skeleton, and fever night and day preyed upon my wasted frame. Still, as I urged our leaving Ireland with such inquietude and impatience, my father thought it best to yield. We took our passage on board a vessel bound for Havre-de-Grace and sailed with a fair wind from the Irish shores. It was midnight. I lay on the deck looking at the stars and listening to the dashing of the waves. I hailed the darkness that shut Ireland from my sight, and my pulse beat with a feverish joy when I reflected that I should soon see Geneva. The past appeared to me in the light of a frightful dream; yet the vessel in which I was, the wind that blew me from the detested shore of Ireland, and the sea which surrounded me told me too forcibly that I was deceived by no vision and that Clerval, my friend and dearest companion, had fallen a victim to me and the monster of my creation. I repassed, in my memory, my whole life — my quiet happiness while residing with my family in Geneva, the death of my mother, and my departure for Ingolstadt. I remembered, shuddering, the mad enthusiasm that hurried me on to the creation of my hideous enemy, and I called to mind the night in which he first lived. I was unable to pursue the train of thought; a thousand feelings pressed upon me, and I wept bitterly. Ever since my recovery from the fever I had been in the custom of taking every night a small quantity of laudanum, for it was by means of this drug only that I was enabled to gain the rest necessary for the preservation of life. Oppressed by the recollection of my various misfortunes, I now swallowed double my usual quantity and soon slept profoundly. But sleep did not afford me respite from thought and misery; my dreams presented a thousand objects that scared me. Towards morning I was possessed by a kind of nightmare; I felt the fiend's grasp in my neck and could not free myself from it; groans and cries rang in my ears. My father, who was watching over me, perceiving my restlessness, awoke me; the dashing waves were around, the cloudy sky above, the fiend was not here: a sense of security, a feeling that a truce was established between the present hour and the irresistible, disastrous future imparted to me a kind of calm forgetfulness, of which the human mind is by its structure peculiarly susceptible.

Chapter 22

The voyage came to an end. We landed, and proceeded to Paris. I soon found that I had overtaxed my strength and that I must repose before I could continue my journey. My father's care and attentions were indefatigable, but he did not know the origin of my sufferings and sought erroneous methods to remedy the incurable ill. He wished me to seek amusement in society. I abhorred the face of man. Oh, not abhorred! They were my brethren, my fellow beings, and I felt attracted even to the most repulsive among them, as to creatures of an angelic nature and celestial mechanism. But I felt that I had no right to share their intercourse. I had unchained an enemy among them whose joy it was to shed their blood and to revel in their groans. How they would, each and all, abhor me and hunt me from the world did they know my unhallowed acts and the crimes which had their source in me!

My father yielded at length to my desire to avoid society and strove by various arguments to banish my despair. Sometimes he thought that I felt deeply the degradation of being obliged to answer a charge of murder, and he endeavoured to prove to me the futility of pride.

"Alas! My father," said I, "how little do you know me. Human beings, their feelings and passions, would indeed be degraded if such a wretch as I felt pride. Justine, poor unhappy Justine, was as innocent as I, and she suffered the same charge; she died for it; and I am the cause of this — I murdered her. William, Justine, and Henry — they all died by my hands."

My father had often, during my imprisonment, heard me make the same assertion; when I thus accused myself, he sometimes seemed to desire an explanation, and at others he appeared to consider it as the offspring of delirium, and that, during my illness, some idea of this kind had presented itself to my imagination, the remembrance of which I preserved in my convalescence.

I avoided explanation and maintained a continual silence concerning the wretch I had created. I had a persuasion that I should be supposed mad, and this in itself would forever have chained my tongue. But, besides, I could not bring myself to disclose a secret which would fill my hearer with consternation and make fear and unnatural horror the inmates of his breast. I checked, therefore, my impatient thirst for sympathy and was silent when I would have given the world to have confided the fatal secret. Yet, still, words like those I have recorded would burst uncontrollably from me. I could offer no explanation of them, but their truth in part relieved the burden of my mysterious woe. Upon this occasion my father said, with an expression of unbounded wonder, “My dearest Victor, what infatuation is this? My dear son, I entreat you never to make such an assertion again.”

“I am not mad,” I cried energetically; “the sun and the heavens, who have viewed my operations, can bear witness of my truth. I am the assassin of those most innocent victims; they died by my machinations. A thousand times would I have shed my own blood, drop by drop, to have saved their lives; but I could not, my father, indeed I could not sacrifice the whole human race.”

The conclusion of this speech convinced my father that my ideas were deranged, and he instantly changed the subject of our conversation and endeavoured to alter the course of my thoughts. He wished as much as possible to obliterate the memory of the scenes that had taken place in Ireland and never alluded to them or suffered me to speak of my misfortunes.

As time passed away I became more calm; misery had her dwelling in my heart, but I no longer talked in the same incoherent manner of my own crimes; sufficient for me was the consciousness of them. By the utmost self-violence I curbed the imperious voice of wretchedness, which sometimes desired to declare itself to the whole world, and my manners were calmer and more composed than they had ever been since my journey to the sea of ice. A few days before we left Paris on our way to Switzerland, I received the following letter from Elizabeth:

“My dear Friend,

“It gave me the greatest pleasure to receive a letter from my uncle dated at Paris; you are no longer at a formidable distance, and I may hope to see you in less than a fortnight. My poor cousin, how much you must have suffered! I expect to see you looking even more ill than when you quitted Geneva. This winter has been passed most miserably, tortured as I have been by anxious suspense; yet I hope to see peace in your countenance and to find that your heart is not totally void of comfort and tranquillity.

“Yet I fear that the same feelings now exist that made you so miserable a year ago, even perhaps augmented by time. I would not disturb you at this period, when so many misfortunes weigh upon you, but a conversation that I had with my uncle previous to his departure renders some explanation necessary before we meet. Explanation! You may possibly say, What can Elizabeth have to explain? If you really say this, my questions are answered and all my doubts satisfied. But you are distant from me, and it is possible that you may dread and yet be pleased with this explanation; and in a probability of this being the case, I dare not any longer postpone writing what, during your absence, I have often wished to express to you but have never had the courage to begin.

“You well know, Victor, that our union had been the favourite plan of your parents ever since our infancy. We were told this when young, and taught to look forward to it as an event that would certainly take place. We were affectionate playfellows during childhood, and, I believe, dear and valued friends to one another as we grew older. But as brother and sister often entertain a lively affection towards each other without desiring a more intimate union, may not such also be our case? Tell me, dearest Victor. Answer me, I conjure you by our mutual happiness, with simple truth — Do you not love another?

“You have travelled; you have spent several years of your life at Ingolstadt; and I confess to you, my friend, that when I saw you last autumn so unhappy, flying to solitude from the society of every creature, I could not help supposing that you might regret our connection and believe yourself bound in honour to fulfil the wishes of your parents, although they opposed themselves to your inclinations. But this is false reasoning. I confess to you, my friend, that I love you and that in my airy dreams of futurity you have been my constant friend and companion. But it is your happiness I desire as well as my own when I declare to you that our marriage would render me eternally miserable unless it were the dictate of your own free choice. Even now I weep to think that, borne down as you are by the cruellest misfortunes, you may stifle, by the word ‘honour,’ all hope of that love and happiness which would alone restore you to yourself. I, who have so disinterested an affection for you, may increase your miseries tenfold by being an obstacle to your wishes. Ah! Victor, be assured that your cousin and playmate has too sincere a love for you not to be made miserable by this supposition. Be happy, my friend; and if you obey me in this one request, remain satisfied that nothing on earth will have the power to interrupt my tranquillity.

"Do not let this letter disturb you; do not answer tomorrow, or the next day, or even until you come, if it will give you pain. My uncle will send me news of your health, and if I see but one smile on your lips when we meet, occasioned by this or any other exertion of mine, I shall need no other happiness.

"Elizabeth Lavenza

"Geneva, May 18th, 17—"

This letter revived in my memory what I had before forgotten, the threat of the fiend—"I WILL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT!" Such was my sentence, and on that night would the daemon employ every art to destroy me and tear me from the glimpse of happiness which promised partly to console my sufferings. On that night he had determined to consummate his crimes by my death. Well, be it so; a deadly struggle would then assuredly take place, in which if he were victorious I should be at peace and his power over me be at an end. If he were vanquished, I should be a free man. Alas! What freedom? Such as the peasant enjoys when his family have been massacred before his eyes, his cottage burnt, his lands laid waste, and he is turned adrift, homeless, penniless, and alone, but free. Such would be my liberty except that in my Elizabeth I possessed a treasure, alas, balanced by those horrors of remorse and guilt which would pursue me until death.

Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and reread her letter, and some softened feelings stole into my heart and dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten, and the angel's arm bared to drive me from all hope. Yet I would die to make her happy. If the monster executed his threat, death was inevitable; yet, again, I considered whether my marriage would hasten my fate. My destruction might indeed arrive a few months sooner, but if my torturer should suspect that I postponed it, influenced by his menaces, he would surely find other and perhaps more dreadful means of revenge.

He had vowed TO BE WITH ME ON MY WEDDING-NIGHT, yet he did not consider that threat as binding him to peace in the meantime, for as if to show me that he was not yet satiated with blood, he had murdered Clerval immediately after the enunciation of his threats. I resolved, therefore, that if my immediate union with my cousin would conduce either to hers or my father's happiness, my adversary's designs against my life should not retard it a single hour.

In this state of mind I wrote to Elizabeth. My letter was calm and affectionate. "I fear, my beloved girl," I said, "little happiness remains for us on earth; yet all that I may one day enjoy is centred in you. Chase away your idle fears; to you alone do I consecrate my life and my endeavours for contentment. I have one secret, Elizabeth, a dreadful one; when revealed to you, it will chill your frame with horror, and then, far from being surprised at my misery, you will only wonder that I survive what I have endured. I will confide this tale of misery and terror to you the day after our marriage shall take place, for, my sweet cousin, there must be perfect confidence between us. But until then, I conjure you, do not mention or allude to it. This I most earnestly entreat, and I know you will comply."

In about a week after the arrival of Elizabeth's letter we returned to Geneva. The sweet girl welcomed me with warm affection, yet tears were in her eyes as she beheld my emaciated frame and feverish cheeks. I saw a change in her also. She was thinner and had lost much of that heavenly vivacity that had before charmed me; but her gentleness and soft looks of compassion made her a more fit companion for one blasted and miserable as I was. The tranquillity which I now enjoyed did not endure. Memory brought madness with it, and when I thought of what had passed, a real insanity possessed me; sometimes I was furious and burnt with rage, sometimes low and despondent. I neither spoke nor looked at anyone, but sat motionless, bewildered by the multitude of miseries that overcame me.

Elizabeth alone had the power to draw me from these fits; her gentle voice would soothe me when transported by passion and inspire me with human feelings when sunk in torpor. She wept with me and for me. When reason returned, she would remonstrate and endeavour to inspire me with resignation. Ah! It is well for the unfortunate to be resigned, but for the guilty there is no peace. The agonies of remorse poison the luxury there is otherwise sometimes found in indulging the excess of grief. Soon after my arrival my father spoke of my immediate marriage with Elizabeth. I remained silent.

"Have you, then, some other attachment?"

"None on earth. I love Elizabeth and look forward to our union with delight. Let the day therefore be fixed; and on it I will consecrate myself, in life or death, to the happiness of my cousin."

"My dear Victor, do not speak thus. Heavy misfortunes have befallen us, but let us only cling closer to what remains and transfer our love for those whom we have lost to those who yet live. Our circle will be small but bound close by the ties of affection and mutual misfortune. And when time shall have softened your despair, new and dear objects of care will be born to replace those of whom we have been so cruelly deprived."

Such were the lessons of my father. But to me the remembrance of the threat returned; nor can you wonder that, omnipotent as the fiend had yet been in his deeds of blood, I should almost regard him as invincible, and that when he had pronounced the words "I SHALL BE WITH YOU ON YOUR WEDDING-NIGHT," I should regard the threatened fate as unavoidable. But death was no evil to me if the loss of Elizabeth were balanced with it, and I therefore, with a contented and even cheerful countenance, agreed with my father that if my cousin would consent, the ceremony should take place in ten days, and thus put, as I imagined, the seal to my fate.

Great God! If for one instant I had thought what might be the hellish intention of my fiendish adversary, I would rather have banished myself forever from my native country and wandered a friendless outcast over the earth than have consented to this miserable marriage. But, as if possessed of magic powers, the monster had blinded me to his real intentions; and when I thought that I had prepared only my own death, I hastened that of a far dearer victim.

As the period fixed for our marriage drew nearer, whether from cowardice or a prophetic feeling, I felt my heart sink within me. But I concealed my feelings by an appearance of hilarity that brought smiles and joy to the countenance of my father, but hardly deceived the ever-watchful and nicer eye of Elizabeth. She looked forward to our union with placid contentment, not unmingled with a little fear, which past misfortunes had impressed, that what now appeared certain and tangible happiness might soon dissipate into an airy dream and leave no trace but deep and everlasting regret. Preparations were made for the event, congratulatory visits were received, and all wore a smiling appearance. I shut up, as well as I could, in my own heart the anxiety that preyed there and entered with seeming earnestness into the plans of my father, although they might only serve as the decorations of my tragedy. Through my father's exertions a part of the inheritance of Elizabeth had been restored to her by the Austrian government. A small possession on the shores of Como belonged to her. It was agreed that, immediately after our union, we should proceed to Villa Lavenza and spend our first days of happiness beside the beautiful lake near which it stood.

In the meantime I took every precaution to defend my person in case the fiend should openly attack me. I carried pistols and a dagger constantly about me and was ever on the watch to prevent artifice, and by these means gained a greater degree of tranquillity. Indeed, as the period approached, the threat appeared more as a delusion, not to be regarded as worthy to disturb my peace, while the happiness I hoped for in my marriage wore a greater appearance of certainty as the day fixed for its solemnization drew nearer and I heard it continually spoken of as an occurrence which no accident could possibly prevent.

Elizabeth seemed happy; my tranquil demeanour contributed greatly to calm her mind. But on the day that was to fulfil my wishes and my destiny, she was melancholy, and a presentiment of evil pervaded her; and perhaps also she thought of the dreadful secret which I had promised to reveal to her on the following day. My father was in the meantime overjoyed and in the bustle of preparation only recognized in the melancholy of his niece the diffidence of a bride.

After the ceremony was performed a large party assembled at my father's, but it was agreed that Elizabeth and I should commence our journey by water, sleeping that night at Evian and continuing our voyage on the following day. The day was fair, the wind favourable; all smiled on our nuptial embarkation.

Those were the last moments of my life during which I enjoyed the feeling of happiness. We passed rapidly along; the sun was hot, but we were sheltered from its rays by a kind of canopy while we enjoyed the beauty of the scene, sometimes on one side of the lake, where we saw Mont Saleve, the pleasant banks of Montalegre, and at a distance, surmounting all, the beautiful Mont Blanc and the assemblage of snowy mountains that in vain endeavour to emulate her; sometimes coasting the opposite banks, we saw the mighty Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost insurmountable barrier to the invader who should wish to enslave it.

I took the hand of Elizabeth. “You are sorrowful, my love. Ah! If you knew what I have suffered and what I may yet endure, you would endeavour to let me taste the quiet and freedom from despair that this one day at least permits me to enjoy.”

“Be happy, my dear Victor,” replied Elizabeth; “there is, I hope, nothing to distress you; and be assured that if a lively joy is not painted in my face, my heart is contented. Something whispers to me not to depend too much on the prospect that is opened before us, but I will not listen to such a sinister voice. Observe how fast we move along and how the clouds, which sometimes obscure and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blanc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting. Look also at the innumerable fish that are swimming in the clear waters, where we can distinguish every pebble that lies at the bottom. What a divine day! How happy and serene all nature appears!”

Thus Elizabeth endeavoured to divert her thoughts and mine from all reflection upon melancholy subjects. But her temper was fluctuating; joy for a few instants shone in her eyes, but it continually gave place to distraction and reverie.

The sun sank lower in the heavens; we passed the river Drance and observed its path through the chasms of the higher and the glens of the lower hills. The Alps here come closer to the lake, and we approached the amphitheatre of mountains which forms its eastern boundary. The spire of Evian shone under the woods that surrounded it and the range of mountain above mountain by which it was overhung.

The wind, which had hitherto carried us along with amazing rapidity, sank at sunset to a light breeze; the soft air just ruffled the water and caused a pleasant motion among the trees as we approached the shore, from which it wafted the most delightful scent of flowers and hay. The sun sank beneath the horizon as we landed, and as I touched the shore I felt those cares and fears revive which soon were to clasp me and cling to me forever.

Chapter 23

It was eight o'clock when we landed; we walked for a short time on the shore, enjoying the transitory light, and then retired to the inn and contemplated the lovely scene of waters, woods, and mountains, obscured in darkness, yet still displaying their black outlines.

The wind, which had fallen in the south, now rose with great violence in the west. The moon had reached her summit in the heavens and was beginning to descend; the clouds swept across it swifter than the flight of the vulture and dimmed her rays, while the lake reflected the scene of the busy heavens, rendered still busier by the restless waves that were beginning to rise. Suddenly a heavy storm of rain descended.

I had been calm during the day, but so soon as night obscured the shapes of objects, a thousand fears arose in my mind. I was anxious and watchful, while my right hand grasped a pistol which was hidden in my bosom; every sound terrified me, but I resolved that I would sell my life dearly and not shrink from the conflict until my own life or that of my adversary was extinguished. Elizabeth observed my agitation for some time in timid and fearful silence, but there was something in my glance which communicated terror to her, and trembling, she asked, “What is it that agitates you, my dear Victor? What is it you fear?”

“Oh! Peace, peace, my love,” replied I; “this night, and all will be safe; but this night is dreadful, very dreadful.”

I passed an hour in this state of mind, when suddenly I reflected how fearful the combat which I momentarily expected would be to my wife, and I earnestly entreated her to retire, resolving not to join her until I had obtained some knowledge as to the situation of my enemy.

She left me, and I continued some time walking up and down the passages of the house and inspecting every corner that might afford a retreat to my adversary. But I discovered no trace of him and was beginning to conjecture that some fortunate chance had intervened to prevent the execution of his menaces when suddenly I heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the room into which Elizabeth had retired. As I heard it, the whole truth rushed into my mind, my arms dropped, the motion of every muscle and fibre was suspended; I could feel the blood trickling in my veins and tingling in the extremities of my limbs. This state lasted but for an instant; the scream was repeated, and I rushed into the room. Great God! Why did I not then expire! Why am I here to relate the destruction of the best hope and the purest creature on earth? She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Everywhere I turn I see the same figure — her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier. Could I behold this and live? Alas! Life is obstinate and clings closest where it is most hated. For a moment only did I lose recollection; I fell senseless on the ground.

When I recovered I found myself surrounded by the people of the inn; their countenances expressed a breathless terror, but the horror of others appeared only as a mockery, a shadow of the feelings that oppressed me. I escaped from them to the room where lay the body of Elizabeth, my love, my wife, so lately living, so dear, so worthy. She had been moved from the posture in which I had first beheld her, and now, as she lay, her head upon her arm and a handkerchief thrown across her face and neck, I might have supposed her asleep. I rushed towards her and embraced her with ardour, but the deadly languor and coldness of the limbs told me that what I now held in my arms had ceased to be the Elizabeth whom I had loved and cherished. The murderous mark of the fiend's grasp was on her neck, and the breath had ceased to issue from her lips. While I still hung over her in the agony of despair, I happened to look up. The windows of the room had before been darkened, and I felt a kind of panic on seeing the pale yellow light of the moon illuminate the chamber. The shutters had been thrown back, and with a sensation of horror not to be described, I saw at the open window a figure the most hideous and abhorred. A grin was on the face of the monster; he seemed to jeer, as with his fiendish finger he pointed towards the corpse of my wife. I rushed towards the window, and drawing a pistol from my bosom, fired; but he eluded me, leaped from his station, and running with the swiftness of lightning, plunged into the lake.

The report of the pistol brought a crowd into the room. I pointed to the spot where he had disappeared, and we followed the track with boats; nets were cast, but in vain. After passing several hours, we returned hopeless, most of my companions believing it to have been a form conjured up by my fancy. After having landed, they proceeded to search the country, parties going in different directions among the woods and vines.

I attempted to accompany them and proceeded a short distance from the house, but my head whirled round, my steps were like those of a drunken man, I fell at last in a state of utter exhaustion; a film covered my eyes, and my skin was parched with the heat of fever. In this state I was carried back and placed on a bed, hardly conscious of what had happened; my eyes wandered round the room as if to seek something that I had lost.

After an interval I arose, and as if by instinct, crawled into the room where the corpse of my beloved lay. There were women weeping around; I hung over it and joined my sad tears to theirs; all this time no distinct idea presented itself to my mind, but my thoughts rambled to various subjects, reflecting confusedly on my misfortunes and their cause. I was bewildered, in a cloud of wonder and horror. The death of William, the execution of Justine, the murder of Clerval, and lastly of my wife; even at that moment I knew not that my only remaining friends were safe from the malignity of the fiend; my father even now might be writhing under his grasp, and Ernest might be dead at his feet. This idea made me shudder and recalled me to action. I started up and resolved to return to Geneva with all possible speed.

There were no horses to be procured, and I must return by the lake; but the wind was unfavourable, and the rain fell in torrents. However, it was hardly morning, and I might reasonably hope to arrive by night. I hired men to row and took an oar myself, for I had always experienced relief from mental torment in bodily exercise. But the overflowing misery I now felt, and the excess of agitation that I endured rendered me incapable of any exertion. I threw down the oar, and leaning my head upon my hands, gave way to every gloomy idea that arose. If I looked up, I saw scenes which were familiar to me in my happier time and which I had contemplated but the day before in the company of her who was now but a shadow and a recollection. Tears streamed from my eyes. The rain had ceased for a moment, and I saw the fish play in the waters as they had done a few hours before; they had then been observed by Elizabeth. Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. The sun might shine or the clouds might lower, but nothing could appear to me as it had done the day before. A fiend had snatched from me every hope of future happiness; no creature had ever been so miserable as I was; so frightful an event is single in the history of man. But why should I dwell upon the incidents that followed this last overwhelming event? Mine has been a tale of horrors; I have reached their acme, and what I must now relate can but be tedious to you. Know that, one by one, my friends were snatched away; I was left desolate. My own strength is exhausted, and I must tell, in a few words, what remains of my hideous narration. I arrived at Geneva. My father and Ernest yet lived, but the former sunk under the tidings that I bore. I see him now, excellent and venerable old man! His eyes wandered in vacancy, for they had lost their charm and their delight — his Elizabeth, his more than daughter, whom he doted on with all that affection which a man feels, who in the decline of life, having few affections, clings more earnestly to those that remain. Cursed, cursed be the fiend that brought misery on his grey hairs and doomed him to waste in wretchedness! He could not live under the horrors that were accumulated around him; the springs of existence suddenly gave way; he was unable to rise from his bed, and in a few days he died in my arms.

What then became of me? I know not; I lost sensation, and chains and darkness were the only objects that pressed upon me. Sometimes, indeed, I dreamt that I wandered in flowery meadows and pleasant vales with the friends of my youth, but I awoke and found myself in a dungeon. Melancholy followed, but by degrees I gained a clear conception of my miseries and situation and was then released from my prison. For they had called me mad, and during many months, as I understood, a solitary cell had been my habitation.

Liberty, however, had been a useless gift to me, had I not, as I awakened to reason, at the same time awakened to revenge. As the memory of past misfortunes pressed upon me, I began to reflect on their cause — the monster whom I had created, the miserable daemon whom I had sent abroad into the world for my destruction. I was possessed by a maddening rage when I thought of him, and desired and ardently prayed that I might have him within my grasp to wreak a great and signal revenge on his cursed head.

Nor did my hate long confine itself to useless wishes; I began to reflect on the best means of securing him; and for this purpose, about a month after my release, I repaired to a criminal judge in the town and told him that I had an accusation to make, that I knew the destroyer of my family, and that I required him to exert his whole authority for the apprehension of the murderer. The magistrate listened to me with attention and kindness.

"Be assured, sir," said he, "no pains or exertions on my part shall be spared to discover the villain."

"I thank you," replied I; "listen, therefore, to the deposition that I have to make. It is indeed a tale so strange that I should fear you would not credit it were there not something in truth which, however wonderful, forces conviction. The story is too connected to be mistaken for a dream, and I have no motive for falsehood." My manner as I thus addressed him was impressive but calm; I had formed in my own heart a resolution to pursue my destroyer to death, and this purpose quieted my agony and for an interval reconciled me to life. I now related my history briefly but with firmness and precision, marking the dates with accuracy and never deviating into invective or exclamation.

The magistrate appeared at first perfectly incredulous, but as I continued he became more attentive and interested; I saw him sometimes shudder with horror; at others a lively surprise, unmingled with disbelief, was painted on his countenance. When I had concluded my narration I said, "This is the being whom I accuse and for whose seizure and punishment I call upon you to exert your whole power. It is your duty as a magistrate, and I believe and hope that your feelings as a man will not revolt from the execution of those functions on this occasion." This address caused a considerable change in the physiognomy of my own auditor. He had heard my story with that half kind of belief that is given to a tale of spirits and supernatural events; but when he was called upon to act officially in consequence, the whole tide of his incredulity returned. He, however, answered mildly, "I would willingly afford you every aid in your pursuit, but the creature of whom you speak appears to have powers which would put all my exertions to defiance. Who can follow an animal which can traverse the sea of ice and inhabit caves and dens where no man would venture to intrude? Besides, some months have elapsed since the commission of his crimes, and no one can conjecture to what place he has wandered or what region he may now inhabit."

"I do not doubt that he hovers near the spot which I inhabit, and if he has indeed taken refuge in the Alps, he may be hunted like the chamois and destroyed as a beast of prey. But I perceive your thoughts; you do not credit my narrative and do not intend to pursue my enemy with the punishment which is his desert.” As I spoke, rage sparkled in my eyes; the magistrate was intimidated. “You are mistaken,” said he. “I will exert myself, and if it is in my power to seize the monster, be assured that he shall suffer punishment proportionate to his crimes. But I fear, from what you have yourself described to be his properties, that this will prove impracticable; and thus, while every proper measure is pursued, you should make up your mind to disappointment.”

“That cannot be; but all that I can say will be of little avail. My revenge is of no moment to you; yet, while I allow it to be a vice, I confess that it is the devouring and only passion of my soul. My rage is unspeakable when I reflect that the murderer, whom I have turned loose upon society, still exists. You refuse my just demand; I have but one resource, and I devote myself, either in my life or death, to his destruction.”

I trembled with excess of agitation as I said this; there was a frenzy in my manner, and something, I doubt not, of that haughty fierceness which the martyrs of old are said to have possessed. But to a Genevan magistrate, whose mind was occupied by far other ideas than those of devotion and heroism, this elevation of mind had much the appearance of madness. He endeavoured to soothe me as a nurse does a child and reverted to my tale as the effects of delirium.

“Man,” I cried, “how ignorant art thou in thy pride of wisdom! Cease; you know not what it is you say.”

I broke from the house angry and disturbed and retired to meditate on some other mode of action.

Chapter 24

My present situation was one in which all voluntary thought was swallowed up and lost. I was hurried away by fury; revenge alone endowed me with strength and composure; it moulded my feelings and allowed me to be calculating and calm at periods when otherwise delirium or death would have been my portion.

My first resolution was to quit Geneva forever; my country, which, when I was happy and beloved, was dear to me, now, in my adversity, became hateful. I provided myself with a sum of money, together with a few jewels which had belonged to my mother, and departed. And now my wanderings began which are to cease but with life. I have traversed a vast portion of the earth and have endured all the hardships which travellers in deserts and barbarous countries are wont to meet. How I have lived I hardly know; many times have I stretched my failing limbs upon the sandy plain and prayed for death. But revenge kept me alive; I dared not die and leave my adversary in being.

When I quitted Geneva my first labour was to gain some clue by which I might trace the steps of my fiendish enemy. But my plan was unsettled, and I wandered many hours round the confines of the town, uncertain what path I should pursue. As night approached I found myself at the entrance of the cemetery where William, Elizabeth, and my father reposed. I entered it and approached the tomb which marked their graves. Everything was silent except the leaves of the trees, which were gently agitated by the wind; the night was nearly dark, and the scene would have been solemn and affecting even to an uninterested observer. The spirits of the departed seemed to flit around and to cast a shadow, which was felt but not seen, around the head of the mourner.

The deep grief which this scene had at first excited quickly gave way to rage and despair. They were dead, and I lived; their murderer also lived, and to destroy him I must drag out my weary existence. I knelt on the grass and kissed the earth and with quivering lips exclaimed, “By the sacred earth on which I kneel, by the shades that wander near me, by the deep and eternal grief that I feel, I swear; and by thee, O Night, and the spirits that preside over thee, to pursue the daemon who caused this misery, until he or I shall perish in mortal conflict. For this purpose I will preserve my life; to execute this dear revenge will I again behold the sun and tread the green herbage of earth, which otherwise should vanish from my eyes forever. And I call on you, spirits of the dead, and on you, wandering ministers of vengeance, to aid and conduct me in my work. Let the cursed and hellish monster drink deep of agony; let him feel the despair that now torments me." I had begun my adjuration with solemnity and an awe which almost assured me that the shades of my murdered friends heard and approved my devotion, but the furies possessed me as I concluded, and rage choked my utterance.

I was answered through the stillness of night by a loud and fiendish laugh. It rang on my ears long and heavily; the mountains re-echoed it, and I felt as if all hell surrounded me with mockery and laughter. Surely in that moment I should have been possessed by frenzy and have destroyed my miserable existence but that my vow was heard and that I was reserved for vengeance. The laughter died away, when a well-known and abhorred voice, apparently close to my ear, addressed me in an audible whisper, "I am satisfied, miserable wretch! You have determined to live, and I am satisfied."

I darted towards the spot from which the sound proceeded, but the devil eluded my grasp. Suddenly the broad disk of the moon arose and shone full upon his ghastly and distorted shape as he fled with more than mortal speed.

I pursued him, and for many months this has been my task. Guided by a slight clue, I followed the windings of the Rhone, but vainly. The blue Mediterranean appeared, and by a strange chance, I saw the fiend enter by night and hide himself in a vessel bound for the Black Sea. I took my passage in the same ship, but he escaped, I know not how.

Amidst the wilds of Tartary and Russia, although he still evaded me, I have ever followed in his track. Sometimes the peasants, scared by this horrid apparition, informed me of his path; sometimes he himself, who feared that if I lost all trace of him I should despair and die, left some mark to guide me. The snows descended on my head, and I saw the print of his huge step on the white plain. To you first entering on life, to whom care is new and agony unknown, how can you understand what I have felt and still feel? Cold, want, and fatigue were the least pains which I was destined to endure; I was cursed by some devil and carried about with me my eternal hell; yet still a spirit of good followed and directed my steps and when I most murmured would suddenly extricate me from seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Sometimes, when nature, overcome by hunger, sank under the exhaustion, a repast was prepared for me in the desert that restored and inspirited me. The fare was, indeed, coarse, such as the peasants of the country ate, but I will not doubt that it was set there by the spirits that I had invoked to aid me. Often, when all was dry, the heavens cloudless, and I was parched by thirst, a slight cloud would bedim the sky, shed the few drops that revived me, and vanish.

I followed, when I could, the courses of the rivers; but the daemon generally avoided these, as it was here that the population of the country chiefly collected. In other places human beings were seldom seen, and I generally subsisted on the wild animals that crossed my path. I had money with me and gained the friendship of the villagers by distributing it; or I brought with me some food that I had killed, which, after taking a small part, I always presented to those who had provided me with fire and utensils for cooking.

My life, as it passed thus, was indeed hateful to me, and it was during sleep alone that I could taste joy. O blessed sleep! Often, when most miserable, I sank to repose, and my dreams lulled me even to rapture. The spirits that guarded me had provided these moments, or rather hours, of happiness that I might retain strength to fulfil my pilgrimage. Deprived of this respite, I should have sunk under my hardships. During the day I was sustained and inspirited by the hope of night, for in sleep I saw my friends, my wife, and my beloved country; again I saw the benevolent countenance of my father, heard the silver tones of my Elizabeth's voice, and beheld Clerval enjoying health and youth. Often, when wearied by a toilsome march, I persuaded myself that I was dreaming until night should come and that I should then enjoy reality in the arms of my dearest friends. What agonizing fondness did I feel for them! How did I cling to their dear forms, as sometimes they haunted even my waking hours, and persuade myself that they still lived! At such moments vengeance, that burned within me, died in my heart, and I pursued my path towards the destruction of the daemon more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul. What his feelings were whom I pursued I cannot know. Sometimes, indeed, he left marks in writing on the barks of the trees or cut in stone that guided me and instigated my fury. “My reign is not yet over” — these words were legible in one of these inscriptions—”you live, and my power is complete. Follow me; I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive. You will find near this place, if you follow not too tardily, a dead hare; eat and be refreshed. Come on, my enemy; we have yet to wrestle for our lives, but many hard and miserable hours must you endure until that period shall arrive.”

Scoffing devil! Again do I vow vengeance; again do I devote thee, miserable fiend, to torture and death. Never will I give up my search until he or I perish; and then with what ecstasy shall I join my Elizabeth and my departed friends, who even now prepare for me the reward of my tedious toil and horrible pilgrimage!

As I still pursued my journey to the northward, the snows thickened and the cold increased in a degree almost too severe to support. The peasants were shut up in their hovels, and only a few of the most hardy ventured forth to seize the animals whom starvation had forced from their hiding-places to seek for prey. The rivers were covered with ice, and no fish could be procured; and thus I was cut off from my chief article of maintenance. The triumph of my enemy increased with the difficulty of my labours. One inscription that he left was in these words: “Prepare! Your toils only begin; wrap yourself in furs and provide food, for we shall soon enter upon a journey where your sufferings will satisfy my everlasting hatred.”

My courage and perseverance were invigorated by these scoffing words; I resolved not to fail in my purpose, and calling on heaven to support me, I continued with unabated fervour to traverse immense deserts, until the ocean appeared at a distance and formed the utmost boundary of the horizon. Oh! How unlike it was to the blue seasons of the south! Covered with ice, it was only to be distinguished from land by its superior wildness and ruggedness. The Greeks wept for joy when they beheld the Mediterranean from the hills of Asia, and hailed with rapture the boundary of their toils. I did not weep, but I knelt down and with a full heart thanked my guiding spirit for conducting me in safety to the place where I hoped, notwithstanding my adversary’s gibe, to meet and grapple with him.

Some weeks before this period I had procured a sledge and dogs and thus traversed the snows with inconceivable speed. I know not whether the fiend possessed the same advantages, but I found that, as before I had daily lost ground in the pursuit, I now gained on him, so much so that when I first saw the ocean he was but one day's journey in advance, and I hoped to intercept him before he should reach the beach. With new courage, therefore, I pressed on, and in two days arrived at a wretched hamlet on the seashore. I inquired of the inhabitants concerning the fiend and gained accurate information. A gigantic monster, they said, had arrived the night before, armed with a gun and many pistols, putting to flight the inhabitants of a solitary cottage through fear of his terrific appearance. He had carried off their store of winter food, and placing it in a sledge, to draw which he had seized on a numerous drove of trained dogs, he had harnessed them, and the same night, to the joy of the horror-struck villagers, had pursued his journey across the sea in a direction that led to no land; and they conjectured that he must speedily be destroyed by the breaking of the ice or frozen by the eternal frosts.

On hearing this information I suffered a temporary access of despair. He had escaped me, and I must commence a destructive and almost endless journey across the mountainous ices of the ocean, amidst cold that few of the inhabitants could long endure and which I, the native of a genial and sunny climate, could not hope to survive. Yet at the idea that the fiend should live and be triumphant, my rage and vengeance returned, and like a mighty tide, overwhelmed every other feeling. After a slight repose, during which the spirits of the dead hovered round and instigated me to toil and revenge, I prepared for my journey. I exchanged my land-sledge for one fashioned for the inequalities of the frozen ocean, and purchasing a plentiful stock of provisions, I departed from land.

I cannot guess how many days have passed since then, but I have endured misery which nothing but the eternal sentiment of a just retribution burning within my heart could have enabled me to support. Immense and rugged mountains of ice often barred up my passage, and I often heard the thunder of the ground sea, which threatened my destruction. But again the frost came and made the paths of the sea secure.

By the quantity of provision which I had consumed, I should guess that I had passed three weeks in this journey; and the continual protraction of hope, returning back upon the heart, often wrung bitter drops of despondency and grief from my eyes. Despair had indeed almost secured her prey, and I should soon have sunk beneath this misery. Once, after the poor animals that conveyed me had with incredible toil gained the summit of a sloping ice mountain, and one, sinking under his fatigue, died, I viewed the expanse before me with anguish, when suddenly my eye caught a dark speck upon the dusky plain. I strained my sight to discover what it could be and uttered a wild cry of ecstasy when I distinguished a sledge and the distorted proportions of a well-known form within. Oh! With what a burning gush did hope revisit my heart! Warm tears filled my eyes, which I hastily wiped away, that they might not intercept the view I had of the daemon; but still my sight was dimmed by the burning drops, until, giving way to the emotions that oppressed me, I wept aloud.

But this was not the time for delay; I disencumbered the dogs of their dead companion, gave them a plentiful portion of food, and after an hour's rest, which was absolutely necessary, and yet which was bitterly irksome to me, I continued my route. The sledge was still visible, nor did I again lose sight of it except at the moments when for a short time some ice-rock concealed it with its intervening crags. I indeed perceptibly gained on it, and when, after nearly two days' journey, I beheld my enemy at no more than a mile distant, my heart bounded within me.

But now, when I appeared almost within grasp of my foe, my hopes were suddenly extinguished, and I lost all trace of him more utterly than I had ever done before. A ground sea was heard; the thunder of its progress, as the waters rolled and swelled beneath me, became every moment more ominous and terrific. I pressed on, but in vain. The wind arose; the sea roared; and, as with the mighty shock of an earthquake, it split and cracked with a tremendous and overwhelming sound. The work was soon finished; in a few minutes a tumultuous sea rolled between me and my enemy, and I was left drifting on a scattered piece of ice that was continually lessening and thus preparing for me a hideous death. In this manner many appalling hours passed; several of my dogs died, and I myself was about to sink under the accumulation of distress when I saw your vessel riding at anchor and holding forth to me hopes of succour and life. I had no conception that vessels ever came so far north and was astounded at the sight. I quickly destroyed part of my sledge to construct oars, and by these means was enabled, with infinite fatigue, to move my ice raft in the direction of your ship. I had determined, if you were going southwards, still to trust myself to the mercy of the seas rather than abandon my purpose. I hoped to induce you to grant me a boat with which I could pursue my enemy. But your direction was northwards. You took me on board when my vigour was exhausted, and I should soon have sunk under my multiplied hardships into a death which I still dread, for my task is unfulfilled.

Oh! When will my guiding spirit, in conducting me to the daemon, allow me the rest I so much desire; or must I die, and he yet live? If I do, swear to me, Walton, that he shall not escape, that you will seek him and satisfy my vengeance in his death. And do I dare to ask of you to undertake my pilgrimage, to endure the hardships that I have undergone? No; I am not so selfish. Yet, when I am dead, if he should appear, if the ministers of vengeance should conduct him to you, swear that he shall not live — swear that he shall not triumph over my accumulated woes and survive to add to the list of his dark crimes. He is eloquent and persuasive, and once his words had even power over my heart; but trust him not. His soul is as hellish as his form, full of treachery and fiend-like malice. Hear him not; call on the names of William, Justine, Clerval, Elizabeth, my father, and of the wretched Victor, and thrust your sword into his heart. I will hover near and direct the steel aright.

Walton, in continuation.

August 26th, 17 —

You have read this strange and terrific story, Margaret; and do you not feel your blood congeal with horror, like that which even now curdles mine? Sometimes, seized with sudden agony, he could not continue his tale; at others, his voice broken, yet piercing, uttered with difficulty the words so replete with anguish. His fine and lovely eyes were now lighted up with indignation, now subdued to downcast sorrow and quenched in infinite wretchedness. Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tones and related the most horrible incidents with a tranquil voice, suppressing every mark of agitation; then, like a volcano bursting forth, his face would suddenly change to an expression of the wildest rage as he shrieked out imprecations on his persecutor.

His tale is connected and told with an appearance of the simplest truth, yet I own to you that the letters of Felix and Safie, which he showed me, and the apparition of the monster seen from our ship, brought to me a greater conviction of the truth of his narrative than his asseverations, however earnest and connected. Such a monster has, then, really existence! I cannot doubt it, yet I am lost in surprise and admiration. Sometimes I endeavoured to gain from Frankenstein the particulars of his creature's formation, but on this point he was impenetrable. "Are you mad, my friend?" said he. "Or whither does your senseless curiosity lead you? Would you also create for yourself and the world a demoniacal enemy? Peace, peace! Learn my miseries and do not seek to increase your own." Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history; he asked to see them and then himself corrected and augmented them in many places, but principally in giving the life and spirit to the conversations he held with his enemy. "Since you have preserved my narration," said he, "I would not that a mutilated one should go down to posterity."

Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed. My thoughts and every feeling of my soul have been drunk up by the interest for my guest which this tale and his own elevated and gentle manners have created. I wish to soothe him, yet can I counsel one so infinitely miserable, so destitute of every hope of consolation, to live? Oh, no! The only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered spirit to peace and death. Yet he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium; he believes that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the beings themselves who visit him from the regions of a remote world. This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth.

Our conversations are not always confined to his own history and misfortunes. On every point of general literature he displays unbounded knowledge and a quick and piercing apprehension. His eloquence is forcible and touching; nor can I hear him, when he relates a pathetic incident or endeavours to move the passions of pity or love, without tears. What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin! He seems to feel his own worth and the greatness of his fall.

“When younger,” said he, “I believed myself destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound, but I possessed a coolness of judgment that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me when others would have been oppressed, for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow creatures. When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this thought, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing, and like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect without passion my reveries while the work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! My friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise.” Must I then lose this admirable being? I have longed for a friend; I have sought one who would sympathize with and love me. Behold, on these desert seas I have found such a one, but I fear I have gained him only to know his value and lose him. I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea.

“I thank you, Walton,” he said, “for your kind intentions towards so miserable a wretch; but when you speak of new ties and fresh affections, think you that any can replace those who are gone? Can any man be to me as Clerval was, or any woman another Elizabeth? Even where the affections are not strongly moved by any superior excellence, the companions of our childhood always possess a certain power over our minds which hardly any later friend can obtain. They know our infantine dispositions, which, however they may be afterwards modified, are never eradicated; and they can judge of our actions with more certain conclusions as to the integrity of our motives. A sister or a brother can never, unless indeed such symptoms have been shown early, suspect the other of fraud or false dealing, when another friend, however strongly he may be attached, may, in spite of himself, be contemplated with suspicion. But I enjoyed friends, dear not only through habit and association, but from their own merits; and wherever I am, the soothing voice of my Elizabeth and the conversation of Clerval will be ever whispered in my ear. They are dead, and but one feeling in such a solitude can persuade me to preserve my life. If I were engaged in any high undertaking or design, fraught with extensive utility to my fellow creatures, then could I live to fulfil it. But such is not my destiny; I must pursue and destroy the being to whom I gave existence; then my lot on earth will be fulfilled and I may die."

September 2nd

My beloved Sister,

I write to you, encompassed by peril and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England and the dearer friends that inhabit it. I am surrounded by mountains of ice which admit of no escape and threaten every moment to crush my vessel. The brave fellows whom I have persuaded to be my companions look towards me for aid, but I have none to bestow. There is something terribly appalling in our situation, yet my courage and hopes do not desert me. Yet it is terrible to reflect that the lives of all these men are endangered through me. If we are lost, my mad schemes are the cause.

And what, Margaret, will be the state of your mind? You will not hear of my destruction, and you will anxiously await my return. Years will pass, and you will have visitings of despair and yet be tortured by hope. Oh! My beloved sister, the sickening failing of your heart-felt expectations is, in prospect, more terrible to me than my own death.

But you have a husband and lovely children; you may be happy. Heaven bless you and make you so!

My unfortunate guest regards me with the tenderest compassion. He endeavours to fill me with hope and talks as if life were a possession which he valued. He reminds me how often the same accidents have happened to other navigators who have attempted this sea, and in spite of myself, he fills me with cheerful auguries. Even the sailors feel the power of his eloquence; when he speaks, they no longer despair; he rouses their energies, and while they hear his voice they believe these vast mountains of ice are mole-hills which will vanish before the resolutions of man. These feelings are transitory; each day of expectation delayed fills them with fear, and I almost dread a mutiny caused by this despair.

September 5th

A scene has just passed of such uncommon interest that, although it is highly probable that these papers may never reach you, yet I cannot forbear recording it.

We are still surrounded by mountains of ice, still in imminent danger of being crushed in their conflict. The cold is excessive, and many of my unfortunate comrades have already found a grave amidst this scene of desolation. Frankenstein has daily declined in health; a feverish fire still glimmers in his eyes, but he is exhausted, and when suddenly roused to any exertion, he speedily sinks again into apparent lifelessness.

I mentioned in my last letter the fears I entertained of a mutiny. This morning, as I sat watching the wan countenance of my friend — his eyes half closed and his limbs hanging listlessly — I was roused by half a dozen of the sailors, who demanded admission into the cabin. They entered, and their leader addressed me. He told me that he and his companions had been chosen by the other sailors to come in deputation to me to make me a requisition which, in justice, I could not refuse. We were immured in ice and should probably never escape, but they feared that if, as was possible, the ice should dissipate and a free passage be opened, I should be rash enough to continue my voyage and lead them into fresh dangers, after they might happily have surmounted this. They insisted, therefore, that I should engage with a solemn promise that if the vessel should be freed I would instantly direct my course southwards.

This speech troubled me. I had not despaired, nor had I yet conceived the idea of returning if set free. Yet could I, in justice, or even in possibility, refuse this demand? I hesitated before I answered, when Frankenstein, who had at first been silent, and indeed appeared hardly to have force enough to attend, now roused himself; his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks flushed with momentary vigour. Turning towards the men, he said, "What do you mean? What do you demand of your captain? Are you, then, so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition?

"And wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror, because at every new incident your fortitude was to be called forth and your courage exhibited, because danger and death surrounded it, and these you were to brave and overcome. For this was it a glorious, for this was it an honourable undertaking. You were hereafter to be hailed as the benefactors of your species, your names adored as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind. And now, behold, with the first imagination of danger, or, if you will, the first mighty and terrific trial of your courage, you shrink away and are content to be handed down as men who had not strength enough to endure cold and peril; and so, poor souls, they were chilly and returned to their warm firesides. Why, that requires not this preparation; ye need not have come thus far and dragged your captain to the shame of a defeat merely to prove yourselves cowards. Oh! Be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable and cannot withstand you if you say that it shall not. Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe." He spoke this with a voice so modulated to the different feelings expressed in his speech, with an eye so full of lofty design and heroism, that can you wonder that these men were moved? They looked at one another and were unable to reply. I spoke; I told them to retire and consider of what had been said, that I would not lead them farther north if they strenuously desired the contrary, but that I hoped that, with reflection, their courage would return. They retired and I turned towards my friend, but he was sunk in languor and almost deprived of life.

How all this will terminate, I know not, but I had rather die than return shamefully, my purpose unfulfilled. Yet I fear such will be my fate; the men, unsupported by ideas of glory and honour, can never willingly continue to endure their present hardships.

September 7th

The die is cast; I have consented to return if we are not destroyed. Thus are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed. It requires more philosophy than I possess to bear this injustice with patience.

September 12th

It is past; I am returning to England. I have lost my hopes of utility and glory; I have lost my friend. But I will endeavour to detail these bitter circumstances to you, my dear sister; and while I am wafted towards England and towards you, I will not despond.

September 9th, the ice began to move, and roarings like thunder were heard at a distance as the islands split and cracked in every direction. We were in the most imminent peril, but as we could only remain passive, my chief attention was occupied by my unfortunate guest whose illness increased in such a degree that he was entirely confined to his bed. The ice cracked behind us and was driven with force towards the north; a breeze sprang from the west, and on the 11th the passage towards the south became perfectly free. When the sailors saw this and that their return to their native country was apparently assured, a shout of tumultuous joy broke from them, loud and long-continued. Frankenstein, who was dozing, awoke and asked the cause of the tumult. “They shout,” I said, “because they will soon return to England.”

“Do you, then, really return?”

“Alas! Yes; I cannot withstand their demands. I cannot lead them unwillingly to danger, and I must return.”

“Do so, if you will; but I will not. You may give up your purpose, but mine is assigned to me by heaven, and I dare not. I am weak, but surely the spirits who assist my vengeance will endow me with sufficient strength.” Saying this, he endeavoured to spring from the bed, but the exertion was too great for him; he fell back and fainted.

It was long before he was restored, and I often thought that life was entirely extinct. At length he opened his eyes; he breathed with difficulty and was unable to speak. The surgeon gave him a composing draught and ordered us to leave him undisturbed. In the meantime he told me that my friend had certainly not many hours to live.

His sentence was pronounced, and I could only grieve and be patient. I sat by his bed, watching him; his eyes were closed, and I thought he slept; but presently he called to me in a feeble voice, and bidding me come near, said, “Alas! The strength I relied on is gone; I feel that I shall soon die, and he, my enemy and persecutor, may still be in being. Think not, Walton, that in the last moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred and ardent desire of revenge I once expressed; but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary. During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blamable. In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature and was bound towards him to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being.

“This was my duty, but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards the beings of my own species had greater claims to my attention because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery. Urged by this view, I refused, and I did right in refusing, to create a companion for the first creature. He showed unparalleled malignity and selfishness in evil; he destroyed my friends; he devoted to destruction beings who possessed exquisite sensations, happiness, and wisdom; nor do I know where this thirst for vengeance may end. Miserable himself that he may render no other wretched, he ought to die. The task of his destruction was mine, but I have failed. When actuated by selfish and vicious motives, I asked you to undertake my unfinished work, and I renew this request now, when I am only induced by reason and virtue.

“Yet I cannot ask you to renounce your country and friends to fulfil this task; and now that you are returning to England, you will have little chance of meeting with him. But the consideration of these points, and the well balancing of what you may esteem your duties, I leave to you; my judgment and ideas are already disturbed by the near approach of death. I dare not ask you to do what I think right, for I may still be misled by passion.

"That he should live to be an instrument of mischief disturbs me; in other respects, this hour, when I momentarily expect my release, is the only happy one which I have enjoyed for several years. The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms. Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed."

His voice became fainter as he spoke, and at length, exhausted by his effort, he sank into silence. About half an hour afterwards he attempted again to speak but was unable; he pressed my hand feebly, and his eyes closed forever, while the irradiation of a gentle smile passed away from his lips.

Margaret, what comment can I make on the untimely extinction of this glorious spirit? What can I say that will enable you to understand the depth of my sorrow? All that I should express would be inadequate and feeble. My tears flow; my mind is overshadowed by a cloud of disappointment. But I journey towards England, and I may there find consolation.

I am interrupted. What do these sounds portend? It is midnight; the breeze blows fairly, and the watch on deck scarcely stir. Again there is a sound as of a human voice, but hoarser; it comes from the cabin where the remains of Frankenstein still lie. I must arise and examine. Good night, my sister.

Great God! what a scene has just taken place! I am yet dizzy with the remembrance of it. I hardly know whether I shall have the power to detail it; yet the tale which I have recorded would be incomplete without this final and wonderful catastrophe. I entered the cabin where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe — gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy. When he heard the sound of my approach, he ceased to utter exclamations of grief and horror and sprung towards the window. Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome yet appalling hideousness. I shut my eyes involuntarily and endeavoured to recollect what were my duties with regard to this destroyer. I called on him to stay.

He paused, looking on me with wonder, and again turning towards the lifeless form of his creator, he seemed to forget my presence, and every feature and gesture seemed instigated by the wildest rage of some uncontrollable passion.

“That is also my victim!” he exclaimed. “In his murder my crimes are consummated; the miserable series of my being is wound to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! He is cold, he cannot answer me.” His voice seemed suffocated, and my first impulses, which had suggested to me the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend in destroying his enemy, were now suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion. I approached this tremendous being; I dared not again raise my eyes to his face, there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness. I attempted to speak, but the words died away on my lips. The monster continued to utter wild and incoherent self-reproaches. At length I gathered resolution to address him in a pause of the tempest of his passion.

“Your repentance,” I said, “is now superfluous. If you had listened to the voice of conscience and heeded the stings of remorse before you had urged your diabolical vengeance to this extremity, Frankenstein would yet have lived.”

“And do you dream?” said the daemon. “Do you think that I was then dead to agony and remorse? He,” he continued, pointing to the corpse, “he suffered not in the consummation of the deed. Oh! Not the ten-thousandth portion of the anguish that was mine during the lingering detail of its execution. A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy, and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine.

“After the murder of Clerval I returned to Switzerland, heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror; I abhorred myself. But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness, that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was forever barred, then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. I recollected my threat and resolved that it should be accomplished. I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture, but I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested yet could not disobey. Yet when she died! Nay, then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish, to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion. And now it is ended; there is my last victim!"

I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet, when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was rekindled within me. "Wretch!" I said. "It is well that you come here to whine over the desolation that you have made. You throw a torch into a pile of buildings, and when they are consumed, you sit among the ruins and lament the fall. Hypocritical fiend! If he whom you mourn still lived, still would he be the object, again would he become the prey, of your accursed vengeance. It is not pity that you feel; you lament only because the victim of your malignity is withdrawn from your power."

"Oh, it is not thus — not thus," interrupted the being. "Yet such must be the impression conveyed to you by what appears to be the purport of my actions. Yet I seek not a fellow feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone while my sufferings shall endure; when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I run over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone.

"You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But in the detail which he gave you of them he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured wasting in impotent passions. For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind sinned against me? Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the saviour of his child? Nay, these are virtuous and immaculate beings! I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice.

"But it is true that I am a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator, the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men, to misery; I have pursued him even to that irremediable ruin.

"There he lies, white and cold in death. You hate me, but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. I look on the hands which executed the deed; I think on the heart in which the imagination of it was conceived and long for the moment when these hands will meet my eyes, when that imagination will haunt my thoughts no more.

"Fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being and accomplish that which must be done, but it requires my own. Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice. I shall quit your vessel on the ice raft which brought me thither and shall seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch who would create such another as I have been. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. I shall no longer see the sun or stars or feel the winds play on my cheeks.

"Light, feeling, and sense will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer and heard the rustling of the leaves and the warbling of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death?

"Farewell! I leave you, and in you the last of humankind whom these eyes will ever behold. Farewell, Frankenstein! If thou wert yet alive and yet cherished a desire of revenge against me, it would be better satiated in my life than in my destruction. But it was not so; thou didst seek my extinction, that I might not cause greater wretchedness; and if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hadst not ceased to think and feel, thou wouldst not desire against me a vengeance greater than that which I feel. Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine, for the bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them forever.

"But soon," he cried with sad and solemn enthusiasm, "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace, or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus. Farewell."

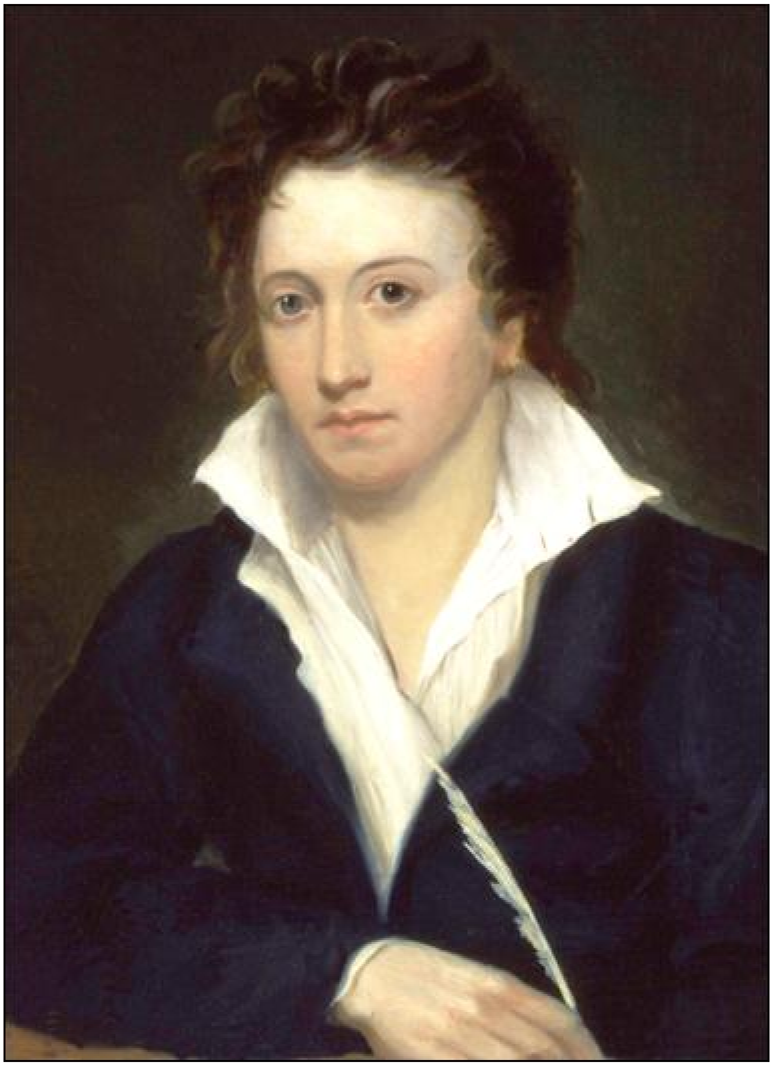
He sprang from the cabin window as he said this, upon the ice raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance.

THE END

MATHILDA

Shelley's second novel *Matilda* was finally edited by Elizabeth Witchie and published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1959; one hundred and forty years after it was completed. *Matilda* was written between August 1819 and February 1820 and, before major revisions, was originally titled 'Fields of Fancy' after Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished 1787 tale 'Cave of Fancy'. Shelley sent the manuscript to her father William Godwin in England for him to arrange the novel's publication but Godwin branded the incest in the text 'disgusting and detestable' and did nothing to facilitate *Matilda* being published. It is not surprising that Godwin was disturbed by the incest in a book which contains obvious autobiographical elements. The three central characters, Matilda, her father and Woodville were clearly influenced though not direct representations of Mary Shelley, Godwin and Percy Shelley respectively, and the death of Matilda's mother after childbirth mirrors that of Mary Wollstonecraft's demise after Mary Shelley's birth.

The novel was composed shortly after two of Shelley's children had died in the space of nine months and she had sunk into despair and depression. She became angry and alienated from her husband whom in the figure of Woodville is the perfect, adored and acclaimed poet that is gentle and patient with Matilda's poor treatment of him. Woodville is an idealised Percy Shelley and the novel shows Matilda berating herself for her cold and isolating behaviour towards him. The book is composed in the form of a memoir addressed to Woodville by the young woman who predicts she will die by the time she is twenty two. The theme of incest was of interest to Shelley and her husband during this time as an effective dramatic device and certainly not autobiographical. Nevertheless, Shelley's resentment at what she perceived to be her father's unsympathetic response to the deaths of her children had caused a distance between them and this sense of alienation permeates the text. Despite only being published for the first time in the mid-twentieth century, *Matilda* has arguably become Shelley's most famous and popular work after *Frankenstein*.



Shelley's husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) was to become, posthumously, one of the major English Romantic poets. His early relationship with Mary clearly influenced the character Woodville in this novel.

CONTENTS

PREFACE
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I
CHAPTER II
CHAPTER III
CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER V
CHAPTER VI
CHAPTER VII
CHAPTER VIII
CHAPTER IX
CHAPTER X
CHAPTER XI
CHAPTER XII
APPENDIX: THE FIELDS OF FANCY

PREFACE

This volume prints for the first time the full text of Mary Shelley's novelette *Mathilda* together with the opening pages of its rough draft, *The Fields of Fancy*. They are transcribed from the microfilm of the notebooks belonging to Lord Abinger which is in the library of Duke University.

The text follows Mary Shelley's manuscript exactly except for the omission of mere corrections by the author, most of which are negligible; those that are significant are included and explained in the notes. Footnotes indicated by an asterisk are Mrs. Shelley's own notes. She was in general a fairly good speller, but certain words, especially those in which there was a question of doubling or not doubling a letter, gave her trouble: untill (though occasionally she deleted the final *l* or wrote the word correctly), agreable, occured, confering, buble, meaness, receeded, as well as hopless, lonly, seperate, extactic, sacrifise, desart, and words ending in -ance or -ence. These and other mispellings (even those of proper names) are reproduced without change or comment. The use of *sic* and of square brackets is reserved to indicate evident slips of the pen, obviously incorrect, unclear, or incomplete phrasing and punctuation, and my conjectures in emending them.

I am very grateful to the library of Duke University and to its librarian, Dr. Benjamin E. Powell, not only for permission to transcribe and publish this work by Mary Shelley but also for the many courtesies shown to me when they welcomed me as a visiting scholar in 1956. To Lord Abinger also my thanks are due for adding his approval of my undertaking, and to the Curators of the Bodleian Library for permiting me to use and to quote from the papers in the reserved Shelley Collection. Other libraries and individuals helped me while I was editing *Mathilda*: the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore, whose Literature and Reference Departments went to endless trouble for me; the Julia Rogers Library of Goucher College and its staff; the library of the University of Pennsylvania; Miss R. Glynn Grylls (Lady Mander); Professor Lewis Patton of Duke University; Professor Frederick L. Jones of the University of Pennsylvania; and many other persons who did me favors that seemed to them small but that to me were very great.

I owe much also to previous books by and about the Shelleys. Those to which I have referred more than once in the introduction and notes are here given with the abbreviated form which I have used:

Frederick L. Jones, ed. *The Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, 2 vols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944 (*Letters*)

—— *Mary Shelley's Journal*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947 (*Journal*)

Roger Ingpen and W.E. Peck, eds. *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Julian Edition, 10 vols. London, 1926-1930 (Julian *Works*)

Newman Ivey White. *Shelley*, 2 vols. New York: Knopf, 1940 (White, *Shelley*)

Elizabeth Nitchie. *Mary Shelley, Author of "Frankenstein."* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953 (Nitchie, *Mary Shelley*)

Elizabeth Nitchie
May, 1959

INTRODUCTION

Of all the novels and stories which Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley left in manuscript,[i] only one novelette, *Mathilda*, is complete. It exists in both rough draft and final copy. In this story, as in all Mary Shelley's writing, there is much that is autobiographical: it would be hard to find a more self-revealing work. For an understanding of Mary's character, especially as she saw herself, and of her attitude toward Shelley and toward Godwin in 1819, this tale is an important document. Although the main narrative, that of the father's incestuous love for his daughter, his suicide, and Mathilda's consequent withdrawal from society to a lonely heath, is not in any real sense autobiographical, many elements in it are drawn from reality. The three main characters are clearly Mary herself, Godwin, and Shelley, and their relations can easily be reassorted to correspond with actuality.

Highly personal as the story was, Mary Shelley hoped that it would be published, evidently believing that the characters and the situations were sufficiently disguised. In May of 1820 she sent it to England by her friends, the Gisbornes, with a request that her father would arrange for its publication. But *Mathilda*, together with its rough draft entitled *The Fields of Fancy*, remained unpublished among the Shelley papers. Although Mary's references to it in her letters and journal aroused some curiosity among scholars, it also remained unexamined until comparatively recently.

This seeming neglect was due partly to the circumstances attending the distribution of the family papers after the deaths of Sir Percy and Lady Shelley. One part of them went to the Bodleian Library to become a reserved collection which, by the terms of Lady Shelley's will, was opened to scholars only under definite restrictions. Another part went to Lady Shelley's niece and, in turn, to her heirs, who for a time did not make the manuscripts available for study. A third part went to Sir John Shelley-Rolls, the poet's grand-nephew, who released much important Shelley material, but not all the scattered manuscripts. In this division, the two notebooks containing the finished draft of *Mathilda* and a portion of *The Fields of Fancy* went to Lord Abinger, the notebook containing the remainder of the rough draft to the Bodleian Library, and some loose sheets containing additions and revisions to Sir John Shelley-Rolls. Happily all the manuscripts are now accessible to scholars, and it is possible to publish the full text of *Mathilda* with such additions from *The Fields of Fancy* as are significant.[ii]

The three notebooks are alike in format.[iii] One of Lord Abinger's notebooks contains the first part of *The Fields of Fancy*, Chapter 1 through the beginning of Chapter 10, 116 pages. The concluding portion occupies the first fifty-four pages of the Bodleian notebook. There is then a blank page, followed by three and a half pages, scored out, of what seems to be a variant of the end of Chapter 1 and the beginning of Chapter 2. A revised and expanded version of the first part of Mathilda's narrative follows (Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3), with a break between the account of her girlhood in Scotland and the brief description of her father after his return. Finally there are four pages of a new opening, which was used in *Mathilda*. This is an extremely rough draft: punctuation is largely confined to the dash, and there are many corrections and alterations. The Shelley-Rolls fragments, twenty-five sheets or slips of paper, usually represent additions to or revisions of *The Fields of Fancy*: many of them are numbered, and some are keyed into the manuscript in Lord Abinger's notebook. Most of the changes were incorporated in *Mathilda*.

The second Abinger notebook contains the complete and final draft of *Mathilda*, 226 pages. It is for the most part a fair copy. The text is punctuated and there are relatively few corrections, most of them, apparently the result of a final rereading, made to avoid the repetition of words. A few additions are written in the margins. On several pages slips of paper containing evident revisions (quite possibly originally among the Shelley-Rolls fragments) have been pasted over the corresponding lines of the text. An occasional passage is scored out and some words and phrases are crossed out to make way for a revision. Following page 216, four sheets containing the conclusion of the story are cut out of the notebook. They appear, the pages numbered 217 to 223, among the Shelley-Rolls fragments. A revised version, pages 217 to 226, follows the cut.[iv]

The mode of telling the story in the final draft differs radically from that in the rough draft. In *The Fields of Fancy* Mathilda's history is set in a fanciful framework. The author is transported by the fairy Fantasia to the

Elysian Fields, where she listens to the discourse of Diotima and meets Mathilda. Mathilda tells her story, which closes with her death. In the final draft this unrealistic and largely irrelevant framework is discarded: Mathilda, whose death is approaching, writes out for her friend Woodville the full details of her tragic history which she had never had the courage to tell him in person.

The title of the rough draft, *The Fields of Fancy*, and the setting and framework undoubtedly stem from Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished tale, *The Cave of Fancy*, in which one of the souls confined in the center of the earth to purify themselves from the dross of their earthly existence tells to Sagesta (who may be compared with Diotima) the story of her ill-fated love for a man whom she hopes to rejoin after her purgation is completed.[v] Mary was completely familiar with her mother's works. This title was, of course, abandoned when the framework was abandoned, and the name of the heroine was substituted. Though it is worth noticing that Mary chose a name with the same initial letter as her own, it was probably taken from Dante. There are several references in the story to the cantos of the *Purgatorio* in which Mathilda appears. Mathilda's father is never named, nor is Mathilda's surname given. The name of the poet went through several changes: Welford, Lovel, Herbert, and finally Woodville.

The evidence for dating *Mathilda* in the late summer and autumn of 1819 comes partly from the manuscript, partly from Mary's journal. On the pages succeeding the portions of *The Fields of Fancy* in the Bodleian notebook are some of Shelley's drafts of verse and prose, including parts of *Prometheus Unbound* and of *Epipsychidion*, both in Italian, and of the preface to the latter in English, some prose fragments, and extended portions of the *Defence of Poetry*. Written from the other end of the book are the *Ode to Naples* and *The Witch of Atlas*. Since these all belong to the years 1819, 1820, and 1821, it is probable that Mary finished her rough draft some time in 1819, and that when she had copied her story, Shelley took over the notebook. Chapter 1 of *Mathilda* in Lord Abinger's notebook is headed, "Florence Nov. 9th. 1819." Since the whole of Mathilda's story takes place in England and Scotland, the date must be that of the manuscript. Mary was in Florence at that time.

These dates are supported by entries in Mary's journal which indicate that she began writing *Mathilda*, early in August, while the Shelleys were living in the Villa Valosano, near Leghorn. On August 4, 1819, after a gap of two months from the time of her little son's death, she resumed her diary. Almost every day thereafter for a month she recorded, "Write," and by September 4, she was saying, "Copy." On September 12 she wrote, "Finish copying my Tale." The next entry to indicate literary activity is the one word, "write," on November 8. On the 12th Percy Florence was born, and Mary did no more writing until March, when she was working on *Valperga*. It is probable, therefore, that Mary wrote and copied *Mathilda* between August 5 and September 12, 1819, that she did some revision on November 8 and finally dated the manuscript November 9.

The subsequent history of the manuscript is recorded in letters and journals. When the Gisbornes went to England on May 2, 1820, they took *Mathilda* with them; they read it on the journey and recorded their admiration of it in their journal.[vi] They were to show it to Godwin and get his advice about publishing it. Although Medwin heard about the story when he was with the Shelleys in 1820[vii] and Mary read it — perhaps from the rough draft — to Edward and Jane Williams in the summer of 1821,[viii] this manuscript apparently stayed in Godwin's hands. He evidently did not share the Gisbornes' enthusiasm: his approval was qualified. He thought highly of certain parts of it, less highly of others; and he regarded the subject as "disgusting and detestable," saying that the story would need a preface to prevent readers "from being tormented by the apprehension ... of the fall of the heroine," — that is, if it was ever published.[ix] There is, however, no record of his having made any attempt to get it into print. From January 18 through June 2, 1822, Mary repeatedly asked Mrs. Gisborne to retrieve the manuscript and have it copied for her, and Mrs. Gisborne invariably reported her failure to do so. The last references to the story are after Shelley's death in an unpublished journal entry and two of Mary's letters. In her journal for October 27, 1822, she told of the solace for her misery she had once found in writing *Mathilda*. In one letter to Mrs. Gisborne she compared the journey of herself and Jane to Pisa and Leghorn to get news of Shelley and Williams to that of Mathilda in search of her father, "driving — (like Matilda), towards the *sea* to learn if we were to be for ever doomed to misery."[x] And on May 6, 1823, she wrote, "Matilda foretells even many small circumstances most truly — and the whole of it is a monument of what now is."[xi]

These facts not only date the manuscript but also show Mary's feeling of personal involvement in the story. In the events of 1818-1819 it is possible to find the basis for this morbid tale and consequently to assess its biographical significance.

On September 24, 1818, the Shelleys' daughter, Clara Everina, barely a year old, died at Venice. Mary and her children had gone from Bagni di Lucca to Este to join Shelley at Byron's villa. Clara was not well when they started, and she grew worse on the journey. From Este Shelley and Mary took her to Venice to consult a physician, a trip which was beset with delays and difficulties. She died almost as soon as they arrived. According to Newman Ivey White,[xii] Mary, in the unreasoning agony of her grief, blamed Shelley for the child's death and for a time felt toward him an extreme physical antagonism which subsided into apathy and spiritual alienation. Mary's black moods made her difficult to live with, and Shelley himself fell into deep dejection. He expressed his sense of their estrangement in some of the lyrics of 1818—"all my saddest poems." In one fragment of verse, for example, he lamented that Mary had left him "in this dreary world alone."

Thy form is here indeed — a lovely one — But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road, That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode. Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair, Where For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

Professor White believed that Shelley recorded this estrangement only "in veiled terms" in *Julian and Maddalo* or in poems that he did not show to Mary, and that Mary acknowledged it only after Shelley's death, in her poem "The Choice" and in her editorial notes on his poems of that year. But this unpublished story, written after the death of their other child William, certainly contains, though also in veiled terms, Mary's immediate recognition and remorse. Mary well knew, I believe, what she was doing to Shelley. In an effort to purge her own emotions and to acknowledge her fault, she poured out on the pages of *Mathilda* the suffering and the loneliness, the bitterness and the self-recrimination of the past months.

The biographical elements are clear: Mathilda is certainly Mary herself; Mathilda's father is Godwin; Woodville is an idealized Shelley.

Like Mathilda Mary was a woman of strong passions and affections which she often hid from the world under a placid appearance. Like Mathilda's, Mary's mother had died a few days after giving her birth. Like Mathilda she spent part of her girlhood in Scotland. Like Mathilda she met and loved a poet of "exceeding beauty," and — also like Mathilda — in that sad year she had treated him ill, having become "captious and unreasonable" in her sorrow. Mathilda's loneliness, grief, and remorse can be paralleled in Mary's later journal and in "The Choice." This story was the outlet for her emotions in 1819.

Woodville, the poet, is virtually perfect, "glorious from his youth," like "an angel with winged feet" — all beauty, all goodness, all gentleness. He is also successful as a poet, his poem written at the age of twenty-three having been universally acclaimed. Making allowance for Mary's exaggeration and wishful thinking, we easily recognize Shelley: Woodville has his poetic ideals, the charm of his conversation, his high moral qualities, his sense of dedication and responsibility to those he loved and to all humanity. He is Mary's earliest portrait of her husband, drawn in a year when she was slowly returning to him from "the hearth of pale despair."

The early circumstances and education of Godwin and of Mathilda's father were different. But they produced similar men, each extravagant, generous, vain, dogmatic. There is more of Godwin in this tale than the account of a great man ruined by character and circumstance. The relationship between father and daughter, before it was destroyed by the father's unnatural passion, is like that between Godwin and Mary. She herself called her love for him "excessive and romantic."[xiii] She may well have been recording, in Mathilda's sorrow over her alienation from her father and her loss of him by death, her own grief at a spiritual separation from Godwin through what could only seem to her his cruel lack of sympathy. He had accused her of being cowardly and insincere in her grief over Clara's death[xiv] and later he belittled her loss of William.[xv] He had also called Shelley "a disgraceful and flagrant person" because of Shelley's refusal to send him more money.[xvi] No wonder if Mary felt that, like Mathilda, she had lost a beloved but cruel father.

Thus Mary took all the blame for the rift with Shelley upon herself and transferred the physical alienation to the break in sympathy with Godwin. That she turned these facts into a story of incest is undoubtedly due to the interest which she and Shelley felt in the subject at this time. They regarded it as a dramatic and effective theme. In August of 1819 Shelley completed *The Cenci*. During its progress he had talked over with Mary the arrangement of scenes; he had even suggested at the outset that she write the tragedy herself. And about a year earlier he had been urging upon her a translation of Alfieri's *Myrrha*. Thomas Medwin, indeed, thought that the story which she was writing in 1819 was specifically based on *Myrrha*. That she was thinking of that tragedy while writing *Mathilda* is evident from her effective use of it at one of the crises in the tale. And perhaps she was remembering her own handling of the theme when she wrote the biographical sketch of Alfieri for Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* nearly twenty years later. She then spoke of the difficulties inherent in such a subject, "inequality of age adding to the unnatural incest. To shed any interest over such an attachment, the dramatist ought to adorn the father with such youthful attributes as would be by no means contrary to probability."[xvii] This she endeavored to do in *Mathilda* (aided indeed by the fact that the situation was the reverse of that in *Myrrha*). Mathilda's father was young: he married before he was twenty. When he returned to Mathilda, he still showed "the ardour and freshness of feeling incident to youth." He lived in the past and saw his dead wife reincarnated in his daughter. Thus Mary attempts to validate the situation and make it "by no means contrary to probability."

Mathilda offers a good example of Mary Shelley's methods of revision. A study of the manuscript shows that she was a careful workman, and that in polishing this bizarre story she strove consistently for greater credibility and realism, more dramatic (if sometimes melodramatic) presentation of events, better motivation, conciseness, and exclusion of purple passages. In the revision and rewriting, many additions were made, so that *Mathilda* is appreciably longer than *The Fields of Fancy*. But the additions are usually improvements: a much fuller account of Mathilda's father and mother and of their marriage, which makes of them something more than lay figures and to a great extent explains the tragedy; development of the character of the Steward, at first merely the servant who accompanies Mathilda in her search for her father, into the sympathetic confidant whose responses help to dramatise the situation; an added word or short phrase that marks Mary Shelley's penetration into the motives and actions of both Mathilda and her father. Therefore *Mathilda* does not impress the reader as being longer than *The Fields of Fancy* because it better sustains his interest. And with all the additions there are also effective omissions of the obvious, of the tautological, of the artificially elaborate.[xviii]

The finished draft, *Mathilda*, still shows Mary Shelley's faults as a writer: verbosity, loose plotting, somewhat stereotyped and extravagant characterization. The reader must be tolerant of its heroine's overwhelming lamentations. But she is, after all, in the great tradition of romantic heroines: she compares her own weeping to that of Boccaccio's Ghismonda over the heart of Guiscardo. If the reader can accept Mathilda on her own terms, he will find not only biographical interest in her story but also intrinsic merits: a feeling for character and situation and phrasing that is often vigorous and precise.

CHAPTER I

Florence. Nov. 9th 1819

It is only four o’clock; but it is winter and the sun has already set: there are no clouds in the clear, frosty sky to reflect its slant beams, but the air itself is tinged with a slight roseate colour which is again reflected on the snow that covers the ground. I live in a lone cottage on a solitary, wide heath: no voice of life reaches me. I see the desolate plain covered with white, save a few black patches that the noonday sun has made at the top of those sharp pointed hillocks from which the snow, sliding as it fell, lay thinner than on the plain ground: a few birds are pecking at the hard ice that covers the pools — for the frost has been of long continuance.

I am in a strange state of mind. I am alone — quite alone — in the world — the blight of misfortune has passed over me and withered me; I know that I am about to die and I feel happy — joyous. — I feel my pulse; it beats fast: I place my thin hand on my cheek; it burns: there is a slight, quick spirit within me which is now emitting its last sparks. I shall never see the snows of another winter — I do believe that I shall never again feel the vivifying warmth of another summer sun; and it is in this persuasion that I begin to write my tragic history. Perhaps a history such as mine had better die with me, but a feeling that I cannot define leads me on and I am too weak both in body and mind to resist the slightest impulse. While life was strong within me I thought indeed that there was a sacred horror in my tale that rendered it unfit for utterance, and now about to die I pollute its mystic terrors. It is as the wood of the Eumenides none but the dying may enter; and Oedipus is about to die.

What am I writing? — I must collect my thoughts. I do not know that any will peruse these pages except you, my friend, who will receive them at my death. I do not address them to you alone because it will give me pleasure to dwell upon our friendship in a way that would be needless if you alone read what I shall write. I shall relate my tale therefore as if I wrote for strangers. You have often asked me the cause of my solitary life; my tears; and above all of my impenetrable and unkind silence. In life I dared not; in death I unveil the mystery. Others will toss these pages lightly over: to you, Woodville, kind, affectionate friend, they will be dear — the precious memorials of a heart-broken girl who, dying, is still warmed by gratitude towards you: your tears will fall on the words that record my misfortunes; I know they will — and while I have life I thank you for your sympathy.

But enough of this. I will begin my tale: it is my last task, and I hope I have strength sufficient to fulfill it. I record no crimes; my faults may easily be pardoned; for they proceeded not from evil motive but from want of judgement; and I believe few would say that they could, by a different conduct and superior wisdom, have avoided the misfortunes to which I am the victim. My fate has been governed by necessity, a hideous necessity. It required hands stronger than mine; stronger I do believe than any human force to break the thick, adamantine chain that has bound me, once breathing nothing but joy, ever possessed by a warm love & delight in goodness, — to misery only to be ended, and now about to be ended, in death. But I forget myself, my tale is yet untold. I will pause a few moments, wipe my dim eyes, and endeavour to lose the present obscure but heavy feeling of unhappiness in the more acute emotions of the past.

I was born in England. My father was a man of rank: he had lost his father early, and was educated by a weak mother with all the indulgence she thought due to a nobleman of wealth. He was sent to Eton and afterwards to college; & allowed from childhood the free use of large sums of money; thus enjoying from his earliest youth the independance which a boy with these advantages, always acquires at a public school.

Under the influence of these circumstances his passions found a deep soil wherein they might strike their roots and flourish either as flowers or weeds as was their nature. By being always allowed to act for himself his character became strongly and early marked and exhibited a various surface on which a quick sighted observer might see the seeds of virtues and of misfortunes. His careless extravagance, which made him squander immense sums of money to satisfy passing whims, which from their apparent energy he dignified with the name of passions, often displayed itself in unbounded generosity. Yet while he earnestly occupied himself about the wants of others his own desires were gratified to their fullest extent. He gave his money, but none of his own wishes were sacrifised to his gifts; he gave his time, which he did not value, and his affections which he was happy in any manner to have called into action.

I do not say that if his own desires had been put in competition with those of others that he would have displayed undue selfishness, but this trial was never made. He was nurtured in prosperity and attended by all its advantages; every one loved him and wished to gratify him. He was ever employed in promoting the pleasures of his companions — but their pleasures were his; and if he bestowed more attention upon the feelings of others than is usual with schoolboys it was because his social temper could never enjoy itself if every brow was not as free from care as his own.

While at school, emulation and his own natural abilities made him hold a conspicuous rank in the forms among his equals; at college he discarded books; he believed that he had other lessons to learn than those which they could teach him. He was now to enter into life and he was still young enough to consider study as a school-boy shackle, employed merely to keep the unruly out of mischief but as having no real connexion with life — whose wisdom of riding — gaming &c. he considered with far deeper interest — So he quickly entered into all college follies although his heart was too well moulded to be contaminated by them — it might be light but it was never cold. He was a sincere and sympathizing friend — but he had met with none who superior or equal to himself could aid him in unfolding his mind, or make him seek for fresh stores of thought by exhausting the old ones. He felt himself superior in quickness of judgement to those around him: his talents, his rank and wealth made him the chief of his party, and in that station he rested not only contented but glorying, conceiving it to be the only ambition worthy for him to aim at in the world.

By a strange narrowness of ideas he viewed all the world in connexion only as it was or was not related to his little society. He considered queer and out of fashion all opinions that were exploded by his circle of intimates, and he became at the same time dogmatic and yet fearful of not coinciding with the only sentiments he could consider orthodox. To the generality of spectators he appeared careless of censure, and with high disdain to throw aside all dependance on public prejudices; but at the same time that he strode with a triumphant stride over the rest of the world, he cowered, with self disguised lowliness, to his own party, and although its [chi]ef never dared express an opinion or a feeling until he was assured that it would meet with the approbation of his companions.

Yet he had one secret hidden from these dear friends; a secret he had nurtured from his earliest years, and although he loved his fellow collegiates he would not trust it to the delicacy or sympathy of any one among them. He loved. He feared that the intensity of his passion might become the subject of their ridicule; and he could not bear that they should blaspheme it by considering that trivial and transitory which he felt was the life of his life.

There was a gentleman of small fortune who lived near his family mansion who had three lovely daughters. The eldest was far the most beautiful, but her beauty was only an addition to her other qualities — her understanding was clear & strong and her disposition angelically gentle. She and my father had been playmates from infancy: Diana, even in her childhood had been a favourite with his mother; this partiality encreased with the years of this beautiful and lively girl and thus during his school & college vacations they were perpetually together. Novels and all the various methods by which youth in civilized life are led to a knowledge of the existence of passions before they really feel them, had produced a strong effect on him who was so peculiarly susceptible of every impression. At eleven years of age Diana was his favourite playmate but he already talked the language of love. Although she was elder than he by nearly two years the nature of her education made her more childish at least in the knowledge and expression of feeling; she received his warm protestations with innocence, and returned them unknowing of what they meant. She had read no novels and associated only with her younger sisters, what could she know of the difference between love and friendship? And when the development of her understanding disclosed the true nature of this intercourse to her, her affections were already engaged to her friend, and all she feared was lest other attractions and fickleness might make him break his infant vows.

But they became every day more ardent and tender. It was a passion that had grown with his growth; it had become entwined with every faculty and every sentiment and only to be lost with life. None knew of their love except their own two hearts; yet although in all things else, and even in this he dreaded the censure of his companions, for thus truly loving one inferior to him in fortune, nothing was ever able for a moment to shake his purpose of uniting himself to her as soon as he could muster courage sufficient to meet those difficulties he was determined to surmount.

Diana was fully worthy of his deepest affection. There were few who could boast of so pure a heart, and so much real humbleness of soul joined to a firm reliance on her own integrity and a belief in that of others. She had from her birth lived a retired life. She had lost her mother when very young, but her father had devoted himself to the care of her education — He had many peculiar ideas which influenced the system he had adopted with regard to her — She was well acquainted with the heroes of Greece and Rome or with those of England who had lived some hundred years ago, while she was nearly ignorant of the passing events of the day: she had read few authors who had written during at least the last fifty years but her reading with this exception was very extensive. Thus although she appeared to be less initiated in the mysteries of life and society than he her knowledge was of a deeper kind and laid on firmer foundations; and if even her beauty and sweetness had not fascinated him her understanding would ever have held his in thrall. He looked up to her as his guide, and such was his adoration that he delighted to augment to his own mind the sense of inferiority with which she sometimes impressed him.

When he was nineteen his mother died. He left college on this event and shaking off for a while his old friends he retired to the neighbourhood of his Diana and received all his consolation from her sweet voice and dearer caresses. This short seperation from his companions gave him courage to assert his independance. He had a feeling that however they might express ridicule of his intended marriage they would not dare display it when it had taken place; therefore seeking the consent of his guardian which with some difficulty he obtained, and of the father of his mistress which was more easily given, without acquainting any one else of his intention, by the time he had attained his twentieth birthday he had become the husband of Diana.

He loved her with passion and her tenderness had a charm for him that would not permit him to think of aught but her. He invited some of his college friends to see him but their frivolity disgusted him. Diana had torn the veil which had before kept him in his boyhood: he was become a man and he was surprised how he could ever have joined in the cant words and ideas of his fellow collegiates or how for a moment he had feared the censure of such as these. He discarded his old friendships not from fickleness but because they were indeed unworthy of him. Diana filled up all his heart: he felt as if by his union with her he had received a new and better soul. She was his monitress as he learned what were the true ends of life. It was through her beloved lessons that he cast off his old pursuits and gradually formed himself to become one among his fellow men; a distinguished member of society, a Patriot; and an enlightened lover of truth and virtue. — He loved her for her beauty and for her amiable disposition but he seemed to love her more for what he considered her superior wisdom. They studied, they rode together; they were never seperate and seldom admitted a third to their society.

Thus my father, born in affluence, and always prosperous, clombe without the difficulty and various disappointments that all human beings seem destined to encounter, to the very topmost pinacle of happiness: Around him was sunshine, and clouds whose shapes of beauty made the prospect divine concealed from him the barren reality which lay hidden below them. From this dizzy point he was dashed at once as he unawares congratulated himself on his felicity. Fifteen months after their marriage I was born, and my mother died a few days after my birth.

A sister of my father was with him at this period. She was nearly fifteen years older than he, and was the offspring of a former marriage of his father. When the latter died this sister was taken by her maternal relations: they had seldom seen one another, and were quite unlike in disposition. This aunt, to whose care I was afterwards consigned, has often related to me the effect that this catastrophe had on my father's strong and susceptible character. From the moment of my mother's death untill his departure she never heard him utter a single word: buried in the deepest melancholy he took no notice of any one; often for hours his eyes streamed tears or a more fearful gloom overpowered him. All outward things seemed to have lost their existence relatively to him and only one circumstance could in any degree recall him from his motionless and mute despair: he would never see me. He seemed insensible to the presence of any one else, but if, as a trial to awaken his sensibility, my aunt brought me into the room he would instantly rush out with every symptom of fury and distraction. At the end of a month he suddenly quitted his house and, unatteneded [*sic*] by any servant, departed from that part of the country without by word or writing informing any one of his intentions. My aunt was only relieved of her anxiety concerning his fate by a letter from him dated Hamburgh.

How often have I wept over that letter which untill I was sixteen was the only relick I had to remind me of my parents. “Pardon me,” it said, “for the uneasiness I have unavoidably given you: but while in that unhappy island, where every thing breathes *her* spirit whom I have lost for ever, a spell held me. It is broken: I have quitted England for many years, perhaps for ever. But to convince you that selfish feeling does not entirely engross me I shall remain in this town untill you have made by letter every arrangement that you judge necessary. When I leave this place do not expect to hear from me: I must break all ties that at present exist. I shall become a wanderer, a miserable outcast — alone! alone!” — In another part of the letter he mentioned me—”As for that unhappy little being whom I could not see, and hardly dare mention, I leave her under your protection. Take care of her and cherish her: one day I may claim her at your hands; but futurity is dark, make the present happy to her.”

My father remained three months at Hamburgh; when he quitted it he changed his name, my aunt could never discover that which he adopted and only by faint hints, could conjecture that he had taken the road of Germany and Hungary to Turkey.

Thus this towering spirit who had excited interest and high expectation in all who knew and could value him became at once, as it were, extinct. He existed from this moment for himself only. His friends remembered him as a brilliant vision which would never again return to them. The memory of what he had been faded away as years passed; and he who before had been as a part of themselves and of their hopes was now no longer counted among the living.

CHAPTER II

I now come to my own story. During the early part of my life there is little to relate, and I will be brief; but I must be allowed to dwell a little on the years of my childhood that it may be apparent how when one hope failed all life was to be a blank; and how when the only affection I was permitted to cherish was blasted my existence was extinguished with it.

I have said that my aunt was very unlike my father. I believe that without the slightest tinge of a bad heart she had the coldest that ever filled a human breast: it was totally incapable of any affection. She took me under her protection because she considered it her duty; but she had too long lived alone and undisturbed by the noise and prattle of children to allow that I should disturb her quiet. She had never been married; and for the last five years had lived perfectly alone on an estate, that had descended to her through her mother, on the shores of Loch Lomond in Scotland. My father had expressed a wish in his letters that she should reside with me at his family mansion which was situated in a beautiful country near Richmond in Yorkshire. She would not consent to this proposition, but as soon as she had arranged the affairs which her brother's departure had caused to fall to her care, she quitted England and took me with her to her scotch estate.

The care of me while a baby, and afterwards untill I had reached my eighth year devolved on a servant of my mother's, who had accompanied us in our retirement for that purpose. I was placed in a remote part of the house, and only saw my aunt at stated hours. These occurred twice a day; once about noon she came to my nursery, and once after her dinner I was taken to her. She never caressed me, and seemed all the time I staid in the room to fear that I should annoy her by some childish freak. My good nurse always schooled me with the greatest care before she ventured into the parlour — and the awe my aunt's cold looks and few constrained words inspired was so great that I seldom disgraced her lessons or was betrayed from the exemplary stillness which I was taught to observe during these short visits.

Under my good nurse's care I ran wild about our park and the neighbouring fields. The offspring of the deepest love I displayed from my earliest years the greatest sensibility of disposition. I cannot say with what passion I loved every thing even the inanimate objects that surrounded me. I believe that I bore an individual attachment to every tree in our park; every animal that inhabited it knew me and I loved them. Their occasional deaths filled my infant heart with anguish. I cannot number the birds that I have saved during the long and severe winters of that climate; or the hares and rabbits that I have defended from the attacks of our dogs, or have nursed when accidentally wounded.

When I was seven years of age my nurse left me. I now forget the cause of her departure if indeed I ever knew it. She returned to England, and the bitter tears she shed at parting were the last I saw flow for love of me for many years. My grief was terrible: I had no friend but her in the whole world. By degrees I became reconciled to solitude but no one supplied her place in my affections. I lived in a desolate country where

—— — there were none to praise And very few to love.[A]

It is true that I now saw a little more of my aunt, but she was in every way an unsocial being; and to a timid child she was as a plant beneath a thick covering of ice; I should cut my hands in endeavouring to get at it. So I was entirely thrown upon my own resourses. The neighbouring minister was engaged to give me lessons in reading, writing and french, but he was without family and his manners even to me were always perfectly characteristic of the profession in the exercise of whose functions he chiefly shone, that of a schoolmaster. I sometimes strove to form friendships with the most attractive of the girls who inhabited the neighbouring village; but I believe I should never have succeeded [even] had not my aunt interposed her authority to prevent all intercourse between me and the peasantry; for she was fearful lest I should acquire the scotch accent and dialect; a little of it I had, although great pains was taken that my tongue should not disgrace my English origin.

As I grew older my liberty encreased with my desires, and my wanderings extended from our park to the neighbouring country. Our house was situated on the shores of the lake and the lawn came down to the water’s edge. I rambled amidst the wild scenery of this lovely country and became a complete mountaineer: I passed hours on the steep brow of a mountain that overhung a waterfall or rowed myself in a little skiff to some one of the islands. I wandered for ever about these lovely solitudes, gathering flower after flower

Ond’ era pinta tutta la mia via[B]

singing as I might the wild melodies of the country, or occupied by pleasant day dreams. My greatest pleasure was the enjoyment of a serene sky amidst these verdant woods: yet I loved all the changes of Nature; and rain, and storm, and the beautiful clouds of heaven brought their delights with them. When rocked by the waves of the lake my spirits rose in triumph as a horseman feels with pride the motions of his high fed steed.

But my pleasures arose from the contemplation of nature alone, I had no companion: my warm affections finding no return from any other human heart were forced to run waste on inanimate objects. Sometimes indeed I wept when my aunt received my caresses with repulsive coldness, and when I looked round and found none to love; but I quickly dried my tears. As I grew older books in some degree supplied the place of human intercourse: the library of my aunt was very small; Shakespear, Milton, Pope and Cowper were the strangley [*sic*] assorted poets of her collection; and among the prose authors a translation of Livy and Rollin’s ancient history were my chief favourites although as I emerged from childhood I found others highly interesting which I had before neglected as dull.

When I was twelve years old it occurred to my aunt that I ought to learn music; she herself played upon the harp. It was with great hesitation that she persuaded herself to undertake my instruction; yet believing this accomplishment a necessary part of my education, and balancing the evils of this measure or of having some one in the house to instruct me she submitted to the inconvenience. A harp was sent for that my playing might not interfere with hers, and I began: she found me a docile and when I had conquered the first rudiments a very apt scholar. I had acquired in my harp a companion in rainy days; a sweet soother of my feelings when any untoward accident ruffled them: I often addressed it as my only friend; I could pour forth to it my hopes and loves, and I fancied that its sweet accents answered me. I have now mentioned all my studies.

I was a solitary being, and from my infant years, ever since my dear nurse left me, I had been a dreamer. I brought Rosalind and Miranda and the lady of Comus to life to be my companions, or on my isle acted over their parts imagining myself to be in their situations. Then I wandered from the fancies of others and formed affections and intimacies with the aerial creations of my own brain — but still clinging to reality I gave a name to these conceptions and nursed them in the hope of realization. I clung to the memory of my parents; my mother I should never see, she was dead: but the idea of [my] unhappy, wandering father was the idol of my imagination. I bestowed on him all my affections; there was a miniature of him that I gazed on continually; I copied his last letter and read it again and again. Sometimes it made me weep; and at other [times] I repeated with transport those words,—"One day I may claim her at your hands." I was to be his consoler, his companion in after years. My favourite vision was that when I grew up I would leave my aunt, whose coldness lulled my conscience, and disguised like a boy I would seek my father through the world. My imagination hung upon the scene of recognition; his miniature, which I should continually wear exposed on my breast, would be the means and I imaged the moment to my mind a thousand and a thousand times, perpetually varying the circumstances. Sometimes it would be in a desart; in a populous city; at a ball; we should perhaps meet in a vessel; and his first words constantly were, "My daughter, I love thee"! What extactic moments have I passed in these dreams! How many tears I have shed; how often have I laughed aloud.

This was my life for sixteen years. At fourteen and fifteen I often thought that the time was come when I should commence my pilgrimage, which I had cheated my own mind into believing was my imperious duty: but a reluctance to quit my Aunt; a remorse for the grief which, I could not conceal from myself, I should occasion her for ever withheld me. Sometimes when I had planned the next morning for my escape a word of more than usual affection from her lips made me postpone my resolution. I reproached myself bitterly for what I called a culpable weakness; but this weakness returned upon me whenever the critical moment approached, and I never found courage to depart.

CHAPTER III

It was on my sixteenth birthday that my aunt received a letter from my father. I cannot describe the tumult of emotions that arose within me as I read it. It was dated from London; he had returned! I could only relieve my transports by tears, tears of unmingled joy. He had returned, and he wrote to know whether my aunt would come to London or whether he should visit her in Scotland. How delicious to me were the words of his letter that concerned me: "I cannot tell you," it said, "how ardently I desire to see my Mathilda. I look on her as the creature who will form the happiness of my future life: she is all that exists on earth that interests me. I can hardly prevent myself from hastening immediately to you but I am necessarily detained a week and I write because if you come here I may see you somewhat sooner." I read these words with devouring eyes; I kissed them, wept over them and exclaimed, "He will love me!" —

My aunt would not undertake so long a journey, and in a fortnight we had another letter from my father, it was dated Edinburgh: he wrote that he should be with us in three days. "As he approached his desire of seeing me," he said, "became more and more ardent, and he felt that the moment when he should first clasp me in his arms would be the happiest of his life."

How irksome were these three days to me! All sleep and appetite fled from me; I could only read and re-read his letter, and in the solitude of the woods imagine the moment of our meeting. On the eve of the third day I retired early to my room; I could not sleep but paced all night about my chamber and, as you may in Scotland at midsummer, watched the crimson track of the sun as it almost skirted the northern horizon. At day break I hastened to the woods; the hours past on while I indulged in wild dreams that gave wings to the slothful steps of time, and beguiled my eager impatience. My father was expected at noon but when I wished to return to me[e]t him I found that I had lost my way: it seemed that in every attempt to find it I only became more involved in the intracacies of the woods, and the trees hid all trace by which I might be guided. I grew impatient, I wept; [*sic*] and wrung my hands but still I could not discover my path.

It was past two o'clock when by a sudden turn I found myself close to the lake near a cove where a little skiff was moored — It was not far from our house and I saw my father and aunt walking on the lawn. I jumped into the boat, and well accustomed to such feats, I pushed it from shore, and exerted all my strength to row swiftly across. As I came, dressed in white, covered only by my tartan *rachan*, my hair streaming on my shoulders, and shooting across with greater speed that it could be supposed I could give to my boat, my father has often told me that I looked more like a spirit than a human maid. I approached the shore, my father held the boat, I leapt lightly out, and in a moment was in his arms.

And now I began to live. All around me was changed from a dull uniformity to the brightest scene of joy and delight. The happiness I enjoyed in the company of my father far exceeded my sanguine expectations. We were for ever together; and the subjects of our conversations were inexhaustible. He had passed the sixteen years of absence among nations nearly unknown to Europe; he had wandered through Persia, Arabia and the north of India and had penetrated among the habitations of the natives with a freedom permitted to few Europeans. His relations of their manners, his anecdotes and descriptions of scenery whiled away delicious hours, when we were tired of talking of our own plans of future life.

The voice of affection was so new to me that I hung with delight upon his words when he told me what he had felt concerning me during these long years of apparent forgetfulness. "At first" — said he, "I could not bear to think of my poor little girl; but afterwards as grief wore off and hope again revisited me I could only turn to her, and amidst cities and desarts her little fairy form, such as I imagined it, for ever flitted before me. The northern breeze as it refreshed me was sweeter and more balmy for it seemed to carry some of your spirit along with it. I often thought that I would instantly return and take you along with me to some fertile island where we should live at peace for ever. As I returned my fervent hopes were dashed by so many fears; my impatience became in the highest degree painful. I dared not think that the sun should shine and the moon rise not on your living form but on your grave. But, no, it is not so; I have my Mathilda, my consolation, and my hope." —

My father was very little changed from what he described himself to be before his misfortunes. It is intercourse with civilized society; it is the disappointment of cherished hopes, the falsehood of friends, or the perpetual clash of mean passions that changes the heart and damps the ardour of youthful feelings; lonly wanderings in a wild country among people of simple or savage manners may inure the body but will not tame the soul, or extinguish the ardour and freshness of feeling incident to youth. The burning sun of India, and the freedom from all restraint had rather encreased the energy of his character: before he bowed under, now he was impatient of any censure except that of his own mind. He had seen so many customs and witnessed so great a variety of moral creeds that he had been obliged to form an independant one for himself which had no relation to the peculiar notions of any one country: his early prejudices of course influenced his judgement in the formation of his principles, and some raw colledge ideas were strangely mingled with the deepest deductions of his penetrating mind.

The vacuity his heart endured of any deep interest in life during his long absence from his native country had had a singular effect upon his ideas. There was a curious feeling of unreality attached by him to his foreign life in comparison with the years of his youth. All the time he had passed out of England was as a dream, and all the interest of his soul[,] all his affections belonged to events which had happened and persons who had existed sixteen years before. It was strange when you heard him talk to see how he passed over this lapse of time as a night of visions; while the remembrances of his youth standing seperate as they did from his after life had lost none of their vigour. He talked of my Mother as if she had lived but a few weeks before; not that he expressed poignant grief, but his discription of her person, and his relation of all anecdotes connected with her was thus fervent and vivid.

In all this there was a strangeness that attracted and enchanted me. He was, as it were, now awakened from his long, visionary sleep, and he felt some what like one of the seven sleepers, or like Nourjahad, in that sweet imitation of an eastern tale: Diana was gone; his friends were changed or dead, and now on his awakening I was all that he had to love on earth.

How dear to me were the waters, and mountains, and woods of Loch Lomond now that I had so beloved a companion for my rambles. I visited with my father every delightful spot, either on the islands, or by the side of the tree-sheltered waterfalls; every shady path, or dingle entangled with underwood and fern. My ideas were enlarged by his conversation. I felt as if I were recreated and had about me all the freshness and life of a new being: I was, as it were, transported since his arrival from a narrow spot of earth into a universe boundless to the imagination and the understanding. My life had been before as a pleasing country rill, never destined to leave its native fields, but when its task was fulfilled quietly to be absorbed, and leave no trace. Now it seemed to me to be as a various river flowing through a fertile and lovely lanscape, ever changing and ever beautiful. Alas! I knew not the desart it was about to reach; the rocks that would tear its waters, and the hideous scene that would be reflected in a more distorted manner in its waves. Life was then brilliant; I began to learn to hope and what brings a more bitter despair to the heart than hope destroyed?

Is it not strange that grief should quickly follow so divine a happiness? I drank of an enchanted cup but gall was at the bottom of its long drawn sweetness. My heart was full of deep affection, but it was calm from its very depth and fulness. I had no idea that misery could arise from love, and this lesson that all at last must learn was taught me in a manner few are obliged to receive it. I lament now, I must ever lament, those few short months of Paradisaical bliss; I disobeyed no command, I ate no apple, and yet I was ruthlessly driven from it. Alas! my companion did, and I was precipitated in his fall. But I wander from my relation — let woe come at its appointed time; I may at this stage of my story still talk of happiness.

Three months passed away in this delightful intercourse, when my aunt fell ill. I passed a whole month in her chamber nursing her, but her disease was mortal and she died, leaving me for some time inconsolable, Death is so dreadful to the living; the chains of habit are so strong even when affection does not link them that the heart must be agonized when they break. But my father was beside me to console me and to drive away bitter memories by bright hopes: methought that it was sweet to grieve that he might dry my tears.

Then again he distracted my thoughts from my sorrow by comparing it with his despair when he lost my mother. Even at that time I shuddered at the picture he drew of his passions: he had the imagination of a poet, and when he described the whirlwind that then tore his feelings he gave his words the impress of life so vividly that I believed while I trembled. I wondered how he could ever again have entered into the offices of life after his wild thoughts seemed to have given him affinity with the unearthly; while he spoke so tremendous were the ideas which he conveyed that it appeared as if the human heart were far too bounded for their conception. His feelings seemed better fitted for a spirit whose habitation is the earthquake and the volcano than for one confined to a mortal body and human lineaments. But these were merely memories; he was changed since then. He was now all love, all softness; and when I raised my eyes in wonder at him as he spoke the smile on his lips told me that his heart was possessed by the gentlest passions.

Two months after my aunt's death we removed to London where I was led by my father to attend to deeper studies than had before occupied me. My improvement was his delight; he was with me during all my studies and assisted or joined with me in every lesson. We saw a great deal of society, and no day passed that my father did not endeavour to embellish by some new enjoyment. The tender attachment that he bore me, and the love and veneration with which I returned it cast a charm over every moment. The hours were slow for each minute was employed; we lived more in one week than many do in the course of several months and the variety and novelty of our pleasures gave zest to each.

We perpetually made excursions together. And whether it were to visit beautiful scenery, or to see fine pictures, or sometimes for no object but to seek amusement as it might chance to arise, I was always happy when near my father. It was a subject of regret to me whenever we were joined by a third person, yet if I turned with a disturbed look towards my father, his eyes fixed on me and beaming with tenderness instantly restored joy to my heart. O, hours of intense delight! Short as ye were ye are made as long to me as a whole life when looked back upon through the mist of grief that rose immediately after as if to shut ye from my view. Alas! ye were the last of happiness that I ever enjoyed; a few, a very few weeks and all was destroyed. Like Psyche I lived for awhile in an enchanted palace, amidst odours, and music, and every luxurious delight; when suddenly I was left on a barren rock; a wide ocean of despair rolled around me: above all was black, and my eyes closed while I still inhabited a universal death. Still I would not hurry on; I would pause for ever on the recollections of these happy weeks; I would repeat every word, and how many do I remember, record every enchantment of the faery habitation. But, no, my tale must not pause; it must be as rapid as was my fate, — I can only describe in short although strong expressions my precipitate and irremediable change from happiness to despair.

CHAPTER IV

Among our most assiduous visitors was a young man of rank, well informed, and agreable in his person. After we had spent a few weeks in London his attentions towards me became marked and his visits more frequent. I was too much taken up by my own occupations and feelings to attend much to this, and then indeed I hardly noticed more than the bare surface of events as they passed around me; but I now remember that my father was restless and uneasy whenever this person visited us, and when we talked together watched us with the greatest apparent anxiety although he himself maintained a profound silence. At length these obnoxious visits suddenly ceased altogether, but from that moment I must date the change of my father: a change that to remember makes me shudder and then filled me with the deepest grief. There were no degrees which could break my fall from happiness to misery; it was as the stroke of lightning — sudden and entire. Alas! I now met frowns where before I had been welcomed only with smiles: he, my beloved father, shunned me, and either treated me with harshness or a more heart-breaking coldness. We took no more sweet counsel together; and when I tried to win him again to me, his anger, and the terrible emotions that he exhibited drove me to silence and tears.

And this was sudden. The day before we had passed alone together in the country; I remember we had talked of future travels that we should undertake together — . There was an eager delight in our tones and gestures that could only spring from deep & mutual love joined to the most unrestrained confidence[;] and now the next day, the next hour, I saw his brows contracted, his eyes fixed in sullen fierceness on the ground, and his voice so gentle and so dear made me shiver when he addressed me. Often, when my wandering fancy brought by its various images now consolation and now aggravation of grief to my heart, I have compared myself to Proserpine who was gaily and heedlessly gathering flowers on the sweet plain of Enna, when the King of Hell snatched her away to the abodes of death and misery. Alas! I who so lately knew of nought but the joy of life; who had slept only to dream sweet dreams and awoke to incomparable happiness, I now passed my days and nights in tears. I who sought and had found joy in the love-breathing countenance of my father now when I dared fix on him a supplicating look it was ever answered by an angry frown. I dared not speak to him; and when sometimes I had worked up courage to meet him and to ask an explanation one glance at his face where a chaos of mighty passion seemed for ever struggling made me tremble and shrink to silence. I was dashed down from heaven to earth as a silly sparrow when pounced on by a hawk; my eyes swam and my head was bewildered by the sudden apparition of grief. Day after day passed marked only by my complaints and my tears; often I lifted my soul in vain prayer for a softer descent from joy to woe, or if that were denied me that I might be allowed to die, and fade for ever under the cruel blast that swept over me,

—— — for what should I do here, Like a decaying flower, still withering Under his bitter words, whose kindly heat Should give my poor heart life?[C]

Sometimes I said to myself, this is an enchantment, and I must strive against it. My father is blinded by some malignant vision which I must remove. And then, like David, I would try music to win the evil spirit from him; and once while singing I lifted my eyes towards him and saw his fixed on me and filled with tears; all his muscles seemed relaxed to softness. I sprung towards him with a cry of joy and would have thrown myself into his arms, but he pushed me roughly from him and left me. And even from this slight incident he contracted fresh gloom and an additional severity of manner.

There are many incidents that I might relate which shewed the diseased yet incomprehensible state of his mind; but I will mention one that occurred while we were in company with several other persons. On this occasion I chanced to say that I thought Myrrha the best of Alfieri’s tragedies; as I said this I chanced to cast my eyes on my father and met his: for the first time the expression of those beloved eyes displeased me, and I saw with affright that his whole frame shook with some concealed emotion that in spite of his efforts half conquered him: as this tempest faded from his soul he became melancholy and silent. Every day some new scene occured and displayed in him a mind working as [it] were with an unknown horror that now he could master but which at times threatened to overturn his reason, and to throw the bright seat of his intelligence into a perpetual chaos.

I will not dwell longer than I need on these disastrous circumstances. I might waste days in describing how anxiously I watched every change of fleeting circumstance that promised better days, and with what despair I found that each effort of mine aggravated his seeming madness. To tell all my grief I might as well attempt to count the tears that have fallen from these eyes, or every sign that has torn my heart. I will be brief for there is in all this a horror that will not bear many words, and I sink almost a second time to death while I recall these sad scenes to my memory. Oh, my beloved father! Indeed you made me miserable beyond all words, but how truly did I even then forgive you, and how entirely did you possess my whole heart while I endeavoured, as a rainbow gleams upon a cataract,[D] to soften thy tremendous sorrows.

Thus did this change come about. I seem perhaps to have dashed too suddenly into the description, but thus suddenly did it happen. In one sentence I have passed from the idea of unspeakable happiness to that of unspeakable grief but they were thus closely linked together. We had remained five months in London three of joy and two of sorrow. My father and I were now seldom alone or if we were he generally kept silence with his eyes fixed on the ground — the dark full orbs in which before I delighted to read all sweet and gentle feeling shadowed from my sight by their lids and the long lashes that fringed them. When we were in company he affected gaiety but I wept to hear his hollow laugh — begun by an empty smile and often ending in a bitter sneer such as never before this fatal period had wrinkled his lips. When others were there he often spoke to me and his eyes perpetually followed my slightest motion. His accents whenever he addressed me were cold and constrained although his voice would tremble when he perceived that my full heart choked the answer to words proffered with a mien yet new to me.

But days of peaceful melancholy were of rare occurence[:] they were often broken in upon by gusts of passion that drove me as a weak boat on a stormy sea to seek a cove for shelter; but the winds blew from my native harbour and I was cast far, far out untill shattered I perished when the tempest had passed and the sea was apparently calm. I do not know that I can describe his emotions: sometimes he only betrayed them by a word or gesture, and then retired to his chamber and I crept as near it as I dared and listened with fear to every sound, yet still more dreading a sudden silence — dreading I knew not what, but ever full of fear.

It was after one tremendous day when his eyes had glared on me like lightning — and his voice sharp and broken seemed unable to express the extent of his emotion that in the evening when I was alone he joined me with a calm countenance, and not noticing my tears which I quickly dried when he approached, told me that in three days that [*sic*] he intended to remove with me to his estate in Yorkshire, and bidding me prepare left me hastily as if afraid of being questioned.

This determination on his part indeed surprised me. This estate was that which he had inhabited in childhood and near which my mother resided while a girl; this was the scene of their youthful loves and where they had lived after their marriage; in happier days my father had often told me that however he might appear weaned from his widow sorrow, and free from bitter recollections elsewhere, yet he would never dare visit the spot where he had enjoyed her society or trust himself to see the rooms that so many years ago they had inhabited together; her favourite walks and the gardens the flowers of which she had delighted to cultivate. And now while he suffered intense misery he determined to plunge into still more intense, and strove for greater emotion than that which already tore him. I was perplexed, and most anxious to know what this portended; ah, what could it po[r]tend but ruin!

I saw little of my father during this interval, but he appeared calmer although not less unhappy than before. On the morning of the third day he informed me that he had determined to go to Yorkshire first alone, and that I should follow him in a fortnight unless I heard any thing from him in the mean time that should contradict this command. He departed the same day, and four days afterwards I received a letter from his steward telling me in his name to join him with as little delay as possible. After travelling day and night I arrived with an anxious, yet a hoping heart, for why should he send for me if it were only to avoid me and to treat me with the apparent aversion that he had in London. I met him at the distance of thirty miles from our mansion. His demeanour was sad; for a moment he appeared glad to see me and then he checked himself as if unwilling to betray his feelings. He was silent during our ride, yet his manner was kinder than before and I thought I beheld a softness in his eyes that gave me hope.

When we arrived, after a little rest, he led me over the house and pointed out to me the rooms which my mother had inhabited. Although more than sixteen years had passed since her death nothing had been changed; her work box, her writing desk were still there and in her room a book lay open on the table as she had left it. My father pointed out these circumstances with a serious and unaltered mien, only now and then fixing his deep and liquid eyes upon me; there was something strange and awful in his look that overcame me, and in spite of myself I wept, nor did he attempt to console me, but I saw his lips quiver and the muscles of his countenance seemed convulsed.

We walked together in the gardens and in the evening when I would have retired he asked me to stay and read to him; and first said, "When I was last here your mother read Dante to me; you shall go on where she left off." And then in a moment he said, "No, that must not be; you must not read Dante. Do you choose a book." I took up Spencer and read the descent of Sir Guyon to the halls of Avarice; while he listened his eyes fixed on me in sad profound silence.

I heard the next morning from the steward that upon his arrival he had been in a most terrible state of mind: he had passed the first night in the garden lying on the damp grass; he did not sleep but groaned perpetually. "Alas!" said the old man[,] who gave me this account with tears in his eyes, "it wrings my heart to see my lord in this state: when I heard that he was coming down here with you, my young lady, I thought we should have the happy days over again that we enjoyed during the short life of my lady your mother — But that would be too much happiness for us poor creatures born to tears — and that was why she was taken from us so soon; [s]he was too beautiful and good for us[.] It was a happy day as we all thought it when my lord married her: I knew her when she was a child and many a good turn has she done for me in my old lady's time — You are like her although there is more of my lord in you — But has he been thus ever since his return? All my joy turned to sorrow when I first beheld him with that melancholy countenance enter these doors as it were the day after my lady's funeral — He seemed to recover himself a little after he had bidden me write to you — but still it is a woful thing to see him so unhappy." These were the feelings of an old, faithful servant: what must be those of an affectionate daughter. Alas! Even then my heart was almost broken.

We spent two months together in this house. My father spent the greater part of his time with me; he accompanied me in my walks, listened to my music, and leant over me as I read or painted. When he conversed with me his manner was cold and constrained; his eyes only seemed to speak, and as he turned their black, full lustre towards me they expressed a living sadness. There was somthing in those dark deep orbs so liquid, and intense that even in happiness I could never meet their full gaze that mine did not overflow. Yet it was with sweet tears; now there was a depth of affliction in their gentle appeal that rent my heart with sympathy; they seemed to desire peace for me; for himself a heart patient to suffer; a craving for sympathy, yet a perpetual self denial. It was only when he was absent from me that his passion subdued him, — that he clinched his hands — knit his brows — and with haggard looks called for death to his despair, raving wildly, untill exhausted he sank down nor was revived untill I joined him.

While we were in London there was a harshness and sulleness in his sorrow which had now entirely disappeared. There I shrunk and fled from him, now I only wished to be with him that I might soothe him to peace. When he was silent I tried to divert him, and when sometimes I stole to him during the energy of his passion I wept but did not desire to leave him. Yet he suffered fearful agony; during the day he was more calm, but at night when I could not be with him he seemed to give the reins to his grief: he often passed his nights either on the floor in my mother's room, or in the garden; and when in the morning he saw me view with poignant grief his exhausted frame, and his person languid almost to death with watching he wept; but during all this time he spoke no word by which I might guess the cause of his unhappiness[.] If I ventured to enquire he would either leave me or press his finger on his lips, and with a deprecating look that I could not resist, turn away. If I wept he would gaze on me in silence but he was no longer harsh and although he repulsed every caress yet it was with gentleness.

He seemed to cherish a mild grief and softer emotions although sad as a relief from despair — He contrived in many ways to nurse his melancholy as an antidote to wilder passion[.] He perpetually frequented the walks that had been favourites with him when he and my mother wandered together talking of love and happiness; he collected every relick that remained of her and always sat opposite her picture which hung in the room fixing on it a look of sad despair — and all this was done in a mystic and awful silence. If his passion subdued him he locked himself in his room; and at night when he wandered restlessly about the house, it was when every other creature slept.

It may easily be imagined that I wearied myself with conjecture to guess the cause of his sorrow. The solution that seemed to me the most probable was that during his residence in London he had fallen in love with some unworthy person, and that his passion mastered him although he would not gratify it: he loved me too well to sacrifise me to this inclination, and that he had now visited this house that by reviving the memory of my mother whom he so passionately adored he might weaken the present impression. This was possible; but it was a mere conjecture unfounded on any fact. Could there be guilt in it? He was too upright and noble to *do* aught that his conscience would not approve; I did not yet know of the crime there may be in involuntary feeling and therefore ascribed his tumultuous starts and gloomy looks wholly to the struggles of his mind and not any as they were partly due to the worst fiend of all — Remorse.

But still do I flatter myself that this would have passed away. His paroxisms of passion were terrific but his soul bore him through them triumphant, though almost destroyed by victory; but the day would finally have been won had not I, foolish and presumtuous wretch! hurried him on untill there was no recall, no hope. My rashness gave the victory in this dreadful fight to the enemy who triumphed over him as he lay fallen and vanquished. I! I alone was the cause of his defeat and justly did I pay the fearful penalty. I said to myself, let him receive sympathy and these struggles will cease. Let him confide his misery to another heart and half the weight of it will be lightened. I will win him to me; he shall not deny his grief to me and when I know his secret then will I pour a balm into his soul and again I shall enjoy the ravishing delight of beholding his smile, and of again seeing his eyes beam if not with pleasure at least with gentle love and thankfulness. This will I do, I said. Half I accomplished; I gained his secret and we were both lost for ever.

CHAPTER V

Nearly a year had past since my father's return, and the seasons had almost finished their round — It was now the end of May; the woods were clothed in their freshest verdure, and the sweet smell of the new mown grass was in the fields. I thought that the balmy air and the lovely face of Nature might aid me in inspiring him with mild sensations, and give him gentle feelings of peace and love preparatory to the confidence I determined to win from him.

I chose therefore the evening of one of these days for my attempt. I invited him to walk with me, and led him to a neighbouring wood of beech trees whose light shade shielded us from the slant and dazzling beams of the descending sun — After walking for some time in silence I seated my self with him on a mossy hillock — It is strange but even now I seem to see the spot — the slim and smooth trunks were many of them wound round by ivy whose shining leaves of the darkest green contrasted with the white bark and the light leaves of the young sprouts of beech that grew from their parent trunks — the short grass was mingled with moss and was partly covered by the dead leaves of the last autumn that driven by the winds had here and there collected in little hillocks — there were a few moss grown stumps about — The leaves were gently moved by the breeze and through their green canopy you could see the bright blue sky — As evening came on the distant trunks were reddened by the sun and the wind died entirely away while a few birds flew past us to their evening rest.

Well it was here we sat together, and when you hear all that past — all that of terrible tore our souls even in this placid spot, which but for strange passions might have been a paradise to us, you will not wonder that I remember it as I looked on it that its calm might give me calm, and inspire me not only with courage but with persuasive words. I saw all these things and in a vacant manner noted them in my mind while I endeavoured to arrange my thoughts in fitting order for my attempt. My heart beat fast as I worked myself up to speak to him, for I was determined not to be repulsed but I trembled to imagine what effect my words might have on him; at length, with much hesitation I began:

"Your kindness to me, my dearest father, and the affection — the excessive affection — that you had for me when you first returned will I hope excuse me in your eyes that I dare speak to you, although with the tender affection of a daughter, yet also with the freedom of a friend and equal. But pardon me, I entreat you and listen to me: do not turn away from me; do not be impatient; you may easily intimidate me into silence, but my heart is bursting, nor can I willingly consent to endure for one moment longer the agony of uncertitude which for the last four months has been my portion.

"Listen to me, dearest friend, and permit me to gain your confidence. Are the happy days of mutual love which have passed to be to me as a dream never to return? Alas! You have a secret grief that destroys us both: but you must permit me to win this secret from you. Tell me, can I do nothing? You well know that on the whole earth there is no sacrifise that I would not make, no labour that I would not undergo with the mere hope that I might bring you ease. But if no endeavour on my part can contribute to your happiness, let me at least know your sorrow, and surely my earnest love and deep sympathy must soothe your despair.

"I fear that I speak in a constrained manner: my heart is overflowing with the ardent desire I have of bringing calm once more to your thoughts and looks; but I fear to aggravate your grief, or to raise that in you which is death to me, anger and distaste. Do not then continue to fix your eyes on the earth; raise them on me for I can read your soul in them: speak to me to me [*sic*], and pardon my presumption. Alas! I am a most unhappy creature!"

I was breathless with emotion, and I paused fixing my earnest eyes on my father, after I had dashed away the intrusive tears that dimmed them. He did not raise his, but after a short silence he replied to me in a low voice: "You are indeed presumptuous, Mathilda, presumptuous and very rash. In the heart of one like me there are secret thoughts working, and secret tortures which you ought not to seek to discover. I cannot tell you how it adds to my grief to know that I am the cause of uneasiness to you; but this will pass away, and I hope that soon we shall be as we were a few months ago. Restrain your impatience or you may mar what you attempt to alleviate. Do not again speak to me in this strain; but wait in submissive patience the event of what is passing around you."

"Oh, yes!" I passionately replied, "I will be very patient; I will not be rash or presumptuous: I will see the agonies, and tears, and despair of my father, my only friend, my hope, my shelter, I will see it all with folded arms and downcast eyes. You do not treat me with candour; it is not true what you say; this will not soon pass away, it will last forever if you deign not to speak to me; to admit my consolations.

"Dearest, dearest father, pity me and pardon me: I entreat you do not drive me to despair; indeed I must not be repulsed; there is one thing that which [*sic*] although it may torture me to know, yet that you must tell me. I demand, and most solemnly I demand if in any way I am the cause of your unhappiness. Do you not see my tears which I in vain strive against — You hear unmoved my voice broken by sobs — Feel how my hand trembles: my whole heart is in the words I speak and you must not endeavour to silence me by mere words barren of meaning: the agony of my doubt hurries me on, and you must reply. I beseech you; by your former love for me now lost, I adjure you to answer that one question. Am I the cause of your grief?"

He raised his eyes from the ground, but still turning them away from me, said: "Besought by that plea I will answer your rash question. Yes, you are the sole, the agonizing cause of all I suffer, of all I must suffer untill I die. Now, beware! Be silent! Do not urge me to your destruction. I am struck by the storm, rooted up, laid waste: but you can stand against it; you are young and your passions are at peace. One word I might speak and then you would be implicated in my destruction; yet that word is hovering on my lips. Oh! There is a fearful chasm; but I adjure you to beware!"

"Ah, dearest friend!" I cried, "do not fear! Speak that word; it will bring peace, not death. If there is a chasm our mutual love will give us wings to pass it, and we shall find flowers, and verdure, and delight on the other side." I threw myself at his feet, and took his hand, "Yes, speak, and we shall be happy; there will no longer be doubt, no dreadful uncertainty; trust me, my affection will soothe your sorrow; speak that word and all danger will be past, and we shall love each other as before, and for ever."

He snatched his hand from me, and rose in violent disorder: "What do you mean? You know not what you mean. Why do you bring me out, and torture me, and tempt me, and kill me — Much happier would [it] be for you and for me if in your frantic curiosity you tore my heart from my breast and tried to read its secrets in it as its life's blood was dropping from it.

Thus you may console me by reducing me to nothing — but your words I cannot bear; soon they will make me mad, quite mad, and then I shall utter strange words, and you will believe them, and we shall be both lost for ever. I tell you I am on the very verge of insanity; why, cruel girl, do you drive me on: you will repent and I shall die."

When I repeat his words I wonder at my pertinacious folly; I hardly know what feelings resis[t]lessly impelled me. I believe it was that coming out with a determination not to be repulsed I went right forward to my object without well weighing his replies: I was led by passion and drew him with frantic heedlessness into the abyss that he so fearfully avoided — I replied to his terrific words: "You fill me with affright it is true, dearest father, but you only confirm my resolution to put an end to this state of doubt. I will not be put off thus: do you think that I can live thus fearfully from day to day — the sword in my bosom yet kept from its mortal wound by a hair — a word! — I demand that dreadful word; though it be as a flash of lightning to destroy me, speak it.

"Alas! Alas! What am I become? But a few months have elapsed since I believed that I was all the world to you; and that there was no happiness or grief for you on earth unshared by your Mathilda — your child: that happy time is no longer, and what I most dreaded in this world is come upon me. In the despair of my heart I see what you cannot conceal: you no longer love me. I adjure you, my father, has not an unnatural passion seized upon your heart? Am I not the most miserable worm that crawls? Do I not embrace your knees, and you most cruelly repulse me? I know it — I see it — you hate me!"

I was transported by violent emotion, and rising from his feet, at which I had thrown myself, I leant against a tree, wildly raising my eyes to heaven. He began to answer with violence: "Yes, yes, I hate you! You are my bane, my poison, my disgust! Oh! No[!]" And then his manner changed, and fixing his eyes on me with an expression that convulsed every nerve and member of my frame—"you are none of all these; you are my light, my only one, my life. — My daughter, I love you!" The last words died away in a hoarse whisper, but I heard them and sunk on the ground, covering my face and almost dead with excess of sickness and fear: a cold perspiration covered my forehead and I shivered in every limb — But he continued, clasping his hands with a frantic gesture:

“Now I have dashed from the top of the rock to the bottom! Now I have precipitated myself down the fearful chasm! The danger is over; she is alive! Oh, Mathilda, lift up those dear eyes in the light of which I live. Let me hear the sweet tones of your beloved voice in peace and calm. Monster as I am, you are still, as you ever were, lovely, beautiful beyond expression. What I have become since this last moment I know not; perhaps I am changed in mien as the fallen archangel. I do believe I am for I have surely a new soul within me, and my blood riots through my veins: I am burnt up with fever. But these are precious moments; devil as I am become, yet that is my Mathilda before me whom I love as one was never before loved: and she knows it now; she listens to these words which I thought, fool as I was, would blast her to death. Come, come, the worst is past: no more grief, tears or despair; were not those the words you uttered? — We have leapt the chasm I told you of, and now, mark me, Mathilda, we are to find flowers, and verdure and delight, or is it hell, and fire, and tortures? Oh! Beloved One, I am borne away; I can no longer sustain myself; surely this is death that is coming. Let me lay my head near your heart; let me die in your arms!” — He sunk to the earth fainting, while I, nearly as lifeless, gazed on him in despair.

Yes it was despair I felt; for the first time that phantom seized me; the first and only time for it has never since left me — After the first moments of speechless agony I felt her fangs on my heart: I tore my hair; I raved aloud; at one moment in pity for his sufferings I would have clasped my father in my arms; and then starting back with horror I spurned him with my foot; I felt as if stung by a serpent, as if scourged by a whip of scorpions which drove me — Ah! Whither — Whither?

Well, this could not last. One idea rushed on my mind; never, never may I speak to him again. As this terrible conviction came upon *him* [*me*?] it melted my soul to tenderness and love — I gazed on him as to take my last farewell — he lay insensible — his eyes closed as [*and*?] his cheeks deathly pale. Above, the leaves of the beech wood cast a flickering shadow on his face, and waved in mournful melody over him — I saw all these things and said, “Aye, this is his grave!” And then I wept aloud, and raised my eyes to heaven to entreat for a respite to my despair and an alleviation for his unnatural suffering — the tears that gushed in a warm & healing stream from my eyes relieved the burthen that oppressed my heart almost to madness. I wept for a long time untill I saw him about to revive, when horror and misery again recurred, and the tide of my sensations rolled back to their former channel: with a terror I could not restrain — I sprung up and fled, with winged speed, along the paths of the wood and across the fields untill nearly dead I reached our house and just ordering the servants to seek my father at the spot I indicated, I shut myself up in my own room[.]

CHAPTER VI

My chamber was in a retired part of the house, and looked upon the garden so that no sound of the other inhabitants could reach it; and here in perfect solitude I wept for several hours. When a servant came to ask me if I would take food I learnt from him that my father had returned, and was apparently well and this relieved me from a load of anxiety, yet I did not cease to weep bitterly. As [*At*] first, as the memory of former happiness contrasted to my present despair came across me, I gave relief to the oppression of heart that I felt by words, and groans, and heart rending sighs: but nature became wearied, and this more violent grief gave place to a passionate but mute flood of tears: my whole soul seemed to dissolve [in] them. I did not wring my hands, or tear my hair, or utter wild exclamations, but as Boccacio describes the intense and quiet grief [of] Sigismunda over the heart of Guiscardo, I sat with my hands folded, silently letting fall a perpetual stream from my eyes. Such was the depth of my emotion that I had no feeling of what caused my distress, my thoughts even wandered to many indifferent objects; but still neither moving limb or feature my tears fell untill, as if the fountains were exhausted, they gradually subsided, and I awoke to life as from a dream.

When I had ceased to weep reason and memory returned upon me, and I began to reflect with greater calmness on what had happened, and how it became me to act — A few hours only had passed but a mighty revolution had taken place with regard to me — the natural work of years had been transacted since the morning: my father was as dead to me, and I felt for a moment as if he with white hairs were laid in his coffin and I — youth vanished in approaching age, were weeping at his timely dissolution. But it was not so, I was yet young, Oh! far too young, nor was he dead to others; but I, most miserable, must never see or speak to him again. I must fly from him with more earnestness than from my greatest enemy: in solitude or in cities I must never more behold him. That consideration made me breathless with anguish, and impressing itself on my imagination I was unable for a time to follow up any train of ideas. Ever after this, I thought, I would live in the most dreary seclusion. I would retire to the Continent and become a nun; not for religion's sake, for I was not a Catholic, but that I might be for ever shut out from the world. I should there find solitude where I might weep, and the voices of life might never reach me.

But my father; my beloved and most wretched father? Would he die? Would he never overcome the fierce passion that now held pityless dominion over him? Might he not many, many years hence, when age had quenched the burning sensations that he now experienced, might he not then be again a father to me? This reflection unwrinkled my brow, and I could feel (and I wept to feel it) a half melancholy smile draw from my lips their expression of suffering: I dared indulge better hopes for my future life; years must pass but they would speed lightly away winged by hope, or if they passed heavily, still they would pass and I had not lost my father for ever. Let him spend another sixteen years of desolate wandering: let him once more utter his wild complaints to the vast woods and the tremendous cataracts of another clime: let him again undergo fearful danger and soul-quelling hardships: let the hot sun of the south again burn his passion worn cheeks and the cold night rains fall on him and chill his blood.

To this life, miserable father, I devote thee! — Go! — Be thy days passed with savages, and thy nights under the cope of heaven! Be thy limbs worn and thy heart chilled, and all youth be dead within thee! Let thy hairs be as snow; thy walk trembling and thy voice have lost its mellow tones! Let the liquid lustre of thine eyes be quenched; and then return to me, return to thy Mathilda, thy child, who may then be clasped in thy loved arms, while thy heart beats with sinless emotion. Go, Devoted One, and return thus! — This is my curse, a daughter's curse: go, and return pure to thy child, who will never love aught but thee.

These were my thoughts; and with trembling hands I prepared to begin a letter to my unhappy parent. I had now spent many hours in tears and mournful meditation; it was past twelve o'clock; all was at peace in the house, and the gentle air that stole in at my window did not rustle the leaves of the twining plants that shadowed it. I felt the entire tranquillity of the hour when my own breath and involuntary sobs were all the sounds that struck upon the air. On a sudden I heard a gentle step ascending the stairs; I paused breathless, and as it approached glided into an obscure corner of the room; the steps paused at my door, but after a few moments they again receeded[,] descended the stairs and I heard no more.

This slight incident gave rise in me to the most painful reflections; nor do I now dare express the emotions I felt. That he should be restless I understood; that he should wander as an unlaid ghost and find no quiet from the burning hell that consumed his heart. But why approach my chamber? Was not that sacred? I felt almost ready to faint while he had stood there, but I had not betrayed my wakefulness by the slightest motion, although I had heard my own heart beat with violent fear. He had withdrawn. Oh, never, never, may I see him again! Tomorrow night the same roof may not cover us; he or I must depart. The mutual link of our destinies is broken; we must be divided by seas — by land. The stars and the sun must not rise at the same period to us: he must not say, looking at the setting crescent of the moon, "Mathilda now watches its fall." — No, all must be changed. Be it light with him when it is darkness with me! Let him feel the sun of summer while I am chilled by the snows of winter! Let there be the distance of the antipodes between us!

At length the east began to brighten, and the comfortable light of morning streamed into my room. I was weary with watching and for some time I had combated with the heavy sleep that weighed down my eyelids: but now, no longer fearful, I threw myself on my bed. I sought for repose although I did not hope for forgetfulness; I knew I should be pursued by dreams, but did not dread the frightful one that I really had. I thought that I had risen and went to seek my father to inform him of my determination to seperate myself from him. I sought him in the house, in the park, and then in the fields and the woods, but I could not find him. At length I saw him at some distance, seated under a tree, and when he perceived me he waved his hand several times, beckoning me to approach; there was something unearthly in his mien that awed and chilled me, but I drew near. When at [a] short distance from him I saw that he was deadlily [*sic*] pale, and clothed in flowing garments of white. Suddenly he started up and fled from me; I pursued him: we sped over the fields, and by the skirts of woods, and on the banks of rivers; he flew fast and I followed. We came at last, methought, to the brow of a huge cliff that over hung the sea which, troubled by the winds, dashed against its base at a distance. I heard the roar of the waters: he held his course right on towards the brink and I became breathless with fear lest he should plunge down the dreadful precipice; I tried to augment my speed, but my knees failed beneath me, yet I had just reached him; just caught a part of his flowing robe, when he leapt down and I awoke with a violent scream. I was trembling and my pillow was wet with my tears; for a few moments my heart beat hard, but the bright beams of the sun and the chirping of the birds quickly restored me to myself, and I rose with a languid spirit, yet wondering what events the day would bring forth. Some time passed before I summoned courage to ring the bell for my servant, and when she came I still dared not utter my father's name. I ordered her to bring my breakfast to my room, and was again left alone — yet still I could make no resolve, but only thought that I might write a note to my father to beg his permission to pay a visit to a relation who lived about thirty miles off, and who had before invited me to her house, but I had refused for then I could not quit my suffering father. When the servant came back she gave me a letter.

"From whom is this letter[?]" I asked trembling.

"Your father left it, madam, with his servant, to be given to you when you should rise."

"My father left it! Where is he? Is he not here?"

"No; he quitted the house before four this morning."

"Good God! He is gone! But tell how this was; speak quick!"

Her relation was short. He had gone in the carriage to the nearest town where he took a post chaise and horses with orders for the London road. He dismissed his servants there, only telling them that he had a sudden call of business and that they were to obey me as their mistress untill his return.

CHAPTER VII

With a beating heart and fearful, I knew not why, I dismissed the servant and locking my door, sat down to read my father's letter. These are the words that it contained.

"My dear Child

"I have betrayed your confidence; I have endeavoured to pollute your mind, and have made your innocent heart acquainted with the looks and language of unlawful and monstrous passion. I must expiate these crimes, and must endeavour in some degree to proportionate my punishment to my guilt. You are I doubt not prepared for what I am about to announce; we must seperate and be divided for ever.

"I deprive you of your parent and only friend. You are cast out shelterless on the world: your hopes are blasted; the peace and security of your pure mind destroyed; memory will bring to you frightful images of guilt, and the anguish of innocent love betrayed. Yet I who draw down all this misery upon you; I who cast you forth and remorselessly have set the seal of distrust and agony on the heart and brow of my own child, who with devilish levity have endeavoured to steal away her loveliness to place in its stead the foul deformity of sin; I, in the overflowing anguish of my heart, supplicate you to forgive me.

"I do not ask your pity; you must and do abhor me: but pardon me, Mathilda, and let not your thoughts follow me in my banishment with unrelenting anger. I must never more behold you; never more hear your voice; but the soft whisperings of your forgiveness will reach me and cool the burning of my disordered brain and heart; I am sure I should feel it even in my grave. And I dare enforce this request by relating how miserably I was betrayed into this net of fiery anguish and all my struggles to release myself: indeed if your soul were less pure and bright I would not attempt to exculpate myself to you; I should fear that if I led you to regard me with less abhorrence you might hate vice less: but in addressing you I feel as if I appealed to an angelic judge. I cannot depart without your forgiveness and I must endeavour to gain it, or I must despair. I conjure you therefore to listen to my words, and if with the good guilt may be in any degree extenuated by sharp agony, and remorse that rends the brain as madness perhaps you may think, though I dare not, that I have some claim to your compassion.

"I entreat you to call to your remembrance our first happy life on the shores of Loch Lomond. I had arrived from a weary wandering of sixteen years, during which, although I had gone through many dangers and misfortunes, my affections had been an entire blank. If I grieved it was for your mother, if I loved it was your image; these sole emotions filled my heart in quietness. The human creatures around me excited in me no sympathy and I thought that the mighty change that the death of your mother had wrought within me had rendered me callous to any future impression. I saw the lovely and I did not love, I imagined therefore that all warmth was extinguished in my heart except that which led me ever to dwell on your then infantine image.

"It is a strange link in my fate that without having seen you I should passionately love you. During my wanderings I never slept without first calling down gentle dreams on your head. If I saw a lovely woman, I thought, does my Mathilda resemble her? All delightful things, sublime scenery, soft breezes, exquisite music seemed to me associated with you and only through you to be pleasant to me. At length I saw you. You appeared as the deity of a lovely region, the ministering Angel of a Paradise to which of all human kind you admitted only me. I dared hardly consider you as my daughter; your beauty, artlessness and untaught wisdom seemed to belong to a higher order of beings; your voice breathed forth only words of love: if there was aught of earthly in you it was only what you derived from the beauty of the world; you seemed to have gained a grace from the mountain breezes — the waterfalls and the lake; and this was all of earthly except your affections that you had; there was no dross, no bad feeling in the composition. You yet even have not seen enough of the world to know the stupendous difference that exists between the women we meet in dayly life and a nymph of the woods such as you were, in whose eyes alone mankind may study for centuries & grow wiser & purer. Those divine lights which shone on me as did those of Beatrice upon Dante, and well might I say with him yet with what different feelings

E quasi mi perdei gli occhi chini.

Can you wonder, Mathilda, that I dwelt on your looks, your words, your motions, & drank in unmixed delight?

[“]But I am afraid that I wander from my purpose. I must be more brief for night draws on apace and all my hours in this house are counted. Well, we removed to London, and still I felt only the peace of sinless passion. You were ever with me, and I desired no more than to gaze on your countenance, and to know that I was all the world to you; I was lapped in a fool’s paradise of enjoyment and security. Was my love blamable? If it was I was ignorant of it; I desired only that which I possessed, and if I enjoyed from your looks, and words, and most innocent caresses a rapture usually excluded from the feelings of a parent towards his child, yet no uneasiness, no wish, no casual idea awoke me to a sense of guilt. I loved you as a human father might be supposed to love a daughter borne to him by a heavenly mother; as Anchises might have regarded the child of Venus if the sex had been changed; love mingled with respect and adoration. Perhaps also my passion was lulled to content by the deep and exclusive affection you felt for me.

“But when I saw you become the object of another’s love; when I imagined that you might be loved otherwise than as a sacred type and image of loveliness and excellence; or that you might love another with a more ardent affection than that which you bore to me, then the fiend awoke within me; I dismissed your lover; and from that moment I have known no peace. I have sought in vain for sleep and rest; my lids refused to close, and my blood was for ever in a tumult. I awoke to a new life as one who dies in hope might wake in Hell. I will not sully your imagination by recounting my combats, my self-anger and my despair. Let a veil be drawn over the unimaginable sensations of a guilty father; the secrets of so agonized a heart may not be made vulgar. All was uproar, crime, remorse and hate, yet still the tenderest love; and what first awoke me to the firm resolve of conquering my passion and of restoring her father to my child was the sight of your bitter and sympathizing sorrows. It was this that led me here: I thought that if I could again awaken in my heart the grief I had felt at the loss of your mother, and the many associations with her memory which had been laid to sleep for seventeen years, that all love for her child would become extinct. In a fit of heroism I determined to go alone; to quit you, the life of my life, and not to see you again untill I might guiltlessly. But it would not do: I rated my fortitude too high, or my love too low. I should certainly have died if you had not hastened to me. Would that I had been indeed extinguished!

“And now, Mathilda I must make you my last confession. I have been miserably mistaken in imagining that I could conquer my love for you; I never can. The sight of this house, these fields and woods which my first love inhabited seems to have encreased it: in my madness I dared say to myself — Diana died to give her birth; her mother’s spirit was transferred into her frame, and she ought to be as Diana to me. With every effort to cast it off, this love clings closer, this guilty love more unnatural than hate, that withers your hopes and destroys me for ever.

Better have loved despair, & safer kissed her.

No time or space can tear from my soul that which makes a part of it. Since my arrival here I have not for a moment ceased to feel the hell of passion which has been implanted in me to burn untill all be cold, and stiff, and dead. Yet I will not die; alas! how dare I go where I may meet Diana, when I have disobeyed her last request; her last words said in a faint voice when all feeling but love, which survives all things else was already dead, she then bade me make her child happy: that thought alone gives a double sting to death. I will wander away from you, away from all life — in the solitude I shall seek I alone shall breathe of human kind. I must endure life; and as it is my duty so I shall untill the grave dreaded yet desired, receive me free from pain: for while I feel it will be pain that must make up the whole sum of my sensations. Is not this a fearful curse that I labour under? Do I not look forward to a miserable future? My child, if after this life I am permitted to see you again, if pain can purify the heart, mine will be pure: if remorse may expiate guilt, I shall be guiltless.

[“]I have been at the door of your chamber: every thing is silent. You sleep. Do you indeed sleep, Mathilda? Spirits of Good, behold the tears of my earnest prayer! Bless my child! Protect her from the selfish among her fellow creatures: protect her from the agonies of passion, and the despair of disappointment! Peace, Hope and Love be thy guardians, oh, thou soul of my soul: thou in whom I breathe!

[“]I dare not read my letter over for I have no time to write another, and yet I fear that some expressions in it might displease me. Since I last saw you I have been constantly employed in writing letters, and have several more to write; for I do not intend that any one shall hear of me after I depart. I need not conjure you to look upon me as one of whom all links that once existed between us are broken. Your own delicacy will not allow you, I am convinced, to attempt to trace me. It is far better for your peace that you should be ignorant of my destination. You will not follow me, for when I bannish myself would you nourish guilt by obtruding yourself upon me? You will not do this, I know you will not. You must forget me and all the evil that I have taught you. Cast off the only gift that I have bestowed upon you, your grief, and rise from under my blighting influence as no flower so sweet ever did rise from beneath so much evil.

"You will never hear from me again: receive these then as the last words of mine that will ever reach you; and although I have forfeited your filial love, yet regard them I conjure you as a father's command. Resolutely shake of[f] the wretchedness that this first misfortune in early life must occasion you. Bear boldly up against the storm: continue wise and mild, but believe it, and indeed it is, your duty to be happy. You are very young; let not this check for more than a moment retard your glorious course; hold on, beloved one. The sun of youth is not set for you; it will restore vigour and life to you; do not resist with obstinate grief its beneficent influence, oh, my child! bless me with the hope that I have not utterly destroyed you.

"Farewell, Mathilda. I go with the belief that I have your pardon. Your gentle nature would not permit you to hate your greatest enemy and though I be he, although I have rent happiness from your grasp; though I have passed over your young love and hopes as the angel of destruction, finding beauty and joy, and leaving blight and despair, yet you will forgive me, and with eyes overflowing with tears I thank you; my beloved one, I accept your pardon with a gratitude that will never die, and that will, indeed it will, outlive guilt and remorse.

"Farewell for ever!"

The moment I finished this letter I ordered the carriage and prepared to follow my father. The words of his letter by which he had dissuaded me from this step were those that determined me. Why did he write them? He must know that if I believed that his intention was merely to absent himself from me that instead of opposing him it would be that which I should myself require — or if he thought that any lurking feeling, yet he could not think that, should lead me to him would he endeavour to overthrow the only hope he could have of ever seeing me again; a lover, there was madness in the thought, yet he was my lover, would not act thus. No, he had determined to die, and he wished to spare me the misery of knowing it. The few ineffectual words he had said concerning his duty were to me a further proof — and the more I studied the letter the more did I perceive a thousand slight expressions that could only indicate a knowledge that life was now over for him. He was about to die! My blood froze at the thought: a sickening feeling of horror came over me that allowed not of tears. As I waited for the carriage I walked up and down with a quick pace; then kneeling and passionately clasping my hands I tried to pray but my voice was choked by convulsive sobs — Oh the sun shone[,] the air was balmy — he must yet live for if he were dead all would surely be black as night to me!

The motion of the carriage knowing that it carried me towards him and that I might perhaps find him alive somewhat revived my courage: yet I had a dreadful ride. Hope only supported me, the hope that I should not be too late[.] I did not weep, but I wiped the perspiration from my brow, and tried to still my brain and heart beating almost to madness. Oh! I must not be mad when I see him; or perhaps it were as well that I should be, my distraction might calm his, and recall him to the endurance of life. Yet untill I find him I must force reason to keep her seat, and I pressed my forehead hard with my hands — Oh do not leave me; or I shall forget what I am about — instead of driving on as we ought with the speed of lightning they will attend to me, and we shall be too late. Oh! God help me! Let him be alive! It is all dark; in my abject misery I demand no more: no hope, no good: only passion, and guilt, and horror; but alive! Alive! My sensations choked me — No tears fell yet I sobbed, and breathed short and hard; one only thought possessed me, and I could only utter one word, that half screaming was perpetually on my lips; Alive! Alive! —

I had taken the steward with me for he, much better than I[,] could make the requisite enquiries — the poor old man could not restrain his tears as he saw my deep distress and knew the cause — he sometimes uttered a few broken words of consolation: in moments like these the mistress and servant become in a manner equals and when I saw his old dim eyes wet with sympathizing tears; his gray hair thinly scattered on an age-wrinkled brow I thought oh if my father were as he is — decrepid & hoary — then I should be spared this pain —

When I had arrived at the nearest town I took post horses and followed the road my father had taken. At every inn where we changed horses we heard of him, and I was possessed by alternate hope and fear. A length I found that he had altered his route; at first he had followed the London road; but now he changed it, and upon enquiry I found that the one which he now pursued led *towards the sea*. My dream recurred to my thoughts; I was not usually superstitious but in wretchedness every one is so. The sea was fifty miles off, yet it was towards it that he fled. The idea was terrible to my half crazed imagination, and almost over-turned the little self possession that still remained to me. I journied all day; every moment my misery encreased and the fever of my blood became intolerable. The summer sun shone in an unclouded sky; the air was close but all was cool to me except my own scorching skin. Towards evening dark thunder clouds arose above the horrizon and I heard its distant roll — after sunset they darkened the whole sky and it began to rain[,] the lightning lighted up the whole country and the thunder drowned the noise of our carriage. At the next inn my father had not taken horses; he had left a box there saying he would return, and had walked over the fields to the town of —— a seacost town eight miles off.

For a moment I was almost paralized by fear; but my energy returned and I demanded a guide to accompany me in following his steps. The night was tempestuous but my bribe was high and I easily procured a countryman. We passed through many lanes and over fields and wild downs; the rain poured down in torrents; and the loud thunder broke in terrible crashes over our heads. Oh! What a night it was! And I passed on with quick steps among the high, dank grass amid the rain and tempest. My dream was for ever in my thoughts, and with a kind of half insanity that often possesses the mind in despair, I said aloud; “Courage! We are not near the sea; we are yet several miles from the ocean” — Yet it was towards the sea that our direction lay and that heightened the confusion of my ideas. Once, overcome by fatigue, I sunk on the wet earth; about two hundred yards distant, alone in a large meadow stood a magnificent oak; the lightnings shewed its myriad boughs torn by the storm. A strange idea seized me; a person must have felt all the agonies of doubt concerning the life and death of one who is the whole world to them before they can enter into my feelings — for in that state, the mind working unrestrained by the will makes strange and fanciful combinations with outward circumstances and weaves the chances and changes of nature into an immediate connexion with the event they dread. It was with this feeling that I turned to the old Steward who stood pale and trembling beside me; “Mark, Gaspar, if the next flash of lightning rend not that oak my father will be alive.”

I had scarcely uttered these words than a flash instantly followed by a tremendous peal of thunder descended on it; and when my eyes recovered their sight after the dazzling light, the oak no longer stood in the meadow — The old man uttered a wild exclamation of horror when he saw so sudden an interpretation given to my prophesy. I started up, my strength returned; [*sic*] with my terror; I cried, “Oh, God! Is this thy decree? Yet perhaps I shall not be too late.”

Although still several miles distant we continued to approach the sea. We came at last to the road that led to the town of —— and at an inn there we heard that my father had passed by somewhat before sunset; he had observed the approaching storm and had hired a horse for the next town which was situated a mile from the sea that he might arrive there before it should commence: this town was five miles off. We hired a chaise here, and with four horses drove with speed through the storm. My garments were wet and clung around me, and my hair hung in straight locks on my neck when not blown aside by the wind. I shivered, yet my pulse was high with fever. Great God! What agony I endured. I shed no tears but my eyes wild and inflamed were starting from my head; I could hardly support the weight that pressed upon my brain. We arrived at the town of —— in a little more than half an hour. When my father had arrived the storm had already begun, but he had refused to stop and leaving his horse there he walked on — *towards the sea*. Alas! it was double cruelty in him to have chosen the sea for his fatal resolve; it was adding madness to my despair.

The poor old servant who was with me endeavoured to persuade me to remain here and to let him go alone — I shook my head silently and sadly; sick almost to death I leant upon his arm, and as there was no road for a chaise dragged my weary steps across the desolate downs to meet my fate, now too certain for the agony of doubt. Almost fainting I slowly approached the fatal waters; when we had quitted the town we heard their roaring[.] I whispered to myself in a muttering voice—”The sound is the same as that which I heard in my dream. It is the knell of my father which I hear.”

The rain had ceased; there was no more thunder and lightning; the wind had paused. My heart no longer beat wildly; I did not feel any fever: but I was chilled; my knees sunk under me — I almost slept as I walked with excess of weariness; every limb trembled. I was silent: all was silent except the roaring of the sea which became louder and more dreadful. Yet we advanced slowly: sometimes I thought that we should never arrive; that the sound of waves would still allure us, and that we should walk on for ever and ever: field succeeding field, never would our weary journey cease, nor night nor day; but still we should hear the dashing of the sea, and to all this there would be no end. Wild beyond the imagination of the happy are the thoughts bred by misery and despair.

At length we reached the overhanging beach; a cottage stood beside the path; we knocked at the door and it was opened: the bed within instantly caught my eye; something stiff and straight lay on it, covered by a sheet; the cottagers looked aghast. The first words that they uttered confirmed what I before knew. I did not feel shocked or overcome: I believe that I asked one or two questions and listened to the answers. I har[d]ly know, but in a few moments I sank lifeless to the ground; and so would that then all had been at an end!

CHAPTER VIII

I was carried to the next town: fever succeeded to convulsions and faintings, & for some weeks my unhappy spirit hovered on the very verge of death. But life was yet strong within me; I recovered: nor did it a little aid my returning health that my recollections were at first vague, and that I was too weak to feel any violent emotion. I often said to myself, my father is dead. He loved me with a guilty passion, and stung by remorse and despair he killed himself. Why is it that I feel no horror? Are these circumstances not dreadful? Is it not enough that I shall never more meet the eyes of my beloved father; never more hear his voice; no caress, no look? All cold, and stiff, and dead! Alas! I am quite callous: the night I was out in was fearful and the cold rain that fell about my heart has acted like the waters of the cavern of Antiparos and has changed it to stone. I do not weep or sigh; but I must reason with myself, and force myself to feel sorrow and despair. This is not resignation that I feel, for I am dead to all regret.

I communed in this manner with myself, but I was silent to all around me. I hardly replied to the slightest question, and was uneasy when I saw a human creature near me. I was surrounded by my female relations, but they were all of them nearly strangers to me: I did not listen to their consolations; and so little did they work their designed effect that they seemed to me to be spoken in an unknown tongue. I found if sorrow was dead within me, so was love and desire of sympathy. Yet sorrow only slept to revive more fierce, but love never woke again — its ghost, ever hovering over my father’s grave, alone survived — since his death all the world was to me a blank except where woe had stampt its burning words telling me to smile no more — the living were not fit companions for me, and I was ever meditating by what means I might shake them all off, and never be heard of again.

My convalescence rapidly advanced, yet this was the thought that haunted me, and I was for ever forming plans how I might hereafter contrive to escape the tortures that were prepared for me when I should mix in society, and to find that solitude which alone could suit one whom an untold grief seperated from her fellow creatures. Who can be more solitary even in a crowd than one whose history and the never ending feelings and remembrances arising from it is [*sic*] known to no living soul. There was too deep a horror in my tale for confidence; I was on earth the sole depository of my own secret. I might tell it to the winds and to the desart heaths but I must never among my fellow creatures, either by word or look give allowance to the smallest conjecture of the dread reality: I must shrink before the eye of man lest he should read my father's guilt in my glazed eyes: I must be silent lest my faltering voice should betray unimagined horrors. Over the deep grave of my secret I must heap an impenetrable heap of false smiles and words: cunning frauds, treacherous laughter and a mixture of all light deceits would form a mist to blind others and be as the poisonous simoon to me. I, the offspring of love, the child of the woods, the nursling of Nature's bright self was to submit to this? I dared not.

How must I escape? I was rich and young, and had a guardian appointed for me; and all about me would act as if I were one of their great society, while I must keep the secret that I really was cut off from them for ever. If I fled I should be pursued; in life there was no escape for me: why then I must die. I shuddered; I dared not die even though the cold grave held all I loved; although I might say with Job

Where is now my hope? For my hope who shall see it?
They shall go down together to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust —

Yes my hope was corruption and dust and all to which death brings us. — Or after life — No, no, I will not persuade myself to die, I may not, dare not. And then I wept; yes, warm tears once more struggled into my eyes soothing yet bitter; and after I had wept much and called with unavailing anguish, with outstretched arms, for my cruel father; after my weak frame was exhausted by all variety of plaint I sank once more into reverie, and once more reflected on how I might find that which I most desired; dear to me if aught were dear, a death-like solitude.

I dared not die, but I might feign death, and thus escape from my comforters: they will believe me united to my father, and so indeed I shall be. For alone, when no voice can disturb my dream, and no cold eye meet mine to check its fire, then I may commune with his spirit; on a lone heath, at noon or at midnight, still I should be near him. His last injunction to me was that I should be happy; perhaps he did not mean the shadowy happiness that I promised myself, yet it was that alone which I could taste. He did not conceive that ever [qu. *never*?] again I could make one of the smiling hunters that go coursing after bubles that break to nothing when caught, and then after a new one with brighter colours; my hope also had proved a buble, but it had been so lovely, so adorned that I saw none that could attract me after it; besides I was wearied with the pursuit, nearly dead with weariness.

I would feign to die; my contented heirs would seize upon my wealth, and I should purchase freedom. But then my plan must be laid with art; I would not be left destitute, I must secure some money. Alas! to what loathsome shifts must I be driven? Yet a whole life of falsehood was otherwise my portion: and when remorse at being the contriver of any cheat made me shrink from my design I was irresistably led back and confirmed in it by the visit of some aunt or cousin, who would tell me that death was the end of all men. And then say that my father had surely lost his wits ever since my mother's death; that he was mad and that I was fortunate, for in one of his fits he might have killed me instead of destroying his own crazed being. And all this, to be sure, was delicately put; not in broad words for my feelings might be hurt but

Whispered so and so In dark hint soft and low[E]

with downcast eyes, and sympathizing smiles or whimpers; and I listened with quiet countenance while every nerve trembled; I that dared not utter aye or no to all this blasphemy. Oh, this was a delicious life quite void of guile! I with my dove's look and fox's heart: for indeed I felt only the degradation of falsehood, and not any sacred sentiment of conscious innocence that might redeem it. I who had before clothed myself in the bright garb of sincerity must now borrow one of divers colours: it might sit awkwardly at first, but use would enable me to place it in elegant folds, to lie with grace. Aye, I might die my soul with falsehood untill I had quite hid its native colour. Oh, beloved father! Accept the pure heart of your unhappy daughter; permit me to join you unspotted as I was or you will not recognize my altered semblance. As grief might change Constance so would deceit change me untill in heaven you would say, “This is not my child” — My father, to be happy both now and when again we meet I must fly from all this life which is mockery to one like me. In solitude only shall I be myself; in solitude I shall be thine.

Alas! I even now look back with disgust at my artifices and contrivances by which, after many painful struggles, I effected my retreat. I might enter into a long detail of the means I used, first to secure myself a slight maintenance for the remainder of my life, and afterwards to ensure the conviction of my death: I might, but I will not. I even now blush at the falsehoods I uttered; my heart sickens: I will leave this complication of what I hope I may in a manner call innocent deceit to be imagined by the reader. The remembrance haunts me like a crime — I know that if I were to endeavour to relate it my tale would at length remain unfinished. I was led to London, and had to endure for some weeks cold looks, cold words and colder consolations: but I escaped; they tried to bind me with fetters that they thought silken, yet which weighed on me like iron, although I broke them more easily than a girth formed of a single straw and fled to freedom.

The few weeks that I spent in London were the most miserable of my life: a great city is a frightful habitation to one sorrowing. The sunset and the gentle moon, the blessed motion of the leaves and the murmuring of waters are all sweet physicians to a distempered mind. The soul is expanded and drinks in quiet, a lulling medecine — to me it was as the sight of the lovely water snakes to the bewitched mariner — in loving and blessing Nature I unawares, called down a blessing on my own soul. But in a city all is closed shut like a prison, a wiry prison from which you can peep at the sky only. I can not describe to you what were [*sic*] the frantic nature of my sensations while I resided there; I was often on the verge of madness. Nay, when I look back on many of my wild thoughts, thoughts with which actions sometimes endeavoured to keep pace; when I tossed my hands high calling down the cope of heaven to fall on me and bury me; when I tore my hair and throwing it to the winds cried, “Ye are free, go seek my father!” And then, like the unfortunate Constance, catching at them again and tying them up, that nought might find him if I might not. How, on my knees I have fancied myself close to my father’s grave and struck the ground in anger that it should cover him from me. Oft when I have listened with gasping attention for the sound of the ocean mingled with my father’s groans; and then wept untill my strength was gone and I was calm and faint, when I have recollected all this I have asked myself if this were not madness. While in London these and many other dreadful thoughts too harrowing for words were my portion: I lost all this suffering when I was free; when I saw the wild heath around me, and the evening star in the west, then I could weep, gently weep, and be at peace.

Do not mistake me; I never was really mad. I was always conscious of my state when my wild thoughts seemed to drive me to insanity, and never betrayed them to aught but silence and solitude. The people around me saw nothing of all this. They only saw a poor girl broken in spirit, who spoke in a low and gentle voice, and from underneath whose downcast lids tears would sometimes steal which she strove to hide. One who loved to be alone, and shrunk from observation; who never smiled; oh, no! I never smiled — and that was all.

Well, I escaped. I left my guardian’s house and I was never heard of again; it was believed from the letters that I left and other circumstances that I planned that I had destroyed myself. I was sought after therefore with less care than would otherwise have been the case; and soon all trace and memory of me was lost. I left London in a small vessel bound for a port in the north of England. And now having succeeded in my attempt, and being quite alone peace returned to me. The sea was calm and the vessel moved gently onwards, I sat upon deck under the open canopy of heaven and methought I was an altered creature. Not the wild, raving & most miserable Mathilda but a youthful Hermitess dedicated to seclusion and whose bosom she must strive to keep free from all tumult and unholy despair — The fanciful nunlike dress that I had adopted; the knowledge that my very existence was a secret known only to myself; the solitude to which I was for ever hereafter destined nursed gentle thoughts in my wounded heart. The breeze that played in my hair revived me, and I watched with quiet eyes the sunbeams that glittered on the waves, and the birds that coursed each other over the waters just brushing them with their plumes. I slept too undisturbed by dreams; and awoke refreshed to again enjoy my tranquil freedom.

In four days we arrived at the harbour to which we were bound. I would not remain on the sea coast, but proceeded immediately inland. I had already planned the situation where I would live. It should be a solitary house on a wide plain near no other habitation: where I could behold the whole horizon, and wander far without molestation from the sight of my fellow creatures. I was not mysanthropic, but I felt that the gentle current of my feelings depended upon my being alone. I fixed myself on a wide solitude. On a dreary heath bestrewen with stones, among which short grass grew; and here and there a few rushes beside a little pool. Not far from my cottage was a small cluster of pines the only trees to be seen for many miles: I had a path cut through the furze from my door to this little wood, from whose topmost branches the birds saluted the rising sun and awoke me to my daily meditation. My view was bounded only by the horizon except on one side where a distant wood made a black spot on the heath, that every where else stretched out its faint hues as far as the eye could reach, wide and very desolate. Here I could mark the net work of the clouds as they wove themselves into thick masses: I could watch the slow rise of the heavy thunder clouds and could see the rack as it was driven across the heavens, or under the pine trees I could enjoy the stillness of the azure sky.

My life was very peaceful. I had one female servant who spent the greater part of the day at a village two miles off. My amusements were simple and very innocent; I fed the birds who built on the pines or among the ivy that covered the wall of my little garden, and they soon knew me: the bolder ones pecked the crumbs from my hands and perched on my fingers to sing their thankfulness. When I had lived here some time other animals visited me and a fox came every day for a portion of food appropriated for him & would suffer me to pat his head. I had besides many books and a harp with which when despairing I could soothe my spirits, and raise myself to sympathy and love.

Love! What had I to love? Oh many things: there was the moonshine, and the bright stars; the breezes and the refreshing rains; there was the whole earth and the sky that covers it: all lovely forms that visited my imagination[,] all memories of heroism and virtue. Yet this was very unlike my early life although as then I was confined to Nature and books. Then I bounded across the fields; my spirit often seemed to ride upon the winds, and to mingle in joyful sympathy with the ambient air. Then if I wandered slowly I cheered myself with a sweet song or sweeter day dreams. I felt a holy rapture spring from all I saw. I drank in joy with life; my steps were light; my eyes, clear from the love that animated them, sought the heavens, and with my long hair loosened to the winds I gave my body and my mind to sympathy and delight. But now my walk was slow — My eyes were seldom raised and often filled with tears; no song; no smiles; no careless motion that might bespeak a mind intent on what surrounded it — I was gathered up into myself — a selfish solitary creature ever pondering on my regrets and faded hopes.

Mine was an idle, useless life; it was so; but say not to the lily laid prostrate by the storm arise, and bloom as before. My heart was bleeding from its death's wound; I could live no otherwise — Often amid apparent calm I was visited by despair and melancholy; gloom that nought could dissipate or overcome; a hatred of life; a carelessness of beauty; all these would by fits hold me nearly annihilated by their powers. Never for one moment when most placid did I cease to pray for death. I could be found in no state of mind which I would not willingly have exchanged for nothingness. And morning and evening my tearful eyes raised to heaven, my hands clasped tight in the energy of prayer, I have repeated with the poet —

Before I see another day Oh, let this body die away!

Let me not be reproached then with inutility; I believed that by suicide I should violate a divine law of nature, and I thought that I sufficiently fulfilled my part in submitting to the hard task of enduring the crawling hours & minutes — in bearing the load of time that weighed miserably upon me and that in abstaining from what I in my calm moments considered a crime, I deserved the reward of virtue. There were periods, dreadful ones, during which I despaired — & doubted the existence of all duty & the reality of crime — but I shudder, and turn from the rememberance.

CHAPTER IX

Thus I passed two years. Day after day so many hundreds wore on; they brought no outward changes with them, but some few slowly operated on my mind as I glided on towards death. I began to study more; to sympathize more in the thoughts of others as expressed in books; to read history, and to lose my individuallity among the crowd that had existed before me. Thus perhaps as the sensation of immediate suffering wore off, I became more human. Solitude also lost to me some of its charms: I began again to wish for sympathy; not that I was ever tempted to seek the crowd, but I wished for one friend to love me. You will say perhaps that I gradually became fitted to return to society. I do not think so. For the sympathy that I desired must be so pure, so divested of influence from outward circumstances that in the world I could not fail of being balked by the gross materials that perpetually mingle even with its best feelings. Believe me, I was then less fitted for any communion with my fellow creatures than before. When I left them they had tormented me but it was in the same way as pain and sickness may torment; somthing extraneous to the mind that galled it, and that I wished to cast aside. But now I should have desired sympathy; I should wish to knit my soul to some one of theirs, and should have prepared for myself plentiful draughts of disappointment and suffering; for I was tender as the sensitive plant, all nerve. I did not desire sympathy and aid in ambition or wisdom, but sweet and mutual affection; smiles to cheer me and gentle words of comfort. I wished for one heart in which I could pour unrestrained my plaints, and by the heavenly nature of the soil blessed fruit might spring from such bad seed. Yet how could I find this? The love that is the soul of friendship is a soft spirit seldom found except when two amiable creatures are knit from early youth, or when bound by mutual suffering and pursuits; it comes to some of the elect unsought and unaware; it descends as gentle dew on chosen spots which however barren they were before become under its benign influence fertile in all sweet plants; but when desired it flies; it scoffs at the prayers of its votaries; it will bestow, but not be sought.

I knew all this and did not go to seek sympathy; but there on my solitary heath, under my lowly roof where all around was desart, it came to me as a sun beam in winter to adorn while it helps to dissolve the drifted snow. — Alas the sun shone on blighted fruit; I did not revive under its radiance for I was too utterly undone to feel its kindly power. My father had been and his memory was the life of my life. I might feel gratitude to another but I never more could love or hope as I had done; it was all suffering; even my pleasures were endured, not enjoyed. I was as a solitary spot among mountains shut in on all sides by steep black precipices; where no ray of heat could penetrate; and from which there was no outlet to sunnier fields. And thus it was that although the spirit of friendship soothed me for a while it could not restore me. It came as some gentle visitation; it went and I hardly felt the loss. The spirit of existence was dead within me; be not surprised therefore that when it came I welcomed not more gladly, or when it departed I lamented not more bitterly the best gift of heaven — a friend.

The name of my friend was Woodville. I will briefly relate his history that you may judge how cold my heart must have been not to be warmed by his eloquent words and tender sympathy; and how he also being most unhappy we were well fitted to be a mutual consolation to each other, if I had not been hardened to stone by the Medusa head of Misery. The misfortunes of Woodville were not of the hearts core like mine; his was a natural grief, not to destroy but to purify the heart and from which he might, when its shadow had passed from over him, shine forth brighter and happier than before.

Woodville was the son of a poor clergyman and had received a classical education. He was one of those very few whom fortune favours from their birth; on whom she bestows all gifts of intellect and person with a profusion that knew no bounds, and whom under her peculiar protection, no imperfection however slight, or disappointment however transitory has leave to touch. She seemed to have formed his mind of that excellence which no dross can tarnish, and his understanding was such that no error could pervert. His genius was transcendant, and when it rose as a bright star in the east all eyes were turned towards it in admiration. He was a Poet. That name has so often been degraded that it will not convey the idea of all that he was. He was like a poet of old whom the muses had crowned in his cradle, and on whose lips bees had fed. As he walked among other men he seemed encompassed with a heavenly halo that divided him from and lifted him above them. It was his surpassing beauty, the dazzling fire of his eyes, and his words whose rich accents wrapt the listener in mute and extactic wonder, that made him transcend all others so that before him they appeared only formed to minister to his superior excellence.

He was glorious from his youth. Every one loved him; no shadow of envy or hate cast even from the meanest mind ever fell upon him. He was, as one the peculiar delight of the Gods, railed and fenced in by his own divinity, so that nought but love and admiration could approach him. His heart was simple like a child, unstained by arrogance or vanity. He mingled in society unknowing of his superiority over his companions, not because he undervalued himself but because he did not perceive the inferiority of others. He seemed incapable of conceiving of the full extent of the power that selfishness & vice possesses in the world: when I knew him, although he had suffered disappointment in his dearest hopes, he had not experienced any that arose from the meaness and self love of men: his station was too high to allow of his suffering through their hardheartedness; and too low for him to have experienced ingratitude and encroaching selfishness: it is one of the blessings of a moderate fortune, that by preventing the possessor from confering pecuniary favours it prevents him also from diving into the arcana of human weakness or malice — To bestow on your fellow men is a Godlike attribute — So indeed it is and as such not one fit for mortality; — the giver like Adam and Prometheus, must pay the penalty of rising above his nature by being the martyr to his own excellence. Woodville was free from all these evils; and if slight examples did come across him he did not notice them but passed on in his course as an angel with winged feet might glide along the earth unimpeded by all those little obstacles over which we of earthly origin stumble. He was a believer in the divinity of genius and always opposed a stern disbelief to the objections of those petty cavillers and minor critics who wish to reduce all men to their own miserable level —"I will make a scientific simile" he would say, "[i]n the manner, if you will, of Dr. Darwin — I consider the alledged errors of a man of genius as the aberrations of the fixed stars. It is our distance from them and our imperfect means of communication that makes them appear to move; in truth they always remain stationary, a glorious centre, giving us a fine lesson of modesty if we would thus receive it."

I have said that he was a poet: when he was three and twenty years of age he first published a poem, and it was hailed by the whole nation with enthusiasm and delight. His good star perpetually shone upon him; a reputation had never before been made so rapidly: it was universal. The multitude extolled the same poems that formed the wonder of the sage in his closet: there was not one dissentient voice.

It was at this time, in the height of his glory, that he became acquainted with Elinor. She was a young heiress of exquisite beauty who lived under the care of her guardian: from the moment they were seen together they appeared formed for each other. Elinor had not the genius of Woodville but she was generous and noble, and exalted by her youth and the love that she every where excited above the knowledge of aught but virtue and excellence. She was lovely; her manners were frank and simple; her deep blue eyes swam in a lustre which could only be given by sensibility joined to wisdom.

They were formed for one another and they soon loved. Woodville for the first time felt the delight of love; and Elinor was enraptured in possessing the heart of one so beautiful and glorious among his fellow men. Could any thing but unmixed joy flow from such a union?

Woodville was a Poet — he was sought for by every society and all eyes were turned on him alone when he appeared; but he was the son of a poor clergyman and Elinor was a rich heiress. Her guardian was not displeased with their mutual affection: the merit of Woodville was too eminent to admit of cavil on account of his inferior wealth; but the dying will of her father did not allow her to marry before she was of age and her fortune depended upon her obeying this injunction. She had just entered her twentieth year, and she and her lover were obliged to submit to this delay. But they were ever together and their happiness seemed that of Paradise: they studied together: formed plans of future occupations, and drinking in love and joy from each other’s eyes and words they hardly repined at the delay to their entire union. Woodville for ever rose in glory; and Elinor become more lovely and wise under the lessons of her accomplished lover.

In two months Elinor would be twenty one: every thing was prepared for their union. How shall I relate the catastrophe to so much joy; but the earth would not be the earth it is covered with blight and sorrow if one such pair as these angelic creatures had been suffered to exist for one another: search through the world and you will not find the perfect happiness which their marriage would have caused them to enjoy; there must have been a revolution in the order of things as established among us miserable earth-dwellers to have admitted of such consummate joy. The chain of necessity ever bringing misery must have been broken and the malignant fate that presides over it would not permit this breach of her eternal laws. But why should I repine at this? Misery was my element, and nothing but what was miserable could approach me; if Woodville had been happy I should never have known him. And can I who for many years was fed by tears, and nourished under the dew of grief, can I pause to relate a tale of woe and death?

Woodville was obliged to make a journey into the country and was detained from day to day in irksome absence from his lovely bride. He received a letter from her to say that she was slightly ill, but telling him to hasten to her, that from his eyes she would receive health and that his company would be her surest medecine. He was detained three days longer and then he hastened to her. His heart, he knew not why prognosticated misfortune; he had not heard from her again; he feared she might be worse and this fear made him impatient and restless for the moment of beholding her once more stand before him arrayed in health and beauty; for a sinister voice seemed always to whisper to him, "You will never more behold her as she was."

When he arrived at her habitation all was silent in it: he made his way through several rooms; in one he saw a servant weeping bitterly: he was faint with fear and could hardly ask, "Is she dead?" and just listened to the dreadful answer, "Not yet." These astounding words came on him as of less fearful import than those which he had expected; and to learn that she was still in being, and that he might still hope was an alleviation to him. He remembered the words of her letter and he indulged the wild idea that his kisses breathing warm love and life would infuse new spirit into her, and that with him near her she could not die; that his presence was the talisman of her life.

He hastened to her sick room; she lay, her cheeks burning with fever, yet her eyes were closed and she was seemingly senseless. He wrapt her in his arms; he imprinted breathless kisses on her burning lips; he called to her in a voice of subdued anguish by the tenderest names; "Return Elinor; I am with you; your life, your love. Return; dearest one, you promised me this boon, that I should bring you health. Let your sweet spirit revive; you cannot die near me: What is death? To see you no more? To part with what is a part of myself; without whom I have no memory and no futurity? Elinor die! This is frenzy and the most miserable despair: you cannot die while I am near."

And again he kissed her eyes and lips, and hung over her inanimate form in agony, gazing on her countenance still lovely although changed, watching every slight convulsion, and varying colour which denoted life still lingering although about to depart. Once for a moment she revived and recognized his voice; a smile, a last lovely smile, played upon her lips. He watched beside her for twelve hours and then she died.

CHAPTER X

It was six months after this miserable conclusion to his long nursed hopes that I first saw him. He had retired to a part of the country where he was not known that he might peacefully indulge his grief. All the world, by the death of his beloved Elinor, was changed to him, and he could no longer remain in any spot where he had seen her or where her image mingled with the most rapturous hopes had brightened all around with a light of joy which would now be transformed to a darkness blacker than midnight since she, the sun of his life, was set for ever.

He lived for some time never looking on the light of heaven but shrouding his eyes in a perpetual darkness far from all that could remind him of what he had been; but as time softened his grief like a true child of Nature he sought in the enjoyment of her beauties for a consolation in his unhappiness. He came to a part of the country where he was entirely unknown and where in the deepest solitude he could converse only with his own heart. He found a relief to his impatient grief in the breezes of heaven and in the sound of waters and woods. He became fond of riding; this exercise distracted his mind and elevated his spirits; on a swift horse he could for a moment gain respite from the image that else for ever followed him; Elinor on her death bed, her sweet features changed, and the soft spirit that animated her gradually waning into extinction. For many months Woodville had in vain endeavoured to cast off this terrible remembrance; it still hung on him untill memory was too great a burthen for his loaded soul, but when on horseback the spell that seemingly held him to this idea was snapt; then if he thought of his lost bride he pictured her radiant in beauty; he could hear her voice, and fancy her "a sylvan Huntress by his side," while his eyes brightened as he thought he gazed on her cherished form. I had several times seen him ride across the heath and felt angry that my solitude should be disturbed. It was so long [since] I had spoken to any but peasants that I felt a disagreable sensation at being gazed on by one of superior rank. I feared also that it might be some one who had seen me before: I might be recognized, my impostures discovered and I dragged back to a life of worse torture than that I had before endured. These were dreadful fears and they even haunted my dreams.

I was one day seated on the verge of the clump of pines when Woodville rode past. As soon as I perceived him I suddenly rose to escape from his observation by entering among the trees. My rising startled his horse; he reared and plunged and the Rider was at length thrown. The horse then galopped swiftly across the heath and the stranger remained on the ground stunned by his fall. He was not materially hurt, a little fresh water soon recovered him. I was struck by his exceeding beauty, and as he spoke to thank me the sweet but melancholy cadence of his voice brought tears into my eyes.

A short conversation passed between us, but the next day he again stopped at my cottage and by degrees an intimacy grew between us. It was strange to him to see a female in extreme youth, I was not yet twenty, evidently belonging to the first classes of society & possessing every accomplishment an excellent education could bestow, living alone on a desolate health [*sic*] — One on whose forehead the impress of grief was strongly marked, and whose words and motions betrayed that her thoughts did not follow them but were intent on far other ideas; bitter and overwhelming miseries. I was dressed also in a whimsical nunlike habit which denoted that I did not retire to solitude from necessity, but that I might indulge in a luxury of grief, and fanciful seclusion.

He soon took great interest in me, and sometimes forgot his own grief to sit beside me and endeavour to cheer me. He could not fail to interest even one who had shut herself from the whole world, whose hope was death, and who lived only with the departed. His personal beauty; his conversation which glowed with imagination and sensibility; the poetry that seemed to hang upon his lips and to make the very air mute to listen to him were charms that no one could resist. He was younger, less worn, more passionless than my father and in no degree reminded me of him: he suffered under immediate grief yet its gentle influence instead of calling feelings otherwise dormant into action, seemed only to veil that which otherwise would have been too dazzling for me. When we were together I spoke little yet my selfish mind was sometimes borne away by the rapid course of his ideas; I would lift my eyes with momentary brilliancy until memories that never died and seldom slept would recur, and a tear would dim them.

Woodville for ever tried to lead me to the contemplation of what is beautiful and happy in the world. His own mind was constitunially [*sic*] bent to a former belief in good [rather] than in evil and this feeling which must even exhilirate the hopeless ever shone forth in his words. He would talk of the wonderful powers of man, of their present state and of their hopes: of what they had been and what they were, and when reason could no longer guide him, his imagination as if inspired shed light on the obscurity that veils the past and the future. He loved to dwell on what might have been the state of the earth before man lived on it, and how he first arose and gradually became the strange, complicated, but as he said, the glorious creature he now is. Covering the earth with their creations and forming by the power of their minds another world more lovely than the visible frame of things, even all the world that we find in their writings. A beautiful creation, he would say, which may claim this superiority to its model, that good and evil is more easily seperated[:] the good rewarded in the way they themselves desire; the evil punished as all things evil ought to be punished, not by pain which is revolting to all philanthropy to consider but by quiet obscurity, which simply deprives them of their harmful qualities; why kill the serpent when you have extracted his fangs?

The poetry of his language and ideas which my words ill convey held me enchained to his discourses. It was a melancholy pleasure to me to listen to his inspired words; to catch for a moment the light of his eyes[;] to feel a transient sympathy and then to awaken from the delusion, again to know that all this was nothing, — a dream — a shadow for that there was no reallity for me; my father had for ever deserted me, leaving me only memories which set an eternal barrier between me and my fellow creatures. I was indeed fellow to none. He — Woodville, mourned the loss of his bride: others wept the various forms of misery as they visited them: but infamy and guilt was mingled with my portion; unlawful and detestable passion had poured its poison into my ears and changed all my blood, so that it was no longer the kindly stream that supports life but a cold fountain of bitterness corrupted in its very source. It must be the excess of madness that could make me imagine that I could ever be aught but one alone; struck off from humanity; bearing no affinity to man or woman; a wretch on whom Nature had set her ban.

Sometimes Woodville talked to me of himself. He related his history brief in happiness and woe and dwelt with passion on his and Elinor's mutual love. "She was[“], he said, "the brightest vision that ever came upon the earth: there was somthing in her frank countenance, in her voice, and in every motion of her graceful form that overpowered me, as if it were a celestial creature that deigned to mingle with me in intercourse more sweet than man had ever before enjoyed. Sorrow fled before her; and her smile seemed to possess an influence like light to irradiate all mental darkness. It was not like a human loveliness that these gentle smiles went and came; but as a sunbeam on a lake, now light and now obscure, flitting before as you strove to catch them, and fold them for ever to your heart. I saw this smile fade for ever. Alas! I could never have believed that it was indeed Elinor that died if once when I spoke she had not lifted her almost benighted eyes, and for one moment like nought beside on earth, more lovely than a sunbeam, slighter, quicker than the waving plumage of a bird, dazzling as lightning and like it giving day to night, yet mild and faint, that smile came; it went, and then there was an end of all joy to me."

Thus his own sorrows, or the shapes copied from nature that dwelt in his mind with beauty greater than their own, occupied our talk while I railed in my own griefs with cautious secresy. If for a moment he shewed curiosity, my eyes fell, my voice died away and my evident suffering made him quickly endeavour to banish the ideas he had awakened; yet he for ever mingled consolation in his talk, and tried to soften my despair by demonstrations of deep sympathy and compassion. "We are both unhappy —" he would say to me; "I have told you my melancholy tale and we have wept together the loss of that lovely spirit that has so cruelly deserted me; but you hide your griefs: I do not ask you to disclose them, but tell me if I may not console you. It seems to me a wild adventure to find in this desart one like you quite solitary: you are young and lovely; your manners are refined and attractive; yet there is in your settled melancholy, and something, I know not what, in your expressive eyes that seems to seperate you from your kind: you shudder; pardon me, I entreat you but I cannot help expressing this once at least the lively interest I feel in your destiny.

“You never smile: your voice is low, and you utter your words as if you were afraid of the slight sound they would produce: the expression of awful and intense sorrow never for a moment fades from your countenance. I have lost for ever the loveliest companion that any man could ever have possessed, one who rather appears to have been a superior spirit who by some strange accident wandered among us earthly creatures, than as belonging to our kind. Yet I smile, and sometimes I speak almost forgetful of the change I have endured. But your sad mien never alters; your pulses beat and you breathe, yet you seem already to belong to another world; and sometimes, pray pardon my wild thoughts, when you touch my hand I am surprised to find your hand warm when all the fire of life seems extinct within you.

“When I look upon you, the tears you shed, the soft deprecating look with which you withstand enquiry; the deep sympathy your voice expresses when I speak of my lesser sorrows add to my interest for you. You stand here shelterless[.] You have cast yourself from among us and you wither on this wild plain fo[r]lorn and helpless: some dreadful calamity must have befallen you. Do not turn from me; I do not ask you to reveal it: I only entreat you to listen to me and to become familiar with the voice of consolation and kindness. If pity, and admiration, and gentle affection can wean you from despair let me attempt the task. I cannot see your look of deep grief without endeavouring to restore you to happier feelings. Unbend your brow; relax the stern melancholy of your regard; permit a friend, a sincere, affectionate friend, I will be one, to convey some relief, some momentary pause to your sufferings.

“Do not think that I would intrude upon your confidence: I only ask your patience. Do not for ever look sorrow and never speak it; utter one word of bitter complaint and I will reprove it with gentle exhortation and pour on you the balm of compassion. You must not shut me from all communion with you: do not tell me why you grieve but only say the words, “I am unhappy,” and you will feel relieved as if for some time excluded from all intercourse by some magic spell you should suddenly enter again the pale of human sympathy. I entreat you to believe in my most sincere professions and to treat me as an old and tried friend: promise me never to forget me, never causelessly to banish me; but try to love me as one who would devote all his energies to make you happy. Give me the name of friend; I will fulfill its duties; and if for a moment complaint and sorrow would shape themselves into words let me be near to speak peace to your vext soul."

I repeat his persuasions in faint terms and cannot give you at the same time the tone and gesture that animated them. Like a refreshing shower on an arid soil they revived me, and although I still kept their cause secret he led me to pour forth my bitter complaints and to clothe my woe in words of gall and fire. With all the energy of desperate grief I told him how I had fallen at once from bliss to misery; how that for me there was no joy, no hope; that death however bitter would be the welcome seal to all my pangs; death the skeleton was to be beautiful as love. I know not why but I found it sweet to utter these words to human ears; and though I derided all consolation yet I was pleased to see it offered me with gentleness and kindness. I listened quietly, and when he paused would again pour out my misery in expressions that shewed how far too deep my wounds were for any cure.

But now also I began to reap the fruits of my perfect solitude. I had become unfit for any intercourse, even with Woodville the most gentle and sympathizing creature that existed. I had become captious and unreasonable: my temper was utterly spoilt. I called him my friend but I viewed all he did with jealous eyes. If he did not visit me at the appointed hour I was angry, very angry, and told him that if indeed he did feel interest in me it was cold, and could not be fitted for me, a poor worn creature, whose deep unhappiness demanded much more than his worldly heart could give. When for a moment I imagined that his manner was cold I would fretfully say to him—"I was at peace before you came; why have you disturbed me? You have given me new wants and now your trifle with me as if my heart were as whole as yours, as if I were not in truth a shorn lamb thrust out on the bleak hill side, tortured by every blast. I wished for no friend, no sympathy[.] I avoided you, you know I did, but you forced yourself upon me and gave me those wants which you see with triump[h] give you power over me. Oh the brave power of the bitter north wind which freezes the tears it has caused to shed! But I will not bear this; go: the sun will rise and set as before you came, and I shall sit among the pines or wander on the heath weeping and complaining without wishing for you to listen. You are cruel, very cruel, to treat me who bleed at every pore in this rough manner."

And then, when in answer to my peevish words, I saw his countenance bent with living pity on me[,] when I saw him

Gli occhi drizzo ver me con quel sembiante Che madre fa sopra figlioul deliro

P[a]radiso. C 1.

I wept and said, “Oh, pardon me! You are good and kind but I am not fit for life. Why am I obliged to live? To drag hour after hour, to see the trees wave their branches restlessly, to feel the air, & to suffer in all I feel keenest agony. My frame is strong, but my soul sinks beneath this endurance of living anguish. Death is the goal that I would attain, but, alas! I do not even see the end of the course. Do you, my compassionate friend, tell me how to die peacefully and innocently and I will bless you: all that I, poor wretch, can desire is a painless death.”

But Woodville’s words had magic in them, when beginning with the sweetest pity, he would raise me by degrees out of myself and my sorrows until I wondered at my own selfishness: but he left me and despair returned; the work of consolation was ever to begin anew. I often desired his entire absence; for I found that I was grown out of the ways of life and that by long seclusion, although I could support my accustomed grief, and drink the bitter daily draught with some degree of patience, yet I had become unfit for the slightest novelty of feeling. Expectation, and hopes, and affection were all too much for me. I knew this, but at other times I was unreasonable and laid the blame upon him, who was most blameless, and pevishly thought that if his gentle soul were more gentle, if his intense sympathy were more intense, he could drive the fiend from my soul and make me more human. I am, I thought, a tragedy; a character that he comes to see act: now and then he gives me my cue that I may make a speech more to his purpose: perhaps he is already planning a poem in which I am to figure. I am a farce and play to him, but to me this is all dreary reality: he takes all the profit and I bear all the burthen.

CHAPTER XI

It is a strange circumstance but it often occurs that blessings by their use turn to curses; and that I who in solitude had desired sympathy as the only relief I could enjoy should now find it an additional torture to me. During my father's life time I had always been of an affectionate and forbearing disposition, but since those days of joy alas! I was much changed. I had become arrogant, peevish, and above all suspicious. Although the real interest of my narration is now ended and I ought quickly to wind up its melancholy catastrophe, yet I will relate one instance of my sad suspicion and despair and how Woodville with the goodness and almost the power of an angel, softened my rugged feelings and led me back to gentleness.

He had promised to spend some hours with me one afternoon but a violent and continual rain prevented him. I was alone the whole evening. I had passed two whole years alone unrepining, but now I was miserable. He could not really care for me, I thought, for if he did the storm would rather have made him come even if I had not expected him, than, as it did, prevent a promised visit. He would well know that this drear sky and gloomy rain would load my spirit almost to madness: if the weather had been fine I should not have regretted his absence as heavily as I necessarily must shut up in this miserable cottage with no companions but my own wretched thoughts. If he were truly my friend he would have calculated all this; and let me now calculate this boasted friendship, and discover its real worth. He got over his grief for Elinor, and the country became dull to him, so he was glad to find even me for amusement; and when he does not know what else to do he passes his lazy hours here, and calls this friendship — It is true that his presence is a consolation to me, and that his words are sweet, and, when he will he can pour forth thoughts that win me from despair. His words are sweet, — and so, truly, is the honey of the bee, but the bee has a sting, and unkindness is a worse smart that that received from an insect's venom. I will put him to the proof. He says all hope is dead to him, and I know that it is dead to me, so we are both equally fitted for death. Let me try if he will die with me; and as I fear to die alone, if he will accompany [me] to cheer me, and thus he can shew himself my friend in the only manner my misery will permit.

It was madness I believe, but I so worked myself up to this idea that I could think of nothing else. If he dies with me it is well, and there will be an end of two miserable beings; and if he will not, then will I scoff at his friendship and drink the poison before him to shame his cowardice. I planned the whole scene with an earnest heart and franticly set my soul on this project. I procured Laudanum and placing it in two glasses on the table, filled my room with flowers and decorated the last scene of my tragedy with the nicest care. As the hour for his coming approached my heart softened and I wept; not that I gave up my plan, but even when resolved the mind must undergo several revolutions of feeling before it can drink its death.

Now all was ready and Woodville came. I received him at the door of my cottage and leading him solemnly into the room, I said: “My friend, I wish to die. I am quite weary of enduring the misery which hourly I do endure, and I will throw it off. What slave will not, if he may, escape from his chains? Look, I weep: for more than two years I have never enjoyed one moment free from anguish. I have often desired to die; but I am a very coward. It is hard for one so young who was once so happy as I was; [*sic*] voluntarily to divest themselves of all sensation and to go alone to the dreary grave; I dare not. I must die, yet my fear chills me; I pause and shudder and then for months I endure my excess of wretchedness. But now the time is come when I may quit life, I have a friend who will not refuse to accompany me in this dark journey; such is my request: earnestly do I entreat and implore you to die with me. Then we shall find Elinor and what I have lost. Look, I am prepared; there is the death draught, let us drink it together and willingly & joyfully quit this hated round of daily life[.]

“You turn from me; yet before you deny me reflect, Woodville, how sweet it were to cast off the load of tears and misery under which we now labour: and surely we shall find light after we have passed the dark valley. That drink will plunge us in a sweet slumber, and when we awaken what joy will be ours to find all our sorrows and fears past. *A little patience, and all will be over*; aye, a very little patience; for, look, there is the key of our prison; we hold it in our own hands, and are we more debased than slaves to cast it away and give ourselves up to voluntary bondage? Even now if we had courage we might be free. Behold, my cheek is flushed with pleasure at the imagination of death; all that we love are dead. Come, give me your hand, one look of joyous sympathy and we will go together and seek them; a lulling journey; where our arrival will bring bliss and our waking be that of angels. Do you delay? Are you a coward, Woodville? Oh fie! Cast off this blank look of human melancholy. Oh! that I had words to express the luxury of death that I might win you. I tell you we are no longer miserable mortals; we are about to become Gods; spirits free and happy as gods. What fool on a bleak shore, seeing a flowery isle on the other side with his lost love beckoning to him from it would pause because the wave is dark and turbid?

"What if some little payne the passage have That makes frayle flesh to fear the bitter wave? Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease, And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave?[F]

"Do you mark my words; I have learned the language of despair: I have it all by heart, for I am Despair; and a strange being am I, joyous, triumphant Despair. But those words are false, for the wave may be dark but it is not bitter. We lie down, and close our eyes with a gentle good night, and when we wake, we are free. Come then, no more delay, thou tardy one! Behold the pleasant potion! Look, I am a spirit of good, and not a human maid that invites thee, and with winning accents, (oh, that they would win thee!) says, Come and drink."

As I spoke I fixed my eyes upon his countenance, and his exquisite beauty, the heavenly compassion that beamed from his eyes, his gentle yet earnest look of deprecation and wonder even before he spoke wrought a change in my high strained feelings taking from me all the sterness of despair and filling me only with the softest grief. I saw his eyes humid also as he took both my hands in his; and sitting down near me, he said:

"This is a sad deed to which you would lead me, dearest friend, and your woe must indeed be deep that could fill you with these unhappy thoughts. You long for death and yet you fear it and wish me to be your companion. But I have less courage than you and even thus accompanied I dare not die. Listen to me, and then reflect if you ought to win me to your project, even if with the over-bearing eloquence of despair you could make black death so inviting that the fair heaven should appear darkness. Listen I entreat you to the words of one who has himself nurtured desperate thoughts, and longed with impatient desire for death, but who has at length trampled the phantom under foot, and crushed his sting. Come, as you have played Despair with me I will play the part of Una with you and bring you hurtless from his dark cavern. Listen to me, and let yourself be softened by words in which no selfish passion lingers.

"We know not what all this wide world means; its strange mixture of good and evil. But we have been placed here and bid live and hope. I know not what we are to hope; but there is some good beyond us that we must seek; and that is our earthly task. If misfortune come against us we must fight with her; we must cast her aside, and still go on to find out that which it is our nature to desire. Whether this prospect of future good be the preparation for another existence I know not; or whether that it is merely that we, as workmen in God's vineyard, must lend a hand to smooth the way for our posterity. If it indeed be that; if the efforts of the virtuous now, are to make the future inhabitants of this fair world more happy; if the labours of those who cast aside selfishness, and try to know the truth of things, are to free the men of ages, now far distant but which will one day come, from the burthen under which those who now live groan, and like you weep bitterly; if they free them but from one of what are now the necessary evils of life, truly I will not fail but will with my whole soul aid the work. From my youth I have said, I will be virtuous; I will dedicate my life for the good of others; I will do my best to extirpate evil and if the spirit who protects ill should so influence circumstances that I should suffer through my endeavour, yet while there is hope and hope there ever must be, of success, cheerfully do I gird myself to my task.

"I have powers; my countrymen think well of them. Do you think I sow my seed in the barren air, & have no end in what I do? Believe me, I will never desert life untill this last hope is torn from my bosom, that in some way my labours may form a link in the chain of gold with which we ought all to strive to drag Happiness from where she sits enthroned above the clouds, now far beyond our reach, to inhabit the earth with us. Let us suppose that Socrates, or Shakespear, or Rousseau had been seized with despair and died in youth when they were as young as I am; do you think that we and all the world should not have lost incalculable improvement in our good feelings and our happiness thro' their destruction. I am not like one of these; they influenced millions: but if I can influence but a hundred, but ten, but one solitary individual, so as in any way to lead him from ill to good, that will be a joy to repay me for all my sufferings, though they were a million times multiplied; and that hope will support me to bear them[.]

"And those who do not work for posterity; or working, as may be my case, will not be known by it; yet they, believe me, have also their duties. You grieve because you are unhappy[;] it is happiness you seek but you despair of obtaining it. But if you can bestow happiness on another; if you can give one other person only one hour of joy ought you not to live to do it? And every one has it in their power to do that. The inhabitants of this world suffer so much pain. In crowded cities, among cultivated plains, or on the desart mountains, pain is thickly sown, and if we can tear up but one of these noxious weeds, or more, if in its stead we can sow one seed of corn, or plant one fair flower, let that be motive sufficient against suicide. Let us not desert our task while there is the slightest hope that we may in a future day do this.

"Indeed I dare not die. I have a mother whose support and hope I am. I have a friend who loves me as his life, and in whose breast I should infix a mortal sting if I ungratefully left him. So I will not die. Nor shall you, my friend; cheer up; cease to weep, I entreat you. Are you not young, and fair, and good? Why should you despair? Or if you must for yourself, why for others? If you can never be happy, can you never bestow happiness[?] Oh! believe me, if you beheld on lips pale with grief one smile of joy and gratitude, and knew that you were parent of that smile, and that without you it had never been, you would feel so pure and warm a happiness that you would wish to live for ever again and again to enjoy the same pleasure[.]

"Come, I see that you have already cast aside the sad thoughts you before franticly indulged. Look in that mirror; when I came your brow was contracted, your eyes deep sunk in your head, your lips quivering; your hands trembled violently when I took them; but now all is tranquil and soft. You are grieved and there is grief in the expression of your countenance but it is gentle and sweet. You allow me to throw away this cursed drink; you smile; oh, Congratulate me, hope is triumphant, and I have done some good."

These words are shadowy as I repeat them but they were indeed words of fire and produced a warm hope in me (I, miserable wretch, to hope!) that tingled like pleasure in my veins. He did not leave me for many hours; not until he had improved the spark that he had kindled, and with an angelic hand fostered the return of somthing that seemed like joy. He left me but I still was calm, and after I had saluted the starry sky and dewy earth with eyes of love and a contented good night, I slept sweetly, visited by dreams, the first of pleasure I had had for many long months.

But this was only a momentary relief and my old habits of feeling returned; for I was doomed while in life to grieve, and to the natural sorrow of my father's death and its most terrific cause, immagination added a tenfold weight of woe. I believed myself to be polluted by the unnatural love I had inspired, and that I was a creature cursed and set apart by nature. I thought that like another Cain, I had a mark set on my forehead to shew mankind that there was a barrier between me and they [*sic*]. Woodville had told me that there was in my countenance an expression as if I belonged to another world; so he had seen that sign: and there it lay a gloomy mark to tell the world that there was that within my soul that no silence could render sufficiently obscure. Why when fate drove me to become this outcast from human feeling; this monster with whom none might mingle in converse and love; why had she not from that fatal and most accursed moment, shrouded me in thick mists and placed real darkness between me and my fellows so that I might never more be seen?, [*sic*] and as I passed, like a murky cloud loaded with blight, they might only perceive me by the cold chill I should cast upon them; telling them, how truly, that something unholy was near? Then I should have lived upon this dreary heath unvisited, and blasting none by my unhallowed gaze. Alas! I verily believe that if the near prospect of death did not dull and soften my bitter [fe]elings, if for a few months longer I had continued to live as I then lived, strong in body, but my soul corrupted to its core by a deadly cancer[,] if day after day I had dwelt on these dreadful sentiments I should have become mad, and should have fancied myself a living pestilence: so horrible to my own solitary thoughts did this form, this voice, and all this wretched self appear; for had it not been the source of guilt that wants a name?

This was superstition. I did not feel thus franticly when first I knew that the holy name of father was become a curse to me: but my lonely life inspired me with wild thoughts; and then when I saw Woodville & day after day he tried to win my confidence and I never dared give words to my dark tale, I was impressed more strongly with the withering fear that I was in truth a marked creature, a pariah, only fit for death.

CHAPTER XII

As I was perpetually haunted by these ideas, you may imagine that the influence of Woodville's words was very temporary; and that although I did not again accuse him of unkindness, yet I soon became as unhappy as before. Soon after this incident we parted. He heard that his mother was ill, and he hastened to her. He came to take leave of me, and we walked together on the heath for the last time. He promised that he would come and see me again; and bade me take cheer, and to encourage what happy thoughts I could, untill time and fortitude should overcome my misery, and I could again mingle in society.

"Above all other admonition on my part," he said, "cherish and follow this one: do not despair. That is the most dangerous gulph on which you perpetually totter; but you must reassure your steps, and take hope to guide you. Hope, and your wounds will be already half healed: but if you obstinately despair, there never more will be comfort for you. Believe me, my dearest friend, that there is a joy that the sun and earth and all its beauties can bestow that you will one day feel. The refreshing bliss of Love will again visit your heart, and undo the spell that binds you to woe, untill you wonder how your eyes could be closed in the long night that burthens you. I dare not hope that I have inspired you with sufficient interest that the thought of me, and the affection that I shall ever bear you, will soften your melancholy and decrease the bitterness of your tears. But if my friendship can make you look on life with less disgust, beware how you injure it with suspicion. Love is a delicate sprite and easily hurt by rough jealousy. Guard, I entreat you, a firm persuasion of my sincerity in the inmost recesses of your heart out of the reach of the casual winds that may disturb its surface. Your temper is made unequal by suffering, and the tenor of your mind is, I fear, sometimes shaken by unworthy causes; but let your confidence in my sympathy and love be deeper far, and incapable of being reached by these agitations that come and go, and if they touch not your affections leave you uninjured."

These were some of Woodville's last lessons. I wept as I listened to him; and after we had taken an affectionate farewell, I followed him far with my eyes until they saw the last of my earthly comforter. I had insisted on accompanying him across the heath towards the town where he dwelt: the sun was yet high when he left me, and I turned my steps towards my cottage. It was at the latter end of the month of September when the nights have become chill. But the weather was serene, and as I walked on I fell into no unpleasing reveries. I thought of Woodville with gratitude and kindness and did not, I know not why, regret his departure with any bitterness. It seemed that after one great shock all other change was trivial to me; and I walked on wondering when the time would come when we should all four, my dearest father restored to me, meet in some sweet Paradise[.] I pictured to myself a lovely river such as that on whose banks Dante describes Mathilda gathering flowers, which ever flows

—— bruna, bruna, Sotto l'ombra perpetua, che mai Raggiar non lascia sole ivi, nè Luna.

And then I repeated to myself all that lovely passage that relates the entrance of Dante into the terrestrial Paradise; and thought it would be sweet when I wandered on those lovely banks to see the car of light descend with my long lost parent to be restored to me. As I waited there in expectation of that moment, I thought how, of the lovely flowers that grew there, I would wind myself a chaplet and crown myself for joy: I would sing *sul margine d'un rio*, my father's favourite song, and that my voice gliding through the windless air would announce to him in whatever bower he sat expecting the moment of our union, that his daughter was come. Then the mark of misery would have faded from my brow, and I should raise my eyes fearlessly to meet his, which ever beamed with the soft lustre of innocent love. When I reflected on the magic look of those deep eyes I wept, but gently, lest my sobs should disturb the fairy scene.

I was so entirely wrapt in this reverie that I wandered on, taking no heed of my steps until I actually stooped down to gather a flower for my wreath on that bleak plain where no flower grew, when I awoke from my day dream and found myself I knew not where.

The sun had set and the roseate hue which the clouds had caught from him in his descent had nearly died away. A wind swept across the plain, I looked around me and saw no object that told me where I was; I had lost myself, and in vain attempted to find my path. I wandered on, and the coming darkness made every trace indistinct by which I might be guided. At length all was veiled in the deep obscurity of blackest night; I became weary and knowing that my servant was to sleep that night at the neighbouring village, so that my absence would alarm no one; and that I was safe in this wild spot from every intruder, I resolved to spend the night where I was. Indeed I was too weary to walk further: the air was chill but I was careless of bodily inconvenience, and I thought that I was well inured to the weather during my two years of solitude, when no change of seasons prevented my perpetual wanderings.

I lay upon the grass surrounded by a darkness which not the slightest beam of light penetrated — There was no sound for the deep night had laid to sleep the insects, the only creatures that lived on the lone spot where no tree or shrub could afford shelter to aught else — There was a wondrous silence in the air that calmed my senses yet which enlivened my soul, my mind hurried from image to image and seemed to grasp an eternity. All in my heart was shadowy yet calm, untill my ideas became confused and at length died away in sleep.

When I awoke it rained: I was already quite wet, and my limbs were stiff and my head giddy with the chill of night. It was a drizzling, penetrating shower; as my dank hair clung to my neck and partly covered my face, I had hardly strength to part with my fingers, the long strait locks that fell before my eyes. The darkness was much dissipated and in the east where the clouds were least dense the moon was visible behind the thin grey cloud —

The moon is behind, and at the full And yet she looks both small and dull.

Its presence gave me a hope that by its means I might find my home. But I was languid and many hours passed before I could reach the cottage, dragging as I did my slow steps, and often resting on the wet earth unable to proceed.

I particularly mark this night, for it was that which has hurried on the last scene of my tragedy, which else might have dwindled on through long years of listless sorrow. I was very ill when I arrived and quite incapable of taking off my wet clothes that clung about me. In the morning, on her return, my servant found me almost lifeless, while possessed by a high fever I was lying on the floor of my room.

I was very ill for a long time, and when I recovered from the immediate danger of fever, every symptom of a rapid consumption declared itself. I was for some time ignorant of this and thought that my excessive weakness was the consequence of the fever; [*sic*] But my strength became less and less; as winter came on I had a cough; and my sunken cheek, before pale, burned with a hectic fever. One by one these symptoms struck me; & I became convinced that the moment I had so much desired was about to arrive and that I was dying. I was sitting by my fire, the physician who had attended me ever since my fever had just left me, and I looked over his prescription in which digitalis was the prominent medecine. “Yes,” I said, “I see how this is, and it is strange that I should have deceived myself so long; I am about to die an innocent death, and it will be sweeter even than that which the opium promised.”

I rose and walked slowly to the window; the wide heath was covered by snow which sparkled under the beams of the sun that shone brightly thro’ the pure, frosty air: a few birds were pecking some crumbs under my window. I smiled with quiet joy; and in my thoughts, which through long habit would for ever connect themselves into one train, as if I shaped them into words, I thus addressed the scene before me:

“I salute thee, beautiful Sun, and thou, white Earth, fair and cold! Perhaps I shall never see thee again covered with green, and the sweet flowers of the coming spring will blossom on my grave. I am about to leave thee; soon this living spirit which is ever busy among strange shapes and ideas, which belong not to thee, soon it will have flown to other regions and this emaciated body will rest insensate on thy bosom

“Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course With rocks, and stones, and trees.

“For it will be the same with thee, who art called our Universal Mother, when I am gone. I have loved thee; and in my days both of happiness and sorrow I have peopled your solitudes with wild fancies of my own creation. The woods, and lakes, and mountains which I have loved, have for me a thousand associations; and thou, oh, Sun! hast smiled upon, and borne your part in many imaginations that sprung to life in my soul alone, and which will die with me. Your solitudes, sweet land, your trees and waters will still exist, moved by your winds, or still beneath the eye of noon, though [w]hat I have felt about ye, and all my dreams which have often strangely deformed thee, will die with me. You will exist to reflect other images in other minds, and ever will remain the same, although your reflected semblance vary in a thousand ways, changeable as the hearts of those who view thee. One of these fragile mirrors, that ever doted on thine image, is about to be broken, crumbled to dust. But everteeming Nature will create another and another, and thou wilt loose nought by my destruction.

"Thou wilt ever be the same. Recieve then the grateful farewell of a fleeting shadow who is about to disappear, who joyfully leaves thee, yet with a last look of affectionate thankfulness. Farewell! Sky, and fields and woods; the lovely flowers that grow on thee; thy mountains & thy rivers; to the balmy air and the strong wind of the north, to all, a last farewell. I shall shed no more tears for my task is almost fulfilled, and I am about to be rewarded for long and most burthensome suffering. Bless thy child even even [*sic*] in death, as I bless thee; and let me sleep at peace in my quiet grave."

I feel death to be near at hand and I am calm. I no longer despair, but look on all around me with placid affection. I find it sweet to watch the progressive decay of my strength, and to repeat to myself, another day and yet another, but again I shall not see the red leaves of autumn; before that time I shall be with my father. I am glad Woodville is not with me for perhaps he would grieve, and I desire to see smiles alone during the last scene of my life; when I last wrote to him I told him of my ill health but not of its mortal tendency, lest he should conceive it to be his duty to come to me for I fear lest the tears of friendship should destroy the blessed calm of my mind. I take pleasure in arranging all the little details which will occur when I shall no longer be. In truth I am in love with death; no maiden ever took more pleasure in the contemplation of her bridal attire than I in fancying my limbs already enwrapt in their shroud: is it not my marriage dress? Alone it will unite me to my father when in an eternal mental union we shall never part.

I will not dwell on the last changes that I feel in the final decay of nature. It is rapid but without pain: I feel a strange pleasure in it. For long years these are the first days of peace that have visited me. I no longer exhaust my miserable heart by bitter tears and frantic complaints; I no longer the [*sic*] reproach the sun, the earth, the air, for pain and wretchedness. I wait in quiet expectation for the closing hours of a life which has been to me most sweet & bitter. I do not die not having enjoyed life; for sixteen years I was happy: during the first months of my father's return I had enjoyed ages of pleasure: now indeed I am grown old in grief; my steps are feeble like those of age; I have become peevish and unfit for life; so having passed little more than twenty years upon the earth I am more fit for my narrow grave than many are when they reach the natural term of their lives.

Again and again I have passed over in my remembrance the different scenes of my short life: if the world is a stage and I merely an actor on it my part has been strange, and, alas! tragical. Almost from infancy I was deprived of all the testimonies of affection which children generally receive; I was thrown entirely upon my own resources, and I enjoyed what I may almost call unnatural pleasures, for they were dreams and not realities. The earth was to me a magic lantern and I [a] gazer, and a listener but no actor; but then came the transporting and soul-reviving era of my existence: my father returned and I could pour my warm affections on a human heart; there was a new sun and a new earth created to me; the waters of existence sparkled: joy! joy! but, alas! what grief! My bliss was more rapid than the progress of a sunbeam on a mountain, which discloses its glades & woods, and then leaves it dark & blank; to my happiness followed madness and agony, closed by despair.

This was the drama of my life which I have now depicted upon paper. During three months I have been employed in this task. The memory of sorrow has brought tears; the memory of happiness a warm glow the lively shadow of that joy. Now my tears are dried; the glow has faded from my cheeks, and with a few words of farewell to you, Woodville, I close my work: the last that I shall perform.

Farewell, my only living friend; you are the sole tie that binds me to existence, and now I break it[.] It gives me no pain to leave you; nor can our seperation give you much. You never regarded me as one of this world, but rather as a being, who for some penance was sent from the Kingdom of Shadows; and she passed a few days weeping on the earth and longing to return to her native soil. You will weep but they will be tears of gentleness. I would, if I thought that it would lessen your regret, tell you to smile and congratulate me on my departure from the misery you beheld me endure. I would say; Woodville, rejoice with your friend, I triumph now and am most happy. But I check these expressions; these may not be the consolations of the living; they weep for their own misery, and not for that of the being they have lost. No; shed a few natural tears due to my memory: and if you ever visit my grave, pluck from thence a flower, and lay it to your heart; for your heart is the only tomb in which my memory will be enterred.

My death is rapidly approaching and you are not near to watch the flitting and vanishing of my spirit. Do no[t] regret this; for death is a too terrible an [*sic*] object for the living. It is one of those adversities which hurt instead of purifying the heart; for it is so intense a misery that it hardens & dulls the feelings. Dreadful as the time was when I pursued my father towards the ocean, & found their [*sic*] only his lifeless corpse; yet for my own sake I should prefer that to the watching one by one his senses fade; his pulse weaken — and sleeplessly as it were devour his life in gazing. To see life in his limbs & to know that soon life would no longer be there; to see the warm breath issue from his lips and to know they would soon be chill — I will not continue to trace this frightful picture; you suffered this torture once; I never did. And the remembrance fills your heart sometimes with bitter despair when otherwise your feelings would have melted into soft sorrow.

So day by day I become weaker, and life flickers in my wasting form, as a lamp about to loose it vivifying oil. I now behold the glad sun of May. It was May, four years ago, that I first saw my beloved father; it was in May, three years ago that my folly destroyed the only being I was doomed to love. May is returned, and I die. Three days ago, the anniversary of our meeting; and, alas! of our eternal seperation, after a day of killing emotion, I caused myself to be led once more to behold the face of nature. I caused myself to be carried to some meadows some miles distant from my cottage; the grass was being mowed, and there was the scent of hay in the fields; all the earth look[ed] fresh and its inhabitants happy. Evening approached and I beheld the sun set. Three years ago and on that day and hour it shone through the branches and leaves of the beech wood and its beams flickered upon the countenance of him whom I then beheld for the last time. I now saw that divine orb, gilding all the clouds with unwonted splendour, sink behind the horizon; it disappeared from a world where he whom I would seek exists not; it approached a world where he exists not[.] Why do I weep so bitterly? Why my [*sic*] does my heart heave with vain endeavour to cast aside the bitter anguish that covers it "as the waters cover the sea." I go from this world where he is no longer and soon I shall meet him in another.

Farewell, Woodville, the turf will soon be green on my grave; and the violets will bloom on it. *There* is my hope and my expectation; your’s are in this world; may they be fulfilled.

APPENDIX: THE FIELDS OF FANCY

It was in Rome — the Queen of the World that I suffered a misfortune that reduced me to misery & despair — The bright sun & deep azure sky were oppressive but nought was so hateful as the voice of Man — I loved to walk by the shores of the Tiber which were solitary & if the sirocco blew to see the swift clouds pass over St. Peters and the many domes of Rome or if the sun shone I turned my eyes from the sky whose light was too dazzling & gay to be reflected in my tearful eyes I turned them to the river whose swift course was as the speedy departure of happiness and whose turbid colour was gloomy as grief —

Whether I slept I know not or whether it was in one of those many hours which I spent seated on the ground my mind a chaos of despair & my eyes for ever wet by tears but I was here visited by a lovely spirit whom I have ever worshiped & who tried to repay my adoration by diverting my mind from the hideous memories that racked it. At first indeed this wanton spirit played a false part & appearing with sable wings & gloomy countenance seemed to take a pleasure in exagerating all my miseries — and as small hopes arose to snatch them from me & give me in their place gigantic fears which under her fairy hand appeared close, impending & unavoidable — sometimes she would cruelly leave me while I was thus on the verge of madness and without consoling me leave me nought but heavy leaden sleep — but at other times she would wilily link less unpleasing thoughts to these most dreadful ones & before I was aware place hopes before me — futile but consoling —

One day this lovely spirit — whose name as she told me was Fantasia came to me in one of her consolotary moods — her wings which seemed coloured by her tone of mind were not gay but beautiful like that of the partridge & her lovely eyes although they ever burned with an unquenshable fire were shaded & softened by her heavy lids & the black long fringe of her eye lashes — She thus addressed me — You mourn for the loss of those you love. They are gone for ever & great as my power is I cannot recall them to you — if indeed I wave my wand over you you will fancy that you feel their gentle spirits in the soft air that steals over your cheeks & the distant sound of winds & waters may image to you their voices which will bid you rejoice for that they live — This will not take away your grief but you will shed sweeter tears than those which full of anguish & hopelessness now start from your eyes — This I can do & also can I take you to see many of my provinces my fairy lands which you have not yet visited and whose beauty will while away the heavy time — I have many lovely spots under my command which poets of old have visited and have seen those sights the relation of which has been as a revelation to the world — many spots I have still in keeping of lovely fields or horrid rocks peopled by the beautiful or the tremendous which I keep in reserve for my future worshippers — to one of those whose grim terrors frightened sleep from the eye I formerly led you but you now need more pleasing images & although I will not promise you to shew you any new scenes yet if I lead you to one often visited by my followers you will at least see new combinations that will sooth if they do not delight you — Follow me —

Alas! I replied — when have you found me slow to obey your voice — some times indeed I have called you & you have not come — but when before have I not followed your slightest sign and have left what was either of joy or sorrow in our world to dwell with you in yours till you have dismissed me ever unwilling to depart — But now the weight of grief that oppresses me takes from me that lightness which is necessary to follow your quick & winged motions alas in the midst of my course one thought would make me droop to the ground while you would outspeed me to your Kingdom of Glory & leave me here darkling

Ungrateful! replied the Spirit Do I not tell you that I will sustain & console you My wings shall aid your heavy steps & I will command my winds to disperse the mist that over casts you — I will lead you to a place where you will not hear laughter that disturbs you or see the sun that dazzles you — We will choose some of the most sombre walks of the Elysian fields —

The Elysian fields — I exclaimed with a quick scream — shall I then see? I gasped & could not ask that which I longed to know — the friendly spirit replied more gravely — I have told you that you will not see those whom you mourn — But I must away — follow me or I must leave you weeping deserted by the spirit that now checks your tears —

Go — I replied I cannot follow — I can only sit here & grieve — & long to see those who are gone for ever for to nought but what has relation to them can I listen —

The spirit left me to groan & weep to wish the sun quenched in eternal darkness — to accuse the air the waters all — all the universe of my utter & irremediable misery — Fantasia came again and ever when she came tempted me to follow her but as to follow her was to leave for a while the thought of those loved ones whose memories were my all although they were my torment I dared not go — Stay with me I cried & help me to clothe my bitter thoughts in lovelier colours give me hope although fallacious & images of what has been although it never will be again — diversion I cannot take cruel fairy do you leave me alas all my joy fades at thy departure but I may not follow thee —

One day after one of these combats when the spirit had left me I wandered on along the banks of the river to try to disperse the excessive misery that I felt untill overcome by fatigue — my eyes weighed down by tears — I lay down under the shade of trees & fell asleep — I slept long and when I awoke I knew not where I was — I did not see the river or the distant city — but I lay beside a lovely fountain shadowed over by willows & surrounded by blooming myrtles — at a short distance the air seemed pierced by the spiry pines & cypresses and the ground was covered by short moss & sweet smelling heath — the sky was blue but not dazzling like that of Rome and on every side I saw long allies — clusters of trees with intervening lawns & gently stealing rivers — Where am I? [I] exclaimed — & looking around me I beheld Fantasia — She smiled & as she smiled all the enchanting scene appeared lovelier — rainbows played in the fountain & the heath flowers at our feet appeared as if just refreshed by dew — I have seized you, said she — as you slept and will for some little time retain you as my prisoner — I will introduce you to some of the inhabitants of these peaceful Gardens — It shall not be to any whose exuberant happiness will form an u[n]pleasing contrast with your heavy grief but it shall be to those whose chief care here is to acquired knowledged [*sic*] & virtue — or to those who having just escaped from care & pain have not yet recovered full sense of enjoyment — This part of these Elysian Gardens is devoted to those who as before in your world wished to become wise & virtuous by study & action here endeavour after the same ends by contemplation —

They are still unknowing of their final destination but they have a clear knowledge of what on earth is only supposed by some which is that their happiness now & hereafter depends upon their intellectual improvement — Nor do they only study the forms of this universe but search deeply in their own minds and love to meet & converse on all those high subjects of which the philosophers of Athens loved to treat — With deep feelings but with no outward circumstances to excite their passions you will perhaps imagine that their life is uniform & dull — but these sages are of that disposition fitted to find wisdom in every thing & in every lovely colour or form ideas that excite their love — Besides many years are consumed before they arrive here — When a soul longing for knowledge & pining at its narrow conceptions escapes from your earth many spirits wait to receive it and to open its eyes to the mysteries of the universe — many centuries are often consumed in these travels and they at last retire here to digest their knowledge & to become still wiser by thought and imagination working upon memory — When the fitting period is accomplished they leave this garden to inhabit another world fitted for the reception of beings almost infinitely wise — but what this world is neither can you conceive or I teach you — some of the spirits whom you will see here are yet unknowing in the secrets of nature — They are those whom care & sorrow have consumed on earth & whose hearts although active in virtue have been shut through suffering from knowledge — These spend sometime here to recover their equanimity & to get a thirst of knowledge from converse with their wiser companions — They now securely hope to see again those whom they love & know that it is ignorance alone that detains them from them. As for those who in your world knew not the loveliness of benevolence & justice they are placed apart some claimed by the evil spirit & in vain sought for by the good but She whose delight is to reform the wicked takes all she can & delivers them to her ministers not to be punished but to be exercised & instructed untill acquiring a love of virtue they are fitted for these gardens where they will acquire a love of knowledge

As Fantasia talked I saw various groupes of figures as they walked among the allies of the gardens or were seated on the grassy plots either in contemplation or conversation several advanced together towards the fountain where I sat — As they approached I observed the principal figure to be that of a woman about 40 years of age her eyes burned with a deep fire and every line of her face expressed enthusiasm & wisdom — Poetry seemed seated on her lips which were beautifully formed & every motion of her limbs although not youthful was inexpressibly graceful — her black hair was bound in tresses round her head and her brows were encompassed by a fillet — her dress was that of a simple tunic bound at the waist by a broad girdle and a mantle which fell over her left arm she was encompassed by several youths of both sexes who appeared to hang on her words & to catch the inspiration as it flowed from her with looks either of eager wonder or stedfast attention with eyes all bent towards her eloquent countenance which beamed with the mind within — I am going said Fantasia but I leave my spirit with you without which this scene wd fade away — I leave you in good company — that female whose eyes like the loveliest planet in the heavens draw all to gaze on her is the Prophetess Diotima the instructress of Socrates — The company about her are those just escaped from the world there they were unthinking or misconducted in the pursuit of knowledge. She leads them to truth & wisdom untill the time comes when they shall be fitted for the journey through the universe which all must one day undertake — farewell —

And now, gentlest reader — I must beg your indulgence — I am a being too weak to record the words of Diotima her matchless wisdom & heavenly eloquence[.] What I shall repeat will be as the faint shadow of a tree by moonlight — some what of the form will be preserved but there will be no life in it — Plato alone of Mortals could record the thoughts of Diotima hopeless therefore I shall not dwell so much on her words as on those of her pupils which being more earthly can better than hers be related by living lips[.]

Diotima approached the fountain & seated herself on a mossy mound near it and her disciples placed themselves on the grass near her — Without noticing me who sat close under her she continued her discourse addressing as it happened one or other of her listeners — but before I attempt to repeat her words I will describe the chief of these whom she appeared to wish principally to impress — One was a woman of about 23 years of age in the full enjoyment of the most exquisite beauty her golden hair floated in ringlets on her shoulders — her hazle eyes were shaded by heavy lids and her mouth the lips apart seemed to breathe sensibility — But she appeared thoughtful & unhappy — her cheek was pale she seemed as if accustomed to suffer and as if the lessons she now heard were the only words of wisdom to which she had ever listened — The youth beside her had a far different aspect — his form was emaciated nearly to a shadow — his features were handsome but thin & worn — & his eyes glistened as if animating the visage of decay — his forehead was expansive but there was a doubt & perplexity in his looks that seemed to say that although he had sought wisdom he had got entangled in some mysterious mazes from which he in vain endeavoured to extricate himself — As Diotima spoke his colour went & came with quick changes & the flexible muscles of his countenance shewed every impression that his mind received — he seemed one who in life had studied hard but whose feeble frame sunk beneath the weight of the mere exertion of life — the spark of intelligence burned with uncommon strength within him but that of life seemed ever on the eve of fading — At present I shall not describe any other of this groupe but with deep attention try to recall in my memory some of the words of Diotima — they were words of fire but their path is faintly marked on my recollection —

It requires a just hand, said she continuing her discourse, to weigh & divide the good from evil — On the earth they are inextricably entangled and if you would cast away what there appears an evil a multitude of beneficial causes or effects cling to it & mock your labour — When I was on earth and have walked in a solitary country during the silence of night & have beheld the multitude of stars, the soft radiance of the moon reflected on the sea, which was studded by lovely islands — When I have felt the soft breeze steal across my cheek & as the words of love it has soothed & cherished me — then my mind seemed almost to quit the body that confined it to the earth & with a quick mental sense to mingle with the scene that I hardly saw — I felt — Then I have exclaimed, oh world how beautiful thou art! — Oh brightest universe behold thy worshiper! — spirit of beauty & of sympathy which pervades all things, & now lifts my soul as with wings, how have you animated the light & the breezes! — Deep & inexplicable spirit give me words to express my adoration; my mind is hurried away but with language I cannot tell how I feel thy loveliness! Silence or the song of the nightingale the momentary apparition of some bird that flies quietly past — all seems animated with thee & more than all the deep sky studded with worlds!” — If the winds roared & tore the sea and the dreadful lightnings seemed falling around me — still love was mingled with the sacred terror I felt; the majesty of loveliness was deeply impressed on me — So also I have felt when I have seen a lovely countenance — or heard solemn music or the eloquence of divine wisdom flowing from the lips of one of its worshippers — a lovely animal or even the graceful undulations of trees & inanimate objects have excited in me the same deep feeling of love & beauty; a feeling which while it made me alive & eager to seek the cause & animator of the scene, yet satisfied me by its very depth as if I had already found the solution to my enquires [*sic*] & as if in feeling myself a part of the great whole I had found the truth & secret of the universe — But when retired in my cell I have studied & contemplated the various motions and actions in the world the weight of evil has confounded me — If I thought of the creation I saw an eternal chain of evil linked one to the other — from the great whale who in the sea swallows & destroys multitudes & the smaller fish that live on him also & torment him to madness — to the cat whose pleasure it is to torment her prey I saw the whole creation filled with pain — each creature seems to exist through the misery of another & death & havoc is the watchword of the animated world — And Man also — even in Athens the most civilized spot on the earth what a multitude of mean passions — envy, malice — a restless desire to depreciate all that was great and good did I see — And in the dominions of the great being I saw man [reduced?] far below the animals of the field preying on one anothers [*sic*] hearts; happy in the downfall of others — themselves holding on with bent necks and cruel eyes to a wretch more a slave if possible than they to his miserable passions — And if I said these are the consequences of civilization & turned to the savage world I saw only ignorance unrepaid by any noble feeling — a mere animal, love of life joined to a low love of power & a fiendish love of destruction — I saw a creature drawn on by his senses & his selfish passions but untouched by aught noble or even Human —

And then when I sought for consolation in the various faculties man is possessed of & which I felt burning within me — I found that spirit of union with love & beauty which formed my happiness & pride degraded into superstition & turned from its natural growth which could bring forth only good fruit: — cruelty — & intolerance & hard tyranny was grafted on its trunk & from it sprung fruit suitable to such grafts — If I mingled with my fellow creatures was the voice I heard that of love & virtue or that of selfishness & vice, still misery was ever joined to it & the tears of mankind formed a vast sea ever blown on by its sighs & seldom illuminated by its smiles — Such taking only one side of the picture & shutting wisdom from the view is a just portraiture of the creation as seen on earth

But when I compared the good & evil of the world & wished to divide them into two seperate principles I found them inextricably intwined together & I was again cast into perplexity & doubt — I might have considered the earth as an imperfect formation where having bad materials to work on the Creator could only palliate the evil effects of his combinations but I saw a wanton malignity in many parts & particularly in the mind of man that baffled me a delight in mischief a love of evil for evils sake — a siding of the multitude — a dastardly applause which in their hearts the crowd gave to triumphant wick[ed]ness over lowly virtue that filled me with painful sensations. Meditation, painful & continual thought only encreased my doubts — I dared not commit the blasphemy of ascribing the slightest evil to a beneficent God — To whom then should I ascribe the creation? To two principles? Which was the upermost? They were certainly independant for neither could the good spirit allow the existence of evil or the evil one the existence of good — Tired of these doubts to which I could form no probable solution — Sick of forming theories which I destroyed as quickly as I built them I was one evening on the top of Hymettus beholding the lovely prospect as the sun set in the glowing sea — I looked towards Athens & in my heart I exclaimed — oh busy hive of men! What heroism & what meaness exists within thy walls! And alas! both to the good & to the wicked what incalculable misery — Freemen ye call yourselves yet every free man has ten slaves to build up his freedom — and these slaves are men as they are yet d[e]graded by their station to all that is mean & loathsome — Yet in how many hearts now beating in that city do high thoughts live & magnanimity that should methinks redeem the whole human race — What though the good man is unhappy has he not that in his heart to satisfy him? And will a contented conscience compensate for fallen hopes — a slandered name torn affections & all the miseries of civilized life? —

Oh Sun how beautiful thou art! And how glorious is the golden ocean that receives thee! My heart is at peace — I feel no sorrow — a holy love stills my senses — I feel as if my mind also partook of the inexpressible loveliness of surrounding nature — What shall I do? Shall I disturb this calm by mingling in the world? — shall I with an aching heart seek the spectacle of misery to discover its cause or shall I hopless leave the search of knowledge & devote myself to the pleasures they say this world affords? — Oh! no — I will become wise! I will study my own heart — and there discovering as I may the spring of the virtues I possess I will teach others how to look for them in their own souls — I will find whence arrises this unquenshable love of beauty I possess that seems the ruling star of my life — I will learn how I may direct it aright and by what loving I may become more like that beauty which I adore And when I have traced the steps of the godlike feeling which ennobles me & makes me that which I esteem myself to be then I will teach others & if I gain but one proselyte — if I can teach but one other mind what is the beauty which they ought to love — and what is the sympathy to which they ought to aspire what is the true end of their being — which must be the true end of that of all men then shall I be satisfied & think I have done enough —

Farewell doubts — painful meditation of evil — & the great, ever inexplicable cause of all that we see — I am content to be ignorant of all this happy that not resting my mind on any unstable theories I have come to the conclusion that of the great secret of the universe I *can know nothing* — There is a veil before it — my eyes are not piercing enough to see through it my arms not long enough to reach it to withdraw it — I will study the end of my being — oh thou universal love inspire me — oh thou beauty which I see glowing around me lift me to a fit understanding of thee! Such was the conclusion of my long wanderings I sought the end of my being & I found it to be knowledge of itself — Nor think this a confined study — Not only did it lead me to search the mazes of the human soul — but I found that there existed nought on earth which contained not a part of that universal beauty with which it [was] my aim & object to become acquainted — the motions of the stars of heaven the study of all that philosophers have unfolded of wondrous in nature became as it where [*sic*] the steps by which my soul rose to the full contemplation & enjoyment of the beautiful — Oh ye who have just escaped from the world ye know not what fountains of love will be opened in your hearts or what exquisite delight your minds will receive when the secrets of the world will be unfolded to you and ye shall become acquainted with the beauty of the universe — Your souls now growing eager for the acquirement of knowledge will then rest in its possession disengaged from every particle of evil and knowing all things ye will as it were be mingled in the universe & ye will become a part of that celestial beauty that you admire —

Diotima ceased and a profound silence ensued — the youth with his cheeks flushed and his eyes burning with the fire communicated from hers still fixed them on her face which was lifted to heaven as in inspiration — The lovely female bent hers to the ground & after a deep sigh was the first to break the silence —

Oh divinest prophetess, said she — how new & to me how strange are your lessons — If such be the end of our being how wayward a course did I pursue on earth — Diotima you know not how torn affections & misery incalculable misery — withers up the soul. How petty do the actions of our earthly life appear when the whole universe is opened to our gaze — yet there our passions are deep & irrisisbable [*sic*] and as we are floating hopless yet clinging to hope down the impetuous stream can we perceive the beauty of its banks which alas my soul was too turbid to reflect — If knowledge is the end of our being why are passions & feelings implanted in us that hurries [*sic*] us from wisdom to selfconcentrated misery & narrow selfish feeling? Is it as a trial? On earth I thought that I had well fulfilled my trial & my last moments became peaceful with the reflection that I deserved no blame — but you take from me that feeling — My passions were there my all to me and the hopeless misery that possessed me shut all love & all images of beauty from my soul — Nature was to me as the blackest night & if rays of loveliness ever strayed into my darkness it was only to draw bitter tears of hopeless anguish from my eyes — Oh on earth what consolation is there to misery?

Your heart I fear, replied Diotima, was broken by your sufferings — but if you had struggled — if when you found all hope of earthly happiness wither within you while desire of it scorched your soul — if you had near you a friend to have raised you to the contemplation of beauty & the search of knowledge you would have found perhaps not new hopes spring within you but a new life distinct from that of passion by which you had before existed — relate to me what this misery was that thus engroses you — tell me what were the vicissitudes of feeling that you endured on earth — after death our actions & worldly interest fade as nothing before us but the traces of our feelings exist & the memories of those are what furnish us here with eternal subject of meditation.

A blush spread over the cheek of the lovely girl — Alas, replied she what a tale must I relate what dark & phre[n]zied passions must I unfold — When you Diotima lived on earth your soul seemed to mingle in love only with its own essence & to be unknowing of the various tortures which that heart endures who if it has not sympathized with has been witness of the dreadful struggles of a soul enchained by dark deep passions which were its hell & yet from which it could not escape — Are there in the peaceful language used by the inhabitants of these regions — words burning enough to paint the tortures of the human heart — Can you understand them? or can you in any way sympathize with them — alas though dead I do and my tears flow as when I lived when my memory recalls the dreadful images of the past —

— As the lovely girl spoke my own eyes filled with bitter drops — the spirit of Fantasia seemed to fade from within me and when after placing my hand before my swimming eyes I withdrew it again I found myself under the trees on the banks of the Tiber — The sun was just setting & tinging with crimson the clouds that floated over St. Peters — all was still no human voice was heard — the very air was quiet I rose — & bewildered with the grief that I felt within me the recollection of what I had heard — I hastened to the city that I might see human beings not that I might forget my wandering recollections but that I might impress on my mind what was reality & what was either dream — or at least not of this earth — The Corso of Rome was filled with carriages and as I walked up the Trinita dei' Montes I became disgusted with the crowd that I saw about me & the vacancy & want of beauty not to say deformity of the many beings who meaninglessly buzzed about me — I hastened to my room which overlooked the whole city which as night came on became tranquil — Silent lovely Rome I now gaze on thee — thy domes are illuminated by the moon — and the ghosts of lovely memories float with the night breeze among thy ruins — contemplating thy loveliness which half soothes my miserable heart I record what I have seen — Tomorrow I will again woo Fantasia to lead me to the same walks & invite her to visit me with her visions which I before neglected — Oh let me learn this lesson while yet it may be useful to me that to a mind hopeless & unhappy as mine — a moment of forgetfullness a moment [in] which it can pass out of itself is worth a life of painful recollection.

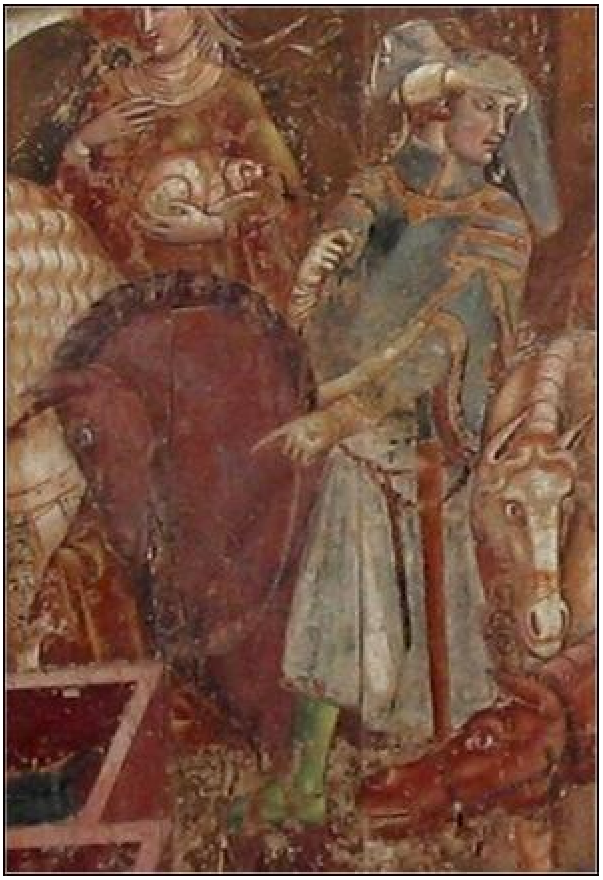
CHAP. 2

The next morning while sitting on the steps of the temple of Aesculapius in the Borghese gardens Fantasia again visited me & smilingly beckoned to me to follow her — My flight was at first heavy but the breezes commanded by the spirit to convoy me grew stronger as I advanced — a pleasing languour seized my senses & when I recovered I found my self by the Elysian fountain near Diotima — The beautiful female who[m] I had left on the point of narrating her earthly history seemed to have waited for my return and as soon as I appeared she spoke thus —

VALPERGA

Valperga is an historical novel that was printed for G and W.B Whittaker, and Ave-Maria-Lane in 1823 in three volumes and was published following *Frankenstein*. It was not reprinted after the first edition for more than 170 years, until after the bicentennial celebration of Mary Shelly's birth in 1997. Shelley's father William Godwin played an important role in the completion of the book, serving as editor and deciding on the title. The novel is set in 14th century Italy during the wars between the Republican Guelphs and the Ghibellines, who were sympathetic to the Holy Roman Empire. One of the central characters is the real life soldier Castruccio Castracani, Prince of Lucca (1281-1328), who lead the Ghibelline's to victory in Tuscany. However, the novel really centres on the two women in Castracani's life, the Countess Euthanasia and Beatrice of Ferrara and their relationship with him alongside their own beliefs and convictions.

Countess Euthanasia governs the fictional fortress of Valperga when it is comes under attack by Castracani who is also her suitor. The prophetess Beatrice is drawn into Castracani's world, and the tale of his desire for power and immortal fame engulfs the two female characters. Like most historical novels, *Valperga* uses a past setting to illuminate contemporary society and Shelley's tale, addressing the nature of the masculine power structure and the choice between autocracy, liberal democracy and progress, was applicable to the 14th and the 19th centuries and still remains relevant in the 21st century.

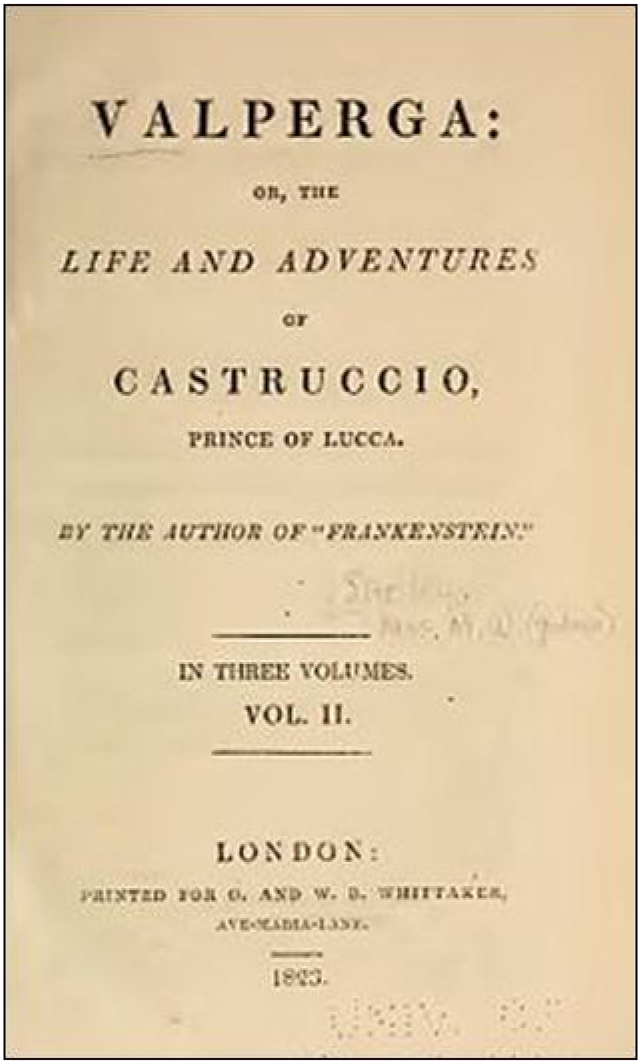


Castruccio Castracani, Prince of Lucca (1281-1328)

CONTENTS

PREFACE
CHAPTER I
CHAPTER II
CHAPTER III
CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER V
CHAPTER VI
CHAPTER VII
CHAPTER VIII
CHAPTER IX
CHAPTER X
CHAPTER XI
CHAPTER XII
CHAPTER XIII
CHAPTER XIV
CHAPTER XV
CHAPTER XVI
CHAPTER XVII
CHAPTER XVIII
CHAPTER XIX
CHAPTER XX
CHAPTER XXI
CHAPTER XXII
CHAPTER XXIII
CHAPTER XXIV
CHAPTER XXV
CHAPTER XXVI
CHAPTER XXVII
CHAPTER XXVIII
CHAPTER XXIX
CHAPTER XXX
CHAPTER XXXI
CHAPTER XXXII

CHAPTER XXXIII
CHAPTER XXXIV
CHAPTER XXXV
CHAPTER XXXVI
CHAPTER XXXVII
CHAPTER XXXVIII



VALPERGA:

OR, THE

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

CASTRUCCIO,

PRINCE OF LUCCA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

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PREFACE

THE accounts of the Life of Castruccio known in England, are generally taken from Macchiavelli’s romance concerning this chief. The reader may find a detail of his real adventures in Sismondi’s delightful publication, Histoire des Republiques Italiennes de L’Age Moyen. In addition to this work, I have consulted Tegrino’s Life of Castruccio, and Giovanni Villani’s Florentine Annals.

The following is a translation from the article respecting him in Moreri.

“Castruccio Castracani, one of the most celebrated captains of his time, lived in the fourteenth century. He was of the family of the Antelminelli of Lucca; and, having at a very early age borne arms in favour of the Ghibelines, he was exiled by the Guelphs. He served not long after in the armies of Philip king of France, who made war on the Flemings. In the sequel he repassed the Alps; and, having joined Uguccione Faggiuola, chief of the Ghibelines of Tuscany, he reduced Lucca, Pistoia, and several other towns. He became the ally of the emperor Louis of Bavaria, against pope John XXII, Robert king of Naples, and the Florentines. Louis of Bavaria gave him the investiture of Lucca under the denomination of Duke, together with the title of Senator of Rome. Nothing seemed able to oppose his courage and good fortune, when he was taken off by a premature death in 1330, in the forty-seventh year of his age.”

The dates here given are somewhat different from those adopted in the following narrative.

CHAPTER I

THE other nations of Europe were yet immersed in barbarism, when Italy, where the light of civilization had never been wholly eclipsed, began to emerge from the darkness of the ruin of the Western Empire, and to catch from the East the returning rays of literature and science. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Dante had already given a permanent form to the language which was the offspring of this revolution; he was personally engaged in those political struggles, in which the elements of the good and evil that have since assumed a more permanent form were contending; his disappointment and exile gave him leisure to meditate, and produced his Divina Comedia.

Lombardy and Tuscany, the most civilized districts of Italy, exhibited astonishing specimens of human genius; but at the same time they were torn to pieces by domestic faction, and almost destroyed by the fury of civil wars. The ancient quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibelines were started with renovated zeal, under the new distinctions of Bianchi and Neri. The Ghibelines and the Bianchi were the friends of the emperor, asserting the supremacy and universality of his sway over all other dominion, ecclesiastical or civil: the Guelphs and the Neri were the partizans of liberty. Florence was at the head of the Guelphs, and employed, as they were employed by it in their turn, the Papal power as a pretext and an instrument.

The distinctions of Bianchi and Neri took their rise in Pistoia, a town of some moment between Florence and Lucca. The Neri being expelled from Pistoia, the exiles fixed their residence in Lucca; where they so fortified and augmented their party, as to be able in the year 1301 to expel the Bianchi, among whom was Castruccio Castracani dei Antelminelli.

The family of the Antelminelli was one of the most distinguished in Lucca. They had followed the emperors in their Italian wars, and had received in recompense titles and reward. The father of Castruccio was the chief of his house; he had been a follower of the unfortunate Manfred, king of Naples, and his party feelings as a Ghibeline derived new fervour from the adoration with which he regarded his noble master. Manfred was the natural son of the last emperor of the house of Swabia; before the age of twenty he had performed the most brilliant exploits, and undergone the most romantic vicissitudes, in all of which the father of Castruccio had been his faithful page and companion. The unrelenting animosity with which the successive Popes pursued his royal master, gave rise in his bosom to a hatred, that was heightened by the contempt with which he regarded their cowardly and artful policy.

When therefore the quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibelines were revived in Lucca under the names of Bianchi and Neri, Ruggieri dei Antelminelli was the chief opponent and principal victim of the machinations of the Papal party. Castruccio was then only eleven years of age; but his young imagination was deeply impressed by the scenes that passed around him. When the citizens of Lucca had assembled on the appointed day to choose their Podestà, or principal magistrate, the two parties dividing on the Piazza glared defiance at each other: the Guelphs had the majority in numbers; but the Ghibelines wishing, like Brennus, to throw the sword into the ascending scale, assailed the stronger party with arms in their hands. They were repulsed; and, flying before their enemies, the Guelphs remained in possession of the field, where, under the guidance of their chiefs, they voted the perpetual banishment of the Ghibelines; and the summons was read by a herald, which commanded all the districts of Lucca to range themselves the next morning under their respective banners, that they might attack and expel by force those of the contrary party who should refuse to obey the decree.

Ruggieri returned from the Piazza of the Podestà, accompanied by several of his principal friends. His wife, Madonna Dianora, was anxiously waiting his return; while the young Castruccio stood at the casement, and, divining by his mother’s countenance the cause of her inquietude, looked eagerly down the street that he might watch the approach of his father: he clapped his hands with joy, as he exclaimed, “They come!” Ruggieri entered; his wife observed him inquiringly and tenderly, but forbore to speak; yet her cheek became pale, when she heard her husband issue orders, that the palace should be barricadoed, and none permitted to enter, except those who brought the word which shewed that they belonged to the same party.

“Are we in danger?” — asked Madonna Dianora in a low voice of one of their most intimate friends. Her husband overheard her, and replied: “Keep up your courage, my best girl; trust me, as you have ever trusted. I would that I dared send you to a place of safety, but it were not well that you traversed the streets of Lucca; so you must share my fortunes, Dianora.”

“Have I not ever shared them?” replied his wife. His friends had retired to an adjoining hall, and she continued;—”There can be no dearer fate to me than to live or perish with you, Ruggieri; but cannot we save our son?”

Castruccio was sitting at the feet of his parents, and gazing on them with his soft, yet bright eyes. He had looked at his mother as she spoke; now he turned eagerly towards his father while he listened to his reply:—”We have been driven from the Piazza of the Podestà, and we can no longer entertain any hope of overcoming our enemies. The mildest fate that we may expect is confiscation and banishment; if they decree our death, the stones of this palace alone divide us from our fate. And Castruccio, — could any of our friends convey him hence, I should feel redoubled courage — but it is too much to risk.”

“Father,” said the boy, “I am only a child, and can do no good; but I pray you do not send me away from you: indeed, dear, dearest mother, I will not leave you.”

The trampling of horses was heard in the streets: Ruggieri started up; one of his friends entered:—”It is the guard going to the gates,” said he; “the assembly of the people is broken up.”

“And what is decreed?”

“No one ventures near to inquire out that; but courage, my noble lord.”

“That word to me, Ricciardo? — but it is well; my wife and child make a very woman of me.”

“Ave Maria is now ringing,” replied his companion; “soon night will set in, and, if you will trust me, I will endeavour to convey Madonna Dianora to some place of concealment.”

“Many thanks, my good Ricciardo,” answered the lady; “my safest post is at the side of Ruggieri. But our boy — save him, and a mother’s blessing, her warm, heartfelt thanks: all the treasure that I can give, shall be yours. You know ?”

“Yes, the castle of . Is the Countess there now?”

“She is, — and she is our friend; if my Castruccio were once within the walls of that castle, I were happy.”

While Madonna Dianora conversed thus with Ricciardo, Ruggieri held a consultation with his friends. The comfortable daylight had faded away, and night brought danger and double fear along with it. The companions of Ruggieri sat in the banqueting hall of his palace, debating their future conduct: they spoke in whispers, for they feared that a louder tone might overpower any sound in the streets; and they listened to every footfall, as if it were the tread of their coming destiny. Ricciardo joined them; and Madonna Dianora was left alone with her son: they were silent. Dianora wept, and held the hand of her child; while he tried to comfort her, and to shew that fortitude he had often heard his father praise; but his little bosom swelled in despite of his mastery, until, the big tears rolling down his cheeks, he threw himself into his mother’s arms, and sobbed aloud. At this moment some one knocked violently at the palace-gate. The assembled Ghibelines started up, and drew their swords as they rushed towards the staircase; and they stood in fearful silence, while they listened to the answers which the stranger gave to him who guarded the door.

Ruggieri had embraced his wife he feared for the last time. She did not then weep; her high wrought feelings were fixed on one object alone, the safety of her child.—”If you escape,” she cried, “ is your refuge; you well know the road that leads to it.”

The boy did not answer for a while; and then he whispered, while he clung round her neck,—”You, dear mother, shall shew it to me.”

The voice of the man who had disturbed them by his knocking, had reassured the imprisoned Ghibelines, and he was admitted. It was Marco, the servant of Messer Antonio dei Adimari. A Florentine by birth, and a Guelph, Antonio had retired from his native city while it continued under the jurisdiction of the opposite party, and had lived at the castle of , of which his wife was Countess and Castellana. He was bound to Ruggieri by the strongest ties of private friendship; and he now exerted himself to save his friend. Marco brought intelligence of the decree of the assembly of the people. “Our lives are then in safety,” — cried Dianora, with a wild look of joy,—”and all the rest is as the seared leaves of autumn; they fall off lightly, and make no noise.”

“The night wears apace,” said Marco, “and before sunrise you must depart; will you accompany me to ?”

“Not so,” replied Ruggieri; “we may be beggars, but we will not burthen our friends. Thank your lord for his many kindnesses towards me. I leave it to him to save what he can for me from the ruins of my fortune. If his interest stand high enough with our rulers, intreat him to exert it to preserve the unoffending walls of this palace: it was the dwelling of my forefathers, my inheritance; I lived here during my boyish days; and once its hall was graced by the presence of Manfred. My boy may one day return; and I would not that he should find the palace of his father a ruin. We cannot remain near Lucca, but shall retire to some town which adheres to our party, and there wait for better days.”

Dianora made speedy preparations for their departure; the horses were brought to the door; and the stars were fading in the light of dawn, as the cavalcade proceeded through the high and narrow streets of Lucca. Their progress was unimpeded at the gates; Ruggieri felt a load taken from his heart, when he found himself, with his wife and child, safe in the open country. Yet the feeling of joy was repressed by the remembrance, that life was all that remained to them, and that poverty and obscurity were to be the hard-visaged nurses of their declining years, the harsh tutors of the young and aspiring Castruccio.

The exiles pursued their way slowly to Florence.

Florence was then in a frightful state of civil discord. The Ghibelines had the preponderance; but not a day passed without brawls and bloodshed. Our exiles found many of their townsmen on the same road, on the same sad errand of seeking protection from a foreign state. Little Castruccio saw many of his dearest friends among them; and his young heart, moved by their tears and complaints, became inflamed with rage and desire of vengeance. It was by scenes such as these, that party spirit was generated, and became so strong in Italy. Children, while they were yet too young to feel their own disgrace, saw the misery of their parents, and took early vows of implacable hatred against their persecutors: these were remembered in after times; the wounds were never seared, but the fresh blood ever streaming kept alive the feelings of passion and anger which had given rise to the first blow.

When they arrived at Florence, they were welcomed with kindness by the chiefs of the Bianchi of that city. Charles of Valois had just sent ambassadors to the government, to offer his mediation in composing their differences; and on that very day the party of Ghibelines who composed the council assembled to deliberate on this insidious proposition. It may be easily supposed therefore, that, entirely taken up with their own affairs, they could not bestow the attention they would otherwise have done on the Lucchese exiles. On the following day Ruggieri left Florence.

The exiles proceeded to Ancona. This was the native town of the Lady Dianora; and they were received with hospitality by her relations. But it was a heavy change for Ruggieri, to pass from the active life of the chief of a party, to the unmarked situation of an individual, who had no interest in the government under which he lived, and who had exchanged the distinctions of rank and wealth for that barren respect which an unblamed old age might claim. Ruggieri had been a man of undaunted courage; and this virtue, being no longer called into action, assumed the appearance of patience and fortitude. His dearest pleasure was the unceasing attention he paid to the education of his son. Castruccio was an apt and sprightly boy, bold in action, careless of consequences, and governed only by his affection for his parents. Ruggieri encouraged his adventurous disposition; and although he often sympathized in the fears of his anxious wife, when Castruccio would venture out to sea on a windy day in a little fair-weather skiff, or when he saw him, without bridle or saddle, mount a horse, and, heading a band of his companions, ride off to the woods, yet he never permitted himself to express these fears, or check the daring of his son.

So Castruccio grew up active; light and graceful of limb, trusting that by his own powers he should always escape. Yet the boy was not without prudence; he seemed to perceive instinctively the limits of possibility, and would often repress the fool-hardiness of his companions, and shew his superior judgement and patience in surmounting the same difficulties by slower and safer means. Ruggieri disciplined him betimes in all the duties of a knight and a soldier; he wielded a lance adapted to his size, shot with bow and arrows, and the necessary studies to which he applied, became, on account of their active nature, the source of inexhaustible amusement to him. Accompanied by a troop of lads, they would feign some court surrounded by an old wall, or some ruined tower, to be Troy Town, or any other famous city of ancient days, and then with mimic balestri, and slings and arrows, and lances, they attacked, and defended, and practised those lessons in tactics which their preceptors inculcated at an early age.

During the first year of their banishment his mother died; her weak frame was destroyed by hardship and disappointment. She recommended her son to his father in terms of tender love; and then closed her eyes in peace. This circumstance for a considerable time unhinged the young mind of Castruccio, and interrupted his studies. His father, who loved her tenderly, and who had found in her a friend to whom he could confide those regrets which pride forbade him to impart to any other hearer, now lamented her with excessive grief.

He did not dare check the silent tear that started into the eye of Castruccio, when, returning from his exercises with his companions, he was no longer embraced by his mother; he felt that his own sentiments would refute the lesson he wished to impress.

Ruggieri was consoled for all his past misfortunes by the promising talents and disposition of his son, and parental tenderness, the strongest of all passions, but often the most unfortunate, was to him the sunbeam, solitary, but bright, which enlightened his years of exile and infirmity.

Yet at the moment that he most enjoyed this blessing, his security was suddenly disturbed. One morning Castruccio disappeared; and the following perplexing note addressed to his father, was the only trace that he left of his intentions: —

> “Pardon me, dearest father; I will return in a very few days; I am quite safe, therefore do not disquiet yourself on my account. Do not be very angry with me; for, although I am indignant at my own weakness, I cannot resist! Be well assured that in less than a fortnight your unworthy son will be at your feet.
>
> “Castruccio.”

This was the year 1304, when Castruccio was fourteen years of age. Ruggieri hoped and trusted that he was safe, and that he would fulfil his promise and soon return; but he waited with inexpressible anxiety. The cause of Castruccio’s flight was curious, shewing at once the manners of the age and country in which they lived, and the imagination and disposition of the boy.

CHAPTER II

A TRAVELLER had arrived at Ancona from Florence, and had diffused the intelligence that a strange and tremendous spectacle would be exhibited there on the first of May of that year. It had been proclaimed in the streets of the city, by a herald sent by the inhabitants of the quarter of San Frediano, that all who wished to have news from the other world, should repair on the first of May to the bridge of Carraia or to the quay of the Arno. And he added, that he believed that preparations were made to exhibit Hell, such as it had been described in a poem now writing by Dante Alighieri, a part of which had been read, and had given rise to the undertaking.

This account raised the curiosity, and fired the imagination of Castruccio. The idea darted into his head that he would see this wonderful exhibition; and no sooner had he conceived the possibility of doing so, than his determination was fixed. He dared not ask his father’s permission, for he knew that he should be refused; and, like many others, he imagined that it was better to go, not having mentioned his design, than to break a positive command. He felt remorse at leaving his father; but curiosity was the stronger passion, and he was overcome: he left a billet for Ruggieri; and, during the silence of a moonlight night, he mounted his steed, and left Ancona. While proceeding through the streets of the town, he several times repented, and thought that he would return; but no sooner had he passed the walls, than he seemed to feel the joy of liberty descending on him; and he rode on with wild delight, while the mountains and their forests slept under the yellow moon, and the murmur of the placid ocean was the only sound that he heard, except the trampling of his own horse’s hoofs.

Riding hard, and changing his horse on the road, he arrived in five days at Florence. He experienced a peculiar sensation of pleasure, as he descended from the mountains into Tuscany. Alone on the bare Apennines, over which the fierce wind swept, he felt free; there was no one near him to control his motions, to order him to stay or go; but his own will guided his progress, swift or slow, as the various thoughts that arose in his mind impelled him. He felt as if the air that quickly glided over him, was a part of his own nature, and bore his soul along with it; impulses of affection mingled with these inexplicable sensations; his thoughts wandered to his native town; he suffered his imagination to dwell upon the period when he might be recalled from exile, and to luxuriate in dreams of power and distinction.

At length he arrived at the fair city of Florence. It was the first of May, and he hastened from his inn to the scene of action. As he approached, he observed the streets almost blocked up by the multitudes that poured to the same spot; and, not being acquainted with the town, he found that he had better follow the multitude, than seek a way of his own. Driven along by the crowd, he at length came in sight of the Arno. It was covered by boats, on which scaffoldings were erected, hung with black cloth, whose accumulated drapery lent life to the flames, which the glare of day would otherwise have eclipsed. In the midst of these flames moved legions of ghastly and distorted shapes, some with horns of fire, and hoofs, and horrible wings; others the naked representatives of the souls in torment; mimic shrieks burst on the air, screams and demoniac laughter. The infernal drama was acted to the life; and the terrible effect of such a scene was enhanced, by the circumstance of its being no more than an actual representation of what then existed in the imagination of the spectators, endued with the vivid colours of a faith inconceivable in these lethargic days.

Castruccio felt a chill of horror run through his frame; the scene before him appeared for a moment as a reality, rather than a representation; the Arno seemed a yawning gulf, where the earth had opened to display the mysteries of the infernal world; when suddenly a tremendous crash stamped with tenfold horror the terrific mockery. The bridge of Carraia, on which a countless multitude stood, one above the other, looking on the river, fell. Castruccio saw its props loosening, and the curved arch shake, and with a sudden shriek he stretched out his arms, as if he could save those who stood on it. It fell in with a report that was reverberated from the houses that lined the Arno; and even, to the hills which close the valley, it rebellowed along the sky, accompanied by fearful screams, and voices that called on the names of those whom they were never more to behold. The confusion was beyond description terrible; some flying, others pressing towards the banks of the river to help the sufferers; all, as himself, seized with a superstitious dread, which rebuked them for having mimicked the dreadful mysteries of their religion, and which burst forth in clamorous exclamations and wild horror. The heroism of Castruccio failed; he seized with eagerness the opportunity of an opening in the crowd; and, getting into a by street, ran with what speed he could, while his knees still shook beneath him, from the spot he in the morning as eagerly sought. The sound of the shrieks began to die away on his ear before he slackened his speed.

The first idea that struck him, as he recovered his breath, was—”I am escaped from Hell!” — And seeing a church open, he with an instinctive impulse entered its doors. He felt as if he fled from the powers of evil; and, if he needed protection, where should he seek it with more confidence, than in the temple where the good God of the universe was worshipped? It was indeed as a change from Hell to Heaven, to have escaped from the jostling of the crowd, the dreadful spectacle of mimicked torments, the unearthly crash that bellowed like thunder along the sky, and the shrieks of the dying — to the silence of the empty church, the faint smell of incense, and the few quiet lights that burned on the high altar. Castruccio was seized with a feeling of awe as he walked up the aisle; and conscience, alive at that moment, reproached him bitterly for having quitted his father. When the idea struck him—”If I had been on that bridge,” — he could no longer resist his emotions; tears ran fast down his cheeks, and he sobbed aloud.

A man, whom he had not perceived before kneeling in a niche beside the altar, arose on hearing the voice of grief, and drew near the boy. “Why do you weep?” — he said. Castruccio, who had not heard his approach, looked up with surprise; for it was the voice of Marco, the servant of his father’s friend, Messer Antonio dei Adimari. Marco instantly recognised him; for who that had once seen, could ever forget his dark eyes, shaded by long, pointed lashes, his sun-bright hair, and his countenance that beamed with sweet frankness and persuasion? The boy threw himself into the arms of his humble, but affectionate friend, and wept there for some time. When he had become more calm, his story was told in a few words. Marco was not inclined to find fault with an adventurous spirit, and soon consoled him. —”You are safe,” — he said; “so there is no harm done. Come, this is rather a fortunate event than otherwise; my lord and lady are in Florence; you shall stay a night with them; and to — morrow morning we will send you home to your anxious father.”

The eyes of Castruccio sparkled with hope.—”Euthanasia is here?”

“She is.”

“Quick then, dear Marco, let us go. — How fortunate it was that I came to Florence!”

The life of Messer Antonio dei Adimari had been spent in the military and civil service of his country; he had often been Priore; and now, that age and blindness had caused him to withdraw from the offices of the state, his counsels were sought and acted upon by his successors. He had married the only daughter of the Count of , a feudal chief who possessed large estates in the territory of Lucca. His castle was situated among the Apennines north of Lucca, and his estates consisted of a few scattered villages, raised on the peaks of mountains, and rendered almost inaccessible by nature as well as art.

By the death of her father the wife of Adimari became Countess and Castellana of the district; and the duties which this government imposed upon her, often caused the removal of her whole family from Florence to the castle of . It was during these visits that Adimari renewed a friendship that had before subsisted between him and Ruggieri dei Antelminelli. Messer Antonio was a Guelph, and had fought against Manfred under the banners of the Pope: it happened during one campaign that Ruggieri fell wounded and a prisoner into his hands; he attended him with humanity; and, when he perceived that no care could restore him if separated from his prince, and that he languished to attend at the side of Manfred, he set him free; and this was the commencement of a friendship, which improved by mutual good offices, and more than all by the esteem that they bore one to the other, had long allied the two houses, though of different parties, in the strictest amity.

Adimari continued in the service of his country, until his infirmities permitted him to withdraw from these active and harassing duties, and, giving up the idea of parties and wars, to apply himself exclusively to literature. The spirit of learning, after a long sleep, that seemed to be annihilation, awoke, and shook her wings over her favoured Italy. Inestimable treasures of learning then existed in various monasteries, of the value of which their inhabitants were at length aware; and even laymen began to partake of that curiosity, which made Petrarch but a few years after travel round Europe to collect manuscripts, and to preserve those wonderful writings, now mutilated, but which would otherwise have been entirely lost.

Antonio dei Adimari enjoyed repose in the bosom of his family, his solitude cheered by the converse which he held with the sages of Rome in ages long past. His family consisted of his wife, two boys, and a girl only two years younger than Castruccio. He and Euthanasia had been educated together almost from their cradle. They had wandered hand in hand among the wild mountains and chestnut woods that surrounded her mother's castle. Their studies, their amusements, were in common; and it was a terrible blow to each when they were separated by the exile of the Antelminelli. Euthanasia, whose soul was a deep well of love, felt most, and her glistening eyes and infantine complaints told for many months, even years after, that she still remembered, and would never forget, the playmate of her childhood.

At the period of this separation Adimari was threatened by a misfortune, the worst that could befall a man of study and learning — blindness. The disease gained ground, and in a year he saw nothing of this fair world but an universal and impenetrable blank. In this dreadful state Euthanasia was his only consolation. Unable to attend to the education of his boys, he sent them to the court of Naples, to which he had before adhered, and in which he possessed many valued friends; and his girl alone remained to cheer him with her prattle; for the countess, his wife, a woman of high birth and party, did not sympathize in his sedentary occupations.—"I will not leave you," said Euthanasia to him one day, when he bade her go and amuse herself, —"I am most pleased while talking with you. You cannot read now, or occupy yourself with those old parchments in which you used to delight. But tell me, dear father, could you not teach me to read them to you? You know I can read very well, and I am never so well pleased as when I can get some of the troubadour songs, or some old chronicle, to puzzle over. These to be sure are written in another language; but I am not totally unacquainted with it; and, if you would have a little patience with me, I think I should be able to understand these difficult authors."

The disabled student did not disdain so affectionate an offer. Every one in those days was acquainted with a rude and barbarous Latin, the knowledge of which Euthanasia now exchanged for the polished language of Cicero and Virgil. A priest of a neighbouring chapel was her tutor; and the desire of pleasing her father made her indefatigable in her exertions. The first difficulties being conquered, she passed whole days over these dusky manuscripts, reading to the old man, who found double pleasure in the ancient poets, as he heard their verses pronounced by his beloved Euthanasia. The effect of this education on her mind was advantageous and memorable; she did not acquire that narrow idea of the present times, as if they and the world were the same, which characterizes the unlearned; she saw and marked the revolutions that had been, and the present seemed to her only a point of rest, from which time was to renew his flight, scattering change as he went; and, if her voice or act could mingle aught of good in these changes, this it was to which her imagination most ardently aspired. She was deeply penetrated by the acts and thoughts of those men, who despised the spirit of party, and grasped the universe in their hopes of virtue and independence.

Liberty had never been more devotedly worshipped than in the republic of Florence: the Guelphs boasted that their attachment to the cause of freedom might rival what history records of the glorious days of antiquity. Adimari had allied himself to this party, because he thought he saw in the designs and principles of its leaders the germ of future independence for Italy. He had ever been a fervent advocate for the freedom of his fellow citizens: but he caught the spirit with double fervour from the Roman writers; and often, not seeing the little fairy form that sat at his feet, he forgot the age of his companion, and talked in high strains of that ennobling spirit which he felt in his inmost heart. Euthanasia heard and understood; her soul, adapted for the reception of all good, drained the cup of eloquent feeling that her father poured out before her, and her eyes shone with the deep emotion. Her young thoughts darted into futurity, to the hope of freedom for Italy, of revived learning and the reign of peace for all the world: wild dreams, that still awake the minds of men to high song and glorious action.

Such was the education of the friend of Castruccio, while he learned all chivalrous accomplishments under the tuition of his noble father at Ancona; and now, after three years absence, they met a Florence, neither having by forgetfulness wronged the friendship they had vowed in infancy.

When Marco led his young friend to the palace of Adimari, he found his master and the countess receiving the visits of some of the Guelph party; and he knew that this was no time or place to introduce the young Ghibeline. But, as they passed along the great hall, a sylph-like form came from a room opposite, appearing as a star from behind a cloud.—"I bring your exiled friend," said Marco; "Castruccio dei Antelminelli is come to visit you."

"Castruccio in Florence!" cried Euthanasia; and she embraced him with sisterly affection. "But how, dear friend, do you venture within these walls? — is your father here? — but this is no place to ask all the questions that I must hear resolved before you go. Come into this room; none but my father will enter here; and now you shall tell me all that has passed since you quitted Lucca."

Castruccio gazed on Euthanasia: he could, he thought, feed for life on her sweet looks, in which deep sensibility and lively thought were pictured, and a judgement and reason beyond her years. Her eyes seemed to read his soul, while they glistened with pleasure; he wished to hear her speak, but she insisted that his tale should be first told, of how he had lived at Ancona, and how he had ventured to Florence. She gently reproached him for having left his father; and then said,—"But I must not play the hypocrite; I am glad you are come; for it gives me more pleasure than I can express, to see you again. But I hear my father's step; I must go and lead him, and tell him of the stranger-visitor he has got."

Castruccio enjoyed the most heartfelt pleasure, as he sat between Euthanasia and her father. Their manners towards him were affectionate, and their conversation best calculated to fill an exile's bosom with hope and joy. He was told by them, that if they now parted, he must look forward to the moment when he and his father should be recalled with honour to their country. Adimari could not see the bright eyes and ardent mien of the boy; but he heard with pleasure the detail of his occupations at Ancona, and easily perceived that his young mind slept not on the present, dreamless of the future. He encouraged his aspirations to honour, and exhorted him to be faithful to the lessons of his father.

The charmed hours flew past, and the following morning they were to separate. This consideration, as evening came on, threw more solemnity into their looks and talk. Castruccio became pensive, and gazed on his friend, as a treasure that he was about to lose, perhaps for ever. Euthanasia was silent; her eyes were bent to earth; and the varying colour of her cheeks shewed that she was revolving some thought in her mind, to which she knew not how to give utterance. At length she raised her eyes, and said:

—”We part to-morrow, Castruccio, as we have before parted, — for many years I fear. But there are two kinds of separation. One, during which we suffer time to obliterate the past, as we should if death, that parting to which no meeting succeeds, or a meeting in which all private ties are superseded, had been the cause of the separation. But there is another; when we cherish the memory of the absent, and act for them as if they were with us; when to remember is a paramount duty. This is alone practicable between friends, when each in his meditations is sure that the other thinks also of him: then, methinks to reflect on the words and looks of a friend, is as if one absolutely saw him. Let this be our separation. We are both familiar with the ideas of virtue and self-sacrifice; let friendship be joined to these, to make all sacrifice light, and virtue more delightful. We are very young; we know not what misfortunes are in store for us; what losses, perhaps what calumnies, or even dishonour, may in after times taint our names. In calumny it is to the friends of our youth that we must turn; for they alone can know how pure the heart is, with which they were acquainted at the time when disguise could have no existence. They, if they are true, dare not leave us without consolation. Castruccio, I know that you will never dishonour yourself: and, remember, if in any hard struggle you want a friend who will console you by sympathy and confidence, and help you as far as her power will permit, I will always be that friend to you.”

Euthanasia was yet a child, when she made this promise. But she saw Castruccio, the friend of her infancy, a youth of high birth and nobly bred, an outcast and an exile; she had heard and read how few friends the unfortunate find, and generosity prompted those sentiments, to which the frankness of her nature caused her to give utterance. She felt that Castruccio had a deep affection for her, and she hoped, that a promise thus voluntary and solemn, would be a consolation to him during adversity. He felt the kindness of her motive, and replied earnestly:—”I am an exile, and can do no good to you who are prosperous; mine must be barren thanks. Yet not the less will I fulfil my promise, if our fortunes change, of being your friend, your knight, your rock, on whom you may build your hope and trust in every misfortune.”

The next morning, accompanied by Marco, Castruccio quitted Florence. In his mind there was a mixture of grief at having left, and joy at having once more seen, Euthanasia. Every word that she had said, and every look of her lovely eyes, were treasured in his soul — to be a consolation and support in trouble, and an incentive to noble endeavour. Adimari had taken an affectionate leave of him, telling him, that, as far as a poor blind man could, he would promote his interests, and seize the first opportunity, if such should offer, of procuring a repeal for his exile. There was a kindness and distinction in the manner of his aged friend, that touched the heart of the boy; and in after times he thought he perceived a hidden meaning in his last words, which he interpreted in a manner that gave a sober steadiness to what he would otherwise have considered as another airy bubble of the enchantress Hope. "Remember," said the venerable Florentine, "that I approve of, and love you; and if you become that which your talents and dawning virtues promise, you may in future be my elect favourite. Now, farewell; and do not forget me or mine!"

Thus cheered, thus buoyed up by hopes of future good fortune and advancement, which had before been too deeply mingled with fear, Castruccio returned with a light heart to his father, his soul more than ever bent upon improvement and the accomplishment of noble deeds. And now, forgiven by his anxious parent for the grief he had occasioned him, his days wore away, as they were wont, in delightful tasks.

Time passed on, while our young esquire was preparing himself for his future career; strengthening his mind by study, and his body by toil. His step assumed the firmness of one who does not fear, and who, with his eye fixed on one point, will not be daunted by the shadows that flit between him and his desired sun. His eyes, before beaming with frankness and engaging sweetness, now sparkled with a profounder meaning. He entered his seventeenth year, and he was pondering upon the fit beginning to his life, and hoping that his father would not oppose his fervent desire to quit what he thought a lifeless solitude; when, as a young bather, peeping from a rock, is pushed into the sea, and forced to exert the powers of which he was before only dreaming, so chance threw Castruccio from his quiet nook into the wide sea of care, to sink or swim, as fate or his own good strength might aid him.

His father died. A malignant fever, brought by some trading vessels from the Levant, raged in the town of Ancona, and Ruggieri was one of its earliest victims. As soon as he was attacked, he knew he must die, and he gazed upon his boy with deep tenderness and care. To be cast so young on life, with a mind burning with ardour, and adorned with every grace — the fair graces of youth, so easily and so irretrievably tarnished! He had commanded him not to come near him during his illness, which was exceedingly contagious: but finding that Castruccio waited on him by stealth, he felt that it was in vain to oppose; and, only intreating him to use every imaginable precaution, they spent the last hours of Ruggieri's life together. The fever was too violent to permit any regular conversation; but the dying father exhorted him to remember his former lessons, and lay them to his heart. "I have written a letter," said he, "which you will deliver to Francesco de Guinigi. He was one of my dearest friends, and of high birth and fortune, in Lucca; but now, like me, he is an exile, and has taken refuge at the town of Este in Lombardy. If he still preserves in adversity that generosity which before so highly distinguished him, you will less feel the loss of your father. Go to him, my Castruccio, and be guided by his advice: he will direct you how you can most usefully employ your time while an outcast from your country. Listen to him with the same deference that you have always shown to me, for he is one of the few wise men who exist in this world, whose vanity and nothingness open upon me the more, now that I am about to quit it."

From time to time Ruggieri renewed his affectionate exhortations. His parental tenderness did not desert him in his last moments; and he died making a sign that in Heaven they should again meet. Castruccio was overwhelmed by grief at his loss. But grief was soon silenced by pain: he had inhaled the pestilential air from the dying breath of his father, and was speedily like him stretched on the bed of sickness. Yet not like him had he any tender nurse, to watch his fever, and administer to his wants: every one fled from the chance of death; and it was only the excellent constitution of the boy that enabled him to recover.

In a month after his father's death, himself in appearance more dead than alive, he crawled out from his apartment to breathe the enlivening air of the sea. A wind swept over it, and chilled his frame, while the dusky sky filled him with despondency. But this was a transient feeling: day by day he gained strength, and with strength and health returned the buoyant spirits of youth. The first lively feeling that he experienced, was an ardent desire to remove from Ancona. During his illness he had bitterly felt the absence of many whom he considered dear and firm friends. When he was able to enquire for those whom he had inwardly reproached as false, he found that they were dead. The pestilence had visited them, and felled them to the ground, while he, bruised and half broken, raised his head when the deadly visitation was over. These disappointments and losses pressed on his soul; and he experienced that feeling which deceives us at every age, that by change of place, he could exchange his unhappy sensations for those of a more genial nature. The rainy season had begun; but he would not delay his departure; so, taking an agonizing farewell of the graves of his friends, and of those of his beloved parents whom he could never see more, he left Ancona.

The beauty of the mountains and the picturesque views for a while beguiled his thoughts. He passed through the country where Asdrubal, the brother of Hannibal, was defeated and slain on the mountain which still bears his name. A river runs at the base; and it was clothed by trees now yellow and red, tinged thus by the winds of autumn, except where a cluster of ilexes gave life to the scenery. As he advanced, the rains poured down, and the hills, now more distant, were hid in mist; while towards the east the gloomy Adriatic filled the air with its restless murmurs. Castruccio had passed swiftly through this country before, when he went to the Festa d'Inferno at Florence. It was then adorned by the fresh spring; the sunbeams illuminated the various folds of the mountains, and the light waves coursed one another, dancing under the dazzling light. Castruccio remembered this; and he gazed sullenly on the sky obscured by a thick woof of black clouds, and reproached that with changing, as his fortune changed. Yet, reflecting on the chances that had occurred during his last journey, his imagination wandered to Euthanasia, and paused there, resting with delight on her beloved image.

He passed through many towns, among which he had no friends, and sought for none. Yet, if he had desired protection, several of these were ruled by Ghibeline lords, who would have welcomed him with hospitality. Rimini was then governed by the husband of Francesca, whose hapless fate is immortalized by Dante. She was dead; but the country people, with a mixture of pity and religious horror, still spoke of her as the loveliest creature that had ever dwelt on earth, yet for whose lost soul, condemned to eternal pains, they dared not even pray.

Castruccio journeyed slowly on. He was weak and unable to endure continued exercise. Yet his mind recovered by degrees its wonted strength; and imagination, ever at work, pictured his future life, brilliant with glowing love, transcendent with glory and success. Thus, in solitude, while no censuring eye could check the exuberant vanity, he would throw his arms to the north, the south, the east, and the west, crying,—”There — there — there, and there, shall my fame reach!” — and then, in gay defiance, casting his eager glance towards heaven:—”and even there, if man may climb the slippery sides of the arched palace of eternal fame, there also will I be recorded.”

He was yet a boy in his seventeenth year when he said this. His desires were afterwards to a considerable extent fulfilled: would he not have been happier, if they had failed, and he, in blameless obscurity, had sunk with the millions that compose the nations of the earth, into the vast ocean of oblivion? The sequel of his history must solve the riddle.

CHAPTER III

CASTRUCCIO passed through Bologna, Ferrara and Rivigo, to arrive at Este. It was not the most favourable period for a visit to Lombardy. The beauty of that country consists in its exquisite vegetation: its fields of waving corn, planted with rows of trees to which vines are festooned, form prospects, ever varying in their combinations, that delight and refresh the eye; but autumn had nearly stripped the landscape, and the low lands were overflowed by the inundation of various rivers. Castruccio's mind, fixed on the imagination of future events, found no amusement in the wintry scene; but he saw with delight the mountains that were the bourn of his journey, become more and more distinct. Este is situated nearly at the foot of the Euganean hills, on a declivity overlooked by an extensive and picturesque castle, beyond which is a convent; the hills rise from behind, from whose heights you discover the vast plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines of Bologna, and to the east by the sea and the towers of Venice.

Castruccio ascended the hill immediately above the town, to seek for the habitation of Guinigi. The autumnal wind swept over it, scattering the fallen leaves of the chestnut wood; and the swift clouds, driven over the boundless plain, gave it the appearance, as their shadows came and went, of a heaving sea of dusky waters. Castruccio found Guinigi sitting at the door of his house; it was a low-roofed cottage, that seemed more fit for the habitation of a peasant, than of a man bred in camps and palaces. Guinigi himself was about forty years of age: the hardships of war had thinned the locks on his temples before their time, and drawn a few lines in his face, beaming as it was with benevolence. The sparkling intelligence of his eye was tempered by gentleness and wisdom; and the stately mien of the soldier had yielded somewhat to his late rustic occupations; for, since his exile he had turned his sword to a ploughshare, and he dwelt with much complacency on the change.

As Castruccio first saw him, he was gazing with the most heartfelt and benevolent pleasure on his boy, a child of seven years of age, who was busy with the peasants, drawing off wine from the vats; for it was just the time when the vintage was finished, and the last labours were bestowed on the crushed grapes. The youth paused: but for the air of dignity that was visible beneath his rustic dress, he could not have believed that this was his father's friend; his father, who in exile never forgot that he was a soldier and a knight. He gave the letter; and, when Guinigi had read it, he embraced the orphan son of his old comrade, and welcomed him with a cordiality that warmed the heart of Castruccio. The name of a stranger soon struck the ear of Arrigo, his little son, who came with joy to greet him, bearing a large basket of grapes and figs. Guinigi was much amused by the evident astonishment with which his guest regarded the appearance of the house and its master, and said:—"You come to the dwelling of a peasant who eats the bread his own hands have sown; this is a new scene for you, but you will not find it uninstructive. To my eyes, which do not now glance with the same fire as yours, the sight of the bounties of nature, and of the harmless peasants who cultivate the earth, is far more delightful than an army of knights hasting in brilliant array to deluge the fields with blood, and to destroy the beneficial hopes of the husbandman. But these are new doctrines to you; and you perhaps will never, like me, in the deep sincerity of your heart, prefer this lowly cottage to yonder majestic castle."

To say the truth, Castruccio was greatly disappointed. As he had ascended from the town, and saw a gay banner waving from the keep of the castle, as he heard the clash of armour, and beheld the sun-beams glitter on the arms of the centinel, he hoped that he should find his future protector a favourite with the happy chief. He would, he felt, have accosted him with more respect, if he had found him a monk in the neighbouring monastery, than a contented farmer, a peasant whose narrow views soared not beyond the wine-vat and the ox's stall.

These were the first feelings that occurred to Castruccio; but he soon found that he was introduced to a new world in the society of Guinigi; a world with whose spring of action he could not sympathize, yet which he could not condemn. It was characterized by a simple yet sublime morality, which resting on natural bases, admitted no factitious colouring. Guinigi thought only of the duty of man to man, laying aside the distinctions of society, and with lovely humility recognized the affinity of the meanest peasant to his own noble mind. Exercising the most exalted virtues, he also cultivated a taste and imagination that dignified what the vulgar would term ignoble, as the common clouds of day become fields of purple and gold, painted by the sun at eve. His fancy only paused, when he would force it to adorn with beauty vice, death, and misery, when disguised by a kingly robe, by the trappings of a victorious army, or the false halo of glory spread over the smoking ruins of a ravaged town. Then his heart sickened, and the banners of triumph or the song of victory could not drive from his recollection the varieties of death, and the groans of torture that occasion such exultation to the privileged murderers of the earth.

When Guinigi and Castruccio became intimate, the youth would reason with him, and endeavour to prove, that in the present distracted state of mankind, it was better that one man should get the upper hand, to rule the rest. “Yes,” said Guinigi, “let one man, if it be forbidden to more than one, get the upper hand in wisdom, and let him teach the rest: teach them the valuable arts of peace and love.”

Guinigi was a strange enthusiast. Men, like Alexander and other conquerors, have indulged the hope of subduing the world, and spreading by their triumphs refinement into its barbarous recesses. Guinigi hoped, how futilely! to lay a foundation-stone for the temple of peace among the Euganean hills. He had an overflowing affection of soul, that could not confine itself to the person of his son, or the aggrandizement of his country, or be spiritualized into a metaphysical adoration of ideal beauty. It bestowed itself on his fellow-creatures; and to see them happy, warmed his heart with a pleasure experienced by few. This man, his imaginative flights, his glowing benevolence and his humble occupations, were an enigma that Castruccio could never solve. But, while he neither sympathized with nor understood him, he quickly loved him with the warmest affection.

Castruccio wished to speak to him of his future destination; Guinigi said, “Your father has recommended you to my counsels, and you must allow me to become acquainted with you, before I can give you advice. You are very young; and we need not hurry. Grant me six months; we will not be idle. We will ramble about the country: winter is the peasant’s leisure time, so I am quite at your service. We shall be much together, and will discuss many subjects; and by degrees I shall understand the foundations on which you are to build your future life.”

They travelled to Padua, to lovely Venice, raising its head from the waves of ocean; they rambled about the coast for days together, having no other end than to enjoy the beauties of nature. Then, coming nearer home, they climbed the Euganean hills, and penetrated their recesses. Guinigi had an ultimate object in view; he wished to impress on the mind of his pupil a love of peace, and a taste for rural pleasures. One day they were on the summit of Monte Selice, a conical hill between Este and Padua, and Guinigi pointed to the country around.—”What a Paradise is this!” he said. “Now it is bare; but in the summer, when the corn waves among the trees, and ripening grapes shade the roads; when on every side you see happy peasants leading the beautiful oxen to their light work, and the sun, and the air, and the earth are each labouring to produce for man all that is necessary for his support, and the ground is covered with vegetation, and the air quickened into life, it is a spot, on which the Creator of the world might pause, and be pleased with his work. How different was this some years ago! You have heard of Ezzelino the tyrant of Padua, under whose auspices the rivers ran blood, and the unfortunate peasant found his harvests reaped by the sword of the invading soldier! Look at those peasants on yonder road, conducting their cattle crowned with flowers: habited in their holiday best, and moving in solemn procession; their oxen are going to be blessed by St. Antonio, to ward from them the evils of the ensuing seasons. A few years ago, instead of peasants, soldiers marched along that road: their close ranks shewed their excellent discipline; their instruments filled the air with triumphant sounds; the knights pricked their steeds forward, who arching their proud necks, seemed to exult in their destination. What were they about to do? to burn a town, to murder the old, and the helpless, the women, and the children; to destroy the dwellings of peace; so that, when they left their cruel work, the miserable wretches who survived had nothing to shelter them but the bare, black walls, where before their neat cottages had stood.”

Castruccio listened impatiently, and cried:—”Yet who would not rather be a knight, than one of those peasants, whose minds are as grovelling as their occupations?”

“That would not I,” replied Guinigi fervently; “how must the human mind be distorted, which can delight in that which is ill, in preference to the cultivation of the earth, and the contemplation of its loveliness! What a strange mistake is it, that a peasant’s life is incompatible with intellectual improvement! Alas! poor wretches; they are too hard-worked now to learn much, and their toil, uncheered by the applause of their fellow-creatures, appears a degradation; yet, when I would picture happiness upon earth, my imagination conjures up the family of a dweller among the fields, whose property is secure, and whose time is passed between labour and intellectual pleasures. Such now is my fate. The evening of my life steals gently on; and I have no regrets for the past, no wish for the future, but to continue as I am.”

“Yes,” cried Castruccio, “You have passed through life, and know what it is; but I would rather, while alive, enter my tomb, than live unknown and unheard of. Is it not fame that makes men gods? Do not urge me to pass my days in indolence; I must act, to be happy, — to be any thing. My father did not wish me to become a farmer and a vinedresser; but to tread in his steps, and go beyond them, and that is my purpose, which I would die to attain.”

A year passed while Castruccio still lived under the low roof of Guinigi. He found that it was no vain boast, that this noble ate the bread that he had sown: for he saw him hold the plough, trim his vines, and enter into all the labours of the husbandman. There is something picturesque in the toil of an Italian peasant. It is not, as in more northern climates, where cold, and wet, and care are endured, to be scantily repaid; and their unceasing anxiety is often terminated by the destruction of their crops through the severity of their climate. Guinigi and his fellow-labourers rose with the sun, which, ascending from the ocean, illumined the wide plain with its slant beams. The most beautiful vegetation luxuriated around them: the strips of land were planted with Indian corn, wheat and beans; they were divided, in some places by rows of olives, in others by elms or Lombardy poplars, to which the vines clung. The hedges were of myrtle, whose aromatic perfume weighed upon the sluggish air of noon, as the labourers reposed, sleeping under the trees, lulled by the rippling of the brooks that watered their grounds. In the evening they ate their meal under the open sky; the birds were asleep, but the ground was alive with innumerable glow-worms, and the air with the lightning-like fire-flies, small, humming crickets, and heavy beetles: the west had quickly lost its splendour, but in the fading beams of sunset sailed the boat-like moon, while Venus, as another satellite to earth, beamed just above the crescent hardly brighter than itself, and the outline of the rugged Apennines was marked darkly below.

Their harvests were plenteous and frequent. The moving of the grass was quickly followed in June by the reaping, and the well-trodden threshing floor, such as Virgil describes it, received the grain; then came the harvest of the Indian corn; and last the glorious vintage, when the beautiful dove-coloured oxen of Lombardy could hardly drag the creaking wains laden with the fruit.

Castruccio attended Guinigi in his labours; and Guinigi, resting on his spade, would moralize on all around him, and win the ardent imagination of the youth to follow his flights. All in the country bore for him the immediate stamp of divine and eternal beauty; he knew every flower of the field, and could describe their various habits, and what insects best loved to suck their nectar. He knew the form and the life of every little being of that peopled region, where the sun seems to quicken every atom into life; and that which was insignificant to common eyes, appeared to him to be invested with strange attributes and uncommon loveliness.

Again Guinigi sat, Castruccio beside him, at the door of his cot, watching the evening work of the labourers, as the wine was drawn off from the last vat. Arrigo, now a year older, was helping them: Castruccio said—”Instead of six months I have given you twelve, and I have not mentioned my future destiny; indeed we have been employed so pleasantly during the summer, that I almost forgot it. But I cannot live another year among these hills; you know not what bitterness I feel at heart, when I hear the clash of arms from the castle, I, who am wearing away an ignoble youth.”

Guinigi smiled, and replied, “I have reflected for you, and I have dived into your secret thoughts, although you have not spoken. To-morrow we will make a journey; and you shall soon be introduced to a man who will bring you into that life whose promise of glory is so attractive to you. So bid farewell to these hills; you will not see them again for many years.”

This hope stole sleep from the eyes of Castruccio that night. His imagination, which had lately rested on sickles, and wains, and vines, and the simple philosophy of Guinigi, now again fled to its wonted track, and entered upon what he conceived to be a more glorious world. Fleecy clouds hid the full moon, and the world was invested by a faint light that gradually opened into day. Castruccio saw the horses led saddled to the door, and he hastened to join Guinigi. Before he departed he kissed affectionately the sleeping Arrigo, and said: “I fear those fair eyes will be dimmed with tears, when he hears that I am not to return. Sweet boy! I love you as a brother, and hope some future day to shew that love in something more than words.”

Guinigi smiled at the aspiring spirit of Castruccio; he smiled to perceive that, still wanting protection, still a boy, his thoughts always dwelt on the power which he would one day acquire, and the protection he would then afford to others.

They rode silently along the well known road that led to Padua: after resting their horses at this town, they continued their way to Venice. Who knows not Venice? its streets paved with the eternal ocean, its beautiful domes and majestic palaces? It is not now as it was when Castruccio visited it; now the degenerate inhabitants go "crouching and crab-like through their sapping streets:" then they were at the height of their glory, just before the aristocratical government was fixed, and the people were struggling for what they lost — liberty.

Guinigi and his young companion were silent during their long ride. Guinigi was on the eve of seeing the friends of his warlike youth; and perhaps his memory recalled those scenes. Castruccio dreamed of futurity; and the uncertainty of his destiny only gave more scope to his imagination, as he figured the glorious part which he flattered himself he was about to act on the great theatre. At length they arrived on the shore of the Laguna, and entered the gondola which was to convey them to the city. Guinigi then addressed the youth:—"You trust your fate to me; and I must explain to you the plan that I have formed concerning you, that you may judge whether I merit the entire confidence you shew yourself inclined to repose in me. You know, my dear Castruccio, that poor Italy is distracted by civil brawls, and how little honour one who is exiled as you are from his native town, can acquire, to whatever party he may adhere. His most arduous exertions may be sacrificed to political intrigue, and assuredly he will be repaid with ingratitude alone, whatever power he serves. In addition, a disgraceful political craft now reigns in the palaces of the Italian princes, which renders them ill schools for a youth, who, while he may, ought to preserve the innocence and sincerity of which the world will but too quickly deprive him. You would inevitably be disgusted by the narrow views, the treachery, and beggarly fraud, that dwell in the hearts, and influence the actions of our proudest nobles.

"You must therefore begin your knightly career out of Italy. The honours that you will obtain from a foreign sovereign, will ennoble you in the eyes of your countrymen, and will enable you, when you return, to judge impartially of the state of your country, and to choose, without being influenced by narrow party-feeling, the course you will pursue. It is with this view that I am going to introduce you to an old friend of mine, an Englishman, who is about to return to his native soil. I knew him many years ago, when he accompanied Charles of Anjou to Italy. A long time has elapsed since Sir Ethelbert Atawel returned to England; but, upon the event of a new king's succession to the throne, he was chosen, as a person well acquainted with the customs of the holy court, to be the chief of an embassy to the Pope. Having discharged his mission, he has crossed the Alps to take a last farewell of his Italian friends, before he proceeds to assume a distinguished part in his own country. I shall consign you, my young friend, to the guidance of this noble gentleman. We have now been separated for nearly twenty years; but our attachment did not arise from casual intercourse alone; we esteemed one another, we bound ourselves one to the other by vows; and, although at this distance of time, life has much changed its appearance to both of us, yet I swear I would keep to the letter all that I vowed to him, and I believe that he will do the same by me.

"Another motive influences me in sending you to England. You have a rich relation there named Alderigo, who requested Atawel to enquire for the various branches of the exiled Antelminelli, and in particular for your father. It may well appear from the earnestness of his enquiries, that, if you go to England, you will find yourself neither friendless nor poor. I am an exile like you, and like you I am destitute of all resources, and am saved from embarrassment only by those labours in which I fortunately take a pride. I know that it would not be agreeable to you to be dependent on the favour of Atawel; but you are differently circumstanced with regard to your relation; and I believe him to have both the power and the will to serve you."

The gondola entered Canale Grande, and rested at the steps of a noble palace. Castruccio had no time to comment upon the relation of Guinigi; but followed him silently through the stately apartments, hung with silk and tapestry, and paved with marble, into the banqueting hall, where the owner of the palace sat surrounded by the aristocracy of Venice. The childish mind of Castruccio shrunk into itself, when he saw the satined and gold-laced state of these nobles, and then glanced his eye on the dignified form of his companion clothed in the mean habiliments of an Italian peasant: but his shame was turned to pride and astonishment, when he found this homely-looking man received with reverence, and embraced with affection, by this lordly assembly. The most cordial salutes echoed from the ends of the hall, as they all pressed round to welcome their old friend and counsellor, to whose wisdom and calm courage many of them owed the most important obligations. There was a sweetness in the smile of Guinigi, that elevated him in appearance above other men, a sensibility beaming in his eye which added grace to his quick and expressive motions, and a gentleness that tempered the frankness of his manners. He introduced Castruccio to the nobles. The youth was beautiful to a wonder, and experienced a flattering reception from the friends of his protector.

"I shall remain but a few days in Venice," said Guinigi to his host; "but I will visit you again before I retire to my farm; at present you must tell me where I can find your English visitor, Sir Ethelbert Atawel, for my business is with him."

A man now arose, and advanced from a retired part of the room; his person formed a strange contrast to the sun-burnt faces and black eyes of the Italians who were around him. He had the round Saxon features, moulded with uncommon delicacy; his light hair slightly shaded his fair temples, and his slender person denoted elegance rather than power; his countenance bore the expression of much thought, of thoughts moulded by an enquiring, yet a gentle mind. He advanced towards Guinigi; his lips were almost convulsed; a tear stole into his eye, as he grasped his hand, and said: "You do not forget me?"

Guinigi replied with trembling emphasis, "Never!" — the hearts of the friends were full, they took leave of the company, and descended to the gondola, that without spectators they might express their remembered affection.

CHAPTER IV

CASTRUCCIO spent several days with his friend at Venice. Guinigi and Atawel were constantly together, and Castruccio was thrown to a great degree into the society of the Venetian nobles. Having been for a year the constant companion of Guinigi, the contrast between him and these men struck him forcibly. The mind of the philosophical exile was fraught with a natural wisdom, a freedom from prejudice, and a boldness of thought, that suited the enthusiasm, while it corrected the narrow views of Castruccio. But these nobles were full of party spirit, and a never resting desire, to aggrandize first themselves, and secondly their native town, in opposition to the rest of the world. They were to themselves the centre of the universe, and men and nations rose and set only for them. As Galileo was persecuted for saying that the earth moved attendant on the sun, thus demonstrating the relative insignificance of our globe; so they would have pursued with excessive hatred any one who should have pointed out to them their true station in relation to their fellow-creatures. They were in no danger of hearing such disagreeable truths from Guinigi: he was content not to be deceived himself by the false shadows thrown from society; but with that amenity which was his characteristic, he adapted his counsels to the ideas of others, and allowed those whom he could not hope to new mould, to sleep in their pleasant dreams.

Castruccio was presented to the doge, and partook of all the brilliant amusements of Venice. But at length the time arrived, when he was to depart with Sir Ethelbert Atawel, and Guinigi to return to his farm among the hills. It was a sorrowful event for Atawel and Castruccio to separate from this kind and valued friend. Before he departed, Guinigi talked long with Castruccio, and vehemently urged him, when he should arrive in England, that he would put himself entirely under the guidance of Atawel. “You will be,” he said, “in a strange country, with unknown manners and customs; so that without a guide you would find it difficult to steer a right course among them. My dear Castruccio, God only knows what your future fortunes will be; but your father intrusted you to my care, and I feel the most earnest anxiety that you should enter life under good auspices, and enjoy, at least with untarnished pleasure, the years of youthful hope. Be towards Atawel as you ever have been to me; the natural ingenuousness of your character will discover to you the medium, which combines the graceful submission of youth, with that independence that is the dearest birthright of man. Atawel is gentle and unassuming; you must seek his counsels; for his best wisdom will be bestowed upon you, when you shew a desire to consult it."

They separated: Atawel and Castruccio departed with a few attendants towards Milan on the road to England.

Castruccio now found himself with a companion, different from him to whom he had just bade an affectionate farewell. Atawel was more a man of the world than Guinigi; nor did he possess his genius and surpassing excellence. Entering into the common road of life, he was notwithstanding able to regulate his conduct by just principles, and to recommend himself by a sound judgement and a steady courage; but he was unable to strike into new paths, and become an adventurer in life and morals as Guinigi had been. He had great sensibility and warm affections; and various misfortunes in life had turned a constitutional gravity into melancholy. Yet he unveiled his spirit for a while from the clouds that obscured it, and entered with interest into the views and expectations of Castruccio.

They conversed together concerning his cousin Alderigo, who was a rich merchant in London, and who by his respectability and talents had acquired influence even among the nobles of England. Alderigo had been known and loved by Edward I: for in those days kings did not disdain to seek friends among those classes of society from which ordinary etiquette would have excluded them. The merchant however had withdrawn from all communication with the court, since the accession of Edward of Caernarvon; for the childish amusements of this monarch ill accorded with the dispositions of one who had been the friend of his manly father. When the barons of England remonstrated with Edward, and insisted on the exile of Piers Gavaston, Alderigo had however come forward to persuade the king to this necessary concession.

Atawel also was an enemy of Gavaston; and, as he sketched the political state of England to his young companion, he painted with indignation the change from the spirited counsels of the late sovereign, to the puerile amusements and weak inaction of his son. He described Gavaston as a man expert in feats of bodily activity, but destitute of judgement and manly enterprize. He said that he was vain-glorious, rapacious, and profuse. Insolent to his superiors and equals, tyrannical to his inferiors, he deigned to use the arts of courtesy to the king alone: even the queen failed in obtaining from him the respect due to her sex and dignity. He had been raised to rank and wealth by the royal favour; but he conducted himself with an arrogance, that would not have been tolerated in the first noble of the land. He was not content to overcome his adversary in the field of honour; but he endeavoured to add to his shame by sarcasm and ridicule. The barons exerted their utmost power for his destruction; Edward yielded to force; but on the first favourable opportunity he recalled his friend, who, untaught by adversity, again irritated his rivals to that hostility in which he was sure to be worsted.

The animated picture which Atawel drew of the discontent and turbulence of the English barons, although it would have excited terror in these quiet times, delighted Castruccio, as affording a hope of having now found a fitting stage on which he might commence his active career. The loss of Scotland to England, and the inaction of the king and his favourite, easily induced him to sympathize in the indignation of Atawel; and he readily believed, that the insolence of the upstart and unworthy Gavaston demanded and justified the most rigorous measures to ensure his expulsion from the kingdom.

Castruccio was now eighteen years of age. His converse with Guinigi had indued him with a manliness of thought and firmness of judgement beyond his years; at the same time that the vivacity of his temper often made him appear rash, and the gaiety of his disposition led him to seek with ardour the common diversions of his age. He was bred as a young esquire in all those accomplishments which were deemed essential to a gentleman, and was expert in feats of horsemanship and arms, in the dance, and in other exercises peculiar to his country. His countenance, which was uncommonly beautiful, expressed frankness, benevolence and confidence; when animated, his eyes shone with fire; when silent, there was a deep seriousness in his expression, that commanded attention, combined at the same time with a modesty and grace which prepossessed every one in his favour. His slight, but active form never moved without displaying some new elegance of person; and his voice, whose modulated accents stole on the ear like sweetest music, forced the hearer to love him; his laugh, like that of a child, heartfelt and joyous, was entirely distinct from the sneer of contempt, or the arrogance of superiority. He had read little; but he had conversed with those who had studied deeply, so that his conversation and manners were imbued with that refinement and superior sweetness, which are peculiar to those who unite the cultivation of the mind to exterior accomplishments. Gay, ambitious and beloved, there was little pride, and no insolence in his nature: nor could he endure either to be the object of arrogance, or to perceive it exercised over others.

Such was Castruccio, when in the beginning of the year 1309 he landed on the English shores. Gavaston had just been expelled by a confederacy of the nobles, who for a while had assumed the royal power into their own hands. But, instead of having been poorly exiled according to the wish of the barons, his royal master had invested him with the Lieutenancy of Ireland, where he signalized himself by his victories over the rebels. Edward however could not be happy in the absence of his favourite, but, melancholy and irresolute, watched for a fitting opportunity, when the hatred of his nobles should in some degree be softened, to recall him.

Alderigo received his young cousin with the warmest affection, and shewed every disposition to aid by his wealth and influence, in placing him in such a situation as might gratify his ambition. Atawel introduced him at court; and, if the haughty barons of England viewed with a supercilious smile the youthful beauty and accomplishments of the stranger, Edward was pleased to behold one, who by his foreign air, and the refinement of his manners, recalled the memory of his exiled favourite. He distinguished Castruccio among the crowd; and the youth, dazzled perhaps by royal favour, easily altered his prepossessions in favour of the barons, into love and pity for their oppressed sovereign. At balls and tournaments Castruccio shone among the throng. He was yet too youthful to enter into manual contests with the English lords; but the management of his horse, his graceful person, his skill in the dance, and other light games, endeared him to Edward, who was incapable of sympathizing in the ruder exercises in which his barons were so jealous of their pre-eminence.

Atawel and Alderigo viewed the favour which Castruccio enjoyed with the king, with fearful eyes: they dreaded the jealousy of the nobles; but happily this passion was not excited on the present occasion. On the contrary they were rather pleased, that the king should be amused by the company of one, whose youth and precarious situation withheld him from entering into the lists of rivalry with them. The Italian Castruccio, dependent on the bounty of a merchant of his own country, no conqueror at the tournament, neither thwarting, nor understanding their several plans of aggrandisement, was past over with a scornful smile, which the youth, regarding himself as a sufferer in common with their injured king, did not receive as a degradation. But deeper feelings of sympathy now gave him other sentiments.

Edward's favourite recreation was the game of tennis; in which, it being common in Italy under the name of la Palla, Castruccio excelled. One day after having amused themselves at this exercise in one of the royal gardens, Edward feeling fatigued gave up the game, and leaning on Castruccio's arm, strolled with him down one of the shady alleys. And here for the first time he opened his heart to his new friend: he described Gavaston as the most amiable and the most accomplished knight of the times: he dwelt with touching earnestness on his own attachment to him, and his forced separation; tears started into his eyes as he spoke of the desolate state of his heart, deprived of the company of his first, his only and his dearest friend; and his cheeks glowed with indignation, as he mentioned the arrogance of his nobles, and the state of slavery to which he was reduced.

Castruccio was deeply moved; and the natural feeling of pity, with which he was inspired at the spectacle of the slavery of one, who it was presumed had a divine right to command, was augmented by the idea that he had been found a worthy deposit for the overflowings of the royal sorrows. He offered his services with earnestness, and Edward gladly accepted his proffers. "Yes, my dear friend," he cried, "the accomplishment of my fondest wishes shall devolve upon you. You shall be my saviour; the saviour of my honour, and the cause of the only happiness I can enjoy on earth, the return of my beloved Piers."

Edward then disclosed to Castruccio the various expedients he had used, to pacify his nobles, and to obtain the re — establishment of his friend. He acknowledged that he had just received from the Pope a dispensation of Gavaston's oath never again to set foot in England; and a faithful messenger was only necessary, to carry this intelligence to his friend, and bid him instantly return; so that the barons, taken unawares, should not have time to plot new disturbances, before the king should be able to defy their worst, secure of the life and the society of his favourite. “That task shall devolve on you, my dear Castruccio,” said he; “and I shall be indebted to you for the happiness of again embracing him to whom I have bound myself by the ties of an eternal friendship. Frame a plausible excuse for quitting England, and hasten to Dublin, where Piers impatiently waits a messenger from me; that you may not be exposed to the slightest risk from the suspicion of the nobles, I will give you no letter: but this ring, as was agreed upon between myself and my friend, will obtain for its bearer his full confidence and friendship.”

Castruccio took leave of the monarch, and hastened to the house of Alderigo, full of pride, hope, and joy. He had now indeed entered upon life, and as he hoped, with the best auspices: he had become the chosen confident of a king, and his secret messenger; he readily believed that prudence, and prudence should not fail him, would cause his rise to the highest dignities. His feelings were not entirely selfish; for he deeply pitied Edward, and was sincerely happy in serving him: but to pity and serve a king, was a state of being full of pleasure. In accordance with the prudent plan he had marked out for himself, he remained at the house of his kinsman during several days, secluded from his courtly friends, and absenting himself entirely from the palace. On occasion of the arrival of a few letters from France, he informed Atawel and Alderigo, that it was absolutely necessary for him to undertake a journey to that country. As he alleged the most frivolous causes as the motive of this determination, his friends easily perceived that he was endeavouring to mislead them by a false pretext. The Italian, after having in vain endeavoured to win his confidence, contented himself with recommending prudence and caution: Atawel spoke more seriously, and bade the youth beware, before he mixed with the intrigues of a foreign court, in which if he were once detected, he had neither friends nor connections to extricate him from the rage of his powerful adversaries. And then again he intreated Castruccio to consider the justice of the cause in the service of which he enlisted himself, and what would be the probable consequences, if through his means Edward were to establish a correspondence with his favourite. The young man listened with seeming deference, but allowed no word to escape him, that might countenance the idea that his journey was influenced by any except private considerations.

He departed from London, as if on his way to France; then suddenly changing his route, he traversed the kingdom, and crossing from Bristol to Cork, hastened to Dublin, and carried to Gavaston the welcome command of the king to return immediately to England; the ring that he bore from Edward, was an immediate passport to the friendship of the illustrious exile.

Piers Gavaston was still in the flower of his age. If he were not handsome, yet the expression of his features was manly and interesting; he was graceful in person, and strong of muscle, though agile of limb: he was courteous in general society, though a certain haughtiness was diffused over his whole manner, which forbade any more familiar feeling than that of admiration. Among his friends this air of superiority yielded to the most winning kindness and affability of demeanour, which, being ever a mark of distinguished affection, did not fail to bind them to him by an additional tie of gratitude. He spoke several languages with great fluency; he rivalled the most graceful knights of France, and far surpassed the English in all chivalrous accomplishments. The consciousness of power with which his dexterity inspired him, generated an independence and frankness of action, which would have rendered him amiable to all, had it not been tainted by vanity and presumption. He was magnificent in his attire, fond of parade, and proud of his dazzling fortunes, all heavy sins among his English enemies. He paid great attention, and made much shew of love to Castruccio, whom if princely affability had before moved, the gracious treatment of Gavaston made a complete conquest of him.

They returned together to England. Edward had arrived at Chester, that he might behold his friend a few days the sooner; and he flew to his arms with the affectionate transports with which a child might welcome the return of its absent mother.

A strict friendship was established between Gavaston and Castruccio. Piers had not learned moderation from adversity; his wealth and luxury were increased, and with these his vanity and insufferable presumption. Atawel in vain endeavoured to win Castruccio from his society; but, if the deportment of Gavaston was arrogant towards the English lords, it was so much the more affable and insinuating towards Castruccio. The king also loved the Italian; and, not examining the merits of the case, he allowed himself to be entirely led away by the personal attachment that he bore to Edward and Piers.

Gavaston had wealth and rank; and, although he was considered an upstart, yet the possession of these gave him a consequence in the eyes of the nobles, of which Castruccio was wholly divested. They looked on the latter as one may regard a stinging insect, whose insignificance is not to compound for his annoyance. They endured the insolence of Gavaston with the sullenness of men who look into the future for revenge; but they bore the far slighter pain which Castruccio inflicted upon them, with the impatience one feels at an injury, however slight, for which we are by no means prepared. And, if Castruccio himself manifested few symptoms of insolence, yet he was supported by that of Gavaston; and they felt that, though for the present they could not injure the favourite personally, yet they might wound him through his Italian friend. This latter also was not unfrequently provoked beyond his usual courtesy by the pride and taunts of his enemies; and, if ever he dared reply, or when Gavaston replied for him, the nobles felt a rage they could ill smother at what they deemed so despicable an offender. The indications of mischief which had before slightly manifested themselves, broke out one day with a violence that suddenly terminated Castruccio’s visit to England.

He accompanied the king, who went with a train of the first nobility on a hawking party, to Chelsea. The exercise excited Castruccio’s blood, and inspired him with an exaltation of spirits which might have exhausted itself in gaiety alone, had not a quarrel, that arose between him and one of the nobles, urged him to a fury he could ill control. The contention began concerning the comparative flight of their birds; and, heated as they were by personal animosity, it became loud and bitter. Edward in vain endeavoured to appease them; but when, seconded by his friends, the English nobleman established his triumph in the contest, Castruccio replied by a sarcasm which so irritated his antagonist, that, no longer restraining his indignation, he darted forward, and struck Castruccio. The fiery youth, crying in Italian, “By blood, and not by words, are blows to be avenged!” — drew his stiletto, and plunged it into the bosom of his adversary. A hundred swords immediately flashed in the air; Edward threw himself before his friend to protect him: Gavaston, Atawel and others who loved him, hastily withdrew him from the crowd, made him mount his horse, and without a moment’s delay they rode to the river’s side below the Tower, where they fortunately found a vessel on the point of sailing for Holland. Without waiting to see his other friends, without going to the house of Alderigo for money or equipment, they hurried him on board the vessel, which immediately got under way, and dropped down with a favourable wind towards the Nore.

The barons, burning with revenge, had sent archers to the house of Alderigo, who, not finding Castruccio, seized upon his kinsman, and threw him into prison. A law then existed in England, that if a foreigner killed a native and escaped, those with whom he resided became amenable for the murder. Alderigo was therefore in the most imminent peril; but Edward, as the last act of friendship that he could bestow upon Castruccio, saved the life and fortune of his kinsman. And thus, after a year’s residence in this island, did the youth bring to a disastrous conclusion all the hopes and expectations which had led him thither.

CHAPTER V

AFTER a favourable navigation of a few hours Castruccio arrived at Ostend. He landed destitute of friends, and even of the equipage of a gentleman. What Castruccio felt during the voyage can hardly be described. Anger, grief and shame kept his spirits in a perpetual fluctuation, which, painful as it was, was far preferable to the extinction of hope, and the sense of utter desertion upon his landing in Flanders. The world was indeed before him: he had been torn with frightful suddenness from the affections he had cultivated for a year, from ease, luxury and the friendship of a powerful monarch, and consigned to utter destitution. He did not even possess the lance and horse, with which knights-errant of old won kingdoms for themselves. Nor did he think without remorse of the blood with which his hands were for the first time stained; he had received a blow, and blood alone could expiate this injury: in France or England a duel in regular and courtly form would have terminated the quarrel; but in Italy the secret stiletto was the weapon of revenge, and the murder of one was avenged by the assassination of another, until the list of expiatory murders ran high, and were carefully counted by each party, each justifying his own, and blaming those of his adversary. Yet, although the mind of Castruccio was tinctured by the morality of his country, he was too young and too new not to feel a natural horror at having been the cause of the death of a fellow creature. Seated on a rock amidst the wide sands left by the retiring sea, listening to the melancholy roar of the tide, he shed bitter tears of repentance and conscious guilt. One idea alone calmed him, that his adversary might not have died — and then what was he? His rashness and folly had thrown him from a high station of prosperity and happiness, to being the solitary, helpless creature that he then was.

The sun sunk in a turbid sky. “Ah! how unlike dear Italy,” sighed Castruccio; “how different from the clear heavens and orange-tinted sunsets of my native soil!”

He spoke in Italian, and a man who stood near unperceived by him, repeated the word so dear to exiles, the name of the country of his birth: —”Italia.” Castruccio looked up, and the man continued: “Italy is also my native country. And who are you, my friend, who, alone and a stranger, mourn for the delights of that paradise of the earth?"

"I am a Lucchese," replied Castruccio; "I am the cousin of Alderigo, the rich merchant in England."

"The name of an Italian," said the other, "is a sufficient passport to my poor hospitality; but, as the relation of my excellent friend, Messer Alderigo, it greatly delights me to offer you all the little service that I am capable of giving. Come with me to my house; you will recall perhaps some not unpleasing associations in the society of an Italian family, who, during a long absence, have never forgotten the olive groves of Italy, and never ceased to desire to return to them."

Castruccio accepted this friendly invitation with joy. He found his host a rich merchant of Ostend, living in the Italian style, and surrounded by a family, whose language and persons transported him to the plains of Lombardy, or the vallies of his native Tuscany.

During the conversation of the evening his host mentioned the wars that were then carrying on between the French king and the Flemings, and that Alberto Scoto commanded under the banners of the former with a troop of Italians. This account struck Castruccio with a hope, that he should now find some remedy for his misfortunes. Being obliged to enter on a new career, and his inclination leading him to war, he thought that this opportunity of serving under a fellow-countryman was too favourable a circumstance to be neglected. He made many enquiries concerning this troop and its illustrious chief. Alberto Scoto had once possessed a wide dominion in Lombardy; he had expelled the Visconti from Milan, and had been constituted tyrant or lord of the most flourishing Lombard states. When by the joint force of revolt and treason he was driven from his power, he had not lost his reputation as a successful general, and Philip le Bel, king of France, eagerly accepted his offered services. In former times he had been considered as belonging to the Guelph faction; but he had changed before he quitted Italy; and, now an exile, the distinction of party was entirely lost to him.

Castruccio had never yet made a campaign; and his eager spirit led him to regard with disdain the sloth in which he had hitherto passed his life. From the moment that he had landed in France he had resolved to commence a military career; and he believed that he should find no better school than that of Alberto Scoto, where he would be disciplined in the modes of his own country, and learn under so experienced a general, the tactics of those armies which he hoped one day to command.

On the following morning he discoursed concerning these ideas with his host, who easily entered into his designs, and promised to provide him with such an introduction to Scoto as would at least command his attention. His plans were quickly arranged.

The merchant took a kind leave of his young compatriot, and gave him a well filled purse at parting: "You shall repay me," said he smiling, "out of your first spoils: or, if these fall short of my expectations, Messer Alderigo will not suffer a friend of his to lose through his kindness to a kinsman."

Castruccio traversed in safety the plains of Flanders, and arrived at the French camp, which was pitched near Douai. He penetrated with some difficulty into the tent of Scoto: but that experienced general soon perceived in the mien of the youthful stranger a soldier's deportment and air of independence, that prepossessed him at once in his favour. After having read the letter of Castruccio's host, he addressed the youth with kindness. "Our countryman," said he, "informs me that you are the chief of the noble family of the Antelminelli, a name so well known in Italy, as to be itself a sufficient introduction to a native of that country. You desire to serve under me, and I feel myself honoured by your selection; my troop must be a gainer by the acquisition of so noble a volunteer."

The manners of Scoto were courtly; and in his conversation with the youth his keen judgement quickly discovered the qualifications of Castruccio. They dined together; and afterwards, having equipped him in a becoming dress, he presented him to the French king, from whom he experienced a favourable reception. Castruccio did not fail speedily to inform Alderigo of his situation, who immediately remitted him a sum of money amply sufficient for his present supply.

Castruccio had now exchanged the idle gaieties of the English court for the active labours of a camp; and on the following day he entered on his military duties. Scoto presented him with a suit of armour, selecting one of the most costly that he possessed. There was a small iron scull cap which fitted the head, and was worn under the helmet. The casque itself was of highly polished iron inlaid with gold in beautiful devices, and the mailed collar for his neck was plated with the same precious metal. The breast-plate was finely carved, and fastened over the shoulders to the back plate, which was laboured with less delicacy. The greaves which sheathed his legs, were beautifully inlaid, and shone with gold; his sword was of the finest temper, and the scabbard, richly adorned, hung at his side from an embroidered scarf; a shield and a good lance completed his equipment. Arms of less costly manufacture were chosen for his horse, which, selected from the stud of Scoto, was strong, heavy and spirited.

The next day the camp was in motion. It were needless to detail the events of this campaign: several battles were fought, and some towns taken. The French who had hitherto been losers, regained their ground; and in every action the troop of Scoto distinguished itself, and among his troop Castruccio was pre — eminent in bravery, enterprize and success. Scoto perceived, and warmly applauded his courage and conduct: the fame of his actions was spread through the army, and his first campaign crowned him with that reputation to which he had long aspired. King Philip himself had witnessed his achievements; he beheld him as he led a troop to the onset, and turned in favour of France the dubious fortune of a hard-fought day. The King proved his gratitude by bestowing on him such praises and rewards as filled Castruccio with triumph and delight.

Scoto was quartered during the winter at one of the Flemish towns, and Castruccio was invited to partake of the gaieties of the Parisian court. He obeyed the summons, and spent some weeks in the enjoyment of all those amusements which the palace of Philip afforded. His beauty and grace attracted the notice of the ladies; and his fame in arms caused him to be distinguished by the French nobility.

Towards the close of the winter he returned to the camp of Scoto, in whose esteem he held a very high place. This general delighted in imparting his experience to so attentive a listener, and in endeavouring to form the genius of one who he foresaw would rise to the highest rank among the lords of Italy. Castruccio was admitted at all hours to his tent; they rode together; and, under the precepts of one well experienced in the politics of Italy, Castruccio began to understand and meditate the part he should act, when he returned to that country. Yet Scoto's was an evil school; and, if his pupil gained from him a true insight into Italian politics, he at the same time learned the use of those arts which then so much disgraced that people. The Punica fides had been transferred across the Mediterranean; and every kind of wile and artifice was practised in the Italian palaces, which ever received from the court of the Popes, as from a well of poison, courtiers and crafty politicians, who never permitted the art to fail for want of instructors. Scoto had been more successful than any other in the exercise of this policy, and he now initiated Castruccio in the secrets of the craft. Hitherto his mind had been innocence, and all his thoughts were honour. Frankness played on his lips; ingenuousness nestled in his heart; shame was ever ready to check him on the brink of folly; and the tenderness of his nature seemed to render it impossible for him to perpetrate a deed of harshness or inhumanity. The court of England had infused some laxity into his moral creed; but at least he had not learned there hypocrisy, and the wily arts of a hoary politician. Still the strait path of honour and a single mind had ever engaged his choice. But nineteen is a dangerous age; and ill betides the youth who confides himself to a crafty instructor. If Castruccio listened at first with an inattentive ear to the counsels of Scoto, yet their frequent repetition, and wax-like docility of his mind, quickly gave them power over him.

"You, my dear Castruccio," said Scoto, "will soon return to your native country, where your talents and valour will open for you a brilliant career. A soldier, if he join wisdom of counsel to soldiership, must for a while succeed in Italy; and if he be prudent, he need not fall as I did. A chief in Italy ought to pay strict attention to the discipline and equipment of his followers, and to the spreading the terror of his name among his enemies. This must be his first step; and without that the foundations of his power are as sand; for to have many cities subject to his command is as nothing in the hour of danger, since if he control them not with iron, gold will ever find its way into the councils of the citizens; and woe and defeat are to that chief, who reigns only by the choice of the people; a choice more fickle and deceitful than the famed faithlessness of woman.

"But, having once formed an army, disciplined it, and shewn its temper by success, then is the time to change the arts of war for those of counsel, and to work your way as the mole, shewing no sign of your path, until your triumphant power comes forth where it is least expected. Nor be lavish of gold; for that is power while you possess it, weakness when surrendered into the hands of another. But alliances, marriages, nominal honours and promises are the fit allurements to be used among our countrymen. By one or other of these means, of such motley materials are Italian confederacies composed, one single chieftain may ever introduce dissention and treason into the enemy's camp. It was thus that I fell; for I did not trust to my own strength, but to that of my allies.

"There are two classes of men in Italy, which indeed often cut like a two-edged sword, and turn upon their master, yet which with proper management are of infinite use in the accomplishment of secret treaties, and the carrying on of correspondence in the very heart of the enemy's councils: these are the priests, and the Uomini di Corte. The priests are the least trustworthy and the most expensive: yet sometimes I have seen them stand by their employer, if he yielded them much respect and apparent submission, and betray him who has paid them well, yet who had neglected the arts of flattery. In their youth men are often led to trust to their actions and their sword; but every day is another page of experience, to shew us that men are governed by words alone, words light as air, yet which have often been found capable of overturning empires: witness the triumphs of the Popes, who dissipated the armies of their enemies, and despoiled them of rank, possessions and life, by excommunications, and anathemas — words. But, in discovering this infinite power in words, let it make you prudent in their use; be not chary in their quantity, but look well to their quality. But to return to our instruments, — priests, and Uomini di Corte.

"These latter are poor dogs, often faithful, easily satisfied, and who can penetrate every where, see every thing, hear every thing, and if you acquire but the art of getting their knowledge from them, they become of infinite utility; this is done by many words, much good humour, and a little gold. When Della Torre and I chased Matteo Visconti from Milan, that chief retired to live on bread and onions in his miserable castle of St. Columban among the Euganean hills. All at once Della Torre began to suspect, that Matteo had received money from Germany, and was secretly collecting arms and men at his castle. So he sent for a Uomo di Corte, a famous fellow in those days, one Marco Lombardi, who had in former times prophesied to count Ugolino his future misfortunes, and said to him; 'Now, my brave Marco, if you would gain a palfrey and a gold-embroidered robe, I have an easy task, which accomplished they shall both be yours. Go, as if on your own pleasure, to the castle where Matteo Visconti now lives; spy well if there be gleam of arms of appearance of soldiers; and, when you take leave of the chief, ask him in a buffoonish manner to answer you two questions:

let those questions be, first, how he likes his present state, and if he be not poorly off; and secondly, when he hopes to return to Milan.'

"Marco readily undertook the task, and visited the castle of St. Columban, where he found Visconti ill dressed, ill fed, and worse attended; for there were about him only a few wrinkled and crippled followers, who not being able to gain more in the wars, and too lazy for work, came to starve themselves under his roof. His good lady was worse off, not having a handmaid to wait upon her, and, as I have heard, there was but one capuchin between her and her husband, which they wore by turns. Marco made but a short stay in the castle, for he got nothing to eat; but, as he took his leave of Visconti, he intreated the chief to help him to gain a palfrey and silken robe. 'Willingly,' replied Visconti, 'if I am able; but think not to get them from me, for I have them not.'

"'Noble count,' said Marco, 'answer me two questions, and I shall receive these gifts in pay for your answers.'

"And then he put the two demands, as Della Torre had instructed him. Visconti, who was discerning and cunning, replied: 'Truly I find my present situation suited to me, since I suit myself to it; tell this to your master, Messer Guido Della Torre, who sent you; and tell him also, that when his crimes out number mine, then it is God's will that I return to Milan.'

"Della Torre, relieved from his fears, since he undoubtedly feared German gold more than the due punishment for his sins, rewarded Marco as he had promised."

Such were the lessons of Scoto; and the reader will easily forgive me, if I repeat them not so often, or dilate on them so much as the chief himself did. Castruccio listened with curiosity, half angry, half convinced; and in those days the seeds of craft were sown, that, flourishing afterwards, contributed to his advancement to power and glory. As winter drew to a close, Scoto said to him: "I could have wished, my young friend, that you fought under my banners another campaign, and that I might still enjoy the advantage of your society and valour; but fortune orders it otherwise, and you must away to Italy. Henry of Luxemburgh, now emperor of Germany, has begun to advance towards that country, where he will collect the wrecks of the Ghibeline party, and endeavour to re-establish them. You are a Ghibeline of a high and faithful family, and must not omit this opportunity for your advancement. Return to Italy; join the emperor; and I doubt not that through his means you will be restored to your wealth and rights in Lucca. Go, Castruccio; you are formed for action and command: do not forget my lessons. Here or in England they might be useless, but in Italy they are necessary to your success. I doubt not of the high fortune that awaits you; and it will warm my old blood, if I think, that I, an exile, and a soldier of fortune, fighting under colours not my own, shall have contributed to the advancement of so lofty a spirit as yours."

Castruccio followed the advice of Scoto; he took an affectionate leave of him, and again received the courteous thanks of the French monarch. He was loaded with many costly presents; and his sword, of the finest temper, the hilt and sheath richly embossed and inlaid with jewels, was presented to him by the hands of the queen. He consigned these gifts, and the spoil by which he was enriched, into the hands of an Italian merchant, to be conveyed by his means into Italy; he travelled himself on horseback, accompanied by a servant, and a mule which bore his armour.

Journeying at this leisurely rate, he arrived after an interval of some weeks, at the southeastern extremity of France. He approached the beautiful Alps, the boundaries of his native country: their white domes and peaks pierced the serene atmosphere; and silence, the deep silence of an Alpine winter, reigned among their ravines. As he advanced into their solitudes, he lost all traces of the footsteps of man, and almost of animals: — an eagle would sometimes cross a ravine, or a chamois was seen hanging on the nearly perpendicular rock. The giant pines were weighed down by a huge canopy of snow; and the silent torrents and frozen waterfalls were covered, and almost hid, by the uniform mass. The paths of the vallies, and the ascent of the mountains, ever difficult, were almost impassable; perpetual showers of snow hid every track, and a few straggling poles alone guided the traveller in his dangerous journey. The vulture leaving his nest in the rock, screamed above, seeming to tell the rash adventurer who dared disturb his haunt, that his torn limbs were the tribute due to him, the monarch of that region. Sometimes even, the road was strewed with the members of the venturous chamois, whose sure foot had failed among the snows; and the approach of Castruccio scared the birds of prey from their repast on his half-frozen limbs. One pass was particularly dangerous: the road was cut in the side of a precipitous mountain: below, the stream which had cleared its way in the very depth of the valley, was hidden by the overhanging of the precipice: above, the mountain side, almost vulture-baffling, black, except where the snow had found a resting-place in its clefts, towered so high that the head became dizzy, when the traveller would have gazed on the walled-in heavens. The path was narrow; and being entirely exposed to the south, the snows that covered it had been slightly melted, and again frozen, so that they had become slippery and dangerous. Castruccio dismounted from his horse; and turning his eyes from the depth below, he led him slowly on, until the widening of the road, and the appearance of a few pines diminished the terror of the surrounding objects.

Then, finding the road less dangerous, he remounted, and was proceeding cautiously along the edge of the precipice, when he heard a voice behind him as calling for help. Hastily dismounting, and tying the animal to a jutting point of the rock, he returned to that chasm, which he had just passed with such tremendous difficulty. There he saw a mule standing quietly by the road side; but, on the steep face of the precipice a few feet below, he perceived a man clinging to the pointed inequalities of the mountain, with such energy that his whole force and being seemed to live in the grasp, and his voice failed as he again endeavoured to cry for help. Castruccio's servant had lingered far behind, so that he was obliged alone to attempt the fearful task of drawing the sufferer from his appalling situation. He unbound his sash, and, tying one end to the girth of the mule's saddle, and taking the other in his hand, he threw it down to the man below. By these means, with infinite difficulty, he succeeded in hoisting up the poor wretch, who, white and wrinkled with fear, stood almost as entranced, when he found himself safe from the frightful death he had feared. Castruccio soothed him with a gentle voice, and told him that now the worst part of the journey was over, and that they were about to descend by an easier path to the plain of Italy; "where," he said, "you will find a paradise that will cure all your evils."

The man looked at him with a mixture of wonder, and what might have been construed into contempt, had his muscles, made rigid with cold and fear, yielded to the feeling of his mind. He replied drily, "I am an Italian." And Castruccio smiled to perceive, that these words were considered as a sufficient refutation to his assertion of the boasted charms of Italy.

After resting until the unfortunate traveller had recovered health and life, they proceeded along the mountain, saying little, for the path was too dangerous to admit of conversation. Yet, when Castruccio dared take his eyes from the track of his horse's feet, he could not help examining curiously the companion fortune had given him. He was a man by whose dry and wrinkled face you might guess him to be nearly sixty years of age; and yet, by the agility and more youthful appearance of his person, he could not be more than forty. His eyes were small, black and sparkling; his nose pointed and turned up; his lips were as a line in his face, uncurved and unmarked except by three deep wrinkles at each corner: his eyebrows were elevated as in vanity; and yet a flat high forehead denoted a good understanding. His figure was tall and lank, yet muscular, and was clothed with a mixture of poverty and rank, which it amused Castruccio to observe. He wore gilt spurs as a knight, and, carefully folded on his saddle before him, was a rich mantle edged with deep gold lace; he was clad in a close, strait dress of threadbare cloth, with a kind of narrow trowsers made of common undressed sheep skin, which fastened with many knots and intersections round his legs; he had a large capuchin cloak wrapped about him, made of coarse flannel, such as was called sclavina, because it was manufactured in Sclavonia, and was worn at that time by the poorest class of Italians. On his feet he wore great coarse boots of undressed sheep skin, that furnished a singular contrast to the golden spurs attached to them; his head was covered only by a scull-cap of iron mail sewed to cloth, which was called in those times a majata.

The sun descended as they pursued their journey, when, perceiving a house not far distant, Castruccio's companion drew in his mule, and pointing to it, asked if they should not remain there for a night? "Nay," replied Castruccio, "the moon will be up in half an hour, and being but just past its full, we may, I think, proceed safely."

"Do not trust to the moon," said his companion; "its shadows are deep and fearful, and its light not less dangerous; sometimes a beam cast from among trees across the road, will look like a running stream, and its black shades may conceal the most frightful dangers. I dare not proceed by moonlight, and am unwilling to part company with you on this dreadful road. I beg you to consent to pass the night at that house."

"I readily agree, if that be indeed a house, and not an unroofed sheep-cot; for I hardly expect to find in these regions a bed softer than the rock, or a roof which will shelter me better than the moonlight sky."

The cottage was shut up, and its inhabitants asleep; but, called up by the shrill voice of the elder traveller, a man rolled himself out from his bed of dried leaves and sheep skins, and opened the door. Welcoming the travellers, he quickly blew up the decaying ashes of a fire in the middle of the only room of the cottage, and it threw a light on the bare walls of this disconsolate apartment; the smoke rose and filled the upper part of the room, while a small portion only escaped through a round hole in the roof. A large bed, or rather dormitory of dried leaves and the stalks of Indian corn, was strewed along one side of the room, on which many both men and women lay, peeping out on the travellers from under their sheep skin coverings: there was no furniture, except a rude bench, and a ruder table; the bare walls were black and falling down, while the sky peeped through many cracks in the roof. The room was so filled with the stench of garlick and smoke, that Castruccio, hastily retreating to the door, asked his companion whether he would not prefer proceeding on his journey. The latter appeared better accustomed to the sight and smell of such miserable cabins, and he used his utmost eloquence to persuade Castruccio that the shelter of the cottage was preferable to the pure and keen air of heaven; but finding the latter resolute in his determination not to enter, he told him, that having warmed for a few minutes his half frozen fingers, and tasted the wine of the cottage, he would proceed with him down the mountain.

The companion of Castruccio had not exaggerated the extreme danger of the road by moonlight. The frightened horses often refused to proceed, or to penetrate the murky depths which the mountain shadows cast around them, even blackening the snow. They rode on slowly and cautiously; and the following morning found themselves little advanced in the descent. It was near noon before they reached Susa, when, having passed the dangers of the journey, the elder traveller, recovering his voice and recollection, rode up to Castruccio, and asked him where he intended to rest after the toil he had undergone. Castruccio replied, that he hoped to find an inn in the town, and, if not, he should apply to some monastery, where he doubted not he should be provided with food and shelter for the following day and night.

“Sir,” said his companion, “I am not a stranger in Susa, and have in particular one good old friend, Messer Tadeo della Ventura, well known to the Florentines and other Italians who pass over this mountain for the purposes of merchandize: this worthy man will receive me as an old friend and guest; and, as you both generously and bravely saved my life, I can do not less than offer to introduce you to the soft couches and good wines of Messer Tadeo."

"Nor will I refuse your offer; for soft couches will be welcome to my aching bones, and good wine a pleasant cordial to my wearied spirits: therefore, Sir Knight, I thank you heartily for your courtesy."

CHAPTER VI

MESSER Tadeo received his old friend with respect and friendship; and, courteously welcoming Castruccio, he led them into a large hall, where the sight of a repast already set out seemed to diffuse joy over the countenances of both travellers. The hall was richly hung with scarlet cloth, and the tables and seats covered with tapestry; at the upper end of the room was a chimney and a fire, near which taking his seat, Messer Tadeo invited the new comers to join several other friends of his, who arranged themselves round the table.

When the long ceremony of dinner was finished, and the servants were busy in removing the tables, Messer Tadeo proposed to the newly arrived guests to conduct them to a bedchamber, where they might repose after the fatigues of the journey. They both gladly accepted this offer; and in a deep and refreshing sleep Castruccio forgot his curiosity concerning who or what his companion might be, and the latter recovered from the trembling fear of danger, which had haunted him since his escape of the preceding day.

When Castruccio arose at about six o'clock in the evening, he joined Messer Tadeo, who was sitting with the other traveller in the great hall. The rest of the company had departed; and these two were in earnest conversation, which they changed when Castruccio entered.

After some time, holding up his finger, and drawing down still longer the long wrinkles of his cheeks, the fellow — traveller of Castruccio, in a mysterious manner, pronounced the word which had been given to the soldiers of Alberto Scoto, that they might distinguish one another during the darkness of night, or the confusion of battle; Castruccio, hearing this, easily divined that he had a fellow soldier, and a friend of his chief, in his strange travelling companion; so smiling, he uttered the countersign, and the other, turning on him, as if the ghost of one whom he had known many years before had risen before him, hastily enquired, "You served then in his troop?"

"Yes," replied Castruccio, "I had the honour of serving under the noble knight, Messer Alberto Scoto; and, in having rendered you a service, I am still more happy to find that I saved one who has fought under the same banners with myself."

"Is your name a secret?"

"I am of a noble Lucchese family; now exiled and wandering; my name is Castruccio Castracani dei Antelminelli."

The elder traveller suddenly arose, and, embracing Castruccio warmly, bestowed on him a brotherly kiss, and then turning to Tadeo, said: "This morning I introduced to you a stranger whose merit with me was that of having saved my life at the imminent risk of his own; now I introduce to you a gallant soldier, whose name has been spread through France, as that of the bravest warrior and the ablest commander that fought in the Low Countries: the Sieur Castruccio is a name which even the children in France lisp with gratitude, and the Flemings tremble to hear."

Many compliments passed; and then the traveller said: "This pleasant discovery has made friends of three who were before strangers; nor will I conceal from you, Messer Castruccio, that my name is Benedetto Pepi, a Cremonese, now returning to my own country, after having gained laurels and knight-hood under the banners of Messer Scoto. You, my dear companion, say that you are an exile; but great changes are now taking place in Italy, and, knowing who you are, we may well admit you to the confidential conversation that I and Messer Tadeo were holding when you entered, concerning all that has passed since the arrival of the emperor Henry in Italy."

Saying this, Benedetto made a slight sign to his friend, which Castruccio easily guessed to be an admonition to be discreet in his disclosures. Tadeo replied to this sign by a nod, and said:

"Two Florentine usurers who had come through Milan, dined yesterday at my house; they had witnessed the entrance of the emperor into that city. The lord of Milan, Guido della Torre, was obliged to discharge his soldiers, and unarmed, at the head of an unarmed multitude, went out to meet the emperor, who had the Visconti in his train, and all the Ghibelines, the old enemies of the Torre family. These are now reinstated in their possessions; yet Henry still pretends to impartiality, and in his march has restored all the exiles to their various towns, whether they be Guelphs or Ghibelines."

"I wonder," said Pepi, "how long he will keep on the mask; few men are impartial, an emperor never: to one curious in state affairs it were a fine occasion, to conjecture what will be the issue and crown of these pretensions."

"Why," asked Castruccio, "should not they be as they appear? Cannot the emperor be animated by a generous policy, and wish to reconcile all parties by a just and fair proceeding?"

"Impossible!" cried Pepi with energy; "an emperor just! a prince impartial! Do not thrones rest upon dissentions and quarrels? And must there not be weakness in the people to create power in the prince? I prophesy; and as a discreet man I prophesy seldom, yet I now securely foretell, that Henry will set all Italy by the ears, to reap the fruits of their dissentions. He procures the recall of all the exiles — I admire his policy, worthy of being studied and understood by all who would reign. Can Ghibelines and Guelphs live within the walls of the same town? No more than one vessel can contain fire and water. No; the cities of Italy will be filled with brawls, and her rivers run blood, by means of this conjunction. If he had meant to establish peace in Italy, he would have assassinated all of one party, to secure the lives of the other; but to unite them, is to destroy both, and under the mask of friendship to get into his own hands all that each has possessed."

Pepi uttered this harangue with an energy and a vivacity that startled Castruccio; his black eyes sparkled, his brows became elevated, and drawing down the perpendicular wrinkles of his cheeks, and contracting the horizontal ones of his forehead, he looked round with an air of triumph on his companions.

"You say true, Messer Benedetto," said Tadeo, groaning at the dismal prognostications of his friend; "and I greatly fear lest this pretended justice prove the watchword for war and bloodshed. Yet now all wears the appearance of peace and brotherhood. The lords of Langusco, Pavia, Vercelli, Novara and Lodi have resigned their tyrannies and given up the keys of their respective towns to Henry, and Imperial Vicars are every where established. Guido della Torre, the proudest and most powerful tyrant of Lombardy, has submitted; and the court of the emperor at Milan is crowded by the lords of the towns in the east of Italy, and the ambassadors of the free states of the south."

"Has Florence submitted?" asked Castruccio.

"No; — that town and its league holds out; Sienna, Lucca and Bologna. Yet, when the emperor marches south, we shall see these proud republicans bow their stiff knees."

"Never!" cried Pepi; "Bologna, Lucca and Sienna may submit; but Florence never will; they are stiff-kneed, stiff-necked, and hate the name of emperor and master more than Pope Urban hated the house of Suabia. These republicans, whom from my soul I detest, have turned out the Ghibelines, and are now fighting with the nobles, and asserting the superiority of the vulgar, till every petty artizan of its meanest lane fancies himself as great a prince as the emperor Henry himself. Besides, when all else fails, they will buy him off: these Florentines squander their golden florins, and pay thousands to purchase what would be a dear bargain even as a gift. Their watchword is that echo of fools, and laughing stock of the wise, — Liberty. Surely the father of lies invented that bait, that trap, at which the multitude catch, as a mouse at a bit of cheese: well would it be for the world, if they found the same end; and, as the nibbling mouse pulls down the iron on his head, they, as if they had one neck, were lopped off, as they seized their prize: — but Florence flourishes!"

Pepi ended his speech with a deep groan, and continued lost in thought; while Tadeo and Castruccio discussed the chances that might arise from the new order of things established in Italy; and Castruccio owned his intention of joining the train of the emperor, and his hopes of being by his means reinstated in his paternal estates. The evening wore away during these discussions, and they retired early to rest. The next morning Castruccio and Pepi took leave of Tadeo, and departed together on the road to Milan.

For some time they rode along silently. Castruccio was overcome by a variety of feelings on again visiting Italian earth. Although, being winter, the landscape was stripped bare, and its vineyards and corn-fields alike appeared waste, yet Castruccio thought that no country could vie with this in beauty, unless it were the plain of Lucca, such as he remembered it, the last time he beheld it, then a child, standing on the summit of his father's palace, — girded by hills, and the many-towered city set as its heart in the midst. He longed for a companion to whom he could pour out his full heart; for his overflowing feelings had for a time swept away the many lessons of Alberto Scoto. He forgot ambition, and the dreams of princely magnificence which he had cherished for many months. He forgot Milan, the emperor, the

Guelphs and Ghibelines, and seemed to bury himself, as a bee in the fragrant circle of a rose, in the softest and most humane emotions; till, half recovering, he blushed to find his eyes dim, and his cheek stained by the pure tears of his deep and unadulterated feeling. Turning hastily round, he was glad to observe his companion somewhat behind him, and he reined in his horse that he might approach. Pepi rode up with his measured pace; and it would have been a curious study to remark the contrasted countenances of the travellers: Castruccio, glorious in beauty; his deep eyes suffused with tears, and his lips breathing passion and delight, was more opposite than light to dark, to the hard lines of Pepi's face, which were unmoved as he glanced his small bright eyes from side to side, while no other sign shewed that he felt or thought; his mouth shut close, his person stiff and strait, his knees pressing his mule's flanks, and his ungainly horsemanship easily betraying the secret, that his feats in arms must have been performed on foot.

At length tired of silence, and willing to speak although to so unsympathizing a being, Castruccio asked: “Messer Benedetto, you seemed last night to groan under the weight of your hatred of the Florentines. Now I have good reason to hate them, since by their means my party was exiled, and Lucca ranks among the Guelphic cities of Tuscany. But you are of Cremona, a town separated from Florence by many mountains and rivers; whence therefore arises your abhorrence of this republic?”

Pepi fixed his little piercing eyes upon Castruccio, as if to read into his heart, and discover the secret motive of this question; but the frank and noble beauty of his fellow-traveller was such, that it even had an effect on this man's rigid soul; and, as he gazed on him, the hard lines of his face seemed to melt away, and he replied at first with gentleness; until, carried away by his subject, he poured forth the torrent of his hatred with a warmth, strange to observe in one, who in calmer moments appeared more as a man made of wood or leather, than of flesh and blood:

“My good friend, you say true, I hate the Florentines; yet I may well find it difficult to tell the cause; for neither have they wounded me, nor stolen my purse, nor done me any other great injury of the like nature; but I am a Ghibeline, and therefore I hate them. And who would not hate a people, that despise the emperor, and all lawful authority; that have as it were dug up the buried form of Liberty, which died when Milan fell under the Visconti; who force their very nobles to become vulgar, and counts of the palace, and counts of the empire, to inscribe their names as weavers and furriers; who go about the world enriching themselves by a wicked usury, and return and squander the money in purchasing licence for themselves? Is not their town filled with brawls, and are not their streets strewed with the ruins of the palaces of the noble Ghibelines? Do they not one day undo the acts of the day before, and ever introduce more and more licence? Now create every two months a set of magistrates, who take all power out of the hands of the rich, and now a captain of the people, who protects and raises the vile multitude, till every lord must cap to his shoemaker? The example is what I abhor; are not Lucca, Bologna and Sienna free? and the contagion spreads over Lombardy. Oh! to every saint in heaven would I put up my prayer, to the devil himself would I give my thanks (but that so good a work could never have been done by his means), if, as was once proposed, the town of Florence had been razed, its streets sown with salt, and its inhabitants scattered like Jews and Sclavonians about the world. Curse thee, curse thee, Farinata, that through thy means this was not done!”

“A disinterested love of the Imperial power causes these emotions? In truth you are the warmest Ghibeline I ever knew.”

“My friend, the world, trust me, will never go well, until the rich rule, and the vulgar sink to their right station as slaves of the soil. You will readily allow that war is the scourge of the world; now in free towns war has a better harvest, than where proper and legitimate authority is established. During war neither our persons, nor our lands, nor our houses are in safety; we may be wounded in brawls, our lands laid waste, our houses and all our possessions despoiled. Now my plan is easy, simple, and practicable: if you are at all read in history, you must know, that the fortunes of the nobles of ancient Rome consisted in many hundreds of slaves, whom they brought up to various trades and arts, and then let them out to work, or permitted them to keep shops and make money, which the masters received, paying them a small sum for their necessary support. Such is the order, which, if I were a prince, I would establish, and every town, such as Florence, where all is noise and talk, should be reduced to silence and peace; about two thousand rich men should possess all the rest of the inhabitants, who, like sheep, would flock to their folds, and receive their pittances with thankfulness and humility.”

"But if, instead of sheep, they were to be wolves, and turn rebels to their masters? Methinks their numbers would panic — strike their two thousand drivers."

"Nay, then we would display our whips, and drive the flock to market. Slaves rebel! we would starve them into decent submission."

Castruccio could not help being amused by the strange policy and earnest manners of the Italian lawgiver, and replied: "But, Messer Benedetto, I dispute your first proposition, and assert that there is as much war and bloodshed under kings, as in republics. You who have fought in Flanders, and I who have also visited England, know this to be true; yet in France and England the people do not mingle with the quarrels of the nobles; so I think you must mend your constitution, and reduce your two thousand slave-drivers of Florence to a single one; yet I am afraid that, if there were only one in each town of Italy, or even if there were only two in the whole world, they would contrive to create war and bloodshed."

"That," replied Pepi, with a groan, "is the great fault that I find in the constitution of the world. If the rich would only know their own interests, we might chain the monster, and again bury Liberty. But they are all fools; if the rich would agree, if the few princes that there need exist in the world, would league in amity, instead of quarrelling, such a state as that of Florence would not subsist a year. But, if reason had a trump as loud as that which will awaken us at the last day, the clash of arms of these senseless people would drown it. Now, if instead of quarrelling, the Pope and Frederic Barbarossa had made a league, all Italy would now be on its knees before this Henry of Luxembourgh. And one day this may be; mark my words; tyranny is a healthy tree, it strikes a deep root, and each year its branches grow larger and larger, and its shade spreads wider and wider. While liberty is a word, a breath, an air; it will dissipate, and Florence become as slavish as it is now rebellious; did not Rome fall?"

"I am little acquainted with the history of ancient times," said Castruccio gaily; "but, since the world began, I can easily imagine that states have risen and fallen; we are blind with regard to futurity, and methinks it is foolish to build for a longer term than a man's life. Kingdoms are as fragile as a porcelain vessel tossed by the ocean; nay, so very weak are they, that even the stars, those small, silly points of light, are said to rule them; and often, when they are at their highest glory, God sends his scourges, pest or earthquake, to sink them for ever; let us work for ourselves alone; we may be obscure or famous, grovelling as the worm, or lofty as the kingly eagle, according as our desires sink or mount."

Discoursing thus they arrived at Turin, and were again entertained by a merchant, the friend of Pepi. Here they found a numerous company, who all discoursed with warmth concerning the political state of Italy, and poured forth the most extravagant praises of the emperor Henry. He had passed two months in Piedmont, reconciling factions, hearing complaints, and destroying the vexatious tyrannies of its petty lords. Pepi, not considering this a fit occasion to poison these sanguine hopes by his prophecies, sat in silence with elevated brows and pressed lips, turning his sharp eyes from one speaker to another, as if by their means to drink in all the intelligence the politicians were able to afford.

The next morning Pepi and Castruccio parted; whether this was caused by the necessities or the prudence of the former cannot be determined. He alleged that his business called him to Alessandria in his way to Cremona, and the road of Castruccio lay directly for Milan. On parting Pepi made a speech, expressive of his gratitude, and the return he was willing to render for the benefit he had received; which was a welcome to his house and board, whenever his preserver should pass through Cremona. "Yet," he added, "if you have any other friends in that town, you maybe will prefer them to me. I have, as I related yesterday, suffered many losses, and am endeavouring to repair them by an *conomical mode of life; I have no rich wines or soft couches, and can neither afford to burn wax lights, nor to eat delicate food. I have a good tower to my house; and, now that I am a knight, I shall have a good horse in my stable; and that is all I have to boast. You seem to have no taste for coarse fare or hard beds; and therefore my dwelling would in no manner be agreeable to you."

Castruccio thanked him, and carelessly replied, that, as a soldier, he had been accustomed to hardship and privation, nor would the poverty of Pepi's dwelling render it less worthy in his eyes; and they coldly took leave of one another, Pepi trotting gravely on the road towards Alessandria, his head full of plans which he kept carefully locked up in his own brain, and his hard-lined face, faithful to his commands, giving no indications of what was passing in his soul.

Castruccio rode on gaily towards Milan; the cheerless wintry sky and the cold air could not tame his buoyant spirits or his hopes. He panted for action, for distinction, and for power; yet he no longer desired these things as a boy, unknowing of the road which led to them. During the interval which he had spent in England and France, he had studied human nature with the observant eye of genius; and, all careless as he appeared to be, he had learned how to please the multitude, how to flatter the foibles of the noble, and thus to gain the hearts of men and to rule them. Under Alberto Scoto he had revolved with care the political state of Italy, such as that commander had pictured it to him; his plans of lordship and conquest were already formed; he had only the first step to make, to proceed afterwards with a swift pace to the goal for which he panted.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER several days travelling, he arrived at Milan; and his first care was to hasten to the palace of Matteo Visconti. This chief was gone to the meeting of the senate, deliberating with the nobles of Milan on the sum of money which should be voted for the use of the emperor. Castruccio was therefore introduced to his son, Galeazzo, who was then in the hall of the palace, surrounded by all the young Ghibeline nobility of Milan. It was a scene of gaiety and splendour. The young nobles were preparing to attend on the emperor in a royal hunt. They were attired with the utmost magnificence, with full dresses of embroidered silk, cloth, or velvet, and cloaks of precious furs; some were accoutred in short gowns with trowsers tied in the same manner as that of Pepi, but made of fine linen and embossed silks; their collars were ornamented with strings of pearl. Their hair, parted equally on the forehead, was curled and fell down as far as the shoulders; they wore different kinds of caps, some flat and adorned with plumes of feathers, others high and pointed, and the lower part twisted round with pearls fastened with a rich broach; most of them held a falcon on his fist, or caressed a favourite hound, or vaunted the prowess of a noble steed. There were many ladies in company who seemed to vie with their male companions in luxury of dress. Their gowns were made of the same costly stuffs, and ornamented with greater profusion of precious stones; their wide sleeves which fell almost to the ground were edged with pearls, while underneath, a small sleeve of the finest silk fitted tight to the arm; the borders of their dresses were richly embroidered with pearls or golden beads; they wore their veils adorned with the same richness, and small capuchins of oriental fur bordered with fringes of gold and pearls; and their girdles were studded with the most splendid stones.

Castruccio paused, half dazzled by the scene. In the ruder courts of London or Paris he had never seen so much splendour and luxury: he cast an involuntary glance on his own habiliments, which although rich were soiled by travelling, and in their best days could not have vied with the meanest dress worn by these nobles. He quickly however recovered his self — possession; and his name, whose sound had passed the Alps, and been repeated with enthusiasm by many of the followers of the emperor who had served with him in the Low Countries, caused this brilliant assembly to receive him with flattering distinction. They crowded round him, and courteously invited him to partake of their amusements; while his handsome person won the smiles of the ladies who were present. Galeazzo Visconti received him with that kindness and cordiality which was then in fashion among the Italians; and he, as the most courteous cavalier of the country, was well versed in all the politeness of the age. Castruccio was provided with a beautiful horse, and a mantle of rich fur befitting the cold season, and made one of the gay and splendid band as they rode towards the palace of the emperor; here they were joined by the sovereign himself, the empress, and the noble Germans of his retinue. Riding through the streets of Milan, they quitted the city at the eastern gate, and dividing into various parties, spread themselves abroad in search of game. The Germans followed the dogs through the open country, chasing down foxes and hares; while the Italians, who were dressed for gala, and would not risk their fine silks among the brambles and impediments of the fields, were content with unmuffling their falcons when they saw game aloft, and making bets on the superior speed of their several birds.

During the first part of the ride Galeazzo observed Castruccio, who appeared to be too much wrapped up in his own thoughts to attend to the discourse of the gay throng around him. He loitered behind, that he might indulge in his reveries; and Galeazzo, who had separated himself from the rest, now rode up to him; and they entered into a conversation together, which at length turned into a discussion of the plans and wishes of Castruccio. They were both men of caution and prudence; yet, being young, they were susceptible of impressions to which men lose their sensibility as they advance in years. They were mutually pleased with each other; and a single glance, a single word, sufficed to make each understand the other, and to unite them in the bonds of friendship.

Castruccio asked what it was believed that the designs of the emperor were; and Galeazzo replied: “You would hardly guess what anxious hearts, throbbing with distrust and fear, are concealed under the apparent gaiety of these hunters. We Milanese are full of dissentions and ambition; and I, as a chief among them, have my head well loaded with care and doubt, while I follow this joyous train with my falcon on my fist. In a few days the game will be up; and we shall see what power the Visconti or the Della Torre will have over Lombardy. At present wait. The emperor is expecting supplies of money, and we are voting them for him with apparent zeal: you, as a politician, must well know that money is the great mover of all change in a state. I prophesy change; but you as a stranger, must stand aloof, and be guided by circumstances. In the mean time make friends; attach yourself to the emperor and to the lords of Lombardy, many of whom are extremely powerful; and rest assured, that whether he be successful or not, he will not quit Italy without endeavouring to change the politics of the Tuscan republics. Now let us join our friends; tomorrow I will talk further with you; and, if we have recourse to arms, I need not say how proud I should be in having my party distinguished by the acquisition of Castruccio dei Antelminelli."

They then mingled with the rest of the company; and Galeazzo introduced his new friend to the Ghibeline lords of Lombardy. He here saw for the first time the magnificent Cane della Scala, lord of Verona, and the generous Guido della Polenta, lord of Ravenna, and father of the unhappy Francesca of Rimini. These nobles had assembled at Milan, to be present at the coronation of the emperor, which had taken place a few weeks before; all wore the appearance of gaiety and good humour; the empress headed the band, accompanied by a beautiful youth who bore a bow in his hand; and Cane della Scala was beside her, descanting on the merits of his falcon. Castruccio was struck by the countenance of the youth who rode near the empress. He was dressed with a profusion of magnificence; at his back he wore a gilt quiver studded with gems, and a scarf embroidered with pearls was thrown over one shoulder, and tied under the other arm; in every way he was accoutred as might become the favourite page of an empress. Yet Castruccio thought that he remembered those light blue eyes; and his sweet yet serious smile filled his own with tears of tender recollection. He eagerly asked Galeazzo who and what he was: his friend replied; "He is the squire of Can' Grande, and he is called Arrigo; I do not know what other name he bears; the empress wishes to attach him to her suite; but the youth would prefer bearing arms under his munificent patron, to the situation of the effeminate page of a queen's ante-chamber."

"That cannot surprise me," said Castruccio; "for his infancy was spent in the labour of the fields, and in listening to the lessons of his godlike father;

he must therefore be ill prepared to enter into the intrigues and follies of a court. If he have not forgotten his childish affection for me, I shall win him from them both; and, if indeed his father be dead, it shall be my pride and boast to be the protector of his Arrigo."

As they re-entered the gates of the town, the trains of the emperor and empress joined; and, Arrigo falling back among the nobles, Castruccio rode up to him. For some time he gazed on him, and heard the gentle tones of his youthful voice; he dared not speak; his heart was full; and to his eyes dimmed by emotion, he fancied that the revered form of Guinigi stood beside his son, smiled on Castruccio, and pointed to the boy. At length, recovering himself, he came abreast with the horse of Arrigo, and whispered, "Does the son of Guinigi forget me? does he forget the farm among the Euganean hills?"

Arrigo started; his countenance became radiant with joy; and he exclaimed, "My own Castruccio!"

They rode away from the company, and entered the town by more lonely streets. Castruccio saw by the looks of his young friend, that his worst fears were true, and that Guinigi was dead; and Arrigo easily read in Castruccio's face that he was thinking of his father. At length he said: "My brother, if so you will permit me to call you, a year has now passed since I was left an orphan; ten months ago I quitted my happy life among the hills, to dwell with a patron, who is indeed munificent and kind to me; but who is not as my father. It appears to me a vision that such a being ever existed; he was so great, so angelically wise and good; and I now float down the stream with the rest, an esquire, an attendant; I pass my life without enjoyment, and look forward to the future without pleasure; but if, my brother, you would grant me one request, a brighter sun would shine upon me."

"Dearest Arrigo, my dear, dear brother, I read in your earnest looks all that you would say; be assured we shall never part again! We will sally forth soldiers of fortune; and the same star shall ascend and descend for both."

"Enough, leave the rest to me; be it my task to contrive my departure from Can' della Scala; inform me of your motions, and fear not but that I shall be at your side."

That same evening a magnificent feast was given at the palace of the emperor; and Castruccio was introduced to this prince by Galeazzo. The lords of Lombardy regarded him with a favourable eye; for they knew that he could not hurt their interests north of the Apennines, and they hoped that by his means the Ghibeline faction might revive and triumph in Tuscany.

Castruccio spent almost the whole evening in conversation with Arrigo. For the youth would not absent himself from him, but recalled with earnest affection all the circumstances of their former intercourse; and related with tears the death of Guinigi; a death, calm as his most innocent life. One afternoon, during the heats of summer, he sat under a cypress with his son, and entered into an anxious detail of what would be the prospects and probable fate of the young Arrigo, when he, his father and protector, should be no more. The boy, struck with the melancholy foreboding, intreated him not to dwell on a period, which was far distant, and which, when it approached, would bring to him nothing but despair. Guinigi however told him that he would not be overruled in this, and with earnest affection talked for hours on the subject with a wisdom and goodness that appeared more than human. "Alas," said Arrigo, "even as he spoke, I thought I saw his eyes beam with a heavenly light, and the torrent of impressive words that he poured forth, were uttered with a voice deep and tender, filling the air as it were with a harmony sweeter than any earthly music. I listened, till I became almost as a statue with attention; and as he either exhorted to virtue, or described the evils of my country, or marked forth the glorious or peaceful path that I might pursue, I felt my countenance change, as I have seen a cloud vary as it passes before the moon, now, as it advances, beaming in a silver light, and then again fading into darkness. At length he dismissed me, saying that he wished to sleep, and I saw him stretch himself under the cypress, gazing on the sky, whose dazzling light was softened by the dark foliage through which it passed; and he slept never to wake again.

"Oh! what I then suffered, when our friends crowded round, and the mourning women came, and the mummery of the funeral went on! But all that is passed; and now I should again feel the elasticity of youth, but that I was, until you returned, friendless in the world."

They talked thus, while the company around them were amusing themselves with dances and song; the feast broke up late; and it broke up only to be renewed with greater zeal the following and the following day. Yet, while all appeared so calm, the storm which the politicians prognosticated, broke out, and the quiet of these festive meetings was disturbed by the revolt of Milan against the Germans. And now Castruccio was witness for the first time to the popular commotions of his country: armed knights galloped through the streets crying, “Libertà! Death to the Germans!” And a multitude of the people, who were enraged at the new taxes imposed upon them, joined in the cry. But the revolt thus quickly excited, was as quickly appeased. The Visconti after some hesitation ranged themselves under the emperor; the Della Torre and his partizans were obliged to fly; their houses were razed, their goods confiscated, and themselves declared traitors.

But the effects of the Milanese revolt were not so easily removed. The various Guelph towns of Lombardy, Crema, Cremona, Brescia, Lodi, and Como, set up the standard of revolt against the emperor; and, spring having now advanced, Henry began his campaign with the attempt to reduce these towns. Castruccio had received from him permission to raise a troop of volunteers, to serve under his command in the Imperial army, and his fame collected a brave band, whose discipline and valour were the admiration of the other generals.

Crema and Lodi submitted to the emperor on his advance, and reaped from their unseasonable resistance an increase of those vexations which had caused their revolt. Henry marched against Cremona, which at first made shew of resistance; but, when the Guelphs, hopeless of success, escaped from the town, the Ghibelines surrendered to the emperor; who, unmollified by their submission, punished his own innocent partizans, sending them to cruel prisons, razing the walls and fortifications of the town, and delivering over the property and persons of the unprotected citizens into the hands of the brutal Germans who composed the greater part of his army.

Castruccio entered Cremona at the head of his little troop, and beheld with dismay the cruel effects of the conquest of the emperor over this city. Most of the German soldiers were busy in destroying the fortifications, or in compelling the peasants and citizens to raze the walls of their town. Other parties were ranging about the streets, entering the palaces, whose rich furniture they destroyed, by feasting, and tearing down from the walls all that had the appearance of gold or silver. The cellars were broken open; and, after inebriating themselves with the choice wines of Italy, the unruly, but armed bands were in a better mood for oppressing the defenceless people. Some of these poor wretches fled to the open country; others locked themselves up in their houses, and, throwing what they possessed from the windows, strove to save their persons from the brutality of their conquerors. Many of the noble females took refuge in the meanest cottages, and disguised themselves in poor clothing, till, frightened by the eager glances, or brutal address of the soldiers, they escaped to the country, and remained exposed to hunger and cold among the woods that surrounded the town. Others, with their hair dishevelled, their dresses in disorder, careless of the eyes which gazed on them, followed their husbands and fathers to their frightful prisons, some in mute despair, many wringing their hands, and crying aloud for mercy. As night came on, the soldiery, tired of rapine, went to rest in the beds from which the proprietors were remorselessly banished: silence prevailed; a dreadful silence, broken sometimes by the shriek of an injured female, or the brutal shouts of some of the men, who passed the night in going from palace to palace, calling up the inhabitants, demanding food and wine, and on the slightest shew of resistance hurrying their victims to prison, or binding them in their own houses with every aggravation of insult.

Castruccio divided his little band, and sent his men to the protection of several of the palaces, while he and Arrigo rode all night about the town; and, having the watchword of the emperor, they succeeded in rescuing some poor wretches from the brutality of the insolent soldiers. Several days followed, bringing with them a repetition of the same scenes; and the hardest heart might have been struck with compassion, to see the misery painted on the faces of many, whose former lives had been a continual dream of pleasure; young mothers weeping over their unfortunate offspring, whose fathers lay rotting or starving in prison; children crying for bread, sitting on the steps of their paternal palaces, within which the military rioted in plenty; childless parents, mourning their murdered babes; orphans, helpless, dying, whose parents could no longer soothe or relieve them. Castruccio, though a soldier, wept; but Arrigo, who had never before witnessed the miseries of war, became almost frenzied with the excess of his compassion and indignation; he poured forth curses loud and bitter, while his eyes streamed tears, and his voice, broken and sharp, was insufficient to convey his passionate abhorrence. Castruccio was at length obliged to use violence to draw him from this scene of misery; and, after soothing him by every argument he could use, and by the most powerful of all, that Henry would be soon obliged to withdraw his soldiers from Cremona to serve him at the siege of Brescia, he dispatched the youth with a letter to Galeazzo Visconti.

Returning to the town, Castruccio saw a figure pass along at the end of the street, which reminded him of one whom he had almost forgotten — Benedetto Pepi. “Alas! poor fellow,” said Castruccio to himself, “you will find the pillage of the Germans a tremendous evil. Well; as I restored your life once, I will now try, if I am not too late, to save the remnant of your property.”

He enquired of a passenger for the house of Benedetto Pepi. “If you mean Benedetto the Rich, if any can now be called rich in this miserable city,” replied the man, “I will conduct you to his house.”

“My Pepi ought rather, I think, to be called the poor; lead me however to Benedetto the Rich; and if he be a tall, gaunt figure with a wrinkled, leathern face, he is the man for whom I enquire.”

Castruccio was conducted to a palace in the highest and most commanding part of the town, built of large blocks of stone, and apparently firm and solid enough to bear a siege. The windows were few, small, grated and sunk deep in the wall; it had a high tower, whose port-holes shewed that it was of uncommon strength and thickness; a parapet built with turrets surrounded it at the top, and in every respect the mansion resembled more a castle, than a palace. The entrance was dark; and, by the number of grooves, it appeared as if there had been many doors; but they were all removed, and the entrance free. Castruccio advanced: there were two large halls on the ground — floor, on each side of the entrance-court; both were filled with German soldiers; they were high, dark, bare rooms, more like the apartments of a prison than a palace. In one of them a number of beds were laid on the paved floor; in the other there was a large fire in the middle, at which various persons were employed in the offices of cookery, and near this, a table was spread out with immense quantities of food, haunches of boiled beef, and black bread; two boys stood at either end of the table, each holding a large flaring torch; and the soldiers with riotous exclamations were choosing their seats on the benches that were placed around. Castruccio paused, unable to discern whether Pepi were among this strange company. At length he observed him standing in one corner filling large jugs from a barrel of wine: he accosted him with a voice of condolence; and

Pepi looked up with his little bright eyes, and a face rather expressive of joy than sorrow. After he had recognized his guest, he left his wine barrel, and invited him into another room, for they could hardly distinguish each other's voices amidst the shouts and tumult of the rude feasters. They ascended the steep narrow stairs; and, Castruccio complaining of want of light, Pepi said: "Let us go to the top of my tower; the sun has been set about ten minutes, and, although dark every where else, it will be light there. If you will wait a short time I will get the key."

Pepi descended the stairs; and from a small port-hole Castruccio saw him cross the court, and then in a few minutes return with cautious and observant steps. When he came near Castruccio, he said: "Those German ruffians are now eating and drinking, and will not mark us; yet let us tread lightly, for I have admitted none of them to my tower, nor is it my intention to do so. It is a place of strength; and the little I have in the world is preserved here, which little in spite of the emperor and his devils I will preserve."

Although the tower had appeared large without, yet its walls were so thick that there was only room left within for a small circular staircase; at the top of this Pepi undrew the bolts, pushed up a trap-door, and they ascended to the platform on the outside. The sky was darkening; but the west was tinged with a deep orange colour, and the wide and dusky plain of Lombardy lay far extended all around: immediately below was the town of Cremona, which to them appeared as silent and peaceful as if the inhabitants were in the enjoyment of perfect security. They continued some minutes gazing silently, Castruccio on the wide extent of scenery before him, Pepi on the thick walls of his tower. At length the former said; "An evil star pursues you, Messer Benedetto, and I am afraid that you were born in the descent of some evil constellation."

"Doubtless," replied Pepi: yet there was an indescribable expression in his countenance and manner, that startled his companion; his eyes sparkled, and the lines of his face, as plainly as such things could speak, spoke joy and exultation. His voice however was drawn out into accents of grief, and he ended his reply by a groan.

"Your palace is wasted by these ruffians."

"Nay, there is nothing to waste; the walls are too thick to be hurt, and I removed every thing else before they came."

“They consume your food.”

“I have none to consume. I am a poor, lone man, and had no food in the house for them. They bring their rapine here; I send my squire for wood, wherever he can collect it; I make a fire, and they dress their food; and that is all that they get by me.”

“Have you lost no friend or relation in the war?”

“There is no one whom I love; I have met with undutifulness and ingratitude, but no kindness or friendship; so I should not have mourned, if my relations had fallen; but they are all safe.”

“Then it would appear, that you have lost nothing by the havock of these Germans, and that you are still Benedetto the Rich.”

Pepi had answered the previous questions of Castruccio with vivacity, and an expression of triumph and vanity, which he in vain strove to conceal; his brows were elevated, a smile lurked in the corners of his strait lips, and he even rubbed his hands. But, when Castruccio spoke these last words, his face fell, his mouth was drawn down, his arms sunk close to his sides, and, glancing at his mean clothing, he replied: “I am always poor, always unfortunate; and, Messer Castruccio, you do me great injustice and injury by supposing that I have any wealth. I have a well built palace, and a strong tower; but I can neither eat the stones, nor clothe myself with the plaster; and, God knows, my possessions are now reduced to fifty small acres; how therefore can I be rich?”

“At least, if you are poor,” replied Castruccio, “your unfortunate townsmen share your misfortunes. Their habitations are pillaged; those that escape the ravage of the emperor, are driven out, starving and miserable, from the only dwellings, be they palaces or cottages, which they possess.”

The countenance of Pepi again lighted up, his eyes sparkled, and he said; “Aye, aye, many are fallen; but not so low — not so low: they have still lands, they are not quite destitute, and the dead have heirs—”

“Yes, indeed, heirs to famine and indignity; unhappy orphans! far more miserable than if they had died with those who gave them birth.”

“Nay, I pity them from my soul; but I also have suffered losses. The first party of Germans that broke into the town, seized upon my horse, and my squire’s gelding: I must buy others when our enemies are gone, to keep up the honour of my knighthood. But, enough of this. You, Messer Castruccio, have a troop of Italians, horsemen, I believe, under your command: what do you intend to do with them? Do you stay in Lombardy, or follow the emperor south?”

“Events are now my masters; soon I hope to rule them, but at present I shall be guided by accident, and cannot therefore answer your question.”

Pepi paused a few moments, and at length said, half to himself; “No; this is not the time; events are as yet unripe; this siege has done much, but I must still delay; — well, Messer Castruccio, at present I will not reveal some circumstances, which, when we began this conversation, I had thought to confide to your discretion. Sometime, perhaps when you least expect it, we shall meet again; and if Benedetto of Cremona be not exactly what he seems, keep the secret until then, and I shall rest your obliged servant. Now, farewell. You came to offer your services to save my palace; I am a prudent man, and ordered my affairs so, that it ran no risk; yet I am indebted to you for this, and for your other generous act in my behalf; a time may come when we shall know one another better. Again farewell.”

This speech was delivered with a grave and mysterious mien, and a face that signified careful thought and important expectations. When he had ended, Pepi opened the trap-door, and he and Castruccio descended slowly down the now benighted staircase into the court of the palace: here they again interchanged salutations, and parted. Pepi joined his boisterous guests, and Castruccio rode towards the camp of the emperor. He mused as he went upon what the words of his strange acquaintance might portend; his curiosity was for a time excited by them; but change of place and the bustle of action made him soon forget the existence of Benedetto the Rich, of Cremona.

CHAPTER VIII

QUITTING Cremona, Henry engaged himself in the siege of Brescia, which made a gallant resistance, and yielded only on honourable conditions, in the month of September. Castruccio served under the emperor during this siege; but his nature was shocked by the want of faith and cruelty of this monarch, who punished his enemies by the most frightful tortures, and treated his friends as if they had been his enemies. Castruccio therefore resolved to separate himself from the Imperial army; and, when Henry quitted Lombardy for Genoa, he remained with his friend, Galeazzo Visconti.

The petty wars of Lombardy could only interest those engaged in them; and all eyes were turned towards the emperor during his journey to Genoa, his unsuccessful negotiations with Florence, his voyage to Pisa, his journey to Rome; where, the Vatican being in the hands of the contrary party, he was crowned in the Lateran. And then, his army diminished by sickness, and himself chagrined by the slow progress of his arms, he returned to Tuscany, made an unsuccessful attack upon Florence, and retired to the neighbourhood of Sienna, where he died on the eighteenth of August 1313; leaving Italy nearly in the same situation with regard to the preponderance of the Guelph party, but more heated and violent in their factious sentiments, as when he entered it two years before.

During this long contest Florence was the head and heart of the resistance made against the emperor. Their detestation of the Imperial power, and their fears of the restoration of their banished Ghibelines, excited them to exert their utmost faculties, in gaining allies, and in the defence of their own town. The death of Henry was to them a bloodless victory; and they hoped that a speedy change in the politics of Italy would establish the universal ascendancy of the Guelphic party.

Pisa had always been constant to the Ghibelines, and friendly to the emperor; by his death they found themselves thrown almost without defence into the hands of the Florentines, their enemies; and they therefore gladly acceded to the moderate terms offered to them by the king of Naples and his ally, Florence, for the establishment of peace in Tuscany. If this treaty had been fulfilled, the hopes of the Ghibelines would have been crushed for ever, nor would Castruccio ever have returned to his country; the scenes of blood and misery which followed would have been spared; and Florence, raising its benign influence over the other Tuscan states, would have been the peace-maker of Italy. Events took a different turn. To understand this it is necessary to look back.

Immediately on the death of Henry, the Pisans, fearful of a sudden incursion of the Florentines, for which they might be unprepared, had engaged in their service a condottiere, Uguccione della Faggiuola, who with his troop of a thousand Germans, took on him the guard of their city. War was the trade of Uguccione; he therefore looked with dismay on the projected peace, and resolved to disturb it. The populace of the Italian towns, ranged under party names, and ever obedient to the watchword and signals of their party, were easily moved to fall on the contrary faction. The Pisan people were Ghibelines; and, while the more moderate among them had advanced far in the negotiating of a peace, Uguccione caused live eagles, the ensigns of the Ghibelines, to be carried through the streets; and the cry of, "Treason from the Guelphs!" was the rallying word of fury to the populace. The magistrates in vain endeavoured to assert their authority; their partizans were dispersed, their captains taken prisoners and put to death, and Uguccione declared general of the war against the Florentines. This active chieftain lost no time in his operations; he marched against the Lucchese, the allies of Florence, ravaged their country, brought them to terms, and made peace with them on condition of their recalling their Ghibeline exiles.

The three years which these events occupied were spent by Castruccio in Lombardy. He made each year a campaign under one or another of the Ghibeline lords of that territory, and passed the winter at Milan. He formed a sincere and lasting friendship with Galeazzo Visconti: but, although this amity contributed to his advancement, his character suffered by the congeniality of sentiment which he acquired with this chief. As they rode, hunted, or fought together, often employed in mutual good — offices one for the other, their affection became stronger; and it was as disinterested and generous as it was firm. Galeazzo sincerely loved Castruccio, and opened to him the dearest secrets of his heart; but these secrets were such as to initiate the latter in the artful policy and unprincipled motives of the Milanese lord, and to make him regard treachery and cruelty as venial faults. He had no saving passion, which by its purity and exalted nature, although it permitted him to forgive, would make him avoid the faults of Galeazzo. Ambition was the ruling feeling of his soul; an ambition for power, conquest and renown, and not for virtue, and that fame, which as the ph*nix, cannot live at the same period as its parent, but springs from his ashes with the strong pinions of immortal being.

It was this aspiring disposition which strongly recommended him to Galeazzo. For it was not with him the wild desire for what he had neither qualities nor capacity to obtain; it was combined with transcendent talents, an energy of action and a clearness of judgement, which greatly surpassed that of his companions. Castruccio was fond of power; yet he was neither arrogant nor tyrannical; words of kindness and winning smiles he bestowed at will on all around. He appeared to fit himself for each scene in which he was to take a part; in the camp he was energetic, valorous, and swift of action; in council he was as prudent and cautious as a grey-haired minister of state: at balls, or during a hunting party, he recommended himself by grace, agility, wit, and a courtesy whose sweetness was untarnished by vanity or presumption. His beauty took a more manly cast; and somewhat of pride, and more of self-confidence, and much of sensibility, were seen in his upturned lip; his eyes, dark as a raven's wing, were full of fire and imagination; his open forehead was shaded by the hyacinthine curls of his chestnut-coloured hair. His face expressed extreme frankness, a frankness that did not exist in his mind; for his practices among the wily chiefs of Lombardy had robbed him of all ingenuousness of soul, although the traces of that which he once possessed had not faded from his countenance. Amidst all the luxury of Lombardy he was abstemious, nor spent in personal magnificence the money which he rather applied to the equipment of his troop. At length the patient improvement which he had bestowed upon his powers, and his perseverance in preparing for advancement, obtained their due reward; and he among the other Lucchese exiles returned to his native city.

But Castruccio was ill content to return as it were by the endurance of the opposite party; on the contrary he wished to raise his faction to that supremacy which would invest him with dominion as its chief. He therefore carried on a treaty with Uguccione's army, requiring their assistance for the overthrow of the Guelphs of Lucca, and for placing him in authority over his native town; while the tyrant of Pisa should in return gain a faithful ally, and one more step should be taken towards the final establishment of the Ghibeline ascendancy.

After arranging this scheme, Castruccio and his companions passed the defile of the Serchio; and, advancing towards Lucca, assumed a warlike appearance, and endeavoured to force the gate of San Frediano; the Guelphs opposed him, and battle ensued. In the mean time Uguccione arrived in another direction, and, not finding free entrance at any of the gates, began to batter the wall. The Guelphs, defeated by the Ghibelines, were in no condition to resist; the Ghibelines, headed by Castruccio, considered Uguccione as their ally, and thought not of impeding his operations; indeed they were fully employed in resisting their adversaries, who, though worsted, would not yield. The breach was effected, Uguccione entered triumphantly, and, treating Lucca as a conquered town, delivered it over to be sacked by his troops; while he himself made a rich booty of the treasure of the Pope which had been preserved in the church of San Frediano; Lucca having been selected as the safest deposit for such a treasure.

Uguccione thought no more of his promises to Castruccio, and both parties in Lucca were oppressed alike, by one who believed that the best security for a governor was the cutting off the tallest flowers in the field. The prompt exertions of Castruccio alone saved his native city from utter ruin. He collected his partizans, formed them into a troop, and ranging them under the banners of Uguccione, accepted a command in this chief’s army; thus quieting the invaders’ fears of a resistance which would have been rash and vain, but having at the same time ready at Castruccio’s smallest signal a well armed and disciplined troop, nominally in the service of the tyrant, but really devoted by affection and military oaths to the cause of their immediate commander. Nor did he again betray the confidence of his fellow citizens; but, entering into Uguccione’s counsels, and assuming a tone of power which this chieftain could not resist, Castruccio at the same time opposed a boundary to his arrogance and cruelty.

But, although his first imprudence in inviting Uguccione to the possession of Lucca was pardoned by his countrymen, in consideration of the reparation that he earnestly desired to make, it was looked upon with far different eyes by states who, hating the Pisan Tyrant, and too distant to be acquainted with all the palliating circumstances, regarded Castruccio as a traitor. The news of the entrance of the Ghibeline exiles into Lucca, and the capture of that town by Uguccione, quickly reached his Florentine adversaries, and excited grief and rage in all the hearers. The name of Castruccio as the betrayer of his country was repeated with indignation and hatred.

There was one gentle heart in Florence which felt deep pain, when it heard the name of Antelminelli coupled with an opprobrious epithet. Euthanasia dei Adimari had not forgotten her vow made many years before; she had treasured in her memory the recollection of her young playfellow, and often, when travellers from Lombardy mentioned the name of Castruccio, her fair cheek was suffused by the eloquent blood.

Euthanasia had long been an orphan; her father had died, and by his death was cut the dearest tie she had to earth. While he lived, she had confined herself almost entirely to his room, and serving as eyes to his blinded sense, she was as faithful to his wants as his own orbs had been before their light was quenched. After his death she mingled more with the distinguished youth of Florence, and joined in that society, which, if we may judge from the indications that Dante gives in his prose works, and from the tender and exquisite poetry of Petrarch, was as refined, delicate and cultivated, as the best society amidst the boasted politeness of the present day. Yet among the youth of Florence Euthanasia was as a lily, that overlooks the less illustrious yet beautiful flowers of a garden. Her beauty, her accomplishments, and the gift of flowing yet mild eloquence that she possessed, the glowing brilliancy of her ardent yet tempered imagination, made her the leader of the little band to which she belonged. It is said, that as Dante sighed for Beatrice, so several of the distinguished youths of Florence fed on the graceful motions and sweet words of this celestial girl, who, walking among them, passionless, yet full of enthusiasm, seemed as a link to bind their earthly thoughts to heaven. Often with her mother’s permission Euthanasia retired for months to the castle of ; and alone among the wild Apennines she studied and worshipped nature, while the bright sun warmed the valleys, and threw its beams over the mountains, or when the silver boat of the moon, which displayed in the clear air its heavy lading, sunk swiftly in the west, and numberless stars witnessed her departure. Then again, quitting the eternal, ever-succeeding pages of nature’s volume, she pored over the works she had before read with her father, or the later written poetry of Dante, and incorporated the thoughts of the sublimest geniuses with her own, while the creative fire in her heart and brain formed new combinations to delight and occupy her.

Her young friends hailed with heartfelt joy her return from her seclusion; she joined in all their amusements; who could sing the canzones of those times, or relate a pathetic tale, like Euthanasia? Besides she was so prudent, so wise, and so kind, that her assistance was perpetually claimed and afforded in every little misfortune or difficulty of her friends.

But the age of thoughtlessness and fearless enjoyment passed away, and Euthanasia advanced to womanhood. At this period a succession of events deprived her of her mother and her two brothers, so that she remained sole heiress of the possessions of her family. Independent and powerful, she was as a queen in and the surrounding villages; at Florence she was considered one of its first citizens; and, if power, wealth and respect could have satisfied her, she must have been happy. She had wept bitterly the death of her relations; she grieved for the loss of her brothers, and felt only pain at being advanced to their place. Yet her mind acquired new dignity, and the virtues of her heart new fervour, from the entire independence of her situation, and the opportunities she possessed of doing good. There was none to gainsay her actions, except the rigid censorship of her own reason, and the opinion of her fellow — citizens, to whose love and esteem she aspired. Most of her time was now spent among her dependents at Valperga; the villages under her jurisdiction became prosperous; and the peasantry were proud that their countess preferred her residence among them to the gaieties of Florence. In the winter she visited her friends of that town; and many a noble, who hoped to rival Dante Alighieri or Guido Cavalcanti, sang of the miraculous change of seasons that had been operated on his city; — that their summers were dreary, bare, and deserted, while the soul of loveliness dwelt among them during the formerly dull months of winter.

It is said that during this period she had never loved; she admired the illustrious and energetic spirits of Florence, and she bestowed her affections on several whose virtue and talents claimed by right that meed; but she had never loved. It appears wonderful, that one so sensitive of heart and imagination should have attained her twenty-second year without having experienced the tyranny of that passion; but, if it be true, how tremendous must be the force of that power, which could finally break down the barriers piled by reason and accustomed coldness, and deluge her soul with the sweet waters of earthly love!

She had just entered her twenty-second year, when Castruccio in 1314 returned to Lucca; when under his auspices, the greatest enemy of Florence became master of the neighbour city; when war was declared between the two states, and Castruccio was in arms against the Florentines. The summer was now far advanced; and she hastened to her solitude at . She was hurt at heart; one of her dearest dreams, the excellence of Castruccio, was overthrown; and she wished for a while to shut out from her thoughts all memory of the world, which appeared to bring tumult and discord to trouble her tranquillity. She was unable to do this: she was too well known, and too much loved, not to be sought by those with whom she was acquainted; and she was startled to hear from all sides eulogiums of the talents and soldiership of Castruccio, those of the Ghibelines mingled with hope, those of the Guelphs with fear.

Is there not a principle in the human mind that foresees the change about to occur to it? Is there not a feeling which would warn the soul of peril, were it not at the same time a sure prophecy that that peril is not to be avoided? So felt Euthanasia: and during her evening meditations she often enquired from her own heart, why the name of Castruccio made her cheeks glow; and why praise or dispraise of him seemed to electrify her frame: why a nameless inquietude pervaded her thoughts, before so calm: why, tenderly as she dwelt on the recollection of her infant playmate, she dreaded so much now to see him? And then, strange to say, being thus agitated and fearful, she saw him; and calm more still than the serene depths of a windless heaven, redescended on her soul, and wrapped it in security and joy.

It was not until October, while Euthanasia still lingered at , that Castruccio took up his abode in Lucca. He returned thither, covered with glory, but highly discontented with Uguccione who feared him, and, while he shewed him outward honour, took every occasion to thwart his desires, and to deprive him of all power and voice in his council. But Castruccio was at the head of a large party, who could ill brook the rude arrogance of Uguccione, and the unmasked presumption of his sons. This party augmented every day; it was watched, insulted, and harassed; but all the

Ghibeline youth of Lucca made it their boast to attend the person, and partake the counsels of Castruccio.

The winter months were spent in apparent idleness, but in reality in deep plotting on the part of Castruccio. Uguccione was at Pisa, and his son, Francesco, could ill understand the wiles of the pupil of Alberto Scoto. He saw his frank countenance, and watched his gay demeanour; but the conclusion of his observations was, that although Castruccio was careless of danger, and ambitious of glory, he was too fond of pleasure, and of too ingenuous a disposition, to enter into any deep scheme, or to form even the wish of usurping the power of the state.

Castruccio stood on the tower of the Antelminelli palace; young Arrigo Guinigi was at his side; he was surrounded by half a dozen of his most intimate associates, and after having for a while discussed their plans of political conduct, they remained silent. Castruccio was separated from the rest of the group; the tower of Antelminelli overlooked the town of Lucca, and being raised far above its narrow, dark streets, appeared, together with the numerous towers of the city, as forming a separate and more agreeable town for the nobles over the heads of the meaner inhabitants. The valley was stretched around the city; its fields bare of vegetation, and spotted with black patches of leafless woods; and the view was terminated by the hills, crowned with snow, and their sides clothed with the dark verdure of the ilex, while from among their folds peeped the white walls of villages and castles.

Castruccio fixed his eye on one of these castles. The forgotten scenes of his youth thronged into his memory, and oppressed him with their numbers and life; the low voice of his mother sounded in his ears; the venerable form of Adimari stood before him, and it seemed to him as if the slender fingers of the infant Euthanasia pressed his hand. He turned suddenly round, and asked: “Does she still live there?” — pointing to the castle.

“Who? The countess of ?”

“Aye, and her daughter Euthanasia?” Many years had elapsed since he had pronounced that name; he felt his whole frame thrill to its musical sound.

“The present countess,” replied Vanni Mordecastelli, “is young and unmarried” —

"And her name is Euthanasia," continued count Ludovico de' Fondi; "she is the daughter of Messer Antonio dei Adimari, who while he lived was one of the leaders of the Guelph party at Florence; and through her mother she possess the castle and villages of ."

"Aye," cried a youth, "and they say that Ranieri della Fagginola pretends to her hand. It is not well, that the credulity of a woman, who will listen to the first fine speeches that are addressed her, should cause so strong a hold as the castle of to pass into the hands of that insufferable nest of traitors."

"You are ignorant of whom you talk," said the aged Fondi, "when you speak thus lightly of the young countess of . She is a lady of great prudence, beauty, and learning; and, although for years she has been sought by the first nobles of Italy, she glories in her independence and solitude. She mingles little with the citizens of this town; her friends reside at Florence, where she often passes many months, associating with its first families."

"Is she as beautiful, as she is said to be?" asked young Arrigo Guinigi.

"Indeed she is lovely to a miracle; but her manners almost make you forget her beauty; they are so winning and graceful. Unfortunately she does not belong to our party, but is as strongly attached to the Pope's as the countess Matilda of old."

"Aye, these women are so easily cajoled by priests."

"Nay, Moncello, you will still be in the wrong, if you apply common rules to the conduct of the countess Euthanasia. She is attached to the cause of the freedom of Florence, and not to the power of her Popes. When I visited her on her return to her castle, I found her full of grief at the renewal of the war between these states. She earnestly asked me whether I saw any prospect of peace; 'For,' said she, 'I am more attached to concord and the alliance of parties, than to any of the factions which distract our poor Italy.'" —

The conversation then turned on other subjects. Castruccio had listened silently to the praise which the old count Fondi had bestowed on the friend of his childhood; and presently after, taking Arrigo aside, he said: "My young friend, you must go on an embassy for me."

"To the end of the world, if you desire it, my dear lord" —

"Nay, this is a shorter journey. You must ride tomorrow morning to the castle of , and ask permission of the countess that I may visit her. Our families, though of opposite interests, were much allied; and I ought to have sought this interview before."

On the following day Castruccio waited anxiously for the return of Arrigo. He arrived a little before noon. "I have seen her," he cried; "and, after having seen her, I wonder at the torpor of these Lucchese that they do not all emigrate from their town, to go and surround her castle, and gaze on her all day long. I seem only to live since I have seen her; she is so lovely, so enchantingly kind and gentle. I have heard you say, my good brother, that you never met with a woman whom you could enshrine in your inmost heart, and thus pay worship to the exalted spirit of loveliness, which you had vainly sought, and never found. Go to , and, gazing on Euthanasia, you will tremblingly unread your heresy."

"To horse then, my dear Arrigo. Does she consent to receive me?"

"Yes, she desires to see you; and with the most ingenuous sweetness, she bade me tell you the pleasure it would give her, to renew her acquaintance with one whom she has not forgotten during a long separation."

CHAPTER IX

"THIS is a well known road to me," thought Castruccio, as he rode across the plain of Lucca towards the hills of the Baths; "there is still that mountain, that as a craggy and mighty wall surmounts and bounds the other Apennines; the lower peaks are still congregated round it, attracting and arresting the clouds that pause on their summits, and then slowly roll off. What a splendid garb of snow these old mountains have thrown over themselves, to shield them from the tramontano, that buffets them all the winter long, while their black sides appear almost as the shadows of a marble statue. Looking at these hills, it seems to me as if I had suddenly a recollection of a previous existence, such a crowd of ideas rush upon me, the birth of my early years, long dead, now revived. There on that hill stands the old sheep-cot, in which I once took refuge during a storm; there is the castle of the Fondi, near which grow the largest ilexes of these hills; and in that recess of the mountain is the holy spring, near which on summer mornings Euthanasia and I have often gathered flowers, and placed leaves for boats, seeing them swallowed up and again cast forth in the whirl of that strange pool; I wonder if that tall cypress still throws its shade upon the water; methinks it would well please me, to sit as of yore, Euthanasia by my side, on its moss-covered roots."

Castruccio's heart was much softened, as he successively recognized objects, which he had forgotten for so many years, and with which he had been most intimately acquainted. The peculiar form of the branches of a tree, the winding of an often-trod mountain-path, the murmurs of small streams, their banks bedecked with dwarf shrubs; things which would have appeared uncharacterized to one who viewed them for the first time; bore for him some distinguishing mark, some peculiar shape, which awoke within him memories that had been long laid asleep.

The road that led from Lucca to struck directly across the plain to the foot of the rock on which the castle was built. This rock overhung the road, casting a deep shade; and projected, forming a precipice on three sides; the northern side, at the foot of which the Secchio flowed, was disjoined from the mountain by a ravine, and a torrent struggled in the depth, among loose stones, and the gnarled and naked roots of trees that shaded the side of the cleft. Castruccio began to ascend the path which led to the portal of the castle, that was cut in the precipitous side of this recess, and was bordered by hedges of stunted myrtles overtopped by chestnut trees; the foliage of these had fallen; and their spoils, yellow, and brown, and red, were strewed on the shining leaves of the myrtle underwood. The path was steep, serpentine and narrow; so that Castruccio, who now looked on nature with a soldier's eye, remarked what an excellent defence Valperga might make, if that were the only access to it: the torrent roared below, keeping the air for ever awake; for that commoner babbles more and louder among huge mountains, and solitudes which may never be still, than among the haunts of men; but all sounds are melodious there; none harsh and obtrusive.

At the summit of the path was a drawbridge that connected it with the almost isolated platform of rock on which the castle stood: — the building nearly covered this space, leaving room only for a small plot of ground, which overlooked the plain, and was guarded by a barbican; and on which a few trees, dark ilexes, and light acacias, mingled their contrasted foliage. Behind the castle the mountain rose, barren and nearly perpendicular; and, when you looked up, the dark and weather — stained precipice towered above, while the blue sky seemed to rest upon it. The castle itself was a large and picturesque building, turreted, and gracefully shaded by trees. Castruccio entered the gate on the side of the drawbridge, and passed between the main building and the barbican which guarded the pass; so coming round to the front of the castle, which opened on the grassy plot; here he was met by several servants, and conducted to the apartment of Euthanasia. The counts of had been rich; and the castle was more magnificent than those rocky strong holds usually were. The great banqueting hall was painted with various figures, which, though rude, and defective in shade and perspective, were regarded with admiration in those days. A large fireplace, now illumined by a blazing fire, gave an air of cheerfulness to the hall; several serving-men, and two large and beautiful dogs, were cowering round the fire, as a cold January blast rushed through the opposite door, through which Castruccio passed into an inner, open court of the castle.

This court was surrounded by gothic cloisters on all sides except one, where the huge mountain formed the barrier: high, near the summit of the rock, grew a few cypresses; and, as you gazed upwards at them, they seemed to pierce the sky with their dark and motionless spires. On one side of this court was a handsome staircase built of the marble of Carrara, and by this he ascended into the audience chamber. It was then, being winter, hung with scarlet cloth; the ceiling was painted; and the bright marble pavement reflected in dim colours the Venus and her Cupids depicted above. A small tripod of white marble curiously carved, stood in the middle of the room, supporting a bronze censer in which incense was burning; several antique vases and tripods adorned the room; the tables were of the finest stones, or of glass mosaic; and the seats or couches were covered with scarlet cloth inwoven with gold. Within this was Euthanasia's own apartment; it was hung with blue silk, and the pavement was of mosaic; the couches were richly embroidered, and a small table of verde antique stood in the middle of the room. In the recesses were several stands for books, writing materials, & co.; and in the embrasures of the windows were bronze stands, on which were placed finely embossed gold vases, filled with such flowers as the season afforded. But, amidst all this luxury, the richest ornament of the room was the lovely possessor herself.

Castruccio and Euthanasia met; after many years of absence, they gazed on each other with curiosity and interest. Euthanasia had awaited his arrival with unwonted anxiety: she could not explain to herself the agitation that she felt at the idea of meeting him; but, when she saw him, beautiful as a god, power and love dwelling on every feature of his countenance, and in every motion of his graceful form, the unquiet beatings of her heart ceased, and she became calm and happy. And was she not also beautiful? Her form was light, and every limb was shaped according to those rules by which the exquisite statues of the ancients have been modelled. A quantity of golden hair fell round her neck, and, unless it had been confined by a veil that was wreathed round her head, it would almost have touched the ground; her eyes were blue; a blue that seemed to have drunk-in the depths of an Italian sky, and to reflect from their orbs the pure and unfathomable brilliance, which strikes the sight as darkness, of a Roman heaven; but these beauteous eyes were fringed by long, pointed lashes, which softened their fire, and added to their sweetness: the very soul of open-hearted Charity dwelt on her brow, and her lips expressed the softest sensibility; there was in her countenance, beyond all of kind and good that you could there discover, an expression that seemed to require ages to read and understand; a wisdom exalted by enthusiasm, a wildness tempered by self-command, that filled every look and every motion with eternal change. She was dressed according to the custom of the times, yet her dress was rather plain, being neither ornamented with gold nor jewels; a silk vest of blue reached from her neck to her feet, girded at the waist by a small embroidered band; the wide and hanging sleeves were embroidered at the edge, and fell far over her hands, except when, thrown back, they discovered her rosy-tipped fingers and taper wrist.

They met then and often again; and the difference of their political parties only drew them closer. Euthanasia perceived that Castruccio intended to work some change in the state of her country; and she earnestly wished, — not to draw him over to her party, — but to shew how futile that distinction and enmity were, if one love of peace and good animated all hearts. She wished also to read his mind, to know if the love of liberty lived there. Euthanasia had this foible, if indeed it might be called one in her, to love the very shadow of freedom with unbounded enthusiasm. She was bred a Guelph among the leaders of that party at Florence, a party whose watchword was liberty; her rank itself would have forced her to take part in the contentions of the times; but she was no narrow partizan; her father, and the studies she had followed under him, had taught her higher lessons; and the history of the Roman republic had increased her love of freedom, while it had annihilated in her mind all interest in petty intrigue. Castruccio was a staunch Ghibeline, and his soul was set on the advancement of that party; he did not sympathize with Euthanasia, but he appeared to do so, for he loved her, and listened, his eyes shining with pleasure, while she spoke in silver tones, and all appeared wise and good that came from her lips. Often her gentle eloquence would for a while carry him along with it, and he would talk of republics, and the energy and virtue that every citizen acquires, when each, acting under the censure of each, yet possesses power; and men, not as children obedient to the mere word of command, discuss and regulate their own interests. Her admiration for the character of several of the Florentine chiefs gave interest to her details respecting the changes that had occurred there during the last years, and to the many anecdotes that she dwelt upon as demonstrating the power and grandeur of her beloved Florence.

Nor were their conversations only political. Euthanasia’s mind was stored with sweet lore; she loved poetry, and sang or repeated the verses of Guido or Dante; and, as she made excursions among the woods, or joined in hunting-parties with Castruccio and her other friends, her conversation appeared one strain of poetry. Castruccio related his adventures, and Euthanasia was never weary of listening to the details of the English and French courts and manners; two systems of society, so widely opposite to each other, and both so different from the scenes to which she had been accustomed. Their love for one another, and their confidence increased: the winter months passed on, and the first days of spring, bringing with them green leaves and soft air, found them vowed friends, each believing to be knit to the other for life with the strongest ties of enduring love.

Euthanasia said that she loved for the first time, and a falsehood had never stained her purest soul; a well of intensest and overflowing passion was opened in her heart; every feeling was softened, every emotion modulated by this change: she was penetrated with love; and, admiration and esteem forming but a part of this, she made a god of him she loved, believing every virtue and every talent to live in his soul. Thus, unrestrained by any latent fear or ungenerous suspicion, she gave up her heart to him, and was for a while happy. They passed much time together; and every day each made a discovery of some new excellence, some till then unobserved accomplishment.

Her feelings were indeed entirely changed by the birth of this new and powerful sentiment. Hitherto she had been in a great degree alone in the world; finding none who entirely sympathized with her, she had poured out the treasure of her heart to the ear of silence alone. She was happy among the gaieties of Florence; the wit and imagination of the people formed an agreeable variety to her life; but there was a mutable and changeful spirit among them, that did not invite her confidence. Her eyes had often been lighted up, and her spirit awakened in conversation, where wit sharpens wit, and the ideas of one mind seem to cause the birth of the children of another. But, when tenderness softened her heart, and the sublime feeling of universal love penetrated her, she found no voice that replied so well to hers as the gentle singing of the pines under the air of noon, and the soft murmurs of the breeze that scattered her hair and freshened her cheek, and the dashing of the waters that has no beginning or end.

It was not thus now; the words and looks of Castruccio replied to her, and she felt happier than she had ever been. There was no doubt, no sorrow; all was security and calm; and her heart softened, until tears sprang forth under the weight of unmitigated pleasure. She was frank, generous and fearless; therefore she instantly believed and trusted; while the master — passions which ever ruled her life were not forgotten, but, mingling with and heightened by love, glowed with greater energy. They passed several months in the enjoyment of this intercourse; they hoped, they felt, that their destinies were intertwined never to be separated; and their union was only deferred until Castruccio should free his country. The summer advancing would soon give the signal for separation. On one of these days, one of the last before their parting, Euthanasia related to Castruccio the few events of her peaceful life which had occurred since their separation ten years before. The tale was short, but it was one that deeply interested the listener.

CHAPTER X

"IT is strange for one to speak, who never before has uttered the sentiments of her heart. With my eyes I have spoken to the starry skies and the green earth; and with smiles that could not express my emotion I have conversed with the soft airs of summer, the murmur of streams, and the chequered shades of our divine woods: but never before have I awakened sympathy in a human countenance with words that unlock the treasure of my heart.

"I have lived a solitary hermitess, and have become an enthusiast for all beauty. Being alone, I have not feared to give the reins to my feelings; I have lived happily within the universe of my own mind, and have often given reality to that which others call a dream. I have had few hopes, and few fears; but every passing sentiment has been an event; and I have marked the birth of a new idea with the joy that others derive from what they call change and fortune. What is the world, except that which we feel? Love, and hope, and delight, or sorrow and tears; these are our lives, our realities, to which we give the names of power, possession, misfortune, and death.

"You smile at my strange words. I now feel livelier emotions arise; and, as is my custom, I try to define and understand them. Love, when nurtured by sympathy, is a stronger feeling, than those breathless emotions which arise from the contemplation of what is commonly called inanimate nature, and of the wondrous and eternal changes of the universe; and, feeling as I do, that if I give it place in my heart, it must bear my whole being away with it, as the tempest bears the rack along the sky, wonder not, dear friend, that I have paused, and even shuddered, when I thought that an unknown power was about to dwell in my soul, which might make it blind to its former delights, and deaf to the deep voice of that nature, whose child and nursling I call myself. But now I doubt no more; I am yours, Castruccio; be my fortune tearful or smiling, it shall be one that will bring with it human sympathy, and I resign that savage liberty of which I was ere while jealous.

"You have asked me to relate the events of my life; I may say that it is a blank, if you would not hear the history of many a strange idea, many an exalted feeling, and reverie of wondrous change. You left me at Florence the favourite daughter of a father I adored: I was ever near him reading and conversing with him; and if I have put order in my day dreams, and culled the fruit of virtue and some slight wisdom from my meditations, it is to his lessons that I owe this good. It is he who taught me to fathom my sensations, and discipline my mind; to understand what my feelings were, and whether they arose from a good or evil source. He taught me to look on my own faults fearlessly; humbly as a weak being — yet not with mock humility, but with a modest, yet firm courage, that led me to know what indeed I might become. He explained to me the lessons of our divine master; which our priests corrupt to satisfy the most grovelling desires; and he taught me to seek in self-approbation, and in a repentance, which was that of virtuous action, and not of weeping, for the absolution of which they make a revenue.

"Do I speak with vanity? I hope that you do not so far mistake me. I have been a solitary being; and, conversing with my own heart, I have been so accustomed to use the frank language of a knowledge drawn from fixed principles, and to weigh my actions and thoughts in those scales which my reason and my religion afforded me, that my words may sound vain, when they are only true. I do not think then that I could speak with vanity; for I was enumerating the benefits that I received from my father. I read with him the literature of ancient Rome; and my whole soul was filled with the beauty of action, and the poetic sentiment of these writers. At first I complained that no men lived now, who bore affinity to these far shining beacons of the earth: but my father convinced me, that the world was shaking off her barbaric lethargy, and that Florence, in her struggle for freedom, had awakened the noblest energies of the human mind. Once, when we attended a court in Lombardy, a minstrel sang some of the Cantos of Dante's Divina Comedia, and I can never forget the enthusiastic joy I experienced, in finding that I was the contemporary of its illustrious author.

"I endeavour to mark in this little history of myself the use of the various feelings that rule all my actions; and I must date my enthusiasm for the liberties of my country, and the political welfare of Italy, from the repetition of these Cantos of Dante's poem. The Romans, whose writings I adored, were free; a Greek who once visited us, had related to us what treasures of poetry and wisdom existed in his language, and these were the productions of freemen: the mental history of the rest of the world who are slaves, was a blank, and thus I was irresistibly forced to connect wisdom and liberty together; and, as I worshipped wisdom as the pure emanation of the Deity, the divine light of the world, so did I adore liberty as its parent, its sister, the half of its being. Florence was free, and Dante was a Florentine; none but a freeman could have poured forth the poetry and eloquence to which I listened: what though he were banished from his native city, and had espoused a party that seemed to support tyranny; the essence of freedom is that clash and struggle which awaken the energies of our nature, and that operation of the elements of our mind, which as it were gives us the force and power that hinder us from degenerating, as they say all things earthly do when not regenerated by change.

"What is man without wisdom? And what would not this world become, if every man might learn from its institutions the true principles of life, and become as the few which have as yet shone as stars amidst the night of ages? If time had not shaken the light of poetry and of genius from his wings, all the past would be dark and trackless: now we have a track — the glorious foot-marks of the children of liberty; let us imitate them, and like them we may serve as marks in the desert, to attract future passengers to the fountains of life. Already we have begun to do so; and Dante is the pledge of a glorious race, which tells us that, in clinging to the freedom which gave birth to his genius, we may awake the fallen hopes of the world. These sentiments, nurtured and directed by my father, have caused the growth of an enthusiasm in my soul, which can only die when I die.

"I was at this time but sixteen; and at that age, unless I had been guided by the lessons of my father, my meditations would have been sufficiently fruitless. But he, whether he taught me to consider the world and the community of man, or to study the little universe of my own mind, was wisdom's self, pouring out accents that commanded attention and obedience. At first I believed, that my heart was good, and that by following its dictates I should not do wrong; I was proud, and loved not to constrain my will, though I myself were the mistress; but he told me, that either my judgement or passions must rule me, and that my future happiness and usefulness depended on the choice I made between these two laws. I learned from him to look upon events as being of consequence only through the feelings which they excited, and to believe that content of mind, love, and benevolent feeling ought to be the elements of our existence; while those accidents of fortune or fame, which to the majority make up the sum of their existence, were as the dust of the balance.

“Well; these were the lessons of my father, a honey of wisdom on which I fed until I attained my eighteenth year; and then he died. What I felt, my grief and despair, I will not relate; few sorrows surpass that of a child, who loses a beloved parent before she has formed new ties which have weakened the first and the most religious.

“Do you remember my mother? She was a lady with a kind heart, and a humanity and equanimity of temper few could surpass. She was a Guelph, a violent partizan, and, heart and soul, was taken up with treaties of peace, acquisitions in war, the conduct of allies, and the fortune of her enemies: while she talked to you, you would have thought that the whole globe of the earth was merely an appendage to the county of . She was acquainted with all the magistrates of Florence, the probabilities of elections, the state of the troops, the receipt of imposts, and every circumstance of the republic. She was interested in the most lively manner in the fall of Corso Donati, the war with Pistoia, the taking of that town, and the deaths and elections of the various Popes. She was present at every court held by the Guelph lords of Lombardy; and her poor subjects were sometimes rather hardly taxed, that we might appear with suitable dignity on these occasions. The marriage of her children was her next care; but she could never come to a decisive resolve as to which alliance would be the most advantageous to her family, and at the same time most promote the cause of the Guelphs in Italy.

“When my father died, she sent for my eldest brother from Naples; and for several months her mind was occupied by his accession, and the dignity that the houses of Adimari and would acquire by having a young warrior at their head, instead of a woman and a blind philosopher. My brother was a soldier, a brave man, full of ambition and party spirit; and a new field was opened to my mother’s politics by him, when he detailed the intrigues of the Neapolitan court; she was for ever occupied in sending messengers, receiving dispatches, calculating imposts, and all the pygmy acts of a petty state.

“When I was nineteen years of age, we heard that my younger brother had fallen ill at Rome, and desired to see some one of his family. My uncle, the abbot of St. Maurice, was on the point of going to Rome; and I obtained my mother’s leave to accompany him. Oh, what long draughts of joy I drank in on that journey! I did not think that my brother's illness was dangerous, and indeed considered that circumstance more as the pretext, than the object of my journey; so I fearlessly gave myself up to the enthusiasm that deluged my soul. Expression lags, as then my own spirit flagged, beneath the influence of these thoughts: it was to Rome I journeyed, to see the vestiges of the mistress of the world, within whose walls all I could conceive of great, and good, and wise, had breathed and acted: I should draw in the sacred air which had vivified the heroes of Rome; their shades would surround me; and the very stones that I should tread were marked by their footsteps. Can you conceive what I felt? You have not studied the histories of ancient times, and perhaps know not the life that breathes in them; a soul of beauty and wisdom which had penetrated my heart of hearts. When I descended the hills of the Abruzzi, and first saw the Tiber rolling its tranquil waters glistening under the morning sun; I wept; — why did not Cato live? — why was I not going to see her consuls, her heroes, and her poets? Alas! I was about to approach the shadow of Rome, the inanimate corse, the broken image of what was once great beyond all power of speech to express. My enthusiasm again changed; and I felt a kind of sacred horror run through my veins. Thou, oh! Tiber, ever rollest, ever and for ever the same! yet are not thy waters those which flowed here when the Scipios and the Fabii lived on thy shores; the grass and the herbage which adorn thy banks have many thousand times been renewed since it was pressed on by their feet; all is changed, even thou art not the same!

"It was night when we entered Rome; I dared hardly breathe; the stars shone bright in the deep azure of heaven, and with their twinkling beams illuminated the dark towers which were black and silent, seeming like animated beings asleep. A procession of monks passed by chaunting in a sweet and solemn tone, in that language which once awoke the pauses of this Roman air with words of fire. Methought they sang their city's requiem; methought I was following to their last narrow home all that had existed of great and good in this god-inhabited city.

"I remained in Rome three months; when I arrived, my brother was considerably better, and we entertained every hope of his recovery. I spent my life among the ruins of Rome; and I felt, as I was told that I appeared to be, rather a wandering shade of the ancient times, than a modern Italian. In my wild enthusiasm I called on the shadows of the departed to converse with me, and to prophesy the fortunes of awakening Italy. I can never forget one evening that I visited the Pantheon by moonlight: the soft beams of the planet streamed through its open roof, and its tall pillars glimmered around. It seemed as if the spirit of beauty descended on my soul, as I sat there in mute ecstasy; never had I before so felt the universal graspings of my own mind, or the sure tokens of other spiritual existences, as at that moment. Oh! could I even now pour forth in words the sentiments of love, and virtue, and divinest wisdom, that then burst in upon my soul, in a rich torrent — such as was the light of the moon to the dark temple in which I stood — the whole world would stand and listen: but fainter than the moonbeams and more evanescent are those deep thoughts; my eyes glisten, my cheeks glow, but words are denied me. I feel as it were my own soul at work within me, and surely, if I could disclose its secret operations, and lay bare the vitals of my being, in that moment, which would be one of overwhelming ecstasy — in that moment I should die.

"Well; to return to the events that sealed my residence in Rome, and by shedding the softness of affectionate sorrow over my feelings, added to their deep holiness. The last month of my residence there, I was a constant attendant on the sick bed of my dying brother: he did not suffer pain; his illness was lethargic; and I watched with breathless anxiety the change from life to death. Sometimes, when the Ave Maria had sounded, and the heats of the day had subsided, I stole out into the air to refresh my wearied spirits. There is no sky so blue as that of Rome; it is deep, penetrating, and dazzling: but at this hour it had faded, and its soft airs, that made wild and thrilling music among the solitudes of its hills and ruins, cooled my fevered cheeks, and soothed me in spite of sorrow. I then enjoyed grief; I may now say so, although I then felt anguish alone; truly I wept, and bitterly over the illness of my brother: but, when the soul is active, it brings a certain consolation along with it: I was never so much alive as then, when my wanderings, which seldom exceeded one or at most two hours, seemed to be lengthened into days and weeks. I loved to wander by the banks of the Tiber, which were solitary, and, if the scirocco blew, to mark the clouds as they sped over St. Peter's and the many towers of Rome: sometimes I walked on the Quirinal or Pincian mounts which overlook the city, and gazed, until my soul was elevated by poetic transport. Beautiful city, thy towers were illuminated by the orange tints of the fast-departing sunset, and the ghosts of lovely memories floated with the night breeze, among thy ruins; I became calm; amidst a dead race, and an extinguished empire, what individual sorrow would dare raise its voice? subdued, trembling, and overcome, I crept back to the sick bed of my brother.

"He died; and I left this city of my soul. I know not whether I shall ever again breathe its air; but its memory is a burning cloud of sunset in the deep azure of the sky: it is that passage in my life since my father's death, on which my intellectual eye rests with emotion, pleasurable now, although I then endured poignant sorrow.

"The passenger that carried the intelligence of my younger brother's death to my mother, was crossed on the road by one who came to inform me that the eldest also was no more. He was killed in an assault on Pistoia. Thus death quickly mowed down the ranks of our family; and at last I have become a solitary scion of the stock.

"I returned home by very slow journeys, and in my way was detained a fortnight at Perugia. When I arrived, I was met by my mother at our palace in Florence; she burst into tears as she folded me in her arms, and wept for some time, lamenting with bitter grief her sad losses. I mingled my tears with hers, and alas! I soon shed them alone; doubly an orphan through her death, I mourned over the last of my family. So many losses, following swift one upon the other, astounded me; and I passed many months, as one who had wandered from the true path, and had no guide to set her right. I retreated to my castle, and the solitude frightened me; I returned to Florence; but the gaieties of that city only told me more plainly that I was alone, since I sympathized with none there. But time has healed these wounds, leaving only a tinge of melancholy in my character which had not belonged to it till now."

CHAPTER XI

THE winter passed away, and with the summer the toils of the soldier began. Castruccio left Lucca, and joined the army of Uguccione against the Florentines. He took leave of his lady; yet she neither tied the scarf around him, nor bade him go and prosper. Florence was her native town; and love of their country was a characteristic of all Florentines. There was in that city an energy of spirit, which panting to expand itself, sought for new emotions, or exalted those that were before felt, until each sentiment became a passion. The Florentines were patriots; there was not one among them, who would not have sacrificed wealth, life, and happiness, to the prosperity of his native city. Euthanasia was brought up in the midst of public discussions and of expressions of public feeling; the army of the Florentines contained her best friends, the companions of her youth, all among men whom she had esteemed and loved; how then could she bid her lover, go, and prosper, when he went to destroy them? She would have been still more unhappy, could she have anticipated the event of the campaign.

Uguccione engaged himself in the siege of the castle of Monte Catini; and the Florentines, after having made every exertion to assemble and discipline their troops, advanced against him with a larger army than they had ever before brought into the field. Nor were the preparations of Uguccione inferior in vigour; he assembled all his allies, and awaited with confidence the arrival of the enemy. During this interval however, the chief fell ill, and was obliged to retire from the camp: the nominal command of the army devolved on his eldest son Francesco; but all looked up to Castruccio as their real leader. The Florentines advanced full of hope; and the Lucchese awaited them with steady courage. The battle was long and bloody; in the beginning of the combat Francesco was killed, and Castruccio perceived the soldiers make a sudden halt, when they saw their general fall: instantly feeling that the command devolved upon him, he galloped to the front of the lines, he threw off his casque that he might be distinguished, and, bidding the trumpets sound, he led his troops to a fresh assault. His army was drawn out on the plain, and every eye was turned upwards towards the castle, which, situated on the height of a steep hill, was the goal they must win. Castruccio had seen service in France; but with far different feelings did he now engage in battle. He was surrounded by his friends; he saw those he loved advance with a steady eye to the danger towards which he led them; he looked up, and saw above the high seated castle that he must storm; he saw the closely set ranks of the enemy; he beheld all this with one glance, one feeling quicker than a look, and the trumpets sounded while he waved his sword; his spirits were exhilarated, his heart swelled, — tears — tears of high and uncontrollable emotion, filled his eyes, as he dashed through the ranks of the enemy, and cried, “Victory, or death!” None dared disobey his voice. His dark brown hair, on which the sun shone, might be distinguished amidst a forest of hostile javelins. He was wounded; but he refused to retire; and fixing his eye on the castle walls — he cried, “There is our home!” All gave way before his fury; that part of the Florentine army which had been drawn out on the plain, was dispersed and fled — the rest retreated towards the castle; when he saw them retreat, when he first perceived that they gave ground before him, his triumph and ecstasy rose almost to frenzy; the mountain was steep, he threw himself from his horse, his troop followed his example; he called on them by the names of father and brother to follow his steps. “Go on!” they cried, “go on!” And they broke through all the impediments placed to impede their ascent, and were seen in close array, winding up the steep path towards the castle.

The victory was due to him alone; he, ever foremost, scaled the height, and first displayed the Ghibeline banner from the walls of the castle of Monte Catini; while, his cheek pale with pain, and his limbs trembling from loss of blood, it seemed almost as if his own death would seal the bloody conquest. The Florentines sustained irreparable loss; their general, the son of the king of Naples, several of his relations, and many members of the noblest families in Florence, fell. The loss is compared by the Florentine historians to the defeat of Cannæ; and many years elapsed before Florence could fill up the gap among her citizens made by the havoc of that day.

Such was the news that blanched poor Euthanasia’s cheek. She had spent the period that had elapsed since the departure of Castruccio, in utter solitude. Her anxiety, and the combat of feelings which she experienced, destroyed all her peace: she dared not give her prayers to either side; or if, following the accustomed bent of her inclinations, she wished success to her townsmen, the idea of Castruccio defeated, perhaps killed, turned all her thoughts to double bitterness. Yet, when the Florentines were indeed defeated, when messenger after messenger brought intelligence from her terror-stricken friends of the sad losses they had sustained, when the name of Castruccio as the slayer was repeated with fear and curses by those whom she tenderly loved; then indeed the current of her feelings returned with violence to its accustomed channel, and, bitterly reproaching herself for having dared to hesitate in a cause where her country was concerned, she knelt down, and solemnly and deliberately made a vow, sanctifying it by an appeal to all that she held sacred in heaven and upon earth, — she made a deep and tremendous vow, never to ally herself to the enemy of Florence: and then, somewhat calmed in soul, though ever sorrowing, she waited for the return of Castruccio to Lucca, so to learn if he could clear himself, or if indeed he were that enemy to Florence against whom her vow was made.

If the overthrow and massacre of the Florentines had moved her soul to its very depths, her horror was tempered with tenderness, when she heard that Castruccio had been brought back wounded to Lucca. The glory of this victory was attributed to him alone; and this glory, which appeared a shame to Euthanasia, excited in her feelings of confusion and sorrow. Now for the first time she felt the struggle in her soul, of inclination warring with duty; for the first time she feared that she ought not to love Castruccio; she thought of retreating to Florence, and of shutting him out from her sight, if possible from her thoughts; yet, as she meditated this, she thought she heard the soft tones of his melodious voice sounding in her ears, and she sank into grief and tears.

This painful struggle ceased not, until she saw him again; and then, as before, all pain and doubt vanished. His cheek was pale from the consequences of his wound, and his person, having thus lost its usual decision of mien, was more interesting; but his eyes shone, and they beamed unutterable love upon her. Truly did he look a hero; for power sat on his brow, and victory seemed to have made itself a home among the smiles of his lips. “Triumph, my sweet girl,” he said; “all my laurels are spoils for you. Nay, turn not away as if you disdained them; they are the assurances of the peace that you desire. Do not doubt me; do not for a moment suffer a cloud of suspicion to darken your animated countenance.

This sword has made me master of peace and war; and need I say, that my wise and gentle Euthanasia shall direct my counsels, her love and honour being the aim and purpose of my life?”

Upon such words could aught but pardon and reconciliation attend?

Castruccio’s wound was slight, and soon healed. But he was now more than ever immersed in his political plans: throwing off the mask, he appeared openly as the leader of a party against Uguccione; his palace was for ever open, and crowded with friends and followers; and, when he rode through the streets, he was attended by a band of the first nobles in Lucca. To his other talents Castruccio joined a vein of raillery and bitter irony, which, when he chose to exert it, seemed to enter into and wither the soul of its object. His scoffs and mockery of the Faggiuola family were repeated through Lucca; and the person against whom they were particularly directed, the governor whom Uguccione had appointed, was a man formed to feel in every nerve the agony of derision.

Francesco having been killed at the battle of Monte Catini, Uguccione had set his son Ranieri over the Lucchese. Ranieri was only two-and-twenty years of age; but his straight black hair fell over a forehead prematurely wrinkled; without the courage of his father, he possessed all his cunning and ambition, as much cruelty, and even more deceit. He had long been a pretender to the hand of the countess of , — with no hope except that with which his own vanity inspired him: yet, when he perceived that Castruccio was his favoured rival, he felt as if he had been robbed of his inheritance; and the beauty, talents, and glory of his adversary made him taste to the dregs the cup of envy. The consciousness of power alone for a while restrained the manifestation of his feelings. He soothed himself with the idea that Castruccio’s life was in his hands; yet a lurking doubt prevented him from putting forth his strength; he glared on his enemy, as a tiger who crouches within reach of his prey; but he dared not spring. He would gladly have got rid of his rival by private assassination; but Castruccio was too cautious, and ever went too well attended, to afford an opportunity for such a measure. Rivalry in love was however but a small part of the cause of the hate with which Ranieri was filled; for Castruccio no longer disguised his abhorrence of the cruelty of Uguccione, or his contempt for the cowardly and artful policy of his son; and a man far less cunning than Ranieri might easily perceive that he laboured day and night for the overthrow of the Faggiuola family.

An accidental scuffle brought these feelings into action; it were idle to attempt to discover the cause of a quarrel, at a period when civil broils were so common, not only among the Italians; but when the capitals of the French and English monarchs were often stained with blood on the most trivial occasions. This affray arose between the dependents of Ranieri and of count Fondi; Castruccio and his companions joined in it; and it ended in the rout and flight of Faggiuola's men, one of whom was killed. Ranieri seized this opportunity to send to his father with greater effect an account of the haughty conduct and machinations of Castruccio. The truth had been sufficient to awaken the suspicions of a man, whose rule it was never to permit an enemy to live; but the colouring that Ranieri gave to the affair, made it appear as if open war had been declared between the parties at Lucca. Uguccione had bathed his hands that very winter in the best blood of Pisa; and he considered one life more as a small sacrifice towards the completion of his security. His advice therefore was to act cautiously, but swiftly, and that the next messenger might bring intelligence of the death of his adversary.

This direction filled Ranieri with unwonted joy; it smoothed the wrinkles of his brow, and lighted up his eyes with ferocity: he would willingly have led forth his troops, and seized Castruccio in the midst of his partizans; but his deceitful disposition suggested to him a quieter, and as he imagined, a surer mode of proceeding. The enemies met at church; they disposed themselves on opposite sides of the aisle, — the followers of Castruccio viewed their opponents with a careless smile of contempt, which was returned by a sullen scowl; while Ranieri manifested an alternation of gaiety and uneasiness, which his art could not entirely conceal. High mass being over, Castruccio was about to retire, when Ranieri, quitting his attendants, walked across the aisle; seeing his movement, the followers of Antelminelli crowded about him; but he bade them fall back, and with a haughty step, and a smile of conscious superiority, he also advanced towards his enemy; they met midway, and the two parties, their hands on their swords, watched every motion of their respective chiefs during this unexpected parley. Had not Ranieri's character for artifice been impressed on every mind, his appearance might now have lulled suspicion; — he smiled, and spoke with a loud, careless voice; and what was hidden under this friendly outside seemed rather timidity, than enmity: Castruccio fixed his eagle-eye upon him; but fear appeared to be the only feeling which lurked behind the frankness that Ranieri wished to assume: nor did he shrink from the examination; he spoke:

"Messer Castruccio, methinks you are much a stranger to my councils and board. Do you suppose that my father forgets your services in his cause, or that he does not pray for an opportunity of shewing his gratitude? Evil reports, I own, have gone abroad to your disadvantage, and your absence from my palace might give some colour to these; but I am not a suspicious man, and trust the actions of my friends which speak in their favour, more readily than the hearsay which traduces them. If any ill blood exists between us, and I am the cause of it, I freely ask your pardon for any offence I may have given you, and request, as the seal of our reconciliation, that you would honour with your presence a poor banquet I am to give to — night to the nobility of Lucca."

Castruccio was somewhat astounded by this speech, which was concluded by the offer of his hand from the speaker. Castruccio drew back, and replied; "My poor services, my lord, were offered to my country; from her I hope for gratitude, from your father I neither deserve nor expect this meed. It were as well perhaps not to attempt to mix jarring elements; but, since you offer hospitality, I will freely accept it; for, whatever cause of alienation may exist between us, you are a knight and a soldier, and I do not fear deceit."

Castruccio withdrew; and the certainty of revenge alone could have quelled the deadly anger of Ranieri at the haughty and supercilious treatment that he had received.

Before the hour for the banquet had arrived, Castruccio rode to the castle of , and related the occurrence to Euthanasia. She listened attentively, and then said: "There is some deep plot in this; I know Neri della Faggiuola; he is at once cowardly, artful, and cruel. Be on your guard; I would intreat you not to go to this feast, but that, going with your followers, I do not see what danger you can incur; but doubt not, that this, or any other friendly overture that may follow, is only a snare in which it is expected that you will entangle yourself."

“Fear not, dear girl; I am open-hearted with my friends; — but I have been a soldier of fortune; and at such a school I may well have learned to detect wiles more deep, and politicians more cunning than Ranieri. Let him beware; this moon which has just bent her bow among the clouds of sunset, will not be two weeks old, when you may see this deep schemer take his solitary way to Pisa, glad to escape from the vengeance that he so well merits.”

Castruccio attended the feast of Ranieri, accompanied by count Fondi and Arrigo Guinigi. He had expected to find the rest of his friends and partizans assembled there, since they had all received invitations: but Ranieri had acted with the utmost caution; and, a very short time before the hour fixed for the banquet, he had sent messages to the friends of Castruccio, and under various pretexts, had, unknown one to the other, employed them on different affairs which he pretended to be of the greatest urgency. When therefore Castruccio entered the banqueting hall, he found only the officers of the German troop attached to the Faggiuola faction, some old men who had retired from public affairs, and a few Guelph families who Ranieri supposed would remain neuter on the present occasion. Castruccio observed this, and felt that all was not right; yet not for a moment did the expression of his physiognomy change, or his frank demeanour betray any sign of suspicion. It was not then the custom, as in the more barbarous society of France and England, to attend peaceful meetings as if armed for mortal combat; and Castruccio was unarmed, except with a small dagger, which as a matter of caution he concealed about his person.

The repast was sumptuous; course succeeded course; and the most delicate sweetmeats and richest wines invited the guests to a prolongation of their pleasures. Castruccio was both from habit and principle abstemious, and the quiet of the banquet was first interrupted by a sarcasm of Ranieri, as he pointed to the quantity of water which his guest mingled with his wine. The latter replied; and his irony was the more keen from the reputation of cowardice and luxury which his enemy bore. Ranieri grew pale; and, filling his own cup with pure wine, he presented it to Castruccio, saying; “Nay, Messere, before you depart, dishonour not my pledge, but drink this cup of generous Cyprus, to the overthrow of the enemies of Faggiuola.”

These words were the signal agreed upon with his soldiers; they suddenly entered, surrounded the other guests, and throwing themselves upon Castruccio, endeavoured to secure him. Twice he threw them off: and once he had nearly drawn his stiletto from his bosom; but he was overpowered and manacled with heavy chains — yet, standing thus impotent, his eagle-glance seemed to wither the soul of Ranieri, who, unable to give voice to the irony with which he had intended to load his victim, gave orders that he should be carried to prison.

Ranieri then addressed his guests, telling them, that the riotous behaviour of Castruccio the preceding week, and the murder of one of his servants, were the just causes of his imprisonment. He bade them not fear any danger to their own persons, unless they should rashly attempt to disturb the due course of justice. Arrigo, with all the warmth of youth, would have replied with bitter reproaches; but count Fondi, making him a signal of silence, and deigning only to cast on Ranieri a smile of contempt, retreated with the youth from the violated board. Ranieri invited his guests to continue their festivity, but in vain: they were silent and confounded; one by one the Italians withdrew, and Ranieri was left only with his officers who were chiefly Germans, and the remainder of the evening was spent in that intemperate enjoyment of the bottle, which the Italians held in wonder and contempt. Ranieri did not wish to drown the voice of his conscience, for that was his servant, and not his monitor; but his coward spirit failed, when he reflected on his critical situation, and the number and resoluteness of Castruccio’s friends: wine inspired him with boldness; and a riotous night succeeded and crowned a misspent day.

No feelings could be in more perfect contrast one to the other, than those with which the gaoler and his prisoner hailed the morning of the ensuing day. Castruccio had slept soundly on the pavement of his dungeon; and, though his limbs were weighted down by chains, his spirit was light and tranquil; he trusted to his friends, and he trusted to the intimate persuasion he felt, that his star was not to stoop before that of the cowardly and treacherous Ranieri. Looking at the clouds as they passed swiftly across the sun borne along by an irresistible wind, he chaunted a troubadour song of victory.

Ranieri awoke with those feelings of listless depression that succeed to drunkenness; the idea that Castruccio was his prisoner struck him with affright; and now, repenting that he had taken so decided a measure, he sent for his favourite attendant, and bade him go and reconnoitre the town, and endeavour to discover the opinions and temper of the citizens. During the absence of this man he was several times on the point of sending an order for the instantaneous death of his prisoner; but his heart failed him: he felt that he might be disobeyed, and that the mandate of death might be the signal for the deliverance of Castruccio. Thus he waited, irresolutely, but impatiently, till circumstances should decide the course he was to pursue.

The report of his messenger was ill calculated to allay his apprehensions. Knots of citizens stood in the streets and market-place, who, with serious mien and angry fervour, talked over the occurrence of the preceding evening. Some friend of Castruccio was at the head of each of these, who incited the people to action, and, ridiculing the cowardice, and reprobating the treachery and cruelty of Ranieri, awakened in every heart love and reverence for Castruccio, by the well deserved praises that he bestowed upon him. The word Liberty seemed to be creeping among them and warming every soul, while it struck a blight upon the sensations of Ranieri: he dared not act, but sent a messenger to his father at Pisa, recounting what he had done, and desiring his assistance in the accomplishment of his revenge.

A few weeks before, Uguccione had caused Bonconti and his son, two Pisan nobles, much loved and esteemed in that town, to be put to death: he had before committed flagrant injustices and legal murders in that city, and to these the people had submitted: but Bonconti was a man of understanding and courage; the Pisans had looked up to him as the instrument of their deliverance from the tyrant; by his death this task seemed to devolve into their own hands, and their sullen looks and whispered discontents shewed plainly that they were about to right themselves. Uguccione sat unsteadily on his seat of power; and his uneasiness, as is often the case in minds untamed by humanity, begot in him a hasty courage, and fierce rashness, that resolved not to yield to any obstacle; he was a stag at bay, and the Pisans stood about him watching some weak side on which they might commence their attack.

At this moment the messenger of Ranieri arrived, relating the seizure of Castruccio, and the fears of the governor. “Fool!” cried Uguccione, “does he not know that the members walk not without the head?”

So, without giving one moment to reflection, he hastily called his faithful troop together, consisting of about four hundred men, and, leaving Pisa, hastened at full gallop towards Lucca. The Pisans dared not trust their good fortune, when they saw their enemy and his adherents voluntarily desert their post, and deliver a bloodless victory into their hands; before Uguccione had reached the summit of Monte San Giuliano, which is, as Dante says, the Perchè i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno, the cry of liberty, and death to the tyrant, arose in the town; the multitude assailed the house of Uguccione; some of his household fell; the rest fled; and the crowd, now somewhat appeased, assembled to constitute as their chief, a man of understanding and valour, who might bring under discipline the furious passions of the injured Pisans.

Uguccione found Lucca in open revolt: he entered the town, and at the head of his troop endeavoured to charge the mutinous multitude. It was vain; firm barriers thrown across the streets impeded the horses, and the tyrant was obliged to parley with the heads of the revolters. They demanded Castruccio; and he was brought forth chained, and delivered to them; his fetters were knocked off, and, mounting a charger brought by one of his friends, his manacles carried as a trophy before him, he was led in triumph to his palace. The people almost worshipped him as he passed, and the air rang with acclamations in his favour; a crowd of his adherents, well armed, clustered about him, proud of their victory, and proud of the chief whom they had delivered. His chains were affixed to the tower of his palace, in commemoration of this sudden change of fortune. Uguccione fled: — he did not wait to be expelled by the furious populace; the news reached him of the revolt of Pisa, and it struck him with a panic; he was accompanied by Ranieri; and, quitting Lucca by the northern gate, they hastened across the mountains to Lombardy, and in one day fell from the rank of powerful chieftains, to be soldiers of fortune at the hire of the first prince who might require their services.

Castruccio and his adherents assembled in his palace to deliberate on the government they should choose; the multitude assembled round, and demanded to behold their beloved chief. — Castruccio shewed himself at the balcony, and was saluted with one cry, as Lord of Lucca, and captain of the war against the Florentines: his friends joined in the acclamation; but Castruccio, who never allowed a momentary enthusiasm to obliterate the plan of conduct that he had marked out for himself, made a sign for silence, which was obeyed. He then addressed the people, and, thanking them for their love and services, declared that he could not alone support the government of his town, and, after many modest observations, requested a companion in the weighty task. The people acceded to his wishes, and the Cavaliere Pagano Quartezzano was named as the sharer of his dignities and power under the appellation of consul.

CHAPTER XII

THE ill news had travelled fast; and Euthanasia knew of the imprisonment of Castruccio the same evening that it had taken place. Well acquainted with the cruel policy of the Faggiuola family and in particular with the dastard ferocity of Ranieri, her fears were wound up to an agonizing height: more unhappy than the prisoner himself, she slept not, nor did she seek sleep; but her thoughts were bent on the consideration of whether she were able in any manner to assist her friend. She resolved at least to employ all the influence her possessions and connections gave her, to arrest the hand of the murderer.

Early in the morning young Guinigi arrived at the castle. If Arrigo admired Castruccio, he adored Euthanasia; her sex and beauty might well have a powerful effect on his youthful heart, and her simplicity and purity were more calculated to influence his inexperienced but active understanding, than the more studied courtesies of Castruccio. Her pale cheek and heavy eyes indicated the anxious thoughts that beset her; and Arrigo hastened to tranquillize them. “Fear not,” he said, “he shall not, he cannot die. His friends watch over him; and Ranieri has by this time learned, that he is more a prisoner among the guards in his palace, than Castruccio chained in his dungeon.”

He then detailed the plans of the Ghibeline party for the deliverance of their chief; and, having somewhat calmed the uneasiness of the countess, he returned with haste to his post at Lucca.

Euthanasia passed an anxious day. She was alone; if one may be called alone, whose thoughts descended not to the calm of solitary meditation, but were actively engaged in the imagination of events passing but a few miles distant. It was a warm April day, but sunless: for the Libeccio had veiled the blue heavens with clouds which seemed to press down the atmosphere, that unmoved by any breeze appeared even by its weight to encumber the flowers, and to destroy all elasticity either in vegetable or animal life. Poor Euthanasia walked restlessly on the plot of ground before the gate of her castle; and her languid eyes, bent towards Lucca, were able to discern objects afar off, sharpened as their sight was by love and fear. In the afternoon she saw a band of soldiers ride along the road beneath the rock on which her castle was built, directing their course towards the northern mountains. She thought that she could distinguish the uncouth figure of Uguccione in the tallest among the horsemen who led the troop; while in the rear she felt sure that she beheld the form of Ranieri.

Her heart was now relieved from many of its fears; and she watched with greater calmness the fading hues of sunset, and the moon, now but a day older than when Castruccio had foretold the overthrow of the tyrant. She had a favourite retreat near a spring that issued from the rock behind her castle. The mountain was almost perpendicular from which it gushed; but a rude flight of steps had been cut, by which she ascended to it through a postern. The spring rose from a rift above, and fell first on a narrow rocky platform about seventy steps above the castle. Euthanasia had caused a basin to be scooped here for the reception of the water, and had covered it with a light portico, supported by fluted columns of the Etruscan order made of the finest marble; a few mossy seats surrounded the fountain. The rock shaded her as she sat, on whose stony face grew nothing but heath, and such shrubs as seem to find nutriment and growth in stone itself; but the top was crowned by ilex trees and stunted myrtle underwood. Thither she now retired, and watched the coming night; when suddenly she thought she heard a rustling above her, and a small bunch of myrtle fell on her lap; she looked up; and, gazing earnestly, perceived Castruccio, with one hand grasping a myrtle shrub, leaning from the summit of the precipice.

“Euthanasia! — Victory!” he cried.

“Victory and security!” she repeated with a deep sigh of joy.

“And glory, and all the blessings of Heaven!” he replied. She answered, but he was far above, and could scarcely hear the words she spoke; he threw another sprig of myrtle, and said, “To-morrow!” and retreated. She continued to look upwards to the spot where he had leaned; the rustling of the leaves was still — the myrtles that had bent as he leaned upon them, slowly upraised themselves — yet still she thought that she heard his voice, until the murmuring of the near stream recalled her to herself, and told her how moveless every thing else was.

And now Euthanasia was happy — too happy; and fast-falling and many tears alone relieved her full heart. She was happy in the assurance of the safety and triumph of her friend; but it was his love that touched her heart, and made her thrill with delight. What sweeter meed is there in life, than the approbation and sincere friendship of those whom we approve and admire? But to be loved by such a one; to feel the deep sympathy of united affections, the delicious consciousness of being loved by one whom all the world approves, by one who fully justifies his claim to the world's esteem by an oblivion of self, and heroic sacrifice of personal felicity for the public cause, touches a chord — opens a spring of feeling which those have never known, whose hearts have not been warmed by public feeling, or who have not entered with interest into the hopes and fears of a band struggling for liberty. The human soul disdains all restraint, and ever seeks to mingle with nature itself, or with kindred minds; to hope and fear for oneself alone often narrows the heart and understanding; but if we are animated by these feelings in unison with a multitude, bound by the same desires and the same perils, such participation of triumph or sorrow exalts and beautifies every emotion.

Yet triumph is a feeling which oppresses the human heart; and that strangely fashioned instrument seems more adapted for suffering than enjoyment; it is rather a passive, than an active principle; abundant joy fills it with melancholy, but it can extract pleasure from the depths of despair. Euthanasia was overpowered; and she felt, in that moment of satisfaction to her hopes, an agitation and unquiet repining, which, though it were indeed only the rebellion of the heart against peace, seemed to her in after times as the foreboding of the unlooked for catastrophe to so much happiness.

The following evening Castruccio again visited her, and restored her to calm. He sat at her feet, and fixing on her his dark eyes, related the circumstances of his imprisonment and liberation. "Did you not wonder," said he, "at your eagle's visit yesternight? I would indeed that I had been one, so that I could have cast myself at your feet, instead of the silly myrtle that I threw! Yester evening, after the business of the day, I went to the castle of Mordecastelli, which is on this same mountain, not far from the Fairy's Fountain and the cypress, under which as children we often sat — which we visited a few weeks ago, clambering to it from the valley. When I left his castle, I passed by that spot; and, pausing there, I thought that perhaps I could not only attain the summit of the rock that overlooks your fountain, but in some way get down to the alcove itself, and thus surprise your retreat. I was disappointed; the precipice is too high above; — but as I looked down, I caught a glance of your robe, and was repaid for my toil, in being able to communicate to you the news of my success. And now, dearest girl, be happy, and smile contentedly on me; for now that I have overcome my domestic enemies, and have supreme power in this hive of ours, you shall direct me, and there shall be the peace that you love, and the concord you so much desire between us and the proud republicans, your friends.”

Euthanasia smiled, and said, “Well may it please one so nearly useless as I am, that I can save the lives of some of my fellow-citizens. Do you not know, dearest Castruccio, that when you draw your sword against the Florentines, it is always wetted with the blood of my best friends? Love you indeed I always must; but I know, for I have studied my own heart, that it would not unite itself to yours, if, instead of these thoughts of peace and concord, you were to scheme war and conquest.”

“You measure your love in nice scales,” replied Castruccio, reproachfully; “surely, if it were as deep as mine, it would be ruled alone by its own laws, and not by outward circumstances.”

Euthanasia answered earnestly, “So can it not be with me; I have been bred in a city distracted by domestic faction, and which, when it obtains a moment of peace in its own bosom, loses the flower of its children in petty wars. A hatred and fear of war is therefore a strong and ruling passion in my heart; but other feelings mingle with these in my zeal for your concord with my fellow-townsmen. Florence is my native city; its citizens are bound to me by the ties of consanguinity and friendship: the families of the Pazzi, the Donati, the Spini, and other noble or plebeian Florentines, against whom you fight when you war with them, each contains individuals whom I love and honour. I should be a traitor to the best feelings of human nature, and a rebel to my country, if I allied myself to its enemy: think you that I who have joined in the social meetings of the Florentines, who as a child was caressed by them, and as a woman loved, who have been present at their marriages, and have mourned among them at their funerals, — when my own beloved father was attended to his grave by these men whom you call your enemies, and my own bitter sorrows assuaged by the sympathy of their daughters, — think you, that thus linked by every social tie, having prayed, and rejoiced, and wept with them, that I could say to you, ‘Go, prosper!’ when you should go to destroy them? Dearest Castruccio, if, united to you, such an event were to ensue, in that moment I must die, or live a death in life."

Castruccio replied only by fresh assurances of his earnest desire for peace, and kissed from the brow of Euthanasia the cloud that for a moment had gathered there.

It had been a strange task to unveil the heart of Antelminelli, and to disentangle the contradictory feelings that influenced him at the moment. There can be no doubt that he never forgot his designs for the aggrandizement of his native city; and he had seen too much of courts, and felt too strongly his own superiority to the men about him, to allow us to suppose that he entertained the idea of establishing a free republic there, and submitting his actions and intentions to be controlled by the people. It had long been his earnest desire to raise and reinstate the fallen Ghibeline party in Tuscany; and this was not to be accomplished except by the humiliation of the Florentines: yet at this time his whole policy was employed in concluding a peace with them, — a peace, which was ratified the following April, and preserved for three years. These three years it is true were not spent in inactivity, but in the reduction of the surrounding country, and, latterly, in preparation for the successful war he afterwards carried on against Florence. Are therefore his protestations to Euthanasia to be considered as wholly deceitful? His frank countenance and unembarrassed voice forbade that idea for a moment to cross her imagination: we may perhaps form this conclusion; — that he now found it for his interest to conclude a peace with Florence; and he made the sincerity of his present purpose lend its colour to his assurances for the future.

A whole year was spent in the arrangement of the treaty. Euthanasia passed all that time at her castle; and her content was again disturbed by the successes of Castruccio; who in treating for peace did not fail to make it more desirable to his enemies, by seizing every opportunity to defeat their forces, and lay waste their country; nor did the knowledge of the pain which these operations caused his friend, in any degree check his activity. Euthanasia loved Castruccio; but her judgement was penetrating, and she was so accustomed to meditate on the events and feelings of each day, that during this time, she in part penetrated the character of her lover. He was formed for victory and daring, rather than for magnanimity: he was swift of design and steady in execution; bold, valiant, yet gentle of manner; his wit was keen; his penetration into the dispositions of men instantaneous; and he possessed also, as by instinct, the faculty of adapting himself to every character, and of acquiring the love of all around him: men always love those who lead them successfully through danger. He was temperate in his habits; and in his mien, though the exterior were ardent and even rash, there might be perceived underneath a reserve of caution, a presence of mind, which never permitted him to be carried beyond the dictates of prudence, and an eagle-eye which caused him swiftly to distinguish danger from impracticability. He trod the most perilous acclivities, but his foot was sure like that of the chamois; and he could discern from afar where the path was broken, and would check himself in the most headlong course. All this was well; but, underneath a frankness of behaviour, and an apparent nobleness of nature, there was the craft of a grey — haired courtier, and even at times the cruelty of a falling tyrant. Euthanasia saw not all this; but a times a glance, a tone seemed to open a mine of undiscovered evil in his character, that made her shudder in the very depths of her nature: yet this sensation would pass away, and she, prompt to forget evil in others, thought no more of it.

This year might be called the happiest of her life; yet it was that which first schooled her to the pain and anguish which were afterwards her portion. The flower of love can never exist without its thorns. She loved, and was beloved: — her eyes beamed with a quicker fire; and her whole soul, perfectly alive, seemed to feel with a vividness and truth she had never before experienced. Nature was invested for her with new appearances; and there was a beauty, a soul, in the breeze of evening, the starry sky, and uprising sun, which filled her with emotions she had never before so vividly felt. Love seemed to have made her heart its chosen temple; and he linked all its beatings to that universal beauty which is his mother and his nurse.

There are feelings, which overpower the human soul, and often render it morbid and weak, if virtuous action does not give dignity to reverie. Euthanasia had many occupations, and among them the glorious and delightful one of rendering her numerous dependents happy. The cottages and villages over which she presided, were filled by a contented peasantry, who adored their countess, and knew her power only by the benefits she conferred on them. Castruccio often accompanied her in her visits to these; and he, accustomed as he was to count men as the numerals of a military arithmetic, even he was touched by her care for the sick, her many ways of displaying her judgement and abounding benevolence towards her people. Yet sometimes he laughed at the difference between her practice and her theory, and asked the youthful sovereign, why she did not erect her states into a republic?

She smiled; but then, collecting herself, answered seriously; “When I first inherited my mother’s power, I gave much consideration to this very question; not of forming a separate republic of my poor villages, but of incorporating them, as many nobles have done, and as doubtless the lords of will one day be obliged to do, with some neighbouring and more powerful republic. My inclinations led me to join myself to Florence; but the distance of that city, and the immediate vicinity of Lucca, shewed me the impracticability of that project. Valperga must one day fall into the hands of the Lucchese; but, if I had at any time made an alliance with them, I should have destroyed the present happiness of my people; there would have been war instead of peace, instead of concord and plenty, party agitations and heavy taxes. This, my friend, must be my excuse for my tyranny; but, when the alliance between you and the Florentines can be sure, when Lucca is as peaceful and happy as Valperga, believe me, I will no longer arrogate a power to which I ought not to have a pretension.”

Castruccio smiled; he hardly believed the simple sincerity of Euthanasia; he understood well and judged with sagacity the balancing objections in a question of interest; but the principle of decision was always with him, that which would most conduce to the fulfilment of his projects, seldom that of the good or evil which affected others. Yet this was veiled even to his own mind, by a habit of gentleness and forbearance, which even in this age of the world, often fills the place, and assumes the form of virtue.

And now Euthanasia was busy in preparing for a court, which she had determined to hold, when peace should be ratified between the contending powers of Tuscany; and Castruccio found her employed in thefor her, unwonted toils, of the arrangement of silks, jewels, and tapestry. She said: “You know that the dependents of are lightly taxed; and the little money that enters my coffers is chiefly expended in the succour of their own necessities: yet of that little I have reserved a sum for periods of sickness, scarcity, or any more agreeable occasion that may call for it. A part of this will be expended on the present solemnity. Nor do I think that I hurt my good people by such an extravagance: their joy on this occasion will be far greater than mine; their pride and love of pleasure will be gratified; for in arranging the amusements of my court the country people will have a full share; and, if we engage the attention of Borsiere, Guarino and other distinguished Uomini di Corte, the buffoons, jugglers, and dancers, will spread glee among the villagers."

The castle was fuller than usual of dependents and workmen, and its cloister-like silence was exchanged for the noise of the hammer, and the voices of Italians, ever louder than need is. Euthanasia witnessed their eagerness with pleasure; and her undisguised sympathy in their feelings made her adored by her servants and dependents. She had now about her several of the daughters of her richer subjects, who assisted in the arrangement of her castle: and there were gathered in the hall men who had grown grey on her estate, who remembered the dreadful battle of Monte Aperto, the fall of Manfred, and the death of the last unfortunate descendant of Frederic Barbarossa. These recounted the feats and dangers of their youth to their descendants, until, so strange are the feelings of our nature, war, peril and ruin seemed joys to be coveted, not perils to be eschewed.

Among the attendants who most constantly waited on her person, was a man who, from his diminutive stature, and strange dress, might have been taken for the buffoon or dwarf so common at the courts of princes in those days, had not the melancholy of his looks forbidden that supposition. Yet he had some of the privileges of the licensed fool; for he mingled in the conversation of his superiors, and his remarks, generally pithy, were sometimes bitter and satirical: yet indeed they were more commonly characterized by a wild and imaginative originality, than by wit; and, if they sometimes made others laugh, he never smiled. The playful and witty disposition of Castruccio would often make him enter into conversation with, and reply to, and try to draw out this strange being, who was no less uncommon in his person than in his mind. He was of that race of which there are a few native specimens in Italy, generally called Albinois; his complexion was of a milky fairness, his hair white, and his long white eyelashes hardly shaded his light red eyes: he was brief of stature, and as slender as he was short; the softness of his features, and the roundness and flexibility of his limbs, manifested his want of strength; his mild, but almost meaningless physiognomy betrayed the want of judgement, courage, and all the more manly virtues. His mind seemed to approach the feebler spark of animal life, had it not been redeemed by an imagination of which he hardly appeared conscious himself, but which raised him above many of the brutal and rough peasants who despised him. Sometimes Castruccio laughed at Euthanasia for keeping this strange creature about her, but she defended herself, saying:

"Indeed, my lord, you must shew no disrespect towards this servant of mine, and truly you will be little inclined to do so, when I have summed up all his good qualities. First, he has by heart, ready to quote on any suitable occasion, every prophecy that has been made since the time of Adam, and knows all the vulgar expositions of the sacred texts. Then he is an adept in the knowledge of sacred trees, fountains, and stones, the flight of birds, lucky and unlucky days; he has an extensive acquaintance with witches, astrologers, sorcerers, and tempestarii; he knows every peculiar ceremony for remarkable days, how to celebrate the calends of January, those of August, and the Vindemie Nolane; none of our cattle are blessed by St. Anthony until he has bound on their crowns; the ceremonies attendant on the Nativity, Easter, and other feasts, are all conducted under his guidance. He interprets all the dreams of the castle, and foretells the point of time when to begin any enterprize: he has a wonderful assortment of holy legends and strange relics; such as a lock of Adam's hair, a little of the sawdust from Noah's sawpit when he clove the planks for the ark, a brick of the tower of Babel, and a tooth of St. Theresa; he has presented many of these to the priest of San Martino, and the people go and adore these shreds and patches of religion with the veneration that its divine morality alone demands. Although of a feminine and un — muscular form, he is healthy; he is silent to a miracle; and among my noisy household he alone flits about unheard, so much so that I have been assured that grass yields not beneath his feet, and that he has no shadow; but you can yourself ascertain that fact. I believe him to be faithful, yet I think him to be attached to none, except the wild beings whom his imagination invests with supernatural powers. But he is an excellent guide for me in my various wanderings, since, as if he had a clue of thread, he can find his unerring way amid the most pathless deserts and forests. With all these wonderful acquirements he is generally disliked; he is said to be the son of a witch, and to have a natural propensity to evil; yet I have never heard of any ill act of his doing; although in truth some strange events have taken place with regard to him, that look as if he had communion with the spirits of air.

"I have said that he is attached to no one among us, yet I may be wrong. If he is always near my person, it is because he seizes every moment, when he is permitted to enter, to creep near me. Once, when I left him here during a visit to Florence, he pined for some time, till every one believed that he was about to die; and then taking a sudden resolution, like a dog following the scent of his master, he departed on foot, and in less than twenty-four hours, arrived half dead with fatigue at my palace at Florence.

"I have another motive for being attached to him: he was a favourite of my father. He found him when a child, in a village not far from Florence, half starved, and ill treated by the country people; for he could not work, and, being an orphan, was destitute of every resource; the idea of his unholy parentage and his strange appearance, rendering the country-people even malignantly inclined towards him. He loved my father, and almost sunk to the grave with sorrow when he died; nor at that time would he leave the room where I was, or if obliged to go, he crept near the door crouching like a dog for the moment of admittance."

This being was now very busy amidst the preparations for the court; preparations which engaged all the hands and all the heads of . While the countess made provision for the entertainment of her guests, her dependents practised the games and exercises with which they should amuse the nobles: all was bustle and animation, but all was joy and good humour. Castruccio and Euthanasia became dearer to each other, as he perceived the pleasure he was able to bestow upon her by a compliance with her wishes; and she felt gratitude for the delight she enjoyed, towards him whom she fondly looked upon as its cause.

CHAPTER XIII

AS the day approached on which Euthanasia was to hold her court, her castle became thronged with the nobility, wealth, and beauty of Tuscany and Lombardy. She had wished indeed to make this a public union of the two parties which distracted Italy; but she was so noted a Guelph that few Ghibelines appeared, although some were attracted by the name of Castruccio, to come under his escort, and in his company. First arrived her uncle, the lord Radolfo di Casaregi; he was an old man, but he loved to encircle his bare temples with an iron helmet, and to try his well used sword against the unfleshed blades of the sons of his companions in arms in days gone by. Then came the marquess Marcello Malespino of Valdimagra, his wife, and three lovely daughters; they were accompanied by three brothers of the Bondelmonti family of Florence: these claimed affinity to the house of Adimari, and when by the laws of her country Euthanasia was obliged to choose a guardian for her maiden state, she had selected the eldest, count Bondelmonte de' Bondelmonti to be her Mondualdo; this relationship had given rise to a sincere friendship, which, although the difference of age was inconsiderable, and the same reverence and obedience could never be felt or exercised, yet in some sort was to Euthanasia in the stead of her dead parents. There arrived soon after the chief members of the Pazzi, Donati, Visdomini, Gianfigliazi, and other Guelph families of Florence; there was Alberti count of Capraia, and all the numerous troop that claimed relationship to him; and many others, both Bianchi and Neri, both Guelph and Ghibeline, whose names it would be needless to detail.

Then arrived a multitude of Uomini di Corte; story-tellers, improvisatori, musicians, singers, actors, rope-dancers, jugglers and buffoons. The most distinguished among the first class was William Borsiere; a man of courteous yet frank manners, nice wit and keen penetration: he was about forty years of age; but he had lost none of the jovial temper of youth, and his generous and even noble disposition made him more respected than men of his class usually were. There was Bergamino, a man more caustic than Borsiere, but whose insinuating address obtained pardon for his biting words; no one knew better than Bergamino how to cure the wounds his tongue had made. There was Andreuccio, whose satirical mood and rough manners frequently drew upon him the anger of the nobles on whose favour he depended; and he was so often dismissed, disgraced and unrewarded, from the courts, where his companions were loaded with presents, that, from his mean and sometimes ragged appearance, and his snarling habits, he went by the name of the Cane Mendicante. He wished to rival Borsiere and Bergamino who were staunch friends, and endeavoured to make up for his lack of the more delicate kind of wit by caustic sayings and contemptuous remarks. There was Ildone, a foolish, smiling fellow, but who sang sorrowful airs with so sweet and touching a voice, that, if you shut your eyes, you might have imagined that St. Cecilia herself had descended to entrance the world with heavenly melody.

Guarino, the Improvisatore, closed the list of the distinguished Uomini di Corte. He was sought in every court in Lombardy for his entertaining qualities: his tales displayed the fire of genius, and the delicate observations of a lover of nature. But he was eaten up by vanity and envy; he hated all those who were admired, from the princely beauty who attracted all regards, down to the lowest buffoon at court. If he were sought by the great, so much the more was he avoided by his equals and inferiors; to the first he tricked himself out with a flattering tongue, a mean and servile address, and gross adulation; for the second he expressed hatred and contempt; and he tyrannized over the last with a hand of iron. But all three classes might equally dread his malignant calumnies, and hatred of all that was good. He spared no art, no wit, no falsehood, to detract from merit, however exalted or lowly; and so full was he of wiles, that he was seldom detected in his serpent craft. He had been a Ghibeline, and at one time was imprisoned by the Dominican inquisitors as a heretic; but now he surpassed all the Italians in superstition and credulity; his friends said that he was truly pious, his enemies that he was the most deceitful of hypocrites: but the trait that sealed his character, was his intolerance and violent persecution of his former heretical associates. Those who were most indulgent said, that he had been first actuated by fear, and was now a sincere convert; he himself pretended to attribute his conversion to a miracle, and of such consequence was he in his own eyes, that he almost affirmed that a saint from heaven had informed him, that the redemption of mankind had been undertaken by the Almighty Saviour for his benefit alone.

Many others followed and joined these; but they were a nameless multitude, distinguished only for vulgar talents; some trying to raise a laugh by folly, others by pert wit; many by manual jests upon each other, in which innumerable were the blows given and received: they were a strange set, and whether they were handsome or ugly, old or young, agile or slow, expert or awkward, they turned even their defects to account, and with a never-ceasing grin, thronged around the nobles, forming a contrast to the dignified deportment and rich dresses of the latter, by their supple and serpentine motions, strange gait, and motley habiliments; some being ragged from lack of wit, others from detected roguery, all regarding with the eagerness of starved curs the riches of the castle, and the generosity of its mistress.

The court opened on the first of May; it was to last four days; and, on the evening before, surrounded by her guests, Euthanasia issued forth the laws for their amusements on the occasion: “The first day,” said she, “we will give to hunting and hawking; the country is well stocked with game, and each guest has surely his falcon on his fist. I will install Antelminelli, the liberatore of Lucca, king for that day; for he has been in foreign countries, and has studied these amusements under the best masters of the age; and I doubt not is well able to direct our exertions, and secure us plentiful sport.

“The second day we will give up to our friends, the Uomini di Corte: they shall do their best to please us, and to deserve the rewards in store for them; certainly none will censure my choice, when I name William Borsiere king of that day. Let him direct the exertions of the rest, so that their tales, their songs, and their feats may succeed one another in agreeable variety.

“On the third day the lists shall be set, and the knights will tilt for the honour of their ladies’ beauty; the conqueror shall receive as the reward of his prowess the liberty of choosing the queen for the following day, who will direct the sports of the ladies, and close with their games the gaieties of my court.”

A shout of applause followed the enunciation of these laws; and it was declared by all, that no better could be devised for the promotion of amusement among their joyful assembly.

On the first of May the sun arose in cloudless splendour. The steeds richly caparisoned were led from the stable, the ladies were mounted on gentle palfreys, and were followed by the esquires, holding the hawks, or with the dogs in leash; others sounding the awakening horn, while the air resounded with voices which called the idlers from their rooms, and said that the hunter deserved no game, who was not with the first a-field to brush the morning dew from the grass. Euthanasia headed a chosen band supreme in beauty; her soft and enthusiastic eyes now sparkled with joy, which the fair expanse of her smooth brow shewed to be yet uninvaded by the fang of a bitter sorrow; a smile hovered on her beautiful lips, like Love playing among the leaves of a rose; her golden hair shone under the sunbeams, and clustered round her neck white as marble, and, like that enriched by many a wandering vein, eclipsing the jewels of her dress; her motions, free as the winds, and graceful as an antelope of the south, appeared more than human in their loveliness; and, when she awoke the air with her silver voice, silence seemed on the watch to drink in the sound.

And now away! — They rode down the steep on which the castle stood, to a chestnut wood, and thence along a plain covered with brushwood: all was alive and gay; the huntsmen called to their dogs; — the knights reined in their restless steeds; — and the ladies with animated gestures, laughing looks, and upturned eyes, watched the flight of their birds, and betted upon their speed.

When noon approached, they became heated and tired, and looked around for a shady spot where they might repose. Castruccio rode forward, and said:—”I should ill deserve the honour of being king of this day, if I suffered my fair subjects to wander as in a desert without refreshment or repose — follow me!”

They entered a chestnut wood; and, after riding about half a mile, they came to a small plot of ground, encircled by trees, and protected from the heat by canopies which were fastened to the boughs: a magnificent repast was prepared in this retreat; a profusion of wines glittered in glass vessels; the tables were piled with every delicate sweetmeat, as well as with the more substantial fare of flesh and fowl. The esquires having fastened their falcons to the branches of the trees, and covered their eyes with the hood, seized the large carving knives, and began their ministry; while the joyous band seated themselves on the cushions that had been provided for their accommodation.

After the repast was ended, they reposed under this delicious shade, watching the changeful shadows of the trees, and listening to the songs of the birds—”How delightful it would be,” cried Calista di Malespino, “if Ildone or Guarino were here, whose songs rival the sweetest birds!”

“To-morrow these men will display their talents,” said Castruccio; “to-day we must amuse ourselves.” Then clapping his hands, several servants brought forward musical instruments, such as were then in fashion, unlike in form those now used, but which in sound and construction might be compared to the lute, the harp, the guitar, and the flute. Many of the company had sweet voices; some who came from Genoa, sang the romances of the Provençal minstrels; the Florentines sang the canzones of Dante, or chosen passages from the Teroretto of his master, Ser Brunetto Latini, or indeed stanzas of their own composing, for the Florentines were an ingenious race, and few among the nobles had passed the boundary between youth and age, without having indited more than one sonnet to his mistress’s eyebrow: the inhabitants of each separate town had a favourite poet, whose verses they now rehearsed.

Thus the time passed, till the sun descended, and the lengthening shadows told them that the heat was gone, and the light of day well nigh spent; when they mounted their horses, and rode towards the castle along the skirts of the chestnut wood. The high Apennines were still white with snow; and, as evening came on, a refreshing breeze blew across the plain, and sang among the branches of the trees, — at a distance was heard the murmuring of the Serchio, as it travelled along in its unwearied course; the air was perfumed by a thousand scents, for the grass was mowing, and bathed the element in sweetness. From out one copse a nightingale poured forth its melodious notes, singing as it were to one lone star that peered through the glowing sunset; Arrigo taking his flute drew a responsive strain which the sweet bird strove to imitate, while the cavalcade passed silently along. Darkness closed around, and the first fire-flies of summer issued from their deep green bowers among the bushes, and darted forth their gentle, ineffectual flame, skimming over the fields, which, as a phosphoric sea, or as a green heaven of ever shifting planets, now was dark, and again thickly studded by these stars. The glow-worm on the ground slowly trailed his steady light; a few bats flew from the rocks; and the regular moan of the Agiolo wheeled about the trees, and spoke of fine days to come. As the home-ward hunters ascended the mountain, the breeze died away, and a breathless stillness pervaded the atmosphere; Euthanasia rode near

Castruccio; her sweet countenance bespoke a deeper joy than mere gaiety, and her wild eyes shone with her emotion. She had thrown her capuchin over her head; and her face, fair as the moon encircled by the night, shone from beneath the sable cowl, while her golden locks twined themselves round her neck: Castruccio gazed on her, and would have given worlds to have embraced her, and to print on her glowing cheek a kiss of love; he dared not, — but his heart swelled with joy, when she turned to him with an affectionate smile, and he whispered his heart—"She is mine."

The second day William Borsiere was prepared to amuse the guests by his own and his companions' talents. His task was more difficult to perform than that of Castruccio, for his materials were not so easy to be controlled as hawks and hounds. Guarino was mortally offended by the choice of Euthanasia with regard to the king of the day, and declared that he had a cold, and could not sing. Nothing but his intolerable vanity vanquished his sullenness; for, when he found that, upon his refusal, Borsiere passed him by, and that his ill humour would only punish himself by consigning him to obscurity, he consented to be numbered among the recruits of the day. Andreuccio was less tractable, for he was less vain; and it was sheer avarice that caused his anger, when he imagined that Borsiere would be the best paid of the company; he absolutely refused to perform his part in story-telling, but reserved his wit for endeavours to turn to ridicule the amusements and exertions of his favoured rival.

In the morning at break of day, each fair lady was awakened by a song, bidding her arise and eclipse the sun; and, as he awoke, and gave life to the flowers and fruits of the earth, so must she spread her benign influence over the hearts of men. The guests assembled in the hall of the castle, which was hung with festoons of evergreens and flowers; and, as they sat, an invisible concert was played, and, between the pauses of the music, a strain of rich melody broke upon the air, that by its unrivalled sweetness betrayed that the singer was Ildone, who, thus concealed, could wrap the soul in Elysium, while his presence must have destroyed the enchantment.

After the music, they were conducted to a small amphitheatre, constructed on the little green platform before the castle, where they were amused by the tricks of the jugglers, sleight of hand, fire-eating, rope-dancing, and every prank that has been known from the shores of the Ganges to those of the Thames, from the most distant periods, even down to our own times. After these had displayed their arts, a number of the peasantry of presented themselves to run at the ring. Three pieces of cloth, and two of silk, the prizes for the various games, streamed from the props that supported the amphitheatre. Two poles were erected, and string was attached to these, on which were strung three rings. A peasant on horseback, with his lance in rest, galloped past in a line parallel to the string, endeavouring to catch the three rings on the point of his lance; the first, second and third failed, — the fourth was more successful; he caught the three rings, and bore off the piece of scarlet-cloth as his prize. A wrestling match succeeded, a foot-race, and then a horse-race; the prizes were distributed by Borsiere; and then, it being noon, the company adjourned to their mid-day meal.

It were needless to enumerate the dainties that made their appearance; Borsiere resolved that the feast neither of the preceding, nor of the two following days, should exceed his; and, having been often regaled at the tables of the most luxurious princes of Europe, he now displayed the skill that he had there acquired, in the directions he gave to the ruder cooks of Euthanasia. When every one had satisfied his appetite, the conversation flagged, and the eyes of the ladies wandered round in search of new amusement. Borsiere appeared at the head of his party; Bergamino, Guarino, Ildone and a score others of less fame came forward; while Andreuccio edged in sideways, neither choosing to join, nor be left out of the company. Advancing in a courteous manner, Borsiere intreated the company to follow him: they all rose, each lady attended by her cavalier. Borsiere had been bred at courts, and knew how to marshal them with the science of a seneschal; as they quitted the hall, they, as by magic, fell each into his proper place, and every noble dame felt that neither could she have preceded the person before her, nor would she have gone behind the one who followed her. Thus, in courtly guise, they proceeded through several passages of the castle, till they quitted it by a small postern; the rocky face of the mountain rose, as I have already said, immediately behind the castle, and almost overhung the battlements; but this postern opened on the little winding staircase I have before mentioned, that, cut in the rock, enabled them to scale the precipice; they ascended therefore, and before they could feel fatigued, they came to a small platform of turf-covered rock, which Borsiere had prepared for their accommodation. The fountain, that gushed from a cleft, trickled down with a gentle murmur, and filled the basin prepared to receive it with its clear and sparkling liquid. This fountain had, like many other springs of those mountains, peculiar qualities: in summer it was icy cold, and in winter it became warmer and warmer as the temperature of the air decreased, until on the frosty mornings of December it smoked in its passage down the rock. To preserve the waters of this basin from the rains, Euthanasia had, as already mentioned, built an alcove over it, supported by small columns; this was a favourite retreat of our young mountain — nymph; and Borsiere had adorned it for the occasion with a master's hand. The boughs of the trees were bent down, and fastened to the rock, or to the roof of the alcove, and then, being interlaced with other boughs, formed a web on which he wove a sky of flowers, which shut out the sun's rays, and, agitated by the gentlest airs, cast forth the most delicate scents: the artificer of the bower had despoiled an hundred gardens to decorate only the floor of the platform, forming a thousand antic device with the petals of various flowers. Anemones, narcissi, daffodils, hyacinths, lilies of the valley, and the earliest roses, had all lent their hues, making a brief mosaic of these lovely and fragile materials; and the white columns of the alcove shone in the midst of this splendid shew in elegant simplicity. Seats were placed round in a semicircle for the company; from hence they could behold the whole country; the platform was so high, that it surmounted the battlements of the castle, and they viewed the entire plain of Lucca, its defiles and woody hills, and the clear Serchio that loitered on its way across it. An exclamation of delight burst from all lips, as they entered this flowery paradise, where every gay colour of nature was heaped about in rich and lovely profusion, while the deep green of the ilex trees, the soft and fan-like foliage of the acacia, mingled with the shining foliage of the laurel, bay and myrtle, relieved the eye from any glare of colours. The joyous company sat down; and Borsiere, coming forward, announced, that he and his companions were ready to present the assembly with their songs and tales; Euthanasia accepted the offer in the name of her guests; and Guarino first shewed himself: that he should be the first to attract the attention of the noble guests had been the bribe which won him to forget his hoarseness, and, having entered upon his task, there was no doubt that his vanity would induce him to exert his utmost powers to surpass his companions.

He sang extempore verses on the event of the late war with Florence, changing his notes, from the hurry of battle, to the wailing for the dead, and then to the song of triumph, whose thrilling melody transported the hearers with admiration. Then, leaving this high theme, he described himself as Dante descending to hell; but, as he had ventured thither without a guide, rude Charon had refused him a passage, and he only saw the wandering ghosts of those recently dead, and some few who bewailed their unburied bones, as they flitted about the dreary coast. Here he found Manfred, who, addressing him, told him that he was now paying, and hereafter would more painfully pay, the deadly penalty for his many crimes—"Well did they for me, and benignly," he cried, "who cast my bones from their unhallowed sepulchre; for now I wander here untormented; but, when the cycle of an hundred years is fulfilled, and I pass that dark river, fire and torture await me, dire punishment for my resistance to the Holy Father." And then continuing, he sent a message to his friends on earth, bidding them repent; and Guarino introduced into this the bitter gall of his sharp and cruel satire against his enemies. He ended; and small applause followed, for he had offended many who were present by his strictures, and few could sympathize in the deep malignity of his anathemas.

He was followed by the story-tellers, who repeated various anecdotes and tales which they had collected in their rambles; they seldom invented a new story; but an old one well told, or some real occurrence dressed up with romantic ornaments, formed the subjects of their narratives.

CHAPTER XIV

CASTRUCCIO had not joined the amusements of the day; for he had returned to Lucca, and assembled his council to deliberate on some knotty question in the Lucchese policy. Having dispatched this weighty affair, he mounted his horse, and turned his head the accustomed road to the castle of . As he quitted the gate of the town, he heard a voice behind calling him; and, reining in his horse, he saw approach at a tremendously high trot, Benedetto the Rich of Cremona. Although at some distance he instantly recognized his old fellow-traveller, by his uncouth dress which was still unchanged, his high shoulders, strait back and bent in knees. Pepi, approaching with a humble salutation, said that he had affairs of importance to communicate to the noble consul of Lucca, and intreated him to give him audience.

"Willingly," said Castruccio: "I am going to ride to yonder castle; do you accompany me; we will discourse on the way; and when there you will find hospitality as well as I."

"You must check your steed then," said Pepi, "for mine will hardly gallop after the hard day's journey he has had."

They rode on together, and Pepi seemed oppressed by a weighty secret, which he longed, yet did not know how, to disclose. He praised the fortifications of Lucca, the fertility of its plain, and its mountains, those inexpensive barriers against the incursions of enemies; and then he paused, — coughed, — scolded his horse, — and sunk into silence.

"And now," asked Castruccio, "what is this affair of importance concerning which you would speak to me?"

"Ah! Messer lo Console, it is a matter of such consequence that I hardly know how to disclose it; and methinks you are in too merry a mood to listen with requisite attention, so for the present I will waive the subject."

"As you please, but, when we arrive at yonder castle, we shall find little opportunity to talk of business; for amusement and gaiety are there the order of the day."

"Gaiety! — Well; it perhaps will do my heart good to see merry faces once again; I have seen few of them since you were on the donjon of my palace. Cremona has not yet recovered its cruel siege and storm; many of its palaces still lie in their ashes; and many good and fertile acres have been sold at a low rate, to trim the despoiled apartments in the guise they once were. Yet the Guelphs have again attained the upper hand there; my townsmen are proud and rebellious, and have not acquired through their misfortunes the humility of poverty, which sits better on a subject than the insolence of prosperity. Were I a prince, all my subjects should be poor; it makes them obedient towards their master, and daring towards their foes, on whose spoils they depend for riches. Yet, alas! so obstinate is man in his wickedness, that, as we see in Cremona, famine, fire and slaughter cannot tame their factious spirits."

"Ah! Messer Benedetto, you are ever the same; you have neither changed your dress nor opinions since I saw you last; ever immersed in politics."

"Indeed, my good lord, I am fuller of those than ever, and that of necessity; as, when you hear what I have to say, you will perceive. Ah! the Cremonese are still proud, though they ought to be humble; yet a small power might now easily overcome them, for they are thinking more how to replant their burnt vineyards, than to resist their lawful prince. Sovereigns make war in a strangely expensive way, when they collect armies and man fleets against a country: a dozen bold fellows with firebrands, when all the town is asleep in their beds, will do as well to the full, as an hundred thousand armed men by broad day-light: a well timed burning of harvests is a better chastiser of rebels, than an army headed by all the sovereigns of Europe. I was ever an admirer of the Hebrew warrior who sent foxes with torches to their tails among the enemy's corn; these are sleights of war that are much neglected, but which are of inestimable benefit."

"Messer Benedetto, I listen with admiration to your wisdom; but trust the word of a friend, and do not talk thus openly in yonder castle; or if you cannot rein your tongue now, turn your horse's head towards Lucca. They are Guelphs up here."

"Strange company for me to enter; for in Cremona I never cap to a Guelph, whoever he may be; but if you, my lord, are safe, surely so am I, and trust Benedetto Pepi for discretion. You are I believe my friend, and a Ghibeline; and, being now lord of this noble country, you can well judge of the truth of my remarks. As it is I am glad to enter the company of Guelphs, and glad to find that you are well with them; for it is always expedient to have a spy in the enemy's camp."

If Castruccio had not fully understood the eccentric mood of his companion, he might have been offended at this speech; and even now he felt his cheek flush at the name of spy being thus as it were applied to him; but he replied laughing; "Aye, Messer Benedetto, there will be fine sport for you; the lady of the castle is holding a court, and tomorrow we have a tournament; will you not enter the lists against these priest-ridden knights?"

"Not the less powerful for being priest-ridden; not the less powerful if they were priests themselves; as I well know to my misfortune, having been beaten almost to death by a young canon who was my enemy; and that took place many years ago, when I was younger, and more active than I am now. But I was revenged; aye, Benedetto Pepi was never yet injured in a hair of his head, but the heart's anguish of his enemy paid for it."

Pepi looked at his companion with the elevated brows of triumph and vanity, while his sharp eyes spoke, not ferocity, but successful cunning. Castruccio regarded him with a glance of distrust, which he did not observe, but continued:—"This young rascal had been forced into the priestly dress, but had not yet made vows, when he resolved to supplant me with a rich, young heiress whom I intended to marry. I was well off in the world, with a good estate, and a noble palace, so the father gave his consent, and all went on prosperously; till this roguish priest laid a plot for my destruction. He waylaid me on the wedding day, as I was conducting the bride to my own house; she loved him, and left me; aye, at the first whistle of this brave dame — hunter I felt her snatch her hand from mine, and saw her throw herself into his arms. I resisted, more as an angry, than a wise man, for they were armed, and I defenceless: so, as I told you, the villain beat me, till I was carried home nearly dead from the blows I received. During my recovery, as I lay there in my bed, my bones aching with the bruises I had received, I formed my plan of revenge, which I carried on, till he and she, and his kin and her kin, knelt to me for mercy; but I did not bend, and was most gloriously revenged. And now where is he? a grey — haired wretch; old before his time, rotting in the dungeons of the Inquisition. She has long been dead; of grief, they say, — at least she never enjoyed a moment with her paramour."

Castruccio started, as he heard the devilish confession of his companion. He did not reply; but he no longer felt that careless amusement which he had formerly done, in his conversation and uncouth manners; but watched him warily as if he had been an old and wrinkled serpent, whose fangs had fallen to decay, but whose venom still lurked in his toothless gums.

Pepi rode on, unconscious of the emotions he had excited; he imagined that he had just recited the finest passage of his life. For this old craftsman was fully impregnated with the Italian policy, which has stained the history of her lords and princes with the foul blots of fraud and cruelty: he did not admire the conqueror of a nation (although that were almost an object of adoration to him), so much as he worshipped the contriver of frauds, the base intriguer, who, not by the open combat of power and passion, but by dastardly and underhand means, brings his enemy on his knees before him.

When they arrived at the castle, they were conducted to the fountain of the rock, and Castruccio introduced Pepi to the company. The Cremonese bowed to the fair countess; and then darted his quick glances around, to discover if he knew any of the company; many he had seen before, and he could not help muttering as he seated himself—"Guelphs to the core! a pretty nest of hornets this!"

The company in the mean time were examining with curious eyes the garb and manners of their visitor. His dress was more shabby than that of the poorest of the jugglers; for he had not brought his gold-fringed cloak with him on this occasion; and, but for the introduction of Castruccio, and the gold spurs which he wore, he would have hazarded the disgrace of being dismissed to the company of the valets of the castle. Pepi observed their contempt, and addressed them as follows.

"For you, noble lords and ladies, who with upturned lips sneer at my homely garb, listen to my story, and do not despise my words, because they are those of a Ghibeline. You shine in silk, and jewels, and costly furs; I am clothed in sheep-skin and sclavina, and perhaps my capuchin may have a hole in its well worn texture; but look at my golden spurs; I am a knight, and have a palace, and a tower, and a good horse, as an Italian nobleman should have. Now listen, and then tell me whether I am right or wrong, in not throwing away the produce of my fields in trinkets and trumpery.

"I dare say that you all know, that there was once an emperor of the West, called Charlemagne. He was a great conqueror, and during his life lorded it nobly over all Europe, even from the tepid waters of the Mediterranean to the frozen Baltic sea; Italy did not murmur against his sway, and Germany was obliged to submit to the force of his arms. It was a glorious thing to see this great prince ride out among his followers, clothed, as I may be, in common skins, and greater than the meanest soldier in his camp only through his superior prowess and wisdom. But the nobles of his court were such as the nobles have continued to be to this day; and the money they should have kept for the maintenance of their followers, and the furniture and works of war, they expended upon dress and foppery.

"One day Charlemagne was at the town of Fugolano, clothed as I have said in a well worn vest of fox's fur, and his only jewel the well-tempered blade of his trusty sword. The courtiers gathered round this royal eagle, and he was indignant at heart to view their tawdry attire: they had just come from Pavia, which place, then as now, the Venetians made the mart for all the rich merchandize they brought from the East. They were dressed with every extravagance of luxury; they wore tippets of the feathers of Phoenician birds, lined with silk; robes of rich brocade, trimmed with the feathers of the back and neck of peacocks. Their flowing cloaks of fur were made of the skins of a thousand minute animals, brought from the wilds of Tartary, and in their caps they had jewels and feathers of extraordinary price. Thus they jutted up and down before their master, fancying that he would admire them, he who loved a well hacked helmet, boots bespattered with riding after fugitive enemies, a blood-stained sword, and a spirited war horse, more than ten armies of such fair-weather birds. 'Come, my brave comrades,' cried the emperor, 'we have no battle and no siege to amuse us; and the gloomy day with its drizzling rain makes the quiet of my palace irksome to me; mount your steeds, and let us away to the chase.'

"It had been a fine sight, to see the courtiers, as they gave a last pitying glance to their gay dresses, and bestrode their horses to follow their master. He led the way; no ditch or hedge or thick cover of copse-wood, could obstruct his path; his noble steed surmounted all, and every bramble had rich spoils from his companions: silk, fur, and feathers strewed the ground, and hung on the thorns by the roadside; what escaped the dangers of land, was shipwrecked by water, for the rain wetted them to the skin, and the materials of their clothes, in losing their gloss, had lost all their value.

“When they returned, they bitterly complained among themselves for the losses they had sustained: the emperor was advised of their murmurs, and sent to command their attendance. They obeyed, and approached his throne in a guise much unlike the gay figure they had exhibited in the morning; their feathers broken, their jewels lost, their silk torn, and their furs, which had been wet, and afterwards dried by the fire, were shrunk, disfigured and spoiled. ‘Oh, most foolish mortals!’ cried Charlemagne, ‘how are these furs precious or useful? Mine cost only a few pence; yours cost not only silver, but many pounds of gold!’”

Pepi ended his most apposite tale by a laugh of triumph; and it might easily be perceived that some of the young nobles were by no means pleased with the uncouth manners of their teacher. But the sun had now set, and the bell of the Ave Marie rung from the chapel of ; so the company descended the rock, and joined in the devotions of the priest, who celebrated vespers, attended by all the more humble guests of the castle.

In the evening several mimes were represented under the direction of Borsiere. No nation can excel the Italians in the expression of passion by the language of gesture alone, or in the talent of extemporarily giving words to a series of action which they intend to represent; even in those ruder times they were able to draw tears from the audience, or shake them with convulsions of laughter. The actors now at the castle, first performed the touching story of Palamon and Arcite, and afterwards the favourite tale of the loves of Troilus and Cressida, and told with animated action the story of the ill repaid constancy of the worthy knight of Troy, and the black treachery of the faithless Cressida; so that few eyes were undimmed with tears, when this unhappy knight, who had sought death in vain, but who survived his country and his friends, was supposed to stand beside the half choked cistern of a once often visited fountain among the ruins and burnt palaces of Troy, and to behold Cressida, in a mean garb, and deformed by disease, bearing a heavy pitcher on her head, come to draw water from the spring; and every bosom thrilled at the bitter grief of Troilus, and the humble repentance and heart-felt self — reproaches of his once wanton mistress, as, calling for pardon, she died. To relieve the company from their painful sympathy, the mimes came forward to act the antic pantomimes of the day: these were neither very decent nor very clever; a miller and a priest were over-reached in their love, and were left shivering in the snow during a winter-night, while two young students of Bologna, whom the other worthies had combined to trick, enjoyed that for which in their dreary condition they ardently pined. Night had now run half its course; and the company retired, after bestowing the praises well due to Borsiere's successful exertions.

The next morning before daylight Castruccio heard some one enter his apartment. It was Pepi, who approached his bed, and said: "My lord, I come to take my leave of you. After what passed last night, you may well believe that the young countess would rather not count me among her guests. I am about to return to Cremona, but would first ask you, whether you would not prefer that a staunch friend of yours should be lord of that town, than that it should remain in the hands of the people, who have become Guelphs and traitors, body and soul?"

Castruccio's thoughts instantly fixed on Galeazzo Visconti, or Cane della Scala, as the promised lord of Cremona; and he replied eagerly: "Messer Benedetto, you would do me an inestimable benefit, if by any means, either in your power, or with which you are acquainted, you could place the government of your town in the hands of one of my friends."

"And are you prepared to assist in such an undertaking?"

"Now I cannot; but I have promised to be in Lombardy at the end of the month of July. In August I will visit you at Cremona; and, if you will disclose to me the contrivers and instruments of this change,—"

"Now I can tell you nothing. Come to me on the fifteenth of August, alone, or with but one attendant; but come not with the shew of a prince; on that day, at five o'clock in the evening, you will meet a person on the bridge of the rivulet you cross about half a mile from Cremona; say to him the word, Lucca, and he will conduct you to my palace by an obscure way, and then I will disclose every thing to you. As you may not be able to command your time to a day, I will wait for you one month, until the fifteenth of September; then if you do not appear, the enterprize must proceed by other means. During this interval promise me inviolable secrecy."

"What, may I not tell — ?"

"No living soul must hear of this — If you impart that with which I have intrusted you, my plan must instantly fail. I trust to your discretion."

"It is well, Messer Benedetto," replied Castruccio, recalling to mind the impressions of the preceding evening, and gazing on his companion with distrust: “I do not clearly understand your plans, and cannot promise to assist in them; but I assure you of my secrecy, and that you shall see me before the fifteenth of September.”

“I am satisfied; farewell. The stars are disappearing, and I would reach your town before sunrise.”

Pepi departed with a brow of care; while every heart in the castle of was light, and every countenance expressed gaiety. This was the third day of the court, the day for which a tournament had been proclaimed. But it would be tedious to dilate on the remainder of these ceremonies, and from what has been related a judgement may be formed of those which were yet to come.

The summer months passed on, and the time approached when Castruccio had promised Galeazzo Visconti to meet him at Rovigo. Euthanasia desired during the autumn to revisit her native city, from which she had been long absent. They agreed to journey thither together; and on Castruccio’s return from Lombardy their long delayed marriage was to take place.

CHAPTER XV

WHEN Castruccio and Euthanasia arrived at Florence, they found the citizens celebrating a festival: the bells were ringing; the country people were flocking into the town; and the youths of both sexes, of the highest rank, and richly dressed, were parading the streets, covered with wreaths of flowers, and singing the poems of Dante, or his friend Guido, to the accompaniment of many instruments. Castruccio said: “I must ask you, fair Euthanasia, who are so learned in Florentine customs, to inform me of the meaning of this gaiety.”

“Indeed, I am entirely ignorant. I know that during peace joyful meetings take place every May, among the young nobility; but this seems a general festivity. Let us ask that grave gentleman in the black capuchin, if he knows the reason of a merriment, which at least has not communicated itself to his face.”

The man, on being asked, replied: “You must be but lately arrived, not to have heard of the cause of our rejoicings; the Florentines, Madonna, are celebrating the occurrence of a most favourable omen with which God and St. John have blessed our city. Yesterday one of the lionesses kept at the expense of the republic, brought forth five whelps.”

“And is this the momentous occasion of so much serious amusement?” asked Castruccio, laughing.

“My lord,” said the man, “you are a stranger in this town; or you would not find cause for laughter in this event. The Florentines keep a number of lions, as the signs and symbols of their strength; and God and St. John have plainly manifested on many occasions, that the prosperity of Florence, and the welfare of the lions are bound together. Three of the finest and largest died on the eve of the fatal battle of Monte Catini.”

“So these wise republicans, whom you, dear Euthanasia, so much vaunt, believe in these childish omens. I would wager my best charger, that their records are full of the influence of stars, and the appearance of comets!”

“And I do not at all know that you would lose: indeed their noblest citizens have a great faith in astrology and portents. If you speak of a scarcity, they will tell of a meteor; if you say that the king of France has lost a battle, they will assure you that the whole kingdom has become, by the will of God and St. John, weaker and more miserable, ever since Philippe le Bel seized upon the Florentine usurers. We love to find a cause for every event, believing that, if we can fit but one link to another, we are on the high road for discovering the last secrets of nature. You smile at the celebration of the birth of these lion’s whelps; yet I own that it pleases me; how innocent, yet how active, must the imagination of that people be, who can find cause for universal joy in such an event!

“It is this same imagination more usefully and capaciously employed, that makes them decree the building of the most extensive and beautiful building of modern times. The men who have conceived the idea, and contributed their money towards the erection of the Duomo, will never see its completion; but their posterity will, and, if they be not degenerate, will glory in the noble spirit of their ancestors. Many years ago, when the Florentines warred with the Siennese, they took by storm a tower of great strength, which commanded a most important pass. They destroyed the tower; and, when half demolished, they filled it up with earth, and planted there an olive tree, which still flourishes, an emblem of the peace which would follow their conquests.”

Castruccio stayed only a few days at Florence; and, recommending himself to the constancy and love of Euthanasia, he took an affectionate leave of her, and hastened on his journey to Rovigo, where he had promised to join Galeazzo Visconti.

Galeazzo, having now succeeded to his father in the tyranny of Milan, was the most powerful chief of Lombardy. He was about thirty-five years of age: he had all the characteristics of an Italian face, arched brows, black eyes, an aquiline nose, and a figure where there was some strength and little grace. He had a great portion of talent, quickness in the combination of plans, yet not sufficient patience to watch their progress, or perseverance to carry them through. He was crafty, ambitious, and vain; yet, where his own interests were not concerned, he was good-natured, and on all occasions exceeded even the Italians in the courtesy of his demeanour. He had seen much of the world, and suffered many misfortunes; this gave him a pliancy of disposition, as well as of manner, which made him appear more kind-hearted than he really was; for in truth he never for a moment lost sight of his own interest; and, if he sometimes wandered from the path which led to its attainment, want of judgement, and not of inclination, caused the error.

He wished to attach Castruccio to his party and designs. He saw in him the head of the Ghibeline faction in Tuscany, and the tamer of his Florentine enemies. He felt that his own situation was precarious; but, if he could gain Castruccio for his ally, he hoped to awe his enemies. More than all, he desired the destruction of the Guelph strong-hold, Florence; and Castruccio was to become its destroyer. He heard of his peace with that city with dismay; he trusted it could not last; but the very name of it blasted his hopes. He wished to see the consul, and to win him to the plan which he had conceived would conduct to the full ascendancy of the Ghibelines; and, circumstances leading him to Rovigo, he had intreated Castruccio to visit him there, making the intended restoration of Ferrara to the marquess of Este the pretence of this request.

The friends met with every demonstration of regard. Galeazzo watched with care every word, by which Castruccio might reveal his intentions, before he would venture to communicate his own wishes. Their first topic of conversation was the immediate business before them, the restoration of the marquess Obizzo to the sovereignty of Ferrara. “This town,” said Galeazzo, “which so long obeyed the Este family, is now in the hands of the Guelphs, and the vicar of the Pope, with a couple of hundred Gascon soldiers for a garrison, keeps possession of it. The people, fleeced by the excellent policy of the Roman court, whose first, second, and third maxim is to fill its own coffers, eagerly desire the restoration of their rightful prince. We have often thought of besieging the town; but that would be a long and expensive business, and even its success would be doubtful; for, if the Ghibelines raised their war-cry, all the Guelph foxes would unearth themselves and have at them, and you know that our lands are much overstocked by this vermin. Stratagem is a surer and a far easier mode of warfare, and not half so bloody as the regular way; we have so many friends within the walls, that I doubt not we should succeed, if a proper communication were established between us. The bishop, who, though a churchman, is our sure friend, sent us a message some days ago, which, although mystically worded, seemed to say that he would betray the town into our hands, if we would commission one of our chiefs to treat with him; for he refused to disclose his project to an underling. Now, you, my good friend, must undertake this task; we are all of us too well known to get admission into the city; but a slight disguise will take you safely past their guards, and I doubt neither of the bishop Marsilio's power or inclination."

Castruccio acceded to his friend's request; and in the evening he was introduced to the marquess of Este, who received him with deference and distinction.

The next morning, when he and Galeazzo rode out together, Galeazzo said: "I am sure, my dear Castruccio, I can never shew myself sufficiently grateful for your kindness in quitting Lucca at my request, and wandering away from your government, which I ardently hope will not suffer from your absence. But I feel less remorse, since the truce you have concluded with Florence must afford you some leisure."

"Not a truce, but a better thing; I have concluded a peace."

"Aye, a truce, or a peace; it is the same thing; either will be sufficiently short-lived."

"Are you then so deep-read in the counsels of the enemy, that you know how and when this peace will change to war?"

"I am deep-read in nothing, my friend, but the politics and changes of Italy; and I have suffered by them enough, and mixed with them sufficiently, to foresee their issue a long way off. Fire and water will make as kindly coalition as Guelph and Ghibeline, Bianchi and Neri. Their interests are at war, and therefore so must they be. But why do I say this to you, who have every prospect of being Imperial Vicar in Tuscany; and think you that peace is the pilot to that haven?"

"My dear Galeazzo, let us understand one another; I am a Ghibeline, faithful to my party and the emperor; and, if I thought there were a fair chance of suppressing the Neri, by the Holy Face of Lucca, I would make a crusade against them, such as has not been seen in the world since the days of Saladin. Let the emperor come to Italy, and something may be done; but why carry on a petty warfare, which destroys the country, and starves the peasant, while it hardly takes a florin from the coffers of the Florentine merchants, or advances us one inch nearer the goal we desire to reach?"

"And is this the end of the dreams of triumph and dominion with which you entered Lucca three years ago? And now that you have the government of that town of oranges and lemons, the mighty aim of your life is accomplished, and you are ready to sleep upon your acquisition, calling yourself a great man?”

“In truth there is little time or place to sleep at Lucca. Do you think that I shall be idle, while a dozen rebel castles hold out against me which must be subdued? Let me conquer them first; let me see no enemy for many miles round; and then we will talk of Florence.”

“Nay, my friend, you must leave nothing to the decision of circumstances; a wise man foresees and provides for all. Florence must one day be yours; and you, prince of Tuscany, of Italy, if you will, will give laws to us all. Do not start; among so many prophecies as we have of Merlin and the rest, I venture to make one more; and, like most others, let its announcement contribute to its completion. My dear Castruccio, this is no child’s play; for men are both our die and our stake: put forth your hand, and you must win. In Lombardy the Ghibelines flourish; but, except Pisa, and your Lucca, the Guelphs domineer throughout Tuscany. But this must not continue; the Popes are out of Italy, and Rome, become a mere resort of robbers, is a blank in our account. Naples and Florence are our only enemies; the emperor must conquer one, and you the other. Let all your efforts tend to that; you talk of rebel castles near Lucca, — aye, subdue those first, that without dread you may hunt down the Florentines; let your will be as a wind to drive all before it: at first, it will pause, collecting its force in the horizon; and then it breaks forth sweeping every thing along with it: Florence must fall before it — I swear it shall; but give me your hand, your faith, Castruccio, and swear that you also will have it so.”

“Nay, by the Virgin! I will not be backward in doing my part to tame the cubs of this wild lioness: if Florence ever can be mine, she shall, and may God’s will and your prophecy be fulfilled.”

“That is well. — At present you are at peace with them; but it must be a peace to crush, and not to invigorate them. You are freshly entered into your lordship, your authority is new, perhaps unstable; but form your troops, be a prince among your own people, and then fall upon these enemies of all princes. Oh! believe me, give up this old fashioned name of consul; it is tainted by the idea of that which I abhor — a commonwealth: make yourself a prince, and then so pure and ardent a hatred of Florence will arise in your mind, that you will not need my spurring to ride them to their destruction. The contagion of liberty is dangerous; — the Ghibelines must fall in Lucca, if the Guelphs be not destroyed in Florence. Think you, if your people are allowed free intercourse with this republic, that the plague of liberty will not spread to your state? For no quarantine will eradicate that spot, if once it has entered the soul: plots, rebellions will be formed against you; Florence, the watchword, the rallying point for all. Choose; for that choice alone is left to you, to quell that city, or depart once more to exile."

These were the lessons with which Galeazzo awakened the latent flame in the soul of Castruccio; a flame, covered, but not extinguished, and which now burned more fiercely than ever. He swore the destruction of the Guelphs, and interminable war to Florence; and his blood flowed more freely, his eyes shone brighter, his soul was elevated to joy, when he thought that one day he might be the master of that proud city.

In the mean time the marquess of Este occupied their attention; and Castruccio prepared for this embassy to the bishop of Ferrara. He took no papers with him that might be dangerous, if discovered; but, habiting himself like a merchant from Ancona, and taking such documents as might enable him to support this character, he left Rovigo for Ferrara, which was about twenty miles distant, and entering that town at ten o'clock in the morning he hastened, unquestioned by any, to the episcopal palace. The bishop was an old man of the most benign physiognomy, and a sweet, mild tone of voice; he was tall, and upright in figure, with an air of dignity and benevolence, that won, yet awed every one; his temples were slightly shaded by his silver locks, and his white beard, reaching to his girdle, increased the dignity of his appearance. Castruccio, who by his intercourse with the world had learned always to honour age, approached him with respect, and disclosed to him his rank and mission. The bishop replied:

"My noble lord, the marquess has done that which I have long desired, in sending to me one to whom I may intrust the important secret, which I do not doubt will be the means of his re-establishment in his government. This evening my friends will assemble at my palace; with their counsel all shall be arranged, the means disclosed to you by which I propose to deliver Ferrara into the hands of its rightful prince, and the day fixed for the commencement of the enterprize."

The bishop and Castruccio continued together the whole day, both mutually delighted with each other; and, as is often the case where sympathy of opinion and feeling exists, they became as intimate in a few hours, as in other circumstances an intercourse of years would have effected. Castruccio had a great taste for theological knowledge, and the bishop, as a man of the world, was delighted with the conversation and remarks of one who had passed through so many scenes, and visited so many nations. Confidence quickly arose between them; so well did each seem to understand the feelings and character of the other. The bishop was a Ghibeline; but his motives were pure: his indignation at the corruptions of the Papal court, and his disapprobation of the faction and brawls which appeared to him inseparable from a republic, attached him strongly to the Imperial party, and to those lords who, reigning peacefully over a people who loved them, seemed to him to ensure the quiet of Italy.

In the evening the partizans of the marquess of Este assembled at the episcopal palace to deliberate on their projects. Castruccio was introduced among them, and received with cordiality and respect by all. The assembly consisted of nearly the whole nobility of Ferrara, chiefly indeed Ghibelines, but there were even some Guelphs, disgusted by the introduction of foreign troops, and the haughtiness and tyranny of their governors. The government however was formidable; they possessed the gates, and the fortress; their armed guard was numerous and faithful; and the restoration of Obizzo could be achieved by stratagem alone.

In one corner of the vast apartment in which the assembly sat, were two women. One was old, and dressed in the fashion of an age gone by: she was in black as a widow; her vest was close and strait, trimmed with beads, and made of black cloth; a black veil covered her head, and her capuchin thrown aside discovered the years and wrinkles of the venerable wearer. It was impossible to judge of the age, and hardly of the sex, of the figure that sat beside her; for her capuchin was wrapped closely round her form, and the hood drawn over her face, as she sat silently, turned away from the company, in the darkest part of the room.

The bishop at length addressed Castruccio: “My lord,” said he, “you now possess the details of our plan, and may perceive the sincerity of our intention, and the eagerness of our desire to receive again our rightful prince: it alone remains to shew you the secret entrance of which I spoke, and to fix the day for our attempt.”

The old lady, who had been hitherto silent, now turned quickly round, and said: “My brother, Beatrice ought to name the fortunate day on which we may undertake this work. Speak, my child, and may the holy Virgin inspire your words!"

As she spoke, she threw back the hood of her young companion; and Castruccio gazed on her exquisite and almost divine beauty. Her deep black eyes, half concealed by their heavy lids, her curved lips, and face formed in a perfect oval, the rising colour that glowed in her cheeks which, though her complexion was pure and delicate, were tinged by the suns of Italy, formed a picture such as Guido has since imagined, when he painted a Virgin or an Ariadne, or which he copied from the life when he painted the unfortunate Beatrice Cenci. Her jet hair fell in waving luxuriance on her neck and shoulders below her waist; and a small silver plate was bound by a white riband on her forehead. Castruccio could only gaze for a moment on this lovely being; for, turning a supplicating look on her aged friend, she again drew the hood over her face, speaking in so low a tone, that he could not distinguish the words she uttered; the elder lady acted as interpreter, and said "Beatrice intreats you not to fix the day until to-morrow, and then she hopes, by the grace of God and the Virgin, to name such a one as will bring your enterprize to an happy issue."

Castruccio turned quickly round to see what effect these words would produce upon the bishop; he thought that he saw a slight smile of derision hover on the old man's lip; but he replied: "Be it so; my lord Castruccio, you will accompany my sister, Madonna Marchesana, to her palace; she will disclose to you the secret entrance, and acquaint you with the means by which you may find it, when you return with the marquess Obizzo and his troops."

The assembly broke up; and Castruccio followed Madonna Marchesana and her beautiful companion. His horse was brought to the door; they mounted their white palfreys, and attended by several esquires and pages carrying torches, arrived at a magnificent palace close to the eastern gate of Ferrara. When they had entered, Madonna Marchesana dismissed her servants, and led Castruccio into a room, hung with tapestry, and furnished with the rich and heavy furniture of the age. She lifted up the hangings; and, while Castruccio supported them, she pushed back a panel in the wainscot, and discovered a long, dark gallery; then, taking up a torch that lay within, and lighting it at a lamp which hung from the ceiling of the room, she presented it to Beatrice, saying: “Do you, my child, light us, and lead us the way, that success may attend our steps.”

A small snow white hand and taper wrist were put out from beneath the capuchin; and Beatrice silently took the torch, and led the way, along the gallery, down several flights of stairs, and then along numerous vaults and corridors, until they arrived at what appeared the end of these subterraneous passages. “You, my lord,” said the lady Marchesana, “must help me.” She pointed to a large stone, which Castruccio rolled away, and discovered behind it a small, low door. The lady drew back the bolts, and bade Beatrice hide the light, which she did, placing it within a kind of recess in the passage that seemed formed for the purpose of receiving it; the lady then opened the door; and Castruccio, creeping out, found himself in an open country, covered with bushes, and surrounded by marshy land, at some distance from the strong fortifications of the town. Castruccio smiled: “Ferrara is ours!” he cried; and the old lady with a countenance expressive of the greatest delight, said: “I intreat you, my lord, to lay my respectful submission and zealous fidelity at the feet of the marquess Obizzo; tell him the joy and triumph that I feel, in being the humble instrument of restoring him to his sovereignty and inheritance. When you mention the name of the viscountess di Malvezzi he may distrust my professions; since the viscount, my late husband, was his bitter and determined enemy. But he is no more; and I have been brought to a true knowledge of the will of God by this divine girl, this Ancilla Dei, as she is truly called, who is sent upon earth for the instruction and example of suffering humanity.”

Castruccio listened with astonishment; while the gifted damsel stood, her face covered by her cowl, and her arms crossed over her breast: the eyes of the old lady beamed with joy and pride. “I do not entirely fulfil my commission,” she continued, “until I have taught you how you may again discover this place. Do you see those straggling sallows that skirt that stagnant drain, and which, although they appear to be without order, are the clue by which you will be guided thither? Four miles distant from Ferrara, on the right-hand side of the road, you will find a mulberry tree, a poplar, and a cypress, growing close together; strike from the road at that point, and follow the line of sallows, however they may lead, until you come to that where the line ends. You must then mark the drains of the marsh, remembering to follow only those which are bordered by dwarf myrtles, and which at every turn have a cross carved in a low stone on their banks; that line will lead you hither; and you will stop at that cross of wood which you see half buried in the tall grass and bulrushes, until this door is opened for your entrance."

The viscountess di Malvezzi repeated her instructions a second time in the same distinct manner; and, finding that Castruccio fully apprehended them, she led the way back to her subterranean passages; and with quick steps they regained the tapestried apartment. Beatrice remained a moment behind to extinguish the torch; and, when she re-appeared, she had thrown off her capuchin, and shone in the light of her divine beauty. Her dress was of the finest white woollen; and in fashion it partook of the usual dress of the age, and of the drapery of the ancient statues: it was confined at her waist by a silken girdle, and fell about her figure in thick and rich folds; a golden cross glittered upon her bosom, on which lay also the glossy ringlets of her hair; on the silver plate bound to her forehead Castruccio could distinguish the words, Ancilla Dei. Her black eyes beamed as with inspiration, and the wide sleeves of her vest discovered her white and veined arm, which she threw up in eager gesticulation as she spoke:

"Mother, I promised that tomorrow I would name the day for my sovereign's enterprize; I feel the spirit coming fast upon me; let this noble gentleman inform your revered brother, that tomorrow in the church of St. Anna I shall speak to my countrymen, and in the midst of the people of Ferrara tell in veiled words the moment of their deliverance."

With a light step Beatrice glided out of the room, and the viscountess, not regarding the surprise of Castruccio, said to him: "Fail not, my lord, to convey the message of my Beatrice to the bishop. God has been gracious to us, in bestowing on us his visible assistance through this sacred maiden, who by her more than human beauty, the excellence of her dispositions, and, above all, by her wisdom beyond that of woman, and her prophecies which have ever been fulfilled, demonstrates, even to the unbeliever and the Gentile, that she is inspired by the grace and favour of the blessed Virgin."

CHAPTER XVI

THUS dismissed, Castruccio returned, burning with curiosity and admiration, to the bishop. He delivered the message with which he had been intrusted, and then eagerly asked who this enchanting Beatrice really was, and if it were true that she was an angel descended upon earth for the benefit and salvation of man. The bishop smiled.

"My lord," he relied, "so much have you won my confidence and esteem, that I am willing to satisfy your curiosity on this subject also. But you must recollect, that neither my sister, nor even the lovely girl herself, knows what I shall now reveal, and that I shall tell it you under the most solemn vow of secrecy."

Castruccio readily promised discretion and silence, and the bishop then related the following particulars.

"Have you never heard of a heretic and most dangerous impostor, of the name of Wilhelmina of Bohemia? This woman appeared first in Italy in the year 1289: she took up her residence at Milan, with a female companion, called Magfreda. Outwardly professing the Catholic religion, and conforming in the strictest manner to its rules, she secretly formed a sect, founded on the absurd and damnable belief, that she was the Holy Ghost incarnate upon earth for the salvation of the female sex. She gave out that she was the daughter of Constance, queen of Bohemia; that, as the angel Gabriel had descended to announce the divine conception to the blessed Virgin, so the angel Raphael announced to her mother the incarnation of the Holy Spirit in favour of the female sex; and that she was born twelve months after this heavenly annunciation. Her tenets were intended entirely to supersede those of our beloved Lord Jesus, and her friend Magfreda was to be papess, and to succeed to all the power and privileges of the Roman pontiff. Wilhelmina died in the year 1302 in the odour of sanctity, and was buried in the church of St. Peter at Milan: she had led so holy a life, and kept her heresy so profound a secret, except from her own sect, that she was followed as a saint, and even priests and dignitaries wrote homilies in praise of her piety, her abstinence, and modesty.

“I was at Milan two years after, when the Dominican inquisitors first discovered this lurking pestilence; and the terror and abomination of the discovery filled the town with horror. Magfreda, and her principal follower, Andrea Saramita, were led to prison; the other disciples who threw themselves on the mercy of the priests, being commanded to perform several pilgrimages, and give large alms to the church, were absolved. I had just then become a Padre, and filled the confessor’s chair: I was young, full of zeal, eloquent in the cause of truth, and tainted by an enthusiastic bigotry against heretics and schismatics. I preached with animation against this new heresy; it appeared to me so impious, so absurd, so terrifically wicked, that I was touched by an holy impulse as I declaimed against its followers. Having thus distinguished myself, the father inquisitors intreated me to use my fervid arguments to persuade the obstinate Magfreda to recant. They had exhausted every reason, and had had recourse even to torture, to convert this woman from her damnable impieties; but she with haughty insolence declared that she was in readiness to perish in the flames, but that her last breath should be spent in the praise of her divine mistress, and an exhortation to her tormentors to repent and believe.

“I was filled with worldly vanity, and fancied that my learned sentences, my anathemas, and eloquent exorcisms could not fail of their desired effect, and that by the aid of God and truth I should be covered with the glory of success in this holy warfare. Thus secure, I entered the dungeon of the heretic: it was a low, damp vault, where she had been confined for several weeks without even straw for her bed. She was kneeling in one corner, praying fervently, and for a moment I stopped to contemplate a heretic, a monster I had never before seen. She was an aged, respectable woman, in the dress of a nun, and with an appearance of sanctity and modesty that astounded me. When she perceived me, she rose, and said with a faint smile: ‘Is my condemnation passed? or is a new scene of torture prepared?’

“‘Daughter,’ I replied, ‘I come indeed to torture, not your body, but your mind; to torture it with a knowledge of itself; to hold a mirror before it, wherein you will contemplate its blots and deformities, of which by the grace of the Virgin you may repent and be purified.’

“‘Father, you are the master, I a slave, and I am willing to listen. But your benevolent countenance, so different from those to which I have been long accustomed, fills me with such confidence, that I dare hope for your indulgence, when I intreat you to spare yourself a useless labour, and to leave in peace the last hours of my life. I know that I must die; and God and She know how willing I am to expire for Her justification, even in pain and burning: but my spirit is worn, my patience, which I have cherished with determined zeal, as the sacred flame of my religion and the life of my heart, now begins to wane; do not bring on my soul the sins of anger and intolerance; — leave me to prayer, to repentance, and to my hopes of again seeing my beloved mistress, there where there is no sorrow.’

“She spoke with dignity and mildness, so that I felt my spirit subdued; and, although almost angry at the stubbornness of her impiety, I followed her example in speaking with gentleness. Our conversation was long; and the more it continued, the more my animation in the cause of truth, and zeal for the conversion of the heretic, increased. For her manner was so sweet and winning, her words so soft yet firm, that it lay like a sin on my heart that I could not save her from eternal condemnation.

“‘You did not know Her,’ she cried, ‘you never saw my Wilhelmina. Ask those who have seen her, even the vulgar, whose eyes are horn, and whose hearts are stone, whether they were not moved to love and charity, when she passed like an angel among them. She was more beautiful than aught human could be; more gentle, modest and pious than any woman ever was, though she were a saint. Then her words possessed a persuasion that could not be resisted, and her eyes a fire, that betrayed even to the unknowing that the Holy Spirit lived within her.

“‘Father, you know not what you ask, when you desire me to leave my faith in her Divinity. I have felt my soul prostrate itself before her; the very blood that vivifies my heart has cried to me, so that, if I had been deaf, I must have heard, that she was more than human. In my dreams I have seen her arrayed in divine light; and even now the sacred radiance that announces her presence fills my dungeon, and bids me for her sake submit with patience to all that ye, her enemies, can inflict.’

“I repeat to you the mad words of Magfreda, that you may judge of the excess of insanity that possessed this unfortunate woman. I combated with the evil spirit within her for eight hours, but in vain; at length I was retiring in despair, when she called me back. I returned with a look of hope, and saw that she was weeping violently and bitterly. As I approached, she seized my hand, and kissed it, and pressed it to her heart, and continued pouring forth, as it were, a fountain of tears. I believed that she was now touched by true repentance, and began to thank divine mercy, when she waved her hand impatiently, beckoning me to be silent. By degrees she calmed her tears; but she was still agitated by passion, as she said: ‘Kneel, father, kneel, I intreat you, and by the cross you wear swear secrecy. Alas! if I die, another must perish with me, one whom I have vowed to protect, one whom I love far, — far beyond my own life.’

“She paused, endeavouring to overcome the tears, that, in spite of herself, she shed: I comforted her, and pronounced the desired oath, when she became calmer. ‘Father, you are good, benign and charitable; and I do believe that She has manifested Her will in sending you to me in my distress; you, who are so unlike the wolves and harpies that have of late beset me. There is a child — Her child: — but, father, before I reveal further, promise me, swear to me, that she shall be educated in my faith and not in yours.’

“I was indignant at this proposal, and said angrily: ‘Woman, think you that I will sacrifice the soul of an infant to your monstrous unbelief and vicious obstinacy? I am a servant of the Lord Jesus, and, believe me, I will never discredit my holy calling.’

“‘Must it be so?’ she cried; ‘yet grant me a few moments to resolve.’

“She knelt down, and prayed fervently for a long time; and then arose with a smiling aspect, saying: ‘Father, you wish to convert me; methinks at this moment I could convert you, if indeed faith did not come from God, and not from the human will. She has revealed Her will to me, and by Her command I now confide to you the treasure of my soul.

“‘Two years before the death of Wilhelmina, she had a child. I cannot tell you who was the father of this child; for, although I believed that her conception partook of the divinity, she never confirmed my faith, or said aught against it: but with her heavenly smile bade me wait until the hour of knowledge should arrive. I alone knew of the birth of this infant; and it has ever been under my care: it was brought up in a cottage five miles hence by a good woman, who knew not to whom it belonged; and I visited it daily, gazing with wonder on its beauty and intelligence.

“‘After its birth Wilhelmina never saw it. She always refused to visit the cottage, or to have it brought to her, but would sit for yours, and listen to my descriptions and praises. I have ever believed that this separation, whatever was its cause, shortened the life of my divine mistress; for she pined, and wept, and faded like a flower unwatered by the dews of heaven. The last words she uttered, were to recommend her infant to my care. I have fulfilled my task, and now, by her command, deliver up my charge to you.

"'A year ago the nurse of the child died; and I took her secretly to my own home, and tended her, and preserved her as her mother had commanded. No love can equal mine for the divinity, her mother: it was a burning affection, an adoration, which no words can express: — I shall never see her more, until we meet in heaven, but I submit with patience to the will of God.

"'When I heard that Andrea Saramita and our other disciples were taken, I was transported with terror for the fate of this infant. I expected every moment to hear the steps of the blood — hounds on the stairs, to seize me, and discover this flower of paradise, which I cherished thus secretly. When suddenly a thought, an inspiration, came over me, and I cried aloud, Better are the wild beast of the forest, and the tempests of heaven, even when they shake us most; better are plague and famine, than man hunting after prey! So I took the infant in my arms, a small purse of gold, and a bag of such provisions as I had in the house; and, it being already dark, I hastened from Milan to the forest that skirts the road to Como: I walked fast, and in two hours arrived at my goal. I knew that one afflicted with leprosy lived in the depth of the forest, a miserable wretch, who with his wooden spoon and platter, collected alms at the road side. Thither I went fearlessly; — mistake me not; this man is not my disciple, he had never seen me before; but though I knew not whether the blood-hunters were acquainted with the existence of the divine child, this I knew, that they would not dare seek her in a leper's dwelling. I dreaded not the contagion; for is not her mother above all the saints in heaven?

"'I wandered long among the tangled paths of the wood, ere I could discover his hut; the babe slept, cherished near my heart, which bled with anguish. To me in all the world there existed but this little creature; the earth seemed to reel under me; yet still I felt her warm breath upon my bosom, and heard the regular heaving of her gentle breast. At length I found the cavern of the leper: it was half-built in the earthy hill against which it rested, and half of the boughs of trees plastered with mud, which was hardened in the sun; black, dilapidated, and filthy, it was worse than a manger for the reception of my poor innocent.

"'The wretched possessor of this sty slept on his miserable straw as I entered. I roused him, put gold into his hand, and, placing food before him, I said — Protect this child, and God will reward you. Feed it, wash it, and above all keep it from the sight of man: deliver it not except to one who may come to ask for it in the name of the Holy Wilhelmina. In one month I hope to return for it, and will reward you as you have obeyed my charge. — I then, with a heart bursting with agony, embraced the daughter of my Wilhelmina for the last time: I blessed her, and tore myself away.

"'I have now been five weeks imprisoned, and I dread lest the leper should have thrust her from his abode. Will you not, father, preserve and love this child?'

"The discourse of Magfreda moved me strangely. I felt a wonder, a pity, an excess of commiseration, I could not express: but kissing the cross I wore, I said: 'Listen to me, unhappy woman, while I swear never to desert this innocent; and may God so help me, as I keep my faith!'

"Magfreda poured forth warm and joyful thanks; then, with a heavy heart, I recommended her to the mercy of God, and left her dungeon.

"As soon as I could tear myself from the questions and childish curiosity of the inquisitors, I hastened to the place that Magfreda had indicated. In the tumult of my soul, I only thought of the danger of the lovely babe in the hands of this outcast of man and nature. I was possessed with a passionate sense of pity, which I cannot now explain, but for which I do not reproach myself; at length, about four miles from the town, I heard the sound of the beggar as he struck his platter with his spoon in token of his wants, and I turned aside from the road to seek him. At that moment the spirit of God almost deserted me, and I was overcome by fear — the fear of disease, and a nameless horror at the expectation of meeting one whom all wholesome life had deserted: but I made the sign of the cross, and approached. The wretch was seated under a tree eating some crusts of bread; miserable, filthy, deformed, his matted hair hung over his eyes and his ragged beard half concealed the lower part of his visage; yet there was to be seen a savage eye, and an appearance of brutal ferocity, that almost staggered me. I made a sign that he should not approach, and he dropped on his knees, and began to gabble pater-nosters, so that the word that God himself had spoken seemed the jargon of the devil. I stopped at some distance from him: ‘Bring me,’ I cried, ‘to the child who was confided to you in the name of Wilhelmina of Bohemia.’

“The wretch, who had almost forgotten human speech, jumped up, and led the way among the tangled underwood, along savage paths, overgrown with rank herbage, and bestrewn with stones, till we came to his miserable hut, — a low, dark, squalid den, which I dared not enter; ‘Bring me the child,’ — I cried.

“Oh; it was a woeful sight, and one which to death I shall remember, to see this child, this morning star of beauty and exceeding brightness, with eyes shining with joy, rosy lips melted into the softest smiles, her glossy hair strewn upon her lovely neck, her whole form glowing with the roseate hues of life, led by the leper from his hut; his body wrapped in a ragged blanket, his grizzly hair stretched stiffly out, and his person and face loathsome beyond words to describe. The lovely angel took her hand from his, and coming up to me, said: ‘Take me to mamma; lead me from this ugly place to mother.’

“This was Beatrice; and need I say how much I have ever loved this hapless girl, and cherished her, and tried to save her from the fate to which her destiny has hurried her?

“I returned to Milan, and found that in the morning, while I had been absent, Magfreda had been burnt, and her ashes scattered to the winds, so that I had become this poor babe’s only guardian. I placed her under the care of a pensioner of the church in the neighbourhood of Milan; and when I was promoted to the see of Ferrara, I brought her with me, and intreated my sister to receive her, and cherish her as her own. The lovely little being won all hearts, and Marchesana soon became attached to her with maternal fondness. She was educated in the Holy Catholic faith; and I hoped that, untainted by her mother’s errors, she would lead an unblamed and peaceful life, unmarked and unknown; God has ordered it otherwise.

“Beatrice was always an extraordinary child. When only six and seven years of age, she would sit alone for hours, silently contemplating; and, when I asked her of what she thought, she would weep, and passionately desire me not to ask her. As she grew older, her imagination developed; she would sing extempore hymns with wild, sweet melody, and she seemed to dwell with all her soul on the mysteries of our religion; she then became communicative, and told me how for hours she meditated upon the works of nature, and the goodness of God, till she was filled with a sentiment that overwhelmed and oppressed her, so that she could only weep and sigh. She intreated me to unfold to her all I knew, and to teach her to read in the sacred book of our religion.

"I was fearful that her ignorance and enthusiasm might lead her astray, since, in her accounts of her meditations, she often said things of God and the angels that were heretical; and I hoped that a knowledge of the truth would calm her mind, and lead her to a saner devotion. But my labours had a contrary effect; the more she heard, and the more she read, the more she gave herself up to contemplation and solitude, and to what I cannot help considering the wild dreams of her imagination. It seemed to me as if her mother's soul had descended into her; but that, regulated by the true faith, she had escaped the damnable heresies of that unhappy woman. She delighted to read, and pretended to explain the prophecies of the sacred writings, and the modern ones of Merlin, the abbot Joachim and Methodius: beside these studies, she grew wonderfully familiar with all vulgar superstitions, holy trees and fountains, lucky and unlucky days, and all the silly beliefs that jugglers and impostors encourage for their own profit. At length she began to prophesy; some of her prophecies were interpreted as true, and since that time her fame has been spread through Ferrara. Her followers are numerous; and my poor sister is the first of her disciples: Beatrice herself is wrapped up in the belief of her own exalted nature, and really thinks herself the Ancilla Dei, the chosen vessel into which God has poured a portion of his spirit: she preaches, she prophesies, she sings extempore hymns, and entirely fulfilling the part of Donna Estatica, she passes many hours of each day in solitary meditation, or rather in dreams, to which her active imagination gives a reality and life which confirm her in her mistakes.

"Thus, my lord, I have revealed the birth of this extraordinary girl, which is unknown to every one else. Why I have done this I can hardly tell; for I have done it without premeditation or foresight. But I am glad that you know the truth; for you seem humane and generous; and I wish to secure another protector for my poor Beatrice, if I were to die, and she fell into any misfortune or disgrace."

Castruccio and the good bishop passed almost the whole night in conversation concerning this wonderful creature; and, when the consul retired to rest, he could not sleep, while the beauty of Beatrice was present to his eyes, and her strange birth and fortunes to his memory. In the morning he went to the church of St. Anna: mass was performed, but he looked in vain for the prophetess; — yet, when the service was finished, and the people assembled in the porch of the church, she appeared among them with her aged protectress at her side. She wore her capuchin of light blue silk, but her cowl was thrown back, and her eyes, black as the darkness which succeeds a midnight flash of lightning, full and soft as the shy antelope's, gleamed with prophetic fire.

She spoke; her words flowed with rich and persuasive eloquence, and her energetic but graceful action added force to her expressions. She reproached the people for lukewarm faith, careless selfishness, and a want of fervour in the just cause, that stamped them as the slaves of foreigners and tyrants. Her discourse was long and continued, with the same flow of words and unabated fervour: her musical voice filled the air; and the deep silence and attention of her numerous auditors added to the solemnity of the scene. Every eye was fixed on her, — every countenance changed as hers changed; they wept, they smiled, and at last became transported by her promises of the good that was suddenly to arise, and of the joy that would then await the constant of heart; — when, as this enthusiasm was at its height, some Dominican inquisitors came forward, surrounded her, and declared her their prisoner. Until that moment Castruccio had observed her only, — her flashing eyes and animated manner; the smiles and then the tears, that, as the sunshine and clouds of an April day, succeeded each other on the heaven of her countenance. But, when the inquisitors surrounded her, her voice was silent, and the mute deference of the multitude was no more. All became clamour and confusion; screams, vociferation, ejaculations and curses burst from every tongue; — they declared that the prophetess, the Ancilla Dei should not be torn from them, — she was no heretic, — of what crime had she been guilty? — The inquisitors had with them a guard of Gascon soldiers, and this inflamed the multitude still more; it was plain that her adherence to the party of the marquess Obizzo, and the prophecy of his restoration were her only crimes. The noise of her arrest spread through the town, and all Ferrara flocked to the church of St. Anna; the crowd, transported with rage, seemed prepared to rescue the prisoner, who, silent and resigned, stood as one unconcerned in the animated scene. The people armed themselves with stones, sticks, knives, and axes; the inquisitors sent for a reinforcement of Gascon troops, and every thing appeared to menace violence, and bloodshed, when one of the priests attempted to take the hand of Beatrice as if to lead her away; she looked at him with a steady glance, and he drew back, while she made a sign as if about to speak, and the multitude hushed themselves to silence, and were as still, as when a busy swarm of bees, buzzing and flying about, all at once drop to silence, clinging round their queen, who is the mistress of their motions.

She said, "I appeal to the bishop."

"Yes, to the bishop, — to the good bishop; he is just, — take her to him, — he shall decide the cause."

The inquisitors were prepared to resist this appeal: but the will of the people became a torrent not to be stemmed by them, and it hurried them away. They led the prophetess to the episcopal palace, surrounded by the Gascon soldiery, and followed by an immense multitude, which rent the sky with the cries of their anger and despair.

The bishop received the appeal with deep sorrow. Beatrice stood before him, her arms crossed on her breast, her eyes cast down; but on her face, although the gentlest modesty was depicted, there was no trace of fear; she looked intrepid, yet as if she relied not on her own strength, but on that of another. The inquisitors accused her of being an impostor, a misleader of the people, a dangerous and wicked enthusiast, whom the penitence and solitude of a cloister must cure of her extravagant dreams. They talked long and loud, uninterrupted either by the judge or the prisoner, although the lady Marchesana who stood near could not always restrain her indignation.

At length they were silent; and Beatrice spoke: "You call me an impostor, — prove it! I shrink from no trial, I fear no danger or torture, — I appeal to the Judgement of God, — on that I rest the truth or falsehood of my mission."

She looked around her with her flashing eyes and glowing cheeks; she was all loveliness, all softness; yet there was a spirit within her, which elevated her above, although it mingled with the feminine delicacy of her mind and manners, and which inspired all who saw her with reverence and tenderness. But a small part of the multitude had found their way into the hall of the bishop’s palace; but these could no longer contain themselves; the Judgement of God was a thing suited to their vulgar imaginations, as a strange and tremendous mystery, that excited their awe, their pity, and their admiration: they cried, “God can alone judge of this! let the trial be made!” and their screams overpowered every other sound. The inquisitors joined in the clamour, whether to consent or dissent it was impossible to distinguish; at length the scene became calmer, and the bishop interposed his mild voice, but vainly, — the inquisitors repeated the words, impostor! heretic! madwoman! and Beatrice disdainfully refused all composition. It was finally agreed, that she should be confined for that night in the convent of St. Anna, and on the following morning, under the auspices of the monks of the adjoining monastery, should undergo the Judgement of God, to be pronounced guilty or innocent as that should declare.

Both the inquisitors and Beatrice retired in security and triumph, followed by the multitude, who were careless of the dismay but too plainly painted on the faces of the prophetess’s friends. The lady Marchesana was in dreadful agitation, fluctuating between her faith in the supernatural powers of Beatrice, and her dread lest the trial should bring ruin upon her: she wept, she laughed, she was in a state approaching to madness; until her brother, bidding her confide in God, soothed her to resignation and some degree of confidence. She then retired to pray, leaving the bishop and Castruccio overwhelmed with pity, horror, and indignation.

Then the old man for the first time gave vent to his sorrow:—”Ill-fated victim! headstrong, foolish girl! what are thy prophecies now? thy inspirations and divine aid? alas! alas! the hand of God is upon thee, born in an evil day of a guilty and impious mother! His wrath wraps thee as a cloud, and thou art consumed beneath it; — my love is as bitter ashes, — my hopes are extinct; — oh, that I had died before this day!”

Castruccio was at first too much confounded to offer consolation; but, when he spoke, and bade his friend not despair, the bishop replied: “My lord, she has won my whole soul, and all my affections; why this is, I know not; — is she not beautiful? and she is as good as she is beautiful. She calls me father, and loves me with the tenderness of a child; day and night I have offered up my prayers to God, not to visit on her the sins of her mother; — for her sake I have fasted and prayed, — but all is vain, and she must perish.”

“Not so, father; say not that so lovely a being shall perish under the fangs of these cruel hell-hounds. Do not, I earnestly intreat you, despair: flight! flight is her only safety; father, you have authority, and must save her. I will take charge of her, when she has quitted the walls of the convent, and I will place her in safe and honourable guardianship. Let her fly, — by the sun in heaven she shall escape!”

The bishop remained silent for some time; the same ardent blood did not warm his veins, which boiled in those of Castruccio: he saw all the difficulties; he feared for the success of their scheme; but he resolved to make the attempt. “You are right,” said he; “flight is her only safety: yet it will be rather a rape, than a flight; for willingly she will never consent to desert the high character she has chosen to assume. Did you not mark her triumph, when the Judgement of God was agreed upon? Mad, wild girl! — Let me consider our plan, and weigh our powers. The abbess is a Guelph; but the abbot of the visiting monastery is a Ghibeline; besides the edicts of the church pronounce against these temptations of God’s justice. I will exert myself; and she may be saved.”

When night closed in, these two anxious friends, alone and wrapped up from observation, hastened to the monastery. Castruccio remained in the parlour; and the prelate entered the interior of the convent. He remained two hours; while Castruccio, full of anxiety, continued alone in the parlour, which looked on an interior court with no object to call off his attention, in silent and anxious expectation. He thought of the beauty of the prophetess, her animation and numberless graces, until he almost believed in the divinity of her mission: but he shuddered with horror, when he reflected upon her danger, that her ivory feet should press the burning iron, that, if she fell, she would fall on the hot metal, and expire in misery, while the priests, the accursed, self-constituted distributors of God’s justice, would sing hymns of triumph over her untimely and miserable fate: — he felt tears gather in his eyes, and he would have devoted himself for her safety. At length the bishop reappeared, and they silently returned to the palace.

“Well! where is she?” were the first words of Castruccio.

“Safe I hope, I trust that I shall not be deceived. I endeavoured to move the abbot to let her escape; I would have gone to the abbess, whose consent I must have obtained, and have used all the influence my station would have given me with her; but the abbot stopped me; — he assured me that he would take care that no harm befell the devoted victim; he begged me not to ask an explanation; — that he and his monks had the charge of the preparation for the Judgement, and that much was in their power; again and again he assured me that she should receive no injury.

“I do not like this: — she must be protected by falsehood and perjury, a lying and blasphemous mockery of the name of God. The abbot, who was a servant of the Popes at Avignon, laughs at my scruples; and I am obliged to yield. She will be saved, and God, I hope, will pardon our human weaknesses. Let the sin lie on the souls of those blood-hounds, who would pursue to destruction the loveliest creature that breathes upon earth.”

CHAPTER XVII

THE OLD man was gloomy and depressed; he retired early to prayer. Castruccio had not slept the preceding night, and he felt his eyes weighed down, although in mind he was agitated and restless; he slept some hours, starting from feverish dreams, in which Euthanasia and poor Beatrice, alike in danger, alike weeping and imploring his aid, filled him with agony. He was awaked before day-break by the bishop's servant; he repaired to the bed-chamber of the prelate, who was sitting on a couch, with haggard looks, and eyes red and inflamed with watching.

"My dear lord," cried the bishop, "I pray you pardon me that I disturb your rest; I cannot sleep. In two hours this ceremony — this mockery begins. I shall not be there; it becomes not my character to be present at such temptations of God's justice: this is my excuse. But I could not go; I should die if I were to behold Beatrice bound and suffering. Yet, do you go, and come quickly back to tell me of her success; — go, and see, if the abbot keeps his word, and if ever I shall behold my child again."

Castruccio endeavoured to console his unhappy friend; but the strong affection and fears of the good man would listen to no comfort. "Let her be saved," he said, "and I am content; but this doubt, this pause of horrid expectation, is more than I can bear; I love her more than father ever loved a child, and she was mine by every tie; — I feel my very life-strings crack, sometimes I am apprehensive I shall die in the agony of doubt; go, go, my dearest lord, go and return quickly, if you love me!"

The bell of the church now began to toll, and announced that the monks were occupied in the prayers that were to precede the ceremony; Castruccio hurried to the scene. It was to take place in a large square of Ferrara, under the walls of the garden of the convent of St. Anna, and before the gates of the monastery to the care of whose monks the Judgement was intrusted. As Castruccio approached, he found every avenue choked up by the multitude, and the house-tops covered with people, — even on towers, whence the square could only appear a confused speck, the people crowded in eager expectation. He joined a few nobles who were admitted through the garden of the monastery; as he passed the sacred precincts, he saw the chapel filled with the brothers, who were praying, while high mass was performed to sanctify their proceedings, and the eucharist was distributed as a pledge of their truth.

The square presented a busy, but awful scene; the houses, the windows of the monastery, the walls of the convent, were covered by people; some clinging to the posts, and to the walls; fixing their feet upon small protuberances of stone, they hung there, as if they stood on air. A large part of the square had been railed off in a semicircle round the door of the monastery, and outside this the people were admitted, while it was guarded on the inside by Gascon soldiers, that with drawn swords kept in awe the eager spectators, whose fury of hope and fear approached madness: their voices it is true were still, for the solemn tolling of the bell struck them with awe, and hushed them, as the roar of the lion in the forest silences the timid herd; but their bodies and muscles were in perpetual motion; some foamed at the mouth, and others gazed with outstretched necks, and eyes starting from their sockets.

Within this inclosure one part was assigned for the Dominican brothers, who, in their black habits and red crosses, at an early hour occupied their seats, which were raised one above another in the form of a small amphitheatre; another part was assigned to some of the nobles of both sexes, the spectators of this piteous scene. Within this inclosure was another small one, close to the gate of the monastery; it had two corresponding entrances, near one of which a large cross was erected, and near the other a white standard with the words Agnus Dei embroidered on it. This inclosure was at first empty, except that in one corner a pile of wood was heaped.

Half an hour passed in tremendous expectation: Castruccio felt sick with dread; the heavy and monotonous tolling of the bell struck on his soul, his head ached, his heart sunk within him. At length the gates of the monastery were thrown open, and a number of monks came forward in procession, carrying lights, and chaunting hymns. They saluted the cross, and then ranged themselves round the outside of the inner inclosure; after a pause of a few moments, another party came out with Beatrice in the midst of them; she was wrapped in her capuchin, the cowl drawn over her face; the crowd spoke not as she appeared, but a sound, as of the hollow north-wind among the mighty trees of a sea-like forest, rose from among them; an awful, deep and nameless breath, a sigh of many hearts; she was led to the cross, and knelt down silently before it, while the brothers continued to chaunt alternately the staves of a melancholy hymn.

Then came forth a third party of monks; they bore ploughshares and torches, mattocks and other instruments, that again spread a groan of horror through the multitude. The pyre was lighted; the shares thrown in among the blazing wood; while other monks threw up the soil of the inclosure with their mattocks, forming six furrows, two feet distant one from the other. At length the bell, which had been silent for a few minutes, began again to toll, in signal for the ceremony to begin. At the command of the monks Beatrice arose, and threw off her capuchin; she was drest in a short vest of black stuff, fastened at the waist with a girdle of rope; it was without sleeves, and her fairest arms were crossed on her breast; her black and silken hair was scattered on her shoulders; her feet, whiter than monumental marble, were bare. She did not notice the crowd about her, but prayed fervently: her cheek was pale, but her eyes beamed; and in her face and person there was an indescribable mixture of timidity, with a firm reliance on the aid of a superior power. One of the monks bound her arms, and tied a scarf over her eyes: the shares, white with the excessive heat, were drawn from the fire with large tongs, and the monks crowded round, and fixed them in the furrows; the earth seemed to smoke with the heat as they were laid down.

Then the barrier of the entrance to the inclosure was thrown down; the monks quitted it at the opposite end, and one of them with a loud voice, recommending Beatrice to the justice of God, bade her advance. Every heart beat fast; Castruccio overcome by uncontrollable pity, would have darted forward to save her, but some one held him back; and in a moment, before the second beating of his heart, before he again drew breath, horror was converted to joy and wonder. Beatrice, her eyes covered, her arms bound, her feet bare, passed over the burning shares with a quick light step, and reaching the opposite barrier, fell on her knees, uttering an exclamation of thanksgiving to God. These were the first words she had spoken: they were followed by a long and deafening shout of triumph from the multitude, which now manifested its joy as wildly, as before they had painfully restrained their pity and indignation. They were no longer to be contained by the palings of the inclosures; all was broken through and destroyed; the inquisitors had slunk away; and the Gascon troops galloped off from the ground.

Immediately on the completion of her task, Beatrice had been unbound, and her capuchin was thrown over her; the noble ladies who were present crowded round her; she was silent and collected; her colour indeed was heightened by her internal agitation, and her limbs trembled with the exertion of her fortitude; but she commanded her countenance and spirits, and at least wore the appearance of serenity. She received the congratulations and respectful salutation of her friends with affectionate cordiality; while the air resounded with the triumphant Te Deum of the monks, and the people pressed around, awed, but joyful. They endeavoured to touch the garment of the newly declared saint; mothers brought her their sick children; the unhappy intreated for her prayers; and, however, bashful and unwilling, she was obliged to bestow her blessing on all around. Suddenly a procession of nuns came forth from the garden-gate of the convent; covered with their long veils, and singing their hymns, they surrounded Beatrice, and led her, attended by the other ladies in company, to their cloisters, where her maternal friend the viscountess Marchesana waited to clasp her in her arms.

Castruccio had already returned to the bishop; yet he came not so quickly, but that the news of the success of his Beatrice, passing from mouth to mouth, had reached him. His first emotions were joy, gratitude, and wonder; but these subsided; and the good old man kneeled humiliated, trembling and penitent, when he considered that God's name had been called on in vain, that his consecrated servants were perjured, and that falsehood was firmly established, on foundations where truth alone ought to rest. He listened to the account of Castruccio with interrupted exclamations and tears; and when it was ended he exclaimed, "This is the most miserable — the happiest day of my life!"

In the evening the palace of the prelate was crowded by his friends, who, knowing the interest he took in Beatrice, came to congratulate him on her victory, and to express their delight that God had thought their town worthy of this manifestation of his grace. The bishop, joyful, but full of shame, listened in silence to their conjectures, exclamations, and long relations of the morning's scene; his heart was glad, but he was angry with himself for feeling pleasure at the triumph of falsehood; and, although a smile played on his lips, a blush spread itself over his aged cheeks.

The viscountess Malvezzi, radiant with delight, and the lovely Beatrice blushing under her newly acquired honours, now entered; the nobles pressed round the prophetess, kissing her hand, and the hem of her garment; while she, modest, half abashed, yet believing in her right to the reverence of her friends, smiled upon all. Castruccio was not among the last of her worshippers; she had never appeared so beautiful; her eyes, sparkling with the light of triumph, were yet half hid by their heavy lids, her cheeks glowing, her graceful person, clothed in her modest garb of white woollen, moved with gestures ever new and beautiful: — she seemed another being from her he had before seen, as inspired, as ethereal, but more lovely.

After the crowd of visitors had retired, a few of the intimate friends who formed the council of the bishop remained; the lady Marchesana invited them immediately to adopt some plan for the entrance of their prince into the city; she continued: "I speak but the words of my child, when I say this; pardon me, saintly Beatrice, that I call you thus. It is sweet to me to fancy that you are my daughter, although I am much unworthy of such a child, and you are the offspring of heaven alone."

Beatrice kissed the hand of her excellent friend with respect and gratitude; the bishop was much troubled at his sister's expression; the remembrance of her heretic mother, and his prison-scene with Magfreda, was full in his recollection, and he looked up to heaven, as if to ask God to pardon him, and to avert the punishment of deceit from the guileless Beatrice.

One of the nobles present asked the sacred maiden, to name the day when the prince should enter the town. She said in a gentle voice: "My lords, the hour of victory is at hand: the Popes, in despite of their duty, have deserted their sacred city, have relinquished their lawful rule, and would now establish tyranny among us, — it will not be. Four days hence, on the evening of Monday, we shall receive our sovereign, and on the following morning his banner will be unfurled on the battlements of this city."

"On Monday," cried a noble, "my heart misgives me; methinks it is an AEgyptian day; has no one a calendar?"

"It is an AEgyptian day," exclaimed Beatrice, with vivacity; "but the adverse aspect of the stars falls on our adversaries; for us there is joy and victory."

“Monday is an early day,” said Castruccio; “but as the holy Beatrice commands, so shall it be. And, my honoured lord, I shall leave you at day-break to-morrow. I shall not see you again, divine prophetess, until I come with your prince, to assert his right. I pray you therefore to bless my arms, and cause, that I may be doubly valiant, approved by one whom heaven has sent us.”

Castruccio kneeled to the beautiful girl; he looked up at her with his ardent eyes, his passion-formed lips, and countenance of frank and noble beauty; she blushing placed her hand on his raven hair, and said, “May God bless and prosper thee and thy cause!” — Then, beckoning her aged friend, she silently saluted the company, and withdrew, abashed, confused, but her heart beating with a new and strange sense of pleasure.

The plan for the entrance of the marquess was now arranged. On the night of the fourth of August he was to pass Lago Scuro, and halt with his troops, at the path which led to the secret entrance to the Malvezzi palace. The marquess, Castruccio, and a small party were to enter the house of the viscountess; and Galeazzo to lead the greater part of the remainder to the gates of the town by day-break the following morning; a part was to remain as a corps de reserve, if the small escort of the marquess should prove insufficient to force the opening of the gates, and the entrance of Galeazzo. In that case this more numerous troop was to enter the city through the house of the viscountess, and bring the necessary succour to their prince.

The assembly then broke up; and Castruccio, wearied by the events of the day, fatigued with want of rest, his spirits sinking after their relaxation from the powerful excitements they had sustained, retired early to repose. He took an affectionate leave of the good old prelate, who charged him with many messages of fidelity and attachment to his prince.

The dawn of day beheld Castruccio on the road to Rovigo. The wide plain of Lombardy awoke to life under the rising sun. It was a serene morning; the cloudy mists that settled on the horizon, received the roseate glories of the rising sun, and the soft clouds of gold and pink that awaited his appearance in the east, would have pictured forth to a Grecian eye the chariot of Aurora, or the golden gates which the Hours threw back as Phoebus entered upon his diurnal path.

And does the beauteous prophetess seek her tower to behold the glories of the morn? Beatrice is on the donjon of the palace; and it is true that her eyes are directed towards the rising sun; but there is a casque which flashes under its first beams, a horseman who gallops away from Ferrara, whose form her eyes strain to behold, even when he appears only as a black spot in the distance. She leans her cheek upon her hand, and, lost in meditation, she, most unfortunate, mistakes for the inspirations of Heaven the wild reveries of youth and love: but still her heart was hidden even from herself by a veil she did not even wish to throw aside. She felt gently agitated, but happy; a kind of Elysian happiness, that trembled at change, and wished only for a secure eternity of what it was.

Castruccio was hailed with joy by his friends at Rovigo; and, when the intelligence he brought was heard, every voice was busy in congratulation, every hand in preparation. The knights assisted the squires in furbishing their arms, and securing the various joints and fastenings of their heavy armour, in looking that the trusty blade of the sword was well fixed in the pummel, in selecting the stoutest lances, and in attending to all the other equipments of war; while the fair hands of the ladies prepared the scarfs, which, tied over the hearts of their knights, would preserve them from every wound. No thought of danger and death, — this was to be rather a tournament, wherein with blunted lances they tilted for a sovereignty; and the idea of the Pope, and of their priest-ridden opponents and their foreign guards excited derision alone.

The sun set on the fourth day, and the troops of the marquess Obizzo to the number of four hundred were drawn out before the gates of Rovigo. The expedition was ordered as it had been arranged; and in the depth of night the viscountess, opening the low door of her secret entrance, found the marquess, Castruccio, and their followers, waiting in silence round the short half-buried cross on the marshy moor. A few whispered words of recognition having been spoken, she led them along her galleries, and up the staircase to the inhabited rooms of the palace, lifting up the tapestry of the first apartment; Castruccio did not again know the old, neglected chamber with its decaying furniture. It was hung with silk, festooned with flowers, and lighted by a hundred wax lights; a table was spread with wines, and fruits, and sweetmeats, and other more substantial refreshments; several couches also were placed round the room for the convenience of those who wished to repose.

The viscountess with courtly grace welcomed the marquess to her palace. “My lord,” she said, “for a few hours you must be imprisoned in this apartment; I have endeavoured to decorate your poor dungeon to the best of my power, and indeed shall ever hold this room honoured, since it affords refuge and protection to my sovereign.”

The old lady received the marquess’s heartfelt thanks, and then retired satisfied, to recount to Beatrice the arrival of her guests, and the whispered enquiry of Castruccio concerning the health of the prophetess. But, although she had gilt their cage, the hours passed heavily to the imprisoned chiefs; they watched the stars as they still burned brightly in the sky, and almost uttered a cry of joy when they first perceived them, one by one, fading in the morning light. At length the steps of men were heard about the streets; and the horses which the bishop had provided for the troop came to the door of the palace. The trampling of these horses as they were led to their destination, attracted a small crowd along with them; and, when the strange knights mounted them, and advanced in slow procession along the streets, the crowd increased, and the name of the marquess was whispered, while every one gazed in wonder. At length, when the troop had reached the principal street of Ferrara, they put their horses to the gallop, and raising the Ghibeline war-cry, rode through the town calling on the people to join them, and invoking downfall to the foreign tyrants: a band of citizens, who had been already prepared, obeyed the summons, and they were followed by others, who espoused the party of the prince in their hearts, and joyfully aided his restoration.

The trampling of the steeds, the clash of arms, as the knights struck their shields with their spears, the war-cry of the troops, and the vivas of the crowd, awoke the papal governor, who called out the Gascon soldiery. But it was too late; the marquess reached the gate of the town, put the sentinels to flight, and admitted Galeazzo into the city: then, joined by all the nobility of Ferrara, he rode towards the palace of the governor. The Gascons were drawn up in the great square of the town, but they were unable to withstand the first onset of Obizzo’s party; they fled, and shut themselves up in Castel Tealdo, the fortress of the town, where they were at least safe from sudden attack. The marquess drew his troops around, and threw up his works to prevent their egress; and, leaving to his principal captain the care of the siege, returned to his palace to receive the congratulations of his delighted subjects.

Now joy was the order of the day; the Italians, who had been intrusted with the charge of some of the gates of the town, brought the keys to the feet of their sovereign; the others were broken open; every magistrate brought in his resignation, and many of them petitions for mercy; and lying traitors, who assured him that their faith had never been broken, crowded to the presence-chamber. His throne was erected in the great square, covered with the richest cloth, and surmounted by a magnificent canopy; the troops were marshalled before him, the standards brought and lowered to his feet. A deputation of the noblest counts and knights of Ferrara were sent to convoy the caroccio to the throne of the prince. They went to the cathedral; and the monks led it forth, adorned with its splendid trappings and standards, the gold cross and white flag of the Popes waving above all. They yoked to it four beautiful dove coloured oxen, on whom they cast rich trappings of scarlet cloth; and then, to the sound of trumpets, surrounded by the knights, and followed by a procession of priests singing a Te Deum, it was drawn to the square before the throne of Obizzo; then with a triumphant flourish, the standard of the Pope was lowered, and that of the house of Este raised to its ancient eminence. Festivities of every kind followed this joyful event, triumphant festivities, untarnished with blood; for few of the subjects of the marquess were hostile to his return, and these either went into voluntary exile, or joined the refugees in Castel Tealdo.

CHAPTER XVIII

CASTRUCCIO was no inactive partaker in this busy scene. But, after the combat was finished, and he perceived that Obizzo was engaged in acts of peaceful sovereignty alone, he hastened to the palace of the bishop; for he was painfully surprised in not seeing him among the nobles who waited on the prince. The old man was ill: he had been dreadfully agitated by the scenes of the preceding days, and his health for a while sunk under it. Castruccio was introduced into his chamber, where he lay peacefully sleeping on a magnificent couch, his adopted child, the lovely Beatrice, watching before him, who, when she beheld Castruccio, blushed deeply, while, in spite of every effort, a smile of delight spread itself over her expressive countenance.

"He is not very ill," she said in a low voice, in answer to Castruccio's enquiries; "the fever has left him entirely; he is weak, but recovering. He sleeps sweetly now: look at him; at his reverend grey hairs strewn over his naked temples; look at his eyes, sunken with age, yet, when open, beaming with benevolence and affection: look what a gentle smile there is upon his pale lips; there he sleeps, affection, benevolence, matchless virtue, and excelling wisdom, all cradled by the baby Sleep; I have been contemplating him for more than an hour; he draws his breath as regularly as a sleeping infant who has sucked its fill, and his heart heaves slowly, but calmly. It is a heavenly sight to look on the repose of this good old man; it calms wild passion, and sheds the fresh dew of healthful meditation over the strange reveries of youth."

She spoke in a whisper; but her countenance was all animation. The old man moved; and, pressing her finger on her lips, she paused. "Beatrice, my child," he said, "I have slept long and soundly, and feel quite well. Who is that stranger? does he bring news from the marquess? Aye, I remember this is the day, — I am strangely confused; I recollect now that I heard of his success before I slept."

"Father, it is my lord Castruccio, who, after having reinstated our prince in his sovereignty, visits your sick chamber."

Castruccio remained several hours conversing with the bishop; he gave him an account of the action of the morning, and Beatrice listened with her whole soul in her eyes; yet, attentive as she was to the narration, she watched with sweet earnestness her sick friend, turning her looks from him to the animated face of Castruccio; and again, as she crept near her adoptive father, she adjusted some pillow, or performed some little office that marked her earnest observation.

"How beautiful she is!" thought Castruccio, "and what will become of her?" He fixed his eyes on the silver plate on her forehead. "Yes, she is the Ancilla Dei, a maiden vowed to God and chastity; yet her eyes seem penetrated with love; the changeful and blooming colours of her face, her form, which is all that imagination can conceive of perfect, appear not like those of a cloistered nun. Ah! Beatrice, if you would be sacred to your God, you ought to hide your surpassing loveliness with thick veils, behind treble grates. But she is a prophetess; something more than human; — a character unapproachable even in thought."

Thus Castruccio tried to disentangle his perplexed thoughts, still looking on the maiden, who, suddenly raising her eyes, and meeting his which were fixed on her silver plate, blushed even till the tips of her fingers became a rosy red; and then, complaining in an hesitating voice, that the plate hurt her brow, she untied it; while her silken hair, no longer confined, fell on her neck.

Thus many hours passed, and when at length the prophetess retired, it was to feverish meditation, and thoughts burning with passion, rendered still more dangerous from her belief in the divine nature of all that suggested itself to her mind. She prayed to the Virgin to inspire her; and, again giving herself up to reverie, she wove a subtle web, whose materials she believed heavenly, but which were indeed stolen from the glowing wings of love. Kneeling, her eyes raised to heaven, she felt the same commotion in her soul, which she had felt before, and had recognised as divine inspiration; she felt the same uncontrollable transport and burst of imaginative vision, which she believed to flow immediately from the invisible ray of heaven-derived prophecy. She felt her soul, as it were, fade away, and incorporate itself with another and a diviner spirit, which whispered truth and knowledge to her mind, and then slowly receding, left her human nature, agitated, joyful, and exhausted; — these were her dreams, — alas! to her they were realities.

The following morning she again met Castruccio in the chamber of the bishop. She now looked upon him fearlessly; and, if the virgin modesty of her nature had not withheld her, her words would have been as frank as she innocently believed them to be inspired. But, although she was silent, her looks told that she was changed. Her manner the day before had been soft, concentrated, and retiring; now she was unconstrained; her eyes sparkled, and a joyous expression dwelt in every feature. Her manner towards her guardian was endearing, nor was the affectionate modulation of her voice different when she addressed his guest: Castruccio started to hear it. It reminded him of the accents of Euthanasia, whom for a while he had forgotten; and, looking at Beatrice, he thought, “How lovely she is, and yet how unlike!”

Several days passed thus; Beatrice became embarrassed; it seemed as if she wished to speak to Castruccio, and yet dared not: when she approached, she blushed, and again drew back, and would again seek him, but again vainly. She had framed the mode of her address, conned and reconned the words she should say; but, when an opportunity occurred to utter them, her voice failed her, the memory of what she was about to utter deserted her, and it was not until the approach of a third person took from her the possibility of speaking, that speech again returned, and the lost occasion was uselessly lamented. At night she sought the counsels of heaven, and gave herself up to her accustomed ecstasies; they always told her the same things, until to her bewildered and untamed mind it seemed as if the spirit that had power over her, reprimanded her hesitation, her little trust in the promises of heaven, and her reluctance to follow the path it pointed out.

“Surely, oh! most certainly,” she thought, “thus I am commanded by the Power who has so often revealed his will to me. Can I penetrate his hidden designs? can I do more than execute his decrees? did I not feel thus, when with prophetic transport I foretold distant events that surely came to pass? when I foresaw yet afar off the death of Lorenzo, that lovely child blooming in health, when every one called me a false prophet? And yet he died. And now, the marquess’s return? nay, am I not approved by heaven? did I not escape from the malice of my enemies through its miraculous interposition? Oh! I will no longer scan with presumptuous argument, purposes that are ruled by mightier hands than mine; I will resign myself to the guidance of what has ever conducted me aright, and which now points out the path to happiness.”

The next morning, her cheeks flushed, her eyes weighed down, trembling and abashed, she sought Castruccio. It is impossible that there should not have been much tenderness in his manner towards this lovely girl; her history, her strange and romantic contemplations and impulses, and the great intimacy which had arisen between them, were sufficient for this. He regarded her also as a nun; and this made him feel less restraint in the manner of his address, since he feared not to be misconstrued; while at the same time it gave an elevation and unusual tone to his ideas concerning her, that made him watch her every motion with interest. She now approached; and he said playfully; “Where is thy mark, prophetess? art thou no longer the Maiden of God? For some days thou hast cast aside the hallowed diadem.”

“I still have it,” she replied; “but I have dismissed it from my brow; I will give it you; come, my lord, this evening at midnight to the secret entrance of the viscountess’s palace.” Saying these words, she fled to hide her burning blushes in solitude, and again to feel the intoxicating delusions that led her on to destruction.

Castruccio came. If it were in human virtue to resist the invitation of this angelic girl, his was not the mind, strictly disciplined to right, self-examining and jealous of its own integrity, that should thus weigh its actions, and move only as approved by conscience. He was frank and noble in his manner; his nature was generous; and, though there lurked in his heart the germ of an evil-bearing tree, it was as yet undeveloped and inanimated; and, in obeying the summons of Beatrice, he passively gave himself up to the strong excitements of curiosity and wonder.

He went again and again. When the silent night was spread over every thing, and the walls of the town stood black and confused amidst the overshadowing trees, whose waving foliage was diversified by no gleam of light, but all was formless as the undistinguishable air; or if a star were dimly seen, it just glistened on the waters of the marsh, and then swiftly the heavy web of clouds hid both star and water; when the watch dogs were mute, unawakened by the moon, and the wind that blew across the plain alone told to the ear the place of the trees; when the bats and the owls were lulled by the exceeding darkness; it was on such nights as these, that Castruccio sought the secret entrance of the viscountess's palace, and was received by the beautiful Beatrice, enshrined in an atmosphere of love and joy.

She was a strange riddle to him. Without vow, without even that slight shew of distrust which is the child of confidence itself; without seeking the responsive professions of eternal love, she surrendered herself to his arms. And, when the first maiden bashfulness had passed away, all was deep tenderness and ardent love. Yet there was a dignity and a trusting affection in her most unguarded moments, that staggered him: a broken expression would sometimes fall from her lips, that seemed to say that she believed him indissolubly hers, which made him start, as if he feared that he had acted with perfidy; yet he had never solicited, never promised, — what could she mean? What was she? He loved her as he would have loved any thing that was surpassingly beautiful; and, when these expressions, that intimated somewhat of enduring and unchangeable in their intercourse, intruded themselves, they pained and irritated him: he turned to the recollection of Euthanasia, his pure, his high-minded, and troth-plight bride; — she seemed as if wronged by such an idea; and yet he hardly dared think her purer than poor Beatrice, whose soul, though given up to love, was imbued in its very grain and texture with delicate affections and honourable feelings; all that makes the soul and living spark of virtue. If she had not resisted the impulses of her soul, it was not that she wanted the power; but that, deluded by the web of deceit that had so long wound itself about her, she believed them, not only lawful, but inspired by the special interposition of heaven.

Poor Beatrice! She had inherited from her mother the most ardent imagination that ever animated a human soul. Its images were as vivid as reality, and were so overpowering, that they appeared to her, when she compared them to the calm sensations of others, as something superhuman; and she followed that as a guide, which she ought to have bound with fetters, and to have curbed and crushed by every effort of reason. Unhappy prophetess! the superstitions of her times had obtained credit for, and indeed given birth to her pretensions, and the compassion and humanity of her follow creatures had stamped them with the truth-attesting seal of a miracle. There is so much life in love! Beatrice was hardly seventeen, and she loved for the first time; and all the exquisite pleasures of that passion were consecrated to her, by a mysteriousness and delusive sanctity that gave them tenfold zest. It is said, that in love we idolize the object; and, placing him apart and selecting him from his fellows, look on him as superior in nature to all others. We do so; but, even as we idolize the object of our affections, do we idolize ourselves: if we separate him from his fellow mortals, so do we separate ourselves, and, glorying in belonging to him alone, feel lifted above all other sensations, all other joys and griefs, to one hallowed circle from which all but his idea is banished; we walk as if a mist or some more potent charm divided us from all but him; a sanctified victim which none but the priest set apart for that office could touch and not pollute, enshrined in a cloud of glory, made glorious through beauties not our own. Thus we all feel during the entrancing dream of love; and Beatrice, the ardent, affectionate Beatrice, felt this with multiplied power: and, believing that none had ever felt so before, she thought that heaven itself had interfered to produce so true a paradise. If her childish dreams had been full of fire, how much more vivid and overpowering was the awakening of her soul when she first loved! It seemed as if some new and wondrous spirit had descended, alive, breathing and panting, into her colder heart, and gave it a new impulse, a new existence. Ever the dupe of her undisciplined thoughts, she cherished her reveries, believing that heavenly and intellectual, which was indebted for its force to earthly mixtures; and she resigned herself entire to her visionary joys, until she finally awoke to truth, fallen, and for ever lost.

In the mean time peace was entirely restored to Ferrara: on the fifteenth of August Castel Tealdo surrendered, and the Pope's governor, with his foreign guard, quitted the territories of the marquess of Este. Galeazzo Visconti returned to Milan, but still Castruccio lingered: he wished to go; he found himself out of place as a dangling courtier in the train of Obizzo; but how could he leave Beatrice? What did she expect or wish? The passionate tenderness that she evinced, could not be an ephemeral spark of worthless love; and how often did the We, she used in talking of futurity, make him pause when he wished to speak of their separation! She seemed happy; her words flowed in rich abundance, and were adorned with various imagery and with delicate thoughts, shewing that her soul, at rest from fear, wandered as it was wont amidst the wilds of her imagination. He found her untaught, undisciplined, but so sincere, so utterly forgetful of self, so trusting, that he dared not speak that, which each day shewed more clearly would be as a dagger to her heart. A thousand times he cursed himself for having mistaken her, and imagining, inspired as she believed herself to be, that her actions and feelings had not been dictated by the loftiest impulses. But the time arrived, when he was obliged to undeceive her; and the hand, that tore away the ties her trusting heart had bound round itself, at the same time tore away the veil which had for her invested all nature, and shewed her life as it was — naked and appalling.

They sat in her apartment at the Malvezzi palace; she radiant, beautiful, and happy; and, twining her lovely arms around Castruccio, she said: “The moon will set late tomorrow — night, and you must not venture here; and indeed for several nights it will spread too glaring a beam. But tell me, are you become a citizen of Ferrara? They averred that you were the head of a noble city; but I see they must have been mistaken, or the poor city must totter strangely, so headless as your absence must make it. How is this, my only friend? Are you not Antelminelli? Are we not to go to Lucca?”

Castruccio could not stand the questioning of her soft yet earnest eyes; he withdrew himself from her arms, and taking her hands in his, kissed them silently. “How is my noble lord?” she repeated, “have you had ill news? are you again banished? that cannot be, or methinks my heart would have told me the secret. Yet, if you are, be not unhappy: — your own Beatrice, with prophetic words, and signs from heaven that lead the multitude, will conduct you to greater glory and greater power than you before possessed. My gentle love, you have talked less about yourself, and about your hopes and desires, than I should have wished: — Do not think me a foolish woman, tied to an embroidery frame, or that my heart would not beat high at the news of your success, or that with my whole soul I should not enter into your plans, and tell you how the stars looked upon your intents. In truth my mind pants for fitting exertion; and, in being joined to thee, dearest love, I thought that I had found the goal for which heaven had destined me. Nay, look not away from me; I do not reproach thee; I know that, in finding thee, in being bound to thy fate, mine is fulfilled; and I am happy. Now speak — tell me what has disturbed thy thoughts.”

“Sweetest Beatrice, I have nothing to tell; yet I have for many days wished to speak; for in truth I must return to Lucca.”

The quick sensations of Beatrice could not be deceived. The words of Castruccio were too plain; she looked at him, as if she would read the secret in his soul, — she did read it: — his downcast eyes, confused air, and the words he stammered out in explanation, told her every thing. The blood rushed to her face, her neck, her hands; and then as suddenly receding, left even her lips pale. She withdrew her arms from the soft caress she had bestowed; playfully she had bound his head with her own hair and the silken strings entangled with his; she tore her tresses impatiently to disengage herself from him; then, trembling, white, and chilled, she sat down, and said not a word. Castruccio looked on with fear; he attempted consolation.

"I shall visit thee again, my own Beatrice; for a time we must part; — the viscountess — the good bishop — you cannot leave them, — fear not but that we shall meet again."

"We shall meet again!" she exclaimed with a passionate voice; "Never!"

Her tone, full of agitation and grief, sunk into the soul of Castruccio. He took her hand; it was lifeless; he would have kissed her; but she drew back coldly and sadly. His words had not been those of the heart; he had hesitated and paused: but now compassion, and the memory of what she had been, awoke his powers, and he said warmly, and with a voice whose modulations seemed tuned by love: "You mistake me, Beatrice; indeed you do. I love you; — who could help loving one so true, so gentle, and so trusting? — we part for a while; — this is necessary. Does not your character require it? the part you act in the world? every consideration of honour and delicacy? — Do you think that I can ever forget you? does not your own heart tell you, that your love, your caresses, your sweet eyes, and gentle words, have woven a net which must keep me for ever? You will remain here, and I shall go; but a few suns, a few moons, and we shall meet again, and the joy of that moment will make you forget our transient separation."

How cold were these words to the burning heart of the prophetess; she, who thought that Heaven had singled out Castruccio to unite him to her, who thought that the Holy Spirit had revealed himself to bless their union, that, by the mingled strength of his manly qualities, and her divine attributes, some great work might be fulfilled on earth; who saw all as God's command, and done by his special interposition; to find this heavenly tissue swept away, beaten down, and destroyed! It was to his fortunes, good or bad, that she had bound herself, to share his glory or soothe his griefs; and not to be the mistress of the passing hour, the distaff of the spinning Hercules. It was her heart, her whole soul she had given; her understanding, her prophetic powers, all the little universe that with her ardent spirit she grasped and possessed, she had surrendered, fully, and without reserve; but alas! the most worthless part alone had been accepted, and the rest cast as dust upon the winds. How in this moment did she long to be a winged soul, that her person heedlessly given, given only as a part of that to the whole of which he had an indefeasible right, and which was now despised, might melt away from the view of the despiser, and be seen no more! The words of her lover brought despair, not comfort; she shook her head in silence; Castruccio spoke again and again; but many words are dangerous where there is much to conceal, and every syllable he uttered laid bare some new forgery of her imagination, and shewed her more and more clearly the harsh reality. She was astounded, and drank in his words eagerly, though she answered not; she was impatient when he was silent, for she longed to know the worst; yet she dared not direct the course of his explanations by a single enquiry: she was as a mother, who reads the death — warrant of her child on the physician's brow, yet blindly trusting that she decyphers ill, will not destroy the last hope by a question. Even so she listened to the assurances of Castruccio, each word being a fresh assurance of her misery, yet not stamping that last damning seal on her despair.

At length grey dawn appeared; she was silent, motionless and wan; she marked it not; but he did; and rising hastily he cried, "I must go, or you are lost; farewell, Beatrice!"

Now she awoke, her eyes glared, her lovely features became even distorted by the strength of her agony, — she started up—"Not yet, not yet — one word more! Do you — love another?"

Her tone was that of command; — her flashing eyes demanded the truth, and seemed as if they would by their excessive force strike the falsehood dead, if he dared utter it: he was subdued, impelled to reply: —

"I do."

"Her name?"

"Euthanasia."

“Enough, I will remember that name in my prayers. Now, go! seek not to come again; the entrance will be closed; do not endeavour to see me at the house of the bishop; I shall fly you as a basilisk, and, if I see you, your eyes will kill me. Remember these are my words; they are as true, as that I am all a lie. It will kill me; but I swear by all my hopes never to see you more. Oh, never, never!”

She again sank down pale and lifeless, pressing her hands upon her eyes, as if the more speedily to fulfil her vow. Castruccio dared stay no longer, he fled as the dæmon might have fled from the bitter sorrows of despoiled Paradise; he left her aghast, overthrown, annihilated.

He quitted Ferrara that day. He was miserable: careless of the road, he sought solitude alone. Before night he was among the wild forests of the Apennines, — and there he paused; he was surrounded by the dark pine-forests that sung above him, covered by a night which was cloudy and unquiet, for the swift wind drove the rack along the sky, and moaned, and howled; while the lightnings of a distant storm, faint, but frequent, displayed the savage spot on which he rested. He threw himself from his horse, and abandoned himself to sorrow: it stung him to reflect, that he was the cause of sharpest pain to one who loved him; and the excuses he fondly leaned upon before his explanation, broke as a reed under the wild force of Beatrice’s despair. He had heard her story, he knew her delusions, and ought not to have acted towards her, as to a fellow-being who walked in the same light as himself, and saw objects dressed in the same colours: a false sun made every thing deceptive for her eyes, — and he knew it.

Yet what could he now do? Go again to Beatrice? Wherefore? What could he say? but one word—”forget me!” And that was already said. His early vows, his deepest and his lasting hopes, were bound up in Euthanasia: she depended on him alone; she had no father, no relation, none to love but him. She had told him that she gave up her soul to him, and had intreated him not to cast aside the gift. Beatrice had never demanded his faith, his promise, his full and entire heart; but she believed that she had them, and the loss sustained by her was irretrievable.

Yet she would soon forget him: thus he reasoned; hers was one of those minds ever tossed like the ocean by the tempest of passion; yet, like the ocean, let the winds abate, and it subsides, and quickly again becomes smiling. She had many friends; she was loved, nay, adored, by all who surrounded her: utter hopelessness of ever seeing him again would cause her to forget him; her old ideas, her old habits would return, and she would be happy. His interference alone could harm her; but she, the spoiled child of the world, would weep out her grief on some fond and friendly bosom, and then again laugh and play as she was wont.

He spent the following day and night among these forests; until the tempest of his soul was calmed, and his thoughts, before entangled and matted by vanity and error, now flowed loose, borne on by repentance, as the clinging weeds of a dried — up brook are spread free and distinct by the re-appearance of the clear stream. He no longer felt the withering look of Beatrice haunt even his dreams; it appeared to him that he had paid the mulct of remorse and error; the impression of her enchantments and of her sorrows wore off; and he returned with renewed tenderness to Euthanasia, whom he had wronged; and, in the knowledge that he had shamed her pure lessons, he felt a true and wholesome sorrow, which was itself virtue. Yet he dared not go back to her; he dared not meet her clear, calm eye; and he felt that his cheek would burn with shame under her innocent gaze. He suddenly remembered his engagement to visit Pepi, the old Ghibeline politician, who, without honesty or humanity, snuffed up the air of self-conceit, and who, thus inflated, believed himself entitled to cover others with the venom of sarcasm and contempt.

“Yes, old fox!” he cried, “I will unearth you, and see if there is aught in your kennel worth the labour. Methinks you would give out as if gold were under the dirt, or that power and wisdom lurked beneath your sheepskin and wrinkles; but believe me, my good friend, we Italians, however base our politics may be, are not yet low enough to feed from a trough with you for the driver.”

The recollection of something so low and contemptible as Benedetto of Cremona, relieved Castruccio from a load of dissatisfaction and remorse. Comparing Pepi with himself, not directly, but by inference of infinite contempt, he felt that he could again unabashed raise his eyes. This was not well; far better was the blush of humiliation which covered him in comparing his soiled purposes and strayed heart to something high and pure, than the ignoble heavings of self-consequence in matching himself with such a blotted specimen of humanity as Pepi. So, as we are wont, when we return from the solitude of self-examination to the company of fellow-sinners, he twisted up again the disentangled tresses of his frank and sincere thoughts into the million-knotted ties of the world's customs and saintly-looking falsehoods; and, leaving the woods of the Apennines, something wiser in self-knowledge, and but little improved in generous virtue, and the government of his passions, he put spurs to his horse, and turned his steps towards Cremona.

CHAPTER XIX

IT was on the evening of the tenth of September that Castruccio arrived at the bridge which Pepi had indicated. No one was there, except an old woman spinning with a distaff, who from her age and wrinkles might have served for a model of the eternal Fates; for her leathern and dry, brown skin, did not seem formed of the same frail materials as the lily cheek of a high-bred dame. She looked full at Castruccio; so that he laughing asked her, whether she would tell him his fortune.

"Aye," replied the beldame, "though no witch, it is easy for me to tell you what you are about to find. Say the word you were bid repeat here, and I will conduct you where you desire to go."

"Lucca."

"Enough; follow me. He of whom you wot, will be glad that you come alone."

She led him out of the high road, by numberless lanes through which his horse could hardly break his way, among the entangled bushes of the hedges. The woman trudged on before, spinning as she went, and screaming out a few notes of a song, returning to them again and again with a monotonous kind of yell, as loud as it was discordant. At length they arrived at a mean suburb of Cremona; and, traversing a number of dirty alleys and dark streets, they came to one bounded on one side by the high, black, stone wall of a palace. The old woman knocked at a small, low door in this wall, made strong with iron clamps, and which, when cautiously opened, appeared not less in thickness than the wall of the palace itself. It was Pepi's muscular, but withered hand, that turned the massy key, and forced back the bolts of three successive doors that guarded this entrance. After having admitted Castruccio (the old woman being left behind with the horse, to lead him to the front gate of the palace), he closed the doors with care; and then, it being quite dark within the passage, he uncovered a small lamp, and led the way through the gallery, up a narrow staircase, which opened by a secret door on the great and dreary hall of the palace. This vast apartment was hardly light, although at the further end a torch, stuck against the wall, flared with a black and smoky flame.

“Welcome again, noble Castruccio, to my palace,” said Pepi: “I have waited anxiously for your arrival, for all my hopes appear now to depend upon you. At present, since you appear wet and cold, come to the further hall, where we shall find fire and food: and pardon, I intreat you, my homely fare, for it is by economy and privation that I have become that which I am.”

The manners of Pepi were unusually inflated and triumphant; and Castruccio wondered what new scene a being, whom he considered as half a buffoon, and half a madman, intended to act. A large fire blazed in the middle of the second hall, and a pot hung over it containing the supper of the family: Pepi took Castruccio’s cloak, and spread it carefully on the high back of a chair; and then he pushed a low bench close to the fire, and the two friends (if so they might be called) sat down. There was no torch or lamp in the room; but the flame of the burning wood cast a broad glare on Benedetto’s face, which Castruccio observed with curiosity; his brows were elevated, his sharp eyes almost emitted sparks of fire, his mouth was drawn down and compressed with a mixed expression of cunning and pride; he threw another log on the blazing hearth, and then began to speak: —

“My lord Castruccio, I think it were well that we should instantly enter on our business, since, when we have agreed upon our terms, no time must be lost in our proceeding. My proposition last May, was, as you may remember, to restore this town to the Ghibelines; and this is in my power. Cane, the lord of Verona, is I know about to approach with an army to besiege it, and it rests with me whether he shall succeed or not. If he do not agree to my terms, he must fail, as I may well say that the keys of this town rest with me. It is true, that when I spoke to you in May, I did not know that Can’ Grande would attempt the town, and in that case I should have needed no more aid from you than your mere interposition: but in affairs of importance a mediator’s is not a humble task; and I hope that you will not disdain to act a friendly part towards me.”

Pepi paused with an inquisitive look; and Castruccio, assuring him of his amicable dispositions, intreated him to continue his explanation, and to name what he called his terms. Benedetto continued: “My terms are these, and truly they may easily be fulfilled; of course Cane only wishes to take the town out of the hands of the Guelphs, and to place it in trust with some sure Ghibeline; now let him make me lord of Cremona, and I will engage, first to put the town into his hands, and afterwards on receiving the investiture, to aid him with men during war, and pay him a tribute in time of peace. If he agree to this, let him only lead his troops to the gate of the town, and it shall be his without costing him one drop of blood."

Castruccio listened with uncontrollable astonishment. He looked at the wrinkled and hardly human face of the speaker, his uncouth gait and manners, and could scarcely restrain his contempt; he remembered Pepi's want of every principle and his boasted cruelty; and disgust overcame every other feeling; but, considering that it was as well to understand the whole of the man's drift, after a moment's pause he replied: "And where are the keys of the town which you say are in your possession?"

"Would you see them?" cried Pepi, starting up with a grin of triumph; "follow me, and you shall behold them."

He called his old woman, and, taking the lamp from her hand, he bade her prepare the supper; and then with quick steps he conducted Castruccio from the apartment: they crossed the court into the second hall, and he opened the door of the secret staircase. After Pepi had again carefully closed it, he opened another door on the staircase, which Castruccio had not before observed, and which was indeed entirely concealed in the dirty plaster of the wall. "Even she," said Pepi, pointing towards the hall, "even my old witch, does not know of this opening."

After closing it, he led the way through a dark gallery, to another long and narrow flight of stairs, which seemed to lead to the vaults underneath the castle. Castruccio paused before he began to descend, so deeply was he impressed with the villainy of his companion; but, remembering that they were man to man, and that he was young and strong, and his companion old and weak, and that he was armed with a sword, while Pepi had not even a knife at his girdle, he followed his conductor down the stairs. Flight after flight succeeded, until he thought they would never end; at length they came to another long gallery, windowless and damp, which by its close air indicated that it was below the surface of the ground, and then to various dreary and mildewed vaults in one of which stood two large chests.

"There," cried Pepi, "are the keys of the town."

"Where?" asked Castruccio, impatiently, "I see them not."

Pepi turned to him with a grin of joy; and, taking two keys from his bosom, he knelt down, and exerting his strength, turned them in their locks, and threw back the lids of the chests, first one, and then the other: they were filled with parchments.

"I do not understand this mummery; how can these musty parchments be the keys of your town?"

Pepi rubbed his hands with triumphant glee; he almost capered with delight; unable to stand still, he walked up and down the vault, crying, "They are not musty! they are parchments of this age! they are signed, they are sealed; — read them! read them!"

Castruccio took up one, and found it to be a bond obliging the signer to pay the sum of twenty thousand crowns on a certain day, in return for certain monies lent, or to forfeit the sum of thirty thousand, secured on the lands of a noble count of Cremona.

"They are usurious bonds," said Castruccio, throwing it down angrily.

"They are," replied Pepi, picking up the deed, and folding it carefully; "said I not well that I had the keys of the town? Every noble owes me a part, many the best part, of his estate. Many bonds are forfeited; and the mulct hangs over the signer by a single thread. There is count Grimaldi, whose bond was due the very day after his castle was plundered and burned, and his lands laid waste by the Germans; he owes me more than he can ever pay, though his last acre with his patent of nobility went with it, and he after with his brats, to beg at the doors of the Guelphs, his friends. There is the marquess Malvoglio who bought the life of his only son, a rank traitor, from the emperor by the sums which I lent him, which have never been repaid. This box is full of the bonds made before the siege of Cremona; it was concealed above in my tower when you last visited me; and this is full of those made since that time; you see the harvest the good emperor brought me. When the Germans quitted the town, my halls were filled with the beggarly Guelph nobility—'Messer Benedetto, my wife has not a garment to cover her!' 'Messer Benedetto, my palace is in ruins!' 'Messer Benedetto, my beds are destroyed, my walls are bare of furniture!'—'Oh! Messer Benedetto, without your aid my children must starve!'

"'Aye, my friends,' said I, 'I will help you most willingly; here are parchments to sign, and gold to spend!' — For in the interim I had called in my debts from various other towns, and had two chests of gold ready for the gaping hounds; some read the bonds, and complained of the conditions; the greater number signed without reading them; none have been paid; now they are all mine, body and soul; aye, with these bonds, the devil himself might buy them."

"And this is the trade by which you have become rich, and to support which you have sold your paternal estate?"

"Ah! Messer Castruccio," replied Pepi, his countenance falling, "not only have I sold every acre, but I have starved myself, exposed myself by my beggarly garb to the jeers and mocks of every buffoon and idiot, who had been weaned but a year from his mother's milk: a knight in sheep-skin was an irresistible subject for ridicule; I have been patient and humble, and by my submissive mien have lulled my debtors into security, till the day of payment passed; then I have come upon them, received no payment, but got fresh bonds, and then with renewed hypocrisy, blinded them again till I have drawn their very souls from their bodies; — and they and theirs are mine. Why, Cane is himself my debtor, here is his bond for ten thousand florins of gold, which I will burn with my own hands, when by his exertions I am made lord of Cremona."

Castruccio, who had steadily curbed his contempt, now, overcome by indignation, burst forth like thunder on his host: "Thou vile Jew," he exclaimed, "utter not those words again! Thou, lord of Cremona! A usurer, a bloodsucker! — Why all the moisture squeezed from thy miserable carcase would not buy one drop of the noble heart's tide of your debtors. — And these parchments! Thinkest thou men are formed of straw to be bound with paper chains? Have they not arms? have they not swords? Tremble, foolish wretch! Be what thou art, — a sycophant. — No, thou art not human; but in these filthy vaults thou hast swollen, as a vile toad or rank mushroom; and then, because thou canst poison men, thou wouldst lord it over them! Now, thou base-minded fellow, be advised to cast off these presumptuous thoughts, or with my armed heel I will crush thee in the dust!"

Pepi was pale with rage; and, with a malignant, distorted smile, which his quivering lips could hardly frame, he said, "Fair words, my lord of Lucca; remember this is my palace, these vaults are mine, and of these passages I alone have the key, know alone of their existence."

"Slave! do you threaten?"

Castruccio had scarcely uttered these words, when he perceived Pepi gliding behind him; with eyes that flashed fire, he darted round, and transfixed by their gaze the wretched traitor; as he cast up his arm with the passionate gesture of indignation and command, Pepi grew pale with terror; it seemed to him, as if he already felt the menaced vengeance of his youthful enemy; his sharp eyes became glazed, his knees trembled, his joints relaxed, and the dagger that he had already drawn from his bosom fell from his nerveless hand. All had passed so silently, that the fall of the weapon seemed to strike like thunder on the pavement, and it re-echoed along the vaults. Castruccio smiled with a feeling too lofty even to admit contempt; it was the smile of power alone. — Pepi fell upon his knees; when, suddenly perceiving that Castruccio glanced his eye from the lamp to the parchments, and then to the lamp again, the fear of losing his precious documents overcame every other feeling, and he tried, prostrate as he was, to dart past his foe, and blow out the light; Castruccio waved his hand to keep him off, and the miserable traitor again shrunk back, and fell upon the ground in an agony of impotent rage and terror.

Castruccio now spoke in a restrained and firm tone: “Fear not; I came hither as a friend; and, though you have broken your faith with me, yet will I not mine with you: — I promised not to betray your secret, and I will not. But remember; if by these or any other means you attempt to oppress your townsmen, I will raise such a nest of hornets about you, that then, as now, you may intreat my mercy. Now give me the keys of your vaults and passages; and then up, and shew me the way from this infernal den.”

Trembling and aghast, his strait lips white with fear, Pepi gathered himself from the pavement; with unwilling hand he gave up the keys of his vault, cast one lingering glance on his treasure, and then, followed by Castruccio, who held the lamp, he quitted his den with a hesitating and unequal gait; for his late terror made him halt, and even his coward fear lest Castruccio should yet stab him in the back as they ascended the stairs. The doors were unlocked and thrown open; for no time was allowed, as in descending, for the careful drawing of bolts and turning of locks in their progress. Castruccio was eager to leave the pestilential air of the place, and to bid farewell to his treacherous and loathsome host. They at length arrived at the head of the staircase; and Pepi would have opened the door that led to the hall.

“Down, villain!” cried Castruccio, “let me go the shortest way from your devilish abode.”

"But your cloak; you left your cloak in the further hall."

"It is my legacy to thee, old fox; — it will serve to wrap your crazed limbs, and to remind you of my promises when you descend again to your tomb."

Pepi went down stairs, and opened the several doors of his palace; and Castruccio hastened past him, feeling new life as he breathed the fresh air of the open street. His enemy, now seeing him on the other side of the gates, threw off his terrors, and collecting all his malice from his heart to his miserable physiognomy, he said: "My lord Castruccio, might I say one word to you?"

"No, not one syllable: remember this night, and so farewell."

"Yet not farewell without my curse; and that I will spit after thee, if thou hadst the speed of an eagle."

The impotent wretch grinned and stamped with rage, when he saw his enemy pass on unheeding, and quickly disappear. Yet anger was not a passion that could long hold possession of the heart of Benedetto; he remembered that his dear chests were safe; and, although he still shuddered at their imminent peril, yet he satisfied himself with the deep contempt he felt towards his foe, who had allowed him, while thus in his power, to escape unhurt.

As he ascended the stairs he gazed on the lamp, and with a ghastly smile, said: "Thou wert the instrument he purposed to use, and I will tread thee to dust. His time will come, and his heart's blood and his soul's agony shall repay me for my wrongs; and so will I wind my snares, that he himself shall proclaim me lord of Cremona."

In a journey that Castruccio made to Lombardy some years after, he enquired concerning his old enemy; and, hearing that he was dead, he listened with curiosity to the relation of the last scenes of Benedetto's life. Ten days after their interview (in the September of the year 1317), Cane della Scala approached Cremona to besiege it; but, after passing some weeks before the walls, the rains, and the ravages which had been effected in the territory of his allies, the Modenese, obliged him to withdraw. Whether Pepi were terrified by the warning of Castruccio, or feared a similar reception to his propositions from Can' Grande, cannot be known: but it is certain that he made no effort to enter into a treaty with him at that time.

In the month of March of the following year Cane received a visit from the ambitious usurer at his palace in Verona. Pepi had grown wise by experience, and in this interview managed his treaty with great skill. He bought for the occasion a vest of scarlet silk and boots of Tartarian fur; fastening on his gilt spurs, throwing his gold fringed cloak over his shoulders, and putting on his head a conical cap of the newest fashion, encircled with a golden band, he mounted a good horse; and, thus caparisoned, he appeared, in his own and in his old woman's eyes, as accomplished and noble a knight as by the stroke of a sword it were possible to dub; nor did he, in his conference with Cane, mention what his means were by which he intended to betray the city, but merely boasted of his power of admitting the army of the lord of Verona, if it should appear before the gates, and named, as the condition of this service, his being instituted its lord in vassalage to Cane, if his Ghibeline townsmen should agree to receive him as their chief. The veteran commander easily acceded to these stipulations; and, the time and other circumstances being agreed upon, Pepi returned to Cremona to prepare for his future government.

His great art consisted in attacking all the nobles for their debts at the same time; and these were so numerous, and of so considerable an amount, that it created much confusion in a town which had been enfeebled by perpetual wars. The nobles, as Castruccio had predicted, reflected that they had arms in their hands, and that their debts being all due to one man, they could by his death easily free their shoulders from a heavy burthen. It was then that Pepi began to disclose to each separately his readiness to destroy their bonds, if through their means he was admitted to be lord of Cremona. The Ghibelines objected the strong opposition they should meet with from the Guelphs; to these he confided the hopes he entertained of aid from Cane della Scala. The Guelphs, now much enfeebled, appeared more tractable, since he endeavoured to persuade them that it would be wholly in his power to prevent the Ghibelines from exiling them; and he promised to act as a moderator between the parties. He was listened to, and many promised him their assistance, each in his heart despising the usurer, but believing that each by his single vote would be of no service to raise him to the sovereignty, and that by fair words they should discharge their heavy debts.

Pepi had so managed, that he had got the keys of one of the gates into possession; he admitted the troops of the lord of Verona; but he found that after all he did not possess the influence he had hoped over the minds of his townsmen. When the Ghibeline war-cry was raised, all the Guelphs of the city, distrusting either the promises or the power of their creditor, assembled in arms; and a tumult ensued, which ended in the defeat of the popular party, and the triumphant entrance of Cane into the town.

Pepi fell in that tumult: whether by a chance-blow, or by the resolved dagger of one of his debtors, cannot be ascertained. But his dead body was discovered among the slain; and, so great was the enmity of his townsmen against him, that, although Cane and his troops had already entered the city, the whole population rushed in fury towards his palace, and in a few hours the massy walls, the high tower, and all the boasted possessions of Pepi were, as himself, a loathsome and useless ruin. The hidden and unknown vaults were undisturbed; and the paper wealth of the usurer lay buried there, to rot in peace among the mildews and damps of those miserable dungeons.

CHAPTER XX

IMMEDIATELY after the restoration of the marquess of Este to the government of Ferrara, Galeazzo Visconti returned to Milan; and thence, after a short delay, he made a journey to Florence. The apparent motive of this visit was to accompany a younger brother, who had been long betrothed to a Florentine lady; and the period had now arrived for the celebration of their marriage. But he had other secret views: he had heard of the engagement of Castruccio to the countess of ; and, this name being famous as belonging to a Guelph family, he thought that he had now discovered the cause of the peace concluded by Castruccio with Florence, and he resolved to ascertain the motives and plans of his friend; and if the countess were really the jealous Guelph fame gave her out to be, he determined to spare neither artifice nor falsehood to disturb their union.

The destined bride of young Azzo Visconti was a near relation of Euthanasia. The family of Adimari to which she belonged, although originally Guelphs, had been united to the party of the Bianchi, and had been expelled with them; with the exception of that branch which adhered to the Neri, of which the father of Euthanasia was the chief. But the children of several of these exiles continued with those of their relations who remained in Florence; and Fiammetta dei Adimari, although the daughter of an exile of the faction of the Bianchi, had continued to reside in Florence under the protection of an aunt. Her father had made himself famous in the wars of Lombardy; and it was there that the union between her and Azzo Visconti had been projected.

When the youth came with Galeazzo to celebrate the marriage, Fiammetta removed to the palace of Euthanasia, it being from her abode, as the head of the family, that the bride ought to be taken, when her husband should come to demand her. Galeazzo calculated on the frequent occasions of meeting that this circumstance would afford, to commence the plot he had formed on the mind of Euthanasia.

These illustrious visitors were received with honours by the magistrates of Florence: a palace was assigned for their abode, and several nobles were commissioned to shew them all that was curious in the city. Florence was then one of the finest towns in Italy; yet certainly its beauty must have been far inferior to that which it boasts at present. Its chief ornaments were palaces of massy stone, surmounted by high towers, each able to sustain a siege: some specimens of this architecture, the Palazzo Strozzi, and the Palazzo Pitti, now a ducal residence, exist to this day. They are grand and imposing; but the sombre air which they give to the streets, was better suited to those warlike and manly times, than to the taste of the present age, when the Italian heaven shines on few who would defend their own home, though its strength were that of an impregnable fortress. The Cathedral, or Duomo, afterwards the pride of Florence, was then just commenced; but the extent of its area, and the solidity of its foundations, justified the high tone of the public decree for its erection, which declared that it should surpass in beauty every other building then existing in Italy, and be the wonder of the modern world. Among other curiosities, Galeazzo was conducted to the dens of the numerous lions and lionesses kept at the expense of the republic: there were nearly an hundred of these animals, that lived sumptuously, maintained by the superstition of the Florentines, who believed their welfare to be symbolical of that of the state.

In their visits to these wonders of Florence the Visconti were accompanied by many of the young nobles of both sexes, and Euthanasia and Fiammetta were among the number. Galeazzo, from the moment of his arrival, had directed his entire attention to the unravelling the character of Euthanasia, and from all that he heard and saw, became convinced that she was the cause of the fluctuations of Castruccio's mind, and that their union must be prevented; otherwise he would never proceed against the Guelphs with the vigorous hostility which was necessary to their suppression. At first Galeazzo kept apart from Euthanasia; he was unwilling to enter into conversation with her, until, finding out the secret chords of her mind, he might play upon them with a master's hand.

They visited among the other curiosities of Florence the tomb of the family of the Soldanieri. This vast receptacle for the dead was built under ground, and received but small light from a grated window which opened into one of the cloisters of the church: it was the custom of this family to coffin their dead in brazen statues, apparently armed cap-à-pié; and these statues were mounted on brazen figures of horses, so that the population of the cemetery resembled a party of armed knights ready for action. The tomb was viewed by the light of innumerable torches; and there was a grim solemnity in the appearance of this troop of bronze horses, each carrying the brazen statue which imitated the living form and mien of the corpse therein coffined, that might well strike the spectator with awe; each voice was hushed as they gazed, and the younger part of the assembly hastened to quit a place which damped all their hilarity. The lights disappeared with them; and for a while Euthanasia lingered behind almost in the dark; for the solitary torch that remained, could hardly do more than make darkness visible; and the sunbeam which had strayed from its right path into the abode of the dead, tinged with its light a few of the casques of the knights, who, though their eyes and brain were within the case, neither saw nor felt the ray. Such a sight must have impressed any one with melancholy; all was still; — Euthanasia, apparently surrounded by an armed band on horseback, for the twilight gave life to the figures, yet felt about her the silence of death; her own step, her own breath, were noisy intruders in the cavern: — nor did her mute companions rest in an enchanted sleep — they were dead, — decay was at work among their frames, and the chill of mortality exhaling from the brass, made the vault as cold as it was silent.

She left the tomb with slow steps; and, at the foot of the stairs by which she would mount to daylight, Galeazzo was waiting to conduct her. Her companions were already far distant; their voices even had died away; and, as she traversed the cloisters, she appeared little inclined to break the silence between herself and her companion. At length Galeazzo spoke; and, after a few trivial remarks on the scene which they had visited, he said:

"I have long sought the opportunity now afforded me, Madonna Euthanasia, to introduce myself more particularly to your notice. As the friend of Castruccio, I hope to find myself already recommended to some portion of your kindness and regard."

Euthanasia replied with courtesy to this speech; and Galeazzo continued: "Being at the head of the Ghibelines of Lombardy, it is not wonderful that an intimacy should subsist between Castruccio and myself; — for our interests are the same; and, if by his alliance I hope to extend my dominion in the north of Italy, I trust that my name as his friend and ally, will aid him in his future designs even on this town itself."

"His designs on this town!" repeated Euthanasia.

“Aye; for in truth he encourages the hope, whether it be wild or practicable I hardly know, of overthrowing this nest of republicans, and making himself prince or imperial vicar of Tuscany. But why should I talk of his plans to you, Madonna, who must know them far better than I? Besides, it may be dangerous to speak here, even in whispers, of such things; who knows if some Guelph may not overhear me?”

“Indeed, my lord,” replied Euthanasia, with a faint smile, “you divine like an astrologer; for truly I overhear you, and I am a Guelph.”

“A Guelph!” repeated Galeazzo, with well feigned astonishment;—”Are you not an Adimari? Madonna Euthanasia dei Adimari?”

“I am also countess of ; and that name will perhaps unravel the enigma. Yes, my lord, I am a Guelph and a Florentine; it cannot therefore be pleasing to me, to hear that Castruccio has formed such designs upon my native town. Yet I thought that I knew him well; and, if you had not seen him since our separation, I should believe that your information was founded on some mistake. As it is — tell me, if you be not bound to secrecy, what you know of his plans.”

“Madonna, Castruccio honours me with the title of his friend, and secrecy and faith are the bonds of friendship. When I spoke so unguardedly of his designs, I thought I spoke to one who knew them far better than myself: if I have unawares betrayed the concealed counsels of Antelminelli, I do most bitterly repent me; and do you graciously remit to me my fault, by laying no stress on my foolish words.”

Euthanasia was silent; her mind was too much disturbed to know immediately what part to take. She had believed in Castruccio’s promises of peace; and the foundations of her very life seemed to give way, when his faith appeared tainted with falsehood. She knew him to be ambitious; and suddenly the thought struck her, that Galeazzo alluded only to his romantic conception of future union among the Italian states, into which she also had entered, and which might easily be mistaken for schemes of war and conquest. Upon this belief she renewed the conversation, and told her companion that he must have mistaken the meaning of Castruccio; that it was the chief’s wish, as it was of all patriotic Italians, to unite the factions that caused so much bloodshed and misery to their country; but that war was not the measure he intended to adopt to bring about a pacific termination.

It was now Galeazzo's turn to be silent; he looked down, and answered in monosyllables, and seemed to wish to make Euthanasia believe, that she might have divined well the plans of Castruccio, though he could not himself believe they were of so peaceful a nature. Euthanasia continued to talk; for she seemed to gather faith in what she desired from her own words. Galeazzo remained silent, and replied with downcast eyes to her appealing words and looks; — at length, after a pause, he appeared to make a struggle to throw off the embarrassment of his demeanour; and looking up, "Madonna," said he, "let me intreat you to mention this subject no more. If I thought that your conjectures were right, I would frankly say so; but I do not: — each word that you utter makes me believe that Antelminelli conceals his true designs from you; and, since he has chosen me as the depositary of his secret, I should be a traitor to friendship and honour, if I disclosed it. You will see him soon, and then you can unravel the mystery; in the mean time, I pray you rest content with my assurance, that Castruccio meditates nothing unworthy his name and glory."

These few words destroyed the peace of Euthanasia. She became sorrowful and disturbed; her countenance, betraying the secret of her heart, no longer displayed that calm and softness which were before its characteristics; the brightness of her eyes, if it was not quenched, only shone forth at intervals, and she mingled most unwillingly in the festivities of the nuptial ceremony. Galeazzo watched her carefully; her perceived the effect his words had had on her; and he determined to follow them up by a system of conduct, which should leave no doubt in her mind as to the truth of his assertions. Instead of avoiding Euthanasia, he now sought her society on all occasions, and often talked to her of Castruccio, whom he always mentioned in a style of excessive praise; yet with this he contrived to mix words, hints, or looks, which seemed to say that he followed other counsels, and devised other schemes than those of which she was aware; meanwhile all this was done in so light a manner, touched on so cursorily, and then dismissed, that, as she listened, the clue of truth slipped from her, and she felt as if lost in a pathless wilderness.

The preparations for the marriage were sumptuous. Every day large parties assembled at the palace of Euthanasia; and, when the day declined, song and dance passed away the hours of darkness. The day at length arrived, when Fiammetta should first be led to church, and thence to the palace where her husband resided. Early in the morning she and her noble friends of her own sex prepared for the ceremony, by attiring themselves in the most magnificent manner. Gold and jewels sparkled on their robes, and their dark hair twisted with pearls, hung in tresses on their shoulders; married ladies only were admitted to the nuptial procession and feasts; and Euthanasia alone, as an independent chieftainess and sovereign, claimed an exemption from this rule.

This day, so gay in appearance, and full of joyous demonstrations, Euthanasia had passed more sadly, than if she had spent it in the silence and solitude, where she would not have been obliged to hide the sorrow she felt at her heart. In the evening Galeazzo informed her, that a courier, coming from Ferrara, had brought a letter to him from Castruccio; and he appeared with difficulty to yield to her intreaties to shew it to her. It contained merely excuses for his delay at Ferrara, and mentioned his speedy return:—"Yet," added he, "I shall not meet you in the cave of the Lioness, for you will surely be gone before my return. Were it not for a pearl which the wild animal guards for me, I would never enter her den but as her enchainer. But no more of this; you know my plans; and, if the viper and eagle unite in firm accord, surely both her heel and her head may receive a deadly wound."

The meaning of these words was too plain; the viper was the crest of the Visconti, the eagle of the Antelminelli, and union between them was to destroy fair Florence, her native city. Euthanasia felt sick at heart; she gave back the letter in silence, and looked as a lily bent by the wind, which bows itself in patience and suffering to the storm. She remembered her vow not to unite herself to the enemy of Florence; and she resolved to abide by it. Her residence of these few weeks in her native town had endeared its inhabitants to her; she had renewed her early friendships; she was again among them, one of them; — and could she unite herself to a man who would bring havoc upon her best friends? She dreaded the reproachful voice of her conscience; and, in her well regulated mind, the fear of self-condemnation would have been sufficient to deter her from incurring such a penalty: but all the feelings of her heart here interposed; her youthful friendships; her daily habits of intercourse and mutual kindness. The favourite companion of her younger days was now married to the chief of one of the citizen-bands of Florence, who would be exposed foremost to the swords of Castruccio's soldiers; the dearest friend of her father would lead his troop also against them. Her marriage with him, on condition of being party in his victories over the Florentines, and rejoicing in the death of those she loved, would be as if she united herself to the rack, and bound herself for life, body and soul, to the ever renewing pangs of some tyrant-invented torture. It could not be: her resolution was made; and the energy of her soul qualified her to complete the sacrifice.

The following day Galeazzo and his brother returned with Fiammetta to Milan. They took a kind leave of Euthanasia; and the last words of Galeazzo were, "Forget, Madonna, all that I may have said to pain you; let not Castruccio find that I have done him an ill office in your favour; and be assured that my sorrow will be most poignant, if you find that I have infused erroneous ideas into your mind as to his plans and wishes."

Shortly after their departure, news arrived that Castruccio would return to Florence in two days. Euthanasia heard this with trembling; — but a short time before she had earnestly desired to see him, that she might clear up all her suspicions, and that certainty of good or evil might decide her fate; — now she feared the death that might suddenly come to all her hopes; and she felt as if but to gain a day, or a few hours, of doubt and expectation, were to gain so much of life: to insure this she took the hasty resolution of quitting Florence, and returning to her castle before the arrival of her suitor. Accordingly, attended by her domestics alone, after having taken a sudden leave of her friends, she departed.

How different was her present journey from that undertaken with Castruccio but a few months before! She was then happy and confiding; but now anxious doubt pervaded her, and fears that would not sleep. She had resolved, if the ambition of Castruccio could not content itself except with the destruction of the liberties of Florence, that she would never be his; but this resolution gave her no calm; the seal neither of life nor death was placed on her hopes: and she strove to expect good; while the fear of evil flushed her cheek, and filled her eyes with unshed tears. The year was on its decline; the myrtle flowers had faded from the mountains, and the chestnut-woods were tinged with brown and yellow; the peasants were busy among the vines; and the trellised arbours they had formed, and the sweet shades of green among which the purple grapes hung, were now pulled down, defaced and trodden upon: the swallows were collecting for their flight, and the chill mornings and evenings announced the near approach of hoary winter. The sluggish scirocco blotted the sky with clouds, and weighed upon the spirits, making them dull and heavy as itself.

Euthanasia saw all this with the observant eye of grief, which refers all things to itself, and forms omens for its own immortality from combinations more unsubstantial than the Sibylline leaves. The autumnal rains threatened nigh at hand; and the year had been much curtailed of those sweet days which follow the hot Italian summer, when the hunter feels his bow injured by the heavy dews of night, but when the noonday sun shines with tempered heat, and sets leaving the downcast eyelids of night heavy with tears for his departure; when we feel that summer is gone, and winter is coming, but the fresh — looking evergreens, the stately cypress, the fruit-burthened olive, and the dark ilex, tell us that nature is not merely a fair-weather friend. Our sorrowing traveller compared the quick advance of winter that she now witnessed, with its long delay of the preceding year, and sighed.

She arrived at her castle on the first of October; and the moment she had arrived, the storm, which for many days had been collecting from the south the force of autumnal rains and thunders, broke over her head. The white lightning sped in forked chains around the sky, and without pause or interval, deluged the midnight heaven with light, which shewed to her, as she stood at the window of her apartment, the colours of the trees, and even of the few flowers which had survived to witness the advent of the storm. The thunder broke in tremendous and continued peals, and the rain awoke in a moment the dried up sources of the mountain torrents; yet their liquid career was not heard amidst the tumult: for, if the thunder paused, the echoes prolonged the sound, and all nature seemed labouring with the commotion. Euthanasia watched the progress of the tempest; and her ear, filled with its almost deafening noise, could not distinguish the sounds, which at other times would have been audible, of horses' hoofs as they ascended the rock of , or the clang at the castle-gate, or the letting down of the draw-bridge; the first sound alien to the storm that visited her sense, was her own name pronounced in a well known and soft voice:

"Euthanasia!"

"Castruccio! you here?"

"Yes, it is I, — Castruccio; — yet I will instantly depart, if you command. I have followed fast upon your steps; — but why are you here? Why did you not remain at Florence?"

For nearly two years Euthanasia had cherished, unblamed by herself, the most fervent love for Castruccio. The union had been delayed; but the sentiment continued as a deep and clear stream, or rather like a pure lake, which in its calmness reflects more vividly and enduringly the rock that hangs eternally above it, than does the tempest-shaken water. They had been separated nearly three months; and, now that she saw and heard him again, her first impulse was, clasped in his arms, to seal with one caress a joyous forgiveness; but she checked herself. Confounded by his sudden appearance, and distracted by the many feelings that pressed upon her, she wept: — she wept long and silently; while her lover stood near her without speaking, looking at her by the glare of the continued lightnings, as they flashed in fast succession, and made day in the chamber.

After a long pause, he spoke with less impetuosity: "Why did you not remain at Florence?"

She looked up at him, and her voice quivered, as she replied: "I cannot tell you now; I am confused, and words refuse themselves to me: my heart is full, and I am most unhappy, — to-morrow I will explain all."

"Now or never; — Euthanasia, you must not trifle with me, — are you mine?"

"If you are your own."

"What does that mean?" cried Castruccio, starting. "Of what then do you accuse me? You speak in riddles: understand, I intreat you, a plain speech, and answer me with frankness. I love you; I have long loved you; and you alone have so long delayed the union which God knows how much I desire. Now you have brought it to a crisis: — Will you be mine?"

It is difficult to answer the language of passion with that of reason: besides Euthanasia was not herself passionless, and there was a feeling in her heart that pleaded more strongly in Castruccio's favour than all his arguments. She felt subdued; yet she was angry with herself for this, and remained a long time silent, endeavouring to collect herself. At length she replied:

"Why do you press me to answer you now? or rather, consult your own heart, and that will answer for me. You have known mine long. — I love you; — but I have other duties besides those which I owe to you, and those shall be fulfilled. My father's lessons must not be forgotten, when the first occasion arrives for putting them in practice; nor must I be wanting to that sense of duty, which until now has been the rule of my life. I am a Florentine; Florence is my native country; nor will I be a traitor to it."

"Well, — and what do you conclude from this?"

"Are you not the enemy of Florence? Are you not contriving war and chains for its happy and free state? You turn away impatiently; to-morrow I will see you again, and you will then have reflected on my words: my fate depends on your true and frank reply to my question. Now leave me; I am worn out and fatigued, and to-night I cannot support the struggle into which you would lead me. To-morrow I shall see you; farewell; the storm has now passed, and the rain has quite ceased. Good night!"

"You leave me thus; and thus you reward me for suspense, jealousy and despair. Good night, Euthanasia. You sacrifice me to a bubble, to the shadow of a bubble, — be it so! Great God! that you should be influenced by such a chimæra! Well, you decide; and I shall expect your award with what patience I may. Again, good night."

He left her to doubt, suspense and grief. But her high mind bore her through all; and, having marked for herself the line of duty which she believed she ought to pursue, the natural enthusiasm of her character aided her to struggle with the misery which her sensibility inflicted upon her. Castruccio himself came to her aid; and the events which followed fast on the scene of this night, served to strengthen her resolution, and, if they did not make the sacrifice more easy, they rendered its necessity more palpable.

CHAPTER XXI

DURING his absence Castruccio had reduced in his own mind his various political plans to a system. He no longer varied either in the end which he desired to attain, or the means by which he resolved to accomplish it. He thought coolly on the obstacles in his way; and he resolved to remove them. His end was the conquest of Tuscany; his means, the enslaving of his native town; and, with the true disposition of a conqueror and an usurper, he began to count heads to be removed, and hands to be used, in the furtherance of his designs. He had no sooner returned to Florence, than messengers brought him intelligence of a plot, which would speedily break out in Lucca to deprive him of his government; and this information, joined to the departure of Euthanasia, determined him instantly to return to the Lucchese territory.

He was no longer the same as when he had quitted it; he returned full of thought, — with a bent brow, a cruel eye, and a heart not to be moved from its purpose of weakness or humanity. The change might appear sudden, yet it had been slow; — it is the last drop that overflows the brimming cup, — and so with him the ambition, light-heartedness, and pride which he had long been nourishing, now having made for itself a form, "a habitation and a name," first manifested itself in its true colours to the eyes of man. Ambition, and the fixed desire to rule, smothered in his mind the voice of his better reason; and the path of tyranny was smoothed, by his steady resolve to obtain the power, which under one form or other it had been the object of his life to seek.

The morning after his return to Lucca he reviewed his troops: they were devoted to him, and by their means he intended to secure his power. He assembled the senate, and surrounded the palace of government with his soldiers; he took his seat at its head, with the countenance of one who knows, and can punish his enemies. He addressed the assembly in few words, saying, that it was by their power he had been raised to the government, and that it now behoved them to support him in its exercise. "I know," he cried, "I have many enemies here, — but let any one of them step forth, and say the ill that I have done to the republic; — I who have fought its battles, secured its prosperity, and raised it from the being the servant of proud Florence to be its rival. What, will none of you come forward to denounce me, now that I appear, face to face, to answer your accusations? Randolfo Obizzi, I call upon you, who would despoil me of the power this senate conferred upon me; — and you, Aldino, who have plotted even my death; — can ye whisper as traitors, and cannot ye speak as men? Away! — the moment of mercy is short: — three hours hence the gates of Lucca will be shut, and whoever among you or your partizans are found within its walls, will pay the forfeit of his life for his temerity.”

The senate would now have broken up; but, when Castruccio saw that his enemies had all departed, he called on the rest to stay, and aid him on this momentous occasion. The decree for banishing the conspirators was then formally passed, and another for demolishing three hundred towers of so many palaces, which were as strong holds and fortresses within the town. The senate was then dismissed, — the troops paraded the streets, and before night-fall three hundred families, despoiled of their possessions, and banished their native town, passed through its gates in mournful procession. The soldiers were employed in demolishing the towers; and the ruins were carried to the eastern quarter of the city, to be used in the erection of a new wall. Castruccio, now master of Lucca, and triumphant over his enemies, felt that he had taken the first step in the accomplishment of his plans.

Euthanasia had remained in her castle in anxious expectation of a visit or a message from Castruccio; — neither came: but late in the afternoon Teresa Obizzi, one of her dearest friends, was announced to her.

“Why so mournful, dear Teresa?” asked her friend. “What has happened? Are you also unfortunate?”

“I hardly know what has happened, or where I am,” replied Teresa. “Methinks the thunder of heaven has fallen among us; all the Obizzi family is banished Lucca, and not these alone, but the Bernardi, the Filippini, the Alviani, and many more, are exiled, and their possessions confiscated.”

“Why, how is this? What new change has occurred in Lucca?”

“Nothing new, dear countess. In truth I believe there was a plot against Antelminelli, and that some of the Obizzi were concerned in it. But Castruccio examines nothing; and, including us all in one general sentence, has wrapped us like a whirlwind, and carries us, God alone knows whither. And my poor father! I threw myself at the consul’s feet; yes, I, the wife of the proud Galeotto Obizzi, and prayed that my poor father might be allowed to remain."

"And he refused?"

"He said, 'You have heard the sentence; he best knows whether he be implicated in it; I have sworn by God and St. Martin that this nest of Guelphs and Neri shall be rooted out of Lucca, and that the will of the senate shall be obeyed. Let him look to it; for after three hours the life of a partizan of the Obizzi will be held no dearer than the earth on which I tread.'"

"Castruccio said this? Did he answer you thus, Teresa?"

"He did, dear Euthanasia; but I must away; I came to bid you farewell, — a long farewell; my father and my husband wait for me; pray God to pity us; — farewell!"

"Not so, Teresa. This castle is not his, and may afford an asylum to his victims. Come here; repose here awhile at least. Bring your father, your babes; come and teach me what sorrow is, and learn from me to bear it with fortitude."

As the evening advanced, others of her friends arrived, and confirmed all that Euthanasia had before heard. She was confounded, and unable to believe that it was indeed Castruccio who had caused these evils. Whence arose this sudden change in his character? Yet, was it sudden? or, was there indeed any change? She remembered words and looks, before forgotten, which told her that what now took place was the offspring of deep thought and a prepared scheme. Yet again, unable to believe the full extent of the evil that she heard, she sent to Lucca to intreat Arrigo Guinigi to hasten to her. Arrigo was with Castruccio when the message came.

"Go, my dear boy," said the latter; "her woman's heart trembles perhaps at this day's work. Shew her the necessity of it; and make her think as little unkindly of me as you can. Notwithstanding her coldness and perplexing ideas about duty, I love her, and must not have her be my enemy. If she would be content with any thing except the peace with Florence for the morgincap, all my power and possessions were at her feet."

Arrigo went to : Euthanasia saw him alone; and, pale and almost breathless, she asked what had caused this change, and whether he knew what the schemes of Castruccio were?

"Indeed, Madonna," replied Arrigo, "I do not; I believe that he aims only at the security of his own state; and many of those he has exiled had plotted against his government."

"It is possible; tyrants ever have enemies; but it were as well to raze the city, as to banish all her citizens. There cannot be less than a thousand souls included in his edict; women and infants, torn from all the comforts, all the necessaries of daily life, cast upon the world to weep and call down curses on him. What does he mean?"

"He suspects all whom he has banished, and has strong secret reasons for his conduct; of that, Euthanasia, you may be sure. When I asked him why he banished so many of his fellow — citizens, he replied laughing, 'Because this city is not big enough for them and me.' And then he told me seriously, that his life was alone preserved by the vigorous measures of this morning."

"Be it so; I wish I could believe him; I do indeed trust that there is nothing wanton in his severity; yet methinks he had better have banished himself, than so many families, who now go as beggars through the world. He also was banished once; they say that princes learn from adversity; I believe it; they learn a cunning in cruelty the prosperous can never know."

"Nay, dear countess, speak not so hardly of him. Castruccio was born to rule; he is noble-minded, but firm of resolution; and can you blame him for securing a life on which the welfare of Lucca, perhaps of Italy, depends?"

Euthanasia did not reply; she knew, although from the gentleness of her nature she had never participated in it, that there was then in Italy a spirit of cruelty, a carelessness for the life and pain of others, which rendered it less wonderful that Castruccio should have adopted a mode of conduct similar to that of most of his contemporaries. It is strange, that man, born to suffering, and often writhing beneath it, should wantonly inflict pain on his fellows; but however cruel an individual may be, no one is so remorseless as a ruler; for he loses even within himself the idea of his own individuality, and fancies that, in pampering his inclinations, and revenging his injuries, he is supporting the state; the state, a fiction, which sacrifices that which constitutes it, to the support of its mere name. Euthanasia knew that she ought not to apply the same rule of conduct to a prince, as to a private individual; yet that Castruccio should have tainted himself with the common vices of his tribe, was a shock, that unsettled the whole frame of her mind; it unveiled at once the idol that had dwelt in the shrine of her heart, shewed the falseness of his apotheosis, and forced her to use her faculties to dislodge him from the seat he had usurped.

A few days after, Castruccio came himself to the castle of . He came at a time when many other visitors were there, and among them several whom he knew to be his secret enemies. He took no notice of this; but, with the frankness of manner for which he was remarkable, he entered into conversation with them, and treating them as on a perfect equality with himself, he soon softened the angry mood with which they had at first regarded him. All political discussion was avoided; and the conversation turned on one of those domestic tragedies which were then too common among the petty courts of Italy, where each little lord possessing supreme power, and unrestrained by principle, was ever ready to wash supposed dishonour from his name in the blood of those who had caused the stigma. The one at present under discussion was of peculiar horror, and was the more singular, since nature had vindicated her violated laws on their infringer, and he who boasted of his morality in indulging his passionate revenge, was now pursued by remorse and madness, and the ghosts of his victims hunting him through the world, gave him no rest or hope. One of the company, a Milanese, said, that it was impossible that remorse could have caused the madness of Messer Francesco; since in revenging the injury his wife had done him, he only followed the example set him by hundreds of his countrymen; and if he had gone beyond them in cruelty, it merely proved that his love, and his sense of honour transcended theirs.

Castruccio replied; “Far be it from me to plead for those childish notions, which would take the sword out of the hand of princes, and make them bind men of iron with chains of straw. But it does surprise me, that any man should dare so to idolize himself, as to sacrifice human victims at the shrine of his pride, jealousy or revenge. Francesco was a monster, when he tortured and murdered his wife; he is now a man, and feels the fitting remorse for so foul a deed. Man may force his nature, and commit deeds of horror; but we are all human beings, all the children of one common mother, who will not suffer that one should agonize the other, without suffering in his turn a part of the anguish he has inflicted.”

After a time the other visitors departed; and Euthanasia was left alone with Castruccio. For a while they were silent; the changeful colours of her cheek might shew, that love had not forgotten its accustomed course, but rushed in a warm flood to her heart, and then ebbed, commanded by a power hardly less strong than that which bids the ocean pause; the power of virtue in a well formed human heart. Castruccio watched her; but, in the returning calmness of her eye, and in her unhesitating voice when she did speak, he read all of female softness, but none of female weakness.

"Will you pardon me," she said, at length, "if I speak frankly to you; and not take in ill part the expression of those reflections to which your late words have given rise?"

Castruccio smiled, and replied, "Madonna, I know already what you are about to say; but you are mistaken in your conclusions. I said that no man could with impunity sacrifice the lives of his fellow-creatures to his own private passions; but you must not torture my meaning; the head of a state is no longer a private man, and he would act with shameful imbecility, if he submitted to his enemies because he dared not punish them."

Euthanasia replied to this, and drew a lively picture of the sufferings of the exiles, but Castruccio answered laughing, "You speak to one wiser on that subject than yourself. Have not I been an exile? and do you think that I forget our mournful procession, when we poor Ghibelines left Lucca nearly twenty years ago? And do you think that the Neri would have reigned, if they had not turned us out; and how should I reign, if I permitted this horde of Guelphs to sit here, and plot in my citadel? Their very number is an argument against them instead of being one in their favour. But let us leave this discussion, my too compassionate Euthanasia, and for a moment cast our thoughts on our own situation. There must be some end put to the riddle, some crown to a work, which seems as if it were to have no conclusion. I will be frank with you; I am neither going to turn hermit, and, laying down my sceptre, to take up with a crucifix: nor like your friends, the holy fathers of the church, am I going to war with money and falsehood, instead of with my sword. I am lord of Lucca, and shall continue so as long as God permits me. I am at the head of the Ghibelines in Tuscany, and my design is that the Ghibelines should put down their old enemies; and, seeing a fair prospect of success, I shall neither spare words nor blows against those who would oppose me in this undertaking. You are a Guelph; but surely, my dear girl, you will not sacrifice your happiness to a name, or allow party-spirit to get the better of all the more noble feelings of your nature."

Euthanasia listened with attention, and answered in mild sadness; "It does not appear to me, Castruccio, that I sacrifice any thing noble in my nature, when I refuse to unite myself to the enemy of my country. As a Ghibeline you know that I loved you; and it is not words alone that cause my change; fight the Florentines with words only, and I am still yours. But more than I love Florence, or myself, or you, Castruccio, do I love peace; and my heart bleeds to think that the cessation of bloodshed and devastation which our poor distracted country now enjoys, is to be of short duration. Have you not lived in a country suffering from war? Have you not seen the peasants driven from their happy cottages, their vines torn up, their crops destroyed, often a poor child lost, or haplessly wounded, whose every drop of blood is of more worth than the power of the Cæsars? And then to behold the tears and despair of these poor creatures, and to find men who would still inflict them, — and for what? The bubble is yours, Castruccio. — What would you have? Honour, fame, dominion? What are these if peace do not purchase them, but contempt, infamy and despotism! Oh! rule your own heart; enthrone reason there, make virtue the high priest of your divinity; let the love of your fellow — creatures be your palace to dwell in, and their praises your delicate food and costly raiment; and, as all sovereigns have dungeons, so do you have them, in which your pride, ambition, and, forgive the word, your cruelty, may be enchained; and then the purple-clad emperors of Constantinople may envy your state and power.

"Why do you cause this cruel combat? or, why would you increase the struggle in my heart? As the enemy of Florence I will never be yours; as the deliberate murderer of the playmates of my infancy, of the friends of my youth, of those to whom I am allied by every tie of relationship and hospitality that binds mankind, as such, I will never be yours. Here then is the crown of the work; the sea in which the deep and constant stream of my affections loses itself, — your ambition. Let these be the last words of contest between us: but if, instead of all that I honour and love in the world, you choose a mean desire of power and selfish aggrandizement, still listen to me. You are about to enter on a new track, yet one on which the course of thousands of those that have gone before you is to be seen: do not follow these; do not be sanguinary like them; — the Italians of the present day have all a remorseless cruelty in them, which will stain the pages of their history with the foulest blots; let yours be free from these!

"Pardon me that I speak to you in this strain. From this moment we are disjoined; whatever our portions may be, we take them separately. Such is the sentence you pronounce upon us."

Castruccio was moved by the fervour of Euthanasia; he tried to alter her determination, to argue her from the point of difference between them, but in vain; he moved her to tears. She wept, but did not reply: her purpose was fixed, but her heart was weak; she loved for the first and only time; and she knew that she sacrificed every hope and joy in life, if she sacrificed Castruccio. But she was firm, and they parted; a parting that caused every nerve in Euthanasia's frame to thrill with agony.

She tried to still these feelings, to forget that she loved; but tears, abundant tears, alone eased the agony of her heart, when she thought, that the soft dreams she had nourished for two years were vain, gossamer that the sun of reality dissipated. Sometimes she schooled herself as being too precise and over-wise, to sacrifice all her hopes to the principles she had set up. But then the remembrance of the grief she had endured during the last war with Florence, and the worse struggles she would feel, if she dared unite herself to any enemy, if, by binding her fate to his, she might neither pray for the cause of her husband, nor for that of her beloved country; when to wish well to Castruccio would be to desire the success of tyranny and usurpation; and to have given her vows to the Florentines in their necessary defence, was to wish the overthrow of the companion of her life — the idea of these struggles gave her courage to persevere; and she hoped, that the approbation of her own heart, and that of her dearest and most valued friends, would in some degree repay her for her sufferings. She thought of her father and his lessons; and her heart again swelled with the desire of the approbation of the good, with the warm and ardent love of right which ever burned within her soul. Hers had been a natural and a lawful passion; she could not live, believing that she did wrong; and the high independence and graceful pride of her nature would never permit her, to stoop beneath the mark she had assigned as the object of her emulation.

Yet when, in the silence of night and of solitude, she consulted her own heart, she found that love had quenched there every other feeling, and not to love was to her to die. She looked on the quiet earth, where the trees slept in the windless air, and the only sound was the voice of an owl, whose shriek now and then with monotonous and unpleasing sound awoke the silence, and gave a melancholy life to what else were dead; she looked up to the sky where the eternal lamps of heaven were burning; all was unchanged there; but for her all was different. It was on a night, in an Italian autumn, that she sat under her acacia tree by the basin of the fountain of the rock. To look on the hues of sunset, to see the softened tints of the olive woods, the purple tinge of the distant mountains, whose outline was softly, yet distinctly marked in the orange sky; to feel the western breeze steal across her cheek, like words of love from one most dear; to see the first star of evening penetrate from out the glowing western firmament, and whisper the secret of distant worlds to us in our narrow prison; to behold the heaven-pointing cypress with unbent spire sleep in the stirless air; these were sights and feelings which softened and exalted her thoughts; she felt as if she were a part of the great whole; she felt bound in amity to all; doubly, immeasurably loving those dear to her, feeling an humanizing charity even to the evil. A sweet scent coming from the lemon-flowers, which mingled with the gummy odour of the cypress trees, added to the enchantment. Suddenly, — list! what is that? Music was heard, and sweeter than all other instruments, the human voice in chorus singing a national song, half hymn, half warlike; Euthanasia wept; like a child she wept, — but there was none near to whom she could tell the complicated sensations that overpowered her: to speak to those we love in such moments, exhilarates the spirits; else the deep feeling preys on the heart itself. She became sad, and looked up to the many-starred sky; her soul uttered silently the bitter complaint of its own misery.

“Must I then forget to love? Oh! sooner shall that restless lamp, which walketh up the heavens, and then descendeth, and abideth no where, Oh! sooner shall that forget its path which it hath ever traced, since God first marked it out, than I forget to love! The air still surrounds the earth, filling the recesses of the mountains, and even penetrating into their caverns; the sun shines through the day, and the cloudless heavens of night are starred with the air’s fire-bearing children; and am not I as unchanged and unchangeable as nature’s own, everlasting works? What is it then that startles every nerve, not as the sound of thunder or of whirlwind, but as the still, small voice, that clings to me, and will not be made silent, telling me that all is changed from that which it once was?

“I loved! God and my own heart know how truly, how tenderly! How I dwelt on his idea, his image, his virtues, with unblamed affection: how it was my glory, my silent boast, when in solitude my eyes swam in tears, and my cheek glowed, to reflect that I loved him, who transcended his kind in wisdom and excellence! Is this a dream? Oh! then all is a dream; and the earth, and the fabric of the adamantine sky are as the gossamer that may not endure! Yet, oh, ye stars, ye shine! And I live. Pulse, and breath, and thought, and all is changed; I must no longer love, — so let me suffer the living death of forgetfulness.

“Surely my heart is not cold, for I feel deep agony; and yet I live. I have read of those who have pined and died, when the sweet food of love was denied to them; were their sensations quicker, deeper, more all-penetrating than mine? Their anguish greater? I know not; nor do I know, if God hath given this frame a greater capacity for endurance than I could desire. Yet, methinks, I still love, and that is why I live. A dark, blank, rayless, motionless night is before me, a heavy, overwhelming annihilation is above me, when for a moment I imagine that hope is not for me. But for an instant does that idea live within me, yet does it come oftener and stay longer than it was wont. The knowledge that I have nought to expect but death, must become a part of my mind. When a dear friend dies, what painful throes does one undergo, before we are persuaded to know that he is no more! So now that hope dies; it is a lesson hard for my heart to learn; but it will learn it; and that which is now reality, will be as a dream; what is now a part of me will be but a recollection, a shadow thrown upon life, from which I at length shall emerge. And what is the state of being that shall follow?

“Yet will I arouse all the pride and all the nobility of my nature; I will not sink beneath this trial; the great and good of past ages have left their lessons for me to meditate, and I will be no indocile pupil; the honey of the cup is exhausted, but all is not gall that remains.”

The winter passed on thus: Euthanasia feared Castruccio as the enemy of Florence; but she avoided Florence as his enemy. Disappointed in her dearest hopes, her very heart destroyed, she hated society, and felt solace in the contemplation of nature alone; that solace which the mind gathers, in communing with its sorrows, and, having lost every other resource, clings as to a friend, to the feelings of woe with which it is penetrated.

The winter was chill; the mountains were covered with snow; yet, when the sun gleamed on them, the Serchio, taking life from his smiles, sped down in his course, roaring and howling, as if, pursued by innumerable and overflowing streams, he hurried to find repose in his home among the waters of the boundless ocean. The air was filled with his turmoil; and winter, asleep among the icy crags of the mountains, feared a sound, which he had not power to silence, and which was the dirge that tolled out his passing hour: the cold northern wind swept along the plain of Lucca, and moaned as a repulsed beggar about the walls of Euthanasia's castle. Within those walls, late the scene of content and joy, sat the disconsolate mistress, a prey to all those sad, and sometimes wild reveries, which utter hopelessness had made her companions. Duty, and the associations of her early youth, had breathed in her ear the terrible command to love no more; but her soul rebelled, and often she thought that, in so mad a world, duty was but a watch — word for fools, and that she might unblamed taste of the only happiness she should ever enjoy.

But, in one who had so long submitted her very thoughts to the control of conscience, such ideas found brief habitation; and her accustomed feelings returned to press her into the narrow circle, whence for her all peace was excluded. Duty, patriotism, and high religious morality, were the watch-dogs which drove her scattered thoughts, like wandering sheep, into their fold: alas! the wolf nestled in the pen itself. If for a moment her will paused, and love, breaking every bank she had carefully built up to regulate her mind's course, burst in at once, and carried away in its untameable course reason, conscience, and even memory, Castruccio himself came to repair the breach, and to restrain the current; some castle burnt, some town taken by assault, some friend or enemy remorselessly banished, filled her with shame and anger, that she should love a tyrant; a slave to his own passions, the avenger of those of others. Castruccio was ever at war; peace subsisted between him and Florence; but the siege of Genoa by the Ghibelines of Lombardy, gave him occasion to turn his arms on that side; and, his march extending from Lucca to beyond the Magra, he deluged the country in blood, and obtained that which he desired, dominion and fame.

It were curious to mark the changes that now operated in his character. Every success made him extend his views to something beyond; and every obstacle surmounted, made him still more impatient of those that presented themselves in succession. He became all in all to himself; his creed seemed to contain no article but the end and aim of his ambition; and that he swore before heaven to attain. Accustomed to see men die in battle for his cause, he became callous to blood, and felt no more whether it flowed for his security on a scaffold, or in the field of honour; and every new act of cruelty hardened his heart for those to come.

And yet all good feelings were not dead within him. An increased ardour in friendship seemed to have taken the place of innocence and general benevolence: virtue, as it were seeking to build her nest in his heart, and thrust out of her ancient one, taking up with the resting-place whose entrance still was free. Bravery and fortitude were to him habitual feelings: but, although he were kind and bounteous to his friends, so that he was loved with ardour, and served with fidelity, there was no magnanimity, and little generosity in his character. His moderate habits, abstemiousness, and contempt of luxury, often gave him the appearance of self-sacrifice; for he bestowed on others what they greatly valued, but what he himself condemned. But, when it came to the sacrifice of his own inclinations, his boundless ambition, and love of sway, then no obstacle either of nature or art could stop him; neither compassion which makes angels of men, nor love which softens the hearts of the gods themselves, had over him the slightest power, — he fixed his whole soul on the point he would attain, and he never either lost sight of it, or paused in his efforts to arrive there.

It were difficult to tell what his sensations were with regard to Euthanasia; he had loved her, tenderly, passionately; and he considered her refusal of his offers as a caprice to be surmounted. Sometimes he was deeply grieved, sometimes angry; yet he ever loved her, and believed that she would relent. Sometimes he thought of poor Beatrice, her form, beaming with beauty, and alive with the spirit of the sybil; or again, pale, struck to the heart as a poor deer in the forest, and sinking beneath the wood: — he then felt that he would give the world to assuage her sorrows. On returning through Bologna, he had sent to Ferrara, and heard that she was alive, that no change in her situation had taken place; and, satisfied with this, he sought no further. Ambition had become the ruling passion of his soul, and all bent beneath its sway, as a field of reeds before the wind: love himself had brief power in his mind; and, although this passion sometimes caused him pain, and the sickness of disappointed hope, yet this was short, and yielded to the first impulse that occurred, which hurried him along to new designs and new conquests.

Once indeed he had loved, and he had drank life and joy from the eyes of Euthanasia. His journey to Lombardy, his connection with Beatrice, although indeed he loved her little, yet was sufficient to weaken the bonds that confined him; and love was with him, ever after, the second feeling in his heart, the servant and thrall of his ambition.

His military exploits were now bounded to the entire reduction of the territory around Lucca; Sarzana, Pontremoli, Fucecchio, Fosedenovo, — castles even beyond the Magra, Valdinera, Aquabuona, La Valle, fortified villages among the Apennines, which had hitherto been under the jurisdiction of the lords of Lombardy, now submitted to the Lucchese consul. During the winter he was for some time confined by the floods to the town of Lucca itself, where he employed himself in establishing a vigorous system of police, in discovering and punishing his enemies, and in the design and foundation of public edifices. He was beloved by the nobles of his own party, and by the common people, whose taxes he lightened, and whom he relieved in a great measure from the tyranny of their superiors; he was beloved even by the clergy, for, although an enemy to the temporal usurpations of the Popes, he valued the learning, and respected the persons of the priests. He was hated by all the rich not immediately connected with his person and faction, for they were deprived of power; despised by his followers, and watched by himself, they could find no asylum from the suspicion and severity of a tyrant who felt himself insecure on his seat of power.

CHAPTER XXII

SPRING advanced, and the mountains looked forth from beneath the snow: the chestnuts began to assume their light and fanlike foliage; the dark ilex and cork trees which crowned the hills, threw off their burthen of snow; and the olives now in flower starred the mountain paths with their small fallen blossoms; the heath perfumed the air; the melancholy voice of the cuckoo issued from the depths of the forests; the swallows returned from their pilgrimage; and in soft moonlight evenings the nightingales answered one another from the copses; the vines with freshest green hung over the springing corn; and various flowers adorned the banks of each running stream. Euthanasia beheld the advance of summer with careless eyes: her heart was full of one thought, of one image; and all she saw, whether it were the snow-clad mountains of winter, or the green and flowery fields of spring, was referred by her to one feeling, one only remembrance. She determined to think no more of Castruccio; but every day, every moment of every day, was as a broken mirror, a multiplied reflection of his form alone.

They had often met during the winter in the palaces of the Lucchese nobles, and sometimes at her own castle; he was ever gentle and deferential to her, and sometimes endeavoured to renew the courtship that had formerly subsisted between them. Euthanasia had not strength of purpose sufficient to avoid these meetings; but each of them was as the life-blood taken from her heart, and left her in a state of despair and grief that preyed like fever upon her vitals. To see him, to hear him, and yet not to be his, was as if to make her food of poison; it might assuage the pangs of hunger, but it destroyed the principle of life. She became pale, sleepless, the shadow of what she had been; her friends perceived the change, and knew the cause; and they endeavoured to persuade her to go to Florence, or to take some journey, which might occupy her mind, and break the chain that now bound her to sorrow. She felt that she ought to comply with their suggestions; but even her spirit, strong and self-sustaining as it had been, sank beneath the influence of love, and she had no power to fly, though to remain were death. Tears and grief were her daily portion; yet she took it patiently, as that to which she was doomed, and hardly prayed to have the bitter cup removed.

A circumstance that occurred just at this crisis, when she seemed to stand on the sharp edge which divides life from death, saved her from destruction, and led her back to taste for a few more years the food of sorrow and disappointment which was doled out to her.

The summer solstice had passed, and Castruccio had been absent during several months, carrying his conquests along the shore beyond the Magra, while every day brought the news of some fresh success he had obtained. This was the season of pilgrimages to Monte San Pelegrino, a wild and high Apennine in the neighbourhood of . It is said, that a king of Scotland, resigning his crown to his son, and exiling himself from his country, finished his days in penitence and prayer on this mountain. In Italy every unknown pilgrim was a king or prince: but this was a strange tradition; and it would seem as if the royal penitent, disdaining the gladsome plains of Italy, sought for the image of his native country on this naked peak among the heaped masses of the Apennines.

His memory was there canonized, and many indulgences were the reward of three successive visits to his rocky tomb; every year numberless pilgrims flocked, and still continue to flock thither. Straining up the rugged paths of the mountain, careless of the burning sun, they walk on, shadowed by their broad pilgrim's hats, repeating their pater-nosters, and thus, by the toil of the body, buy indulgence for the soul's idleness. Many on their return visited the castle of , and partook its hospitality. One party had just withdrawn, as the Ave Maria sounded from the vale below; and they chaunted the evening hymn, as they wound down the steep. Euthanasia listened from her tower, and heard the last song of the sleepy cicala among the olive woods, and the buzz of the numerous night insects, that filled the air with their slight but continual noise. It was the evening of a burning day; and the breeze that slightly waved the grass, and bended the ripe corn with its quick steps, was as a refreshing bath to the animals who panted under the stagnant air of the day. Amid the buzzing of the crickets and dragon flies, the agiolo's monotonous and regular cry told of clear skies and sunny weather; the flowers were bending beneath the dew, and her acacia, now in bloom, crowning its fan-like foliage with a roseate crest, sent forth a sweet scent. A few of the latest fire-flies darted here and there, with bright green light; but it was July, and their season was well nigh past. Towards the sea, on the horizon, a faint lightning shewed the over — heated state of the atmosphere, and killed by its brightness the last glories of the orange sunset; the mountains were losing their various tints in darkness; and their vast amphitheatre looked like a ponderous unformed wall, closing in Lucca, whose lights glimmered afar off.

Euthanasia was awaked from the reverie, half painful, half pleasing, that engaged her as she sat at her window; for she was too true a child of nature, not to feel her sorrows alleviated by the sight of what is beautiful in the visible world; — she was roused, I say, by her servant who told her that a female pilgrim was at the gate, and desired to see the lady of the castle. “Receive her,” said Euthanasia, “and let her be led to the bath; I will see her when she is refreshed.”

“She will not enter,” replied the servant, “but desires earnestly, she says, to see you: she absolutely refuses to enter the castle.”

Euthanasia descended to the gate; her quick light steps trod the pavement of the hall, her long golden tresses waved upon the wind, and her blue eyes seemed to have drunk in the azure of departed day, they were in colour so deep, so clear. The pilgrim stood at the door leaning on her staff, a large hat covered her head, and was pulled down over her brows, and her coarse cloak fell in undistinguishing folds round her slim form; but Euthanasia, accustomed to see the peasantry alone resort to this mountain, was struck by the small white hand that held the staff, and the delicately moulded and snowy feet which, shod in the rudest sandals, seemed little used to labour or fatigue.

“I intreat you,” she said, “to come into the castle to rest yourself; the Ave Maria is passed, and your toils for the day are ended; you will find a bath, food and rest; will you not enter?” Euthanasia held forth her hand.

“Lady, I must not. I intreat you only to bestow your alms on a pilgrim going to Rome, but who has turned aside to perform a vow among these mountains.”

“Most willingly; but I also have made a vow, which is, not to suffer a tired pilgrim to pass my gates without rest and food. Where can you go to-night? Lucca is six long miles off; you are weak and very weary: come; I ask you for alms; they are your prayers which must be told on the soft cushions of a pleasant bed amid your dreams this night. Come in; the heavy dews that fall from the clear sky after this burning day may hurt you: this is a dangerous hour in the plain; can you not be persuaded?”

Euthanasia saw quick drops fall from the flashing and black eyes of the poor pilgrim: she raised them to heaven, saying, “Thy will be done! I am now all humbleness.”

As she threw up her head Euthanasia looked on her countenance; it was beautiful, but sunburnt and wild; her finely carved eyes, her lips curved in the line of beauty, her pointed and dimpled chin still beamed loveliness, and her voice was low and silver-toned. She entered the castle, but would go no further than the outer hall. The eloquence of Euthanasia was wasted; and she was obliged to order cushions and food to be brought to the hall: they then sat down; the pilgrim took off her hat, and her black and silken ringlets fell around her face; she parted them with her small fingers, and then sat downcast and silent.

Euthanasia placed fruit, sweetmeats and wine before her; “Eat,” she said, “you are greatly fatigued.”

The poor pilgrim tried; but her lips refused the fruit she would have tasted. She felt that she should weep; and, angry at her own weakness, she drank a little wine, which somewhat revived her; and then, sitting thus, overcome, bent and sorrowing, beside the clear loveliness of Euthanasia, these two ladies entered into conversation, soft and consoling on one part, on the other hesitating and interrupted. At first the pilgrim gazed for a moment on the golden hair and bluest eyes of Euthanasia, her heavenly smile, and clear brow; and then she said: “You are the lady of this castle? You are named Euthanasia?”

“Most true: and might I in return ask you who you are, who wander alone and unhappy? Believe me I should think myself very fortunate, if you would permit me to know your grief, and to undertake the task of consoling you. If you mourn for your faults, does not a moment of real repentance annihilate them all? Come, I will be your confessor; and impose on you the light penances of cheerfulness and hope. Do you mourn your friends? poor girl! weep not; that is a sorrow time alone can cure: but time can cure it, if with a patient heart you yield yourself to new affections and feelings of kindness. Sweet, hush the storm that agitates you: if you pray, let not your words be drops of agony, but as the morning dew of faith and hope. You are silent; you are angry that I speak; so truly do I prize the soft peace that was for years the inmate of my own heart, that I would bestow it on others with as earnest a labour, as for myself I would try to recall it to the nest from which it has fled.”

“How! and are you not happy?” The eyes of the pilgrim glanced a sudden fire, that was again quenched by her downcast lids.

“I have had my share of tranquillity. For five-and-twenty years few sorrows, and those appeaseable by natural and quickly dried tears, visited me; now my cares rise thick, while, trust me, with eager endeavour, I try to dissipate them. But you are young, very young; you have quaffed the gall, and will now come to the honey of your cup. Wherefore are you bound for Rome?”

“It were a long tale to tell, lady, and one I would not willingly disclose. Yet, methinks, you should be happy; your eyes are mild, and made for peace. I thought, — I heard, — that a thousand blessed circumstances conduced to render you fortunate beyond all others.”

“Circumstances change as fast as the fleeting clouds of an autumnal sky. If happiness depends upon occasion, how unstable is it! We can alone call that ours which lives in our own bosoms. Yet those feelings also are bound to mutability; and, as the priests have doubtless long since taught you, there is no joy that endures upon earth.”

“How is this! He is not dead! — he must be—” The pilgrim suddenly stopped, her cheek burning with blushes.

“Who dead? What do you mean?”

“Your father, your brother, any one you love. But, lady, I will intrude no longer; the dews are fallen, and I find the air of the castle close and suffocating. I long for the free air.”

“You will not sleep here?”

“I must not; do not ask me again; you pain me much; I must pursue my journey!”

The pilgrim gathered up her raven locks, and put on her hat; then, leaning on her staff, she held forth her little hand, and said in a smothered voice, so low that the tone hardly struck the air, “Your alms, lady.”

Euthanasia took out gold; the pilgrim smiled sadly, saying, “My vow prevents my receiving more than three soldi; let that sum be the limit of your generous aid.”

Euthanasia found something so inexplicable, reserved, and almost haughty, in the manner of her guest, that she felt checked, and ill disposed to press her often rejected services; she gave the small sum asked, saying, “You are penurious in your courtesies; this will hardly buy for me one pater-noster.”

“It will buy the treasure of my heart in prayers for your welfare; prayers, which I once thought all powerful, may be as well worth perhaps as those of the beggar whom we fee on the road-side. Farewell!”

The pilgrim spoke earnestly and sweetly; and then drawing her cloak about her, she left the castle, winding slowly down the steep. After she had awhile departed, Euthanasia sent a servant to the nunnery of St. Ursula, which was on the road the pilgrim was to follow, with a loaded basket of fruits, wine and other food, and a message to the nuns to watch for and receive the unhappy stranger. All passed as she desired. The pilgrim entered the convent; and, after praying in the chapel, and silently partaking a frugal meal of fruit and bread, she went to rest in her lowly cell. The next morning the abbess had intended to question her, and to win her to some comfort; but, before the dawn of day, the pilgrim had left the convent; and, with slow steps and a sorrowing heart, pursued her way towards Rome.

This occurrence had greatly struck Euthanasia. She felt, that there was something uncommon in the visit of the stranger, and that, although unknown to her, there must be some link between them, which she vainly strove to discover. It happened, that, about a fortnight after, she was at the Fondi palace in Lucca, where Castruccio was in company; and she related this incident, dwelling on the beauty of the pilgrim, her graceful manners, and deep sorrow. When she described her form and countenance, Castruccio, struck by some sudden recollection, advanced towards Euthanasia, and began to question her earnestly as to the very words and looks of the stranger; then, checking himself, he drew back, and entered into conversation with another person. When however Euthanasia rose to depart, he approached, and said in a low tone: “I am afraid that I can solve the riddle of this unfortunate girl; permit me to see you alone tomorrow; I must know every thing that passed.”

Euthanasia assented, and waited with impatience for the visit.

He came; and at his request she related minutely all that had happened. Castruccio listened earnestly; and, when he heard what had been her last words, he cried, “It must be she! It is the poor Beatrice!”

“Beatrice! — Who is Beatrice?”

Castruccio endeavoured to evade the question, and afterwards to answer it by the relation of a few slight circumstances; but Euthanasia, struck by his manner, questioned him so seriously, that he ended by relating the whole story. Euthanasia was deeply moved; and earnest pity succeeded to her first astonishment; astonishment for her powers and strange errors, and then compassion for her sorrows and mighty fall. Castruccio, led on by the memory of her enchantments, spoke with ardour, scarcely knowing to whom he spoke; and, when he ended, Euthanasia cried, “She must be followed, brought back, consoled; her misery is great; but there is a cure for it.”

She then concerted with Castruccio the plan for tracing her steps, and inducing her to return. Messengers were sent on the road to Rome, who were promised high rewards if they succeeded in finding her; others were sent to Ferrara to learn if her friends there had any knowledge of her course. These researches occupied several weeks; but they were fruitless: the messengers from Ferrara brought word, that she had left that city early in the preceding spring in a pilgrimage to Rome, and that she had never since been heard of. The lady Marchesana, inconsolable for her departure, had since died; and the good bishop Marsilio, who had not returned from France, where he had been made a cardinal, was at too great a distance to understand the circumstances of her departure, or to act upon them. Nor were the tidings brought from Rome more satisfactory; she was traced from Lucca to Pisa, Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, Foligno, Spoletto, and even to Terni; but there all trace was lost. It appeared certain that she had never arrived in Rome; none of the priests had heard of her; every church and convent was examined; but no trace of her could be found. Every exertion was vain: it appeared as if she had sunk into the bowels of the earth.

During the period occupied by these researches, a great change had taken place in the mind of Euthanasia. Before, though her atmosphere had been torn by storms, and blackened by the heaviest clouds, her love had ever borne her on towards one point with resistless force; and it seemed as if, body and soul, she would in the end be its victim. Now the tide ebbed, and left her, as a poor wretch upon one point of rock, when the rising ocean suddenly subsides, and restores him unexpectedly to life. She had loved Castruccio; and, as is ever the case with pure and exalted minds, she had separated the object of her love from all other beings, and, investing him with a glory, he was no longer to her as one among the common herd, nor ever for a moment could she confound him and class him with his fellow men. It is this feeling that is the essence and life of love, and that, still subsisting even after esteem and sympathy had been destroyed, had caused the excessive grief in which she had been plunged. She had separated herself from the rest as his chosen one; she had been selected from the whole world for him to love, and therefore was there a mighty barrier between her and all things else; no sentiment could pass through her mind unmingled with his image, no thought that did not bear his stamp to distinguish it from all other thoughts; as the moon in heaven shines bright, because the sun illumines her with his rays, so did she proceed on her high path in serene majesty, protected through her love for him from all meaner cares or joys; her very person was sacred, since she had dedicated herself to him; but, the god undeified, the honours of the priestess fell to the dust. The story of Beatrice dissolved the charm; she looked on him now in the common light of day; the illusion and exaltation of love was dispelled for ever: and, although disappointment, and the bitterness of destroyed hope, robbed her of every sensation of enjoyment, it was no longer that mad despair, that clinging to the very sword that cut her, which before had tainted her cheek with the hues of death. Her old feelings of duty, benevolence, and friendship returned; all was not now, as before, referred to love alone; the trees, the streams, the mountains, and the stars, no longer told one never-varying tale of disappointed passion: before, they had oppressed her heart by reminding her, through every change and every form, of what she had once seen in joy; and they lay as so heavy and sad a burthen on her soul, that she would exclaim as a modern poet has since done:

Thou, thrush, that singest loud, and loud, and free.
Into yon row of willows flit.
Upon that alder sit.
Or sing another song, or choose another tree!
Roll back, sweet rill, back to thy mountain bounds.
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained.
Be any thing, sweet rill, but that which thou art now.

But now these feverish emotions ceased. Sorrow sat on her downcast eye, restrained her light step, and slept in the unmoved dimples of her fair cheek; but the wildness of grief had died, the fountain of selfish tears flowed no more, and she was restored from death to life. She considered Castruccio as bound to Beatrice; bound by the deep love and anguish of the fallen prophetess, by all her virtues, even by her faults; bound by his falsehood to her who was then his betrothed, and whom he carelessly wronged, and thus proved how little capable he was of participating in her own exalted feelings. She believed that he would be far happier in the passionate and unquestioning love of this enthusiast, than with her, who had lived too long to be satisfied alone with the affection of him she loved, but required in him a conformity of tastes to those she had herself cultivated, which in Castruccio was entirely wanting. She felt half glad, half sorry, for the change she was aware had been operated in her heart; for the misery that she before endured was not without its momentary intervals, which busy love filled with dreams and hopes, that caused a wild transport, which, although it destroyed her, was still joy, still delight. But now there was no change; one steady hopeless blank was before her; the very energies of her mind were palsied; her imagination furled its wings, and the owlet, reason, was the only dweller that found sustenance and a being in her benighted soul.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ambitious designs of Castruccio were each day ripening. The whole Ghibeline force in Italy was not turned to the siege of Genoa, which was defended by Robert, king of Naples, at the head of the Guelphs. Castruccio had never actually joined the besieging army. But he had taken advantage of the war, which prevented the Genoese from defending their castles on the sea — coast, to surprise many of them, and to spread his conquests far beyond the Lucchese territory; and he was ever attentive to the slightest incident that might contribute to the exaltation of the Ghibelines. He aided his Lombard friends, by annoying the enemy as much as was in his power, and did not hesitate in using the most nefarious arts to injure and destroy them. He now fully subscribed to all the articles of Pepi's political creed, and thought fraud and secret murder fair play, when it thinned the ranks of the enemy.

Robert, king of Naples, was at the head of the Guelph army at Genoa. The siege had now lasted with various fortune for two years; and every summer the king visited this city to conduct the enterprizes of the campaign. Castruccio, urged by Galeazzo Visconti, and by his own belief in the expediency of the scheme, conspired to destroy the king: a foolish plan in many ways; for a legitimate king, like a vine, never dies; and when you throw earth over the old root, a new sprout ever springs up from the parent stock.

The king of Naples had fitted out a fleet to go and attack the king of Sicily, who was a protector of the Ghibelines. Castruccio sent two desperate, but faithful fellows, to set fire to the ship in which the king himself sailed. The men got admittance on board the royal galley, which, swifter than the rest, sped on through the waves, while the rest of the fleet hung like a cloud on the far horizon. At night the smell of fire was perceived in the vessel, and a small flame issued from one of the windows: the affright and confusion were terrible, when they found that they were burning thus on the desert sea, while the other vessels were too distant to afford them aid. All hands were at work to extinguish the flames; and it was then that the hired incendiaries were perceived, as they tried to fire another part of the ship. It was found that they were provided with floats of cork, by which they hoped to preserve themselves in the water, until by some accident they might be rescued.

The fire was seen by the galley, in which the eldest son of king Robert was embarked, and which bore down to his relief. The youthful prince, in an agony of terror, lent his own hand to the oar that they might arrive more speedily. The whole crew was saved; and the criminals were reserved for torture and death.

The news of this detestable plot was spread through all Italy, nor was it much blamed. It was then that Euthanasia, the living spirit of goodness and honour, amidst the anguish that the unworthiness of Castruccio occasioned her, felt a just triumph, that she had overcome her inclinations, and was not the bride of a suborner and a murderer. Even now, remembering that it was known that she once loved Antelminelli, she was penetrated with shame, and her cheeks burned with blushes when she heard the tale. But, careless of an infamy which he shared with many of his countrymen, and sorry only that his design had not succeeded, Castruccio did not attempt to conceal the part he had taken in the plot, and loudly declared that all his enemies might expect the same measure as king Robert, while in return he permitted them to try the like arts against him.

In the mean time he prosecuted the war with redoubled vigour. In the winter of the year 1320, the Ghibelines reinforced their armies before Genoa, and called upon their allies for their utmost assistance; and Castruccio among the rest was to advance to their aid with all his forces. But the Guelphs were not idle: Florence had sent soldiers every campaign to reinforce the Genoese, and entered with spirit into all the enterprizes undertaken against the imperial party; although a wish to preserve their territory free from the horrors of war, and to repair by a long peace the injury done to their vines and olive woods, had caused them to preserve a shew of peace with Lucca.

Castruccio considered all his present successes as preliminaries only to his grand undertaking; and, having now reduced not only the territory of Lucca, but many castles and strong holds, which before had either been independent, or had paid tribute to Genoa, or to the lords of Lombardy, he planned a more vigorous system of warfare for the ensuing campaign. His first step was to increase his security and power in Lucca itself.

Having grown proud upon his recent successes, he began to disdain the name of consul, which he had hitherto borne. He assembled the senate; and, at the instance of his friends, who had been tutored for the purpose, this assembly bestowed upon him the government of Lucca for life, with the title of prince. He afterwards caused this grant to be confirmed by an assembly of the people; his warlike achievements, joined to the moderate expenditure of his government, had made him a great favourite with the inferior classes of the community, and they cordially entered into the projects of his ambition. Soon after, through the mediation of his friend Galeazzo Visconti, he obtained from Frederic, king of the Romans, the dignity of Imperial Vicar in Tuscany.

All this passed during the winter; and in the spring he assembled his troops, intent upon some new design. He had now been at peace with Florence for the space of three years, although, fighting under opposite banners, the spirit of enmity had always subsisted between him and them. Now, without declaring war, or in any way advising them of their peril, he suddenly made an incursion into their territory, burning and wasting their land as far as Empoli, taking several castles, and carrying off an immense booty; he then retreated back to Lucca.

This violation of every law of nations filled the Florentines at first with affright, and afterwards with indignation. They had sent their best troops to Genoa; and they found themselves attacked without warning or time for preparation. When the Lucchese retreated, anger and complaint succeeded. Castruccio replied to the reproaches of the Florentines by a declaration of war, and then immediately marched with his forces to join the besieging army before Genoa.

When the Florentines found that they could obtain no redress, they turned their thoughts to revenge. They raised what fresh troops they could among the citizens; and wishing to assist their small army by other measures which were then rife in the Italian system of warfare, they endeavoured to foment a conspiracy among the Lucchese for the overthrow of their prince's government. Castruccio received in one day letters from Giovanni da Castiglione, the general who commanded the few troops which he had left to guard his own principality, to inform him, that the Florentines had entered the Val di Nievole, burning and spoiling every thing before them; and from Vanni Mordecastelli, his civil lieutenant at Lucca, with information of a plot for the destruction of his power which was brewing in that city. Castruccio immediately left the Lombard army, and returned with his troops to disconcert these designs.

Of the castles which were situated within a circuit of many miles round Lucca, all were subject to Castruccio, except the castle of and its dependencies. He had often solicited Euthanasia to place her lordship under the protection of his government; and she had uniformly refused. The castle of Valperga was situated on a rock, among the mountains that bound the pass through which the Serchio flows, and commanded the northern entrance to the Lucchese territory. It was a place of great strength, and in the hands of an enemy might afford an easy entrance for an hostile army into the plain of Lucca itself. The Florentines, trusting to the affection which the countess bore their city, sent ambassadors to her to intreat her to engage in an alliance with them against Castruccio, and to admit a party of Florentine soldiers into her castle; but she rejected their proposals, and positively refused to enter into any league injurious to the existing government of Lucca. The ambassadors had been selected from among her intimate friends; and her Monualdo, Bondelmonti, was at the head of them: they were not therefore intimidated by one repulse, but reiterated their arguments, founded upon her own interest, and the service she would render to her native town, in vain. She felt that the liberty in which she had been permitted to remain, while, one after another, all the castles around her had been reduced, could only have arisen from the friendship and forbearance of the prince; and she judged that it would be a sort of treason in her, to take advantage of his moderation to introduce devastation into his country; at the same time she promised, that no threats or intreaties should induce her to ally herself with, or submit to, the enemy of Florence.

The ambassadors, who had been bred in the Italian school of politics of that age, little understood, and by no means approved her scruples; they found her however invincible to their arguments, and were obliged to give up all expectation of her assistance. But they made the hope of overcoming her objections the pretext for their protracted stay in her castle; for they had other designs in view. The vicinity of to Lucca, and the intercourse which took place between it and that town, gave them an opportunity of becoming acquainted with several of the discontented nobles, the remnants of the faction of the Neri, who had been permitted to remain. Euthanasia, being a

Guelph, had of course much intercourse with the few of that party who were to be found in Lucca; and from the conversation of these men the Florentine ambassadors conceived the hope of weaving some plot which would produce the downfall of Castruccio. And they believed, that in one of them they had found a successor to his dignity, and a chief who would prove as faithful to the papal party, as Castruccio had been to the imperial.

Among those of the faction of the Neri who had remained in Lucca, was a branch of the family of Guinigi, and one of the youths of this house had married Lauretta dei Adimari, a cousin of Euthanasia. This connection had caused great intimacy between the families; and Leodino de' Guinigi, the husband of Lauretta, was a young man of talent, spirit and ambition. Being refused a command in the army of Castruccio, he was however forced to expend his love of action and his desire of distinction, in hunting, hawking and tournaments. He was a man of large fortune, and greatly respected and loved in Lucca; for his manners were courteous, and his disposition generous, so that every one blamed the prince for neglecting a person of so much merit on account of his party. Every year however added to the discontent of Leodino; and he used frequently at the castle of his cousin Euthanasia, to bemoan his fate, and declare how he longed for a change which should draw him from idleness and obscurity. Lauretta was a beautiful and amiable girl; but party feelings ran so high in Lucca, that she was shunned as a Guelph and a Florentine, and therefore she also entered eagerly into the complaints of her husband; while the fear of the confiscation of his property withheld Leodino from serving under some leader of his own party. Euthanasia esteemed him highly; his mind was greatly cultivated; and the similarity of their tastes and pursuits had given rise to a sincere affection and sympathy between them. The Florentine ambassadors saw Leodino and his wife at the castle of ; they easily penetrated his character and wishes; and Bondelmonti undertook to work on him to co-operate with them in their design. Leodino required little instigation, and immediately set to work in Lucca to gain partizans: every thing promised well. All this had been carefully concealed from Euthanasia; who was too sincere of disposition to suspect fraud in others. But their plot was now ripe; and the ambassadors were on the eve of returning to Florence to lead their troops to the attack; when the conspiracy was betrayed to Mordecastelli, and Castruccio suddenly appeared in Lucca.

Bondelmonti and his associates instantly quitted ; and several of the conspirators, struck with affright, fled from Lucca; but Leodino, trusting to the secrecy with which he had enveloped his name, resolved to brave all danger and to remain. This imprudence caused his destruction; and, the morning after the return of Castruccio, he and six more of his intimate associates were arrested, and thrown into prison. Lauretta fled in despair to the castle of Valperga; she threw herself into the arms of Euthanasia, confessed the plot that had been carried on with Bondelmonti, and intreated her intercession with the prince to save the life of Leodino. Euthanasia felt her indignation rise, on discovering that her hospitality had been abused, and her friendship employed as the pretence which veiled a conspiracy. But, when the weeping Lauretta urged the danger of Leodino, all her anger was changed into compassion and anxiety; and she ordered the horses to be brought to the gate, that she might hasten to Lucca. "I am afraid, my poor cousin," said she, "if the prince be not of himself inclined to mercy, that my intreaties will have little effect: but be assured that I will spare no prayers to gain the life of Leodino. His life! indeed that is far too precious to be lightly sacrificed; I feel a confidence within me, which assures me that he will be saved; fear nothing, therefore; I will bring him back with me when I return."

She had covered her head with her veil, and folded her capuchin round her; when an attendant announced the arrival of Castruccio himself at the castle. This unexpected news made her turn pale; and again the blood, flowing from her heart, dyed her cheeks and even her fingers with pink; she hardly knew what caused her agitation; but she trembled, her eyes filled with tears, her voice faltered; — Castruccio entered.

He was no longer her lover, scarcely her friend; no joy sparkled in the eyes of either at this meeting after a separation of months; she had loved him passionately, and still dwelt with tenderness on the memory of what he had been; but she saw no likeness between the friend of her youth, beaming with love, joy and hope, and the prince who now stood before her; his brow was bent, his curved lips expressed disdain, his attitude and gesture were haughty and almost repulsive. Euthanasia was not to be daunted by this shew of superiority; she instantly recovered her presence of mind, and advanced towards him with calm dignity, saying, "My lord, I was about to visit you, when I find that you prevent me by honouring my castle with your presence; I was coming as a suppliant for the life of a dear friend."

"Countess, perhaps my errand is of more serious import, — at least to yourself: and, since it may include an answer to your supplication, I intreat you to hear me before we enter on any other subject."

Euthanasia bowed assent, and Castruccio continued.

"Madonna, you may remember that I have often in friendly terms intreated you to place yourself under the protection of my government at Lucca; you have ever refused me, and I indulgently acceded to your refusal. I have subdued all the castles around, several stronger than this, but I have left you to enjoy the independence you prized. I did this, trusting to your promise, that, although you were not my ally, you would not become my enemy, and that, in whatever war I might engage myself, you would preserve a strict neutrality. On my return from Genoa, forced to this hasty measure by the intimation of a plot being formed against me, I find that you are at the head of my enemies, and that, in violation of your faith, if you have not declared war, you have acted a more injurious part, in fomenting a conspiracy, and giving traitors those opportunities for maturing their plans, which, unless you had done this, they could never have dreamed of."

Euthanasia replied earnestly; "My lord, your mistake would be pardonable, had you not known me long enough to be assured that I am incapable of acting the part you attribute to me. But, although you have forgotten that treason and artifice are as foreign to my nature as darkness to that of the sun, you will at least believe me, when I give you my solemn assurance, that until this morning I knew nothing of the conspiracy entered into against you. And now—"

"But how can this be? Did not Bondelmonti and his associates reside in this castle for two months?"

"They did; they came to urge me to enter into the Florentine war against you, which I refused."

"And was it necessary to hesitate during two months for your answer? or, did it not rather enter into your plans, that they should remain as spies and plotters for my destruction? but enough of this?" —

"Enough, and far too much, my lord. You doubt my faith, and disbelieve my word: these are outrages which I did not expect to receive from you, but to which I must submit. And now permit me to speak to you on the subject of my intended visit."

"Pardon me, but you may remember that we agreed I should be the first heard; and I have not yet mentioned why I intrude myself into your castle. I am at war with Florence; you are not; and you believe yourself permitted, not only to hold correspondence with my enemies, but also to afford them an opportunity through your means to carry on plots with my traitorous subjects. This may have been done very innocently on your part; but I cannot permit a repetition of the same mime, or of any other, which, though differing in words, shall be the same in spirit. If you have not taken advantage of my forbearance, you have at least shown yourself incapable of sustaining the trust I reposed in you. But, Euthanasia, in you are indeed innocent, I am unmannerly in being thus stern with you; and, since you deny that you entered into this plot, and I would fain believe you, it is with repugnance that I enter upon the subject of my visit. You must surrender your castle to me; prudence no longer permits me to suffer you to enjoy independence; and, however painful the alternative, you must submit to become my ally."

"It were of little moment to enter into a treaty with me," said Euthanasia, with a bitter smile: "since, if I am capable of treason, I may be more dangerous as an ally than an enemy."

"Not so, for the first article of our alliance must be the razing of this castle; in exchange you shall have a site afforded you in the plain for the erection of a palace, nor shall you incur any loss in fortune or revenue; but you must descend to the rank of a private individual, and this castle, and your power in this country, must be resigned into my hands."

"My lord, I am afraid that we shall not agree on the first article of our intended treaty. I will persevere in the neutrality I promised, and endeavour to be more prudent than I was in this last unfortunate affair. But I cannot surrender my castle, or permit the seat of my ancestors to be razed to the ground. And now allow me to speak of what is nearer to my heart. Leodino de' Guinigi has conspired against you, you have discovered his plot, and have thrown him into prison. I know that you consider his life a forfeit to your laws; but I intreat you to spare him: if neither the generosity of your character, nor the impotence of your enemy will incline you to mercy, I intreat you by our ancient friendship. His wife, Lauretta dei Adimari, is my cousin, and my friend; Leodino, although your enemy, is a man distinguished by every virtue, brave, generous and wise. If you would obtain a faithful and trust-worthy friend, pardon him, confide in him; and his gratitude will be to you as a guard an hundred strong: if you have not sufficient magnanimity to trust your enemy, banish him; but for my sake spare his life."

Castruccio appeared somewhat moved by her earnestness, but he replied; —"It cannot be; I am sorry to refuse you, but the example would be too dangerous. Put aside this from your thoughts, and let me intreat you to consider what I have just said. You answer me slightly; but be assured that I have not mentioned this alternative of war or peace between us, until my purpose was fixed: reflect seriously on the evils that resistance may bring upon you, and send me your answer tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, or today, it is the same. But you, Castruccio, reflect upon the misery you cause, if you refuse to spare my unfortunate friend."

"Do not torment yourself or me any more on the subject of Leodino; your intercession is fruitless; he is already dead; I gave orders for his immediate execution before I left Lucca. — But why are you so pale? — What agitates you?"

Euthanasia could not speak; the horror that she felt on hearing the violent death of one she loved announced so coldly by his murderer, overcame her: she struggled violently not to faint; but, when Castruccio drew near to support her, he found her hand cold and lifeless; and her trembling limbs alone shewed that she still felt: her lips were pale; she stood as if changed to stone: —

"Euthanasia, speak!"

"Speak! What should I say? Leave me! You touch me, and your hands are covered with blood, your garments are dripping with gore; come not near me! — Oh! God, have pity on me, that I should know this misery! Leave me; you are not a man; your heart is stone; your very features betray the icy blood which fills your veins. Oh, Leodino!"

And then she wept, and her features relaxed from the rigid horror they had expressed into softness and grief. After she had wept awhile, and thus calmed her agitation, she said: "My lord, this is the last time that we shall ever meet. You may attack my castle, if you will; you may tear it down, and leave not a stone to shew where it stood; but I will never voluntarily submit to a tyrant and a murderer. My answer is brief; — Do your worst: it cannot be so bad as that which you have already done! You have destroyed every hope of my life; you have done worse, far worse, than my words can express; do not exasperate me, or let me exasperate you, by a longer stay: I can never forgive the death of Leodino; farewell! — we are enemies; do your worst against me."

She left him, unable to retain any longer even the patience to behold him. But she had no leisure afforded her to indulge her grief or indignation. Lauretta had heard of the death of her husband; and her despair, and the convulsions it occasioned, entirely engrossed Euthanasia's attention, so that she forgot her own feelings and situation; nor did she recur to the threats of Castruccio, until they were recalled to her recollection by other proceedings on his part.

He did not doubt in his own mind, that, when pushed to extremity, the countess would surrender her castle. When he first heard that it had been selected by the conspirators as their rendezvous, he believed that she had had a principal share in the plot; but now, when assured of her innocence (for it was impossible not to believe her words, so clearly were truth and courageous sincerity painted on her noble countenance), he did not for that relent in his purpose of depriving her of the independence that she possessed, in the midst of a territory subject to himself. Like many of his predecessors and successors in usurpation, Castruccio had a method in his tyranny; and he never proceeded to any act of violence, without first consulting with his council, and obtaining their sanction to his measures. On his return from the castle of , he called together this friendly assembly, and represented to them the evil he incurred by permitting so violent a Guelph as the countess Euthanasia, to preserve her power, and erect her standard, in the very heart of his principality. His council replied to his representations with one voice, that the castle must be reduced.

The following morning Castruccio bade Arrigo di Guinigi carry a message to Euthanasia. Arrigo had always been a favourite with the countess; and Castruccio thought that it would be more delicate and forbearing, to send one so young and unpresuming as the bearer of his most displeasing message. Euthanasia received the youth with kindness; they talked on various subjects; but she carefully refrained from mentioning Castruccio's name, or alluding to the late transactions at Lucca; and it was long before Arrigo could summon courage to introduce the topic himself; at length he said; “Madonna, I bear a message to you from the prince.”

Euthanasia changed colour when he was alluded to; he, whom she now feared, as formerly she had dwelt on his idea with love. She replied hastily; “What is Antelminelli’s pleasure with me? Speak quickly, that there may soon be an end of a subject, which I cannot even think upon without agitation.”

“Yet I must intreat your patience, for my message is neither short nor unimportant; and you must pardon me that I am its bearer: you know by what ties I am bound to Castruccio; and if I now obey him, do not, dearest countess, condemn me too harshly. He intreats you to remember what he said when he visited you two days ago; he has since discussed the affair in council; and it is agreed that you can no longer be permitted to retain your independence. You know that the prince is all — powerful here; his army is well disciplined and formidable; his commands every where submitted to unquestioned. Look at every castle and village for miles around; they acknowledge his law; you cannot dream therefore of resisting; and, if you refuse to submit, it is because you believe that he will not proceed to extremities with you. My dear Euthanasia, this is a grievous task for me, and one which no earthly power but Castruccio could have persuaded me to undertake; pardon me, if I appear unmannerly when I repeat his words.

“He says, that he does not forget the friendship that once subsisted between you, and that he deeply regrets that your coldness and violence caused a division between you; but this is a question of state, and not a private altercation; and he would be unworthy of the trust reposed in him, if he permitted his individual inclinations to interfere with his duty towards the public. He is commanded by the ruling powers of his country, to compel the submission of the castle and rock of ; and he is resolved to obey them: he intreats you to spare both yourself and him the unhappiness you will inflict on him, and the blood that must be shed, if you resist. It would be absurd to attempt to defend yourself alone: to give your cause the least chance of success you must call in foreign aid; and, by bringing the Florentines into the heart of this valley, you not only introduce war and destruction into the abodes of peace, but you act a treasonable part (forgive me if I repeat his word), in taking advantage of the power which you hold through his indulgence, to endeavour to bring ruin upon him. But, whatever you determine upon, whether to hold out with your own small forces, or to call strangers to your assistance, he is resolved to spare no exertion, and to be stopped by no obstacle, until he has reduced into his own hands Valperga and all its dependencies; at the same time that you, so far from being a loser, except in nominal advantages, shall be fully compensated for your present possessions."

Euthanasia listened attentively, although sometimes disdain hovered on her lips, and at times her eyes flashed fire at the words she heard. She paused a moment to collect her thoughts, and then she replied: "My dear Arrigo, I pardon most freely all the part you take in these unfortunate circumstances; I would that the prince had not so far degraded himself, as to veil his tyranny with hypocrisy and falsehood; his is the power, and not the senate's; to him I reply; and, casting away all the vain pretexts with which he would hide, perhaps to himself, his injustice and lawless ambition, I reply with plain words to his artful speech; and I beg that without any alteration you faithfully deliver my message to him.

"I will never willingly surrender my power into his hands: I hold it for the good of my people, who are happy under my government, and towards whom I shall ever perform my duty. I look upon him as a lawless tyrant, whom every one ought to resist to the utmost of their power; nor will I through cowardice give way to injustice. I may be exasperated beyond prudence; but right is on my side: I have preserved the articles of my alliance with him, and I will hold them still; but, if he attack me, I shall defend myself, and shall hold myself justified in accepting the assistance of my friends. If I had not that right, if indeed I had pledged myself to submit whenever he should call upon me to resign my birthright, what an absurd mockery is it to talk of his moderation towards me! I acknowledge that he might long ago have attempted, as now he threatens, to reduce this castle to a frightful ruin; but then I should have resisted as I shall now; resisted with my own forces, and those of my allies. stands on a barren rock, and the few villages that own its law are poor and unprotected; but this castle is as dear to me as all his dominion is to him; I inherited it from my ancestors; and if I wished to despoil myself of power, it would be to make my people free, and not to force them to enter the muster-roll of a usurper and a tyrant.

"My dear Arrigo, do not endeavour to persuade me to alter my purpose; for it is fixed. I am not young nor old enough to be scared by threats, nor happy enough to buy life on any terms Castruccio may choose to offer. I am willing to lose it in a just cause; and such I conceive to be the preservation of my inheritance."

Arrigo was too raw and inexperienced to contend in words with Euthanasia; he was overcome by her enthusiasm, which, although serious and apparently quiet, was as a stream that runs deep and waveless, but whose course is swifter and stronger than that which wastes its force in foam and noise.

CHAPTER XXIV

ARRIGO returned sorrowfully to Lucca. He found Castruccio playing at chess with Mordecastelli; while a priest, Battista Tripalda, sat observing the game, and spoiling it by his interference.

"Nay, Vanni, I shall check-mate you next move," said Castruccio; "think again if you cannot escape, and make better play. Well, Arrigo, is peace or war the word you bring?"

"You must choose that, my lord; the countess wishes for peace, but she will not submit."

"Not submit!" cried Tripalda, stalking with his tall, upright figure into the middle of the room. "The woman is mad! I see that there is something wrong in this, that I must set right."

"Aye," said Mordecastelli; "as you set my game right for me, and made me lose two knights and a castle."

"I wish he could persuade Euthanasia to lose a castle, and then all would go well. Are there no hopes, Arrigo? tell me what she said."

Arrigo repeated her message, endeavouring to soften her expressions; but Castruccio was too experienced in the management of the human mind, not to draw from the youth the very words she had uttered.

"A murderer and a tyrant! pretty words applied to me, because I put a traitor to death, who otherwise would have placed my head on a Florentine pike. To what extremities am I driven! I would give the world not to go to open war about her miserable castle; yet have it I must, and that quickly, before she can send for her Florentine friends. What a spirit she has! I do not blame her; but, by St. Martin, I must tame it! Vanni, send for Castiglione; I must give him instructions for the conduct of the siege: I will have nothing to do with it personally; so tomorrow I shall away to keep the Florentines in check, if not to beat them."

"My lord," said Tripalda, drawing himself up before Castruccio with an air of the utmost self-consequence, "you have often found me of use in occasions of this sort; and I intreat you to authorize me to go and expostulate with the countess; I doubt not that I shall bring you a favourable answer: she must hear reason, and from no one is she so likely to hear it as from myself."

"You little know her disposition, friend Tripalda; but the most hopeless effort is worth making, before I declare war, and take her possessions by force. Go therefore to-morrow morning early; in the mean time I will give Castiglione my instructions; that, if your persuasions are vain, he may commence the attack the following day."

Tripalda then retired to meditate the speech by which he should persuade Euthanasia to yield; while Castruccio, desperate of any composition, gave his full directions for the conduct of the siege.

"If I were not in the secret of the place," said he to Castiglione, "I might well believe the castle of to be impregnable, except by famine; and that would be a tedious proceeding; but I know of other means which will give you entrance before nightfall. Lead a detachment of your most useless soldiers to the pathway which conducts to the main entrance of the castle; that of course will be well guarded; and, if the defence is directed with common judgement, the disadvantages under which the assailants must labour would render the attempt almost insane. But, as I said, let your more useless troops be employed there; they will keep the besieged in play; while you will conduct a chosen band to sure victory. You remember the fountain of the rock, beside which we were feasted, when the countess held her court, and where she sustained the mockery of a siege; to be conquered in play, as she now will be in earnest. You remember the narrow path that leads from the fountain to the postern, a gate, which, though strong, may easily be cut through by active arms and good hatchets. I know a path which leads from this valley to the fountain; it is long, difficult, and almost impracticable; but I have scaled it, and so may you and your followers. To-night before the moon rises, and it rises late, we will ride to the spot, and when you are in possession of this secret, the castle is at your mercy."

It was now the beginning of the month of October; the summer, which had been particularly sultry, had swiftly declined; already the gales which attend upon the equinox swept through the woods, and the trees, who know

His voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear.
And tremble and despoil themselves.

had already begun to obey the command of their ruler: the delicate chestnut woods, which last dare encounter the blasts of spring, whose tender leaves do not expand until they may become a shelter to the swallow, and which first hear the voice of the tyrant Libeccio, as he comes all conquering from the west, had already changed their hues, and shone yellow and red, amidst the sea-green foliage of the olives, the darker but light boughs of the cork trees, and the deep and heavy masses of ilexes and pines. The evening was hot; for the Libeccio, although it shuts out the sun with clouds, yet brings a close and heavy air, that warms, while it oppresses.

When evening came, Castruccio and his companion addressed themselves for their expedition. They muffled themselves in their capuchins, and, leaving the town of Lucca, crossed the plain, riding swiftly and silently along. Who can descend into the heart of man, and know what the prince felt, as he conducted Castiglione to the secret path, discovered by his love, now used to injure and subdue her whom he had loved? The white walls of the castle, half concealed by the cork and ilex trees which grew on the platform before it, stood quietly and silent; and she who dwelt within, whose heart now beat fast with fear and wretchedness, was the lovely and beloved Euthanasia, whose sweet and soft eyes, which shone as violets beneath a load of snow, had formerly beamed unutterable love on him, and whose gentle and modulated voice had once pronounced words of tenderness, which, though changed, he could never forget, — it was she, the beautiful, who had lived on earth as the enshrined statue of a divinity, adorning all places where she appeared, and adored by all who saw her; it was she, whose castle he was about to take and raze, it was against her that he now warred with a fixed resolution to conquer. Castruccio thought on all this; he called to mind her altered mien, and the coldness which had changed her heart from a fountain of burning love to an icy spring: and this awakened a feeling which he would fain have believed to be indignation. “Shall this false girl,” he muttered, “enjoy this triumph over me? And shall the love which she despises, save her from the fate to which her own coldness and imprudence consign her? Let her yield; and she will find the Castruccio whom she calumniates, neither a tyrant nor a monster; but, if she resist, on her be the burthen of the misery that must follow.”

Yet still, as officious conscience brought forward excuses for her, and called on him again and again to beware, he rode along side Castiglione, and entered into conversation. “Tomorrow at this hour,” he said, “you and your troop must come along this road, and hide yourselves in the forest which we are about to enter. When morning is up, do not long delay to scale the mountain, and enter the castle, for the sooner you take it, the less blood will be shed: order the battle so, that the troops you leave for the false attack may be fully engaged with the besieged before you enter; and then, coming behind the garrison, you can drive them down the mountain among their enemies, so that they may all be taken prisoners, at small expense either of their lives or ours."

They now dismounted; and, leaving their horses to their servants, began to ascend the acclivity. They moved cautiously along; and, if there had been any to listen to their footsteps, and sound was drowned by the singing of the pines, which moaned beneath the wind. Following the path of a torrent, and holding by the jutting points of rock, or the bare and tangled roots of the trees that overhung them, they proceeded slowly up the face of the mountain. Then turning to the right, they penetrated a complete wilderness of forest ground, where the undergrowth of the giant trees, and the fern and brambles, covered every path, so that Castruccio had need of all his sagacity to distinguish the slight peculiarities of scene that guided him. They awoke the hare from her form; and the pheasants, looking down from the branches of the trees, flew away with a sharp cry, and the whiz of their heavy wings, as their solitude was disturbed.

Their progress was difficult and slow; but, after their toil had continued nearly two hours, Castruccio exclaimed, "Yes, I see that I am right!" and he paused a moment beside a spring, near which grew a solitary, but gigantic cypress, that seemed, as you looked up, to attain to the bright star which shone right above it, and towards which its moveless spire pointed; "I am right; I know this place well; mark it, Castiglione; and now our journey is almost ended."

It was here, that in their childish days Castruccio and Euthanasia often played; their names were carved on the rough bark of the cypress, and here, in memory of their infantine friendship, they had since met, to renew the vows they had formerly made, vows now broken, scattered to the winds, more worthless than the fallen leaves of autumn on which he then trod. The way to the rock which overlooked the fountain was now short, but more difficult than ever; and both hands and feet were necessary to conquer the ascent. At length they came to a pinnacle, which, higher than the castle, overlooked the whole plain; and immediately under was the alcove which sheltered Euthanasia's fountain.

"I see no path which may lead to the fountain, my lord," said Castiglione.

"There is none," replied the prince, "nor did I ever get into the castle this way; but I have observed the place, and doubt not of the practicability of my plan."

Castruccio drew from under his cloak a rope, and fastened it to the shattered stump of a lightning-blasted tree; by the help of this rope, and a stick shod with iron which he carried in his hand, he contrived with the aid of Castiglione to reach a projecting ledge in the rock about two feet wide, which ran round the precipice about ten feet from its base; the fountain flowed from a crevice in this ledge, and steps were hewn out of the rock, leading from the source to the basin. Castruccio pointed out these circumstances to his companion, and made if fully apparent that, with a little boldness and caution, they might arrive by the means he had pointed out at the path which led to the postern of the castle. A few questions asked by Castiglione, which the prince answered with accuracy and minuteness, sufficed to clear all the doubts which the former had entertained, and to explain the whole of his proceeding.

As they returned, however, Castiglione said suddenly, "My lord, you understand this path so much better than I, why will you not undertake the attack?"

"I thank you," replied Castruccio, with a bitter smile; "but this business falls to your share; I must away to keep off the aid the countess expects from the Florentines."

They descended slowly; the moon had risen, which would have discovered their path to them, but that she was hid behind so thick a woof of dark and lightning-bearing clouds, that her presence sufficed only to dispel the pitchy blackness, in which, but for her, they had been enveloped. Every now and then the growling of distant but heavy thunder shook the air, and was answered by the screeching of the owl, and the screams of the birds whom it awoke from their sleep among the trees. The two adventurers soon reached the valley; and, mounting their horses, crossed the plain at full gallop; and the strong Libeccio against which they drove, cutting the air with difficulty, warmed the spirits, and somewhat dissipated the melancholy, which, in spite of all his efforts, oppressed Castruccio. He arrived much fatigued at his journey’s end; and, whatever might be the revolutions in his feelings, or the remorse which stung him when he reflected on the work for which he prepared, throwing himself on his couch, deep sleep quickly overcame all; nor did he awake, until an attendant came to announce to him, that the day was advanced, that the troops had long quitted Lucca, and that his principal officers waited only for him to join them in their march towards the Florentine camp. Castruccio then shook off sleep; and, having examined well that his esquire had omitted no piece of his armour which another horse bore, and having visited his charger which was to be led unbacked to the field, he mounted a black palfrey; and, merely saying to Castiglione, as he passed him in the palace court, “You understand all,” — he joined his officers, and they rode off on the road to Florence.

As they quitted the town, they met Tripalda, who, accosting the prince, told him, that he was now going to , and that he did not doubt that his arguments would induce the countess to surrender. Castruccio shook his head in disbelief, and, hastily wishing him good-success, put spurs to his horse, apparently impatient to quit every thing that reminded him of the odious task he had left his friends to perform.

Battista Tripalda, the ambassador of Castruccio on this occasion, was a canon of the cathedral of St. Ambrose at Perugia. By this time the colleges of canons, who had before lived in common like monks, had been dissolved, and each member was permitted to live privately, receiving his share of the yearly income which was before employed as a common stock. But the canons had offices to perform in the church, which obliged them to reside in the town, in which the cathedral to which they belonged was situated; Tripalda had however been long absent from his duties, nor did his bishop ever enquire after him, or require him to return. He had appeared at Lucca about a year before this time, unknown and unrecommended; but he had intruded himself into the palaces of the nobles, and been well received: his eccentric manners made them pardon his opinions, and the subtleties of his mind forced them to forgive his uncouth and arrogant demeanour. Yet, although received by all, he was liked by none, for there was a mystery about him that no one could divine; and we seldom like what we do not comprehend. He was an unbelieving priest, yet was permitted to exercise the clerical functions; he was a man who cried out against the simony and wickedness of the Roman religion, yet he was tolerated by all its members; he was equally severe against tyrants and lords, yet he was received at every court in Italy. He was an earnest panegyrizer of republics and democracies; yet he was satisfied with no existing form of government, because none was sufficiently free: he contended that each man ought to be his own king and judge; yet he pretended to morality, and to be a strict censor of manners and luxury. He had a deep insight into artful and artificial character, and a kind of instinctive prudence in extricating himself from the most embarrassing circumstances; so that his penetration almost gave him the appearance of a tamperer in the forbidden arts, which however he held in supreme contempt.

He was equally well received by the opposite factions, allying himself with neither, but condemning both. When he first appeared at Lucca, he was humble and mild, pretending to nothing but uncorrupted and uncorruptible virtue, desiring none of the goods of fortune, except that which she could not withhold from him, namely, the esteem and friendship of all good men. But this was merely the prelude to what was to follow. He was as those dwarfs we read of in fairy tales, who at first appear small and impotent, but who on further acquaintance assume the form of tremendous giants; so, when he became familiar with his new friends, he cast off his modest disguise, and appeared vain, presumptuous and insolent, delivering his opinions as oracles, violent when opposed in argument, contemptuous even when agreed with: there was besides something buffoonish in his manner, which he occasionally endeavoured to pass off for wit and imagination, and at other times, served him as a cloak for deep designs and dangerous opinions. The Guelphs declared that they believed him to be a Ghibeline spy; the Ghibelines, that he was under pay from the Pope; many said, that he tampered with both parties, and betrayed both. Worse stories had been whispered concerning him, but they were believed by few; it was said that the flagrant wickedness of his actions had caused him to be banished from Perugia; but this was disproved at once, for if so, why was he not deprived of his emoluments in the church?

The first conjecture concerning him was that he was a spy; but, however that might be, he escaped detection, and contrived to maintain his confidence with the chiefs of the opposite factions, and among these was Euthanasia. She admired his talents, believed him to be honest, and refused to listen to the accusations advanced against him, since the manner in which they were brought forward stamped them with the shew of unfounded calumnies. She was sometimes irritated by his impertinence, and shocked at his want of delicacy; but she had heard that early misfortunes had deranged his understanding, and she pitied and forgave him. Indeed she had known him a very short time; and he had not yet thrown off his mask of humility and virtue, which he ever wore on his first appearance on a new scene.

Euthanasia waited with impatience to hear the result of her message to Castruccio. She could not believe that he would put his threats in execution; but, in case of the worst, she resolved to oppose his pretensions, and to use every means to preserve her independence. She had sent, the same night of her interview with Arrigo, to intreat the Florentine general to dispatch a brigade for her defence, and to request the assistance of an able officer in sustaining the siege she might encounter. She called together the few militia of her villages. She visited the works of the castle, and gave orders for the immediate demolition of all roads and bridges on the first advance of the enemy; and then, overcome by the sense of wretchedness which clung to her in spite of the exalted state of her mind, she shrunk to solitude, and tried to seek in the recesses of her own soul for the long-studied lessons of courage and fortitude.

She believed herself justified, nay called upon to oppose the encroachments of the prince of Lucca; she felt roused to resistance by his menaces, and the implied accusation of treachery with which he had endeavoured to brand her. Her innocence made her proud, her spirit of independence, bold; she had ever refused to submit to his usurpations; her castle had often been the asylum for his victims, and herself the aider of the persecuted. “I may fall,” she thought; “but I will not stoop. I may become his victim; but I will never be his slave. I refused to yield to him when I loved him, if he did not dismiss his ambitious designs. Love, which is the ruling principle of my mind, whose power I now feel in every nerve, in every beating of my heart, I would not submit my conscience to the control of love; and shall fear rule me?”

She said this, and at the same moment Tripalda was announced. He advanced towards Euthanasia with a serious and important look, yet at the same time with an endeavour to appear courteous, if not humble. He kissed her hand, and having gravely asked after her health, he soon began to speak on the object of his visit, and to endeavour to persuade her that all resistance to the will of the prince was useless, and that in timely submission was the only hope left for her preservation. Euthanasia felt her cheeks glow as he spoke, and once her eyes seemed to flash lightning, when the word Mercy escaped from the orator, who talked on, appearing to observe little of what she felt, but to be wholly engrossed in the winding up of his periods. “Madonna,” said he, “the prince has a true and sincere friendship for you, and he is infinitely grieved at the idea of being at open hostility with you; but he must obey the will of the senate and the council, and you must ultimately submit to the forces sent against you. Listen then to one older than yourself, who has lived longer in the world, and has grown wise by experience: never, being weak, contend with the strong; for it is far more politic to yield at first upon conditions, than, falling after combat, to receive the law from the conqueror.”

“I am afraid, Messer Canonico,” replied Euthanasia, calmly, but somewhat haughtily, “that our opinions agree too little, to allow you to be a fitting arbiter between me and the prince of Lucca. This castle, and the power annexed to it, belonged to my ancestors; and when I received it from my mother’s hands, I vowed to exercise and preserve it for the good of my people—”

“And is it for the good of your people to expose them to the desolation of war, when you might conclude a satisfactory peace?”

“Messer Battista, I listened patiently while you spoke; and it boots little to continue this discussion, if you will not also attend to me. I will be very brief: Castruccio formed an alliance with me, and, as the condition of my independence, I promised not to join his enemies. I have preserved my part of the agreement; and, if he wishes to break his, I have friends and allies, who will not permit that my situation should be so hopeless as you imagine. It is the height of injustice to say that I bring war into this territory; since every prayer and every wish of my heart is for peace; but, if attacked, I will defend myself, and my right must become both my sword and shield.”

“You speak proudly, but foolishly, countess Euthanasia; for right was never yet sword or shield to any one. It is well to talk in this manner to women and children, and thus to keep the world in some degree of order. You are a woman, it is true; but your rank and power have placed you in a situation to know the truth of things; and, if you have not yet learned the futility of the lessons of the priests, whose sole end to all their speeches is to find a way, shorter or longer, into your purse; learn it from me, who am both willing and able to teach you."

"I shall make a sorry pupil, I am afraid; but, if you please, I will alter my phraseology, that my meaning may be more clear. I expect the aid of the Florentines; and I depend upon the courage with which the hatred of a usurper will inspire my soldiers, who love me, and will, I doubt not, defend me to the last drop of their blood: if my right cannot help me, my resolution shall. The prince of Lucca has called me, perhaps he believes me to be, a traitor; I am none to him, nor will I be to the party to which I belong. I promised my allies not to submit; and my word is sacred. Messer Battista, I doubt not that the motives which urged your visit, were honest, perhaps friendly; but cease to vex yourself and me with fruitless altercation."

"I do not intend altercation, Madonna; but I wished to expostulate with you, and to shew you the pit into which you seem obstinately resolved to fall. I know that the wisdom of all ages tells us, that women will have their will; I had hoped to find you superior to the foibles of your sex; and my mistake becomes my crime; for in truth you are as headstrong as a girl of fifteen, who hopes to cover her head with the nuptial veil. But I have set my heart on carrying this point with you, and will not be discouraged by a woman's eloquence or obstinacy."

"This is going too far," said Euthanasia, half angrily; "you imagine perhaps that I am already the slave of your lord, that you no longer preserve the respect which even then would be due to me. My mind is too full both of grief and anxiety, to string sentences together in answer to your arguments; but my purpose is firm, and you cannot shake it. If you come from the lord Castruccio himself, my answer is ever the same. I am at peace with him; but, if he attacks me, I know how to defend myself."

Any man but Tripalda might have been awed by the dignity of Euthanasia, and the restrained indignation, that glistened in her eyes, and flushed her cheek. She rose to bid the priest farewell, and her serious manner made him pause for an instant in his address; but his accustomed impudence quickly overcame the momentary shame, and he said, "I came to speak reason to the deaf, and to shew danger to the blind; but the deaf man says, I hear better than you, and the sound of arms and trumpets is yet far off; — and the blind man cries, Avaunt! I see my path better than you:

meanwhile the one falls into the hands of the enemy, and the other tumbles into the pit round which I would have led him. You will repent too late, that you did not follow my counsel; and then who will medicine your wounds?"

"The God who inflicted them upon me. I fear not!"

Tripalda returned to Lucca. Castruccio had left the town; and Castiglione, hearing the result of the priest's embassy, instantly prepared for the attack. Heralds were sent in due form to demand the surrender of the castle; and, when refused, war was immediately declared.

In the mean time the Florentine army had advanced into the Lucchese territory; but, when they heard of the march of Castruccio, they fell back to Fucecchio, and pitched their tents on the banks of the river Guisciana. Castruccio came up to them with his troops; but, being on opposite sides of the river, and not caring to cross it in face of the enemy, both armies remained observing each other's motions, each preparing to attack the other on the first shew of fear or retreat. The Florentine general had received the message of Euthanasia, but he found it difficult to comply with her wishes; for any troops sent to her aid must pass the Guisciana, and that was too well guarded to permit of any but a general passage and attack. He communicated her situation to the Florentine government, which sent her a small troop with Bondelmonti at its head, who, making the circuit of Bologna and the Modenese mountains, arrived on the eve of the attack, having with infinite difficulty surmounted the fortified passages of the mountains; so that many of his followers being made prisoners, and others left behind, he made his appearance at with not more than fifty men.

CHAPTER XXV

AFTER the departure of Tripalda, Euthanasia remained long on the battlements of her castle, watching the men who were employed in repairing and erecting some outworks for its defence. Every now and then she heard a murmuring near her, a slight noise, and then a voice which said—"Aye, that will do; this helmet is still too large, I must find some way to cut it round the edges."

Looking up, she saw at a small window of one of the projecting towers the Albinois, who appeared furbishing and repairing arms. "Are we so straitened for men," she said, "that you are obliged to turn armourer, my poor Bindo?"

"Not an armourer, but a soldier, lady; tomorrow I gird on my sword for your defence."

"You, and a sword! Nay, that is impossible; you must not expose yourself to danger, where you can do no good."

"Countess, have firm hope; I have learned from the stars, that tomorrow is a fortunate day for us. I have visited the holy fountain; and, sprinkling its waters three times around, I have called on its saints to aid us: tomorrow is named as a lucky day for us, and I will be among your defenders."

He spoke earnestly; and so highly wrought were the feelings of Euthanasia, that, although at another time she might have smiled, she could now with difficulty repress her tears. "If you would defend me," she replied, "wait then near me; I will not indeed have you risk your life to no end."

"Why, Madonna," said Bindo, "should you care more for my life, than for those of the brave fellows who will tomorrow die for you? We shall succeed; but death will be among us; and tomorrow many a child will lose its father, and many a wife her husband, fighting for this heap of stones which can feel neither defeat nor triumph. I will be among them; fear not, St. Martin has declared for us."

There are moments in our lives, when the chance-word of a madman or a fool is sufficient to cause our misery; and such was the present state of Euthanasia's mind. She hastily retreated to solitude, and in earnest thought tried to overcome the effect of the conscience-stricken wound which the Albinois had inflicted. We are distrustful of ourselves; so little do we depend upon our human reason, that, on the eve of any action, even the most praiseworthy, it will sometimes assume another semblance, and that will appear selfish wilfulness, or at best a distorted freak of the imagination, which, when we first contemplated it, seemed the highest effort of human virtue. It had appeared to Euthanasia her first duty to resist the incroachments of Castruccio, and to preserve the independence of her subjects. Now again she paused, and thought that all the shows this world presents were dearly bought at the price of one drop of human blood. She doubted the purity of her own motives; she doubted the justification which even now she was called upon to make at the tribunal of her conscience, and hereafter before that of her God; she stopped, and shivered on the brink of her purpose, as a mighty fragment of rock will pause shaking at the edge of a precipice, and then fall to the darkness that must receive it.

"The earth is a wide sea," she cried, "and we its passing bubbles; it is a changeful heaven, and we its smallest and swiftest driven vapours; all changes, all passes — nothing is stable, nothing for one moment the same. But, if it be so, oh my God! if in Eternity all the years that man has numbered on this green earth be but a point, and we but the minutest speck in the great whole, why is the present moment every thing to us? Why do our minds, grasping all, feel as if eternity and immeasurable space were kernelled up in one instantaneous sensation? We look back to times past, and we mass them together, and say in such a year such and such events took place, such wars occupied that year, and during the next there was peace. Yet each year was then divided into weeks, days, minutes, and slow-moving seconds, during which there were human minds to note and distinguish them, as now. We think of a small motion of the dial as of an eternity; yet ages have past, and they are but hours; the present moment will soon be only a memory, an unseen atom in the night of by-gone time. A hundred years hence, and young and old we shall all be gathered to the dust, and I shall no longer feel the coil that is at work in my heart, or any longer struggle within the inextricable bonds of fate. I know this; but yet this moment, this point of time, during which the sun makes but one round amidst the many millions it has made, and the many millions it will make, this moment is all to me. Most willingly, nay, most earnestly, do I pray that

I may die this night, and that all contention may cease with the beatings of my heart. Yet, if I live, shall I submit? Is all that we prize but a shadow? Are tyranny, and cruelty, and liberty, and virtue only names? Or, are they not rather the misery of joy, that makes our hearts the abode of storms, or as a smiling, flower-covered isle? Oh! I will no longer question my purpose, or waver where necessity ought to inspire me with courage. One heart is too weak to contain so overwhelming a contention."

While her melancholy thoughts thus wandered, and she seemed to range in idea through the whole universe, yet no where found repose, it was announced to her that Bondelmonti and his soldiers had arrived, and that the chief desired to see her. There was something in the name of Bondelmonti that struck a favourable chord in her heart; he had been her father's friend; he was her guardian, and, although she had sometimes run counter to his advice, yet she always felt most happy when his opinion coincided with hers. His presence thus announced seemed to cancel half her care; she collected all the courage she possessed, and that was a mighty store, and descended, even smiling, to the hall; her cares and regrets were leashed like dogs by the huntsmen, but they neither bayed nor yelled, but cowered in silence. Bondelmonti was struck by the serenity of her aspect; and his countenance changed from the doubt it had before expressed, to a frank and gallant address.

"Madonna," said he, "the work we undertake is difficult; Castruccio keeps our army in check, and guards the passes; and the fifty men that I bring you, is all out of three hundred that could pass the Serchio. Have good heart however, your castle walls are strong and will resist all the stones with which their battifolle can batter it, if indeed they can scale the rock, which we must make as impracticable as we can. But this is not fitting work for you, fair countess; do you retire to rest; I would indeed that we could place you in safety in Florence out of all danger, where you would not be able to hear the clash of arms that tomorrow will resound in this castle. But I know that you have courage; and I now see all the calm fortitude of your father shine in your clear eyes; you are a good girl, Euthanasia, a good and a wise girl, and be assured that every drop of blood that warms my heart, every faculty of my body or my mind, are devoted to your cause."

Euthanasia thanked him in the warm language her feeling heart dictated, and he continued; "I should have much to say to you, much encouragement from your friends and messages of praise and affection; but my time is short: believe then in one word, that all your Florentine friends love, approve and admire you; and if you fall, which this good sword forbid, we shall at least have this consolation, that our long absent Euthanasia will reappear among us. But now to the works of war; I will apply to your seneschal to know what food you have in the castle, and what possibilities there are of increasing your stock; and your principal officers shall shew me your works of defence, that I may concert with them the plan for to-morrow's combat."

Euthanasia however undertook this task herself: she was too much agitated, not to find some relief in the shew of composure which she preserved with Bondelmonti, and in the exertion of explaining and pointing out the various modes of defence which she had adopted, in addition to those with which nature had furnished her habitation. The castle was built, as I have before said, on the projecting platform of a precipitous mountain: the wall of the edifice itself was thick and strong; and but a small way removed from it was a lower wall, built with corner towers and battlements, which at once defended the main building, and sheltered the besieged, who could shower stones and arrows on the assailants from the portholes, and be in no danger of retaliation. Before the gate of the castle was a green plot, about fifteen paces across, planted with a few cork and ilex trees, and surrounded by a barbican or low wall built on the edge of the precipice, which, high, bare, and inaccessible, hung over the plain below. Between the wall and the barbican, a path ran round one side of the castle, which was terminated by massy gates and a portcullis; and it was there that, crossing the chasm which insulated the castle, by means of a drawbridge, you found the path that conducted to the plain. This path was defended by various works; palisades, wooden towers to shelter archers, and more by nature herself, for the rock and the trees were all so many asylums whence the defenders could uninjured prevent the approach of an enemy.

"This is all excellent," said Bondelmonti; "it is impossible that all the armies of Italy could force this pass, though it were defended only by a handful. But, Madonna, is there no other entrance to your castle? Is there no postern with a path up or down the mountain, whose secret your enemies may learn, and thus attack you unawares?"

“None; the only postern is that which opens on a path conducting to a small fountain about a hundred paces up the acclivity; but there it stops, and the rock rising precipitously behind forbids approach.”

“It is well. I will now review your soldiers, appoint their various posts, and see that mine are refreshed; then, cousin, having tasted your wine, I will go to rest, that I may awake betimes to-morrow. I am resolved that all shall go well; Castruccio will be defeated; and you shall ever be, as you deserve, the castellana of .”

The tables were spread in the great hall of the castle, and heaped with wine and food. After Euthanasia had seen every want of her guests supplied, she retired to her own room at the eastern angle of the castle, one window of which overlooked the whole plain of Lucca; and she sat near this window, unable to rest or sleep, in that breathless and feverish state, in which we expect a coming, but uncertain danger.

The veil of night was at length withdrawn; first Euthanasia saw the stars wax faint, and then the western sky caught a crimson tinge from the opposing sun. It was long ere he climbed the eastern hill; but his rays fell upon the opposite mountains, and the windows of the castle of shone dazzlingly bright. A reveillée was sounded in the court below, and roused the young countess from her waking dreams, to the reality that yawned as a gulf before her. First, she composed her dress, and bound the wandering locks of her hair round her head; then for a moment she stood, her hands folded on her bosom, her eyes cast up to heaven. At first her countenance expressed pain: but it changed; her pale cheek began to glow, her brow became clear from the cloud that had dimmed it, her eyes grew brighter, and her whole form gained dignity and firmness. “I do my duty,” she thought, “and in that dear belief do I place my strength; I do my duty towards myself, towards my peasants, towards Castruccio, from whose hands I detain only the power of doing greater ill; God is my help, and I fear not.”

Thinking and feeling thus, she descended to the hall of the castle; most of the soldiers had gone to their posts; but Bondelmonti, and some of those of higher rank in her party and household, were waiting her appearance. She entered not gaily, but serenely; and her beauty, the courage painted on her face, and her thrilling tone as she bade them good morrow, inspired them with a simultaneous emotion, which they almost expressed, and midway checked their voices. Bondelmonti kissed her hand; “Farewell, my friends,” she said; “you risk your lives for me, and the sacrifice of mine were a poor recompense; my honour, my every hope rests upon your swords; they are wielded by those who love me, and I do not fear the result.”

Bondelmonti addressed himself to the combat, ordered the men to their posts, and took his own station on the drawbridge of the castle. The winding path which led to the foot of the mountain, was lined with archers and slingers, who were hid behind the projecting rocks or trees, or within small wooden towers, erected for the purpose. A chosen band armed with long spears was stationed in firm array at the most precipitous part of the path, who, drawn up in close rank, and advancing their arms, formed an outwork of iron spikes, impossible to be passed or driven back. The foremost in the combat were the dependents of Euthanasia; they were full of that loud, but undisciplined courage which anger and fear inspire; Bindo was among them, and he harangued them, saying, that every sign in the heavens, and every power of air, was propitious to their mistress; at other times they had derided his superstition; but now it acted as another incentive to their indignation, and supporter for their courage.

In the mean time Euthanasia had retired to the apartment of Lauretta. This unfortunate lady had remained in the castle since the death of her husband; and such was the agony of grief she endured, that Euthanasia had not communicated to her the threats of Castruccio, and the approaching siege. The noise of arms, and the sound of many voices alarmed her; and she wildly asked the cause. Her friend related to her the events of the few last days, and endeavoured to calm her; Lauretta listened in fear; she had suffered so much by the like contentions, that every thing presented itself to her in the gloomiest point of view. Grasping the countess’s hand, she intreated her to submit; “You know not what a siege is,” she cried; “my father’s castle was stormed, and therefore I well know. Even if Castruccio were at the head of his troops, he would in vain endeavour to restrain their fury; a triumphant soldier is worse than the buffalo of the forest, and no humanity can check his thirst for blood and outrage; they will conquer, and neither God nor man can save us.”

Euthanasia tried to soothe her; but in vain. She wept bitterly, and prayed so earnestly that the countess would spare them both the utter misery they would endure, that Euthanasia was for a moment startled by her adjurations; but then, recalling her thoughts, she replied with gentle firmness, and bade her lay aside her fears which were unfounded, for there was nothing to dread save an easy imprisonment, if they should be overcome.

And now, as they were talking thus, a messenger came from Bondelmonti. “The general desires you to have good heart,” he said; “the troops of the enemy advance; and, if we may judge by their appearance, they are few, and even those few the refuse of the prince’s army.”

Euthanasia listened incredulously; for she knew that however doubtful the decision of the combat might be, the contention must be fierce. Soon the war-cry arose from without the castle, and was echoed from the walls and mountains; when it ceased it was answered by the Ghibeline cry from the assailants. But this only proved the truth of Bondelmonti’s assertion, that they were few, and of no note; for the shout was not that exhilarating sound, that echoes the soul’s triumph, and, borne along the line, raises responsive ardour in every breast; it was loud, but soon died away.

Wearied by the childish remonstrances of Lauretta, Euthanasia descended to the platform of the castle, and leaned over the barbican; but she could see nothing, though her ears were stunned by the cries, and clash of arms, that rose from the valley. Returning to the inner court, she met some men who were bearing the wounded from the field, and bringing them for succour to the castle; for a moment her heart sunk within her, for a moment she was pierced with grief, as she thought—”This is my work!” But she recovered herself—”It must all be endured,” said she; “I have undertaken a part, and will not faint on the threshold. Spirit of my father, aid me!”

Beds had been prepared in a large apartment of the castle, and Euthanasia mingled with the women who ministered to the wounded; she bound them with her own hands, cheered them with her voice, and endeavoured, by supporting their minds, to alleviate the sense of bodily pain. The men, who saw her flitting like an angel about them, aiding and ministering to their wants, felt all the love and gratitude that such unwonted, but gracious kindness might inspire. “Fear not, lady,” they said; “we are even more numerous than those who attack us; already they are tired, and out of breath; fear not, the day is ours.”

A messenger also came from Bondelmonti, to say, that the imprudence of an under-officer had caused the few to fall who had fallen, but that her troops were now all sheltered, and, that without the loss of a man they would either destroy all the assailants, or drive them down the steep; and this assertion appeared confirmed, since no more wounded were brought in. Thus reassured, Euthanasia left the hall, and ascended to her own apartment; her spirit was lightened of much of its burthen; the first barrier had been passed; and she feared not, she would not fear, the rest.

As she thought this, a sudden scream echoed through the castle; for a moment she was transfixed; the scream was repeated, louder and nearer, and she hastened to the window that overlooked the outer court. Thence she saw a party of soldiers in the Lucchese uniform issue from the gate, and run round the castle towards the drawbridge; as they came out in file she thought their numbers would never end, and she recognized several of the officers as those of the highest rank in Castruccio's army; the last at length disappeared, and she looked around for an explanation. The castle was silent; she stood alone in the room; and even the echo of footsteps reached her not: she paused a moment; and then, weary of further doubt, she hastened to the room of Lauretta, and found it full of soldiers, — the enemy's soldiers; while the poor girl, pale and trembling, sat bewildered and silent. Euthanasia entered from a small door, leading from a private staircase: her first words were addressed to her friend; "Fear not," she cried; "we are betrayed; but fear not."

The soldiers, seeing her appear, had sent for their chief officer, who came forward, saying, "The castle is ours; and, Madonna, it were well that you ordered your people to yield; for further resistance would be useless, and could only cause more bloodshed: we are commanded by our general to act with the greatest moderation."

"It is enough," replied Euthanasia, quietly; "the commander will judge of the necessity of submission: but see, you frighten this lady, who is ill and delicate. I beseech you to leave this room awhile; if I find that indeed no further resistance can be made, I shall soon be prepared to obey what orders you may bring."

"Madonna, we withdraw as you desire: but permit me to add, that it is the general's orders that we escort you to Lucca this evening: until then we shall not intrude upon you."

The soldiers quitted the room; and Euthanasia, leaving Lauretta with her servant, retired to her own apartment. Here she found several of her attendants, who told with many tears that there was no longer any hope; that the enemy, entering at the postern, had attacked her soldiers from behind, and driven them down the mountain, and that the party left in the castle having raised the drawbridge, were now in undisturbed possession. Euthanasia heard all this with an unaltered mien, and, when the melancholy tale was finished, she bade them leave her, and go to the commanding officer of the troop to receive orders for their further proceeding, but not to return to her, until she should command their attendance.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE castle bell tolled the Ave Maria for the last time, answering the belfries of the various convents in the vale below. “There is my knell!” cried Euthanasia. At first she thought that it would please her, in quitting for ever the abode of her ancestors, to array herself in mourning garments; but then the simplicity of her mind made her instinctively shun any thing that had the appearance of affectation; so she covered her head with a white veil, folded her capuchin about her, and returned to the chamber of Lauretta to prepare for her removal. Castiglione sent thither to desire admittance; when he came, he felt awed by the deportment of Euthanasia, who received him with that slight tinge of pride mingled with her accustomed dignity, which adversity naturally bestows on the good. He announced that the escort had arrived to convey them to Lucca; Euthanasia bowed her head in acquiescence; and, supporting Lauretta, with an unfaltering step she left for the last time the castle of her ancestors; she supported her friend with one hand, and with the other folded her veil close to her face, that no rudely curious eye might read in its expression the sorrow that she felt in her heart. “My grief is my own,” she thought, “the only treasure that remains to me; and I will hoard it with more jealousy from the sight and knowledge of others, than a miser does his gold.”

She walked unhesitating through the hall, long the seat of her purest happiness. Her infant feet had trodden its pavement in unreproved gaiety; and she thought for a moment that she saw the venerable form of her father seated in his accustomed place. But she proudly shook the softening emotion from her, and looked with a tearless eye upon the hearth, round which the soldiers of her enemy stood, profaning its sacredness by their presence. The inner court of the castle was filled by a number of women and children, the wives of the peasantry who depended on her, who, as they saw her advance, raised one cry of grief; she started, and said in a smothered voice, “Could I not have been spared this?”

“Impossible,” replied Castiglione, who overheard her; “nothing but the most brutal force could have prevented them.”

“Enough,” said Euthanasia; “I am satisfied.”

The women clung about her, kissing her hands, her garments, and throwing themselves on their knees with all the violent gesticulation of Italians. They tore their hair, and called on heaven to save and bless their mistress, and to avenge her wrongs;—”God bless you, good people!” cried their countess; “may you never be reminded of my loss by any misfortune that may befall yourselves!”

And, disengaging herself from their grasp, she walked on, while they followed crying and bewailing. She crossed the drawbridge, which was guarded at each end by soldiers; ere she put her foot on the opposite rock, Euthanasia paused for one moment; it seemed to her that all was irretrievably lost, when once she had passed the barrier which this bridge placed between her past and future life; she glanced back once more at the castle, and looked up to the window of her apartment; she had expected to find it desert and blank; but it was filled with soldiers, who stood looking from it on her departure; she sighed deeply, and then with quicker steps hastened down the mountain.

The idea that this path had been the scene of the morning’s combat affrighted her; and she dared not look round, fearing that she might see some lifeless victim among the bushes and rocks on the road-side: and so it might easily have been; for, when Castiglione had ordered the road to be cleared of the dead, many had been cast behind the projections of rock, or under the low wood, in their haste; and, as they passed, the vulture arose from among the grass, scared from his prey, and told too truly that he feasted upon limbs which that same morning had been endowed with life. The very path on which she trod was slippery with blood; and she felt as if she walked through one of the circles of hell’s torments, until she reached the foot of the rock.

Lauretta was placed in a litter; Euthanasia mounted her horse; and they prepared to depart: but the women again raising a cry, threw themselves about the horse, seizing the reins, and vowing that she should not leave them. “God bless you!” cried the poor countess, who, although filled with her own grief, yet sympathized with these good people; “but now go; you may harm yourselves with your new master; you can do no good to me.”

The soldiers interfered; and, opening the path before Euthanasia, she gave the reins to her horse, and rode with speed out of the hearing of the cry, which her people again sent up, when they saw that she had indeed left them. She had outridden the rest of her party; and, finding herself alone, she drew up her palfrey to wait their arrival. She looked upon the castle, no longer hers; a few quick drops fell; she dried them again; and, seeing her escort approach, she turned her horse's head, and, without a word, proceeded slowly on her way to Lucca.

The city-gates were shut; but, on the word being given by her escort, they were thrown open, and she entered the dark and narrow streets of the town. "My prison!" thought Euthanasia. Here the company divided: Lauretta, at her own request, was conveyed to the house of the mother of Leodino; and Euthanasia was led to the palace prepared for her reception. She took no notice of the streets through which she passed, and cared little whether they conducted her to a palace or a prison; indeed during the latter part of her ride, her strength both of mind and body so much forsook her, that she could hardly keep her seat on her horse, but rode like a veiled statue of despair.

Euthanasia was led to her chamber; her attendants came to her, but she dismissed them all; and, her mind confused, her spirits and strength quite exhausted by long watching during several of the preceding nights, and by the exciting circumstances of the day, she threw herself dressed as she was on a couch, and, kindly nature coming to her aid, sank instantaneously into a heavy and dreamless sleep.

Day was far advanced, before she again awoke, and looked forth on the light, with a sentiment, as if the slight refreshment of spirit and strength she had received, were but a mockery of the sad weight that oppressed her heart. She lifted her heavy head, like a water lily whose cup is filled by a thunder shower: but, presently recalling her scattered faculties, she sat for some time in deep meditation, endeavouring to philosophize herself out of the unhappiness that she felt. The palace to which she had been conducted, was a large and magnificent one, near the outskirts of the town: it had belonged to one of the victims of Castruccio's despotism, and had the desolate and woe-begone appearance of a mansion which has lost its master. From the chamber where she sat, she looked upon the garden; a square plot of ground surrounded by four high walls, which had been planted in the Italian taste, but which now ran wild; the small flower-beds were overgrown with weeds, and the grass, a rude commoner, had thrust itself into the untrod paths; the stone — pedestals for the lemon-pots were green with moss and lichens; and here and there the wind-borne seed of some delicate plant had sown a lovely flower in the midst of the moist, coarse herbage which could ill claim its fellowship. A few cypress and box trees, which had been cut into shape, now mocked the gardener's knife with the unpruned growth of three years; and ivy darkened the walls side by side with the orange trees, whose golden apples shone amidst the dark foliage. A few lizards had crept from beneath the stones to bask in the rays of the autumnal sun; and the frogs croaked in a reservoir or cistern, which had once played as a fountain, but which was now choked with weeds and dirt. Such was the desolate scene which arrested the eyes of Euthanasia, as she looked from her window. "The image of my fortunes;" she thought, and turned away, while a tear flowed down her cheek.

Her servant now entered; and, while she arranged her dress, the woman related the catastrophe of the siege. When the soldiers of Castruccio had appeared behind her defenders coming down from the castle, they threw themselves first on those who guarded the bridge, and took Bondelmonti and the principal Florentines prisoners: but the dependents of the countess, transported with fury, and elevated by the promises which Bindo had held out of success, rushed out of their hiding-places, and charging those at the foot of the rock, drove them with desperate courage down the mountain path, unmindful of the enemies who pressed upon their rear. The battle was bloody; many fell on each side; the small troop of ns were destroyed almost to a man, falling voluntary sacrifices for their mistress's preservation. A few were taken prisoners, and among them Bindo, who almost miraculously had escaped unwounded. But, if he were not wounded in body, his mind was almost frenzied with rage and disappointment, when he saw the Lucchese flag wave from the donjon of the castle; he tried to break from those who held him, and, weak as he appeared to be, he exerted such desperate strength, using both hands, feet, and teeth, that the soldiers found it necessary to bind him. — As they fastened the cords, Castiglione came up: he remembered the Albinois; and, asking why it was that he was used so roughly, he ordered them to set him free. As soon as his bonds were loosened, without speaking or looking round, he darted off; and, running across the country as swiftly as a deer from the hounds, was quickly out of sight.

Euthanasia wept when she heard of the blood that had been spilt for her; and self-reproach, who is ever ready to thrust in his sharp sting, if he find that mailed conscience has one weak part, now tormented her that she had not yielded, before one human life had been lost in so unhappy a cause. “Do not evil that good may come,” thought she. “Are not those the words of the Teacher? I have done infinite evil, in spilling that blood whose each precious drop was of more worth than the jewels of a kingly crown; but my evil has borne its fitting fruit; its root in death, its produce poison.”

In the course of the day, Arrigo Guinigi came to visit her. He came with a message from Castruccio, who intreated her to remain quietly in the palace provided for her, until he should return to Lucca, which would be in a few days, when he would learn from her own lips what her wishes were with regard to her future life. Arrigo said all this with downcast eyes and a heaving breast, hardly daring to speak, and much less raise his eyes upon the countess; who replied that she would obey; that she had much rather not see the prince; but that if he commanded it, she was ready to submit. “You see me, my dear Arrigo, a prisoner, despoiled of my possessions, a slave to your lord’s will. Yet I hope and trust, that these events would not have created the deep sorrow with which I feel that my soul is filled, did not bitter sentiments of lost affections, disappointed expectations, and utter hopelessness, fill up the measure of my infelicity. My good youth, we are born to misery; so our priests tell us, and there is more sooth in that lesson, than in early youth we are willing to believe; yet fortitude is the virtue with which my father endeavoured principally to imbue me, and I would fain not disgrace his counsels; but indeed a poisoned barb has entered my heart, and I cannot draw it out.”

Arrigo endeavoured to comfort her.—”Your state is far from hopeless; the prince has promised, and intends to keep his promise, that your revenues shall not be injured by the loss of your castle. At Florence you will be surrounded by friends, and every luxury and pleasure of life; and there you may again be happy.”

Autumn was now far advanced, and the rains came on. The Florentine and Lucchese armies, which had remained looking at each other from opposite sides of the river, were now further divided by the overflowing of its waters; so each retreated to their several towns, and the campaign of that year ended. Castruccio returned to Lucca. His first concern was a long and private conversation with Castiglione; and immediately after he dispatched Arrigo to prepare Euthanasia for a conference.

Poor girl! her heart beat, and the blood mounted to her before pale cheeks, when she heard that she was to see him whom she had loved, and to whose memory, as of what had been, she clung with tenacious affection. It was a cruel task for her to behold his form, graceful as it had been when she gazed on it in happier days, and his countenance, which, but that more pride were mingled in the expression, was as gloriously beautiful, as when it beamed love upon her; and more than all, to hear his voice, whose soft and mellow cadences had wrapped her soul in Elysium, now to be heard as the voice of an alien. But indignation mingled itself with these feelings, and enabled her to support the coming trial with greater courage; so, calling up all of pride with which her delicacy might arm her, and all of fortitude which her philosophy had taught, she awaited with patience the expected moment.

She sat on a low sofa; her dress was dark; the vest, formed of purple silk, and fastened at her waist by a silken cord, fell in large folds to her feet; a cloak of sables hung on her shoulder; and her golden hair, partly clustered on her neck, and partly confined by a ribbon, covered with its ringlets her fair brow. When she heard the step of Castruccio approaching, she became pale; her very lips lost their colour; and her serious eyes, shorn of their beams, were as the deep azure of midnight, where the stars shine not. He entered. When he had seen her last, he had been haughty and imperious; but now his manner was all softness, gentleness and humility; so that, when he spoke, in spite of the high nobility of her spirit, her eyes were weighed down by the unshed tears.

“Countess,” he said, “pardon me, if my intrusion upon you appear ungenerous; but persons, that, like myself, are occupied in the affairs of government, are apt to leave too much to underlings, who never do or say that which it were exactly right to have said or done. Your future peace is too dear to me, to permit me to hear from any but yourself what are your wishes and your expectations.”

He paused, waiting for an answer, and fixed on her his soft and full eyes, which seemed to read her soul, while a gentle smile of compassion and love played on his lips. After collecting her thoughts, she raised her eyes to reply, and met those of her former lover, whose expression seemed fraught with all that affection he had once vowed to her. She was unable to speak; but then, angry at her own weakness, she rallied her spirits, and replied,—”I have but one favour to intreat, which is your permission to remove instantly to Florence.”

“Your wishes in this respect, Madonna, are commands; yet I could have desired that you would consent to stay awhile in Lucca. I know the judgement that you have formed of me; you look on me as a wild beast ravenous for blood, as a lawless monster, despoiled of all the feelings of humanity. I could have desired that you would stay awhile, to find and to avow your injustice; I could wish you to stay, until the deep respect, and if you will permit the word, the love I feel for you, should make such impression on your heart, that you would allow me to assuage those sorrows of which I have unhappily been the cause.”

“My lord, do not speak thus to me,” replied Euthanasia, with a voice which at first trembled, but which gained firmness as she continued; “We are divided; there is an eternal barrier between us now, sealed by the blood of those miserable people who fell for me. I cannot, I do not love you; and, if a most frivolous and reprehensible weakness could make me listen now, the ghosts of the slain would arise to divide us. My lord, I cannot reason with you, I can hardly speak; the blood of the slaughtered, the tears of the survivors, the scathed ruins of my castle, are all answers, louder than words, to your present offers. If these have been your acts of courtship, pardon me if I say, that I had rather woo the lion in his den to be my husband, than become the bride of a conqueror. But this is useless cavilling, painful to both of us; it awakens in me the indignation I would fain repress; and it may kindle resentment in your heart, which is already too apt to be inflamed with that sentiment. You came, you say, to learn my wishes; you have now heard them; let us part; we part in that peace every Christian believer owes to his brother; I forgive you from my inmost heart; do not you hate me; and thus farewell.”

“You forgive me, Euthanasia? Is then your soul so pure? me, who indeed have grievously wronged you; and, however, necessary my actions have been, yet have they been destructive to you. But, if indeed you forgive me, and part in Christian amity, allow me once more to take your hand, that I may know that it is not a mere form of words, but that you express a feeling of the heart.”

Euthanasia held out her hand, which he took in both his, and holding it thus, he said: “Hear me, my loved girl; you whom alone in the world I have ever loved. You despise, repulse, and almost hate me; and yet, God knows, I still cherish you as tenderly, as when we told each other’s love-tale first in yonder unhappy castle. I do not ask you to love me, you cannot; — but you are still young, very young, Euthanasia; and fortune yet may have many changes in store for you. Remember, that, through them all, I am your friend; and if ever in any misery you want a protector, one to save and preserve you, Castruccio, the neglected, mistaken, but most faithful Castruccio, will ever be ready to use his arm and his power in your service. Now, Euthanasia, farewell.”

“Oh God!” cried the unhappy girl, moved to her inmost heart, “could you not have spared me this? leave me; farewell for ever!”

He kissed her hand, and left her; while she, her delicate frame yielding under the many emotions she experienced, sank almost lifeless on the couch. She had suffered much, and borne up through all. But this last interview overcame her: her health, which had been weakened by watching, and agitation, and tears, now entirely gave way. A fever followed, — delirium, and utter deprivation of strength. The disease seemed to feed on her very vitals; and death already tainted her cheek with his fingers. But youth, and a constitution, nourished and strengthened among mountains, and healthful exertions of body and mind, saved her; and, after a confinement of several months, she again crept forth, to see the sun of spring smile on his children, who laughingly welcomed his genial beams.

Where during this time was the prophetess of Ferrara?

CHAPTER XXVII

WHEN Bindo had been released by the command of Castiglione from the hands of the Lucchese soldiers, he fled across the country; and, possessed with horror and despair at the issue of all his predictions, hastened to the only human being to whom he ever spoke his real sentiments, or in whom he placed any confidence.

To the north of Lucca, where the mountains rise highest, and the country is most wild, there was, at the period those people lived concerning whom I write, an immense ilex wood, which covered the Apennines, and was lost to sight in the grey distance, and among the folds and declivities of the hills. In this forest there lived a witch; she inhabited a cottage built partly of the trunks of trees, partly of stones, and partly was inclosed by the side of the mountain against which it leaned. This hut was very old; that part of it which was built of stone was covered with moss, lichens and wall-flowers, whose beauty and scent appeared alien to the gloom around; but, amidst desolation and horror, Nature loves to place the lovely and excellent, that man, viewing the scene, may not forget that she, the Mother, dwells every where. The trees were covered with ivy, many of them hollow and decaying, while around them the new sprouts arose, and refreshed the eye with an appearance of youth. On a stone near the cabin door sat the witch; she was very old; none knew how old: men, verging on decrepitude, remembered their childish fears of her; and they all agreed that formerly she appeared more aged and decrepit than now. She was bent nearly double; there was no flesh on her bones; and the brown and wrinkled skin hung loosely about her cheeks and arms. She was short, thin and small; her hair was perfectly white, and her red eyes, the only part about her that appeared to have life, glared within their sunken sockets; her voice was cracked and shrill.

“Well, son,” said she, when she saw Bindo arrive, “What news? Are thine, or my predictions most true?”

Bindo threw himself on the ground, and tore his hair with rage, but he answered not a word.

“You would not believe my words,” continued she, with a malicious laugh; “but the stars are not truer to their course, than I to fate; tomorrow not one stone will lie upon another of the castle of .”

“This must not be,” cried Bindo, starting up furiously; “it shall not be! Are you not a witch? and if you have sold your soul to the devil, will he not obey your will?”

“I sold my soul to the devil!” she replied in a tone, which bordered on a scream; “I tell thee, thou wert happy, if thy soul were as certain to be saved as mine. I rule the spirits, and do not serve them; what can angels do more? But one thing I cannot do; I cannot impede the star of Castruccio: that must rise.”

“Aye, — you are all alike; — you can lame cattle, strangle fowls, and milk cows; but, when power is wanted, you are as weak as this straw. Come, if you are a witch, act as one.”

“What would you that I should do? I can cover the sky with clouds; I can conjure rain and thunder from the blue empyrean; the Serchio will obey me; the winds from the north and the south know my call; the mines of the earth are subject to me; I can call the dead from their graves, and command the spirits of air to obey me. The fortunes of men are known to me; but man himself is not to be ruled, unless he consent to obey. Castruccio is set above men; his star is highest in the sky, and the aspect of the vast heaven favours him; I can do nothing with him.”

“Then farewell; and may the curses of hell cling to you, and blight you! I want no conjurer’s tricks, — but man shall do for me what the devil cannot.”

“Stay, son,” cried the witch; “now you say right; now you are reasonable. Though the star of Castruccio be high, it will fall at last, burst and fall like a dead stick upon the ground. Be it for us to hasten this moment; man may help you, and be that your task; watch all that happens, and tell me all; let no act or word escape your notice; and something will happen which I may wind to my purpose. We have both vowed to pursue the prince of Lucca to the death. There are no means now; but some will arise, and we shall triumph. Keep in mind one thing; do not let your mistress depart. I know that she desires to go to Florence; she must remain at Lucca, until the destined time be fulfilled; be it your task to keep her.”

“I do not like these slow measures,” replied the Albinois sullenly; “and, methinks, his waxen image at the fire, or his heart stuck full of pins, might soon rid the earth of him; surely if curses might kill a man, he were dead; tell me, in truth is he not a fiend? Is he not one of the spirits of the damned housed in flesh to torment us?”

“Seek not to enquire into the mysteries of our art. You tell your wishes; I direct their accomplishment; — obey — you can do no more. When death, the mower, is in the field, few plants are tough enough to turn the edge of his scythe: yet Castruccio is one of these few; and patience and prudence alone can effect his fall. Watch every thing; report all to me; and beware that the countess leaves not Lucca; our power is gone, when she goes.”

Such was the scene that immediately followed the destruction of the castle of . Bindo had hitherto loved his mistress, with an affection whose energy had never been called into action; but he loved her, as the lioness in the desert loves her whelps, who day by day feeds them in peace, but, when aroused by the hunters, will defend them to the last drop of her blood. He loved her, as we all love, and know not how fervently, until events awake our love to the expression of its energy. He had seldom thought upon Castruccio; when he came frequently to Valperga, and he saw his mistress happy in his visits, then these visits also made the Albinois joyful; yet he sympathized too little in the course of daily life, to disapprove of him when he came no more: but, when he sought to injure the sole being whom Bindo loved and reverenced, then a hidden spring suddenly burst forth in the Albinois’ mind; and hate, till then unknown, arose, and filled every conduit of his heart, and, mingling its gall with the waters of love, became the first feeling, the prime mover in his soul.

He had long associated with this witch. He felt his defects in bodily prowess; perhaps also he felt the weakness of his reason; and therefore he sought for powers of art, which might overcome strength, and powers of mind, which were denied to the majority of the human species. Bindo was a very favourable subject for the witch to act upon; she deceived him easily, and through his means spread far the fame of her incantations. What made these women pretend to powers they did not possess, incur the greatest perils for the sake of being believed to be what they were not, without any apparent advantage accruing to themselves from this belief? I believe we may find the answer in our own hearts: the love of power is inherent in human nature; and, in evil natures, to be feared is a kind of power. The witch of the Lucchese forest was much feared; and no one contributed to the spread of this feeling more than Bindo.

She had no interest to preserve Euthanasia, or to destroy Castruccio; but she must feign these feelings in order to preserve her power over the Albinois. She resolved however not to be drawn into any action which might attract the hatred of the prince; for she knew him indeed to be a man out of her sphere, a man who went to mass, and told his beads as the church directed him, and who would have no hesitation in consigning to what he would call, condign punishment, all such as dealt with evil spirits, infernal drugs, and diabolical craft.

Bindo saw nothing of the motives which actuated her; and he really believed that the star of Castruccio had the ascendant: so after the first ebullitions of despair were calmed, he waited, with the patience of cherished hate, for the events which the witch told him might in the course of time bring about the sequel he so much desired.

He had made calculations, and cast lots upon the fate of , whose results were contrary to the enunciations of the witch. These had proved false; and, when time had calmed his feelings, this disappointment itself made him cling more readily to the distant, but as he hoped, surer promises of the witch, and build upon her words the certain expectation of the overthrow of Castruccio, and the restoration of Valperga in more than its original splendour. He returned to Euthanasia, and watched by her sick chamber, as the savage mother of a wild brood tends upon her expiring young; the fear of losing her by this sickness, at once exasperated him against the man whom he believed to be the cause of the mischief, and by the mightiness of his fear filled him with that calm which is the consummation of wretchedness. He neither ate nor slept; his existence appeared a miracle. But his mistress recovered; and his exhausted frame was now as much shaken with joy, as before with grief; yet, pale, emaciated, trembling as it were on the edge of life, but still living, he survived all these changes.

The summer advanced; and still Euthanasia remained at Lucca. A number of slight circumstances caused this: her health was yet weak; and her pale cheek and beamless eye shewed that life hardly sat firm upon his throne within her frame; they were menaced with a peculiarly hot season, and it was scarcely judged right that she should expose herself to the excessive heat of a Florentine summer. Lauretta also, her cousin, promised to accompany her, if she would delay her journey until autumn; so she consented to remain, although in truth she felt Lucca to be to her as a narrow prison, and cherished the hope of finding healthful feelings, and some slight return of happiness, at Florence. Yet the joyless state which was not her portion, was one reason why she cared not to change; it bred within her an indolence of feeling, that loved to feed upon old cares, rather than upon new hopes. A sense of duty, rather than any other sentiment, made her wish to remove; she believed, that she owed it to herself to revive from the kind of moral death she had endured, and to begin as it were a fresh life with new expectations. But we are all such creatures of habit, that we cling rather to sorrows which have been our companions of old, than to a new-sprung race of pleasures, whose very names perhaps are unknown to us.

Euthanasia loved to sit in the desolate garden of her palace, and to moralize in her own mind, when she saw a tender rose embraced and choked by evil weeds that grew in strength about it; or sometimes to visit the tower of her palace, and to look towards the rock where the castle of had once stood, now a heap of ruins. Could she endure to look upon the formless mass which had before constituted her shelter and home? where had stood the hall within whose atmosphere she had grown to womanhood; where she had experienced all the joys that her imagination and heart (storehouses of countless treasure) could bestow? Yet that was all gone, and she must begin life anew: she prayed for her father's spirit to inspire her with courage; but her mind was too subtle and delicate in its feelings, to forget its ancient attachments. There are some souls, bright and precious, which, like gold and silver, may be subdued by the fiery trial, and yield to new moulds; but there are others, pure and solid as the diamond, which may be shivered to pieces, yet in every fragment retain their indelible characteristics.

“I can never change,” she thought, “never become other than I am. And yet I am told that this obstinate sorrow is weakness, and that the wise and good, like strong plants, shoot up with fresh vigour, when cut down even to the root. It may be so; and so it may perhaps be with me: but as yet I feel all dead, except pain, and that dwells for ever within me. Alas! life, and the little it contains, is not worth the misery I endure; its best joys are fleeting shadows; its griefs ought to be the same; and those are true philosophers, who trample on both, and seek in the grave for a wisdom and happiness, which life cannot bring us.

"Why was I born to feel sorrow! Why do I not die, that pain may expire with me? And yet I now speak as a presumptuous caviller, unread in the lessons of the wise, and who vainly blunders over and misquotes their best learning. Life has more in it than we think; it is all that we have, all that we know.

"Life is all our knowledge, and our highest praise is to have lived well. If we had never lived, we should know nothing of earth, or sky, or God, or man, or delight, or sorrow. When our Creator bestowed on us this gift, he gave us that which is beyond all words precious; for without it our apparent forms would have been a blind atom in the mass, our souls would never have been. We live; and we learn all that is good, and see all that is beautiful; our will is called into action, our minds expand like flowers, till, overworn, they fade; if we did not live, we should know nothing of all this; and if we do not live well, we reap sorrow alone.

"What do we know of heroes and sages, but that they lived? Let us not spurn therefore this sum and summit of our knowledge, but, cherishing it, make it so appear that we value, and in some degree deserve, the gift of life, and the many wonders that accompany it."

Euthanasia suffered much during the summer months; and all that she heard of Castruccio turned the fount of wholesome tears to drops of agony. He had in truth become a tyrant. He did not slay his thousands like Ezzelin of Padua; but he had received the graft of vain-glory into his soul, and he now bore the fruits. He put to death remorselessly those whom he suspected, and would even use torture, either to discover other victims, or to satisfy his desire of revenge. Several circumstances of this kind happened during this summer, which made Euthanasia more miserable than words or tears could express. If she saw his enemies, they uttered deep curses on his cruelty; if she saw those who had formerly been his friends, their talk was filled with bitter sarcasms on his ingratitude, and careless coldness of heart. That heart had once been the garden of virtue, where all good qualities sprung up and flourished, like odorous and delicately painted flowers; but now ambition had become its gardener, and the weed-overgrown inclosure of Euthanasia's palace was but a slight symbol of all of cruel and treacherous that sprung up there, which allowed no rose to blow, and hid the blooms of the jessamine in the coarse and broad leaves of worthless brambles. Sometimes she thanked Providence that she had not become the wife of this man: but it was a bitter thankfulness. She had not been wedded to him by the church's rites; but her soul, her thoughts, her fate, had been married to his; she tried to loosen the chain that bound them eternally together, and felt that the effort was fruitless: if he were evil, she must weep; if his light — hearted selfishness allowed no room for remorse in his own breast, humiliation and sorrow was doubly her portion, and this was her destiny for ever.

His military exploits of this year rather consisted in the slow laying of foundation-stones, than were distinguished by any peculiar glory. The Florentine army retreated in trepidation before him; he took several castles, made several new alliances, and consolidated more and more the power which he hoped one day to put to a mighty purpose. Desire of dominion and lordship was the only passion that now had much power in his soul; he had forgotten Euthanasia; or if he remembered her, he called her a peevish girl, and wasted no further thought upon her.

The summer had been tremendously hot; and all the fields were parched, and the earth baked and cracked from the long drouth. These were all signs of a wet autumn; and hardly had Euthanasia determined on her journey to Florence, before it was stopped by tremendous rains and tempests, that deluged the earth, and disturbed the sky. The lightning became as a shaft in the hands of an experienced warrior; so true it seemed to its aim, and destroying so many with its subtle fire: and the thunder, reverberating along the hills, sent up to heaven the shout, which proclaimed the triumph and desolation of its precursor. Then came the rain; and the earth gladly received these tokens of heaven's love, which blessed her with fertility. The torrents roared down the hills; and the rivers, no longer restrained within their banks, rose, and deluged the plain, filling even the streets of Lucca with water.

Bindo looked on all this labour of the elements with a mind hovering between pleasure and fear. He believed that the witch of the forest had caused this inundation, to impede the journey of the countess; but, thinking thus, he trembled at the power she possessed, and at the strange company of unseen spirits, which thus, unknown to mortals, interfere with their destinies. The devil, he knew, was called prince of the air; but there is a wide difference between our belief of an hearsay, and the proof which he now thought was presented to him. When he repaired at the mysterious hour of midnight to a running stream, and saw, as the witch uttered her incantations, and lashed the waters with her rod, — that a tempestuous wind arose from the south, and the dark clouds among which the lightnings played, advanced over their heads, and then the rain in quick big drops, accompanied by hail, fell on the earth; — when he saw this, his limbs trembled, his heart beat quick with fear; he dared not cross himself, nor mutter a pater-noster; and, if love and hate had not possessed him so entirely, he would never have ventured again to witness the magical powers of his friend.

A cold and early winter followed the flood, and froze the waters before they retreated from the inundated fields. For many years so terrible a season had not been known in Italy; and, in the Lucchese states particularly, it occasioned a great loss of fruit-trees and vines. The mountains were covered with snow; the torrents were arrested in their course by the subtle nets which winter cast over them; it was a strange sight for an Italian to see. “And this,” thought Euthanasia, “is what the Transalpines mean, when they talk of the fearful cold of winter. Oh! indeed, no hunter is like him, when he comes down from the north, bringing frost, his bride, along with him; he hunts the leaves from the trees, and destroys the animals which inhabit the earth, even in their holds and fastnesses. He casts bonds upon the rivers and streams; and even the ‘sapless foliage of the ocean,’ and the mighty monsters and numberless spawn that rove through its wastes, are all subdued by his fierce and resistless ravages.”

Thus she thought, as she saw the country, late so beautiful, the Earth, lovely as a young mother nursing her only care, now as wild and forlorn as that mother if she be ruthlessly bereft of her infant. The fields were hardened by frost; and the flood lay moveless and white over the plain; the hills were covered with snow. It was a grievous change from the smiles of summer; but it did not last long; and thaw quickly reversed the scene. The earth was again alive; and the rivers and floods again filled the air with sound. Euthanasia resolved to wait only until the season should be somewhat more advanced, to make her long delayed journey to Florence.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHILE Euthanasia yet remained at Lucca in this uncertain manner, a circumstance occurred which caused her to suspend the preparations for her journey. Late one night (it was nearly twelve o'clock), the visit of a stranger was announced; a man, they said, so wrapped up in his capuchin, that his physiognomy could not be distinguished. Why did Euthanasia's heart beat fast, and the colour desert her warm lips? What could she hope or fear? The man was admitted, and one glance sufficed to satisfy her curiosity, and to quiet her trembling expectation. He was one of the meaner class; and, when he threw back his cloak, Euthanasia perceived that he was an entire stranger to her; but there was a kindness, a rough sensibility in his face, that pleased her, and she gently enquired what he had to say to her.

"Noble countess, I come on a work of charity, which would ruin me for ever if my superiors were to discover it. I am the gaoler of the Lucchese prison; and this morning the Dominican inquisitors put under my custody a Paterin woman, whom it would move any soul but theirs to behold. She has touched me with the greatest pity by her tears and heart-breaking intreaties: she denies her heresy, and says that you can prove her faith; but she must see you first; and I, at peril of all that I am worth, am come to conduct you to her dungeon, for I can admit you only by night. Surely you will come; poor thing, she is very young and fearful, and is now lying on the floor of her prison panting with terror and expectation."

"Unfortunate creature! Did she tell you her name?"

"She says that you do not know it; but she intreats you to remember a pilgrim girl, whom you once received at your castle, and whom you pitied; a sun-burnt, way-worn creature who said that she was on the way to Rome."

"I do not recollect; but if she is unhappy, and desires to see me, it is enough, I follow you."

Euthanasia wrapped her capuchin around her, and followed the man through the dark, wet streets of Lucca: the thaw had not yet completed its work; the snow was deep and miry under their feet; while the melting collections of several days dripped, or rather streamed from the house-roofs on their heads: the Libeccio blew a warm, cloud-bringing wind, that made the night so black, that they could not avoid the standing pools that interspersed the streets. At length they arrived at the prison; the gaoler entered by a small, low door which he carefully closed after them, and then struck a light. He led Euthanasia through the bare and mildewed vaults, sometimes unlocking a massy gate, drawing back the harsh bolts which grated with rust and damp; sometimes they emerged into a passage open to the sky, but narrow, with tall black walls about it, which dropped their melted snow with a continual and sullen splash upon the pavement: small, glassless, grated windows looked into these strait passages; these were the holes that admitted light into the dungeons. At length they ascended a small, broken staircase of wood; and, opening a door at the head of it, and consigning his lamp to the countess, the gaoler said: “She is here; comfort her; in two hours I shall come to conduct you back.”

Euthanasia entered the prison-chamber, awe-stricken and trembling; for the good ever feel humiliated at the sight of misfortune in others: the poor prisoner was seated crouched in a corner; she looked wildly towards the door; and, seeing Euthanasia, she leaped up, and, throwing herself at her feet, clinging to her knees, and clasping them with convulsive strength, she said, “Save me! You alone on earth can save me.”

Poor Euthanasia was moved to tears; she raised the sufferer, and, taking her in her arms, tried to soothe her: the prisoner only sobbed, leaning her head upon Euthanasia’s hand: “Fear not, you shall be saved; poor sufferer, calm yourself; speak, what would you with me? fear not, no harm shall reach you; I will be your friend.”

“Will you indeed — indeed — be my friend? and go to him, and bid him save me? He alone can do it.”

“Who? Speak calmly, dearest; pause awhile; reassure yourself, and then speak. Look, you are safe in my arms; I clasp them round you, do not fear!”

The prisoner sunk in Euthanasia’s embrace: she was chilled, icy-cold; — and she lay panting, as a bleeding fawn who gazes on its death’s wound. The warmth of Euthanasia’s arms somewhat restored her; and she said, dividing the entangled strings of her hair with her thin fingers; “You do not remember me, nor would he; I am as unlike what I was when he saw me, as is the yellow, fallen leaf to the bright-green foliage of May. You do not remember me?”

"Yes, now it flashes on my memory; are you then indeed—" Euthanasia paused; the name of Beatrice hovered on her lips, but a feeling of delicacy prevented her from speaking it: she continued; "Yes, I recollect the pilgrim, your refusal to remain at , and the deep interest I took in your sorrows."

"You were very, very kind; are you not so now? Will you not go to him, and ask him to order my release?"

"To whom am I to go? and from whom do I come?" asked Euthanasia, half-smiling; for, notwithstanding the prisoner recalled to her memory a scene, which made it appear that she was certainly Beatrice; yet so long had all trace of her been lost, that she wished for some confirmation from her own lips.

"Alas!" replied the unhappy girl, "I would not have him know, if I could help it. Do you think that, if you were to tell him that a poor girl, who five years ago had just attained her seventeenth year, who was then happy, loving and adored, — who is now pursued for heresy — falsely — or if you will — truly; one very unfortunate, who earnestly implores him as he loves his own soul, to save her; do you not think he would compassionate me?"

"Who? you speak in riddles."

"In riddles! Are you not Euthanasia? You must know whom I mean; why, Antelminelli, — Castruccio."

The prison hid her face with her hands. She blushed deeply, and her fast-falling tears trickled through her fingers; Euthanasia blushed also, a tremulous hectic, that quickly vanished, while her companion's cheeks still burned.

"Yes, I will go to him, or to any one on earth to save you. — Yet methinks I had better go to the father-inquisitors; I am known to them, and I think I could as easily move them as the prince; he is careless—"

"Oh! no — no; you must go to him: he knew me once, and surely would compassionate me. Try him first with the echo of my complaints, and a relation of my tears; surely his eyes, which can look into the soul, would then be dimmed: would they not?"

Euthanasia thought of Leodino; and she was about to reply, that warriors, politicians, and ambitious princes, such as Castruccio, were accustomed to regard with contempt woes like hers. But she hesitated; she would not rob him, whom she had once loved, of the smallest mite of another's praise, however undeserved; besides, she felt that the name of Beatrice alone would move him to compassion, perhaps to remorse. She was therefore silent; and the prisoner continued, with a voice of trembling earnestness, "Try every argument first; but, if he is obdurate, then tell him that he once knew me, — that now my fortunes are changed, — he will guess the cause: yet perhaps he will think wrong, for that is not the cause. Tell him I am one Beatrice; — he saw me some years ago at the house of the good bishop of Ferrara."

The poor fallen prophetess now burst into a passion of weeping; she wrung her hands, and tore her hair, while her companion looked on her, unable to restrain her tears. Castruccio had described his Beatrice, so bright, so ethereal in her loveliness, that it moved Euthanasia's inmost soul to see what a change a very few years had made. Perceiving the blushes and shame of the lost girl, she concealed her knowledge of her tale, and answered only by endeavouring to soothe her, and to assure her of her safety.

"Am I safe? I tell you that I fear, oh! how much I fear! I am very young; I was once happy; but, since that, I have suffered beyond human utterance; yet I dread death; and, more than all, do I fear pain. They call me a heretic; aye," (and her dark eyes beamed fiercely) "I am one; I do not belong to their maudlin creed; I feel my wrongs, and I dare curse — But, hush, not so loud. — You pardon me, do you not? Alas! if you turn against me, they seize on me, tear me, burn me!"

The two hours had swiftly passed, while Beatrice thus wept with alternate passion. The gaoler came to reconduct Euthanasia; but Beatrice clung to her, clasping her neck, and intwining her fingers in her long thick hair. "No! no! You must not go!" she cried; "I shall die, if I am again left alone. Oh! before you came, I sometimes felt as if I did not know where I was, and madness seemed about to fall on me: you are good, consolatory, kind; you must not leave me."

"Then I cannot see the prince; I cannot intercede for your liberation."

"But that is many hours hence, and the comfortable day-light will be come; now it is quite dark; hark to the splashing water, and the howling of the Libeccio; I had forgotten all that; and now they come upon me with tenfold horror; do not leave me!"

Euthanasia could hardly distinguish the suppliant's features by the light of the gaoler's small lamp; but she saw her eyes bright with tears, and felt her bosom throb against her own; again she strove to console her; reason was thrown away; — when the gaoler urged his, her own, every one's safety — she shook her head.

"I thought you were kind; but you are not: my cheeks are pale with fear; put up your lamp to them that you may see. She can go early, the moment day dawns, — indeed she shall go then, but now she must not."

Euthanasia tore herself away; though her heart was pierced by the wild shriek of Beatrice, as she threw herself on the floor. The gaoler led her through the melancholy passages of the prison, and then along the wet streets, until she reached her home: and she retired to meditate during the remaining hours of night on the words she should employ in her representations to Castruccio the following morning.

The expectation of this meeting flushed her cheeks, and made her deep eyes beam, while every limb trembled. She had not seen him so long that his assumed power, his tyrannies, and mean politics, were lost in her recollection; she felt as if she should again see him honest, passion-breathing, and beautiful, as when they took sweet counsel together at . Valperga! that was now a black and hideous ruin, and he the author of its destruction. But she thought, "This is a dream; — I shall see him, and it will vanish; there is a coil wound round me of sorrow and distrust, which will snap beneath his smile, and free me, — I shall see him!

"Why do I think of myself? I go to free this poor girl, whom he has wronged, and to whom he belongs far more than to me; this unhappy Beatrice, who sheds tears of agony in her dungeon. I am nothing; I go as nothing; would that he should not recognize me! I go a suppliant for another, and I must tame my looks: they are not proud; but I must teach them humility; I must school my heart not to speak, not to think of itself — I go for her; and, having obtained my request, I will come away, forgetful that I am any thing."

Day dawned; day, cold, wet, and cloudy, but ever cheerful to one weighed down by the sense of darkness and inaction: day did not dawn this dreary winter morning, until seven o'clock, and the period had arrived when it was fitting that Euthanasia should seek Castruccio. She threw a veil over her shining hair, while she hid her form in a rich cloak of sables; then she stole out alone; for she could not endure that any one should know of this strange visit. When she arrived at the Palazzo del Governo, her rich attire and distinguished mien won her easy entrance, and she penetrated to the cabinet of the prince.

Her heart beat audibly; she had entered with rapid, though light steps; now she paused; and, as it were gathering up the straggling feelings of her mind, she endeavoured to bind them in a firm knot; she resolved to calm herself, to still the convulsive motion of her lips, to remember nothing but Beatrice. She entered; Antelminelli was alone; he was at a table reading a paper, and a smile of light derision played upon his features; he raised on her his dark, piercing eyes, and seeing a lady before him, he rose; in a moment Euthanasia was self-possessed and resolved; and casting back her cloak, and throwing aside her veil, her eyes lifted up, yet not fixed on him, she began in her silver voice to say, “My lord, I come—”

But he was too much thunderstruck to listen; his cheeks glowed with pleasure; all the anger and indifference he had nourished vanished in her presence, and he broke forth in a torrent of wonder and thanks.

She waved her hand,—”Do not thank me, but listen; for I come on a message, an errand of charity; and if you can, hear me, and forget who it is that speaks.”

He smiled, and replied; “Certainly it were easy not to see the sun when it shines: but, whatever your errand may be, speak it not yet; — if you come to make a request, I shall grant it instantly, and then you will go; but pause awhile first, that I may look on you; it is a whole year since I saw you last; you are changed, you are paler, — your eyes — but you turn away from me, as if you were angry.”

“I am not angry — but I am nothing. — There is a heretic, at least a girl accused of heresy, confined in your prisons, whom I wish you to free, and, for the love of Heaven, not by the shortest delay to add another moment of sorrow to her heap: she has suffered much.”

“A heretic! that is beyond my jurisdiction; I do not meddle with religion.”

“Yes, you do; — you see priests every day: but I intreat you not to oblige me to argue with you; listen to me a few moments, and I shall say no more. She is very unfortunate, and fears death and pain with a horror that almost deprives her of reason; she is young; and it is piteous to see one scarcely more than twenty years of age, under the fangs of these bloodhounds; she was once happy; alas! pity her, since she feels to the very centre of her heart the change from joy to grief.”

"Yet no harm will happen to her, at most a few months' imprisonment: if she dread death and pain, she will of course recant and be freed; what will she suffer for so short a time?"

"Fear; the worst of evils, far worse than death. I would fain persuade you to throw aside this hard-heartedness, which is not natural to you; moments are years, if they are lengthened out by pain; every minute that she lives in her dungeon is to her a living death of agony; but I will tell you her name, — at her request I wished to conceal it: but that will win you, if you are not already won by the sweet hope of saving one who suffers torments you can never know."

"Euthanasia, do not look so gloomily; I am not thinking of your heretic; I hesitate, that I may keep you here: you have your will; I will never refuse a request of yours."

A smile of fleeting disdain passed over her countenance. "Nay, when you know who she is, you may grant my prayer for her own sake. I come from Beatrice, the daughter of Wilhelmina of Bohemia."

If the ghost of the poor prophetess had suddenly arisen, it could not have astounded Castruccio more, than to hear her name thus spoken by Euthanasia, coupled with the appellations of heretic and prisoner. The tide of his life ebbed; and, when it flowed again, he thought of the celestial Beatrice, her light step, her almost glorious presence; and the memory of her pale cheek and white lips when he last saw her, thrilled his heart. Years had passed since then; what had she suffered? What was she? A heretic? Alas! she was the daughter of Wilhelmina, the nursling of Magfreda, the ward of a leper, the adopted child of the good bishop of Ferrara.

Euthanasia saw the great confluence of passions, which agitated Castruccio, and made him alternately pale and red; she was silent, her quiet eyes beaming upon him in compassion; for a long time his heart could not find a voice, but at length he spoke,—"Hasten! hasten! free her, take her to you! Euthanasia, you are the angel itself of charity; you know all her sad story — all that relates to me; calm her, console her, make her herself again, — poor, poor Beatrice!"

"Farewell then; I go, — send one of your officers with the order; I will hasten to her, as quickly as you can wish."

"Yet pause, stay one moment; shall I never see you again? You have cast me off utterly; yet, I pray you, be happy. Why should you be pale and sorrowful? you have other friends; must all that love me, mourn? Surely I am not a devil, that all I touch must wither. Beware! tear the veil from your heart; read, read its inmost secrets, and eternal words imprinted in its core; you do not despise me, you love me, — be mine.”

The pale cheek of Euthanasia was flushed, her eyes flashed fire, —”Never! tie myself to tyranny, to slavery, to war, to deceit, to hate? I tell thee I am as free as air. But I am hurried far beyond the bounds I prescribed for myself, and now not a word more.”

“Yes, one word more; not of yourself, wild enthusiast, but of Beatrice. I destroyed her; not that I knew what I did; but heedlessly, foolishly, destroyed her; do you then repair my work; I would give half my soul that she should be as when I first saw her. You have heard a part of her story, and you will now perhaps learn those sufferings which she has endured since we parted; it is doubtless a strange and miserable tale; but do you be the ministering angel of mercy and love to her.”

Sorrow and even humiliation were marked on Castruccio’s countenance; Euthanasia looked at it, almost for the first time since she had entered; she sighed softly, and said nearly in a whisper, “Alas! that you should no longer be what you once were!”

Pride now returned and swelled every feature of Castruccio; “Enough, enough: whatever wine of life I drain, I mingled it myself. Euthanasia, if we never meet again, remember, I am content; can you be more?”

Euthanasia said not a word; she vanished, her bright presence was gone; and Castruccio, to whom, as to the fallen arch-angel, that line might be applied.

Vaunting aloud, though rack’d with deep despair, tearless, his lips pressed together, sat recalling to mind her words and looks, until, remembering his boast, he looked up with angry defiance; and, shaking from his heart the dew of tenderness he plunged amidst the crowd where he commanded, where his very eye was obeyed.

Euthanasia hastened to the prison, where the kind-hearted gaoler led her with a face of joyful triumph to the dungeon of Beatrice; the poor thing was sleeping, the traces of tears were on her cheeks (for like a child she had cried herself to sleep), and several times she started uneasily. Euthanasia made a sign to the gaoler to be silent, and knelt down beside her, looking at her countenance, once so gloriously beautiful; the exquisite carving of her well shaped eyelids, her oval face, and pointed chin still shewed signs of what she had been; the rest was lost. Her complexion was sunburnt, her hands very thin and yellow, and care had already marked her sunken cheeks and brow with many lines; her jet black hair was mingled with grey; her long tresses had been cut, and now reached only to her neck; while, strait and thin, they were the shadow merely of what they had been; her face, her whole person was emaciated, worn and faded. She awoke and beheld the eyes of Euthanasia, like heaven itself, clear and deep, gazing on her. —"Arise, poor sufferer, you are free!"

Beatrice looked wildly; then, starting up, she clapped her hands in a transport of joy, she threw herself at the feet of her deliverer, she embraced the gaoler, she was frantic. "Free! free!" for some time she could repeat no other word. At length she said, "Pardon me; yesterday I was rude and selfish; I tormented and reproached you, who are all kindness. And you, excellent man, you will forgive me, will you not? What was it that I feared? Now that I am going to leave my dungeon, methinks it is a good cell enough, and I could stay here always well content; it is somewhat dark and cold, but one can wrap oneself up, and shut one's eyes, and fancy one's self under the sun of heaven."

She continued prattling, and would have said much more, but that Euthanasia with gentle force drew her from the dungeon, out of the gloomy prison; and they hastened to her palace, where Beatrice was quickly refreshed by a bath and food. But, when the first joy of liberation was passed, she sunk to melancholy: she would not speak, but sat listlessly, and her tears fell in silence. Euthanasia tried to comfort her; but many days passed, during which she continued sullen and intractable.

In the mean time Euthanasia received several billets from Castruccio, with earnest enquiries concerning the welfare of this poor girl. "God knows," he wrote, "what has happened to this unfortunate being since we parted. My heart is agonized, not only for what she suffers, but for what she may have suffered. She is now, they say, a heretic, a Paterin, one who believes in the ascendancy of the evil spirit in the world; poor insane girl! Euthanasia, for her soul's sake, and for mine which must answer for hers, reason with her, and convert her; be to her as an affectionate sister, an angel of peace and pardon. I leave the guidance of her future destiny to your judgement: but do not lose sight of her. What do I ask of you? And what right have I to bring upon you the burthen of my faults? But you are good, and will forgive me.”

CHAPTER XXIX

EUTHANASIA was meditating on this letter, when Beatrice entered, and sat down beside her. She took her hand, and kissed it, and then said, “How can you forgive my ingratitude? I am self-willed, sullen, and humorous; alas! sometimes the memory of the evils I have suffered presses on me, and I forget all my duties. Duties! until I knew you I had none; for five years my life has been one scene of despair: you cannot tell what a fall mine was.”

“Forget, I do intreat you, poor sufferer, all your past unhappiness; forget every thing that you once were.”

“Aye, you say right; I must forget every thing, or to be what I am must torture me to despair. Poor, misled, foolish, insensate Beatrice! I can accuse myself alone for my many ills; myself, and that power who sits on high, and scatters evil like dew upon the earth, a killing, blighting honey dew.”

“Hush! my poor girl, do not talk thus; indeed I must not have you utter these sentiments.”

“Oh! let me speak: before all others I must hide my bursting feelings, deep, deep. Yet for one moment let me curse!”

Beatrice arose; she pointed to heaven; she stood in the same attitude, as when she had prophesied to the people of Ferrara under the portico of the church of St. Anna; but how changed! Her form thin; her face care-worn; her love-formed lips withered; her hands and arms, then so round and fair, now wrinkled and faded; her eyes were not the same; they had lost that softness which, mingling with their fire, was as something wonderful in brilliancy and beauty; they now, like the sun from beneath a thunder cloud, glared fiercely from under her dark and scattered hair that shaded her brow: but even now, as in those times, she spoke with tumultuous eloquence:

“Euthanasia, you are much deceived; you either worship a useless shadow, or a fiend in the clothing of a god. Listen to me, while I announce to you the eternal and victorious influence of evil, which circulates like air about us, clinging to our flesh like a poisonous garment, eating into us, and destroying us. Are you blind, that you see it not? Are you deaf, that you hear no groans? Are you insensible, that you feel no misery? Open your eyes, and you will behold all of which I speak, standing in hideous array before you. Look around. Is there not war, violation of treaties, and hard-hearted cruelty? Look at the societies of men; are not our fellow creatures tormented one by the other in an endless circle of pain? Some shut up in iron cages, starved and destroyed; cities float in blood, and the hopes of the husbandman are manured by his own mangled limbs: remember the times of our fathers, the extirpation of the Albigenses; — the cruelties of Ezzelin, when troops of the blind, and the lame, and the mutilated, the scum of his prisons, inundated the Italian states. Remember the destruction of the templars. Did you never glance in thought into the tower of famine of Ugolino; or into the hearts of the armies of exiles, that each day the warring citizens banish from their homes? Did you never reflect on the guilty policy of the Popes, those ministers of the reigning king of heaven? Remember the Sicilian vespers; the death of the innocent Conradin; the myriads whose bones are now bleached beneath the sun of Asia: they went in honour of His name, and thus He rewards them.

"Then reflect upon domestic life, on the strife, hatred and uncharitableness, that, as sharp spears, pierce one's bosom at every turn; think of jealousy, midnight murders, envy, want of faith, calumny, ingratitude, cruelty, and all which man in his daily sport inflicts upon man. Think upon disease, plague, famine, leprosy, fever, and all the aching pains our limbs suffer withal; visit in thought the hospital, the lazar house; Oh! surely God's hand is the chastening hand of a father, that thus torments his children! His children? his eternal enemies! look, I am one! He created the seeds of disease, maremma, thirst, want; he created man, — that most wretched of slaves; oh! know you not what a wretch man is? and what a store house of infinite pain is this much-vaunted human soul? Look into your own heart; or, if that be too peaceful, gaze on mine; I will tear it open for your inspection. There is remorse, hatred, grief — overwhelming, mighty, and eternal misery. God created me: am I the work of a beneficent being? Oh, what spirit mingled in my wretched frame love, hope, energy, confidence, — to find indifference, to be blasted to despair, to be as weak as the fallen leaf, to be betrayed by all! Now I am changed, — I hate; — my energy is spent in curses, and if I trust, it is to be the more deeply wounded.

"Did not the power you worship create the passions of man; his desires which outleap possibility, and bring ruin upon his head? Did he not implant the seeds of ambition, revenge and hate? Did he not create love, the tempter: he who keeps the key of that mansion whose motto must ever be Lasciate ogni speranza voi che intrate.

And the imagination, that masterpiece of his malice; that spreads honey on the cup that you may drink poison; that strews roses over thorns, thorns sharp and big as spears; that semblance of beauty which beckons you to the desert; that apple of gold with the heart of ashes; that foul image, with the veil of excellence; that mist of the maremma, glowing with roseate hues beneath the sun, that creates it, and beautifies it, to destroy you; that diadem of nettles; that spear, broken in the heart! He, the damned and triumphant one, sat meditating many thousand years for the conclusion, the consummation, the final crown, the seal of all misery, which he might set on man's brain and heart to doom him to endless torment; and he created the Imagination. And then we are told the fault is ours; good and evil are sown in our hearts, and ours is the tillage, ours the harvest; and can this justify an omnipotent deity that he permits one particle of pain to subsist in his world? Oh, never.

"I tell thee what; there is not an atom of life in this all — peopled world that does not suffer pain; we destroy animals; — look at your own dress, which a myriad of living creatures wove and then died; those sables, — a thousand hearts once beat beneath those skins, quenched in the agonies of death to furnish forth that cloak. Yet why not? While they lived, those miserable hearts beat under the influence of fear, cold and famine. Oh! better to die, than to suffer! The whale in the great ocean destroys nations of fish, but thousands live on him and torment him. Destruction is the watchword of the world; the death by which it lives, the despair by which it hopes: oh, surely a good being created all this!

"Let me tell you, that you do ill to ally yourself to the triumphant spirit of evil, leaving the worship of the good, who is fallen and depressed, yet who still lives. He wanders about the world a proscribed and helpless thing, hooted from the palaces of kings, excommunicated from churches; sometimes he wanders into the heart of man, and makes his bosom glow with love and virtue; but so surely as he enters, misfortune, bound to him by his enemy, as a corpse to a living body, enters with him; the wretch who has received his influence, becomes poor, helpless and deserted; happy if he be not burnt at the stake, whipped with iron, torn with red-hot pincers.

“The Spirit of Evil chose a nation for his own; the Spirit of Good tried to redeem that nation from its gulf of vice and misery, and was cruelly destroyed by it; and now, as the masterpiece of the enemy, they are adored together; and he the beneficent, kind and suffering, is made the mediator to pull down curses upon us.

“How quick and secure are the deeds of the evil spirit; how slow and uncertain those of the good! I remember once a good and learned friend of mine telling me, that the country about Athens was adorned by the most exquisite works man had ever produced; marble temples traced with divine sculpture, statues transcending human beauty; the art of man had been exhausted to embellish it, the lives of hundreds of men had been wasted to accomplish it, the genius of the wisest had been employed in its execution; ages had passed, while slowly, year by year, these wonders had been collected; some were almost falling through exceeding age, while others shone in their first infancy. Well: — a king, Philip of Macedon, destroyed all these in three days, burnt them, razed them, annihilated them. This is the proportionate energy of good and evil; the produce of ages is the harvest of a moment; a man may spend years in curbing his passions, in acquiring wisdom, in becoming an angel in excellence; the brutality of a fellow creature, or the chance of war, may fell him in an instant; and all his knowledge and virtues become blank, as a moonless, starless night.

“Euthanasia, my heart aches, and my spirits flag: I was a poor, simple girl; but I have suffered much; and endurance, and bitter experience have let me into the truth of things; the deceitful veil which is cast over this world, is powerless to hide its deformity from me. I see the cruel heart, which lurks beneath the beautiful skin of the pard; I see the blight of autumn in the green leaves of spring, the wrinkles of age in the face of youth, rust on the burnished iron, storm in the very breast of calm, sorrow in the heart of joy; all beauty wraps deformity, as the fruit the kernel; Time opens the shell, the seed is poison.”

The eyes of Beatrice shot forth sparks of fire as she poured out this anathema against the creation; her cheeks were fevered with a hectic glow; her voice, sharp and broken, which was sometimes raised almost to a shriek, and sometimes lowered to a whisper, fell on the brain of Euthanasia like a rain of alternate fire and ice; she shrunk and trembled beneath the flood of terror that inundated and confounded her understanding: but the eloquent prophetess of Evil ceased at last, and, pale and exhausted, she sank down; clasping Euthanasia in her arms, she hid her face on her knees, and sobbed, and wept: “Forgive me, if I have said that which appears to you blasphemy; I will unveil my heart to you, tell you my sufferings, and surely you will then curse with me the author of my being.”

Euthanasia spoke consolation alone; she bade her weep no more; that she need no longer fear or hate; that she might again love, hope and trust; and that she as a tender sister would sympathize with and support her. The undisciplined mind of poor Beatrice was as a flower that droops beneath the storm; but, on the first gleam of sunshine, raises again its head, even though the hail-stones and the wind might have broken and tarnished its leaves and its tints. She looked up, and smiled; “I will do all that you tell me; I will be docile, good and affectionate; — I will be obedient to your smallest sign, kindest, dearest Euthanasia. Trust me, you shall make me a Catholic again, if you will love me unceasingly for one whole year, and in the mean time I do not die. I am very teachable, very, very tractable; but I have suffered greatly, as one day you will know; for I will tell you every thing. Now, good bye; I am very tired, and I think I shall sleep.”

“Sleep then, poor creature; here is a couch ready for you; I will watch near you; and may your dreams be pleasant.”

“Give me your hand then; I will hold it while I rest; how small, and white, and soft it is! Look at mine, it is yellow and dry; once it was like yours; I think it was rather smaller, but never so well shaped; the tips of my fingers and my nails were never dyed by so roseate a tint as this, nor was the palm so silken soft. You are very beautiful, and very good, dear Euthanasia; I hope you are, and will be happy.”

Euthanasia kissed the forehead of this child of imagination and misery; and soon she slept, forgetful of all her sufferings. Euthanasia felt deeply interested in her; she felt that they were bound together, by their love for one who loved only himself; she thought over her wild denunciations; and, strange to say, she felt doubly warmed with admiration of the creation, and gratitude towards God, at the moment that Beatrice had painted its defects. She thought of the beauty of the world and the wondrous nature of man, until her mind was raised to an enthusiastic sentiment of happiness and praise. “And you also shall curb your wild thoughts,” whispered Euthanasia, as she looked at the sleeping girl; “I will endeavour to teach you the lessons of true religion; and, in reducing the wandering thoughts of one so lovely and so good, I shall be in part fulfilling my task on the earth."

For several days after this conversation Beatrice became peaceful and mild, saying little, and appearing complacent, almost content; she attended mass, told her beads, and talked of going to confession. Euthanasia was astounded; she was herself so steady in her principles, so firm in opinion and action, slow to change, but resolute having changed, that she was at a loss to understand the variable feelings and swift mutations of the poor, untaught Beatrice.

"Confess!" she repeated; "you promised that I should convert you in a year; but you have already forsaken your Paterin opinions!"

"No, indeed, I have not; but it is of so little consequence; I would please you, dearest, by seeming what I am not; not that I am sure that I am not what you desire. You know, if God is good, he will forgive my errors: if he is evil, I care not to please him; so I shall endeavour to please the virtuous and kind of this world, and you are one of those, my best friend. Besides, now I think of it, this world seems too beautiful to have been created by an evil spirit; he would have made us all toads, the trees and flowers all mushrooms, and the rocks and mountains would have been huge, formless polypi. Yet there is evil; but I will not trouble myself more about it; you shall form my creed; and, as a lisping infant, with clasped hands, I will repeat my prayers after you."

"Why so, dearest Beatrice? Why will you not recall the creeds of your childhood, as your adoptive parents taught them you? I cannot school you better than they."

"My childhood!" cried the prophetess; her eyes becoming dark and stormy, "what to become again a dupe, a maniac? to fall again, as I have fallen? Cease, cease, in mercy cease, to talk of my childhood; days of error, vanity and paradise! My lessons must all be new; all retold in words signifying other ideas than what they signified during my mad, brief dream of youth. Then faith was not a shadow: it was what these eyes saw; I clutched hope, and found it certainty; I heard the angels of heaven, and saw the souls of the departed; can I ever see them again?"

"Sweetest and most unfortunate, drive away memory, and take hope to you. Youth is indeed a dream; and, if I spent it not in your ecstasies, yet believe me I was not then as I am now. I am older than you, and know life better; I have passed the fearful change from dream to reality, and am now calm. I have known all your throes; sometimes indeed they now visit me; but I quench them, cast them aside, tread on them; — so may you."

"Never! never!" replied Beatrice: "I was born for wretchedness. When the fates twined my destiny, they mingled three threads; the first was green hope, the second purple joy, the third black despair; but the two first were very short, and soon came to an end; a dreary line of black alone remains. Yet I would forget all that; and for many days I have been as calm as a bird that broods, rocked on her tree by a gentle wind; full of a quiet, sleepy life. Should this state continue longer, I might become what you wish me to be; but I find my soul awakening, and I fear a relapse; I fear the return of tears and endless groans. Oh! let me wrap myself round you, my better angel, hope of my life; pour your balmy words upon me; lay your cool, healthful cheek near my burning one, let our pulses beat responsive! Oh! that once I could become less feverish, less wild, less like a dark and crimsoned thunder-cloud, driven away, away, through the unknown wildernesses of sky."

Euthanasia was glad to hear her suffering friend talk, however wildly; for she observed that, when she had exhausted herself in speech, she became calmer and happier; while, if she brooded silently over her cares, she became almost insane through grief. Occasionally she sought consolation in music; there was something magical in her voice, and in the tones she could draw from the organ or the harp: in her days of glory it had been said, that she was taught to sing by angelic instructors; and now those remembered melodies remained, sole relics of her faded honours. The recollection of this sometimes disturbed her; and she would suddenly break off her song, and peevishly exclaim, that music, like the rest of the world's masks, contained the soul of bitterness within its form of beauty.

"Not so, dear girl," said Euthanasia; "Euterpe has ever been so dear a friend of mine, that I cannot permit you to calumniate her unjustly; there is to me an unalloyed pleasure in music. Some blessed spirit, compassionate of man's estate, and loving him, sent it, to teach him that he is other than what he seems: it comes, like a voice from a far world, to tell you that there are depths of intense emotion veiled in the blue empyrean, and the windows of heaven are opened by music alone. It chastens and lulls our ecstasies; and, if it awakens grief, it also soothes it. But more than to the happy or the sorrowful, music is an inestimable gift to those who forget all sublimer emotions in the pursuits of daily life. I listen to the talk of men; I play with my embroidery-frame; I enter into society: suddenly high song awakens me, and I leave all this tedious routine far, far distant; I listen, till all the world is changed, and the beautiful earth becomes more beautiful. Evening and all its soft delights, morning and all its refreshing loveliness; — noonday, when the busy soul rests, like the sun in its diurnal course, and then gathering new strength, descends; all these, when thought upon, bring pleasure; but music is far more delicious than these. Never do I feel happier and better, than when I have heard sweet music; my thoughts often sleep like young children nestled in their cradles, until music awakens them, and they open their starry eyes. I may be mistaken; but music seems to me to reveal to us some of the profoundest secrets of the universe; and the spirit, freed from prison by its charms, can then soar, and gaze with eagle eyes on the eternal sun of this all-beauteous world."

Beatrice smiled. — Since her days of happiness had ended, Euthanasia's enthusiasm had become more concentrated, more concealed; but Beatrice again awoke to her words, and these two ladies, bound by the sweet ties of gratitude and pity, found in each other's converse some balm for their misfortunes. Circumstances had thus made friends of those whom nature seemed to separate: they were much unlike; but the wild looks of Beatrice sometimes reflected the soft light of Euthanasia's eyes; and Euthanasia found her heart, which was sinking to apathy, awake again, as she listened to Beatrice. And, though we may be unhappy, we can never be perfectly wretched, while the mind is active; it is inaction alone that constitutes true wretchedness.

In the mean time her own journey to Florence was put off indefinitely. She was too much interested in the fate of Beatrice, and already loved her too well, to desert her; the poor prophetess appeared little capable of the journey, since the most trifling circumstance would awaken her wildest fancies, and fever and convulsions followed. Once indeed Euthanasia had mentioned her wish to go thither; Beatrice looked at her with flashing eyes, and cried, "Did you not promise never to desert me? Are you faithless also?"

"But would you not accompany me?"

"Do you see that river that flows near Lucca?" exclaimed Beatrice. "I fancy that it has flowed through the self-same banks these many thousand years; and sooner will it desert them, than I this town. See you that cypress, that grows towering above all its neighbour trees in that convent-garden, I am as firm to this soil as that; I will never leave this place but by force, and then I die."

She said these words in her wildest manner; and they were followed by such an annihilation of strength, and such symptoms of fever, that Euthanasia did not again dare mention her removal to Florence. She also suffered less by her continued stay at Lucca; for the feelings of her heart were so completely absorbed in pity and love for Beatrice, that the painful ideas of many years' growth seemed rooted out by a new and mightier power. She was so little selfish, that she could easily forget her own sorrows, deep as they were, in her sympathy for the unhappy prophetess, who had suffered evils tremendous and irremediable.

Castruccio often sent to learn of the welfare of this poor girl, and Euthanasia answered his enquiries with exactness. She did this; for she thought that perhaps the future destiny of Beatrice was in his hands, and that he might engraft life and even happiness on the blighted plant.

One day Beatrice went out. It was the first time she had quitted the palace; and Euthanasia was vexed and anxious. After an absence of some hours she returned; she was clothed in a great coarse cloak that entirely disguised her; she put it off; and, trembling, blushing, panting, she threw herself into the arms of her protectress.

"I have seen him! I have seen him!"

"Calm yourself, poor fluttering bird; you have seen him: well, well, he is changed, much altered; why do you weep?"

"Aye, he is changed; but he is far more beautiful than ever he was. Oh, Euthanasia, how radiant, how divine he is! His eyes, which, like the eagle's, could outgaze the sun, yet melt in the sweetest love, as a cloud, shining, yet soft; his brow, manly and expansive, on which his raven curls rest; his upturned lips, where pride, and joy, and love, and wisdom, and triumph live, small spirits, ready to obey his smallest will; and his head, cinctured by a slight diadem, looks carved out by the intensest knowledge of beauty! How graceful his slightest motion! and his voice, — his voice is here,—"

Beatrice put her hand upon her heart; her eyes were filled with tears; and the whole expression of her face was softened and humanized. Suddenly she stopped; she dried her eyes; and, fixing them on Euthanasia, she took her two hands in hers, and looked on her, as if she would read her soul. "Beautiful creature," she said, "once he told me that he loved you. Did he not? does he not? Why are you separated? do you not love him?"

"I did; once I did truly; but he has cast off that which was my love; and, like a flower plucked from the stalk, it has withered — as you see it."

"Aye, that is strange. What did he cast off?"

"Why will you make me speak? He cast off humanity, honesty, honourable feeling, all that I prize."

"Forms, forms, — mere forms, my mistaken Euthanasia. He remained, and was not that every thing? Methinks, it would please me, that my lover should cast off all humanity, and be a reprobate, and an outcast of his species. Oh! then how deeply and tenderly I should love him; soiled with crimes, his hands dripping blood, I would shade him as the flowering shrub invests the ruin; I would cover him with a spotless veil; — my intensity of love would annihilate his wickedness; — every one would hate him; — but, if all adored him, it would not come near the sum of my single affection. I should be every thing to him, life, and hope; he would die in his remorse; but he would live again and again in the light of my love; I would invest him as a silvery mist, so that none should see how evil he was; I would pour out before him large draughts of love, that he should become drunk with it, until he grew good and kind. So you deserted this glorious being, and he has felt the pangs of unrequited affection, the helpless throes of love cast as water upon the sand of the desert? Oh, indeed I pity him!"

"Believe me," cried Euthanasia, "he has other affections. Glory and conquest are his mistresses, and he is a successful lover; already he has deluged our valleys in blood, and turned our habitations into black and formless ruins; he has torn down the banners of the Florentines, and planted his own upon the towers of noble cities; I believe him to be happy."

"Thank God for that; I would pour out my blood, drop by drop, to make him happy. But he is not married, and you have deserted him; I love him; he has loved me; is it impossible — ? Oh! foolish, hateful wretch that I am, what do I say? No creature was ever so utterly undone!"

Beatrice covered her face with her hands; her struggles were violent; she shrunk from Euthanasia's consoling embrace; and at length, quite overcome, she sank in convulsions on the pavement of the hall. Her paroxysm was long and fearful; it was succeeded by a heavy lethargic sleep; during the first part of which she was feverish and uneasy; but, after some hours, her cheeks became pale, her pulse beat slower, and her breath was drawn regularly.

Euthanasia watched beside her alone: when she found that she was sleeping quietly and deeply, she retired from her bedside; and, sitting at some distance, she tried to school herself on the bitter feelings that had oppressed her since the morning. Euthanasia was so self-examining, that she never allowed a night to elapse without recalling her feelings and actions of the past day; she endeavoured to be simply just to herself, and her soul had so long been accustomed to this discipline, that it easily laid open its dearest secrets. Misfortune had not dulled her sense of right and wrong; her understanding was still clear, though tinged by the same lofty enthusiasm which had ever been her characteristic. She now searched her soul to find what were the feelings which still remained to her concerning Castruccio; she hardly knew whether it was hate or love. Hate! could she hate one, to whom once she had delivered up all her thoughts, as to the tribunal of her God, whom she had loved as one to whom she was willing to unite herself for ever? And could she love one, who had deceived her in her dearest hopes, who had lulled her on the brink of a precipice, to plunge her with greater force to eternal unhappiness? She felt neither hatred, nor revenge, nor contempt colder than either; she felt grief alone, and that sentiment was deeply engraven on her soul.

CHAPTER XXX

SHE was awakened from this reverie by the voice of Beatrice, who called to her to come near. “I am quite recovered,” she said, “though weak; I have been very ill to-day, and I am frightened to think of the violence of my sensations. But sit near me, beloved friend; it is now night, and you will hear no sound but my feeble voice; while I fulfil my promise of relating to you my wretched history.”

“Mine own Beatrice, do not now vex yourself with these recollections; you must seek calm and peace alone; let memory go to its grave.”

“Nay, you must know all,” replied Beatrice, peevishly; “why do you baulk me? indeed I do best when I follow my own smallest inclinations; for, when I try to combat them, I am again ill, as I was this morning. Sit beside me; I will make room for you on my couch; give me your hand, but turn away your soft eyes; and now I will tell you every thing.

“You know that I loved Castruccio; how much I need hardly tell: I loved him beyond human love, for I thought heaven itself had interfered to unite us. I thought — alas! it is with aching pain that I recollect my wild dreams, — that we two were chosen from the rest of the world, gifted with celestial faculties. It appeared to me to be a dispensation of Providence, that I should have met him at the full height of my glory, when I was burning with triumph and joy. I do not think, my own Euthanasia, that you can ever have experienced the vigour and fire of my sensations. Victory in an almost desperate struggle, success in art, love itself, are earthly feelings, subject to change and death; but, when these three most exquisite sensations are bestowed by the visible intervention of heaven, thus giving security to the unstable, and eternity to what is fleeting, such an event fills the over-brimming cup, intoxicates the brain, and renders her who feels them more than mortal.

“Victory and glory I had, and an assurance of divine inspiration; the fame of what I was, was spread among the people of my country; then love came, and flattered, and softened, and overcame me. Well, that I will pass over: to conceive that all I felt was human, common, and now faded, disgusts me, and makes me look back with horror to my lost paradise. Castruccio left me; and I sat I cannot tell how long, white, immoveable, and entranced; hours, I believe days, passed; I cannot tell, for in truth I think I was mad. Yet I was silent; not a word, not a tear, not a sound escaped me, until some one mentioned the name of Castruccio before me, and then I wept. I did not rave or weep aloud; I crept about like a shadow, brooding over my own thoughts, and trying to divine the mystery of my destiny.

"At length I went to my good father, the bishop; I knelt down before him: 'Rise, dear child,' he said; 'how pale you are! what has quenched the fire of your brilliant eyes?'

"'Father, holy father,' I replied, 'I will not rise till you answer me one question.' — My looks were haggard with want of rest; my tangled locks fell on my neck; my glazed eyes could scarcely distinguish any object.

"'My blessed Beatrice,' said the good old man, 'you are much unlike yourself: but speak; I know that you can ask nothing that I can refuse to tell.'

"'Tell me then, by your hopes of heaven,' I cried, 'whether fraud was used in the Judgement of God that I underwent, or how I escaped the fearful burning of the hot shares.'

"Tears started in my father's eyes; he rose, and embraced me, and, lifting me up, said with passion,—'Thank God! my prayers are fulfilled. Beatrice, you shall not be deceived, you will no longer deceive yourself; and do not be unhappy, but joy that the deceit is removed from you, and that you may return from your wild and feverish ecstasies to a true and real piety.'

"'This is all well,' I replied calmly; 'but tell me truly how it happened.'

"'That I cannot, my child, for I was myself kept in the dark; I only know that fraud was most certainly practised for your deliverance. My child, we have all of us much erred; you less than any; for you have been deceived, led away by your feelings and imagination to believe yourself that which you are not.'

"I will not repeat to you all that the bishop said; it was severe, but kind. First he shewed me, how I had deceived myself, and nourished ecstasies and transports of the soul which were in no way allied to holiness; and then he told me now I must repair my faults by deep humility, prayer, and a steady faith in that alone which others taught, not what I myself imagined. I listened silently; but I heard every word; I was very docile; I believed all he said; and although my soul bled with its agony, I accused none, none but myself. At first I thought that I would tell my countrymen of their deception. But, unsupported by my supernatural powers, I now shrunk from all display; no veil, no wall could conceal me sufficiently; for it could not hide me from myself. My very powers of speech deserted me, and I could not articulate a syllable; I listened, my eyes bent on the earth, my cheek pale; I listened until I almost became marble. At length the good old man ceased; and, with many words of affectionate comfort, he bade me go and make firm peace with my own heart, and that then he hoped to teach me a calm road to happiness. Happiness! surely I must have been stone; for I neither frowned in despite, nor laughed in derision, when that term was applied to any thing that I could hereafter feel. I kissed his hand, and withdrew.

"Did you ever feel true humility? a prostration of soul, that accuses itself alone, and asks pardon of a superior power with entire penitence, and a confiding desertion of all self-merit, a persuasion intimate and heartfelt of one's own unworthiness? That was what I felt; I had been vain, proud, presumptuous; now I fell to utter poverty of spirit; yet it was not poverty, for there was a richness in my penitence which reminded me of the sacred text, that says 'Oh, that my head were water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!'

"Then succeeded to this mental humiliation, a desire to mortify and punish myself for my temerity and mistakes. I was possessed by a spirit of martyrdom. Sometimes I thought that I would again undergo the Judgement of God fairly and justly: but now I shrunk from public exhibition; besides, the good bishop had strongly reprobated these temptations of God's justice. At other times I thought that I would confess all to my excellent father; and this perhaps is what I ought to have done; what would really have caused me to regain a part of the calm that I had lost; but I could not; womanly shame forbade me; death would have been a far preferable alternative. At length an idea struck me, that seemed to my overstrained feelings to transcend all other penitence; a wretchedness and anguish that might well redeem my exceeding sins.

"Think you that, while I thus humbled myself, I forgot Castruccio? Never! the love I bore him clung around me, festered on my soul, and kept me ever alive to pain. Love him! I adored him; to whisper his name only in solitude, where none could hear my voice but my own most attentive ear, thrilled me with transport. I tried to banish him from my thoughts; he recurred in my dreams, which I could not control. I saw him there, beautiful as his real self, and my heart was burnt by my emotion. Well; it was on this excess of love that I built my penitence, which was to go as a pilgrim and ask alms of you. Euthanasia! I only knew your name; the very idea of seeing you made me shiver. It was three months before I could steel my heart to this resolve. I saw none; I spoke to none; I was occupied by my meditations alone, and those were deep and undermining as the ocean.

"Well; as I have said, I dwelt long and deeply upon my plan, until every moment seemed a crime, that went by before I put it in execution. The long winter passed thus; my poor mother, the lady Marchesana, watched me, as a child might watch a favourite bird fluttering in the agonies of death. She saw that some mysterious and painful feeling oppressed me, that I no longer appeared in public, that I shunned the worship of my admirers, that the spirit of prophecy was dead within me; but I was silent, and reserved; and her reverence for me (Good angels! her reverence for me!) prevented any enquiries. In the spring the bishop Marsilio was promoted to another see, and he was obliged to go to Avignon to receive the investiture. Excellent and beloved old man! he blessed me, and kissed me, and with words of affectionate advice departed. I have never seen him more.

"When he was gone, the labour of my departure was lightened; and in gentle and hesitating words I told my best and loved mother that I had vowed a pilgrimage to Rome: she wished to accompany me. Those were heart-breaking scenes, my Euthanasia, when I left all my friends, all who loved me, and whom I had ever loved: I knew that I should never see them again. How did I know this? In truth, after having performed my vow with regard to you, I intended to visit the sepulchres at Rome; and I might then have returned. I was no prophetess; and yet I felt that mine was not a simple pilgrimage, but an eternal separation from all former associations, from every one I had ever known. Thus, hopeless of future good, I deserted all that yet rendered life in any degree sufferable: I did this to satisfy my sense of duty, to do homage to the divinity by some atonement for his violated laws: I did this; and henceforward I was to be an outcast, a poor lonely shrub on a bleak heath, a single reed in a vast and overflowing river.

"I had known too much luxury in my youth; every one loved me, and tended on me; I had seen about me eyes beaming with affection, smiles all my own, words of deep interest and respect, that had become to me a second nature. I departed alone at four in the morning from Ferrara by the secret entrance of the viscountess's palace, on a clear and lovely day in the spring. I was dressed as the meanest pilgrim, and I carefully hid my white hands and fair cheeks, which might have betrayed my way of life during the past; except indeed when I was alone, — then I loved to throw off my cloak, to bare my arms, my face, my neck to the scorching sun-beams, that I might the sooner destroy a delicacy I despised: the work was quickly done; a few hours exposure to the sun of noon burnt up my skin, and made it red and common.

"The first day was one of unmixed pain; the sun parched my frame; my feet were blistered, my limbs ached; I walked all day, until bodily fatigue lulled my mental anguish, for I was unhappy beyond all words. Alone, deserted by God and man, I had lost my firm support, my belief in my own powers; I had lost my friends, and I found, that the vain, self-sufficing, cloud — inhabiting Beatrice was in truth a poor dependent creature, whose heart sunk, when in the evening she came to a clear brook running through a little wood, and she found no cup to drink, and no dainties to satisfy her appetite. I dragged my weary limbs three miles further, to an hospital for pilgrims, and repined over my coarse fare and coarser bed: — I, the ethereal prophetess, who fancied that I could feed upon air and beautiful thoughts, who had regarded my body but as a servant to my will, to hunger and thirst only as I bade it.

"Alone! alone! I travelled on day after day, in short, but wearisome journeys, and I felt the pain of utter and forced solitude; the burning sun shone, and the dews fell at evening, but there was no breeze, no coolness to refresh me; the nights were close, and my limbs, dried with the scorching of the day, and stiff with walking, burned all night as if a furnace had glowed within them. Were those slight evils? Alas! I was a spoiled child, and I felt every pain as an agony.

"I felt ill; I caught cold one evening, when just after sunset I threw myself down to rest under a tree, and the unwholesome dew fell upon me. I got a low fever, which for a long time I did not understand, feeling one day well, and the next feverish, cold, and languid. Some attendant nuns at an hospital found out my disorder, and nursed me; I was confined for six weeks; and, when I issued forth, little of the fire of my eyes, or of the beauty the lady Marchesana used to dwell upon, out-lived this attack. — I was yellow, meagre, — a shadow of what I had been.

"My journey to your castle was very long. I crossed the Apennines during the summer, and passing through Florence I arrived at Pistoia in the beginning of June. But now my heart again failed; I heard of your name, your prosperity, your beauty, the respect and adoration you every where excited: it was a double penance to humble myself before so excelling a rival. If you had been worthless, a self-contenting pride would have eased my wounds, but to do homage to my equal — oh! to one far my superior, — was a new lesson to my stubborn soul. I remained nearly three months at Pistoia, very unhappy, hesitating, — cast about, as a boat that for ever shifts its sail, but can never find the right wind to lead it into port.

"I visited you in September; do you remember my coming? do you remember my hesitating gait, and low and trembling voice? I was giddy — sick — I thought that death was upon me, for that nothing but that great change could cause such an annihilation of my powers, such an utter sinking of my spirit. A cold dew stood upon my forehead, my eyes were glazed and sightless, my limbs trembled as with convulsions. Castruccio loved you! Castruccio! it is long since I have mentioned his name: during this weary journey never did his loved image for a moment quit its temple, its fane, its only home, that it still and for ever fills. Love him! it was madness; yet I did; — yet I do; — put your hand upon my heart, — does it not beat fast?"

Euthanasia kissed poor Beatrice's forehead; and, after a short pause, she continued:

"My penance was completed, yet I did not triumph; an unconquerable sadness hung over me; miserable dreams haunted my sleep; and their recollected images strayed among my day — thoughts, as thin and grim ghosts, frightening and astounding me. Once, — I can never forget, — I had been oppressed for several days by an overpowering and black melancholy, for which I could in no manner account; it was not regret or grief; it was a sinking, an annihilation of all my mental powers in which I was a passive sufferer, as if the shadow of some mightier spirit was cast over to darken and depress me. I was haunted as by a prophecy, or rather a sense of evil, which I could neither define nor understand. Three evenings after, as I sat beside a quiet spring that lulled me almost to insensibility, the cause of my mournful reveries suddenly flashed across me; it stalked on my recollection, as a terrific and gigantic shadow, and made me almost die with terror. The memory of a dream flashed across me. Again and again I have dreamed this dream, and always on the eve of some great misfortune. It is my genius, my dæmon. What was it? there was something said, something done, a scene portrayed. Listen attentively, I intreat; there was a wide plain flooded by the waters of an overflowing river, the road was dry, being on the side of a hill above the level of the plain, and I kept along the path which declined, wondering if I should come to an insurmountable obstacle; at a distance before me they were driving a flock of sheep; on my left, on the side of the hill, there was a ruined circuit of wall, which inclosed the dilapidated houses of a deserted town; at some distance a dreary, large, ruinous house, half like a castle, yet without a tower, dilapidated, and overgrown with moss, was dimly seen, islanded by the flood on which it cast a night-black shade; the scirocco blew, and covered the sky with fleecy clouds; and the mists in the distance hovered low over the plain; a bat above me wheeled around. Then something happened, what I cannot now tell, terrific it most certainly was; Euthanasia, there is something in this strange world, that we none of us understand.

"Euthanasia, I came to that scene; if I live, I did! I saw it all as I had before seen it in the slumbers of the night. Great God, what am I? I am frailer than the first autumnal leaf that falls; I am overpowered."

She paused sobbing with passion; a clinging horror fell upon Euthanasia; they were for a long time silent, and then Beatrice in a low subdued voice continued:

"I had returned to Florence; I had passed through Arezzo; I had left Thrasymene to the north; I had passed through Perugia, Foligno, and Terni, and was descending towards the plain surrounding Rome; the Tiber had overflowed, the whole of the low country was under water; but I proceeded, descending the mountains, until, having passed Narni, I came to the lowest hill which bounds the Campagna di Roma; the scirocco blew; the mists were on the hills, and half concealed the head of lone Soracte; the white waters, cold and dreary, were spread far, waste and shelterless; on my left was a high dark wall surrounding a ruined town — I looked, — some way beyond I saw on the road a flock of sheep almost lost in the distance, — my brain was troubled, I grew dizzy and sick, — when my glazed eyes caught a glance of an old, large, dilapidated house islanded in the flood, — the dream flashed across my memory; I uttered a wild shriek, and fell lifeless on the road.

“I again awoke, but all was changed: I was lying on a couch, in a vast apartment, whose loose tapestries waved and sighed in the wind; — near me were two boys holding torches which flared, and their black smoke was driven across my eyes; an old woman was chafing my temples. — I turned my head from the light of the torches, and then I first saw my wicked and powerful enemy: he leaned against the wall, observing me; his eyes had a kind of fascination in them, and, unknowing what I did, hardly conscious that he was a human creature, (indeed for a time it appeared to me only a continuation of my dream,) I gazed on his face, which became illuminated by a proud, triumphant, fiendlike smile. — I felt sick at heart, and relapsed into a painful swoon.

“Well: I promised to be brief, and I go on dwelling on the particulars of my tale, until your fair cheek is blanched still whiter by fear. But I have said enough, nor will I tell that which would chill your warm blood with horror. I remained three years in this house; and what I saw, and what I endured, is a tale for the unhallowed ears of infidels, or for those who have lost humanity in the sight of blood, and not for so tender a heart as yours. It has changed me, much changed me, to have been witness of these scenes; I entered young, I came out grey, old and withered; I went in innocent; and, if innocence consist in ignorance, I am now guilty of the knowledge of crime, which it would seem that fiends alone could contrive.

“What was he, who was the author and mechanist of these crimes? he bore a human name; they say that his lineage was human; yet could he be a man? During the day he was absent; at night he returned, and his roofs rung with the sounds of festivity, mingled with shrieks and imprecations. It was the carnival of devils, when we miserable victims were dragged out to —

“Enough! enough! Euthanasia, do you wonder I, who have been the slave of incarnate Evil, should have become a Paterin?

“That time has passed as a dream. Often my faculties were exerted to the utmost; my energies alive, at work, combating; — but I struggled against victory, and was ever vanquished. I have seen the quiet stars shine, and the shadow of the grated window of the hall lie upon the moon-enlightened pavement, and it crawled along silently as I had observed it in childhood, so that truly I inhabited the same world as you, — yet how different! Animal life was the same; the household dog knew, and was at last obedient to my voice; the cat slumbered in the sun; — what was the influence that hung alone over the mind of man, rendering it cruel, hard and fiendlike?

"And who was the author of these ills? There was something about him that might be called beautiful; but it was the beauty of the tiger, of lightning, of the cataract that destroys. Obedience waited on his slightest motion; for he made none, that did not command; his followers worshipped him, but it was as a savage might worship the god of evil. His slaves dared not murmur; — his eyes beamed with irresistible fire, his smile was as death. I hated him; and I alone among his many victims was not quelled to submission. I cursed him — I poured forth eloquent and tumultuous maledictions on his head, until I changed his detested love into less dreadful, less injurious hate. Yet then I did not escape; his boiling and hideous passions, turned to revenge, now endeavoured to wreak themselves in my misery. These limbs, my Euthanasia, have been wrenched in tortures; cold, famine and thirst have kept like blood-hounds a perpetual watch upon my wearied life; yet I still live to remember and to curse.

"But, though life survived these rending struggles, my reason sank beneath them! — I became mad. Oh! dearest friend, may you never know what I suffered, when I perceived the shadow of a false vision overpower me, and my sickening throes, when the bars of my dungeon, its low roof, and black thick air, would, as it were, peer upon me with a stifling sense of reality amidst my insane transports. I struggled to recall my reason, and to preserve it; I wept, I prayed; — but I was again lost; and the fire that dwelt in my brain gave unnatural light to every object. But I must speak of that no more; methinks I again feel, what it is madness only to recollect.

"I told you that I remained for three years in this infernal house. You can easily imagine how slowly the days and nights succeeded one to another, each adding to my age, each adding one misery more to my list. Still I was the slave of him, who was a man in form alone, and of his companions, who, if they did not equal him in malice, yet were more vile, more treacherous, than he. At length the Pope's party besieged the castle. The many crimes of its possessor had drawn on him the hatred of the country round; and the moment that a leader appeared, the whole peasantry flocked as to a crusade to destroy their oppressor. He was destroyed. I saw him die, calm, courageous and unrepenting. I stood alone near his couch of blood-stained cloaks thrown in a heap upon the floor, on which when he staggered into the room he had fallen; he asked me for a cup of water; I raised his head, and gave him to drink; he said—'I feel new strength, I shall be better soon.' And, saying those words, he died.

"I was now free. I arose from the floor on which I knelt; and dividing from my eyes my hair dabbled in his blood, I cut off with his dagger the long and dripping locks, and threw them on his body. I disguised me in the clothes of one of his pages, and hid myself, until by the submission of his followers the outlet from my prison should be free. As I said before, it was more a vast palace than a castle, being without towers or battlements; but it was fortified by numberless ditches and other obstacles, apparently small, yet which, defended by slingers and archers, became almost impregnable. But when the chief died, these were deserted; and the partners of his rapine and his feasts filled the air with their savage lamentations. The fortress was taken; and I escaped to the mountains, the wild, wild mountains, — I sought them as a home after my long and painful imprisonment.

"I was now free. The ilex trees shaded me; the waters murmured beside me; the sweet winds passed over my cheeks. I felt new life. I was no longer a haggard prisoner, the despairing victim of others' crimes, the inhabitant of the dark and blood — stained walls of a house, which hedged me in on all sides, and interrupted the free course of my health even in sleep. I was again Beatrice; I again felt the long absent sensations of joy: it was paradise to me, to see the stars of heaven, unimpeded by the grates of my dungeon-windows, to walk, to rest, to think, to speak, uninterrupted and unheard. I became delirious with joy; I embraced the rough trunks of the old trees, as if they were my sisters in freedom and delight; — I took up in my hand the sparkling waters of the stream, and scattered them to the winds; — I threw myself on the earth, I kissed the rocks, I raved with tumultuous pleasure. Free! free! I can run, until my strength fails; I can rest on a mossy bank, until my strength returns; I hear the waving of the branches; I see the flight of the birds; I can lie on the grassy floor of my mother-earth so long unvisited; and I can call nature my own again. It was autumn, and the underwood of the forest had strewn the ground with its withered leaves; the arbutus-berries, chestnuts, and other fruits satisfied my appetite. I felt no want, no fatigue; the common shapes of this world seemed arrayed in unusual loveliness, to welcome and feast me on my new-found liberty.

"I wandered many days, and penetrated into the wild country of the Abruzzi. But I was again lost: I know not what deprived me of reason thus, when I most needed it. Whether it were the joy, or the sudden change, attendant on a too intense sensation of freedom, which made me feel as if I interpenetrated all nature, alive and boundless. I have recollections, as if sometimes I saw the woods, the green earth, and blue sky, and heard the roaring of a mighty waterfall which splashed me with its cold waters: but there is a blank, as of a deep, lethargic sleep; and many weeks passed before I awoke again, and entered upon the reality of life.

"I found myself in a cavern lying on the ground. It was night; and a solitary lamp burned, fastened to the wall of the cave; the half-extinguished ashes of a fire glimmered in a recess; and a few utensils that appeared to have been intended for the preparing food, seemed to mark this as a human habitation. It was dry, and furnished with a few benches and a table, on which lay bread and fruits. I felt as if I had become the inhabitant of the dwelling of a spirit; and, with a strange, half-painful, half-pleasurable feeling, I raised an apple to my lips, that by its fragrance and taste I might assure myself that it was earthly. Then again I looked around for some fellow — creature. I found a narrow passage from my cave, which led to an inner apartment much smaller and very low; on the ground, on a bed of leaves lay an old man: his grey hairs were thinly strewn on his venerable temples, his beard white, flowing and soft, fell to his girdle; he smiled even in his sleep a gentle smile of benevolence. I knelt down beside him; methought it was my excellent father, the lord Marsilio; but that there were greater traces of thought and care upon the fallen cheeks and wrinkled brow of this old man.

"He awoke: 'My poor girl,' he said, 'what would you?'

"'I wish to know where I am, and what I do here?'

"My words convinced my good protector, that the kindly sleep into which his medicines had thrown me, had restored my reason; and, it being now day-break, he arose, and opened the door of his cave. It was dug under the side of a mountain, covered by ivy, wild vines, and other parasites, and shaded by ilex trees; it opened on the edge of a small grassy platform, with a steep wall of rock behind, and a precipice before: the mountain in which it was scooped, was one of many that inclosed a rugged valley; and, from one spot on the platform, I could distinguish a mass of waters falling with a tremendous crash, which were afterwards hidden by the inequalities of the mountain, and then were seen, a turbid and swift river, at the bottom of the valley. The lower sides of the mountain were covered with olive woods, whose sea-green colour contrasted with the dark ilex, and the fresh-budding leaves of a few chestnuts. I felt cold, and the mountain had just begun to be tipped by the rising sun; it seemed as if no path led to or from the platform, and that we were shut out from the whole world, suspended on the side of a rocky mountain.

"This cavern had been an hospital for me during the long winter months. The old man had found me straying wildly among the forests, complaining of the heavy chains that bound me, and the wrongs and imprisonment that I suffered. He, poor wretch, was an outcast of his species, a heretic, a Paterin, who hid himself in the woods from the fury of the priests who would have destroyed him. He led me to his cave; he tended me as the kindest father; he restored me to reason, and even then did not desert me. He lived here quite alone; no one was intrusted with the secret of his retreat; at night, muffled up and disguised, he often went to seek for food, and again hastened back to peace and solitude.

"I partook his solitude for many months; at sunrise we quitted our dwelling, and enjoyed the fresh air, and the view of the sky and the hills, until the sight of the first countryman in the vale below warned us to retire. On moonlight nights we sat there; and, while she, lady of the night, moved slowly above us, and the stars twinkled around, we talked, and, in our conversations of faith, goodness and power, his doctrines unveiled to me, what had before been obscure, and from him I learned that creed which you hold in detestation, but which, believe me, has much to be said in its behalf.

"Look, dear Euthanasia, daylight has made dim the glimmer of your lamp, and bids me remember how often I have forgotten my promise to be brief in my relation; it is now almost finished. I soon greatly loved my kind guardian; he was the gentlest and most amiable of mortals, wise as a Grecian sage, fearless and independent. He died in torture: the bloodhounds hunted him from his den; they bound his aged limbs; they dragged him to the stake. He died without dread, I would fain believe almost without pain. Could these things be, oh, my preserver, best and most excellent of men? It were well befitting, that thou shouldst die thus, and that I lived, and still live.

"It were tedious to relate how all this passed; how I wept and prayed; how I escaped, and, half maddened by this misery, cursed the creation and its cruel laws. The rest is all uninteresting; I was returning from the task of carrying the last legacy of this old man to his daughter at Genoa, when I was seized in this town by the Inquisitors, and cast into prison, — you know the rest.

"And now, dearest friend, leave me. Having related the events of my past life, it makes me look on towards the future; it is not enough to rise every day, and then lie down to sleep; I would look on what I may become with firmness; I know that no creature in the whole world is so miserable as I; but I have not yet drained the cup of life; something still remains to be done.

"Yet one word, my Euthanasia, of Him who is the law of my life; and yet I dare not say what I thought of saying. You write to him about me sometimes; do you not? You may still; I would not check you in this. In truth he is the master of my fate; and it were well that he knew all that relates to me."

Poor Beatrice then wept bitterly; but she waved her hand in sign that she would be left alone; and Euthanasia retired. She had not slept the whole night, but she felt no inclination to rest. The last words of Beatrice seemed to imply that she wished that Castruccio should know her story; so she sat down, and wrote an abstract of it, while her eyes often filled with tears, as she related the wondrous miseries of the ill-fated prophetess.

CHAPTER XXXI

ON the following day Beatrice seemed far more calm. Euthanasia had feared, that the reviving the memory of past sorrows, might awaken the frenzy from which she had before suffered; but it was not so. She had pined for confidence; her heart was too big to close up in secrecy all the mighty store of unhappiness to which it was conscious; but, having now communicated the particulars to another, she felt somewhat relieved. She and Euthanasia walked up and down the overgrown paths of the palace-garden; and, as Beatrice held her friend's hand, after a silence of a few minutes she said:

"I do not like to pry into the secrets of my own heart; and yet I am ever impelled to do it. I was about to compare it to this unweeded garden; but here all is still; and the progress of life, be it beautiful or evil, goes on in peace: in my soul all jars, — one thought strikes against another, and produces most vile discord. Sometimes for a moment this ceases; and would that that state of peace would endure for ever: but, crash! — comes in the stroke of a mightier hand, which destroys all harmony and melody, alas! that may be found in your gentler heart; in mine all recollection of it even is extinct."

"I will tell you how this is, my sweet Beatrice," replied Euthanasia, playfully. "I will tell you what the human mind is; and you shall learn to regulate its various powers. The human soul, dear girl, is a vast cave, in which many powers sit and live. First, Consciousness is as a sentinel at the entrance; and near him wait Joy and Sorrow, Love and Hate, and all the quick sensations that through his means gain entrance into our hearts.

"In the vestibule of this cavern, still illumined by the light of day, sit Memory with banded eyes, grave Judgement bearing her scales, and Reason in a lawyer's gown. Hope and Fear dwell there, hand in hand, twin sisters; the first (the elder by some brief moments, of ruddy complexion, firm step, eyes eagerly looking forward, and lips apart in earnest expectation,) would often hurry on to take her seat beside Joy; if she were not held back by Fear, the younger born; who, pale and trembling, would as often fly, if Hope held not her hand, and supported her; her eyes are ever turned back to appeal to

Memory, and you may see her heart beat through her dun robe. Religion dwells there also, and Charity, or sometimes in their place, their counterfeits or opposites, Hypocrisy, Avarice and Cruelty.

"Within, excluded from the light of day, Conscience sits, who can see indeed, as an owl, in the dark. His temples are circled by a diadem of thorns, and in his hand he bears a whip; yet his garb is kingly, and his countenance, though severe, majestical.

"But beyond all this there is an inner cave, difficult of access, rude, strange, and dangerous. Few visit this, and it is often barren and empty; but sometimes (like caverns that we read of, which are discovered in the bosoms of the mountains, and exist in beauty, unknown and neglected) this last recess is decorated with the strongest and most wondrous devices; — stalactites of surpassing beauty, stores of unimagined wealth, and silver sounds, which the dropping water makes, or the circulation of the air, felt among the delicate crystals. But here also find abode owls, and bats, and vipers, and scorpions, and other deadly reptiles. This recess receives no light from outward day; nor has Conscience any authority here. Sometimes it is lighted by an inborn light; and then the birds of night retreat, and the reptiles creep not from their holes. But, if this light do not exist, oh! then let those beware who would explore this cave. It is hence that bad men receive those excuses for their crimes, which take the whip from the hand of Conscience, and blunt his sharp crown; it is hence that the daring heretic learns strange secrets. This is the habitation of the madman, when all the powers desert the vestibule, and he, finding no light, makes darkling, fantastic combinations, and lives among them. From thence there is a short path to hell, and the evil spirits pass and repass unreproved, devising their temptations.

"But it is here also that Poetry and Imagination live; it is here that Heroism, and Self-sacrifice, and the highest virtues dwell, and here they find a lore far better than all the lessons of the world; and here dwells the sweet reward of all our toil, Content of Mind, who crowned with roses, and bearing a flower — wreathed sceptre, rules, instead of Conscience, those admitted to her happy dominion."

Euthanasia talked thus, trying to give birth in the mind of Beatrice to calmer ideas; but it was in vain; the poor girl listened, and when her friend had finished, she raised her eyes heavy with tears. "Talk no more in this strain," she said; "every word you utter tells me only too plainly what a lost wretch I am. No content of mind exists for me, no beauty of thought, or poetry; and, if imagination live, it is as a tyrant, armed with fire, and venomed darts, to drive me to despair."

A torrent of tears followed these words; and no caresses or consolation could soothe her.

Soon after, Euthanasia received an answer from Castruccio to the letter in which she had sketched Beatrice's unhappy story. He lamented the misfortunes, which through his means had overwhelmed the poor prophetess. "I know," he continued, "of no refuge or shelter for her, if it be not in your protecting affection. If she were as when I knew her, her own feelings might suggest a cloister, as the last resource for one so outraged and so miserable as she is. But she is a Paterin; and, until she be reclaimed from this detestable heresy, she is shut out from the consolations of our religion."

"And he writes thus coldly of this ruined temple, which was once all that is fair and beautiful! Ah! I wonder not," thought Euthanasia, "that he cast away my affections, since he can spare no deeper sympathy for Beatrice. She does not interfere with his ambition or his designs; it is therefore hardness of heart alone which dictates his chilling councils."

At this moment Beatrice entered. To see that beautiful creature only (for beautiful she still was in spite of calamity and madness), was to behold all that can be imagined of soft and lovely in woman, soft and lovely, yet wild, so that, while you gazed with delight, you feared. Her low brow, though its fairness were tarnished by the sun, still gleamed beneath her raven-black hair; her eyes, which had reassumed some of their ancient gentleness, slept as it were beneath their heavy lids. Her angry look, which was lightning, her smile, which was as paradise, all elevated her above her fellow creatures; she seemed like the incarnation of some strange planetary spirit, that, robed in flesh, felt uneasy in its bonds, and longed to be away on the wings of its own will.

She spoke with trepidation: "Do not blush, my friend, or endeavour to conceal that paper; I know what it is; and, if you care for my peace of mind, if you love me, if the welfare of my almost lost soul be dear to you, let me see that writing."

"There is no consolation for you in it," replied Euthanasia, sadly.

“Now, of that I alone can judge; look, I kneel to you, Euthanasia; and do you deny me? I intreat you to give me that paper.”

“My own Beatrice, do not torture me thus: if I do not shew it you — Never mind: here it is; read it, and know what Castruccio is.”

Beatrice read it with a peaceful air; and then, folding in up, said composedly;—”I see no ill in this; and his will shall be done. It is a strange coincidence, that I had already decided on what he advises; and I trust he will be glad to find that the wandering prophetess again seeks her ancient path of religion and peace. I must explain these things to you, my Euthanasia. I know that you wish to remove to Florence: I can never leave this town. I shall never see him again, hear him speak, or be any thing to him; but to live within the same walls, to breathe the air of heaven which perhaps has hovered near him, this is a joy which I will never, never forego. My resolution is fixed: but you perish here; and would find loving and cherished friends there, where he can never come. I would not detain you; I have chosen the mode of my future destiny, and planned it all. The convent nearest to his palace is one of nuns dedicated to San Michele. I have already sent for the confessor of that convent; through him I shall make my peace with the church; and, when he believes me sufficiently pure to become an inhabitant of those sainted walls, I shall enter myself as a novice, and afterwards become a nun of that order. I intreat you, dearest, to stay only till my vows are made, when, wholly dedicated to heaven, I shall feel less an earthly separation.”

She spoke in a hurried, faltering voice, and closed her speech in tears; she threw herself into Euthanasia’s arms, and they both wept.—”Oh! no, unhappy, but dear, dear Beatrice, indeed you shall not leave me. I can be of little use now in the world to myself or others: but to cheer you, to teach you, as well as my poor skill will permit, the softest path to heaven, these shall be my tasks; you shall never leave me.”

Beatrice disengaged herself from the arms of Euthanasia; and, casting up her eyes, with that look of inspiration which seemed to seek and find converse with the powers above, she said: “I thank you from the depth of my heart, and may God bless you as you deserve, divine Euthanasia; but I am fixed. Alas! my mind is as the waters, now lashed into waves by the winds of circumstance, now coldly dark under a lowering heaven, but never smiled upon by the life-giving sun. And this perishable frame is to my soul as a weak, tempest-beaten promontory, against which the Libeccio impels the undermining sea. I shall soon perish: but let my death be that of the holy; and that can alone be in the solitude of a cloister: that is the consummation of my fate. Oppose me no more: has not he pronounced? And I will obey his word, as if he were my king, my lord, my — Speak not; contradict me not; you see what a fragile being I am.”

And now this Beatrice, this Paterin, who had so lately with heartfelt hatred told the tale of all the miseries that are suffered under the sun, and cursed the author of them, became as docile to the voice of the priest, as a seven-years-old child. The confessor for whom she had sent, found it no difficult task to turn her mind to the reception of his tenets; and prayer and penitence became again for her the law of the day. She never went out; she remained secluded in Euthanasia’s palace; and, with her beads in her hand, her wild eyes turned heavenwards, she sought for peace, and she found at least a respite from some of the dreadful feelings that had hitherto tormented her.

In the mean time “the mother of the months” had many times waned, and again refilled her horn; and summer, and its treasure of blue skies, odorous flowers, merry insects, and sweet-voiced birds, again bade the world be happy. The peasant prepared the threshing floor, choosing a sunny spot which he carefully cleared of grass and weeds, and pouring water on it, beat it, till it was as hard as a barn-floor in the north. The ploughs, whose rough workmanship Virgil describes, lay useless beside the tilth, now filled with the rising corn: the primroses had faded; but one began to scent the myrtle on the mountains; the innumerable fireflies, loving the green wheat, made a second heaven of twinkling stars upon a verdant floor, or, darting among the olive copses, formed a fairy scene of the sweet Italian night; the soft-eyed oxen reposed in their stalls; and the flowers of the chestnuts and olives had given place to the young, half-formed fruit. This is the season that man has ever chosen for the destruction of his fellow-creatures, to make the brooks run blood, the air, filled with the carolling of happy birds, to echo also to the groans and shrieks of the dying, and the blue and serene heaven to become tainted with the dew which the unburied corpse exhales; winter were Bellona’s fitting mate; but, no; she hangs about the neck of summer, who would fain shake her off, as might well be expected for so quarrelsome a bride.

Castruccio now possessed the whole territory of Lucca and several other circumjacent provinces, in peace and obedience. But his eyes were always turned towards Florence; and his most ardent wish was to humble, if not possess himself of, that city. He made another step towards it during the summer. The abbot of Pacciana got by popular favour entire power in Pistoia; he used this in behalf of Castruccio, turning out the Florentine ambassadors, and giving up to the prince of Lucca many of the strong-holds and towers of the Pistoian territory. Castruccio was possessed of the fortresses placed on the mountain which overlooked the town, where he hovered, like a hawk over his prey, ready to pounce, delaying only for the destined minute.

During this summer also he conceived some hopes of taking Pisa. The head of the government there, who reigned entirely through the affections of the people, suddenly offended his masters; he was decapitated; and the various parties in the town, running to arms, entered into a bloody warfare. At this moment Castruccio appeared with his army on the hill of St. Giuliano: this sight pacified the combatants; they elected a new lord, and turned their powers towards resisting the common enemy. Castruccio retreated to Lucca; but he was so moved by the overthrow of the Pisan chief, that, resolving to trust no more, as he had hitherto done, to the affections of his people, he erected in the same year a strong fortress within the walls of his city, which he called Agosta. He spared no expense or labour in it; and it was considered by all as the most magnificent work of those days: it was situated in that part of the town which looks towards Pisa, surrounded by a strong and high wall, and fortified by thirty towers. The inhabitants of a whole quarter were turned out of their dwellings, to make room for this new symbol of tyranny; and here he, his family, and followers, lived in proud security.

Towards the end of the month of June, Euthanasia, who had hitherto been occupied in attending to the sorrows of Beatrice, received information, that one of her most valued Florentine friends was dangerously ill, and earnestly desired her attendance. She mentioned this to her guest; and Beatrice, ever variable, was then in a docile mood. She had long listened with deep and earnest faith to the lessons of Padre Lanfranco, the confessor of the convent to which she was about to retire. It would seem that this old man humoured warily and wisely her disturbed understanding; for she appeared at peace with herself and others: if she now wept, she did not accuse, as she had before done, Him who had created the fountain of her tears.

"Go, kind friend," said she to Euthanasia; "go; but return again. Remember, I claim your companionship, until I take the veil, — then you are free. Methinks, I should like to be left now in utter solitude; I could commune more intensely with the hopes and heavenly gifts that I entertain. Go; blessed spirit of Good, guardian Angel of poor Beatrice, poor in all but gratitude, — you shall not see your work marred on your return; you will still find me the good, obedient child, which I have been, now, I think, for more than a month."

Euthanasia left her with pain, and with a mournful presentiment; but, as all wore the aspect of peace, she thought herself bound to obey the voice of friendship, and to see, perhaps for the last time, one who had been the friend and companion of her early youth; and she departed for Florence. There were for her too many associations allied to the Val di Nievole, to permit her to choose that route. Besides Castruccio's army occupied the passes, and she feared to meet him. She accordingly went round by Pisa. Nothing could be more beautiful than the country; the low Pisan hills covered with chestnut and olive woods, interspersed with darker patches of pine and cork (while, among all, the cypresses raised their tapering spires), and, crowned by castles and towers, bounded in a plain of unparalleled fertility. The corn was cutting, and the song of the reapers kept time as it were with the noisy cicale in the olive trees, and the chirping birds. Peace, for the first time for several years, sat brooding with outspread wings over the land; and underneath their blessed shade sprung joy and plenty.

Euthanasia arrived at Florence. She found her friend recovered; but all her acquaintance, who had eagerly expected her arrival, were much disappointed when they heard that it was her intention to return to Lucca. She however both loved and pitied Beatrice too much, to be wanting in any of the duties of friendship towards her. After a month's residence in her natal and beloved city, she again departed from Florence. In the mean time what had become of the ill-fated prophetess?

CHAPTER XXXII

THE Albinois Bindo had been greatly struck by the appearance of Beatrice. There was a wildness in her countenance and gestures that excited his curiosity; and he seemed to feel instinctively that she had about her the marks of one who dealt with unembodied spirits. He had ventured to speak to his mistress concerning her; but he learnt nothing except that Ferrara was her native town. With this slight information he visited his friend, the witch, and they canvassed the subject together.

"Her eye sees beyond this world," said Bindo; "if you were to look on her, you would find a companion in your art. I have discovered that there is a mysterious connection between her and the prince: he liberated her when she was imprisoned by the Dominican fathers, as a Paterin, they say, but I suspect that it was for magic."

"At any rate," replied the witch, "there is a mystery in this that I will clear up. I will go to Ferrara, and learn who and what she is. Expect me back in less than a month; in the mean time watch her; watch every word and action; something may come of this."

The witch went to Ferrara. She traversed the hills, and went by unknown paths, and across the untrodden mountains, guided either by her former experience, or by the arch fiend himself; for it required almost supernatural knowledge to trace her way among the heaped and confused range of the Apennines. She walked at night, and rested during the day, and saw the sun many times rise and set among the wild forests that covered the hills. At Ferrara she learnt what she desired: Beatrice, the Ancilla Dei, the prophetess, was not forgotten; even her connection with Castruccio had been guessed at; and some even dared assert, that she had never quitted Lucca, or the palace of the prince, during her pretended pilgrimage to Rome. The witch returned, joyful to think that she had now obtained an instrument for some of her projects.

What were her projects? They had not that settled aim and undeviating course which one object might inspire. Her desire was malice; and her present hope, to impress upon Bindo some notion of the powers to which she pretended. She had been young once; and her nature, never mild, had been turned to ferocity by wrongs which had been received so long ago, that the authors of them were all dead, and she, the victim, alone survived. Calumny had blasted her name; her dearest affections had been blighted; her children torn from her; and she remained to execrate and to avenge.

Her evil propensities had long exhausted themselves in acts of petty mischief among the peasantry; but her connection with Bindo gave her hopes of a wider scope for wickedness. To injure Castruccio, or to benefit Euthanasia, was alike indifferent to her. She saw and understood more of the human heart than Bindo did: she knew, that Euthanasia had once loved the prince; and injury to him she hoped would carry a double sting. She was old, perhaps about to die; and she thought that there would be a pleasure in expiring amidst the groans of the victims of her malice.

In these days, when the passions, if they are not milder, are more restrained, and assume a more conventional appearance, it will be doubted if such fiendish love of mischief ever existed; but that it did, all tradition and history prove. It was believed, that the witch loved evil as her daily bread, and that she had sold her soul to the devil to do ill alone; she knew how powerless she was; but she desired to fill in every part the character attributed to her.

As she returned over the Apennines, she planned her future conduct; she thought she saw one mighty ruin envelop three master-spirits of the human kind, plotted by her alone. It was a dangerous experiment. “But I must die,” she cried; “and what death will be sweeter, even if it be in the midst of flames, if so many share the torments with me? And thou, puny abortion, who darest with trembling hands meddle in work beyond thee, thou also shalt taste the poison so long withheld! A canker cling to you all! I have long sought for labour suited to my genius; and now I have found it.”

It was on the day previous to the departure of Euthanasia for Florence, that the witch returned: she met Bindo with a ghastly smile. “All,” she cried, “is as you wish; the star of Castruccio will be extinguished behind the murky cloud which this same Beatrice will raise. Bring her to me; in time you shall know all: but be wary; the countess must be blind and deaf to our machinations.”

Euthanasia had departed, leaving Beatrice far calmer than she had before been since her release from prison. But no feelings were more fluctuating than those of the poor prophetess. The day after she had parted from her protectress, Padre Lanfranco had been called upon urgent business to Sienna; and she was left without a guide to the workings of her own mind. She could not stand this; the consolations of Euthanasia, and the exhortations of the priest were alike forgotten; and Beatrice, turned out, as it were, without shelter, fell into repinings and despair.

She had ardently desired to see Castruccio; but her confessor had commanded her to avoid all occasions of meeting him, if she wished to fit herself for the holy life to which she said she felt herself called. Beatrice was easily led; but she had no command over herself; and, the moment she was left to her own guidance, she was hurried away by the slightest impression.

Castruccio had just returned from Pistoia on the news of the insurrection of Pisa; and it was said that he would again quit Lucca on the following morning. “Now or never,” thought Beatrice, “I may have my will unreproved; if this day escape, I am again surrounded, enchained; I might see him, hear his voice; oh! that I had courage to make the attempt! Yet I fear that this may be the suggestion of some evil spirit; I must not, dare not see him.”

She wept and prayed; but in vain. In her days of ecstatic reverie she had sanctified and obeyed every impulse as of divine origin; and now she could not withstand the impressions she felt. She wrapped a coarse capuchin around her, and sallied forth, with trembling steps, and eyes gleaming with tears, to go and gaze on the form of him for whom she had sacrificed her all. Hardly had she proceeded two paces from Euthanasia’s palace-gate, before a form — a man — passed before her, and with a loud shriek she fell senseless on the pavement. She was brought back to the house, and carefully nursed; but several days elapsed, while, still possessed with fever, she raved of the most tremendous and appalling scenes and actions, which she fancied were taking place around her. The man whom she had seen was Tripalda; and from what she said in her delirium, it might be gathered, that he had been an actor in the frightful wrongs she had endured during her strange imprisonment in the Campagna di Roma. She was attended on with kindness, and she recovered; and such was the effect of her delirium, that she persuaded herself that what had so terrified her, was a mere vision conjured up by her imagination. She thought that the vivid image of this partner of her enemy’s crimes, thus coming across her while she was on the point of disobeying her confessor's injunction, was a warning and punishment from heaven.

Euthanasia was away, and Beatrice dared not speak to any: she brooded in her own mind over the appearance, mysterious as she thought it, of this man; until her fancy was so high wrought, that she feared her very shadow on the wall; and the echo of her own steps as she trod the marble pavement of her chamber, made her tremble with terror; the scenes she had witnessed, the horrors that she had endured in that unhallowed asylum of crime, presented themselves to her in their most vivid colours; she remembered all, saw all; and the deep anguish she felt was no longer mitigated by converse with her friend.

"Oh, cruel, unkind Euthanasia!" she cried, "why did you leave me? My only hope, my only trust was in you; and you desert me. Alas! alas! I am a broken reed, and none will support me; the winds blow, and I am prostrated to the ground; and, if I rise again, I am bruised, almost annihilated.

"Oh! that I could die! and yet I fear death. Oh! thou, who wert my teacher and saviour, thou who expiredst smiling amidst flames, would that thou wert here to teach me to die! What do I in this fair garden of the world? I am a weed, a noxious insect; would that some superior power would root me out utterly, or some giant-foot tread me to dust! Yet I ask for what I do not wish. Was he a good God that moulded all the agonizing contradictions of this frail heart?

"Yet hush, presumptuous spirit! recall no more those lessons, which I hoped had been forgotten. Father! God! behold the most miserable and weakest of thy creatures; teach me to die; and then kill me!"

She sat in the neglected garden of the palace, on one of the pedestals which had been placed as a stand for the pots containing lemon-trees; she leaned her head upon her hand, while the tears trickled down unheeded. It had been her delight, ever since her arrival at Lucca, to rove in this wild garden; and sometimes, when the sun had been long set, and the sound of the Ave Maria had died away, she would sit there, and, fixing her eyes on the brightest star of the heavens, would sing the remembered melodies of her childhood. Nothing recalls past feeling so strongly as the notes of once-loved music; the memory was almost too much for her; and her eyes streamed tears, as she sang the sweetest lay that mortal ear had ever heard. Euthanasia had listened, she loved to listen, to her wild airs; and, as

Beatrice saw her own deep emotions reflected in the beaming eyes of her friend, she felt soothed. But she was now alone; she felt the solitude; she felt, that she sang, and that none heeded her song: but, as the violet breathes as sweet an odour on the indifferent air, as when the loveliest creature in the world bends over it to inhale its fragrance; so did Beatrice now sing in solitude, while, her heart warmed, her imagination expanded, and she felt a transport which was pleasure, although a sea of black despair was its near boundary.

As she sang, Bindo came near her unperceived. He had never addressed her before; and she had never observed him: she was one of those persons, who feel their own life and identity so much, that they seem to have no spare feeling and sense for the uninteresting events and persons that pass around them. He now spoke in a loud voice, arousing her from her deep reverie:

"Awake, prophetess; it is not well that you should sleep; the spirits of the air have work for you; all Tuscany feels your superhuman presence."

Beatrice started, and gazed with surprise on the being who thus addressed her: his dwarfish stature, his white hair and eyelashes, his pale and wrinkled face, and his light reddish eyes gave him a strange appearance; he looked indeed like one of the spirits whose existence he asserted; and she shuddered as she beheld him.

"I come," continued Bindo, "from one, whose eye can see the forms that pass, to me viewless, through the air; from one, who has thunder and tempest like dogs in a leash, and who can wind and unwind the will of man, as the simple girl spins thread from her distaff. I bear a message to you."

"Of whom do you speak? I do not understand you."

"You will understand her words; for between the gifted there are signs, which none else know, but which bind them fast together."

"Are you one of those?" asked the wondering girl.

"I am not," replied Bindo; "you know that I am not, though I did not tell you. Are you not Beatrice, the prophetess of Ferrara? But my words are weak. There is one who lives in a cavern not far off, who was called, when young, Fior di Ligi, and now she calls herself Fior di Mandragola; she rules the spirits who live about us, and is powerful over the seasons, and over the misfortunes and sorrows of life. She bade me tell you to awake; this night I will lead you to her; and she will by her incantations take off the veil which spirits of darkness have thrown over you."

"You talk of nothing; who are you?"

"I am a servant of the countess of ; nothing more; a poor, ignorant, despised dwarf, a blight, a stunt: but I am more powerful in my weakness, than they with their giant limbs and strong muscles; — at least I have that strength, as long as I am obedient to her of whom I spoke. These are the words she bade me say to you,—'There is a cloud over you which words of power can dispel; you are that which you seemed, and not that which you believe; — come to the cavern of Fior di Mandragola; and she will restore you to that height, from which the ignorance of others, and your own want of faith have precipitated you."

"And who is Fior di Mandragola?"

"A witch, — a woman with grey hair and decrepit limbs; she is clothed in rags, and feeds upon acorns and wood-nuts; but she is greater than any queen. If she were to command, this blue sky would be covered with clouds, the Serchio would overflow, and the plain of Lucca heave with earthquake; she makes men fear they know not what; for by her command spirits tug them by the hair, and they shiver with dread. One only she cannot command; one will, one fortune, one power cannot be controlled by her; but your star surmounts his. — So, come, that you may know how to rule him."

"Whom?"

"The prince of Lucca."

"Away! you know not what you say."

"I obey; speak not of this to the countess; I will be at your chamber-window by midnight."

Bindo retreated, leaving Beatrice startled and trembling. She did not rely on his wild creed; but she felt as if it might be true. She had once believed in the command of man over supernatural agency; and she had thrown aside that creed, when she lost her faith in her own powers. She ran rapidly in her thoughts over all that had occurred to her of this nature, her ecstasies, her delirious and joyous aspirations, — they were more dead and cold, than the white ashes of a long-extinguished fire; — but other events had occurred, and she had felt inexplicable emotions which seemed to link her to other existences. She remembered her dream; and, covering her eyes with her hands, she endeavoured to recall what words and forms had been revealed to her on that occasion — vainly; the attempt served only more to shake reason already tottering. It awoke her however from her unbelief; and she again felt those deep and inquisitive thoughts, that had for many years been the life of her being. She resolved to visit Fior di Mandragola; she knew not why, but curiosity was mingled with the desire of change and freedom; she thought that it would be delightful to visit at midnight the witch's cave, guided by the strange Albinois. Beatrice was left alone to her own reflections for the whole evening; they were ever dreadful, except when the vivacity of her imagination mingled rainbows with the tempest.

Night came; and, wrapping a capuchin around her, she mounted the horse that Bindo had brought, and followed him across the country, towards the mountains which divide the Lucchese from the Modenese territory; the dark forests extended into the valley, contrasting their black shadows with the dun hues of the low country; the stars shone keenly above. They rode swiftly; but the way was long; and it was two o'clock before they arrived at the witch's cave. It was a dreary habitation: and now, as the shades of night fell upon it, it appeared more desolate than ever; the pines made a sorrowful singing above it; the earth around was herbless; and a few pine cones lay about, mingled with the grey rock that here and there peeped above the soil.

The witch sat at the door of the hovel. She was a strange being: her person was short, almost deformed, shrivelled and dried up, but agile and swift of motion; her brown and leathern face was drawn into a thousand lines; and the flesh of her cheeks, thus deformed, seemed hardly human; her hands were large, bony, and thin; she was unlike every other animal, but also was she unlike humanity, and seemed to form a species apart, which might well inspire the country people with awe. When she saw Beatrice, she arose, and advanced towards her, saying, "What do you here, child of a sleeping power? Come you here to teach, or to learn the secrets of our art?"

"I come at your own request," replied Beatrice, haughtily; "if you have nothing to say to me, I return."

"I have much to say to you," said Mandragola; "for I would awaken a spirit from lethargy, that can command us all. You are the mistress of those, of whom I am the slave; will it, and a thousand spirits wait your bidding; look, like subdued hounds they now crouch at your feet, knowing that you are their superior. It is my glory to obey them, — how far do you transcend me!"

“You talk in riddles, good mother; I see no spirits, I feel no power.”

“And if you did, would you be here? Here, at the cavern of a poor witch, who, spelling her incantations, and doing such penance as would make your young blood freeze but to hear it, just earns a power hardly gained, quickly to be resigned. But you could ride the winds, command the vegetation of the earth, and have all mankind your slaves. I ask you whether you did not once feel that strength? For a moment you were eclipsed; but the influence of the evil planet is well nigh gone, and you may now rule all, — will you accept this dominion?”

“Your words appear idle to me; give them proof, and I will listen.”

“Consult your own heart, prophetess; and that will teach you far more than I can. Does it not contain strange secrets known only to yourself? Have you never owned a power, which dwelt within you, and you felt your own mind distinct from it, as if it were more wise than you; so wise that you confessed, but could not comprehend its wisdom? Has it not revealed to you that, which without its aid you never could have known? Have you not seen this other self?”

“Stop, wonderful woman, if you would not madden me,” screamed the poor terrified Beatrice. “That is the key, the unbreakable link of my existence; that dream must either place me above humanity, or destroy me.”

“You own this power?” cried the witch triumphantly.

“Send away the Albinois, and I will tell you all. [At the beck of the witch Bindo withdrew.] Yet I gasp for breath, and fear possesses me. What do you tell me of power? I feel that I am ruled; and, when this dream comes over me, as it now does, I am no longer myself. I dreamed of a flood, of a waste of white, still waters, of mountains, of a real scene which I had never beheld. There was a vast, black house standing in the midst of the water; a concourse of dark shapes hovered about me; and suddenly I was transported into a boat which was to convey me to that mansion. Strange! another boat like to mine moved beside us; its prow was carved in the same manner; its rowers, the same in number, the same in habiliment, struck the water with their oars at the same time with ours; a woman sat near the stern, aghast and wild as I; — but their boat cut the waves without sound, their oars splashed not the waters as they struck them, and, though the boats were alike black, yet not like mine did this other cast a black shadow on the water. We landed together; I could not walk for fear; I was carried into a large room, and left alone; I leaned against the hangings, and there advanced to meet me another form. It was myself; I knew it; it stood before me, melancholy and silent; the very air about it was still. I can tell no more; — a few minutes ago I remembered nothing of all this; a few moments, and I distinctly remembered the words it spoke; they have now faded. Yes; there is something mysterious in my nature, which I cannot fathom."

Beatrice shivered; her face was deadly pale, and her eyes were glazed by fear. The witch had now tuned her instrument, and she proceeded to play on it with a master's hand.

"Heavenly girl," she said, "I acknowledge myself your slave. Command me and my powers, as you will; they will do all you bid them; — but that is little. There are other spirits, which belong not to the elements, but to the mind and fortunes of man, over which I have no sway, but which are attendant upon you. Fear not! The revelations you have received are almost too tremendous for your weak human frame; but gather strength; for your body and your spirit may master all the kings of the earth. That other self, which at one time lives within you, and anon wanders at will over the boundless universe, is a pure and immediate emanation of the divinity, and, as such, commands all creatures, be they earthly or ethereal. As yet you have seen it only in a dream; have faith, and the consciousness of its presence will visit your waking reveries."

Beatrice sighed deeply, and said: "I was in hope that my part was done, and that I should die without more agitation and fear; but I am marked, and cannot combat with my destiny. Strange as is the tale which I have just related, I cannot believe what you say: and, though doubtless there are other existences, of which we know nothing, yet I do not believe that we can have communication with, and far less power over them. I would fain preserve the little reason I have still left me; and that tells me that what you say is false."

"But if I can prove it to be true?"

"How?"

"Ask what you will! Would you see the cloudless sky become black and tempestuous? Would you hear the roaring of the overflowing waters, or see the animals of the forest congregate at my feet? Or, would you exert your own power? Would you draw towards you by your powerful incantations, one whom you wish to see, and who must obey your call? If you speak, all must obey; the prince himself, the victorious Castruccio, could not resist you."

The burning cheeks, and flashing eyes of the prophetess, shewed the agitation that this proposal excited in her heart. Poor girl! she still loved; that wound still festered, ever unhealed. She would have risked her soul, to gain a moment's power over Castruccio. She paused; and then said, "In three days I will tell you what I wish, and what I will do."

"In the mean time swear never to reveal this visit, this cavern, or my name: swear by yourself."

"A foolish vow, — by myself I swear."

"Enough; you dare not break that oath."

The witch retreated into her cave; and Bindo came forward to conduct Beatrice home. She was faint and tired; and day dawned before they arrived at the palace of Euthanasia.

The three following days were days of doubt and trepidation for the unfortunate Beatrice. At one moment she utterly discredited the pretensions of Mandragola; but then her imagination, that evil pilot for her, suggested, Yet, if it should be so! and then she would picture forth the scenes she desired, until she gasped with expectation. At last, she thought,—"There will be no harm in the experiment; if her promises are vain, no injury will result; — if true — To be sure I know they are not; but something will happen, and at least I will try.

"I know that Euthanasia, and more than she, Padre Lanfranco, would tell me, that, if true, this woman deals with the devil, and that I, who have lately saved my soul from his grasp, should beware of trusting myself within his reach. All this is well to children and old women; but I have already tempted the powers above me too far to flinch now. Am I not, was I not, a Paterin? Euthanasia, who has never wandered from the straight line of her duty, and Lanfranco, who has learned his morality in a cloister, cannot know what it most becomes an excommunicated wretch like me to do.

"Yet I am very ungrateful and wicked, when I say this; ungrateful to their prayers, wicked in transgressing the laws which God has promulgated.

"What does this woman say? that I shall see him, that he will obey my voice, and that, not by magic art, but by that innate power, which, by the order of the universe, one spirit possesses over another: — that I shall see him, as I have seen him! — Oh, saints of heaven, suffer me not to be tempted thus! But no, — the heavenly powers deign not to interfere; they know my weakness, my incapacity to resist, — but, like most careless guardians, they permit that to approach which must overcome me. I am resolved; she shall guide me; if nothing come (as most surely nothing will come), it imports not. And, if I am destined for one moment more in this most wretched life to taste of joy, others may (but I will not) dash the intoxicating draught away."

She thought thus, and spoke thus to her secret mind; but every hour her resolution fluctuated, and remorse, hope, and dread possessed her by turns. She feared to be alone; but the presence of an indifferent person made her nerves tremble with the restraint she was obliged to keep upon herself. There seemed some link of confidence between her and Bindo; and she called for him to dispel the appalling sensations with which solitude inspired her. He came; and his conversation only tended to increase her chaos of conflicting thoughts. He related the wonderful exploits of Mandragola; how he had seen her call lightning and cloud from the south, and how at her bidding the soft western wind would suddenly arise, and dispel the wondrous tempests she had brewed; how the planet of night obeyed her, and that, once during the full moon, this planet had suddenly deserted the sky, but that while the heavens were blank and rayless, its image continued to lie placidly in the stream near which they stood. He related the strange effects she had produced upon the minds of men, forcing them most unwillingly to do her pleasure; at other times depriving them of their senses, so that for many hours they wandered about like madmen, until at her command their faculties were restored to them.

Beatrice listened, half in disdain, half in fear; her conclusion still was, —"The experiment is worth trying; if her words be false, there is no harm done; if true" — and then her imagination pictured forth happiness that never should be hers.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ON the third night she returned to the witch. “You need not speak,” said Mandragola, “I know your thoughts; you hardly believe my words, yet you are determined to make the trial. It is well; I should be surer of success, if you had implicit faith in my powers and your own; but it is enough. What do you wish to effect?”

“First, mother, I must know what I can do.”

“Your power is almost illimitable; but that of which I spoke, and that power which you prize most, is the power which you possess over the prince of Lucca. Do you wish to see him? Do you wish in solitude, with none but me near, to see him come, to hear him renew his ancient vows?”

“He never made vows to me,” cried Beatrice angrily; “he was bound to me, I thought, by stronger ties than mortal oaths; that is past for ever; but, except the salvation of my soul, I would sacrifice every thing to see him once again, divested of the ceremonial of power, listening to what will never be told, consoling her who can never be consoled.”

“That is easy work,” said the witch, with alacrity, “but first swear, swear by all that you hold sacred in the world, by your life, by his, that you will never disclose this conversation, or what I shall now reveal to you, or hint in any manner the work we shall undertake.”

Beatrice shivered; she could no longer stand, she sunk to the ground: the witch went into the hut, and brought her a bowl of water; Beatrice put it to her lips; then suddenly withdrawing it, she cried,—”You have given me a poisonous drug, either to kill me, or undermine my understanding; — dare you thus trifle with me?”

The witch took the bowl from her hand, and drank the liquid it contained: “Take shame for your mistrust,” she said; “this was pure water from the spring; and, except that the charmed moon-beams sleep on it, even when you see not the moon in the sky, it does not differ from the waters of any other fountain. Now speak; do you swear secrecy?”

Again the prophetess paused. But curiosity and hope hurried her beyond discretion; and with folded hands placed between the dry and skinny palms of the witch, she pronounced the vow that was dictated.

Mandragola then said: “This satisfies me. The moon is now on the wane: when she fills again, I will send Bindo to inform you what is to be done. Fear not, but that all will be well.”

Beatrice returned to Lucca. Her glazed eyes and pale cheeks told that the spirit which animated her now found nor rest nor hope. She dreaded to look forward to the fearful trial she was about to make; and yet she could think of nothing else. Her rosary was thrown aside; her prayers were forgotten; and love again reassumed his throne in her heart. Her reason was disturbed by doubt and fear; and she often sat whole hours, her eye fixed upon the earth, her parted lips pale, her hands closed with convulsive strength, as she tried to reason herself into disbelief concerning the promises and assertions of Mandragola. It was too much for her weak frame; if the witch had been near her to mark the wasting of her faculties, she might have wound her plot so as to inspire her with some courage: but no one was near except Bindo; and he by his tales, and his own fears and belief, only increased the combat of feelings to which the prophetess was a prey.

Euthanasia returned from Florence. She was much disappointed, much grieved, to find her friend far worse both in body and mind, than when she left her. More than all wildness of words and manner, she feared her silence and reserve, so very unlike her latest disposition. If the convent, or her future plans were named, she listened calmly, but did not reply; no intreaties could persuade her to give words to that which preyed upon her mind. She would weep; and then, flying from the affectionate reproaches of her protectress, she would shut herself up to grieve alone, or far more dangerously to dream of the return of love and joy. Euthanasia reasoned, persuaded, intreated, but vainly: accustomed to the caprices of this unfortunate girl, she saw nothing in what now occurred, that appeared to arise from any external impulse; and she hoped that indulgence and kindness would in time restore her to her former calm. She reproached herself for having left her; and she resolved that, unless indeed Beatrice took the veil, which now seemed doubtful, she would never again separate herself from her. She loved her tenderly, and pitied her so truly, that she was willing to sacrifice all her own hopes of future peace to soothe and restore her to some degree of happiness.

Her endeavours were useless. The melancholy of poor Beatrice was undissipated by the slightest gleam of tranquillity: for five days she had not spoken, and had hardly touched any food. Euthanasia tried in vain to console her, and, hopeless of good, sought to excite any passion that might rouse her from her mute reveries; she spoke not, but wandered restlessly from room to room, or among the wild paths of the garden; and thence she would have escaped into the open country, but that her weak limbs sunk beneath her. One night Euthanasia slept, when Beatrice suddenly entered the room; and, twining herself round her neck, and wrapping the long and thick hair of her friend around her brows —

"Save me!" she cried, "save me from madness, which, as a fiend, pursues and haunts me. I endeavour to fly him; but still he hovers near: is there no escape? Oh! If God be good, surely he will redeem my soul from this curse. I would fain preserve my reason; my lips are bloodless, and my hair quite grey; I am a skeleton without flesh or form; I am to what lives, like the waning moon at noonday, which floats up as a vapour, and the blue air seems to penetrate its pale and sickly form. Happiness, beauty, love have passed away; but I would fain preserve that without which I am as a poor hunted beast, whose sole repose is on the spear of the huntsman. Breathe on me, Euthanasia, breathe on my hands, my eyes; perhaps some portion of calm may flow from your bosom to mine. I only wish not to be mad; yet, if what is said be true, these wonderful things may be, and I still sane. There, there, your hand is cool; press my head. I know you well; you are Euthanasia; I am Beatrice; I may still be preserved from madness."

Euthanasia wept; she folded Beatrice in her arms; she placed her cool hand on her brow, and her pale cheek close to the flushed one of the poor sick girl. Beatrice rested a few moments in silence; and then again she spoke. "It has been said, that I am a witch, one who has power over the elements, and still more over the mind of man. I do not believe this: once, I knew, a very long time ago, I fancied myself a prophetess; but I awoke from that dream many years since. Why then do they madden me with these insinuations? I will tell you, Euthanasia (sweet name, dear, much-loved friend), that sometimes I fancy this is true. — Oh! that I could tell the heavy secret that weighs upon my soul! I have sworn — they did not well, that made me swear: — yet there is some truth in what they say, doubtless there is some truth, and it shall be proved. Well, well; I have sworn, and I will not tell — Good night, dearest; I shall sleep now; so not a word more; I have reasoned with myself, and am content."

Beatrice crept back to her chamber; but Euthanasia could not again rest. She was amazed at her friend’s strange words, and tried to divine whether they proceeded from the heated imagination of the prophetess, or from some real event of which Euthanasia was ignorant; but she had no clue to guide her in her conjectures; and it appeared to her most probable, that Beatrice was moved by the suggestions of her own heart; she could not guess the dreadful and maniac thoughts that really disturbed her, or the frightful incitements that had been employed to deceive her.

A fortnight passed thus; when the Albinois brought a message from Mandragola, bidding Beatrice repair that same night at twelve, to a wood about four miles from Lucca. At this time Castruccio was employed in building the tower of Nozzano, on a small hill which was surrounded by the wood chosen by the witch. The weather (it was in the month of July) was exceedingly hot; the cattle panted beneath the sun; the earth was herbless; all life decayed: but delicious nights succeeded these oppressive days; and Castruccio was accustomed to repair, as early as two in the morning, to visit the fortress. Mandragola knew the spot near which he passed; and she so planned her scheme, that her incantation should be wound to the desired pitch, at the moment when he should ride through the wood: and thus, to the simple mind of the Albinois, and the exalted imagination of Beatrice, afford a proof of the extent of her power.

It is impossible to say what her object was in all this; she might be merely instigated by the desire to excite respect and terror, and have trusted that this apparent confirmation of her assertions would enable her to acquire unlimited power over the mind of her victims. She did not intend on this occasion that Beatrice should speak to the prince; — that she should call for him, and he appear, was sufficient mummery for one day: another time more might be done, and another step taken in the labyrinth of error and fraud.

That same night Bindo tapped at the door of Beatrice’s chamber. The prophetess opened it; — she looked aghast and wild, but spoke not.—”This is the hour,” said the Albinois.

“Wrap your cloak round you,” he continued, “that you may not be known.” Beatrice did as he desired, moving her arms like inanimate machines, and turning her eyes around, as if she saw nothing. Bindo led her down-stairs; they quitted the palace by a small back door; he made her mount a horse; and they rode out of the town. All passed in silence; Beatrice hardly appeared to know whither she was going, or why she went; the bridle fell from her hands, and hung loosely on the horse's neck; but the animal mechanically followed Bindo's horse, which led the way.

They arrived at the wood, and dismounted. Bindo tied the horses to a tree, and proceeded cautiously through the intricate paths of the forest. It was an ilex wood; and the dark foliage canopied them above, while the moonbeams penetrated through the interstices of the leaves, and made a chequered shadow upon the ground, which was despoiled of its grassy covering through long drouth. At length they came to a more trodden road; and this led to a kind of woody amphitheatre, an open space in the midst of the trees, one of the corners of which the path traversed, and all around the ilexes formed a circular boundary of ample circumference. At one of the extremities, farthest from the path, was a fountain, which kept a soft murmuring all the still night through. Near this fountain the witch sat: she was weaving two coronals of ivy, and muttering as she wove; Beatrice and the Albinois were before her, but she appeared not to notice them. Beatrice stood, her arms hanging down, her head fallen on her bosom in a mute lethargy, her cloak had dropped from her shoulders, and fallen to her feet; she was dressed, as the witch had commanded, in white: several years had passed since she had been thus habited, and her attire displayed the thinness of her form and the paleness of her wasted cheeks; her hands were skinny and yellow, her hair perfectly grey; a few weeks ago, although mingled with white, its ancient colour was preserved; but since then it had quite changed; her eyes were sunken, ringed with black, and rayless.

When the witch had finished her work, she rose; and, taking some of the water of the fountain in the hollow of her hand, she threw it over Beatrice, and then crowned her with one of the chaplets; she placed the other on her own head; and then she said to Bindo:—"I am about to sanctify this place; you must depart."

Bindo bowed assent, and disappeared. She took up a curiously fashioned ewer of brass; and, filling it at the fount, she walked round the amphitheatre of trees, sprinkling the ground as she went, and muttering her incantations, till she came round again to the spot, where Beatrice stood, white, motionless, and silent. "You appear faint, daughter," she said; "drink of this water." — She put it to the lips of her victim, who drank it eagerly; and immediately a change took place in her appearance; her eyes lighted up, her cheeks were flushed, the heavy chain of mortality seemed to fall from her, she became active and even gay; by degrees a kind of transport seized her, a drunkenness of spirit, which made her lose all constraint over her words and actions, although it did not blind her to what was passing around.

"Aye, mother," she said, "I know what I come for; now let us begin; I am an enchantress, you say; I can conjure him to appear, who before defied my powers? be it so; — let us begin."

"Listen," replied Mandragola, "no art requires so much patience as ours. We will make our incantations; and you will see him pass on horseback along that road: do not now seek to speak to him. Exercise your power moderately at first; and it will be greater afterwards: bind him now with a straw; in time he will be inextricably enthralled. To-night be it enough that you see him."

"Enough! oh! I would lay down my life for one, one moment's sight!"

The night was perfectly still; the air was sultry, and not a leaf moved: the trees, bathed as it were in the cold moonshine, slept; and the earth received their moveless shadows on her quiet bosom. The fountain murmured on; beside it stood the witch and Beatrice; — Beatrice, her eyes lifted to heaven, her arms crossed on her bosom, her hair clinging round her faded neck. Mandragola was full of business; she piled a small heap of wood, walking often around it, singing or chanting strange verses, and scattering water and oil about her; she drew, with a wand formed of a peeled chestnut-bough, a circle which surrounded the pile and the spot whereon Beatrice stood, and commanded her not to pass the line till she should give permission; since that circle would preserve her from the spirits that their terrible incantations had called around them. She then turned to the pile again, and placed on it incense and odoriferous gums, and plants, and strange devices, cut in wood, or moulded in wax, which no one might understand: then to crown the work she cut off a lock of Beatrice's hair, and threw it on the heap.

She had just accomplished this work, when a slight sound struck her ear; "Now is the time!" she exclaimed; and she set up a wild song to drown the trampling of the approaching horses; she lighted a torch, and cried—"This is your work, mistress of the powers of air; light the pyre, and call thrice on the name of the prince of Lucca!"

Beatrice started forward with frantic haste; she seized the torch, thrust it into the pile, which caught the flame, and blazed up as she cried aloud, “Castruccio! Castruccio! Castruccio!”

And then, unable to restrain her impatience, she ran towards the path in which Mandragola had said he would appear. The witch called on her to stay; but she was too decrepit to follow swiftly to stop her: the sound of coming horsemen was now distinctly heard; Beatrice threw herself on her knees, in the midst of the path by which they must pass; with flashing eyes and outstretched arms, she gazed eagerly forwards: the dark wood covered her; the moon beams fell on her; and there she, once the loveliest, now the most lost, the most utterly undone of women, kneeled in frantic expectation. The horsemen approached; a turn in the path concealed them, until they were full upon her; and then she saw Castruccio and Tripalda advance. Her brain, already on fire with impatience, and her spirits exalted by the drug administered to her, could no longer sustain the sensations that overpowered her. The presence of Tripalda was to her the sign of diabolical interference; she believed him dead; that it was his spirit which then appeared; and, if so, it was also an unreal form, the resemblance of Castruccio alone, that she beheld. — She sunk in convulsions on the road.

Castruccio, surprised at what he saw, leaped from his horse; and his example was followed by his attendants. The witch, who had hitherto hobbled towards Beatrice, seeing them dismount, endeavoured to escape; but Tripalda, who, judging of others by himself, was ever ready to suspect knavery, cut off her retreat, and ordered two of the servants to hold her. She submitted quietly, but remained invincibly silent to all the questions that were put to her. Beatrice was carried to the fountain; and they endeavoured, by chafing her temples, and rubbing her hands, to bring her to life: the prince himself supported her head; but he did not recognize her; so utterly was she changed from what the prophetess of Ferrara had been. Once she opened her eyes; she saw the face of Castruccio leaning over her, and she smiled. Castruccio thought that he knew that smile; but Tripalda, leaving the witch, pressed in among those who were about her. — No one who had seen him could ever forget him; she saw what she believed to be the evil genius of her life; and she again sunk into insensibility.

In the mean time the Albinois, who had been lurking near the spot, hearing the trampling of horses, and the sound of men’s voices, ventured forward. Mandragola saw him first, as he came into the moonshine from under the dark covert of trees. She darted forward, and cried aloud—”Fly! fly!” Her words and gesture attracted the notice of her guards, as Bindo turned about to obey her orders. They pursued him, and easily took him prisoner.

He was brought to Castruccio, who instantly recognized him. “What do you here?” he demanded. “Are you not the servant of the countess of ?”

“I am.”

“Who then is this lady? and how came you here?”

“That is Beatrice of Ferrara. I can tell you no more until she” (pointing to the witch) “gives me leave.”

The name of Beatrice was sufficient to transfix the prince with pity and remorse. “Beatrice!” he cried, and throwing himself on the earth beside her, he kissed her hand passionately. Her faintness began now to dissipate; but her reason did not return. The first words she uttered were those of madness; she raved of that which ever haunted her thoughts in delirium, her prison in Romagna. Tripalda heard the words, and started, as if he had trodden on a viper; his sallow complexion became paler, — but Castruccio did not attend to this, or make out her speech. He perceived her frenzy; and, unable any longer to endure his remorse, or the sight of his hapless victim, he gave hasty orders that she should be conveyed slowly and carefully to the palace of the countess of , and her companions be detained as prisoners; and then he rode off. He rode towards Lucca; and, reflecting on the fright that Euthanasia might sustain if she saw her unhappy friend brought home in so miserable a state, he resolved to go first to her palace, and inform her of what had passed.

“And are you come to this, lovely Beatrice?” he thought. “And is this the same creature, who, radiant with beauty and joy, formerly gave me her benediction at the palace of the good old Marsilio? I remember that day, as if it were yesterday; and now I find her with grey hairs and a wasted form, a young fruit utterly blighted, and, worse than all, her reason fallen the victim of her misery. Am I the cause of this?”

He rode on swiftly, and soon arrived at the palace. He did not reflect that he was going to behold Euthanasia, the beautiful and beloved; and thinking of nothing but Beatrice, and finding the gates open, he entered. It was about three in the morning. During the night Euthanasia had thought that she heard a groan come from the chamber of Beatrice; and she hastened thither, to discover if any new sorrow disturbed her unfortunate guest. The chamber was empty; the bed unslept upon; she sought her in the adjoining rooms; and, not finding her, she became terrified, and, rousing the house, had the palace searched, but in vain; no trace of her was left. She sent several messengers to different gates of the town to learn whether she had been seen, and waited with inexpressible anxiety for their return.

The prince found men consulting together in the great hall; and the first words he heard was the name of “Madonna Beatrice.”

“Do not be alarmed,” he said, coming forward. “I know where she is, and she will soon be here; some of you see that her couch be prepared, and seek a physician, for she is very ill. Where is the countess?”

Appearing thus unexpectedly and alone, the men did not recognize the prince; but the quick ear of Euthanasia caught the sound of his voice; and, coming out of an adjoining room, she cried, “Do you then know where my friend is, Castruccio?”

“I do indeed,” he replied: “and it is fortunate; since I may have saved her from evil hands. But I am perfectly ignorant how and why she came to a spot so far from the town.”

He related in a few words where and in what manner he had found her, and concluded by saying, “I leave her to your care; I know how kind and generous you are. If she recover, I intreat you to inform me without delay of so favourable a change.”

As he said this, the trampling of horsemen was heard in the streets; — he cried, “I dare not see her again; farewell, Euthanasia; pity her and me!”

He hastened from the palace, and in a few minutes after Beatrice was brought in; her countenance was deadly pale, and her arms hung lifelessly over the shoulder of one of the men who supported her; her hair was dank, and her garments wetted with the dew of morning; her eyes were open, and glared meaninglessly around. They laid her on a bed; and Euthanasia, approaching, took her hand; Beatrice did not notice her; she seemed to have lost all sensation, and the rolling of her eyes, and the convulsive gaspings of her breath, were all the signs of life that she gave.

Why should I describe the scenes that ensued during the following days? Descriptions of unmixed horror cannot be pleasing; and what other feelings could mingle to soften that sensation, on beholding the declining state of poor Beatrice? She never again had any return of reason, nor did she ever sleep; generally she lay, as I have described, pale and motionless; if ever she woke to sensation, it was to rave and scream, so that the hardest heart might have been penetrated with excess of pity. Some have seen, most have read the descriptions of, madness. She called upon Euthanasia, upon Castruccio; but, more than all, she fancied that she was chained to her dungeon-floor in her tremendous prison, mocked and laughed at by her keepers; and sometimes she imagined that these beloved friends were chained beside her, suffering those torments which she had herself endured. She never in her wildest sallies uttered a reproachful word against Castruccio, although it appeared that she sometimes thought that he accused himself; and then with the tenderest accents, and most winning sweetness, she bade him not grieve, and assured him that he had committed no fault.

These intervals of raving were short and rare; and, as she became weaker, she still seldomer emerged from her state of insensibility. She was evidently dying; the physicians gave no hopes of her life; and the priests crowded about her. Padre Lanfranco was among them; and he bitterly reproached himself for having left her, and endeavoured to compensate for his neglect, by watching day and night for some return of reason, when he might ask whether she died in the faith of the church. This never arrived: but the priests were lenient; they placed the crucifix on her breast, and she seemed to press it; once, when the name of her Redeemer was mentioned, her eyes lighted up, and a smile seemed to play upon her lips. She was so perfectly senseless, that this could have had no connection with the words that had been used; but the charitable priests chose to construe it into an eternal assurance of the salvation of her soul; and they administered the sacraments. She never spoke afterwards; but day by day she grew weaker; Castruccio sent continually to inquire of her state; but he dared not come. Euthanasia hardly ever left her bed side; and she became as pale, and almost as weak, as the dying Beatrice.

Such had been the effect of the witch's incantations. Beatrice had needed the tenderest nursing; and she had received instead, a shock which saner nerves than hers could hardly have sustained. Yet her death was smoothed to her by the affectionate ministry of her friend; and she at last lost all sense even of pain. She died, peacefully, and calmly as a child; and her many sorrows and wrongs no longer filled her with anguish and despair. She died:

Euthanasia was beside her when she heard a gentle sigh, followed by a fixedness of feature and rigidity of limb, which shewed that the mighty change had taken place in her frame.

Tears and lamentation succeeded to her death. Euthanasia wished that her funeral should be private and unnoticed; but Castruccio insisted that it should be attended with every circumstance of pomp used in those days. The room was hung with black cloth, and made as dark as night, to give brightness to the many torches by which it was illuminated. Beatrice was laid on a bier, arrayed in costly apparel, and canopied with a pall of black velvet embroidered with gold: flowers, whose beauty and freshness mocked the livid hues of the corpse, were strewn over her, and scattered about the room; and two boys walked about, swinging censers of incense. The chamber was filled with mourning women; one, the chief, dressed in black, with dishevelled hair, knelt near the head of the bier, and began the funeral song; she sang a strain in monotonous, but not unmelodious voice: the verses were extempore, and described the virtues and fortunes of the deceased; they ended with the words:

Oime! ora giace morta sulla bara!

And the other women, taking up the burthen, cried in shrill tones:

Oime! ora giace morta sulla bara!

Again they were silent: and the Cantatrice, renewing her song, repeated another verse in praise of poor Beatrice. Castruccio had told her in part what ought to be the subject of her song. The first verse described her as beautiful, beloved and prosperous, among her friends and fellow citizens: “Then,” cried the singer, “the spoiler came; she lost all that was dear to her; and she wandered forth a wretch upon the earth. Who can tell what she suffered? Evil persons were abroad; they seized on her; and she became the victim of unspoken crimes: worse ills followed, madness and heresy, which threatened to destroy her soul.”

The woman wept, wept unfeigned tears as she sang; and the hired mourners sympathized in her grief; each verse ended with the words.

Oime! ora giace morta sulla bara! which were echoed by them all, and accompanied by cries and tears.

She ended; and, night being come, the hour for internment arrived. The censers were replenished with incense; and the priests sprinkled holy water about the room. Four lay-brothers raised the bier, and followed a troop of priests and monks, who went first with the crucifix, chaunting a De profundis. The streets through which they passed, were rendered as light as day by the glare of torches; after the priests, came the bier on which the body lay exposed, covered with flowers; many of the young girls and women of the city followed, each carrying a wax taper; a troop of horse closed the procession. It was midnight when they entered the church; the moon threw the shadow of the high window on the pavement; but all shadows were effaced by the torches which filled the church. Beatrice was laid in her peaceful grave; and, mass being said for the repose of her soul, the ceremony closed.

Euthanasia had not been present: and, although she longed for solitude to weep in peace over the fate of her hapless friend, she was obliged to receive the visits of the Lucchese ladies, who came to condole with her on this occasion, and perhaps to satisfy their curiosity concerning its object. The funeral feast was sumptuous and well attended, though few knew in whose honour it was given. Euthanasia shrunk from their questions, and was angry with Castruccio, that he should have placed her in so disagreeable a situation. It seemed to her better to befit the hapless fate of Beatrice, that she should have been permitted to depart unmarked, wept only by those, who knew her worth, and who lamented her unequalled misfortunes. It was the false pride of Castruccio, that made him think differently; and such were the prejudices of the times, that his contemporaries would have agreed with him, that he had in some degree compensated for the injuries that Beatrice had received from him, by the magnificence of her funeral.

After the ceremony was ended, Castruccio first thought of the two individuals whom he had found in the forest with their victim. Mandragola had preserved an uniform silence; and no threats, nor torture itself, could induce her to speak. Bindo was formed of frailer clay; she had charged him not to reveal what had passed, and had imprecated the most terrible curses on his head, if he disobeyed. He trembled; but the sight of the instruments of torture overcame him, and he confessed all. Mandragola was condemned by the laws which then existed in every country against the dealers in the black art, and suffered death as a witch. Euthanasia endeavoured to procure the freedom of the Albinois; but in vain. He was confined in the dungeons of the Dominican convent; he pined for liberty; and in a few months he died.

The tie which bound Euthanasia to Lucca, was now broken. For many days she sorrowed, forgetful of herself, over the fate of her friend. By degrees however the feelings of actual life returned to her; and she longed to quit a town, which had been for her the theatre of tremendous misfortune. Two months after the death of Beatrice she returned to Florence; where she found, in the society of her friends, and in the cultivation of her mind, some alleviation for her sorrow, and some compensation for the many evils she had endured.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CASTRUCCIO had now been lord of Lucca for six years, and had attained his thirty-third year; his character was formed; and his physiognomy, changed from its youthful expression, had become impressed by his habitual feelings. Constant exposure to the sun and weather had tinged his cheek with brown; which, but for that, had been deadly pale; for care, and the strong emotions to which he was subject, had left their mark on his countenance; his eye had grown hollow, and the smooth lustre of his brow was diminished by lines, which indeed looked gracefully at his years, since they marked the progress of thought; but some, more straggling and undefined, shewed that those passions whose outward signs he suppressed, yet preyed upon the vital principle; his eyes had not lost their fire, but their softness was gone.

He was kind and even grateful to his friends, so long as he considered them as such; but he was quick to distrust; and cold looks and averted favour followed suspicion: if these were answered by aught but patience and submission, hatred quickly came, and that never failed to destroy its object. If he only suspected, that was sufficient cause, that he who had become thus obnoxious to his prince should be told that it was his will that he should instantly depart from Lucca; and the confiscation filled the public coffers. If he thought that he had reason to fear, the doom of that man whom he feared was sealed: he was cruel and unrelenting; and the death of his victim did not satisfy him; several were starved to death by his command, and worse tortures were inflicted upon others: — something of this was to be attributed to the usage of the times; but cruelty had become an elemental feature of Castruccio’s character.

If he were feared by his enemies in open war, his secret policy was still more dreaded. He had not forgotten the lessons of Alberto Scoto; and, as his attempt on the life of the king of Naples might prove, his measures had perhaps been influenced by the counsels of Benedetto Pepi. He had many spies in each town, and collected intelligence from every court of Lombardy. Women and priests were his frequent instruments; and even the more distinguished among the citizens were induced through his largesses to betray the counsels of their country.

Such was Antelminelli, the some time lover of Euthanasia; daring, artful, bounteous and cruel; evil predominated in his character; and, if he were loved by a few, he was hated by most, and feared by all. His perpetual wars, which impoverished the neighbouring states, did not enrich his own; his artful policy sowed distrust among dear friends, and spies and traitors abounded during his reign. In Lucca he was as an eagle in a cage; he had a craving that seemed to demand the empire of the world; and, weak as he was in means and hopes, he made the nations tremble.

The object of Castruccio's present policy was Florence. He proceeded by measured steps; but he was perpetually gaining some advantage against the rival state, improving his military discipline, and preparing for the last assault. His first attempt was upon Pistoia, and he carried this place by a double treachery. The Florentines took the alarm upon so disastrous an event; and the pope sent to them Raymond de Cardona, one of the most eminent generals of the times, whom they immediately placed at the head of their armies. Cardona crossed the Guisciana, and ravaged the plain of Lucca, which had for many years been unspoiled by the hostile sword; but, when it became necessary for him to retreat, Castruccio by masterly movements intercepted his march, obtained a complete victory, and, after a short, but severe contest, took Cardona and all his army prisoners.

The battle of this day was called the field of Altopascio. Arrigo Guinigi was among the slain; and his loss was grievously felt by Castruccio. The prince of Lucca had ever looked on him as a treasure consigned to him by his late father; and, amidst all his faults, Castruccio preserved his gratitude for the lessons of that admirable man, and a sweet remembrance of the days of peace he had passed with him among the Euganean hills. He had loved Arrigo, as a dear brother, or a son; childless himself, he sometimes thought, that, although there was small difference between their ages, Arrigo would succeed him, that his children would be his heirs, and that, if not bound to him by the ties of blood, yet they would look back to him with the same gratitude and respect, that an honoured posterity regard the founder of their house. Ambition hardens the heart; but such is the texture of the mind of man, that he is constantly urged to contemplate those days, when his once over-awing sceptre shall have fallen from his nerveless grasp; the worst usurper, as he advances in years, looks with tenderness on his children, who, in the peaceful exercise of power, are to efface the memory of the lawless deeds by which he had acquired it. Castruccio saw the son of Guinigi in this light, and he felt a pang of sincere and deep grief, when it became his turn to heap his grassy tomb, amidst the many others with which the plain around Altopascio was crowded, and to order the place where the remains of Arrigo reposed, to be marked with a sepulchral pillar.

From Altopascio, Castruccio advanced with his army to the very gates of Florence. The peasants fled before him, and took refuge, with what property they could save, in the city; the rest became the prey of the Lucchese army, who marked their progress by fire and devastation. All the harvests had been brought in; but Castruccio's soldiers wreaked their vengeance upon the fields, tearing up and burning the vines, cutting down the olive woods, seizing or burning the winter-stock, and reducing the cottages of the poor to a heap of formless ruins. The country about Florence was adorned by numerous villas, the summer abodes of the rich citizens, ornamented with all the luxury of the times, the grounds laid out in the most delicious gardens, where beautiful trees and flowers adorned the landscape, and natural and artificial rills and waterfalls diffused coolness in the midst of summer. These became the prey of the soldier; the palaces were ransacked, and afterwards burned, the cultivated grounds covered with ruins, the rivulets choked up, and all that, a few days before, had presented the shew of a terrestrial paradise, now appeared as if an earthquake, mocking the best cares of man, had laid it in ruin.

The army encamped before the gates of Florence. The remnant of the troops of Cardona and the remainder of the citizens capable of bearing arms, would have formed a force sufficient to cope with the army of Antelminelli. But more than their declared enemies, the Florentines feared domestic traitors; so many of their first citizens were prisoners to the prince of Lucca, that they dreaded lest their relations might endeavour to secure for them their freedom even by the betraying of their native city. Day and night they guarded the walls and gates, and patrolled the streets, each regarding the other with suspicious eyes, and listening with fear and horror to the sounds of rejoicing and riot that issued from the camp of Castruccio.

The prince, in contempt and derision of the besieged, encouraged every kind of pastime and insulting mockery, that might sting his proud, though humbled enemies: he instituted games and races, coined money, and sent continual defiances to the citizens to issue from their walls and encounter him in battle. The men, too ready to seize the spirit of hatred and ridicule, amused themselves with casting by means of their balestri, the carcases of dead asses and dogs into the town. Woe to the Florentine who fell into their hands; if a female, no innocence nor tears could save her from their brutality, and, if a man, if their insults were less cruel, they were hardly less cutting and humiliating; to lead a prisoner naked through the camp, seated on an ass, with his face turned towards the tail, was a common mockery. Castruccio perhaps did not perceive the full extent to which the brutal ferocity of his soldiers, made drunk by victory, carried them; if he did, he winked at it; for he had not that magnanimity which should lead him to treat with respect and kindness a fallen enemy.

While the Lucchese soldiers rioted in plenty, filling themselves even to satiety with the delicate wines and food of the Florentine nobles, and consuming in a few weeks the provision of years, the inhabitants of the besieged city presented a far different spectacle. The villagers, driven from their cottages, had taken refuge in Florence, whose gates jealously closed, permitted not the means of subsistence to be increased. In consequence of this, of the supernumerary population of the town, and of the unwholesome food on which the poorer classes were forced to subsist, pestilence and other contagious fevers declared themselves: the streets were filled with mournful processions, the bells tolled a perpetual knell of death; the citizens invited their friends to the funeral feasts, but the seats of many of the guests were vacated by death, and the hosts who celebrated them had been invited to several similar commemorations. Every face looked blank and fearful. The magistrates were obliged to interfere; they issued an order that the relations of the dead were no longer to celebrate their funerals by assemblies of their friends, or to toll the bell during the ceremony, so that the numerous dead might go to their long homes without terrifying the survivors by their numbers. Yet this law could not hide the works of death that were so frequent in the town; the streets were almost deserted, except by the monks, who hurried from house to house carrying the cross and sacrament to the dying; while the poor, almost starving, and often houseless, fell in the streets, or were carried in terrifying troops to the hospitals and convents of charity. And this was the work of Castruccio.

Euthanasia saw and felt this; and she felt as if, bound to him by an indissoluble chain, it was her business to follow, like an angel, in his track, to heal the wounds that he inflicted. Dressed in a coarse garb, and endeavouring to throw aside those feelings of delicacy which were as a part of her, she visited the houses of the poor, aided the sick, fed the hungry, and would perform offices that even wives and mothers shrunk from with disgust and fear. An heroic sentiment possessed her mind, and lifted her above humanity; she must atone for the crimes of him she had loved.

Bondelmonti one day visited her; she had just returned from closing the eyes of an unhappy woman, whose husband and children had fled from their mother and wife, in the fear of infection; she had changed her garments on entering the palace, and lay on a couch, exhausted; for she had not slept for the two previous nights. Bondelmonti approached her unperceived, and kissed her hand; — she drew it away: “Beware!” she said. “If you knew from whence I came, you would not touch a hand that may carry infection with it.”

Bondelmonti reproached her for the carelessness with which she exposed her health and her life: but Euthanasia interrupted him: “I thank you, dear cousin, for your anxiety; but you know me of old, and will not attempt to deter me from doing that which I regard as my duty. — But what would you now say to me; for I perceive weighty thought in your overhanging brow?”

“Am I not like the rest of our townsmen in that? You see, Madonna, perhaps better than any of us, to what straits our city is reduced, while this Lucchese tyrant triumphs; you perceive our miseries too well not to pity them; and I trust that you are too good a patriot not to desire most earnestly to put an end to them.”

“My dear friend, what do you say? I would sacrifice my life, and more than life, to be of use to my fellow citizens. God knows how deeply I lament their defeats and their unhappiness. But what can be done? An angel alone could inspire our troops with that spirit and courage, which would fit them to cope with the forces of the prince.”

“You say true; but there are other means for overthrowing him. Consider, Euthanasia, that not only he conquers and despoils us, but that he is a cruel and bloody tyrant, execrated by the chiefs of our religion, feared and hated by all who approach him, one whose death would spread joy and exultation over all Italy.”

"His death!" Euthanasia's pale cheek became still paler.

"Nay, you are a woman; and, in spite of your superior strength of mind, I see that you are still to be frightened by words. Do not let us therefore talk of his death, but only of his overthrow; we must contrive that."

Euthanasia remained silent. Bondelmonti continued:

"Call to mind, Madonna, the many excellent and virtuous persons whom he has murdered. I need not mention your friend Leodino, or any other individual; his enemies have fallen beneath his axe like trees in a forest; and he feels as little remorse as the woodman who fells them. Torture, confiscation, treachery and ingratitude have gone hand in hand with murder. Before he came, Lucca belonged to the Guelphs, and peace hovered over Tuscany. Now the first nobles of the land have either fallen victims to his jealousy, or wander as beggars in Italy. All that is virtuous and worthy under his dominion send up daily prayers for his downfall; and that is now near at hand; the means are ready, the instruments are preparing—"

"For his death?" cried Euthanasia.

"Nay, if you intercede for him, he may be saved: but it must be upon one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you join our conspiracy, and aid its accomplishment; thus Antelminelli may be saved, otherwise his fate is sealed. Consider this alternative; you may take a week for reflection on what I have said."

Bondelmonti left her. The sleep that had been about to visit her wearied senses, fled far away, — scared by the doubts and anguish that possessed her heart.

She felt with double severity this change from the calm that she had enjoyed for the three preceding years, into the fears and miseries of a struggle to which she saw no end. The tyranny and warlike propensities of Castruccio were so entirely in opposition to every feeling of her heart, that she would not have lamented his fall; especially as then perhaps she would have conceived it her duty to stand near him in misfortune, to console his disappointed hopes, and to teach him the lesson of content in obscurity. But to join the conspiracy, to become one of those who plotted against him, to assist in directing the blow which should annihilate, if not his life, at least all that he regarded as necessary to his happiness, was a task she shuddered at being called upon to fulfil.

No one can act conscientiously up to his sense of duty, or perhaps go even beyond that sense, in the exercise of benevolence and self-sacrifice, without being repaid by the sweetest and most secure happiness that man can enjoy, self — approbation. Euthanasia had devoted herself for some weeks to the nursing the sick, and the feeding of the hungry; and her benevolence was repaid by a return of healthful spirits and peace of mind, which it seemed that no passing circumstance of life could disturb. It was in vain that she witnessed scenes of pain and wretchedness; she felt that pity which angels are said to feel; but so strange is the nature of the human mind, that the most unblemished serenity reigned in her soul. Her sleep, when she found time to sleep, was deep and refreshing; as she moved, she felt as if she were air, there was so much elasticity and lightness of spirit in her motions and her thoughts. She shed tears, as she heard the groans and complaints of the sufferers; but she felt as if she were lifted beyond their sphere, and that her soul, clothed in garments of heavenly texture, could not be tarnished with earthly dross. All this was now changed. She fell again into weak humanity, doubting, fearing, hoping.

When Castruccio's army removed from before the walls of Florence, the gates were thrown open, and its inhabitants were relieved from the pressure and burthen of supernumerary inhabitants. But where did the peasant go? he found his cottage burnt, his vines, his next year's hope, destroyed, ghastly ruin stared him in the face, and his countenance reflected back the horrors of a long train of misery that he saw was preparing for him. Euthanasia could do little good amidst the universal devastation; what she could do, she did. She restricted her own expenditure, and all the money she could collect, was expended on the relief of these poor people; but this was a small pittance, a drop of water in the ocean of their calamities.

She was returning from one of these visits to the country, where she had been struck with horror to perceive the inadequacy of her aid to the miseries around her. A whole village had been laid waste, the implements of husbandry destroyed, the cattle carried off, and there was neither food for the starving inhabitants, nor hope of an harvest for the ensuing year. She had heard the name of Antelminelli loaded with such imprecations as a father's mind suggested, when his children called on him vainly for food, and Castruccio the cause of this misery. "If God fulfils," she thought, "as they say he does, the curses of the injured, how will his soul escape, weighed down by the imprecations of thousands? Yet I will not consent to the hopes of his enemies, nor be instrumental in dragging him from his seat of power. I have loved him; and what would be just vengeance in another, would be treachery and black ingratitude in me. Ingratitude! And yet for what? For lost hopes, content destroyed, and confidence in virtue shaken. These are the benefits I have received from him; yet I will not join his enemies."

On her return to her palace, she found Bondelmonti waiting for her. "Have you decided?" he asked.

"I have. I cannot enter into your conspiracy."

"Do you know, Madonna, that in deciding thus you sign his death-warrant?"

"Nay, cousin, it is ungenerous and unmanly to use such a menace with me. If he be doomed to death, which indeed cannot, must not be, — how can I save him? how can I, a woman, turn aside the daggers of the conspirators? if it be not indeed by betraying your plot to him, a deed you may perhaps force me to at last."

"I hope not, Euthanasia. For your own sake — for the sake of all the virtue that ever dwelt beneath the female form, I hope that you will not be led to commit so base an action. You cannot harm us. If you inform Antelminelli that there is a conspiracy formed against him, and that I am at the head of it, you tell him no more than he already knows. He does not need the lessons of history; his own experience teaches him sufficiently, that the sword is suspended over the tyrant's head by a single hair. He knows that he has enemies; but he has too many to arrest them all: he knows that his friends are treacherous; but he will never guess who on the present occasion will turn traitor. He cannot be surprised, nor can it do him any good to know, that I am the chief conspirator; I have ever been his open and determined foe; and this is not my first attempt to accomplish his downfall.

"As to what you say concerning my childish menace, you much misunderstand me when you call it a threat. The persons who must act in this business are Lucchese; I may direct their exertions; but they are the actors. And, if you heard the appalling curses that they heap upon Castruccio's name, if you beheld the deep hate their eyes express when he is mentioned, their savage joy when they dream that one day they may wreak their vengeance upon him, you would feel that his life is indeed at stake. I do not wish him to die. Perhaps I am wrong in this; if his life be preserved, it is probable that no good will arise from his downfall, and that no blood will in reality be spared. But I have eaten at his board, and he has been my guest within these walls, so that I would preserve his life; and I have pitched upon you as the person who can best assist me in this. What else can I do? I cannot go to Lucca to watch over and restrain the fury of his enemies; nor can I find one Lucchese to whom I dare disclose the secret of the conspiracy, and whom I may trust with the protection of his person. Indeed this task seems naturally to devolve to you. You hate tyranny and war; you are a Guelph, and would fain see the enemy of your country, the author of the innumerable evils under which we groan, removed from his government: but ancient friendship, the reciprocal interchange of hospitality render his person dear to you, and your female softness, and perhaps weakness, would come in aid of these feelings. You are free to go to Lucca; you may mix the voice of humanity with the bloody machinations of these men; you may save him, and you alone."

Euthanasia was deeply moved by the presentations of Bondelmonti. But her thoughts were still confused; she saw no steady principle, on which to seize, and make it her guide from out the labyrinth. She paused, hesitated, and asked again for a few days for consideration. And this Bondelmonti reluctantly granted.

In the mean time Castruccio was engaged in exhibiting the pomp of a triumph, which was conducted with unparalleled splendour; and in which, like a merciless barbarian, the prince of Lucca, led along Cardona and all the most eminent of his prisoners as the attendants of his chariot.

CHAPTER XXXV

DURING this festivity at Lucca, every thing wore the face of sorrow and depression at Florence. The only circumstance that raised them from their ruin, was the commerce of the city; for, by means of the merchants, corn was brought from the neighbouring states, and the magistrates distributed it among the poorer peasantry.

Euthanasia had listened to the intelligence of Castruccio's triumph with unwilling ears. It seemed to her like the pomp of his funeral; and she dreaded lest his person, exposed during the ceremonial, should be attempted by some of his bolder enemies. But they worked with a closer design.

The tide of her sensations turned, when the conclusion of that day's pomp brought nothing with it, but the account of its splendour and success; and, when she heard that the prince was personally safe, she found fresh reason for regret, in the want of that delicate and honourable feeling on his part, which above all her other virtues characterised her own mind.

But, if she were disgusted by the low pride that Castruccio manifested in his treatment of Cardona, her feelings of horror and of hatred were called forth by the occurrences that followed. Four days after this scene Bondelmonti entered her apartment: his manner was abrupt; his face pale; he could not speak. — When he had somewhat recovered, his first words were a torrent of execrations against Antelminelli.

"Oh, cease!" cried Euthanasia, "you hate, and would destroy, but do not curse him!"

"Bid me rather add tenfold bitterness to my weak execrations; but all words man can pronounce are poor. He has done that which, if he had before been an angel, would blot and disfigure him for ever. He is the worst of tyrants, the most cruel and atrocious wretch that breathes! But earth shall soon be rid of the monster. Read that writing!"

He put into her hand a dirty scrap of paper, on which she deciphered these words:

"For holy Jesu's sake, save me! My mother does not send my ransom. I was put to the torture this morning. I suffer it again on Thursday, if you do not send six hundred golden florins.

"Pity your Francesco Bondelmonti."

The paper dropped from her hands. "This comes from my cousin Francesco," said Bondelmonti; "others are in the same situation. Those who have not been ransomed, he has thrown into the most loathsome dungeons, and starves and tortures them to quicken their appetite for freedom. Shall such a one reign?"

"No," cried Euthanasia, her cheek burning with indignation, and her lips quivering with excessive pity; "No, he shall not reign; he were unworthy to live, if it be not to repent. Bondelmonti, here is my hand; do with me what you please; let his life be saved; but let him be torn from the power which he uses more like a fiend than a human creature."

"Thank you, dear cousin, for this generous feeling: now I know you again. I know my Euthanasia, who had forgotten herself awhile, only to awake again with new vigour. Call up all your spirits, Madonna; recollect all of noble, and wise, and courageous, that your excellent father taught you. This is no mayday trick, or the resolution of momentary indignation; it is the firm purpose of those, who see an evil beyond imagination pregnant with destruction and horror. Your quick concession merits my utmost confidence; and you shall have it. To-night I will see you again. Now I must endeavour to borrow money to liberate Francesco. My purse has been emptied by the ransom of my three brothers, and his mother has three hundred florins only."

"I can supply the rest," said Euthanasia. "Poor fellow, send them immediately, that with the shortest delay he may be rescued from the power of one more remorseless than the rack on which he suffers. To-night I see you again."

Euthanasia spent the intervening hours in great agitation. She did not shrink from her purpose; she had given her word, and she did not dream of recalling it. But all was turmoil and confusion in her mind. She figured to herself the scenes that would ensue; she imagined the downfall of him she had loved, his life saved only through her intervention, — and he perhaps, knowing that she also had joined the conspiracy to despoil him of the power he had laboured to attain, would turn from her in abhorrence.

As she thought of this, a few natural tears fell; she cast her deep blue eyes up to heaven; and tried to collect all her fortitude. Night came, and with it the hour when she expected Bondelmonti; but all was tumult and uneasiness in her heart: and to all other regrets she added the startling doubt whether she were not on the present occasion quitting the path of innocence, for the intricate and painful one of error. Then she knelt down, and prayed fervently for a wisdom and judgement that might guide her aright.

Euthanasia was now advanced to the very prime of life. Ten years had elapsed since she had first interchanged vows with Antelminelli in her castle of ; but her mind was of that youthful kind, that, ever, as it were, renewing itself from her own exhaustless treasure of wisdom and sentiment, never slept upon the past, forgetful of the changes that took place around her. Her character was always improving, always adding some new acquirements, or strengthening those which she possessed before; and thus for ever enlarging her sphere of knowledge and feeling. She often felt as if she were not the same being that she had been a few years before; she often figured to herself, that it was only from such or such a period that she obtained a true insight into the affairs of life, and became initiated in real wisdom; but these epochs were continually changing, for day by day she experienced the acquisition of some new power, the discovery of some new light which guided her through the labyrinth, while another of the thousand-folded veils which hide the sun of reality from the ardent spirit of youth, fell before her piercing gaze. Yet the change that she felt in her faculties was greater than that which had really taken place; it was only the disclosure of another petal of the blowing rose, but the bud had contained the germ of all that appeared as if new-created.

With this matured judgement and depth of feeling, she was called upon to take an arduous part in a most doubtful and perilous undertaking. The enthusiasm that distinguished her, had ever induced her to place a great confidence in her own sentiments, and the instantaneous decision of any doubtful point; and now she did not hesitate in resolving to become one in the conspiracy: her refusal would not stop its progress; her consent would enable her to judge of, and regulate its measures. She no longer loved the prince; his cruelty had degraded him even from the small place that he had still kept in her heart. But such was the force of early feeling, that she desired to restore her affections to him, when he should again become gentle and humane, as he appeared when she first knew him. Adversity might bring about this change.

Bondelmonti appeared. He appeared with a face of satisfaction and even of joy, as he claimed her promise of the morning. She renewed it solemnly, while her serious countenance, and the touching modulation of her voice, told how from the depth of her heart she felt the extent and force of the engagement into which she entered. Bondelmonti then detailed to her the circumstances of the conspiracy.

The family of the Quartezzani had been that which had most assisted Castruccio in his rise to power, and had stood by him long with fidelity. But, as his tyranny became more secure, he feared their power, more than he was pleased by their support, and suspected that they only looked upon him as an instrument to fight their battles awhile, and then to be put aside at the first opportunity. He changed his demeanour towards them, from that of friendliness, to the coldest distrust, and took the earliest opportunity to banish the chief among them from Lucca. Disgusted by this ingratitude, they withdrew from court, and tempted by the emissaries of Bondelmonti, now entered into a conspiracy against him, joining with the Avogadii, his professed enemies, to despoil him of power, perhaps of life.

Bondelmonti explained to Euthanasia all the circumstances of the plan they had concerted to get the city into their hands. The present governor of Pisa, who remembered, and hated the prince on account of the treason he had fomented against him, was to advance in a hostile manner to Ripafrata; and, while the shew of force on that side should attract Castruccio and his army, a detachment was to cross the hill of St. Giuliano, and come suddenly on the city, whose gates would be opened to them by one of the conspirators. The Florentine force would hover on the banks of the Guisciana; and, taking advantage of the confusion which the seizure of Lucca would occasion, would pass the river, and march directly towards the city, declaring liberty to the peasant, and attacking the partizans of the tyrant alone. King Robert of Naples had a fleet already in the gulf of Spezia, which, on the news of the breaking out of the conspiracy, would disembark its soldiers on the Lucchese territory, and thus add to the general confusion.

This was the outline of the plan; there were many smaller circumstances which Bondelmonti detailed. He then named their associates in the plot. In calling over the list he mentioned Tripalda; Euthanasia’s eyes flashed angrily at the sound of that name.

“Tripalda!” she cried, “Battista Tripalda! Is he one of your associates? Nay then, I am truly sorry that I am now numbered among you.”

“Why this passion, my fair cousin? Tripalda is a man of infinite talent: his counsels have been of the greatest benefit to us. I do not think that our plot would ever have ripened into maturity, had it not been for him. Of what consequence is the virtue or vice of a man on such an occasion? Edged tools are what we want; it matters little the evil name with which they may be branded.”

“You reason ill, my friend; and, if you persist, I foresee the failure of our plan, and the destruction of those engaged in it. I have promised my assistance, nor will I shrink from the task imposed upon me; but I can no longer have faith in our success, if one so treacherous and unprincipled as Tripalda be admitted into a participation of our counsels. Accident has made me acquainted with the full extent of his crimes; it is the knowledge of them that has caused his expulsion from the palace and society of the prince, his crimes alone impel him to associate in this conspiracy, and they also ought to induce us to reject him; that cause must be bad, which requires the assistance of one so wicked as this infidel priest.”

“You are strangely prejudiced, methinks, against this man,” replied Bondelmonti, “but indeed, my dear cousin, such as he is, we must now tolerate him. He is not only acquainted with every circumstance of the conspiracy, but has been its most active member. Many of our most valuable partizans have been gained over by him alone; he is the tie which binds those who are personally at variance one with the other, and the stay which fixes the fluctuating.”

“And this then is the trap into which we are about to fall? This man hates the prince, because Castruccio is fully acquainted with the extent of his iniquity; for the same reason he detests me—”

“This expression of yours,” interrupted Bondelmonti, “proves the excess of your misapprehension. So far from disliking, he esteems and admires you, and it was at his instigation that I first named our purpose to you.”

“All that you say, unfortunately increases my distrust. But, if, as I believe, I have done well in promising my assistance, fear shall not withhold me from exerting my powers, and giving my whole heart to the undertaking. My dear Bondelmonti, you are the oldest of my friends, you were the friend of my father, I trust much to your judgement; I confide greatly in the sense of right which nature has implanted in my own heart; I hope no false view, no veiled passion, misleads me now, when most I desire to act well, justly towards others, and towards myself: the catastrophe is in the hands of that irresistible Power which guides us all; and, if we fail, no weakness, no vain reproach, or worse treachery, shall tarnish my defeat. Trust in me to the death.”

CHAPTER XXXVI

ONE of the first effects of Euthanasia's entrance into the conspiracy of Bondelmonti, was a journey from Florence to Lucca. It was necessary for her to be there some time before the breaking out of the plot, that she might be able to take the part allotted to her. She quitted her native city with a heavy heart. It was at the end of the month of November; and the lowering skies portended rain, and the bare earth, stripped of its summer ornaments, appeared chilled by the cold blast that passed over it. The olive and ilex woods, and the few cork trees and cypresses, that grew on the declivities of the hills, diversified the landscape with their sober green: but they had a funereal appearance; they were as the pall of the dying year, and the melancholy song of their waving branches was its dirge.

Euthanasia's mind was no store-house of blithe thoughts. She felt deeply the danger of the project in which she had embarked; and yet its danger was one of the considerations that reconciled her to it. To have encountered Castruccio with superior force, and to have despoiled him of all power with security to herself, would have been hateful to her feelings; and it appeared to her that in acting such a part she would have merited the disapprobation of mankind. But she approached the foundations of his power by a path encompassed with danger; she groped through the murky air of night, and owls and bats flitted before her, and flapped their wings in her eyes; her footing was unsteady; — a precipice yawned on each side, and the probable result of her undertaking was ignominy and death. She felt all this. The name of Tripalda had extinguished in her bosom every hope of success. She felt that the purity of her intentions would excuse her in her own eyes; and she could then endure with patience all of bitter and evil that might befall her. She could not say in the words of the poet.

Roll on, the chariot-wheels of my dear plots.
And bear mine ends to their desired marks!
As yet there's not a rub of wit, or gulf of thought.
No rocky misconstruction, thorny maze.
Or other let of any doubtfulness:
As yet thy way is smooth and plain.

Like the green ocean in a silent calm.

No! the course she followed was a slippery path, that overhung a chasm terrible as death: the sea on which she sailed was rife with quicksands, and its breakers threatened instant destruction.

Sometimes the memory of her peaceful life at Florence obtruded itself upon her, and more than that, her charitable occupations when she attended the sick in that city, and whence, as from a rough-hewn chalice containing nectarian drink, she had quaffed happiness. Sometimes she reproached destiny that she had not fallen a victim to her perilous exertions; but she endeavoured to shut out these remembrances from her mind, to look before her and not behind. What though dense clouds hid the future, and thunder muttered above? she was borne on by a virtuous purpose, which would be to her as the wings of an eagle, or the sure foot of the precipice-walking chamois.

And then, if the enterprise succeeded, she would save Castruccio. But for her he would be sacrificed by his insatiable enemies. But her hand would avert their daggers, her voice bid them “Hold!” — Her imagination pictured the whole scene. He would be seized by his enemies, and expect death; he would be conveyed aboard one of the vessels of the king of Naples; and she would be there, to watch over and tend upon him. At first he might repulse, perhaps spurn her: but patient forbearance, and her meek demeanour would soften him; he would see the tears of her devotion; he would hear her defence; and he would forgive her. They would disembark on some lovely island on the sea of Baiae — his prison. A resting-place, whose walls would be the ocean, and whose bars and locks the all-encompassing air — would be allotted to him on the island of Ischia. Thence he would survey the land where the philosophers of past ages lived; he would study their lessons; and their wisest lore would descend into his soul, like the dews of heaven upon the parched frame of the wanderer in the Arabian deserts. By degrees he would love obscurity. They would behold together the wondrous glories of the heavens, and the beauty of that transparent sea, whose floor of pebbles, shells and weeds, is as a diamond-paved palace of romance, shone on and illustrated as it is by the sun’s rays. He would see the flame arise from Vesuvius, and behold afar off the smoke of the burning lava, — such was the emblem of his former life; but he would then have become, like the land he trod, an extinguished volcano; and the soil would prove more fertile, more rich in beauty and excellence, than those cold natures which had never felt the vivifying heat of mighty and subdued passions.

Thus she dreamed; and thus she cheated herself into tranquillity. She arrived at Pisa, where she was met by Orlando Quartezzani, who explained to her much of the minutiæ of the plot, and besought her to hasten its execution. “I pine, in exile,” he said, “still to behold that ungrateful tyrant seated on a throne, which, if it be not formed of our skulls, yet exists only to torture and destroy us. My brothers are tardy, those Avogadii, lazy and inert. They are still at Lucca; they see its fertile valleys; they live among its mountains. Sometimes indeed I dare go to the top of the hill of San Giuliano, and behold its towers almost at my feet: but I long to make one with my fellow-citizens, to enter again into the lists of life.”

Euthanasia quitted Pisa. She crossed the plain to the foot of the hills, and passed along through Pugnano and Ripafrata. She was very melancholy. How could it be otherwise? She had entered upon a race, whose penalty was death, whose prize was yet hidden in the mists of futurity; — it might turn out even more blighting and terrible than death itself. But there was no room for retreat; the path was narrow, and her chariot could not turn; she must fix her eyes upon the goal, for be the consequence good or evil, she must arrive there, she must there seek and find the fulfilment of her destiny.

She entered Lucca at the beginning of the month of December; and she went immediately to the palace which had been assigned her by the Lucchese government, in compensation for her demolished castle. The same evening that she arrived, the two chiefs of the conspiracy, Ugo Quartezzani and Tripalda, visited her. The name of Tripalda, so often and so fearfully repeated by the dying Beatrice, made her shrink from all communication with one who had tarnished his life with the foulest crimes. On this occasion she was obliged however to smother her indignation; and he, from a sense of his own importance, was more presumptuous and insolent than she had ever seen him.

“Madonna,” said he, stalking forward with an erect mien, and half shut eyes, which, although they were not bent on the ground, yet ever avoided the direct gaze of those to whom he spoke;—”Madonna, I much praise your wisdom in entering into this conspiracy. We all know that, when you choose to exert your abilities, you are the cleverest woman in Tuscany. This is a period which will shew you in your true colours.”

"Messer Battista, let us leave to speak of me and my poor talents: we come to talk of far weightier matter; and I bear a message to Messer Ugo from his brother Orlando."

They now began to speak of the future; but Tripalda would allow no one to talk but himself; and he walked up and down the room delivering his opinion in a loud voice.

"Hush, for Jesu's sake!" cried Ugo, "some one will overhear us, and we are all lost."

Tripalda looked suspiciously around, approached on tiptoe the sofa on which Euthanasia and Ugo sat, and, speaking in a whisper, he said,—"I tell you we shall succeed. Look! I have already sharpened the dagger which is to stab the tyrant to the heart."

"Now the Mother of God defend him!" cried Euthanasia, turning pale: "that is beyond my contract. Bear witness, Ugo, that I entered into this plot on condition that his life should be saved."

"Women! women!" said Tripalda, contemptuously. "By the body of Bacchus! I wonder what Bondelmonti meant by introducing a woman into the plot. One way or another they have spoiled, and ever will spoil, every design that the wisdom of man has contrived. I say he must die."

"I say he shall not, Sir Priest. And remember, you are not one who dares place your warrant on the life of Antelminelli. That is guarded by spirits of whose very existence you are ignorant; it is guarded by devoted love and disinterested virtue; and you shall not endanger it."

"You indeed talk of spirits, of which I and all the wise among men know nothing. In the present case I do not exactly see what devoted love has to do with a conspiracy to overthrow the party beloved; and as for disinterested virtue, all the virtue I know any thing about bids me stab the tyrant. He shall die."

"Nay, as you say that you understand me not, you may well leave to speak of what dwells without the circle of your intelligence. Are you not a priest? a man of peace? and dare you avow such thoughts? They shame your profession; and, if any spark of virtue dwelt within you, you would now blush as deep a red, as your hands would shew, stained with that blood you think to shed."

"Madonna," said Ugo, "you are now animated beyond all prudence. Speak mildly; and Messer Tripalda will yield."

“That will I not!” cried Tripalda, compressing his thin lips, and elevating his high brows. “I have doomed him to death; and he shall die. By my soul’s salvation, he shall!”

“Then is your soul lost, for he shall live.”

The gentle modulation of Euthanasia’s voice, now first attuned to command, carried with it an irresistible force, while she extended her fair arm in earnest gesture; then, calming herself, she continued: “I entered into this conspiracy on one condition; and I might well say, ‘If you keep not your words with me, neither will I keep mine with you; if you betray me, so will I betray you.’ But I say not this; I have other means of silencing this man. I know you, Tripalda; and you are well aware, that I can see through the many folds which you have wound round your heart. You oblige me to menace you. I can tell a tale, Tripalda, a tale the knowledge of whose exceeding horror is confined to your own polluted heart; but whose slightest sketch would fill mankind with detestation, and your destruction would quickly follow. Dare not even to imagine the death of Castruccio; while he is safe, you are safe; otherwise you know what will follow.”

“So far from knowing, I cannot even guess your meaning,” replied Tripalda; but with a subdued voice and humble manner. “In truth, Madonna, you speak enigmas to me. But since you are resolved to save the life of the prince, so let it be. But I suppose you will allow us to secure his person.”

“We have a plan for that,” said Euthanasia, turning to Ugo, “a plan to which I hope you will accede: for Castruccio must be saved; Bondelmonti entered into that engagement with me, before I became a party to your plot.”

“It shall be as you command,” replied Tripalda, who had shifted his place several times, and seemed to stand as uneasily before the now softened looks of Euthanasia, as a hypocrite well might before the eyes of the accusing angel. “I will leave you now,” continued he, “for I promised to be with Nicola dei Avogadii at eight o’clock, and seven struck some time ago. Good night, Madonna; when we again meet, I hope you will be better pleased with my intentions, and thank me for my exertions in favour of your friend, the prince.”

He quitted the room. Euthanasia followed him with her eyes until he had closed the door; and then she said to Ugo, “I distrust that man; and if my purpose did not lift me alike above fear and hope, I should dread him. But do you have a care, Ugo; and, if you regard your own safety, watch him, as you would one whose sword you must parry, until the deed you meditate be accomplished.”

“You judge hastily, Madonna; he is the sworn enemy of Castruccio; and I believe him to be, on this occasion at least, trust-worthy. I cannot divine what you know concerning him; it is surely something black, for he cowered beneath your words. But a man may be one day wicked, and good the next; for self — interest sways all, and we are virtuous or vicious as we hope for advantage to ourselves. The downfall of Antelminelli will raise him; and therefore he is to be trusted.”

“That is bad philosophy, and worse morality, Ugo: but we have no time to dispute now; remember, that I tell you to beware of Tripalda. Now let us occupy ourselves in worthier considerations.”

After a long conversation, in which all was concluded except the exact period for the breaking out of the conspiracy, Ugo retired, to prepare messengers for Pisa and Florence, that they might, with the concurrence of their associates, determine the conduct of this last act of the tragedy. Euthanasia was left alone. She had been roused to the expression of anger by the insolent cruelty of Tripalda; but her nature, mild as it was, quickly forgot the feeling of indignation, and now other thoughts (oh, far other thoughts!) possessed her. She was again in Lucca. She ascended to the tower of her palace; and the waning moon, which shone in the east, shed its yellow and melancholy light over the landscape: she could distinguish afar the abrupt and isolated rock on which the castle of had stood; it formed one of the sides of the chasm which the spirits of creation had opened to make free the course of the Serchio. The scene was unchanged; and even in winter the soul of beauty hovered over it, ready again to reanimate the corpse, when the caducean wand of spring should touch it. The narrow, deep streets of Lucca lay like the allies of a prison around her; and she longed for the consummation of the deed in which she had engaged, when she might fly for ever from a scene, which had been too dear to her, not to make its sight painful in her altered situation.

In the mean time, while in deep security of thought she brooded over the success of her attempt, the hour which yet lingered on the dial was big with her ruin; and events which threatened to destroy her for ever, already came so near, that their awful shadow began to be thrown on the path of her life.

Tripalda had left her, burning with all the malice of which his evil nature was so amply susceptible. He had learned that the prisoner of the castle in the Campagna di Roma had survived, and had fallen into the hands of Euthanasia: and he knew that his fate depended upon disclosures that she was enabled to make. The prisoner was now dead; but both Castruccio and Euthanasia had become in part the depositaries of her secret; Euthanasia had heard his name pronounced, mingled with shrieks and despair, by the lips of the lovely maniac; and, after her death, she had revealed her suspicions to the prince, while he in anger forbade the priest ever again to approach his palace or his person. In disgracing and banishing him from his presence, Castruccio had incurred the penalty of his hate; and he was overjoyed to think, that in destroying the man who had injured him, he should also free himself from one who was conscious of the most perilous secrets concerning him. He had been loud in his abuse of the prince; but none had listened to him, except those who sympathized in his feelings; and Antelminelli despised him too heartily to take heed to what he said.

Thus, with the wily heart and wicked design of a serpent beneath a magpie's exterior, this self-named Brutus of modern Italy, whose feigned folly was a cover for pride, selfishness and all uncharitableness, fomented a conspiracy in Lucca to overthrow a tyrant, who well deserved to fall, but who was as pure as the milk-white dove, if compared with the sable plumage of this crow. He had endeavoured to entice Euthanasia to participate in the plot, he hardly knew why, secure that, if she were persuaded to enter into it, it would be pregnant with nothing but misery and suffering for her. The scene which had taken place in her palace, overturned all his ideas. Castruccio despised and banished him; but he had never menaced the disclosure of those secrets, whose smallest effect would be to immure him for ever within the dungeons of some convent. He therefore hated, rather than feared him; but the words of Euthanasia had terrified his soul, and with his terror awakened all those feelings of hellish malignity with which his heart was imbued. To destroy her, and save himself, was now the scope of his desire. To betray the conspiracy, and deliver over his confederates to death, was of little moment in his eyes, compared with the care he had for his own preservation, and the satisfaction of his new-born revenge. All night he slept not; he walked up and down his room, easing his heart with curses, and with images of impending ruin for his enemies. When morning dawned, he hasted to Agosta, and made his way into the private cabinet of Vanni Mordecastelli.

Castruccio was at Pistoia, and would not return until the following day; in the mean time Mordecastelli was the governor of Lucca. He was seated in his cabinet with his secretary when Tripalda entered: like a true courtier, he hardly deigned to look on the man who was disgraced by his prince.

“Messer Tripalda,” said he, “are you still in Lucca? I thought some one told me that you had returned to your canonicate. Have you any business with me? Be brief; for you see that I am occupied.”

“Messer Vanni, I have business with you; but it must be private. Do not look thus contemptuously on me; for you know that I have been useful to you before; and I shall now be so again.”

“I do not much care to trust myself alone with you; for they say that you have sworn destruction to all the prince’s friends. However, I am armed,” he continued, taking a dagger from his bosom, and drawing it from its sheath; “so, Ubaldo, you may leave us alone.”

“And, Ubaldo, do you hear,” cried Tripalda, “it is as much as your life is worth to tell any one that I am with the governor. The very walls of the palace must not know it.”

“And are you the lord to threaten me, Messer Canonico? though you have a fool’s head, pray keep a discreet tongue.”

“Silence, Ubaldo,” said Mordecastelli. “Go, and remember what he says: you shall answer for it, if it be known that this visit has taken place. — And now, Sir Priest, what have you to say to me? if it be not something well worth the hearing, you shall pay a rich penalty for this impertinence of yours.”

“Remember, Messer Vanni, who put you on the right scent in Leodino’s plot; remember the golden harvest which that brought you in. Remember this; and put aside your pride and insolence.”

“I remember well the detestable part that you then played, and it had been well that your head had been struck off instead of Leodino’s. But you trifle now, and I have no time to waste; if you have any fresh scene of villainy to disclose, be quick.”

“I have discovered a plot of the highest consequence. One that counts among the conspirators the first citizens of the principality. But I must make my conditions before I tell you further: I hold the life of your lord in my grasp; and, before I part with my advantage, I must be paid its full worth."

"Conditions! Aye, they shall be generous and ample ones; if you fairly tell all, you shall be believed on your word, and not be put to the torture, to extort that which craft may make you conceal: these are all the conditions a villain, such as you, deserves. Come, waste no more time; if your plot be worth the telling, you well know that you will not go unrewarded; if this is all smoke, why perchance you may be smothered in it; so no more delay."

Tripalda opened each door, peeped behind the hangings, under the tables, and chairs; and then, approaching as softly as a cat who sees a mouse playing in the moonshine, or a spider who beholds his prey unconsciously cleaning his wings with an inch of him, he sat down beside Mordecastelli and whispered:

"The Avogadii."

"Well, what of them? I know that they hate Antelminelli; but they are not powerful enough to do any mischief."

"The Quartezzani."

"Nay, then this is of deeper interest. Have they turned vipers? By St. Martin! they have a sting!"

Tripalda in a low and solemn voice entered into a detail of the plot. "And now," said he, when he had nearly concluded, "except for one circumstance, you had not heard a word of this from me."

"You are a villain to say so; — but what is this circumstance? the love you bear your prince?"

"The love I bear him might have made me bring the Pope to Lucca with thirty thousand Gascons at his heels, but not betray a plot against him. No, truly it was not that; but they have admitted a woman into it; and, as there is neither safety nor success where they are, I made my retreat in good time."

"A woman! What, Berta Avogadii?"

"One of far higher rank; the countess of ."

"Nay, then, it is all a lie, Tripalda, and, by the Virgin, you shall repent having amused me with your inventions! The countess of ! She is too wise and too holy to mingle in one of your midnight plots: besides, once upon a time, to my knowledge she loved Castruccio."

"The old proverb tells us, Vanni, that sweetest love turns to bitterest hate. Remember ! Do you think she has forgotten it? Remember her castle, her power, the state she used to keep, when she was queen of those barren mountains! Do you think she has forgotten that? She might carry it humbly; but she, like the rest of those painted ruins, is proud at heart, proud and revengeful; why she has vowed the death of her quondam lover."

"I would not believe it, if an angel were to tell me; do you think then that I will credit such a tale, when it is given out by a devil like you? Nay, do not frown, Sir Priest; the devil loves to clothe himself in a holy garb; and report says that you have more than once shewn the cloven foot."

"You are pleased to jest, Lord Governor," replied Tripalda, with a ghastly smile, "do you know the hand-writing of Orlando Quartezzani?"

"As I know my own."

"Read then that letter."

It was a letter from Orlando to Tripalda, conjuring him to be speedy in his operations, and saying that, since the countess of appeared to enter into the plot with a willing heart, all difficulties would now be easily removed.

Vanni put down the letter with a look of mingled contempt and indignation. "And who else have ye among you? I expect next to hear that some of the saints or martyrs, or perhaps the Virgin herself has come down to aid you."

"Here is a list of the conspirators; and here are letters which will serve as further proofs of the truth of my disclosures."

"Give them to me. And now let me tell you, my excellent fox, that I by no means trust you, and that, knowing your tricks of old, I may well suspect that, after trying to get all you can from us by betraying your associates, you will endeavour to get all you can out of them by assisting them to escape; so, my good fellow, you must for the present remain under lock and key."

"I hoped that I had deserved better—"

"Deserved! Aye, you deserve the torture, as much as the vilest heretic who denies the passion of our Redeemer. You know yourself to be an arch-traitor, and, by the saints! you shall be treated like one. Come, there is a better room for your prison than you deserve: go in peaceably; for if you oblige me to use force, you shall lodge for the next week in one of those holes under ground, of which I believe you have some knowledge, since your fiendish malice contrived them."

"Well, Vanni, I yield. But I hope that your future gratitude—"

“Oh! trust to my gratitude. I know my trade too well not to encourage such hell-hounds as you are.”

CHAPTER XXXVII

HAVING thus disposed of Tripalda, Vanni sat down to study the list of conspirators that he had given him. It contained three hundred names. “What a murderous dog this priest is!” he cried. “Why every noble family has one or more of its members engaged in this plot. I shall take the liberty to curtail it exceedingly, before it meets the eyes of the prince. The ringleaders are enough for him: the rest I shall punish on my private account; a few fines will bring them to reason, and they are better subjects ever after. But ! I would as soon have believed that an ass could drink up the moon, as that that villain could have drawn her from her illustrious sphere, to be swallowed up among the rest of the gulls, when he wants to make merry with a few murders. But, by St. Martin! as she has sown, so must she reap; and I hate her ten times the more for her hypocritical, angel face. Conspire against Castruccio! He used her ill; but a meek and forbearing woman’s love that forgave all injuries, is what she ever boasted, if not in words, at least in looks and manners. For thy sake, thou goodly painted saint, like the rest of them, well looking outside, but worms and corruption within, I will never trust more to any of thy sex! — Nor shalt thou escape. Others will pay a fearful penalty for their treason; and thine, which merits much more than theirs, shall not go free. I could have staked my life upon Euthanasia; I knew her from a child; I remember her a smiling cherub with deep blue eyes and curly tresses; and her very name seemed to carry a divinity with it. I have many sins on my head; and, when my death comes, many years of purgatory may be tacked on to my absolution; but methought that, when I contemplated and almost adored the virtues of Euthanasia, my soul was half-way through its purification; — and she to fall!”

Vanni, who, in the common acceptation, was truly faithful to his master, was struck with disgust at what appeared to him the depth of treachery on her part. He knew little of the human heart, its wondrous subtlety and lawyer-like distinctions; he could not imagine the thousand sophistries that cloaked her purpose to Euthanasia, the veils of woven wind, that made her apparent treachery shew like purest truth to her. He could not judge of the enthusiasm, that, although it permitted her to foresee the opprobrium and condemnation which would be attached to her conduct, yet made her trample upon all. She walked on in what she deemed the right path; and neither the pangs of doubt, nor the imminent risque that awaited her perseverance, could arrest her; or, worse than all, the harsh opinion of man, his ever ready censure of ideas he cannot understand, his fiery scorn of virtue which he might never attain. She passed on to her goal, fearless of, and despising "the barbed tongues, or thoughts more sharp than they," which threatened to wound her most sacred feelings.

But Vanni could not penetrate the inner sanctuary of her heart, which throned self-approbation as its deity, and cared not for the false gods that usurp the pleasant groves and high places of the world. After having vented his spleen with that sceptred infallibility men assume, and condemned her and her whole sex unheard, Mordecastelli proceeded to more active business, and before night the chiefs of the conspiracy were thrown into prison.

Early the following morning Castruccio returned to Lucca. Mordecastelli met him with a countenance, in which the falcon — eye of the prince could read uncommon tidings. "Why do you look thus, my friend?" said he. "Either laugh or cry; or tell me why you do neither, although on the verge of both."

"My lord, I have cause. I have discovered a conspiracy which threatened your power, and that not a mean one; so that I must wish you joy, that you have again escaped from these harpies. But, when you hear the names of the conspirators, you also will be sorrowful; several of your friends are among them; and names, which have been repeated in your daily prayers with blessings joined to them, are now written in the list of traitors."

"When I took power upon me, my dear Vanni, I well knew that I wrapped suspicion about me as a robe, and wedded danger, and treachery, and most other evils. So let it be! I was yet a boy, when I prayed to be a prince, though my crown were of thorns. But who are these? Which of my old friends are so blind, as to see their own interest in my downfall?"

Mordecastelli gave the list of the ringleaders which he had prepared, and watched the countenance of Castruccio as he read it. He observed contempt and carelessness on his countenance, until the name of the countess of met his eyes; he then saw the expression change, and a slight convulsion on his lips, which he evidently strove to suppress. Vanni could contain himself no longer.

"You see, my lord, you see her name. And, as true as there is a sun in heaven, as true, as she is false, this saintlike Euthanasia has spotted her soul with treason. I have proofs, here they are. It would make one doubt one's salvation, to see her with her Madonna face creep into this nest of traitors. There they must have been, closeted in a cellar, or hid in some dark hole; for else my spies would have earthed them out long ago. And I figure her to myself, with her golden hair, and eyes which illumined even the night, they were so dazzling, — entering a room made dark enough to hide treason; — and to think that the hellish bat did not take wing out at the window when she appeared! but no, she cherished him in her bosom."

"You are eloquent, Vanni."

"I am, my lord. I took her for an angel, and I find her a woman; — one of those frail, foolish creatures we all despise—"

"Peace, peace, my dear Vanni; you talk insufferable nonsense. Let us proceed to more serious business. What have you done with these people?"

"They are all in prison."

"The countess among them?"

"Why, my lord, would you have had her spared?"

"She is in prison then?"

"She is."

"Vanni, you must look to these people. I assure you that I by no means find myself mercifully inclined towards them. These continual plots, and this foolish ingratitude, to give it no worse name, disturb our government too much. I will tear it away root and branch; and the punishment of these fellows shall be a terrible warning to those who may think of treading in the same steps."

Castruccio fixed his eyes upon Mordecastelli; but there was an expression in them that made the confident cast his upon the ground. They glared; and his pale face became paler, so that his very lips were white. He looked steadily on Mordecastelli for some minutes; and then said:

"They must all die."

"They shall, my lord."

"Yet not by an easy death. That were a poor revenge. They shall die, as they have lived, like traitors; and on their living tombs shall be written, ‘Thus Castruccio punishes his rebel subjects.’ Have I toiled, exposed my person to danger, become the fear and hope of Tuscany, to stain with my best blood the dagger of one of these miserable villains? Do you see that they die so, Vanni, as that I may be satisfied.”

“I will, my lord. And the countess?” —

“Leave her to me. I will be her judge and executioner.”

“Castruccio?”

“Do no look so pale, Vanni; you do not understand. A few hours hence I will tell you more. Now leave me.”

Solitude is a coy companion for a prince, and one he little loves. But Castruccio had much to occupy his thoughts, much that agonized him. “Revenge!” He clenched his hand, and, throwing his eyes upward, he cried: “Yes, revenge is among those few goods in life, which compensate for its many evils. Yet it is poor: it is a passion which can have no end. Burning in pursuit, cold and unsatisfactory in its conclusion, it is as love, which wears out its soul in unrequited caresses. But still, it shall be mine; and these shall suffer. They shall feel in every nerve what it is to have awakened me. I will not fear; I will not feel my life depend alone upon the word of these most impotent slaves. They shall die; and the whole world shall learn that Castruccio can revenge.”

Thus he thought: yet there was an inner sense, that betrayed to him the paltriness of his feelings, when he imagined that there was glory in trampling upon the enemy beneath his feet. He would not listen to this small still voice; but, turning from these ideas, he began to reflect on that which filled him with a bitterness of feeling to which he had long been a stranger.

“So, she has conspired against me; and, forgetful of all those ties that bound us notwithstanding her coldness, she has plotted my death! She knew, she must have known, that in spite of absence and repulse, she was the saint of my life; and that this one human weakness, or human virtue, remained to me, when power and a strong will had in other respects metamorphosed me. Does she forget, that I have ever worn near my heart a medallion engraven with her vows of childhood? She has forgotten all. And not only has she forgotten to love, but she has cast aside the uprightness of her understanding, and stained the purity of her soul.

"It is well for me to speak thus, who, instead of the virtues that once were mine, have as ministers, revenge, and hate, and conquest. But, although I choose to be thus, and although I have selected these hell-hounds to drag my car of life, I have not lost the sense of what is just and right; and, in the midst of all my wilful errors and my degradation, I could discern and worship the pure loveliness of Euthanasia. By the saints! I believed, that, if she died, like Dante's Beatrice, she would plead for me before the throne of the Eternal, and that I should be saved through her. Now she is lost, and may perdition seize the whole worthless race of man, since it has fallen upon her!

"But she must be saved. My hands shall not be stained with her blood, nor my soul bear the brand of that crime. But she must not stay here; nor shall she remain in Tuscany. She shall go far away, so that I never more may hear her name: that shall be her punishment, and she must bear it. Now I must contrive the means; for she shall not remain another night in prison."

Euthanasia in prison! Yes; she had become the inhabitant of this abode of crime, though her high mind was as far above fault as human nature could soar; hers, if it were an error, was one of judgement. But why should I call it error? To remove a cruel tyrant from his seat of power, — to devote those days, which she might have spent in luxury and pleasure, to a deep solitude, where neither love nor sympathy would cheer her; — to bear his anger, perhaps his hate, and in the midst of all to preserve a firmness and sweetness, that might sustain her, and soften him, — to quit all her friends, and her native country for ever, to follow in the steps of one she had ceased to love, but to whom she felt herself for ever bound by her wish to preserve him from that misery which his crimes would ultimately occasion him: these were her errors.

After Quartezzani had quitted her on the night of her arrival in Lucca, she had not slept; she was too full of various thought, of dread and breathless expectation, to compose her spirits to rest. She felt eternity in each second; and each slow hour seemed to creep forward, stretching itself in a wide, endless circle around her. When day dawned, it found her, not sleeping, but with open eyes looking on the one last star that faded in the west, calling to mind a thousand associations, a thousand hopes, now lying dead in the ashes of that pyre time had heaped together and consumed; she looked forward; yet then she paused; she dared not attempt to penetrate into futurity; — all was so tempestuous and dark.

She arose at sun-rise, and had descended into the garden, to breathe the bleak, but, to her feverish spirits the refreshing air of a December morning; when, at noon, Quartezzani rushed in; he was deadly pale, and his hair seemed to stand on end with fear.

“Holy saints! what has happened?” cried Euthanasia.

“We are all lost! dead, or worse than dead! We are betrayed!”

“Tripalda has betrayed us?”

“He has.”

“And there is no escape?”

“None. The gates are shut, nor will they be opened, until we are all seized.”

“Then most certainly we die?”

“As sure as that Christ died upon the cross! so surely shall we perish.”

“Then courage, my friend, and let us cast aside, with all mortal hopes, all mortal fear. I have the start of you, Ugo; I was prepared for this; but you would not believe me, until now my predictions are sealed by the event. Let us die, as we would have lived, for the cause of freedom; and let no trembling dismay, no coward fear, make us the mock of our enemies.

“Other men in various ages have died by untimely death, and we will dare to imitate them. Others have sustained their fate with fortitude; and let faith and submission to the will of heaven be to us, instead of that dauntless spirit of inbred virtue that supported the heroes of antiquity.”

Euthanasia raised her own spirits as she spoke; and fearless expectation, and something like triumph, illuminated her countenance, as she cast her eyes upward, and with her hand clasped that of her friend. He received no warmth from the pressure; chilly fear possessed him; and he stood utterly dejected before her — he wept.

“Aye, weep,” she continued, “and I also, did not the tempest of my soul bear all clouds far away, I also might shed tears. You weep to leave those whom you love, — that is a bitter pang. You weep to see your associates suffer; but each must relieve the other from that sorrow by cheerfulness and courage. But,” she continued, seeing him entirely subdued by fear, “is there no hope of escape? Exert your ingenuity; once past the gates, you would soon be out of the territory of Lucca. And Castruccio—”

"Oh, that most hated name! Bloody, execrable tyrant! Curse him! May the fiends—"

"Cease! know you not that a dying man's curse falls more on himself, than on him against whom he imprecates the wrath of heaven? This is childish; Ugo, collect yourself; you have a wife; — woman's wit is ready; consult with her; she may devise some plan for your safety."

"You are an angel of consolation, Euthanasia. Heaven bless you! and do you also reflect on your own danger."

He left her: and she (without giving a thought to vain regret; her moments were too precious) sat down and wrote a long letter to Bondelmonti. It was calm and affectionate: she felt raised above mortality; and her words expressed the exceeding serenity of her soul. She gave a last farewell to her friends. "It may seem strange to you," she wrote, "that I express myself thus: and indeed, when I reason with myself, methinks I ought not to expect death from the hands of Antelminelli. Nor do I; and yet I expect some solemn termination to this scene, some catastrophe which will divide me from you for ever. Nor is it Italy, beloved and native Italy, that I shall leave, but also this air, this sun, and the earth's beauty. I feel thus; and therefore do I write you an eternal farewell."

She had scarcely finished her letter, when a messenger arrived from Mordecastelli. He told her that the conspiracy was divulged, and that she must in a prison await the orders of Castruccio. She started at the word Prison; but, recovering herself, she made a sign that she was ready to follow the messenger; so, without a word, without a sigh, she quitted her palace, and, ascending her litter, was conducted to her place of confinement. She passed through the same streets, through which the gaoler had conducted her to the dungeon of Beatrice. A small and curiously carved shrine of the Madonna with a lamp before it, chanced to recall this circumstance to her mind. "Thou art at peace, blessed one," she said, "there where I hope soon to be."

The gaoler of the prison, who was the same that had besought her to come and comfort poor Beatrice, received her with a sorrowful countenance, and led her to his most decent apartment, high in the tower, that overlooked the rest of the building. There she was left alone to ruminate on her fortunes, and to imbue herself with that fortitude, which might carry her with honour through the trials that awaited her. The circumstance that pressed most painfully upon her, was the death which her associates must suffer. She tried to forget herself; she did not fear death; she did not expect it at the hands of Castruccio; and her expectations and ideas were too vague to permit her to dread much the coming events as they regarded her. The window of her prison-chamber was not grated, and from it she could survey the neighbouring country. A thousand feelings passed through her mind, and she could put no order in her thoughts. Sleep refused to visit her; but her reflections became peaceful, and full of pleasant images and recollections.

Morning succeeded to a winter's night. It was clear, and sunshiny, but cold. The cheering beams poured into her room; she looked upon the azure sky, and the flock of giant mountains which lay crouching around, with a strange pleasure. She felt as if she saw them for the last time, but as if she were capable of enjoying until the latest moment those pleasures which nature had ever conferred upon her. She repeated some of Dante's verses where he describes in such divine strains the solemn calm and celestial beauty of paradise. "When will it be my lot to wander there also," she said, "when shall I enjoy the windless air, and flower-starred meadows of that land?"

Thus the whole day passed; but it was quickly dark; and she, who had watched for two nights, and was now quite overcome, looking out once upon the evening star, that star she had ever loved, and which was ever to her as the good genius of the world watching his children in their repose, repeated the Catholic ejaculation, "Stella, alma, benigna, ora pro nobis!" then, crossing herself, she lay down to rest, and quickly slept, as peacefully and happily, as a babe rocked in its mother's arms.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

A LITTLE before midnight Euthanasia’s prison-chamber was unlocked, and the gaoler entered, with a lamp in his hand, accompanied by one of majestic figure, and a countenance beautiful, but sad, and tarnished by the expression of pride that animated it. “She sleeps,” whispered the gaoler. His companion raised his finger in token of silence; and, taking the lamp from the man’s hand, approached her mattress which was spread upon the floor, and, kneeling down beside it, earnestly gazed upon that face he had known so well in happier days. She made an uneasy motion, as if the lamp which he held disturbed her; he placed it on the ground, and shaded it with his figure; while, by the soft light that fell upon her, he tried to read the images that were working in her mind.

She appeared but slightly altered since he had first seen her. If thought had drawn some lines in her brow, the intellect which its beautiful form expressed, effaced them to the eye of the spectator: her golden hair fell over her face and neck: he gently drew it back, while she smiled in her sleep; her smile was ever past description lovely, and one might well exclaim with Dante

Quel, ch’ella par quando un poco sorride.
Non si puo dicer, ne tenere a mente;
Si è nuovo miracolo, e gentile.

He gazed on her long; her white arm lay on her black dress, and he imprinted a sad kiss upon it; she awoke, and saw Castruccio gazing upon her.

She started up; “What does this mean?” she cried.

His countenance, which had softened as he looked upon her, now reassumed its severe expression. “Madonna,” he replied, “I come to take you from this place.”

She looked on him, endeavouring to read his purpose in his eyes; but she saw there no explanation of her doubts:—”And whither do you intend to lead me?”

“That you will know hereafter.”

She paused; and he added with a disdainful smile, “The countess of need not fear, while I have the power to protect her, the fate she prepared for me.”

“What fate?”

“Death.”

He spoke in an under tone, but with one of those modulations of voice, which, bringing to her mind scenes of other days, was best fitted to make an impression upon her. She replied almost unconsciously—”I did not prepare death for you; God is my witness!”

“Well, Madonna, we will not quarrel about words; or, like lawyers, clothe our purposes in such a subtle guise, that it might deceive all, if truth did not destroy the spider’s web. I come to lead you from prison.”

“Not thus, my lord, not thus will I be saved. I disdain any longer to assert my intentions, since I am not believed. But am I to be liberated alone; or are my friends included in your merciful intentions?”

“Your friends are too dangerous enemies of the commonwealth, to be rescued from the fate that awaits them. Your sex, perhaps the memory of our ancient friendship, plead for you; and I do not think that it accords with your wisdom to make conditions with one who has the power to do that which best pleases him.”

“And yet I will not yield; I will not most unworthily attend to my own safety, while my associates die. No, my lord, if they are to be sacrificed, the addition of one poor woman will add little to the number of your victims; and I cannot consent to desert them.”

“How do you desert them? You will never see or hear of them more, or they of you. But this is trifling; and my moments are precious.”

“I will not — I dare not follow you. My heart, my conscience tell me to remain. I must not disobey their voice.”

“Is your conscience so officious now, and did it say nothing, or did your heart silence it, when you plotted my destruction?”

“Castruccio, this I believe is the last time that I shall ever speak to you. Our hearts are in the hands of the father of all; and he sees my thoughts. You know me too well, to believe that I plotted your death, or that of any human creature. Now is not the time to explain my motives and plans: but my earnest prayer was that you might live; my best hope, to make that life less miserable, less unworthy, than it had hitherto been.”

She spoke with deep earnestness; and there was something in her manner, as if the spirit of truth animated all her accents, that compelled assent. Castruccio believed all; and he spoke in a milder and more persuasive manner; “Poor Euthanasia! so you were at last cajoled by that arch-traitor, Bondelmonti. Well, I believe, and pardon all; but, as the seal of the purity of your intentions, I now claim your consent to my offers of safety.”

“I cannot, indeed I cannot, consent. Be merciful; be magnanimous; and pardon all, banish us all where our discontent cannot be dangerous to you. But to desert my friends, and basely to save that life you deny to them, I never can.”

The gaoler, who had hitherto stood in the shade near the door, could no longer contain himself. He knelt to Euthanasia, and earnestly and warmly intreated her to save herself, and not with wilful presumption to cast aside those means which God had brought about for her safety. “Remember,” he cried, “your misfortunes will be on the prince’s head; make him not answer for you also. Oh! lady, for his sake, for all our sakes, yield.”

Castruccio was much moved to see the warmth of this man. He took the hand of Euthanasia, he also knelt: “Yes, my only and dearest friend, save yourself for my sake. Yield, beloved Euthanasia, to my intreaties. Indeed you will not die; for you well know that your life is dearer to me than my own. But yield to my request, by our former loves, I intreat; by the prayers which you offer up for my salvation, I conjure you as they shall be heard, so also hear me!”

The light of the solitary lamp fell full upon the countenance of Castruccio: it was softened from all severity; his eyes glistened, and a tear stole silently down his cheek as he prayed her to yield. They talk of the tears of women; but, when they flow most plenteously, they soften not the heart of man, as one tear from his eyes has power on a woman. Words and looks have been feigned; they say, though I believe them not, that women have feigned tears: but those of a man, which are ever as the last demonstration of a too full heart, force belief, and communicate to her who causes them, that excess of tenderness, that intense depth of passion, of which they are themselves the sure indication.

Euthanasia had seen Castruccio weep but once before; it was many years ago, when he departed for the battle of Monte Catini; and he then sympathized too deeply in her sorrows, not to repay her much weeping with one most true and sacred tear. And now this scene was present before her; the gap of years remained unfilled; and she had consented to his request, before she again recalled her thoughts, and saw the dreary prison — chamber, the glimmering lamp, and the rough form of the gaoler who knelt beside Antelminelli. Her consent was scarcely obtained, when Castruccio leapt up, and, bidding her wrap her capuchin about her, led her by the hand down the steep prison — stairs, while the gaoler went before them, and unlocked, and drew back the bolts of, the heavy, creaking doors.

At the entrance of the prison they found a man on horseback holding two other horses. It was Mordecastelli. Castruccio assisted Euthanasia to mount, and then sprang on his own saddle; they walked their horses to a gate of the town which was open; — they proceeded in silence; — at the gate Castruccio said to his companion—”Here leave us; I shall speedily return.”

Vanni then turned his horse’s head, slightly answering the salute of Euthanasia, which she had involuntarily made at parting for ever with one who had been her intimate acquaintance. A countryman was waiting on horseback outside the gate: “You are our guide?” said Castruccio. “Lead on then.”

It was a frosty, cloudless night; there was no moon, but the stars shone intensely above; the bright assemblage seemed to congregate from the far wastes of heaven, and to press in innumerable clusters upon the edge of the visible atmosphere, to gaze upon the strange earth beneath. The party passed out of the city of Lucca by the Pisan gate, and at first put their horses to a gallop. As they approached the hills, Castruccio came up beside Euthanasia; they slackened their speed; she spoke thus:

“I have acceded to your request, and left the prison; indeed it were useless in me to resist one who possesses the absolute power that you do. But I intreat you now that I see you for the last time, to have pity on my companions in this conspiracy. I can think only of them; and if I am to live — if ever I am again to hear of the events which will pass within the walls of that town, reflect on the sharp pang you will inflict upon me, if I hear of their destruction.”

“Madonna,” replied the prince, “I will do that which I consider my duty: and let not these our last moments be employed in fruitless discussion.”

Euthanasia felt that it was in vain to speak. Her confederates, her friends, who were reserved instantly to die, stood in funereal group before the eye of her soul; her imagination made present to her all that they thought, and all that they were to suffer. She looked upon Castruccio; she saw that he was moulded of an impenetrable substance: her heart swelled to the confines of her bosom, and forbade her such degradation to the assured victims, as would be implied in her uttering one further word in their behalf to the unhearing, unrelenting being that stood before her. Castruccio continued:

"You are about to leave Tuscany, and to take up your abode in a foreign land. You are still young. I send you from your native country; but you may at a future period confess that I have done you a kindness. You have hitherto mingled in the embroiled politics of a republic, and seen conspiracies, heart — burnings, and war."

Euthanasia felt herself unable to reply.

They had crossed the plain of Lucca, and were arrived beneath those hills, which, crowned with towers, and clothed with deep forests, were the beautiful romantic steeps that she best loved. They struck off here from the usual road, and, fording the Serchio, began to ascend the acclivities on the opposite side, proceeding one by one up the narrow path. At length they reached the summit, and viewed, stretched before them beneath the stars of night, a scene of enchanting beauty. The plain they had just crossed was dimly seen beneath, bounded by its hills; before them was another plain, desert and barren, through which the Serchio flows, bounded by the dark line of the sea; and the Lago di Macciucoli, a marshy lake, was close beneath.

"Here I leave you," said Castruccio: "there is your destination," and he pointed to the sea; "remember one with whom you have passed your happiest days."

He took her hand, and kissed it. Her feelings were strange, and hardly to be described. She could not entirely forget what he had once been to her. She could at that moment have overlooked his tyranny, his lawless ambition, and his cruelty. But, no; the moment itself was a bane to oblivion. She could have forgotten his past cruelties, but not those which were immediately to be perpetrated, to be perpetrated on individuals who had been united with her in a plot for liberty, and some of whom her name and her countenance had perhaps prompted to the desperate undertaking, and egged on to destruction.

Castruccio spoke to the guide, recommending haste as soon as they should reach the plain, and then turned his horse's head. Euthanasia and her conductor paused on the summit of the hill; and she heard the steps of Castruccio's horse, as it made its way back through the tangled underwood. Then she also began her descent on the other side.

Euthanasia, being now separated from her former connections, and from him who had been the evil genius of the scene, began to resume her wonted tone. The eternal spirit of the universe seemed to descend upon her, and she drank in breathlessly the sensation, which the silent night, the starry heavens, and the sleeping earth bestowed upon her. All seemed so peaceful, that no unwelcome sensation in her own heart could disturb the scene of which she felt herself a part. She looked up, and exclaimed in her own beautiful Italian, whose soft accents and expressive phrases then so much transcended all other European languages—"What a brave canopy has this earth, and how graciously does the supreme empyrean smile upon its nursling!"

"E Bellissimo," replied her guide, "ma figurcisci, Madonna, se è tanto bello sul rovescio, cosa mai sarà al dritto."

Euthanasia smiled at the fancy of one so uncouth in manners and habits of life; and she replied,—"Who knows how soon it may be my destiny to see that other side, which you imagine outdoes this sublime spectacle in splendour?"

"Heaven preserve you long upon earth," replied the man; "and make you as happy as you deserve, as happy as you have made others!"

"Do you know me then?"

"I dwell in the village of . I and my family have been Aldiani there, since the time of the old count Goffredo, your great-grandfather. But, Madonna, please you to put spur to your horse; for we have little time, and I fear that before long the heavens will be overclouded; that last puff had something of the scirocco in it, and I see a mist in the west that foretells wind from that quarter."

They put their horses to the gallop. Euthanasia's was a noble steed, and bore her proudly on. She felt her spirits rise with the exhilarating motion; the wind gathered from the west, and scattered her hair, which, as she quitted her prison, she had slightly bound with a handkerchief; and, as she faced the breeze, its warm breath brought the lagging blood to her cheeks.

They approached the sea, and began to hear its roar; the breeze became stronger as they drew near. The beach was flat, and the small line of sand that bordered the waters, was now beaten upon, and covered by the waves. As they came near, Euthanasia felt some curiosity to know her destination; but she saw nothing but the dim weed-grown field, and the white breakers of the troubled ocean. It was not until they were close upon the sand, that she discerned a large black boat drawn up on the beach, and several men near it. One of them came up, and asked the word, which the countryman gave; and then a man, who had the appearance of a leader, came from the boat, and welcomed Euthanasia.—”I am commanded,” he said, “by the prince of Lucca to receive you, lady.”

“And whither am I to go?”

He pointed to a vessel which rode hard by, — so near, that she wondered she had not seen it before. Its black hulk cast a deep shade upon the waters; and the dim sails, increased to an extraordinary size by the darkness, flapped heavily. She looked upon it with surprise, and wondered whither it was to bear her; but she asked no more questions: addressing herself for her departure, she took a kind leave of the countryman, and gave him the little gold that she had with her. The man turned to the chief, and said,—”Sir Knight, if it be not thought impertinent, have the courtesy to inform me wither that vessel is bound.”

The man looked at him somewhat haughtily: but replied—”To Sicily.” Sicily was then under the rule of the family of the kings of Arragon, who inherited from the daughter of Manfred, and were of course Ghibelines.

“The Virgin Mother bless your voyage!” said her guide to Euthanasia. —”I am afraid that it will be rough, for an ugly wind is rising: but the saints will surely guard you.”

Euthanasia stepped into the boat; its commander sat beside her; and the men took their oars: she waved her hand to her guide, saying, “Farewell, may God bless you!” she added in a low tone, half to herself—”They speak Italian also in Sicily.”

These were the last words she ever spoke to any one who returned to tell the tale. The countryman stood upon the beach; — he saw the boat moor beside the vessel; he saw its crew ascend the dark sides. The boat was drawn up; the sails were set; and they bore out to sea, receding slowly with many tacks, for the wind was contrary; — the vessel faded on the sight; and he turned about, and speeded to Lucca.

The wind changed to a more northerly direction during the night; and the land-breeze of the morning filled their sails, so that, although slowly, they dropped down southward. About noon they met a Pisan vessel, who bade them beware of a Genoese squadron, which was cruising off Corsica: so they bore in nearer to the shore. At sunset that day a fierce scirocco rose, accompanied by thunder and lightning, such as is seldom seen during the winter season. Presently they saw huge, dark columns, descending from heaven, and meeting the sea, which boiled beneath; they were borne on by the storm, and scattered by the wind. The rain came down in sheets; and the hail clattered, as it fell to its grave in the ocean; — the ocean was lashed into such waves, that, many miles inland, during the pauses of the wind, the hoarse and constant murmurs of the far-off sea made the well-housed landsman mutter one more prayer for those exposed to its fury.

Such was the storm, as it was seen from shore. Nothing more was ever known of the Sicilian vessel which bore Euthanasia. It never reached its destined port, nor were any of those on board ever after seen. The sentinels who watched near Vado, a tower on the sea beach of the Maremma, found on the following day, that the waves had washed on shore some of the wrecks of a vessel; they picked up a few planks and a broken mast, round which, tangled with some of its cordage, was a white silk handkerchief, such a one as had bound the tresses of Euthanasia the night that she had embarked, and in its knot were a few golden hairs.

She was never heard of more; even her name perished. She slept in the oozy cavern of the ocean; the sea-weed was tangled with her shining hair; and the spirits of the deep wondered that the earth had trusted so lovely a creature to the barren bosom of the sea, which, as an evil step-mother, deceives and betrays all committed to her care.

Earth felt no change when she died; and men forgot her. Yet a lovelier spirit never ceased to breathe, nor was a lovelier form ever destroyed amidst the many it brings forth. Endless tears might well have been shed at her loss; yet for her none wept, save the piteous skies, which deplored the mischief they had themselves committed; — none moaned except the sea-birds that flapped their heavy wings above the ocean-cave wherein she lay; — and the muttering thunder alone tolled her passing bell, as she quitted a life, which for her had been replete with change and sorrow. CONCLUSION THE private chronicles, from which the foregoing relation has been collected, end with the death of Euthanasia. It is therefore in public histories alone that we find an account of the last years of the life of Castruccio. We can know nothing of his grief, when he found that she whom he had once tenderly loved, and whom he had ever revered as the best and wisest among his friends, had died. We know however that, during the two years that he survived this event, his glory and power arose not only higher than they had ever before done, but that they surpassed those of any former Italian prince.

Louis of Bavaria, king of the Romans, entered Italy in the month of February 1327. He found Castruccio, the scourge of the Guelphs, the first power of Tuscany, and the principal supporter of his own titles and pretensions.

Louis of Bavaria was crowned with the iron crown at Milan. But his proceedings were tyrannical and imprudent. He deprived Galeazzo Visconti of his power, imprisoned him, and set up the shadow of a republic at Milan, which was in fact composed of a few Ghibeline nobles, who by their jealousies and dissentions served only to weaken his power.

He marched through Lombardy, crossed the Apennines at Parma, and was met by Castruccio at Pontremoli. The prince, whose chief aim was to ingratiate himself with, and to raise himself to power through the favour of, the emperor, made his visit more agreeable through the magnificent presents by which he was accompanied; and his sagacity, warlike spirit, and agreeable manners gained for him an easy entrance into the councils, and afterwards into the friendship, of Louis. They proceeded together to Pisa. The Pisans at first refused entrance to the emperor, but yielded after he had besieged them a few days. Louis then visited Lucca, where he erected a duchy composed of the towns and territory of Lucca, Pistoia, Volterra and Lunigiana, and created Castruccio duke, honouring and exalting him as his best friend, and the firmest support of the imperial power.

They went to Rome together, where the emperor knighted him, and he bore the sword of state in the procession from the Campidoglio to St. Peter's, where Louis received the imperial crown. He was created count of the palace, senator of Rome, and master of the court. He had arrived at the summit of his glory; he was more feared and obeyed than the emperor himself; and, in the expedition which Louis meditated against Naples, king Robert dreaded Castruccio alone, as his most formidable and craftiest enemy. It was then, that the proud Antelminelli invested himself in a robe of silk richly adorned with gold and jewels; and on the breast were embroidered these words — Egli è come dio vuole. And on the shoulders, si sara quel che dio vorrà.

While he was thus enjoying the maturity of his glory, and partaking all the amusements and feasts of the capital of Italy, he received intelligence that the Florentines had possessed themselves of Lucca. Without a moment's delay, he quitted Rome, traversed the Maremma with a small band of friends, and appeared, when he was least expected, in the midst of his enemies.

It was here that he again met Galeazzo Visconti. At Castruccio's request the emperor had released him from prison; and he came to serve under the ensigns of his more fortunate friend. Their meeting was an occasion of mutual joy; they embraced each other affectionately, and confirmed and renewed the vows of friendship and support which they had entered into more than ten years before. Castruccio enjoyed for a short time the unalloyed pleasure which the society of his friend afforded him; they recounted to each other their various fortunes; and, in recording the events which had passed since their separation, Galeazzo found, that, if he had lost sovereignty and power, Castruccio had lost that which might be considered far more valuable; he had lost his dearest friends; and on his pale cheek might be read, that, although he disdained to acknowledge the power of fortune, she had made him feel in his heart's core her poisoned shafts. We know nothing of the private communion of these friends; but we may guess that, if Castruccio revealed the sorrows of his heart, Galeazzo might have regretted that, instead of having instigated the ambition, and destroyed the domestic felicity of his friend, he had not taught him other lessons, through which he might have enjoyed that peace, sympathy and happiness, of which he was now for ever deprived.

His presence restored the state of his affairs. He possessed himself of Pisa, recovered Pistoia, and again returned in triumph to Lucca. But this was the term of his victories. During the siege of Pistoia he had tasked his strength beyond human suffering; he was ever in the trenches on horseback, or on foot exposed to the hot sun of July, encouraging the soldiers, directing the pioneers, and often, in the ardour of impatience, he himself took the spade, and worked among them. He neither rested nor slept; and the heats of noon-day, and the dews of night alike fell upon him. Immediately on his return to his native city, he was seized with a malignant fever. He knew that he was about to die; and, with that coolness and presence of mind which was his peculiar characteristic, he made every arrangement necessary for the welfare of Lucca, and gave particular directions to his captains for the prosecution of the war. But he felt, that he left behind him no fitting successor; and that, if he were the sole creator and only support of the Lucchese, so they would fall into their primitive insignificance when he expired. Lying thus on the bed of pain, and conscious that in a few hours he must surely die, he grasped the hand of Vanni Mordecastelli, who wept beside him, saying Io morrò, e vedrete il mondo per varie turbolenze confondersi, e rivoltarsi ogni cosa. This consideration cast a gloom over his last moments; yet he supported himself with courage.

Galeazzo Visconti had assisted Castruccio in all his labours, exposing himself with like imprudence, and labouring with equal energy. He was attacked at Pistoia with the same fever and the same symptoms. Hearing that the prince was ill at Lucca, he desired, although dying, to be conveyed to him. He was carried as far as Pescia, where he expired on the third of September 1328.

On the same day, and at the same hour, Castruccio died at Lucca.

His enemies rejoiced in his death; his friends were confounded and overthrown. They, as the last act of gratitude, conducted the pomp of his funeral with princely magnificence. He was buried in the church of San Francesco, then without, now included within, the walls of Lucca. The ancient tombstone is still seen on the walls of the church; and its inscription may serve for the moral and conclusion of this tale.

En vivo vivamque
fama rerum gestarum
Italicæ militiæ splen-
dor; Lucensium
decus Etruriæ
ornamentum Cas-
truccius Gerii An-
telminellorum stirpe

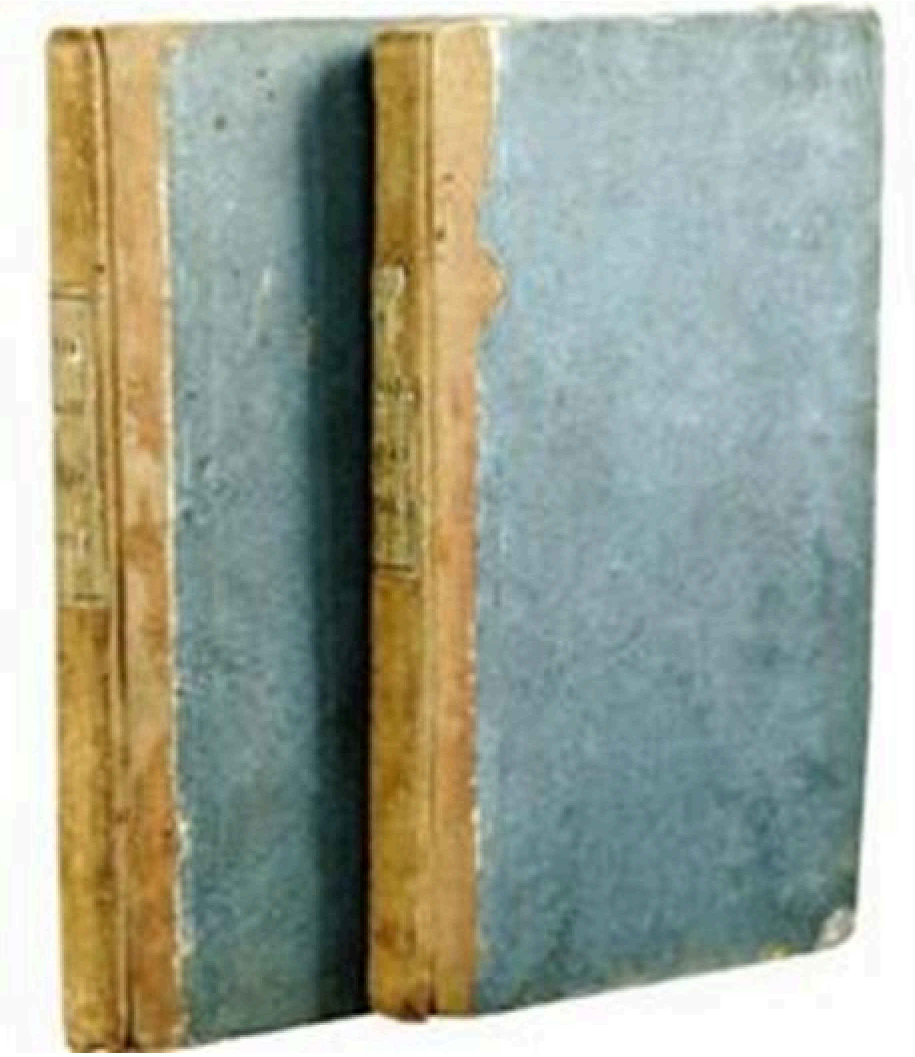
vixi peccavi dolui
cessi naturæ indigenti
animæ piæ benevoli
succurrite brevi memores
vos morituros.

THE END

THE LAST MAN

Shelley's 1826 novel *The Last Man* was her first work to be published by Henry Colburn and consisted of three volumes. There were two editions printed by Colburn and one published in Paris by Galignani. The apocalyptic novel was poorly received by many critics and subsequently was not republished until 1965. It was adapted in 2008 for film but the tale was relocated to Tucson Arizona and the adaptation received little recognition. Lionel Verney is the narrator and central character of Shelley's late 21st century tale; he begins the novel with a hatred of the royal family and particularly the King, who casts aside Verney's father, resulting in the narrator becoming an orphan. After being caught attempting to steal from the Earl of Windsor, he is shown mercy by the Earl Adrian, the former King's son and they become close friends. The introduction of Lord Raymond completes the friendship group and the opening volume explores the three characters relationships, philosophies and ambitions.

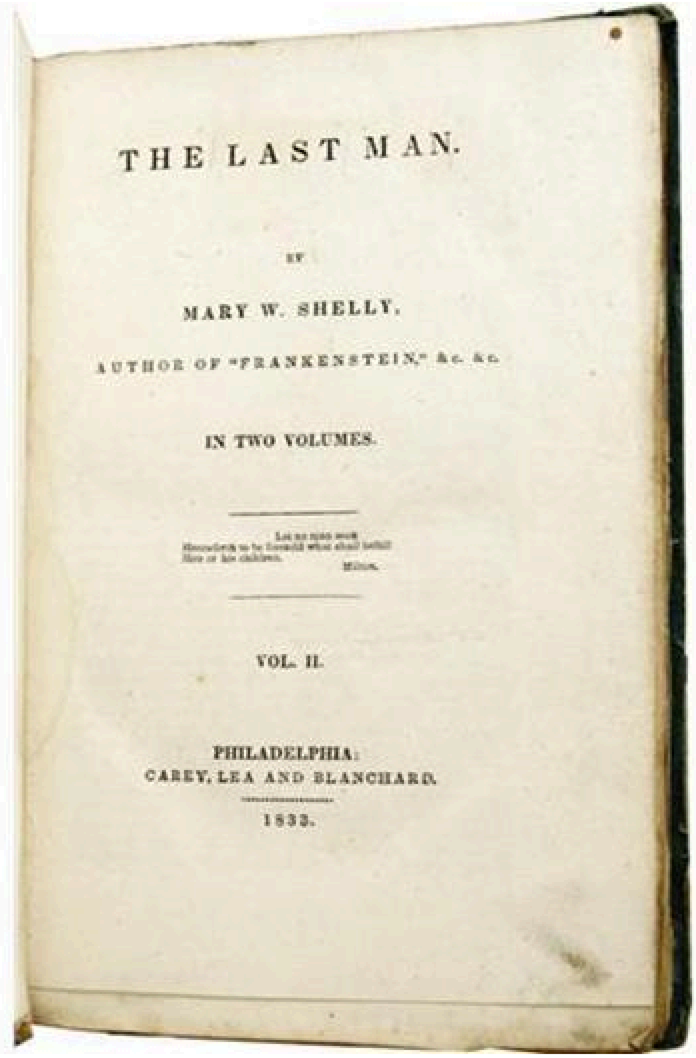
The tone of the *The Last Man* darkens when Lord Raymond returns to fight for Greece against the Turks, and the plague which has previously only been alluded to briefly begins to engulf Europe. Lionel Verney is believed to have been partly based on Mary Shelley while Adrian and Lord Raymond were inspired by Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron respectively. Byron died from a fever while fighting in the Greek War of Independence and the philosophical and utopian Adrian reflects Percy Bysshe Shelley's idealism. The novel expresses the fears of seclusion, isolation and loss that troubled and grieved the author after the deaths of her husband and friends. It also explores the power and solace of the imagination; a central tenet of Romantic philosophy and that which Verney declares to be 'the creator of all that was good and great to man'.



The first edition

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I
CHAPTER II
CHAPTER III
CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER V
CHAPTER VI
CHAPTER VII
CHAPTER VIII
CHAPTER IX
CHAPTER X
CHAPTER XI
CHAPTER XII
CHAPTER XIII
CHAPTER XIV
CHAPTER XV
CHAPTER XVI
CHAPTER XVII
CHAPTER XVIII
CHAPTER XIX
CHAPTER XX
CHAPTER XXI
CHAPTER XXII
CHAPTER XXIII
CHAPTER XXIV
CHAPTER XXV
CHAPTER XXVI
CHAPTER XXVII
CHAPTER XXVIII
CHAPTER XXIX
CHAPTER XXX



THE LAST MAN.

BY

MARY W. SHELLY,

AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY, LEA AND BLANCHARD.
1833.

The original title page

INTRODUCTION

I visited Naples in the year 1818. On the 8th of December of that year, my companion and I crossed the Bay, to visit the antiquities which are scattered on the shores of Baiæ. The translucent and shining waters of the calm sea covered fragments of old Roman villas, which were interlaced by sea-weed, and received diamond tints from the chequering of the sun-beams; the blue and pellucid element was such as Galatea might have skimmed in her car of mother of pearl; or Cleopatra, more fitly than the Nile, have chosen as the path of her magic ship. Though it was winter, the atmosphere seemed more appropriate to early spring; and its genial warmth contributed to inspire those sensations of placid delight, which are the portion of every traveller, as he lingers, loath to quit the tranquil bays and radiant promontories of Baiæ.

We visited the so-called Elysian Fields and Avernus: and wandered through various ruined temples, baths, and classic spots; at length we entered the gloomy cavern of the Cumæan Sibyl. Our Lazzeroni bore flaring torches, which shone red, and almost dusky, in the murky subterranean passages, whose darkness thirstily surrounding them, seemed eager to imbibe more and more of the element of light. We passed by a natural archway, leading to a second gallery, and enquired, if we could not enter there also. The guides pointed to the reflection of their torches on the water that paved it, leaving us to form our own conclusion; but adding it was a pity, for it led to the Sibyl's Cave. Our curiosity and enthusiasm were excited by this circumstance, and we insisted upon attempting the passage. As is usually the case in the prosecution of such enterprises, the difficulties decreased on examination. We found, on each side of the humid pathway, "dry land for the sole of the foot." At length we arrived at a large, desert, dark cavern, which the Lazzeroni assured us was the Sibyl's Cave. We were sufficiently disappointed — Yet we examined it with care, as if its blank, rocky walls could still bear trace of celestial visitant. On one side was a small opening. "Whither does this lead?" we asked; "can we enter here?"—"*Questo poi, no*," said the wild looking savage, who held the torch; "you can advance but a short distance, and nobody visits it."

"Nevertheless, I will try it," said my companion; "it may lead to the real cavern. Shall I go alone, or will you accompany me?"

I signified my readiness to proceed, but our guides protested against such a measure. With great volubility, in their native Neapolitan dialect, with which we were not very familiar, they told us that there were spectres, that the roof would fall in, that it was too narrow to admit us, that there was a deep hole within, filled with water, and we might be drowned. My friend shortened the harangue, by taking the man's torch from him; and we proceeded alone.

The passage, which at first scarcely admitted us, quickly grew narrower and lower; we were almost bent double; yet still we persisted in making our way through it. At length we entered a wider space, and the low roof heightened; but, as we congratulated ourselves on this change, our torch was extinguished by a current of air, and we were left in utter darkness. The guides bring with them materials for renewing the light, but we had none — our only resource was to return as we came. We groped round the widened space to find the entrance, and after a time fancied that we had succeeded. This proved however to be a second passage, which evidently ascended. It terminated like the former; though something approaching to a ray, we could not tell whence, shed a very doubtful twilight in the space. By degrees, our eyes grew somewhat accustomed to this dimness, and we perceived that there was no direct passage leading us further; but that it was possible to climb one side of the cavern to a low arch at top, which promised a more easy path, from whence we now discovered that this light proceeded. With considerable difficulty we scrambled up, and came to another passage with still more of illumination, and this led to another ascent like the former.

After a succession of these, which our resolution alone permitted us to surmount, we arrived at a wide cavern with an arched dome-like roof. An aperture in the midst let in the light of heaven; but this was overgrown with brambles and underwood, which acted as a veil, obscuring the day, and giving a solemn religious hue to the apartment. It was spacious, and nearly circular, with a raised seat of stone, about the size of a Grecian couch, at one end. The only sign that life had been here, was the perfect snow-white skeleton of a goat, which had probably not perceived the opening as it grazed on the hill above, and had fallen headlong. Ages perhaps had elapsed since this catastrophe; and the ruin it had made above, had been repaired by the growth of vegetation during many hundred summers.

The rest of the furniture of the cavern consisted of piles of leaves, fragments of bark, and a white filmy substance, resembling the inner part of the green hood which shelters the grain of the unripe Indian corn. We were fatigued by our struggles to attain this point, and seated ourselves on the rocky couch, while the sounds of tinkling sheep-bells, and shout of shepherd-boy, reached us from above.

At length my friend, who had taken up some of the leaves strewed about, exclaimed, “This *is* the Sibyl’s cave; these are Sibylline leaves.” On examination, we found that all the leaves, bark, and other substances, were traced with written characters. What appeared to us more astonishing, was that these writings were expressed in various languages: some unknown to my companion, ancient Chaldee, and Egyptian hieroglyphics, old as the Pyramids. Stranger still, some were in modern dialects, English and Italian. We could make out little by the dim light, but they seemed to contain prophecies, detailed relations of events but lately passed; names, now well known, but of modern date; and often exclamations of exultation or woe, of victory or defeat, were traced on their thin scant pages. This was certainly the Sibyl’s Cave; not indeed exactly as Virgil describes it, but the whole of this land had been so convulsed by earthquake and volcano, that the change was not wonderful, though the traces of ruin were effaced by time; and we probably owed the preservation of these leaves to the accident which had closed the mouth of the cavern, and the swift-growing vegetation which had rendered its sole opening impervious to the storm. We made a hasty selection of such of the leaves, whose writing one at least of us could understand; and then, laden with our treasure, we bade adieu to the dim hypæthric cavern, and after much difficulty succeeded in rejoining our guides.

During our stay at Naples, we often returned to this cave, sometimes alone, skimming the sun-lit sea, and each time added to our store. Since that period, whenever the world’s circumstance has not imperiously called me away, or the temper of my mind impeded such study, I have been employed in deciphering these sacred remains. Their meaning, wondrous and eloquent, has often repaid my toil, soothing me in sorrow, and exciting my imagination to daring flights, through the immensity of nature and the mind of man. For a while my labours were not solitary; but that time is gone; and, with the selected and matchless companion of my toils, their dearest reward is also lost to me —

Di mie tenere frondi altro lavoro
Credea mostrarte; e qual fero pianeta
Ne' nvidiò insieme, o mio nobil tesoro?

I present the public with my latest discoveries in the slight Sibylline pages. Scattered and unconnected as they were, I have been obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form. But the main substance rests on the truths contained in these poetic rhapsodies, and the divine intuition which the Cumæan damsel obtained from heaven.

I have often wondered at the subject of her verses, and at the English dress of the Latin poet. Sometimes I have thought that, obscure and chaotic as they are, they owe their present form to me, their decipherer. As if we should give to another artist the painted fragments which form the mosaic copy of Raphael's Transfiguration in St. Peter's; he would put them together in a form, whose mode would be fashioned by his own peculiar mind and talent. Doubtless the leaves of the Cumæan Sibyl have suffered distortion and diminution of interest and excellence in my hands. My only excuse for thus transforming them, is that they were unintelligible in their pristine condition.

My labours have cheered long hours of solitude, and taken me out of a world, which has averted its once benignant face from me, to one glowing with imagination and power. Will my readers ask how I could find solace from the narration of misery and woeful change? This is one of the mysteries of our nature, which holds full sway over me, and from whose influence I cannot escape. I confess, that I have not been unmoved by the development of the tale; and that I have been depressed, nay, agonized, at some parts of the recital, which I have faithfully transcribed from my materials. Yet such is human nature, that the excitement of mind was dear to me, and that the imagination, painter of tempest and earthquake, or, worse, the stormy and ruin-fraught passions of man, softened my real sorrows and endless regrets, by clothing these fictitious ones in that ideality, which takes the mortal sting from pain.

I hardly know whether this apology is necessary. For the merits of my adaptation and translation must decide how far I have well bestowed my time and imperfect powers, in giving form and substance to the frail and attenuated Leaves of the Sibyl.

CHAPTER I

I am the native of a sea-surrounded nook, a cloud-enshadowed land, which, when the surface of the globe, with its shoreless ocean and trackless continents, presents itself to my mind, appears only as an inconsiderable speck in the immense whole; and yet, when balanced in the scale of mental power, far outweighed countries of larger extent and more numerous population. So true it is, that man's mind alone was the creator of all that was good or great to man, and that Nature herself was only his first minister. England, seated far north in the turbid sea, now visits my dreams in the semblance of a vast and well-manned ship, which mastered the winds and rode proudly over the waves. In my boyish days she was the universe to me. When I stood on my native hills, and saw plain and mountain stretch out to the utmost limits of my vision, speckled by the dwellings of my countrymen, and subdued to fertility by their labours, the earth's very centre was fixed for me in that spot, and the rest of her orb was as a fable, to have forgotten which would have cost neither my imagination nor understanding an effort.

My fortunes have been, from the beginning, an exemplification of the power that mutability may possess over the varied tenor of man's life. With regard to myself, this came almost by inheritance. My father was one of those men on whom nature had bestowed to prodigality the envied gifts of wit and imagination, and then left his bark of life to be impelled by these winds, without adding reason as the rudder, or judgment as the pilot for the voyage. His extraction was obscure; but circumstances brought him early into public notice, and his small paternal property was soon dissipated in the splendid scene of fashion and luxury in which he was an actor. During the short years of thoughtless youth, he was adored by the high-bred triflers of the day, nor least by the youthful sovereign, who escaped from the intrigues of party, and the arduous duties of kingly business, to find never-failing amusement and exhilaration of spirit in his society. My father's impulses, never under his own control, perpetually led him into difficulties from which his ingenuity alone could extricate him; and the accumulating pile of debts of honour and of trade, which would have bent to earth any other, was supported by him with a light spirit and tameless hilarity; while his company was so necessary at the tables and assemblies of the rich, that his derelictions were considered venial, and he himself received with intoxicating flattery.

This kind of popularity, like every other, is evanescent: and the difficulties of every kind with which he had to contend increased in a frightful ratio compared with his small means of extricating himself. At such times the king, in his enthusiasm for him, would come to his relief, and then kindly take his friend to task; my father gave the best promises for amendment, but his social disposition, his craving for the usual diet of admiration, and more than all, the fiend of gambling, which fully possessed him, made his good resolutions transient, his promises vain. With the quick sensibility peculiar to his temperament, he perceived his power in the brilliant circle to be on the wane. The king married; and the haughty princess of Austria, who became, as queen of England, the head of fashion, looked with harsh eyes on his defects, and with contempt on the affection her royal husband entertained for him. My father felt that his fall was near; but so far from profiting by this last calm before the storm to save himself, he sought to forget anticipated evil by making still greater sacrifices to the deity of pleasure, deceitful and cruel arbiter of his destiny.

The king, who was a man of excellent dispositions, but easily led, had now become a willing disciple of his imperious consort. He was induced to look with extreme disapprobation, and at last with distaste, on my father's imprudence and follies. It is true that his presence dissipated these clouds; his warm-hearted frankness, brilliant sallies, and confiding demeanour were irresistible: it was only when at a distance, while still renewed tales of his errors were poured into his royal friend's ear, that he lost his influence. The queen's dexterous management was employed to prolong these absences, and gather together accusations. At length the king was brought to see in him a source of perpetual disquiet, knowing that he should pay for the short-lived pleasure of his society by tedious homilies, and more painful narrations of excesses, the truth of which he could not disprove. The result was, that he would make one more attempt to reclaim him, and in case of ill success, cast him off for ever.

Such a scene must have been one of deepest interest and high-wrought passion. A powerful king, conspicuous for a goodness which had heretofore made him meek, and now lofty in his admonitions, with alternate entreaty and reproof, besought his friend to attend to his real interests, resolutely to avoid those fascinations which in fact were fast deserting him, and to spend his great powers on a worthy field, in which he, his sovereign, would be his prop, his stay, and his pioneer. My father felt this kindness; for a moment ambitious dreams floated before him; and he thought that it would be well to exchange his present pursuits for nobler duties. With sincerity and fervour he gave the required promise: as a pledge of continued favour, he received from his royal master a sum of money to defray pressing debts, and enable him to enter under good auspices his new career. That very night, while yet full of gratitude and good resolves, this whole sum, and its amount doubled, was lost at the gaming-table. In his desire to repair his first losses, my father risked double stakes, and thus incurred a debt of honour he was wholly unable to pay. Ashamed to apply again to the king, he turned his back upon London, its false delights and clinging miseries; and, with poverty for his sole companion, buried himself in solitude among the hills and lakes of Cumberland. His wit, his bon mots, the record of his personal attractions, fascinating manners, and social talents, were long remembered and repeated from mouth to mouth. Ask where now was this favourite of fashion, this companion of the noble, this excelling beam, which gilt with alien splendour the assemblies of the courtly and the gay — you heard that he was under a cloud, a lost man; not one thought it belonged to him to repay pleasure by real services, or that his long reign of brilliant wit deserved a pension on retiring. The king lamented his absence; he loved to repeat his sayings, relate the adventures they had had together, and exalt his talents — but here ended his reminiscence.

Meanwhile my father, forgotten, could not forget. He repined for the loss of what was more necessary to him than air or food — the excitements of pleasure, the admiration of the noble, the luxurious and polished living of the great. A nervous fever was the consequence; during which he was nursed by the daughter of a poor cottager, under whose roof he lodged. She was lovely, gentle, and, above all, kind to him; nor can it afford astonishment, that the late idol of high-bred beauty should, even in a fallen state, appear a being of an elevated and wondrous nature to the lowly cottage-girl. The attachment between them led to the ill-fated marriage, of which I was the offspring.

Notwithstanding the tenderness and sweetness of my mother, her husband still deplored his degraded state. Unaccustomed to industry, he knew not in what way to contribute to the support of his increasing family. Sometimes he thought of applying to the king; pride and shame for a while withheld him; and, before his necessities became so imperious as to compel him to some kind of exertion, he died. For one brief interval before this catastrophe, he looked forward to the future, and contemplated with anguish the desolate situation in which his wife and children would be left. His last effort was a letter to the king, full of touching eloquence, and of occasional flashes of that brilliant spirit which was an integral part of him. He bequeathed his widow and orphans to the friendship of his royal master, and felt satisfied that, by this means, their prosperity was better assured in his death than in his life. This letter was enclosed to the care of a nobleman, who, he did not doubt, would perform the last and inexpensive office of placing it in the king's own hand.

He died in debt, and his little property was seized immediately by his creditors. My mother, penniless and burthened with two children, waited week after week, and month after month, in sickening expectation of a reply, which never came. She had no experience beyond her father's cottage; and the mansion of the lord of the manor was the chiefest type of grandeur she could conceive. During my father's life, she had been made familiar with the name of royalty and the courtly circle; but such things, ill according with her personal experience, appeared, after the loss of him who gave substance and reality to them, vague and fantastical. If, under any circumstances, she could have acquired sufficient courage to address the noble persons mentioned by her husband, the ill success of his own application caused her to banish the idea. She saw therefore no escape from dire penury: perpetual care, joined to sorrow for the loss of the wondrous being, whom she continued to contemplate with ardent admiration, hard labour, and naturally delicate health, at length released her from the sad continuity of want and misery.

The condition of her orphan children was peculiarly desolate. Her own father had been an emigrant from another part of the country, and had died long since: they had no one relation to take them by the hand; they were outcasts, paupers, unfriended beings, to whom the most scanty pittance was a matter of favour, and who were treated merely as children of peasants, yet poorer than the poorest, who, dying, had left them, a thankless bequest, to the close-handed charity of the land.

I, the elder of the two, was five years old when my mother died. A remembrance of the discourses of my parents, and the communications which my mother endeavoured to impress upon me concerning my father's friends, in slight hope that I might one day derive benefit from the knowledge, floated like an indistinct dream through my brain. I conceived that I was different and superior to my protectors and companions, but I knew not how or wherefore. The sense of injury, associated with the name of king and noble, clung to me; but I could draw no conclusions from such feelings, to serve as a guide to action. My first real knowledge of myself was as an unprotected orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland. I was in the service of a farmer; and with crook in hand, my dog at my side, I shepherded a numerous flock on the near uplands. I cannot say much in praise of such a life; and its pains far exceeded its pleasures. There was freedom in it, a companionship with nature, and a reckless loneliness; but these, romantic as they were, did not accord with the love of action and desire of human sympathy, characteristic of youth. Neither the care of my flock, nor the change of seasons, were sufficient to tame my eager spirit; my out-door life and unemployed time were the temptations that led me early into lawless habits. I associated with others friendless like myself; I formed them into a band, I was their chief and captain. All shepherd-boys alike, while our flocks were spread over the pastures, we schemed and executed many a mischievous prank, which drew on us the anger and revenge of the rustics. I was the leader and protector of my comrades, and as I became distinguished among them, their misdeeds were usually visited upon me. But while I endured punishment and pain in their defence with the spirit of an hero, I claimed as my reward their praise and obedience.

In such a school my disposition became rugged, but firm. The appetite for admiration and small capacity for self-control which I inherited from my father, nursed by adversity, made me daring and reckless. I was rough as the elements, and unlearned as the animals I tended. I often compared myself to them, and finding that my chief superiority consisted in power, I soon persuaded myself that it was in power only that I was inferior to the chiefest potentates of the earth. Thus untaught in refined philosophy, and pursued by a restless feeling of degradation from my true station in society, I wandered among the hills of civilized England as uncouth a savage as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome. I owned but one law, it was that of the strongest, and my greatest deed of virtue was never to submit.

Yet let me a little retract from this sentence I have passed on myself. My mother, when dying, had, in addition to her other half-forgotten and misapplied lessons, committed, with solemn exhortation, her other child to my fraternal guardianship; and this one duty I performed to the best of my ability, with all the zeal and affection of which my nature was capable. My sister was three years younger than myself; I had nursed her as an infant, and when the difference of our sexes, by giving us various occupations, in a great measure divided us, yet she continued to be the object of my careful love. Orphans, in the fullest sense of the term, we were poorest among the poor, and despised among the unhonoured. If my daring and courage obtained for me a kind of respectful aversion, her youth and sex, since they did not excite tenderness, by proving her to be weak, were the causes of numberless mortifications to her; and her own disposition was not so constituted as to diminish the evil effects of her lowly station.

She was a singular being, and, like me, inherited much of the peculiar disposition of our father. Her countenance was all expression; her eyes were not dark, but impenetrably deep; you seemed to discover space after space in their intellectual glance, and to feel that the soul which was their soul, comprehended an universe of thought in its ken. She was pale and fair, and her golden hair clustered on her temples, contrasting its rich hue with the living marble beneath. Her coarse peasant-dress, little consonant apparently with the refinement of feeling which her face expressed, yet in a strange manner accorded with it. She was like one of Guido’s saints, with heaven in her heart and in her look, so that when you saw her you only thought of that within, and costume and even feature were secondary to the mind that beamed in her countenance.

Yet though lovely and full of noble feeling, my poor Perdita (for this was the fanciful name my sister had received from her dying parent), was not altogether saintly in her disposition. Her manners were cold and repulsive. If she had been nurtured by those who had regarded her with affection, she might have been different; but unloved and neglected, she repaid want of kindness with distrust and silence. She was submissive to those who held authority over her, but a perpetual cloud dwelt on her brow; she looked as if she expected enmity from every one who approached her, and her actions were instigated by the same feeling. All the time she could command she spent in solitude. She would ramble to the most unfrequented places, and scale dangerous heights, that in those unvisited spots she might wrap herself in loneliness. Often she passed whole hours walking up and down the paths of the woods; she wove garlands of flowers and ivy, or watched the flickering of the shadows and glancing of the leaves; sometimes she sat beside a stream, and as her thoughts paused, threw flowers or pebbles into the waters, watching how those swam and these sank; or she would set afloat boats formed of bark of trees or leaves, with a feather for a sail, and intensely watch the navigation of her craft among the rapids and shallows of the brook. Meanwhile her active fancy wove a thousand combinations; she dreamt "of moving accidents by flood and field" — she lost herself delightedly in these self-created wanderings, and returned with unwilling spirit to the dull detail of common life.

Poverty was the cloud that veiled her excellencies, and all that was good in her seemed about to perish from want of the genial dew of affection. She had not even the same advantage as I in the recollection of her parents; she clung to me, her brother, as her only friend, but her alliance with me completed the distaste that her protectors felt for her; and every error was magnified by them into crimes. If she had been bred in that sphere of life to which by inheritance the delicate framework of her mind and person was adapted, she would have been the object almost of adoration, for her virtues were as eminent as her defects. All the genius that ennobled the blood of her father illustrated hers; a generous tide flowed in her veins; artifice, envy, or meanness, were at the antipodes of her nature; her countenance, when enlightened by amiable feeling, might have belonged to a queen of nations; her eyes were bright; her look fearless.

Although by our situation and dispositions we were almost equally cut off from the usual forms of social intercourse, we formed a strong contrast to each other. I always required the stimulants of companionship and applause. Perdita was all-sufficient to herself. Notwithstanding my lawless habits, my disposition was sociable, hers recluse. My life was spent among tangible realities, hers was a dream. I might be said even to love my enemies, since by exciting me they in a sort bestowed happiness upon me; Perdita almost disliked her friends, for they interfered with her visionary moods. All my feelings, even of exultation and triumph, were changed to bitterness, if unparticipated; Perdita, even in joy, fled to loneliness, and could go on from day to day, neither expressing her emotions, nor seeking a fellow-feeling in another mind. Nay, she could love and dwell with tenderness on the look and voice of her friend, while her demeanour expressed the coldest reserve. A sensation with her became a sentiment, and she never spoke until she had mingled her perceptions of outward objects with others which were the native growth of her own mind. She was like a fruitful soil that imbibed the airs and dews of heaven, and gave them forth again to light in loveliest forms of fruits and flowers; but then she was often dark and rugged as that soil, raked up, and new sown with unseen seed.

She dwelt in a cottage whose trim grass-plat sloped down to the waters of the lake of Ulswater; a beech wood stretched up the hill behind, and a purling brook gently falling from the acclivity ran through poplar-shaded banks into the lake. I lived with a farmer whose house was built higher up among the hills: a dark crag rose behind it, and, exposed to the north, the snow lay in its crevices the summer through. Before dawn I led my flock to the sheep-walks, and guarded them through the day. It was a life of toil; for rain and cold were more frequent than sunshine; but it was my pride to contemn the elements. My trusty dog watched the sheep as I slipped away to the rendezvous of my comrades, and thence to the accomplishment of our schemes. At noon we met again, and we threw away in contempt our peasant fare, as we built our fire-place and kindled the cheering blaze destined to cook the game stolen from the neighbouring preserves. Then came the tale of hair-breadth escapes, combats with dogs, ambush and flight, as gypsy-like we encompassed our pot. The search after a stray lamb, or the devices by which we elude or endeavoured to elude punishment, filled up the hours of afternoon; in the evening my flock went to its fold, and I to my sister.

It was seldom indeed that we escaped, to use an old-fashioned phrase, scot free. Our dainty fare was often exchanged for blows and imprisonment. Once, when thirteen years of age, I was sent for a month to the county jail. I came out, my morals unimproved, my hatred to my oppressors increased tenfold. Bread and water did not tame my blood, nor solitary confinement inspire me with gentle thoughts. I was angry, impatient, miserable; my only happy hours were those during which I devised schemes of revenge; these were perfected in my forced solitude, so that during the whole of the following season, and I was freed early in September, I never failed to provide excellent and plenteous fare for myself and my comrades. This was a glorious winter. The sharp frost and heavy snows tamed the animals, and kept the country gentlemen by their firesides; we got more game than we could eat, and my faithful dog grew sleek upon our refuse.

Thus years passed on; and years only added fresh love of freedom, and contempt for all that was not as wild and rude as myself. At the age of sixteen I had shot up in appearance to man's estate; I was tall and athletic; I was practised to feats of strength, and inured to the inclemency of the elements. My skin was embrowned by the sun; my step was firm with conscious power. I feared no man, and loved none. In after life I looked back with wonder to what I then was; how utterly worthless I should have become if I had pursued my lawless career. My life was like that of an animal, and my mind was in danger of degenerating into that which informs brute nature. Until now, my savage habits had done me no radical mischief; my physical powers had grown up and flourished under their influence, and my mind, undergoing the same discipline, was imbued with all the hardy virtues. But now my boasted independence was daily instigating me to acts of tyranny, and freedom was becoming licentiousness. I stood on the brink of manhood; passions, strong as the trees of a forest, had already taken root within me, and were about to shadow with their noxious overgrowth, my path of life.

I panted for enterprises beyond my childish exploits, and formed distempered dreams of future action. I avoided my ancient comrades, and I soon lost them. They arrived at the age when they were sent to fulfil their destined situations in life; while I, an outcast, with none to lead or drive me forward, paused. The old began to point at me as an example, the young to wonder at me as a being distinct from themselves; I hated them, and began, last and worst degradation, to hate myself. I clung to my ferocious habits, yet half despised them; I continued my war against civilization, and yet entertained a wish to belong to it.

I revolved again and again all that I remembered my mother to have told me of my father's former life; I contemplated the few relics I possessed belonging to him, which spoke of greater refinement than could be found among the mountain cottages; but nothing in all this served as a guide to lead me to another and pleasanter way of life. My father had been connected with nobles, but all I knew of such connection was subsequent neglect. The name of the king, — he to whom my dying father had addressed his latest prayers, and who had barbarously slighted them, was associated only with the ideas of unkindness, injustice, and consequent resentment. I was born for something greater than I was — and greater I would become; but greatness, at least to my distorted perceptions, was no necessary associate of goodness, and my wild thoughts were unchecked by moral considerations when they rioted in dreams of distinction. Thus I stood upon a pinnacle, a sea of evil rolled at my feet; I was about to precipitate myself into it, and rush like a torrent over all obstructions to the object of my wishes — when a stranger influence came over the current of my fortunes, and changed their boisterous course to what was in comparison like the gentle meanderings of a meadow-encircling streamlet.

CHAPTER II

I lived far from the busy haunts of men, and the rumour of wars or political changes came worn to a mere sound, to our mountain abodes. England had been the scene of momentous struggles, during my early boyhood. In the year 2073, the last of its kings, the ancient friend of my father, had abdicated in compliance with the gentle force of the remonstrances of his subjects, and a republic was instituted. Large estates were secured to the dethroned monarch and his family; he received the title of Earl of Windsor, and Windsor Castle, an ancient royalty, with its wide demesnes were a part of his allotted wealth. He died soon after, leaving two children, a son and a daughter.

The ex-queen, a princess of the house of Austria, had long impelled her husband to withstand the necessity of the times. She was haughty and fearless; she cherished a love of power, and a bitter contempt for him who had despoiled himself of a kingdom. For her children's sake alone she consented to remain, shorn of regality, a member of the English republic. When she became a widow, she turned all her thoughts to the educating her son Adrian, second Earl of Windsor, so as to accomplish her ambitious ends; and with his mother's milk he imbibed, and was intended to grow up in the steady purpose of re-acquiring his lost crown. Adrian was now fifteen years of age. He was addicted to study, and imbued beyond his years with learning and talent: report said that he had already begun to thwart his mother's views, and to entertain republican principles. However this might be, the haughty Countess entrusted none with the secrets of her family-tuition. Adrian was bred up in solitude, and kept apart from the natural companions of his age and rank. Some unknown circumstance now induced his mother to send him from under her immediate tutelage; and we heard that he was about to visit Cumberland. A thousand tales were rife, explanatory of the Countess of Windsor's conduct; none true probably; but each day it became more certain that we should have the noble scion of the late regal house of England among us.

There was a large estate with a mansion attached to it, belonging to this family, at Ulswater. A large park was one of its appendages, laid out with great taste, and plentifully stocked with game. I had often made depredations on these preserves; and the neglected state of the property facilitated my incursions. When it was decided that the young Earl of Windsor should visit Cumberland, workmen arrived to put the house and grounds in order for his reception. The apartments were restored to their pristine splendour, and the park, all disrepairs restored, was guarded with unusual care.

I was beyond measure disturbed by this intelligence. It roused all my dormant recollections, my suspended sentiments of injury, and gave rise to the new one of revenge. I could no longer attend to my occupations; all my plans and devices were forgotten; I seemed about to begin life anew, and that under no good auspices. The tug of war, I thought, was now to begin. He would come triumphantly to the district to which my parent had fled broken-hearted; he would find the ill-fated offspring, bequeathed with such vain confidence to his royal father, miserable paupers. That he should know of our existence, and treat us, near at hand, with the same contumely which his father had practised in distance and absence, appeared to me the certain consequence of all that had gone before. Thus then I should meet this titled stripling — the son of my father's friend. He would be hedged in by servants; nobles, and the sons of nobles, were his companions; all England rang with his name; and his coming, like a thunderstorm, was heard from far: while I, unlettered and unfashioned, should, if I came in contact with him, in the judgment of his courtly followers, bear evidence in my very person to the propriety of that ingratitude which had made me the degraded being I appeared.

With my mind fully occupied by these ideas, I might be said as if fascinated, to haunt the destined abode of the young Earl. I watched the progress of the improvements, and stood by the unlading waggons, as various articles of luxury, brought from London, were taken forth and conveyed into the mansion. It was part of the Ex-Queen's plan, to surround her son with princely magnificence. I beheld rich carpets and silken hangings, ornaments of gold, richly embossed metals, emblazoned furniture, and all the appendages of high rank arranged, so that nothing but what was regal in splendour should reach the eye of one of royal descent. I looked on these; I turned my gaze to my own mean dress. — Whence sprung this difference? Whence but from ingratitude, from falsehood, from a dereliction on the part of the prince's father, of all noble sympathy and generous feeling. Doubtless, he also, whose blood received a mingling tide from his proud mother — he, the acknowledged focus of the kingdom's wealth and nobility, had been taught to repeat my father's name with disdain, and to scoff at my just claims to protection. I strove to think that all this grandeur was but more glaring infamy, and that, by planting his gold-enwoven flag beside my tarnished and tattered banner, he proclaimed not his superiority, but his debasement. Yet I envied him. His stud of beautiful horses, his arms of costly workmanship, the praise that attended him, the adoration, ready servitor, high place and high esteem, — I considered them as forcibly wrenched from me, and envied them all with novel and tormenting bitterness.

To crown my vexation of spirit, Perdita, the visionary Perdita, seemed to awake to real life with transport, when she told me that the Earl of Windsor was about to arrive.

"And this pleases you?" I observed, moodily.

"Indeed it does, Lionel," she replied; "I quite long to see him; he is the descendant of our kings, the first noble of the land: every one admires and loves him, and they say that his rank is his least merit; he is generous, brave, and affable."

"You have learnt a pretty lesson, Perdita," said I, "and repeat it so literally, that you forget the while the proofs we have of the Earl's virtues; his generosity to us is manifest in our plenty, his bravery in the protection he affords us, his affability in the notice he takes of us. His rank his least merit, do you say? Why, all his virtues are derived from his station only; because he is rich, he is called generous; because he is powerful, brave; because he is well served, he is affable. Let them call him so, let all England believe him to be thus — we know him — he is our enemy — our penurious, dastardly, arrogant enemy; if he were gifted with one particle of the virtues you call his, he would do justly by us, if it were only to show, that if he must strike, it should not be a fallen foe. His father injured my father — his father, unassailable on his throne, dared despise him who only stooped beneath himself, when he deigned to associate with the royal ingrate. We, descendants from the one and the other, must be enemies also. He shall find that I can feel my injuries; he shall learn to dread my revenge!"

A few days after he arrived. Every inhabitant of the most miserable cottage, went to swell the stream of population that poured forth to meet him: even Perdita, in spite of my late philippic, crept near the highway, to behold this idol of all hearts. I, driven half mad, as I met party after party of the country people, in their holiday best, descending the hills, escaped to their cloud-veiled summits, and looking on the sterile rocks about me, exclaimed—"*They* do not cry, long live the Earl!" Nor, when night came, accompanied by drizzling rain and cold, would I return home; for I knew that each cottage rang with the praises of Adrian; as I felt my limbs grow numb and chill, my pain served as food for my insane aversion; nay, I almost triumphed in it, since it seemed to afford me reason and excuse for my hatred of my unheeding adversary. All was attributed to him, for I confounded so entirely the idea of father and son, that I forgot that the latter might be wholly unconscious of his parent's neglect of us; and as I struck my aching head with my hand, I cried: "He shall hear of this! I will be revenged! I will not suffer like a spaniel! He shall know, beggar and friendless as I am, that I will not tamely submit to injury!"

Each day, each hour added to these exaggerated wrongs. His praises were so many adder's stings infixed in my vulnerable breast. If I saw him at a distance, riding a beautiful horse, my blood boiled with rage; the air seemed poisoned by his presence, and my very native English was changed to a vile jargon, since every phrase I heard was coupled with his name and honour. I panted to relieve this painful heart-burning by some misdeed that should rouse him to a sense of my antipathy. It was the height of his offending, that he should occasion in me such intolerable sensations, and not deign himself to afford any demonstration that he was aware that I even lived to feel them.

It soon became known that Adrian took great delight in his park and preserves. He never sported, but spent hours in watching the tribes of lovely and almost tame animals with which it was stocked, and ordered that greater care should be taken of them than ever. Here was an opening for my plans of offence, and I made use of it with all the brute impetuosity I derived from my active mode of life. I proposed the enterprise of poaching on his demesne to my few remaining comrades, who were the most determined and lawless of the crew; but they all shrunk from the peril; so I was left to achieve my revenge myself. At first my exploits were unperceived; I increased in daring; footsteps on the dewy grass, torn boughs, and marks of slaughter, at length betrayed me to the game-keepers. They kept better watch; I was taken, and sent to prison. I entered its gloomy walls in a fit of triumphant ecstasy: “He feels me now,” I cried, “and shall, again and again!” — I passed but one day in confinement; in the evening I was liberated, as I was told, by the order of the Earl himself. This news precipitated me from my self-raised pinnacle of honour. He despises me, I thought; but he shall learn that I despise him, and hold in equal contempt his punishments and his clemency. On the second night after my release, I was again taken by the gamekeepers — again imprisoned, and again released; and again, such was my pertinacity, did the fourth night find me in the forbidden park. The gamekeepers were more enraged than their lord by my obstinacy. They had received orders that if I were again taken, I should be brought to the Earl; and his lenity made them expect a conclusion which they considered ill befitting my crime. One of them, who had been from the first the leader among those who had seized me, resolved to satisfy his own resentment, before he made me over to the higher powers.

The late setting of the moon, and the extreme caution I was obliged to use in this my third expedition, consumed so much time, that something like a qualm of fear came over me when I perceived dark night yield to twilight. I crept along by the fern, on my hands and knees, seeking the shadowy coverts of the underwood, while the birds awoke with unwelcome song above, and the fresh morning wind, playing among the boughs, made me suspect a footfall at each turn. My heart beat quick as I approached the palings; my hand was on one of them, a leap would take me to the other side, when two keepers sprang from an ambush upon me: one knocked me down, and proceeded to inflict a severe horse-whipping. I started up — a knife was in my grasp; I made a plunge at his raised right arm, and inflicted a deep, wide wound in his hand. The rage and yells of the wounded man, the howling execrations of his comrade, which I answered with equal bitterness and fury, echoed through the dell; morning broke more and more, ill accordant in its celestial beauty with our brute and noisy contest. I and my enemy were still struggling, when the wounded man exclaimed, “The Earl!” I sprang out of the herculean hold of the keeper, panting from my exertions; I cast furious glances on my persecutors, and placing myself with my back to a tree, resolved to defend myself to the last. My garments were torn, and they, as well as my hands, were stained with the blood of the man

I had wounded; one hand grasped the dead birds — my hard-earned prey, the other held the knife; my hair was matted; my face besmeared with the same guilty signs that bore witness against me on the dripping instrument I clenched; my whole appearance was haggard and squalid. Tall and muscular as I was in form, I must have looked like, what indeed I was, the merest ruffian that ever trod the earth.

The name of the Earl startled me, and caused all the indignant blood that warmed my heart to rush into my cheeks; I had never seen him before; I figured to myself a haughty, assuming youth, who would take me to task, if he deigned to speak to me, with all the arrogance of superiority. My reply was ready; a reproach I deemed calculated to sting his very heart. He came up the while; and his appearance blew aside, with gentle western breath, my cloudy wrath: a tall, slim, fair boy, with a physiognomy expressive of the excess of sensibility and refinement stood before me; the morning sunbeams tinged with gold his silken hair, and spread light and glory over his beaming countenance. “How is this?” he cried. The men eagerly began their defence; he put them aside, saying, “Two of you at once on a mere lad — for shame!” He came up to me: “Verney,” he cried, “Lionel Verney, do we meet thus for the first time? We were born to be friends to each other; and though ill fortune has divided us, will you not acknowledge the hereditary bond of friendship which I trust will hereafter unite us?”

As he spoke, his earnest eyes, fixed on me, seemed to read my very soul: my heart, my savage revengeful heart, felt the influence of sweet benignity sink upon it; while his thrilling voice, like sweetest melody, awoke a mute echo within me, stirring to its depths the life-blood in my frame. I desired to reply, to acknowledge his goodness, accept his proffered friendship; but words, fitting words, were not afforded to the rough mountaineer; I would have held out my hand, but its guilty stain restrained me. Adrian took pity on my faltering mien: “Come with me,” he said, “I have much to say to you; come home with me — you know who I am?”

“Yes,” I exclaimed, “I do believe that I now know you, and that you will pardon my mistakes — my crime.”

Adrian smiled gently; and after giving his orders to the gamekeepers, he came up to me; putting his arm in mine, we walked together to the mansion.

It was not his rank — after all that I have said, surely it will not be suspected that it was Adrian’s rank, that, from the first, subdued my heart of hearts, and laid my entire spirit prostrate before him. Nor was it I alone who felt thus intimately his perfections. His sensibility and courtesy fascinated every one. His vivacity, intelligence, and active spirit of benevolence, completed the conquest. Even at this early age, he was deep read and imbued with the spirit of high philosophy. This spirit gave a tone of irresistible persuasion to his intercourse with others, so that he seemed like an inspired musician, who struck, with unerring skill, the "lyre of mind," and produced thence divine harmony. In person, he hardly appeared of this world; his slight frame was over-informed by the soul that dwelt within; he was all mind; "Man but a rush against" his breast, and it would have conquered his strength; but the might of his smile would have tamed an hungry lion, or caused a legion of armed men to lay their weapons at his feet.

I spent the day with him. At first he did not recur to the past, or indeed to any personal occurrences. He wished probably to inspire me with confidence, and give me time to gather together my scattered thoughts. He talked of general subjects, and gave me ideas I had never before conceived. We sat in his library, and he spoke of the old Greek sages, and of the power which they had acquired over the minds of men, through the force of love and wisdom only. The room was decorated with the busts of many of them, and he described their characters to me. As he spoke, I felt subject to him; and all my boasted pride and strength were subdued by the honeyed accents of this blue-eyed boy. The trim and paled demesne of civilization, which I had before regarded from my wild jungle as inaccessible, had its wicket opened by him; I stepped within, and felt, as I entered, that I trod my native soil.

As evening came on, he reverted to the past. "I have a tale to relate," he said, "and much explanation to give concerning the past; perhaps you can assist me to curtail it. Do you remember your father? I had never the happiness of seeing him, but his name is one of my earliest recollections: he stands written in my mind's tablets as the type of all that was gallant, amiable, and fascinating in man. His wit was not more conspicuous than the overflowing goodness of his heart, which he poured in such full measure on his friends, as to leave, alas! small remnant for himself."

Encouraged by this encomium, I proceeded, in answer to his inquiries, to relate what I remembered of my parent; and he gave an account of those circumstances which had brought about a neglect of my father's testamentary letter. When, in after times, Adrian's father, then king of England, felt his situation become more perilous, his line of conduct more embarrassed, again and again he wished for his early friend, who might stand a mound against the impetuous anger of his queen, a mediator between him and the parliament. From the time that he had quitted London, on the fatal night of his defeat at the gaming-table, the king had received no tidings concerning him; and when, after the lapse of years, he exerted himself to discover him, every trace was lost. With fonder regret than ever, he clung to his memory; and gave it in charge to his son, if ever he should meet this valued friend, in his name to bestow every succour, and to assure him that, to the last, his attachment survived separation and silence.

A short time before Adrian's visit to Cumberland, the heir of the nobleman to whom my father had confided his last appeal to his royal master, put this letter, its seal unbroken, into the young Earl's hands. It had been found cast aside with a mass of papers of old date, and accident alone brought it to light. Adrian read it with deep interest; and found there that living spirit of genius and wit he had so often heard commemorated. He discovered the name of the spot whither my father had retreated, and where he died; he learnt the existence of his orphan children; and during the short interval between his arrival at Ulswater and our meeting in the park, he had been occupied in making inquiries concerning us, and arranging a variety of plans for our benefit, preliminary to his introducing himself to our notice.

The mode in which he spoke of my father was gratifying to my vanity; the veil which he delicately cast over his benevolence, in alleging a duteous fulfilment of the king's latest will, was soothing to my pride. Other feelings, less ambiguous, were called into play by his conciliating manner and the generous warmth of his expressions, respect rarely before experienced, admiration, and love — he had touched my rocky heart with his magic power, and the stream of affection gushed forth, imperishable and pure. In the evening we parted; he pressed my hand: "We shall meet again; come to me to-morrow." I clasped that kind hand; I tried to answer; a fervent "God bless you!" was all my ignorance could frame of speech, and I darted away, oppressed by my new emotions.

I could not rest. I sought the hills; a west wind swept them, and the stars glittered above. I ran on, careless of outward objects, but trying to master the struggling spirit within me by means of bodily fatigue. “This,” I thought, “is power! Not to be strong of limb, hard of heart, ferocious, and daring; but kind, compassionate and soft.” — Stopping short, I clasped my hands, and with the fervour of a new proselyte, cried, “Doubt me not, Adrian, I also will become wise and good!” and then quite overcome, I wept aloud.

As this gust of passion passed from me, I felt more composed. I lay on the ground, and giving the reins to my thoughts, repassed in my mind my former life; and began, fold by fold, to unwind the many errors of my heart, and to discover how brutish, savage, and worthless I had hitherto been. I could not however at that time feel remorse, for methought I was born anew; my soul threw off the burthen of past sin, to commence a new career in innocence and love. Nothing harsh or rough remained to jar with the soft feelings which the transactions of the day had inspired; I was as a child lisping its devotions after its mother, and my plastic soul was remoulded by a master hand, which I neither desired nor was able to resist.

This was the first commencement of my friendship with Adrian, and I must commemorate this day as the most fortunate of my life. I now began to be human. I was admitted within that sacred boundary which divides the intellectual and moral nature of man from that which characterises animals. My best feelings were called into play to give fitting responses to the generosity, wisdom, and amenity of my new friend. He, with a noble goodness all his own, took infinite delight in bestowing to prodigality the treasures of his mind and fortune on the long-neglected son of his father’s friend, the offspring of that gifted being whose excellencies and talents he had heard commemorated from infancy.

After his abdication the late king had retreated from the sphere of politics, yet his domestic circle afforded him small content. The ex-queen had none of the virtues of domestic life, and those of courage and daring which she possessed were rendered null by the secession of her husband: she despised him, and did not care to conceal her sentiments. The king had, in compliance with her exactions, cast off his old friends, but he had acquired no new ones under her guidance. In this dearth of sympathy, he had recourse to his almost infant son; and the early development of talent and sensibility rendered Adrian no unfitting depository of his father’s confidence. He was never weary of listening to the latter’s often repeated accounts of old times, in which my father had played a distinguished part; his keen remarks were repeated to the boy, and remembered by him; his wit, his fascinations, his very faults were hallowed by the regret of affection; his loss was sincerely deplored. Even the queen's dislike of the favourite was ineffectual to deprive him of his son's admiration: it was bitter, sarcastic, contemptuous — but as she bestowed her heavy censure alike on his virtues as his errors, on his devoted friendship and his ill-bestowed loves, on his disinterestedness and his prodigality, on his prepossessing grace of manner, and the facility with which he yielded to temptation, her double shot proved too heavy, and fell short of the mark. Nor did her angry dislike prevent Adrian from imaging my father, as he had said, the type of all that was gallant, amiable, and fascinating in man. It was not strange therefore, that when he heard of the existence of the offspring of this celebrated person, he should have formed the plan of bestowing on them all the advantages his rank made him rich to afford. When he found me a vagabond shepherd of the hills, a poacher, an unlettered savage, still his kindness did not fail. In addition to the opinion he entertained that his father was to a degree culpable of neglect towards us, and that he was bound to every possible reparation, he was pleased to say that under all my ruggedness there glimmered forth an elevation of spirit, which could be distinguished from mere animal courage, and that I inherited a similarity of countenance to my father, which gave proof that all his virtues and talents had not died with him. Whatever those might be which descended to me, my noble young friend resolved should not be lost for want of culture.

Acting upon this plan in our subsequent intercourse, he led me to wish to participate in that cultivation which graced his own intellect. My active mind, when once it seized upon this new idea, fastened on it with extreme avidity. At first it was the great object of my ambition to rival the merits of my father, and render myself worthy of the friendship of Adrian. But curiosity soon awoke, and an earnest love of knowledge, which caused me to pass days and nights in reading and study. I was already well acquainted with what I may term the panorama of nature, the change of seasons, and the various appearances of heaven and earth. But I was at once startled and enchanted by my sudden extension of vision, when the curtain, which had been drawn before the intellectual world, was withdrawn, and I saw the universe, not only as it presented itself to my outward senses, but as it had appeared to the wisest among men. Poetry and its creations, philosophy and its researches and classifications, alike awoke the sleeping ideas in my mind, and gave me new ones.

I felt as the sailor, who from the topmast first discovered the shore of America; and like him I hastened to tell my companions of my discoveries in unknown regions. But I was unable to excite in any breast the same craving appetite for knowledge that existed in mine. Even Perdita was unable to understand me. I had lived in what is generally called the world of reality, and it was awakening to a new country to find that there was a deeper meaning in all I saw, besides that which my eyes conveyed to me. The visionary Perdita beheld in all this only a new gloss upon an old reading, and her own was sufficiently inexhaustible to content her. She listened to me as she had done to the narration of my adventures, and sometimes took an interest in this species of information; but she did not, as I did, look on it as an integral part of her being, which having obtained, I could no more put off than the universal sense of touch.

We both agreed in loving Adrian: although she not having yet escaped from childhood could not appreciate as I did the extent of his merits, or feel the same sympathy in his pursuits and opinions. I was for ever with him. There was a sensibility and sweetness in his disposition, that gave a tender and unearthly tone to our converse. Then he was gay as a lark carolling from its skiey tower, soaring in thought as an eagle, innocent as the mild-eyed dove. He could dispel the seriousness of Perdita, and take the sting from the torturing activity of my nature. I looked back to my restless desires and painful struggles with my fellow beings as to a troubled dream, and felt myself as much changed as if I had transmigrated into another form, whose fresh sensorium and mechanism of nerves had altered the reflection of the apparent universe in the mirror of mind. But it was not so; I was the same in strength, in earnest craving for sympathy, in my yearning for active exertion. My manly virtues did not desert me, for the witch Urania spared the locks of Sampson, while he reposed at her feet; but all was softened and humanized. Nor did Adrian instruct me only in the cold truths of history and philosophy. At the same time that he taught me by their means to subdue my own reckless and uncultured spirit, he opened to my view the living page of his own heart, and gave me to feel and understand its wondrous character.

The ex-queen of England had, even during infancy, endeavoured to implant daring and ambitious designs in the mind of her son. She saw that he was endowed with genius and surpassing talent; these she cultivated for the sake of afterwards using them for the furtherance of her own views. She encouraged his craving for knowledge and his impetuous courage; she even tolerated his tameless love of freedom, under the hope that this would, as is too often the case, lead to a passion for command. She endeavoured to bring him up in a sense of resentment towards, and a desire to revenge himself upon, those who had been instrumental in bringing about his father's abdication. In this she did not succeed. The accounts furnished him, however distorted, of a great and wise nation asserting its right to govern itself, excited his admiration: in early days he became a republican from principle. Still his mother did not despair. To the love of rule and haughty pride of birth she added determined ambition, patience, and self-control. She devoted herself to the study of her son's disposition. By the application of praise, censure, and exhortation, she tried to seek and strike the fitting chords; and though the melody that followed her touch seemed discord to her, she built her hopes on his talents, and felt sure that she would at last win him. The kind of banishment he now experienced arose from other causes.

The ex-queen had also a daughter, now twelve years of age; his fairy sister, Adrian was wont to call her; a lovely, animated, little thing, all sensibility and truth. With these, her children, the noble widow constantly resided at Windsor; and admitted no visitors, except her own partisans, travellers from her native Germany, and a few of the foreign ministers. Among these, and highly distinguished by her, was Prince Zaimi, ambassador to England from the free States of Greece; and his daughter, the young Princess Evadne, passed much of her time at Windsor Castle. In company with this sprightly and clever Greek girl, the Countess would relax from her usual state. Her views with regard to her own children, placed all her words and actions relative to *them* under restraint: but Evadne was a plaything she could in no way fear; nor were her talents and vivacity slight alleviations to the monotony of the Countess's life.

Evadne was eighteen years of age. Although they spent much time together at Windsor, the extreme youth of Adrian prevented any suspicion as to the nature of their intercourse. But he was ardent and tender of heart beyond the common nature of man, and had already learnt to love, while the beauteous Greek smiled benignantly on the boy. It was strange to me, who, though older than Adrian, had never loved, to witness the whole heart's sacrifice of my friend. There was neither jealousy, inquietude, or mistrust in his sentiment; it was devotion and faith. His life was swallowed up in the existence of his beloved; and his heart beat only in unison with the pulsations that vivified hers. This was the secret law of his life — he loved and was beloved. The universe was to him a dwelling, to inhabit with his chosen one; and not either a scheme of society or an enchainment of events, that could impart to him either happiness or misery. What, though life and the system of social intercourse were a wilderness, a tiger-haunted jungle! Through the midst of its errors, in the depths of its savage recesses, there was a disentangled and flowery pathway, through which they might journey in safety and delight. Their track would be like the passage of the Red Sea, which they might traverse with unwet feet, though a wall of destruction were impending on either side.

Alas! why must I record the hapless delusion of this matchless specimen of humanity? What is there in our nature that is for ever urging us on towards pain and misery? We are not formed for enjoyment; and, however we may be attuned to the reception of pleasurable emotion, disappointment is the never-failing pilot of our life's bark, and ruthlessly carries us on to the shoals. Who was better framed than this highly-gifted youth to love and be beloved, and to reap unalienable joy from an unblamed passion? If his heart had slept but a few years longer, he might have been saved; but it awoke in its infancy; it had power, but no knowledge; and it was ruined, even as a too early-blowing bud is nipped by the killing frost.

I did not accuse Evadne of hypocrisy or a wish to deceive her lover; but the first letter that I saw of hers convinced me that she did not love him; it was written with elegance, and, foreigner as she was, with great command of language. The hand-writing itself was exquisitely beautiful; there was something in her very paper and its folds, which even I, who did not love, and was withal unskilled in such matters, could discern as being tasteful. There was much kindness, gratitude, and sweetness in her expression, but no love. Evadne was two years older than Adrian; and who, at eighteen, ever loved one so much their junior? I compared her placid epistles with the burning ones of Adrian. His soul seemed to distil itself into the words he wrote; and they breathed on the paper, bearing with them a portion of the life of love, which was his life. The very writing used to exhaust him; and he would weep over them, merely from the excess of emotion they awakened in his heart.

Adrian’s soul was painted in his countenance, and concealment or deceit were at the antipodes to the dreadless frankness of his nature. Evadne made it her earnest request that the tale of their loves should not be revealed to his mother; and after for a while contesting the point, he yielded it to her. A vain concession; his demeanour quickly betrayed his secret to the quick eyes of the ex-queen. With the same wary prudence that characterised her whole conduct, she concealed her discovery, but hastened to remove her son from the sphere of the attractive Greek. He was sent to Cumberland; but the plan of correspondence between the lovers, arranged by Evadne, was effectually hidden from her. Thus the absence of Adrian, concerted for the purpose of separating, united them in firmer bonds than ever. To me he discoursed ceaselessly of his beloved Ionian. Her country, its ancient annals, its late memorable struggles, were all made to partake in her glory and excellence. He submitted to be away from her, because she commanded this submission; but for her influence, he would have declared his attachment before all England, and resisted, with unshaken constancy, his mother’s opposition. Evadne’s feminine prudence perceived how useless any assertion of his resolves would be, till added years gave weight to his power. Perhaps there was besides a lurking dislike to bind herself in the face of the world to one whom she did not love — not love, at least, with that passionate enthusiasm which her heart told her she might one day feel towards another. He obeyed her injunctions, and passed a year in exile in Cumberland.

CHAPTER III

Happy, thrice happy, were the months, and weeks, and hours of that year. Friendship, hand in hand with admiration, tenderness and respect, built a bower of delight in my heart, late rough as an untrod wild in America, as the homeless wind or herbless sea. Insatiate thirst for knowledge, and boundless affection for Adrian, combined to keep both my heart and understanding occupied, and I was consequently happy. What happiness is so true and unclouded, as the overflowing and talkative delight of young people. In our boat, upon my native lake, beside the streams and the pale bordering poplars — in valley and over hill, my crook thrown aside, a nobler flock to tend than silly sheep, even a flock of new-born ideas, I read or listened to Adrian; and his discourse, whether it concerned his love or his theories for the improvement of man, alike entranced me. Sometimes my lawless mood would return, my love of peril, my resistance to authority; but this was in his absence; under the mild sway of his dear eyes, I was obedient and good as a boy of five years old, who does his mother's bidding.

After a residence of about a year at Ulswater, Adrian visited London, and came back full of plans for our benefit. You must begin life, he said: you are seventeen, and longer delay would render the necessary apprenticeship more and more irksome. He foresaw that his own life would be one of struggle, and I must partake his labours with him. The better to fit me for this task, we must now separate. He found my name a good passport to preferment, and he had procured for me the situation of private secretary to the Ambassador at Vienna, where I should enter on my career under the best auspices. In two years, I should return to my country, with a name well known and a reputation already founded.

And Perdita? — Perdita was to become the pupil, friend and younger sister of Evadne. With his usual thoughtfulness, he had provided for her independence in this situation. How refuse the offers of this generous friend? — I did not wish to refuse them; but in my heart of hearts, I made a vow to devote life, knowledge, and power, all of which, in as much as they were of any value, he had bestowed on me — all, all my capacities and hopes, to him alone I would devote.

Thus I promised myself, as I journeyed towards my destination with roused and ardent expectation: expectation of the fulfilment of all that in boyhood we promise ourselves of power and enjoyment in maturity. Methought the time was now arrived, when, childish occupations laid aside, I should enter into life. Even in the Elysian fields, Virgil describes the souls of the happy as eager to drink of the wave which was to restore them to this mortal coil. The young are seldom in Elysium, for their desires, outstripping possibility, leave them as poor as a moneyless debtor. We are told by the wisest philosophers of the dangers of the world, the deceits of men, and the treason of our own hearts: but not the less fearlessly does each put off his frail bark from the port, spread the sail, and strain his oar, to attain the multitudinous streams of the sea of life. How few in youth's prime, moor their vessels on the "golden sands," and collect the painted shells that strew them. But all at close of day, with riven planks and rent canvas make for shore, and are either wrecked ere they reach it, or find some wave-beaten haven, some desert strand, whereon to cast themselves and die unmourned.

A truce to philosophy! — Life is before me, and I rush into possession. Hope, glory, love, and blameless ambition are my guides, and my soul knows no dread. What has been, though sweet, is gone; the present is good only because it is about to change, and the to come is all my own. Do I fear, that my heart palpitates? high aspirations cause the flow of my blood; my eyes seem to penetrate the cloudy midnight of time, and to discern within the depths of its darkness, the fruition of all my soul desires.

Now pause! — During my journey I might dream, and with buoyant wings reach the summit of life's high edifice. Now that I am arrived at its base, my pinions are furled, the mighty stairs are before me, and step by step I must ascend the wondrous fane —

Speak! — What door is opened?

Behold me in a new capacity. A diplomatist: one among the pleasure-seeking society of a gay city; a youth of promise; favourite of the Ambassador. All was strange and admirable to the shepherd of Cumberland. With breathless amaze I entered on the gay scene, whose actors were

— the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin.

Soon, too soon, I entered the giddy whirl; forgetting my studious hours, and the companionship of Adrian. Passionate desire of sympathy, and ardent pursuit for a wished-for object still characterised me. The sight of beauty entranced me, and attractive manners in man or woman won my entire confidence. I called it rapture, when a smile made my heart beat; and I felt the life's blood tingle in my frame, when I approached the idol which for awhile I worshipped. The mere flow of animal spirits was Paradise, and at night's close I only desired a renewal of the intoxicating delusion. The dazzling light of ornamented rooms; lovely forms arrayed in splendid dresses; the motions of a dance, the voluptuous tones of exquisite music, cradled my senses in one delightful dream.

And is not this in its kind happiness? I appeal to moralists and sages. I ask if in the calm of their measured reveries, if in the deep meditations which fill their hours, they feel the ecstasy of a youthful tyro in the school of pleasure? Can the calm beams of their heaven-seeking eyes equal the flashes of mingling passion which blind his, or does the influence of cold philosophy steep their soul in a joy equal to his, engaged

In this dear work of youthful revelry.

But in truth, neither the lonely meditations of the hermit, nor the tumultuous raptures of the reveller, are capable of satisfying man's heart. From the one we gather unquiet speculation, from the other satiety. The mind flags beneath the weight of thought, and droops in the heartless intercourse of those whose sole aim is amusement. There is no fruition in their vacant kindness, and sharp rocks lurk beneath the smiling ripples of these shallow waters.

Thus I felt, when disappointment, weariness, and solitude drove me back upon my heart, to gather thence the joy of which it had become barren. My flagging spirits asked for something to speak to the affections; and not finding it, I drooped. Thus, notwithstanding the thoughtless delight that waited on its commencement, the impression I have of my life at Vienna is melancholy. Goethe has said, that in youth we cannot be happy unless we love. I did not love; but I was devoured by a restless wish to be something to others. I became the victim of ingratitude and cold coquetry — then I desponded, and imagined that my discontent gave me a right to hate the world. I receded to solitude; I had recourse to my books, and my desire again to enjoy the society of Adrian became a burning thirst.

Emulation, that in its excess almost assumed the venomous properties of envy, gave a sting to these feelings. At this period the name and exploits of one of my countrymen filled the world with admiration. Relations of what he had done, conjectures concerning his future actions, were the never-failing topics of the hour. I was not angry on my own account, but I felt as if the praises which this idol received were leaves torn from laurels destined for Adrian. But I must enter into some account of this darling of fame — this favourite of the wonder-loving world.

Lord Raymond was the sole remnant of a noble but impoverished family. From early youth he had considered his pedigree with complacency, and bitterly lamented his want of wealth. His first wish was aggrandisement; and the means that led towards this end were secondary considerations. Haughty, yet trembling to every demonstration of respect; ambitious, but too proud to show his ambition; willing to achieve honour, yet a votary of pleasure, — he entered upon life. He was met on the threshold by some insult, real or imaginary; some repulse, where he least expected it; some disappointment, hard for his pride to bear. He writhed beneath an injury he was unable to revenge; and he quitted England with a vow not to return, till the good time should arrive, when she might feel the power of him she now despised.

He became an adventurer in the Greek wars. His reckless courage and comprehensive genius brought him into notice. He became the darling hero of this rising people. His foreign birth, and he refused to throw off his allegiance to his native country, alone prevented him from filling the first offices in the state. But, though others might rank higher in title and ceremony, Lord Raymond held a station above and beyond all this. He led the Greek armies to victory; their triumphs were all his own. When he appeared, whole towns poured forth their population to meet him; new songs were adapted to their national airs, whose themes were his glory, valour, and munificence.

A truce was concluded between the Greeks and Turks. At the same time, Lord Raymond, by some unlooked-for chance, became the possessor of an immense fortune in England, whither he returned, crowned with glory, to receive the meed of honour and distinction before denied to his pretensions. His proud heart rebelled against this change. In what was the despised Raymond not the same? If the acquisition of power in the shape of wealth caused this alteration, that power should they feel as an iron yoke. Power therefore was the aim of all his endeavours; aggrandisement the mark at which he for ever shot. In open ambition or close intrigue, his end was the same — to attain the first station in his own country.

This account filled me with curiosity. The events that in succession followed his return to England, gave me keener feelings. Among his other advantages, Lord Raymond was supremely handsome; every one admired him; of women he was the idol. He was courteous, honey-tongued — an adept in fascinating arts. What could not this man achieve in the busy English world? Change succeeded to change; the entire history did not reach me; for Adrian had ceased to write, and Perdita was a laconic correspondent. The rumour went that Adrian had become — how write the fatal word — mad: that Lord Raymond was the favourite of the ex-queen, her daughter's destined husband. Nay, more, that this aspiring noble revived the claim of the house of Windsor to the crown, and that, on the event of Adrian's incurable disorder and his marriage with the sister, the brow of the ambitious Raymond might be encircled with the magic ring of regality.

Such a tale filled the trumpet of many voiced fame; such a tale rendered my longer stay at Vienna, away from the friend of my youth, intolerable. Now I must fulfil my vow; now range myself at his side, and be his ally and support till death. Farewell to courtly pleasure; to politic intrigue; to the maze of passion and folly! All hail, England! Native England, receive thy child! thou art the scene of all my hopes, the mighty theatre on which is acted the only drama that can, heart and soul, bear me along with it in its development. A voice most irresistible, a power omnipotent, drew me thither. After an absence of two years I landed on its shores, not daring to make any inquiries, fearful of every remark. My first visit would be to my sister, who inhabited a little cottage, a part of Adrian's gift, on the borders of Windsor Forest. From her I should learn the truth concerning our protector; I should hear why she had withdrawn from the protection of the Princess Evadne, and be instructed as to the influence which this overtopping and towering Raymond exercised over the fortunes of my friend.

I had never before been in the neighbourhood of Windsor; the fertility and beauty of the country around now struck me with admiration, which increased as I approached the antique wood. The ruins of majestic oaks which had grown, flourished, and decayed during the progress of centuries, marked where the limits of the forest once reached, while the shattered palings and neglected underwood showed that this part was deserted for the younger plantations, which owed their birth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and now stood in the pride of maturity. Perdita's humble dwelling was situated on the skirts of the most ancient portion; before it was stretched Bishopgate Heath, which towards the east appeared interminable, and was bounded to the west by Chapel Wood and the grove of Virginia Water. Behind, the cottage was shadowed by the venerable fathers of the forest, under which the deer came to graze, and which for the most part hollow and decayed, formed fantastic groups that contrasted with the regular beauty of the younger trees. These, the offspring of a later period, stood erect and seemed ready to advance fearlessly into coming time; while those out worn stragglers, blasted and broke, clung to each other, their weak boughs sighing as the wind buffeted them — a weather-beaten crew.

A light railing surrounded the garden of the cottage, which, low-roofed, seemed to submit to the majesty of nature, and cower amidst the venerable remains of forgotten time. Flowers, the children of the spring, adorned her garden and casements; in the midst of lowliness there was an air of elegance which spoke the graceful taste of the inmate. With a beating heart I entered the enclosure; as I stood at the entrance, I heard her voice melodious as it had ever been, which before I saw her assured me of her welfare.

A moment more and Perdita appeared; she stood before me in the fresh bloom of youthful womanhood, different from and yet the same as the mountain girl I had left. Her eyes could not be deeper than they were in childhood, nor her countenance more expressive; but the expression was changed and improved; intelligence sat on her brow; when she smiled her face was embellished by the softest sensibility, and her low, modulated voice seemed tuned by love. Her person was formed in the most feminine proportions; she was not tall, but her mountain life had given freedom to her motions, so that her light step scarce made her foot-fall heard as she tripped across the hall to meet me. When we had parted, I had clasped her to my bosom with unrestrained warmth; we met again, and new feelings were awakened; when each beheld the other, childhood passed, as full grown actors on this changeful scene. The pause was but for a moment; the flood of association and natural feeling which had been checked, again rushed in full tide upon our hearts, and with tenderest emotion we were swiftly locked in each other's embrace.

This burst of passionate feeling over, with calmed thoughts we sat together, talking of the past and present. I alluded to the coldness of her letters; but the few minutes we had spent together sufficiently explained the origin of this. New feelings had arisen within her, which she was unable to express in writing to one whom she had only known in childhood; but we saw each other again, and our intimacy was renewed as if nothing had intervened to check it. I detailed the incidents of my sojourn abroad, and then questioned her as to the changes that had taken place at home, the causes of Adrian's absence, and her secluded life.

The tears that suffused my sister's eyes when I mentioned our friend, and her heightened colour seemed to vouch for the truth of the reports that had reached me. But their import was too terrible for me to give instant credit to my suspicion. Was there indeed anarchy in the sublime universe of Adrian's thoughts, did madness scatter the well-appointed legions, and was he no longer the lord of his own soul? Beloved friend, this ill world was no clime for your gentle spirit; you delivered up its governance to false humanity, which stript it of its leaves ere winter-time, and laid bare its quivering life to the evil ministration of roughest winds. Have those gentle eyes, those "channels of the soul" lost their meaning, or do they only in their glare disclose the horrible tale of its aberrations? Does that voice no longer "discourse excellent music?" Horrible, most horrible! I veil my eyes in terror of the change, and gushing tears bear witness to my sympathy for this unimaginable ruin.

In obedience to my request Perdita detailed the melancholy circumstances that led to this event.

The frank and unsuspicious mind of Adrian, gifted as it was by every natural grace, endowed with transcendent powers of intellect, unblemished by the shadow of defect (unless his dreadless independence of thought was to be construed into one), was devoted, even as a victim to sacrifice, to his love for Evadne. He entrusted to her keeping the treasures of his soul, his aspirations after excellence, and his plans for the improvement of mankind. As manhood dawned upon him, his schemes and theories, far from being changed by personal and prudential motives, acquired new strength from the powers he felt arise within him; and his love for Evadne became deep-rooted, as he each day became more certain that the path he pursued was full of difficulty, and that he must seek his reward, not in the applause or gratitude of his fellow creatures, hardly in the success of his plans, but in the approbation of his own heart, and in her love and sympathy, which was to lighten every toil and recompense every sacrifice.

In solitude, and through many wanderings afar from the haunts of men, he matured his views for the reform of the English government, and the improvement of the people. It would have been well if he had concealed his sentiments, until he had come into possession of the power which would secure their practical development. But he was impatient of the years that must intervene, he was frank of heart and fearless. He gave not only a brief denial to his mother's schemes, but published his intention of using his influence to diminish the power of the aristocracy, to effect a greater equalisation of wealth and privilege, and to introduce a perfect system of republican government into England. At first his mother treated his theories as the wild ravings of inexperience. But they were so systematically arranged, and his arguments so well supported, that though still in appearance incredulous, she began to fear him. She tried to reason with him, and finding him inflexible, learned to hate him.

Strange to say, this feeling was infectious. His enthusiasm for good which did not exist; his contempt for the sacredness of authority; his ardour and imprudence were all at the antipodes of the usual routine of life; the worldly feared him; the young and inexperienced did not understand the lofty severity of his moral views, and disliked him as a being different from themselves. Evadne entered but coldly into his systems. She thought he did well to assert his own will, but she wished that will to have been more intelligible to the multitude. She had none of the spirit of a martyr, and did not incline to share the shame and defeat of a fallen patriot. She was aware of the purity of his motives, the generosity of his disposition, his true and ardent attachment to her; and she entertained a great affection for him. He repaid this spirit of kindness with the fondest gratitude, and made her the treasure-house of all his hopes.

At this time Lord Raymond returned from Greece. No two persons could be more opposite than Adrian and he. With all the incongruities of his character, Raymond was emphatically a man of the world. His passions were violent; as these often obtained the mastery over him, he could not always square his conduct to the obvious line of self-interest, but self-gratification at least was the paramount object with him. He looked on the structure of society as but a part of the machinery which supported the web on which his life was traced. The earth was spread out as an highway for him; the heavens built up as a canopy for him.

Adrian felt that he made a part of a great whole. He owned affinity not only with mankind, but all nature was akin to him; the mountains and sky were his friends; the winds of heaven and the offspring of earth his playmates; while he the focus only of this mighty mirror, felt his life mingle with the universe of existence. His soul was sympathy, and dedicated to the worship of beauty and excellence. Adrian and Raymond now came into contact, and a spirit of aversion rose between them. Adrian despised the narrow views of the politician, and Raymond held in supreme contempt the benevolent visions of the philanthropist.

With the coming of Raymond was formed the storm that laid waste at one fell blow the gardens of delight and sheltered paths which Adrian fancied that he had secured to himself, as a refuge from defeat and contumely. Raymond, the deliverer of Greece, the graceful soldier, who bore in his mien a tinge of all that, peculiar to her native clime, Evadne cherished as most dear — Raymond was loved by Evadne. Overpowered by her new sensations, she did not pause to examine them, or to regulate her conduct by any sentiments except the tyrannical one which suddenly usurped the empire of her heart. She yielded to its influence, and the too natural consequence in a mind unattuned to soft emotions was, that the attentions of Adrian became distasteful to her. She grew capricious; her gentle conduct towards him was exchanged for asperity and repulsive coldness. When she perceived the wild or pathetic appeal of his expressive countenance, she would relent, and for a while resume her ancient kindness. But these fluctuations shook to its depths the soul of the sensitive youth; he no longer deemed the world subject to him, because he possessed Evadne's love; he felt in every nerve that the dire storms of the mental universe were about to attack his fragile being, which quivered at the expectation of its advent.

Perdita, who then resided with Evadne, saw the torture that Adrian endured. She loved him as a kind elder brother; a relation to guide, protect, and instruct her, without the too frequent tyranny of parental authority. She adored his virtues, and with mixed contempt and indignation she saw Evadne pile drear sorrow on his head, for the sake of one who hardly marked her. In his solitary despair Adrian would often seek my sister, and in covered terms express his misery, while fortitude and agony divided the throne of his mind. Soon, alas! was one to conquer. Anger made no part of his emotion. With whom should he be angry? Not with Raymond, who was unconscious of the misery he occasioned; not with Evadne, for her his soul wept tears of blood — poor, mistaken girl, slave not tyrant was she, and amidst his own anguish he grieved for her future destiny. Once a writing of his fell into Perdita's hands; it was blotted with tears — well might any blot it with the like —

"Life" — it began thus—"is not the thing romance writers describe it; going through the measures of a dance, and after various evolutions arriving at a conclusion, when the dancers may sit down and repose. While there is life there is action and change. We go on, each thought linked to the one which was its parent, each act to a previous act. No joy or sorrow dies barren of progeny, which for ever generated and generating, weaves the chain that make our life:

Un dia llama à otro dia
y ass i llama, y encadena
llanto à llanto, y pena à pena.

Truly disappointment is the guardian deity of human life; she sits at the threshold of unborn time, and marshals the events as they come forth. Once my heart sat lightly in my bosom; all the beauty of the world was doubly beautiful, irradiated by the sun-light shed from my own soul. O wherefore are love and ruin for ever joined in this our mortal dream? So that when we make our hearts a lair for that gently seeming beast, its companion enters with it, and pitilessly lays waste what might have been an home and a shelter."

By degrees his health was shaken by his misery, and then his intellect yielded to the same tyranny. His manners grew wild; he was sometimes ferocious, sometimes absorbed in speechless melancholy. Suddenly Evadne quitted London for Paris; he followed, and overtook her when the vessel was about to sail; none knew what passed between them, but Perdita had never seen him since; he lived in seclusion, no one knew where, attended by such persons as his mother selected for that purpose.

CHAPTER IV

The next day Lord Raymond called at Perdita’s cottage, on his way to Windsor Castle. My sister’s heightened colour and sparkling eyes half revealed her secret to me. He was perfectly self-possessed; he accosted us both with courtesy, seemed immediately to enter into our feelings, and to make one with us. I scanned his physiognomy, which varied as he spoke, yet was beautiful in every change. The usual expression of his eyes was soft, though at times he could make them even glare with ferocity; his complexion was colourless; and every trait spoke predominate self-will; his smile was pleasing, though disdain too often curled his lips — lips which to female eyes were the very throne of beauty and love. His voice, usually gentle, often startled you by a sharp discordant note, which showed that his usual low tone was rather the work of study than nature. Thus full of contradictions, unbending yet haughty, gentle yet fierce, tender and again neglectful, he by some strange art found easy entrance to the admiration and affection of women; now caressing and now tyrannising over them according to his mood, but in every change a despot.

At the present time Raymond evidently wished to appear amiable. Wit, hilarity, and deep observation were mingled in his talk, rendering every sentence that he uttered as a flash of light. He soon conquered my latent distaste; I endeavoured to watch him and Perdita, and to keep in mind every thing I had heard to his disadvantage. But all appeared so ingenuous, and all was so fascinating, that I forgot everything except the pleasure his society afforded me. Under the idea of initiating me in the scene of English politics and society, of which I was soon to become a part, he narrated a number of anecdotes, and sketched many characters; his discourse, rich and varied, flowed on, pervading all my senses with pleasure. But for one thing he would have been completely triumphant. He alluded to Adrian, and spoke of him with that disparagement that the worldly wise always attach to enthusiasm. He perceived the cloud gathering, and tried to dissipate it; but the strength of my feelings would not permit me to pass thus lightly over this sacred subject; so I said emphatically, “Permit me to remark, that I am devotedly attached to the Earl of Windsor; he is my best friend and benefactor. I reverence his goodness, I accord with his opinions, and bitterly lament his present, and I trust temporary, illness. That illness, from its peculiarity, makes it painful to me beyond words to hear him mentioned, unless in terms of respect and affection."

Raymond replied; but there was nothing conciliatory in his reply. I saw that in his heart he despised those dedicated to any but worldly idols. "Every man," he said, "dreams about something, love, honour, and pleasure; you dream of friendship, and devote yourself to a maniac; well, if that be your vocation, doubtless you are in the right to follow it." —

Some reflection seemed to sting him, and the spasm of pain that for a moment convulsed his countenance, checked my indignation. "Happy are dreamers," he continued, "so that they be not awakened! Would I could dream! but 'broad and garish day' is the element in which I live; the dazzling glare of reality inverts the scene for me. Even the ghost of friendship has departed, and love" — He broke off; nor could I guess whether the disdain that curled his lip was directed against the passion, or against himself for being its slave.

This account may be taken as a sample of my intercourse with Lord Raymond. I became intimate with him, and each day afforded me occasion to admire more and more his powerful and versatile talents, that together with his eloquence, which was graceful and witty, and his wealth now immense, caused him to be feared, loved, and hated beyond any other man in England.

My descent, which claimed interest, if not respect, my former connection with Adrian, the favour of the ambassador, whose secretary I had been, and now my intimacy with Lord Raymond, gave me easy access to the fashionable and political circles of England. To my inexperience we at first appeared on the eve of a civil war; each party was violent, acrimonious, and unyielding. Parliament was divided by three factions, aristocrats, democrats, and royalists. After Adrian's declared predilection to the republican form of government, the latter party had nearly died away, chiefless, guideless; but, when Lord Raymond came forward as its leader, it revived with redoubled force. Some were royalists from prejudice and ancient affection, and there were many moderately inclined who feared alike the capricious tyranny of the popular party, and the unbending despotism of the aristocrats. More than a third of the members ranged themselves under Raymond, and their number was perpetually increasing. The aristocrats built their hopes on their preponderant wealth and influence; the reformers on the force of the nation itself; the debates were violent, more violent the discourses held by each knot of politicians as they assembled to arrange their measures. Opprobrious epithets were bandied about, resistance even to the death threatened; meetings of the populace disturbed the quiet order of the country; except in war, how could all this end? Even as the destructive flames were ready to break forth, I saw them shrink back; allayed by the absence of the military, by the aversion entertained by every one to any violence, save that of speech, and by the cordial politeness and even friendship of the hostile leaders when they met in private society. I was from a thousand motives induced to attend minutely to the course of events, and watch each turn with intense anxiety.

I could not but perceive that Perdita loved Raymond; methought also that he regarded the fair daughter of Verney with admiration and tenderness. Yet I knew that he was urging forward his marriage with the presumptive heiress of the Earldom of Windsor, with keen expectation of the advantages that would thence accrue to him. All the ex-queen’s friends were his friends; no week passed that he did not hold consultations with her at Windsor.

I had never seen the sister of Adrian. I had heard that she was lovely, amiable, and fascinating. Wherefore should I see her? There are times when we have an indefinable sentiment of impending change for better or for worse, to arise from an event; and, be it for better or for worse, we fear the change, and shun the event. For this reason I avoided this high-born damsel. To me she was everything and nothing; her very name mentioned by another made me start and tremble; the endless discussion concerning her union with Lord Raymond was real agony to me. Methought that, Adrian withdrawn from active life, and this beauteous Idris, a victim probably to her mother’s ambitious schemes, I ought to come forward to protect her from undue influence, guard her from unhappiness, and secure to her freedom of choice, the right of every human being. Yet how was I to do this? She herself would disdain my interference. Since then I must be an object of indifference or contempt to her, better, far better avoid her, nor expose myself before her and the scornful world to the chance of playing the mad game of a fond, foolish Icarus.

One day, several months after my return to England, I quitted London to visit my sister. Her society was my chief solace and delight; and my spirits always rose at the expectation of seeing her. Her conversation was full of pointed remark and discernment; in her pleasant alcove, redolent with sweetest flowers, adorned by magnificent casts, antique vases, and copies of the finest pictures of Raphael, Correggio, and Claude, painted by herself, I fancied myself in a fairy retreat untainted by and inaccessible to the noisy contentions of politicians and the frivolous pursuits of fashion. On this occasion, my sister was not alone; nor could I fail to recognise her companion: it was Idris, the till now unseen object of my mad idolatry.

In what fitting terms of wonder and delight, in what choice expression and soft flow of language, can I usher in the loveliest, wisest, best? How in poor assemblage of words convey the halo of glory that surrounded her, the thousand graces that waited unwearied on her. The first thing that struck you on beholding that charming countenance was its perfect goodness and frankness; candour sat upon her brow, simplicity in her eyes, heavenly benignity in her smile. Her tall slim figure bent gracefully as a poplar to the breezy west, and her gait, goddess-like, was as that of a winged angel new alit from heaven's high floor; the pearly fairness of her complexion was stained by a pure suffusion; her voice resembled the low, subdued tenor of a flute. It is easiest perhaps to describe by contrast. I have detailed the perfections of my sister; and yet she was utterly unlike Idris. Perdita, even where she loved, was reserved and timid; Idris was frank and confiding. The one recoiled to solitude, that she might there entrench herself from disappointment and injury; the other walked forth in open day, believing that none would harm her. Wordsworth has compared a beloved female to two fair objects in nature; but his lines always appeared to me rather a contrast than a similitude:

A violet by a mossy stone
   Half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star when only one
   Is shining in the sky.

Such a violet was sweet Perdita, trembling to entrust herself to the very air, cowering from observation, yet betrayed by her excellences; and repaying with a thousand graces the labour of those who sought her in her lonely bye-path. Idris was as the star, set in single splendour in the dim anadem of balmy evening; ready to enlighten and delight the subject world, shielded herself from every taint by her unimagined distance from all that was not like herself akin to heaven.

I found this vision of beauty in Perdita's alcove, in earnest conversation with its inmate. When my sister saw me, she rose, and taking my hand, said, "He is here, even at our wish; this is Lionel, my brother."

Idris arose also, and bent on me her eyes of celestial blue, and with grace peculiar said—"You hardly need an introduction; we have a picture, highly valued by my father, which declares at once your name. Verney, you will acknowledge this tie, and as my brother's friend, I feel that I may trust you."

Then, with lids humid with a tear and trembling voice, she continued —"Dear friends, do not think it strange that now, visiting you for the first time, I ask your assistance, and confide my wishes and fears to you. To you alone do I dare speak; I have heard you commended by impartial spectators; you are my brother's friends, therefore you must be mine. What can I say? if you refuse to aid me, I am lost indeed!" She cast up her eyes, while wonder held her auditors mute; then, as if carried away by her feelings, she cried—"My brother! beloved, ill-fated Adrian! how speak of your misfortunes? Doubtless you have both heard the current tale; perhaps believe the slander; but he is not mad! Were an angel from the foot of God's throne to assert it, never, never would I believe it. He is wronged, betrayed, imprisoned — save him! Verney, you must do this; seek him out in whatever part of the island he is immured; find him, rescue him from his persecutors, restore him to himself, to me — on the wide earth I have none to love but only him!"

Her earnest appeal, so sweetly and passionately expressed, filled me with wonder and sympathy; and, when she added, with thrilling voice and look, "Do you consent to undertake this enterprise?" I vowed, with energy and truth, to devote myself in life and death to the restoration and welfare of Adrian. We then conversed on the plan I should pursue, and discussed the probable means of discovering his residence. While we were in earnest discourse, Lord Raymond entered unannounced: I saw Perdita tremble and grow deadly pale, and the cheeks of Idris glow with purest blushes. He must have been astonished at our conclave, disturbed by it I should have thought; but nothing of this appeared; he saluted my companions, and addressed me with a cordial greeting. Idris appeared suspended for a moment, and then with extreme sweetness, she said, “Lord Raymond, I confide in your goodness and honour.”

Smiling haughtily, he bent his head, and replied, with emphasis, “Do you indeed confide, Lady Idris?”

She endeavoured to read his thought, and then answered with dignity, “As you please. It is certainly best not to compromise oneself by any concealment.”

“Pardon me,” he replied, “if I have offended. Whether you trust me or not, rely on my doing my utmost to further your wishes, whatever they may be.”

Idris smiled her thanks, and rose to take leave. Lord Raymond requested permission to accompany her to Windsor Castle, to which she consented, and they quitted the cottage together. My sister and I were left — truly like two fools, who fancied that they had obtained a golden treasure, till daylight showed it to be lead — two silly, luckless flies, who had played in sunbeams and were caught in a spider’s web. I leaned against the casement, and watched those two glorious creatures, till they disappeared in the forest-glades; and then I turned. Perdita had not moved; her eyes fixed on the ground, her cheeks pale, her very lips white, motionless and rigid, every feature stamped by woe, she sat. Half frightened, I would have taken her hand; but she shudderingly withdrew it, and strove to collect herself. I entreated her to speak to me: “Not now,” she replied, “nor do you speak to me, my dear Lionel; you *can* say nothing, for you know nothing. I will see you to-morrow; in the meantime, adieu!” She rose, and walked from the room; but pausing at the door, and leaning against it, as if her over-busy thoughts had taken from her the power of supporting herself, she said, “Lord Raymond will probably return. Will you tell him that he must excuse me to-day, for I am not well. I will see him to-morrow if he wishes it, and you also. You had better return to London with him; you can there make the inquiries agreed upon, concerning the Earl of Windsor and visit me again to-morrow, before you proceed on your journey — till then, farewell!”

She spoke falteringly, and concluded with a heavy sigh. I gave my assent to her request; and she left me. I felt as if, from the order of the systematic world, I had plunged into chaos, obscure, contrary, unintelligible. That Raymond should marry Idris was more than ever intolerable; yet my passion, though a giant from its birth, was too strange, wild, and impracticable, for me to feel at once the misery I perceived in Perdita. How should I act? She had not confided in me; I could not demand an explanation from Raymond without the hazard of betraying what was perhaps her most treasured secret. I would obtain the truth from her the following day — in the mean time — But, while I was occupied by multiplying reflections, Lord Raymond returned. He asked for my sister; and I delivered her message. After musing on it for a moment, he asked me if I were about to return to London, and if I would accompany him: I consented. He was full of thought, and remained silent during a considerable part of our ride; at length he said, “I must apologize to you for my abstraction; the truth is, Ryland’s motion comes on to-night, and I am considering my reply.”

Ryland was the leader of the popular party, a hard-headed man, and in his way eloquent; he had obtained leave to bring in a bill making it treason to endeavour to change the present state of the English government and the standing laws of the republic. This attack was directed against Raymond and his machinations for the restoration of the monarchy.

Raymond asked me if I would accompany him to the House that evening. I remembered my pursuit for intelligence concerning Adrian; and, knowing that my time would be fully occupied, I excused myself. “Nay,” said my companion, “I can free you from your present impediment. You are going to make inquiries concerning the Earl of Windsor. I can answer them at once, he is at the Duke of Athol’s seat at Dunkeld. On the first approach of his disorder, he travelled about from one place to another; until, arriving at that romantic seclusion he refused to quit it, and we made arrangements with the Duke for his continuing there.”

I was hurt by the careless tone with which he conveyed this information, and replied coldly: “I am obliged to you for your intelligence, and will avail myself of it.”

“You shall, Verney,” said he, “and if you continue of the same mind, I will facilitate your views. But first witness, I beseech you, the result of this night’s contest, and the triumph I am about to achieve, if I may so call it, while I fear that victory is to me defeat. What can I do? My dearest hopes appear to be near their fulfilment. The ex-queen gives me Idris; Adrian is totally unfitted to succeed to the earldom, and that earldom in my hands becomes a kingdom. By the reigning God it is true; the paltry earldom of Windsor shall no longer content him, who will inherit the rights which must for ever appertain to the person who possesses it. The Countess can never forget that she has been a queen, and she disdains to leave a diminished inheritance to her children; her power and my wit will rebuild the throne, and this brow will be clasped by a kingly diadem. — I can do this — I can marry Idris.” —

He stopped abruptly, his countenance darkened, and its expression changed again and again under the influence of internal passion. I asked, “Does Lady Idris love you?”

“What a question,” replied he laughing. “She will of course, as I shall her, when we are married.”

“You begin late,” said I, ironically, “marriage is usually considered the grave, and not the cradle of love. So you are about to love her, but do not already?”

“Do not catechise me, Lionel; I will do my duty by her, be assured. Love! I must steel my heart against *that*; expel it from its tower of strength, barricade it out: the fountain of love must cease to play, its waters be dried up, and all passionate thoughts attendant on it die — that is to say, the love which would rule me, not that which I rule. Idris is a gentle, pretty, sweet little girl; it is impossible not to have an affection for her, and I have a very sincere one; only do not speak of love — love, the tyrant and the tyrant-queller; love, until now my conqueror, now my slave; the hungry fire, the untameable beast, the fanged snake — no — no — I will have nothing to do with that love. Tell me, Lionel, do you consent that I should marry this young lady?”

He bent his keen eyes upon me, and my uncontrollable heart swelled in my bosom. I replied in a calm voice — but how far from calm was the thought imaged by my still words—”Never! I can never consent that Lady Idris should be united to one who does not love her.”

“Because you love her yourself.”

“Your Lordship might have spared that taunt; I do not, dare not love her.”

“At least,” he continued haughtily, “she does not love you. I would not marry a reigning sovereign, were I not sure that her heart was free. But, O, Lionel! a kingdom is a word of might, and gently sounding are the terms that compose the style of royalty. Were not the mightiest men of the olden times kings? Alexander was a king; Solomon, the wisest of men, was a king; Napoleon was a king; Caesar died in his attempt to become one, and Cromwell, the puritan and king-killer, aspired to regality. The father of Adrian yielded up the already broken sceptre of England; but I will rear the fallen plant, join its dismembered frame, and exalt it above all the flowers of the field.

“You need not wonder that I freely discover Adrian’s abode. Do not suppose that I am wicked or foolish enough to found my purposed sovereignty on a fraud, and one so easily discovered as the truth or falsehood of the Earl’s insanity. I am just come from him. Before I decided on my marriage with Idris, I resolved to see him myself again, and to judge of the probability of his recovery. — He is irrecoverably mad.”

I gasped for breath —

“I will not detail to you,” continued Raymond, “the melancholy particulars. You shall see him, and judge for yourself; although I fear this visit, useless to him, will be insufferably painful to you. It has weighed on my spirits ever since. Excellent and gentle as he is even in the downfall of his reason, I do not worship him as you do, but I would give all my hopes of a crown and my right hand to boot, to see him restored to himself.”

His voice expressed the deepest compassion: “Thou most unaccountable being,” I cried, “whither will thy actions tend, in all this maze of purpose in which thou seemest lost?”

“Whither indeed? To a crown, a golden be-gemmed crown, I hope; and yet I dare not trust and though I dream of a crown and wake for one, ever and anon a busy devil whispers to me, that it is but a fool’s cap that I seek, and that were I wise, I should trample on it, and take in its stead, that which is worth all the crowns of the east and presidentships of the west.”

“And what is that?”

“If I do make it my choice, then you shall know; at present I dare not speak, even think of it.”

Again he was silent, and after a pause turned to me laughingly. When scorn did not inspire his mirth, when it was genuine gaiety that painted his features with a joyous expression, his beauty became super-eminent, divine. “Verney,” said he, “my first act when I become King of England, will be to unite with the Greeks, take Constantinople, and subdue all Asia. I intend to be a warrior, a conqueror; Napoleon’s name shall vail to mine; and enthusiasts, instead of visiting his rocky grave, and exalting the merits of the fallen, shall adore my majesty, and magnify my illustrious achievements.”

I listened to Raymond with intense interest. Could I be other than all ear, to one who seemed to govern the whole earth in his grasping imagination, and who only quailed when he attempted to rule himself. Then on his word and will depended my own happiness — the fate of all dear to me. I endeavoured to divine the concealed meaning of his words. Perdita’s name was not mentioned; yet I could not doubt that love for her caused the vacillation of purpose that he exhibited. And who was so worthy of love as my noble-minded sister? Who deserved the hand of this self-exalted king more than she whose glance belonged to a queen of nations? who loved him, as he did her; notwithstanding that disappointment quelled her passion, and ambition held strong combat with his.

We went together to the House in the evening. Raymond, while he knew that his plans and prospects were to be discussed and decided during the expected debate, was gay and careless. An hum, like that of ten thousand hives of swarming bees, stunned us as we entered the coffee-room. Knots of politicians were assembled with anxious brows and loud or deep voices. The aristocratical party, the richest and most influential men in England, appeared less agitated than the others, for the question was to be discussed without their interference. Near the fire was Ryland and his supporters. Ryland was a man of obscure birth and of immense wealth, inherited from his father, who had been a manufacturer. He had witnessed, when a young man, the abdication of the king, and the amalgamation of the two houses of Lords and Commons; he had sympathized with these popular encroachments, and it had been the business of his life to consolidate and increase them. Since then, the influence of the landed proprietors had augmented; and at first Ryland was not sorry to observe the machinations of Lord Raymond, which drew off many of his opponent’s partisans. But the thing was now going too far. The poorer nobility hailed the return of sovereignty, as an event which would restore them to their power and rights, now lost. The half extinct spirit of royalty roused itself in the minds of men; and they, willing slaves, self-constituted subjects, were ready to bend their necks to the yoke. Some erect and manly spirits still remained, pillars of state; but the word republic had grown stale to the vulgar ear; and many — the event would prove whether it was a majority — pined for the tinsel and show of royalty. Ryland was roused to resistance; he asserted that his sufferance alone had permitted the increase of this party; but the time for indulgence was passed, and with one motion of his arm he would sweep away the cobwebs that blinded his countrymen.

When Raymond entered the coffee-room, his presence was hailed by his friends almost with a shout. They gathered round him, counted their numbers, and detailed the reasons why they were now to receive an addition of such and such members, who had not yet declared themselves. Some trifling business of the House having been gone through, the leaders took their seats in the chamber; the clamour of voices continued, till Ryland arose to speak, and then the slightest whispered observation was audible. All eyes were fixed upon him as he stood — ponderous of frame, sonorous of voice, and with a manner which, though not graceful, was impressive. I turned from his marked, iron countenance to Raymond, whose face, veiled by a smile, would not betray his care; yet his lips quivered somewhat, and his hand clasped the bench on which he sat, with a convulsive strength that made the muscles start again.

Ryland began by praising the present state of the British empire. He recalled past years to their memory; the miserable contentions which in the time of our fathers arose almost to civil war, the abdication of the late king, and the foundation of the republic. He described this republic; showed how it gave privilege to each individual in the state, to rise to consequence, and even to temporary sovereignty. He compared the royal and republican spirit; showed how the one tended to enslave the minds of men; while all the institutions of the other served to raise even the meanest among us to something great and good. He showed how England had become powerful, and its inhabitants valiant and wise, by means of the freedom they enjoyed. As he spoke, every heart swelled with pride, and every cheek glowed with delight to remember, that each one there was English, and that each supported and contributed to the happy state of things now commemorated. Ryland's fervour increased — his eyes lighted up — his voice assumed the tone of passion. There was one man, he continued, who wished to alter all this, and bring us back to our days of impotence and contention: — one man, who would dare arrogate the honour which was due to all who claimed England as their birthplace, and set his name and style above the name and style of his country. I saw at this juncture that Raymond changed colour; his eyes were withdrawn from the orator, and cast on the ground; the listeners turned from one to the other; but in the meantime the speaker's voice filled their ears — the thunder of his denunciations influenced their senses. The very boldness of his language gave him weight; each knew that he spoke truth — a truth known, but not acknowledged. He tore from reality the mask with which she had been clothed; and the purposes of Raymond, which before had crept around, ensnaring by stealth, now stood a hunted stag — even at bay — as all perceived who watched the irrepressible changes of his countenance. Ryland ended by moving, that any attempt to re-erect the kingly power should be declared treason, and he a traitor who should endeavour to change the present form of government. Cheers and loud acclamations followed the close of his speech.

After his motion had been seconded, Lord Raymond rose, — his countenance bland, his voice softly melodious, his manner soothing, his grace and sweetness came like the mild breathing of a flute, after the loud, organ-like voice of his adversary. He rose, he said, to speak in favour of the honourable member's motion, with one slight amendment subjoined. He was ready to go back to old times, and commemorate the contests of our fathers, and the monarch's abdication. Nobly and greatly, he said, had the illustrious and last sovereign of England sacrificed himself to the apparent good of his country, and divested himself of a power which could only be maintained by the blood of his subjects — these subjects named so no more, these, his friends and equals, had in gratitude conferred certain favours and distinctions on him and his family for ever. An ample estate was allotted to them, and they took the first rank among the peers of Great Britain. Yet it might be conjectured that they had not forgotten their ancient heritage; and it was hard that his heir should suffer alike with any other pretender, if he attempted to regain what by ancient right and inheritance belonged to him. He did not say that he should favour such an attempt; but he did say that such an attempt would be venial; and, if the aspirant did not go so far as to declare war, and erect a standard in the kingdom, his fault ought to be regarded with an indulgent eye. In his amendment he proposed, that an exception should be made in the bill in favour of any person who claimed the sovereign power in right of the earls of Windsor.

Nor did Raymond make an end without drawing in vivid and glowing colours, the splendour of a kingdom, in opposition to the commercial spirit of republicanism. He asserted, that each individual under the English monarchy, was then as now, capable of attaining high rank and power — with one only exception, that of the function of chief magistrate; higher and nobler rank, than a bartering, timorous commonwealth could afford. And for this one exception, to what did it amount? The nature of riches and influence forcibly confined the list of candidates to a few of the wealthiest; and it was much to be feared, that the ill-humour and contention generated by this triennial struggle, would counterbalance its advantages in impartial eyes. I can ill record the flow of language and graceful turns of expression, the wit and easy raillery that gave vigour and influence to his speech. His manner, timid at first, became firm — his changeful face was lit up to superhuman brilliancy; his voice, various as music, was like that enchanting.

It were useless to record the debate that followed this harangue. Party speeches were delivered, which clothed the question in cant, and veiled its simple meaning in a woven wind of words. The motion was lost; Ryland withdrew in rage and despair; and Raymond, gay and exulting, retired to dream of his future kingdom.

CHAPTER V

Is there such a feeling as love at first sight? And if there be, in what does its nature differ from love founded in long observation and slow growth? Perhaps its effects are not so permanent; but they are, while they last, as violent and intense. We walk the pathless mazes of society, vacant of joy, till we hold this clue, leading us through that labyrinth to paradise. Our nature dim, like to an unlighted torch, sleeps in formless blank till the fire attain it; this life of life, this light to moon, and glory to the sun. What does it matter, whether the fire be struck from flint and steel, nourished with care into a flame, slowly communicated to the dark wick, or whether swiftly the radiant power of light and warmth passes from a kindred power, and shines at once the beacon and the hope. In the deepest fountain of my heart the pulses were stirred; around, above, beneath, the clinging Memory as a cloak enwrapped me. In no one moment of coming time did I feel as I had done in time gone by. The spirit of Idris hovered in the air I breathed; her eyes were ever and for ever bent on mine; her remembered smile blinded my faint gaze, and caused me to walk as one, not in eclipse, not in darkness and vacancy — but in a new and brilliant light, too novel, too dazzling for my human senses. On every leaf, on every small division of the universe, (as on the hyacinth ±[1] is engraved) was imprinted the talisman of my existence — SHE LIVES! SHE IS! — I had not time yet to analyse my feeling, to take myself to task, and leash in the tameless passion; all was one idea, one feeling, one knowledge — it was my life!

But the die was cast — Raymond would marry Idris. The merry marriage bells rung in my ears; I heard the nation's gratulation which followed the union; the ambitious noble uprose with swift eagle-flight, from the lowly ground to regal supremacy — and to the love of Idris. Yet, not so! She did not love him; she had called me her friend; she had smiled on me; to me she had entrusted her heart's dearest hope, the welfare of Adrian. This reflection thawed my congealing blood, and again the tide of life and love flowed impetuously onward, again to ebb as my busy thoughts changed.

The debate had ended at three in the morning. My soul was in tumults; I traversed the streets with eager rapidity. Truly, I was mad that night — love

— which I have named a giant from its birth, wrestled with despair! My heart, the field of combat, was wounded by the iron heel of the one, watered by the gushing tears of the other. Day, hateful to me, dawned; I retreated to my lodgings — I threw myself on a couch — I slept — was it sleep? — for thought was still alive — love and despair struggled still, and I writhed with unendurable pain.

I awoke half stupefied; I felt a heavy oppression on me, but knew not wherefore; I entered, as it were, the council-chamber of my brain, and questioned the various ministers of thought therein assembled; too soon I remembered all; too soon my limbs quivered beneath the tormenting power; soon, too soon, I knew myself a slave!

Suddenly, unannounced, Lord Raymond entered my apartment. He came in gaily, singing the Tyrolese song of liberty; noticed me with a gracious nod, and threw himself on a sofa opposite the copy of a bust of the Apollo Belvedere. After one or two trivial remarks, to which I sullenly replied, he suddenly cried, looking at the bust, “I am called like that victor! Not a bad idea; the head will serve for my new coinage, and be an omen to all dutiful subjects of my future success.”

He said this in his most gay, yet benevolent manner, and smiled, not disdainfully, but in playful mockery of himself. Then his countenance suddenly darkened, and in that shrill tone peculiar to himself, he cried, “I fought a good battle last night; higher conquest the plains of Greece never saw me achieve. Now I am the first man in the state, burthen of every ballad, and object of old women’s mumbled devotions. What are your meditations? You, who fancy that you can read the human soul, as your native lake reads each crevice and folding of its surrounding hills — say what you think of me; king-expectant, angel or devil, which?”

This ironical tone was discord to my bursting, over-boiling heart; I was nettled by his insolence, and replied with bitterness; “There is a spirit, neither angel or devil, damned to limbo merely.” I saw his cheeks become pale, and his lips whiten and quiver; his anger served but to enkindle mine, and I answered with a determined look his eyes which glared on me; suddenly they were withdrawn, cast down, a tear, I thought, wetted the dark lashes; I was softened, and with involuntary emotion added, “Not that you are such, my dear lord.”

I paused, even awed by the agitation he evinced; "Yes," he said at length, rising and biting his lip, as he strove to curb his passion; "Such am I! You do not know me, Verney; neither you, nor our audience of last night, nor does universal England know aught of me. I stand here, it would seem, an elected king; this hand is about to grasp a sceptre; these brows feel in each nerve the coming diadem. I appear to have strength, power, victory; standing as a dome-supporting column stands; and I am — a reed! I have ambition, and that attains its aim; my nightly dreams are realized, my waking hopes fulfilled; a kingdom awaits my acceptance, my enemies are overthrown. But here," and he struck his heart with violence, "here is the rebel, here the stumbling-block; this over-ruling heart, which I may drain of its living blood; but, while one fluttering pulsation remains, I am its slave."

He spoke with a broken voice, then bowed his head, and, hiding his face in his hands, wept. I was still smarting from my own disappointment; yet this scene oppressed me even to terror, nor could I interrupt his access of passion. It subsided at length; and, throwing himself on the couch, he remained silent and motionless, except that his changeful features showed a strong internal conflict. At last he rose, and said in his usual tone of voice, "The time grows on us, Verney, I must away. Let me not forget my chiefest errand here. Will you accompany me to Windsor to-morrow? You will not be dishonoured by my society, and as this is probably the last service, or disservice you can do me, will you grant my request?"

He held out his hand with almost a bashful air. Swiftly I thought — Yes, I will witness the last scene of the drama. Beside which, his mien conquered me, and an affectionate sentiment towards him, again filled my heart — I bade him command me. "Aye, that I will," said he gaily, "that's my cue now; be with me to-morrow morning by seven; be secret and faithful; and you shall be groom of the stole ere long."

So saying, he hastened away, vaulted on his horse, and with a gesture as if he gave me his hand to kiss, bade me another laughing adieu. Left to myself, I strove with painful intensity to divine the motive of his request and foresee the events of the coming day. The hours passed on unperceived; my head ached with thought, the nerves seemed teeming with the over full fraught — I clasped my burning brow, as if my fevered hand could medicine its pain.

I was punctual to the appointed hour on the following day, and found Lord Raymond waiting for me. We got into his carriage, and proceeded towards Windsor. I had tutored myself, and was resolved by no outward sign to disclose my internal agitation.

"What a mistake Ryland made," said Raymond, "when he thought to overpower me the other night. He spoke well, very well; such an harangue would have succeeded better addressed to me singly, than to the fools and knaves assembled yonder. Had I been alone, I should have listened to him with a wish to hear reason, but when he endeavoured to vanquish me in my own territory, with my own weapons, he put me on my mettle, and the event was such as all might have expected."

I smiled incredulously, and replied: "I am of Ryland's way of thinking, and will, if you please, repeat all his arguments; we shall see how far you will be induced by them, to change the royal for the patriotic style."

"The repetition would be useless," said Raymond, "since I well remember them, and have many others, self-suggested, which speak with unanswerable persuasion."

He did not explain himself, nor did I make any remark on his reply. Our silence endured for some miles, till the country with open fields, or shady woods and parks, presented pleasant objects to our view. After some observations on the scenery and seats, Raymond said: "Philosophers have called man a microcosm of nature, and find a reflection in the internal mind for all this machinery visibly at work around us. This theory has often been a source of amusement to me; and many an idle hour have I spent, exercising my ingenuity in finding resemblances. Does not Lord Bacon say that, 'the falling from a discord to a concord, which maketh great sweetness in music, hath an agreement with the affections, which are re-integrated to the better after some dislikes?' What a sea is the tide of passion, whose fountains are in our own nature! Our virtues are the quick-sands, which show themselves at calm and low water; but let the waves arise and the winds buffet them, and the poor devil whose hope was in their durability, finds them sink from under him. The fashions of the world, its exigencies, educations and pursuits, are winds to drive our wills, like clouds all one way; but let a thunderstorm arise in the shape of love, hate, or ambition, and the rack goes backward, stemming the opposing air in triumph."

"Yet," replied I, "nature always presents to our eyes the appearance of a patient: while there is an active principle in man which is capable of ruling fortune, and at least of tacking against the gale, till it in some mode conquers it."

"There is more of what is specious than true in your distinction," said my companion. "Did we form ourselves, choosing our dispositions, and our powers? I find myself, for one, as a stringed instrument with chords and stops — but I have no power to turn the pegs, or pitch my thoughts to a higher or lower key."

"Other men," I observed, "may be better musicians."

"I talk not of others, but myself," replied Raymond, "and I am as fair an example to go by as another. I cannot set my heart to a particular tune, or run voluntary changes on my will. We are born; we choose neither our parents, nor our station; we are educated by others, or by the world's circumstance, and this cultivation, mingling with our innate disposition, is the soil in which our desires, passions, and motives grow."

"There is much truth in what you say," said I, "and yet no man ever acts upon this theory. Who, when he makes a choice, says, Thus I choose, because I am necessitated? Does he not on the contrary feel a freedom of will within him, which, though you may call it fallacious, still actuates him as he decides?"

"Exactly so," replied Raymond, "another link of the breakless chain. Were I now to commit an act which would annihilate my hopes, and pluck the regal garment from my mortal limbs, to clothe them in ordinary weeds, would this, think you, be an act of free-will on my part?"

As we talked thus, I perceived that we were not going the ordinary road to Windsor, but through Englefield Green, towards Bishopgate Heath. I began to divine that Idris was not the object of our journey, but that I was brought to witness the scene that was to decide the fate of Raymond — and of Perdita. Raymond had evidently vacillated during his journey, and irresolution was marked in every gesture as we entered Perdita's cottage. I watched him curiously, determined that, if this hesitation should continue, I would assist Perdita to overcome herself, and teach her to disdain the wavering love of him, who balanced between the possession of a crown, and of her, whose excellence and affection transcended the worth of a kingdom.

We found her in her flower-adorned alcove; she was reading the newspaper report of the debate in parliament, that apparently doomed her to hopelessness. That heart-sinking feeling was painted in her sunk eyes and spiritless attitude; a cloud was on her beauty, and frequent sighs were tokens of her distress. This sight had an instantaneous effect on Raymond; his eyes beamed with tenderness, and remorse clothed his manners with earnestness and truth. He sat beside her; and, taking the paper from her hand, said, “Not a word more shall my sweet Perdita read of this contention of madmen and fools. I must not permit you to be acquainted with the extent of my delusion, lest you despise me; although, believe me, a wish to appear before you, not vanquished, but as a conqueror, inspired me during my wordy war.”

Perdita looked at him like one amazed; her expressive countenance shone for a moment with tenderness; to see him only was happiness. But a bitter thought swiftly shadowed her joy; she bent her eyes on the ground, endeavouring to master the passion of tears that threatened to overwhelm her. Raymond continued, “I will not act a part with you, dear girl, or appear other than what I am, weak and unworthy, more fit to excite your disdain than your love. Yet you do love me; I feel and know that you do, and thence I draw my most cherished hopes. If pride guided you, or even reason, you might well reject me. Do so; if your high heart, incapable of my infirmity of purpose, refuses to bend to the lowness of mine. Turn from me, if you will, — if you can. If your whole soul does not urge you to forgive me — if your entire heart does not open wide its door to admit me to its very centre, forsake me, never speak to me again. I, though sinning against you almost beyond remission, I also am proud; there must be no reserve in your pardon — no drawback to the gift of your affection.”

Perdita looked down, confused, yet pleased. My presence embarrassed her; so that she dared not turn to meet her lover’s eye, or trust her voice to assure him of her affection; while a blush mantled her cheek, and her disconsolate air was exchanged for one expressive of deep-felt joy. Raymond encircled her waist with his arm, and continued, “I do not deny that I have balanced between you and the highest hope that mortal men can entertain; but I do so no longer. Take me — mould me to your will, possess my heart and soul to all eternity. If you refuse to contribute to my happiness, I quit England to-night, and will never set foot in it again.

“Lionel, you hear: witness for me: persuade your sister to forgive the injury I have done her; persuade her to be mine.”

“There needs no persuasion,” said the blushing Perdita, “except your own dear promises, and my ready heart, which whispers to me that they are true.”

That same evening we all three walked together in the forest, and, with the garrulity which happiness inspires, they detailed to me the history of their loves. It was pleasant to see the haughty Raymond and reserved Perdita changed through happy love into prattling, playful children, both losing their characteristic dignity in the fullness of mutual contentment. A night or two ago Lord Raymond, with a brow of care, and a heart oppressed with thought, bent all his energies to silence or persuade the legislators of England that a sceptre was not too weighty for his hand, while visions of dominion, war, and triumph floated before him; now, frolicsome as a lively boy sporting under his mother’s approving eye, the hopes of his ambition were complete, when he pressed the small fair hand of Perdita to his lips; while she, radiant with delight, looked on the still pool, not truly admiring herself, but drinking in with rapture the reflection there made of the form of herself and her lover, shown for the first time in dear conjunction.

I rambled away from them. If the rapture of assured sympathy was theirs, I enjoyed that of restored hope. I looked on the regal towers of Windsor. High is the wall and strong the barrier that separate me from my Star of Beauty. But not impassible. She will not be his. A few more years dwell in thy native garden, sweet flower, till I by toil and time acquire a right to gather thee. Despair not, nor bid me despair! What must I do now? First I must seek Adrian, and restore him to her. Patience, gentleness, and untired affection, shall recall him, if it be true, as Raymond says, that he is mad; energy and courage shall rescue him, if he be unjustly imprisoned.

After the lovers again joined me, we supped together in the alcove. Truly it was a fairy’s supper; for though the air was perfumed by the scent of fruits and wine, we none of us either ate or drank — even the beauty of the night was unobserved; their ecstasy could not be increased by outward objects, and I was wrapt in reverie. At about midnight Raymond and I took leave of my sister, to return to town. He was all gaiety; scraps of songs fell from his lips; every thought of his mind — every object about us, gleamed under the sunshine of his mirth. He accused me of melancholy, of ill-humour and envy.

“Not so,” said I, “though I confess that my thoughts are not occupied as pleasantly as yours are. You promised to facilitate my visit to Adrian; I conjure you to perform your promise. I cannot linger here; I long to soothe — perhaps to cure the malady of my first and best friend. I shall immediately depart for Dunkeld.”

“Thou bird of night,” replied Raymond, “what an eclipse do you throw across my bright thoughts, forcing me to call to mind that melancholy ruin, which stands in mental desolation, more irreparable than a fragment of a carved column in a weed-grown field. You dream that you can restore him? Dædalus never wound so inextricable an error round Minotaur, as madness has woven about his imprisoned reason. Nor you, nor any other Theseus, can thread the labyrinth, to which perhaps some unkind Ariadne has the clue.”

“You allude to Evadne Zaimi: but she is not in England.”

“And were she,” said Raymond, “I would not advise her seeing him. Better to decay in absolute delirium, than to be the victim of the methodical unreason of ill-bestowed love. The long duration of his malady has probably erased from his mind all vestige of her; and it were well that it should never again be imprinted. You will find him at Dunkeld; gentle and tractable he wanders up the hills, and through the wood, or sits listening beside the waterfall. You may see him — his hair stuck with wild flowers — his eyes full of untraceable meaning — his voice broken — his person wasted to a shadow. He plucks flowers and weeds, and weaves chaplets of them, or sails yellow leaves and bits of bark on the stream, rejoicing in their safety, or weeping at their wreck. The very memory half unmans me. By Heaven! the first tears I have shed since boyhood rushed scalding into my eyes when I saw him.”

It needed not this last account to spur me on to visit him. I only doubted whether or not I should endeavour to see Idris again, before I departed. This doubt was decided on the following day. Early in the morning Raymond came to me; intelligence had arrived that Adrian was dangerously ill, and it appeared impossible that his failing strength should surmount the disorder. “To-morrow,” said Raymond, “his mother and sister set out for Scotland to see him once again.”

“And I go to-day,” I cried; “this very hour I will engage a sailing balloon; I shall be there in forty-eight hours at furthest, perhaps in less, if the wind is fair. Farewell, Raymond; be happy in having chosen the better part in life. This turn of fortune revives me. I feared madness, not sickness — I have a presentiment that Adrian will not die; perhaps this illness is a crisis, and he may recover.”

Everything favoured my journey. The balloon rose about half a mile from the earth, and with a favourable wind it hurried through the air, its feathered vans cleaving the unopposing atmosphere. Notwithstanding the melancholy object of my journey, my spirits were exhilarated by reviving hope, by the swift motion of the airy pinnace, and the balmy visitation of the sunny air. The pilot hardly moved the plumed steerage, and the slender mechanism of the wings, wide unfurled, gave forth a murmuring noise, soothing to the sense. Plain and hill, stream and corn-field, were discernible below, while we unimpeded sped on swift and secure, as a wild swan in his spring-tide flight. The machine obeyed the slightest motion of the helm; and, the wind blowing steadily, there was no let or obstacle to our course. Such was the power of man over the elements; a power long sought, and lately won; yet foretold in by-gone time by the prince of poets, whose verses I quoted much to the astonishment of my pilot, when I told him how many hundred years ago they had been written: —

Oh! human wit, thou can’st invent much ill,
Thou searchest strange arts: who would think by skill,
An heavy man like a light bird should stray,
And through the empty heavens find a way?

I alighted at Perth; and, though much fatigued by a constant exposure to the air for many hours, I would not rest, but merely altering my mode of conveyance, I went by land instead of air, to Dunkeld. The sun was rising as I entered the opening of the hills. After the revolution of ages Birnam hill was again covered with a young forest, while more aged pines, planted at the very commencement of the nineteenth century by the then Duke of Athol, gave solemnity and beauty to the scene. The rising sun first tinged the pine tops; and my mind, rendered through my mountain education deeply susceptible of the graces of nature, and now on the eve of again beholding my beloved and perhaps dying friend, was strangely influenced by the sight of those distant beams: surely they were ominous, and as such I regarded them, good omens for Adrian, on whose life my happiness depended.

Poor fellow! he lay stretched on a bed of sickness, his cheeks glowing with the hues of fever, his eyes half closed, his breath irregular and difficult. Yet it was less painful to see him thus, than to find him fulfilling the animal functions uninterruptedly, his mind sick the while. I established myself at his bedside; I never quitted it day or night. Bitter task was it, to behold his spirit waver between death and life: to see his warm cheek, and know that the very fire which burned too fiercely there, was consuming the vital fuel; to hear his moaning voice, which might never again articulate words of love and wisdom; to witness the ineffectual motions of his limbs, soon to be wrapt in their mortal shroud. Such for three days and nights appeared the consummation which fate had decreed for my labours, and I became haggard and spectre-like, through anxiety and watching. At length his eyes unclosed faintly, yet with a look of returning life; he became pale and weak; but the rigidity of his features was softened by approaching convalescence. He knew me. What a brimful cup of joyful agony it was, when his face first gleamed with the glance of recognition — when he pressed my hand, now more fevered than his own, and when he pronounced my name! No trace of his past insanity remained, to dash my joy with sorrow.

This same evening his mother and sister arrived. The Countess of Windsor was by nature full of energetic feeling; but she had very seldom in her life permitted the concentrated emotions of her heart to show themselves on her features. The studied immovability of her countenance; her slow, equable manner, and soft but unmelodious voice, were a mask, hiding her fiery passions, and the impatience of her disposition. She did not in the least resemble either of her children; her black and sparkling eye, lit up by pride, was totally unlike the blue lustre, and frank, benignant expression of either Adrian or Idris. There was something grand and majestic in her motions, but nothing persuasive, nothing amiable. Tall, thin, and strait, her face still handsome, her raven hair hardly tinged with grey, her forehead arched and beautiful, had not the eye-brows been somewhat scattered — it was impossible not to be struck by her, almost to fear her. Idris appeared to be the only being who could resist her mother, notwithstanding the extreme mildness of her character. But there was a fearlessness and frankness about her, which said that she would not encroach on another's liberty, but held her own sacred and unassailable.

The Countess cast no look of kindness on my worn-out frame, though afterwards she thanked me coldly for my attentions. Not so Idris; her first glance was for her brother; she took his hand, she kissed his eye-lids, and hung over him with looks of compassion and love. Her eyes glistened with tears when she thanked me, and the grace of her expressions was enhanced, not diminished, by the fervour, which caused her almost to falter as she spoke. Her mother, all eyes and ears, soon interrupted us; and I saw, that she wished to dismiss me quietly, as one whose services, now that his relatives had arrived, were of no use to her son. I was harassed and ill, resolved not to give up my post, yet doubting in what way I should assert it; when Adrian called me, and clasping my hand, bade me not leave him. His mother, apparently inattentive, at once understood what was meant, and seeing the hold we had upon her, yielded the point to us.

The days that followed were full of pain to me; so that I sometimes regretted that I had not yielded at once to the haughty lady, who watched all my motions, and turned my beloved task of nursing my friend to a work of pain and irritation. Never did any woman appear so entirely made of mind, as the Countess of Windsor. Her passions had subdued her appetites, even her natural wants; she slept little, and hardly ate at all; her body was evidently considered by her as a mere machine, whose health was necessary for the accomplishment of her schemes, but whose senses formed no part of her enjoyment. There is something fearful in one who can thus conquer the animal part of our nature, if the victory be not the effect of consummate virtue; nor was it without a mixture of this feeling, that I beheld the figure of the Countess awake when others slept, fasting when I, abstemious naturally, and rendered so by the fever that preyed on me, was forced to recruit myself with food. She resolved to prevent or diminish my opportunities of acquiring influence over her children, and circumvented my plans by a hard, quiet, stubborn resolution, that seemed not to belong to flesh and blood. War was at last tacitly acknowledged between us. We had many pitched battles, during which no word was spoken, hardly a look was interchanged, but in which each resolved not to submit to the other. The Countess had the advantage of position; so I was vanquished, though I would not yield.

I became sick at heart. My countenance was painted with the hues of ill health and vexation. Adrian and Idris saw this; they attributed it to my long watching and anxiety; they urged me to rest, and take care of myself, while I most truly assured them, that my best medicine was their good wishes; those, and the assured convalescence of my friend, now daily more apparent. The faint rose again blushed on his cheek; his brow and lips lost the ashy paleness of threatened dissolution; such was the dear reward of my unremitting attention — and bounteous heaven added overflowing recompense, when it gave me also the thanks and smiles of Idris.

After the lapse of a few weeks, we left Dunkeld. Idris and her mother returned immediately to Windsor, while Adrian and I followed by slow journeys and frequent stoppages, occasioned by his continued weakness. As we traversed the various counties of fertile England, all wore an exhilarating appearance to my companion, who had been so long secluded by disease from the enjoyments of weather and scenery. We passed through busy towns and cultivated plains. The husbandmen were getting in their plenteous harvests, and the women and children, occupied by light rustic toils, formed groups of happy, healthful persons, the very sight of whom carried cheerfulness to the heart. One evening, quitting our inn, we strolled down a shady lane, then up a grassy slope, till we came to an eminence, that commanded an extensive view of hill and dale, meandering rivers, dark woods, and shining villages. The sun was setting; and the clouds, straying, like new-shorn sheep, through the vast fields of sky, received the golden colour of his parting beams; the distant uplands shone out, and the busy hum of evening came, harmonized by distance, on our ear. Adrian, who felt all the fresh spirit infused by returning health, clasped his hands in delight, and exclaimed with transport:

"O happy earth, and happy inhabitants of earth! A stately palace has God built for you, O man! and worthy are you of your dwelling! Behold the verdant carpet spread at our feet, and the azure canopy above; the fields of earth which generate and nurture all things, and the track of heaven, which contains and clasps all things. Now, at this evening hour, at the period of repose and refection, methinks all hearts breathe one hymn of love and thanksgiving, and we, like priests of old on the mountain-tops, give a voice to their sentiment.

"Assuredly a most benignant power built up the majestic fabric we inhabit, and framed the laws by which it endures. If mere existence, and not happiness, had been the final end of our being, what need of the profuse luxuries which we enjoy? Why should our dwelling place be so lovely, and why should the instincts of nature minister pleasurable sensations? The very sustaining of our animal machine is made delightful; and our sustenance, the fruits of the field, is painted with transcendent hues, endued with grateful odours, and palatable to our taste. Why should this be, if HE were not good? We need houses to protect us from the seasons, and behold the materials with which we are provided; the growth of trees with their adornment of leaves; while rocks of stone piled above the plains variegate the prospect with their pleasant irregularity.

"Nor are outward objects alone the receptacles of the Spirit of Good. Look into the mind of man, where wisdom reigns enthroned; where imagination, the painter, sits, with his pencil dipped in hues lovelier than those of sunset, adorning familiar life with glowing tints. What a noble boon, worthy the giver, is the imagination! It takes from reality its leaden hue: it envelopes all thought and sensation in a radiant veil, and with an hand of beauty beckons us from the sterile seas of life, to her gardens, and bowers, and glades of bliss. And is not love a gift of the divinity? Love, and her child, Hope, which can bestow wealth on poverty, strength on the weak, and happiness on the sorrowing.

"My lot has not been fortunate. I have consorted long with grief, entered the gloomy labyrinth of madness, and emerged, but half alive. Yet I thank God that I have lived! I thank God, that I have beheld his throne, the heavens, and earth, his footstool. I am glad that I have seen the changes of his day; to behold the sun, fountain of light, and the gentle pilgrim moon; to have seen the fire bearing flowers of the sky, and the flowery stars of earth; to have witnessed the sowing and the harvest. I am glad that I have loved, and have experienced sympathetic joy and sorrow with my fellow-creatures. I am glad now to feel the current of thought flow through my mind, as the blood through the articulations of my frame; mere existence is pleasure; and I thank God that I live!

“And all ye happy nurslings of mother-earth, do ye not echo my words? Ye who are linked by the affectionate ties of nature, companions, friends, lovers! fathers, who toil with joy for their offspring; women, who while gazing on the living forms of their children, forget the pains of maternity; children, who neither toil nor spin, but love and are loved!

“Oh, that death and sickness were banished from our earthly home! that hatred, tyranny, and fear could no longer make their lair in the human heart! that each man might find a brother in his fellow, and a nest of repose amid the wide plains of his inheritance! that the source of tears were dry, and that lips might no longer form expressions of sorrow. Sleeping thus under the beneficent eye of heaven, can evil visit thee, O Earth, or grief cradle to their graves thy luckless children? Whisper it not, let the demons hear and rejoice! The choice is with us; let us will it, and our habitation becomes a paradise. For the will of man is omnipotent, blunting the arrows of death, soothing the bed of disease, and wiping away the tears of agony. And what is each human being worth, if he do not put forth his strength to aid his fellow-creatures? My soul is a fading spark, my nature frail as a spent wave; but I dedicate all of intellect and strength that remains to me, to that one work, and take upon me the task, as far as I am able, of bestowing blessings on my fellow-men!”

His voice trembled, his eyes were cast up, his hands clasped, and his fragile person was bent, as it were, with excess of emotion. The spirit of life seemed to linger in his form, as a dying flame on an altar flickers on the embers of an accepted sacrifice.

CHAPTER VI

When we arrived at Windsor, I found that Raymond and Perdita had departed for the continent. I took possession of my sister's cottage, and blessed myself that I lived within view of Windsor Castle. It was a curious fact, that at this period, when by the marriage of Perdita I was allied to one of the richest individuals in England, and was bound by the most intimate friendship to its chiefest noble, I experienced the greatest excess of poverty that I had ever known. My knowledge of the worldly principles of Lord Raymond, would have ever prevented me from applying to him, however deep my distress might have been. It was in vain that I repeated to myself with regard to Adrian, that his purse was open to me; that one in soul, as we were, our fortunes ought also to be common. I could never, while with him, think of his bounty as a remedy to my poverty; and I even put aside hastily his offers of supplies, assuring him of a falsehood, that I needed them not. How could I say to this generous being, "Maintain me in idleness. You who have dedicated your powers of mind and fortune to the benefit of your species, shall you so misdirect your exertions, as to support in uselessness the strong, healthy, and capable?"

And yet I dared not request him to use his influence that I might obtain an honourable provision for myself — for then I should have been obliged to leave Windsor. I hovered for ever around the walls of its Castle, beneath its enshadowing thickets; my sole companions were my books and my loving thoughts. I studied the wisdom of the ancients, and gazed on the happy walls that sheltered the beloved of my soul. My mind was nevertheless idle. I pored over the poetry of old times; I studied the metaphysics of Plato and Berkeley. I read the histories of Greece and Rome, and of England's former periods, and I watched the movements of the lady of my heart. At night I could see her shadow on the walls of her apartment; by day I viewed her in her flower-garden, or riding in the park with her usual companions. Methought the charm would be broken if I were seen, but I heard the music of her voice and was happy. I gave to each heroine of whom I read, her beauty and matchless excellences — such was Antigone, when she guided the blind Oedipus to the grove of the Eumenides, and discharged the funeral rites of Polynices; such was Miranda in the unvisited cave of Prospero; such Haidee, on the sands of the Ionian island. I was mad with excess of passionate devotion; but pride, tameless as fire, invested my nature, and prevented me from betraying myself by word or look.

In the mean time, while I thus pampered myself with rich mental repasts, a peasant would have disdained my scanty fare, which I sometimes robbed from the squirrels of the forest. I was, I own, often tempted to recur to the lawless feats of my boy-hood, and knock down the almost tame pheasants that perched upon the trees, and bent their bright eyes on me. But they were the property of Adrian, the nurslings of Idris; and so, although my imagination rendered sensual by privation, made me think that they would better become the spit in my kitchen, than the green leaves of the forest,

Nathelesse,
I checked my haughty will, and did not eat;

but supped upon sentiment, and dreamt vainly of "such morsels sweet," as I might not waking attain.

But, at this period, the whole scheme of my existence was about to change. The orphan and neglected son of Verney, was on the eve of being linked to the mechanism of society by a golden chain, and to enter into all the duties and affections of life. Miracles were to be wrought in my favour, the machine of social life pushed with vast effort backward. Attend, O reader! while I narrate this tale of wonders!

One day as Adrian and Idris were riding through the forest, with their mother and accustomed companions, Idris, drawing her brother aside from the rest of the cavalcade, suddenly asked him, "What had become of his friend, Lionel Verney?"

"Even from this spot," replied Adrian, pointing to my sister's cottage, "you can see his dwelling."

"Indeed!" said Idris, "and why, if he be so near, does he not come to see us, and make one of our society?"

"I often visit him," replied Adrian; "but you may easily guess the motives, which prevent him from coming where his presence may annoy any one among us."

"I do guess them," said Idris, "and such as they are, I would not venture to combat them. Tell me, however, in what way he passes his time; what he is doing and thinking in his cottage retreat?"

"Nay, my sweet sister," replied Adrian, "you ask me more than I can well answer; but if you feel interest in him, why not visit him? He will feel highly honoured, and thus you may repay a part of the obligation I owe him, and compensate for the injuries fortune has done him."

"I will most readily accompany you to his abode," said the lady, "not that I wish that either of us should unburthen ourselves of our debt, which, being no less than your life, must remain unpayable ever. But let us go; to-morrow we will arrange to ride out together, and proceeding towards that part of the forest, call upon him."

The next evening therefore, though the autumnal change had brought on cold and rain, Adrian and Idris entered my cottage. They found me Curius-like, feasting on sorry fruits for supper; but they brought gifts richer than the golden bribes of the Sabines, nor could I refuse the invaluable store of friendship and delight which they bestowed. Surely the glorious twins of Latona were not more welcome, when, in the infancy of the world, they were brought forth to beautify and enlighten this "sterile promontory," than were this angelic pair to my lowly dwelling and grateful heart. We sat like one family round my hearth. Our talk was on subjects, unconnected with the emotions that evidently occupied each; but we each divined the other's thought, and as our voices spoke of indifferent matters, our eyes, in mute language, told a thousand things no tongue could have uttered.

They left me in an hour's time. They left me happy — how unspeakably happy. It did not require the measured sounds of human language to syllable the story of my ecstasy. Idris had visited me; Idris I should again and again see — my imagination did not wander beyond the completeness of this knowledge. I trod air; no doubt, no fear, no hope even, disturbed me; I clasped with my soul the fullness of contentment, satisfied, undesiring, beatified.

For many days Adrian and Idris continued to visit me thus. In this dear intercourse, love, in the guise of enthusiastic friendship, infused more and more of his omnipotent spirit. Idris felt it. Yes, divinity of the world, I read your characters in her looks and gesture; I heard your melodious voice echoed by her — you prepared for us a soft and flowery path, all gentle thoughts adorned it — your name, O Love, was not spoken, but you stood the Genius of the Hour, veiled, and time, but no mortal hand, might raise the curtain. Organs of articulate sound did not proclaim the union of our hearts; for untoward circumstance allowed no opportunity for the expression that hovered on our lips.

Oh my pen! haste thou to write what was, before the thought of what is, arrests the hand that guides thee. If I lift up my eyes and see the desert earth, and feel that those dear eyes have spent their mortal lustre, and that those beauteous lips are silent, their “crimson leaves” faded, for ever I am mute!

But you live, my Idris, even now you move before me! There was a glade, O reader! a grassy opening in the wood; the retiring trees left its velvet expanse as a temple for love; the silver Thames bounded it on one side, and a willow bending down dipped in the water its Naiad hair, dishevelled by the wind’s viewless hand. The oaks around were the home of a tribe of nightingales — there am I now; Idris, in youth’s dear prime, is by my side — remember, I am just twenty-two, and seventeen summers have scarcely passed over the beloved of my heart. The river swollen by autumnal rains, deluged the low lands, and Adrian in his favourite boat is employed in the dangerous pastime of plucking the topmost bough from a submerged oak. Are you weary of life, O Adrian, that you thus play with danger? —

He has obtained his prize, and he pilots his boat through the flood; our eyes were fixed on him fearfully, but the stream carried him away from us; he was forced to land far lower down, and to make a considerable circuit before he could join us. “He is safe!” said Idris, as he leapt on shore, and waved the bough over his head in token of success; “we will wait for him here.”

We were alone together; the sun had set; the song of the nightingales began; the evening star shone distinct in the flood of light, which was yet unfaded in the west. The blue eyes of my angelic girl were fixed on this sweet emblem of herself: “How the light palpitates,” she said, “which is that star’s life. Its vacillating effulgence seems to say that its state, even like ours upon earth, is wavering and inconstant; it fears, methinks, and it loves.”

“Gaze not on the star, dear, generous friend,” I cried, “read not love in *its* trembling rays; look not upon distant worlds; speak not of the mere imagination of a sentiment. I have long been silent; long even to sickness have I desired to speak to you, and submit my soul, my life, my entire being to you. Look not on the star, dear love, or do, and let that eternal spark plead for me; let it be my witness and my advocate, silent as it shines — love is to me as light to the star; even so long as that is uneclipsed by annihilation, so long shall I love you.”

Veiled for ever to the world’s callous eye must be the transport of that moment. Still do I feel her graceful form press against my full-fraught heart — still does sight, and pulse, and breath sicken and fail, at the remembrance of that first kiss. Slowly and silently we went to meet Adrian, whom we heard approaching.

I entreated Adrian to return to me after he had conducted his sister home. And that same evening, walking among the moon-lit forest paths, I poured forth my whole heart, its transport and its hope, to my friend. For a moment he looked disturbed—”I might have foreseen this,” he said, “what strife will now ensue! Pardon me, Lionel, nor wonder that the expectation of contest with my mother should jar me, when else I should delightedly confess that my best hopes are fulfilled, in confiding my sister to your protection. If you do not already know it, you will soon learn the deep hate my mother bears to the name Verney. I will converse with Idris; then all that a friend can do, I will do; to her it must belong to play the lover’s part, if she be capable of it.”

While the brother and sister were still hesitating in what manner they could best attempt to bring their mother over to their party, she, suspecting our meetings, taxed her children with them; taxed her fair daughter with deceit, and an unbecoming attachment for one whose only merit was being the son of the profligate favourite of her imprudent father; and who was doubtless as worthless as he from whom he boasted his descent. The eyes of Idris flashed at this accusation; she replied, “I do not deny that I love Verney; prove to me that he is worthless; and I will never see him more.”

“Dear Madam,” said Adrian, “let me entreat you to see him, to cultivate his friendship. You will wonder then, as I do, at the extent of his accomplishments, and the brilliancy of his talents.” (Pardon me, gentle reader, this is not futile vanity; — not futile, since to know that Adrian felt thus, brings joy even now to my lone heart).

“Mad and foolish boy!” exclaimed the angry lady, “you have chosen with dreams and theories to overthrow my schemes for your own aggrandisement; but you shall not do the same by those I have formed for your sister. I but too well understand the fascination you both labour under; since I had the same struggle with your father, to make him cast off the parent of this youth, who hid his evil propensities with the smoothness and subtlety of a viper. In those days how often did I hear of his attractions, his wide spread conquests, his wit, his refined manners. It is well when flies only are caught by such spiders’ webs; but is it for the high-born and powerful to bow their necks to the flimsy yoke of these unmeaning pretensions? Were your sister indeed the insignificant person she deserves to be, I would willingly leave her to the fate, the wretched fate, of the wife of a man, whose very person, resembling as it does his wretched father, ought to remind you of the folly and vice it typifies — but remember, Lady Idris, it is not alone the once royal blood of England that colours your veins, you are a Princess of Austria, and every life-drop is akin to emperors and kings. Are you then a fit mate for an uneducated shepherd-boy, whose only inheritance is his father’s tarnished name?”

“I can make but one defence,” replied Idris, “the same offered by my brother; see Lionel, converse with my shepherd-boy” —

The Countess interrupted her indignantly—”Yours!” — she cried: and then, smoothing her impassioned features to a disdainful smile, she continued—”We will talk of this another time. All I now ask, all your mother, Idris, requests is, that you will not see this upstart during the interval of one month.”

“I dare not comply,” said Idris, “it would pain him too much. I have no right to play with his feelings, to accept his proffered love, and then sting him with neglect.”

“This is going too far,” her mother answered, with quivering lips, and eyes again instinct by anger.

“Nay, Madam,” said Adrian, “unless my sister consent never to see him again, it is surely an useless torment to separate them for a month.”

“Certainly,” replied the ex-queen, with bitter scorn, “his love, and her love, and both their childish flutterings, are to be put in fit comparison with my years of hope and anxiety, with the duties of the offspring of kings, with the high and dignified conduct which one of her descent ought to pursue. But it is unworthy of me to argue and complain. Perhaps you will have the goodness to promise me not to marry during that interval?”

This was asked only half ironically; and Idris wondered why her mother should extort from her a solemn vow not to do, what she had never dreamed of doing — but the promise was required and given.

All went on cheerfully now; we met as usual, and talked without dread of our future plans. The Countess was so gentle, and even beyond her wont, amiable with her children, that they began to entertain hopes of her ultimate consent. She was too unlike them, too utterly alien to their tastes, for them to find delight in her society, or in the prospect of its continuance, but it gave them pleasure to see her conciliating and kind. Once even, Adrian ventured to propose her receiving me. She refused with a smile, reminding him that for the present his sister had promised to be patient.

One day, after the lapse of nearly a month, Adrian received a letter from a friend in London, requesting his immediate presence for the furtherance of some important object. Guileless himself, Adrian feared no deceit. I rode with him as far as Staines: he was in high spirits; and, since I could not see Idris during his absence, he promised a speedy return. His gaiety, which was extreme, had the strange effect of awakening in me contrary feelings; a presentiment of evil hung over me; I loitered on my return; I counted the hours that must elapse before I saw Idris again. Wherefore should this be? What evil might not happen in the mean time? Might not her mother take advantage of Adrian’s absence to urge her beyond her sufferance, perhaps to entrap her? I resolved, let what would befall, to see and converse with her the following day. This determination soothed me. To-morrow, loveliest and best, hope and joy of my life, to-morrow I will see thee — Fool, to dream of a moment’s delay!

I went to rest. At past midnight I was awaked by a violent knocking. It was now deep winter; it had snowed, and was still snowing; the wind whistled in the leafless trees, despoiling them of the white flakes as they fell; its drear moaning, and the continued knocking, mingled wildly with my dreams — at length I was wide awake; hastily dressing myself, I hurried to discover the cause of this disturbance, and to open my door to the unexpected visitor. Pale as the snow that showered about her, with clasped hands, Idris stood before me. “Save me!” she exclaimed, and would have sunk to the ground had I not supported her. In a moment however she revived, and, with energy, almost with violence, entreated me to saddle horses, to take her away, away to London — to her brother — at least to save her. I had no horses — she wrung her hands. “What can I do?” she cried, “I am lost — we are both for ever lost! But come — come with me, Lionel; here I must not stay, — we can get a chaise at the nearest post-house; yet perhaps we have time! come, O come with me to save and protect me!”

When I heard her piteous demands, while with disordered dress, dishevelled hair, and aghast looks, she wrung her hands — the idea shot across me is she also mad?—”Sweet one,” and I folded her to my heart, “better repose than wander further; — rest — my beloved, I will make a fire — you are chill.”

“Rest!” she cried, “repose! you rave, Lionel! If you delay we are lost; come, I pray you, unless you would cast me off for ever.”

That Idris, the princely born, nursling of wealth and luxury, should have come through the tempestuous winter-night from her regal abode, and standing at my lowly door, conjure me to fly with her through darkness and storm — was surely a dream — again her plaintive tones, the sight of her loveliness assured me that it was no vision. Looking timidly around, as if she feared to be overheard, she whispered: “I have discovered — to-morrow — that is, to-day — already the to-morrow is come — before dawn, foreigners, Austrians, my mother’s hirelings, are to carry me off to Germany, to prison, to marriage — to anything, except you and my brother — take me away, or soon they will be here!”

I was frightened by her vehemence, and imagined some mistake in her incoherent tale; but I no longer hesitated to obey her. She had come by herself from the Castle, three long miles, at midnight, through the heavy snow; we must reach Englefield Green, a mile and a half further, before we could obtain a chaise. She told me, that she had kept up her strength and courage till her arrival at my cottage, and then both failed. Now she could hardly walk. Supporting her as I did, still she lagged: and at the distance of half a mile, after many stoppages, shivering fits, and half faintings, she slipt from my supporting arm on the snow, and with a torrent of tears averred that she must be taken, for that she could not proceed. I lifted her up in my arms; her light form rested on my breast. — I felt no burthen, except the internal one of contrary and contending emotions. Brimming delight now invested me. Again her chill limbs touched me as a torpedo; and I shuddered in sympathy with her pain and fright. Her head lay on my shoulder, her breath waved my hair, her heart beat near mine, transport made me tremble, blinded me, annihilated me — till a suppressed groan, bursting from her lips, the chattering of her teeth, which she strove vainly to subdue, and all the signs of suffering she evinced, recalled me to the necessity of speed and succour. At last I said to her, "There is Englefield Green; there the inn. But, if you are seen thus strangely circumstanced, dear Idris, even now your enemies may learn your flight too soon: were it not better that I hired the chaise alone? I will put you in safety meanwhile, and return to you immediately."

She answered that I was right, and might do with her as I pleased. I observed the door of a small out-house a-jar. I pushed it open; and, with some hay strewed about, I formed a couch for her, placing her exhausted frame on it, and covering her with my cloak. I feared to leave her, she looked so wan and faint — but in a moment she re-acquired animation, and, with that, fear; and again she implored me not to delay. To call up the people of the inn, and obtain a conveyance and horses, even though I harnessed them myself, was the work of many minutes; minutes, each freighted with the weight of ages. I caused the chaise to advance a little, waited till the people of the inn had retired, and then made the post-boy draw up the carriage to the spot where Idris, impatient, and now somewhat recovered, stood waiting for me. I lifted her into the chaise; I assured her that with our four horses we should arrive in London before five o'clock, the hour when she would be sought and missed. I besought her to calm herself; a kindly shower of tears relieved her, and by degrees she related her tale of fear and peril.

That same night after Adrian's departure, her mother had warmly expostulated with her on the subject of her attachment to me. Every motive, every threat, every angry taunt was urged in vain. She seemed to consider that through me she had lost Raymond; I was the evil influence of her life; I was even accused of increasing and confirming the mad and base apostasy of Adrian from all views of advancement and grandeur; and now this miserable mountaineer was to steal her daughter. Never, Idris related, did the angry lady deign to recur to gentleness and persuasion; if she had, the task of resistance would have been exquisitely painful. As it was, the sweet girl's generous nature was roused to defend, and ally herself with, my despised cause. Her mother ended with a look of contempt and covert triumph, which for a moment awakened the suspicions of Idris. When they parted for the night, the Countess said, "To-morrow I trust your tone will be changed: be composed; I have agitated you; go to rest; and I will send you a medicine I always take when unduly restless — it will give you a quiet night."

By the time that she had with uneasy thoughts laid her fair cheek upon her pillow, her mother's servant brought a draught; a suspicion again crossed her at this novel proceeding, sufficiently alarming to determine her not to take the potion; but dislike of contention, and a wish to discover whether there was any just foundation for her conjectures, made her, she said, almost instinctively, and in contradiction to her usual frankness, pretend to swallow the medicine. Then, agitated as she had been by her mother's violence, and now by unaccustomed fears, she lay unable to sleep, starting at every sound. Soon her door opened softly, and on her springing up, she heard a whisper, "Not asleep yet," and the door again closed. With a beating heart she expected another visit, and when after an interval her chamber was again invaded, having first assured herself that the intruders were her mother and an attendant, she composed herself to feigned sleep. A step approached her bed, she dared not move, she strove to calm her palpitations, which became more violent, when she heard her mother say mutteringly, "Pretty simpleton, little do you think that your game is already at an end for ever."

For a moment the poor girl fancied that her mother believed that she had drank poison: she was on the point of springing up; when the Countess, already at a distance from the bed, spoke in a low voice to her companion, and again Idris listened: "Hasten," said she, "there is no time to lose — it is long past eleven; they will be here at five; take merely the clothes necessary for her journey, and her jewel-casket." The servant obeyed; few words were spoken on either side; but those were caught at with avidity by the intended victim. She heard the name of her own maid mentioned;—"No, no," replied her mother, "she does not go with us; Lady Idris must forget England, and all belonging to it." And again she heard, "She will not wake till late to-morrow, and we shall then be at sea."—"All is ready," at length the woman announced. The Countess again came to her daughter's bedside: "In Austria at least," she said, "you will obey. In Austria, where obedience can be enforced, and no choice left but between an honourable prison and a fitting marriage."

Both then withdrew; though, as she went, the Countess said, "Softly; all sleep; though all have not been prepared for sleep, like her. I would not have any one suspect, or she might be roused to resistance, and perhaps escape. Come with me to my room; we will remain there till the hour agreed upon." They went. Idris, panic-struck, but animated and strengthened even by her excessive fear, dressed herself hurriedly, and going down a flight of back-stairs, avoiding the vicinity of her mother's apartment, she contrived to escape from the castle by a low window, and came through snow, wind, and obscurity to my cottage; nor lost her courage, until she arrived, and, depositing her fate in my hands, gave herself up to the desperation and weariness that overwhelmed her.

I comforted her as well as I might. Joy and exultation, were mine, to possess, and to save her. Yet not to excite fresh agitation in her, "*per non turbar quel bel viso sereno*," I curbed my delight. I strove to quiet the eager dancing of my heart; I turned from her my eyes, beaming with too much tenderness, and proudly, to dark night, and the inclement atmosphere, murmured the expressions of my transport. We reached London, methought, all too soon; and yet I could not regret our speedy arrival, when I witnessed the ecstasy with which my beloved girl found herself in her brother's arms, safe from every evil, under his unblamed protection.

Adrian wrote a brief note to his mother, informing her that Idris was under his care and guardianship. Several days elapsed, and at last an answer came, dated from Cologne. "It was useless," the haughty and disappointed lady wrote, "for the Earl of Windsor and his sister to address again the injured parent, whose only expectation of tranquillity must be derived from oblivion of their existence. Her desires had been blasted, her schemes overthrown. She did not complain; in her brother's court she would find, not compensation for their disobedience (filial unkindness admitted of none), but such a state of things and mode of life, as might best reconcile her to her fate. Under such circumstances, she positively declined any communication with them."

Such were the strange and incredible events, that finally brought about my union with the sister of my best friend, with my adored Idris. With simplicity and courage she set aside the prejudices and opposition which were obstacles to my happiness, nor scrupled to give her hand, where she had given her heart. To be worthy of her, to raise myself to her height through the exertion of talents and virtue, to repay her love with devoted, unwearied tenderness, were the only thanks I could offer for the matchless gift.

CHAPTER VII

And now let the reader, passing over some short period of time, be introduced to our happy circle. Adrian, Idris and I, were established in Windsor Castle; Lord Raymond and my sister, inhabited a house which the former had built on the borders of the Great Park, near Perdita's cottage, as was still named the low-roofed abode, where we two, poor even in hope, had each received the assurance of our felicity. We had our separate occupations and our common amusements. Sometimes we passed whole days under the leafy covert of the forest with our books and music. This occurred during those rare days in this country, when the sun mounts his ethereal throne in unclouded majesty, and the windless atmosphere is as a bath of pellucid and grateful water, wrapping the senses in tranquillity. When the clouds veiled the sky, and the wind scattered them there and here, rending their woof, and strewing its fragments through the aerial plains — then we rode out, and sought new spots of beauty and repose. When the frequent rains shut us within doors, evening recreation followed morning study, ushered in by music and song. Idris had a natural musical talent; and her voice, which had been carefully cultivated, was full and sweet. Raymond and I made a part of the concert, and Adrian and Perdita were devout listeners. Then we were as gay as summer insects, playful as children; we ever met one another with smiles, and read content and joy in each other's countenances. Our prime festivals were held in Perdita's cottage; nor were we ever weary of talking of the past or dreaming of the future. Jealousy and disquiet were unknown among us; nor did a fear or hope of change ever disturb our tranquillity. Others said, We might be happy — we said — We are.

When any separation took place between us, it generally so happened, that Idris and Perdita would ramble away together, and we remained to discuss the affairs of nations, and the philosophy of life. The very difference of our dispositions gave zest to these conversations. Adrian had the superiority in learning and eloquence; but Raymond possessed a quick penetration, and a practical knowledge of life, which usually displayed itself in opposition to Adrian, and thus kept up the ball of discussion. At other times we made excursions of many days' duration, and crossed the country to visit any spot noted for beauty or historical association. Sometimes we went up to London, and entered into the amusements of the busy throng; sometimes our retreat was invaded by visitors from among them. This change made us only the more sensible to the delights of the intimate intercourse of our own circle, the tranquillity of our divine forest, and our happy evenings in the halls of our beloved Castle.

The disposition of Idris was peculiarly frank, soft, and affectionate. Her temper was unalterably sweet; and although firm and resolute on any point that touched her heart, she was yielding to those she loved. The nature of Perdita was less perfect; but tenderness and happiness improved her temper, and softened her natural reserve. Her understanding was clear and comprehensive, her imagination vivid; she was sincere, generous, and reasonable. Adrian, the matchless brother of my soul, the sensitive and excellent Adrian, loving all, and beloved by all, yet seemed destined not to find the half of himself, which was to complete his happiness. He often left us, and wandered by himself in the woods, or sailed in his little skiff, his books his only companions. He was often the gayest of our party, at the same time that he was the only one visited by fits of despondency; his slender frame seemed overcharged with the weight of life, and his soul appeared rather to inhabit his body than unite with it. I was hardly more devoted to my Idris than to her brother, and she loved him as her teacher, her friend, the benefactor who had secured to her the fulfilment of her dearest wishes. Raymond, the ambitious, restless Raymond, reposed midway on the great high-road of life, and was content to give up all his schemes of sovereignty and fame, to make one of us, the flowers of the field. His kingdom was the heart of Perdita, his subjects her thoughts; by her he was loved, respected as a superior being, obeyed, waited on. No office, no devotion, no watching was irksome to her, as it regarded him. She would sit apart from us and watch him; she would weep for joy to think that he was hers. She erected a temple for him in the depth of her being, and each faculty was a priestess vowed to his service. Sometimes she might be wayward and capricious; but her repentance was bitter, her return entire, and even this inequality of temper suited him who was not formed by nature to float idly down the stream of life.

During the first year of their marriage, Perdita presented Raymond with a lovely girl. It was curious to trace in this miniature model the very traits of its father. The same half-disdainful lips and smile of triumph, the same intelligent eyes, the same brow and chestnut hair; her very hands and taper fingers resembled his. How very dear she was to Perdita! In progress of time, I also became a father, and our little darlings, our playthings and delights, called forth a thousand new and delicious feelings.

Years passed thus, — even years. Each month brought forth its successor, each year one like to that gone by; truly, our lives were a living comment on that beautiful sentiment of Plutarch, that "our souls have a natural inclination to love, being born as much to love, as to feel, to reason, to understand and remember." We talked of change and active pursuits, but still remained at Windsor, incapable of violating the charm that attached us to our secluded life.

Pareamo aver qui tutto il ben raccolto
Che fra mortali in più parte si rimembra.

Now also that our children gave us occupation, we found excuses for our idleness, in the idea of bringing them up to a more splendid career. At length our tranquillity was disturbed, and the course of events, which for five years had flowed on in hushing tranquillity, was broken by breakers and obstacles, that woke us from our pleasant dream.

A new Lord Protector of England was to be chosen; and, at Raymond's request, we removed to London, to witness, and even take a part in the election. If Raymond had been united to Idris, this post had been his stepping-stone to higher dignity; and his desire for power and fame had been crowned with fullest measure. He had exchanged a sceptre for a lute, a kingdom for Perdita.

Did he think of this as we journeyed up to town? I watched him, but could make but little of him. He was particularly gay, playing with his child, and turning to sport every word that was uttered. Perhaps he did this because he saw a cloud upon Perdita's brow. She tried to rouse herself, but her eyes every now and then filled with tears, and she looked wistfully on

Raymond and her girl, as if fearful that some evil would betide them. And so she felt. A presentiment of ill hung over her. She leaned from the window looking on the forest, and the turrets of the Castle, and as these became hid by intervening objects, she passionately exclaimed—”Scenes of happiness! scenes sacred to devoted love, when shall I see you again! and when I see ye, shall I be still the beloved and joyous Perdita, or shall I, heart-broken and lost, wander among your groves, the ghost of what I am!”

“Why, silly one,” cried Raymond, “what is your little head pondering upon, that of a sudden you have become so sublimely dismal? Cheer up, or I shall make you over to Idris, and call Adrian into the carriage, who, I see by his gesture, sympathies with my good spirits.”

Adrian was on horseback; he rode up to the carriage, and his gaiety, in addition to that of Raymond, dispelled my sister’s melancholy. We entered London in the evening, and went to our several abodes near Hyde Park.

The following morning Lord Raymond visited me early. “I come to you,” he said, “only half assured that you will assist me in my project, but resolved to go through with it, whether you concur with me or not. Promise me secrecy however; for if you will not contribute to my success, at least you must not baffle me.”

“Well, I promise. And now—”

“And now, my dear fellow, for what are we come to London? To be present at the election of a Protector, and to give our yea or nay for his shuffling Grace of —— ? or for that noisy Ryland? Do you believe, Verney, that I brought you to town for that? No, we will have a Protector of our own. We will set up a candidate, and ensure his success. We will nominate Adrian, and do our best to bestow on him the power to which he is entitled by his birth, and which he merits through his virtues.

“Do not answer; I know all your objections, and will reply to them in order. First, Whether he will or will not consent to become a great man? Leave the task of persuasion on that point to me; I do not ask you to assist me there. Secondly, Whether he ought to exchange his employment of plucking blackberries, and nursing wounded partridges in the forest, for the command of a nation? My dear Lionel, *we* are married men, and find employment sufficient in amusing our wives, and dancing our children. But Adrian is alone, wifeless, childless, unoccupied. I have long observed him. He pines for want of some interest in life. His heart, exhausted by his early sufferings, reposes like a new-healed limb, and shrinks from all excitement. But his understanding, his charity, his virtues, want a field for exercise and display; and we will procure it for him. Besides, is it not a shame, that the genius of Adrian should fade from the earth like a flower in an untrod mountain-path, fruitless? Do you think Nature composed his surpassing machine for no purpose? Believe me, he was destined to be the author of infinite good to his native England. Has she not bestowed on him every gift in prodigality? — birth, wealth, talent, goodness? Does not every one love and admire him? and does he not delight singly in such efforts as manifest his love to all? Come, I see that you are already persuaded, and will second me when I propose him to-night in parliament."

"You have got up all your arguments in excellent order," I replied; "and, if Adrian consent, they are unanswerable. One only condition I would make, — that you do nothing without his concurrence."

"I believe you are in the right," said Raymond; "although I had thought at first to arrange the affair differently. Be it so. I will go instantly to Adrian; and, if he inclines to consent, you will not destroy my labour by persuading him to return, and turn squirrel again in Windsor Forest. Idris, you will not act the traitor towards me?"

"Trust me," replied she, "I will preserve a strict neutrality."

"For my part," said I, "I am too well convinced of the worth of our friend, and the rich harvest of benefits that all England would reap from his Protectorship, to deprive my countrymen of such a blessing, if he consent to bestow it on them."

In the evening Adrian visited us.—"Do you cabal also against me," said he, laughing; "and will you make common cause with Raymond, in dragging a poor visionary from the clouds to surround him with the fire-works and blasts of earthly grandeur, instead of heavenly rays and airs? I thought you knew me better."

"I do know you better," I replied "than to think that you would be happy in such a situation; but the good you would do to others may be an inducement, since the time is probably arrived when you can put your theories into practice, and you may bring about such reformation and change, as will conduce to that perfect system of government which you delight to portray."

“You speak of an almost-forgotten dream,” said Adrian, his countenance slightly clouding as he spoke; “the visions of my boyhood have long since faded in the light of reality; I know now that I am not a man fitted to govern nations; sufficient for me, if I keep in wholesome rule the little kingdom of my own mortality.

“But do not you see, Lionel, the drift of our noble friend; a drift, perhaps, unknown to himself, but apparent to me. Lord Raymond was never born to be a drone in the hive, and to find content in our pastoral life. He thinks, that he ought to be satisfied; he imagines, that his present situation precludes the possibility of aggrandisement; he does not therefore, even in his own heart, plan change for himself. But do you not see, that, under the idea of exalting me, he is chalking out a new path for himself; a path of action from which he has long wandered?

“Let us assist him. He, the noble, the warlike, the great in every quality that can adorn the mind and person of man; he is fitted to be the Protector of England. If *I* — that is, if *we* propose him, he will assuredly be elected, and will find, in the functions of that high office, scope for the towering powers of his mind. Even Perdita will rejoice. Perdita, in whom ambition was a covered fire until she married Raymond, which event was for a time the fulfilment of her hopes; Perdita will rejoice in the glory and advancement of her lord — and, coyly and prettily, not be discontented with her share. In the mean time, we, the wise of the land, will return to our Castle, and, Cincinnatus-like, take to our usual labours, until our friend shall require our presence and assistance here.”

The more Adrian reasoned upon this scheme, the more feasible it appeared. His own determination never to enter into public life was insurmountable, and the delicacy of his health was a sufficient argument against it. The next step was to induce Raymond to confess his secret wishes for dignity and fame. He entered while we were speaking. The way in which Adrian had received his project for setting him up as a candidate for the Protectorship, and his replies, had already awakened in his mind, the view of the subject which we were now discussing. His countenance and manner betrayed irresolution and anxiety; but the anxiety arose from a fear that we should not prosecute, or not succeed in our idea; and his irresolution, from a doubt whether we should risk a defeat. A few words from us decided him, and hope and joy sparkled in his eyes; the idea of embarking in a career, so congenial to his early habits and cherished wishes, made him as before energetic and bold. We discussed his chances, the merits of the other candidates, and the dispositions of the voters.

After all we miscalculated. Raymond had lost much of his popularity, and was deserted by his peculiar partisans. Absence from the busy stage had caused him to be forgotten by the people; his former parliamentary supporters were principally composed of royalists, who had been willing to make an idol of him when he appeared as the heir of the Earldom of Windsor; but who were indifferent to him, when he came forward with no other attributes and distinctions than they conceived to be common to many among themselves. Still he had many friends, admirers of his transcendent talents; his presence in the house, his eloquence, address and imposing beauty, were calculated to produce an electric effect. Adrian also, notwithstanding his recluse habits and theories, so adverse to the spirit of party, had many friends, and they were easily induced to vote for a candidate of his selection.

The Duke of —— , and Mr. Ryland, Lord Raymond’s old antagonist, were the other candidates. The Duke was supported by all the aristocrats of the republic, who considered him their proper representative. Ryland was the popular candidate; when Lord Raymond was first added to the list, his chance of success appeared small. We retired from the debate which had followed on his nomination: we, his nominators, mortified; he dispirited to excess. Perdita reproached us bitterly. Her expectations had been strongly excited; she had urged nothing against our project, on the contrary, she was evidently pleased by it; but its evident ill success changed the current of her ideas. She felt, that, once awakened, Raymond would never return unrepining to Windsor. His habits were unhinged; his restless mind roused from its sleep, ambition must now be his companion through life; and if he did not succeed in his present attempt, she foresaw that unhappiness and cureless discontent would follow. Perhaps her own disappointment added a sting to her thoughts and words; she did not spare us, and our own reflections added to our disquietude.

It was necessary to follow up our nomination, and to persuade Raymond to present himself to the electors on the following evening. For a long time he was obstinate. He would embark in a balloon; he would sail for a distant quarter of the world, where his name and humiliation were unknown. But this was useless; his attempt was registered; his purpose published to the world; his shame could never be erased from the memories of men. It was as well to fail at last after a struggle, as to fly now at the beginning of his enterprise.

From the moment that he adopted this idea, he was changed. His depression and anxiety fled; he became all life and activity. The smile of triumph shone on his countenance; determined to pursue his object to the uttermost, his manner and expression seem ominous of the accomplishment of his wishes. Not so Perdita. She was frightened by his gaiety, for she dreaded a greater revulsion at the end. If his appearance even inspired us with hope, it only rendered the state of her mind more painful. She feared to lose sight of him; yet she dreaded to remark any change in the temper of his mind. She listened eagerly to him, yet tantalised herself by giving to his words a meaning foreign to their true interpretation, and adverse to her hopes. She dared not be present at the contest; yet she remained at home a prey to double solicitude. She wept over her little girl; she looked, she spoke, as if she dreaded the occurrence of some frightful calamity. She was half mad from the effects of uncontrollable agitation.

Lord Raymond presented himself to the house with fearless confidence and insinuating address. After the Duke of —— and Mr. Ryland had finished their speeches, he commenced. Assuredly he had not conned his lesson; and at first he hesitated, pausing in his ideas, and in the choice of his expressions. By degrees he warmed; his words flowed with ease, his language was full of vigour, and his voice of persuasion. He reverted to his past life, his successes in Greece, his favour at home. Why should he lose this, now that added years, prudence, and the pledge which his marriage gave to his country, ought to increase, rather than diminish his claims to confidence? He spoke of the state of England; the necessary measures to be taken to ensure its security, and confirm its prosperity. He drew a glowing picture of its present situation. As he spoke, every sound was hushed, every thought suspended by intense attention. His graceful elocution enchained the senses of his hearers. In some degree also he was fitted to reconcile all parties. His birth pleased the aristocracy; his being the candidate recommended by Adrian, a man intimately allied to the popular party, caused a number, who had no great reliance either on the Duke or Mr. Ryland, to range on his side.

The contest was keen and doubtful. Neither Adrian nor myself would have been so anxious, if our own success had depended on our exertions; but we had egged our friend on to the enterprise, and it became us to ensure his triumph. Idris, who entertained the highest opinion of his abilities, was warmly interested in the event: and my poor sister, who dared not hope, and to whom fear was misery, was plunged into a fever of disquietude.

Day after day passed while we discussed our projects for the evening, and each night was occupied by debates which offered no conclusion. At last the crisis came: the night when parliament, which had so long delayed its choice, must decide: as the hour of twelve passed, and the new day began, it was by virtue of the constitution dissolved, its power extinct.

We assembled at Raymond's house, we and our partisans. At half past five o'clock we proceeded to the House. Idris endeavoured to calm Perdita; but the poor girl's agitation deprived her of all power of self-command. She walked up and down the room, — gazed wildly when any one entered, fancying that they might be the announcers of her doom. I must do justice to my sweet sister: it was not for herself that she was thus agonized. She alone knew the weight which Raymond attached to his success. Even to us he assumed gaiety and hope, and assumed them so well, that we did not divine the secret workings of his mind. Sometimes a nervous trembling, a sharp dissonance of voice, and momentary fits of absence revealed to Perdita the violence he did himself; but we, intent on our plans, observed only his ready laugh, his joke intruded on all occasions, the flow of his spirits which seemed incapable of ebb. Besides, Perdita was with him in his retirement; she saw the moodiness that succeeded to this forced hilarity; she marked his disturbed sleep, his painful irritability — once she had seen his tears — hers had scarce ceased to flow, since she had beheld the big drops which disappointed pride had caused to gather in his eye, but which pride was unable to dispel. What wonder then, that her feelings were wrought to this pitch! I thus accounted to myself for her agitation; but this was not all, and the sequel revealed another excuse.

One moment we seized before our departure, to take leave of our beloved girls. I had small hope of success, and entreated Idris to watch over my sister. As I approached the latter, she seized my hand, and drew me into another apartment; she threw herself into my arms, and wept and sobbed bitterly and long. I tried to soothe her; I bade her hope; I asked what tremendous consequences would ensue even on our failure. “My brother,” she cried, “protector of my childhood, dear, most dear Lionel, my fate hangs by a thread. I have you all about me now — you, the companion of my infancy; Adrian, as dear to me as if bound by the ties of blood; Idris, the sister of my heart, and her lovely offspring. This, O this may be the last time that you will surround me thus!”

Abruptly she stopped, and then cried: “What have I said? — foolish false girl that I am!” She looked wildly on me, and then suddenly calming herself, apologized for what she called her unmeaning words, saying that she must indeed be insane, for, while Raymond lived, she must be happy; and then, though she still wept, she suffered me tranquilly to depart. Raymond only took her hand when he went, and looked on her expressively; she answered by a look of intelligence and assent.

Poor girl! what she then suffered! I could never entirely forgive Raymond for the trials he imposed on her, occasioned as they were by a selfish feeling on his part. He had schemed, if he failed in his present attempt, without taking leave of any of us, to embark for Greece, and never again to revisit England. Perdita acceded to his wishes; for his contentment was the chief object of her life, the crown of her enjoyment; but to leave us all, her companions, the beloved partners of her happiest years, and in the interim to conceal this frightful determination, was a task that almost conquered her strength of mind. She had been employed in arranging for their departure; she had promised Raymond during this decisive evening, to take advantage of our absence, to go one stage of the journey, and he, after his defeat was ascertained, would slip away from us, and join her.

Although, when I was informed of this scheme, I was bitterly offended by the small attention which Raymond paid to my sister’s feelings, I was led by reflection to consider, that he acted under the force of such strong excitement, as to take from him the consciousness, and, consequently, the guilt of a fault. If he had permitted us to witness his agitation, he would have been more under the guidance of reason; but his struggles for the show of composure, acted with such violence on his nerves, as to destroy his power of self-command. I am convinced that, at the worst, he would have returned from the seashore to take leave of us, and to make us the partners of his council. But the task imposed on Perdita was not the less painful. He had extorted from her a vow of secrecy; and her part of the drama, since it was to be performed alone, was the most agonizing that could be devised. But to return to my narrative.

The debates had hitherto been long and loud; they had often been protracted merely for the sake of delay. But now each seemed fearful lest the fatal moment should pass, while the choice was yet undecided. Unwonted silence reigned in the house, the members spoke in whispers, and the ordinary business was transacted with celerity and quietness. During the first stage of the election, the Duke of —— had been thrown out; the question therefore lay between Lord Raymond and Mr. Ryland. The latter had felt secure of victory, until the appearance of Raymond; and, since his name had been inserted as a candidate, he had canvassed with eagerness. He had appeared each evening, impatience and anger marked in his looks, scowling on us from the opposite side of St. Stephen's, as if his mere frown would cast eclipse on our hopes.

Every thing in the English constitution had been regulated for the better preservation of peace. On the last day, two candidates only were allowed to remain; and to obviate, if possible, the last struggle between these, a bribe was offered to him who should voluntarily resign his pretensions; a place of great emolument and honour was given him, and his success facilitated at a future election. Strange to say however, no instance had yet occurred, where either candidate had had recourse to this expedient; in consequence the law had become obsolete, nor had been referred to by any of us in our discussions. To our extreme surprise, when it was moved that we should resolve ourselves into a committee for the election of the Lord Protector, the member who had nominated Ryland, rose and informed us that this candidate had resigned his pretensions. His information was at first received with silence; a confused murmur succeeded; and, when the chairman declared Lord Raymond duly chosen, it amounted to a shout of applause and victory. It seemed as if, far from any dread of defeat even if Mr. Ryland had not resigned, every voice would have been united in favour of our candidate. In fact, now that the idea of contest was dismissed, all hearts returned to their former respect and admiration of our accomplished friend. Each felt, that England had never seen a Protector so capable of fulfilling the arduous duties of that high office. One voice made of many voices, resounded through the chamber; it syllabled the name of Raymond.

He entered. I was on one of the highest seats, and saw him walk up the passage to the table of the speaker. The native modesty of his disposition conquered the joy of his triumph. He looked round timidly; a mist seemed before his eyes. Adrian, who was beside me, hastened to him, and jumping down the benches, was at his side in a moment. His appearance re-animated our friend; and, when he came to speak and act, his hesitation vanished, and he shone out supreme in majesty and victory. The former Protector tendered him the oaths, and presented him with the insignia of office, performing the ceremonies of installation. The house then dissolved. The chief members of the state crowded round the new magistrate, and conducted him to the palace of government. Adrian suddenly vanished; and, by the time that Raymond's supporters were reduced to our intimate friends merely, returned leading Idris to congratulate her friend on his success.

But where was Perdita? In securing solicitously an unobserved retreat in case of failure, Raymond had forgotten to arrange the mode by which she was to hear of his success; and she had been too much agitated to revert to this circumstance. When Idris entered, so far had Raymond forgotten himself, that he asked for my sister; one word, which told of her mysterious disappearance, recalled him. Adrian it is true had already gone to seek the fugitive, imagining that her tameless anxiety had led her to the purlieus of the House, and that some sinister event detained her. But Raymond, without explaining himself, suddenly quitted us, and in another moment we heard him gallop down the street, in spite of the wind and rain that scattered tempest over the earth. We did not know how far he had to go, and soon separated, supposing that in a short time he would return to the palace with Perdita, and that they would not be sorry to find themselves alone.

Perdita had arrived with her child at Dartford, weeping and inconsolable. She directed everything to be prepared for the continuance of their journey, and placing her lovely sleeping charge on a bed, passed several hours in acute suffering. Sometimes she observed the war of elements, thinking that they also declared against her, and listened to the pattering of the rain in gloomy despair. Sometimes she hung over her child, tracing her resemblance to the father, and fearful lest in after life she should display the same passions and uncontrollable impulses, that rendered him unhappy. Again, with a gush of pride and delight, she marked in the features of her little girl, the same smile of beauty that often irradiated Raymond's countenance. The sight of it soothed her. She thought of the treasure she possessed in the affections of her lord; of his accomplishments, surpassing those of his contemporaries, his genius, his devotion to her. — Soon she thought, that all she possessed in the world, except him, might well be spared, nay, given with delight, a propitiatory offering, to secure the supreme good she retained in him. Soon she imagined, that fate demanded this sacrifice from her, as a mark she was devoted to Raymond, and that it must be made with cheerfulness. She figured to herself their life in the Greek isle he had selected for their retreat; her task of soothing him; her cares for the beauteous Clara, her rides in his company, her dedication of herself to his consolation. The picture then presented itself to her in such glowing colours, that she feared the reverse, and a life of magnificence and power in London; where Raymond would no longer be hers only, nor she the sole source of happiness to him. So far as she merely was concerned, she began to hope for defeat; and it was only on his account that her feelings vacillated, as she heard him gallop into the court-yard of the inn. That he should come to her alone, wetted by the storm, careless of every thing except speed, what else could it mean, than that, vanquished and solitary, they were to take their way from native England, the scene of shame, and hide themselves in the myrtle groves of the Grecian isles?

In a moment she was in his arms. The knowledge of his success had become so much a part of himself, that he forgot that it was necessary to impart it to his companion. She only felt in his embrace a dear assurance that while he possessed her, he would not despair. “This is kind,” she cried; “this is noble, my own beloved! O fear not disgrace or lowly fortune, while you have your Perdita; fear not sorrow, while our child lives and smiles. Let us go even where you will; the love that accompanies us will prevent our regrets.”

Locked in his embrace, she spoke thus, and cast back her head, seeking an assent to her words in his eyes — they were sparkling with ineffable delight. “Why, my little Lady Protectress,” said he, playfully, “what is this you say? And what pretty scheme have you woven of exile and obscurity, while a brighter web, a gold-enwoven tissue, is that which, in truth, you ought to contemplate?”

He kissed her brow — but the wayward girl, half sorry at his triumph, agitated by swift change of thought, hid her face in his bosom and wept. He comforted her; he instilled into her his own hopes and desires; and soon her countenance beamed with sympathy. How very happy were they that night! How full even to bursting was their sense of joy!

CHAPTER VIII

Having seen our friend properly installed in his new office, we turned our eyes towards Windsor. The nearness of this place to London was such, as to take away the idea of painful separation, when we quitted Raymond and Perdita. We took leave of them in the Protectoral Palace. It was pretty enough to see my sister enter as it were into the spirit of the drama, and endeavour to fill her station with becoming dignity. Her internal pride and humility of manner were now more than ever at war. Her timidity was not artificial, but arose from that fear of not being properly appreciated, that slight estimation of the neglect of the world, which also characterised Raymond. But then Perdita thought more constantly of others than he; and part of her bashfulness arose from a wish to take from those around her a sense of inferiority; a feeling which never crossed her mind. From the circumstances of her birth and education, Idris would have been better fitted for the formulae of ceremony; but the very ease which accompanied such actions with her, arising from habit, rendered them tedious; while, with every drawback, Perdita evidently enjoyed her situation. She was too full of new ideas to feel much pain when we departed; she took an affectionate leave of us, and promised to visit us soon; but she did not regret the circumstances that caused our separation. The spirits of Raymond were unbounded; he did not know what to do with his new got power; his head was full of plans; he had as yet decided on none — but he promised himself, his friends, and the world, that the era of his Protectorship should be signalized by some act of surpassing glory.

Thus, we talked of them, and moralized, as with diminished numbers we returned to Windsor Castle. We felt extreme delight at our escape from political turmoil, and sought our solitude with redoubled zest. We did not want for occupation; but my eager disposition was now turned to the field of intellectual exertion only; and hard study I found to be an excellent medicine to allay a fever of spirit with which in indolence, I should doubtless have been assailed. Perdita had permitted us to take Clara back with us to Windsor; and she and my two lovely infants were perpetual sources of interest and amusement.

The only circumstance that disturbed our peace, was the health of Adrian. It evidently declined, without any symptom which could lead us to suspect his disease, unless indeed his brightened eyes, animated look, and flustering cheeks, made us dread consumption; but he was without pain or fear. He betook himself to books with ardour, and reposed from study in the society he best loved, that of his sister and myself. Sometimes he went up to London to visit Raymond, and watch the progress of events. Clara often accompanied him in these excursions; partly that she might see her parents, partly because Adrian delighted in the prattle, and intelligent looks of this lovely child.

Meanwhile all went on well in London. The new elections were finished; parliament met, and Raymond was occupied in a thousand beneficial schemes. Canals, aqueducts, bridges, stately buildings, and various edifices for public utility, were entered upon; he was continually surrounded by projectors and projects, which were to render England one scene of fertility and magnificence; the state of poverty was to be abolished; men were to be transported from place to place almost with the same facility as the Princes Houssain, Ali, and Ahmed, in the Arabian Nights. The physical state of man would soon not yield to the beatitude of angels; disease was to be banished; labour lightened of its heaviest burden. Nor did this seem extravagant. The arts of life, and the discoveries of science had augmented in a ratio which left all calculation behind; food sprung up, so to say, spontaneously — machines existed to supply with facility every want of the population. An evil direction still survived; and men were not happy, not because they could not, but because they would not rouse themselves to vanquish self-raised obstacles. Raymond was to inspire them with his beneficial will, and the mechanism of society, once systematised according to faultless rules, would never again swerve into disorder. For these hopes he abandoned his long-cherished ambition of being enregistered in the annals of nations as a successful warrior; laying aside his sword, peace and its enduring glories became his aim — the title he coveted was that of the benefactor of his country.

Among other works of art in which he was engaged, he had projected the erection of a national gallery for statues and pictures. He possessed many himself, which he designed to present to the Republic; and, as the edifice was to be the great ornament of his Protectorship, he was very fastidious in his choice of the plan on which it would be built. Hundreds were brought to him and rejected. He sent even to Italy and Greece for drawings; but, as the design was to be characterised by originality as well as by perfect beauty, his endeavours were for a time without avail. At length a drawing came, with an address where communications might be sent, and no artist's name affixed. The design was new and elegant, but faulty; so faulty, that although drawn with the hand and eye of taste, it was evidently the work of one who was not an architect. Raymond contemplated it with delight; the more he gazed, the more pleased he was; and yet the errors multiplied under inspection. He wrote to the address given, desiring to see the draughtsman, that such alterations might be made, as should be suggested in a consultation between him and the original conceiver.

A Greek came. A middle-aged man, with some intelligence of manner, but with so common-place a physiognomy, that Raymond could scarcely believe that he was the designer. He acknowledged that he was not an architect; but the idea of the building had struck him, though he had sent it without the smallest hope of its being accepted. He was a man of few words. Raymond questioned him; but his reserved answers soon made him turn from the man to the drawing. He pointed out the errors, and the alterations that he wished to be made; he offered the Greek a pencil that he might correct the sketch on the spot; this was refused by his visitor, who said that he perfectly understood, and would work at it at home. At length Raymond suffered him to depart.

The next day he returned. The design had been re-drawn; but many defects still remained, and several of the instructions given had been misunderstood. "Come," said Raymond, "I yielded to you yesterday, now comply with my request — take the pencil."

The Greek took it, but he handled it in no artist-like way; at length he said: "I must confess to you, my Lord, that I did not make this drawing. It is impossible for you to see the real designer; your instructions must pass through me. Condescend therefore to have patience with my ignorance, and to explain your wishes to me; in time I am certain that you will be satisfied."

Raymond questioned vainly; the mysterious Greek would say no more. Would an architect be permitted to see the artist? This also was refused. Raymond repeated his instructions, and the visitor retired. Our friend resolved however not to be foiled in his wish. He suspected, that unaccustomed poverty was the cause of the mystery, and that the artist was unwilling to be seen in the garb and abode of want. Raymond was only the more excited by this consideration to discover him; impelled by the interest he took in obscure talent, he therefore ordered a person skilled in such matters, to follow the Greek the next time he came, and observe the house in which he should enter. His emissary obeyed, and brought the desired intelligence. He had traced the man to one of the most penurious streets in the metropolis. Raymond did not wonder, that, thus situated, the artist had shrunk from notice, but he did not for this alter his resolve.

On the same evening, he went alone to the house named to him. Poverty, dirt, and squalid misery characterised its appearance. Alas! thought Raymond, I have much to do before England becomes a Paradise. He knocked; the door was opened by a string from above — the broken, wretched staircase was immediately before him, but no person appeared; he knocked again, vainly — and then, impatient of further delay, he ascended the dark, creaking stairs. His main wish, more particularly now that he witnessed the abject dwelling of the artist, was to relieve one, possessed of talent, but depressed by want. He pictured to himself a youth, whose eyes sparkled with genius, whose person was attenuated by famine. He half feared to displease him; but he trusted that his generous kindness would be administered so delicately, as not to excite repulse. What human heart is shut to kindness? and though poverty, in its excess, might render the sufferer unapt to submit to the supposed degradation of a benefit, the zeal of the benefactor must at last relax him into thankfulness. These thoughts encouraged Raymond, as he stood at the door of the highest room of the house. After trying vainly to enter the other apartments, he perceived just within the threshold of this one, a pair of small Turkish slippers; the door was ajar, but all was silent within. It was probable that the inmate was absent, but secure that he had found the right person, our adventurous Protector was tempted to enter, to leave a purse on the table, and silently depart. In pursuance of this idea, he pushed open the door gently — but the room was inhabited.

Raymond had never visited the dwellings of want, and the scene that now presented itself struck him to the heart. The floor was sunk in many places; the walls ragged and bare — the ceiling weather-stained — a tattered bed stood in the corner; there were but two chairs in the room, and a rough broken table, on which was a light in a tin candlestick; — yet in the midst of such drear and heart sickening poverty, there was an air of order and cleanliness that surprised him. The thought was fleeting; for his attention was instantly drawn towards the inhabitant of this wretched abode. It was a female. She sat at the table; one small hand shaded her eyes from the candle; the other held a pencil; her looks were fixed on a drawing before her, which Raymond recognized as the design presented to him. Her whole appearance awakened his deepest interest. Her dark hair was braided and twined in thick knots like the head-dress of a Grecian statue; her garb was mean, but her attitude might have been selected as a model of grace. Raymond had a confused remembrance that he had seen such a form before; he walked across the room; she did not raise her eyes, merely asking in Romaic, who is there? “A friend,” replied Raymond in the same dialect. She looked up wondering, and he saw that it was Evadne Zaimi. Evadne, once the idol of Adrian’s affections; and who, for the sake of her present visitor, had disdained the noble youth, and then, neglected by him she loved, with crushed hopes and a stinging sense of misery, had returned to her native Greece. What revolution of fortune could have brought her to England, and housed her thus?

Raymond recognized her; and his manner changed from polite beneficence to the warmest protestations of kindness and sympathy. The sight of her, in her present situation, passed like an arrow into his soul. He sat by her, he took her hand, and said a thousand things which breathed the deepest spirit of compassion and affection. Evadne did not answer; her large dark eyes were cast down, at length a tear glimmered on the lashes. “Thus,” she cried, “kindness can do, what no want, no misery ever effected; I weep.” She shed indeed many tears; her head sunk unconsciously on the shoulder of Raymond; he held her hand: he kissed her sunken tear-stained cheek. He told her, that her sufferings were now over: no one possessed the art of consoling like Raymond; he did not reason or declaim, but his look shone with sympathy; he brought pleasant images before the sufferer; his caresses excited no distrust, for they arose purely from the feeling which leads a mother to kiss her wounded child; a desire to demonstrate in every possible way the truth of his feelings, and the keenness of his wish to pour balm into the lacerated mind of the unfortunate.

As Evadne regained her composure, his manner became even gay; he sported with the idea of her poverty. Something told him that it was not its real evils that lay heavily at her heart, but the debasement and disgrace attendant on it; as he talked, he divested it of these; sometimes speaking of her fortitude with energetic praise; then, alluding to her past state, he called her his Princess in disguise. He made her warm offers of service; she was too much occupied by more engrossing thoughts, either to accept or reject them; at length he left her, making a promise to repeat his visit the next day. He returned home, full of mingled feelings, of pain excited by Evadne's wretchedness, and pleasure at the prospect of relieving it. Some motive for which he did not account, even to himself, prevented him from relating his adventure to Perdita.

The next day he threw such disguise over his person as a cloak afforded, and revisited Evadne. As he went, he bought a basket of costly fruits, such as were natives of her own country, and throwing over these various beautiful flowers, bore it himself to the miserable garret of his friend. "Behold," cried he, as he entered, "what bird's food I have brought for my sparrow on the house-top."

Evadne now related the tale of her misfortunes. Her father, though of high rank, had in the end dissipated his fortune, and even destroyed his reputation and influence through a course of dissolute indulgence. His health was impaired beyond hope of cure; and it became his earnest wish, before he died, to preserve his daughter from the poverty which would be the portion of her orphan state. He therefore accepted for her, and persuaded her to accede to, a proposal of marriage, from a wealthy Greek merchant settled at Constantinople. She quitted her native Greece; her father died; by degrees she was cut off from all the companions and ties of her youth.

The war, which about a year before the present time had broken out between Greece and Turkey, brought about many reverses of fortune. Her husband became bankrupt, and then in a tumult and threatened massacre on the part of the Turks, they were obliged to fly at midnight, and reached in an open boat an English vessel under sail, which brought them immediately to this island. The few jewels they had saved, supported them awhile. The whole strength of Evadne's mind was exerted to support the failing spirits of her husband. Loss of property, hopelessness as to his future prospects, the inoccupation to which poverty condemned him, combined to reduce him to a state bordering on insanity. Five months after their arrival in England, he committed suicide.

"You will ask me," continued Evadne, "what I have done since; why I have not applied for succour to the rich Greeks resident here; why I have not returned to my native country? My answer to these questions must needs appear to you unsatisfactory, yet they have sufficed to lead me on, day after day, enduring every wretchedness, rather than by such means to seek relief. Shall the daughter of the noble, though prodigal Zaimi, appear a beggar before her compeers or inferiors — superiors she had none. Shall I bow my head before them, and with servile gesture sell my nobility for life? Had I a child, or any tie to bind me to existence, I might descend to this — but, as it is — the world has been to me a harsh step-mother; fain would I leave the abode she seems to grudge, and in the grave forget my pride, my struggles, my despair. The time will soon come; grief and famine have already sapped the foundations of my being; a very short time, and I shall have passed away; unstained by the crime of self-destruction, unstung by the memory of degradation, my spirit will throw aside the miserable coil, and find such recompense as fortitude and resignation may deserve. This may seem madness to you, yet you also have pride and resolution; do not then wonder that my pride is tameless, my resolution unalterable."

Having thus finished her tale, and given such an account as she deemed fit, of the motives of her abstaining from all endeavour to obtain aid from her countrymen, Evadne paused; yet she seemed to have more to say, to which she was unable to give words. In the mean time Raymond was eloquent. His desire of restoring his lovely friend to her rank in society, and to her lost prosperity, animated him, and he poured forth with energy, all his wishes and intentions on that subject. But he was checked; Evadne exacted a promise, that he should conceal from all her friends her existence in England. "The relatives of the Earl of Windsor," said she haughtily, "doubtless think that I injured him; perhaps the Earl himself would be the first to acquit me, but probably I do not deserve acquittal. I acted then, as I ever must, from impulse. This abode of penury may at least prove the disinterestedness of my conduct. No matter: I do not wish to plead my cause before any of them, not even before your Lordship, had you not first discovered me. The tenor of my actions will prove that I had rather die, than be a mark for scorn — behold the proud Evadne in her tatters! look on the beggar-princess! There is aspic venom in the thought — promise me that my secret shall not be violated by you.”

Raymond promised; but then a new discussion ensued. Evadne required another engagement on his part, that he would not without her concurrence enter into any project for her benefit, nor himself offer relief. “Do not degrade me in my own eyes,” she said; “poverty has long been my nurse; hard-visaged she is, but honest. If dishonour, or what I conceive to be dishonour, come near me, I am lost.” Raymond adduced many arguments and fervent persuasions to overcome her feeling, but she remained unconvinced; and, agitated by the discussion, she wildly and passionately made a solemn vow, to fly and hide herself where he never could discover her, where famine would soon bring death to conclude her woes, if he persisted in his to her disgracing offers. She could support herself, she said. And then she showed him how, by executing various designs and paintings, she earned a pittance for her support. Raymond yielded for the present. He felt assured, after he had for awhile humoured her self-will, that in the end friendship and reason would gain the day.

But the feelings that actuated Evadne were rooted in the depths of her being, and were such in their growth as he had no means of understanding. Evadne loved Raymond. He was the hero of her imagination, the image carved by love in the unchanged texture of her heart. Seven years ago, in her youthful prime, she had become attached to him; he had served her country against the Turks; he had in her own land acquired that military glory peculiarly dear to the Greeks, since they were still obliged inch by inch to fight for their security. Yet when he returned thence, and first appeared in public life in England, her love did not purchase his, which then vacillated between Perdita and a crown. While he was yet undecided, she had quitted England; the news of his marriage reached her, and her hopes, poorly nurtured blossoms, withered and fell. The glory of life was gone for her; the roseate halo of love, which had imbued every object with its own colour, faded; — she was content to take life as it was, and to make the best of leaden-coloured reality. She married; and, carrying her restless energy of character with her into new scenes, she turned her thoughts to ambition, and aimed at the title and power of Princess of Wallachia; while her patriotic feelings were soothed by the idea of the good she might do her country, when her husband should be chief of this principality. She lived to find ambition, as unreal a delusion as love. Her intrigues with Russia for the furtherance of her object, excited the jealousy of the Porte, and the animosity of the Greek government. She was considered a traitor by both, the ruin of her husband followed; they avoided death by a timely flight, and she fell from the height of her desires to penury in England. Much of this tale she concealed from Raymond; nor did she confess, that repulse and denial, as to a criminal convicted of the worst of crimes, that of bringing the scythe of foreign despotism to cut away the new springing liberties of her country, would have followed her application to any among the Greeks.

She knew that she was the cause of her husband's utter ruin; and she strung herself to bear the consequences. The reproaches which agony extorted; or worse, cureless, uncomplaining depression, when his mind was sunk in a torpor, not the less painful because it was silent and moveless. She reproached herself with the crime of his death; guilt and its punishments appeared to surround her; in vain she endeavoured to allay remorse by the memory of her real integrity; the rest of the world, and she among them, judged of her actions, by their consequences. She prayed for her husband's soul; she conjured the Supreme to place on her head the crime of his self-destruction — she vowed to live to expiate his fault.

In the midst of such wretchedness as must soon have destroyed her, one thought only was matter of consolation. She lived in the same country, breathed the same air as Raymond. His name as Protector was the burthen of every tongue; his achievements, projects, and magnificence, the argument of every story. Nothing is so precious to a woman's heart as the glory and excellence of him she loves; thus in every horror Evadne revelled in his fame and prosperity. While her husband lived, this feeling was regarded by her as a crime, repressed, repented of. When he died, the tide of love resumed its ancient flow, it deluged her soul with its tumultuous waves, and she gave herself up a prey to its uncontrollable power.

But never, O, never, should he see her in her degraded state. Never should he behold her fallen, as she deemed, from her pride of beauty, the poverty-stricken inhabitant of a garret, with a name which had become a reproach, and a weight of guilt on her soul. But though impenetrably veiled from him, his public office permitted her to become acquainted with all his actions, his daily course of life, even his conversation. She allowed herself one luxury, she saw the newspapers every day, and feasted on the praise and actions of the Protector. Not that this indulgence was devoid of accompanying grief. Perdita’s name was for ever joined with his; their conjugal felicity was celebrated even by the authentic testimony of facts. They were continually together, nor could the unfortunate Evadne read the monosyllable that designated his name, without, at the same time, being presented with the image of her who was the faithful companion of all his labours and pleasures. *They, their Excellencies*, met her eyes in each line, mingling an evil potion that poisoned her very blood.

It was in the newspaper that she saw the advertisement for the design for a national gallery. Combining with taste her remembrance of the edifices which she had seen in the east, and by an effort of genius enduing them with unity of design, she executed the plan which had been sent to the Protector. She triumphed in the idea of bestowing, unknown and forgotten as she was, a benefit upon him she loved; and with enthusiastic pride looked forward to the accomplishment of a work of hers, which, immortalized in stone, would go down to posterity stamped with the name of Raymond. She awaited with eagerness the return of her messenger from the palace; she listened insatiate to his account of each word, each look of the Protector; she felt bliss in this communication with her beloved, although he knew not to whom he addressed his instructions. The drawing itself became ineffably dear to her. He had seen it, and praised it; it was again retouched by her, each stroke of her pencil was as a chord of thrilling music, and bore to her the idea of a temple raised to celebrate the deepest and most unutterable emotions of her soul. These contemplations engaged her, when the voice of Raymond first struck her ear, a voice, once heard, never to be forgotten; she mastered her gush of feelings, and welcomed him with quiet gentleness.

Pride and tenderness now struggled, and at length made a compromise together. She would see Raymond, since destiny had led him to her, and her constancy and devotion must merit his friendship. But her rights with regard to him, and her cherished independence, should not be injured by the idea of interest, or the intervention of the complicated feelings attendant on pecuniary obligation, and the relative situations of the benefactor, and benefited. Her mind was of uncommon strength; she could subdue her sensible wants to her mental wishes, and suffer cold, hunger and misery, rather than concede to fortune a contested point. Alas! that in human nature such a pitch of mental discipline, and disdainful negligence of nature itself, should not have been allied to the extreme of moral excellence! But the resolution that permitted her to resist the pains of privation, sprung from the too great energy of her passions; and the concentrated self-will of which this was a sign, was destined to destroy even the very idol, to preserve whose respect she submitted to this detail of wretchedness.

Their intercourse continued. By degrees Evadne related to her friend the whole of her story, the stain her name had received in Greece, the weight of sin which had accrued to her from the death of her husband. When Raymond offered to clear her reputation, and demonstrate to the world her real patriotism, she declared that it was only through her present sufferings that she hoped for any relief to the stings of conscience; that, in her state of mind, diseased as he might think it, the necessity of occupation was salutary medicine; she ended by extorting a promise that for the space of one month he would refrain from the discussion of her interests, engaging after that time to yield in part to his wishes. She could not disguise to herself that any change would separate her from him; now she saw him each day. His connection with Adrian and Perdita was never mentioned; he was to her a meteor, a companionless star, which at its appointed hour rose in her hemisphere, whose appearance brought felicity, and which, although it set, was never eclipsed. He came each day to her abode of penury, and his presence transformed it to a temple redolent with sweets, radiant with heaven's own light; he partook of her delirium. "They built a wall between them and the world" — Without, a thousand harpies raved, remorse and misery, expecting the destined moment for their invasion. Within, was the peace as of innocence, reckless blindness, deluding joy, hope, whose still anchor rested on placid but unconstant water.

Thus, while Raymond had been wrapt in visions of power and fame, while he looked forward to entire dominion over the elements and the mind of man, the territory of his own heart escaped his notice; and from that unthought of source arose the mighty torrent that overwhelmed his will, and carried to the oblivious sea, fame, hope, and happiness.

CHAPTER IX

In the mean time what did Perdita?

During the first months of his Protectorate, Raymond and she had been inseparable; each project was discussed with her, each plan approved by her. I never beheld any one so perfectly happy as my sweet sister. Her expressive eyes were two stars whose beams were love; hope and light-heartedness sat on her cloudless brow. She fed even to tears of joy on the praise and glory of her Lord; her whole existence was one sacrifice to him, and if in the humility of her heart she felt self-complacency, it arose from the reflection that she had won the distinguished hero of the age, and had for years preserved him, even after time had taken from love its usual nourishment. Her own feeling was as entire as at its birth. Five years had failed to destroy the dazzling unreality of passion. Most men ruthlessly destroy the sacred veil, with which the female heart is wont to adorn the idol of its affections. Not so Raymond; he was an enchanter, whose reign was for ever undiminished; a king whose power never was suspended: follow him through the details of common life, still the same charm of grace and majesty adorned him; nor could he be despoiled of the innate deification with which nature had invested him. Perdita grew in beauty and excellence under his eye; I no longer recognised my reserved abstracted sister in the fascinating and open-hearted wife of Raymond. The genius that enlightened her countenance, was now united to an expression of benevolence, which gave divine perfection to her beauty.

Happiness is in its highest degree the sister of goodness. Suffering and amiability may exist together, and writers have loved to depict their conjunction; there is a human and touching harmony in the picture. But perfect happiness is an attribute of angels; and those who possess it, appear angelic. Fear has been said to be the parent of religion: even of that religion is it the generator, which leads its votaries to sacrifice human victims at its altars; but the religion which springs from happiness is a lovelier growth; the religion which makes the heart breathe forth fervent thanksgiving, and causes us to pour out the overflowings of the soul before the author of our being; that which is the parent of the imagination and the nurse of poetry;

that which bestows benevolent intelligence on the visible mechanism of the world, and makes earth a temple with heaven for its cope. Such happiness, goodness, and religion inhabited the mind of Perdita.

During the five years we had spent together, a knot of happy human beings at Windsor Castle, her blissful lot had been the frequent theme of my sister's conversation. From early habit, and natural affection, she selected me in preference to Adrian or Idris, to be the partner in her overflowings of delight; perhaps, though apparently much unlike, some secret point of resemblance, the offspring of consanguinity, induced this preference. Often at sunset, I have walked with her, in the sober, enshadowed forest paths, and listened with joyful sympathy. Security gave dignity to her passion; the certainty of a full return, left her with no wish unfulfilled. The birth of her daughter, embryo copy of her Raymond, filled up the measure of her content, and produced a sacred and indissoluble tie between them. Sometimes she felt proud that he had preferred her to the hopes of a crown. Sometimes she remembered that she had suffered keen anguish, when he hesitated in his choice. But this memory of past discontent only served to enhance her present joy. What had been hardly won, was now, entirely possessed, doubly dear. She would look at him at a distance with the same rapture, (O, far more exuberant rapture!) that one might feel, who after the perils of a tempest, should find himself in the desired port; she would hasten towards him, to feel more certain in his arms, the reality of her bliss. This warmth of affection, added to the depth of her understanding, and the brilliancy of her imagination, made her beyond words dear to Raymond.

If a feeling of dissatisfaction ever crossed her, it arose from the idea that he was not perfectly happy. Desire of renown, and presumptuous ambition, had characterised his youth. The one he had acquired in Greece; the other he had sacrificed to love. His intellect found sufficient field for exercise in his domestic circle, whose members, all adorned by refinement and literature, were many of them, like himself, distinguished by genius. Yet active life was the genuine soil for his virtues; and he sometimes suffered tedium from the monotonous succession of events in our retirement. Pride made him recoil from complaint; and gratitude and affection to Perdita, generally acted as an opiate to all desire, save that of meriting her love. We all observed the visitation of these feelings, and none regretted them so much as Perdita. Her life consecrated to him, was a slight sacrifice to reward his choice, but was not that sufficient — Did he need any gratification that she was unable to bestow? This was the only cloud in the azure of her happiness.

His passage to power had been full of pain to both. He however attained his wish; he filled the situation for which nature seemed to have moulded him. His activity was fed in wholesome measure, without either exhaustion or satiety; his taste and genius found worthy expression in each of the modes human beings have invented to encage and manifest the spirit of beauty; the goodness of his heart made him never weary of conducing to the well-being of his fellow-creatures; his magnificent spirit, and aspirations for the respect and love of mankind, now received fruition; true, his exaltation was temporary; perhaps it were better that it should be so. Habit would not dull his sense of the enjoyment of power; nor struggles, disappointment and defeat await the end of that which would expire at its maturity. He determined to extract and condense all of glory, power, and achievement, which might have resulted from a long reign, into the three years of his Protectorate.

Raymond was eminently social. All that he now enjoyed would have been devoid of pleasure to him, had it been unparticipated. But in Perdita he possessed all that his heart could desire. Her love gave birth to sympathy; her intelligence made her understand him at a word; her powers of intellect enabled her to assist and guide him. He felt her worth. During the early years of their union, the inequality of her temper, and yet unsubdued self-will which tarnished her character, had been a slight drawback to the fullness of his sentiment. Now that unchanged serenity, and gentle compliance were added to her other qualifications, his respect equalled his love. Years added to the strictness of their union. They did not now guess at, and totter on the pathway, divining the mode to please, hoping, yet fearing the continuance of bliss. Five years gave a sober certainty to their emotions, though it did not rob them of their ethereal nature. It had given them a child; but it had not detracted from the personal attractions of my sister. Timidity, which in her had almost amounted to awkwardness, was exchanged for a graceful decision of manner; frankness, instead of reserve, characterised her physiognomy; and her voice was attuned to thrilling softness. She was now three and twenty, in the pride of womanhood, fulfilling the precious duties of wife and mother, possessed of all her heart had ever coveted. Raymond was ten years older; to his previous beauty, noble mien, and commanding aspect, he now added gentlest benevolence, winning tenderness, graceful and unwearied attention to the wishes of another.

The first secret that had existed between them was the visits of Raymond to Evadne. He had been struck by the fortitude and beauty of the ill-fated Greek; and, when her constant tenderness towards him unfolded itself, he asked with astonishment, by what act of his he had merited this passionate and unrequited love. She was for a while the sole object of his reveries; and Perdita became aware that his thoughts and time were bestowed on a subject unparticipated by her. My sister was by nature destitute of the common feelings of anxious, petulant jealousy. The treasure which she possessed in the affections of Raymond, was more necessary to her being, than the life-blood that animated her veins — more truly than Othello she might say,

To be once in doubt,
Is — once to be resolved.

On the present occasion she did not suspect any alienation of affection; but she conjectured that some circumstance connected with his high place, had occasioned this mystery. She was startled and pained. She began to count the long days, and months, and years which must elapse, before he would be restored to a private station, and unreservedly to her. She was not content that, even for a time, he should practice concealment with her. She often repined; but her trust in the singleness of his affection was undisturbed; and, when they were together, unchecked by fear, she opened her heart to the fullest delight.

Time went on. Raymond, stopping mid-way in his wild career, paused suddenly to think of consequences. Two results presented themselves in the view he took of the future. That his intercourse with Evadne should continue a secret to, or that finally it should be discovered by Perdita. The destitute condition, and highly wrought feelings of his friend prevented him from adverting to the possibility of exiling himself from her. In the first event he had bidden an eternal farewell to open-hearted converse, and entire sympathy with the companion of his life. The veil must be thicker than that invented by Turkish jealousy; the wall higher than the unscaleable tower of Vathek, which should conceal from her the workings of his heart, and hide from her view the secret of his actions. This idea was intolerably painful to him. Frankness and social feelings were the essence of Raymond's nature; without them his qualities became common-place; without these to spread glory over his intercourse with Perdita, his vaunted exchange of a throne for her love, was as weak and empty as the rainbow hues which vanish when the sun is down. But there was no remedy. Genius, devotion, and courage; the adornments of his mind, and the energies of his soul, all exerted to their uttermost stretch, could not roll back one hair's breadth the wheel of time's chariot; that which had been was written with the adamantine pen of reality, on the everlasting volume of the past; nor could agony and tears suffice to wash out one iota from the act fulfilled.

But this was the best side of the question. What, if circumstance should lead Perdita to suspect, and suspecting to be resolved? The fibres of his frame became relaxed, and cold dew stood on his forehead, at this idea. Many men may scoff at his dread; but he read the future; and the peace of Perdita was too dear to him, her speechless agony too certain, and too fearful, not to unman him. His course was speedily decided upon. If the worst befell; if she learnt the truth, he would neither stand her reproaches, or the anguish of her altered looks. He would forsake her, England, his friends, the scenes of his youth, the hopes of coming time, he would seek another country, and in other scenes begin life again. Having resolved on this, he became calmer. He endeavoured to guide with prudence the steeds of destiny through the devious road which he had chosen, and bent all his efforts the better to conceal what he could not alter.

The perfect confidence that subsisted between Perdita and him, rendered every communication common between them. They opened each other's letters, even as, until now, the inmost fold of the heart of each was disclosed to the other. A letter came unawares, Perdita read it. Had it contained confirmation, she must have been annihilated. As it was, trembling, cold, and pale, she sought Raymond. He was alone, examining some petitions lately presented. She entered silently, sat on a sofa opposite to him, and gazed on him with a look of such despair, that wildest shrieks and dire moans would have been tame exhibitions of misery, compared to the living incarnation of the thing itself exhibited by her.

At first he did not take his eyes from the papers; when he raised them, he was struck by the wretchedness manifest on her altered cheek; for a moment he forgot his own acts and fears, and asked with consternation —”Dearest girl, what is the matter; what has happened?”

“Nothing,” she replied at first; “and yet not so,” she continued, hurrying on in her speech; “you have secrets, Raymond; where have you been lately, whom have you seen, what do you conceal from me? — why am I banished from your confidence? Yet this is not it — I do not intend to entrap you with questions — one will suffice — am I completely a wretch?”

With trembling hand she gave him the paper, and sat white and motionless looking at him while he read it. He recognised the hand-writing of Evadne, and the colour mounted in his cheeks. With lightning-speed he conceived the contents of the letter; all was now cast on one die; falsehood and artifice were trifles in comparison with the impending ruin. He would either entirely dispel Perdita’s suspicions, or quit her for ever. “My dear girl,” he said, “I have been to blame; but you must pardon me. I was in the wrong to commence a system of concealment; but I did it for the sake of sparing you pain; and each day has rendered it more difficult for me to alter my plan. Besides, I was instigated by delicacy towards the unhappy writer of these few lines.”

Perdita gasped: “Well,” she cried, “well, go on!”

“That is all — this paper tells all. I am placed in the most difficult circumstances. I have done my best, though perhaps I have done wrong. My love for you is inviolate.”

Perdita shook her head doubtingly: “It cannot be,” she cried, “I know that it is not. You would deceive me, but I will not be deceived. I have lost you, myself, my life!”

“Do you not believe me?” said Raymond haughtily.

“To believe you,” she exclaimed, “I would give up all, and expire with joy, so that in death I could feel that you were true — but that cannot be!”

“Perdita,” continued Raymond, “you do not see the precipice on which you stand. You may believe that I did not enter on my present line of conduct without reluctance and pain. I knew that it was possible that your suspicions might be excited; but I trusted that my simple word would cause them to disappear. I built my hope on your confidence. Do you think that I will be questioned, and my replies disdainfully set aside? Do you think that I will be suspected, perhaps watched, cross-questioned, and disbelieved? I am not yet fallen so low; my honour is not yet so tarnished. You have loved me; I adored you. But all human sentiments come to an end. Let our affection expire — but let it not be exchanged for distrust and recrimination. Heretofore we have been friends — lovers — let us not become enemies, mutual spies. I cannot live the object of suspicion — you cannot believe me — let us part!"

"Exactly so," cried Perdita, "I knew that it would come to this! Are we not already parted? Does not a stream, boundless as ocean, deep as vacuum, yawn between us?"

Raymond rose, his voice was broken, his features convulsed, his manner calm as the earthquake-cradling atmosphere, he replied: "I am rejoiced that you take my decision so philosophically. Doubtless you will play the part of the injured wife to admiration. Sometimes you may be stung with the feeling that you have wronged me, but the condolence of your relatives, the pity of the world, the complacency which the consciousness of your own immaculate innocence will bestow, will be excellent balm; — me you will never see more!"

Raymond moved towards the door. He forgot that each word he spoke was false. He personated his assumption of innocence even to self-deception. Have not actors wept, as they portrayed imagined passion? A more intense feeling of the reality of fiction possessed Raymond. He spoke with pride; he felt injured. Perdita looked up; she saw his angry glance; his hand was on the lock of the door. She started up, she threw herself on his neck, she gasped and sobbed; he took her hand, and leading her to the sofa, sat down near her. Her head fell on his shoulder, she trembled, alternate changes of fire and ice ran through her limbs: observing her emotion he spoke with softened accents:

"The blow is given. I will not part from you in anger; — I owe you too much. I owe you six years of unalloyed happiness. But they are passed. I will not live the mark of suspicion, the object of jealousy. I love you too well. In an eternal separation only can either of us hope for dignity and propriety of action. We shall not then be degraded from our true characters. Faith and devotion have hitherto been the essence of our intercourse; —

these lost, let us not cling to the seedless husk of life, the unkernelled shell. You have your child, your brother, Idris, Adrian" —

"And you," cried Perdita, "the writer of that letter."

Uncontrollable indignation flashed from the eyes of Raymond. He knew that this accusation at least was false. "Entertain this belief," he cried, "hug it to your heart — make it a pillow to your head, an opiate for your eyes — I am content. But, by the God that made me, hell is not more false than the word you have spoken!"

Perdita was struck by the impassioned seriousness of his asseverations. She replied with earnestness, "I do not refuse to believe you, Raymond; on the contrary I promise to put implicit faith in your simple word. Only assure me that your love and faith towards me have never been violated; and suspicion, and doubt, and jealousy will at once be dispersed. We shall continue as we have ever done, one heart, one hope, one life."

"I have already assured you of my fidelity," said Raymond with disdainful coldness, "triple assertions will avail nothing where one is despised. I will say no more; for I can add nothing to what I have already said, to what you before contemptuously set aside. This contention is unworthy of both of us; and I confess that I am weary of replying to charges at once unfounded and unkind."

Perdita tried to read his countenance, which he angrily averted. There was so much of truth and nature in his resentment, that her doubts were dispelled. Her countenance, which for years had not expressed a feeling unallied to affection, became again radiant and satisfied. She found it however no easy task to soften and reconcile Raymond. At first he refused to stay to hear her. But she would not be put off; secure of his unaltered love, she was willing to undertake any labour, use any entreaty, to dispel his anger. She obtained an hearing, he sat in haughty silence, but he listened. She first assured him of her boundless confidence; of this he must be conscious, since but for that she would not seek to detain him. She enumerated their years of happiness; she brought before him past scenes of intimacy and happiness; she pictured their future life, she mentioned their child — tears unbidden now filled her eyes. She tried to disperse them, but they refused to be checked — her utterance was choked. She had not wept before. Raymond could not resist these signs of distress: he felt perhaps somewhat ashamed of the part he acted of the injured man, he who was in truth the injurer. And then he devoutly loved Perdita; the bend of her head, her glossy ringlets, the turn of her form were to him subjects of deep tenderness and admiration; as she spoke, her melodious tones entered his soul; he soon softened towards her, comforting and caressing her, and endeavouring to cheat himself into the belief that he had never wronged her.

Raymond staggered forth from this scene, as a man might do, who had been just put to the torture, and looked forward to when it would be again inflicted. He had sinned against his own honour, by affirming, swearing to, a direct falsehood; true this he had palmed on a woman, and it might therefore be deemed less base — by others — not by him; — for whom had he deceived? — his own trusting, devoted, affectionate Perdita, whose generous belief galled him doubly, when he remembered the parade of innocence with which it had been exacted. The mind of Raymond was not so rough cast, nor had been so rudely handled, in the circumstance of life, as to make him proof to these considerations — on the contrary, he was all nerve; his spirit was as a pure fire, which fades and shrinks from every contagion of foul atmosphere: but now the contagion had become incorporated with its essence, and the change was the more painful. Truth and falsehood, love and hate lost their eternal boundaries, heaven rushed in to mingle with hell; while his sensitive mind, turned to a field for such battle, was stung to madness. He heartily despised himself, he was angry with Perdita, and the idea of Evadne was attended by all that was hideous and cruel. His passions, always his masters, acquired fresh strength, from the long sleep in which love had cradled them, the clinging weight of destiny bent him down; he was goaded, tortured, fiercely impatient of that worst of miseries, the sense of remorse. This troubled state yielded by degrees, to sullen animosity, and depression of spirits. His dependants, even his equals, if in his present post he had any, were startled to find anger, derision, and bitterness in one, before distinguished for suavity and benevolence of manner. He transacted public business with distaste, and hastened from it to the solitude which was at once his bane and relief. He mounted a fiery horse, that which had borne him forward to victory in Greece; he fatigued himself with deadening exercise, losing the pangs of a troubled mind in animal sensation.

He slowly recovered himself; yet, at last, as one might from the effects of poison, he lifted his head from above the vapours of fever and passion into the still atmosphere of calm reflection. He meditated on what was best to be done. He was first struck by the space of time that had elapsed, since madness, rather than any reasonable impulse, had regulated his actions. A month had gone by, and during that time he had not seen Evadne. Her power, which was linked to few of the enduring emotions of his heart, had greatly decayed. He was no longer her slave — no longer her lover: he would never see her more, and by the completeness of his return, deserve the confidence of Perdita.

Yet, as he thus determined, fancy conjured up the miserable abode of the Greek girl. An abode, which from noble and lofty principle, she had refused to exchange for one of greater luxury. He thought of the splendour of her situation and appearance when he first knew her; he thought of her life at Constantinople, attended by every circumstance of oriental magnificence; of her present penury, her daily task of industry, her lorn state, her faded, famine-struck cheek. Compassion swelled his breast; he would see her once again; he would devise some plan for restoring her to society, and the enjoyment of her rank; their separation would then follow, as a matter of course.

Again he thought, how during this long month, he had avoided Perdita, flying from her as from the stings of his own conscience. But he was awake now; all this should be remedied; and future devotion erase the memory of this only blot on the serenity of their life. He became cheerful, as he thought of this, and soberly and resolutely marked out the line of conduct he would adopt. He remembered that he had promised Perdita to be present this very evening (the 19th of October, anniversary of his election as Protector) at a festival given in his honour. Good augury should this festival be of the happiness of future years. First, he would look in on Evadne; he would not stay; but he owed her some account, some compensation for his long and unannounced absence; and then to Perdita, to the forgotten world, to the duties of society, the splendour of rank, the enjoyment of power.

After the scene sketched in the preceding pages, Perdita had contemplated an entire change in the manners and conduct of Raymond. She expected freedom of communication, and a return to those habits of affectionate intercourse which had formed the delight of her life. But Raymond did not join her in any of her avocations. He transacted the business of the day apart from her; he went out, she knew not whither. The pain inflicted by this disappointment was tormenting and keen. She looked on it as a deceitful dream, and tried to throw off the consciousness of it; but like the shirt of Nessus, it clung to her very flesh, and ate with sharp agony into her vital principle. She possessed that (though such an assertion may appear a paradox) which belongs to few, a capacity of happiness. Her delicate organization and creative imagination rendered her peculiarly susceptible of pleasurable emotion. The overflowing warmth of her heart, by making love a plant of deep root and stately growth, had attuned her whole soul to the reception of happiness, when she found in Raymond all that could adorn love and satisfy her imagination. But if the sentiment on which the fabric of her existence was founded, became common place through participation, the endless succession of attentions and graceful action snapped by transfer, his universe of love wrested from her, happiness must depart, and then be exchanged for its opposite. The same peculiarities of character rendered her sorrows agonies; her fancy magnified them, her sensibility made her for ever open to their renewed impression; love envenomed the heart-piercing sting. There was neither submission, patience, nor self-abandonment in her grief; she fought with it, struggled beneath it, and rendered every pang more sharp by resistance. Again and again the idea recurred, that he loved another. She did him justice; she believed that he felt a tender affection for her; but give a paltry prize to him who in some life-pending lottery has calculated on the possession of tens of thousands, and it will disappoint him more than a blank. The affection and amity of a Raymond might be inestimable; but, beyond that affection, embosomed deeper than friendship, was the indivisible treasure of love. Take the sum in its completeness, and no arithmetic can calculate its price; take from it the smallest portion, give it but the name of parts, separate it into degrees and sections, and like the magician's coin, the valueless gold of the mine, is turned to vilest substance. There is a meaning in the eye of love; a cadence in its voice, an irradiation in its smile, the talisman of whose enchantments one only can possess; its spirit is elemental, its essence single, its divinity an unit. The very heart and soul of Raymond and Perdita had mingled, even as two mountain brooks that join in their descent, and murmuring and sparkling flow over shining pebbles, beside starry flowers; but let one desert its primal course, or be dammed up by choking obstruction, and the other shrinks in its altered banks. Perdita was sensible of the failing of the tide that fed her life. Unable to support the slow withering of her hopes, she suddenly formed a plan, resolving to terminate at once the period of misery, and to bring to an happy conclusion the late disastrous events.

The anniversary was at hand of the exaltation of Raymond to the office of Protector; and it was customary to celebrate this day by a splendid festival. A variety of feelings urged Perdita to shed double magnificence over the scene; yet, as she arrayed herself for the evening gala, she wondered herself at the pains she took, to render sumptuous the celebration of an event which appeared to her the beginning of her sufferings. Woe befall the day, she thought, woe, tears, and mourning betide the hour, that gave Raymond another hope than love, another wish than my devotion; and thrice joyful the moment when he shall be restored to me! God knows, I put my trust in his vows, and believe his asserted faith — but for that, I would not seek what I am now resolved to attain. Shall two years more be thus passed, each day adding to our alienation, each act being another stone piled on the barrier which separates us? No, my Raymond, my only beloved, sole possession of Perdita! This night, this splendid assembly, these sumptuous apartments, and this adornment of your tearful girl, are all united to celebrate your abdication. Once for me, you relinquished the prospect of a crown. That was in days of early love, when I could only hold out the hope, not the assurance of happiness. Now you have the experience of all that I can give, the heart's devotion, taintless love, and unhesitating subjection to you. You must choose between these and your protectorate. This, proud noble, is your last night! Perdita has bestowed on it all of magnificent and dazzling that your heart best loves — but, from these gorgeous rooms, from this princely attendance, from power and elevation, you must return with to-morrow's sun to our rural abode; for I would not buy an immortality of joy, by the endurance of one more week sister to the last.

Brooding over this plan, resolved when the hour should come, to propose, and insist upon its accomplishment, secure of his consent, the heart of Perdita was lightened, or rather exalted. Her cheek was flushed by the expectation of struggle; her eyes sparkled with the hope of triumph. Having cast her fate upon a die, and feeling secure of winning, she, whom I have named as bearing the stamp of queen of nations on her noble brow, now rose superior to humanity, and seemed in calm power, to arrest with her finger, the wheel of destiny. She had never before looked so supremely lovely.

We, the Arcadian shepherds of the tale, had intended to be present at this festivity, but Perdita wrote to entreat us not to come, or to absent ourselves from Windsor; for she (though she did not reveal her scheme to us) resolved the next morning to return with Raymond to our dear circle, there to renew a course of life in which she had found entire felicity. Late in the evening she entered the apartments appropriated to the festival. Raymond had quitted the palace the night before; he had promised to grace the assembly, but he had not yet returned. Still she felt sure that he would come at last; and the wider the breach might appear at this crisis, the more secure she was of closing it for ever.

It was as I said, the nineteenth of October; the autumn was far advanced and dreary. The wind howled; the half bare trees were despoiled of the remainder of their summer ornament; the state of the air which induced the decay of vegetation, was hostile to cheerfulness or hope. Raymond had been exalted by the determination he had made; but with the declining day his spirits declined. First he was to visit Evadne, and then to hasten to the palace of the Protectorate. As he walked through the wretched streets in the neighbourhood of the luckless Greek's abode, his heart smote him for the whole course of his conduct towards her. First, his having entered into any engagement that should permit her to remain in such a state of degradation; and then, after a short wild dream, having left her to drear solitude, anxious conjecture, and bitter, still — disappointed expectation. What had she done the while, how supported his absence and neglect? Light grew dim in these close streets, and when the well known door was opened, the staircase was shrouded in perfect night. He groped his way up, he entered the garret, he found Evadne stretched speechless, almost lifeless on her wretched bed. He called for the people of the house, but could learn nothing from them, except that they knew nothing. Her story was plain to him, plain and distinct as the remorse and horror that darted their fangs into him. When she found herself forsaken by him, she lost the heart to pursue her usual avocations; pride forbade every application to him; famine was welcomed as the kind porter to the gates of death, within whose opening folds she should now, without sin, quickly repose. No creature came near her, as her strength failed.

If she died, where could there be found on record a murderer, whose cruel act might compare with his? What fiend more wanton in his mischief, what damned soul more worthy of perdition! But he was not reserved for this agony of self-reproach. He sent for medical assistance; the hours passed, spun by suspense into ages; the darkness of the long autumnal night yielded to day, before her life was secure. He had her then removed to a more commodious dwelling, and hovered about her, again and again to assure himself that she was safe.

In the midst of his greatest suspense and fear as to the event, he remembered the festival given in his honour, by Perdita; in his honour then, when misery and death were affixing indelible disgrace to his name, honour to him whose crimes deserved a scaffold; this was the worst mockery. Still Perdita would expect him; he wrote a few incoherent words on a scrap of paper, testifying that he was well, and bade the woman of the house take it to the palace, and deliver it into the hands of the wife of the Lord Protector. The woman, who did not know him, contemptuously asked, how he thought she should gain admittance, particularly on a festal night, to that lady's presence? Raymond gave her his ring to ensure the respect of the menials. Thus, while Perdita was entertaining her guests, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of her lord, his ring was brought her; and she was told that a poor woman had a note to deliver to her from its wearer.

The vanity of the old gossip was raised by her commission, which, after all, she did not understand, since she had no suspicion, even now that Evadne's visitor was Lord Raymond. Perdita dreaded a fall from his horse, or some similar accident — till the woman's answers woke other fears. From a feeling of cunning blindly exercised, the officious, if not malignant messenger, did not speak of Evadne's illness; but she garrulously gave an account of Raymond's frequent visits, adding to her narration such circumstances, as, while they convinced Perdita of its truth, exaggerated the unkindness and perfidy of Raymond. Worst of all, his absence now from the festival, his message wholly unaccounted for, except by the disgraceful hints of the woman, appeared the deadliest insult. Again she looked at the ring, it was a small ruby, almost heart-shaped, which she had herself given him. She looked at the hand-writing, which she could not mistake, and repeated to herself the words—”Do not, I charge you, I entreat you, permit your guests to wonder at my absence:” the while the old crone going on with her talk, filled her ear with a strange medley of truth and falsehood. At length Perdita dismissed her.

The poor girl returned to the assembly, where her presence had not been missed. She glided into a recess somewhat obscured, and leaning against an ornamental column there placed, tried to recover herself. Her faculties were palsied. She gazed on some flowers that stood near in a carved vase: that morning she had arranged them, they were rare and lovely plants; even now all aghast as she was, she observed their brilliant colours and starry shapes. —”Divine infoliations of the spirit of beauty,” she exclaimed, “Ye droop not, neither do ye mourn; the despair that clasps my heart, has not spread contagion over you! — Why am I not a partner of your insensibility, a sharer in your calm!”

She paused. “To my task,” she continued mentally, “my guests must not perceive the reality, either as it regards him or me. I obey; they shall not, though I die the moment they are gone. They shall behold the antipodes of what is real — for I will appear to live — while I am — dead.” It required all her self-command, to suppress the gush of tears self-pity caused at this idea. After many struggles, she succeeded, and turned to join the company.

All her efforts were now directed to the dissembling her internal conflict. She had to play the part of a courteous hostess; to attend to all; to shine the focus of enjoyment and grace. She had to do this, while in deep woe she sighed for loneliness, and would gladly have exchanged her crowded rooms for dark forest depths, or a drear, night-enshadowed heath. But she became gay. She could not keep in the medium, nor be, as was usual with her, placidly content. Every one remarked her exhilaration of spirits; as all actions appear graceful in the eye of rank, her guests surrounded her applaudingly, although there was a sharpness in her laugh, and an abruptness in her sallies, which might have betrayed her secret to an attentive observer. She went on, feeling that, if she had paused for a moment, the checked waters of misery would have deluged her soul, that her wrecked hopes would raise their wailing voices, and that those who now echoed her mirth, and provoked her repartees, would have shrunk in fear from her convulsive despair. Her only consolation during the violence which she did herself, was to watch the motions of an illuminated clock, and internally count the moments which must elapse before she could be alone.

At length the rooms began to thin. Mocking her own desires, she rallied her guests on their early departure. One by one they left her — at length she pressed the hand of her last visitor. “How cold and damp your hand is,” said her friend; “you are over fatigued, pray hasten to rest.” Perdita smiled faintly — her guest left her; the carriage rolling down the street assured the final departure. Then, as if pursued by an enemy, as if wings had been at her feet, she flew to her own apartment, she dismissed her attendants, she locked the doors, she threw herself wildly on the floor, she bit her lips even to blood to suppress her shrieks, and lay long a prey to the vulture of despair, striving not to think, while multitudinous ideas made a home of her heart; and ideas, horrid as furies, cruel as vipers, and poured in with such swift succession, that they seemed to jostle and wound each other, while they worked her up to madness.

At length she rose, more composed, not less miserable. She stood before a large mirror — she gazed on her reflected image; her light and graceful dress, the jewels that studded her hair, and encircled her beauteous arms and neck, her small feet shod in satin, her profuse and glossy tresses, all were to her clouded brow and woe-begone countenance like a gorgeous frame to a dark tempest-portraying picture. “Vase am I,” she thought, “vase brimful of despair’s direst essence. Farewell, Perdita! farewell, poor girl! never again will you see yourself thus; luxury and wealth are no longer yours; in the excess of your poverty you may envy the homeless beggar; most truly am I without a home! I live on a barren desert, which, wide and interminable, brings forth neither fruit or flower; in the midst is a solitary rock, to which thou, Perdita, art chained, and thou seest the dreary level stretch far away.”

She threw open her window, which looked on the palace-garden. Light and darkness were struggling together, and the orient was streaked by roseate and golden rays. One star only trembled in the depth of the kindling atmosphere. The morning air blowing freshly over the dewy plants, rushed into the heated room. “All things go on,” thought Perdita, “all things proceed, decay, and perish! When noontide has passed, and the weary day has driven her team to their western stalls, the fires of heaven rise from the East, moving in their accustomed path, they ascend and descend the skiey hill. When their course is fulfilled, the dial begins to cast westward an uncertain shadow; the eye-lids of day are opened, and birds and flowers, the startled vegetation, and fresh breeze awaken; the sun at length appears, and in majestic procession climbs the capitol of heaven. All proceeds, changes and dies, except the sense of misery in my bursting heart.

“Ay, all proceeds and changes: what wonder then, that love has journeyed on to its setting, and that the lord of my life has changed? We call the supernal lights fixed, yet they wander about yonder plain, and if I look again where I looked an hour ago, the face of the eternal heavens is altered. The silly moon and inconstant planets vary nightly their erratic dance; the sun itself, sovereign of the sky, ever and anon deserts his throne, and leaves his dominion to night and winter. Nature grows old, and shakes in her decaying limbs, — creation has become bankrupt! What wonder then, that eclipse and death have led to destruction the light of thy life, O Perdita!”

CHAPTER X

Thus sad and disarranged were the thoughts of my poor sister, when she became assured of the infidelity of Raymond. All her virtues and all her defects tended to make the blow incurable. Her affection for me, her brother, for Adrian and Idris, was subject as it were to the reigning passion of her heart; even her maternal tenderness borrowed half its force from the delight she had in tracing Raymond's features and expression in the infant's countenance. She had been reserved and even stern in childhood; but love had softened the asperities of her character, and her union with Raymond had caused her talents and affections to unfold themselves; the one betrayed, and the other lost, she in some degree returned to her ancient disposition. The concentrated pride of her nature, forgotten during her blissful dream, awoke, and with its adder's sting pierced her heart; her humility of spirit augmented the power of the venom; she had been exalted in her own estimation, while distinguished by his love: of what worth was she, now that he thrust her from this preferment? She had been proud of having won and preserved him — but another had won him from her, and her exultation was as cold as a water quenched ember.

We, in our retirement, remained long in ignorance of her misfortune. Soon after the festival she had sent for her child, and then she seemed to have forgotten us. Adrian observed a change during a visit that he afterward paid them; but he could not tell its extent, or divine the cause. They still appeared in public together, and lived under the same roof. Raymond was as usual courteous, though there was, on occasions, an unbidden haughtiness, or painful abruptness in his manners, which startled his gentle friend; his brow was not clouded but disdain sat on his lips, and his voice was harsh. Perdita was all kindness and attention to her lord; but she was silent, and beyond words sad. She had grown thin and pale; and her eyes often filled with tears. Sometimes she looked at Raymond, as if to say — That it should be so! At others her countenance expressed — I will still do all I can to make you happy. But Adrian read with uncertain aim the charactery of her face, and might mistake. — Clara was always with her, and she seemed most at ease, when, in an obscure corner, she could sit holding her child’s hand, silent and lonely. Still Adrian was unable to guess the truth; he entreated them to visit us at Windsor, and they promised to come during the following month.

It was May before they arrived: the season had decked the forest trees with leaves, and its paths with a thousand flowers. We had notice of their intention the day before; and, early in the morning, Perdita arrived with her daughter. Raymond would follow soon, she said; he had been detained by business. According to Adrian’s account, I had expected to find her sad; but, on the contrary, she appeared in the highest spirits: true, she had grown thin, her eyes were somewhat hollow, and her cheeks sunk, though tinged by a bright glow. She was delighted to see us; caressed our children, praised their growth and improvement; Clara also was pleased to meet again her young friend Alfred; all kinds of childish games were entered into, in which Perdita joined. She communicated her gaiety to us, and as we amused ourselves on the Castle Terrace, it appeared that a happier, less care-worn party could not have been assembled. “This is better, Mamma,” said Clara, “than being in that dismal London, where you often cry, and never laugh as you do now.”—”Silence, little foolish thing,” replied her mother, “and remember any one that mentions London is sent to Coventry for an hour.”

Soon after, Raymond arrived. He did not join as usual in the playful spirit of the rest; but, entering into conversation with Adrian and myself, by degrees we seceded from our companions, and Idris and Perdita only remained with the children. Raymond talked of his new buildings; of his plan for an establishment for the better education of the poor; as usual Adrian and he entered into argument, and the time slipped away unperceived.

We assembled again towards evening, and Perdita insisted on our having recourse to music. She wanted, she said, to give us a specimen of her new accomplishment; for since she had been in London, she had applied herself to music, and sang, without much power, but with a great deal of sweetness. We were not permitted by her to select any but light-hearted melodies; and all the Operas of Mozart were called into service, that we might choose the most exhilarating of his airs. Among the other transcendent attributes of Mozart’s music, it possesses more than any other that of appearing to come from the heart; you enter into the passions expressed by him, and are transported with grief, joy, anger, or confusion, as he, our soul’s master, chooses to inspire. For some time, the spirit of hilarity was kept up; but, at length, Perdita receded from the piano, for Raymond had joined in the trio of "*Taci ingiusto core*," in Don Giovanni, whose arch entreaty was softened by him into tenderness, and thrilled her heart with memories of the changed past; it was the same voice, the same tone, the self-same sounds and words, which often before she had received, as the homage of love to her — no longer was it that; and this concord of sound with its dissonance of expression penetrated her with regret and despair. Soon after Idris, who was at the harp, turned to that passionate and sorrowful air in Figaro, "*Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro*," in which the deserted Countess laments the change of the faithless Almaviva. The soul of tender sorrow is breathed forth in this strain; and the sweet voice of Idris, sustained by the mournful chords of her instrument, added to the expression of the words. During the pathetic appeal with which it concludes, a stifled sob attracted our attention to Perdita, the cessation of the music recalled her to herself, she hastened out of the hall — I followed her. At first, she seemed to wish to shun me; and then, yielding to my earnest questioning, she threw herself on my neck, and wept aloud:—"Once more," she cried, "once more on your friendly breast, my beloved brother, can the lost Perdita pour forth her sorrows. I had imposed a law of silence on myself; and for months I have kept it. I do wrong in weeping now, and greater wrong in giving words to my grief. I will not speak! Be it enough for you to know that I am miserable — be it enough for you to know, that the painted veil of life is rent, that I sit for ever shrouded in darkness and gloom, that grief is my sister, everlasting lamentation my mate!"

I endeavoured to console her; I did not question her! but I caressed her, assured her of my deepest affection and my intense interest in the changes of her fortune:—"Dear words," she cried, "expressions of love come upon my ear, like the remembered sounds of forgotten music, that had been dear to me. They are vain, I know; how very vain in their attempt to soothe or comfort me. Dearest Lionel, you cannot guess what I have suffered during these long months. I have read of mourners in ancient days, who clothed themselves in sackcloth, scattered dust upon their heads, ate their bread mingled with ashes, and took up their abode on the bleak mountain tops, reproaching heaven and earth aloud with their misfortunes. Why this is the very luxury of sorrow! thus one might go on from day to day contriving new extravagances, revelling in the paraphernalia of woe, wedded to all the appurtenances of despair. Alas! I must for ever conceal the wretchedness that consumes me. I must weave a veil of dazzling falsehood to hide my grief from vulgar eyes, smoothe my brow, and paint my lips in deceitful smiles — even in solitude I dare not think how lost I am, lest I become insane and rave."

The tears and agitation of my poor sister had rendered her unfit to return to the circle we had left — so I persuaded her to let me drive her through the park; and, during the ride, I induced her to confide the tale of her unhappiness to me, fancying that talking of it would lighten the burthen, and certain that, if there were a remedy, it should be found and secured to her.

Several weeks had elapsed since the festival of the anniversary, and she had been unable to calm her mind, or to subdue her thoughts to any regular train. Sometimes she reproached herself for taking too bitterly to heart, that which many would esteem an imaginary evil; but this was no subject for reason; and, ignorant as she was of the motives and true conduct of Raymond, things assumed for her even a worse appearance, than the reality warranted. He was seldom at the palace; never, but when he was assured that his public duties would prevent his remaining alone with Perdita. They seldom addressed each other, shunning explanation, each fearing any communication the other might make. Suddenly, however, the manners of Raymond changed; he appeared to desire to find opportunities of bringing about a return to kindness and intimacy with my sister. The tide of love towards her appeared to flow again; he could never forget, how once he had been devoted to her, making her the shrine and storehouse wherein to place every thought and every sentiment. Shame seemed to hold him back; yet he evidently wished to establish a renewal of confidence and affection. From the moment Perdita had sufficiently recovered herself to form any plan of action, she had laid one down, which now she prepared to follow. She received these tokens of returning love with gentleness; she did not shun his company; but she endeavoured to place a barrier in the way of familiar intercourse or painful discussion, which mingled pride and shame prevented Raymond from surmounting. He began at last to show signs of angry impatience, and Perdita became aware that the system she had adopted could not continue; she must explain herself to him; she could not summon courage to speak — she wrote thus: —

“Read this letter with patience, I entreat you. It will contain no reproaches. Reproach is indeed an idle word: for what should I reproach you?

“Allow me in some degree to explain my feeling; without that, we shall both grope in the dark, mistaking one another; erring from the path which may conduct, one of us at least, to a more eligible mode of life than that led by either during the last few weeks.

“I loved you — I love you — neither anger nor pride dictates these lines; but a feeling beyond, deeper, and more unalterable than either. My affections are wounded; it is impossible to heal them: — cease then the vain endeavour, if indeed that way your endeavours tend. Forgiveness! Return! Idle words are these! I forgive the pain I endure; but the trodden path cannot be retraced.

“Common affection might have been satisfied with common usages. I believed that you read my heart, and knew its devotion, its unalienable fidelity towards you. I never loved any but you. You came the embodied image of my fondest dreams. The praise of men, power and high aspirations attended your career. Love for you invested the world for me in enchanted light; it was no longer the earth I trod — the earth, common mother, yielding only trite and stale repetition of objects and circumstances old and worn out. I lived in a temple glorified by intensest sense of devotion and rapture; I walked, a consecrated being, contemplating only your power, your excellence;

For O, you stood beside me, like my youth,
Transformed for me the real to a dream,
Clothing the palpable and familiar
With golden exhalations of the dawn.

‘The bloom has vanished from my life’ — there is no morning to this all investing night; no rising to the set-sun of love. In those days the rest of the world was nothing to me: all other men — I never considered nor felt what they were; nor did I look on you as one of them. Separated from them; exalted in my heart; sole possessor of my affections; single object of my hopes, the best half of myself.

"Ah, Raymond, were we not happy? Did the sun shine on any, who could enjoy its light with purer and more intense bliss? It was not — it is not a common infidelity at which I repine. It is the disunion of an whole which may not have parts; it is the carelessness with which you have shaken off the mantle of election with which to me you were invested, and have become one among the many. Dream not to alter this. Is not love a divinity, because it is immortal? Did not I appear sanctified, even to myself, because this love had for its temple my heart? I have gazed on you as you slept, melted even to tears, as the idea filled my mind, that all I possessed lay cradled in those idolised, but mortal lineaments before me. Yet, even then, I have checked thick-coming fears with one thought; I would not fear death, for the emotions that linked us must be immortal.

"And now I do not fear death. I should be well pleased to close my eyes, never more to open them again. And yet I fear it; even as I fear all things; for in any state of being linked by the chain of memory with this, happiness would not return — even in Paradise, I must feel that your love was less enduring than the mortal beatings of my fragile heart, every pulse of which knells audibly,

        The funeral note
Of love, deep buried, without resurrection.

No — no — me miserable; for love extinct there is no resurrection!

"Yet I love you. Yet, and for ever, would I contribute all I possess to your welfare. On account of a tattling world; for the sake of my — of our child, I would remain by you, Raymond, share your fortunes, partake your counsel. Shall it be thus? We are no longer lovers; nor can I call myself a friend to any; since, lost as I am, I have no thought to spare from my own wretched, engrossing self. But it will please me to see you each day! to listen to the public voice praising you; to keep up your paternal love for our girl; to hear your voice; to know that I am near you, though you are no longer mine.

"If you wish to break the chains that bind us, say the word, and it shall be done — I will take all the blame on myself, of harshness or unkindness, in the world's eye.

"Yet, as I have said, I should be best pleased, at least for the present, to live under the same roof with you. When the fever of my young life is spent; when placid age shall tame the vulture that devours me, friendship may come, love and hope being dead. May this be true? Can my soul, inextricably linked to this perishable frame, become lethargic and cold, even as this sensitive mechanism shall lose its youthful elasticity? Then, with lack-lustre eyes, grey hairs, and wrinkled brow, though now the words sound hollow and meaningless, then, tottering on the grave's extreme edge, I may be — your affectionate and true friend,

"PERDITA."

Raymond's answer was brief. What indeed could he reply to her complaints, to her griefs which she jealously paled round, keeping out all thought of remedy. "Notwithstanding your bitter letter," he wrote, "for bitter I must call it, you are the chief person in my estimation, and it is your happiness that I would principally consult. Do that which seems best to you: and if you can receive gratification from one mode of life in preference to another, do not let me be any obstacle. I foresee that the plan which you mark out in your letter will not endure long; but you are mistress of yourself, and it is my sincere wish to contribute as far as you will permit me to your happiness."

"Raymond has prophesied well," said Perdita, "alas, that it should be so! our present mode of life cannot continue long, yet I will not be the first to propose alteration. He beholds in me one whom he has injured even unto death; and I derive no hope from his kindness; no change can possibly be brought about even by his best intentions. As well might Cleopatra have worn as an ornament the vinegar which contained her dissolved pearl, as I be content with the love that Raymond can now offer me."

I own that I did not see her misfortune with the same eyes as Perdita. At all events methought that the wound could be healed; and, if they remained together, it would be so. I endeavoured therefore to sooth and soften her mind; and it was not until after many endeavours that I gave up the task as impracticable. Perdita listened to me impatiently, and answered with some asperity:—"Do you think that any of your arguments are new to me? or that my own burning wishes and intense anguish have not suggested them all a thousand times, with far more eagerness and subtlety than you can put into them? Lionel, you cannot understand what woman's love is. In days of happiness I have often repeated to myself, with a grateful heart and exulting spirit, all that Raymond sacrificed for me. I was a poor, uneducated, unbefriended, mountain girl, raised from nothingness by him. All that I possessed of the luxuries of life came from him. He gave me an illustrious name and noble station; the world's respect reflected from his own glory: all this joined to his own undying love, inspired me with sensations towards him, akin to those with which we regard the Giver of life. I gave him love only. I devoted myself to him: imperfect creature that I was, I took myself to task, that I might become worthy of him. I watched over my hasty temper, subdued my burning impatience of character, schooled my self-engrossing thoughts, educating myself to the best perfection I might attain, that the fruit of my exertions might be his happiness. I took no merit to myself for this. He deserved it all — all labour, all devotion, all sacrifice; I would have toiled up a scaleless Alp, to pluck a flower that would please him. I was ready to quit you all, my beloved and gifted companions, and to live only with him, for him. I could not do otherwise, even if I had wished; for if we are said to have two souls, he was my better soul, to which the other was a perpetual slave. One only return did he owe me, even fidelity. I earned that; I deserved it. Because I was mountain bred, unallied to the noble and wealthy, shall he think to repay me by an empty name and station? Let him take them back; without his love they are nothing to me. Their only merit in my eyes was that they were his."

Thus passionately Perdita ran on. When I adverted to the question of their entire separation, she replied: "Be it so! One day the period will arrive; I know it, and feel it. But in this I am a coward. This imperfect companionship, and our masquerade of union, are strangely dear to me. It is painful, I allow, destructive, impracticable. It keeps up a perpetual fever in my veins; it frets my immedicable wound; it is instinct with poison. Yet I must cling to it; perhaps it will kill me soon, and thus perform a thankful office."

In the mean time, Raymond had remained with Adrian and Idris. He was naturally frank; the continued absence of Perdita and myself became remarkable; and Raymond soon found relief from the constraint of months, by an unreserved confidence with his two friends. He related to them the situation in which he had found Evadne. At first, from delicacy to Adrian he concealed her name; but it was divulged in the course of his narrative, and her former lover heard with the most acute agitation the history of her sufferings. Idris had shared Perdita's ill opinion of the Greek; but Raymond's account softened and interested her. Evadne's constancy, fortitude, even her ill-fated and ill-regulated love, were matter of admiration and pity; especially when, from the detail of the events of the nineteenth of October, it was apparent that she preferred suffering and death to any in her eyes degrading application for the pity and assistance of her lover. Her subsequent conduct did not diminish this interest. At first, relieved from famine and the grave, watched over by Raymond with the tenderest assiduity, with that feeling of repose peculiar to convalescence, Evadne gave herself up to rapturous gratitude and love. But reflection returned with health. She questioned him with regard to the motives which had occasioned his critical absence. She framed her inquiries with Greek subtlety; she formed her conclusions with the decision and firmness peculiar to her disposition. She could not divine, that the breach which she had occasioned between Raymond and Perdita was already irreparable: but she knew, that under the present system it would be widened each day, and that its result must be to destroy her lover's happiness, and to implant the fangs of remorse in his heart. From the moment that she perceived the right line of conduct, she resolved to adopt it, and to part from Raymond for ever. Conflicting passions, long-cherished love, and self-inflicted disappointment, made her regard death alone as sufficient refuge for her woe. But the same feelings and opinions which had before restrained her, acted with redoubled force; for she knew that the reflection that he had occasioned her death, would pursue Raymond through life, poisoning every enjoyment, clouding every prospect. Besides, though the violence of her anguish made life hateful, it had not yet produced that monotonous, lethargic sense of changeless misery which for the most part produces suicide. Her energy of character induced her still to combat with the ills of life; even those attendant on hopeless love presented themselves, rather in the shape of an adversary to be overcome, than of a victor to whom she must submit. Besides, she had memories of past tenderness to cherish, smiles, words, and even tears, to con over, which, though remembered in desertion and sorrow, were to be preferred to the forgetfulness of the grave. It was impossible to guess at the whole of her plan. Her letter to Raymond gave no clue for discovery; it assured him, that she was in no danger of wanting the means of life; she promised in it to preserve herself, and some future day perhaps to present herself to him in a station not unworthy of her. She then bade him, with the eloquence of despair and of unalterable love, a last farewell.

All these circumstances were now related to Adrian and Idris. Raymond then lamented the cureless evil of his situation with Perdita. He declared, notwithstanding her harshness, he even called it coldness, that he loved her. He had been ready once with the humility of a penitent, and the duty of a vassal, to surrender himself to her; giving up his very soul to her tutelage, to become her pupil, her slave, her bondsman. She had rejected these advances; and the time for such exuberant submission, which must be founded on love and nourished by it, was now passed. Still all his wishes and endeavours were directed towards her peace, and his chief discomfort arose from the perception that he exerted himself in vain. If she were to continue inflexible in the line of conduct she now pursued, they must part. The combinations and occurrences of this senseless mode of intercourse were maddening to him. Yet he would not propose the separation. He was haunted by the fear of causing the death of one or other of the beings implicated in these events; and he could not persuade himself to undertake to direct the course of events, lest, ignorant of the land he traversed, he should lead those attached to the car into irremediable ruin.

After a discussion on this subject, which lasted for several hours, he took leave of his friends, and returned to town, unwilling to meet Perdita before us, conscious, as we all must be, of the thoughts uppermost in the minds of both. Perdita prepared to follow him with her child. Idris endeavoured to persuade her to remain. My poor sister looked at the counsellor with affright. She knew that Raymond had conversed with her; had he instigated this request? — was this to be the prelude to their eternal separation? — I have said, that the defects of her character awoke and acquired vigour from her unnatural position. She regarded with suspicion the invitation of Idris;

she embraced me, as if she were about to be deprived of my affection also: calling me her more than brother, her only friend, her last hope, she pathetically conjured me not to cease to love her; and with increased anxiety she departed for London, the scene and cause of all her misery.

The scenes that followed, convinced her that she had not yet fathomed the obscure gulf into which she had plunged. Her unhappiness assumed every day a new shape; every day some unexpected event seemed to close, while in fact it led onward, the train of calamities which now befell her.

The selected passion of the soul of Raymond was ambition. Readiness of talent, a capacity of entering into, and leading the dispositions of men; earnest desire of distinction were the awakeners and nurses of his ambition. But other ingredients mingled with these, and prevented him from becoming the calculating, determined character, which alone forms a successful hero. He was obstinate, but not firm; benevolent in his first movements; harsh and reckless when provoked. Above all, he was remorseless and unyielding in the pursuit of any object of desire, however lawless. Love of pleasure, and the softer sensibilities of our nature, made a prominent part of his character, conquering the conqueror; holding him in at the moment of acquisition; sweeping away ambition’s web; making him forget the toil of weeks, for the sake of one moment’s indulgence of the new and actual object of his wishes. Obeying these impulses, he had become the husband of Perdita: egged on by them, he found himself the lover of Evadne. He had now lost both. He had neither the ennobling self-gratulation, which constancy inspires, to console him, nor the voluptuous sense of abandonment to a forbidden, but intoxicating passion. His heart was exhausted by the recent events; his enjoyment of life was destroyed by the resentment of Perdita, and the flight of Evadne; and the inflexibility of the former, set the last seal upon the annihilation of his hopes. As long as their disunion remained a secret, he cherished an expectation of re-awakening past tenderness in her bosom; now that we were all made acquainted with these occurrences, and that Perdita, by declaring her resolves to others, in a manner pledged herself to their accomplishment, he gave up the idea of re-union as futile, and sought only, since he was unable to influence her to change, to reconcile himself to the present state of things. He made a vow against love and its train of struggles, disappointment and remorse, and sought in mere sensual enjoyment, a remedy for the injurious inroads of passion.

Debasement of character is the certain follower of such pursuits. Yet this consequence would not have been immediately remarkable, if Raymond had continued to apply himself to the execution of his plans for the public benefit, and the fulfilling his duties as Protector. But, extreme in all things, given up to immediate impressions, he entered with ardour into this new pursuit of pleasure, and followed up the incongruous intimacies occasioned by it without reflection or foresight. The council-chamber was deserted; the crowds which attended on him as agents to his various projects were neglected. Festivity, and even libertinism, became the order of the day.

Perdita beheld with affright the increasing disorder. For a moment she thought that she could stem the torrent, and that Raymond could be induced to hear reason from her. — Vain hope! The moment of her influence was passed. He listened with haughtiness, replied disdainfully; and, if in truth, she succeeded in awakening his conscience, the sole effect was that he sought an opiate for the pang in oblivious riot. With the energy natural to her, Perdita then endeavoured to supply his place. Their still apparent union permitted her to do much; but no woman could, in the end, present a remedy to the increasing negligence of the Protector; who, as if seized with a paroxysm of insanity, trampled on all ceremony, all order, all duty, and gave himself up to license.

Reports of these strange proceedings reached us, and we were undecided what method to adopt to restore our friend to himself and his country, when Perdita suddenly appeared among us. She detailed the progress of the mournful change, and entreated Adrian and myself to go up to London, and endeavour to remedy the increasing evil:—”Tell him,” she cried, “tell Lord Raymond, that my presence shall no longer annoy him. That he need not plunge into this destructive dissipation for the sake of disgusting me, and causing me to fly. This purpose is now accomplished; he will never see me more. But let me, it is my last entreaty, let me in the praises of his countrymen and the prosperity of England, find the choice of my youth justified.”

During our ride up to town, Adrian and I discussed and argued upon Raymond’s conduct, and his falling off from the hopes of permanent excellence on his part, which he had before given us cause to entertain. My friend and I had both been educated in one school, or rather I was his pupil in the opinion, that steady adherence to principle was the only road to honour; a ceaseless observance of the laws of general utility, the only conscientious aim of human ambition. But though we both entertained these ideas, we differed in their application. Resentment added also a sting to my censure; and I reprobated Raymond's conduct in severe terms. Adrian was more benign, more considerate. He admitted that the principles that I laid down were the best; but he denied that they were the only ones. Quoting the text, *there are many mansions in my father's house,* he insisted that the modes of becoming good or great, varied as much as the dispositions of men, of whom it might be said, as of the leaves of the forest, there were no two alike.

We arrived in London at about eleven at night. We conjectured, notwithstanding what we had heard, that we should find Raymond in St. Stephen's: thither we sped. The chamber was full — but there was no Protector; and there was an austere discontent manifest on the countenances of the leaders, and a whispering and busy tattle among the underlings, not less ominous. We hastened to the palace of the Protectorate. We found Raymond in his dining room with six others: the bottle was being pushed about merrily, and had made considerable inroads on the understanding of one or two. He who sat near Raymond was telling a story, which convulsed the rest with laughter.

Raymond sat among them, though while he entered into the spirit of the hour, his natural dignity never forsook him. He was gay, playful, fascinating — but never did he overstep the modesty of nature, or the respect due to himself, in his wildest sallies. Yet I own, that considering the task which Raymond had taken on himself as Protector of England, and the cares to which it became him to attend, I was exceedingly provoked to observe the worthless fellows on whom his time was wasted, and the jovial if not drunken spirit which seemed on the point of robbing him of his better self. I stood watching the scene, while Adrian flitted like a shadow in among them, and, by a word and look of sobriety, endeavoured to restore order in the assembly. Raymond expressed himself delighted to see him, declaring that he should make one in the festivity of the night.

This action of Adrian provoked me. I was indignant that he should sit at the same table with the companions of Raymond — men of abandoned characters, or rather without any, the refuse of high-bred luxury, the disgrace of their country. “Let me entreat Adrian,” I cried, “not to comply: rather join with me in endeavouring to withdraw Lord Raymond from this scene, and restore him to other society.”

“My good fellow,” said Raymond, “this is neither the time nor place for the delivery of a moral lecture: take my word for it that my amusements and society are not so bad as you imagine. We are neither hypocrites or fools — for the rest, ‘Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?’”

I turned angrily away: “Verney,” said Adrian, “you are very cynical: sit down; or if you will not, perhaps, as you are not a frequent visitor, Lord Raymond will humour you, and accompany us, as we had previously agreed upon, to parliament.”

Raymond looked keenly at him; he could read benignity only in his gentle lineaments; he turned to me, observing with scorn my moody and stern demeanour. “Come,” said Adrian, “I have promised for you, enable me to keep my engagement. Come with us.” — Raymond made an uneasy movement, and laconically replied—”I won’t!”

The party in the mean time had broken up. They looked at the pictures, strolled into the other apartments, talked of billiards, and one by one vanished. Raymond strode angrily up and down the room. I stood ready to receive and reply to his reproaches. Adrian leaned against the wall. “This is infinitely ridiculous,” he cried, “if you were school-boys, you could not conduct yourselves more unreasonably.”

“You do not understand,” said Raymond. “This is only part of a system: — a scheme of tyranny to which I will never submit. Because I am Protector of England, am I to be the only slave in its empire? My privacy invaded, my actions censured, my friends insulted? But I will get rid of the whole together. — Be you witnesses,” and he took the star, insignia of office, from his breast, and threw it on the table. “I renounce my office, I abdicate my power — assume it who will!” —

“Let him assume it,” exclaimed Adrian, “who can pronounce himself, or whom the world will pronounce to be your superior. There does not exist the man in England with adequate presumption. Know yourself, Raymond, and your indignation will cease; your complacency return. A few months ago, whenever we prayed for the prosperity of our country, or our own, we at the same time prayed for the life and welfare of the Protector, as indissolubly linked to it. Your hours were devoted to our benefit, your ambition was to obtain our commendation. You decorated our towns with edifices, you bestowed on us useful establishments, you gifted the soil with abundant fertility. The powerful and unjust cowered at the steps of your judgment-seat, and the poor and oppressed arose like morn-awakened flowers under the sunshine of your protection.

"Can you wonder that we are all aghast and mourn, when this appears changed? But, come, this splenetic fit is already passed; resume your functions; your partisans will hail you; your enemies be silenced; our love, honour, and duty will again be manifested towards you. Master yourself, Raymond, and the world is subject to you."

"All this would be very good sense, if addressed to another," replied Raymond, moodily, "con the lesson yourself, and you, the first peer of the land, may become its sovereign. You the good, the wise, the just, may rule all hearts. But I perceive, too soon for my own happiness, too late for England's good, that I undertook a task to which I am unequal. I cannot rule myself. My passions are my masters; my smallest impulse my tyrant. Do you think that I renounced the Protectorate (and I have renounced it) in a fit of spleen? By the God that lives, I swear never to take up that bauble again; never again to burthen myself with the weight of care and misery, of which that is the visible sign.

"Once I desired to be a king. It was in the hey-day of youth, in the pride of boyish folly. I knew myself when I renounced it. I renounced it to gain — no matter what — for that also I have lost. For many months I have submitted to this mock majesty — this solemn jest. I am its dupe no longer. I will be free.

"I have lost that which adorned and dignified my life; that which linked me to other men. Again I am a solitary man; and I will become again, as in my early years, a wanderer, a soldier of fortune. My friends, for Verney, I feel that you are my friend, do not endeavour to shake my resolve. Perdita, wedded to an imagination, careless of what is behind the veil, whose charactery is in truth faulty and vile, Perdita has renounced me. With her it was pretty enough to play a sovereign's part; and, as in the recesses of your beloved forest we acted masques, and imagined ourselves Arcadian shepherds, to please the fancy of the moment — so was I content, more for

Perdita's sake than my own, to take on me the character of one of the great ones of the earth; to lead her behind the scenes of grandeur, to vary her life with a short act of magnificence and power. This was to be the colour; love and confidence the substance of our existence. But we must live, and not act our lives; pursuing the shadow, I lost the reality — now I renounce both.

"Adrian, I am about to return to Greece, to become again a soldier, perhaps a conqueror. Will you accompany me? You will behold new scenes; see a new people; witness the mighty struggle there going forward between civilization and barbarism; behold, and perhaps direct the efforts of a young and vigorous population, for liberty and order. Come with me. I have expected you. I waited for this moment; all is prepared; — will you accompany me?"

"I will," replied Adrian.

"Immediately?"

"To-morrow if you will."

"Reflect!" I cried.

"Wherefore?" asked Raymond—"My dear fellow, I have done nothing else than reflect on this step the live-long summer; and be assured that Adrian has condensed an age of reflection into this little moment. Do not talk of reflection; from this moment I abjure it; this is my only happy moment during a long interval of time. I must go, Lionel — the Gods will it; and I must. Do not endeavour to deprive me of my companion, the outcast's friend.

"One word more concerning unkind, unjust Perdita. For a time, I thought that, by watching a complying moment, fostering the still warm ashes, I might relume in her the flame of love. It is more cold within her, than a fire left by gypsies in winter-time, the spent embers crowned by a pyramid of snow. Then, in endeavouring to do violence to my own disposition, I made all worse than before. Still I think, that time, and even absence, may restore her to me. Remember, that I love her still, that my dearest hope is that she will again be mine. I know, though she does not, how false the veil is which she has spread over the reality — do not endeavour to rend this deceptive covering, but by degrees withdraw it. Present her with a mirror, in which she may know herself; and, when she is an adept in that necessary but difficult science, she will wonder at her present mistake, and hasten to restore to me, what is by right mine, her forgiveness, her kind thoughts, her love.”

CHAPTER XI

After these events, it was long before we were able to attain any degree of composure. A moral tempest had wrecked our richly freighted vessel, and we, remnants of the diminished crew, were aghast at the losses and changes which we had undergone. Idris passionately loved her brother, and could ill brook an absence whose duration was uncertain; his society was dear and necessary to me — I had followed up my chosen literary occupations with delight under his tutorship and assistance; his mild philosophy, unerring reason, and enthusiastic friendship were the best ingredient, the exalted spirit of our circle; even the children bitterly regretted the loss of their kind playfellow. Deeper grief oppressed Perdita. In spite of resentment, by day and night she figured to herself the toils and dangers of the wanderers. Raymond absent, struggling with difficulties, lost to the power and rank of the Protectorate, exposed to the perils of war, became an object of anxious interest; not that she felt any inclination to recall him, if recall must imply a return to their former union. Such return she felt to be impossible; and while she believed it to be thus, and with anguish regretted that so it should be, she continued angry and impatient with him, who occasioned her misery. These perplexities and regrets caused her to bathe her pillow with nightly tears, and to reduce her in person and in mind to the shadow of what she had been. She sought solitude, and avoided us when in gaiety and unrestrained affection we met in a family circle. Lonely musings, interminable wanderings, and solemn music were her only pastimes. She neglected even her child; shutting her heart against all tenderness, she grew reserved towards me, her first and fast friend.

I could not see her thus lost, without exerting myself to remedy the evil — remediless I knew, if I could not in the end bring her to reconcile herself to Raymond. Before he went I used every argument, every persuasion to induce her to stop his journey. She answered the one with a gush of tears — telling me that to be persuaded — life and the goods of life were a cheap exchange. It was not will that she wanted, but the capacity; again and again she declared, it were as easy to enchain the sea, to put reins on the wind's viewless courses, as for her to take truth for falsehood, deceit for honesty, heartless communion for sincere, confiding love. She answered my reasonings more briefly, declaring with disdain, that the reason was hers; and, until I could persuade her that the past could be unacted, that maturity could go back to the cradle, and that all that was could become as though it had never been, it was useless to assure her that no real change had taken place in her fate. And thus with stern pride she suffered him to go, though her very heart-strings cracked at the fulfilling of the act, which rent from her all that made life valuable.

To change the scene for her, and even for ourselves, all unhinged by the cloud that had come over us, I persuaded my two remaining companions that it were better that we should absent ourselves for a time from Windsor. We visited the north of England, my native Ulswater, and lingered in scenes dear from a thousand associations. We lengthened our tour into Scotland, that we might see Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond; thence we crossed to Ireland, and passed several weeks in the neighbourhood of Killarney. The change of scene operated to a great degree as I expected; after a year's absence, Perdita returned in gentler and more docile mood to Windsor. The first sight of this place for a time unhinged her. Here every spot was distinct with associations now grown bitter. The forest glades, the ferny dells, and lawny uplands, the cultivated and cheerful country spread around the silver pathway of ancient Thames, all earth, air, and wave, took up one choral voice, inspired by memory, instinct with plaintive regret.

But my essay towards bringing her to a saner view of her own situation, did not end here. Perdita was still to a great degree uneducated. When first she left her peasant life, and resided with the elegant and cultivated Evadne, the only accomplishment she brought to any perfection was that of painting, for which she had a taste almost amounting to genius. This had occupied her in her lonely cottage, when she quitted her Greek friend's protection. Her pallet and easel were now thrown aside; did she try to paint, thronging recollections made her hand tremble, her eyes fill with tears. With this occupation she gave up almost every other; and her mind preyed upon itself almost to madness.

For my own part, since Adrian had first withdrawn me from my sylvatic wilderness to his own paradise of order and beauty, I had been wedded to literature. I felt convinced that however it might have been in former times, in the present stage of the world, no man's faculties could be developed, no man’s moral principle be enlarged and liberal, without an extensive acquaintance with books. To me they stood in the place of an active career, of ambition, and those palpable excitements necessary to the multitude. The collation of philosophical opinions, the study of historical facts, the acquirement of languages, were at once my recreation, and the serious aim of my life. I turned author myself. My productions however were sufficiently unpretending; they were confined to the biography of favourite historical characters, especially those whom I believed to have been traduced, or about whom clung obscurity and doubt.

As my authorship increased, I acquired new sympathies and pleasures. I found another and a valuable link to enchain me to my fellow-creatures; my point of sight was extended, and the inclinations and capacities of all human beings became deeply interesting to me. Kings have been called the fathers of their people. Suddenly I became as it were the father of all mankind. Posterity became my heirs. My thoughts were gems to enrich the treasure house of man’s intellectual possessions; each sentiment was a precious gift I bestowed on them. Let not these aspirations be attributed to vanity. They were not expressed in words, nor even reduced to form in my own mind; but they filled my soul, exalting my thoughts, raising a glow of enthusiasm, and led me out of the obscure path in which I before walked, into the bright noon-enlightened highway of mankind, making me, citizen of the world, a candidate for immortal honours, an eager aspirant to the praise and sympathy of my fellow men.

No one certainly ever enjoyed the pleasures of composition more intensely than I. If I left the woods, the solemn music of the waving branches, and the majestic temple of nature, I sought the vast halls of the Castle, and looked over wide, fertile England, spread beneath our regal mount, and listened the while to inspiring strains of music. At such times solemn harmonies or spirit-stirring airs gave wings to my lagging thoughts, permitting them, methought, to penetrate the last veil of nature and her God, and to display the highest beauty in visible expression to the understandings of men. As the music went on, my ideas seemed to quit their mortal dwelling house; they shook their pinions and began a flight, sailing on the placid current of thought, filling the creation with new glory, and rousing sublime imagery that else had slept voiceless. Then I would hasten to my desk, weave the new-found web of mind in firm texture and brilliant colours, leaving the fashioning of the material to a calmer moment.

But this account, which might as properly belong to a former period of my life as to the present moment, leads me far afield. It was the pleasure I took in literature, the discipline of mind I found arise from it, that made me eager to lead Perdita to the same pursuits. I began with light hand and gentle allurement; first exciting her curiosity, and then satisfying it in such a way as might occasion her, at the same time that she half forgot her sorrows in occupation, to find in the hours that succeeded a reaction of benevolence and toleration.

Intellectual activity, though not directed towards books, had always been my sister's characteristic. It had been displayed early in life, leading her out to solitary musing among her native mountains, causing her to form innumerous combinations from common objects, giving strength to her perceptions, and swiftness to their arrangement. Love had come, as the rod of the master-prophet, to swallow up every minor propensity. Love had doubled all her excellencies, and placed a diadem on her genius. Was she to cease to love? Take the colours and odour from the rose, change the sweet nutriment of mother's milk to gall and poison; as easily might you wean Perdita from love. She grieved for the loss of Raymond with an anguish, that exiled all smile from her lips, and trenched sad lines on her brow of beauty. But each day seemed to change the nature of her suffering, and every succeeding hour forced her to alter (if so I may style it) the fashion of her soul's mourning garb. For a time music was able to satisfy the cravings of her mental hunger, and her melancholy thoughts renewed themselves in each change of key, and varied with every alteration in the strain. My schooling first impelled her towards books; and, if music had been the food of sorrow, the productions of the wise became its medicine.

The acquisition of unknown languages was too tedious an occupation, for one who referred every expression to the universe within, and read not, as many do, for the mere sake of filling up time; but who was still questioning herself and her author, moulding every idea in a thousand ways, ardently desirous for the discovery of truth in every sentence. She sought to improve her understanding; mechanically her heart and dispositions became soft and gentle under this benign discipline. After awhile she discovered, that amidst all her newly acquired knowledge, her own character, which formerly she fancied that she thoroughly understood, became the first in rank among the terrae incognitae, the pathless wilds of a country that had no chart. Erringly and strangely she began the task of self-examination with self-condemnation. And then again she became aware of her own excellencies, and began to balance with juster scales the shades of good and evil. I, who longed beyond words, to restore her to the happiness it was still in her power to enjoy, watched with anxiety the result of these internal proceedings.

But man is a strange animal. We cannot calculate on his forces like that of an engine; and, though an impulse draw with a forty-horse power at what appears willing to yield to one, yet in contempt of calculation the movement is not effected. Neither grief, philosophy, nor love could make Perdita think with mildness of the dereliction of Raymond. She now took pleasure in my society; towards Idris she felt and displayed a full and affectionate sense of her worth — she restored to her child in abundant measure her tenderness and care. But I could discover, amidst all her repinings, deep resentment towards Raymond, and an unfading sense of injury, that plucked from me my hope, when I appeared nearest to its fulfilment. Among other painful restrictions, she has occasioned it to become a law among us, never to mention Raymond's name before her. She refused to read any communications from Greece, desiring me only to mention when any arrived, and whether the wanderers were well. It was curious that even little Clara observed this law towards her mother. This lovely child was nearly eight years of age. Formerly she had been a light-hearted infant, fanciful, but gay and childish. After the departure of her father, thought became impressed on her young brow. Children, unadepts in language, seldom find words to express their thoughts, nor could we tell in what manner the late events had impressed themselves on her mind. But certainly she had made deep observations while she noted in silence the changes that passed around her. She never mentioned her father to Perdita, she appeared half afraid when she spoke of him to me, and though I tried to draw her out on the subject, and to dispel the gloom that hung about her ideas concerning him, I could not succeed. Yet each foreign post-day she watched for the arrival of letters — knew the post mark, and watched me as I read. I found her often poring over the article of Greek intelligence in the newspaper.

There is no more painful sight than that of untimely care in children, and it was particularly observable in one whose disposition had heretofore been mirthful. Yet there was so much sweetness and docility about Clara, that your admiration was excited; and if the moods of mind are calculated to paint the cheek with beauty, and endow motions with grace, surely her contemplations must have been celestial; since every lineament was moulded into loveliness, and her motions were more harmonious than the elegant boundings of the fawns of her native forest. I sometimes expostulated with Perdita on the subject of her reserve; but she rejected my counsels, while her daughter's sensibility excited in her a tenderness still more passionate.

After the lapse of more than a year, Adrian returned from Greece.

When our exiles had first arrived, a truce was in existence between the Turks and Greeks; a truce that was as sleep to the mortal frame, signal of renewed activity on waking. With the numerous soldiers of Asia, with all of warlike stores, ships, and military engines, that wealth and power could command, the Turks at once resolved to crush an enemy, which creeping on by degrees, had from their stronghold in the Morea, acquired Thrace and Macedonia, and had led their armies even to the gates of Constantinople, while their extensive commercial relations gave every European nation an interest in their success. Greece prepared for a vigorous resistance; it rose to a man; and the women, sacrificing their costly ornaments, accoutred their sons for the war, and bade them conquer or die with the spirit of the Spartan mother. The talents and courage of Raymond were highly esteemed among the Greeks. Born at Athens, that city claimed him for her own, and by giving him the command of her peculiar division in the army, the commander-in-chief only possessed superior power. He was numbered among her citizens, his name was added to the list of Grecian heroes. His judgment, activity, and consummate bravery, justified their choice. The Earl of Windsor became a volunteer under his friend.

"It is well," said Adrian, "to prate of war in these pleasant shades, and with much ill-spent oil make a show of joy, because many thousand of our fellow-creatures leave with pain this sweet air and natal earth. I shall not be suspected of being averse to the Greek cause; I know and feel its necessity; it is beyond every other a good cause. I have defended it with my sword, and was willing that my spirit should be breathed out in its defence;

freedom is of more worth than life, and the Greeks do well to defend their privilege unto death. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Turks are men; each fibre, each limb is as feeling as our own, and every spasm, be it mental or bodily, is as truly felt in a Turk's heart or brain, as in a Greek's. The last action at which I was present was the taking of —— . The Turks resisted to the last, the garrison perished on the ramparts, and we entered by assault. Every breathing creature within the walls was massacred. Think you, amidst the shrieks of violated innocence and helpless infancy, I did not feel in every nerve the cry of a fellow being? They were men and women, the sufferers, before they were Mohammedans, and when they rise turbanless from the grave, in what except their good or evil actions will they be the better or worse than we? Two soldiers contended for a girl, whose rich dress and extreme beauty excited the brutal appetites of these wretches, who, perhaps good men among their families, were changed by the fury of the moment into incarnated evils. An old man, with a silver beard, decrepit and bald, he might be her grandfather, interposed to save her; the battle axe of one of them clove his skull. I rushed to her defence, but rage made them blind and deaf; they did not distinguish my Christian garb or heed my words — words were blunt weapons then, for while war cried 'havoc,' and murder gave fit echo, how could I —

Turn back the tide of ills, relieving wrong
With mild accost of soothing eloquence?

One of the fellows, enraged at my interference, struck me with his bayonet in the side, and I fell senseless.

"This wound will probably shorten my life, having shattered a frame, weak of itself. But I am content to die. I have learnt in Greece that one man, more or less, is of small import, while human bodies remain to fill up the thinned ranks of the soldiery; and that the identity of an individual may be overlooked, so that the muster roll contain its full numbers. All this has a different effect upon Raymond. He is able to contemplate the ideal of war, while I am sensible only to its realities. He is a soldier, a general. He can influence the blood-thirsty war-dogs, while I resist their propensities vainly.

The cause is simple. Burke has said that, ‘in all bodies those who would lead, must also, in a considerable degree, follow.’ — I cannot follow; for I do not sympathize in their dreams of massacre and glory — to follow and to lead in such a career, is the natural bent of Raymond’s mind. He is always successful, and bids fair, at the same time that he acquires high name and station for himself, to secure liberty, probably extended empire, to the Greeks.”

Perdita’s mind was not softened by this account. He, she thought, can be great and happy without me. Would that I also had a career! Would that I could freight some untried bark with all my hopes, energies, and desires, and launch it forth into the ocean of life — bound for some attainable point, with ambition or pleasure at the helm! But adverse winds detain me on shore; like Ulysses, I sit at the water’s edge and weep. But my nerveless hands can neither fell the trees, nor smooth the planks. Under the influence of these melancholy thoughts, she became more than ever in love with sorrow. Yet Adrian’s presence did some good; he at once broke through the law of silence observed concerning Raymond. At first she started from the unaccustomed sound; soon she got used to it and to love it, and she listened with avidity to the account of his achievements. Clara got rid also of her restraint; Adrian and she had been old playfellows; and now, as they walked or rode together, he yielded to her earnest entreaty, and repeated, for the hundredth time, some tale of her father’s bravery, munificence, or justice.

Each vessel in the mean time brought exhilarating tidings from Greece. The presence of a friend in its armies and councils made us enter into the details with enthusiasm; and a short letter now and then from Raymond told us how he was engrossed by the interests of his adopted country. The Greeks were strongly attached to their commercial pursuits, and would have been satisfied with their present acquisitions, had not the Turks roused them by invasion. The patriots were victorious; a spirit of conquest was instilled; and already they looked on Constantinople as their own. Raymond rose perpetually in their estimation; but one man held a superior command to him in their armies. He was conspicuous for his conduct and choice of position in a battle fought in the plains of Thrace, on the banks of the Hebrus, which was to decide the fate of Islam. The Mohammedans were defeated, and driven entirely from the country west of this river. The battle was sanguinary, the loss of the Turks apparently irreparable; the Greeks, in losing one man, forgot the nameless crowd strewed upon the bloody field, and they ceased to value themselves on a victory, which cost them — Raymond.

At the battle of Makri he had led the charge of cavalry, and pursued the fugitives even to the banks of the Hebrus. His favourite horse was found grazing by the margin of the tranquil river. It became a question whether he had fallen among the unrecognised; but no broken ornament or stained trapping betrayed his fate. It was suspected that the Turks, finding themselves possessed of so illustrious a captive, resolved to satisfy their cruelty rather than their avarice, and fearful of the interference of England, had come to the determination of concealing for ever the cold-blooded murder of the soldier they most hated and feared in the squadrons of their enemy.

Raymond was not forgotten in England. His abdication of the Protectorate had caused an unexampled sensation; and, when his magnificent and manly system was contrasted with the narrow views of succeeding politicians, the period of his elevation was referred to with sorrow. The perpetual recurrence of his name, joined to most honourable testimonials, in the Greek gazettes, kept up the interest he had excited. He seemed the favourite child of fortune, and his untimely loss eclipsed the world, and showed forth the remnant of mankind with diminished lustre. They clung with eagerness to the hope held out that he might yet be alive. Their minister at Constantinople was urged to make the necessary perquisitions, and should his existence be ascertained, to demand his release. It was to be hoped that their efforts would succeed, and that though now a prisoner, the sport of cruelty and the mark of hate, he would be rescued from danger and restored to the happiness, power, and honour which he deserved.

The effect of this intelligence upon my sister was striking. She never for a moment credited the story of his death; she resolved instantly to go to Greece. Reasoning and persuasion were thrown away upon her; she would endure no hindrance, no delay. It may be advanced for a truth, that, if argument or entreaty can turn any one from a desperate purpose, whose motive and end depends on the strength of the affections only, then it is right so to turn them, since their docility shows that neither the motive nor the end were of sufficient force to bear them through the obstacles attendant on their undertaking. If, on the contrary, they are proof against expostulation, this very steadiness is an omen of success; and it becomes the duty of those who love them, to assist in smoothing the obstructions in their path. Such sentiments actuated our little circle. Finding Perdita immoveable, we consulted as to the best means of furthering her purpose. She could not go alone to a country where she had no friends, where she might arrive only to hear the dreadful news, which must overwhelm her with grief and remorse. Adrian, whose health had always been weak, now suffered considerable aggravation of suffering from the effects of his wound. Idris could not endure to leave him in this state; nor was it right either to quit or take with us a young family for a journey of this description. I resolved at length to accompany Perdita. The separation from my Idris was painful — but necessity reconciled us to it in some degree: necessity and the hope of saving Raymond, and restoring him again to happiness and Perdita. No delay was to ensue. Two days after we came to our determination, we set out for Portsmouth, and embarked. The season was May, the weather stormless; we were promised a prosperous voyage. Cherishing the most fervent hopes, embarked on the waste ocean, we saw with delight the receding shore of Britain, and on the wings of desire outspeeded our well filled sails towards the South. The light curling waves bore us onward, and old ocean smiled at the freight of love and hope committed to his charge; it stroked gently its tempestuous plains, and the path was smoothed for us. Day and night the wind right aft, gave steady impulse to our keel — nor did rough gale, or treacherous sand, or destructive rock interpose an obstacle between my sister and the land which was to restore her to her first beloved,

Her dear heart's confessor — a heart within that heart.

CHAPTER XII

During this voyage, when on calm evenings we conversed on deck, watching the glancing of the waves and the changeful appearances of the sky, I discovered the total revolution that the disasters of Raymond had wrought in the mind of my sister. Were they the same waters of love, which, lately cold and cutting as ice, repelling as that, now loosened from their frozen chains, flowed through the regions of her soul in gushing and grateful exuberance? She did not believe that he was dead, but she knew that he was in danger, and the hope of assisting in his liberation, and the idea of soothing by tenderness the ills that he might have undergone, elevated and harmonized the late jarring element of her being. I was not so sanguine as she as to the result of our voyage. She was not sanguine, but secure; and the expectation of seeing the lover she had banished, the husband, friend, heart's companion from whom she had long been alienated, wrapt her senses in delight, her mind in placidity. It was beginning life again; it was leaving barren sands for an abode of fertile beauty; it was a harbour after a tempest, an opiate after sleepless nights, a happy waking from a terrible dream.

Little Clara accompanied us; the poor child did not well understand what was going forward. She heard that we were bound for Greece, that she would see her father, and now, for the first time, she prattled of him to her mother.

On landing at Athens we found difficulties increase upon us: nor could the storied earth or balmy atmosphere inspire us with enthusiasm or pleasure, while the fate of Raymond was in jeopardy. No man had ever excited so strong an interest in the public mind; this was apparent even among the phlegmatic English, from whom he had long been absent. The Athenians had expected their hero to return in triumph; the women had taught their children to lisp his name joined to thanksgiving; his manly beauty, his courage, his devotion to their cause, made him appear in their eyes almost as one of the ancient deities of the soil descended from their native Olympus to defend them. When they spoke of his probable death and certain captivity, tears streamed from their eyes; even as the women of

Syria sorrowed for Adonis, did the wives and mothers of Greece lament our English Raymond — Athens was a city of mourning.

All these shows of despair struck Perdita with affright. With that sanguine but confused expectation, which desire engendered while she was at a distance from reality, she had formed an image in her mind of instantaneous change, when she should set her foot on Grecian shores. She fancied that Raymond would already be free, and that her tender attentions would come to entirely obliterate even the memory of his mischance. But his fate was still uncertain; she began to fear the worst, and to feel that her soul's hope was cast on a chance that might prove a blank. The wife and lovely child of Lord Raymond became objects of intense interest in Athens. The gates of their abode were besieged, audible prayers were breathed for his restoration; all these circumstances added to the dismay and fears of Perdita.

My exertions were unremitted: after a time I left Athens, and joined the army stationed at Kishan in Thrace. Bribery, threats, and intrigue, soon discovered the secret that Raymond was alive, a prisoner, suffering the most rigorous confinement and wanton cruelties. We put in movement every impulse of policy and money to redeem him from their hands.

The impatience of my sister's disposition now returned on her, awakened by repentance, sharpened by remorse. The very beauty of the Grecian climate, during the season of spring, added torture to her sensations. The unexampled loveliness of the flower-clad earth — the genial sunshine and grateful shade — the melody of the birds — the majesty of the woods — the splendour of the marble ruins — the clear effulgence of the stars by night — the combination of all that was exciting and voluptuous in this transcending land, by inspiring a quicker spirit of life and an added sensitiveness to every articulation of her frame, only gave edge to the poignancy of her grief. Each long hour was counted, and "*He suffers*" was the burthen of all her thoughts. She abstained from food; she lay on the bare earth, and, by such mimicry of his enforced torments, endeavoured to hold communion with his distant pain. I remembered in one of her harshest moments a quotation of mine had roused her to anger and disdain. "Perdita," I had said, "some day you will discover that you have done wrong in again casting Raymond on the thorns of life. When disappointment has sullied his beauty, when a soldier's hardships have bent his manly form, and loneliness made even triumph bitter to him, then you will repent; and regret for the irreparable change

"will move
In hearts all rocky now, the late remorse of love."*

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* Byron's *Childe Harolde*, Canto IV.

The stinging "remorse of love" now pierced her heart. She accused herself of his journey to Greece — his dangers — his imprisonment. She pictured to herself the anguish of his solitude; she remembered with what eager delight he had in former days made her the partner of his joyful hopes — with what grateful affection he received her sympathy in his cares. She called to mind how often he had declared that solitude was to him the greatest of all evils, and how death itself was to him more full of fear and pain when he pictured to himself a lonely grave. "My best girl," he had said, "relieves me from these phantasies. United to her, cherished in her dear heart, never again shall I know the misery of finding myself alone. Even if I die before you, my Perdita, treasure up my ashes till yours may mingle with mine. It is a foolish sentiment for one who is not a materialist, yet, methinks, even in that dark cell, I may feel that my inanimate dust mingles with yours, and thus have a companion in decay." In her resentful mood, these expressions had been remembered with acrimony and disdain; they visited her in her softened hour, taking sleep from her eyes, all hope of rest from her uneasy mind.

Two months passed thus, when at last we obtained a promise of Raymond's release. Confinement and hardship had undermined his health; the Turks feared an accomplishment of the threats of the English government, if he died under their hands; they looked upon his recovery as impossible; they delivered him up as a dying man, willingly making over to us the rites of burial.

He came by sea from Constantinople to Athens. The wind, favourable to him, blew so strongly in shore, that we were unable, as we had at first intended, to meet him on his watery road. The watchtower of Athens was besieged by inquirers, each sail eagerly looked out for; till on the first of May the gallant frigate bore in sight, freighted with treasure more invaluable than the wealth which, piloted from Mexico, the vexed Pacific swallowed, or that was conveyed over its tranquil bosom to enrich the crown of Spain. At early dawn the vessel was discovered bearing in shore; it was conjectured that it would cast anchor about five miles from land.

The news spread through Athens, and the whole city poured out at the gate of the Piræus, down the roads, through the vineyards, the olive woods and plantations of fig-trees, towards the harbour. The noisy joy of the populace, the gaudy colours of their dress, the tumult of carriages and horses, the march of soldiers intermixed, the waving of banners and sound of martial music added to the high excitement of the scene; while round us reposed in solemn majesty the relics of ancient time. To our right the Acropolis rose high, spectatress of a thousand changes, of ancient glory, Turkish slavery, and the restoration of dear-bought liberty; tombs and cenotaphs were strewed thick around, adorned by ever renewing vegetation; the mighty dead hovered over their monuments, and beheld in our enthusiasm and congregated numbers a renewal of the scenes in which they had been the actors. Perdita and Clara rode in a close carriage; I attended them on horseback. At length we arrived at the harbour; it was agitated by the outward swell of the sea; the beach, as far could be discerned, was covered by a moving multitude, which, urged by those behind toward the sea, again rushed back as the heavy waves with sullen roar burst close to them. I applied my glass, and could discern that the frigate had already cast anchor, fearful of the danger of approaching nearer to a lee shore: a boat was lowered; with a pang I saw that Raymond was unable to descend the vessel's side; he was let down in a chair, and lay wrapt in cloaks at the bottom of the boat.

I dismounted, and called to some sailors who were rowing about the harbour to pull up, and take me into their skiff; Perdita at the same moment alighted from her carriage — she seized my arm—"Take me with you," she cried; she was trembling and pale; Clara clung to her—"You must not," I said, "the sea is rough — he will soon be here — do you not see his boat?" The little bark to which I had beckoned had now pulled up; before I could stop her, Perdita, assisted by the sailors was in it — Clara followed her mother — a loud shout echoed from the crowd as we pulled out of the inner harbour; while my sister at the prow, had caught hold of one of the men who was using a glass, asking a thousand questions, careless of the spray that broke over her, deaf, sightless to all, except the little speck that, just visible on the top of the waves, evidently neared. We approached with all the speed six rowers could give; the orderly and picturesque dress of the soldiers on the beach, the sounds of exulting music, the stirring breeze and waving flags, the unchecked exclamations of the eager crowd, whose dark looks and foreign garb were purely eastern; the sight of temple-crowned rock, the white marble of the buildings glittering in the sun, and standing in bright relief against the dark ridge of lofty mountains beyond; the near roar of the sea, the splash of oars, and dash of spray, all steeped my soul in a delirium, unfelt, unimagined in the common course of common life. Trembling, I was unable to continue to look through the glass with which I had watched the motion of the crew, when the frigate's boat had first been launched. We rapidly drew near, so that at length the number and forms of those within could be discerned; its dark sides grew big, and the splash of its oars became audible: I could distinguish the languid form of my friend, as he half raised himself at our approach.

Perdita's questions had ceased; she leaned on my arm, panting with emotions too acute for tears — our men pulled alongside the other boat. As a last effort, my sister mustered her strength, her firmness; she stepped from one boat to the other, and then with a shriek she sprang towards Raymond, knelt at his side, and gluing her lips to the hand she seized, her face shrouded by her long hair, gave herself up to tears.

Raymond had somewhat raised himself at our approach, but it was with difficulty that he exerted himself even thus much. With sunken cheek and hollow eyes, pale and gaunt, how could I recognize the beloved of Perdita? I continued awe-struck and mute — he looked smilingly on the poor girl; the smile was his. A day of sunshine falling on a dark valley, displays its before hidden characteristics; and now this smile, the same with which he first spoke love to Perdita, with which he had welcomed the protectorate, playing on his altered countenance, made me in my heart's core feel that this was Raymond.

He stretched out to me his other hand; I discerned the trace of manacles on his bared wrist. I heard my sister's sobs, and thought, happy are women who can weep, and in a passionate caress disburden the oppression of their feelings; shame and habitual restraint hold back a man. I would have given worlds to have acted as in days of boyhood, have strained him to my breast, pressed his hand to my lips, and wept over him; my swelling heart choked me; the natural current would not be checked; the big rebellious tears gathered in my eyes; I turned aside, and they dropped in the sea — they came fast and faster; — yet I could hardly be ashamed, for I saw that the rough sailors were not unmoved, and Raymond's eyes alone were dry from among our crew. He lay in that blessed calm which convalescence always induces, enjoying in secure tranquillity his liberty and re-union with her whom he adored. Perdita at length subdued her burst of passion, and rose, — she looked round for Clara; the child frightened, not recognizing her father, and neglected by us, had crept to the other end of the boat; she came at her mother's call. Perdita presented her to Raymond; her first words were: "Beloved, embrace our child." "Come hither, sweet one," said her father, "do you not know me?" She knew his voice, and cast herself in his arms with half bashful but uncontrollable emotion.

Perceiving the weakness of Raymond, I was afraid of ill consequences from the pressure of the crowd on his landing. But they were awed as I had been, at the change of his appearance. The music died away, the shouts abruptly ended; the soldiers had cleared a space in which a carriage was drawn up. He was placed in it; Perdita and Clara entered with him, and his escort closed round it; a hollow murmur, akin to the roaring of the near waves, went through the multitude; they fell back as the carriage advanced, and fearful of injuring him they had come to welcome, by loud testimonies of joy, they satisfied themselves with bending in a low salaam as the carriage passed; it went slowly along the road of the Piraeus; passed by antique temple and heroic tomb, beneath the craggy rock of the citadel. The sound of the waves was left behind; that of the multitude continued at intervals, suppressed and hoarse; and though, in the city, the houses, churches, and public buildings were decorated with tapestry and banners — though the soldiery lined the streets, and the inhabitants in thousands were assembled to give him hail, the same solemn silence prevailed, the soldiery presented arms, the banners vailed, many a white hand waved a streamer, and vainly sought to discern the hero in the vehicle, which, closed and encompassed by the city guards, drew him to the palace allotted for his abode.

Raymond was weak and exhausted, yet the interest he perceived to be excited on his account, filled him with proud pleasure. He was nearly killed with kindness. It is true, the populace retained themselves; but there arose a perpetual hum and bustle from the throng round the palace, which added to the noise of fireworks, the frequent explosion of arms, the tramp to and fro of horsemen and carriages, to which effervescence he was the focus, retarded his recovery. So we retired awhile to Eleusis, and here rest and tender care added each day to the strength of our invalid. The zealous attention of Perdita claimed the first rank in the causes which induced his rapid recovery; but the second was surely the delight he felt in the affection and good will of the Greeks. We are said to love much those whom we greatly benefit. Raymond had fought and conquered for the Athenians; he had suffered, on their account, peril, imprisonment, and hardship; their gratitude affected him deeply, and he inly vowed to unite his fate for ever to that of a people so enthusiastically devoted to him.

Social feeling and sympathy constituted a marked feature in my disposition. In early youth, the living drama acted around me, drew me heart and soul into its vortex. I was now conscious of a change. I loved, I hoped, I enjoyed; but there was something besides this. I was inquisitive as to the internal principles of action of those around me: anxious to read their thoughts justly, and for ever occupied in divining their inmost mind. All events, at the same time that they deeply interested me, arranged themselves in pictures before me. I gave the right place to every personage in the group, the just balance to every sentiment. This undercurrent of thought, often soothed me amidst distress, and even agony. It gave ideality to that, from which, taken in naked truth, the soul would have revolted: it bestowed pictorial colours on misery and disease, and not unfrequently relieved me from despair in deplorable changes. This faculty, or instinct, was now roused. I watched the re-awakened devotion of my sister; Clara’s timid, but concentrated admiration of her father, and Raymond’s appetite for renown, and sensitiveness to the demonstrations of affection of the Athenians. Attentively perusing this animated volume, I was the less surprised at the tale I read on the new-turned page.

The Turkish army were at this time besieging Rodosto; and the Greeks, hastening their preparations, and sending each day reinforcements, were on the eve of forcing the enemy to battle. Each people looked on the coming struggle as that which would be to a great degree decisive; as, in case of victory, the next step would be the siege of Constantinople by the Greeks. Raymond, being somewhat recovered, prepared to re-assume his command in the army.

Perdita did not oppose herself to his determination. She only stipulated to be permitted to accompany him. She had set down no rule of conduct for herself; but for her life she could not have opposed his slightest wish, or do other than acquiesce cheerfully in all his projects. One word, in truth, had alarmed her more than battles or sieges, during which she trusted Raymond's high command would exempt him from danger. That word, as yet it was not more to her, was PLAGUE. This enemy to the human race had begun early in June to raise its serpent-head on the shores of the Nile; parts of Asia, not usually subject to this evil, were infected. It was in Constantinople; but as each year that city experienced a like visitation, small attention was paid to those accounts which declared more people to have died there already, than usually made up the accustomed prey of the whole of the hotter months. However it might be, neither plague nor war could prevent Perdita from following her lord, or induce her to utter one objection to the plans which he proposed. To be near him, to be loved by him, to feel him again her own, was the limit of her desires. The object of her life was to do him pleasure: it had been so before, but with a difference. In past times, without thought or foresight she had made him happy, being so herself, and in any question of choice, consulted her own wishes, as being one with his. Now she sedulously put herself out of the question, sacrificing even her anxiety for his health and welfare to her resolve not to oppose any of his desires. Love of the Greek people, appetite for glory, and hatred of the barbarian government under which he had suffered even to the approach of death, stimulated him. He wished to repay the kindness of the Athenians, to keep alive the splendid associations connected with his name, and to eradicate from Europe a power which, while every other nation advanced in civilization, stood still, a monument of antique barbarism. Having effected the reunion of Raymond and Perdita, I was eager to return to England; but his earnest request, added to awakening curiosity, and an indefinable anxiety to behold the catastrophe, now apparently at hand, in the long drawn history of Grecian and Turkish warfare, induced me to consent to prolong until the autumn, the period of my residence in Greece.

As soon as the health of Raymond was sufficiently re-established, he prepared to join the Grecian camp, near Kishan, a town of some importance, situated to the east of the Hebrus; in which Perdita and Clara were to remain until the event of the expected battle. We quitted Athens on the 2nd of June. Raymond had recovered from the gaunt and pallid looks of fever. If I no longer saw the fresh glow of youth on his matured countenance, if care had besieged his brow,

"And dug deep trenches in his beauty's field,"*

* Shakepeare's *Sonnets*.

if his hair, slightly mingled with grey, and his look, considerate even in its eagerness, gave signs of added years and past sufferings, yet there was something irresistibly affecting in the sight of one, lately snatched from the grave, renewing his career, untamed by sickness or disaster. The Athenians saw in him, not as heretofore, the heroic boy or desperate man, who was ready to die for them; but the prudent commander, who for their sakes was careful of his life, and could make his own warrior-propensities second to the scheme of conduct policy might point out.

All Athens accompanied us for several miles. When he had landed a month ago, the noisy populace had been hushed by sorrow and fear; but this was a festival day to all. The air resounded with their shouts; their picturesque costume, and the gay colours of which it was composed, flaunted in the sunshine; their eager gestures and rapid utterance accorded with their wild appearance. Raymond was the theme of every tongue, the hope of each wife, mother or betrothed bride, whose husband, child, or lover, making a part of the Greek army, were to be conducted to victory by him.

Notwithstanding the hazardous object of our journey, it was full of romantic interest, as we passed through the valleys, and over the hills, of this divine country. Raymond was inspirited by the intense sensations of recovered health; he felt that in being general of the Athenians, he filled a post worthy of his ambition; and, in his hope of the conquest of Constantinople, he counted on an event which would be as a landmark in the waste of ages, an exploit unequalled in the annals of man; when a city of grand historic association, the beauty of whose site was the wonder of the world, which for many hundred years had been the strong hold of the Moslems, should be rescued from slavery and barbarism, and restored to a people illustrious for genius, civilization, and a spirit of liberty. Perdita rested on his restored society, on his love, his hopes and fame, even as a Sybarite on a luxurious couch; every thought was transport, each emotion bathed as it were in a congenial and balmy element.

We arrived at Kishan on the 7th of July. The weather during our journey had been serene. Each day, before dawn, we left our night's encampment, and watched the shadows as they retreated from hill and valley, and the golden splendour of the sun's approach. The accompanying soldiers received, with national vivacity, enthusiastic pleasure from the sight of beautiful nature. The uprising of the star of day was hailed by triumphant strains, while the birds, heard by snatches, filled up the intervals of the music. At noon, we pitched our tents in some shady valley, or embowering wood among the mountains, while a stream prattling over pebbles induced grateful sleep. Our evening march, more calm, was yet more delightful than the morning restlessness of spirit. If the band played, involuntarily they chose airs of moderated passion; the farewell of love, or lament at absence, was followed and closed by some solemn hymn, which harmonized with the tranquil loveliness of evening, and elevated the soul to grand and religious thought. Often all sounds were suspended, that we might listen to the nightingale, while the fire-flies danced in bright measure, and the soft cooing of the aziolo spoke of fair weather to the travellers. Did we pass a valley? Soft shades encompassed us, and rocks tinged with beauteous hues. If we traversed a mountain, Greece, a living map, was spread beneath, her renowned pinnacles cleaving the ether; her rivers threading in silver line the fertile land. Afraid almost to breathe, we English travellers surveyed with ecstasy this splendid landscape, so different from the sober hues and melancholy graces of our native scenery. When we quitted Macedonia, the fertile but low plains of Thrace afforded fewer beauties; yet our journey continued to be interesting. An advanced guard gave information of our approach, and the country people were quickly in motion to do honour to Lord Raymond. The villages were decorated by triumphal arches of greenery by day, and lamps by night; tapestry waved from the windows, the ground was strewed with flowers, and the name of Raymond, joined to that of Greece, was echoed in the *Evive* of the peasant crowd.

When we arrived at Kishan, we learnt, that on hearing of the advance of Lord Raymond and his detachment, the Turkish army had retreated from Rodosto; but meeting with a reinforcement, they had re-trod their steps. In the meantime, Argyropylo, the Greek commander-in-chief, had advanced, so as to be between the Turks and Rodosto; a battle, it was said, was inevitable. Perdita and her child were to remain at Kishan. Raymond asked me, if I would not continue with them. "Now by the fells of Cumberland," I cried, "by all of the vagabond and poacher that appertains to me, I will stand at your side, draw my sword in the Greek cause, and be hailed as a victor along with you!"

All the plain, from Kishan to Rodosto, a distance of sixteen leagues, was alive with troops, or with the camp-followers, all in motion at the approach of a battle. The small garrisons were drawn from the various towns and fortresses, and went to swell the main army. We met baggage waggons, and many females of high and low rank returning to Fairy or Kishan, there to wait the issue of the expected day. When we arrived at Rodosto, we found that the field had been taken, and the scheme of the battle arranged. The sound of firing, early on the following morning, informed us that advanced posts of the armies were engaged. Regiment after regiment advanced, their colours flying and bands playing. They planted the cannon on the tumuli, sole elevations in this level country, and formed themselves into column and hollow square; while the pioneers threw up small mounds for their protection.

These then were the preparations for a battle, nay, the battle itself; far different from any thing the imagination had pictured. We read of centre and wing in Greek and Roman history; we fancy a spot, plain as a table, and soldiers small as chessmen; and drawn forth, so that the most ignorant of the game can discover science and order in the disposition of the forces. When I came to the reality, and saw regiments file off to the left far out of sight, fields intervening between the battalions, but a few troops sufficiently near me to observe their motions, I gave up all idea of understanding, even of seeing a battle, but attaching myself to Raymond attended with intense interest to his actions. He showed himself collected, gallant and imperial; his commands were prompt, his intuition of the events of the day to me miraculous. In the mean time the cannon roared; the music lifted up its enlivening voice at intervals; and we on the highest of the mounds I mentioned, too far off to observe the fallen sheaves which death gathered into his storehouse, beheld the regiments, now lost in smoke, now banners and staves peering above the cloud, while shout and clamour drowned every sound.

Early in the day, Argyropylo was wounded dangerously, and Raymond assumed the command of the whole army. He made few remarks, till, on observing through his glass the sequel of an order he had given, his face, clouded for awhile with doubt, became radiant. “The day is ours,” he cried, “the Turks fly from the bayonet.” And then swiftly he dispatched his aides-de-camp to command the horse to fall on the routed enemy. The defeat became total; the cannon ceased to roar; the infantry rallied, and horse pursued the flying Turks along the dreary plain; the staff of Raymond was dispersed in various directions, to make observations, and bear commands. Even I was dispatched to a distant part of the field.

The ground on which the battle was fought, was a level plain — so level, that from the tumuli you saw the waving line of mountains on the wide-stretched horizon; yet the intervening space was unvaried by the least irregularity, save such undulations as resembled the waves of the sea. The whole of this part of Thrace had been so long a scene of contest, that it had remained uncultivated, and presented a dreary, barren appearance. The order I had received, was to make an observation of the direction which a detachment of the enemy might have taken, from a northern tumulus; the whole Turkish army, followed by the Greek, had poured eastward; none but the dead remained in the direction of my side. From the top of the mound, I looked far round — all was silent and deserted.

The last beams of the nearly sunken sun shot up from behind the far summit of Mount Athos; the sea of Marmora still glittered beneath its rays, while the Asiatic coast beyond was half hid in a haze of low cloud. Many a casque, and bayonet, and sword, fallen from unnerved arms, reflected the departing ray; they lay scattered far and near. From the east, a band of ravens, old inhabitants of the Turkish cemeteries, came sailing along towards their harvest; the sun disappeared. This hour, melancholy yet sweet, has always seemed to me the time when we are most naturally led to commune with higher powers; our mortal sternness departs, and gentle complacency invests the soul. But now, in the midst of the dying and the dead, how could a thought of heaven or a sensation of tranquillity possess one of the murderers? During the busy day, my mind had yielded itself a willing slave to the state of things presented to it by its fellow-beings; historical association, hatred of the foe, and military enthusiasm had held dominion over me. Now, I looked on the evening star, as softly and calmly it hung pendulous in the orange hues of sunset. I turned to the corse-strewn earth; and felt ashamed of my species. So perhaps were the placid skies; for they quickly veiled themselves in mist, and in this change assisted the swift disappearance of twilight usual in the south; heavy masses of cloud floated up from the south east, and red and turbid lightning shot from their dark edges; the rushing wind disturbed the garments of the dead, and was chilled as it passed over their icy forms. Darkness gathered round; the objects about me became indistinct, I descended from my station, and with difficulty guided my horse, so as to avoid the slain.

Suddenly I heard a piercing shriek; a form seemed to rise from the earth; it flew swiftly towards me, sinking to the ground again as it drew near. All this passed so suddenly, that I with difficulty reined in my horse, so that it should not trample on the prostrate being. The dress of this person was that of a soldier, but the bared neck and arms, and the continued shrieks discovered a female thus disguised. I dismounted to her aid, while she, with heavy groans, and her hand placed on her side, resisted my attempt to lead her on. In the hurry of the moment I forgot that I was in Greece, and in my native accents endeavoured to soothe the sufferer. With wild and terrific exclamations did the lost, dying Evadne (for it was she) recognize the language of her lover; pain and fever from her wound had deranged her intellects, while her piteous cries and feeble efforts to escape, penetrated me with compassion. In wild delirium she called upon the name of Raymond; she exclaimed that I was keeping him from her, while the Turks with fearful instruments of torture were about to take his life. Then again she sadly lamented her hard fate; that a woman, with a woman's heart and sensibility, should be driven by hopeless love and vacant hopes to take up the trade of arms, and suffer beyond the endurance of man privation, labour, and pain — the while her dry, hot hand pressed mine, and her brow and lips burned with consuming fire.

As her strength grew less, I lifted her from the ground; her emaciated form hung over my arm, her sunken cheek rested on my breast; in a sepulchral voice she murmured:—”This is the end of love! — Yet not the end!” — and frenzy lent her strength as she cast her arm up to heaven: “there is the end! there we meet again. Many living deaths have I borne for thee, O Raymond, and now I expire, thy victim! — By my death I purchase thee — lo! the instruments of war, fire, the plague are my servitors. I dared, I conquered them all, till now! I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me — Fire, and war, and plague, unite for thy destruction — O my Raymond, there is no safety for thee!”

With a heavy heart I listened to the changes of her delirium; I made her a bed of cloaks; her violence decreased and a clammy dew stood on her brow as the paleness of death succeeded to the crimson of fever, I placed her on the cloaks. She continued to rave of her speedy meeting with her beloved in the grave, of his death nigh at hand; sometimes she solemnly declared that he was summoned; sometimes she bewailed his hard destiny. Her voice grew feebler, her speech interrupted; a few convulsive movements, and her muscles relaxed, the limbs fell, no more to be sustained, one deep sigh, and life was gone.

I bore her from the near neighbourhood of the dead; wrapt in cloaks, I placed her beneath a tree. Once more I looked on her altered face; the last time I saw her she was eighteen; beautiful as poet’s vision, splendid as a Sultana of the East — Twelve years had past; twelve years of change, sorrow and hardship; her brilliant complexion had become worn and dark, her limbs had lost the roundness of youth and womanhood; her eyes had sunk deep,

Crushed and o’erworn,
The hours had drained her blood, and filled her brow
With lines and wrinkles.

With shuddering horror I veiled this monument of human passion and human misery; I heaped over her all of flags and heavy accoutrements I could find, to guard her from birds and beasts of prey, until I could bestow on her a fitting grave. Sadly and slowly I stemmed my course from among the heaps of slain, and, guided by the twinkling lights of the town, at length reached Rodosto.

CHAPTER XIII

On my arrival, I found that an order had already gone forth for the army to proceed immediately towards Constantinople; and the troops which had suffered least in the battle were already on their way. The town was full of tumult. The wound, and consequent inability of Argyropylo, caused Raymond to be the first in command. He rode through the town, visiting the wounded, and giving such orders as were necessary for the siege he meditated. Early in the morning the whole army was in motion. In the hurry I could hardly find an opportunity to bestow the last offices on Evadne. Attended only by my servant, I dug a deep grave for her at the foot of the tree, and without disturbing her warrior shroud, I placed her in it, heaping stones upon the grave. The dazzling sun and glare of daylight, deprived the scene of solemnity; from Evadne's low tomb, I joined Raymond and his staff, now on their way to the Golden City.

Constantinople was invested, trenches dug, and advances made. The whole Greek fleet blockaded it by sea; on land from the river Kyat Kbanah, near the Sweet Waters, to the Tower of Marmora, on the shores of the Propontis, along the whole line of the ancient walls, the trenches of the siege were drawn. We already possessed Pera; the Golden Horn itself, the city, bastioned by the sea, and the ivy-mantled walls of the Greek emperors was all of Europe that the Mohammedans could call theirs. Our army looked on her as certain prey. They counted the garrison; it was impossible that it should be relieved; each sally was a victory; for, even when the Turks were triumphant, the loss of men they sustained was an irreparable injury.

I rode one morning with Raymond to the lofty mound, not far from the Top Kapou, (Cannon-gate), on which Mahmoud planted his standard, and first saw the city. Still the same lofty domes and minarets towered above the verdurous walls, where Constantine had died, and the Turk had entered the city. The plain around was interspersed with cemeteries, Turk, Greek, and Armenian, with their growth of cypress trees; and other woods of more cheerful aspect, diversified the scene. Among them the Greek army was encamped, and their squadrons moved to and fro — now in regular march, now in swift career.

Raymond's eyes were fixed on the city. "I have counted the hours of her life," said he; "one month, and she falls. Remain with me till then; wait till you see the cross on St. Sophia; and then return to your peaceful glades."

"You then," I asked, "still remain in Greece?"

"Assuredly," replied Raymond. "Yet Lionel, when I say this, believe me I look back with regret to our tranquil life at Windsor. I am but half a soldier; I love the renown, but not the trade of war. Before the battle of Rodosto I was full of hope and spirit; to conquer there, and afterwards to take Constantinople, was the hope, the bourne, the fulfilment of my ambition. This enthusiasm is now spent, I know not why; I seem to myself to be entering a darksome gulf; the ardent spirit of the army is irksome to me, the rapture of triumph null."

He paused, and was lost in thought. His serious mien recalled, by some association, the half-forgotten Evadne to my mind, and I seized this opportunity to make inquiries from him concerning her strange lot. I asked him, if he had ever seen among the troops any one resembling her; if since he had returned to Greece he had heard of her?

He started at her name, — he looked uneasily on me. "Even so," he cried, "I knew you would speak of her. Long, long I had forgotten her. Since our encampment here, she daily, hourly visits my thoughts. When I am addressed, her name is the sound I expect: in every communication, I imagine that she will form a part. At length you have broken the spell; tell me what you know of her."

I related my meeting with her; the story of her death was told and re-told. With painful earnestness he questioned me concerning her prophecies with regard to him. I treated them as the ravings of a maniac. "No, no," he said, "do not deceive yourself, — me you cannot. She has said nothing but what I knew before — though this is confirmation. Fire, the sword, and plague! They may all be found in yonder city; on my head alone may they fall!"

From this day Raymond's melancholy increased. He secluded himself as much as the duties of his station permitted. When in company, sadness would in spite of every effort steal over his features, and he sat absent and mute among the busy crowd that thronged about him. Perdita rejoined him, and before her he forced himself to appear cheerful, for she, even as a mirror, changed as he changed, and if he were silent and anxious, she solicitously inquired concerning, and endeavoured to remove the cause of his seriousness. She resided at the palace of Sweet Waters, a summer seraglio of the Sultan; the beauty of the surrounding scenery, undefiled by war, and the freshness of the river, made this spot doubly delightful. Raymond felt no relief, received no pleasure from any show of heaven or earth. He often left Perdita, to wander in the grounds alone; or in a light shallop he floated idly on the pure waters, musing deeply. Sometimes I joined him; at such times his countenance was invariably solemn, his air dejected. He seemed relieved on seeing me, and would talk with some degree of interest on the affairs of the day. There was evidently something behind all this; yet, when he appeared about to speak of that which was nearest his heart, he would abruptly turn away, and with a sigh endeavour to deliver the painful idea to the winds.

It had often occurred, that, when, as I said, Raymond quitted Perdita's drawing-room, Clara came up to me, and gently drawing me aside, said, "Papa is gone; shall we go to him? I dare say he will be glad to see you." And, as accident permitted, I complied with or refused her request. One evening a numerous assembly of Greek chieftains were gathered together in the palace. The intriguing Palli, the accomplished Karazza, the warlike Ypsilanti, were among the principal. They talked of the events of the day; the skirmish at noon; the diminished numbers of the Infidels; their defeat and flight: they contemplated, after a short interval of time, the capture of the Golden City. They endeavoured to picture forth what would then happen, and spoke in lofty terms of the prosperity of Greece, when Constantinople should become its capital. The conversation then reverted to Asiatic intelligence, and the ravages the plague made in its chief cities; conjectures were hazarded as to the progress that disease might have made in the besieged city.

Raymond had joined in the former part of the discussion. In lively terms he demonstrated the extremities to which Constantinople was reduced; the wasted and haggard, though ferocious appearance of the troops; famine and pestilence was at work for them, he observed, and the infidels would soon be obliged to take refuge in their only hope — submission. Suddenly in the midst of his harangue he broke off, as if stung by some painful thought; he rose uneasily, and I perceived him at length quit the hall, and through the long corridor seek the open air. He did not return; and soon Clara crept round to me, making the accustomed invitation. I consented to her request, and taking her little hand, followed Raymond. We found him just about to embark in his boat, and he readily agreed to receive us as companions. After the heats of the day, the cooling land-breeze ruffled the river, and filled our little sail. The city looked dark to the south, while numerous lights along the near shores, and the beautiful aspect of the banks reposing in placid night, the waters keenly reflecting the heavenly lights, gave to this beauteous river a dower of loveliness that might have characterised a retreat in Paradise. Our single boatman attended to the sail; Raymond steered; Clara sat at his feet, clasping his knees with her arms, and laying her head on them. Raymond began the conversation somewhat abruptly.

"This, my friend, is probably the last time we shall have an opportunity of conversing freely; my plans are now in full operation, and my time will become more and more occupied. Besides, I wish at once to tell you my wishes and expectations, and then never again to revert to so painful a subject. First, I must thank you, Lionel, for having remained here at my request. Vanity first prompted me to ask you: vanity, I call it; yet even in this I see the hand of fate — your presence will soon be necessary; you will become the last resource of Perdita, her protector and consoler. You will take her back to Windsor." —

"Not without you," I said. "You do not mean to separate again?"

"Do not deceive yourself," replied Raymond, "the separation at hand is one over which I have no control; most near at hand is it; the days are already counted. May I trust you? For many days I have longed to disclose the mysterious presentiments that weigh on me, although I fear that you will ridicule them. Yet do not, my gentle friend; for, all childish and unwise as they are, they have become a part of me, and I dare not expect to shake them off.

"Yet how can I expect you to sympathize with me? You are of this world; I am not. You hold forth your hand; it is even as a part of yourself; and you do not yet divide the feeling of identity from the mortal form that shapes forth Lionel. How then can you understand me? Earth is to me a tomb, the firmament a vault, shrouding mere corruption. Time is no more, for I have stepped within the threshold of eternity; each man I meet appears a corse, which will soon be deserted of its animating spark, on the eve of decay and corruption.

Cada piedra un piramide levanta,
y cada flor costruye un monumento,
cada edificio es un sepulcro altivo,
cada soldado un esqueleto vivo."*

*Calderon de la Barca.

His accent was mournful, — he sighed deeply. "A few months ago," he continued, "I was thought to be dying; but life was strong within me. My affections were human; hope and love were the day-stars of my life. Now — they dream that the brows of the conqueror of the infidel faith are about to be encircled by triumphant laurel; they talk of honourable reward, of title, power, and wealth — all I ask of Greece is a grave. Let them raise a mound above my lifeless body, which may stand even when the dome of St. Sophia has fallen.

"Wherefore do I feel thus? At Rodosto I was full of hope; but when first I saw Constantinople, that feeling, with every other joyful one, departed. The last words of Evadne were the seal upon the warrant of my death. Yet I do not pretend to account for my mood by any particular event. All I can say is, that it is so. The plague I am told is in Constantinople, perhaps I have imbibed its effluvia — perhaps disease is the real cause of my prognostications. It matters little why or wherefore I am affected, no power can avert the stroke, and the shadow of Fate's uplifted hand already darkens me.

"To you, Lionel, I entrust your sister and her child. Never mention to her the fatal name of Evadne. She would doubly sorrow over the strange link that enchains me to her, making my spirit obey her dying voice, following her, as it is about to do, to the unknown country."

I listened to him with wonder; but that his sad demeanour and solemn utterance assured me of the truth and intensity of his feelings, I should with light derision have attempted to dissipate his fears. Whatever I was about to reply, was interrupted by the powerful emotions of Clara. Raymond had spoken, thoughtless of her presence, and she, poor child, heard with terror and faith the prophecy of his death. Her father was moved by her violent grief; he took her in his arms and soothed her, but his very soothings were solemn and fearful. “Weep not, sweet child,” said he, “the coming death of one you have hardly known. I may die, but in death I can never forget or desert my own Clara. In after sorrow or joy, believe that you father’s spirit is near, to save or sympathize with you. Be proud of me, and cherish your infant remembrance of me. Thus, sweetest, I shall not appear to die. One thing you must promise, — not to speak to any one but your uncle, of the conversation you have just overheard. When I am gone, you will console your mother, and tell her that death was only bitter because it divided me from her; that my last thoughts will be spent on her. But while I live, promise not to betray me; promise, my child.”

With faltering accents Clara promised, while she still clung to her father in a transport of sorrow. Soon we returned to shore, and I endeavoured to obviate the impression made on the child’s mind, by treating Raymond’s fears lightly. We heard no more of them; for, as he had said, the siege, now drawing to a conclusion, became paramount in interest, engaging all his time and attention.

The empire of the Mohammedans in Europe was at its close. The Greek fleet blockading every port of Stamboul, prevented the arrival of succour from Asia; all egress on the side towards land had become impracticable, except to such desperate sallies, as reduced the numbers of the enemy without making any impression on our lines. The garrison was now so much diminished, that it was evident that the city could easily have been carried by storm; but both humanity and policy dictated a slower mode of proceeding. We could hardly doubt that, if pursued to the utmost, its palaces, its temples and store of wealth would be destroyed in the fury of contending triumph and defeat. Already the defenceless citizens had suffered through the barbarity of the Janisaries; and, in time of storm, tumult and massacre, beauty, infancy and decrepitude, would have alike been sacrificed to the brutal ferocity of the soldiers. Famine and blockade were certain means of conquest; and on these we founded our hopes of victory.

Each day the soldiers of the garrison assaulted our advanced posts, and impeded the accomplishment of our works. Fire-boats were launched from the various ports, while our troops sometimes recoiled from the devoted courage of men who did not seek to live, but to sell their lives dearly. These contests were aggravated by the season: they took place during summer, when the southern Asiatic wind came laden with intolerable heat, when the streams were dried up in their shallow beds, and the vast basin of the sea appeared to glow under the unmitigated rays of the solstitial sun. Nor did night refresh the earth. Dew was denied; herbage and flowers there were none; the very trees drooped; and summer assumed the blighted appearance of winter, as it went forth in silence and flame to abridge the means of sustenance to man. In vain did the eye strive to find the wreck of some northern cloud in the stainless empyrean, which might bring hope of change and moisture to the oppressive and windless atmosphere. All was serene, burning, annihilating. We the besiegers were in the comparison little affected by these evils. The woods around afforded us shade, — the river secured to us a constant supply of water; nay, detachments were employed in furnishing the army with ice, which had been laid up on Haemus, and Athos, and the mountains of Macedonia, while cooling fruits and wholesome food renovated the strength of the labourers, and made us bear with less impatience the weight of the unrefreshing air. But in the city things wore a different face. The sun's rays were refracted from the pavement and buildings — the stoppage of the public fountains — the bad quality of the food, and scarcity even of that, produced a state of suffering, which was aggravated by the scourge of disease; while the garrison arrogated every superfluity to themselves, adding by waste and riot to the necessary evils of the time. Still they would not capitulate.

Suddenly the system of warfare was changed. We experienced no more assaults; and by night and day we continued our labours unimpeded. Stranger still, when the troops advanced near the city, the walls were vacant, and no cannon was pointed against the intruders. When these circumstances were reported to Raymond, he caused minute observations to be made as to what was doing within the walls, and when his scouts returned, reporting only the continued silence and desolation of the city, he commanded the army to be drawn out before the gates. No one appeared on the walls; the very portals, though locked and barred, seemed unguarded; above, the many domes and glittering crescents pierced heaven; while the old walls, survivors of ages, with ivy-crowned tower and weed-tangled buttress, stood as rocks in an uninhabited waste. From within the city neither shout nor cry, nor aught except the casual howling of a dog, broke the noon-day stillness. Even our soldiers were awed to silence; the music paused; the clang of arms was hushed. Each man asked his fellow in whispers, the meaning of this sudden peace; while Raymond from an height endeavoured, by means of glasses, to discover and observe the stratagem of the enemy. No form could be discerned on the terraces of the houses; in the higher parts of the town no moving shadow bespoke the presence of any living being: the very trees waved not, and mocked the stability of architecture with like immovability.

The tramp of horses, distinctly heard in the silence, was at length discerned. It was a troop sent by Karazza, the Admiral; they bore dispatches to the Lord General. The contents of these papers were important. The night before, the watch, on board one of the smaller vessels anchored near the seraglio wall, was roused by a slight splashing as of muffled oars; the alarm was given: twelve small boats, each containing three Janisaries, were descried endeavouring to make their way through the fleet to the opposite shore of Scutari. When they found themselves discovered they discharged their muskets, and some came to the front to cover the others, whose crews, exerting all their strength, endeavoured to escape with their light barks from among the dark hulls that environed them. They were in the end all sunk, and, with the exception of two or three prisoners, the crews drowned. Little could be got from the survivors; but their cautious answers caused it to be surmised that several expeditions had preceded this last, and that several Turks of rank and importance had been conveyed to Asia. The men disdainfully repelled the idea of having deserted the defence of their city; and one, the youngest among them, in answer to the taunt of a sailor, exclaimed, “Take it, Christian dogs! take the palaces, the gardens, the mosques, the abode of our fathers — take plague with them; pestilence is the enemy we fly; if she be your friend, hug her to your bosoms. The curse of Allah is on Stamboul, share ye her fate.”

Such was the account sent by Karazza to Raymond: but a tale full of monstrous exaggerations, though founded on this, was spread by the accompanying troop among our soldiers. A murmur arose, the city was the prey of pestilence; already had a mighty power subjugated the inhabitants; Death had become lord of Constantinople.

I have heard a picture described, wherein all the inhabitants of earth were drawn out in fear to stand the encounter of Death. The feeble and decrepit fled; the warriors retreated, though they threatened even in flight. Wolves and lions, and various monsters of the desert roared against him; while the grim Unreality hovered shaking his spectral dart, a solitary but invincible assailant. Even so was it with the army of Greece. I am convinced, that had the myriad troops of Asia come from over the Propontis, and stood defenders of the Golden City, each and every Greek would have marched against the overwhelming numbers, and have devoted himself with patriotic fury for his country. But here no hedge of bayonets opposed itself, no death-dealing artillery, no formidable array of brave soldiers — the unguarded walls afforded easy entrance — the vacant palaces luxurious dwellings; but above the dome of St. Sophia the superstitious Greek saw Pestilence, and shrunk in trepidation from her influence.

Raymond was actuated by far other feelings. He descended the hill with a face beaming with triumph, and pointing with his sword to the gates, commanded his troops to — down with those barricades — the only obstacles now to completest victory. The soldiers answered his cheerful words with aghast and awe-struck looks; instinctively they drew back, and Raymond rode in the front of the lines:—”By my sword I swear,” he cried, “that no ambush or stratagem endangers you. The enemy is already vanquished; the pleasant places, the noble dwellings and spoil of the city are already yours; force the gate; enter and possess the seats of your ancestors, your own inheritance!”

An universal shudder and fearful whispering passed through the lines; not a soldier moved. “Cowards!” exclaimed their general, exasperated, “give me an hatchet! I alone will enter! I will plant your standard; and when you see it wave from yon highest minaret, you may gain courage, and rally round it!”

One of the officers now came forward: “General,” he said, “we neither fear the courage, nor arms, the open attack, nor secret ambush of the Moslems. We are ready to expose our breasts, exposed ten thousand times before, to the balls and scimitars of the infidels, and to fall gloriously for Greece. But we will not die in heaps, like dogs poisoned in summer-time, by the pestilential air of that city — we dare not go against the Plague!”

A multitude of men are feeble and inert, without a voice, a leader; give them that, and they regain the strength belonging to their numbers. Shouts from a thousand voices now rent the air — the cry of applause became universal. Raymond saw the danger; he was willing to save his troops from the crime of disobedience; for he knew, that contention once begun between the commander and his army, each act and word added to the weakness of the former, and bestowed power on the latter. He gave orders for the retreat to be sounded, and the regiments repaired in good order to the camp.

I hastened to carry the intelligence of these strange proceedings to Perdita; and we were soon joined by Raymond. He looked gloomy and perturbed. My sister was struck by my narrative: “How beyond the imagination of man,” she exclaimed, “are the decrees of heaven, wondrous and inexplicable!”

“Foolish girl,” cried Raymond angrily, “are you like my valiant soldiers, panic-struck? What is there inexplicable, pray, tell me, in so very natural an occurrence? Does not the plague rage each year in Stamboul? What wonder, that this year, when as we are told, its virulence is unexampled in Asia, that it should have occasioned double havoc in that city? What wonder then, in time of siege, want, extreme heat, and drought, that it should make unaccustomed ravages? Less wonder far is it, that the garrison, despairing of being able to hold out longer, should take advantage of the negligence of our fleet to escape at once from siege and capture. It is not pestilence — by the God that lives! it is not either plague or impending danger that makes us, like birds in harvest-time, terrified by a scarecrow, abstain from the ready prey — it is base superstition — And thus the aim of the valiant is made the shuttlecock of fools; the worthy ambition of the high-souled, the plaything of these tamed hares! But yet Stamboul shall be ours! By my past labours, by torture and imprisonment suffered for them, by my victories, by my sword, I swear — by my hopes of fame, by my former deserts now awaiting their reward, I deeply vow, with these hands to plant the cross on yonder mosque!”

“Dearest Raymond!” interrupted Perdita, in a supplicating accent.

He had been walking to and fro in the marble hall of the seraglio; his very lips were pale with rage, while, quivering, they shaped his angry words — his eyes shot fire — his gestures seemed restrained by their very vehemence. “Perdita,” he continued, impatiently, “I know what you would say; I know that you love me, that you are good and gentle; but this is no woman’s work — nor can a female heart guess at the hurricane which tears me!”

He seemed half afraid of his own violence, and suddenly quitted the hall: a look from Perdita showed me her distress, and I followed him. He was pacing the garden: his passions were in a state of inconceivable turbulence. "Am I for ever," he cried, "to be the sport of fortune! Must man, the heaven-climber, be for ever the victim of the crawling reptiles of his species! Were I as you, Lionel, looking forward to many years of life, to a succession of love-enlightened days, to refined enjoyments and fresh-springing hopes, I might yield, and breaking my General's staff, seek repose in the glades of Windsor. But I am about to die! — nay, interrupt me not — soon I shall die. From the many-peopled earth, from the sympathies of man, from the loved resorts of my youth, from the kindness of my friends, from the affection of my only beloved Perdita, I am about to be removed. Such is the will of fate! Such the decree of the High Ruler from whom there is no appeal: to whom I submit. But to lose all — to lose with life and love, glory also! It shall not be!

"I, and in a few brief years, all you, — this panic-struck army, and all the population of fair Greece, will no longer be. But other generations will arise, and ever and for ever will continue, to be made happier by our present acts, to be glorified by our valour. The prayer of my youth was to be one among those who render the pages of earth's history splendid; who exalt the race of man, and make this little globe a dwelling of the mighty. Alas, for Raymond! the prayer of his youth is wasted — the hopes of his manhood are null!

"From my dungeon in yonder city I cried, soon I will be thy lord! When Evadne pronounced my death, I thought that the title of Victor of Constantinople would be written on my tomb, and I subdued all mortal fear. I stand before its vanquished walls, and dare not call myself a conqueror. So shall it not be! Did not Alexander leap from the walls of the city of the Oxydracae, to show his coward troops the way to victory, encountering alone the swords of its defenders? Even so will I brave the plague — and though no man follow, I will plant the Grecian standard on the height of St. Sophia."

Reason came unavailing to such high-wrought feelings. In vain I showed him, that when winter came, the cold would dissipate the pestilential air, and restore courage to the Greeks. "Talk not of other season than this!" he cried. "I have lived my last winter, and the date of this year, 2092, will be carved upon my tomb. Already do I see," he continued, looking up mournfully, "the bourne and precipitate edge of my existence, over which I plunge into the gloomy mystery of the life to come. I am prepared, so that I leave behind a trail of light so radiant, that my worst enemies cannot cloud it. I owe this to Greece, to you, to my surviving Perdita, and to myself, the victim of ambition."

We were interrupted by an attendant, who announced, that the staff of Raymond was assembled in the council-chamber. He requested me in the meantime to ride through the camp, and to observe and report to him the dispositions of the soldiers; he then left me. I had been excited to the utmost by the proceedings of the day, and now more than ever by the passionate language of Raymond. Alas! for human reason! He accused the Greeks of superstition: what name did he give to the faith he lent to the predictions of Evadne? I passed from the palace of Sweet Waters to the plain on which the encampment lay, and found its inhabitants in commotion. The arrival of several with fresh stories of marvels, from the fleet; the exaggerations bestowed on what was already known; tales of old prophecies, of fearful histories of whole regions which had been laid waste during the present year by pestilence, alarmed and occupied the troops. Discipline was lost; the army disbanded itself. Each individual, before a part of a great whole moving only in unison with others, now became resolved into the unit nature had made him, and thought of himself only. They stole off at first by ones and twos, then in larger companies, until, unimpeded by the officers, whole battalions sought the road that led to Macedonia.

About midnight I returned to the palace and sought Raymond; he was alone, and apparently composed; such composure, at least, was his as is inspired by a resolve to adhere to a certain line of conduct. He heard my account of the self-dissolution of the army with calmness, and then said, "You know, Verney, my fixed determination not to quit this place, until in the light of day Stamboul is confessedly ours. If the men I have about me shrink from following me, others, more courageous, are to be found. Go you before break of day, bear these dispatches to Karazza, add to them your own entreaties that he send me his marines and naval force; if I can get but one regiment to second me, the rest would follow of course. Let him send me this regiment. I shall expect your return by to-morrow noon."

Methought this was but a poor expedient; but I assured him of my obedience and zeal. I quitted him to take a few hours rest. With the breaking of morning I was accoutred for my ride. I lingered awhile, desirous of taking leave of Perdita, and from my window observed the approach of the sun. The golden splendour arose, and weary nature awoke to suffer yet another day of heat and thirsty decay. No flowers lifted up their dew-laden cups to meet the dawn; the dry grass had withered on the plains; the burning fields of air were vacant of birds; the cicale alone, children of the sun, began their shrill and deafening song among the cypresses and olives. I saw Raymond's coal-black charger brought to the palace gate; a small company of officers arrived soon after; care and fear was painted on each cheek, and in each eye, unrefreshed by sleep. I found Raymond and Perdita together. He was watching the rising sun, while with one arm he encircled his beloved's waist; she looked on him, the sun of her life, with earnest gaze of mingled anxiety and tenderness. Raymond started angrily when he saw me. "Here still?" he cried. "Is this your promised zeal?"

"Pardon me," I said, "but even as you speak, I am gone."

"Nay, pardon me," he replied; "I have no right to command or reproach; but my life hangs on your departure and speedy return. Farewell!"

His voice had recovered its bland tone, but a dark cloud still hung on his features. I would have delayed; I wished to recommend watchfulness to Perdita, but his presence restrained me. I had no pretence for my hesitation; and on his repeating his farewell, I clasped his outstretched hand; it was cold and clammy. "Take care of yourself, my dear Lord," I said.

"Nay," said Perdita, "that task shall be mine. Return speedily, Lionel."

With an air of absence he was playing with her auburn locks, while she leaned on him; twice I turned back, only to look again on this matchless pair. At last, with slow and heavy steps, I had paced out of the hall, and sprung upon my horse. At that moment Clara flew towards me; clasping my knee she cried, "Make haste back, uncle! Dear uncle, I have such fearful dreams; I dare not tell my mother. Do not be long away!" I assured her of my impatience to return, and then, with a small escort rode along the plain towards the tower of Marmora.

I fulfilled my commission; I saw Karazza. He was somewhat surprised; he would see, he said, what could be done; but it required time; and Raymond had ordered me to return by noon. It was impossible to effect any thing in so short a time. I must stay till the next day; or come back, after having reported the present state of things to the general. My choice was easily made. A restlessness, a fear of what was about to betide, a doubt as to Raymond’s purposes, urged me to return without delay to his quarters. Quitting the Seven Towers, I rode eastward towards the Sweet Waters. I took a circuitous path, principally for the sake of going to the top of the mount before mentioned, which commanded a view of the city. I had my glass with me. The city basked under the noon-day sun, and the venerable walls formed its picturesque boundary. Immediately before me was the Top Kapou, the gate near which Mahomet had made the breach by which he entered the city. Trees gigantic and aged grew near; before the gate I discerned a crowd of moving human figures — with intense curiosity I lifted my glass to my eye. I saw Lord Raymond on his charger; a small company of officers had gathered about him; and behind was a promiscuous concourse of soldiers and subalterns, their discipline lost, their arms thrown aside; no music sounded, no banners streamed. The only flag among them was one which Raymond carried; he pointed with it to the gate of the city. The circle round him fell back. With angry gestures he leapt from his horse, and seizing a hatchet that hung from his saddle-bow, went with the apparent intention of battering down the opposing gate. A few men came to aid him; their numbers increased; under their united blows the obstacle was vanquished, gate, portcullis, and fence were demolished; and the wide sun-lit way, leading to the heart of the city, now lay open before them. The men shrank back; they seemed afraid of what they had already done, and stood as if they expected some Mighty Phantom to stalk in offended majesty from the opening. Raymond sprung lightly on his horse, grasped the standard, and with words which I could not hear (but his gestures, being their fit accompaniment, were marked by passionate energy), he seemed to adjure their assistance and companionship; even as he spoke, the crowd receded from him. Indignation now transported him; his words I guessed were fraught with disdain — then turning from his coward followers, he addressed himself to enter the city alone. His very horse seemed to back from the fatal entrance; his dog, his faithful dog, lay moaning and supplicating in his path — in a moment more, he had plunged the rowels into the sides of the stung animal, who bounded forward, and he, the gateway passed, was galloping up the broad and desert street.

Until this moment my soul had been in my eyes only. I had gazed with wonder, mixed with fear and enthusiasm. The latter feeling now predominated. I forgot the distance between us: “I will go with thee, Raymond!” I cried; but, my eye removed from the glass, I could scarce discern the pygmy forms of the crowd, which about a mile from me surrounded the gate; the form of Raymond was lost. Stung with impatience, I urged my horse with force of spur and loosened reins down the acclivity, that, before danger could arrive, I might be at the side of my noble, godlike friend. A number of buildings and trees intervened, when I had reached the plain, hiding the city from my view. But at that moment a crash was heard. Thunderlike it reverberated through the sky, while the air was darkened. A moment more and the old walls again met my sight, while over them hovered a murky cloud; fragments of buildings whirled above, half seen in smoke, while flames burst out beneath, and continued explosions filled the air with terrific thunders. Flying from the mass of falling ruin which leapt over the high walls, and shook the ivy towers, a crowd of soldiers made for the road by which I came; I was surrounded, hemmed in by them, unable to get forward. My impatience rose to its utmost; I stretched out my hands to the men; I conjured them to turn back and save their General, the conqueror of Stamboul, the liberator of Greece; tears, aye tears, in warm flow gushed from my eyes — I would not believe in his destruction; yet every mass that darkened the air seemed to bear with it a portion of the martyred Raymond. Horrible sights were shaped to me in the turbid cloud that hovered over the city; and my only relief was derived from the struggles I made to approach the gate. Yet when I effected my purpose, all I could discern within the precincts of the massive walls was a city of fire: the open way through which Raymond had ridden was enveloped in smoke and flame. After an interval the explosions ceased, but the flames still shot up from various quarters; the dome of St. Sophia had disappeared. Strange to say (the result perhaps of the concussion of air occasioned by the blowing up of the city) huge, white thunder clouds lifted themselves up from the southern horizon, and gathered over-head; they were the first blots on the blue expanse that I had seen for months, and amidst this havoc and despair they inspired pleasure. The vault above became obscured, lightning flashed from the heavy masses, followed instantaneously by crashing thunder; then the big rain fell. The flames of the city bent beneath it; and the smoke and dust arising from the ruins was dissipated.

I no sooner perceived an abatement of the flames than, hurried on by an irresistible impulse, I endeavoured to penetrate the town. I could only do this on foot, as the mass of ruin was impracticable for a horse. I had never entered the city before, and its ways were unknown to me. The streets were blocked up, the ruins smoking; I climbed up one heap, only to view others in succession; and nothing told me where the centre of the town might be, or towards what point Raymond might have directed his course. The rain ceased; the clouds sunk behind the horizon; it was now evening, and the sun descended swiftly the western sky. I scrambled on, until I came to a street, whose wooden houses, half-burnt, had been cooled by the rain, and were fortunately uninjured by the gunpowder. Up this I hurried — until now I had not seen a vestige of man. Yet none of the defaced human forms which I distinguished, could be Raymond; so I turned my eyes away, while my heart sickened within me. I came to an open space — a mountain of ruin in the midst, announced that some large mosque had occupied the space — and here, scattered about, I saw various articles of luxury and wealth, singed, destroyed — but showing what they had been in their ruin — jewels, strings of pearls, embroidered robes, rich furs, glittering tapestries, and oriental ornaments, seemed to have been collected here in a pile destined for destruction; but the rain had stopped the havoc midway.

Hours passed, while in this scene of ruin I sought for Raymond. Insurmountable heaps sometimes opposed themselves; the still burning fires scorched me. The sun set; the atmosphere grew dim — and the evening star no longer shone companionless. The glare of flames attested the progress of destruction, while, during mingled light and obscurity, the piles around me took gigantic proportions and weird shapes. For a moment I could yield to the creative power of the imagination, and for a moment was soothed by the sublime fictions it presented to me. The beatings of my human heart drew me back to blank reality. Where, in this wilderness of death, art thou, O Raymond — ornament of England, deliverer of Greece, “hero of unwritten story,” where in this burning chaos are thy dear relics strewed? I called aloud for him — through the darkness of night, over the scorching ruins of fallen Constantinople, his name was heard; no voice replied — echo even was mute.

I was overcome by weariness; the solitude depressed my spirits. The sultry air impregnated with dust, the heat and smoke of burning palaces, palsied my limbs. Hunger suddenly came acutely upon me. The excitement which had hitherto sustained me was lost; as a building, whose props are loosened, and whose foundations rock, totters and falls, so when enthusiasm and hope deserted me, did my strength fail. I sat on the sole remaining step of an edifice, which even in its downfall, was huge and magnificent; a few broken walls, not dislodged by gunpowder, stood in fantastic groups, and a flame glimmered at intervals on the summit of the pile. For a time hunger and sleep contended, till the constellations reeled before my eyes and then were lost. I strove to rise, but my heavy lids closed, my limbs over-wearied, claimed repose — I rested my head on the stone, I yielded to the grateful sensation of utter forgetfulness; and in that scene of desolation, on that night of despair — I slept.

CHAPTER XIV

The stars still shone brightly when I awoke, and Taurus high in the southern heaven showed that it was midnight. I awoke from disturbed dreams. Methought I had been invited to Timon’s last feast; I came with keen appetite, the covers were removed, the hot water sent up its unsatisfying steams, while I fled before the anger of the host, who assumed the form of Raymond; while to my diseased fancy, the vessels hurled by him after me, were surcharged with fetid vapour, and my friend’s shape, altered by a thousand distortions, expanded into a gigantic phantom, bearing on its brow the sign of pestilence. The growing shadow rose and rose, filling, and then seeming to endeavour to burst beyond, the adamantine vault that bent over, sustaining and enclosing the world. The night-mare became torture; with a strong effort I threw off sleep, and recalled reason to her wonted functions. My first thought was Perdita; to her I must return; her I must support, drawing such food from despair as might best sustain her wounded heart; recalling her from the wild excesses of grief, by the austere laws of duty, and the soft tenderness of regret.

The position of the stars was my only guide. I turned from the awful ruin of the Golden City, and, after great exertion, succeeded in extricating myself from its enclosure. I met a company of soldiers outside the walls; I borrowed a horse from one of them, and hastened to my sister. The appearance of the plain was changed during this short interval; the encampment was broken up; the relics of the disbanded army met in small companies here and there; each face was clouded; every gesture spoke astonishment and dismay.

With a heavy heart I entered the palace, and stood fearful to advance, to speak, to look. In the midst of the hall was Perdita; she sat on the marble pavement, her head fallen on her bosom, her hair dishevelled, her fingers twined busily one within the other; she was pale as marble, and every feature was contracted by agony. She perceived me, and looked up inquiringly; her half glance of hope was misery; the words died before I could articulate them; I felt a ghastly smile wrinkle my lips. She understood my gesture; again her head fell; again her fingers worked restlessly. At last I recovered speech, but my voice terrified her; the hapless girl had understood my look, and for worlds she would not that the tale of her heavy misery should have been shaped out and confirmed by hard, irrevocable words. Nay, she seemed to wish to distract my thoughts from the subject: she rose from the floor: “Hush!” she said, whisperingly; “after much weeping, Clara sleeps; we must not disturb her.” She seated herself then on the same ottoman where I had left her in the morning resting on the beating heart of her Raymond; I dared not approach her, but sat at a distant corner, watching her starting and nervous gestures. At length, in an abrupt manner she asked, “Where is he?”

“O, fear not,” she continued, “fear not that I should entertain hope! Yet tell me, have you found him? To have him once more in my arms, to see him, however changed, is all I desire. Though Constantinople be heaped above him as a tomb, yet I must find him — then cover us with the city’s weight, with a mountain piled above — I care not, so that one grave hold Raymond and his Perdita.” Then weeping, she clung to me: “Take me to him,” she cried, “unkind Lionel, why do you keep me here? Of myself I cannot find him — but you know where he lies — lead me thither.”

At first these agonizing plaints filled me with intolerable compassion. But soon I endeavoured to extract patience for her from the ideas she suggested. I related my adventures of the night, my endeavours to find our lost one, and my disappointment. Turning her thoughts this way, I gave them an object which rescued them from insanity. With apparent calmness she discussed with me the probable spot where he might be found, and planned the means we should use for that purpose. Then hearing of my fatigue and abstinence, she herself brought me food. I seized the favourable moment, and endeavoured to awaken in her something beyond the killing torpor of grief. As I spoke, my subject carried me away; deep admiration; grief, the offspring of truest affection, the overflowing of a heart bursting with sympathy for all that had been great and sublime in the career of my friend, inspired me as I poured forth the praises of Raymond.

“Alas, for us,” I cried, “who have lost this latest honour of the world! Beloved Raymond! He is gone to the nations of the dead; he has become one of those, who render the dark abode of the obscure grave illustrious by dwelling there. He has journeyed on the road that leads to it, and joined the mighty of soul who went before him. When the world was in its infancy death must have been terrible, and man left his friends and kindred to dwell, a solitary stranger, in an unknown country. But now, he who dies finds many companions gone before to prepare for his reception. The great of past ages people it, the exalted hero of our own days is counted among its inhabitants, while life becomes doubly ‘the desert and the solitude.’

“What a noble creature was Raymond, the first among the men of our time. By the grandeur of his conceptions, the graceful daring of his actions, by his wit and beauty, he won and ruled the minds of all. Of one only fault he might have been accused; but his death has cancelled that. I have heard him called inconstant of purpose — when he deserted, for the sake of love, the hope of sovereignty, and when he abdicated the protectorship of England, men blamed his infirmity of purpose. Now his death has crowned his life, and to the end of time it will be remembered, that he devoted himself, a willing victim, to the glory of Greece. Such was his choice: he expected to die. He foresaw that he should leave this cheerful earth, the lightsome sky, and thy love, Perdita; yet he neither hesitated or turned back, going right onward to his mark of fame. While the earth lasts, his actions will be recorded with praise. Grecian maidens will in devotion strew flowers on his tomb, and make the air around it resonant with patriotic hymns, in which his name will find high record.”

I saw the features of Perdita soften; the sternness of grief yielded to tenderness — I continued:—”Thus to honour him, is the sacred duty of his survivors. To make his name even as an holy spot of ground, enclosing it from all hostile attacks by our praise, shedding on it the blossoms of love and regret, guarding it from decay, and bequeathing it untainted to posterity. Such is the duty of his friends. A dearer one belongs to you, Perdita, mother of his child. Do you remember in her infancy, with what transport you beheld Clara, recognizing in her the united being of yourself and Raymond; joying to view in this living temple a manifestation of your eternal loves. Even such is she still. You say that you have lost Raymond. O, no! — yet he lives with you and in you there. From him she sprung, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone — and not, as heretofore, are you content to trace in her downy cheek and delicate limbs, an affinity to Raymond, but in her enthusiastic affections, in the sweet qualities of her mind, you may still find him living, the good, the great, the beloved. Be it your care to foster this similarity — be it your care to render her worthy of him, so that, when she glory in her origin, she take not shame for what she is."

I could perceive that, when I recalled my sister's thoughts to her duties in life, she did not listen with the same patience as before. She appeared to suspect a plan of consolation on my part, from which she, cherishing her new-born grief, revolted. "You talk of the future," she said, "while the present is all to me. Let me find the earthly dwelling of my beloved; let us rescue that from common dust, so that in times to come men may point to the sacred tomb, and name it his — then to other thoughts, and a new course of life, or what else fate, in her cruel tyranny, may have marked out for me."

After a short repose I prepared to leave her, that I might endeavour to accomplish her wish. In the mean time we were joined by Clara, whose pallid cheek and scared look showed the deep impression grief had made on her young mind. She seemed to be full of something to which she could not give words; but, seizing an opportunity afforded by Perdita's absence, she preferred to me an earnest prayer, that I would take her within view of the gate at which her father had entered Constantinople. She promised to commit no extravagance, to be docile, and immediately to return. I could not refuse; for Clara was not an ordinary child; her sensibility and intelligence seemed already to have endowed her with the rights of womanhood. With her therefore, before me on my horse, attended only by the servant who was to re-conduct her, we rode to the Top Kapou. We found a party of soldiers gathered round it. They were listening. "They are human cries," said one: "More like the howling of a dog," replied another; and again they bent to catch the sound of regular distant moans, which issued from the precincts of the ruined city. "That, Clara," I said, "is the gate, that the street which yestermorn your father rode up." Whatever Clara's intention had been in asking to be brought hither, it was balked by the presence of the soldiers. With earnest gaze she looked on the labyrinth of smoking piles which had been a city, and then expressed her readiness to return home. At this moment a melancholy howl struck on our ears; it was repeated; "Hark!" cried Clara, "he is there; that is Florio, my father's dog." It seemed to me impossible that she could recognise the sound, but she persisted in her assertion till she gained credit with the crowd about. At least it would be a benevolent action to rescue the sufferer, whether human or brute, from the desolation of the town; so, sending Clara back to her home, I again entered Constantinople. Encouraged by the impunity attendant on my former visit, several soldiers who had made a part of Raymond's body guard, who had loved him, and sincerely mourned his loss, accompanied me.

It is impossible to conjecture the strange enchainment of events which restored the lifeless form of my friend to our hands. In that part of the town where the fire had most raged the night before, and which now lay quenched, black and cold, the dying dog of Raymond crouched beside the mutilated form of its lord. At such a time sorrow has no voice; affliction, tamed by it is very vehemence, is mute. The poor animal recognised me, licked my hand, crept close to its lord, and died. He had been evidently thrown from his horse by some falling ruin, which had crushed his head, and defaced his whole person. I bent over the body, and took in my hand the edge of his cloak, less altered in appearance than the human frame it clothed. I pressed it to my lips, while the rough soldiers gathered around, mourning over this worthiest prey of death, as if regret and endless lamentation could re-illumine the extinguished spark, or call to its shattered prison-house of flesh the liberated spirit. Yesterday those limbs were worth an universe; they then enshrined a transcendent power, whose intents, words, and actions were worthy to be recorded in letters of gold; now the superstition of affection alone could give value to the shattered mechanism, which, incapable and clod-like, no more resembled Raymond, than the fallen rain is like the former mansion of cloud in which it climbed the highest skies, and gilded by the sun, attracted all eyes, and satiated the sense by its excess of beauty.

Such as he had now become, such as was his terrene vesture, defaced and spoiled, we wrapt it in our cloaks, and lifting the burthen in our arms, bore it from this city of the dead. The question arose as to where we should deposit him. In our road to the palace, we passed through the Greek cemetery; here on a tablet of black marble I caused him to be laid; the cypresses waved high above, their death-like gloom accorded with his state of nothingness. We cut branches of the funereal trees and placed them over him, and on these again his sword. I left a guard to protect this treasure of dust; and ordered perpetual torches to be burned around.

When I returned to Perdita, I found that she had already been informed of the success of my undertaking. He, her beloved, the sole and eternal object of her passionate tenderness, was restored her. Such was the maniac language of her enthusiasm. What though those limbs moved not, and those lips could no more frame modulated accents of wisdom and love! What though like a weed flung from the fruitless sea, he lay the prey of corruption — still that was the form she had caressed, those the lips that meeting hers, had drank the spirit of love from the commingling breath; that was the earthly mechanism of dissoluble clay she had called her own. True, she looked forward to another life; true, the burning spirit of love seemed to her inextinguishable throughout eternity. Yet at this time, with human fondness, she clung to all that her human senses permitted her to see and feel to be a part of Raymond.

Pale as marble, clear and beaming as that, she heard my tale, and enquired concerning the spot where he had been deposited. Her features had lost the distortion of grief; her eyes were brightened, her very person seemed dilated; while the excessive whiteness and even transparency of her skin, and something hollow in her voice, bore witness that not tranquillity, but excess of excitement, occasioned the treacherous calm that settled on her countenance. I asked her where he should be buried. She replied, “At Athens; even at the Athens which he loved. Without the town, on the acclivity of Hymettus, there is a rocky recess which he pointed out to me as the spot where he would wish to repose.”

My own desire certainly was that he should not be removed from the spot where he now lay. But her wish was of course to be complied with; and I entreated her to prepare without delay for our departure.

Behold now the melancholy train cross the flats of Thrace, and wind through the defiles, and over the mountains of Macedonia, coast the clear waves of the Peneus, cross the Larissean plain, pass the straits of Thermopylae, and ascending in succession Oeta and Parnassus, descend to the fertile plain of Athens. Women bear with resignation these long drawn ills, but to a man’s impatient spirit, the slow motion of our cavalcade, the melancholy repose we took at noon, the perpetual presence of the pall, gorgeous though it was, that wrapt the rifled casket which had contained Raymond, the monotonous recurrence of day and night, unvaried by hope or change, all the circumstances of our march were intolerable. Perdita, shut up in herself, spoke little. Her carriage was closed; and, when we rested, she sat leaning her pale cheek on her white cold hand, with eyes fixed on the ground, indulging thoughts which refused communication or sympathy.

We descended from Parnassus, emerging from its many folds, and passed through Livadia on our road to Attica. Perdita would not enter Athens; but reposing at Marathon on the night of our arrival, conducted me on the following day, to the spot selected by her as the treasure house of Raymond's dear remains. It was in a recess near the head of the ravine to the south of Hymettus. The chasm, deep, black, and hoary, swept from the summit to the base; in the fissures of the rock myrtle underwood grew and wild thyme, the food of many nations of bees; enormous crags protruded into the cleft, some beetling over, others rising perpendicularly from it. At the foot of this sublime chasm, a fertile laughing valley reached from sea to sea, and beyond was spread the blue AEgean, sprinkled with islands, the light waves glancing beneath the sun. Close to the spot on which we stood, was a solitary rock, high and conical, which, divided on every side from the mountain, seemed a nature-hewn pyramid; with little labour this block was reduced to a perfect shape; the narrow cell was scooped out beneath in which Raymond was placed, and a short inscription, carved in the living stone, recorded the name of its tenant, the cause and æra of his death.

Everything was accomplished with speed under my directions. I agreed to leave the finishing and guardianship of the tomb to the head of the religious establishment at Athens, and by the end of October prepared for my return to England. I mentioned this to Perdita. It was painful to appear to drag her from the last scene that spoke of her lost one; but to linger here was vain, and my very soul was sick with its yearning to rejoin my Idris and her babes. In reply, my sister requested me to accompany her the following evening to the tomb of Raymond. Some days had passed since I had visited the spot. The path to it had been enlarged, and steps hewn in the rock led us less circuitously than before, to the spot itself; the platform on which the pyramid stood was enlarged, and looking towards the south, in a recess overshadowed by the straggling branches of a wild fig-tree, I saw foundations dug, and props and rafters fixed, evidently the commencement of a cottage; standing on its unfinished threshold, the tomb was at our right-hand, the whole ravine, and plain, and azure sea immediately before us; the dark rocks received a glow from the descending sun, which glanced along the cultivated valley, and dyed in purple and orange the placid waves; we sat on a rocky elevation, and I gazed with rapture on the beauteous panorama of living and changeful colours, which varied and enhanced the graces of earth and ocean.

"Did I not do right," said Perdita, "in having my loved one conveyed hither? Hereafter this will be the cynosure of Greece. In such a spot death loses half its terrors, and even the inanimate dust appears to partake of the spirit of beauty which hallows this region. Lionel, he sleeps there; that is the grave of Raymond, he whom in my youth I first loved; whom my heart accompanied in days of separation and anger; to whom I am now joined for ever. Never — mark me — never will I leave this spot. Methinks his spirit remains here as well as that dust, which, uncommunicable though it be, is more precious in its nothingness than aught else widowed earth clasps to her sorrowing bosom. The myrtle bushes, the thyme, the little cyclamen, which peep from the fissures of the rock, all the produce of the place, bear affinity to him; the light that invests the hills participates in his essence, and sky and mountains, sea and valley, are imbued by the presence of his spirit. I will live and die here!

"Go you to England, Lionel; return to sweet Idris and dearest Adrian; return, and let my orphan girl be as a child of your own in your house. Look on me as dead; and truly if death be a mere change of state, I am dead. This is another world, from that which late I inhabited, from that which is now your home. Here I hold communion only with the has been, and to come. Go you to England, and leave me where alone I can consent to drag out the miserable days which I must still live."

A shower of tears terminated her sad harangue. I had expected some extravagant proposition, and remained silent awhile, collecting my thoughts that I might the better combat her fanciful scheme. "You cherish dreary thoughts, my dear Perdita," I said, "nor do I wonder that for a time your better reason should be influenced by passionate grief and a disturbed imagination. Even I am in love with this last home of Raymond's; nevertheless we must quit it."

"I expected this," cried Perdita; "I supposed that you would treat me as a mad, foolish girl. But do not deceive yourself; this cottage is built by my order; and here I shall remain, until the hour arrives when I may share his happier dwelling."

"My dearest girl!"

"And what is there so strange in my design? I might have deceived you; I might have talked of remaining here only a few months; in your anxiety to reach Windsor you would have left me, and without reproach or contention, I might have pursued my plan. But I disdained the artifice; or rather in my wretchedness it was my only consolation to pour out my heart to you, my brother, my only friend. You will not dispute with me? You know how wilful your poor, misery-stricken sister is. Take my girl with you; wean her from sights and thoughts of sorrow; let infantine hilarity revisit her heart, and animate her eyes; so could it never be, were she near me; it is far better for all of you that you should never see me again. For myself, I will not voluntarily seek death, that is, I will not, while I can command myself; and I can here. But drag me from this country; and my power of self control vanishes, nor can I answer for the violence my agony of grief may lead me to commit."

"You clothe your meaning, Perdita," I replied, "in powerful words, yet that meaning is selfish and unworthy of you. You have often agreed with me that there is but one solution to the intricate riddle of life; to improve ourselves, and contribute to the happiness of others: and now, in the very prime of life, you desert your principles, and shut yourself up in useless solitude. Will you think of Raymond less at Windsor, the scene of your early happiness? Will you commune less with his departed spirit, while you watch over and cultivate the rare excellence of his child? You have been sadly visited; nor do I wonder that a feeling akin to insanity should drive you to bitter and unreasonable imaginings. But a home of love awaits you in your native England. My tenderness and affection must soothe you; the society of Raymond's friends will be of more solace than these dreary speculations. We will all make it our first care, our dearest task, to contribute to your happiness."

Perdita shook her head; "If it could be so," she replied, "I were much in the wrong to disdain your offers. But it is not a matter of choice; I can live here only. I am a part of this scene; each and all its properties are a part of me. This is no sudden fancy; I live by it. The knowledge that I am here, rises with me in the morning, and enables me to endure the light; it is mingled with my food, which else were poison; it walks, it sleeps with me, for ever it accompanies me. Here I may even cease to repine, and may add my tardy consent to the decree which has taken him from me. He would rather have died such a death, which will be recorded in history to endless time, than have lived to old age unknown, unhonoured. Nor can I desire better, than, having been the chosen and beloved of his heart, here, in youth's prime, before added years can tarnish the best feelings of my nature, to watch his tomb, and speedily rejoin him in his blessed repose.

"So much, my dearest Lionel, I have said, wishing to persuade you that I do right. If you are unconvinced, I can add nothing further by way of argument, and I can only declare my fixed resolve. I stay here; force only can remove me. Be it so; drag me away — I return; confine me, imprison me, still I escape, and come here. Or would my brother rather devote the heart-broken Perdita to the straw and chains of a maniac, than suffer her to rest in peace beneath the shadow of His society, in this my own selected and beloved recess?" —

All this appeared to me, I own, methodized madness. I imagined, that it was my imperative duty to take her from scenes that thus forcibly reminded her of her loss. Nor did I doubt, that in the tranquillity of our family circle at Windsor, she would recover some degree of composure, and in the end, of happiness. My affection for Clara also led me to oppose these fond dreams of cherished grief; her sensibility had already been too much excited; her infant heedlessness too soon exchanged for deep and anxious thought. The strange and romantic scheme of her mother, might confirm and perpetuate the painful view of life, which had intruded itself thus early on her contemplation.

On returning home, the captain of the steam packet with whom I had agreed to sail, came to tell me, that accidental circumstances hastened his departure, and that, if I went with him, I must come on board at five on the following morning. I hastily gave my consent to this arrangement, and as hastily formed a plan through which Perdita should be forced to become my companion. I believe that most people in my situation would have acted in the same manner. Yet this consideration does not, or rather did not in after time, diminish the reproaches of my conscience. At the moment, I felt convinced that I was acting for the best, and that all I did was right and even necessary.

I sat with Perdita and soothed her, by my seeming assent to her wild scheme. She received my concurrence with pleasure, and a thousand times over thanked her deceiving, deceitful brother. As night came on, her spirits, enlivened by my unexpected concession, regained an almost forgotten vivacity. I pretended to be alarmed by the feverish glow in her cheek; I entreated her to take a composing draught; I poured out the medicine, which she took docilely from me. I watched her as she drank it. Falsehood and artifice are in themselves so hateful, that, though I still thought I did right, a feeling of shame and guilt came painfully upon me. I left her, and soon heard that she slept soundly under the influence of the opiate I had administered. She was carried thus unconscious on board; the anchor weighed, and the wind being favourable, we stood far out to sea; with all the canvas spread, and the power of the engine to assist, we scudded swiftly and steadily through the chafed element.

It was late in the day before Perdita awoke, and a longer time elapsed before recovering from the torpor occasioned by the laudanum, she perceived her change of situation. She started wildly from her couch, and flew to the cabin window. The blue and troubled sea sped past the vessel, and was spread shoreless around: the sky was covered by a rack, which in its swift motion showed how speedily she was borne away. The creaking of the masts, the clang of the wheels, the tramp above, all persuaded her that she was already far from the shores of Greece.—”Where are we?” she cried, “where are we going?” —

The attendant whom I had stationed to watch her, replied, “to England.” —

“And my brother?” —

“Is on deck, Madam.”

“Unkind! unkind!” exclaimed the poor victim, as with a deep sigh she looked on the waste of waters. Then without further remark, she threw herself on her couch, and closing her eyes remained motionless; so that but for the deep sighs that burst from her, it would have seemed that she slept.

As soon as I heard that she had spoken, I sent Clara to her, that the sight of the lovely innocent might inspire gentle and affectionate thoughts. But neither the presence of her child, nor a subsequent visit from me, could rouse my sister. She looked on Clara with a countenance of woeful meaning, but she did not speak. When I appeared, she turned away, and in reply to my inquiries, only said, “You know not what you have done!” — I trusted that this sullenness betokened merely the struggle between disappointment and natural affection, and that in a few days she would be reconciled to her fate.

When night came on, she begged that Clara might sleep in a separate cabin. Her servant, however, remained with her. About midnight she spoke to the latter, saying that she had had a bad dream, and bade her go to her daughter, and bring word whether she rested quietly. The woman obeyed.

The breeze, that had flagged since sunset, now rose again. I was on deck, enjoying our swift progress. The quiet was disturbed only by the rush of waters as they divided before the steady keel, the murmur of the moveless and full sails, the wind whistling in the shrouds, and the regular motion of the engine. The sea was gently agitated, now showing a white crest, and now resuming an uniform hue; the clouds had disappeared; and dark ether clipped the broad ocean, in which the constellations vainly sought their accustomed mirror. Our rate could not have been less than eight knots.

Suddenly I heard a splash in the sea. The sailors on watch rushed to the side of the vessel, with the cry — some one gone overboard. “It is not from deck,” said the man at the helm, “something has been thrown from the aft cabin.” A call for the boat to be lowered was echoed from the deck. I rushed into my sister’s cabin; it was empty.

With sails abaft, the engine stopped, the vessel remained unwillingly stationary, until, after an hour’s search, my poor Perdita was brought on board. But no care could re-animate her, no medicine cause her dear eyes to open, and the blood to flow again from her pulseless heart. One clenched hand contained a slip of paper, on which was written, “To Athens.” To ensure her removal thither, and prevent the irrecoverable loss of her body in the wide sea, she had had the precaution to fasten a long shawl round her waist, and again to the stanchions of the cabin window. She had drifted somewhat under the keel of the vessel, and her being out of sight occasioned the delay in finding her. And thus the ill-starred girl died a victim to my senseless rashness. Thus, in early day, she left us for the company of the dead, and preferred to share the rocky grave of Raymond, before the animated scene this cheerful earth afforded, and the society of loving friends. Thus in her twenty-ninth year she died; having enjoyed some few years of the happiness of paradise, and sustaining a reverse to which her impatient spirit and affectionate disposition were unable to submit. As I marked the placid expression that had settled on her countenance in death, I felt, in spite of the pangs of remorse, in spite of heart-rending regret, that it was better to die so, than to drag on long, miserable years of repining and inconsolable grief.

Stress of weather drove us up the Adriatic Gulf; and, our vessel being hardly fitted to weather a storm, we took refuge in the port of Ancona. Here I met Georgio Palli, the vice-admiral of the Greek fleet, a former friend and warm partisan of Raymond. I committed the remains of my lost Perdita to his care, for the purpose of having them transported to Hymettus, and placed in the cell her Raymond already occupied beneath the pyramid. This was all accomplished even as I wished. She reposed beside her beloved, and the tomb above was inscribed with the united names of Raymond and Perdita.

I then came to a resolution of pursuing our journey to England overland. My own heart was racked by regrets and remorse. The apprehension, that Raymond had departed for ever, that his name, blended eternally with the past, must be erased from every anticipation of the future, had come slowly upon me. I had always admired his talents; his noble aspirations; his grand conceptions of the glory and majesty of his ambition: his utter want of mean passions; his fortitude and daring. In Greece I had learnt to love him; his very waywardness, and self-abandonment to the impulses of superstition, attached me to him doubly; it might be weakness, but it was the antipodes of all that was grovelling and selfish. To these pangs were added the loss of Perdita, lost through my own accursed self-will and conceit. This dear one, my sole relation; whose progress I had marked from tender childhood through the varied path of life, and seen her throughout conspicuous for integrity, devotion, and true affection; for all that constitutes the peculiar graces of the female character, and beheld her at last the victim of too much loving, too constant an attachment to the perishable and lost, she, in her pride of beauty and life, had thrown aside the pleasant perception of the apparent world for the unreality of the grave, and had left poor Clara quite an orphan. I concealed from this beloved child that her mother’s death was voluntary, and tried every means to awaken cheerfulness in her sorrow-stricken spirit.

One of my first acts for the recovery even of my own composure, was to bid farewell to the sea. Its hateful splash renewed again and again to my sense the death of my sister; its roar was a dirge; in every dark hull that was tossed on its inconstant bosom, I imaged a bier, that would convey to death all who trusted to its treacherous smiles. Farewell to the sea! Come, my Clara, sit beside me in this aerial bark; quickly and gently it cleaves the azure serene, and with soft undulation glides upon the current of the air; or, if storm shake its fragile mechanism, the green earth is below; we can descend, and take shelter on the stable continent. Here aloft, the companions of the swift-winged birds, we skim through the unresisting element, fleetly and fearlessly. The light boat heaves not, nor is opposed by death-bearing waves; the ether opens before the prow, and the shadow of the globe that upholds it, shelters us from the noon-day sun. Beneath are the plains of Italy, or the vast undulations of the wave-like Apennines: fertility reposes in their many folds, and woods crown the summits. The free and happy peasant, unshackled by the Austrian, bears the double harvest to the garner; and the refined citizens rear without dread the long blighted tree of knowledge in this garden of the world. We were lifted above the Alpine peaks, and from their deep and brawling ravines entered the plain of fair France, and after an airy journey of six days, we landed at Dieppe, furled the feathered wings, and closed the silken globe of our little pinnace. A heavy rain made this mode of travelling now incommodious; so we embarked in a steam-packet, and after a short passage landed at Portsmouth.

A strange story was rife here. A few days before, a tempest-struck vessel had appeared off the town: the hull was parched-looking and cracked, the sails rent, and bent in a careless, unseamanlike manner, the shrouds tangled and broken. She drifted towards the harbour, and was stranded on the sands at the entrance. In the morning the custom-house officers, together with a crowd of idlers, visited her. One only of the crew appeared to have arrived with her. He had got to shore, and had walked a few paces towards the town, and then, vanquished by malady and approaching death, had fallen on the inhospitable beach. He was found stiff, his hands clenched, and pressed against his breast. His skin, nearly black, his matted hair and bristly beard, were signs of a long protracted misery. It was whispered that he had died of the plague. No one ventured on board the vessel, and strange sights were averred to be seen at night, walking the deck, and hanging on the masts and shrouds. She soon went to pieces; I was shown where she had been, and saw her disjoined timbers tossed on the waves. The body of the man who had landed, had been buried deep in the sands; and none could tell more, than that the vessel was American built, and that several months before the Fortunatas had sailed from Philadelphia, of which no tidings were afterwards received.

CHAPTER XV

I returned to my family estate in the autumn of the year 2092. My heart had long been with them; and I felt sick with the hope and delight of seeing them again. The district which contained them appeared the abode of every kindly spirit. Happiness, love and peace, walked the forest paths, and tempered the atmosphere. After all the agitation and sorrow I had endured in Greece, I sought Windsor, as the storm-driven bird does the nest in which it may fold its wings in tranquillity.

How unwise had the wanderers been, who had deserted its shelter, entangled themselves in the web of society, and entered on what men of the world call "life," — that labyrinth of evil, that scheme of mutual torture. To live, according to this sense of the word, we must not only observe and learn, we must also feel; we must not be mere spectators of action, we must act; we must not describe, but be subjects of description. Deep sorrow must have been the inmate of our bosoms; fraud must have lain in wait for us; the artful must have deceived us; sickening doubt and false hope must have chequered our days; hilarity and joy, that lap the soul in ecstasy, must at times have possessed us. Who that knows what "life" is, would pine for this feverish species of existence? I have lived. I have spent days and nights of festivity; I have joined in ambitious hopes, and exulted in victory: now, — shut the door on the world, and build high the wall that is to separate me from the troubled scene enacted within its precincts. Let us live for each other and for happiness; let us seek peace in our dear home, near the inland murmur of streams, and the gracious waving of trees, the beauteous vesture of earth, and sublime pageantry of the skies. Let us leave "life," that we may live.

Idris was well content with this resolve of mine. Her native sprightliness needed no undue excitement, and her placid heart reposed contented on my love, the well-being of her children, and the beauty of surrounding nature. Her pride and blameless ambition was to create smiles in all around her, and to shed repose on the fragile existence of her brother. In spite of her tender nursing, the health of Adrian perceptibly declined. Walking, riding, the common occupations of life, overcame him: he felt no pain, but seemed to tremble for ever on the verge of annihilation. Yet, as he had lived on for months nearly in the same state, he did not inspire us with any immediate fear; and, though he talked of death as an event most familiar to his thoughts, he did not cease to exert himself to render others happy, or to cultivate his own astonishing powers of mind.

Winter passed away; and spring, led by the months, awakened life in all nature. The forest was dressed in green; the young calves frisked on the new-sprung grass; the wind-winged shadows of light clouds sped over the green cornfields; the hermit cuckoo repeated his monotonous all-hail to the season; the nightingale, bird of love and minion of the evening star, filled the woods with song; while Venus lingered in the warm sunset, and the young green of the trees lay in gentle relief along the clear horizon.

Delight awoke in every heart, delight and exultation; for there was peace through all the world; the temple of Universal Janus was shut, and man died not that year by the hand of man.

“Let this last but twelve months,” said Adrian; “and earth will become a Paradise. The energies of man were before directed to the destruction of his species: they now aim at its liberation and preservation. Man cannot repose, and his restless aspirations will now bring forth good instead of evil. The favoured countries of the south will throw off the iron yoke of servitude; poverty will quit us, and with that, sickness. What may not the forces, never before united, of liberty and peace achieve in this dwelling of man?”

“Dreaming, for ever dreaming, Windsor!” said Ryland, the old adversary of Raymond, and candidate for the Protectorate at the ensuing election. “Be assured that earth is not, nor ever can be heaven, while the seeds of hell are natives of her soil. When the seasons have become equal, when the air breeds no disorders, when its surface is no longer liable to blights and droughts, then sickness will cease; when men’s passions are dead, poverty will depart. When love is no longer akin to hate, then brotherhood will exist: we are very far from that state at present.”

“Not so far as you may suppose,” observed a little old astronomer, by name Merrival, “the poles precede slowly, but securely; in an hundred thousand years—”

“We shall all be underground,” said Ryland.

“The pole of the earth will coincide with the pole of the ecliptic,” continued the astronomer, “an universal spring will be produced, and earth become a paradise."

"And we shall of course enjoy the benefit of the change," said Ryland, contemptuously.

"We have strange news here," I observed. I had the newspaper in my hand, and, as usual, had turned to the intelligence from Greece. "It seems that the total destruction of Constantinople, and the supposition that winter had purified the air of the fallen city, gave the Greeks courage to visit its site, and begin to rebuild it. But they tell us that the curse of God is on the place, for every one who has ventured within the walls has been tainted by the plague; that this disease has spread in Thrace and Macedonia; and now, fearing the virulence of infection during the coming heats, a cordon has been drawn on the frontiers of Thessaly, and a strict quarantine exacted."

This intelligence brought us back from the prospect of paradise, held out after the lapse of an hundred thousand years, to the pain and misery at present existent upon earth. We talked of the ravages made last year by pestilence in every quarter of the world; and of the dreadful consequences of a second visitation. We discussed the best means of preventing infection, and of preserving health and activity in a large city thus afflicted — London, for instance. Merrival did not join in this conversation; drawing near Idris, he proceeded to assure her that the joyful prospect of an earthly paradise after an hundred thousand years, was clouded to him by the knowledge that in a certain period of time after, an earthly hell or purgatory, would occur, when the ecliptic and equator would be at right angles.* Our party at length broke up; "We are all dreaming this morning," said Ryland, "it is as wise to discuss the probability of a visitation of the plague in our well-governed metropolis, as to calculate the centuries which must escape before we can grow pine-apples here in the open air."

* See an ingenious Essay, entitled "The Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients Demonstrated," by Mackey, a shoemaker of Norwich, printed in 1822.

But, though it seemed absurd to calculate upon the arrival of the plague in London, I could not reflect without extreme pain on the desolation this evil would cause in Greece. The English for the most part talked of Thrace and Macedonia, as they would of a lunar territory, which, unknown to them, presented no distinct idea or interest to the minds. I had trod the soil. The faces of many of the inhabitants were familiar to me; in the towns, plains, hills, and defiles of these countries, I had enjoyed unspeakable delight, as I journeyed through them the year before. Some romantic village, some cottage, or elegant abode there situated, inhabited by the lovely and the good, rose before my mental sight, and the question haunted me, is the plague there also? — That same invincible monster, which hovered over and devoured Constantinople — that fiend more cruel than tempest, less tame than fire, is, alas, unchained in that beautiful country — these reflections would not allow me to rest.

The political state of England became agitated as the time drew near when the new Protector was to be elected. This event excited the more interest, since it was the current report, that if the popular candidate (Ryland) should be chosen, the question of the abolition of hereditary rank, and other feudal relics, would come under the consideration of parliament. Not a word had been spoken during the present session on any of these topics. Every thing would depend upon the choice of a Protector, and the elections of the ensuing year. Yet this very silence was awful, showing the deep weight attributed to the question; the fear of either party to hazard an ill-timed attack, and the expectation of a furious contention when it should begin.

But although St. Stephen’s did not echo with the voice which filled each heart, the newspapers teemed with nothing else; and in private companies the conversation however remotely begun, soon verged towards this central point, while voices were lowered and chairs drawn closer. The nobles did not hesitate to express their fear; the other party endeavoured to treat the matter lightly. “Shame on the country,” said Ryland, “to lay so much stress upon words and frippery; it is a question of nothing; of the new painting of carriage-panels and the embroidery of footmen’s coats.”

Yet could England indeed doff her lordly trappings, and be content with the democratic style of America? Were the pride of ancestry, the patrician spirit, the gentle courtesies and refined pursuits, splendid attributes of rank, to be erased among us? We were told that this would not be the case; that we were by nature a poetical people, a nation easily duped by words, ready to array clouds in splendour, and bestow honour on the dust. This spirit we could never lose; and it was to diffuse this concentrated spirit of birth, that the new law was to be brought forward. We were assured that, when the name and title of Englishman was the sole patent of nobility, we should all be noble; that when no man born under English sway, felt another his superior in rank, courtesy and refinement would become the birth-right of all our countrymen. Let not England be so far disgraced, as to have it imagined that it can be without nobles, nature's true nobility, who bear their patent in their mien, who are from their cradle elevated above the rest of their species, because they are better than the rest. Among a race of independent, and generous, and well educated men, in a country where the imagination is empress of men's minds, there needs be no fear that we should want a perpetual succession of the high-born and lordly. That party, however, could hardly yet be considered a minority in the kingdom, who extolled the ornament of the column, "the Corinthian capital of polished society;" they appealed to prejudices without number, to old attachments and young hopes; to the expectation of thousands who might one day become peers; they set up as a scarecrow, the spectre of all that was sordid, mechanic and base in the commercial republics.

The plague had come to Athens. Hundreds of English residents returned to their own country. Raymond's beloved Athenians, the free, the noble people of the divinest town in Greece, fell like ripe corn before the merciless sickle of the adversary. Its pleasant places were deserted; its temples and palaces were converted into tombs; its energies, bent before towards the highest objects of human ambition, were now forced to converge to one point, the guarding against the innumerable arrows of the plague.

At any other time this disaster would have excited extreme compassion among us; but it was now passed over, while each mind was engaged by the coming controversy. It was not so with me; and the question of rank and right dwindled to insignificance in my eyes, when I pictured the scene of suffering Athens. I heard of the death of only sons; of wives and husbands most devoted; of the rending of ties twisted with the heart's fibres, of friend losing friend, and young mothers mourning for their first born; and these moving incidents were grouped and painted in my mind by the knowledge of the persons, by my esteem and affection for the sufferers. It was the admirers, friends, fellow soldiers of Raymond, families that had welcomed

Perdita to Greece, and lamented with her the loss of her lord, that were swept away, and went to dwell with them in the undistinguishing tomb.

The plague at Athens had been preceded and caused by the contagion from the East; and the scene of havoc and death continued to be acted there, on a scale of fearful magnitude. A hope that the visitation of the present year would prove the last, kept up the spirits of the merchants connected with these countries; but the inhabitants were driven to despair, or to a resignation which, arising from fanaticism, assumed the same dark hue. America had also received the taint; and, were it yellow fever or plague, the epidemic was gifted with a virulence before unfelt. The devastation was not confined to the towns, but spread throughout the country; the hunter died in the woods, the peasant in the corn-fields, and the fisher on his native waters.

A strange story was brought to us from the East, to which little credit would have been given, had not the fact been attested by a multitude of witnesses, in various parts of the world. On the twenty-first of June, it was said that an hour before noon, a black sun arose: an orb, the size of that luminary, but dark, defined, whose beams were shadows, ascended from the west; in about an hour it had reached the meridian, and eclipsed the bright parent of day. Night fell upon every country, night, sudden, rayless, entire. The stars came out, shedding their ineffectual glimmerings on the light-widowed earth. But soon the dim orb passed from over the sun, and lingered down the eastern heaven. As it descended, its dusky rays crossed the brilliant ones of the sun, and deadened or distorted them. The shadows of things assumed strange and ghastly shapes. The wild animals in the woods took fright at the unknown shapes figured on the ground. They fled they knew not whither; and the citizens were filled with greater dread, at the convulsion which "shook lions into civil streets;" — birds, strong-winged eagles, suddenly blinded, fell in the market-places, while owls and bats showed themselves welcoming the early night. Gradually the object of fear sank beneath the horizon, and to the last shot up shadowy beams into the otherwise radiant air. Such was the tale sent us from Asia, from the eastern extremity of Europe, and from Africa as far west as the Golden Coast.

Whether this story were true or not, the effects were certain. Through Asia, from the banks of the Nile to the shores of the Caspian, from the Hellespont even to the sea of Oman, a sudden panic was driven. The men filled the mosques; the women, veiled, hastened to the tombs, and carried offerings to the dead, thus to preserve the living. The plague was forgotten, in this new fear which the black sun had spread; and, though the dead multiplied, and the streets of Ispahan, of Pekin, and of Delhi were strewed with pestilence-struck corpses, men passed on, gazing on the ominous sky, regardless of the death beneath their feet. The christians sought their churches, — christian maidens, even at the feast of roses, clad in white, with shining veils, sought, in long procession, the places consecrated to their religion, filling the air with their hymns; while, ever and anon, from the lips of some poor mourner in the crowd, a voice of wailing burst, and the rest looked up, fancying they could discern the sweeping wings of angels, who passed over the earth, lamenting the disasters about to fall on man.

In the sunny clime of Persia, in the crowded cities of China, amidst the aromatic groves of Cashmere, and along the southern shores of the Mediterranean, such scenes had place. Even in Greece the tale of the sun of darkness increased the fears and despair of the dying multitude. We, in our cloudy isle, were far removed from danger, and the only circumstance that brought these disasters at all home to us, was the daily arrival of vessels from the east, crowded with emigrants, mostly English; for the Moslems, though the fear of death was spread keenly among them, still clung together; that, if they were to die (and if they were, death would as readily meet them on the homeless sea, or in far England, as in Persia,) — if they were to die, their bones might rest in earth made sacred by the relics of true believers. Mecca had never before been so crowded with pilgrims; yet the Arabs neglected to pillage the caravans, but, humble and weaponless, they joined the procession, praying Mahomet to avert plague from their tents and deserts.

I cannot describe the rapturous delight with which I turned from political brawls at home, and the physical evils of distant countries, to my own dear home, to the selected abode of goodness and love; to peace, and the interchange of every sacred sympathy. Had I never quitted Windsor, these emotions would not have been so intense; but I had in Greece been the prey of fear and deplorable change; in Greece, after a period of anxiety and sorrow, I had seen depart two, whose very names were the symbol of greatness and virtue. But such miseries could never intrude upon the domestic circle left to me, while, secluded in our beloved forest, we passed our lives in tranquillity. Some small change indeed the progress of years brought here; and time, as it is wont, stamped the traces of mortality on our pleasures and expectations.

Idris, the most affectionate wife, sister and friend, was a tender and loving mother. The feeling was not with her as with many, a pastime; it was a passion. We had had three children; one, the second in age, died while I was in Greece. This had dashed the triumphant and rapturous emotions of maternity with grief and fear. Before this event, the little beings, sprung from herself, the young heirs of her transient life, seemed to have a sure lease of existence; now she dreaded that the pitiless destroyer might snatch her remaining darlings, as it had snatched their brother. The least illness caused throes of terror; she was miserable if she were at all absent from them; her treasure of happiness she had garnered in their fragile being, and kept forever on the watch, lest the insidious thief should as before steal these valued gems. She had fortunately small cause for fear. Alfred, now nine years old, was an upright, manly little fellow, with radiant brow, soft eyes, and gentle, though independent disposition. Our youngest was yet in infancy; but his downy cheek was sprinkled with the roses of health, and his unwearied vivacity filled our halls with innocent laughter.

Clara had passed the age which, from its mute ignorance, was the source of the fears of Idris. Clara was dear to her, to all. There was so much intelligence combined with innocence, sensibility with forbearance, and seriousness with perfect good-humour, a beauty so transcendent, united to such endearing simplicity, that she hung like a pearl in the shrine of our possessions, a treasure of wonder and excellence.

At the beginning of winter our Alfred, now nine years of age, first went to school at Eton. This appeared to him the primary step towards manhood, and he was proportionably pleased. Community of study and amusement developed the best parts of his character, his steady perseverance, generosity, and well-governed firmness. What deep and sacred emotions are excited in a father’s bosom, when he first becomes convinced that his love for his child is not a mere instinct, but worthily bestowed, and that others, less akin, participate his approbation! It was supreme happiness to Idris and myself, to find that the frankness which Alfred’s open brow indicated, the intelligence of his eyes, the tempered sensibility of his tones, were not delusions, but indications of talents and virtues, which would "grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength." At this period, the termination of an animal's love for its offspring, — the true affection of the human parent commences. We no longer look on this dearest part of ourselves, as a tender plant which we must cherish, or a plaything for an idle hour. We build now on his intellectual faculties, we establish our hopes on his moral propensities. His weakness still imparts anxiety to this feeling, his ignorance prevents entire intimacy; but we begin to respect the future man, and to endeavour to secure his esteem, even as if he were our equal. What can a parent have more at heart than the good opinion of his child? In all our transactions with him our honour must be inviolate, the integrity of our relations untainted: fate and circumstance may, when he arrives at maturity, separate us for ever — but, as his aegis in danger, his consolation in hardship, let the ardent youth for ever bear with him through the rough path of life, love and honour for his parents.

We had lived so long in the vicinity of Eton, that its population of young folks was well known to us. Many of them had been Alfred's playmates, before they became his school-fellows. We now watched this youthful congregation with redoubled interest. We marked the difference of character among the boys, and endeavoured to read the future man in the stripling. There is nothing more lovely, to which the heart more yearns than a free-spirited boy, gentle, brave, and generous. Several of the Etonians had these characteristics; all were distinguished by a sense of honour, and spirit of enterprise; in some, as they verged towards manhood, this degenerated into presumption; but the younger ones, lads a little older than our own, were conspicuous for their gallant and sweet dispositions.

Here were the future governors of England; the men, who, when our ardour was cold, and our projects completed or destroyed for ever, when, our drama acted, we doffed the garb of the hour, and assumed the uniform of age, or of more equalising death; here were the beings who were to carry on the vast machine of society; here were the lovers, husbands, fathers; here the landlord, the politician, the soldier; some fancied that they were even now ready to appear on the stage, eager to make one among the *dramatis personæ* of active life. It was not long since I was like one of these beardless aspirants; when my boy shall have obtained the place I now hold, I shall have tottered into a grey-headed, wrinkled old man. Strange system!

riddle of the Sphinx, most awe-striking! that thus man remains, while we the individuals pass away. Such is, to borrow the words of an eloquent and philosophic writer, “the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression.”*

* Burke’s *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

Willingly do I give place to thee, dear Alfred! advance, offspring of tender love, child of our hopes; advance a soldier on the road to which I have been the pioneer! I will make way for thee. I have already put off the carelessness of childhood, the unlined brow, and springy gait of early years, that they may adorn thee. Advance; and I will despoil myself still further for thy advantage. Time shall rob me of the graces of maturity, shall take the fire from my eyes, and agility from my limbs, shall steal the better part of life, eager expectation and passionate love, and shower them in double portion on thy dear head. Advance! avail thyself of the gift, thou and thy comrades; and in the drama you are about to act, do not disgrace those who taught you to enter on the stage, and to pronounce becomingly the parts assigned to you! May your progress be uninterrupted and secure; born during the spring-tide of the hopes of man, may you lead up the summer to which no winter may succeed!

CHAPTER XVI

Some disorder had surely crept into the course of the elements, destroying their benignant influence. The wind, prince of air, raged through his kingdom, lashing the sea into fury, and subduing the rebel earth into some sort of obedience.

The God sends down his angry plagues from high,
Famine and pestilence in heaps they die.
Again in vengeance of his wrath he falls
On their great hosts, and breaks their tottering walls;
Arrests their navies on the ocean’s plain,
And whelms their strength with mountains of the main.*

* Elton’s translation of Hesiod’s *Works and Days*.

Their deadly power shook the flourishing countries of the south, and during winter, even, we, in our northern retreat, began to quake under their ill effects.

That fable is unjust, which gives the superiority to the sun over the wind. Who has not seen the lightsome earth, the balmy atmosphere, and basking nature become dark, cold and ungenial, when the sleeping wind has awoke in the east? Or, when the dun clouds thickly veil the sky, while exhaustless stores of rain are poured down, until, the dank earth refusing to imbibe the superabundant moisture, it lies in pools on the surface; when the torch of day seems like a meteor, to be quenched; who has not seen the cloud-stirring north arise, the streaked blue appear, and soon an opening made in the vapours in the eye of the wind, through which the bright azure shines? The clouds become thin; an arch is formed for ever rising upwards, till, the universal cope being unveiled, the sun pours forth its rays, re-animated and fed by the breeze.

Then mighty art thou, O wind, to be throned above all other vicegerents of nature’s power; whether thou comest destroying from the east, or pregnant with elementary life from the west; thee the clouds obey; the sun is subservient to thee; the shoreless ocean is thy slave! Thou sweepest over the earth, and oaks, the growth of centuries, submit to thy viewless axe; the snow-drift is scattered on the pinnacles of the Alps, the avalanche thunders down their valleys. Thou holdest the keys of the frost, and canst first chain and then set free the streams; under thy gentle governance the buds and leaves are born, they flourish nursed by thee.

Why dost thou howl thus, O wind? By day and by night for four long months thy roarings have not ceased — the shores of the sea are strewn with wrecks, its keel-welcoming surface has become impassable, the earth has shed her beauty in obedience to thy command; the frail balloon dares no longer sail on the agitated air; thy ministers, the clouds, deluge the land with rain; rivers forsake their banks; the wild torrent tears up the mountain path; plain and wood, and verdant dell are despoiled of their loveliness; our very cities are wasted by thee. Alas, what will become of us? It seems as if the giant waves of ocean, and vast arms of the sea, were about to wrench the deep-rooted island from its centre; and cast it, a ruin and a wreck, upon the fields of the Atlantic.

What are we, the inhabitants of this globe, least among the many that people infinite space? Our minds embrace infinity; the visible mechanism of our being is subject to merest accident. Day by day we are forced to believe this. He whom a scratch has disorganised, he who disappears from apparent life under the influence of the hostile agency at work around us, had the same powers as I — I also am subject to the same laws. In the face of all this we call ourselves lords of the creation, wielders of the elements, masters of life and death, and we allege in excuse of this arrogance, that though the individual is destroyed, man continues for ever.

Thus, losing our identity, that of which we are chiefly conscious, we glory in the continuity of our species, and learn to regard death without terror. But when any whole nation becomes the victim of the destructive powers of exterior agents, then indeed man shrinks into insignificance, he feels his tenure of life insecure, his inheritance on earth cut off.

I remember, after having witnessed the destructive effects of a fire, I could not even behold a small one in a stove, without a sensation of fear. The mounting flames had curled round the building, as it fell, and was destroyed. They insinuated themselves into the substances about them, and the impediments to their progress yielded at their touch. Could we take integral parts of this power, and not be subject to its operation? Could we domesticate a cub of this wild beast, and not fear its growth and maturity?

Thus we began to feel, with regard to many-visaged death let loose on the chosen districts of our fair habitation, and above all, with regard to the plague. We feared the coming summer. Nations, bordering on the already infected countries, began to enter upon serious plans for the better keeping out of the enemy. We, a commercial people, were obliged to bring such schemes under consideration; and the question of contagion became matter of earnest disquisition.

That the plague was not what is commonly called contagious, like the scarlet fever, or extinct small-pox, was proved. It was called an epidemic. But the grand question was still unsettled of how this epidemic was generated and increased. If infection depended upon the air, the air was subject to infection. As for instance, a typhus fever has been brought by ships to one sea-port town; yet the very people who brought it there, were incapable of communicating it in a town more fortunately situated. But how are we to judge of airs, and pronounce — in such a city plague will die unproductive; in such another, nature has provided for it a plentiful harvest? In the same way, individuals may escape ninety-nine times, and receive the death-blow at the hundredth; because bodies are sometimes in a state to reject the infection of malady, and at others, thirsty to imbibe it. These reflections made our legislators pause, before they could decide on the laws to be put in force. The evil was so wide-spreading, so violent and immedicable, that no care, no prevention could be judged superfluous, which even added a chance to our escape.

These were questions of prudence; there was no immediate necessity for an earnest caution. England was still secure. France, Germany, Italy and Spain, were interposed, walls yet without a breach, between us and the plague. Our vessels truly were the sport of winds and waves, even as Gulliver was the toy of the Brobdignagians; but we on our stable abode could not be hurt in life or limb by these eruptions of nature. We could not fear — we did not. Yet a feeling of awe, a breathless sentiment of wonder, a painful sense of the degradation of humanity, was introduced into every heart. Nature, our mother, and our friend, had turned on us a brow of menace. She showed us plainly, that, though she permitted us to assign her laws and subdue her apparent powers, yet, if she put forth but a finger, we must quake. She could take our globe, fringed with mountains, girded by the atmosphere, containing the condition of our being, and all that man's mind could invent or his force achieve; she could take the ball in her hand, and cast it into space, where life would be drunk up, and man and all his efforts for ever annihilated.

These speculations were rife among us; yet not the less we proceeded in our daily occupations, and our plans, whose accomplishment demanded the lapse of many years. No voice was heard telling us to hold! When foreign distresses came to be felt by us through the channels of commerce, we set ourselves to apply remedies. Subscriptions were made for the emigrants, and merchants bankrupt by the failure of trade. The English spirit awoke to its full activity, and, as it had ever done, set itself to resist the evil, and to stand in the breach which diseased nature had suffered chaos and death to make in the bounds and banks which had hitherto kept them out.

At the commencement of summer, we began to feel, that the mischief which had taken place in distant countries was greater than we had at first suspected. Quito was destroyed by an earthquake. Mexico laid waste by the united effects of storm, pestilence and famine. Crowds of emigrants inundated the west of Europe; and our island had become the refuge of thousands. In the mean time Ryland had been chosen Protector. He had sought this office with eagerness, under the idea of turning his whole forces to the suppression of the privileged orders of our community. His measures were thwarted, and his schemes interrupted by this new state of things. Many of the foreigners were utterly destitute; and their increasing numbers at length forbade a recourse to the usual modes of relief. Trade was stopped by the failure of the interchange of cargoes usual between us, and America, India, Egypt and Greece. A sudden break was made in the routine of our lives. In vain our Protector and his partisans sought to conceal this truth; in vain, day after day, he appointed a period for the discussion of the new laws concerning hereditary rank and privilege; in vain he endeavoured to represent the evil as partial and temporary. These disasters came home to so many bosoms, and, through the various channels of commerce, were carried so entirely into every class and division of the community, that of necessity they became the first question in the state, the chief subjects to which we must turn our attention.

Can it be true, each asked the other with wonder and dismay, that whole countries are laid waste, whole nations annihilated, by these disorders in nature? The vast cities of America, the fertile plains of Hindustan, the crowded abodes of the Chinese, are menaced with utter ruin. Where late the busy multitudes assembled for pleasure or profit, now only the sound of wailing and misery is heard. The air is empoisoned, and each human being inhales death, even while in youth and health, their hopes are in the flower. We called to mind the plague of 1348, when it was calculated that a third of mankind had been destroyed. As yet western Europe was uninfected; would it always be so?

O, yes, it would — Countrymen, fear not! In the still uncultivated wilds of America, what wonder that among its other giant destroyers, Plague should be numbered! It is of old a native of the East, sister of the tornado, the earthquake, and the simoom. Child of the sun, and nursling of the tropics, it would expire in these climes. It drinks the dark blood of the inhabitant of the south, but it never feasts on the pale-faced Celt. If perchance some stricken Asiatic come among us, plague dies with him, uncommunicated and innoxious. Let us weep for our brethren, though we can never experience their reverse. Let us lament over and assist the children of the garden of the earth. Late we envied their abodes, their spicy groves, fertile plains, and abundant loveliness. But in this mortal life extremes are always matched; the thorn grows with the rose, the poison tree and the cinnamon mingle their boughs. Persia, with its cloth of gold, marble halls, and infinite wealth, is now a tomb. The tent of the Arab is fallen in the sands, and his horse spurns the ground unbridled and unsaddled. The voice of lamentation fills the valley of Cashmere; its dells and woods, its cool fountains, and gardens of roses, are polluted by the dead; in Circassia and Georgia the spirit of beauty weeps over the ruin of its favourite temple — the form of woman.

Our own distresses, though they were occasioned by the fictitious reciprocity of commerce, increased in due proportion. Bankers, merchants, and manufacturers, whose trade depended on exports and interchange of wealth, became bankrupt. Such things, when they happen singly, affect only the immediate parties; but the prosperity of the nation was now shaken by frequent and extensive losses. Families, bred in opulence and luxury, were reduced to beggary. The very state of peace in which we gloried was injurious; there were no means of employing the idle, or of sending any overplus of population out of the country. Even the source of colonies was dried up, for in New Holland, Van Diemen’s Land, and the Cape of Good Hope, plague raged. O, for some medicinal vial to purge unwholesome nature, and bring back the earth to its accustomed health!

Ryland was a man of strong intellects and quick and sound decision in the usual course of things, but he stood aghast at the multitude of evils that gathered round us. Must he tax the landed interest to assist our commercial population? To do this, he must gain the favour of the chief land-holders, the nobility of the country; and these were his vowed enemies — he must conciliate them by abandoning his favourite scheme of equalisation; he must confirm them in their manorial rights; he must sell his cherished plans for the permanent good of his country, for temporary relief. He must aim no more at the dear object of his ambition; throwing his arms aside, he must for present ends give up the ultimate object of his endeavours. He came to Windsor to consult with us. Every day added to his difficulties; the arrival of fresh vessels with emigrants, the total cessation of commerce, the starving multitude that thronged around the palace of the Protectorate, were circumstances not to be tampered with. The blow was struck; the aristocracy obtained all they wished, and they subscribed to a twelvemonths’ bill, which levied twenty per cent on all the rent-rolls of the country.

Calm was now restored to the metropolis, and to the populous cities, before driven to desperation; and we returned to the consideration of distant calamities, wondering if the future would bring any alleviation to their excess. It was August; so there could be small hope of relief during the heats. On the contrary, the disease gained virulence, while starvation did its accustomed work. Thousands died unlamented; for beside the yet warm corpse the mourner was stretched, made mute by death.

On the eighteenth of this month news arrived in London that the plague was in France and Italy. These tidings were at first whispered about town; but no one dared express aloud the soul-quailing intelligence. When any one met a friend in the street, he only cried as he hurried on, “You know!” — while the other, with an ejaculation of fear and horror, would answer, —”What will become of us?” At length it was mentioned in the newspapers. The paragraph was inserted in an obscure part: “We regret to state that there can be no longer a doubt of the plague having been introduced at Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles." No word of comment followed; each reader made his own fearful one. We were as a man who hears that his house is burning, and yet hurries through the streets, borne along by a lurking hope of a mistake, till he turns the corner, and sees his sheltering roof enveloped in a flame. Before it had been a rumour; but now in words inerasable, in definite and undeniable print, the knowledge went forth. Its obscurity of situation rendered it the more conspicuous: the diminutive letters grew gigantic to the bewildered eye of fear: they seemed graven with a pen of iron, impressed by fire, woven in the clouds, stamped on the very front of the universe.

The English, whether travellers or residents, came pouring in one great revulsive stream, back on their own country; and with them crowds of Italians and Spaniards. Our little island was filled even to bursting. At first an unusual quantity of specie made its appearance with the emigrants; but these people had no means of receiving back into their hands what they spent among us. With the advance of summer, and the increase of the distemper, rents were unpaid, and their remittances failed them. It was impossible to see these crowds of wretched, perishing creatures, late nurslings of luxury, and not stretch out a hand to save them. As at the conclusion of the eighteenth century, the English unlocked their hospitable store, for the relief of those driven from their homes by political revolution; so now they were not backward in affording aid to the victims of a more wide-spreading calamity. We had many foreign friends whom we eagerly sought out, and relieved from dreadful penury. Our Castle became an asylum for the unhappy. A little population occupied its halls. The revenue of its possessor, which had always found a mode of expenditure congenial to his generous nature, was now attended to more parsimoniously, that it might embrace a wider portion of utility. It was not however money, except partially, but the necessaries of life, that became scarce. It was difficult to find an immediate remedy. The usual one of imports was entirely cut off. In this emergency, to feed the very people to whom we had given refuge, we were obliged to yield to the plough and the mattock our pleasure-grounds and parks. Live stock diminished sensibly in the country, from the effects of the great demand in the market. Even the poor deer, our antlered proteges, were obliged to fall for the sake of worthier pensioners. The labour necessary to bring the lands to this sort of culture, employed and fed the offcasts of the diminished manufactories.

Adrian did not rest only with the exertions he could make with regard to his own possessions. He addressed himself to the wealthy of the land; he made proposals in parliament little adapted to please the rich; but his earnest pleadings and benevolent eloquence were irresistible. To give up their pleasure-grounds to the agriculturist, to diminish sensibly the number of horses kept for the purposes of luxury throughout the country, were means obvious, but unpleasing. Yet, to the honour of the English be it recorded, that, although natural disinclination made them delay awhile, yet when the misery of their fellow-creatures became glaring, an enthusiastic generosity inspired their decrees. The most luxurious were often the first to part with their indulgencies. As is common in communities, a fashion was set. The high-born ladies of the country would have deemed themselves disgraced if they had now enjoyed, what they before called a necessary, the ease of a carriage. Chairs, as in olden time, and Indian palanquins were introduced for the infirm; but else it was nothing singular to see females of rank going on foot to places of fashionable resort. It was more common, for all who possessed landed property to secede to their estates, attended by whole troops of the indigent, to cut down their woods to erect temporary dwellings, and to portion out their parks, parterres and flower-gardens, to necessitous families. Many of these, of high rank in their own countries, now, with hoe in hand, turned up the soil. It was found necessary at last to check the spirit of sacrifice, and to remind those whose generosity proceeded to lavish waste, that, until the present state of things became permanent, of which there was no likelihood, it was wrong to carry change so far as to make a reaction difficult. Experience demonstrated that in a year or two pestilence would cease; it were well that in the mean time we should not have destroyed our fine breeds of horses, or have utterly changed the face of the ornamented portion of the country.

It may be imagined that things were in a bad state indeed, before this spirit of benevolence could have struck such deep roots. The infection had now spread in the southern provinces of France. But that country had so many resources in the way of agriculture, that the rush of population from one part of it to another, and its increase through foreign emigration, was less felt than with us. The panic struck appeared of more injury, than disease and its natural concomitants.

Winter was hailed, a general and never-failing physician. The embrowning woods, and swollen rivers, the evening mists, and morning frosts, were welcomed with gratitude. The effects of purifying cold were immediately felt; and the lists of mortality abroad were curtailed each week. Many of our visitors left us: those whose homes were far in the south, fled delightedly from our northern winter, and sought their native land, secure of plenty even after their fearful visitation. We breathed again. What the coming summer would bring, we knew not; but the present months were our own, and our hopes of a cessation of pestilence were high.

CHAPTER XVII

I have lingered thus long on the extreme bank, the wasting shoal that stretched into the stream of life, dallying with the shadow of death. Thus long, I have cradled my heart in retrospection of past happiness, when hope was. Why not for ever thus? I am not immortal; and the thread of my history might be spun out to the limits of my existence. But the same sentiment that first led me to portray scenes replete with tender recollections, now bids me hurry on. The same yearning of this warm, panting heart, that has made me in written words record my vagabond youth, my serene manhood, and the passions of my soul, makes me now recoil from further delay. I must complete my work.

Here then I stand, as I said, beside the fleet waters of the flowing years, and now away! Spread the sail, and strain with oar, hurrying by dark impending crags, adown steep rapids, even to the sea of desolation I have reached. Yet one moment, one brief interval before I put from shore — once, once again let me fancy myself as I was in 2094 in my abode at Windsor, let me close my eyes, and imagine that the immeasurable boughs of its oaks still shadow me, its castle walls anear. Let fancy portray the joyous scene of the twentieth of June, such as even now my aching heart recalls it.

Circumstances had called me to London; here I heard talk that symptoms of the plague had occurred in hospitals of that city. I returned to Windsor; my brow was clouded, my heart heavy; I entered the Little Park, as was my custom, at the Frogmore gate, on my way to the Castle. A great part of these grounds had been given to cultivation, and strips of potato-land and corn were scattered here and there. The rooks cawed loudly in the trees above; mixed with their hoarse cries I heard a lively strain of music. It was Alfred's birthday. The young people, the Etonians, and children of the neighbouring gentry, held a mock fair, to which all the country people were invited. The park was speckled by tents, whose flaunting colours and gaudy flags, waving in the sunshine, added to the gaiety of the scene. On a platform erected beneath the terrace, a number of the younger part of the assembly were dancing. I leaned against a tree to observe them. The band played the wild eastern air of Weber introduced in Abu Hassan; its volatile notes gave wings to the feet of the dancers, while the lookers-on unconsciously beat time. At first the tripping measure lifted my spirit with it, and for a moment my eyes gladly followed the mazes of the dance. The revulsion of thought passed like keen steel to my heart. Ye are all going to die, I thought; already your tomb is built up around you. Awhile, because you are gifted with agility and strength, you fancy that you live: but frail is the “bower of flesh” that encaskets life; dissoluble the silver cord than binds you to it. The joyous soul, charioted from pleasure to pleasure by the graceful mechanism of well-formed limbs, will suddenly feel the axle-tree give way, and spring and wheel dissolve in dust. Not one of you, O! fated crowd, can escape — not one! not my own ones! not my Idris and her babes! Horror and misery! Already the gay dance vanished, the green sward was strewn with corpses, the blue air above became fetid with deathly exhalations. Shriek, ye clarions! ye loud trumpets, howl! Pile dirge on dirge; rouse the funereal chords; let the air ring with dire wailing; let wild discord rush on the wings of the wind! Already I hear it, while guardian angels, attendant on humanity, their task achieved, hasten away, and their departure is announced by melancholy strains; faces all unseemly with weeping, forced open my lids; faster and faster many groups of these woe-begone countenances thronged around, exhibiting every variety of wretchedness — well known faces mingled with the distorted creations of fancy. Ashy pale, Raymond and Perdita sat apart, looking on with sad smiles. Adrian’s countenance flitted across, tainted by death — Idris, with eyes languidly closed and livid lips, was about to slide into the wide grave. The confusion grew — their looks of sorrow changed to mockery; they nodded their heads in time to the music, whose clang became maddening.

I felt that this was insanity — I sprang forward to throw it off; I rushed into the midst of the crowd. Idris saw me: with light step she advanced; as I folded her in my arms, feeling, as I did, that I thus enclosed what was to me a world, yet frail as the waterdrop which the noon-day sun will drink from the water lily’s cup; tears filled my eyes, unwont to be thus moistened. The joyful welcome of my boys, the soft gratulation of Clara, the pressure of Adrian’s hand, contributed to unman me. I felt that they were near, that they were safe, yet methought this was all deceit; — the earth reeled, the firm-enrooted trees moved — dizziness came over me — I sank to the ground.

My beloved friends were alarmed — nay, they expressed their alarm so anxiously, that I dared not pronounce the word *plague*, that hovered on my lips, lest they should construe my perturbed looks into a symptom, and see infection in my languor. I had scarcely recovered, and with feigned hilarity had brought back smiles into my little circle, when we saw Ryland approach.

Ryland had something the appearance of a farmer; of a man whose muscles and full grown stature had been developed under the influence of vigorous exercise and exposure to the elements. This was to a great degree the case: for, though a large landed proprietor, yet, being a projector, and of an ardent and industrious disposition, he had on his own estate given himself up to agricultural labours. When he went as ambassador to the Northern States of America, he, for some time, planned his entire migration; and went so far as to make several journeys far westward on that immense continent, for the purpose of choosing the site of his new abode. Ambition turned his thoughts from these designs — ambition, which labouring through various lets and hindrances, had now led him to the summit of his hopes, in making him Lord Protector of England.

His countenance was rough but intelligent — his ample brow and quick grey eyes seemed to look out, over his own plans, and the opposition of his enemies. His voice was stentorian: his hand stretched out in debate, seemed by its gigantic and muscular form, to warn his hearers that words were not his only weapons. Few people had discovered some cowardice and much infirmity of purpose under this imposing exterior. No man could crush a “butterfly on the wheel” with better effect; no man better cover a speedy retreat from a powerful adversary. This had been the secret of his secession at the time of Lord Raymond’s election. In the unsteady glance of his eye, in his extreme desire to learn the opinions of all, in the feebleness of his hand-writing, these qualities might be obscurely traced, but they were not generally known. He was now our Lord Protector. He had canvassed eagerly for this post. His protectorate was to be distinguished by every kind of innovation on the aristocracy. This his selected task was exchanged for the far different one of encountering the ruin caused by the convulsions of physical nature. He was incapable of meeting these evils by any comprehensive system; he had resorted to expedient after expedient, and could never be induced to put a remedy in force, till it came too late to be of use.

Certainly the Ryland that advanced towards us now, bore small resemblance to the powerful, ironical, seemingly fearless canvasser for the first rank among Englishmen. Our native oak, as his partisans called him, was visited truly by a nipping winter. He scarcely appeared half his usual height; his joints were unknit, his limbs would not support him; his face was contracted, his eye wandering; debility of purpose and dastard fear were expressed in every gesture.

In answer to our eager questions, one word alone fell, as it were involuntarily, from his convulsed lips: *The Plague*. —”Where?”—”Everywhere — we must fly — all fly — but whither? No man can tell — there is no refuge on earth, it comes on us like a thousand packs of wolves — we must all fly — where shall you go? Where can any of us go?”

These words were syllabled trembling by the iron man. Adrian replied, “Whither indeed would you fly? We must all remain; and do our best to help our suffering fellow-creatures.”

“Help!” said Ryland, “there is no help! — great God, who talks of help! All the world has the plague!”

“Then to avoid it, we must quit the world,” observed Adrian, with a gentle smile.

Ryland groaned; cold drops stood on his brow. It was useless to oppose his paroxysm of terror: but we soothed and encouraged him, so that after an interval he was better able to explain to us the ground of his alarm. It had come sufficiently home to him. One of his servants, while waiting on him, had suddenly fallen down dead. The physician declared that he died of the plague. We endeavoured to calm him — but our own hearts were not calm. I saw the eye of Idris wander from me to her children, with an anxious appeal to my judgment. Adrian was absorbed in meditation. For myself, I own that Ryland’s words rang in my ears; all the world was infected; — in what uncontaminated seclusion could I save my beloved treasures, until the shadow of death had passed from over the earth? We sunk into silence: a silence that drank in the doleful accounts and prognostications of our guest.

We had receded from the crowd; and ascending the steps of the terrace, sought the Castle. Our change of cheer struck those nearest to us; and, by means of Ryland's servants, the report soon spread that he had fled from the plague in London. The sprightly parties broke up — they assembled in whispering groups. The spirit of gaiety was eclipsed; the music ceased; the young people left their occupations and gathered together. The lightness of heart which had dressed them in masquerade habits, had decorated their tents, and assembled them in fantastic groups, appeared a sin against, and a provocative to, the awful destiny that had laid its palsying hand upon hope and life. The merriment of the hour was an unholy mockery of the sorrows of man. The foreigners whom we had among us, who had fled from the plague in their own country, now saw their last asylum invaded; and, fear making them garrulous, they described to eager listeners the miseries they had beheld in cities visited by the calamity, and gave fearful accounts of the insidious and irremediable nature of the disease.

We had entered the Castle. Idris stood at a window that over-looked the park; her maternal eyes sought her own children among the young crowd. An Italian lad had got an audience about him, and with animated gestures was describing some scene of horror. Alfred stood immoveable before him, his whole attention absorbed. Little Evelyn had endeavoured to draw Clara away to play with him; but the Italian's tale arrested her, she crept near, her lustrous eyes fixed on the speaker. Either watching the crowd in the park, or occupied by painful reflection, we were all silent; Ryland stood by himself in an embrasure of the window; Adrian paced the hall, revolving some new and overpowering idea — suddenly he stopped and said: "I have long expected this; could we in reason expect that this island should be exempt from the universal visitation? The evil is come home to us, and we must not shrink from our fate. What are your plans, my Lord Protector, for the benefit of our country?"

"For heaven's love! Windsor," cried Ryland, "do not mock me with that title. Death and disease level all men. I neither pretend to protect nor govern an hospital — such will England quickly become."

"Do you then intend, now in time of peril, to recede from your duties?"

"Duties! speak rationally, my Lord! — when I am a plague-spotted corpse, where will my duties be? Every man for himself! the devil take the protectorship, say I, if it expose me to danger!"

"Faint-hearted man!" cried Adrian indignantly—"Your countrymen put their trust in you, and you betray them!"

"I betray them!" said Ryland, "the plague betrays me. Faint-hearted! It is well, shut up in your castle, out of danger, to boast yourself out of fear. Take the Protectorship who will; before God I renounce it!"

"And before God," replied his opponent, fervently, "do I receive it! No one will canvass for this honour now — none envy my danger or labours. Deposit your powers in my hands. Long have I fought with death, and much" (he stretched out his thin hand) "much have I suffered in the struggle. It is not by flying, but by facing the enemy, that we can conquer. If my last combat is now about to be fought, and I am to be worsted — so let it be!"

"But come, Ryland, recollect yourself! Men have hitherto thought you magnanimous and wise, will you cast aside these titles? Consider the panic your departure will occasion. Return to London. I will go with you. Encourage the people by your presence. I will incur all the danger. Shame! shame! if the first magistrate of England be foremost to renounce his duties."

Meanwhile among our guests in the park, all thoughts of festivity had faded. As summer-flies are scattered by rain, so did this congregation, late noisy and happy, in sadness and melancholy murmurs break up, dwindling away apace. With the set sun and the deepening twilight the park became nearly empty. Adrian and Ryland were still in earnest discussion. We had prepared a banquet for our guests in the lower hall of the castle; and thither Idris and I repaired to receive and entertain the few that remained. There is nothing more melancholy than a merry-meeting thus turned to sorrow: the gala dresses — the decorations, gay as they might otherwise be, receive a solemn and funereal appearance. If such change be painful from lighter causes, it weighed with intolerable heaviness from the knowledge that the earth's desolator had at last, even as an arch-fiend, lightly over-leaped the boundaries our precautions raised, and at once enthroned himself in the full and beating heart of our country. Idris sat at the top of the half-empty hall. Pale and tearful, she almost forgot her duties as hostess; her eyes were fixed on her children. Alfred's serious air showed that he still revolved the tragic story related by the Italian boy. Evelyn was the only mirthful creature present: he sat on Clara's lap; and, making matter of glee from his own fancies, laughed aloud. The vaulted roof echoed again his infant tone. The poor mother who had brooded long over, and suppressed the expression of her anguish, now burst into tears, and folding her babe in her arms, hurried from the hall. Clara and Alfred followed. While the rest of the company, in confused murmur, which grew louder and louder, gave voice to their many fears.

The younger part gathered round me to ask my advice; and those who had friends in London were anxious beyond the rest, to ascertain the present extent of disease in the metropolis. I encouraged them with such thoughts of cheer as presented themselves. I told them exceedingly few deaths had yet been occasioned by pestilence, and gave them hopes, as we were the last visited, so the calamity might have lost its most venomous power before it had reached us. The cleanliness, habits of order, and the manner in which our cities were built, were all in our favour. As it was an epidemic, its chief force was derived from pernicious qualities in the air, and it would probably do little harm where this was naturally salubrious. At first, I had spoken only to those nearest me; but the whole assembly gathered about me, and I found that I was listened to by all. “My friends,” I said, “our risk is common; our precautions and exertions shall be common also. If manly courage and resistance can save us, we will be saved. We will fight the enemy to the last. Plague shall not find us a ready prey; we will dispute every inch of ground; and, by methodical and inflexible laws, pile invincible barriers to the progress of our foe. Perhaps in no part of the world has she met with so systematic and determined an opposition. Perhaps no country is naturally so well protected against our invader; nor has nature anywhere been so well assisted by the hand of man. We will not despair. We are neither cowards nor fatalists; but, believing that God has placed the means for our preservation in our own hands, we will use those means to our utmost. Remember that cleanliness, sobriety, and even good-humour and benevolence, are our best medicines.”

There was little I could add to this general exhortation; for the plague, though in London, was not among us. I dismissed the guests therefore; and they went thoughtful, more than sad, to await the events in store for them.

I now sought Adrian, anxious to hear the result of his discussion with Ryland. He had in part prevailed; the Lord Protector consented to return to London for a few weeks; during which time things should be so arranged, as to occasion less consternation at his departure. Adrian and Idris were together. The sadness with which the former had first heard that the plague was in London had vanished; the energy of his purpose informed his body with strength, the solemn joy of enthusiasm and self-devotion illuminated his countenance; and the weakness of his physical nature seemed to pass from him, as the cloud of humanity did, in the ancient fable, from the divine lover of Semele. He was endeavouring to encourage his sister, and to bring her to look on his intent in a less tragic light than she was prepared to do; and with passionate eloquence he unfolded his designs to her.

“Let me, at the first word,” he said, “relieve your mind from all fear on my account. I will not task myself beyond my powers, nor will I needlessly seek danger. I feel that I know what ought to be done, and as my presence is necessary for the accomplishment of my plans, I will take especial care to preserve my life.

“I am now going to undertake an office fitted for me. I cannot intrigue, or work a tortuous path through the labyrinth of men’s vices and passions; but I can bring patience, and sympathy, and such aid as art affords, to the bed of disease; I can raise from earth the miserable orphan, and awaken to new hopes the shut heart of the mourner. I can enchain the plague in limits, and set a term to the misery it would occasion; courage, forbearance, and watchfulness, are the forces I bring towards this great work.

“O, I shall be something now! From my birth I have aspired like the eagle — but, unlike the eagle, my wings have failed, and my vision has been blinded. Disappointment and sickness have hitherto held dominion over me; twin born with me, my *would*, was for ever enchained by the *shall not*, of these my tyrants. A shepherd-boy that tends a silly flock on the mountains, was more in the scale of society than I. Congratulate me then that I have found fitting scope for my powers. I have often thought of offering my services to the pestilence-stricken towns of France and Italy; but fear of paining you, and expectation of this catastrophe, withheld me. To England and to Englishmen I dedicate myself. If I can save one of her mighty spirits from the deadly shaft; if I can ward disease from one of her smiling cottages, I shall not have lived in vain.”

Strange ambition this! Yet such was Adrian. He appeared given up to contemplation, averse to excitement, a lowly student, a man of visions — but afford him worthy theme, and —

Like to the lark at break of day arising,
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate.*

so did he spring up from listlessness and unproductive thought, to the highest pitch of virtuous action.

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* Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*.

With him went enthusiasm, the high-wrought resolve, the eye that without blenching could look at death. With us remained sorrow, anxiety, and unendurable expectation of evil. The man, says Lord Bacon, who hath wife and children, has given hostages to fortune. Vain was all philosophical reasoning — vain all fortitude — vain, vain, a reliance on probable good. I might heap high the scale with logic, courage, and resignation — but let one fear for Idris and our children enter the opposite one, and, over-weighed, it kicked the beam.

The plague was in London! Fools that we were not long ago to have foreseen this. We wept over the ruin of the boundless continents of the east, and the desolation of the western world; while we fancied that the little channel between our island and the rest of the earth was to preserve us alive among the dead. It were no mighty leap methinks from Calais to Dover. The eye easily discerns the sister land; they were united once; and the little path that runs between looks in a map but as a trodden footway through high grass. Yet this small interval was to save us: the sea was to rise a wall of adamant — without, disease and misery — within, a shelter from evil, a nook of the garden of paradise — a particle of celestial soil, which no evil could invade — truly we were wise in our generation, to imagine all these things!

But we are awake now. The plague is in London; the air of England is tainted, and her sons and daughters strew the unwholesome earth. And now, the sea, late our defence, seems our prison bound; hemmed in by its gulfs, we shall die like the famished inhabitants of a besieged town. Other nations have a fellowship in death; but we, shut out from all neighbourhood, must bury our own dead, and little England become a wide, wide tomb.

This feeling of universal misery assumed concentration and shape, when I looked on my wife and children; and the thought of danger to them possessed my whole being with fear. How could I save them? I revolved a thousand and a thousand plans. They should not die — first I would be gathered to nothingness, ere infection should come anear these idols of my soul. I would walk barefoot through the world, to find an uninfected spot; I would build my home on some wave-tossed plank, drifted about on the barren, shoreless ocean. I would betake me with them to some wild beast's den, where a tiger's cubs, which I would slay, had been reared in health. I would seek the mountain eagle's eyrie, and live years suspended in some inaccessible recess of a sea-bounding cliff — no labour too great, no scheme too wild, if it promised life to them. O! ye heart-strings of mine, could ye be torn asunder, and my soul not spend itself in tears of blood for sorrow!

Idris, after the first shock, regained a portion of fortitude. She studiously shut out all prospect of the future, and cradled her heart in present blessings. She never for a moment lost sight of her children. But while they in health sported about her, she could cherish contentment and hope. A strange and wild restlessness came over me — the more intolerable, because I was forced to conceal it. My fears for Adrian were ceaseless; August had come; and the symptoms of plague increased rapidly in London. It was deserted by all who possessed the power of removing; and he, the brother of my soul, was exposed to the perils from which all but slaves enchained by circumstance fled. He remained to combat the fiend — his side unguarded, his toils unshared — infection might even reach him, and he die unattended and alone. By day and night these thoughts pursued me. I resolved to visit London, to see him; to quiet these agonizing throes by the sweet medicine of hope, or the opiate of despair.

It was not until I arrived at Brentford, that I perceived much change in the face of the country. The better sort of houses were shut up; the busy trade of the town palsied; there was an air of anxiety among the few passengers I met, and they looked wonderingly at my carriage — the first they had seen pass towards London, since pestilence sat on its high places, and possessed its busy streets. I met several funerals; they were slenderly attended by mourners, and were regarded by the spectators as omens of direst import. Some gazed on these processions with wild eagerness — others fled timidly — some wept aloud.

Adrian's chief endeavour, after the immediate succour of the sick, had been to disguise the symptoms and progress of the plague from the inhabitants of London. He knew that fear and melancholy forebodings were powerful assistants to disease; that desponding and brooding care rendered the physical nature of man peculiarly susceptible of infection. No unseemly sights were therefore discernible: the shops were in general open, the concourse of passengers in some degree kept up. But although the appearance of an infected town was avoided, to me, who had not beheld it since the commencement of the visitation, London appeared sufficiently changed. There were no carriages, and grass had sprung high in the streets; the houses had a desolate look; most of the shutters were closed; and there was a ghast and frightened stare in the persons I met, very different from the usual business-like demeanour of the Londoners. My solitary carriage attracted notice, as it rattled along towards the Protectoral Palace — and the fashionable streets leading to it wore a still more dreary and deserted appearance. I found Adrian's antechamber crowded — it was his hour for giving audience. I was unwilling to disturb his labours, and waited, watching the ingress and egress of the petitioners. They consisted of people of the middling and lower classes of society, whose means of subsistence failed with the cessation of trade, and of the busy spirit of money-making in all its branches, peculiar to our country. There was an air of anxiety, sometimes of terror in the new-comers, strongly contrasted with the resigned and even satisfied mien of those who had had audience. I could read the influence of my friend in their quickened motions and cheerful faces. Two o'clock struck, after which none were admitted; those who had been disappointed went sullenly or sorrowfully away, while I entered the audience-chamber.

I was struck by the improvement that appeared in the health of Adrian. He was no longer bent to the ground, like an over-nursed flower of spring, that, shooting up beyond its strength, is weighed down even by its own coronal of blossoms. His eyes were bright, his countenance composed, an air of concentrated energy was diffused over his whole person, much unlike its former languor. He sat at a table with several secretaries, who were arranging petitions, or registering the notes made during that day's audience. Two or three petitioners were still in attendance. I admired his justice and patience. Those who possessed a power of living out of London, he advised immediately to quit it, affording them the means of so doing. Others, whose trade was beneficial to the city, or who possessed no other refuge, he provided with advice for better avoiding the epidemic; relieving overloaded families, supplying the gaps made in others by death. Order, comfort, and even health, rose under his influence, as from the touch of a magician's wand.

"I am glad you are come," he said to me, when we were at last alone; "I can only spare a few minutes, and must tell you much in that time. The plague is now in progress — it is useless closing one's eyes to the fact — the deaths increase each week. What will come I cannot guess. As yet, thank God, I am equal to the government of the town; and I look only to the present. Ryland, whom I have so long detained, has stipulated that I shall suffer him to depart before the end of this month. The deputy appointed by parliament is dead; another therefore must be named; I have advanced my claim, and I believe that I shall have no competitor. To-night the question is to be decided, as there is a call of the house for the purpose. You must nominate me, Lionel; Ryland, for shame, cannot show himself; but you, my friend, will do me this service?"

How lovely is devotion! Here was a youth, royally sprung, bred in luxury, by nature averse to the usual struggles of a public life, and now, in time of danger, at a period when to live was the utmost scope of the ambitious, he, the beloved and heroic Adrian, made, in sweet simplicity, an offer to sacrifice himself for the public good. The very idea was generous and noble, — but, beyond this, his unpretending manner, his entire want of the assumption of a virtue, rendered his act ten times more touching. I would have withstood his request; but I had seen the good he diffused; I felt that his resolves were not to be shaken, so, with an heavy heart, I consented to do as he asked. He grasped my hand affectionately:—"Thank you," he said, "you have relieved me from a painful dilemma, and are, as you ever were, the best of my friends. Farewell — I must now leave you for a few hours. Go you and converse with Ryland. Although he deserts his post in London, he may be of the greatest service in the north of England, by receiving and assisting travellers, and contributing to supply the metropolis with food. Awaken him, I entreat you, to some sense of duty."

Adrian left me, as I afterwards learnt, upon his daily task of visiting the hospitals, and inspecting the crowded parts of London. I found Ryland much altered, even from what he had been when he visited Windsor. Perpetual fear had jaundiced his complexion, and shrivelled his whole person. I told him of the business of the evening, and a smile relaxed the contracted muscles. He desired to go; each day he expected to be infected by pestilence, each day he was unable to resist the gentle violence of Adrian's detention. The moment Adrian should be legally elected his deputy, he would escape to safety. Under this impression he listened to all I said; and, elevated almost to joy by the near prospect of his departure, he entered into a discussion concerning the plans he should adopt in his own county, forgetting, for the moment, his cherished resolution of shutting himself up from all communication in the mansion and grounds of his estate.

In the evening, Adrian and I proceeded to Westminster. As we went he reminded me of what I was to say and do, yet, strange to say, I entered the chamber without having once reflected on my purpose. Adrian remained in the coffee-room, while I, in compliance with his desire, took my seat in St. Stephen's. There reigned unusual silence in the chamber. I had not visited it since Raymond's protectorate; a period conspicuous for a numerous attendance of members, for the eloquence of the speakers, and the warmth of the debate. The benches were very empty, those by custom occupied by the hereditary members were vacant; the city members were there — the members for the commercial towns, few landed proprietors, and not many of those who entered parliament for the sake of a career. The first subject that occupied the attention of the house was an address from the Lord Protector, praying them to appoint a deputy during a necessary absence on his part.

A silence prevailed, till one of the members coming to me, whispered that the Earl of Windsor had sent him word that I was to move his election, in the absence of the person who had been first chosen for this office. Now for the first time I saw the full extent of my task, and I was overwhelmed by what I had brought on myself. Ryland had deserted his post through fear of the plague: from the same fear Adrian had no competitor. And I, the nearest kinsman of the Earl of Windsor, was to propose his election. I was to thrust this selected and matchless friend into the post of danger — impossible! the die was cast — I would offer myself as candidate.

The few members who were present, had come more for the sake of terminating the business by securing a legal attendance, than under the idea of a debate. I had risen mechanically — my knees trembled; irresolution hung on my voice, as I uttered a few words on the necessity of choosing a person adequate to the dangerous task in hand. But, when the idea of presenting myself in the room of my friend intruded, the load of doubt and pain was taken from off me. My words flowed spontaneously — my utterance was firm and quick. I adverted to what Adrian had already done — I promised the same vigilance in furthering all his views. I drew a touching picture of his vacillating health; I boasted of my own strength. I prayed them to save even from himself this scion of the noblest family in England. My alliance with him was the pledge of my sincerity, my union with his sister, my children, his presumptive heirs, were the hostages of my truth.

This unexpected turn in the debate was quickly communicated to Adrian. He hurried in, and witnessed the termination of my impassioned harangue. I did not see him: my soul was in my words, — my eyes could not perceive that which was; while a vision of Adrian’s form, tainted by pestilence, and sinking in death, floated before them. He seized my hand, as I concluded —”Unkind!” he cried, “you have betrayed me!” then, springing forwards, with the air of one who had a right to command, he claimed the place of deputy as his own. He had bought it, he said, with danger, and paid for it with toil. His ambition rested there; and, after an interval devoted to the interests of his country, was I to step in, and reap the profit? Let them remember what London had been when he arrived: the panic that prevailed brought famine, while every moral and legal tie was loosened. He had restored order — this had been a work which required perseverance, patience, and energy; and he had neither slept nor waked but for the good of his country. — Would they dare wrong him thus? Would they wrest his hard-earned reward from him, to bestow it on one, who, never having mingled in public life, would come a tyro to the craft, in which he was an adept. He demanded the place of deputy as his right. Ryland had shown that he preferred him. Never before had he, who was born even to the inheritance of the throne of England, never had he asked favour or honour from those now his equals, but who might have been his subjects. Would they refuse him? Could they thrust back from the path of distinction and laudable ambition, the heir of their ancient kings, and heap another disappointment on a fallen house.

No one had ever before heard Adrian allude to the rights of his ancestors. None had ever before suspected, that power, or the suffrage of the many, could in any manner become dear to him. He had begun his speech with vehemence; he ended with unassuming gentleness, making his appeal with the same humility, as if he had asked to be the first in wealth, honour, and power among Englishmen, and not, as was the truth, to be the foremost in the ranks of loathsome toils and inevitable death. A murmur of approbation rose after his speech. “Oh, do not listen to him,” I cried, “he speaks false — false to himself,” — I was interrupted: and, silence being restored, we were ordered, as was the custom, to retire during the decision of the house. I fancied that they hesitated, and that there was some hope for me — I was mistaken — hardly had we quitted the chamber, before Adrian was recalled, and installed in his office of Lord Deputy to the Protector.

We returned together to the palace. “Why, Lionel,” said Adrian, “what did you intend? you could not hope to conquer, and yet you gave me the pain of a triumph over my dearest friend.”

“This is mockery,” I replied, “you devote yourself, — you, the adored brother of Idris, the being, of all the world contains, dearest to our hearts — you devote yourself to an early death. I would have prevented this; my death would be a small evil — or rather I should not die; while you cannot hope to escape.”

“As to the likelihood of escaping,” said Adrian, “ten years hence the cold stars may shine on the graves of all of us; but as to my peculiar liability to infection, I could easily prove, both logically and physically, that in the midst of contagion I have a better chance of life than you.

“This is my post: I was born for this — to rule England in anarchy, to save her in danger — to devote myself for her. The blood of my forefathers cries aloud in my veins, and bids me be first among my countrymen. Or, if this mode of speech offend you, let me say, that my mother, the proud queen, instilled early into me a love of distinction, and all that, if the weakness of my physical nature and my peculiar opinions had not prevented such a design, might have made me long since struggle for the lost inheritance of my race. But now my mother, or, if you will, my mother's lessons, awaken within me. I cannot lead on to battle; I cannot, through intrigue and faithlessness rear again the throne upon the wreck of English public spirit. But I can be the first to support and guard my country, now that terrific disasters and ruin have laid strong hands upon her.

"That country and my beloved sister are all I have. I will protect the first — the latter I commit to your charge. If I survive, and she be lost, I were far better dead. Preserve her — for her own sake I know that you will — if you require any other spur, think that, in preserving her, you preserve me. Her faultless nature, one sum of perfections, is wrapt up in her affections — if they were hurt, she would droop like an unwatered floweret, and the slightest injury they receive is a nipping frost to her. Already she fears for us. She fears for the children she adores, and for you, the father of these, her lover, husband, protector; and you must be near her to support and encourage her. Return to Windsor then, my brother; for such you are by every tie — fill the double place my absence imposes on you, and let me, in all my sufferings here, turn my eyes towards that dear seclusion, and say — There is peace."

CHAPTER XVIII

I did proceed to Windsor, but not with the intention of remaining there. I went but to obtain the consent of Idris, and then to return and take my station beside my unequalled friend; to share his labours, and save him, if so it must be, at the expense of my life. Yet I dreaded to witness the anguish which my resolve might excite in Idris. I had vowed to my own heart never to shadow her countenance even with transient grief, and should I prove recreant at the hour of greatest need? I had begun my journey with anxious haste; now I desired to draw it out through the course of days and months. I longed to avoid the necessity of action; I strove to escape from thought — vainly — futurity, like a dark image in a phantasmagoria, came nearer and more near, till it clasped the whole earth in its shadow.

A slight circumstance induced me to alter my usual route, and to return home by Egham and Bishopgate. I alighted at Perdita's ancient abode, her cottage; and, sending forward the carriage, determined to walk across the park to the castle. This spot, dedicated to sweetest recollections, the deserted house and neglected garden were well adapted to nurse my melancholy. In our happiest days, Perdita had adorned her cottage with every aid art might bring, to that which nature had selected to favour. In the same spirit of exaggeration she had, on the event of her separation from Raymond, caused it to be entirely neglected. It was now in ruin: the deer had climbed the broken palings, and reposed among the flowers; grass grew on the threshold, and the swinging lattice creaking to the wind, gave signal of utter desertion. The sky was blue above, and the air impregnated with fragrance by the rare flowers that grew among the weeds. The trees moved overhead, awakening nature's favourite melody — but the melancholy appearance of the choked paths, and weed-grown flower-beds, dimmed even this gay summer scene. The time when in proud and happy security we assembled at this cottage, was gone — soon the present hours would join those past, and shadows of future ones rose dark and menacing from the womb of time, their cradle and their bier. For the first time in my life I envied the sleep of the dead, and thought with pleasure of one's bed under the sod, where grief and fear have no power. I passed through the gap of the broken paling — I felt, while I disdained, the choking tears — I rushed into the depths of the forest. O death and change, rulers of our life, where are ye, that I may grapple with you! What was there in our tranquillity, that excited your envy — in our happiness, that ye should destroy it? We were happy, loving, and beloved; the horn of Amalthea contained no blessing unshowered upon us, but, alas!

la fortuna
deidad barbara importuna,
oy cadaver y ayer flor,
no permanece jamas!*

As I wandered on thus ruminating, a number of country people passed me. They seemed full of careful thought, and a few words of their conversation that reached me, induced me to approach and make further inquiries. A party of people flying from London, as was frequent in those days, had come up the Thames in a boat. No one at Windsor would afford them shelter; so, going a little further up, they remained all night in a deserted hut near Bolter's lock. They pursued their way the following morning, leaving one of their company behind them, sick of the plague. This circumstance once spread abroad, none dared approach within half a mile of the infected neighbourhood, and the deserted wretch was left to fight with disease and death in solitude, as he best might. I was urged by compassion to hasten to the hut, for the purpose of ascertaining his situation, and administering to his wants.

As I advanced I met knots of country-people talking earnestly of this event: distant as they were from the apprehended contagion, fear was impressed on every countenance. I passed by a group of these terrorists, in a lane in the direct road to the hut. One of them stopped me, and, conjecturing that I was ignorant of the circumstance, told me not to go on, for that an infected person lay but at a short distance.

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* Calderon de la Barca.

“I know it,” I replied, “and I am going to see in what condition the poor fellow is.”

A murmur of surprise and horror ran through the assembly. I continued: —”This poor wretch is deserted, dying, succourless; in these unhappy times, God knows how soon any or all of us may be in like want. I am going to do, as I would be done by.”

“But you will never be able to return to the Castle — Lady Idris — his children—” in confused speech were the words that struck my ear.

“Do you not know, my friends,” I said, “that the Earl himself, now Lord Protector, visits daily, not only those probably infected by this disease, but the hospitals and pest houses, going near, and even touching the sick? yet he was never in better health. You labour under an entire mistake as to the nature of the plague; but do not fear, I do not ask any of you to accompany me, nor to believe me, until I return safe and sound from my patient.”

So I left them, and hurried on. I soon arrived at the hut: the door was ajar. I entered, and one glance assured me that its former inhabitant was no more — he lay on a heap of straw, cold and stiff; while a pernicious effluvia filled the room, and various stains and marks served to show the virulence of the disorder.

I had never before beheld one killed by pestilence. While every mind was full of dismay at its effects, a craving for excitement had led us to peruse De Foe’s account, and the masterly delineations of the author of Arthur Mervyn. The pictures drawn in these books were so vivid, that we seemed to have experienced the results depicted by them. But cold were the sensations excited by words, burning though they were, and describing the death and misery of thousands, compared to what I felt in looking on the corpse of this unhappy stranger. This indeed was the plague. I raised his rigid limbs, I marked the distortion of his face, and the stony eyes lost to perception. As I was thus occupied, chill horror congealed my blood, making my flesh quiver and my hair to stand on end. Half insanely I spoke to the dead. So the plague killed you, I muttered. How came this? Was the coming painful? You look as if the enemy had tortured, before he murdered you. And now I leapt up precipitately, and escaped from the hut, before nature could revoke her laws, and inorganic words be breathed in answer from the lips of the departed.

On returning through the lane, I saw at a distance the same assemblage of persons which I had left. They hurried away, as soon as they saw me; my agitated mien added to their fear of coming near one who had entered within the verge of contagion.

At a distance from facts one draws conclusions which appear infallible, which yet when put to the test of reality, vanish like unreal dreams. I had ridiculed the fears of my countrymen, when they related to others; now that they came home to myself, I paused. The Rubicon, I felt, was passed; and it behoved me well to reflect what I should do on this hither side of disease and danger. According to the vulgar superstition, my dress, my person, the air I breathed, bore in it mortal danger to myself and others. Should I return to the Castle, to my wife and children, with this taint upon me? Not surely if I were infected; but I felt certain that I was not — a few hours would determine the question — I would spend these in the forest, in reflection on what was to come, and what my future actions were to be. In the feeling communicated to me by the sight of one struck by the plague, I forgot the events that had excited me so strongly in London; new and more painful prospects, by degrees were cleared of the mist which had hitherto veiled them. The question was no longer whether I should share Adrian's toils and danger; but in what manner I could, in Windsor and the neighbourhood, imitate the prudence and zeal which, under his government, produced order and plenty in London, and how, now pestilence had spread more widely, I could secure the health of my own family.

I spread the whole earth out as a map before me. On no one spot of its surface could I put my finger and say, here is safety. In the south, the disease, virulent and immedicable, had nearly annihilated the race of man; storm and inundation, poisonous winds and blights, filled up the measure of suffering. In the north it was worse — the lesser population gradually declined, and famine and plague kept watch on the survivors, who, helpless and feeble, were ready to fall an easy prey into their hands.

I contracted my view to England. The overgrown metropolis, the great heart of mighty Britain, was pulseless. Commerce had ceased. All resort for ambition or pleasure was cut off — the streets were grass-grown — the houses empty — the few, that from necessity remained, seemed already branded with the taint of inevitable pestilence. In the larger manufacturing towns the same tragedy was acted on a smaller, yet more disastrous scale.

There was no Adrian to superintend and direct, while whole flocks of the poor were struck and killed.

Yet we were not all to die. No truly, though thinned, the race of man would continue, and the great plague would, in after years, become matter of history and wonder. Doubtless this visitation was for extent unexampled — more need that we should work hard to dispute its progress; ere this men have gone out in sport, and slain their thousands and tens of thousands; but now man had become a creature of price; the life of one of them was of more worth than the so called treasures of kings. Look at his thought-endued countenance, his graceful limbs, his majestic brow, his wondrous mechanism — the type and model of this best work of God is not to be cast aside as a broken vessel — he shall be preserved, and his children and his children's children carry down the name and form of man to latest time.

Above all I must guard those entrusted by nature and fate to my especial care. And surely, if among all my fellow-creatures I were to select those who might stand forth examples of the greatness and goodness of man, I could choose no other than those allied to me by the most sacred ties. Some from among the family of man must survive, and these should be among the survivors; that should be my task — to accomplish it my own life were a small sacrifice. There then in that castle — in Windsor Castle, birth-place of Idris and my babes, should be the haven and retreat for the wrecked bark of human society. Its forest should be our world — its garden afford us food; within its walls I would establish the shaken throne of health. I was an outcast and a vagabond, when Adrian gently threw over me the silver net of love and civilization, and linked me inextricably to human charities and human excellence. I was one, who, though an aspirant after good, and an ardent lover of wisdom, was yet unenrolled in any list of worth, when Idris, the princely born, who was herself the personification of all that was divine in woman, she who walked the earth like a poet's dream, as a carved goddess endued with sense, or pictured saint stepping from the canvas — she, the most worthy, chose me, and gave me herself — a priceless gift.

During several hours I continued thus to meditate, till hunger and fatigue brought me back to the passing hour, then marked by long shadows cast from the descending sun. I had wandered towards Bracknell, far to the west of Windsor. The feeling of perfect health which I enjoyed, assured me that I was free from contagion. I remembered that Idris had been kept in ignorance of my proceedings. She might have heard of my return from London, and my visit to Bolter's Lock, which, connected with my continued absence, might tend greatly to alarm her. I returned to Windsor by the Long Walk, and passing through the town towards the Castle, I found it in a state of agitation and disturbance.

"It is too late to be ambitious," says Sir Thomas Browne. "We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons; one face of Janus holds no proportion to the other." Upon this text many fanatics arose, who prophesied that the end of time was come. The spirit of superstition had birth, from the wreck of our hopes, and antics wild and dangerous were played on the great theatre, while the remaining particle of futurity dwindled into a point in the eyes of the prognosticators. Weak-spirited women died of fear as they listened to their denunciations; men of robust form and seeming strength fell into idiocy and madness, racked by the dread of coming eternity. A man of this kind was now pouring forth his eloquent despair among the inhabitants of Windsor. The scene of the morning, and my visit to the dead, which had been spread abroad, had alarmed the country-people, so they had become fit instruments to be played upon by a maniac.

The poor wretch had lost his young wife and lovely infant by the plague. He was a mechanic; and, rendered unable to attend to the occupation which supplied his necessities, famine was added to his other miseries. He left the chamber which contained his wife and child — wife and child no more, but "dead earth upon the earth" — wild with hunger, watching and grief, his diseased fancy made him believe himself sent by heaven to preach the end of time to the world. He entered the churches, and foretold to the congregations their speedy removal to the vaults below. He appeared like the forgotten spirit of the time in the theatres, and bade the spectators go home and die. He had been seized and confined; he had escaped and wandered from London among the neighbouring towns, and, with frantic gestures and thrilling words, he unveiled to each their hidden fears, and gave voice to the soundless thought they dared not syllable. He stood under the arcade of the town-hall of Windsor, and from this elevation harangued a trembling crowd.

"Hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth," he cried, "hear thou, all seeing, but most pitiless Heaven! hear thou too, O tempest-tossed heart, which breathes out these words, yet faints beneath their meaning! Death is among us! The earth is beautiful and flower-bedecked, but she is our grave! The clouds of heaven weep for us — the pageantry of the stars is but our funeral torchlight. Grey headed men, ye hoped for yet a few years in your long-known abode — but the lease is up, you must remove — children, ye will never reach maturity, even now the small grave is dug for ye — mothers, clasp them in your arms, one death embraces you!"

Shuddering, he stretched out his hands, his eyes cast up, seemed bursting from their sockets, while he appeared to follow shapes, to us invisible, in the yielding air—"There they are," he cried, "the dead! They rise in their shrouds, and pass in silent procession towards the far land of their doom — their bloodless lips move not — their shadowy limbs are void of motion, while still they glide onwards. We come," he exclaimed, springing forwards, "for what should we wait? Haste, my friends, apparel yourselves in the court-dress of death. Pestilence will usher you to his presence. Why thus long? they, the good, the wise, and the beloved, are gone before. Mothers, kiss you last — husbands, protectors no more, lead on the partners of your death! Come, O come! while the dear ones are yet in sight, for soon they will pass away, and we never never shall join them more."

From such ravings as these, he would suddenly become collected, and with unexaggerated but terrific words, paint the horrors of the time; describe with minute detail, the effects of the plague on the human frame, and tell heart-breaking tales of the snapping of dear affinities — the gasping horror of despair over the death-bed of the last beloved — so that groans and even shrieks burst from the crowd. One man in particular stood in front, his eyes fixed on the prophet, his mouth open, his limbs rigid, while his face changed to various colours, yellow, blue, and green, through intense fear. The maniac caught his glance, and turned his eye on him — one has heard of the gaze of the rattle-snake, which allures the trembling victim till he falls within his jaws. The maniac became composed; his person rose higher; authority beamed from his countenance. He looked on the peasant, who began to tremble, while he still gazed; his knees knocked together; his teeth chattered. He at last fell down in convulsions. "That man has the plague," said the maniac calmly. A shriek burst from the lips of the poor wretch; and then sudden motionlessness came over him; it was manifest to all that he was dead.

Cries of horror filled the place — every one endeavoured to effect his escape — in a few minutes the market place was cleared — the corpse lay on the ground; and the maniac, subdued and exhausted, sat beside it, leaning his gaunt cheek upon his thin hand. Soon some people, deputed by the magistrates, came to remove the body; the unfortunate being saw a gaoler in each — he fled precipitately, while I passed onwards to the Castle.

Death, cruel and relentless, had entered these beloved walls. An old servant, who had nursed Idris in infancy, and who lived with us more on the footing of a revered relative than a domestic, had gone a few days before to visit a daughter, married, and settled in the neighbourhood of London. On the night of her return she sickened of the plague. From the haughty and unbending nature of the Countess of Windsor, Idris had few tender filial associations with her. This good woman had stood in the place of a mother, and her very deficiencies of education and knowledge, by rendering her humble and defenceless, endeared her to us — she was the especial favourite of the children. I found my poor girl, there is no exaggeration in the expression, wild with grief and dread. She hung over the patient in agony, which was not mitigated when her thoughts wandered towards her babes, for whom she feared infection. My arrival was like the newly discovered lamp of a lighthouse to sailors, who are weathering some dangerous point. She deposited her appalling doubts in my hands; she relied on my judgment, and was comforted by my participation in her sorrow. Soon our poor nurse expired; and the anguish of suspense was changed to deep regret, which though at first more painful, yet yielded with greater readiness to my consolations. Sleep, the sovereign balm, at length steeped her tearful eyes in forgetfulness.

She slept; and quiet prevailed in the Castle, whose inhabitants were hushed to repose. I was awake, and during the long hours of dead night, my busy thoughts worked in my brain, like ten thousand mill-wheels, rapid, acute, untameable. All slept — all England slept; and from my window, commanding a wide prospect of the star-illumined country, I saw the land stretched out in placid rest. I was awake, alive, while the brother of death possessed my race. What, if the more potent of these fraternal deities should obtain dominion over it? The silence of midnight, to speak truly, though apparently a paradox, rung in my ears. The solitude became intolerable — I placed my hand on the beating heart of Idris, I bent my head to catch the sound of her breath, to assure myself that she still existed — for a moment I doubted whether I should not awake her; so effeminate an horror ran through my frame. — Great God! would it one day be thus? One day all extinct, save myself, should I walk the earth alone? Were these warning voices, whose inarticulate and oracular sense forced belief upon me?

Yet I would not call *them*
Voices of warning, that announce to us
Only the inevitable. As the sun,
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere — so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.*

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* Coleridge's Translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

CHAPTER XIX

After a long interval, I am again impelled by the restless spirit within me to continue my narration; but I must alter the mode which I have hitherto adopted. The details contained in the foregoing pages, apparently trivial, yet each slightest one weighing like lead in the depressed scale of human afflictions; this tedious dwelling on the sorrows of others, while my own were only in apprehension; this slowly laying bare of my soul's wounds: this journal of death; this long drawn and tortuous path, leading to the ocean of countless tears, awakens me again to keen grief. I had used this history as an opiate; while it described my beloved friends, fresh with life and glowing with hope, active assistants on the scene, I was soothed; there will be a more melancholy pleasure in painting the end of all. But the intermediate steps, the climbing the wall, raised up between what was and is, while I still looked back nor saw the concealed desert beyond, is a labour past my strength. Time and experience have placed me on an height from which I can comprehend the past as a whole; and in this way I must describe it, bringing forward the leading incidents, and disposing light and shade so as to form a picture in whose very darkness there will be harmony.

It would be needless to narrate those disastrous occurrences, for which a parallel might be found in any slighter visitation of our gigantic calamity. Does the reader wish to hear of the pest-houses, where death is the comforter — of the mournful passage of the death-cart — of the insensibility of the worthless, and the anguish of the loving heart — of harrowing shrieks and silence dire — of the variety of disease, desertion, famine, despair, and death? There are many books which can feed the appetite craving for these things; let them turn to the accounts of Boccaccio, De Foe, and Browne. The vast annihilation that has swallowed all things — the voiceless solitude of the once busy earth — the lonely state of singleness which hems me in, has deprived even such details of their stinging reality, and mellowing the lurid tints of past anguish with poetic hues, I am able to escape from the mosaic of circumstance, by perceiving and reflecting back the grouping and combined colouring of the past.

I had returned from London possessed by the idea, with the intimate feeling that it was my first duty to secure, as well as I was able, the well-being of my family, and then to return and take my post beside Adrian. The events that immediately followed on my arrival at Windsor changed this view of things. The plague was not in London alone, it was every where — it came on us, as Ryland had said, like a thousand packs of wolves, howling through the winter night, gaunt and fierce. When once disease was introduced into the rural districts, its effects appeared more horrible, more exigent, and more difficult to cure, than in towns. There was a companionship in suffering there, and, the neighbours keeping constant watch on each other, and inspired by the active benevolence of Adrian, succour was afforded, and the path of destruction smoothed. But in the country, among the scattered farm-houses, in lone cottages, in fields, and barns, tragedies were acted harrowing to the soul, unseen, unheard, unnoticed. Medical aid was less easily procured, food was more difficult to obtain, and human beings, unwithheld by shame, for they were unbeheld of their fellows, ventured on deeds of greater wickedness, or gave way more readily to their abject fears.

Deeds of heroism also occurred, whose very mention swells the heart and brings tears into the eyes. Such is human nature, that beauty and deformity are often closely linked. In reading history we are chiefly struck by the generosity and self-devotion that follow close on the heels of crime, veiling with supernal flowers the stain of blood. Such acts were not wanting to adorn the grim train that waited on the progress of the plague.

The inhabitants of Berkshire and Bucks had been long aware that the plague was in London, in Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, York, in short, in all the more populous towns of England. They were not however the less astonished and dismayed when it appeared among themselves. They were impatient and angry in the midst of terror. They would do something to throw off the clinging evil, and, while in action, they fancied that a remedy was applied. The inhabitants of the smaller towns left their houses, pitched tents in the fields, wandering separate from each other careless of hunger or the sky’s inclemency, while they imagined that they avoided the death-dealing disease. The farmers and cottagers, on the contrary, struck with the fear of solitude, and madly desirous of medical assistance, flocked into the towns.

But winter was coming, and with winter, hope. In August, the plague had appeared in the country of England, and during September it made its ravages. Towards the end of October it dwindled away, and was in some degree replaced by a typhus, of hardly less virulence. The autumn was warm and rainy: the infirm and sickly died off — happier they: many young people flushed with health and prosperity, made pale by wasting malady, became the inhabitants of the grave. The crop had failed, the bad corn, and want of foreign wines, added vigour to disease. Before Christmas half England was under water. The storms of the last winter were renewed; but the diminished shipping of this year caused us to feel less the tempests of the sea. The flood and storms did more harm to continental Europe than to us — giving, as it were, the last blow to the calamities which destroyed it. In Italy the rivers were unwatched by the diminished peasantry; and, like wild beasts from their lair when the hunters and dogs are afar, did Tiber, Arno, and Po, rush upon and destroy the fertility of the plains. Whole villages were carried away. Rome, and Florence, and Pisa were overflowed, and their marble palaces, late mirrored in tranquil streams, had their foundations shaken by their winter-gifted power. In Germany and Russia the injury was still more momentous.

But frost would come at last, and with it a renewal of our lease of earth. Frost would blunt the arrows of pestilence, and enchain the furious elements; and the land would in spring throw off her garment of snow, released from her menace of destruction. It was not until February that the desired signs of winter appeared. For three days the snow fell, ice stopped the current of the rivers, and the birds flew out from crackling branches of the frost-whitened trees. On the fourth morning all vanished. A south-west wind brought up rain — the sun came out, and mocking the usual laws of nature, seemed even at this early season to burn with solstitial force. It was no consolation, that with the first winds of March the lanes were filled with violets, the fruit trees covered with blossoms, that the corn sprung up, and the leaves came out, forced by the unseasonable heat. We feared the balmy air — we feared the cloudless sky, the flower-covered earth, and delightful woods, for we looked on the fabric of the universe no longer as our dwelling, but our tomb, and the fragrant land smelled to the apprehension of fear like a wide church-yard.

Pisando la tierra dura
de continuo el hombre està
y cada passo que dà
es sobre su sepultura.*

* Calderon de la Barca.

Yet notwithstanding these disadvantages winter was breathing time; and we exerted ourselves to make the best of it. Plague might not revive with the summer; but if it did, it should find us prepared. It is a part of man's nature to adapt itself through habit even to pain and sorrow. Pestilence had become a part of our future, our existence; it was to be guarded against, like the flooding of rivers, the encroachments of ocean, or the inclemency of the sky. After long suffering and bitter experience, some panacea might be discovered; as it was, all that received infection died — all however were not infected; and it became our part to fix deep the foundations, and raise high the barrier between contagion and the sane; to introduce such order as would conduce to the well-being of the survivors, and as would preserve hope and some portion of happiness to those who were spectators of the still renewed tragedy. Adrian had introduced systematic modes of proceeding in the metropolis, which, while they were unable to stop the progress of death, yet prevented other evils, vice and folly, from rendering the awful fate of the hour still more tremendous. I wished to imitate his example, but men are used to

— move all together, if they move at all,*

* Wordsworth.

and I could find no means of leading the inhabitants of scattered towns and villages, who forgot my words as soon as they heard them not, and veered with every baffling wind, that might arise from an apparent change of circumstance.

I adopted another plan. Those writers who have imagined a reign of peace and happiness on earth, have generally described a rural country, where each small township was directed by the elders and wise men. This was the key of my design. Each village, however small, usually contains a leader, one among themselves whom they venerate, whose advice they seek in difficulty, and whose good opinion they chiefly value. I was immediately drawn to make this observation by occurrences that presented themselves to my personal experience.

In the village of Little Marlow an old woman ruled the community. She had lived for some years in an alms-house, and on fine Sundays her threshold was constantly beset by a crowd, seeking her advice and listening to her admonitions. She had been a soldier's wife, and had seen the world; infirmity, induced by fevers caught in unwholesome quarters, had come on her before its time, and she seldom moved from her little cot. The plague entered the village; and, while fright and grief deprived the inhabitants of the little wisdom they possessed, old Martha stepped forward and said —"Before now I have been in a town where there was the plague."—"And you escaped?"—"No, but I recovered." — After this Martha was seated more firmly than ever on the regal seat, elevated by reverence and love. She entered the cottages of the sick; she relieved their wants with her own hand; she betrayed no fear, and inspired all who saw her with some portion of her own native courage. She attended the markets — she insisted upon being supplied with food for those who were too poor to purchase it. She showed them how the well-being of each included the prosperity of all. She would not permit the gardens to be neglected, nor the very flowers in the cottage lattices to droop from want of care. Hope, she said, was better than a doctor's prescription, and every thing that could sustain and enliven the spirits, of more worth than drugs and mixtures.

It was the sight of Little Marlow, and my conversations with Martha, that led me to the plan I formed. I had before visited the manor houses and gentlemen's seats, and often found the inhabitants actuated by the purest benevolence, ready to lend their utmost aid for the welfare of their tenants. But this was not enough. The intimate sympathy generated by similar hopes and fears, similar experience and pursuits, was wanting here. The poor perceived that the rich possessed other means of preservation than those which could be partaken of by themselves, seclusion, and, as far as circumstances permitted, freedom from care. They could not place reliance on them, but turned with tenfold dependence to the succour and advice of their equals. I resolved therefore to go from village to village, seeking out the rustic archon of the place, and by systematising their exertions, and enlightening their views, increase both their power and their use among their fellow-cottagers. Many changes also now occurred in these spontaneous regal elections: depositions and abdications were frequent, while, in the place of the old and prudent, the ardent youth would step forward, eager for action, regardless of danger. Often too, the voice to which all listened was suddenly silenced, the helping hand cold, the sympathetic eye closed, and the villagers feared still more the death that had selected a choice victim, shivering in dust the heart that had beat for them, reducing to incommunicable annihilation the mind for ever occupied with projects for their welfare.

Whoever labours for man must often find ingratitude, watered by vice and folly, spring from the grain which he has sown. Death, which had in our younger days walked the earth like "a thief that comes in the night," now, rising from his subterranean vault, girt with power, with dark banner floating, came a conqueror. Many saw, seated above his vice-regal throne, a supreme Providence, who directed his shafts, and guided his progress, and they bowed their heads in resignation, or at least in obedience. Others perceived only a passing casualty; they endeavoured to exchange terror for heedlessness, and plunged into licentiousness, to avoid the agonizing throes of worst apprehension. Thus, while the wise, the good, and the prudent were occupied by the labours of benevolence, the truce of winter produced other effects among the young, the thoughtless, and the vicious. During the colder months there was a general rush to London in search of amusement — the ties of public opinion were loosened; many were rich, heretofore poor — many had lost father and mother, the guardians of their morals, their mentors and restraints. It would have been useless to have opposed these impulses by barriers, which would only have driven those actuated by them to more pernicious indulgencies. The theatres were open and thronged; dance and midnight festival were frequented — in many of these decorum was violated, and the evils, which hitherto adhered to an advanced state of civilization, were doubled. The student left his books, the artist his study: the occupations of life were gone, but the amusements remained; enjoyment might be protracted to the verge of the grave. All factitious colouring disappeared — death rose like night, and, protected by its murky shadows the blush of modesty, the reserve of pride, the decorum of prudery were frequently thrown aside as useless veils.

This was not universal. Among better natures, anguish and dread, the fear of eternal separation, and the awful wonder produced by unprecedented calamity, drew closer the ties of kindred and friendship. Philosophers opposed their principles, as barriers to the inundation of profligacy or despair, and the only ramparts to protect the invaded territory of human life; the religious, hoping now for their reward, clung fast to their creeds, as the rafts and planks which over the tempest-vexed sea of suffering, would bear them in safety to the harbour of the Unknown Continent. The loving heart, obliged to contract its view, bestowed its overflow of affection in triple portion on the few that remained. Yet, even among these, the present, as an unalienable possession, became all of time to which they dared commit the precious freight of their hopes.

The experience of immemorial time had taught us formerly to count our enjoyments by years, and extend our prospect of life through a lengthened period of progression and decay; the long road threaded a vast labyrinth, and the Valley of the Shadow of Death, in which it terminated, was hid by intervening objects. But an earthquake had changed the scene — under our very feet the earth yawned — deep and precipitous the gulf below opened to receive us, while the hours charioted us towards the chasm. But it was winter now, and months must elapse before we are hurled from our security. We became ephemera, to whom the interval between the rising and setting sun was as a long drawn year of common time. We should never see our children ripen into maturity, nor behold their downy cheeks roughen, their blithe hearts subdued by passion or care; but we had them now — they lived, and we lived — what more could we desire? With such schooling did my poor Idris try to hush thronging fears, and in some measure succeeded. It was not as in summer-time, when each hour might bring the dreaded fate — until summer, we felt sure; and this certainty, short lived as it must be, yet for awhile satisfied her maternal tenderness. I know not how to express or communicate the sense of concentrated, intense, though evanescent transport, that imparadised us in the present hour. Our joys were dearer because we saw their end; they were keener because we felt, to its fullest extent, their value; they were purer because their essence was sympathy —

as a meteor is brighter than a star, did the felicity of this winter contain in itself the extracted delights of a long, long life.

How lovely is spring! As we looked from Windsor Terrace on the sixteen fertile counties spread beneath, speckled by happy cottages and wealthier towns, all looked as in former years, heart-cheering and fair. The land was ploughed, the slender blades of wheat broke through the dark soil, the fruit trees were covered with buds, the husbandman was abroad in the fields, the milk-maid tripped home with well-filled pails, the swallows and martins struck the sunny pools with their long, pointed wings, the new dropped lambs reposed on the young grass, the tender growth of leaves —

Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever sprouting green.*

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* Keats.

Man himself seemed to regenerate, and feel the frost of winter yield to an elastic and warm renewal of life — reason told us that care and sorrow would grow with the opening year — but how to believe the ominous voice breathed up with pestiferous vapours from fear’s dim cavern, while nature, laughing and scattering from her green lap flowers, and fruits, and sparkling waters, invited us to join the gay masque of young life she led upon the scene?

Where was the plague? “Here — everywhere!” one voice of horror and dismay exclaimed, when in the pleasant days of a sunny May the Destroyer of man brooded again over the earth, forcing the spirit to leave its organic chrysalis, and to enter upon an untried life. With one mighty sweep of its potent weapon, all caution, all care, all prudence were levelled low: death sat at the tables of the great, stretched itself on the cottager’s pallet, seized the dastard who fled, quelled the brave man who resisted: despondency entered every heart, sorrow dimmed every eye.

Sights of woe now became familiar to me, and were I to tell all of anguish and pain that I witnessed, of the despairing moans of age, and the more terrible smiles of infancy in the bosom of horror, my reader, his limbs quivering and his hair on end, would wonder how I did not, seized with sudden frenzy, dash myself from some precipice, and so close my eyes for ever on the sad end of the world. But the powers of love, poetry, and creative fancy will dwell even beside the sick of the plague, with the squalid, and with the dying. A feeling of devotion, of duty, of a high and steady purpose, elevated me; a strange joy filled my heart. In the midst of saddest grief I seemed to tread air, while the spirit of good shed round me an ambrosial atmosphere, which blunted the sting of sympathy, and purified the air of sighs. If my wearied soul flagged in its career, I thought of my loved home, of the casket that contained my treasures, of the kiss of love and the filial caress, while my eyes were moistened by purest dew, and my heart was at once softened and refreshed by thrilling tenderness.

Maternal affection had not rendered Idris selfish; at the beginning of our calamity she had, with thoughtless enthusiasm, devoted herself to the care of the sick and helpless. I checked her; and she submitted to my rule. I told her how the fear of her danger palsied my exertions, how the knowledge of her safety strung my nerves to endurance. I showed her the dangers which her children incurred during her absence; and she at length agreed not to go beyond the enclosure of the forest. Indeed, within the walls of the Castle we had a colony of the unhappy, deserted by their relatives, and in themselves helpless, sufficient to occupy her time and attention, while ceaseless anxiety for my welfare and the health of her children, however she strove to curb or conceal it, absorbed all her thoughts, and undermined the vital principle. After watching over and providing for their safety, her second care was to hide from me her anguish and tears. Each night I returned to the Castle, and found there repose and love awaiting me. Often I waited beside the bed of death till midnight, and through the obscurity of rainy, cloudy nights rode many miles, sustained by one circumstance only, the safety and sheltered repose of those I loved. If some scene of tremendous agony shook my frame and fevered my brow, I would lay my head on the lap of Idris, and the tumultuous pulses subsided into a temperate flow — her smile could raise me from hopelessness, her embrace bathe my sorrowing heart in calm peace.

Summer advanced, and, crowned with the sun’s potent rays, plague shot her unerring shafts over the earth. The nations beneath their influence bowed their heads, and died. The corn that sprung up in plenty, lay in autumn rotting on the ground, while the melancholy wretch who had gone out to gather bread for his children, lay stiff and plague-struck in the furrow. The green woods waved their boughs majestically, while the dying were spread beneath their shade, answering the solemn melody with inharmonious cries. The painted birds flitted through the shades; the careless deer reposed unhurt upon the fern — the oxen and the horses strayed from their unguarded stables, and grazed among the wheat, for death fell on man alone.

With summer and mortality grew our fears. My poor love and I looked at each other, and our babes.—”We will save them, Idris,” I said, “I will save them. Years hence we shall recount to them our fears, then passed away with their occasion. Though they only should remain on the earth, still they shall live, nor shall their cheeks become pale nor their sweet voices languish.” Our eldest in some degree understood the scenes passing around, and at times, he with serious looks questioned me concerning the reason of so vast a desolation. But he was only ten years old; and the hilarity of youth soon chased unreasonable care from his brow. Evelyn, a laughing cherub, a gamesome infant, without idea of pain or sorrow, would, shaking back his light curls from his eyes, make the halls re-echo with his merriment, and in a thousand artless ways attract our attention to his play. Clara, our lovely gentle Clara, was our stay, our solace, our delight. She made it her task to attend the sick, comfort the sorrowing, assist the aged, and partake the sports and awaken the gaiety of the young. She flitted through the rooms, like a good spirit, dispatched from the celestial kingdom, to illumine our dark hour with alien splendour. Gratitude and praise marked where her footsteps had been. Yet, when she stood in unassuming simplicity before us, playing with our children, or with girlish assiduity performing little kind offices for Idris, one wondered in what fair lineament of her pure loveliness, in what soft tone of her thrilling voice, so much of heroism, sagacity and active goodness resided.

The summer passed tediously, for we trusted that winter would at least check the disease. That it would vanish altogether was an hope too dear — too heartfelt, to be expressed. When such a thought was heedlessly uttered, the hearers, with a gush of tears and passionate sobs, bore witness how deep their fears were, how small their hopes. For my own part, my exertions for the public good permitted me to observe more closely than most others, the virulence and extensive ravages of our sightless enemy. A short month has destroyed a village, and where in May the first person sickened, in June the paths were deformed by unburied corpses — the houses tenantless, no smoke arising from the chimneys; and the housewife’s clock marked only the hour when death had been triumphant. From such scenes I have sometimes saved a deserted infant — sometimes led a young and grieving mother from the lifeless image of her first born, or drawn the sturdy labourer from childish weeping over his extinct family.

July is gone. August must pass, and by the middle of September we may hope. Each day was eagerly counted; and the inhabitants of towns, desirous to leap this dangerous interval, plunged into dissipation, and strove, by riot, and what they wished to imagine to be pleasure, to banish thought and opiate despair. None but Adrian could have tamed the motley population of London, which, like a troop of unbitted steeds rushing to their pastures, had thrown aside all minor fears, through the operation of the fear paramount. Even Adrian was obliged in part to yield, that he might be able, if not to guide, at least to set bounds to the license of the times. The theatres were kept open; every place of public resort was frequented; though he endeavoured so to modify them, as might best quiet the agitation of the spectators, and at the same time prevent a reaction of misery when the excitement was over. Tragedies deep and dire were the chief favourites. Comedy brought with it too great a contrast to the inner despair: when such were attempted, it was not infrequent for a comedian, in the midst of the laughter occasioned by his disproportioned buffoonery, to find a word or thought in his part that jarred with his own sense of wretchedness, and burst from mimic merriment into sobs and tears, while the spectators, seized with irresistible sympathy, wept, and the pantomimic revelry was changed to a real exhibition of tragic passion.

It was not in my nature to derive consolation from such scenes; from theatres, whose buffoon laughter and discordant mirth awakened distempered sympathy, or where fictitious tears and wailings mocked the heart-felt grief within; from festival or crowded meeting, where hilarity sprung from the worst feelings of our nature, or such enthralment of the better ones, as impressed it with garish and false varnish; from assemblies of mourners in the guise of revellers. Once however I witnessed a scene of singular interest at one of the theatres, where nature overpowered art, as an overflowing cataract will tear away the puny manufacture of a mock cascade, which had before been fed by a small portion of its waters.

I had come to London to see Adrian. He was not at the palace; and, though the attendants did not know whither he had gone, they did not expect him till late at night. It was between six and seven o'clock, a fine summer afternoon, and I spent my leisure hours in a ramble through the empty streets of London; now turning to avoid an approaching funeral, now urged by curiosity to observe the state of a particular spot; my wanderings were instinct with pain, for silence and desertion characterised every place I visited, and the few beings I met were so pale and woe-begone, so marked with care and depressed by fear, that weary of encountering only signs of misery, I began to retread my steps towards home.

I was now in Holborn, and passed by a public house filled with uproarious companions, whose songs, laughter, and shouts were more sorrowful than the pale looks and silence of the mourner. Such an one was near, hovering round this house. The sorry plight of her dress displayed her poverty, she was ghastly pale, and continued approaching, first the window and then the door of the house, as if fearful, yet longing to enter. A sudden burst of song and merriment seemed to sting her to the heart; she murmured, “Can he have the heart?” and then mustering her courage, she stepped within the threshold. The landlady met her in the passage; the poor creature asked, “Is my husband here? Can I see George?”

“See him,” cried the woman, “yes, if you go to him; last night he was taken with the plague, and we sent him to the hospital.”

The unfortunate inquirer staggered against a wall, a faint cry escaped her—”O! were you cruel enough,” she exclaimed, “to send him there?”

The landlady meanwhile hurried away; but a more compassionate barmaid gave her a detailed account, the sum of which was, that her husband had been taken ill, after a night of riot, and sent by his boon companions with all expedition to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. I had watched this scene, for there was a gentleness about the poor woman that interested me; she now tottered away from the door, walking as well as she could down Holborn Hill; but her strength soon failed her; she leaned against a wall, and her head sunk on her bosom, while her pallid cheek became still more white. I went up to her and offered my services. She hardly looked up

—”You can do me no good,” she replied; “I must go to the hospital; if I do not die before I get there.”

There were still a few hackney-coaches accustomed to stand about the streets, more truly from habit than for use. I put her in one of these, and entered with her that I might secure her entrance into the hospital. Our way was short, and she said little; except interrupted ejaculations of reproach that he had left her, exclamations on the unkindness of some of his friends, and hope that she would find him alive. There was a simple, natural earnestness about her that interested me in her fate, especially when she assured me that her husband was the best of men, — had been so, till want of business during these unhappy times had thrown him into bad company. “He could not bear to come home,” she said, “only to see our children die. A man cannot have the patience a mother has, with her own flesh and blood.”

We were set down at St. Bartholomew’s, and entered the wretched precincts of the house of disease. The poor creature clung closer to me, as she saw with what heartless haste they bore the dead from the wards, and took them into a room, whose half-opened door displayed a number of corpses, horrible to behold by one unaccustomed to such scenes. We were directed to the ward where her husband had been first taken, and still was, the nurse said, if alive. My companion looked eagerly from one bed to the other, till at the end of the ward she espied, on a wretched bed, a squalid, haggard creature, writhing under the torture of disease. She rushed towards him, she embraced him, blessing God for his preservation.

The enthusiasm that inspired her with this strange joy, blinded her to the horrors about her; but they were intolerably agonizing to me. The ward was filled with an effluvia that caused my heart to heave with painful qualms. The dead were carried out, and the sick brought in, with like indifference; some were screaming with pain, others laughing from the influence of more terrible delirium; some were attended by weeping, despairing relations, others called aloud with thrilling tenderness or reproach on the friends who had deserted them, while the nurses went from bed to bed, incarnate images of despair, neglect, and death. I gave gold to my luckless companion; I recommended her to the care of the attendants; I then hastened away; while the tormentor, the imagination, busied itself in picturing my own loved ones, stretched on such beds, attended thus. The country afforded no such mass of horrors; solitary wretches died in the open fields; and I have found a survivor in a vacant village, contending at once with famine and disease; but the assembly of pestilence, the banqueting hall of death, was spread only in London.

I rambled on, oppressed, distracted by painful emotions — suddenly I found myself before Drury Lane Theatre. The play was Macbeth — the first actor of the age was there to exert his powers to drug with irreflection the auditors; such a medicine I yearned for, so I entered. The theatre was tolerably well filled. Shakespeare, whose popularity was established by the approval of four centuries, had not lost his influence even at this dread period; but was still "Ut magus," the wizard to rule our hearts and govern our imaginations. I came in during the interval between the third and fourth act. I looked round on the audience; the females were mostly of the lower classes, but the men were of all ranks, come hither to forget awhile the protracted scenes of wretchedness, which awaited them at their miserable homes. The curtain drew up, and the stage presented the scene of the witches' cave. The wildness and supernatural machinery of Macbeth, was a pledge that it could contain little directly connected with our present circumstances. Great pains had been taken in the scenery to give the semblance of reality to the impossible. The extreme darkness of the stage, whose only light was received from the fire under the cauldron, joined to a kind of mist that floated about it, rendered the unearthly shapes of the witches obscure and shadowy. It was not three decrepit old hags that bent over their pot throwing in the grim ingredients of the magic charm, but forms frightful, unreal, and fanciful. The entrance of Hecate, and the wild music that followed, took us out of this world. The cavern shape the stage assumed, the beetling rocks, the glare of the fire, the misty shades that crossed the scene at times, the music in harmony with all witch-like fancies, permitted the imagination to revel, without fear of contradiction, or reproof from reason or the heart. The entrance of Macbeth did not destroy the illusion, for he was actuated by the same feelings that inspired us, and while the work of magic proceeded we sympathized in his wonder and his daring, and gave ourselves up with our whole souls to the influence of scenic delusion. I felt the beneficial result of such excitement, in a renewal of those pleasing flights of fancy to which I had long been a stranger. The effect of this scene of incantation communicated a portion of its power to that which followed. We forgot that Malcolm and Macduff were mere human beings, acted upon by such simple passions as warmed our own breasts. By slow degrees however we were drawn to the real interest of the scene. A shudder like the swift passing of an electric shock ran through the house, when Rosse exclaimed, in answer to “Stands Scotland where it did?”

Alas, poor country;
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead man’s knell
Is there scarce asked, for who; and good men’s lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken.

Each word struck the sense, as our life’s passing bell; we feared to look at each other, but bent our gaze on the stage, as if our eyes could fall innocuous on that alone. The person who played the part of Rosse, suddenly became aware of the dangerous ground he trod. He was an inferior actor, but truth now made him excellent; as he went on to announce to Macduff the slaughter of his family, he was afraid to speak, trembling from apprehension of a burst of grief from the audience, not from his fellow-mime. Each word was drawn out with difficulty; real anguish painted his features; his eyes were now lifted in sudden horror, now fixed in dread upon the ground. This show of terror increased ours, we gasped with him, each neck was stretched out, each face changed with the actor’s changes — at length while Macduff, who, attending to his part, was unobservant of the high wrought sympathy of the house, cried with well acted passion:

All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? — O hell kite! All?

What! all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop!

A pang of tameless grief wrenched every heart, a burst of despair was echoed from every lip. — I had entered into the universal feeling — I had been absorbed by the terrors of Rosse — I re-echoed the cry of Macduff, and then rushed out as from an hell of torture, to find calm in the free air and silent street.

Free the air was not, or the street silent. Oh, how I longed then for the dear soothings of maternal Nature, as my wounded heart was still further stung by the roar of heartless merriment from the public-house, by the sight of the drunkard reeling home, having lost the memory of what he would find there in oblivious debauch, and by the more appalling salutations of those melancholy beings to whom the name of home was a mockery. I ran on at my utmost speed until I found myself I knew not how, close to Westminster Abbey, and was attracted by the deep and swelling tone of the organ. I entered with soothing awe the lighted chancel, and listened to the solemn religious chant, which spoke peace and hope to the unhappy. The notes, freighted with man's dearest prayers, re-echoed through the dim aisles, and the bleeding of the soul's wounds was staunched by heavenly balm. In spite of the misery I deprecated, and could not understand; in spite of the cold hearths of wide London, and the corpse-strewn fields of my native land; in spite of all the variety of agonizing emotions I had that evening experienced, I thought that in reply to our melodious adjurations, the Creator looked down in compassion and promise of relief; the awful peal of the heaven-winged music seemed fitting voice wherewith to commune with the Supreme; calm was produced by its sound, and by the sight of many other human creatures offering up prayers and submission with me. A sentiment approaching happiness followed the total resignation of one's being to the guardianship of the world's ruler. Alas! with the failing of this solemn strain, the elevated spirit sank again to earth. Suddenly one of the choristers died — he was lifted from his desk, the vaults below were hastily opened — he was consigned with a few muttered prayers to the darksome cavern, abode of thousands who had gone before — now wide yawning to receive even all who fulfilled the funeral rites. In vain I would then have turned from this scene, to darkened aisle or lofty dome, echoing with melodious praise. In the open air alone I found relief; among nature's beauteous works, her God reassumed his attribute of benevolence, and again I could trust that he who built up the mountains, planted the forests, and poured out the rivers, would erect another state for lost humanity, where we might awaken again to our affections, our happiness, and our faith.

Fortunately for me those circumstances were of rare occurrence that obliged me to visit London, and my duties were confined to the rural district which our lofty castle overlooked; and here labour stood in the place of pastime, to occupy such of the country people as were sufficiently exempt from sorrow or disease. My endeavours were directed towards urging them to their usual attention to their crops, and to the acting as if pestilence did not exist. The mower's scythe was at times heard; yet the joyless haymakers after they had listlessly turned the grass, forgot to cart it; the shepherd, when he had sheared his sheep, would let the wool lie to be scattered by the winds, deeming it useless to provide clothing for another winter. At times however the spirit of life was awakened by these employments; the sun, the refreshing breeze, the sweet smell of the hay, the rustling leaves and prattling rivulets brought repose to the agitated bosom, and bestowed a feeling akin to happiness on the apprehensive. Nor, strange to say, was the time without its pleasures. Young couples, who had loved long and hopelessly, suddenly found every impediment removed, and wealth pour in from the death of relatives. The very danger drew them closer. The immediate peril urged them to seize the immediate opportunity; wildly and passionately they sought to know what delights existence afforded, before they yielded to death, and

Snatching their pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life,*

they defied the conquering pestilence to destroy what had been, or to erase even from their death-bed thoughts the sentiment of happiness which had been theirs.

* Andrew Marvell.

One instance of this kind came immediately under our notice, where a high-born girl had in early youth given her heart to one of meaner extraction. He was a schoolfellow and friend of her brother's, and usually spent a part of the holidays at the mansion of the duke her father. They had played together as children, been the confidants of each other's little secrets, mutual aids and consolers in difficulty and sorrow. Love had crept in, noiseless, terrorless at first, till each felt their life bound up in the other, and at the same time knew that they must part. Their extreme youth, and the purity of their attachment, made them yield with less resistance to the tyranny of circumstances. The father of the fair Juliet separated them; but not until the young lover had promised to remain absent only till he had rendered himself worthy of her, and she had vowed to preserve her virgin heart, his treasure, till he returned to claim and possess it.

Plague came, threatening to destroy at once the aim of the ambitious and the hopes of love. Long the Duke of L —— derided the idea that there could be danger while he pursued his plans of cautious seclusion; and he so far succeeded, that it was not till this second summer, that the destroyer, at one fell stroke, overthrew his precautions, his security, and his life. Poor Juliet saw one by one, father, mother, brothers, and sisters, sicken and die. Most of the servants fled on the first appearance of disease, those who remained were infected mortally; no neighbour or rustic ventured within the verge of contagion. By a strange fatality Juliet alone escaped, and she to the last waited on her relatives, and smoothed the pillow of death. The moment at length came, when the last blow was given to the last of the house: the youthful survivor of her race sat alone among the dead. There was no living being near to soothe her, or withdraw her from this hideous company. With the declining heat of a September night, a whirlwind of storm, thunder, and hail, rattled round the house, and with ghastly harmony sung the dirge of her family. She sat upon the ground absorbed in wordless despair, when through the gusty wind and bickering rain she thought she heard her name called. Whose could that familiar voice be? Not one of her relations, for they lay glaring on her with stony eyes. Again her name was syllabled, and she shuddered as she asked herself, am I becoming mad, or am I dying, that

I hear the voices of the departed? A second thought passed, swift as an arrow, into her brain; she rushed to the window; and a flash of lightning showed to her the expected vision, her lover in the shrubbery beneath; joy lent her strength to descend the stairs, to open the door, and then she fainted in his supporting arms.

A thousand times she reproached herself, as with a crime, that she should revive to happiness with him. The natural clinging of the human mind to life and joy was in its full energy in her young heart; she gave herself impetuously up to the enchantment: they were married; and in their radiant features I saw incarnate, for the last time, the spirit of love, of rapturous sympathy, which once had been the life of the world.

I envied them, but felt how impossible it was to imbibe the same feeling, now that years had multiplied my ties in the world. Above all, the anxious mother, my own beloved and drooping Idris, claimed my earnest care; I could not reproach the anxiety that never for a moment slept in her heart, but I exerted myself to distract her attention from too keen an observation of the truth of things, of the near and nearer approaches of disease, misery, and death, of the wild look of our attendants as intelligence of another and yet another death reached us; for to the last something new occurred that seemed to transcend in horror all that had gone before. Wretched beings crawled to die under our succouring roof; the inhabitants of the Castle decreased daily, while the survivors huddled together in fear, and, as in a famine-struck boat, the sport of the wild, interminable waves, each looked in the other’s face, to guess on whom the death-lot would next fall. All this I endeavoured to veil, so that it might least impress my Idris; yet, as I have said, my courage survived even despair: I might be vanquished, but I would not yield.

One day, it was the ninth of September, seemed devoted to every disaster, to every harrowing incident. Early in the day, I heard of the arrival of the aged grandmother of one of our servants at the Castle. This old woman had reached her hundredth year; her skin was shrivelled, her form was bent and lost in extreme decrepitude; but as still from year to year she continued in existence, out-living many younger and stronger, she began to feel as if she were to live for ever. The plague came, and the inhabitants of her village died. Clinging, with the dastard feeling of the aged, to the remnant of her spent life, she had, on hearing that the pestilence had come into her neighbourhood, barred her door, and closed her casement, refusing to communicate with any. She would wander out at night to get food, and returned home, pleased that she had met no one, that she was in no danger from the plague. As the earth became more desolate, her difficulty in acquiring sustenance increased; at first, her son, who lived near, had humoured her by placing articles of food in her way: at last he died. But, even though threatened by famine, her fear of the plague was paramount; and her greatest care was to avoid her fellow creatures. She grew weaker each day, and each day she had further to go. The night before, she had reached Datchet; and, prowling about, had found a baker's shop open and deserted. Laden with spoil, she hastened to return, and lost her way. The night was windless, hot, and cloudy; her load became too heavy for her; and one by one she threw away her loaves, still endeavouring to get along, though her hobbling fell into lameness, and her weakness at last into inability to move.

She lay down among the tall corn, and fell asleep. Deep in midnight, she was awaked by a rustling near her; she would have started up, but her stiff joints refused to obey her will. A low moan close to her ear followed, and the rustling increased; she heard a smothered voice breathe out, Water, Water! several times; and then again a sigh heaved from the heart of the sufferer. The old woman shuddered, she contrived at length to sit upright; but her teeth chattered, and her knees knocked together — close, very close, lay a half-naked figure, just discernible in the gloom, and the cry for water and the stifled moan were again uttered. Her motions at length attracted the attention of her unknown companion; her hand was seized with a convulsive violence that made the grasp feel like iron, the fingers like the keen teeth of a trap.—"At last you are come!" were the words given forth — but this exertion was the last effort of the dying — the joints relaxed, the figure fell prostrate, one low moan, the last, marked the moment of death. Morning broke; and the old woman saw the corpse, marked with the fatal disease, close to her; her wrist was livid with the hold loosened by death. She felt struck by the plague; her aged frame was unable to bear her away with sufficient speed; and now, believing herself infected, she no longer dreaded the association of others; but, as swiftly as she might, came to her grand-daughter, at Windsor Castle, there to lament and die. The sight was horrible; still she clung to life, and lamented her mischance with cries and hideous groans; while the swift advance of the disease showed, what proved to be the fact, that she could not survive many hours.

While I was directing that the necessary care should be taken of her, Clara came in; she was trembling and pale; and, when I anxiously asked her the cause of her agitation, she threw herself into my arms weeping and exclaiming—"Uncle, dearest uncle, do not hate me for ever! I must tell you, for you must know, that Evelyn, poor little Evelyn" — her voice was choked by sobs. The fear of so mighty a calamity as the loss of our adored infant made the current of my blood pause with chilly horror; but the remembrance of the mother restored my presence of mind. I sought the little bed of my darling; he was oppressed by fever; but I trusted, I fondly and fearfully trusted, that there were no symptoms of the plague. He was not three years old, and his illness appeared only one of those attacks incident to infancy. I watched him long — his heavy half-closed lids, his burning cheeks and restless twining of his small fingers — the fever was violent, the torpor complete — enough, without the greater fear of pestilence, to awaken alarm. Idris must not see him in this state. Clara, though only twelve years old, was rendered, through extreme sensibility, so prudent and careful, that I felt secure in entrusting the charge of him to her, and it was my task to prevent Idris from observing their absence. I administered the fitting remedies, and left my sweet niece to watch beside him, and bring me notice of any change she should observe.

I then went to Idris, contriving in my way, plausible excuses for remaining all day in the Castle, and endeavouring to disperse the traces of care from my brow. Fortunately she was not alone. I found Merrival, the astronomer, with her. He was far too long sighted in his view of humanity to heed the casualties of the day, and lived in the midst of contagion unconscious of its existence. This poor man, learned as La Place, guileless and unforeseeing as a child, had often been on the point of starvation, he, his pale wife and numerous offspring, while he neither felt hunger, nor observed distress. His astronomical theories absorbed him; calculations were scrawled with coal on the bare walls of his garret: a hard-earned guinea, or an article of dress, was exchanged for a book without remorse; he neither heard his children cry, nor observed his companion's emaciated form, and the excess of calamity was merely to him as the occurrence of a cloudy night, when he would have given his right hand to observe a celestial phenomenon. His wife was one of those wondrous beings, to be found only among women, with affections not to be diminished by misfortune. Her mind was divided between boundless admiration for her husband, and tender anxiety for her children — she waited on him, worked for them, and never complained, though care rendered her life one long-drawn, melancholy dream.

He had introduced himself to Adrian, by a request he made to observe some planetary motions from his glass. His poverty was easily detected and relieved. He often thanked us for the books we lent him, and for the use of our instruments, but never spoke of his altered abode or change of circumstances. His wife assured us, that he had not observed any difference, except in the absence of the children from his study, and to her infinite surprise he complained of this unaccustomed quiet.

He came now to announce to us the completion of his Essay on the Pericyclical Motions of the Earth's Axis, and the precession of the equinoctial points. If an old Roman of the period of the Republic had returned to life, and talked of the impending election of some laurel-crowned consul, or of the last battle with Mithridates, his ideas would not have been more alien to the times, than the conversation of Merrival. Man, no longer with an appetite for sympathy, clothed his thoughts in visible signs; nor were there any readers left: while each one, having thrown away his sword with opposing shield alone, awaited the plague, Merrival talked of the state of mankind six thousand years hence. He might with equal interest to us, have added a commentary, to describe the unknown and unimaginable lineaments of the creatures, who would then occupy the vacated dwelling of mankind. We had not the heart to undeceive the poor old man; and at the moment I came in, he was reading parts of his book to Idris, asking what answer could be given to this or that position.

Idris could not refrain from a smile, as she listened; she had already gathered from him that his family was alive and in health; though not apt to forget the precipice of time on which she stood, yet I could perceive that she was amused for a moment, by the contrast between the contracted view we had so long taken of human life, and the seven league strides with which Merrival paced a coming eternity. I was glad to see her smile, because it assured me of her total ignorance of her infant's danger: but I shuddered to think of the revulsion that would be occasioned by a discovery of the truth.

While Merrival was talking, Clara softly opened a door behind Idris, and beckoned me to come with a gesture and look of grief. A mirror betrayed the sign to Idris — she started up. To suspect evil, to perceive that, Alfred being with us, the danger must regard her youngest darling, to fly across the long chambers into his apartment, was the work but of a moment. There she beheld her Evelyn lying fever-stricken and motionless. I followed her, and strove to inspire more hope than I could myself entertain; but she shook her head mournfully. Anguish deprived her of presence of mind; she gave up to me and Clara the physician's and nurse's parts; she sat by the bed, holding one little burning hand, and, with glazed eyes fixed on her babe, passed the long day in one unvaried agony. It was not the plague that visited our little boy so roughly; but she could not listen to my assurances; apprehension deprived her of judgment and reflection; every slight convulsion of her child's features shook her frame — if he moved, she dreaded the instant crisis; if he remained still, she saw death in his torpor, and the cloud on her brow darkened.

The poor little thing's fever increased towards night. The sensation is most dreary, to use no stronger term, with which one looks forward to passing the long hours of night beside a sick bed, especially if the patient be an infant, who cannot explain its pain, and whose flickering life resembles the wasting flame of the watch-light,

Whose narrow fire
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge
Devouring darkness hovers.*

* *The Cenci*.

With eagerness one turns toward the east, with angry impatience one marks the unchequered darkness; the crowing of a cock, that sound of glee during day-time, comes wailing and untunable — the creaking of rafters, and slight stir of invisible insect is heard and felt as the signal and type of desolation. Clara, overcome by weariness, had seated herself at the foot of her cousin's bed, and in spite of her efforts slumber weighed down her lids;

twice or thrice she shook it off; but at length she was conquered and slept. Idris sat at the bedside, holding Evelyn's hand; we were afraid to speak to each other; I watched the stars — I hung over my child — I felt his little pulse — I drew near the mother — again I receded. At the turn of morning a gentle sigh from the patient attracted me, the burning spot on his cheek faded — his pulse beat softly and regularly — torpor yielded to sleep. For a long time I dared not hope; but when his unobstructed breathing and the moisture that suffused his forehead, were tokens no longer to be mistaken of the departure of mortal malady, I ventured to whisper the news of the change to Idris, and at length succeeded in persuading her that I spoke truth.

But neither this assurance, nor the speedy convalescence of our child could restore her, even to the portion of peace she before enjoyed. Her fear had been too deep, too absorbing, too entire, to be changed to security. She felt as if during her past calm she had dreamed, but was now awake; she was

As one
In some lone watch-tower on the deep, awakened
From soothing visions of the home he loves,
Trembling to hear the wrathful billows roar;*

as one who has been cradled by a storm, and awakes to find the vessel sinking. Before, she had been visited by pangs of fear — now, she never enjoyed an interval of hope. No smile of the heart ever irradiated her fair countenance; sometimes she forced one, and then gushing tears would flow, and the sea of grief close above these wrecks of past happiness. Still while I was near her, she could not be in utter despair — she fully confided herself to me — she did not seem to fear my death, or revert to its possibility; to my guardianship she consigned the full freight of her anxieties, reposing on my love, as a wind-nipped fawn by the side of a doe, as a wounded nestling under its mother's wing, as a tiny, shattered boat, quivering still, beneath some protecting willow-tree. While I, not proudly as in days of joy, yet tenderly, and with glad consciousness of the comfort I afforded, drew my trembling girl close to my heart, and tried to ward every painful thought or rough circumstance from her sensitive nature.

* *The Bride's Tragedy*, by T. L. Beddoes, Esq.

One other incident occurred at the end of this summer. The Countess of Windsor, Ex-Queen of England, returned from Germany. She had at the beginning of the season quitted the vacant city of Vienna; and, unable to tame her haughty mind to anything like submission, she had delayed at Hamburg, and, when at last she came to London, many weeks elapsed before she gave Adrian notice of her arrival. In spite of her coldness and long absence, he welcomed her with sensibility, displaying such affection as sought to heal the wounds of pride and sorrow, and was repulsed only by her total apparent want of sympathy. Idris heard of her mother's return with pleasure. Her own maternal feelings were so ardent, that she imagined her parent must now, in this waste world, have lost pride and harshness, and would receive with delight her filial attentions. The first check to her duteous demonstrations was a formal intimation from the fallen majesty of England, that I was in no manner to be intruded upon her. She consented, she said, to forgive her daughter, and acknowledge her grandchildren; larger concessions must not be expected.

To me this proceeding appeared (if so light a term may be permitted) extremely whimsical. Now that the race of man had lost in fact all distinction of rank, this pride was doubly fatuitous; now that we felt a kindred, fraternal nature with all who bore the stamp of humanity, this angry reminiscence of times for ever gone, was worse than foolish. Idris was too much taken up by her own dreadful fears, to be angry, hardly grieved; for she judged that insensibility must be the source of this continued rancour. This was not altogether the fact: but predominant self-will assumed the arms and masque of callous feeling; and the haughty lady disdained to exhibit any token of the struggle she endured; while the slave of pride, she fancied that she sacrificed her happiness to immutable principle.

False was all this — false all but the affections of our nature, and the links of sympathy with pleasure or pain. There was but one good and one evil in the world — life and death. The pomp of rank, the assumption of power, the possessions of wealth vanished like morning mist. One living beggar had become of more worth than a national peerage of dead lords — alas the day! — than of dead heroes, patriots, or men of genius. There was much of degradation in this: for even vice and virtue had lost their attributes — life — life — the continuation of our animal mechanism — was the Alpha and Omega of the desires, the prayers, the prostrate ambition of human race.

CHAPTER XX

Half England was desolate, when October came, and the equinoctial winds swept over the earth, chilling the ardours of the unhealthy season. The summer, which was uncommonly hot, had been protracted into the beginning of this month, when on the eighteenth a sudden change was brought about from summer temperature to winter frost. Pestilence then made a pause in her death-dealing career. Gasping, not daring to name our hopes, yet full even to the brim with intense expectation, we stood, as a ship-wrecked sailor stands on a barren rock islanded by the ocean, watching a distant vessel, fancying that now it nears, and then again that it is bearing from sight. This promise of a renewed lease of life turned rugged natures to melting tenderness, and by contrast filled the soft with harsh and unnatural sentiments. When it seemed destined that all were to die, we were reckless of the how and when — now that the virulence of the disease was mitigated, and it appeared willing to spare some, each was eager to be among the elect, and clung to life with dastard tenacity. Instances of desertion became more frequent; and even murders, which made the hearer sick with horror, where the fear of contagion had armed those nearest in blood against each other. But these smaller and separate tragedies were about to yield to a mightier interest — and, while we were promised calm from infectious influences, a tempest arose wilder than the winds, a tempest bred by the passions of man, nourished by his most violent impulses, unexampled and dire.

A number of people from North America, the relics of that populous continent, had set sail for the East with mad desire of change, leaving their native plains for lands not less afflicted than their own. Several hundreds landed in Ireland, about the first of November, and took possession of such vacant habitations as they could find; seizing upon the superabundant food, and the stray cattle. As they exhausted the produce of one spot, they went on to another. At length they began to interfere with the inhabitants, and strong in their concentrated numbers, ejected the natives from their dwellings, and robbed them of their winter store. A few events of this kind roused the fiery nature of the Irish; and they attacked the invaders. Some were destroyed; the major part escaped by quick and well ordered movements; and danger made them careful. Their numbers ably arranged; the very deaths among them concealed; moving on in good order, and apparently given up to enjoyment, they excited the envy of the Irish. The Americans permitted a few to join their band, and presently the recruits outnumbered the strangers — nor did they join with them, nor imitate the admirable order which, preserved by the Trans-Atlantic chiefs, rendered them at once secure and formidable. The Irish followed their track in disorganised multitudes; each day increasing; each day becoming more lawless. The Americans were eager to escape from the spirit they had roused, and, reaching the eastern shores of the island, embarked for England. Their incursion would hardly have been felt had they come alone; but the Irish, collected in unnatural numbers, began to feel the inroads of famine, and they followed in the wake of the Americans for England also. The crossing of the sea could not arrest their progress. The harbours of the desolate sea-ports of the west of Ireland were filled with vessels of all sizes, from the man of war to the small fishers' boat, which lay sailorless, and rotting on the lazy deep. The emigrants embarked by hundreds, and unfurling their sails with rude hands, made strange havoc of buoy and cordage. Those who modestly betook themselves to the smaller craft, for the most part achieved their watery journey in safety. Some, in the true spirit of reckless enterprise, went on board a ship of an hundred and twenty guns; the vast hull drifted with the tide out of the bay, and after many hours its crew of landsmen contrived to spread a great part of her enormous canvass — the wind took it, and while a thousand mistakes of the helmsman made her present her head now to one point, and now to another, the vast fields of canvass that formed her sails flapped with a sound like that of a huge cataract; or such as a sea-like forest may give forth when buffeted by an equinoctial north-wind. The port-holes were open, and with every sea, which as she lurched, washed her decks, they received whole tons of water. The difficulties were increased by a fresh breeze which began to blow, whistling among the shrouds, dashing the sails this way and that, and rending them with horrid split, and such whirr as may have visited the dreams of Milton, when he imagined the winnowing of the arch-fiend's van-like wings, which increased the uproar of wild chaos. These sounds were mingled with the roaring of the sea, the splash of the chafed billows round the vessel's sides, and the gurgling up of the water in the hold. The crew, many of whom had never seen the sea before, felt indeed as if heaven and earth came ruining together, as the vessel dipped her bows in the waves, or rose high upon them. Their yells were drowned in the clamour of elements, and the thunder rivings of their unwieldy habitation — they discovered at last that the water gained on them, and they betook themselves to their pumps; they might as well have laboured to empty the ocean by bucketfuls. As the sun went down, the gale increased; the ship seemed to feel her danger, she was now completely water-logged, and presented other indications of settling before she went down. The bay was crowded with vessels, whose crews, for the most part, were observing the uncouth sportings of this huge unwieldy machine — they saw her gradually sink; the waters now rising above her lower decks — they could hardly wink before she had utterly disappeared, nor could the place where the sea had closed over her be at all discerned. Some few of her crew were saved, but the greater part clinging to her cordage and masts went down with her, to rise only when death loosened their hold.

This event caused many of those who were about to sail, to put foot again on firm land, ready to encounter any evil rather than to rush into the yawning jaws of the pitiless ocean. But these were few, in comparison to the numbers who actually crossed. Many went up as high as Belfast to ensure a shorter passage, and then journeying south through Scotland, they were joined by the poorer natives of that country, and all poured with one consent into England.

Such incursions struck the English with affright, in all those towns where there was still sufficient population to feel the change. There was room enough indeed in our hapless country for twice the number of invaders; but their lawless spirit instigated them to violence; they took a delight in thrusting the possessors from their houses; in seizing on some mansion of luxury, where the noble dwellers secluded themselves in fear of the plague; in forcing these of either sex to become their servants and purveyors; till, the ruin complete in one place, they removed their locust visitation to another. When unopposed they spread their ravages wide; in cases of danger they clustered, and by dint of numbers overthrew their weak and despairing foes. They came from the east and the north, and directed their course without apparent motive, but unanimously towards our unhappy metropolis.

Communication had been to a great degree cut off through the paralysing effects of pestilence, so that the van of our invaders had proceeded as far as Manchester and Derby, before we received notice of their arrival. They swept the country like a conquering army, burning — laying waste — murdering. The lower and vagabond English joined with them. Some few of the Lords Lieutenant who remained, endeavoured to collect the militia — but the ranks were vacant, panic seized on all, and the opposition that was made only served to increase the audacity and cruelty of the enemy. They talked of taking London, conquering England — calling to mind the long detail of injuries which had for many years been forgotten. Such vaunts displayed their weakness, rather than their strength — yet still they might do extreme mischief, which, ending in their destruction, would render them at last objects of compassion and remorse.

We were now taught how, in the beginning of the world, mankind clothed their enemies in impossible attributes — and how details proceeding from mouth to mouth, might, like Virgil's ever-growing Rumour, reach the heavens with her brow, and clasp Hesperus and Lucifer with her outstretched hands. Gorgon and Centaur, dragon and iron-hoofed lion, vast sea-monster and gigantic hydra, were but types of the strange and appalling accounts brought to London concerning our invaders. Their landing was long unknown, but having now advanced within an hundred miles of London, the country people flying before them arrived in successive troops, each exaggerating the numbers, fury, and cruelty of the assailants. Tumult filled the before quiet streets — women and children deserted their homes, escaping they knew not whither — fathers, husbands, and sons, stood trembling, not for themselves, but for their loved and defenceless relations. As the country people poured into London, the citizens fled southwards — they climbed the higher edifices of the town, fancying that they could discern the smoke and flames the enemy spread around them. As Windsor lay, to a great degree, in the line of march from the west, I removed my family to London, assigning the Tower for their sojourn, and joining Adrian, acted as his Lieutenant in the coming struggle.

We employed only two days in our preparations, and made good use of them. Artillery and arms were collected; the remnants of such regiments, as could be brought through many losses into any show of muster, were put under arms, with that appearance of military discipline which might encourage our own party, and seem most formidable to the disorganised multitude of our enemies. Even music was not wanting: banners floated in the air, and the shrill fife and loud trumpet breathed forth sounds of encouragement and victory. A practised ear might trace an undue faltering in the step of the soldiers; but this was not occasioned so much by fear of the adversary, as by disease, by sorrow, and by fatal prognostications, which often weighed most potently on the brave, and quelled the manly heart to abject subjection.

Adrian led the troops. He was full of care. It was small relief to him that our discipline should gain us success in such a conflict; while plague still hovered to equalise the conqueror and the conquered, it was not victory that he desired, but bloodless peace. As we advanced, we were met by bands of peasantry, whose almost naked condition, whose despair and horror, told at once the fierce nature of the coming enemy. The senseless spirit of conquest and thirst of spoil blinded them, while with insane fury they deluged the country in ruin. The sight of the military restored hope to those who fled, and revenge took place of fear. They inspired the soldiers with the same sentiment. Languor was changed to ardour, the slow step converted to a speedy pace, while the hollow murmur of the multitude, inspired by one feeling, and that deadly, filled the air, drowning the clang of arms and sound of music. Adrian perceived the change, and feared that it would be difficult to prevent them from wreaking their utmost fury on the Irish. He rode through the lines, charging the officers to restrain the troops, exhorting the soldiers, restoring order, and quieting in some degree the violent agitation that swelled every bosom.

We first came upon a few stragglers of the Irish at St. Albans. They retreated, and, joining others of their companions, still fell back, till they reached the main body. Tidings of an armed and regular opposition recalled them to a sort of order. They made Buckingham their head-quarters, and scouts were sent out to ascertain our situation. We remained for the night at Luton. In the morning a simultaneous movement caused us each to advance. It was early dawn, and the air, impregnated with freshest odour, seemed in idle mockery to play with our banners, and bore onwards towards the enemy the music of the bands, the neighings of the horses, and regular step of the infantry. The first sound of martial instruments that came upon our undisciplined foe, inspired surprise, not unmingled with dread. It spoke of other days, of days of concord and order; it was associated with times when plague was not, and man lived beyond the shadow of imminent fate. The pause was momentary. Soon we heard their disorderly clamour, the barbarian shouts, the untimed step of thousands coming on in disarray. Their troops now came pouring on us from the open country or narrow lanes; a large extent of unenclosed fields lay between us; we advanced to the middle of this, and then made a halt: being somewhat on superior ground, we could discern the space they covered. When their leaders perceived us drawn out in opposition, they also gave the word to halt, and endeavoured to form their men into some imitation of military discipline. The first ranks had muskets; some were mounted, but their arms were such as they had seized during their advance, their horses those they had taken from the peasantry; there was no uniformity, and little obedience, but their shouts and wild gestures showed the untamed spirit that inspired them. Our soldiers received the word, and advanced to quickest time, but in perfect order: their uniform dresses, the gleam of their polished arms, their silence, and looks of sullen hate, were more appalling than the savage clamour of our innumerous foe. Thus coming nearer and nearer each other, the howls and shouts of the Irish increased; the English proceeded in obedience to their officers, until they came near enough to distinguish the faces of their enemies; the sight inspired them with fury: with one cry, that rent heaven and was re-echoed by the furthest lines, they rushed on; they disdained the use of the bullet, but with fixed bayonet dashed among the opposing foe, while the ranks opening at intervals, the matchmen lighted the cannon, whose deafening roar and blinding smoke filled up the horror of the scene.

I was beside Adrian; a moment before he had again given the word to halt, and had remained a few yards distant from us in deep meditation: he was forming swiftly his plan of action, to prevent the effusion of blood; the noise of cannon, the sudden rush of the troops, and yell of the foe, startled him: with flashing eyes he exclaimed, “Not one of these must perish!” and plunging the rowels into his horse’s sides, he dashed between the conflicting bands. We, his staff, followed him to surround and protect him; obeying his signal, however, we fell back somewhat. The soldiery perceiving him, paused in their onset; he did not swerve from the bullets that passed near him, but rode immediately between the opposing lines. Silence succeeded to clamour; about fifty men lay on the ground dying or dead. Adrian raised his sword in act to speak: “By whose command,” he cried, addressing his own troops, “do you advance? Who ordered your attack? Fall back; these misguided men shall not be slaughtered, while I am your general. Sheath your weapons; these are your brothers, commit not fratricide; soon the plague will not leave one for you to glut your revenge upon: will you be more pitiless than pestilence? As you honour me — as you worship God, in whose image those also are created — as your children and friends are dear to you, — shed not a drop of precious human blood.”

He spoke with outstretched hand and winning voice, and then turning to our invaders, with a severe brow, he commanded them to lay down their arms: “Do you think,” he said, “that because we are wasted by plague, you can overcome us; the plague is also among you, and when ye are vanquished by famine and disease, the ghosts of those you have murdered will arise to bid you not hope in death. Lay down your arms, barbarous and cruel men — men whose hands are stained with the blood of the innocent, whose souls are weighed down by the orphan’s cry! We shall conquer, for the right is on our side; already your cheeks are pale — the weapons fall from your nerveless grasp. Lay down your arms, fellow men! brethren! Pardon, succour, and brotherly love await your repentance. You are dear to us, because you wear the frail shape of humanity; each one among you will find a friend and host among these forces. Shall man be the enemy of man, while plague, the foe to all, even now is above us, triumphing in our butchery, more cruel than her own?”

Each army paused. On our side the soldiers grasped their arms firmly, and looked with stern glances on the foe. These had not thrown down their weapons, more from fear than the spirit of contest; they looked at each other, each wishing to follow some example given him, — but they had no leader. Adrian threw himself from his horse, and approaching one of those just slain: “He was a man,” he cried, “and he is dead. O quickly bind up the wounds of the fallen — let not one die; let not one more soul escape through your merciless gashes, to relate before the throne of God the tale of fratricide; bind up their wounds — restore them to their friends. Cast away the hearts of tigers that burn in your breasts; throw down those tools of cruelty and hate; in this pause of exterminating destiny, let each man be brother, guardian, and stay to the other. Away with those blood-stained arms, and hasten some of you to bind up these wounds.”

As he spoke, he knelt on the ground, and raised in his arms a man from whose side the warm tide of life gushed — the poor wretch gasped — so still had either host become, that his moans were distinctly heard, and every heart, late fiercely bent on universal massacre, now beat anxiously in hope and fear for the fate of this one man. Adrian tore off his military scarf and bound it round the sufferer — it was too late — the man heaved a deep sigh, his head fell back, his limbs lost their sustaining power.—”He is dead!” said Adrian, as the corpse fell from his arms on the ground, and he bowed his head in sorrow and awe. The fate of the world seemed bound up in the death of this single man. On either side the bands threw down their arms, even the veterans wept, and our party held out their hands to their foes, while a gush of love and deepest amity filled every heart. The two forces mingling, unarmed and hand in hand, talking only how each might assist the other, the adversaries conjoined; each repenting, the one side their former cruelties, the other their late violence, they obeyed the orders of the General to proceed towards London.

Adrian was obliged to exert his utmost prudence, first to allay the discord, and then to provide for the multitude of the invaders. They were marched to various parts of the southern counties, quartered in deserted villages, — a part were sent back to their own island, while the season of winter so far revived our energy, that the passes of the country were defended, and any increase of numbers prohibited.

On this occasion Adrian and Idris met after a separation of nearly a year. Adrian had been occupied in fulfilling a laborious and painful task. He had been familiar with every species of human misery, and had for ever found his powers inadequate, his aid of small avail. Yet the purpose of his soul, his energy and ardent resolution, prevented any re-action of sorrow. He seemed born anew, and virtue, more potent than Medean alchemy, endued him with health and strength. Idris hardly recognized the fragile being, whose form had seemed to bend even to the summer breeze, in the energetic man, whose very excess of sensibility rendered him more capable of fulfilling his station of pilot in storm-tossed England.

It was not thus with Idris. She was uncomplaining; but the very soul of fear had taken its seat in her heart. She had grown thin and pale, her eyes filled with involuntary tears, her voice was broken and low. She tried to throw a veil over the change which she knew her brother must observe in her, but the effort was ineffectual; and when alone with him, with a burst of irrepressible grief she gave vent to her apprehensions and sorrow. She described in vivid terms the ceaseless care that with still renewing hunger ate into her soul; she compared this gnawing of sleepless expectation of evil, to the vulture that fed on the heart of Prometheus; under the influence of this eternal excitement, and of the interminable struggles she endured to combat and conceal it, she felt, she said, as if all the wheels and springs of the animal machine worked at double rate, and were fast consuming themselves. Sleep was not sleep, for her waking thoughts, bridled by some remains of reason, and by the sight of her children happy and in health, were then transformed to wild dreams, all her terrors were realized, all her fears received their dread fulfilment. To this state there was no hope, no alleviation, unless the grave should quickly receive its destined prey, and she be permitted to die, before she experienced a thousand living deaths in the loss of those she loved. Fearing to give me pain, she hid as best she could the excess of her wretchedness, but meeting thus her brother after a long absence, she could not restrain the expression of her woe, but with all the vividness of imagination with which misery is always replete, she poured out the emotions of her heart to her beloved and sympathising Adrian.

Her present visit to London tended to augment her state of inquietude, by showing in its utmost extent the ravages occasioned by pestilence. It hardly preserved the appearance of an inhabited city; grass sprung up thick in the streets; the squares were weed-grown, the houses were shut up, while silence and loneliness characterised the busiest parts of the town. Yet in the midst of desolation Adrian had preserved order; and each one continued to live according to law and custom — human institutions thus surviving as it were divine ones, and while the decree of population was abrogated, property continued sacred. It was a melancholy reflection; and in spite of the diminution of evil produced, it struck on the heart as a wretched mockery. All idea of resort for pleasure, of theatres and festivals had passed away. “Next summer,” said Adrian as we parted on our return to Windsor, “will decide the fate of the human race. I shall not pause in my exertions until that time; but, if plague revives with the coming year, all contest with her must cease, and our only occupation be the choice of a grave.”

I must not forget one incident that occurred during this visit to London. The visits of Merrival to Windsor, before frequent, had suddenly ceased. At this time where but a hair's line separated the living from the dead, I feared that our friend had become a victim to the all-embracing evil. On this occasion I went, dreading the worst, to his dwelling, to see if I could be of any service to those of his family who might have survived. The house was deserted, and had been one of those assigned to the invading strangers quartered in London. I saw his astronomical instruments put to strange uses, his globes defaced, his papers covered with abstruse calculations destroyed. The neighbours could tell me little, till I lighted on a poor woman who acted as nurse in these perilous times. She told me that all the family were dead, except Merrival himself, who had gone mad — mad, she called it, yet on questioning her further, it appeared that he was possessed only by the delirium of excessive grief. This old man, tottering on the edge of the grave, and prolonging his prospect through millions of calculated years, — this visionary who had not seen starvation in the wasted forms of his wife and children, or plague in the horrible sights and sounds that surrounded him — this astronomer, apparently dead on earth, and living only in the motion of the spheres — loved his family with unapparent but intense affection. Through long habit they had become a part of himself; his want of worldly knowledge, his absence of mind and infant guilelessness, made him utterly dependent on them. It was not till one of them died that he perceived their danger; one by one they were carried off by pestilence; and his wife, his helpmate and supporter, more necessary to him than his own limbs and frame, which had hardly been taught the lesson of self-preservation, the kind companion whose voice always spoke peace to him, closed her eyes in death. The old man felt the system of universal nature which he had so long studied and adored, slide from under him, and he stood among the dead, and lifted his voice in curses. — No wonder that the attendant should interpret as frenzy the harrowing maledictions of the grief-struck old man.

I had commenced my search late in the day, a November day, that closed in early with pattering rain and melancholy wind. As I turned from the door, I saw Merrival, or rather the shadow of Merrival, attenuated and wild, pass me, and sit on the steps of his home. The breeze scattered the grey locks on his temples, the rain drenched his uncovered head, he sat hiding his face in his withered hands. I pressed his shoulder to awaken his attention, but he did not alter his position. “Merrival,” I said, “it is long since we have seen you — you must return to Windsor with me — Lady Idris desires to see you, you will not refuse her request — come home with me.”

He replied in a hollow voice, “Why deceive a helpless old man, why talk hypocritically to one half crazed? Windsor is not my home; my true home I have found; the home that the Creator has prepared for me.”

His accent of bitter scorn thrilled me—”Do not tempt me to speak,” he continued, “my words would scare you — in an universe of cowards I dare think — among the church-yard tombs — among the victims of His merciless tyranny I dare reproach the Supreme Evil. How can he punish me? Let him bare his arm and transfix me with lightning — this is also one of his attributes” — and the old man laughed.

He rose, and I followed him through the rain to a neighbouring church-yard — he threw himself on the wet earth. “Here they are,” he cried, “beautiful creatures — breathing, speaking, loving creatures. She who by day and night cherished the age-worn lover of her youth — they, parts of my flesh, my children — here they are: call them, scream their names through the night; they will not answer!” He clung to the little heaps that marked the graves. “I ask but one thing; I do not fear His hell, for I have it here; I do not desire His heaven, let me but die and be laid beside them; let me but, when I lie dead, feel my flesh as it moulders, mingle with theirs. Promise,” and he raised himself painfully, and seized my arm, “promise to bury me with them.”

“So God help me and mine as I promise,” I replied, “on one condition: return with me to Windsor.”

“To Windsor!” he cried with a shriek, “Never! — from this place I never go — my bones, my flesh, I myself, are already buried here, and what you see of me is corrupted clay like them. I will lie here, and cling here, till rain, and hail, and lightning and storm, ruining on me, make me one in substance with them below.”

In a few words I must conclude this tragedy. I was obliged to leave London, and Adrian undertook to watch over him; the task was soon fulfilled; age, grief, and inclement weather, all united to hush his sorrows, and bring repose to his heart, whose beats were agony. He died embracing the sod, which was piled above his breast, when he was placed beside the beings whom he regretted with such wild despair.

I returned to Windsor at the wish of Idris, who seemed to think that there was greater safety for her children at that spot; and because, once having taken on me the guardianship of the district, I would not desert it while an inhabitant survived. I went also to act in conformity with Adrian's plans, which was to congregate in masses what remained of the population; for he possessed the conviction that it was only through the benevolent and social virtues that any safety was to be hoped for the remnant of mankind.

It was a melancholy thing to return to this spot so dear to us, as the scene of a happiness rarely before enjoyed, here to mark the extinction of our species, and trace the deep inerasable footsteps of disease over the fertile and cherished soil. The aspect of the country had so far changed, that it had been impossible to enter on the task of sowing seed, and other autumnal labours. That season was now gone; and winter had set in with sudden and unusual severity. Alternate frosts and thaws succeeding to floods, rendered the country impassable. Heavy falls of snow gave an arctic appearance to the scenery; the roofs of the houses peeped from the white mass; the lowly cot and stately mansion, alike deserted, were blocked up, their thresholds uncleared; the windows were broken by the hail, while the prevalence of a north-east wind rendered out-door exertions extremely painful. The altered state of society made these accidents of nature, sources of real misery. The luxury of command and the attentions of servitude were lost. It is true that the necessaries of life were assembled in such quantities, as to supply to superfluity the wants of the diminished population; but still much labour was required to arrange these, as it were, raw materials; and depressed by sickness, and fearful of the future, we had not energy to enter boldly and decidedly on any system.

I can speak for myself — want of energy was not my failing. The intense life that quickened my pulses, and animated my frame, had the effect, not of drawing me into the mazes of active life, but of exalting my lowliness, and of bestowing majestic proportions on insignificant objects — I could have lived the life of a peasant in the same way — my trifling occupations were swelled into important pursuits; my affections were impetuous and engrossing passions, and nature with all her changes was invested in divine attributes. The very spirit of the Greek mythology inhabited my heart; I deified the uplands, glades, and streams, I

Had sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
And heard old Triton blow his wreathed horn.*

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* Wordsworth.

Strange, that while the earth preserved her monotonous course, I dwelt with ever-renewing wonder on her antique laws, and now that with eccentric wheel she rushed into an untried path, I should feel this spirit fade; I struggled with despondency and weariness, but like a fog, they choked me. Perhaps, after the labours and stupendous excitement of the past summer, the calm of winter and the almost menial toils it brought with it, were by natural re-action doubly irksome. It was not the grasping passion of the preceding year, which gave life and individuality to each moment — it was not the aching pangs induced by the distresses of the times. The utter inutility that had attended all my exertions took from them their usual effects of exhilaration, and despair rendered abortive the balm of self applause — I longed to return to my old occupations, but of what use were they? To read were futile — to write, vanity indeed. The earth, late wide circus for the display of dignified exploits, vast theatre for a magnificent drama, now presented a vacant space, an empty stage — for actor or spectator there was no longer aught to say or hear.

Our little town of Windsor, in which the survivors from the neighbouring counties were chiefly assembled, wore a melancholy aspect. Its streets were blocked up with snow — the few passengers seemed palsied, and frozen by the ungenial visitation of winter. To escape these evils was the aim and scope of all our exertions. Families late devoted to exalting and refined pursuits, rich, blooming, and young, with diminished numbers and care-fraught hearts, huddled over a fire, grown selfish and grovelling through suffering. Without the aid of servants, it was necessary to discharge all household duties; hands unused to such labour must knead the bread, or in the absence of flour, the statesmen or perfumed courtier must undertake the butcher’s office. Poor and rich were now equal, or rather the poor were the superior, since they entered on such tasks with alacrity and experience; while ignorance, inaptitude, and habits of repose, rendered them fatiguing to the luxurious, galling to the proud, disgustful to all whose minds, bent on intellectual improvement, held it their dearest privilege to be exempt from attending to mere animal wants.

But in every change goodness and affection can find field for exertion and display. Among some these changes produced a devotion and sacrifice of self at once graceful and heroic. It was a sight for the lovers of the human race to enjoy; to behold, as in ancient times, the patriarchal modes in which the variety of kindred and friendship fulfilled their duteous and kindly offices. Youths, nobles of the land, performed for the sake of mother or sister, the services of menials with amiable cheerfulness. They went to the river to break the ice, and draw water: they assembled on foraging expeditions, or axe in hand felled the trees for fuel. The females received them on their return with the simple and affectionate welcome known before only to the lowly cottage — a clean hearth and bright fire; the supper ready cooked by beloved hands; gratitude for the provision for to-morrow's meal: strange enjoyments for the high-born English, yet they were now their sole, hard earned, and dearly prized luxuries.

None was more conspicuous for this graceful submission to circumstances, noble humility, and ingenious fancy to adorn such acts with romantic colouring, than our own Clara. She saw my despondency, and the aching cares of Idris. Her perpetual study was to relieve us from labour and to spread ease and even elegance over our altered mode of life. We still had some attendants spared by disease, and warmly attached to us. But Clara was jealous of their services; she would be sole handmaid of Idris, sole minister to the wants of her little cousins; nothing gave her so much pleasure as our employing her in this way; she went beyond our desires, earnest, diligent, and unwearied, —

Abra was ready ere we called her name,
And though we called another, Abra came.*

* Prior's *Solomon*.

It was my task each day to visit the various families assembled in our town, and when the weather permitted, I was glad to prolong my ride, and to muse in solitude over every changeful appearance of our destiny, endeavouring to gather lessons for the future from the experience of the past. The impatience with which, while in society, the ills that afflicted my species inspired me, were softened by loneliness, when individual suffering was merged in the general calamity, strange to say, less afflicting to contemplate. Thus often, pushing my way with difficulty through the narrow snow-blocked town, I crossed the bridge and passed through Eton. No youthful congregation of gallant-hearted boys thronged the portal of the college; sad silence pervaded the busy school-room and noisy playground. I extended my ride towards Salt Hill, on every side impeded by the snow. Were those the fertile fields I loved — was that the interchange of gentle upland and cultivated dale, once covered with waving corn, diversified by stately trees, watered by the meandering Thames? One sheet of white covered it, while bitter recollection told me that cold as the winter-clothed earth, were the hearts of the inhabitants. I met troops of horses, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, wandering at will; here throwing down a hay-rick, and nestling from cold in its heart, which afforded them shelter and food — there having taken possession of a vacant cottage.

Once on a frosty day, pushed on by restless unsatisfying reflections, I sought a favourite haunt, a little wood not far distant from Salt Hill. A bubbling spring prattles over stones on one side, and a plantation of a few elms and beeches, hardly deserve, and yet continue the name of wood. This spot had for me peculiar charms. It had been a favourite resort of Adrian; it was secluded; and he often said that in boyhood, his happiest hours were spent here; having escaped the stately bondage of his mother, he sat on the rough hewn steps that led to the spring, now reading a favourite book, now musing, with speculation beyond his years, on the still unravelled skein of morals or metaphysics. A melancholy foreboding assured me that I should never see this place more; so with careful thought, I noted each tree, every winding of the streamlet and irregularity of the soil, that I might better call up its idea in absence. A robin red-breast dropt from the frosty branches of the trees, upon the congealed rivulet; its panting breast and half-closed eyes showed that it was dying: a hawk appeared in the air; sudden fear seized the little creature; it exerted its last strength, throwing itself on its back, raising its talons in impotent defence against its powerful enemy. I took it up and placed it in my breast. I fed it with a few crumbs from a biscuit; by degrees it revived; its warm fluttering heart beat against me; I cannot tell why I detail this trifling incident — but the scene is still before me; the snow-clad fields seen through the silvered trunks of the beeches, — the brook, in days of happiness alive with sparkling waters, now choked by ice — the leafless trees fantastically dressed in hoar frost — the shapes of summer leaves imaged by winter's frozen hand on the hard ground — the dusky sky, drear cold, and unbroken silence — while close in my bosom, my feathered nursling lay warm, and safe, speaking its content with a light chirp — painful reflections thronged, stirring my brain with wild commotion — cold and death-like as the snowy fields was all earth — misery-stricken the life-tide of the inhabitants — why should I oppose the cataract of destruction that swept us away? — why string my nerves and renew my wearied efforts — ah, why? But that my firm courage and cheerful exertions might shelter the dear mate, whom I chose in the spring of my life; though the throbbings of my heart be replete with pain, though my hopes for the future are chill, still while your dear head, my gentlest love, can repose in peace on that heart, and while you derive from its fostering care, comfort, and hope, my struggles shall not cease, — I will not call myself altogether vanquished.

One fine February day, when the sun had reassumed some of its genial power, I walked in the forest with my family. It was one of those lovely winter-days which assert the capacity of nature to bestow beauty on barrenness. The leafless trees spread their fibrous branches against the pure sky; their intricate and pervious tracery resembled delicate sea-weed; the deer were turning up the snow in search of the hidden grass; the white was made intensely dazzling by the sun, and trunks of the trees, rendered more conspicuous by the loss of preponderating foliage, gathered around like the labyrinthine columns of a vast temple; it was impossible not to receive pleasure from the sight of these things. Our children, freed from the bondage of winter, bounded before us; pursuing the deer, or rousing the pheasants and partridges from their coverts. Idris leant on my arm; her sadness yielded to the present sense of pleasure. We met other families on the Long Walk, enjoying like ourselves the return of the genial season. At once, I seemed to awake; I cast off the clinging sloth of the past months; earth assumed a new appearance, and my view of the future was suddenly made clear. I exclaimed, "I have now found out the secret!"

"What secret?"

In answer to this question, I described our gloomy winter-life, our sordid cares, our menial labours:—”This northern country,” I said, “is no place for our diminished race. When mankind were few, it was not here that they battled with the powerful agents of nature, and were enabled to cover the globe with offspring. We must seek some natural Paradise, some garden of the earth, where our simple wants may be easily supplied, and the enjoyment of a delicious climate compensate for the social pleasures we have lost. If we survive this coming summer, I will not spend the ensuing winter in England; neither I nor any of us.”

I spoke without much heed, and the very conclusion of what I said brought with it other thoughts. Should we, any of us, survive the coming summer? I saw the brow of Idris clouded; I again felt, that we were enchained to the car of fate, over whose coursers we had no control. We could no longer say, This we will do, and this we will leave undone. A mightier power than the human was at hand to destroy our plans or to achieve the work we avoided. It were madness to calculate upon another winter. This was our last. The coming summer was the extreme end of our vista; and, when we arrived there, instead of a continuation of the long road, a gulf yawned, into which we must of force be precipitated. The last blessing of humanity was wrested from us; we might no longer hope. Can the madman, as he clanks his chains, hope? Can the wretch, led to the scaffold, who when he lays his head on the block, marks the double shadow of himself and the executioner, whose uplifted arm bears the axe, hope? Can the ship-wrecked mariner, who spent with swimming, hears close behind the splashing waters divided by a shark which pursues him through the Atlantic, hope? Such hope as theirs, we also may entertain!

Old fable tells us, that this gentle spirit sprung from the box of Pandora, else crammed with evils; but these were unseen and null, while all admired the inspiriting loveliness of young Hope; each man’s heart became her home; she was enthroned sovereign of our lives, here and here-after; she was deified and worshipped, declared incorruptible and everlasting. But like all other gifts of the Creator to Man, she is mortal; her life has attained its last hour. We have watched over her; nursed her flickering existence; now she has fallen at once from youth to decrepitude, from health to immedicinable disease; even as we spend ourselves in struggles for her recovery, she dies; to all nations the voice goes forth, Hope is dead! We are but mourners in the funeral train, and what immortal essence or perishable creation will refuse to make one in the sad procession that attends to its grave the dead comforter of humanity?

Does not the sun call in his light? and day
Like a thin exhalation melt away —
Both wrapping up their beams in clouds to be
Themselves close mourners at this obsequie.*

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* Cleveland’s *Poems*.

CHAPTER XXI

Hear you not the rushing sound of the coming tempest? Do you not behold the clouds open, and destruction lurid and dire pour down on the blasted earth? See you not the thunderbolt fall, and are deafened by the shout of heaven that follows its descent? Feel you not the earth quake and open with agonizing groans, while the air is pregnant with shrieks and wailings, — all announcing the last days of man?

No! none of these things accompanied our fall! The balmy air of spring, breathed from nature's ambrosial home, invested the lovely earth, which wakened as a young mother about to lead forth in pride her beauteous offspring to meet their sire who had been long absent. The buds decked the trees, the flowers adorned the land: the dark branches, swollen with seasonable juices, expanded into leaves, and the variegated foliage of spring, bending and singing in the breeze, rejoiced in the genial warmth of the unclouded empyrean: the brooks flowed murmuring, the sea was waveless, and the promontories that over-hung it were reflected in the placid waters; birds awoke in the woods, while abundant food for man and beast sprung up from the dark ground. Where was pain and evil? Not in the calm air or weltering ocean; not in the woods or fertile fields, nor among the birds that made the woods resonant with song, nor the animals that in the midst of plenty basked in the sunshine. Our enemy, like the Calamity of Homer, trod our hearts, and no sound was echoed from her steps —

With ills the land is rife, with ills the sea,
Diseases haunt our frail humanity,
Through noon, through night, on casual wing they glide,
Silent, — a voice the power all-wise denied.*

* Elton's translation of Hesiod.

Once man was a favourite of the Creator, as the royal psalmist sang, "God had made him a little lower than the angels, and had crowned him with glory and honour. God made him to have dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet." Once it was so; now is man lord of the creation? Look at him — ha! I see plague! She has invested his form, is incarnate in his flesh, has entwined herself with his being, and blinds his heaven-seeking eyes. Lie down, O man, on the flower-strewn earth; give up all claim to your inheritance, all you can ever possess of it is the small cell which the dead require.

Plague is the companion of spring, of sunshine, and plenty. We no longer struggle with her. We have forgotten what we did when she was not. Of old navies used to stem the giant ocean-waves betwixt Indus and the Pole for slight articles of luxury. Men made perilous journeys to possess themselves of earth's splendid trifles, gems and gold. Human labour was wasted — human life set at nought. Now life is all that we covet; that this automaton of flesh should, with joints and springs in order, perform its functions, that this dwelling of the soul should be capable of containing its dweller. Our minds, late spread abroad through countless spheres and endless combinations of thought, now retrenched themselves behind this wall of flesh, eager to preserve its well-being only. We were surely sufficiently degraded.

At first the increase of sickness in spring brought increase of toil to such of us, who, as yet spared to life, bestowed our time and thoughts on our fellow creatures. We nerved ourselves to the task: "in the midst of despair we performed the tasks of hope." We went out with the resolution of disputing with our foe. We aided the sick, and comforted the sorrowing; turning from the multitudinous dead to the rare survivors, with an energy of desire that bore the resemblance of power, we bade them — live. Plague sat paramount the while, and laughed us to scorn.

Have any of you, my readers, observed the ruins of an anthill immediately after its destruction? At first it appears entirely deserted of its former inhabitants; in a little time you see an ant struggling through the upturned mould; they reappear by twos and threes, running hither and thither in search of their lost companions. Such were we upon earth, wondering aghast at the effects of pestilence. Our empty habitations remained, but the dwellers were gathered to the shades of the tomb.

As the rules of order and pressure of laws were lost, some began with hesitation and wonder to transgress the accustomed uses of society. Palaces were deserted, and the poor man dared at length, unreproved, intrude into the splendid apartments, whose very furniture and decorations were an unknown world to him. It was found that, though at first the stop put to all circulation of property, had reduced those before supported by the factitious wants of society to sudden and hideous poverty, yet when the boundaries of private possession were thrown down, the products of human labour at present existing were more, far more, than the thinned generation could possibly consume. To some among the poor this was matter of exultation. We were all equal now; magnificent dwellings, luxurious carpets, and beds of down, were afforded to all. Carriages and horses, gardens, pictures, statues, and princely libraries, there were enough of these even to superfluity; and there was nothing to prevent each from assuming possession of his share. We were all equal now; but near at hand was an equality still more levelling, a state where beauty and strength, and wisdom, would be as vain as riches and birth. The grave yawned beneath us all, and its prospect prevented any of us from enjoying the ease and plenty which in so awful a manner was presented to us.

Still the bloom did not fade on the cheeks of my babes; and Clara sprung up in years and growth, unsullied by disease. We had no reason to think the site of Windsor Castle peculiarly healthy, for many other families had expired beneath its roof; we lived therefore without any particular precaution; but we lived, it seemed, in safety. If Idris became thin and pale, it was anxiety that occasioned the change; an anxiety I could in no way alleviate. She never complained, but sleep and appetite fled from her, a slow fever preyed on her veins, her colour was hectic, and she often wept in secret; gloomy prognostications, care, and agonizing dread, ate up the principle of life within her. I could not fail to perceive this change. I often wished that I had permitted her to take her own course, and engage herself in such labours for the welfare of others as might have distracted her thoughts. But it was too late now. Besides that, with the nearly extinct race of man, all our toils grew near a conclusion, she was too weak; consumption, if so it might be called, or rather the over active life within her, which, as with Adrian, spent the vital oil in the early morning hours, deprived her limbs of strength. At night, when she could leave me unperceived, she wandered through the house, or hung over the couches of her children; and in the day time would sink into a perturbed sleep, while her murmurs and starts betrayed the unquiet dreams that vexed her. As this state of wretchedness became more confirmed, and, in spite of her endeavours at concealment more apparent, I strove, though vainly, to awaken in her courage and hope. I could not wonder at the vehemence of her care; her very soul was tenderness; she trusted indeed that she should not outlive me if I became the prey of the vast calamity, and this thought sometimes relieved her. We had for many years trod the highway of life hand in hand, and still thus linked, we might step within the shades of death; but her children, her lovely, playful, animated children — beings sprung from her own dear side — portions of her own being — depositories of our loves — even if we died, it would be comfort to know that they ran man's accustomed course. But it would not be so; young and blooming as they were, they would die, and from the hopes of maturity, from the proud name of attained manhood, they were cut off for ever. Often with maternal affection she had figured their merits and talents exerted on life's wide stage. Alas for these latter days! The world had grown old, and all its inmates partook of the decrepitude. Why talk of infancy, manhood, and old age? We all stood equal sharers of the last throes of time-worn nature. Arrived at the same point of the world's age — there was no difference in us; the name of parent and child had lost their meaning; young boys and girls were level now with men. This was all true; but it was not less agonizing to take the admonition home.

Where could we turn, and not find a desolation pregnant with the dire lesson of example? The fields had been left uncultivated, weeds and gaudy flowers sprung up, — or where a few wheat-fields showed signs of the living hopes of the husbandman, the work had been left halfway, the ploughman had died beside the plough; the horses had deserted the furrow, and no seedsman had approached the dead; the cattle unattended wandered over the fields and through the lanes; the tame inhabitants of the poultry yard, baulked of their daily food, had become wild — young lambs were dropt in flower-gardens, and the cow stalled in the hall of pleasure. Sickly and few, the country people neither went out to sow nor reap; but sauntered about the meadows, or lay under the hedges, when the inclement sky did not drive them to take shelter under the nearest roof. Many of those who remained, secluded themselves; some had laid up stores which should prevent the necessity of leaving their homes; — some deserted wife and child, and imagined that they secured their safety in utter solitude. Such had been Ryland's plan, and he was discovered dead and half-devoured by insects, in a house many miles from any other, with piles of food laid up in useless superfluity. Others made long journeys to unite themselves to those they loved, and arrived to find them dead.

London did not contain above a thousand inhabitants; and this number was continually diminishing. Most of them were country people, come up for the sake of change; the Londoners had sought the country. The busy eastern part of the town was silent, or at most you saw only where, half from cupidity, half from curiosity, the warehouses had been more ransacked than pillaged: bales of rich India goods, shawls of price, jewels, and spices, unpacked, strewed the floors. In some places the possessor had to the last kept watch on his store, and died before the barred gates. The massy portals of the churches swung creaking on their hinges; and some few lay dead on the pavement. The wretched female, loveless victim of vulgar brutality, had wandered to the toilet of high-born beauty, and, arraying herself in the garb of splendour, had died before the mirror which reflected to herself alone her altered appearance. Women whose delicate feet had seldom touched the earth in their luxury, had fled in fright and horror from their homes, till, losing themselves in the squalid streets of the metropolis, they had died on the threshold of poverty. The heart sickened at the variety of misery presented; and, when I saw a specimen of this gloomy change, my soul ached with the fear of what might befall my beloved Idris and my babes. Were they, surviving Adrian and myself, to find themselves protectorless in the world? As yet the mind alone had suffered — could I for ever put off the time, when the delicate frame and shrinking nerves of my child of prosperity, the nursling of rank and wealth, who was my companion, should be invaded by famine, hardship, and disease? Better die at once — better plunge a poniard in her bosom, still untouched by drear adversity, and then again sheathe it in my own! But, no; in times of misery we must fight against our destinies, and strive not to be overcome by them. I would not yield, but to the last gasp resolutely defended my dear ones against sorrow and pain; and if I were vanquished at last, it should not be ingloriously. I stood in the gap, resisting the enemy — the impalpable, invisible foe, who had so long besieged us — as yet he had made no breach: it must be my care that he should not, secretly undermining, burst up within the very threshold of the temple of love, at whose altar I daily sacrificed.

The hunger of Death was now stung more sharply by the diminution of his food: or was it that before, the survivors being many, the dead were less eagerly counted? Now each life was a gem, each human breathing form of far, O! far more worth than subtlest imagery of sculptured stone; and the daily, nay, hourly decrease visible in our numbers, visited the heart with sickening misery. This summer extinguished our hopes, the vessel of society was wrecked, and the shattered raft, which carried the few survivors over the sea of misery, was riven and tempest tost. Man existed by twos and threes; man, the individual who might sleep, and wake, and perform the animal functions; but man, in himself weak, yet more powerful in congregated numbers than wind or ocean; man, the queller of the elements, the lord of created nature, the peer of demi-gods, existed no longer.

Farewell to the patriotic scene, to the love of liberty and well earned meed of virtuous aspiration! — farewell to crowded senate, vocal with the councils of the wise, whose laws were keener than the sword blade tempered at Damascus! — farewell to kingly pomp and warlike pageantry; the crowns are in the dust, and the wearers are in their graves! — farewell to the desire of rule, and the hope of victory; to high vaulting ambition, to the appetite for praise, and the craving for the suffrage of their fellows! The nations are no longer! No senate sits in council for the dead; no scion of a time honoured dynasty pants to rule over the inhabitants of a charnel house; the general’s hand is cold, and the soldier has his untimely grave dug in his native fields, unhonoured, though in youth. The market-place is empty, the candidate for popular favour finds none whom he can represent. To chambers of painted state farewell! — To midnight revelry, and the panting emulation of beauty, to costly dress and birth-day show, to title and the gilded coronet, farewell!

Farewell to the giant powers of man, — to knowledge that could pilot the deep-drawing bark through the opposing waters of shoreless ocean, — to science that directed the silken balloon through the pathless air, — to the power that could put a barrier to mighty waters, and set in motion wheels, and beams, and vast machinery, that could divide rocks of granite or marble, and make the mountains plain!

Farewell to the arts, — to eloquence, which is to the human mind as the winds to the sea, stirring, and then allaying it; — farewell to poetry and deep philosophy, for man's imagination is cold, and his inquiring mind can no longer expatiate on the wonders of life, for "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest!" — to the graceful building, which in its perfect proportion transcended the rude forms of nature, the fretted gothic and massy saracenic pile, to the stupendous arch and glorious dome, the fluted column with its capital, Corinthian, Ionic, or Doric, the peristyle and fair entablature, whose harmony of form is to the eye as musical concord to the ear! — farewell to sculpture, where the pure marble mocks human flesh, and in the plastic expression of the culled excellencies of the human shape, shines forth the god! — farewell to painting, the high wrought sentiment and deep knowledge of the artists's mind in pictured canvas — to paradisaical scenes, where trees are ever vernal, and the ambrosial air rests in perpetual glow: — to the stamped form of tempest, and wildest uproar of universal nature encaged in the narrow frame, O farewell! Farewell to music, and the sound of song; to the marriage of instruments, where the concord of soft and harsh unites in sweet harmony, and gives wings to the panting listeners, whereby to climb heaven, and learn the hidden pleasures of the eternals! — Farewell to the well-trod stage; a truer tragedy is enacted on the world's ample scene, that puts to shame mimic grief: to high-bred comedy, and the low buffoon, farewell! — Man may laugh no more.

Alas! to enumerate the adornments of humanity, shows, by what we have lost, how supremely great man was. It is all over now. He is solitary; like our first parents expelled from Paradise, he looks back towards the scene he has quitted. The high walls of the tomb, and the flaming sword of plague, lie between it and him. Like to our first parents, the whole earth is before him, a wide desert. Unsupported and weak, let him wander through fields where the unreaped corn stands in barren plenty, through copses planted by his fathers, through towns built for his use. Posterity is no more; fame, and ambition, and love, are words void of meaning; even as the cattle that grazes in the field, do thou, O deserted one, lie down at evening-tide, unknowing of the past, careless of the future, for from such fond ignorance alone canst thou hope for ease!

Joy paints with its own colours every act and thought. The happy do not feel poverty — for delight is as a gold-tissued robe, and crowns them with priceless gems. Enjoyment plays the cook to their homely fare, and mingles intoxication with their simple drink. Joy strews the hard couch with roses, and makes labour ease.

Sorrow doubles the burthen to the bent-down back; plants thorns in the unyielding pillow; mingles gall with water; adds saltness to their bitter bread; clothing them in rags, and strewing ashes on their bare heads. To our irremediable distress every small and pelting inconvenience came with added force; we had strung our frames to endure the Atlean weight thrown on us; we sank beneath the added feather chance threw on us, “the grasshopper was a burthen.” Many of the survivors had been bred in luxury — their servants were gone, their powers of command vanished like unreal shadows: the poor even suffered various privations; and the idea of another winter like the last, brought affright to our minds. Was it not enough that we must die, but toil must be added? — must we prepare our funeral repast with labour, and with unseemly drudgery heap fuel on our deserted hearths — must we with servile hands fabricate the garments, soon to be our shroud?

Not so! We are presently to die, let us then enjoy to its full relish the remnant of our lives. Sordid care, avaunt! menial labours, and pains, slight in themselves, but too gigantic for our exhausted strength, shall make no part of our ephemeral existences. In the beginning of time, when, as now, man lived by families, and not by tribes or nations, they were placed in a genial clime, where earth fed them untilled, and the balmy air enwrapped their reposing limbs with warmth more pleasant than beds of down. The south is the native place of the human race; the land of fruits, more grateful to man than the hard-earned Ceres of the north, — of trees, whose boughs are as a palace-roof, of couches of roses, and of the thirst-appeasing grape. We need not there fear cold and hunger.

Look at England! the grass shoots up high in the meadows; but they are dank and cold, unfit bed for us. Corn we have none, and the crude fruits cannot support us. We must seek firing in the bowels of the earth, or the unkind atmosphere will fill us with rheums and aches. The labour of hundreds of thousands alone could make this inclement nook fit habitation for one man. To the south then, to the sun! — where nature is kind, where

Jove has showered forth the contents of Amalthea’s horn, and earth is garden.

England, late birth-place of excellence and school of the wise, thy children are gone, thy glory faded! Thou, England, wert the triumph of man! Small favour was shown thee by thy Creator, thou Isle of the North; a ragged canvas naturally, painted by man with alien colours; but the hues he gave are faded, never more to be renewed. So we must leave thee, thou marvel of the world; we must bid farewell to thy clouds, and cold, and scarcity for ever! Thy manly hearts are still; thy tale of power and liberty at its close! Bereft of man, O little isle! the ocean waves will buffet thee, and the raven flap his wings over thee; thy soil will be birth-place of weeds, thy sky will canopy barrenness. It was not for the rose of Persia thou wert famous, nor the banana of the east; not for the spicy gales of India, nor the sugar groves of America; not for thy vines nor thy double harvests, nor for thy vernal airs, nor solstitial sun — but for thy children, their unwearied industry and lofty aspiration. They are gone, and thou goest with them the oft trodden path that leads to oblivion, —

Farewell, sad Isle, farewell, thy fatal glory
Is summed, cast up, and cancelled in this story.*

* Cleveland’s *Poems*.

CHAPTER XXII

In the autumn of this year 2096, the spirit of emigration crept in among the few survivors, who, congregating from various parts of England, met in London. This spirit existed as a breath, a wish, a far off thought, until communicated to Adrian, who imbibed it with ardour, and instantly engaged himself in plans for its execution. The fear of immediate death vanished with the heats of September. Another winter was before us, and we might elect our mode of passing it to the best advantage. Perhaps in rational philosophy none could be better chosen than this scheme of migration, which would draw us from the immediate scene of our woe, and, leading us through pleasant and picturesque countries, amuse for a time our despair. The idea once broached, all were impatient to put it in execution.

We were still at Windsor; our renewed hopes medicined the anguish we had suffered from the late tragedies. The death of many of our inmates had weaned us from the fond idea, that Windsor Castle was a spot sacred from the plague; but our lease of life was renewed for some months, and even Idris lifted her head, as a lily after a storm, when a last sunbeam tinges its silver cup. Just at this time Adrian came down to us; his eager looks showed us that he was full of some scheme. He hastened to take me aside, and disclosed to me with rapidity his plan of emigration from England.

To leave England for ever! to turn from its polluted fields and groves, and, placing the sea between us, to quit it, as a sailor quits the rock on which he has been wrecked, when the saving ship rides by. Such was his plan.

To leave the country of our fathers, made holy by their graves! — We could not feel even as a voluntary exile of old, who might for pleasure or convenience forsake his native soil; though thousands of miles might divide him, England was still a part of him, as he of her. He heard of the passing events of the day; he knew that, if he returned, and resumed his place in society, the entrance was still open, and it required but the will, to surround himself at once with the associations and habits of boyhood. Not so with us, the remnant. We left none to represent us, none to repeople the desert land, and the name of England died, when we left her, In vagabond pursuit of dreadful safety.

Yet let us go! England is in her shroud, — we may not enchain ourselves to a corpse. Let us go — the world is our country now, and we will choose for our residence its most fertile spot. Shall we, in these desert halls, under this wintry sky, sit with closed eyes and folded hands, expecting death? Let us rather go out to meet it gallantly: or perhaps — for all this pendulous orb, this fair gem in the sky's diadem, is not surely plague-stricken — perhaps, in some secluded nook, amidst eternal spring, and waving trees, and purling streams, we may find Life. The world is vast, and England, though her many fields and wide spread woods seem interminable, is but a small part of her. At the close of a day's march over high mountains and through snowy valleys, we may come upon health, and committing our loved ones to its charge, replant the uprooted tree of humanity, and send to late posterity the tale of the ante-pestilential race, the heroes and sages of the lost state of things.

Hope beckons and sorrow urges us, the heart beats high with expectation, and this eager desire of change must be an omen of success. O come! Farewell to the dead! farewell to the tombs of those we loved! — farewell to giant London and the placid Thames, to river and mountain or fair district, birth-place of the wise and good, to Windsor Forest and its antique castle, farewell! themes for story alone are they, — we must live elsewhere.

Such were in part the arguments of Adrian, uttered with enthusiasm and unanswerable rapidity. Something more was in his heart, to which he dared not give words. He felt that the end of time was come; he knew that one by one we should dwindle into nothingness. It was not advisable to wait this sad consummation in our native country; but travelling would give us our object for each day, that would distract our thoughts from the swift-approaching end of things. If we went to Italy, to sacred and eternal Rome, we might with greater patience submit to the decree, which had laid her mighty towers low. We might lose our selfish grief in the sublime aspect of its desolation. All this was in the mind of Adrian; but he thought of my children, and, instead of communicating to me these resources of despair, he called up the image of health and life to be found, where we knew not — when we knew not; but if never to be found, for ever and for ever to be sought. He won me over to his party, heart and soul.

It devolved on me to disclose our plan to Idris. The images of health and hope which I presented to her, made her with a smile consent. With a smile she agreed to leave her country, from which she had never before been absent, and the spot she had inhabited from infancy; the forest and its mighty trees, the woodland paths and green recesses, where she had played in childhood, and had lived so happily through youth; she would leave them without regret, for she hoped to purchase thus the lives of her children. They were her life; dearer than a spot consecrated to love, dearer than all else the earth contained. The boys heard with childish glee of our removal: Clara asked if we were to go to Athens. “It is possible,” I replied; and her countenance became radiant with pleasure. There she would behold the tomb of her parents, and the territory filled with recollections of her father’s glory. In silence, but without respite, she had brooded over these scenes. It was the recollection of them that had turned her infant gaiety to seriousness, and had impressed her with high and restless thoughts.

There were many dear friends whom we must not leave behind, humble though they were. There was the spirited and obedient steed which Lord Raymond had given his daughter; there was Alfred’s dog and a pet eagle, whose sight was dimmed through age. But this catalogue of favourites to be taken with us, could not be made without grief to think of our heavy losses, and a deep sigh for the many things we must leave behind. The tears rushed into the eyes of Idris, while Alfred and Evelyn brought now a favourite rose tree, now a marble vase beautifully carved, insisting that these must go, and exclaiming on the pity that we could not take the castle and the forest, the deer and the birds, and all accustomed and cherished objects along with us. “Fond and foolish ones,” I said, “we have lost for ever treasures far more precious than these; and we desert them, to preserve treasures to which in comparison they are nothing. Let us not for a moment forget our object and our hope; and they will form a resistless mound to stop the overflowing of our regret for trifles.”

The children were easily distracted, and again returned to their prospect of future amusement. Idris had disappeared. She had gone to hide her weakness; escaping from the castle, she had descended to the little park, and sought solitude, that she might there indulge her tears; I found her clinging round an old oak, pressing its rough trunk with her roseate lips, as her tears fell plenteously, and her sobs and broken exclamations could not be suppressed; with surpassing grief I beheld this loved one of my heart thus lost in sorrow! I drew her towards me; and, as she felt my kisses on her eyelids, as she felt my arms press her, she revived to the knowledge of what remained to her. “You are very kind not to reproach me,” she said: “I weep, and a bitter pang of intolerable sorrow tears my heart. And yet I am happy; mothers lament their children, wives lose their husbands, while you and my children are left to me. Yes, I am happy, most happy, that I can weep thus for imaginary sorrows, and that the slight loss of my adored country is not dwindled and annihilated in mightier misery. Take me where you will; where you and my children are, there shall be Windsor, and every country will be England to me. Let these tears flow not for myself, happy and ungrateful as I am, but for the dead world — for our lost country — for all of love, and life, and joy, now choked in the dusty chambers of death.”

She spoke quickly, as if to convince herself; she turned her eyes from the trees and forest-paths she loved; she hid her face in my bosom, and we — yes, my masculine firmness dissolved — we wept together consolatory tears, and then calm — nay, almost cheerful, we returned to the castle.

The first cold weather of an English October, made us hasten our preparations. I persuaded Idris to go up to London, where she might better attend to necessary arrangements. I did not tell her, that to spare her the pang of parting from inanimate objects, now the only things left, I had resolved that we should none of us return to Windsor. For the last time we looked on the wide extent of country visible from the terrace, and saw the last rays of the sun tinge the dark masses of wood variegated by autumnal tints; the uncultivated fields and smokeless cottages lay in shadow below; the Thames wound through the wide plain, and the venerable pile of Eton college, stood in dark relief, a prominent object; the cawing of the myriad rooks which inhabited the trees of the little park, as in column or thick wedge they speeded to their nests, disturbed the silence of evening. Nature was the same, as when she was the kind mother of the human race; now, childless and forlorn, her fertility was a mockery; her loveliness a mask for deformity. Why should the breeze gently stir the trees, man felt not its refreshment? Why did dark night adorn herself with stars — man saw them not? Why are there fruits, or flowers, or streams, man is not here to enjoy them?

Idris stood beside me, her dear hand locked in mine. Her face was radiant with a smile.—"The sun is alone," she said, "but we are not. A strange star, my Lionel, ruled our birth; sadly and with dismay we may look upon the annihilation of man; but we remain for each other. Did I ever in the wide world seek other than thee? And since in the wide world thou remainest, why should I complain? Thou and nature are still true to me. Beneath the shades of night, and through the day, whose garish light displays our solitude, thou wilt still be at my side, and even Windsor will not be regretted."

I had chosen night-time for our journey to London, that the change and desolation of the country might be the less observable. Our only surviving servant drove us. We past down the steep hill, and entered the dusky avenue of the Long Walk. At times like these, minute circumstances assume giant and majestic proportions; the very swinging open of the white gate that admitted us into the forest, arrested my thoughts as matter of interest; it was an every day act, never to occur again! The setting crescent of the moon glittered through the massy trees to our right, and when we entered the park, we scared a troop of deer, that fled bounding away in the forest shades. Our two boys quietly slept; once, before our road turned from the view, I looked back on the castle. Its windows glistened in the moonshine, and its heavy outline lay in a dark mass against the sky — the trees near us waved a solemn dirge to the midnight breeze. Idris leaned back in the carriage; her two hands pressed mine, her countenance was placid, she seemed to lose the sense of what she now left, in the memory of what she still possessed.

My thoughts were sad and solemn, yet not of unmingled pain. The very excess of our misery carried a relief with it, giving sublimity and elevation to sorrow. I felt that I carried with me those I best loved; I was pleased, after a long separation to rejoin Adrian; never again to part. I felt that I quitted what I loved, not what loved me. The castle walls, and long familiar trees, did not hear the parting sound of our carriage-wheels with regret. And, while I felt Idris to be near, and heard the regular breathing of my children, I could not be unhappy. Clara was greatly moved; with streaming eyes, suppressing her sobs, she leaned from the window, watching the last glimpse of her native Windsor.

Adrian welcomed us on our arrival. He was all animation; you could no longer trace in his look of health, the suffering valetudinarian; from his smile and sprightly tones you could not guess that he was about to lead forth from their native country, the numbered remnant of the English nation, into the tenantless realms of the south, there to die, one by one, till the LAST MAN should remain in a voiceless, empty world.

Adrian was impatient for our departure, and had advanced far in his preparations. His wisdom guided all. His care was the soul, to move the luckless crowd, who relied wholly on him. It was useless to provide many things, for we should find abundant provision in every town. It was Adrian's wish to prevent all labour; to bestow a festive appearance on this funeral train. Our numbers amounted to not quite two thousand persons. These were not all assembled in London, but each day witnessed the arrival of fresh numbers, and those who resided in the neighbouring towns, had received orders to assemble at one place, on the twentieth of November. Carriages and horses were provided for all; captains and under officers chosen, and the whole assemblage wisely organized. All obeyed the Lord Protector of dying England; all looked up to him. His council was chosen, it consisted of about fifty persons. Distinction and station were not the qualifications of their election. We had no station among us, but that which benevolence and prudence gave; no distinction save between the living and the dead. Although we were anxious to leave England before the depth of winter, yet we were detained. Small parties had been dispatched to various parts of England, in search of stragglers; we would not go, until we had assured ourselves that in all human probability we did not leave behind a single human being.

On our arrival in London, we found that the aged Countess of Windsor was residing with her son in the palace of the Protectorate; we repaired to our accustomed abode near Hyde Park. Idris now for the first time for many years saw her mother, anxious to assure herself that the childishness of old age did not mingle with unforgotten pride, to make this high-born dame still so inveterate against me. Age and care had furrowed her cheeks, and bent her form; but her eye was still bright, her manners authoritative and unchanged; she received her daughter coldly, but displayed more feeling as she folded her grand-children in her arms. It is our nature to wish to continue our systems and thoughts to posterity through our own offspring. The Countess had failed in this design with regard to her children; perhaps she hoped to find the next remove in birth more tractable. Once Idris named me casually — a frown, a convulsive gesture of anger, shook her mother, and, with voice trembling with hate, she said—"I am of little worth in this world; the young are impatient to push the old off the scene; but, Idris, if you do not wish to see your mother expire at your feet, never again name that person to me; all else I can bear; and now I am resigned to the destruction of my cherished hopes: but it is too much to require that I should love the instrument that providence gifted with murderous properties for my destruction."

This was a strange speech, now that, on the empty stage, each might play his part without impediment from the other. But the haughty Ex-Queen thought as Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony,

  We could not stall together
In the whole world.

The period of our departure was fixed for the twenty-fifth of November. The weather was temperate; soft rains fell at night, and by day the wintry sun shone out. Our numbers were to move forward in separate parties, and to go by different routes, all to unite at last at Paris. Adrian and his division, consisting in all of five hundred persons, were to take the direction of Dover and Calais.

On the twentieth of November, Adrian and I rode for the last time through the streets of London. They were grass-grown and deserted. The open doors of the empty mansions creaked upon their hinges; rank herbage, and deforming dirt, had swiftly accumulated on the steps of the houses; the voiceless steeples of the churches pierced the smokeless air; the churches were open, but no prayer was offered at the altars; mildew and damp had already defaced their ornaments; birds, and tame animals, now homeless, had built nests, and made their lairs in consecrated spots. We passed St. Paul's. London, which had extended so far in suburbs in all direction, had been somewhat deserted in the midst, and much of what had in former days obscured this vast building was removed. Its ponderous mass, blackened stone, and high dome, made it look, not like a temple, but a tomb. Methought above the portico was engraved the Hic jacet of England. We passed on eastwards, engaged in such solemn talk as the times inspired. No human step was heard, nor human form discerned. Troops of dogs, deserted of their masters, passed us; and now and then a horse, unbridled and unsaddled, trotted towards us, and tried to attract the attention of those which we rode, as if to allure them to seek like liberty. An unwieldy ox, who had fed in an abandoned granary, suddenly lowed, and showed his shapeless form in a narrow doorway; every thing was desert; but nothing was in ruin. And this medley of undamaged buildings, and luxurious accommodation, in trim and fresh youth, was contrasted with the lonely silence of the unpeopled streets.

Night closed in, and it began to rain. We were about to return homewards, when a voice, a human voice, strange now to hear, attracted our attention. It was a child singing a merry, lightsome air; there was no other sound. We had traversed London from Hyde Park even to where we now were in the Minories, and had met no person, heard no voice nor footstep. The singing was interrupted by laughing and talking; never was merry ditty so sadly timed, never laughter more akin to tears. The door of the house from which these sounds proceeded was open, the upper rooms were illuminated as for a feast. It was a large magnificent house, in which doubtless some rich merchant had lived. The singing again commenced, and rang through the high-roofed rooms, while we silently ascended the staircase. Lights now appeared to guide us; and a long suite of splendid rooms illuminated, made us still more wonder. Their only inhabitant, a little girl, was dancing, waltzing, and singing about them, followed by a large Newfoundland dog, who boisterously jumping on her, and interrupting her, made her now scold, now laugh, now throw herself on the carpet to play with him. She was dressed grotesquely, in glittering robes and shawls fit for a woman; she appeared about ten years of age. We stood at the door looking on this strange scene, till the dog perceiving us barked loudly; the child turned and saw us: her face, losing its gaiety, assumed a sullen expression: she slunk back, apparently meditating an escape. I came up to her, and held her hand; she did not resist, but with a stern brow, so strange in childhood, so different from her former hilarity, she stood still, her eyes fixed on the ground. “What do you do here?” I said gently; “Who are you?” — she was silent, but trembled violently.—”My poor child,” asked Adrian, “are you alone?” There was a winning softness in his voice, that went to the heart of the little girl; she looked at him, then snatching her hand from me, threw herself into his arms, clinging round his neck, ejaculating—”Save me! save me!” while her unnatural sullenness dissolved in tears.

“I will save you,” he replied, “of what are you afraid? you need not fear my friend, he will do you no harm. Are you alone?”

“No, Lion is with me.”

“And your father and mother?—”

“I never had any; I am a charity girl. Every body is gone, gone for a great, great many days; but if they come back and find me out, they will beat me so!”

Her unhappy story was told in these few words: an orphan, taken on pretended charity, ill-treated and reviled, her oppressors had died: unknowing of what had passed around her, she found herself alone; she had not dared venture out, but by the continuance of her solitude her courage revived, her childish vivacity caused her to play a thousand freaks, and with her brute companion she passed a long holiday, fearing nothing but the return of the harsh voices and cruel usage of her protectors. She readily consented to go with Adrian.

In the mean-time, while we descanted on alien sorrows, and on a solitude which struck our eyes and not our hearts, while we imagined all of change and suffering that had intervened in these once thronged streets, before, tenantless and abandoned, they became mere kennels for dogs, and stables for cattle: — while we read the death of the world upon the dark fane, and hugged ourselves in the remembrance that we possessed that which was all the world to us — in the meanwhile —

We had arrived from Windsor early in October, and had now been in London about six weeks. Day by day, during that time, the health of my Idris declined: her heart was broken; neither sleep nor appetite, the chosen servants of health, waited on her wasted form. To watch her children hour by hour, to sit by me, drinking deep the dear persuasion that I remained to her, was all her pastime. Her vivacity, so long assumed, her affectionate display of cheerfulness, her light-hearted tone and springy gait were gone. I could not disguise to myself, nor could she conceal, her life-consuming sorrow. Still change of scene, and reviving hopes might restore her; I feared the plague only, and she was untouched by that.

I had left her this evening, reposing after the fatigues of her preparations. Clara sat beside her, relating a story to the two boys. The eyes of Idris were closed: but Clara perceived a sudden change in the appearance of our eldest darling; his heavy lids veiled his eyes, an unnatural colour burnt in his cheeks, his breath became short. Clara looked at the mother; she slept, yet started at the pause the narrator made — Fear of awakening and alarming her, caused Clara to go on at the eager call of Evelyn, who was unaware of what was passing. Her eyes turned alternately from Alfred to Idris; with trembling accents she continued her tale, till she saw the child about to fall: starting forward she caught him, and her cry roused Idris. She looked on her son. She saw death stealing across his features; she laid him on a bed, she held drink to his parched lips.

Yet he might be saved. If I were there, he might be saved; perhaps it was not the plague. Without a counsellor, what could she do? stay and behold him die! Why at that moment was I away? "Look to him, Clara," she exclaimed, "I will return immediately."

She inquired among those who, selected as the companions of our journey, had taken up their residence in our house; she heard from them merely that I had gone out with Adrian. She entreated them to seek me: she returned to her child, he was plunged in a frightful state of torpor; again she rushed down stairs; all was dark, desert, and silent; she lost all self-possession; she ran into the street; she called on my name. The pattering rain and howling wind alone replied to her. Wild fear gave wings to her feet; she darted forward to seek me, she knew not where; but, putting all her thoughts, all her energy, all her being in speed only, most misdirected speed, she neither felt, nor feared, nor paused, but ran right on, till her strength suddenly deserted her so suddenly, that she had not thought to save herself. Her knees failed her, and she fell heavily on the pavement.

She was stunned for a time; but at length rose, and though sorely hurt, still walked on, shedding a fountain of tears, stumbling at times, going she knew not whither, only now and then with feeble voice she called my name, adding with heart-piercing exclamations, that I was cruel and unkind. Human being there was none to reply; and the inclemency of the night had driven the wandering animals to the habitations they had usurped. Her thin dress was drenched with rain; her wet hair clung round her neck; she tottered through the dark streets; till, striking her foot against an unseen impediment, she again fell; she could not rise; she hardly strove; but, gathering up her limbs, she resigned herself to the fury of the elements, and the bitter grief of her own heart. She breathed an earnest prayer to die speedily, for there was no relief but death. While hopeless of safety for herself, she ceased to lament for her dying child, but shed kindly, bitter tears for the grief I should experience in losing her.

While she lay, life almost suspended, she felt a warm, soft hand on her brow, and a gentle female voice asked her, with expressions of tender compassion, if she could not rise? That another human being, sympathetic and kind, should exist near, roused her; half rising, with clasped hands, and fresh springing tears, she entreated her companion to seek for me, to bid me hasten to my dying child, to save him, for the love of heaven, to save him!

The woman raised her; she led her under shelter, she entreated her to return to her home, whither perhaps I had already returned. Idris easily yielded to her persuasions, she leaned on the arm of her friend, she endeavoured to walk on, but irresistible faintness made her pause again and again.

Quickened by the increasing storm, we had hastened our return, our little charge was placed before Adrian on his horse. There was an assemblage of persons under the portico of our house, in whose gestures I instinctively read some heavy change, some new misfortune. With swift alarm, afraid to ask a single question, I leapt from my horse; the spectators saw me, knew me, and in awful silence divided to make way for me. I snatched a light, and rushing up stairs, and hearing a groan, without reflection I threw open the door of the first room that presented itself. It was quite dark; but, as I stepped within, a pernicious scent assailed my senses, producing sickening qualms, which made their way to my very heart, while I felt my leg clasped, and a groan repeated by the person that held me. I lowered my lamp, and saw a negro half clad, writhing under the agony of disease, while he held me with a convulsive grasp. With mixed horror and impatience I strove to disengage myself, and fell on the sufferer; he wound his naked festering arms round me, his face was close to mine, and his breath, death-laden, entered my vitals. For a moment I was overcome, my head was bowed by aching nausea; till, reflection returning, I sprung up, threw the wretch from me, and darting up the staircase, entered the chamber usually inhabited by my family. A dim light showed me Alfred on a couch; Clara trembling, and paler than whitest snow, had raised him on her arm, holding a cup of water to his lips. I saw full well that no spark of life existed in that ruined form, his features were rigid, his eyes glazed, his head had fallen back. I took him from her, I laid him softly down, kissed his cold little mouth, and turned to speak in a vain whisper, when loudest sound of thunderlike cannon could not have reached him in his immaterial abode.

And where was Idris? That she had gone out to seek me, and had not returned, were fearful tidings, while the rain and driving wind clattered against the window, and roared round the house. Added to this, the sickening sensation of disease gained upon me; no time was to be lost, if ever I would see her again. I mounted my horse and rode out to seek her, fancying that I heard her voice in every gust, oppressed by fever and aching pain.

I rode in the dark and rain through the labyrinthine streets of unpeopled London. My child lay dead at home; the seeds of mortal disease had taken root in my bosom; I went to seek Idris, my adored, now wandering alone, while the waters were rushing from heaven like a cataract to bathe her dear head in chill damp, her fair limbs in numbing cold. A female stood on the step of a door, and called to me as I galloped past. It was not Idris; so I rode swiftly on, until a kind of second sight, a reflection back again on my senses of what I had seen but not marked, made me feel sure that another figure, thin, graceful and tall, stood clinging to the foremost person who supported her. In a minute I was beside the suppliant, in a minute I received the sinking Idris in my arms. Lifting her up, I placed her on the horse; she had not strength to support herself; so I mounted behind her, and held her close to my bosom, wrapping my riding-cloak round her, while her companion, whose well known, but changed countenance, (it was Juliet, daughter of the Duke of L ——) could at this moment of horror obtain from me no more than a passing glance of compassion. She took the abandoned rein, and conducted our obedient steed homewards. Dare I avouch it? That was the last moment of my happiness; but I was happy. Idris must die, for her heart was broken: I must die, for I had caught the plague; earth was a scene of desolation; hope was madness; life had married death; they were one; but, thus supporting my fainting love, thus feeling that I must soon die, I revelled in the delight of possessing her once more; again and again I kissed her, and pressed her to my heart.

We arrived at our home. I assisted her to dismount, I carried her up stairs, and gave her into Clara’s care, that her wet garments might be changed. Briefly I assured Adrian of her safety, and requested that we might be left to repose. As the miser, who with trembling caution visits his treasure to count it again and again, so I numbered each moment, and grudged every one that was not spent with Idris. I returned swiftly to the chamber where the life of my life reposed; before I entered the room I paused for a few seconds; for a few seconds I tried to examine my state; sickness and shuddering ever and anon came over me; my head was heavy, my chest oppressed, my legs bent under me; but I threw off resolutely the swift growing symptoms of my disorder, and met Idris with placid and even joyous looks. She was lying on a couch; carefully fastening the door to prevent all intrusion; I sat by her, we embraced, and our lips met in a kiss long drawn and breathless — would that moment had been my last!

Maternal feeling now awoke in my poor girl’s bosom, and she asked: “And Alfred?”

“Idris,” I replied, “we are spared to each other, we are together; do not let any other idea intrude. I am happy; even on this fatal night, I declare myself happy, beyond all name, all thought — what would you more, sweet one?”

Idris understood me: she bowed her head on my shoulder and wept. “Why,” she again asked, “do you tremble, Lionel, what shakes you thus?”

“Well may I be shaken,” I replied, “happy as I am. Our child is dead, and the present hour is dark and ominous. Well may I tremble! but, I am happy, mine own Idris, most happy.”

“I understand thee, my kind love,” said Idris, “thus — pale as thou art with sorrow at our loss; trembling and aghast, though wouldest assuage my grief by thy dear assurances. I am not happy,” (and the tears flashed and fell from under her down-cast lids), “for we are inmates of a miserable prison, and there is no joy for us; but the true love I bear you will render this and every other loss endurable.”

“We have been happy together, at least,” I said; “no future misery can deprive us of the past. We have been true to each other for years, ever since my sweet princess-love came through the snow to the lowly cottage of the poverty-stricken heir of the ruined Verney. Even now, that eternity is before us, we take hope only from the presence of each other. Idris, do you think, that when we die, we shall be divided?”

“Die! when we die! what mean you? What secret lies hid from me in those dreadful words?”

“Must we not all die, dearest?” I asked with a sad smile.

“Gracious God! are you ill, Lionel, that you speak of death? My only friend, heart of my heart, speak!”

“I do not think,” replied I, “that we have any of us long to live; and when the curtain drops on this mortal scene, where, think you, we shall find ourselves?”

Idris was calmed by my unembarrassed tone and look; she answered: —”You may easily believe that during this long progress of the plague, I have thought much on death, and asked myself, now that all mankind is dead to this life, to what other life they may have been borne. Hour after hour, I have dwelt on these thoughts, and strove to form a rational conclusion concerning the mystery of a future state. What a scare-crow, indeed, would death be, if we were merely to cast aside the shadow in which we now walk, and, stepping forth into the unclouded sunshine of knowledge and love, revived with the same companions, the same affections, and reached the fulfilment of our hopes, leaving our fears with our earthly vesture in the grave. Alas! the same strong feeling which makes me sure that I shall not wholly die, makes me refuse to believe that I shall live wholly as I do now. Yet, Lionel, never, never, can I love any but you; through eternity I must desire your society; and, as I am innocent of harm to others, and as relying and confident as my mortal nature permits, I trust that the Ruler of the world will never tear us asunder.”

“Your remarks are like yourself, dear love,” replied I, “gentle and good; let us cherish such a belief, and dismiss anxiety from our minds. But, sweet, we are so formed, (and there is no sin, if God made our nature, to yield to what he ordains), we are so formed, that we must love life, and cling to it; we must love the living smile, the sympathetic touch, and thrilling voice, peculiar to our mortal mechanism. Let us not, through security in hereafter, neglect the present. This present moment, short as it is, is a part of eternity, and the dearest part, since it is our own unalienably. Thou, the hope of my futurity, art my present joy. Let me then look on thy dear eyes, and, reading love in them, drink intoxicating pleasure.”

Timidly, for my vehemence somewhat terrified her, Idris looked on me. My eyes were bloodshot, starting from my head; every artery beat, methought, audibly, every muscle throbbed, each single nerve felt. Her look of wild affright told me, that I could no longer keep my secret:—"So it is, mine own beloved," I said, "the last hour of many happy ones is arrived, nor can we shun any longer the inevitable destiny. I cannot live long — but, again and again, I say, this moment is ours!"

Paler than marble, with white lips and convulsed features, Idris became aware of my situation. My arm, as I sat, encircled her waist. She felt the palm burn with fever, even on the heart it pressed:—"One moment," she murmured, scarce audibly, "only one moment." —

She kneeled, and hiding her face in her hands, uttered a brief, but earnest prayer, that she might fulfil her duty, and watch over me to the last. While there was hope, the agony had been unendurable; — all was now concluded; her feelings became solemn and calm. Even as Epicharis, unperturbed and firm, submitted to the instruments of torture, did Idris, suppressing every sigh and sign of grief, enter upon the endurance of torments, of which the rack and the wheel are but faint and metaphysical symbols.

I was changed; the tight-drawn cord that sounded so harshly was loosened, the moment that Idris participated in my knowledge of our real situation. The perturbed and passion-tossed waves of thought subsided, leaving only the heavy swell that kept right on without any outward manifestation of its disturbance, till it should break on the remote shore towards which I rapidly advanced:—"It is true that I am sick," I said, "and your society, my Idris is my only medicine; come, and sit beside me."

She made me lie down on the couch, and, drawing a low ottoman near, sat close to my pillow, pressing my burning hands in her cold palms. She yielded to my feverish restlessness, and let me talk, and talked to me, on subjects strange indeed to beings, who thus looked the last, and heard the last, of what they loved alone in the world. We talked of times gone by; of the happy period of our early love; of Raymond, Perdita, and Evadne. We talked of what might arise on this desert earth, if, two or three being saved, it were slowly re-peopled. — We talked of what was beyond the tomb; and, man in his human shape being nearly extinct, we felt with certainty of faith, that other spirits, other minds, other perceptive beings, sightless to us, must people with thought and love this beauteous and imperishable universe.

We talked — I know not how long — but, in the morning I awoke from a painful heavy slumber; the pale cheek of Idris rested on my pillow; the large orbs of her eyes half raised the lids, and showed the deep blue lights beneath; her lips were unclosed, and the slight murmurs they formed told that, even while asleep, she suffered. “If she were dead,” I thought, “what difference? now that form is the temple of a residing deity; those eyes are the windows of her soul; all grace, love, and intelligence are throned on that lovely bosom — were she dead, where would this mind, the dearer half of mine, be? For quickly the fair proportion of this edifice would be more defaced, than are the sand-choked ruins of the desert temples of Palmyra.”

CHAPTER XXIII

Idris stirred and awoke; alas! she awoke to misery. She saw the signs of disease on my countenance, and wondered how she could permit the long night to pass without her having sought, not cure, that was impossible, but alleviation to my sufferings. She called Adrian; my couch was quickly surrounded by friends and assistants, and such medicines as were judged fitting were administered. It was the peculiar and dreadful distinction of our visitation, that none who had been attacked by the pestilence had recovered. The first symptom of the disease was the death-warrant, which in no single instance had been followed by pardon or reprieve. No gleam of hope therefore cheered my friends.

While fever producing torpor, heavy pains, sitting like lead on my limbs, and making my breast heave, were upon me; I continued insensible to every thing but pain, and at last even to that. I awoke on the fourth morning as from a dreamless sleep. An irritating sense of thirst, and, when I strove to speak or move, an entire dereliction of power, was all I felt.

For three days and nights Idris had not moved from my side. She administered to all my wants, and never slept nor rested. She did not hope; and therefore she neither endeavoured to read the physician’s countenance, nor to watch for symptoms of recovery. All her thought was to attend on me to the last, and then to lie down and die beside me. On the third night animation was suspended; to the eye and touch of all I was dead. With earnest prayer, almost with force, Adrian tried to draw Idris from me. He exhausted every adjuration, her child’s welfare and his own. She shook her head, and wiped a stealing tear from her sunk cheek, but would not yield; she entreated to be allowed to watch me that one night only, with such affliction and meek earnestness, that she gained her point, and sat silent and motionless, except when, stung by intolerable remembrance, she kissed my closed eyes and pallid lips, and pressed my stiffening hands to her beating heart.

At dead of night, when, though it was mid winter, the cock crowed at three o’clock, as herald of the morning change, while hanging over me, and mourning in silent, bitter thought for the loss of all of love towards her that had been enshrined in my heart; her dishevelled hair hung over her face, and the long tresses fell on the bed; she saw one ringlet in motion, and the scattered hair slightly stirred, as by a breath. It is not so, she thought, for he will never breathe more. Several times the same thing occurred, and she only marked it by the same reflection; till the whole ringlet waved back, and she thought she saw my breast heave. Her first emotion was deadly fear, cold dew stood on her brow; my eyes half opened; and, reassured, she would have exclaimed, “He lives!” but the words were choked by a spasm, and she fell with a groan on the floor.

Adrian was in the chamber. After long watching, he had unwillingly fallen into a sleep. He started up, and beheld his sister senseless on the earth, weltering in a stream of blood that gushed from her mouth. Increasing signs of life in me in some degree explained her state; the surprise, the burst of joy, the revulsion of every sentiment, had been too much for her frame, worn by long months of care, late shattered by every species of woe and toil. She was now in far greater danger than I, the wheels and springs of my life, once again set in motion, acquired elasticity from their short suspension. For a long time, no one believed that I should indeed continue to live; during the reign of the plague upon earth, not one person, attacked by the grim disease, had recovered. My restoration was looked on as a deception; every moment it was expected that the evil symptoms would recur with redoubled violence, until confirmed convalescence, absence of all fever or pain, and increasing strength, brought slow conviction that I had recovered from the plague.

The restoration of Idris was more problematical. When I had been attacked by illness, her cheeks were sunk, her form emaciated; but now, the vessel, which had broken from the effects of extreme agitation, did not entirely heal, but was as a channel that drop by drop drew from her the ruddy stream that vivified her heart. Her hollow eyes and worn countenance had a ghastly appearance; her cheek-bones, her open fair brow, the projection of the mouth, stood fearfully prominent; you might tell each bone in the thin anatomy of her frame. Her hand hung powerless; each joint lay bare, so that the light penetrated through and through. It was strange that life could exist in what was wasted and worn into a very type of death.

To take her from these heart-breaking scenes, to lead her to forget the world’s desolation in the variety of objects presented by travelling, and to nurse her failing strength in the mild climate towards which we had resolved to journey, was my last hope for her preservation. The preparations for our departure, which had been suspended during my illness, were renewed. I did not revive to doubtful convalescence; health spent her treasures upon me; as the tree in spring may feel from its wrinkled limbs the fresh green break forth, and the living sap rise and circulate, so did the renewed vigour of my frame, the cheerful current of my blood, the new-born elasticity of my limbs, influence my mind to cheerful endurance and pleasurable thoughts. My body, late the heavy weight that bound me to the tomb, was exuberant with health; mere common exercises were insufficient for my reviving strength; methought I could emulate the speed of the race-horse, discern through the air objects at a blinding distance, hear the operations of nature in her mute abodes; my senses had become so refined and susceptible after my recovery from mortal disease.

Hope, among my other blessings, was not denied to me; and I did fondly trust that my unwearied attentions would restore my adored girl. I was therefore eager to forward our preparations. According to the plan first laid down, we were to have quitted London on the twenty-fifth of November; and, in pursuance of this scheme, two-thirds of our people — *the* people — all that remained of England, had gone forward, and had already been some weeks in Paris. First my illness, and subsequently that of Idris, had detained Adrian with his division, which consisted of three hundred persons, so that we now departed on the first of January, 2098. It was my wish to keep Idris as distant as possible from the hurry and clamour of the crowd, and to hide from her those appearances that would remind her most forcibly of our real situation. We separated ourselves to a great degree from Adrian, who was obliged to give his whole time to public business. The Countess of Windsor travelled with her son. Clara, Evelyn, and a female who acted as our attendant, were the only persons with whom we had contact. We occupied a commodious carriage, our servant officiated as coachman. A party of about twenty persons preceded us at a small distance. They had it in charge to prepare our halting places and our nightly abode. They had been selected for this service out of a great number that offered, on account of the superior sagacity of the man who had been appointed their leader.

Immediately on our departure, I was delighted to find a change in Idris, which I fondly hoped prognosticated the happiest results. All the cheerfulness and gentle gaiety natural to her revived. She was weak, and this alteration was rather displayed in looks and voice than in acts; but it was permanent and real. My recovery from the plague and confirmed health instilled into her a firm belief that I was now secure from this dread enemy. She told me that she was sure she should recover. That she had a presentiment, that the tide of calamity which deluged our unhappy race had now turned. That the remnant would be preserved, and among them the dear objects of her tender affection; and that in some selected spot we should wear out our lives together in pleasant society. "Do not let my state of feebleness deceive you," she said; "I feel that I am better; there is a quick life within me, and a spirit of anticipation that assures me, that I shall continue long to make a part of this world. I shall throw off this degrading weakness of body, which infects even my mind with debility, and I shall enter again on the performance of my duties. I was sorry to leave Windsor: but now I am weaned from this local attachment; I am content to remove to a mild climate, which will complete my recovery. Trust me, dearest, I shall neither leave you, nor my brother, nor these dear children; my firm determination to remain with you to the last, and to continue to contribute to your happiness and welfare, would keep me alive, even if grim death were nearer at hand than he really is."

I was only half re-assured by these expressions; I could not believe that the over-quick flow of her blood was a sign of health, or that her burning cheeks denoted convalescence. But I had no fears of an immediate catastrophe; nay, I persuaded myself that she would ultimately recover. And thus cheerfulness reigned in our little society. Idris conversed with animation on a thousand topics. Her chief desire was to lead our thoughts from melancholy reflections; so she drew charming pictures of a tranquil solitude, of a beauteous retreat, of the simple manners of our little tribe, and of the patriarchal brotherhood of love, which would survive the ruins of the populous nations which had lately existed. We shut out from our thoughts the present, and withdrew our eyes from the dreary landscape we traversed. Winter reigned in all its gloom. The leafless trees lay without motion against the dun sky; the forms of frost, mimicking the foliage of summer, strewed the ground; the paths were overgrown; the unploughed cornfields were patched with grass and weeds; the sheep congregated at the threshold of the cottage, the horned ox thrust his head from the window. The wind was bleak, and frequent sleet or snow-storms, added to the melancholy appearance wintry nature assumed.

We arrived at Rochester, and an accident caused us to be detained there a day. During that time, a circumstance occurred that changed our plans, and which, alas! in its result changed the eternal course of events, turning me from the pleasant new sprung hope I enjoyed, to an obscure and gloomy desert. But I must give some little explanation before I proceed with the final cause of our temporary alteration of plan, and refer again to those times when man walked the earth fearless, before Plague had become Queen of the World.

There resided a family in the neighbourhood of Windsor, of very humble pretensions, but which had been an object of interest to us on account of one of the persons of whom it was composed. The family of the Claytons had known better days; but, after a series of reverses, the father died a bankrupt, and the mother heartbroken, and a confirmed invalid, retired with her five children to a little cottage between Eton and Salt Hill. The eldest of these children, who was thirteen years old, seemed at once from the influence of adversity, to acquire the sagacity and principle belonging to a more mature age. Her mother grew worse and worse in health, but Lucy attended on her, and was as a tender parent to her younger brothers and sisters, and in the meantime showed herself so good-humoured, social, and benevolent, that she was beloved as well as honoured, in her little neighbourhood.

Lucy was besides extremely pretty; so when she grew to be sixteen, it was to be supposed, notwithstanding her poverty, that she should have admirers. One of these was the son of a country-curate; he was a generous, frank-hearted youth, with an ardent love of knowledge, and no mean acquirements. Though Lucy was untaught, her mother's conversation and manners gave her a taste for refinements superior to her present situation. She loved the youth even without knowing it, except that in any difficulty she naturally turned to him for aid, and awoke with a lighter heart every Sunday, because she knew that she would be met and accompanied by him in her evening walk with her sisters. She had another admirer, one of the head-waiters at the inn at Salt Hill. He also was not without pretensions to urbane superiority, such as he learnt from gentlemen's servants and waiting-maids, who initiating him in all the slang of high life below stairs, rendered his arrogant temper ten times more intrusive. Lucy did not disclaim him — she was incapable of that feeling; but she was sorry when she saw him approach, and quietly resisted all his endeavours to establish an intimacy. The fellow soon discovered that his rival was preferred to him; and this changed what was at first a chance admiration into a passion, whose main springs were envy, and a base desire to deprive his competitor of the advantage he enjoyed over himself.

Poor Lucy's sad story was but a common one. Her lover's father died; and he was left destitute. He accepted the offer of a gentleman to go to India with him, feeling secure that he should soon acquire an independence, and return to claim the hand of his beloved. He became involved in the war carried on there, was taken prisoner, and years elapsed before tidings of his existence were received in his native land. In the meantime disastrous poverty came on Lucy. Her little cottage, which stood looking from its trellis, covered with woodbine and jessamine, was burnt down; and the whole of their little property was included in the destruction. Whither betake them? By what exertion of industry could Lucy procure them another abode? Her mother nearly bed-rid, could not survive any extreme of famine-struck poverty. At this time her other admirer stepped forward, and renewed his offer of marriage. He had saved money, and was going to set up a little inn at Datchet. There was nothing alluring to Lucy in this offer, except the home it secured to her mother; and she felt more sure of this, since she was struck by the apparent generosity which occasioned the present offer. She accepted it; thus sacrificing herself for the comfort and welfare of her parent.

It was some years after her marriage that we became acquainted with her. The accident of a storm caused us to take refuge in the inn, where we witnessed the brutal and quarrelsome behaviour of her husband, and her patient endurance. Her lot was not a fortunate one. Her first lover had returned with the hope of making her his own, and met her by accident, for the first time, as the mistress of his country inn, and the wife of another. He withdrew despairingly to foreign parts; nothing went well with him; at last he enlisted, and came back again wounded and sick, and yet Lucy was debarred from nursing him. Her husband's brutal disposition was aggravated by his yielding to the many temptations held out by his situation, and the consequent disarrangement of his affairs. Fortunately she had no children; but her heart was bound up in her brothers and sisters, and these his avarice and ill temper soon drove from the house; they were dispersed about the country, earning their livelihood with toil and care. He even showed an inclination to get rid of her mother — but Lucy was firm here — she had sacrificed herself for her; she lived for her — she would not part with her — if the mother went, she would also go beg bread for her, die with her, but never desert her. The presence of Lucy was too necessary in keeping up the order of the house, and in preventing the whole establishment from going to wreck, for him to permit her to leave him. He yielded the point; but in all accesses of anger, or in his drunken fits, he recurred to the old topic, and stung poor Lucy's heart by opprobrious epithets bestowed on her parent.

A passion however, if it be wholly pure, entire, and reciprocal, brings with it its own solace. Lucy was truly, and from the depth of heart, devoted to her mother; the sole end she proposed to herself in life, was the comfort and preservation of this parent. Though she grieved for the result, yet she did not repent of her marriage, even when her lover returned to bestow competence on her. Three years had intervened, and how, in their penniless state, could her mother have existed during this time? This excellent woman was worthy of her child's devotion. A perfect confidence and friendship existed between them; besides, she was by no means illiterate; and Lucy, whose mind had been in some degree cultivated by her former lover, now found in her the only person who could understand and appreciate her. Thus, though suffering, she was by no means desolate, and when, during fine summer days, she led her mother into the flowery and shady lanes near their abode, a gleam of unmixed joy enlightened her countenance; she saw that her parent was happy, and she knew that this happiness was of her sole creating.

Meanwhile her husband's affairs grew more and more involved; ruin was near at hand, and she was about to lose the fruit of all her labours, when pestilence came to change the aspect of the world. Her husband reaped benefit from the universal misery; but, as the disaster increased, the spirit of lawlessness seized him; he deserted his home to revel in the luxuries promised him in London, and found there a grave. Her former lover had been one of the first victims of the disease. But Lucy continued to live for and in her mother. Her courage only failed when she dreaded peril for her parent, or feared that death might prevent her from performing those duties to which she was unalterably devoted.

When we had quitted Windsor for London, as the previous step to our final emigration, we visited Lucy, and arranged with her the plan of her own and her mother's removal. Lucy was sorry at the necessity which forced her to quit her native lanes and village, and to drag an infirm parent from her comforts at home, to the homeless waste of depopulate earth; but she was too well disciplined by adversity, and of too sweet a temper, to indulge in repinings at what was inevitable.

Subsequent circumstances, my illness and that of Idris, drove her from our remembrance; and we called her to mind at last, only to conclude that she made one of the few who came from Windsor to join the emigrants, and that she was already in Paris. When we arrived at Rochester therefore, we were surprised to receive, by a man just come from Slough, a letter from this exemplary sufferer. His account was, that, journeying from his home, and passing through Datchet, he was surprised to see smoke issue from the chimney of the inn, and supposing that he should find comrades for his journey assembled there, he knocked and was admitted. There was no one in the house but Lucy, and her mother; the latter had been deprived of the use of her limbs by an attack of rheumatism, and so, one by one, all the remaining inhabitants of the country set forward, leaving them alone. Lucy entreated the man to stay with her; in a week or two her mother would be better, and they would then set out; but they must perish, if they were left thus helpless and forlorn. The man said, that his wife and children were already among the emigrants, and it was therefore, according to his notion, impossible for him to remain. Lucy, as a last resource, gave him a letter for Idris, to be delivered to her wherever he should meet us. This commission at least he fulfilled, and Idris received with emotion the following letter: —

"HONOURED LADY,

"I am sure that you will remember and pity me, and I dare hope that you will assist me; what other hope have I? Pardon my manner of writing, I am so bewildered. A month ago my dear mother was deprived of the use of her limbs. She is already better, and in another month would I am sure be able to travel, in the way you were so kind as to say you would arrange for us. But now everybody is gone — everybody — as they went away, each said, that perhaps my mother would be better, before we were quite deserted. But three days ago I went to Samuel Woods, who, on account of his new-born child, remained to the last; and there being a large family of them, I thought I could persuade them to wait a little longer for us; but I found the house deserted. I have not seen a soul since, till this good man came. — What will become of us? My mother does not know our state; she is so ill, that I have hidden it from her.

"Will you not send some one to us? I am sure we must perish miserably as we are. If I were to try to move my mother now, she would die on the road; and if, when she gets better, I were able, I cannot guess how, to find out the roads, and get on so many many miles to the sea, you would all be in France, and the great ocean would be between us, which is so terrible even to sailors. What would it be to me, a woman, who never saw it? We should be imprisoned by it in this country, all, all alone, with no help; better die where we are. I can hardly write — I cannot stop my tears — it is not for myself; I could put my trust in God; and let the worst come, I think I could bear it, if I were alone. But my mother, my sick, my dear, dear mother, who never, since I was born, spoke a harsh word to me, who has been patient in many sufferings; pity her, dear Lady, she must die a miserable death if you do not pity her. People speak carelessly of her, because she is old and infirm, as if we must not all, if we are spared, become so; and then, when the young are old themselves, they will think that they ought to be taken care of. It is very silly of me to write in this way to you; but, when I hear her trying not to groan, and see her look smiling on me to comfort me, when I know she is in pain; and when I think that she does not know the worst, but she soon must; and then she will not complain; but I shall sit guessing at all that she is dwelling upon, of famine and misery — I feel as if my heart must break, and I do not know what I say or do; my mother — mother for whom I have borne much, God preserve you from this fate! Preserve her, Lady, and He will bless you; and I, poor miserable creature as I am, will thank you and pray for you while I live.

"Your unhappy and dutiful servant,

"LUCY MARTIN.

"*Dec. 30th*, 2097."

This letter deeply affected Idris, and she instantly proposed, that we should return to Datchet, to assist Lucy and her mother. I said that I would without delay set out for that place, but entreated her to join her brother, and there await my return with the children. But Idris was in high spirits, and full of hope. She declared that she could not consent even to a temporary separation from me, but that there was no need of this, the motion of the carriage did her good, and the distance was too trifling to be considered. We could dispatch messengers to Adrian, to inform him of our deviation from the original plan. She spoke with vivacity, and drew a picture after her own dear heart, of the pleasure we should bestow upon Lucy, and declared, if I went, she must accompany me, and that she should very much dislike to entrust the charge of rescuing them to others, who might fulfil it with coldness or inhumanity. Lucy's life had been one act of devotion and virtue; let her now reap the small reward of finding her excellence appreciated, and her necessity assisted, by those whom she respected and honoured.

These, and many other arguments, were urged with gentle pertinacity, and the ardour of a wish to do all the good in her power, by her whose simple expression of a desire and slightest request had ever been a law with me. I, of course, consented, the moment that I saw that she had set her heart upon this step. We sent half our attendant troop on to Adrian; and with the other half our carriage took a retrograde course back to Windsor.

I wonder now how I could be so blind and senseless, as thus to risk the safety of Idris; for, if I had eyes, surely I could see the sure, though deceitful, advance of death in her burning cheek and increasing weakness. But she said she was better; and I believed her. Extinction could not be near a being, whose vivacity and intelligence hourly increased, and whose frame was endowed with an intense, and I fondly thought, a strong and permanent spirit of life. Who, after a great disaster, has not looked back with wonder at his inconceivable obtuseness of understanding, that could not perceive the many minute threads with which fate weaves the inextricable net of our destinies, until he is enmeshed completely in it?

The cross roads which we now entered upon, were even in a worse state than the long neglected high-ways; and the inconvenience seemed to menace the perishing frame of Idris with destruction. Passing through Dartford, we arrived at Hampton on the second day. Even in this short interval my beloved companion grew sensibly worse in health, though her spirits were still light, and she cheered my growing anxiety with gay sallies; sometimes the thought pierced my brain — Is she dying? — as I saw her fair fleshless hand rest on mine, or observed the feebleness with which she performed the accustomed acts of life. I drove away the idea, as if it had been suggested by insanity; but it occurred again and again, only to be dispelled by the continued liveliness of her manner.

About mid-day, after quitting Hampton, our carriage broke down: the shock caused Idris to faint, but on her reviving no other ill consequence ensued; our party of attendants had as usual gone on before us, and our coachman went in search of another vehicle, our former one being rendered by this accident unfit for service. The only place near us was a poor village, in which he found a kind of caravan, able to hold four people, but it was clumsy and ill hung; besides this he found a very excellent cabriolet: our plan was soon arranged; I would drive Idris in the latter; while the children were conveyed by the servant in the former. But these arrangements cost time; we had agreed to proceed that night to Windsor, and thither our purveyors had gone: we should find considerable difficulty in getting accommodation, before we reached this place; after all, the distance was only ten miles; my horse was a good one; I would go forward at a good pace with Idris, leaving the children to follow at a rate more consonant to the uses of their cumbrous machine.

Evening closed in quickly, far more quickly than I was prepared to expect. At the going down of the sun it began to snow heavily. I attempted in vain to defend my beloved companion from the storm; the wind drove the snow in our faces; and it lay so high on the ground, that we made but small way; while the night was so dark, that but for the white covering on the ground we should not have been able to see a yard before us. We had left our accompanying caravan far behind us; and now I perceived that the storm had made me unconsciously deviate from my intended route. I had gone some miles out of my way. My knowledge of the country enabled me to regain the right road; but, instead of going, as at first agreed upon, by a cross road through Stanwell to Datchet, I was obliged to take the way of Egham and Bishopgate. It was certain therefore that I should not be rejoined by the other vehicle, that I should not meet a single fellow-creature till we arrived at Windsor.

The back of our carriage was drawn up, and I hung a pelisse before it, thus to curtain the beloved sufferer from the pelting sleet. She leaned on my shoulder, growing every moment more languid and feeble; at first she replied to my words of cheer with affectionate thanks; but by degrees she sunk into silence; her head lay heavily upon me; I only knew that she lived by her irregular breathing and frequent sighs. For a moment I resolved to stop, and, opposing the back of the cabriolet to the force of the tempest, to expect morning as well as I might. But the wind was bleak and piercing, while the occasional shudderings of my poor Idris, and the intense cold I felt myself, demonstrated that this would be a dangerous experiment. At length methought she slept — fatal sleep, induced by frost: at this moment I saw the heavy outline of a cottage traced on the dark horizon close to us: "Dearest love," I said, "support yourself but one moment, and we shall have shelter; let us stop here, that I may open the door of this blessed dwelling."

As I spoke, my heart was transported, and my senses swam with excessive delight and thankfulness; I placed the head of Idris against the carriage, and, leaping out, scrambled through the snow to the cottage, whose door was open. I had apparatus about me for procuring light, and that showed me a comfortable room, with a pile of wood in one corner, and no appearance of disorder, except that, the door having been left partly open, the snow, drifting in, had blocked up the threshold. I returned to the carriage, and the sudden change from light to darkness at first blinded me. When I recovered my sight — eternal God of this lawless world! O supreme Death! I will not disturb thy silent reign, or mar my tale with fruitless exclamations of horror — I saw Idris, who had fallen from the seat to the bottom of the carriage; her head, its long hair pendent, with one arm, hung over the side. — Struck by a spasm of horror, I lifted her up; her heart was pulseless, her faded lips unfanned by the slightest breath.

I carried her into the cottage; I placed her on the bed. Lighting a fire, I chafed her stiffening limbs; for two long hours I sought to restore departed life; and, when hope was as dead as my beloved, I closed with trembling hands her glazed eyes. I did not doubt what I should now do. In the confusion attendant on my illness, the task of interring our darling Alfred had devolved on his grandmother, the Ex-Queen, and she, true to her ruling passion, had caused him to be carried to Windsor, and buried in the family vault, in St. George's Chapel. I must proceed to Windsor, to calm the anxiety of Clara, who would wait anxiously for us — yet I would fain spare her the heart-breaking spectacle of Idris, brought in by me lifeless from the journey. So first I would place my beloved beside her child in the vault, and then seek the poor children who would be expecting me.

I lighted the lamps of my carriage; I wrapt her in furs, and placed her along the seat; then taking the reins, made the horses go forward. We proceeded through the snow, which lay in masses impeding the way, while the descending flakes, driving against me with redoubled fury, blinded me. The pain occasioned by the angry elements, and the cold iron of the shafts of frost which buffeted me, and entered my aching flesh, were a relief to me; blunting my mental suffering. The horses staggered on, and the reins hung loosely in my hands. I often thought I would lay my head close to the sweet, cold face of my lost angel, and thus resign myself to conquering torpor. Yet I must not leave her a prey to the fowls of the air; but, in pursuance of my determination place her in the tomb of her forefathers, where a merciful God might permit me to rest also.

The road we passed through Egham was familiar to me; but the wind and snow caused the horses to drag their load slowly and heavily. Suddenly the wind veered from south-west to west, and then again to north-west. As Sampson with tug and strain stirred from their bases the columns that supported the Philistine temple, so did the gale shake the dense vapours propped on the horizon, while the massy dome of clouds fell to the south, disclosing through the scattered web the clear empyrean, and the little stars, which were set at an immeasurable distance in the crystalline fields, showered their small rays on the glittering snow. Even the horses were cheered, and moved on with renovated strength. We entered the forest at Bishopgate, and at the end of the Long Walk I saw the Castle, “the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers.” I looked with reverence on a structure, ancient almost as the rock on which it stood, abode of kings, theme of admiration for the wise. With greater reverence and, tearful affection I beheld it as the asylum of the long lease of love I had enjoyed there with the perishable, unmatchable treasure of dust, which now lay cold beside me. Now indeed, I could have yielded to all the softness of my nature, and wept; and, womanlike, have uttered bitter plaints; while the familiar trees, the herds of living deer, the sward oft pressed by her fairy-feet, one by one with sad association presented themselves. The white gate at the end of the Long Walk was wide open, and I rode up the empty town through the first gate of the feudal tower; and now St. George's Chapel, with its blackened fretted sides, was right before me. I halted at its door, which was open; I entered, and placed my lighted lamp on the altar; then I returned, and with tender caution I bore Idris up the aisle into the chancel, and laid her softly down on the carpet which covered the step leading to the communion table. The banners of the knights of the garter, and their half drawn swords, were hung in vain emblazonry above the stalls. The banner of her family hung there, still surmounted by its regal crown. Farewell to the glory and heraldry of England! — I turned from such vanity with a slight feeling of wonder, at how mankind could have ever been interested in such things. I bent over the lifeless corpse of my beloved; and, while looking on her uncovered face, the features already contracted by the rigidity of death, I felt as if all the visible universe had grown as soulless, inane, and comfortless as the clay-cold image beneath me. I felt for a moment the intolerable sense of struggle with, and detestation for, the laws which govern the world; till the calm still visible on the face of my dead love recalled me to a more soothing tone of mind, and I proceeded to fulfil the last office that could now be paid her. For her I could not lament, so much I envied her enjoyment of "the sad immunities of the grave."

The vault had been lately opened to place our Alfred therein. The ceremony customary in these latter days had been cursorily performed, and the pavement of the chapel, which was its entrance, having been removed, had not been replaced. I descended the steps, and walked through the long passage to the large vault which contained the kindred dust of my Idris. I distinguished the small coffin of my babe. With hasty, trembling hands I constructed a bier beside it, spreading it with the furs and Indian shawls, which had wrapt Idris in her journey thither. I lighted the glimmering lamp, which flickered in this damp abode of the dead; then I bore my lost one to her last bed, decently composing her limbs, and covering them with a mantle, veiling all except her face, which remained lovely and placid. She appeared to rest like one over-wearied, her beauteous eyes steeped in sweet slumber. Yet, so it was not — she was dead! How intensely I then longed to lie down beside her, to gaze till death should gather me to the same repose.

But death does not come at the bidding of the miserable. I had lately recovered from mortal illness, and my blood had never flowed with such an even current, nor had my limbs ever been so instinct with quick life, as now. I felt that my death must be voluntary. Yet what more natural than famine, as I watched in this chamber of mortality, placed in a world of the dead, beside the lost hope of my life? Meanwhile as I looked on her, the features, which bore a sisterly resemblance to Adrian, brought my thoughts back again to the living, to this dear friend, to Clara, and to Evelyn, who were probably now in Windsor, waiting anxiously for our arrival.

Methought I heard a noise, a step in the far chapel, which was re-echoed by its vaulted roof, and borne to me through the hollow passages. Had Clara seen my carriage pass up the town, and did she seek me here? I must save her at least from the horrible scene the vault presented. I sprung up the steps, and then saw a female figure, bent with age, and clad in long mourning robes, advance through the dusky chapel, supported by a slender cane, yet tottering even with this support. She heard me, and looked up; the lamp I held illuminated my figure, and the moon-beams, struggling through the painted glass, fell upon her face, wrinkled and gaunt, yet with a piercing eye and commanding brow — I recognized the Countess of Windsor. With a hollow voice she asked, “Where is the princess?”

I pointed to the torn-up pavement: she walked to the spot, and looked down into the palpable darkness; for the vault was too distant for the rays of the small lamp I had left there to be discernible.

“Your light,” she said. I gave it her; and she regarded the now visible, but precipitous steps, as if calculating her capacity to descend. Instinctively I made a silent offer of my assistance. She motioned me away with a look of scorn, saying in an harsh voice, as she pointed downwards, “There at least I may have her undisturbed.”

She walked deliberately down, while I, overcome, miserable beyond words, or tears, or groans, threw myself on the pavement near — the stiffening form of Idris was before me, the death-struck countenance hushed in eternal repose beneath. That was to me the end of all! The day before, I had figured to my self various adventures, and communion with my friends in after time — now I had leapt the interval, and reached the utmost edge and bourne of life. Thus wrapt in gloom, enclosed, walled up, vaulted over by the omnipotent present, I was startled by the sound of feet on the steps of the tomb, and I remembered her whom I had utterly forgotten, my angry visitant; her tall form slowly rose upwards from the vault, a living statue, instinct with hate, and human, passionate strife: she seemed to me as having reached the pavement of the aisle; she stood motionless, seeking with her eyes alone, some desired object — till, perceiving me close to her, she placed her wrinkled hand on my arm, exclaiming with tremulous accents, “Lionel Verney, my son!” This name, applied at such a moment by my angel’s mother, instilled into me more respect than I had ever before felt for this disdainful lady. I bowed my head, and kissed her shrivelled hand, and, remarking that she trembled violently, supported her to the end of the chancel, where she sat on the steps that led to the regal stall. She suffered herself to be led, and still holding my hand, she leaned her head back against the stall, while the moon beams, tinged with various colours by the painted glass, fell on her glistening eyes; aware of her weakness, again calling to mind her long cherished dignity, she dashed the tears away; yet they fell fast, as she said, for excuse, “She is so beautiful and placid, even in death. No harsh feeling ever clouded her serene brow; how did I treat her? wounding her gentle heart with savage coldness; I had no compassion on her in past years, does she forgive me now? Little, little does it boot to talk of repentance and forgiveness to the dead, had I during her life once consulted her gentle wishes, and curbed my rugged nature to do her pleasure, I should not feel thus.”

Idris and her mother were unlike in person. The dark hair, deep-set black eyes, and prominent features of the Ex-Queen were in entire contrast to the golden tresses, the full blue orbs, and the soft lines and contour of her daughter’s countenance. Yet, in latter days, illness had taken from my poor girl the full outline of her face, and reduced it to the inflexible shape of the bone beneath. In the form of her brow, in her oval chin, there was to be found a resemblance to her mother; nay in some moods, their gestures were not unlike; nor, having lived so long together, was this wonderful.

There is a magic power in resemblance. When one we love dies, we hope to see them in another state, and half expect that the agency of mind will inform its new garb in imitation of its decayed earthly vesture. But these are ideas of the mind only. We know that the instrument is shivered, the sensible image lies in miserable fragments, dissolved to dusty nothingness; a look, a gesture, or a fashioning of the limbs similar to the dead in a living person, touches a thrilling chord, whose sacred harmony is felt in the heart's dearest recess. Strangely moved, prostrate before this spectral image, and enslaved by the force of blood manifested in likeness of look and movement, I remained trembling in the presence of the harsh, proud, and till now unloved mother of Idris.

Poor, mistaken woman! in her tenderest mood before, she had cherished the idea, that a word, a look of reconciliation from her, would be received with joy, and repay long years of severity. Now that the time was gone for the exercise of such power, she fell at once upon the thorny truth of things, and felt that neither smile nor caress could penetrate to the unconscious state, or influence the happiness of her who lay in the vault beneath. This conviction, together with the remembrance of soft replies to bitter speeches, of gentle looks repaying angry glances; the perception of the falsehood, paltriness and futility of her cherished dreams of birth and power; the overpowering knowledge, that love and life were the true emperors of our mortal state; all, as a tide, rose, and filled her soul with stormy and bewildering confusion. It fell to my lot, to come as the influential power, to allay the fierce tossing of these tumultuous waves. I spoke to her; I led her to reflect how happy Idris had really been, and how her virtues and numerous excellencies had found scope and estimation in her past career. I praised her, the idol of my heart's dear worship, the admired type of feminine perfection. With ardent and overflowing eloquence, I relieved my heart from its burthen, and awoke to the sense of a new pleasure in life, as I poured forth the funeral eulogy. Then I referred to Adrian, her loved brother, and to her surviving child. I declared, which I had before almost forgotten, what my duties were with regard to these valued portions of herself, and bade the melancholy repentant mother reflect, how she could best expiate unkindness towards the dead, by redoubled love of the survivors. Consoling her, my own sorrows were assuaged; my sincerity won her entire conviction.

She turned to me. The hard, inflexible, persecuting woman, turned with a mild expression of face, and said, “If our beloved angel sees us now, it will delight her to find that I do you even tardy justice. You were worthy of her; and from my heart I am glad that you won her away from me. Pardon, my son, the many wrongs I have done you; forget my bitter words and unkind treatment — take me, and govern me as you will.”

I seized this docile moment to propose our departure from the church. “First,” she said, “let us replace the pavement above the vault.”

We drew near to it; “Shall we look on her again?” I asked.

“I cannot,” she replied, “and, I pray you, neither do you. We need not torture ourselves by gazing on the soulless body, while her living spirit is buried quick in our hearts, and her surpassing loveliness is so deeply carved there, that sleeping or waking she must ever be present to us.”

For a few moments, we bent in solemn silence over the open vault. I consecrated my future life, to the embalming of her dear memory; I vowed to serve her brother and her child till death. The convulsive sob of my companion made me break off my internal orisons. I next dragged the stones over the entrance of the tomb, and closed the gulf that contained the life of my life. Then, supporting my decrepit fellow-mourner, we slowly left the chapel. I felt, as I stepped into the open air, as if I had quitted an happy nest of repose, for a dreary wilderness, a tortuous path, a bitter, joyless, hopeless pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XXIV

Our escort had been directed to prepare our abode for the night at the inn, opposite the ascent to the Castle. We could not again visit the halls and familiar chambers of our home, on a mere visit. We had already left for ever the glades of Windsor, and all of coppice, flowery hedgerow, and murmuring stream, which gave shape and intensity to the love of our country, and the almost superstitious attachment with which we regarded native England. It had been our intention to have called at Lucy's dwelling in Datchet, and to have re-assured her with promises of aid and protection before we repaired to our quarters for the night. Now, as the Countess of Windsor and I turned down the steep hill that led from the Castle, we saw the children, who had just stopped in their caravan, at the inn door. They had passed through Datchet without halting. I dreaded to meet them, and to be the bearer of my tragic story, so while they were still occupied in the hurry of arrival, I suddenly left them, and through the snow and clear moonlight air, hastened along the well known road to Datchet.

Well known indeed it was. Each cottage stood on its accustomed site, each tree wore its familiar appearance. Habit had graven inerasably on my memory, every turn and change of object on the road. At a short distance beyond the Little Park, was an elm half blown down by a storm, some ten years ago; and still, with leafless snow-laden branches, it stretched across the pathway, which wound through a meadow, beside a shallow brook, whose brawling was silenced by frost — that stile, that white gate, that hollow oak tree, which doubtless once belonged to the forest, and which now showed in the moonlight its gaping rent; to whose fanciful appearance, tricked out by the dusk into a resemblance of the human form, the children had given the name of Falstaff; — all these objects were as well known to me as the cold hearth of my deserted home, and every moss-grown wall and plot of orchard ground, alike as twin lambs are to each other in a stranger's eye, yet to my accustomed gaze bore differences, distinction, and a name. England remained, though England was dead — it was the ghost of merry England that I beheld, under those greenwood shade passing generations had sported in security and ease. To this painful recognition of familiar places, was added a feeling experienced by all, understood by none — a feeling as if in some state, less visionary than a dream, in some past real existence, I had seen all I saw, with precisely the same feelings as I now beheld them — as if all my sensations were a duplex mirror of a former revelation. To get rid of this oppressive sense I strove to imagine change in this tranquil spot — this augmented my mood, by causing me to bestow more attention on the objects which occasioned me pain.

I reached Datchet and Lucy's humble abode — once noisy with Saturday night revellers, or trim and neat on Sunday morning it had borne testimony to the labours and orderly habits of the housewife. The snow lay high about the door, as if it had remained unclosed for many days.

"What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?"

I muttered to myself as I looked at the dark casements. At first I thought I saw a light in one of them, but it proved to be merely the refraction of the moon-beams, while the only sound was the crackling branches as the breeze whirred the snow flakes from them — the moon sailed high and unclouded in the interminable ether, while the shadow of the cottage lay black on the garden behind. I entered this by the open wicket, and anxiously examined each window. At length I detected a ray of light struggling through a closed shutter in one of the upper rooms — it was a novel feeling, alas! to look at any house and say there dwells its usual inmate — the door of the house was merely on the latch: so I entered and ascended the moon-lit staircase. The door of the inhabited room was ajar: looking in, I saw Lucy sitting as at work at the table on which the light stood; the implements of needlework were about her, but her hand had fallen on her lap, and her eyes, fixed on the ground, showed by their vacancy that her thoughts wandered. Traces of care and watching had diminished her former attractions — but her simple dress and cap, her desponding attitude, and the single candle that cast its light upon her, gave for a moment a picturesque grouping to the whole. A fearful reality recalled me from the thought — a figure lay stretched on the bed covered by a sheet — her mother was dead, and Lucy, apart from all the world, deserted and alone, watched beside the corpse during the weary night. I entered the room, and my unexpected appearance at first drew a scream from the lone survivor of a dead nation; but she recognised me, and recovered herself, with the quick exercise of self-control habitual to her. “Did you not expect me?” I asked, in that low voice which the presence of the dead makes us as it were instinctively assume.

“You are very good,” replied she, “to have come yourself; I can never thank you sufficiently; but it is too late.”

“Too late,” cried I, “what do you mean? It is not too late to take you from this deserted place, and conduct you to—”

My own loss, which I had forgotten as I spoke, now made me turn away, while choking grief impeded my speech. I threw open the window, and looked on the cold, waning, ghastly, misshaped circle on high, and the chill white earth beneath — did the spirit of sweet Idris sail along the moon-frozen crystal air? — No, no, a more genial atmosphere, a lovelier habitation was surely hers!

I indulged in this meditation for a moment, and then again addressed the mourner, who stood leaning against the bed with that expression of resigned despair, of complete misery, and a patient sufferance of it, which is far more touching than any of the insane ravings or wild gesticulation of untamed sorrow. I desired to draw her from this spot; but she opposed my wish. That class of persons whose imagination and sensibility have never been taken out of the narrow circle immediately in view, if they possess these qualities to any extent, are apt to pour their influence into the very realities which appear to destroy them, and to cling to these with double tenacity from not being able to comprehend any thing beyond. Thus Lucy, in desert England, in a dead world, wished to fulfil the usual ceremonies of the dead, such as were customary to the English country people, when death was a rare visitant, and gave us time to receive his dreaded usurpation with pomp and circumstance — going forth in procession to deliver the keys of the tomb into his conquering hand. She had already, alone as she was, accomplished some of these, and the work on which I found her employed, was her mother’s shroud. My heart sickened at such detail of woe, which a female can endure, but which is more painful to the masculine spirit than deadliest struggle, or throes of unutterable but transient agony.

This must not be, I told her; and then, as further inducement, I communicated to her my recent loss, and gave her the idea that she must come with me to take charge of the orphan children, whom the death of Idris had deprived of a mother’s care. Lucy never resisted the call of a duty, so she yielded, and closing the casements and doors with care, she accompanied me back to Windsor. As we went she communicated to me the occasion of her mother's death. Either by some mischance she had got sight of Lucy's letter to Idris, or she had overheard her conversation with the countryman who bore it; however it might be, she obtained a knowledge of the appalling situation of herself and her daughter, her aged frame could not sustain the anxiety and horror this discovery instilled — she concealed her knowledge from Lucy, but brooded over it through sleepless nights, till fever and delirium, swift forerunners of death, disclosed the secret. Her life, which had long been hovering on its extinction, now yielded at once to the united effects of misery and sickness, and that same morning she had died.

After the tumultuous emotions of the day, I was glad to find on my arrival at the inn that my companions had retired to rest. I gave Lucy in charge to the Countess's attendant, and then sought repose from my various struggles and impatient regrets. For a few moments the events of the day floated in disastrous pageant through my brain, till sleep bathed it in forgetfulness; when morning dawned and I awoke, it seemed as if my slumber had endured for years.

My companions had not shared my oblivion. Clara's swollen eyes showed that she has passed the night in weeping. The Countess looked haggard and wan. Her firm spirit had not found relief in tears, and she suffered the more from all the painful retrospect and agonizing regret that now occupied her. We departed from Windsor, as soon as the burial rites had been performed for Lucy's mother, and, urged on by an impatient desire to change the scene, went forward towards Dover with speed, our escort having gone before to provide horses; finding them either in the warm stables they instinctively sought during the cold weather, or standing shivering in the bleak fields ready to surrender their liberty in exchange for offered corn.

During our ride the Countess recounted to me the extraordinary circumstances which had brought her so strangely to my side in the chancel of St. George's chapel. When last she had taken leave of Idris, as she looked anxiously on her faded person and pallid countenance, she had suddenly been visited by a conviction that she saw her for the last time. It was hard to part with her while under the dominion of this sentiment, and for the last time she endeavoured to persuade her daughter to commit herself to her nursing, permitting me to join Adrian. Idris mildly refused, and thus they separated. The idea that they should never again meet grew on the Countess's mind, and haunted her perpetually; a thousand times she had resolved to turn back and join us, and was again and again restrained by the pride and anger of which she was the slave. Proud of heart as she was, she bathed her pillow with nightly tears, and through the day was subdued by nervous agitation and expectation of the dreaded event, which she was wholly incapable of curbing. She confessed that at this period her hatred of me knew no bounds, since she considered me as the sole obstacle to the fulfilment of her dearest wish, that of attending upon her daughter in her last moments. She desired to express her fears to her son, and to seek consolation from his sympathy with, or courage from his rejection of, her auguries.

On the first day of her arrival at Dover she walked with him on the sea beach, and with the timidity characteristic of passionate and exaggerated feeling was by degrees bringing the conversation to the desired point, when she could communicate her fears to him, when the messenger who bore my letter announcing our temporary return to Windsor, came riding down to them. He gave some oral account of how he had left us, and added, that notwithstanding the cheerfulness and good courage of Lady Idris, he was afraid that she would hardly reach Windsor alive.

"True," said the Countess, "your fears are just, she is about to expire!"

As she spoke, her eyes were fixed on a tomblike hollow of the cliff, and she saw, she averred the same to me with solemnity, Idris pacing slowly towards this cave. She was turned from her, her head was bent down, her white dress was such as she was accustomed to wear, except that a thin crepe-like veil covered her golden tresses, and concealed her as a dim transparent mist. She looked dejected, as docilely yielding to a commanding power; she submissively entered, and was lost in the dark recess.

"Were I subject to visionary moods," said the venerable lady, as she continued her narrative, "I might doubt my eyes, and condemn my credulity; but reality is the world I live in, and what I saw I doubt not had existence beyond myself. From that moment I could not rest; it was worth my existence to see her once again before she died; I knew that I should not accomplish this, yet I must endeavour. I immediately departed for Windsor; and, though I was assured that we travelled speedily, it seemed to me that our progress was snail-like, and that delays were created solely for my annoyance. Still I accused you, and heaped on your head the fiery ashes of my burning impatience. It was no disappointment, though an agonizing pang, when you pointed to her last abode; and words would ill express the abhorrence I that moment felt towards you, the triumphant impediment to my dearest wishes. I saw her, and anger, and hate, and injustice died at her bier, giving place at their departure to a remorse (Great God, that I should feel it!) which must last while memory and feeling endure."

To medicine such remorse, to prevent awakening love and new-born mildness from producing the same bitter fruit that hate and harshness had done, I devoted all my endeavours to soothe the venerable penitent. Our party was a melancholy one; each was possessed by regret for what was remediless; for the absence of his mother shadowed even the infant gaiety of Evelyn. Added to this was the prospect of the uncertain future. Before the final accomplishment of any great voluntary change the mind vacillates, now soothing itself by fervent expectation, now recoiling from obstacles which seem never to have presented themselves before with so frightful an aspect. An involuntary tremor ran through me when I thought that in another day we might have crossed the watery barrier, and have set forward on that hopeless, interminable, sad wandering, which but a short time before I regarded as the only relief to sorrow that our situation afforded.

Our approach to Dover was announced by the loud roarings of the wintry sea. They were borne miles inland by the sound-laden blast, and by their unaccustomed uproar, imparted a feeling of insecurity and peril to our stable abode. At first we hardly permitted ourselves to think that any unusual eruption of nature caused this tremendous war of air and water, but rather fancied that we merely listened to what we had heard a thousand times before, when we had watched the flocks of fleece-crowned waves, driven by the winds, come to lament and die on the barren sands and pointed rocks. But we found upon advancing farther, that Dover was overflowed — many of the houses were overthrown by the surges which filled the streets, and with hideous brawlings sometimes retreated leaving the pavement of the town bare, till again hurried forward by the influx of ocean, they returned with thunder-sound to their usurped station.

Hardly less disturbed than the tempestuous world of waters was the assembly of human beings, that from the cliff fearfully watched its ravings.

On the morning of the arrival of the emigrants under the conduct of Adrian, the sea had been serene and glassy, the slight ripples refracted the sunbeams, which shed their radiance through the clear blue frosty air. This placid appearance of nature was hailed as a good augury for the voyage, and the chief immediately repaired to the harbour to examine two steamboats which were moored there. On the following midnight, when all were at rest, a frightful storm of wind and clattering rain and hail first disturbed them, and the voice of one shrieking in the streets, that the sleepers must awake or they would be drowned; and when they rushed out, half clothed, to discover the meaning of this alarm, they found that the tide, rising above every mark, was rushing into the town. They ascended the cliff, but the darkness permitted only the white crest of waves to be seen, while the roaring wind mingled its howlings in dire accord with the wild surges. The awful hour of night, the utter inexperience of many who had never seen the sea before, the wailing of women and cries of children added to the horror of the tumult.

All the following day the same scene continued. When the tide ebbed, the town was left dry; but on its flow, it rose even higher than on the preceding night. The vast ships that lay rotting in the roads were whirled from their anchorage, and driven and jammed against the cliff, the vessels in the harbour were flung on land like sea-weed, and there battered to pieces by the breakers. The waves dashed against the cliff, which if in any place it had been before loosened, now gave way, and the affrighted crowd saw vast fragments of the near earth fall with crash and roar into the deep. This sight operated differently on different persons. The greater part thought it a judgment of God, to prevent or punish our emigration from our native land. Many were doubly eager to quit a nook of ground now become their prison, which appeared unable to resist the inroads of ocean’s giant waves.

When we arrived at Dover, after a fatiguing day’s journey, we all required rest and sleep; but the scene acting around us soon drove away such ideas. We were drawn, along with the greater part of our companions, to the edge of the cliff, there to listen to and make a thousand conjectures. A fog narrowed our horizon to about a quarter of a mile, and the misty veil, cold and dense, enveloped sky and sea in equal obscurity. What added to our inquietude was the circumstance that two-thirds of our original number were now waiting for us in Paris, and clinging, as we now did most painfully, to any addition to our melancholy remnant, this division, with the tameless impassable ocean between, struck us with affright. At length, after loitering for several hours on the cliff, we retired to Dover Castle, whose roof sheltered all who breathed the English air, and sought the sleep necessary to restore strength and courage to our worn frames and languid spirits.

Early in the morning Adrian brought me the welcome intelligence that the wind had changed: it had been south-west; it was now north-east. The sky was stripped bare of clouds by the increasing gale, while the tide at its ebb seceded entirely from the town. The change of wind rather increased the fury of the sea, but it altered its late dusky hue to a bright green; and in spite of its unmitigated clamour, its more cheerful appearance instilled hope and pleasure. All day we watched the ranging of the mountainous waves, and towards sunset a desire to decipher the promise for the morrow at its setting, made us all gather with one accord on the edge of the cliff. When the mighty luminary approached within a few degrees of the tempest-tossed horizon, suddenly, a wonder! three other suns, alike burning and brilliant, rushed from various quarters of the heavens towards the great orb; they whirled round it. The glare of light was intense to our dazzled eyes; the sun itself seemed to join in the dance, while the sea burned like a furnace, like all Vesuvius a-light, with flowing lava beneath. The horses broke loose from their stalls in terror — a herd of cattle, panic struck, raced down to the brink of the cliff, and blinded by light, plunged down with frightful yells in the waves below. The time occupied by the apparition of these meteors was comparatively short; suddenly the three mock suns united in one, and plunged into the sea. A few seconds afterwards, a deafening watery sound came up with awful peal from the spot where they had disappeared.

Meanwhile the sun, disencumbered from his strange satellites, paced with its accustomed majesty towards its western home. When — we dared not trust our eyes late dazzled, but it seemed that — the sea rose to meet it — it mounted higher and higher, till the fiery globe was obscured, and the wall of water still ascended the horizon; it appeared as if suddenly the motion of earth was revealed to us — as if no longer we were ruled by ancient laws, but were turned adrift in an unknown region of space. Many cried aloud, that these were no meteors, but globes of burning matter, which had set fire to the earth, and caused the vast cauldron at our feet to bubble up with its measureless waves; the day of judgment was come they averred, and a few moments would transport us before the awful countenance of the omnipotent judge; while those less given to visionary terrors, declared that two conflicting gales had occasioned the last phænomenon. In support of this opinion they pointed out the fact that the east wind died away, while the rushing of the coming west mingled its wild howl with the roar of the advancing waters. Would the cliff resist this new battery? Was not the giant wave far higher than the precipice? Would not our little island be deluged by its approach? The crowd of spectators fled. They were dispersed over the fields, stopping now and then, and looking back in terror. A sublime sense of awe calmed the swift pulsations of my heart — I awaited the approach of the destruction menaced, with that solemn resignation which an unavoidable necessity instils. The ocean every moment assumed a more terrific aspect, while the twilight was dimmed by the rack which the west wind spread over the sky. By slow degrees however, as the wave advanced, it took a more mild appearance; some under current of air, or obstruction in the bed of the waters, checked its progress, and it sank gradually; while the surface of the sea became uniformly higher as it dissolved into it. This change took from us the fear of an immediate catastrophe, although we were still anxious as to the final result. We continued during the whole night to watch the fury of the sea and the pace of the driving clouds, through whose openings the rare stars rushed impetuously; the thunder of conflicting elements deprived us of all power to sleep.

This endured ceaselessly for three days and nights. The stoutest hearts quailed before the savage enmity of nature; provisions began to fail us, though every day foraging parties were dispersed to the nearer towns. In vain we schooled ourselves into the belief, that there was nothing out of the common order of nature in the strife we witnessed; our disastrous and overwhelming destiny turned the best of us to cowards. Death had hunted us through the course of many months, even to the narrow strip of time on which we now stood; narrow indeed, and buffeted by storms, was our footway overhanging the great sea of calamity —

As an unsheltered northern shore
Is shaken by the wintry wave —

And frequent storms for evermore,
(While from the west the loud winds rave,
Or from the east, or mountains hoar)
The struck and tott’ring sand-bank lave.*

* Chorus in *Oedipus Coloneus*.

It required more than human energy to bear up against the menaces of destruction that everywhere surrounded us.

After the lapse of three days, the gale died away, the sea-gull sailed upon the calm bosom of the windless atmosphere, and the last yellow leaf on the topmost branch of the oak hung without motion. The sea no longer broke with fury; but a swell setting in steadily for shore, with long sweep and sullen burst replaced the roar of the breakers. Yet we derived hope from the change, and we did not doubt that after the interval of a few days the sea would resume its tranquillity. The sunset of the fourth day favoured this idea; it was clear and golden. As we gazed on the purple sea, radiant beneath, we were attracted by a novel spectacle; a dark speck — as it neared, visibly a boat — rode on the top of the waves, every now and then lost in the steep valleys between. We marked its course with eager questionings; and, when we saw that it evidently made for shore, we descended to the only practicable landing place, and hoisted a signal to direct them. By the help of glasses we distinguished her crew; it consisted of nine men, Englishmen, belonging in truth to the two divisions of our people, who had preceded us, and had been for several weeks at Paris. As countryman was wont to meet countryman in distant lands, did we greet our visitors on their landing, with outstretched hands and gladsome welcome. They were slow to reciprocate our gratulations. They looked angry and resentful; not less than the chafed sea which they had traversed with imminent peril, though apparently more displeased with each other than with us. It was strange to see these human beings, who appeared to be given forth by the earth like rare and inestimable plants, full of towering passion, and the spirit of angry contest. Their first demand was to be conducted to the Lord Protector of England, so they called Adrian, though he had long discarded the empty title, as a bitter mockery of the shadow to which the

Protectorship was now reduced. They were speedily led to Dover Castle, from whose keep Adrian had watched the movements of the boat. He received them with the interest and wonder so strange a visitation created. In the confusion occasioned by their angry demands for precedence, it was long before we could discover the secret meaning of this strange scene. By degrees, from the furious declamations of one, the fierce interruptions of another, and the bitter scoffs of a third, we found that they were deputies from our colony at Paris, from three parties there formed, who, each with angry rivalry, tried to attain a superiority over the other two. These deputies had been dispatched by them to Adrian, who had been selected arbiter; and they had journeyed from Paris to Calais, through the vacant towns and desolate country, indulging the while violent hatred against each other; and now they pleaded their several causes with unmitigated party-spirit.

By examining the deputies apart, and after much investigation, we learnt the true state of things at Paris. Since parliament had elected him Ryland's deputy, all the surviving English had submitted to Adrian. He was our captain to lead us from our native soil to unknown lands, our lawgiver and our preserver. On the first arrangement of our scheme of emigration, no continued separation of our members was contemplated, and the command of the whole body in gradual ascent of power had its apex in the Earl of Windsor. But unforeseen circumstances changed our plans for us, and occasioned the greater part of our numbers to be divided for the space of nearly two months, from the supreme chief. They had gone over in two distinct bodies; and on their arrival at Paris dissension arose between them.

They had found Paris a desert. When first the plague had appeared, the return of travellers and merchants, and communications by letter, informed us regularly of the ravages made by disease on the continent. But with the increased mortality this intercourse declined and ceased. Even in England itself communication from one part of the island to the other became slow and rare. No vessel stemmed the flood that divided Calais from Dover; or if some melancholy voyager, wishing to assure himself of the life or death of his relatives, put from the French shore to return among us, often the greedy ocean swallowed his little craft, or after a day or two he was infected by the disorder, and died before he could tell the tale of the desolation of France. We were therefore to a great degree ignorant of the state of things on the continent, and were not without some vague hope of finding numerous companions in its wide track. But the same causes that had so fearfully diminished the English nation had had even greater scope for mischief in the sister land. France was a blank; during the long line of road from Calais to Paris not one human being was found. In Paris there were a few, perhaps a hundred, who, resigned to their coming fate, flitted about the streets of the capital and assembled to converse of past times, with that vivacity and even gaiety that seldom deserts the individuals of this nation.

The English took uncontested possession of Paris. Its high houses and narrow streets were lifeless. A few pale figures were to be distinguished at the accustomed resort at the Tuileries; they wondered wherefore the islanders should approach their ill-fated city — for in the excess of wretchedness, the sufferers always imagine, that their part of the calamity is the bitterest, as, when enduring intense pain, we would exchange the particular torture we writhe under, for any other which should visit a different part of the frame. They listened to the account the emigrants gave of their motives for leaving their native land, with a shrug almost of disdain —”Return,” they said, “return to your island, whose sea breezes, and division from the continent gives some promise of health; if Pestilence among you has slain its hundreds, with us it has slain its thousands. Are you not even now more numerous than we are? — A year ago you would have found only the sick burying the dead; now we are happier; for the pang of struggle has passed away, and the few you find here are patiently waiting the final blow. But you, who are not content to die, breathe no longer the air of France, or soon you will only be a part of her soil.”

Thus, by menaces of the sword, they would have driven back those who had escaped from fire. But the peril left behind was deemed imminent by my countrymen; that before them doubtful and distant; and soon other feelings arose to obliterate fear, or to replace it by passions, that ought to have had no place among a brotherhood of unhappy survivors of the expiring world.

The more numerous division of emigrants, which arrived first at Paris, assumed a superiority of rank and power; the second party asserted their independence. A third was formed by a sectarian, a self-erected prophet, who, while he attributed all power and rule to God, strove to get the real command of his comrades into his own hands. This third division consisted of fewest individuals, but their purpose was more one, their obedience to their leader more entire, their fortitude and courage more unyielding and active.

During the whole progress of the plague, the teachers of religion were in possession of great power; a power of good, if rightly directed, or of incalculable mischief, if fanaticism or intolerance guided their efforts. In the present instance, a worse feeling than either of these actuated the leader. He was an impostor in the most determined sense of the term. A man who had in early life lost, through the indulgence of vicious propensities, all sense of rectitude or self-esteem; and who, when ambition was awakened in him, gave himself up to its influence unbridled by any scruple. His father had been a methodist preacher, an enthusiastic man with simple intentions; but whose pernicious doctrines of election and special grace had contributed to destroy all conscientious feeling in his son. During the progress of the pestilence he had entered upon various schemes, by which to acquire adherents and power. Adrian had discovered and defeated these attempts; but Adrian was absent; the wolf assumed the shepherd's garb, and the flock admitted the deception: he had formed a party during the few weeks he had been in Paris, who zealously propagated the creed of his divine mission, and believed that safety and salvation were to be afforded only to those who put their trust in him.

When once the spirit of dissension had arisen, the most frivolous causes gave it activity. The first party, on arriving at Paris, had taken possession of the Tuileries; chance and friendly feeling had induced the second to lodge near to them. A contest arose concerning the distribution of the pillage; the chiefs of the first division demanded that the whole should be placed at their disposal; with this assumption the opposite party refused to comply. When next the latter went to forage, the gates of Paris were shut on them. After overcoming this difficulty, they marched in a body to the Tuileries. They found that their enemies had been already expelled thence by the Elect, as the fanatical party designated themselves, who refused to admit any into the palace who did not first abjure obedience to all except God, and his delegate on earth, their chief. Such was the beginning of the strife, which at length proceeded so far, that the three divisions, armed, met in the Place Vendôme, each resolved to subdue by force the resistance of its adversaries. They assembled, their muskets were loaded, and even pointed at the breasts of their so called enemies. One word had been sufficient; and there the last of mankind would have burthened their souls with the crime of murder, and dipped their hands in each other's blood. A sense of shame, a recollection that not only their cause, but the existence of the whole human race was at stake, entered the breast of the leader of the more numerous party. He was aware, that if the ranks were thinned, no other recruits could fill them up; that each man was as a priceless gem in a kingly crown, which if destroyed, the earth's deep entrails could yield no paragon. He was a young man, and had been hurried on by presumption, and the notion of his high rank and superiority to all other pretenders; now he repented his work, he felt that all the blood about to be shed would be on his head; with sudden impulse therefore he spurred his horse between the bands, and, having fixed a white handkerchief on the point of his uplifted sword, thus demanded parley; the opposite leaders obeyed the signal. He spoke with warmth; he reminded them of the oath all the chiefs had taken to submit to the Lord Protector; he declared their present meeting to be an act of treason and mutiny; he allowed that he had been hurried away by passion, but that a cooler moment had arrived; and he proposed that each party should send deputies to the Earl of Windsor, inviting his interference and offering submission to his decision. His offer was accepted so far, that each leader consented to command a retreat, and moreover agreed, that after the approbation of their several parties had been consulted, they should meet that night on some neutral spot to ratify the truce. At the meeting of the chiefs, this plan was finally concluded upon. The leader of the fanatics indeed refused to admit the arbitration of Adrian; he sent ambassadors, rather than deputies, to assert his claim, not plead his cause.

The truce was to continue until the first of February, when the bands were again to assemble on the Place Vendôme; it was of the utmost consequence therefore that Adrian should arrive in Paris by that day, since an hair might turn the scale, and peace, scared away by intestine broils, might only return to watch by the silent dead. It was now the twenty-eighth of January; every vessel stationed near Dover had been beaten to pieces and destroyed by the furious storms I have commemorated. Our journey however would admit of no delay. That very night, Adrian, and I, and twelve others, either friends or attendants, put off from the English shore, in the boat that had brought over the deputies. We all took our turn at the oar; and the immediate occasion of our departure affording us abundant matter for conjecture and discourse, prevented the feeling that we left our native country, depopulate England, for the last time, to enter deeply into the minds of the greater part of our number. It was a serene starlight night, and the dark line of the English coast continued for some time visible at intervals, as we rose on the broad back of the waves. I exerted myself with my long oar to give swift impulse to our skiff; and, while the waters splashed with melancholy sound against its sides, I looked with sad affection on this last glimpse of sea-girt England, and strained my eyes not too soon to lose sight of the castellated cliff, which rose to protect the land of heroism and beauty from the inroads of ocean, that, turbulent as I had lately seen it, required such cyclopean walls for its repulsion. A solitary sea-gull winged its flight over our heads, to seek its nest in a cleft of the precipice. Yes, thou shalt revisit the land of thy birth, I thought, as I looked invidiously on the airy voyager; but we shall, never more! Tomb of Idris, farewell! Grave, in which my heart lies sepultured, farewell for ever!

We were twelve hours at sea, and the heavy swell obliged us to exert all our strength. At length, by mere dint of rowing, we reached the French coast. The stars faded, and the grey morning cast a dim veil over the silver horns of the waning moon — the sun rose broad and red from the sea, as we walked over the sands to Calais. Our first care was to procure horses, and although wearied by our night of watching and toil, some of our party immediately went in quest of these in the wide fields of the unenclosed and now barren plain round Calais. We divided ourselves, like seamen, into watches, and some reposed, while others prepared the morning's repast. Our foragers returned at noon with only six horses — on these, Adrian and I, and four others, proceeded on our journey towards the great city, which its inhabitants had fondly named the capital of the civilized world. Our horses had become, through their long holiday, almost wild, and we crossed the plain round Calais with impetuous speed. From the height near Boulogne, I turned again to look on England; nature had cast a misty pall over her, her cliff was hidden — there was spread the watery barrier that divided us, never again to be crossed; she lay on the ocean plain,

In the great pool a swan's nest.

Ruined the nest, alas! the swans of Albion had passed away for ever — an uninhabited rock in the wide Pacific, which had remained since the creation uninhabited, unnamed, unmarked, would be of as much account in the world's future history, as desert England.

Our journey was impeded by a thousand obstacles. As our horses grew tired, we had to seek for others; and hours were wasted, while we exhausted our artifices to allure some of these enfranchised slaves of man to resume the yoke; or as we went from stable to stable through the towns, hoping to find some who had not forgotten the shelter of their native stalls. Our ill success in procuring them, obliged us continually to leave some one of our companions behind; and on the first of February, Adrian and I entered Paris, wholly unaccompanied. The serene morning had dawned when we arrived at Saint Denis, and the sun was high, when the clamour of voices, and the clash, as we feared, of weapons, guided us to where our countrymen had assembled on the Place Vendôme. We passed a knot of Frenchmen, who were talking earnestly of the madness of the insular invaders, and then coming by a sudden turn upon the Place, we saw the sun glitter on drawn swords and fixed bayonets, while yells and clamours rent the air. It was a scene of unaccustomed confusion in these days of depopulation. Roused by fancied wrongs, and insulting scoffs, the opposite parties had rushed to attack each other; while the elect, drawn up apart, seemed to wait an opportunity to fall with better advantage on their foes, when they should have mutually weakened each other. A merciful power interposed, and no blood was shed; for, while the insane mob were in the very act of attack, the females, wives, mothers and daughters, rushed between; they seized the bridles; they embraced the knees of the horsemen, and hung on the necks, or enweaponed arms of their enraged relatives; the shrill female scream was mingled with the manly shout, and formed the wild clamour that welcomed us on our arrival.

Our voices could not be heard in the tumult; Adrian however was eminent for the white charger he rode; spurring him, he dashed into the midst of the throng: he was recognized, and a loud cry raised for England and the Protector. The late adversaries, warmed to affection at the sight of him, joined in heedless confusion, and surrounded him; the women kissed his hands, and the edges of his garments; nay, his horse received tribute of their embraces; some wept their welcome; he appeared an angel of peace descended among them; and the only danger was, that his mortal nature would be demonstrated, by his suffocation from the kindness of his friends. His voice was at length heard, and obeyed; the crowd fell back; the chiefs alone rallied round him. I had seen Lord Raymond ride through his lines; his look of victory, and majestic mien obtained the respect and obedience of all: such was not the appearance or influence of Adrian. His slight figure, his fervent look, his gesture, more of deprecation than rule, were proofs that love, unmingled with fear, gave him dominion over the hearts of a multitude, who knew that he never flinched from danger, nor was actuated by other motives than care for the general welfare. No distinction was now visible between the two parties, late ready to shed each other's blood, for, though neither would submit to the other, they both yielded ready obedience to the Earl of Windsor.

One party however remained, cut off from the rest, which did not sympathize in the joy exhibited on Adrian's arrival, or imbibe the spirit of peace, which fell like dew upon the softened hearts of their countrymen. At the head of this assembly was a ponderous, dark-looking man, whose malign eye surveyed with gloating delight the stern looks of his followers. They had hitherto been inactive, but now, perceiving themselves to be forgotten in the universal jubilee, they advanced with threatening gestures: our friends had, as it were in wanton contention, attacked each other; they wanted but to be told that their cause was one, for it to become so: their mutual anger had been a fire of straw, compared to the slow-burning hatred they both entertained for these seceders, who seized a portion of the world to come, there to entrench and incastellate themselves, and to issue with fearful sally, and appalling denunciations, on the mere common children of the earth. The first advance of the little army of the elect reawakened their rage; they grasped their arms, and waited but their leader's signal to commence the attack, when the clear tones of Adrian's voice were heard, commanding them to fall back; with confused murmur and hurried retreat, as the wave ebbs clamorously from the sands it lately covered, our friends obeyed. Adrian rode singly into the space between the opposing bands; he approached the hostile leader, as requesting him to imitate his example, but his look was not obeyed, and the chief advanced, followed by his whole troop. There were many women among them, who seemed more eager and resolute than their male companions. They pressed round their leader, as if to shield him, while they loudly bestowed on him every sacred denomination and epithet of worship. Adrian met them half way; they halted: "What," he said, "do you seek? Do you require any thing of us that we refuse to give, and that you are forced to acquire by arms and warfare?"

His questions were answered by a general cry, in which the words election, sin, and red right arm of God, could alone be heard.

Adrian looked expressly at their leader, saying, "Can you not silence your followers? Mine, you perceive, obey me."

The fellow answered by a scowl; and then, perhaps fearful that his people should become auditors of the debate he expected to ensue, he commanded them to fall back, and advanced by himself. "What, I again ask," said Adrian, "do you require of us?"

"Repentance," replied the man, whose sinister brow gathered clouds as he spoke. "Obedience to the will of the Most High, made manifest to these his Elected People. Do we not all die through your sins, O generation of unbelief, and have we not a right to demand of you repentance and obedience?"

"And if we refuse them, what then?" his opponent inquired mildly.

"Beware," cried the man, "God hears you, and will smite your stony heart in his wrath; his poisoned arrows fly, his dogs of death are unleashed! We will not perish unrevenged — and mighty will our avenger be, when he descends in visible majesty, and scatters destruction among you."

"My good fellow," said Adrian, with quiet scorn, "I wish that you were ignorant only, and I think it would be no difficult task to prove to you, that you speak of what you do not understand. On the present occasion however, it is enough for me to know that you seek nothing of us; and, heaven is our witness, we seek nothing of you. I should be sorry to embitter by strife the few days that we any of us may have here to live; when there," he pointed downwards, "we shall not be able to contend, while here we need not. Go home, or stay; pray to your God in your own mode; your friends may do the like. My orisons consist in peace and good will, in resignation and hope. Farewell!"

He bowed slightly to the angry disputant who was about to reply; and, turning his horse down Rue Saint Honore, called on his friends to follow him. He rode slowly, to give time to all to join him at the Barrier, and then issued his orders that those who yielded obedience to him, should rendezvous at Versailles. In the meantime he remained within the walls of Paris, until he had secured the safe retreat of all. In about a fortnight the remainder of the emigrants arrived from England, and they all repaired to Versailles; apartments were prepared for the family of the Protector in the Grand Trianon, and there, after the excitement of these events, we reposed amidst the luxuries of the departed Bourbons.

CHAPTER XXV

After the repose of a few days, we held a council, to decide on our future movements. Our first plan had been to quit our wintry native latitude, and seek for our diminished numbers the luxuries and delights of a southern climate. We had not fixed on any precise spot as the termination of our wanderings; but a vague picture of perpetual spring, fragrant groves, and sparkling streams, floated in our imagination to entice us on. A variety of causes had detained us in England, and we had now arrived at the middle of February; if we pursued our original project, we should find ourselves in a worse situation than before, having exchanged our temperate climate for the intolerable heats of a summer in Egypt or Persia. We were therefore obliged to modify our plan, as the season continued to be inclement; and it was determined that we should await the arrival of spring in our present abode, and so order our future movements as to pass the hot months in the icy valleys of Switzerland, deferring our southern progress until the ensuing autumn, if such a season was ever again to be beheld by us.

The castle and town of Versailles afforded our numbers ample accommodation, and foraging parties took it by turns to supply our wants. There was a strange and appalling motley in the situation of these the last of the race. At first I likened it to a colony, which borne over the far seas, struck root for the first time in a new country. But where was the bustle and industry characteristic of such an assemblage; the rudely constructed dwelling, which was to suffice till a more commodious mansion could be built; the marking out of fields; the attempt at cultivation; the eager curiosity to discover unknown animals and herbs; the excursions for the sake of exploring the country? Our habitations were palaces our food was ready stored in granaries — there was no need of labour, no inquisitiveness, no restless desire to get on. If we had been assured that we should secure the lives of our present numbers, there would have been more vivacity and hope in our councils. We should have discussed as to the period when the existing produce for man’s sustenance would no longer suffice for us, and what mode of life we should then adopt. We should have considered more carefully our future plans, and debated concerning the spot where we should in future dwell. But summer and the plague were near, and we dared not look forward. Every heart sickened at the thought of amusement; if the younger part of our community were ever impelled, by youthful and untamed hilarity, to enter on any dance or song, to cheer the melancholy time, they would suddenly break off, checked by a mournful look or agonizing sigh from any one among them, who was prevented by sorrows and losses from mingling in the festivity. If laughter echoed under our roof, yet the heart was vacant of joy; and, when ever it chanced that I witnessed such attempts at pastime, they increased instead of diminishing my sense of woe. In the midst of the pleasure-hunting throng, I would close my eyes, and see before me the obscure cavern, where was garnered the mortality of Idris, and the dead lay around, mouldering in hushed repose. When I again became aware of the present hour, softest melody of Lydian flute, or harmonious maze of graceful dance, was but as the demoniac chorus in the Wolf's Glen, and the caperings of the reptiles that surrounded the magic circle.

My dearest interval of peace occurred, when, released from the obligation of associating with the crowd, I could repose in the dear home where my children lived. Children I say, for the tenderest emotions of paternity bound me to Clara. She was now fourteen; sorrow, and deep insight into the scenes around her, calmed the restless spirit of girlhood; while the remembrance of her father whom she idolised, and respect for me and Adrian, implanted an high sense of duty in her young heart. Though serious she was not sad; the eager desire that makes us all, when young, plume our wings, and stretch our necks, that we may more swiftly alight tiptoe on the height of maturity, was subdued in her by early experience. All that she could spare of overflowing love from her parents' memory, and attention to her living relatives, was spent upon religion. This was the hidden law of her heart, which she concealed with childish reserve, and cherished the more because it was secret. What faith so entire, what charity so pure, what hope so fervent, as that of early youth? and she, all love, all tenderness and trust, who from infancy had been tossed on the wide sea of passion and misfortune, saw the finger of apparent divinity in all, and her best hope was to make herself acceptable to the power she worshipped. Evelyn was only five years old; his joyous heart was incapable of sorrow, and he enlivened our house with the innocent mirth incident to his years.

The aged Countess of Windsor had fallen from her dream of power, rank and grandeur; she had been suddenly seized with the conviction, that love was the only good of life, virtue the only ennobling distinction and enriching wealth. Such a lesson had been taught her by the dead lips of her neglected daughter; and she devoted herself, with all the fiery violence of her character, to the obtaining the affection of the remnants of her family. In early years the heart of Adrian had been chilled towards her; and, though he observed a due respect, her coldness, mixed with the recollection of disappointment and madness, caused him to feel even pain in her society. She saw this, and yet determined to win his love; the obstacle served the rather to excite her ambition. As Henry, Emperor of Germany, lay in the snow before Pope Leo's gate for three winter days and nights, so did she in humility wait before the icy barriers of his closed heart, till he, the servant of love, and prince of tender courtesy, opened it wide for her admittance, bestowing, with fervency and gratitude, the tribute of filial affection she merited. Her understanding, courage, and presence of mind, became powerful auxiliaries to him in the difficult task of ruling the tumultuous crowd, which were subjected to his control, in truth by a single hair.

The principal circumstances that disturbed our tranquillity during this interval, originated in the vicinity of the impostor-prophet and his followers. They continued to reside at Paris; but missionaries from among them often visited Versailles — and such was the power of assertions, however false, yet vehemently iterated, over the ready credulity of the ignorant and fearful, that they seldom failed in drawing over to their party some from among our numbers. An instance of this nature coming immediately under our notice, we were led to consider the miserable state in which we should leave our countrymen, when we should, at the approach of summer, move on towards Switzerland, and leave a deluded crew behind us in the hands of their miscreant leader. The sense of the smallness of our numbers, and expectation of decrease, pressed upon us; and, while it would be a subject of congratulation to ourselves to add one to our party, it would be doubly gratifying to rescue from the pernicious influence of superstition and unrelenting tyranny, the victims that now, though voluntarily enchained, groaned beneath it. If we had considered the preacher as sincere in a belief of his own denunciations, or only moderately actuated by kind feeling in the exercise of his assumed powers, we should have immediately addressed ourselves to him, and endeavoured with our best arguments to soften and humanise his views. But he was instigated by ambition, he desired to rule over these last stragglers from the fold of death; his projects went so far, as to cause him to calculate that, if, from these crushed remains, a few survived, so that a new race should spring up, he, by holding tight the reins of belief, might be remembered by the post-pestilential race as a patriarch, a prophet, nay a deity; such as of old among the post-diluvians were Jupiter the conqueror, Serapis the lawgiver, and Vishnu the preserver. These ideas made him inflexible in his rule, and violent in his hate of any who presumed to share with him his usurped empire.

It is a strange fact, but incontestable, that the philanthropist, who ardent in his desire to do good, who patient, reasonable and gentle, yet disdains to use other argument than truth, has less influence over men's minds, than he who, grasping and selfish, refuses not to adopt any means, nor awaken any passion, nor diffuse any falsehood, for the advancement of his cause. If this from time immemorial has been the case, the contrast was infinitely greater, now that the one could bring harrowing fears and transcendent hopes into play; while the other had few hopes to hold forth, nor could influence the imagination to diminish the fears which he himself was the first to entertain. The preacher had persuaded his followers, that their escape from the plague, the salvation of their children, and the rise of a new race of men from their seed, depended on their faith in, and their submission to him. They greedily imbibed this belief; and their over-weening credulity even rendered them eager to make converts to the same faith.

How to seduce any individuals from such an alliance of fraud, was a frequent subject of Adrian's meditations and discourse. He formed many plans for the purpose; but his own troop kept him in full occupation to ensure their fidelity and safety; beside which the preacher was as cautious and prudent, as he was cruel. His victims lived under the strictest rules and laws, which either entirely imprisoned them within the Tuileries, or let them out in such numbers, and under such leaders, as precluded the possibility of controversy. There was one among them however whom I resolved to save; she had been known to us in happier days; Idris had loved her; and her excellent nature made it peculiarly lamentable that she should be sacrificed by this merciless cannibal of souls.

This man had between two and three hundred persons enlisted under his banners. More than half of them were women; there were about fifty children of all ages; and not more than eighty men. They were mostly drawn from that which, when such distinctions existed, was denominated the lower rank of society. The exceptions consisted of a few high-born females, who, panic-struck, and tamed by sorrow, had joined him. Among these was one, young, lovely, and enthusiastic, whose very goodness made her a more easy victim. I have mentioned her before: Juliet, the youngest daughter, and now sole relic of the ducal house of L —— . There are some beings, whom fate seems to select on whom to pour, in unmeasured portion, the vials of her wrath, and whom she bathes even to the lips in misery. Such a one was the ill-starred Juliet. She had lost her indulgent parents, her brothers and sisters, companions of her youth; in one fell swoop they had been carried off from her. Yet she had again dared to call herself happy; united to her admirer, to him who possessed and filled her whole heart, she yielded to the lethean powers of love, and knew and felt only his life and presence. At the very time when with keen delight she welcomed the tokens of maternity, this sole prop of her life failed, her husband died of the plague. For a time she had been lulled in insanity; the birth of her child restored her to the cruel reality of things, but gave her at the same time an object for whom to preserve at once life and reason. Every friend and relative had died off, and she was reduced to solitude and penury; deep melancholy and angry impatience distorted her judgment, so that she could not persuade herself to disclose her distress to us. When she heard of the plan of universal emigration, she resolved to remain behind with her child, and alone in wide England to live or die, as fate might decree, beside the grave of her beloved. She had hidden herself in one of the many empty habitations of London; it was she who rescued my Idris on the fatal twentieth of November, though my immediate danger, and the subsequent illness of Idris, caused us to forget our hapless friend. This circumstance had however brought her again in contact with her fellow-creatures; a slight illness of her infant, proved to her that she was still bound to humanity by an indestructible tie; to preserve this little creature's life became the object of her being, and she joined the first division of migrants who went over to Paris.

She became an easy prey to the methodist; her sensibility and acute fears rendered her accessible to every impulse; her love for her child made her eager to cling to the merest straw held out to save him. Her mind, once unstrung, and now tuned by roughest inharmonious hands, made her credulous: beautiful as fabled goddess, with voice of unrivalled sweetness, burning with new lighted enthusiasm, she became a steadfast proselyte, and powerful auxiliary to the leader of the elect. I had remarked her in the crowd, on the day we met on the Place Vendôme; and, recollecting suddenly her providential rescue of my lost one, on the night of the twentieth of November, I reproached myself for my neglect and ingratitude, and felt impelled to leave no means that I could adopt untried, to recall her to her better self, and rescue her from the fangs of the hypocrite destroyer.

I will not, at this period of my story, record the artifices I used to penetrate the asylum of the Tuileries, or give what would be a tedious account of my stratagems, disappointments, and perseverance. I at last succeeded in entering these walls, and roamed its halls and corridors in eager hope to find my selected convert. In the evening I contrived to mingle unobserved with the congregation, which assembled in the chapel to listen to the crafty and eloquent harangue of their prophet. I saw Juliet near him. Her dark eyes, fearfully impressed with the restless glare of madness, were fixed on him; she held her infant, not yet a year old, in her arms; and care of it alone could distract her attention from the words to which she eagerly listened. After the sermon was over, the congregation dispersed; all quitted the chapel except she whom I sought; her babe had fallen asleep; so she placed it on a cushion, and sat on the floor beside, watching its tranquil slumber.

I presented myself to her; for a moment natural feeling produced a sentiment of gladness, which disappeared again, when with ardent and affectionate exhortation I besought her to accompany me in flight from this den of superstition and misery. In a moment she relapsed into the delirium of fanaticism, and, but that her gentle nature forbade, would have loaded me with execrations. She conjured me, she commanded me to leave her—”Beware, O beware,” she cried, “fly while yet your escape is practicable. Now you are safe; but strange sounds and inspirations come on me at times, and if the Eternal should in awful whisper reveal to me his will, that to save my child you must be sacrificed, I would call in the satellites of him you call the tyrant; they would tear you limb from limb; nor would I hallow the death of him whom Idris loved, by a single tear."

She spoke hurriedly, with tuneless voice, and wild look; her child awoke, and, frightened, began to cry; each sob went to the ill-fated mother's heart, and she mingled the epithets of endearment she addressed to her infant, with angry commands that I should leave her. Had I had the means, I would have risked all, have torn her by force from the murderer's den, and trusted to the healing balm of reason and affection. But I had no choice, no power even of longer struggle; steps were heard along the gallery, and the voice of the preacher drew near. Juliet, straining her child in a close embrace, fled by another passage. Even then I would have followed her; but my foe and his satellites entered; I was surrounded, and taken prisoner.

I remembered the menace of the unhappy Juliet, and expected the full tempest of the man's vengeance, and the awakened wrath of his followers, to fall instantly upon me. I was questioned. My answers were simple and sincere. "His own mouth condemns him," exclaimed the impostor; "he confesses that his intention was to seduce from the way of salvation our well-beloved sister in God; away with him to the dungeon; to-morrow he dies the death; we are manifestly called upon to make an example, tremendous and appalling, to scare the children of sin from our asylum of the saved."

My heart revolted from his hypocritical jargon: but it was unworthy of me to combat in words with the ruffian; and my answer was cool; while, far from being possessed with fear, methought, even at the worst, a man true to himself, courageous and determined, could fight his way, even from the boards of the scaffold, through the herd of these misguided maniacs. "Remember," I said, "who I am; and be well assured that I shall not die unavenged. Your legal magistrate, the Lord Protector, knew of my design, and is aware that I am here; the cry of blood will reach him, and you and your miserable victims will long lament the tragedy you are about to act."

My antagonist did not deign to reply, even by a look;—"You know your duty," he said to his comrades,—"obey."

In a moment I was thrown on the earth, bound, blindfolded, and hurried away — liberty of limb and sight was only restored to me, when, surrounded by dungeon-walls, dark and impervious, I found myself a prisoner and alone.

Such was the result of my attempt to gain over the proselyte of this man of crime; I could not conceive that he would dare put me to death. — Yet I was in his hands; the path of his ambition had ever been dark and cruel; his power was founded upon fear; the one word which might cause me to die, unheard, unseen, in the obscurity of my dungeon, might be easier to speak than the deed of mercy to act. He would not risk probably a public execution; but a private assassination would at once terrify any of my companions from attempting a like feat, at the same time that a cautious line of conduct might enable him to avoid the inquiries and the vengeance of Adrian.

Two months ago, in a vault more obscure than the one I now inhabited, I had resolved the design of quietly laying me down to die; now I shuddered at the approach of fate. My imagination was busied in shaping forth the kind of death he would inflict. Would he allow me to wear out life with famine; or was the food administered to me to be medicined with death? Would he steal on me in my sleep; or should I contend to the last with my murderers, knowing, even while I struggled, that I must be overcome? I lived upon an earth whose diminished population a child's arithmetic might number; I had lived through long months with death stalking close at my side, while at intervals the shadow of his skeleton-shape darkened my path. I had believed that I despised the grim phantom, and laughed his power to scorn.

Any other fate I should have met with courage, nay, have gone out gallantly to encounter. But to be murdered thus at the midnight hour by cold-blooded assassins, no friendly hand to close my eyes, or receive my parting blessing — to die in combat, hate and execration — ah, why, my angel love, didst thou restore me to life, when already I had stepped within the portals of the tomb, now that so soon again I was to be flung back a mangled corpse!

Hours passed — centuries. Could I give words to the many thoughts which occupied me in endless succession during this interval, I should fill volumes. The air was dank, the dungeon-floor mildewed and icy cold; hunger came upon me too, and no sound reached me from without. To-morrow the ruffian had declared that I should die. When would to-morrow come? Was it not already here?

My door was about to be opened. I heard the key turn, and the bars and bolts slowly removed. The opening of intervening passages permitted sounds from the interior of the palace to reach me; and I heard the clock strike one. They come to murder me, I thought; this hour does not befit a public execution. I drew myself up against the wall opposite the entrance; I collected my forces, I rallied my courage, I would not fall a tame prey. Slowly the door receded on its hinges — I was ready to spring forward to seize and grapple with the intruder, till the sight of who it was changed at once the temper of my mind. It was Juliet herself; pale and trembling she stood, a lamp in her hand, on the threshold of the dungeon, looking at me with wistful countenance. But in a moment she re-assumed her self-possession; and her languid eyes recovered their brilliancy. She said, “I am come to save you, Verney.”

“And yourself also,” I cried: “dearest friend, can we indeed be saved?”

“Not a word,” she replied, “follow me!”

I obeyed instantly. We threaded with light steps many corridors, ascended several flights of stairs, and passed through long galleries; at the end of one she unlocked a low portal; a rush of wind extinguished our lamp; but, in lieu of it, we had the blessed moon-beams and the open face of heaven. Then first Juliet spoke:—”You are safe,” she said, “God bless you! — farewell!”

I seized her reluctant hand—”Dear friend,” I cried, “misguided victim, do you not intend to escape with me? Have you not risked all in facilitating my flight? and do you think, that I will permit you to return, and suffer alone the effects of that miscreant’s rage? Never!”

“Do not fear for me,” replied the lovely girl mournfully, “and do not imagine that without the consent of our chief you could be without these walls. It is he that has saved you; he assigned to me the part of leading you hither, because I am best acquainted with your motives for coming here, and can best appreciate his mercy in permitting you to depart.”

“And are you,” I cried, “the dupe of this man? He dreads me alive as an enemy, and dead he fears my avengers. By favouring this clandestine escape he preserves a show of consistency to his followers; but mercy is far from his heart. Do you forget his artifices, his cruelty, and fraud? As I am free, so are you. Come, Juliet, the mother of our lost Idris will welcome you, the noble Adrian will rejoice to receive you; you will find peace and love, and better hopes than fanaticism can afford. Come, and fear not; long before day we shall be at Versailles; close the door on this abode of crime — come, sweet Juliet, from hypocrisy and guilt to the society of the affectionate and good."

I spoke hurriedly, but with fervour: and while with gentle violence I drew her from the portal, some thought, some recollection of past scenes of youth and happiness, made her listen and yield to me; suddenly she broke away with a piercing shriek:—"My child, my child! he has my child; my darling girl is my hostage."

She darted from me into the passage; the gate closed between us — she was left in the fangs of this man of crime, a prisoner, still to inhale the pestilential atmosphere which adhered to his demoniac nature; the unimpeded breeze played on my cheek, the moon shone graciously upon me, my path was free. Glad to have escaped, yet melancholy in my very joy, I retrod my steps to Versailles.

CHAPTER XXVI

Eventful winter passed; winter, the respite of our ills. By degrees the sun, which with slant beams had before yielded the more extended reign to night, lengthened his diurnal journey, and mounted his highest throne, at once the fosterer of earth's new beauty, and her lover. We who, like flies that congregate upon a dry rock at the ebbing of the tide, had played wantonly with time, allowing our passions, our hopes, and our mad desires to rule us, now heard the approaching roar of the ocean of destruction, and would have fled to some sheltered crevice, before the first wave broke over us. We resolved without delay, to commence our journey to Switzerland; we became eager to leave France. Under the icy vaults of the glaciers, beneath the shadow of the pines, the swinging of whose mighty branches was arrested by a load of snow; beside the streams whose intense cold proclaimed their origin to be from the slow-melting piles of congelated waters, amidst frequent storms which might purify the air, we should find health, if in truth health were not herself diseased.

We began our preparations at first with alacrity. We did not now bid adieu to our native country, to the graves of those we loved, to the flowers, and streams, and trees, which had lived beside us from infancy. Small sorrow would be ours on leaving Paris. A scene of shame, when we remembered our late contentions, and thought that we left behind a flock of miserable, deluded victims, bending under the tyranny of a selfish impostor. Small pangs should we feel in leaving the gardens, woods, and halls of the palaces of the Bourbons at Versailles, which we feared would soon be tainted by the dead, when we looked forward to valleys lovelier than any garden, to mighty forests and halls, built not for mortal majesty, but palaces of nature's own, with the Alp of marmoreal whiteness for their walls, the sky for their roof.

Yet our spirits flagged, as the day drew near which we had fixed for our departure. Dire visions and evil auguries, if such things were, thickened around us, so that in vain might men say —

These are their reasons, they are natural,* we felt them to be ominous, and dreaded the future event enchained to them. That the night owl should screech before the noon-day sun, that the hard-winged bat should wheel around the bed of beauty, that muttering thunder should in early spring startle the cloudless air, that sudden and exterminating blight should fall on the tree and shrub, were unaccustomed, but physical events, less horrible than the mental creations of almighty fear. Some had sight of funeral processions, and faces all begrimed with tears, which flitted through the long avenues of the gardens, and drew aside the curtains of the sleepers at dead of night. Some heard wailing and cries in the air; a mournful chaunt would stream through the dark atmosphere, as if spirits above sang the requiem of the human race. What was there in all this, but that fear created other senses within our frames, making us see, hear, and feel what was not? What was this, but the action of diseased imaginations and childish credulity? So might it be; but what was most real, was the existence of these very fears; the staring looks of horror, the faces pale even to ghastliness, the voices struck dumb with harrowing dread, of those among us who saw and heard these things. Of this number was Adrian, who knew the delusion, yet could not cast off the clinging terror. Even ignorant infancy appeared with timorous shrieks and convulsions to acknowledge the presence of unseen powers. We must go: in change of scene, in occupation, and such security as we still hoped to find, we should discover a cure for these gathering horrors.

* Shakespeare — *Julius Cæsar*.

On mustering our company, we found them to consist of fourteen hundred souls, men, women, and children. Until now therefore, we were undiminished in numbers, except by the desertion of those who had attached themselves to the impostor-prophet, and remained behind in Paris. About fifty French joined us. Our order of march was easily arranged; the ill success which had attended our division, determined Adrian to keep all in one body. I, with an hundred men, went forward first as purveyor, taking the road of the Côte d’Or, through Auxerre, Dijon, Dole, over the Jura to Geneva. I was to make arrangements, at every ten miles, for the accommodation of such numbers as I found the town or village would receive, leaving behind a messenger with a written order, signifying how many were to be quartered there. The remainder of our tribe was then divided into bands of fifty each, every division containing eighteen men, and the remainder, consisting of women and children. Each of these was headed by an officer, who carried the roll of names, by which they were each day to be mustered. If the numbers were divided at night, in the morning those in the van waited for those in the rear. At each of the large towns before mentioned, we were all to assemble; and a conclave of the principal officers would hold council for the general weal. I went first, as I said; Adrian last. His mother, with Clara and Evelyn under her protection, remained also with him. Thus our order being determined, I departed. My plan was to go at first no further than Fontainebleau, where in a few days I should be joined by Adrian, before I took flight again further eastward.

My friend accompanied me a few miles from Versailles. He was sad; and, in a tone of unaccustomed despondency, uttered a prayer for our speedy arrival among the Alps, accompanied with an expression of vain regret that we were not already there. "In that case," I observed, "we can quicken our march; why adhere to a plan whose dilatory proceeding you already disapprove?"

"Nay," replied he, "it is too late now. A month ago, and we were masters of ourselves; now,—" he turned his face from me; though gathering twilight had already veiled its expression, he turned it yet more away, as he added —"a man died of the plague last night!"

He spoke in a smothered voice, then suddenly clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Swiftly, most swiftly advances the last hour for us all; as the stars vanish before the sun, so will his near approach destroy us. I have done my best; with grasping hands and impotent strength, I have hung on the wheel of the chariot of plague; but she drags me along with it, while, like Juggernaut, she proceeds crushing out the being of all who strew the high road of life. Would that it were over — would that her procession achieved, we had all entered the tomb together!"

Tears streamed from his eyes. "Again and again," he continued, "will the tragedy be acted; again I must hear the groans of the dying, the wailing of the survivors; again witness the pangs, which, consummating all, envelope an eternity in their evanescent existence. Why am I reserved for this? Why the tainted wether of the flock, am I not struck to earth among the first? It is hard, very hard, for one of woman born to endure all that I endure!"

Hitherto, with an undaunted spirit, and an high feeling of duty and worth, Adrian had fulfilled his self-imposed task. I had contemplated him with reverence, and a fruitless desire of imitation. I now offered a few words of encouragement and sympathy. He hid his face in his hands, and while he strove to calm himself, he ejaculated, “For a few months, yet for a few months more, let not, O God, my heart fail, or my courage be bowed down; let not sights of intolerable misery madden this half-crazed brain, or cause this frail heart to beat against its prison-bound, so that it burst. I have believed it to be my destiny to guide and rule the last of the race of man, till death extinguish my government; and to this destiny I submit.

“Pardon me, Verney, I pain you, but I will no longer complain. Now I am myself again, or rather I am better than myself. You have known how from my childhood aspiring thoughts and high desires have warred with inherent disease and overstrained sensitiveness, till the latter became victors. You know how I placed this wasted feeble hand on the abandoned helm of human government. I have been visited at times by intervals of fluctuation; yet, until now, I have felt as if a superior and indefatigable spirit had taken up its abode within me or rather incorporated itself with my weaker being. The holy visitant has for a time slept, perhaps to show me how powerless I am without its inspiration. Yet, stay for a while, O Power of goodness and strength; disdain not yet this rent shrine of fleshly mortality, O immortal Capability! While one fellow creature remains to whom aid can be afforded, stay by and prop your shattered, falling engine!”

His vehemence, and voice broken by irrepressible sighs, sunk to my heart; his eyes gleamed in the gloom of night like two earthly stars; and, his form dilating, his countenance beaming, truly it almost seemed as if at his eloquent appeal a more than mortal spirit entered his frame, exalting him above humanity.

He turned quickly towards me, and held out his hand. “Farewell, Verney,” he cried, “brother of my love, farewell; no other weak expression must cross these lips, I am alive again: to our tasks, to our combats with our unvanquishable foe, for to the last I will struggle against her.”

He grasped my hand, and bent a look on me, more fervent and animated than any smile; then turning his horse’s head, he touched the animal with the spur, and was out of sight in a moment.

A man last night had died of the plague. The quiver was not emptied, nor the bow unstrung. We stood as marks, while Parthian Pestilence aimed and shot, insatiated by conquest, unobstructed by the heaps of slain. A sickness of the soul, contagious even to my physical mechanism, came over me. My knees knocked together, my teeth chattered, the current of my blood, clotted by sudden cold, painfully forced its way from my heavy heart. I did not fear for myself, but it was misery to think that we could not even save this remnant. That those I loved might in a few days be as clay-cold as Idris in her antique tomb; nor could strength of body or energy of mind ward off the blow. A sense of degradation came over me. Did God create man, merely in the end to become dead earth in the midst of healthful vegetating nature? Was he of no more account to his Maker, than a field of corn blighted in the ear? Were our proud dreams thus to fade? Our name was written "a little lower than the angels;" and, behold, we were no better than ephemera. We had called ourselves the "paragon of animals," and, lo! we were a "quintessence of dust." We repined that the pyramids had outlasted the embalmed body of their builder. Alas! the mere shepherd's hut of straw we passed on the road, contained in its structure the principle of greater longevity than the whole race of man. How reconcile this sad change to our past aspirations, to our apparent powers!

Sudden an internal voice, articulate and clear, seemed to say: — Thus from eternity, it was decreed: the steeds that bear Time onwards had this hour and this fulfilment enchained to them, since the void brought forth its burthen. Would you read backwards the unchangeable laws of Necessity?

Mother of the world! Servant of the Omnipotent! eternal, changeless Necessity! who with busy fingers sittest ever weaving the indissoluble chain of events! — I will not murmur at thy acts. If my human mind cannot acknowledge that all that is, is right; yet since what is, must be, I will sit amidst the ruins and smile. Truly we were not born to enjoy, but to submit, and to hope.

Will not the reader tire, if I should minutely describe our long-drawn journey from Paris to Geneva? If, day by day, I should record, in the form of a journal, the thronging miseries of our lot, could my hand write, or language afford words to express, the variety of our woe; the hustling and crowding of one deplorable event upon another? Patience, oh reader! whoever thou art, wherever thou dwellest, whether of race spiritual, or, sprung from some surviving pair, thy nature will be human, thy habitation the earth; thou wilt here read of the acts of the extinct race, and wilt ask wonderingly, if they, who suffered what thou findest recorded, were of frail flesh and soft organization like thyself. Most true, they were — weep therefore; for surely, solitary being, thou wilt be of gentle disposition; shed compassionate tears; but the while lend thy attention to the tale, and learn the deeds and sufferings of thy predecessors.

Yet the last events that marked our progress through France were so full of strange horror and gloomy misery, that I dare not pause too long in the narration. If I were to dissect each incident, every small fragment of a second would contain an harrowing tale, whose minutest word would curdle the blood in thy young veins. It is right that I should erect for thy instruction this monument of the foregone race; but not that I should drag thee through the wards of an hospital, nor the secret chambers of the charnel-house. This tale, therefore, shall be rapidly unfolded. Images of destruction, pictures of despair, the procession of the last triumph of death, shall be drawn before thee, swift as the rack driven by the north wind along the blotted splendour of the sky.

Weed-grown fields, desolate towns, the wild approach of riderless horses had now become habitual to my eyes; nay, sights far worse, of the unburied dead, and human forms which were strewed on the road side, and on the steps of once frequented habitations, where,

Through the flesh that wastes away
Beneath the parching sun, the whitening bones
Start forth, and moulder in the sable dust.*

* Elton’s Translation of Hesiod’s *Shield of Hercules*.

Sights like these had become — ah, woe the while! so familiar, that we had ceased to shudder, or spur our stung horses to sudden speed, as we passed them. France in its best days, at least that part of France through which we travelled, had been a cultivated desert, and the absence of enclosures, of cottages, and even of peasantry, was saddening to a traveller from sunny Italy, or busy England. Yet the towns were frequent and lively, and the cordial politeness and ready smile of the wooden-shoed peasant restored good humour to the splenetic. Now, the old woman sat no more at the door with her distaff — the lank beggar no longer asked charity in courtier-like phrase; nor on holidays did the peasantry thread with slow grace the mazes of the dance. Silence, melancholy bride of death, went in procession with him from town to town through the spacious region.

We arrived at Fontainebleau, and speedily prepared for the reception of our friends. On mustering our numbers for the night, three were found missing. When I enquired for them, the man to whom I spoke, uttered the word "plague," and fell at my feet in convulsions; he also was infected. There were hard faces around me; for among my troop were sailors who had crossed the line times unnumbered, soldiers who, in Russia and far America, had suffered famine, cold and danger, and men still sterner-featured, once nightly depredators in our over-grown metropolis; men bred from their cradle to see the whole machine of society at work for their destruction. I looked round, and saw upon the faces of all horror and despair written in glaring characters.

We passed four days at Fontainebleau. Several sickened and died, and in the mean time neither Adrian nor any of our friends appeared. My own troop was in commotion; to reach Switzerland, to plunge into rivers of snow, and to dwell in caves of ice, became the mad desire of all. Yet we had promised to wait for the Earl; and he came not. My people demanded to be led forward — rebellion, if so we might call what was the mere casting away of straw-formed shackles, appeared manifestly among them. They would away on the word without a leader. The only chance of safety, the only hope of preservation from every form of indescribable suffering, was our keeping together. I told them this; while the most determined among them answered with sullenness, that they could take care of themselves, and replied to my entreaties with scoffs and menaces.

At length, on the fifth day, a messenger arrived from Adrian, bearing letters, which directed us to proceed to Auxerre, and there await his arrival, which would only be deferred for a few days. Such was the tenor of his public letters. Those privately delivered to me, detailed at length the difficulties of his situation, and left the arrangement of my future plans to my own discretion. His account of the state of affairs at Versailles was brief, but the oral communications of his messenger filled up his omissions, and showed me that perils of the most frightful nature were gathering around him. At first the re-awakening of the plague had been concealed; but the number of deaths increasing, the secret was divulged, and the destruction already achieved, was exaggerated by the fears of the survivors. Some emissaries of the enemy of mankind, the accursed Impostors. were among them instilling their doctrine, that safety and life could only be ensured by submission to their chief; and they succeeded so well, that soon, instead of desiring to proceed to Switzerland, the major part of the multitude, weak-minded women, and dastardly men, desired to return to Paris, and, by ranging themselves under the banners of the so called prophet, and by a cowardly worship of the principle of evil, to purchase respite, as they hoped, from impending death. The discord and tumult induced by these conflicting fears and passions, detained Adrian. It required all his ardour in pursuit of an object, and his patience under difficulties, to calm and animate such a number of his followers, as might counterbalance the panic of the rest, and lead them back to the means from which alone safety could be derived. He had hoped immediately to follow me; but, being defeated in this intention, he sent his messenger urging me to secure my own troop at such a distance from Versailles, as to prevent the contagion of rebellion from reaching them; promising, at the same time, to join me the moment a favourable occasion should occur, by means of which he could withdraw the main body of the emigrants from the evil influence at present exercised over them.

I was thrown into a most painful state of uncertainty by these communications. My first impulse was that we should all return to Versailles, there to assist in extricating our chief from his perils. I accordingly assembled my troop, and proposed to them this retrograde movement, instead of the continuation of our journey to Auxerre. With one voice they refused to comply. The notion circulated among them was, that the ravages of the plague alone detained the Protector; they opposed his order to my request; they came to a resolve to proceed without me, should I refuse to accompany them. Argument and adjuration were lost on these dastards. The continual diminution of their own numbers, effected by pestilence, added a sting to their dislike of delay; and my opposition only served to bring their resolution to a crisis. That same evening they departed towards Auxerre. Oaths, as from soldiers to their general, had been taken by them: these they broke. I also had engaged myself not to desert them; it appeared to me inhuman to ground any infraction of my word on theirs. The same spirit that caused them to rebel against me, would impel them to desert each other; and the most dreadful sufferings would be the consequence of their journey in their present unordered and chiefless array. These feelings for a time were paramount; and, in obedience to them, I accompanied the rest towards Auxerre.

We arrived the same night at Villeneuve-la-Guiard, a town at the distance of four posts from Fontainebleau. When my companions had retired to rest, and I was left alone to revolve and ruminate upon the intelligence I received of Adrian's situation, another view of the subject presented itself to me. What was I doing, and what was the object of my present movements? Apparently I was to lead this troop of selfish and lawless men towards Switzerland, leaving behind my family and my selected friend, which, subject as they were hourly to the death that threatened to all, I might never see again. Was it not my first duty to assist the Protector, setting an example of attachment and duty? At a crisis, such as the one I had reached, it is very difficult to balance nicely opposing interests, and that towards which our inclinations lead us, obstinately assumes the appearance of selfishness, even when we meditate a sacrifice. We are easily led at such times to make a compromise of the question; and this was my present resource. I resolved that very night to ride to Versailles; if I found affairs less desperate than I now deemed them, I would return without delay to my troop; I had a vague idea that my arrival at that town, would occasion some sensation more or less strong, of which we might profit, for the purpose of leading forward the vacillating multitude — at least no time was to be lost — I visited the stables, I saddled my favourite horse, and vaulting on his back, without giving myself time for further reflection or hesitation, quitted Villeneuve-la-Guiard on my return to Versailles.

I was glad to escape from my rebellious troop, and to lose sight for a time, of the strife of evil with good, where the former for ever remained triumphant. I was stung almost to madness by my uncertainty concerning the fate of Adrian, and grew reckless of any event, except what might lose or preserve my unequalled friend. With an heavy heart, that sought relief in the rapidity of my course, I rode through the night to Versailles. I spurred my horse, who addressed his free limbs to speed, and tossed his gallant head in pride. The constellations reeled swiftly by, swiftly each tree and stone and landmark fled past my onward career. I bared my head to the rushing wind, which bathed my brow in delightful coolness. As I lost sight of Villeneuve-la-Guiard, I forgot the sad drama of human misery; methought it was happiness enough to live, sensitive the while of the beauty of the verdure-clad earth, the star-bespangled sky, and the tameless wind that lent animation to the whole. My horse grew tired — and I, forgetful of his fatigue, still as he lagged, cheered him with my voice, and urged him with the spur. He was a gallant animal, and I did not wish to exchange him for any chance beast I might light on, leaving him never to be refound. All night we went forward; in the morning he became sensible that we approached Versailles, to reach which as his home, he mustered his flagging strength. The distance we had come was not less than fifty miles, yet he shot down the long Boulevards swift as an arrow; poor fellow, as I dismounted at the gate of the castle, he sunk on his knees, his eyes were covered with a film, he fell on his side, a few gasps inflated his noble chest, and he died. I saw him expire with an anguish, unaccountable even to myself, the spasm was as the wrenching of some limb in agonizing torture, but it was brief as it was intolerable. I forgot him, as I swiftly darted through the open portal, and up the majestic stairs of this castle of victories — heard Adrian's voice — O fool! O woman nurtured, effeminate and contemptible being — I heard his voice, and answered it with convulsive shrieks; I rushed into the Hall of Hercules, where he stood surrounded by a crowd, whose eyes, turned in wonder on me, reminded me that on the stage of the world, a man must repress such girlish ecstasies. I would have given worlds to have embraced him; I dared not — Half in exhaustion, half voluntarily, I threw myself at my length on the ground — dare I disclose the truth to the gentle offspring of solitude? I did so, that I might kiss the dear and sacred earth he trod.

I found everything in a state of tumult. An emissary of the leader of the elect, had been so worked up by his chief, and by his own fanatical creed, as to make an attempt on the life of the Protector and preserver of lost mankind. His hand was arrested while in the act of poniarding the Earl; this circumstance had caused the clamour I heard on my arrival at the castle, and the confused assembly of persons that I found assembled in the Salle d’Hercule. Although superstition and demoniac fury had crept among the emigrants, yet several adhered with fidelity to their noble chieftain; and many, whose faith and love had been unhinged by fear, felt all their latent affection rekindled by this detestable attempt. A phalanx of faithful breasts closed round him; the wretch, who, although a prisoner and in bonds, vaunted his design, and madly claimed the crown of martyrdom, would have been torn to pieces, had not his intended victim interposed. Adrian, springing forward, shielded him with his own person, and commanded with energy the submission of his infuriate friends — at this moment I had entered.

Discipline and peace were at length restored in the castle; and then Adrian went from house to house, from troop to troop, to soothe the disturbed minds of his followers, and recall them to their ancient obedience. But the fear of immediate death was still rife amongst these survivors of a world’s destruction; the horror occasioned by the attempted assassination, past away; each eye turned towards Paris. Men love a prop so well, that they will lean on a pointed poisoned spear; and such was he, the impostor, who, with fear of hell for his scourge, most ravenous wolf, played the driver to a credulous flock.

It was a moment of suspense, that shook even the resolution of the unyielding friend of man. Adrian for one moment was about to give in, to cease the struggle, and quit, with a few adherents, the deluded crowd, leaving them a miserable prey to their passions, and to the worse tyrant who excited them. But again, after a brief fluctuation of purpose, he resumed his courage and resolves, sustained by the singleness of his purpose, and the untried spirit of benevolence which animated him. At this moment, as an omen of excellent import, his wretched enemy pulled destruction on his head, destroying with his own hands the dominion he had erected.

His grand hold upon the minds of men, took its rise from the doctrine inculcated by him, that those who believed in, and followed him, were the remnant to be saved, while all the rest of mankind were marked out for death. Now, at the time of the Flood, the omnipotent repented him that he had created man, and as then with water, now with the arrows of pestilence, was about to annihilate all, except those who obeyed his decrees, promulgated by the *ipse dixit* prophet. It is impossible to say on what foundations this man built his hopes of being able to carry on such an imposture. It is likely that he was fully aware of the lie which murderous nature might give to his assertions, and believed it to be the cast of a die, whether he should in future ages be reverenced as an inspired delegate from heaven, or be recognized as an impostor by the present dying generation. At any rate he resolved to keep up the drama to the last act. When, on the first approach of summer, the fatal disease again made its ravages among the followers of Adrian, the impostor exultingly proclaimed the exemption of his own congregation from the universal calamity. He was believed; his followers, hitherto shut up in Paris, now came to Versailles. Mingling with the coward band there assembled, they reviled their admirable leader, and asserted their own superiority and exemption.

At length the plague, slow-footed, but sure in her noiseless advance, destroyed the illusion, invading the congregation of the elect, and showering promiscuous death among them. Their leader endeavoured to conceal this event; he had a few followers, who, admitted into the arcana of his wickedness, could help him in the execution of his nefarious designs. Those who sickened were immediately and quietly withdrawn, the cord and a midnight-grave disposed of them for ever; while some plausible excuse was given for their absence. At last a female, whose maternal vigilance subdued even the effects of the narcotics administered to her, became a witness of their murderous designs on her only child. Mad with horror, she would have burst among her deluded fellow-victims, and, wildly shrieking, have awaked the dull ear of night with the history of the fiend-like crime; when the Impostor, in his last act of rage and desperation, plunged a poniard in her bosom. Thus wounded to death, her garments dripping with her own life-blood, bearing her strangled infant in her arms, beautiful and young as she was, Juliet, (for it was she) denounced to the host of deceived believers, the wickedness of their leader. He saw the aghast looks of her auditors, changing from horror to fury — the names of those already sacrificed were echoed by their relatives, now assured of their loss. The wretch with that energy of purpose, which had borne him thus far in his guilty career, saw his danger, and resolved to evade the worst forms of it — he rushed on one of the foremost, seized a pistol from his girdle, and his loud laugh of derision mingled with the report of the weapon with which he destroyed himself.

They left his miserable remains even where they lay; they placed the corpse of poor Juliet and her babe upon a bier, and all, with hearts subdued to saddest regret, in long procession walked towards Versailles. They met troops of those who had quitted the kindly protection of Adrian, and were journeying to join the fanatics. The tale of horror was recounted — all turned back; and thus at last, accompanied by the undiminished numbers of surviving humanity, and preceded by the mournful emblem of their recovered reason, they appeared before Adrian, and again and for ever vowed obedience to his commands, and fidelity to his cause.

CHAPTER XXVII

These events occupied so much time, that June had numbered more than half its days, before we again commenced our long-protracted journey. The day after my return to Versailles, six men, from among those I had left at Villeneuve-la-Guiard, arrived, with intelligence, that the rest of the troop had already proceeded towards Switzerland. We went forward in the same track.

It is strange, after an interval of time, to look back on a period, which, though short in itself, appeared, when in actual progress, to be drawn out interminably. By the end of July we entered Dijon; by the end of July those hours, days, and weeks had mingled with the ocean of forgotten time, which in their passage teemed with fatal events and agonizing sorrow. By the end of July, little more than a month had gone by, if man's life were measured by the rising and setting of the sun: but, alas! in that interval ardent youth had become grey-haired; furrows deep and inerasable were trenched in the blooming cheek of the young mother; the elastic limbs of early manhood, paralyzed as by the burthen of years, assumed the decrepitude of age. Nights passed, during whose fatal darkness the sun grew old before it rose; and burning days, to cool whose baleful heat the balmy eve, lingering far in eastern climes, came lagging and ineffectual; days, in which the dial, radiant in its noon-day station, moved not its shadow the space of a little hour, until a whole life of sorrow had brought the sufferer to an untimely grave.

We departed from Versailles fifteen hundred souls. We set out on the eighteenth of June. We made a long procession, in which was contained every dear relationship, or tie of love, that existed in human society. Fathers and husbands, with guardian care, gathered their dear relatives around them; wives and mothers looked for support to the manly form beside them, and then with tender anxiety bent their eyes on the infant troop around. They were sad, but not hopeless. Each thought that someone would be saved; each, with that pertinacious optimism, which to the last characterised our human nature, trusted that their beloved family would be the one preserved.

We passed through France, and found it empty of inhabitants. Some one or two natives survived in the larger towns, which they roamed through like ghosts; we received therefore small increase to our numbers, and such decrease through death, that at last it became easier to count the scanty list of survivors. As we never deserted any of the sick, until their death permitted us to commit their remains to the shelter of a grave, our journey was long, while every day a frightful gap was made in our troop — they died by tens, by fifties, by hundreds. No mercy was shown by death; we ceased to expect it, and every day welcomed the sun with the feeling that we might never see it rise again.

The nervous terrors and fearful visions which had scared us during the spring, continued to visit our coward troop during this sad journey. Every evening brought its fresh creation of spectres; a ghost was depicted by every blighted tree; and appalling shapes were manufactured from each shaggy bush. By degrees these common marvels palled on us, and then other wonders were called into being. Once it was confidently asserted, that the sun rose an hour later than its seasonable time; again it was discovered that he grew paler and paler; that shadows took an uncommon appearance. It was impossible to have imagined, during the usual calm routine of life men had before experienced, the terrible effects produced by these extravagant delusions: in truth, of such little worth are our senses, when unsupported by concurring testimony, that it was with the utmost difficulty I kept myself free from the belief in supernatural events, to which the major part of our people readily gave credit. Being one sane amidst a crowd of the mad, I hardly dared assert to my own mind, that the vast luminary had undergone no change — that the shadows of night were unthickened by innumerable shapes of awe and terror; or that the wind, as it sung in the trees, or whistled round an empty building, was not pregnant with sounds of wailing and despair. Sometimes realities took ghostly shapes; and it was impossible for one's blood not to curdle at the perception of an evident mixture of what we knew to be true, with the visionary semblance of all that we feared.

Once, at the dusk of the evening, we saw a figure all in white, apparently of more than human stature, flourishing about the road, now throwing up its arms, now leaping to an astonishing height in the air, then turning round several times successively, then raising itself to its full height and gesticulating violently. Our troop, on the alert to discover and believe in the supernatural, made a halt at some distance from this shape; and, as it became darker, there was something appalling even to the incredulous, in the lonely spectre, whose gambols, if they hardly accorded with spiritual dignity, were beyond human powers. Now it leapt right up in the air, now sheer over a high hedge, and was again the moment after in the road before us. By the time I came up, the fright experienced by the spectators of this ghostly exhibition, began to manifest itself in the flight of some, and the close huddling together of the rest. Our goblin now perceived us; he approached, and, as we drew reverentially back, made a low bow. The sight was irresistibly ludicrous even to our hapless band, and his politeness was hailed by a shout of laughter; — then, again springing up, as a last effort, it sunk to the ground, and became almost invisible through the dusky night. This circumstance again spread silence and fear through the troop; the more courageous at length advanced, and, raising the dying wretch, discovered the tragic explanation of this wild scene. It was an opera-dancer, and had been one of the troop which deserted from Villeneuve-la-Guiard: falling sick, he had been deserted by his companions; in an access of delirium he had fancied himself on the stage, and, poor fellow, his dying sense eagerly accepted the last human applause that could ever be bestowed on his grace and agility.

At another time we were haunted for several days by an apparition, to which our people gave the appellation of the Black Spectre. We never saw it except at evening, when his coal black steed, his mourning dress, and plume of black feathers, had a majestic and awe-striking appearance; his face, one said, who had seen it for a moment, was ashy pale; he had lingered far behind the rest of his troop, and suddenly at a turn in the road, saw the Black Spectre coming towards him; he hid himself in fear, and the horse and his rider slowly past, while the moonbeams fell on the face of the latter, displaying its unearthly hue. Sometimes at dead of night, as we watched the sick, we heard one galloping through the town; it was the Black Spectre come in token of inevitable death. He grew giant tall to vulgar eyes; an icy atmosphere, they said, surrounded him; when he was heard, all animals shuddered, and the dying knew that their last hour was come. It was Death himself, they declared, come visibly to seize on subject earth, and quell at once our decreasing numbers, sole rebels to his law. One day at noon, we saw a dark mass on the road before us, and, coming up, beheld the Black Spectre fallen from his horse, lying in the agonies of disease upon the ground. He did not survive many hours; and his last words disclosed the secret of his mysterious conduct. He was a French noble of distinction, who, from the effects of plague, had been left alone in his district; during many months, he had wandered from town to town, from province to province, seeking some survivor for a companion, and abhorring the loneliness to which he was condemned. When he discovered our troop, fear of contagion conquered his love of society. He dared not join us, yet he could not resolve to lose sight of us, sole human beings who besides himself existed in wide and fertile France; so he accompanied us in the spectral guise I have described, till pestilence gathered him to a larger congregation, even that of Dead Mankind.

It had been well, if such vain terrors could have distracted our thoughts from more tangible evils. But these were too dreadful and too many not to force themselves into every thought, every moment, of our lives. We were obliged to halt at different periods for days together, till another and yet another was consigned as a clod to the vast clod which had been once our living mother. Thus we continued travelling during the hottest season; and it was not till the first of August, that we, the emigrants, — reader, there were just eighty of us in number, — entered the gates of Dijon.

We had expected this moment with eagerness, for now we had accomplished the worst part of our drear journey, and Switzerland was near at hand. Yet how could we congratulate ourselves on any event thus imperfectly fulfilled? Were these miserable beings, who, worn and wretched, passed in sorrowful procession, the sole remnants of the race of man, which, like a flood, had once spread over and possessed the whole earth? It had come down clear and unimpeded from its primal mountain source in Ararat, and grew from a puny streamlet to a vast perennial river, generation after generation flowing on ceaselessly. The same, but diversified, it grew, and swept onwards towards the absorbing ocean, whose dim shores we now reached. It had been the mere plaything of nature, when first it crept out of uncreative void into light; but thought brought forth power and knowledge; and, clad with these, the race of man assumed dignity and authority. It was then no longer the mere gardener of earth, or the shepherd of her flocks; “it carried with it an imposing and majestic aspect; it had a pedigree and illustrious ancestors; it had its gallery of portraits, its monumental inscriptions, its records and titles."*

* Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

This was all over, now that the ocean of death had sucked in the slackening tide, and its source was dried up. We first had bidden *adieu* to the state of things which having existed many thousand years, seemed eternal; such a state of government, obedience, traffic, and domestic intercourse, as had moulded our hearts and capacities, as far back as memory could reach. Then to patriotic zeal, to the arts, to reputation, to enduring fame, to the name of country, we had bidden farewell. We saw depart all hope of retrieving our ancient state — all expectation, except the feeble one of saving our individual lives from the wreck of the past. To preserve these we had quitted England — England, no more; for without her children, what name could that barren island claim? With tenacious grasp we clung to such rule and order as could best save us; trusting that, if a little colony could be preserved, that would suffice at some remoter period to restore the lost community of mankind.

But the game is up! We must all die; nor leave survivor nor heir to the wide inheritance of earth. We must all die! The species of man must perish; his frame of exquisite workmanship; the wondrous mechanism of his senses; the noble proportion of his godlike limbs; his mind, the throned king of these; must perish. Will the earth still keep her place among the planets; will she still journey with unmarked regularity round the sun; will the seasons change, the trees adorn themselves with leaves, and flowers shed their fragrance, in solitude? Will the mountains remain unmoved, and streams still keep a downward course towards the vast abyss; will the tides rise and fall, and the winds fan universal nature; will beasts pasture, birds fly, and fishes swim, when man, the lord, possessor, perceiver, and recorder of all these things, has passed away, as though he had never been? O, what mockery is this! Surely death is not death, and humanity is not extinct; but merely passed into other shapes, unsubjected to our perceptions. Death is a vast portal, an high road to life: let us hasten to pass; let us exist no more in this living death, but die that we may live!

We had longed with inexpressible earnestness to reach Dijon, since we had fixed on it, as a kind of station in our progress. But now we entered it with a torpor more painful than acute suffering. We had come slowly but irrevocably to the opinion, that our utmost efforts would not preserve one human being alive. We took our hands therefore away from the long grasped rudder; and the frail vessel on which we floated, seemed, the government over her suspended, to rush, prow foremost, into the dark abyss of the billows. A gush of grief, a wanton profusion of tears, and vain laments, and overflowing tenderness, and passionate but fruitless clinging to the priceless few that remained, was followed by languor and recklessness.

During this disastrous journey we lost all those, not of our own family, to whom we had particularly attached ourselves among the survivors. It were not well to fill these pages with a mere catalogue of losses; yet I cannot refrain from this last mention of those principally dear to us. The little girl whom Adrian had rescued from utter desertion, during our ride through London on the twentieth of November, died at Auxerre. The poor child had attached herself greatly to us; and the suddenness of her death added to our sorrow. In the morning we had seen her apparently in health — in the evening, Lucy, before we retired to rest, visited our quarters to say that she was dead. Poor Lucy herself only survived, till we arrived at Dijon. She had devoted herself throughout to the nursing the sick, and attending the friendless. Her excessive exertions brought on a slow fever, which ended in the dread disease whose approach soon released her from her sufferings. She had throughout been endeared to us by her good qualities, by her ready and cheerful execution of every duty, and mild acquiescence in every turn of adversity. When we consigned her to the tomb, we seemed at the same time to bid a final adieu to those peculiarly feminine virtues conspicuous in her; uneducated and unpretending as she was, she was distinguished for patience, forbearance, and sweetness. These, with all their train of qualities peculiarly English, would never again be revived for us. This type of all that was most worthy of admiration in her class among my countrywomen, was placed under the sod of desert France; and it was as a second separation from our country to have lost sight of her for ever.

The Countess of Windsor died during our abode at Dijon. One morning I was informed that she wished to see me. Her message made me remember, that several days had elapsed since I had last seen her. Such a circumstance had often occurred during our journey, when I remained behind to watch to their close the last moments of some one of our hapless comrades, and the rest of the troop past on before me. But there was something in the manner of her messenger, that made me suspect that all was not right. A caprice of the imagination caused me to conjecture that some ill had occurred to Clara or Evelyn, rather than to this aged lady. Our fears, for ever on the stretch, demanded a nourishment of horror; and it seemed too natural an occurrence, too like past times, for the old to die before the young.

I found the venerable mother of my Idris lying on a couch, her tall emaciated figure stretched out; her face fallen away, from which the nose stood out in sharp profile, and her large dark eyes, hollow and deep, gleamed with such light as may edge a thunder cloud at sun-set. All was shrivelled and dried up, except these lights; her voice too was fearfully changed, as she spoke to me at intervals. “I am afraid,” said she, “that it is selfish in me to have asked you to visit the old woman again, before she dies: yet perhaps it would have been a greater shock to hear suddenly that I was dead, than to see me first thus.”

I clasped her shrivelled hand: “Are you indeed so ill?” I asked.

“Do you not perceive death in my face,” replied she, “it is strange; I ought to have expected this, and yet I confess it has taken me unaware. I never clung to life, or enjoyed it, till these last months, while among those I senselessly deserted: and it is hard to be snatched immediately away. I am glad, however, that I am not a victim of the plague; probably I should have died at this hour, though the world had continued as it was in my youth.”

She spoke with difficulty, and I perceived that she regretted the necessity of death, even more than she cared to confess. Yet she had not to complain of an undue shortening of existence; her faded person showed that life had naturally spent itself. We had been alone at first; now Clara entered; the Countess turned to her with a smile, and took the hand of this lovely child; her roseate palm and snowy fingers, contrasted with relaxed fibres and yellow hue of those of her aged friend; she bent to kiss her, touching her withered mouth with the warm, full lips of youth. “Verney,” said the Countess, “I need not recommend this dear girl to you, for your own sake you will preserve her. Were the world as it was, I should have a thousand sage precautions to impress, that one so sensitive, good, and beauteous, might escape the dangers that used to lurk for the destruction of the fair and excellent. This is all nothing now.

"I commit you, my kind nurse, to your uncle's care; to yours I entrust the dearest relic of my better self. Be to Adrian, sweet one, what you have been to me — enliven his sadness with your sprightly sallies; sooth his anguish by your sober and inspired converse, when he is dying; nurse him as you have done me."

Clara burst into tears; "Kind girl," said the Countess, "do not weep for me. Many dear friends are left to you."

"And yet," cried Clara, "you talk of their dying also. This is indeed cruel — how could I live, if they were gone? If it were possible for my beloved protector to die before me, I could not nurse him; I could only die too."

The venerable lady survived this scene only twenty-four hours. She was the last tie binding us to the ancient state of things. It was impossible to look on her, and not call to mind in their wonted guise, events and persons, as alien to our present situation as the disputes of Themistocles and Aristides, or the wars of the two roses in our native land. The crown of England had pressed her brow; the memory of my father and his misfortunes, the vain struggles of the late king, the images of Raymond, Evadne, and Perdita, who had lived in the world's prime, were brought vividly before us. We consigned her to the oblivious tomb with reluctance; and when I turned from her grave, Janus veiled his retrospective face; that which gazed on future generations had long lost its faculty.

After remaining a week at Dijon, until thirty of our number deserted the vacant ranks of life, we continued our way towards Geneva. At noon on the second day we arrived at the foot of Jura. We halted here during the heat of the day. Here fifty human beings — fifty, the only human beings that survived of the food-teeming earth, assembled to read in the looks of each other ghastly plague, or wasting sorrow, desperation, or worse, carelessness of future or present evil. Here we assembled at the foot of this mighty wall of mountain, under a spreading walnut tree; a brawling stream refreshed the green sward by its sprinkling; and the busy grasshopper chirped among the thyme. We clustered together a group of wretched sufferers. A mother cradled in her enfeebled arms the child, last of many, whose glazed eye was about to close for ever. Here beauty, late glowing in youthful lustre and consciousness, now wan and neglected, knelt fanning with uncertain motion the beloved, who lay striving to paint his features, distorted by illness, with a thankful smile. There an hard-featured, weather-worn veteran, having prepared his meal, sat, his head dropped on his breast, the useless knife falling from his grasp, his limbs utterly relaxed, as thought of wife and child, and dearest relative, all lost, passed across his recollection. There sat a man who for forty years had basked in fortune's tranquil sunshine; he held the hand of his last hope, his beloved daughter, who had just attained womanhood; and he gazed on her with anxious eyes, while she tried to rally her fainting spirit to comfort him. Here a servant, faithful to the last, though dying, waited on one, who, though still erect with health, gazed with gasping fear on the variety of woe around.

Adrian stood leaning against a tree; he held a book in his hand, but his eye wandered from the pages, and sought mine; they mingled a sympathetic glance; his looks confessed that his thoughts had quitted the inanimate print, for pages more pregnant with meaning, more absorbing, spread out before him. By the margin of the stream, apart from all, in a tranquil nook, where the purling brook kissed the green sward gently, Clara and Evelyn were at play, sometimes beating the water with large boughs, sometimes watching the summer-flies that sported upon it. Evelyn now chased a butterfly — now gathered a flower for his cousin; and his laughing cherub-face and clear brow told of the light heart that beat in his bosom. Clara, though she endeavoured to give herself up to his amusement, often forgot him, as she turned to observe Adrian and me. She was now fourteen, and retained her childish appearance, though in height a woman; she acted the part of the tenderest mother to my little orphan boy; to see her playing with him, or attending silently and submissively on our wants, you thought only of her admirable docility and patience; but, in her soft eyes, and the veined curtains that veiled them, in the clearness of her marmoreal brow, and the tender expression of her lips, there was an intelligence and beauty that at once excited admiration and love.

When the sun had sunk towards the precipitate west, and the evening shadows grew long, we prepared to ascend the mountain. The attention that we were obliged to pay to the sick, made our progress slow. The winding road, though steep, presented a confined view of rocky fields and hills, each hiding the other, till our farther ascent disclosed them in succession. We were seldom shaded from the declining sun, whose slant beams were instinct with exhausting heat. There are times when minor difficulties grow gigantic — times, when as the Hebrew poet expressively terms it, “the grasshopper is a burthen;” so was it with our ill fated party this evening. Adrian, usually the first to rally his spirits, and dash foremost into fatigue and hardship, with relaxed limbs and declined head, the reins hanging loosely in his grasp, left the choice of the path to the instinct of his horse, now and then painfully rousing himself, when the steepness of the ascent required that he should keep his seat with better care. Fear and horror encompassed me. Did his languid air attest that he also was struck with contagion? How long, when I look on this matchless specimen of mortality, may I perceive that his thought answers mine? how long will those limbs obey the kindly spirit within? how long will light and life dwell in the eyes of this my sole remaining friend? Thus pacing slowly, each hill surmounted, only presented another to be ascended; each jutting corner only discovered another, sister to the last, endlessly. Sometimes the pressure of sickness in one among us, caused the whole cavalcade to halt; the call for water, the eagerly expressed wish to repose; the cry of pain, and suppressed sob of the mourner — such were the sorrowful attendants of our passage of the Jura.

Adrian had gone first. I saw him, while I was detained by the loosening of a girth, struggling with the upward path, seemingly more difficult than any we had yet passed. He reached the top, and the dark outline of his figure stood in relief against the sky. He seemed to behold something unexpected and wonderful; for, pausing, his head stretched out, his arms for a moment extended, he seemed to give an All Hail! to some new vision. Urged by curiosity, I hurried to join him. After battling for many tedious minutes with the precipice, the same scene presented itself to me, which had wrapt him in ecstatic wonder.

Nature, or nature’s favourite, this lovely earth, presented her most unrivalled beauties in resplendent and sudden exhibition. Below, far, far below, even as it were in the yawning abyss of the ponderous globe, lay the placid and azure expanse of lake Leman; vine-covered hills hedged it in, and behind dark mountains in cone-like shape, or irregular cyclopean wall, served for further defence. But beyond, and high above all, as if the spirits of the air had suddenly unveiled their bright abodes, placed in scaleless altitude in the stainless sky, heaven-kissing, companions of the unattainable ether, were the glorious Alps, clothed in dazzling robes of light by the setting sun. And, as if the world’s wonders were never to be exhausted, their vast immensities, their jagged crags, and roseate painting, appeared again in the lake below, dipping their proud heights beneath the unruffled waves — palaces for the Naiads of the placid waters. Towns and villages lay scattered at the foot of Jura, which, with dark ravine, and black promontories, stretched its roots into the watery expanse beneath. Carried away by wonder, I forgot the death of man, and the living and beloved friend near me. When I turned, I saw tears streaming from his eyes; his thin hands pressed one against the other, his animated countenance beaming with admiration; “Why,” cried he, at last, “Why, oh heart, whisperest thou of grief to me? Drink in the beauty of that scene, and possess delight beyond what a fabled paradise could afford.”

By degrees, our whole party surmounting the steep, joined us, not one among them, but gave visible tokens of admiration, surpassing any before experienced. One cried, “God reveals his heaven to us; we may die blessed.” Another and another, with broken exclamations, and extravagant phrases, endeavoured to express the intoxicating effect of this wonder of nature. So we remained awhile, lightened of the pressing burthen of fate, forgetful of death, into whose night we were about to plunge; no longer reflecting that our eyes now and for ever were and would be the only ones which might perceive the divine magnificence of this terrestrial exhibition. An enthusiastic transport, akin to happiness, burst, like a sudden ray from the sun, on our darkened life. Precious attribute of woe-worn humanity! that can snatch ecstatic emotion, even from under the very share and harrow, that ruthlessly ploughs up and lays waste every hope.

This evening was marked by another event. Passing through Ferney in our way to Geneva, unaccustomed sounds of music arose from the rural church which stood embosomed in trees, surrounded by smokeless, vacant cottages. The peal of an organ with rich swell awoke the mute air, lingering along, and mingling with the intense beauty that clothed the rocks and woods, and waves around.

Music — the language of the immortals, disclosed to us as testimony of their existence — music, “silver key of the fountain of tears,” child of love, soother of grief, inspirer of heroism and radiant thoughts, O music, in this our desolation, we had forgotten thee! Nor pipe at eve cheered us, nor harmony of voice, nor linked thrill of string; thou camest upon us now, like the revealing of other forms of being; and transported as we had been by the loveliness of nature, fancying that we beheld the abode of spirits, now we might well imagine that we heard their melodious communings. We paused in such awe as would seize on a pale votarist, visiting some holy shrine at midnight; if she beheld animated and smiling, the image which she worshipped. We all stood mute; many knelt. In a few minutes however, we were recalled to human wonder and sympathy by a familiar strain. The air was Haydn's "New-Created World," and, old and drooping as humanity had become, the world yet fresh as at creation's day, might still be worthily celebrated by such an hymn of praise. Adrian and I entered the church; the nave was empty, though the smoke of incense rose from the altar, bringing with it the recollection of vast congregations, in once thronged cathedrals; we went into the loft. A blind old man sat at the bellows; his whole soul was ear; and as he sat in the attitude of attentive listening, a bright glow of pleasure was diffused over his countenance; for, though his lack-lustre eye could not reflect the beam, yet his parted lips, and every line of his face and venerable brow spoke delight. A young woman sat at the keys, perhaps twenty years of age. Her auburn hair hung on her neck, and her fair brow shone in its own beauty; but her drooping eyes let fall fast-flowing tears, while the constraint she exercised to suppress her sobs, and still her trembling, flushed her else pale cheek; she was thin; languor, and alas! sickness, bent her form.

We stood looking at the pair, forgetting what we heard in the absorbing sight; till, the last chord struck, the peal died away in lessening reverberations. The mighty voice, inorganic we might call it, for we could in no way associate it with mechanism of pipe or key, stilled its sonorous tone, and the girl, turning to lend her assistance to her aged companion, at length perceived us.

It was her father; and she, since childhood, had been the guide of his darkened steps. They were Germans from Saxony, and, emigrating thither but a few years before, had formed new ties with the surrounding villagers. About the time that the pestilence had broken out, a young German student had joined them. Their simple history was easily divined. He, a noble, loved the fair daughter of the poor musician, and followed them in their flight from the persecutions of his friends; but soon the mighty leveller came with unblunted scythe to mow, together with the grass, the tall flowers of the field. The youth was an early victim. She preserved herself for her father's sake. His blindness permitted her to continue a delusion, at first the child of accident — and now solitary beings, sole survivors in the land, he remained unacquainted with the change, nor was aware that when he listened to his child's music, the mute mountains, senseless lake, and unconscious trees, were, himself excepted, her sole auditors.

The very day that we arrived she had been attacked by symptomatic illness. She was paralyzed with horror at the idea of leaving her aged, sightless father alone on the empty earth; but she had not courage to disclose the truth, and the very excess of her desperation animated her to surpassing exertions. At the accustomed vesper hour, she led him to the chapel; and, though trembling and weeping on his account, she played, without fault in time, or error in note, the hymn written to celebrate the creation of the adorned earth, soon to be her tomb.

We came to her like visitors from heaven itself; her high-wrought courage; her hardly sustained firmness, fled with the appearance of relief. With a shriek she rushed towards us, embraced the knees of Adrian, and uttering but the words, "O save my father!" with sobs and hysterical cries, opened the long-shut floodgates of her woe.

Poor girl! — she and her father now lie side by side, beneath the high walnut-tree where her lover reposes, and which in her dying moments she had pointed out to us. Her father, at length aware of his daughter's danger, unable to see the changes of her dear countenance, obstinately held her hand, till it was chilled and stiffened by death. Nor did he then move or speak, till, twelve hours after, kindly death took him to his breakless repose. They rest beneath the sod, the tree their monument; — the hallowed spot is distinct in my memory, paled in by craggy Jura, and the far, immeasurable Alps; the spire of the church they frequented still points from out the embosoming trees; and though her hand be cold, still methinks the sounds of divine music which they loved wander about, solacing their gentle ghosts.

CHAPTER XXVIII

We had now reached Switzerland, so long the final mark and aim of our exertions. We had looked, I know not wherefore, with hope and pleasing expectation on her congregation of hills and snowy crags, and opened our bosoms with renewed spirits to the icy Biz, which even at Midsummer used to come from the northern glacier laden with cold. Yet how could we nourish expectation of relief? Like our native England, and the vast extent of fertile France, this mountain-embowered land was desolate of its inhabitants. Nor bleak mountain-top, nor snow-nourished rivulet; not the ice-laden Biz, nor thunder, the tamer of contagion, had preserved them — why therefore should we claim exemption?

Who was there indeed to save? What troop had we brought fit to stand at bay, and combat with the conqueror? We were a failing remnant, tamed to mere submission to the coming blow. A train half dead, through fear of death — a hopeless, unresisting, almost reckless crew, which, in the tossed bark of life, had given up all pilotage, and resigned themselves to the destructive force of ungoverned winds. Like a few furrows of unreaped corn, which, left standing on a wide field after the rest is gathered to the garner, are swiftly borne down by the winter storm. Like a few straggling swallows, which, remaining after their fellows had, on the first unkind breath of passing autumn, migrated to genial climes, were struck to earth by the first frost of November. Like a stray sheep that wanders over the sleet-beaten hill-side, while the flock is in the pen, and dies before morning-dawn. Like a cloud, like one of many that were spread in impenetrable woof over the sky, which, when the shepherd north has driven its companions "to drink Antipodean noon," fades and dissolves in the clear ether — Such were we!

We left the fair margin of the beauteous lake of Geneva, and entered the Alpine ravines; tracing to its source the brawling Arve, through the rock-bound valley of Servox, beside the mighty waterfalls, and under the shadow of the inaccessible mountains, we travelled on; while the luxuriant walnut-tree gave place to the dark pine, whose musical branches swung in the wind, and whose upright forms had braved a thousand storms — till the verdant sod, the flowery dell, and shrubbery hill were exchanged for the sky-piercing, untrodden, seedless rock, “the bones of the world, waiting to be clothed with every thing necessary to give life and beauty.”* Strange that we should seek shelter here! Surely, if, in those countries where earth was wont, like a tender mother, to nourish her children, we had found her a destroyer, we need not seek it here, where stricken by keen penury she seems to shudder through her stony veins. Nor were we mistaken in our conjecture. We vainly sought the vast and ever moving glaciers of Chamonix, rifts of pendant ice, seas of congelated waters, the leafless groves of tempest-battered pines, dells, mere paths for the loud avalanche, and hill-tops, the resort of thunder-storms. Pestilence reigned paramount even here. By the time that day and night, like twin sisters of equal growth, shared equally their dominion over the hours, one by one, beneath the ice-caves, beside the waters springing from the thawed snows of a thousand winters, another and yet another of the remnant of the race of Man, closed their eyes for ever to the light.

* Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters from Norway*.

Yet we were not quite wrong in seeking a scene like this, whereon to close the drama. Nature, true to the last, consoled us in the very heart of misery. Sublime grandeur of outward objects soothed our hapless hearts, and were in harmony with our desolation. Many sorrows have befallen man during his chequered course; and many a woe-stricken mourner has found himself sole survivor among many. Our misery took its majestic shape and colouring from the vast ruin, that accompanied and made one with it. Thus on lovely earth, many a dark ravine contains a brawling stream, shadowed by romantic rocks, threaded by mossy paths — but all, except this, wanted the mighty back-ground, the towering Alps, whose snowy capes, or bared ridges, lifted us from our dull mortal abode, to the palaces of Nature’s own.

This solemn harmony of event and situation regulated our feelings, and gave as it were fitting costume to our last act. Majestic gloom and tragic pomp attended the decease of wretched humanity. The funeral procession of monarchs of old, was transcended by our splendid shows. Near the sources of the Arveiron we performed the rites for, four only excepted, the last of the species. Adrian and I, leaving Clara and Evelyn wrapt in peaceful unobserving slumber, carried the body to this desolate spot, and placed it in those caves of ice beneath the glacier, which rive and split with the slightest sound, and bring destruction on those within the clefts — no bird or beast of prey could here profane the frozen form. So, with hushed steps and in silence, we placed the dead on a bier of ice, and then, departing, stood on the rocky platform beside the river springs. All hushed as we had been, the very striking of the air with our persons had sufficed to disturb the repose of this thawless region; and we had hardly left the cavern, before vast blocks of ice, detaching themselves from the roof, fell, and covered the human image we had deposited within. We had chosen a fair moonlight night, but our journey thither had been long, and the crescent sank behind the western heights by the time we had accomplished our purpose. The snowy mountains and blue glaciers shone in their own light. The rugged and abrupt ravine, which formed one side of Mont Anvert, was opposite to us, the glacier at our side; at our feet Arveiron, white and foaming, dashed over the pointed rocks that jutted into it, and, with whirring spray and ceaseless roar, disturbed the stilly night. Yellow lightnings played around the vast dome of Mont Blanc, silent as the snow-clad rock they illuminated; all was bare, wild, and sublime, while the singing of the pines in melodious murmurings added a gentle interest to the rough magnificence. Now the riving and fall of icy rocks clave the air; now the thunder of the avalanche burst on our ears. In countries whose features are of less magnitude, nature betrays her living powers in the foliage of the trees, in the growth of herbage, in the soft purling of meandering streams; here, endowed with giant attributes, the torrent, the thunder-storm, and the flow of massive waters, display her activity. Such the church-yard, such the requiem, such the eternal congregation, that waited on our companion’s funeral!

Nor was it the human form alone which we had placed in this eternal sepulchre, whose obsequies we now celebrated. With this last victim Plague vanished from the earth. Death had never wanted weapons wherewith to destroy life, and we, few and weak as we had become, were still exposed to every other shaft with which his full quiver teemed. But pestilence was absent from among them. For seven years it had had full sway upon earth; she had trod every nook of our spacious globe; she had mingled with the atmosphere, which as a cloak enwraps all our fellow-creatures — the inhabitants of native Europe — the luxurious Asiatic — the swarthy African and free American had been vanquished and destroyed by her. Her barbarous tyranny came to its close here in the rocky vale of Chamonix.

Still recurring scenes of misery and pain, the fruits of this distemper, made no more a part of our lives — the word plague no longer rung in our ears — the aspect of plague incarnate in the human countenance no longer appeared before our eyes. From this moment I saw plague no more. She abdicated her throne, and despoiled herself of her imperial sceptre among the ice rocks that surrounded us. She left solitude and silence co-heirs of her kingdom.

My present feelings are so mingled with the past, that I cannot say whether the knowledge of this change visited us, as we stood on this sterile spot. It seems to me that it did; that a cloud seemed to pass from over us, that a weight was taken from the air; that henceforth we breathed more freely, and raised our heads with some portion of former liberty. Yet we did not hope. We were impressed by the sentiment, that our race was run, but that plague would not be our destroyer. The coming time was as a mighty river, down which a charmed boat is driven, whose mortal steersman knows, that the obvious peril is not the one he needs fear, yet that danger is nigh; and who floats awe-struck under beetling precipices, through the dark and turbid waters — seeing in the distance yet stranger and ruder shapes, towards which he is irresistibly impelled. What would become of us? O for some Delphic oracle, or Pythian maid, to utter the secrets of futurity! O for some Oedipus to solve the riddle of the cruel Sphinx! Such Oedipus was I to be — not divining a word's juggle, but whose agonizing pangs, and sorrow-tainted life were to be the engines, wherewith to lay bare the secrets of destiny, and reveal the meaning of the enigma, whose explanation closed the history of the human race.

Dim fancies, akin to these, haunted our minds, and instilled feelings not unallied to pleasure, as we stood beside this silent tomb of nature, reared by these lifeless mountains, above her living veins, choking her vital principle. "Thus are we left," said Adrian, "two melancholy blasted trees, where once a forest waved. We are left to mourn, and pine, and die. Yet even now we have our duties, which we must string ourselves to fulfil: the duty of bestowing pleasure where we can, and by force of love, irradiating with rainbow hues the tempest of grief. Nor will I repine if in this extremity we preserve what we now possess. Something tells me, Verney, that we need no longer dread our cruel enemy, and I cling with delight to the oracular voice. Though strange, it will be sweet to mark the growth of your little boy, and the development of Clara's young heart. In the midst of a desert world, we are everything to them; and, if we live, it must be our task to make this new mode of life happy to them. At present this is easy, for their childish ideas do not wander into futurity, and the stinging craving for sympathy, and all of love of which our nature is susceptible, is not yet awake within them: we cannot guess what will happen then, when nature asserts her indefeasible and sacred powers; but, long before that time, we may all be cold, as he who lies in yonder tomb of ice. We need only provide for the present, and endeavour to fill with pleasant images the inexperienced fancy of your lovely niece. The scenes which now surround us, vast and sublime as they are, are not such as can best contribute to this work. Nature is here like our fortunes, grand, but too destructive, bare, and rude, to be able to afford delight to her young imagination. Let us descend to the sunny plains of Italy. Winter will soon be here, to clothe this wilderness in double desolation; but we will cross the bleak hill-tops, and lead her to scenes of fertility and beauty, where her path will be adorned with flowers, and the cheery atmosphere inspire pleasure and hope."

In pursuance of this plan we quitted Chamonix on the following day. We had no cause to hasten our steps; no event was transacted beyond our actual sphere to enchain our resolves, so we yielded to every idle whim, and deemed our time well spent, when we could behold the passage of the hours without dismay. We loitered along the lovely Vale of Servox; passed long hours on the bridge, which, crossing the ravine of Arve, commands a prospect of its pine-clothed depths, and the snowy mountains that wall it in. We rambled through romantic Switzerland; till, fear of coming winter leading us forward, the first days of October found us in the valley of La Maurienne, which leads to Cenis. I cannot explain the reluctance we felt at leaving this land of mountains; perhaps it was, that we regarded the Alps as boundaries between our former and our future state of existence, and so clung fondly to what of old we had loved. Perhaps, because we had now so few impulses urging to a choice between two modes of action, we were pleased to preserve the existence of one, and preferred the prospect of what we were to do, to the recollection of what had been done. We felt that for this year danger was past; and we believed that, for some months, we were secured to each other. There was a thrilling, agonizing delight in the thought — it filled the eyes with misty tears, it tore the heart with tumultuous heavings; frailer than the "snow fall in the river," were we each and all — but we strove to give life and individuality to the meteoric course of our several existences, and to feel that no moment escaped us unenjoyed. Thus tottering on the dizzy brink, we were happy. Yes! as we sat beneath the toppling rocks, beside the waterfalls, near

— Forests, ancient as the hills,
And folding sunny spots of greenery,

where the chamois grazed, and the timid squirrel laid up its hoard — descanting on the charms of nature, drinking in the while her unalienable beauties — we were, in an empty world, happy.

Yet, O days of joy — days, when eye spoke to eye, and voices, sweeter than the music of the swinging branches of the pines, or rivulet's gentle murmur, answered mine — yet, O days replete with beatitude, days of loved society — days unutterably dear to me forlorn — pass, O pass before me, making me in your memory forget what I am. Behold, how my streaming eyes blot this senseless paper — behold, how my features are convulsed by agonizing throes, at your mere recollection, now that, alone, my tears flow, my lips quiver, my cries fill the air, unseen, unmarked, unheard! Yet, O yet, days of delight! let me dwell on your long-drawn hours!

As the cold increased upon us, we passed the Alps, and descended into Italy. At the uprising of morn, we sat at our repast, and cheated our regrets by gay sallies or learned disquisitions. The live-long day we sauntered on, still keeping in view the end of our journey, but careless of the hour of its completion. As the evening star shone out, and the orange sunset, far in the west, marked the position of the dear land we had for ever left, talk, thought enchaining, made the hours fly — O that we had lived thus for ever and for ever! Of what consequence was it to our four hearts, that they alone were the fountains of life in the wide world? As far as mere individual sentiment was concerned, we had rather be left thus united together, than if, each alone in a populous desert of unknown men, we had wandered truly companionless till life's last term. In this manner, we endeavoured to console each other; in this manner, true philosophy taught us to reason.

It was the delight of Adrian and myself to wait on Clara, naming her the little queen of the world, ourselves her humblest servitors. When we arrived at a town, our first care was to select for her its most choice abode; to make sure that no harrowing relic remained of its former inhabitants; to seek food for her, and minister to her wants with assiduous tenderness. Clara entered into our scheme with childish gaiety. Her chief business was to attend on Evelyn; but it was her sport to array herself in splendid robes, adorn herself with sunny gems, and ape a princely state. Her religion, deep and pure, did not teach her to refuse to blunt thus the keen sting of regret; her youthful vivacity made her enter, heart and soul, into these strange masquerades.

We had resolved to pass the ensuing winter at Milan, which, as being a large and luxurious city, would afford us choice of homes. We had descended the Alps, and left far behind their vast forests and mighty crags. We entered smiling Italy. Mingled grass and corn grew in her plains, the unpruned vines threw their luxuriant branches around the elms. The grapes, overripe, had fallen on the ground, or hung purple, or burnished green, among the red and yellow leaves. The ears of standing corn winnowed to emptiness by the spendthrift winds; the fallen foliage of the trees, the weed-grown brooks, the dusky olive, now spotted with its blackened fruit; the chestnuts, to which the squirrel only was harvest-man; all plenty, and yet, alas! all poverty, painted in wondrous hues and fantastic groupings this land of beauty. In the towns, in the voiceless towns, we visited the churches, adorned by pictures, master-pieces of art, or galleries of statues — while in this genial clime the animals, in new found liberty, rambled through the gorgeous palaces, and hardly feared our forgotten aspect. The dove-coloured oxen turned their full eyes on us, and paced slowly by; a startling throng of silly sheep, with pattering feet, would start up in some chamber, formerly dedicated to the repose of beauty, and rush, huddling past us, down the marble staircase into the street, and again in at the first open door, taking unrebuked possession of hallowed sanctuary, or kingly council-chamber. We no longer started at these occurrences, nor at worse exhibition of change — when the palace had become a mere tomb, pregnant with fetid stench, strewn with the dead; and we could perceive how pestilence and fear had played strange antics, chasing the luxurious dame to the dank fields and bare cottage; gathering, among carpets of Indian woof, and beds of silk, the rough peasant, or the deformed half-human shape of the wretched beggar.

We arrived at Milan, and stationed ourselves in the Vice-Roy's palace. Here we made laws for ourselves, dividing our day, and fixing distinct occupations for each hour. In the morning we rode in the adjoining country, or wandered through the palaces, in search of pictures or antiquities. In the evening we assembled to read or to converse. There were few books that we dared read; few, that did not cruelly deface the painting we bestowed on our solitude, by recalling combinations and emotions never more to be experienced by us. Metaphysical disquisition; fiction, which wandering from all reality, lost itself in self-created errors; poets of times so far gone by, that to read of them was as to read of Atlantis and Utopia; or such as referred to nature only, and the workings of one particular mind; but most of all, talk, varied and ever new, beguiled our hours.

While we paused thus in our onward career towards death, time held on its accustomed course. Still and for ever did the earth roll on, enthroned in her atmospheric car, speeded by the force of the invisible coursers of never-erring necessity. And now, this dew-drop in the sky, this ball, ponderous with mountains, lucent with waves, passing from the short tyranny of watery Pisces and the frigid Ram, entered the radiant demesne of Taurus and the Twins. There, fanned by vernal airs, the Spirit of Beauty sprung from her cold repose; and, with winnowing wings and soft pacing feet, set a girdle of verdure around the earth, sporting among the violets, hiding within the springing foliage of the trees, tripping lightly down the radiant streams into the sunny deep. "For lo! winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell."* Thus was it in the time of the ancient regal poet; thus was it now.

* Solomon's Song.

Yet how could we miserable hail the approach of this delightful season? We hoped indeed that death did not now as heretofore walk in its shadow; yet, left as we were alone to each other, we looked in each other's faces with inquiring eyes, not daring altogether to trust to our presentiments, and endeavouring to divine which would be the hapless survivor to the other three. We were to pass the summer at the lake of Como, and thither we removed as soon as spring grew to her maturity, and the snow disappeared from the hill tops. Ten miles from Como, under the steep heights of the eastern mountains, by the margin of the lake, was a villa called the Pliniana, from its being built on the site of a fountain, whose periodical ebb and flow is described by the younger Pliny in his letters. The house had nearly fallen into ruin, till in the year 2090, an English nobleman had bought it, and fitted it up with every luxury. Two large halls, hung with splendid tapestry, and paved with marble, opened on each side of a court, of whose two other sides one overlooked the deep dark lake, and the other was bounded by a mountain, from whose stony side gushed, with roar and splash, the celebrated fountain. Above, underwood of myrtle and tufts of odorous plants crowned the rock, while the star-pointing giant cypresses reared themselves in the blue air, and the recesses of the hills were adorned with the luxuriant growth of chestnut-trees. Here we fixed our summer residence. We had a lovely skiff, in which we sailed, now stemming the midmost waves, now coasting the over-hanging and craggy banks, thick sown with evergreens, which dipped their shining leaves in the waters, and were mirrored in many a little bay and creek of waters of translucent darkness. Here orange plants bloomed, here birds poured forth melodious hymns; and here, during spring, the cold snake emerged from the clefts, and basked on the sunny terraces of rock.

Were we not happy in this paradisiacal retreat? If some kind spirit had whispered forgetfulness to us, methinks we should have been happy here, where the precipitous mountains, nearly pathless, shut from our view the far fields of desolate earth, and with small exertion of the imagination, we might fancy that the cities were still resonant with popular hum, and the peasant still guided his plough through the furrow, and that we, the world’s free denizens, enjoyed a voluntary exile, and not a remediless cutting off from our extinct species.

Not one among us enjoyed the beauty of this scenery so much as Clara. Before we quitted Milan, a change had taken place in her habits and manners. She lost her gaiety, she laid aside her sports, and assumed an almost vestal plainness of attire. She shunned us, retiring with Evelyn to some distant chamber or silent nook; nor did she enter into his pastimes with the same zest as she was wont, but would sit and watch him with sadly tender smiles, and eyes bright with tears, yet without a word of complaint. She approached us timidly, avoided our caresses, nor shook off her embarrassment till some serious discussion or lofty theme called her for awhile out of herself. Her beauty grew as a rose, which, opening to the summer wind, discloses leaf after leaf till the sense aches with its excess of loveliness. A slight and variable colour tinged her cheeks, and her motions seemed attuned by some hidden harmony of surpassing sweetness. We redoubled our tenderness and earnest attentions. She received them with grateful smiles, that fled swift as sunny beam from a glittering wave on an April day.

Our only acknowledged point of sympathy with her, appeared to be Evelyn. This dear little fellow was a comforter and delight to us beyond all words. His buoyant spirit, and his innocent ignorance of our vast calamity, were balm to us, whose thoughts and feelings were over-wrought and spun out in the immensity of speculative sorrow. To cherish, to caress, to amuse him was the common task of all. Clara, who felt towards him in some degree like a young mother, gratefully acknowledged our kindness towards him. To me, O! to me, who saw the clear brows and soft eyes of the beloved of my heart, my lost and ever dear Idris, re-born in his gentle face, to me he was dear even to pain; if I pressed him to my heart, methought I clasped a real and living part of her, who had lain there through long years of youthful happiness.

It was the custom of Adrian and myself to go out each day in our skiff to forage in the adjacent country. In these expeditions we were seldom accompanied by Clara or her little charge, but our return was an hour of hilarity. Evelyn ransacked our stores with childish eagerness, and we always brought some new found gift for our fair companion. Then too we made discoveries of lovely scenes or gay palaces, whither in the evening we all proceeded. Our sailing expeditions were most divine, and with a fair wind or transverse course we cut the liquid waves; and, if talk failed under the pressure of thought, I had my clarinet with me, which awoke the echoes, and gave the change to our careful minds. Clara at such times often returned to her former habits of free converse and gay sally; and though our four hearts alone beat in the world, those four hearts were happy.

One day, on our return from the town of Como, with a laden boat, we expected as usual to be met at the port by Clara and Evelyn, and we were somewhat surprised to see the beach vacant. I, as my nature prompted, would not prognosticate evil, but explained it away as a mere casual incident. Not so Adrian. He was seized with sudden trembling and apprehension, and he called to me with vehemence to steer quickly for land, and, when near, leapt from the boat, half falling into the water; and, scrambling up the steep bank, hastened along the narrow strip of garden, the only level space between the lake and the mountain. I followed without delay; the garden and inner court were empty, so was the house, whose every room we visited. Adrian called loudly upon Clara's name, and was about to rush up the near mountain-path, when the door of a summer-house at the end of the garden slowly opened, and Clara appeared, not advancing towards us, but leaning against a column of the building with blanched cheeks, in a posture of utter despondency. Adrian sprang towards her with a cry of joy, and folded her delightedly in his arms. She withdrew from his embrace, and, without a word, again entered the summer-house. Her quivering lips, her despairing heart refused to afford her voice to express our misfortune. Poor little Evelyn had, while playing with her, been seized with sudden fever, and now lay torpid and speechless on a little couch in the summer-house.

For a whole fortnight we unceasingly watched beside the poor child, as his life declined under the ravages of a virulent typhus. His little form and tiny lineaments encaged the embryo of the world-spanning mind of man. Man's nature, brimful of passions and affections, would have had an home in that little heart, whose swift pulsations hurried towards their close. His small hand's fine mechanism, now flaccid and unbent, would in the growth of sinew and muscle, have achieved works of beauty or of strength. His tender rosy feet would have trod in firm manhood the bowers and glades of earth — these reflections were now of little use: he lay, thought and strength suspended, waiting unresisting the final blow.

We watched at his bedside, and when the access of fever was on him, we neither spoke nor looked at each other, marking only his obstructed breath and the mortal glow that tinged his sunken cheek, the heavy death that weighed on his eyelids. It is a trite evasion to say, that words could not express our long drawn agony; yet how can words image sensations, whose tormenting keenness throw us back, as it were, on the deep roots and hidden foundations of our nature, which shake our being with earthquake-throe, so that we leave to confide in accustomed feelings which like mother-earth support us, and cling to some vain imagination or deceitful hope, which will soon be buried in the ruins occasioned by the final shock. I have called that period a fortnight, which we passed watching the changes of the sweet child's malady — and such it might have been — at night, we wondered to find another day gone, while each particular hour seemed endless. Day and night were exchanged for one another uncounted; we slept hardly at all, nor did we even quit his room, except when a pang of grief seized us, and we retired from each other for a short period to conceal our sobs and tears. We endeavoured in vain to abstract Clara from this deplorable scene. She sat, hour after hour, looking at him, now softly arranging his pillow, and, while he had power to swallow, administered his drink. At length the moment of his death came: the blood paused in its flow — his eyes opened, and then closed again: without convulsion or sigh, the frail tenement was left vacant of its spiritual inhabitant.

I have heard that the sight of the dead has confirmed materialists in their belief. I ever felt otherwise. Was that my child — that moveless decaying inanimation? My child was enraptured by my caresses; his dear voice clothed with meaning articulations his thoughts, otherwise inaccessible; his smile was a ray of the soul, and the same soul sat upon its throne in his eyes. I turn from this mockery of what he was. Take, O earth, thy debt! freely and for ever I consign to thee the garb thou didst afford. But thou, sweet child, amiable and beloved boy, either thy spirit has sought a fitter dwelling, or, shrined in my heart, thou livest while it lives.

We placed his remains under a cypress, the upright mountain being scooped out to receive them. And then Clara said, "If you wish me to live, take me from hence. There is something in this scene of transcendent beauty, in these trees, and hills and waves, that for ever whisper to me, leave thy cumbrous flesh, and make a part of us. I earnestly entreat you to take me away."

So on the fifteenth of August we bade adieu to our villa, and the embowering shades of this abode of beauty; to calm bay and noisy waterfall; to Evelyn's little grave we bade farewell! and then, with heavy hearts, we departed on our pilgrimage towards Rome.

CHAPTER XXIX

Now — soft awhile — have I arrived so near the end? Yes! it is all over now — a step or two over those new made graves, and the wearisome way is done. Can I accomplish my task? Can I streak my paper with words capacious of the grand conclusion? Arise, black Melancholy! quit thy Cimmerian solitude! Bring with thee murky fogs from hell, which may drink up the day; bring blight and pestiferous exhalations, which, entering the hollow caverns and breathing places of earth, may fill her stony veins with corruption, so that not only herbage may no longer flourish, the trees may rot, and the rivers run with gall — but the everlasting mountains be decomposed, and the mighty deep putrefy, and the genial atmosphere which clips the globe, lose all powers of generation and sustenance. Do this, sad visaged power, while I write, while eyes read these pages.

And who will read them? Beware, tender offspring of the re-born world — beware, fair being, with human heart, yet untamed by care, and human brow, yet unploughed by time — beware, lest the cheerful current of thy blood be checked, thy golden locks turn grey, thy sweet dimpling smiles be changed to fixed, harsh wrinkles! Let not day look on these lines, lest garish day waste, turn pale, and die. Seek a cypress grove, whose moaning boughs will be harmony befitting; seek some cave, deep embowered in earth's dark entrails, where no light will penetrate, save that which struggles, red and flickering, through a single fissure, staining thy page with grimmest livery of death.

There is a painful confusion in my brain, which refuses to delineate distinctly succeeding events. Sometimes the irradiation of my friend's gentle smile comes before me; and methinks its light spans and fills eternity — then, again, I feel the gasping throes —

We quitted Como, and in compliance with Adrian's earnest desire, we took Venice in our way to Rome. There was something to the English peculiarly attractive in the idea of this wave-encircled, island-enthroned city. Adrian had never seen it. We went down the Po and the Brenta in a boat; and, the days proving intolerably hot, we rested in the bordering palaces during the day, travelling through the night, when darkness made the bordering banks indistinct, and our solitude less remarkable; when the wandering moon lit the waves that divided before our prow, and the night-wind filled our sails, and the murmuring stream, waving trees, and swelling canvass, accorded in harmonious strain. Clara, long overcome by excessive grief, had to a great degree cast aside her timid, cold reserve, and received our attentions with grateful tenderness. While Adrian with poetic fervour discoursed of the glorious nations of the dead, of the beauteous earth and the fate of man, she crept near him, drinking in his speech with silent pleasure. We banished from our talk, and as much as possible from our thoughts, the knowledge of our desolation. And it would be incredible to an inhabitant of cities, to one among a busy throng, to what extent we succeeded. It was as a man confined in a dungeon, whose small and grated rift at first renders the doubtful light more sensibly obscure, till, the visual orb having drunk in the beam, and adapted itself to its scantiness, he finds that clear noon inhabits his cell. So we, a simple triad on empty earth, were multiplied to each other, till we became all in all. We stood like trees, whose roots are loosened by the wind, which support one another, leaning and clinging with increased fervour while the wintry storms howl.

Thus we floated down the widening stream of the Po, sleeping when the cicale sang, awake with the stars. We entered the narrower banks of the Brenta, and arrived at the shore of the Laguna at sunrise on the sixth of September. The bright orb slowly rose from behind its cupolas and towers, and shed its penetrating light upon the glassy waters. Wrecks of gondolas, and some few uninjured ones, were strewed on the beach at Fusina. We embarked in one of these for the widowed daughter of ocean, who, abandoned and fallen, sat forlorn on her propping isles, looking towards the far mountains of Greece. We rowed lightly over the Laguna, and entered Canale Grande. The tide ebbed sullenly from out the broken portals and violated halls of Venice: sea weed and sea monsters were left on the blackened marble, while the salt ooze defaced the matchless works of art that adorned their walls, and the sea gull flew out from the shattered window. In the midst of this appalling ruin of the monuments of man's power, nature asserted her ascendancy, and shone more beauteous from the contrast. The radiant waters hardly trembled, while the rippling waves made many sided mirrors to the sun; the blue immensity, seen beyond Lido, stretched far, unspecked by boat, so tranquil, so lovely, that it seemed to invite us to quit the land strewn with ruins, and to seek refuge from sorrow and fear on its placid extent.

We saw the ruins of this hapless city from the height of the tower of San Marco, immediately under us, and turned with sickening hearts to the sea, which, though it be a grave, rears no monument, discloses no ruin. Evening had come apace. The sun set in calm majesty behind the misty summits of the Apennines, and its golden and roseate hues painted the mountains of the opposite shore. “That land,” said Adrian, “tinged with the last glories of the day, is Greece.” Greece! The sound had a responsive chord in the bosom of Clara. She vehemently reminded us that we had promised to take her once again to Greece, to the tomb of her parents. Why go to Rome? what should we do at Rome? We might take one of the many vessels to be found here, embark in it, and steer right for Albania.

I objected the dangers of ocean, and the distance of the mountains we saw, from Athens; a distance which, from the savage uncultivation of the country, was almost impassable. Adrian, who was delighted with Clara’s proposal, obviated these objections. The season was favourable; the north-west that blew would take us transversely across the gulf; and then we might find, in some abandoned port, a light Greek caique, adapted for such navigation, and run down the coast of the Morea, and, passing over the Isthmus of Corinth, without much land-travelling or fatigue, find ourselves at Athens. This appeared to me wild talk; but the sea, glowing with a thousand purple hues, looked so brilliant and safe; my beloved companions were so earnest, so determined, that, when Adrian said, “Well, though it is not exactly what you wish, yet consent, to please me” — I could no longer refuse. That evening we selected a vessel, whose size just seemed fitted for our enterprise; we bent the sails and put the rigging in order, and reposing that night in one of the city’s thousand palaces, agreed to embark at sunrise the following morning.

When winds that move not its calm surface, sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more;
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind —

Thus said Adrian, quoting a translation of Moschus’s poem, as in the clear morning light, we rowed over the Laguna, past Lido, into the open sea — I would have added in continuation

But, when the roar
Of ocean’s gray abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst —

But my friends declared that such verses were evil augury; so in cheerful mood we left the shallow waters, and, when out at sea, unfurled our sails to catch the favourable breeze. The laughing morning air filled them, while sun-light bathed earth, sky and ocean — the placid waves divided to receive our keel, and playfully kissed the dark sides of our little skiff, murmuring a welcome; as land receded, still the blue expanse, most waveless, twin sister to the azure empyrean, afforded smooth conduct to our bark. As the air and waters were tranquil and balmy, so were our minds steeped in quiet. In comparison with the unstained deep, funereal earth appeared a grave, its high rocks and stately mountains were but monuments, its trees the plumes of a hearse, the brooks and rivers brackish with tears for departed man. Farewell to desolate towns — to fields with their savage intermixture of corn and weeds — to ever multiplying relics of our lost species. Ocean, we commit ourselves to thee — even as the patriarch of old floated above the drowned world, let us be saved, as thus we betake ourselves to thy perennial flood.

Adrian sat at the helm; I attended to the rigging, the breeze right aft filled our swelling canvas, and we ran before it over the untroubled deep. The wind died away at noon; its idle breath just permitted us to hold our course. As lazy, fair-weather sailors, careless of the coming hour, we talked gaily of our coasting voyage, of our arrival at Athens. We would make our home of one of the Cyclades, and there in myrtle-groves, amidst perpetual spring, fanned by the wholesome sea-breezes — we would live long years in beatific union — Was there such a thing as death in the world? —

The sun passed its zenith, and lingered down the stainless floor of heaven. Lying in the boat, my face turned up to the sky, I thought I saw on its blue white, marbled streaks, so slight, so immaterial, that now I said — They are there — and now, It is a mere imagination. A sudden fear stung me while I gazed; and, starting up, and running to the prow, — as I stood, my hair was gently lifted on my brow — a dark line of ripples appeared to the east, gaining rapidly on us — my breathless remark to Adrian, was followed by the flapping of the canvas, as the adverse wind struck it, and our boat lurched — swift as speech, the web of the storm thickened over head, the sun went down red, the dark sea was strewed with foam, and our skiff rose and fell in its increasing furrows.

Behold us now in our frail tenement, hemmed in by hungry, roaring waves, buffeted by winds. In the inky east two vast clouds, sailing contrary ways, met; the lightning leapt forth, and the hoarse thunder muttered. Again in the south, the clouds replied, and the forked stream of fire running along the black sky, showed us the appalling piles of clouds, now met and obliterated by the heaving waves. Great God! And we alone — we three — alone — alone — sole dwellers on the sea and on the earth, we three must perish! The vast universe, its myriad worlds, and the plains of boundless earth which we had left — the extent of shoreless sea around — contracted to my view — they and all that they contained, shrunk up to one point, even to our tossing bark, freighted with glorious humanity.

A convulsion of despair crossed the love-beaming face of Adrian, while with set teeth he murmured, “Yet they shall be saved!” Clara, visited by an human pang, pale and trembling, crept near him — he looked on her with an encouraging smile—”Do you fear, sweet girl? O, do not fear, we shall soon be on shore!”

The darkness prevented me from seeing the changes of her countenance; but her voice was clear and sweet, as she replied, “Why should I fear? neither sea nor storm can harm us, if mighty destiny or the ruler of destiny does not permit. And then the stinging fear of surviving either of you, is not here — one death will clasp us undivided.”

Meanwhile we took in all our sails, save a jib; and, as soon as we might without danger, changed our course, running with the wind for the Italian shore. Dark night mixed everything; we hardly discerned the white crests of the murderous surges, except when lightning made brief noon, and drank the darkness, showing us our danger, and restoring us to double night. We were all silent, except when Adrian, as steersman, made an encouraging observation. Our little shell obeyed the rudder miraculously well, and ran along on the top of the waves, as if she had been an offspring of the sea, and the angry mother sheltered her endangered child.

I sat at the prow, watching our course; when suddenly I heard the waters break with redoubled fury. We were certainly near the shore — at the same time I cried, "About there!" and a broad lightning filling the concave, showed us for one moment the level beach a-head, disclosing even the sands, and stunted, ooze-sprinkled beds of reeds, that grew at high water mark. Again it was dark, and we drew in our breath with such content as one may, who, while fragments of volcano-hurled rock darken the air, sees a vast mass ploughing the ground immediately at his feet. What to do we knew not — the breakers here, there, everywhere, encompassed us — they roared, and dashed, and flung their hated spray in our faces. With considerable difficulty and danger we succeeded at length in altering our course, and stretched out from shore. I urged my companions to prepare for the wreck of our little skiff, and to bind themselves to some oar or spar which might suffice to float them. I was myself an excellent swimmer — the very sight of the sea was wont to raise in me such sensations, as a huntsman experiences, when he hears a pack of hounds in full cry; I loved to feel the waves wrap me and strive to overpower me; while I, lord of myself, moved this way or that, in spite of their angry buffetings. Adrian also could swim — but the weakness of his frame prevented him from feeling pleasure in the exercise, or acquiring any great expertness. But what power could the strongest swimmer oppose to the overpowering violence of ocean in its fury? My efforts to prepare my companions were rendered nearly futile — for the roaring breakers prevented our hearing one another speak, and the waves, that broke continually over our boat, obliged me to exert all my strength in lading the water out, as fast as it came in. The while darkness, palpable and rayless, hemmed us round, dissipated only by the lightning; sometimes we beheld thunderbolts, fiery red, fall into the sea, and at intervals vast spouts stooped from the clouds, churning the wild ocean, which rose to meet them; while the fierce gale bore the rack onwards, and they were lost in the chaotic mingling of sky and sea. Our gunwales had been torn away, our single sail had been rent to ribbands, and borne down the stream of the wind. We had cut away our mast, and lightened the boat of all she contained — Clara attempted to assist me in heaving the water from the hold, and, as she turned her eyes to look on the lightning, I could discern by that momentary gleam, that resignation had conquered every fear. We have a power given us in any worst extremity, which props the else feeble mind of man, and enables us to endure the most savage tortures with a stillness of soul which in hours of happiness we could not have imagined. A calm, more dreadful in truth than the tempest, allayed the wild beatings of my heart — a calm like that of the gamester, the suicide, and the murderer, when the last die is on the point of being cast — while the poisoned cup is at the lips, — as the death-blow is about to be given.

Hours passed thus — hours which might write old age on the face of beardless youth, and grizzle the silky hair of infancy — hours, while the chaotic uproar continued, while each dread gust transcended in fury the one before, and our skiff hung on the breaking wave, and then rushed into the valley below, and trembled and spun between the watery precipices that seemed most to meet above her. For a moment the gale paused, and ocean sank to comparative silence — it was a breathless interval; the wind which, as a practised leaper, had gathered itself up before it sprung, now with terrific roar rushed over the sea, and the waves struck our stern. Adrian exclaimed that the rudder was gone;—"We are lost," cried Clara, "Save yourselves — O save yourselves!" The lightning showed me the poor girl half buried in the water at the bottom of the boat; as she was sinking in it Adrian caught her up, and sustained her in his arms. We were without a rudder — we rushed prow foremost into the vast billows piled up ahead — they broke over and filled the tiny skiff; one scream I heard — one cry that we were gone, I uttered; I found myself in the waters; darkness was around. When the light of the tempest flashed, I saw the keel of our upset boat close to me — I clung to this, grasping it with clenched hand and nails, while I endeavoured during each flash to discover any appearance of my companions. I thought I saw Adrian at no great distance from me, clinging to an oar; I sprung from my hold, and with energy beyond my human strength, I dashed aside the waters as I strove to lay hold of him. As that hope failed, instinctive love of life animated me, and feelings of contention, as if a hostile will combated with mine. I breasted the surges, and flung them from me, as I would the opposing front and sharpened claws of a lion about to enfang my bosom. When I had been beaten down by one wave, I rose on another, while I felt bitter pride curl my lip.

Ever since the storm had carried us near the shore, we had never attained any great distance from it. With every flash I saw the bordering coast; yet the progress I made was small, while each wave, as it receded, carried me back into ocean's far abysses. At one moment I felt my foot touch the sand, and then again I was in deep water; my arms began to lose their power of motion; my breath failed me under the influence of the strangling waters — a thousand wild and delirious thoughts crossed me: as well as I can now recall them, my chief feeling was, how sweet it would be to lay my head on the quiet earth, where the surges would no longer strike my weakened frame, nor the sound of waters ring in my ears — to attain this repose, not to save my life, I made a last effort — the shelving shore suddenly presented a footing for me. I rose, and was again thrown down by the breakers — a point of rock to which I was enabled to cling, gave me a moment's respite; and then, taking advantage of the ebbing of the waves, I ran forwards — gained the dry sands, and fell senseless on the oozy reeds that sprinkled them.

I must have lain long deprived of life; for when first, with a sickening feeling, I unclosed my eyes, the light of morning met them. Great change had taken place meanwhile: grey dawn dappled the flying clouds, which sped onwards, leaving visible at intervals vast lakes of pure ether. A fountain of light arose in an increasing stream from the east, behind the waves of the Adriatic, changing the grey to a roseate hue, and then flooding sky and sea with aerial gold.

A kind of stupor followed my fainting; my senses were alive, but memory was extinct. The blessed respite was short — a snake lurked near me to sting me into life — on the first retrospective emotion I would have started up, but my limbs refused to obey me; my knees trembled, the muscles had lost all power. I still believed that I might find one of my beloved companions cast like me, half alive, on the beach; and I strove in every way to restore my frame to the use of its animal functions. I wrung the brine from my hair; and the rays of the risen sun soon visited me with genial warmth. With the restoration of my bodily powers, my mind became in some degree aware of the universe of misery, henceforth to be its dwelling. I ran to the water's edge, calling on the beloved names. Ocean drank in, and absorbed my feeble voice, replying with pitiless roar. I climbed a near tree: the level sands bounded by a pine forest, and the sea clipped round by the horizon, was all that I could discern. In vain I extended my researches along the beach; the mast we had thrown overboard, with tangled cordage, and remnants of a sail, was the sole relic land received of our wreck. Sometimes I stood still, and wrung my hands. I accused earth and sky — the universal machine and the Almighty power that misdirected it. Again I threw myself on the sands, and then the sighing wind, mimicking a human cry, roused me to bitter, fallacious hope. Assuredly if any little bark or smallest canoe had been near, I should have sought the savage plains of ocean, found the dear remains of my lost ones, and clinging round them, have shared their grave.

The day passed thus; each moment contained eternity; although when hour after hour had gone by, I wondered at the quick flight of time. Yet even now I had not drunk the bitter potion to the dregs; I was not yet persuaded of my loss; I did not yet feel in every pulsation, in every nerve, in every thought, that I remained alone of my race, — that I was the LAST MAN.

The day had clouded over, and a drizzling rain set in at sunset. Even the eternal skies weep, I thought; is there any shame then, that mortal man should spend himself in tears? I remembered the ancient fables, in which human beings are described as dissolving away through weeping into ever-gushing fountains. Ah! that so it were; and then my destiny would be in some sort akin to the watery death of Adrian and Clara. Oh! grief is fantastic; it weaves a web on which to trace the history of its woe from every form and change around; it incorporates itself with all living nature; it finds sustenance in every object; as light, it fills all things, and, like light, it gives its own colours to all.

I had wandered in my search to some distance from the spot on which I had been cast, and came to one of those watch-towers, which at stated distances line the Italian shore. I was glad of shelter, glad to find a work of human hands, after I had gazed so long on nature's drear barrenness; so I entered, and ascended the rough winding staircase into the guard-room. So far was fate kind, that no harrowing vestige remained of its former inhabitants; a few planks laid across two iron trestles, and strewed with the dried leaves of Indian corn, was the bed presented to me; and an open chest, containing some half mouldered biscuit, awakened an appetite, which perhaps existed before, but of which, until now, I was not aware. Thirst also, violent and parching, the result of the sea-water I had drank, and of the exhaustion of my frame, tormented me. Kind nature had gifted the supply of these wants with pleasurable sensations, so that I — even I! — was refreshed and calmed, as I ate of this sorry fare, and drank a little of the sour wine which half filled a flask left in this abandoned dwelling. Then I stretched myself on the bed, not to be disdained by the victim of shipwreck. The earthy smell of the dried leaves was balm to my sense after the hateful odour of sea-weed. I forgot my state of loneliness. I neither looked backward nor forward; my senses were hushed to repose; I fell asleep and dreamed of all dear inland scenes, of hay-makers, of the shepherd's whistle to his dog, when he demanded his help to drive the flock to fold; of sights and sounds peculiar to my boyhood's mountain life, which I had long forgotten.

I awoke in a painful agony — for I fancied that ocean, breaking its bounds, carried away the fixed continent and deep rooted mountains, together with the streams I loved, the woods, and the flocks — it raged around, with that continued and dreadful roar which had accompanied the last wreck of surviving humanity. As my waking sense returned, the bare walls of the guard room closed round me, and the rain pattered against the single window. How dreadful it is, to emerge from the oblivion of slumber, and to receive as a good morrow the mute wailing of one's own hapless heart — to return from the land of deceptive dreams, to the heavy knowledge of unchanged disaster! — Thus was it with me, now, and for ever! The sting of other griefs might be blunted by time; and even mine yielded sometimes during the day, to the pleasure inspired by the imagination or the senses; but I never look first upon the morning-light but with my fingers pressed tight on my bursting heart, and my soul deluged with the interminable flood of hopeless misery. Now I awoke for the first time in the dead world — I awoke alone — and the dull dirge of the sea, heard even amidst the rain, recalled me to the reflection of the wretch I had become. The sound came like a reproach, a scoff — like the sting of remorse in the soul — I gasped — the veins and muscles of my throat swelled, suffocating me. I put my fingers to my ears, I buried my head in the leaves of my couch, I would have dived to the centre to lose hearing of that hideous moan.

But another task must be mine — again I visited the detested beach — again I vainly looked far and wide — again I raised my unanswered cry, lifting up the only voice that could ever again force the mute air to syllable the human thought.

What a pitiable, forlorn, disconsolate being I was! My very aspect and garb told the tale of my despair. My hair was matted and wild — my limbs soiled with salt ooze; while at sea, I had thrown off those of my garments that encumbered me, and the rain drenched the thin summer-clothing I had retained — my feet were bare, and the stunted reeds and broken shells made them bleed — the while, I hurried to and fro, now looking earnestly on some distant rock which, islanded in the sands, bore for a moment a deceptive appearance — now with flashing eyes reproaching the murderous ocean for its unutterable cruelty.

For a moment I compared myself to that monarch of the waste — Robinson Crusoe. We had been both thrown companionless — he on the shore of a desolate island: I on that of a desolate world. I was rich in the so called goods of life. If I turned my steps from the near barren scene, and entered any of the earth's million cities, I should find their wealth stored up for my accommodation — clothes, food, books, and a choice of dwelling beyond the command of the princes of former times — every climate was subject to my selection, while he was obliged to toil in the acquirement of every necessary, and was the inhabitant of a tropical island, against whose heats and storms he could obtain small shelter. — Viewing the question thus, who would not have preferred the Sybarite enjoyments I could command, the philosophic leisure, and ample intellectual resources, to his life of labour and peril? Yet he was far happier than I: for he could hope, nor hope in vain — the destined vessel at last arrived, to bear him to countrymen and kindred, where the events of his solitude became a fire-side tale. To none could I ever relate the story of my adversity; no hope had I. He knew that, beyond the ocean which begirt his lonely island, thousands lived whom the sun enlightened when it shone also on him: beneath the meridian sun and visiting moon, I alone bore human features; I alone could give articulation to thought; and, when I slept, both day and night were unbeheld of any. He had fled from his fellows, and was transported with terror at the print of a human foot. I would have knelt down and worshipped the same. The wild and cruel Caribbee, the merciless Cannibal — or worse than these, the uncouth, brute, and remorseless veteran in the vices of civilization, would have been to me a beloved companion, a treasure dearly prized — his nature would be kin to mine; his form cast in the same mould; human blood would flow in his veins; a human sympathy must link us for ever. It cannot be that I shall never behold a fellow being more! — never! — never! — not in the course of years! — Shall I wake, and speak to none, pass the interminable hours, my soul, islanded in the world, a solitary point, surrounded by vacuum? Will day follow day endlessly thus? — No! no! a God rules the world — providence has not exchanged its golden sceptre for an aspic's sting. Away! let me fly from the ocean-grave, let me depart from this barren nook, paled in, as it is, from access by its own desolateness; let me tread once again the paved towns; step over the threshold of man's dwellings, and most certainly I shall find this thought a horrible vision — a maddening, but evanescent dream.

I entered Ravenna, (the town nearest to the spot whereon I had been cast), before the second sun had set on the empty world; I saw many living creatures; oxen, and horses, and dogs, but there was no man among them; I entered a cottage, it was vacant; I ascended the marble stairs of a palace, the bats and the owls were nestled in the tapestry; I stepped softly, not to awaken the sleeping town: I rebuked a dog, that by yelping disturbed the sacred stillness; I would not believe that all was as it seemed — The world was not dead, but I was mad; I was deprived of sight, hearing, and sense of touch; I was labouring under the force of a spell, which permitted me to behold all sights of earth, except its human inhabitants; they were pursuing their ordinary labours. Every house had its inmate; but I could not perceive them. If I could have deluded myself into a belief of this kind, I should have been far more satisfied. But my brain, tenacious of its reason, refused to lend itself to such imaginations — and though I endeavoured to play the antic to myself, I knew that I, the offspring of man, during long years one among many — now remained sole survivor of my species.

The sun sank behind the western hills; I had fasted since the preceding evening, but, though faint and weary, I loathed food, nor ceased, while yet a ray of light remained, to pace the lonely streets. Night came on, and sent every living creature but me to the bosom of its mate. It was my solace, to blunt my mental agony by personal hardship — of the thousand beds around, I would not seek the luxury of one; I lay down on the pavement, —

a cold marble step served me for a pillow — midnight came; and then, though not before, did my wearied lids shut out the sight of the twinkling stars, and their reflex on the pavement near. Thus I passed the second night of my desolation.

CHAPTER XXX

I awoke in the morning, just as the higher windows of the lofty houses received the first beams of the rising sun. The birds were chirping, perched on the windows sills and deserted thresholds of the doors. I awoke, and my first thought was, Adrian and Clara are dead. I no longer shall be hailed by their good-morrow — or pass the long day in their society. I shall never see them more. The ocean has robbed me of them — stolen their hearts of love from their breasts, and given over to corruption what was dearer to me than light, or life, or hope.

I was an untaught shepherd-boy, when Adrian deigned to confer on me his friendship. The best years of my life had been passed with him. All I had possessed of this world's goods, of happiness, knowledge, or virtue — I owed to him. He had, in his person, his intellect, and rare qualities, given a glory to my life, which without him it had never known. Beyond all other beings he had taught me, that goodness, pure and single, can be an attribute of man. It was a sight for angels to congregate to behold, to view him lead, govern, and solace, the last days of the human race.

My lovely Clara also was lost to me — she who last of the daughters of man, exhibited all those feminine and maiden virtues, which poets, painters, and sculptors, have in their various languages strove to express. Yet, as far as she was concerned, could I lament that she was removed in early youth from the certain advent of misery? Pure she was of soul, and all her intents were holy. But her heart was the throne of love, and the sensibility her lovely countenance expressed, was the prophet of many woes, not the less deep and drear, because she would have for ever concealed them.

These two wondrously endowed beings had been spared from the universal wreck, to be my companions during the last year of solitude. I had felt, while they were with me, all their worth. I was conscious that every other sentiment, regret, or passion had by degrees merged into a yearning, clinging affection for them. I had not forgotten the sweet partner of my youth, mother of my children, my adored Idris; but I saw at least a part of her spirit alive again in her brother; and after, that by Evelyn's death I had lost what most dearly recalled her to me; I enshrined her memory in

Adrian's form, and endeavoured to confound the two dear ideas. I sound the depths of my heart, and try in vain to draw thence the expressions that can typify my love for these remnants of my race. If regret and sorrow came athwart me, as well it might in our solitary and uncertain state, the clear tones of Adrian's voice, and his fervent look, dissipated the gloom; or I was cheered unaware by the mild content and sweet resignation Clara's cloudless brow and deep blue eyes expressed. They were all to me — the suns of my benighted soul — repose in my weariness — slumber in my sleepless woe. Ill, most ill, with disjointed words, bare and weak, have I expressed the feeling with which I clung to them. I would have wound myself like ivy inextricably round them, so that the same blow might destroy us. I would have entered and been a part of them — so that

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,

even now I had accompanied them to their new and incommunicable abode.

Never shall I see them more. I am bereft of their dear converse — bereft of sight of them. I am a tree rent by lightning; never will the bark close over the bared fibres — never will their quivering life, torn by the winds, receive the opiate of a moment's balm. I am alone in the world — but that expression as yet was less pregnant with misery, than that Adrian and Clara are dead.

The tide of thought and feeling rolls on for ever the same, though the banks and shapes around, which govern its course, and the reflection in the wave, vary. Thus the sentiment of immediate loss in some sort decayed, while that of utter, irremediable loneliness grew on me with time. Three days I wandered through Ravenna — now thinking only of the beloved beings who slept in the oozy caves of ocean — now looking forward on the dread blank before me; shuddering to make an onward step — writhing at each change that marked the progress of the hours.

For three days I wandered to and fro in this melancholy town. I passed whole hours in going from house to house, listening whether I could detect some lurking sign of human existence. Sometimes I rang at a bell; it tinkled through the vaulted rooms, and silence succeeded to the sound. I called myself hopeless, yet still I hoped; and still disappointment ushered in the hours, intruding the cold, sharp steel which first pierced me, into the aching festering wound. I fed like a wild beast, which seizes its food only when stung by intolerable hunger. I did not change my garb, or seek the shelter of a roof, during all those days. Burning heats, nervous irritation, a ceaseless, but confused flow of thought, sleepless nights, and days instinct with a frenzy of agitation, possessed me during that time.

As the fever of my blood increased, a desire of wandering came upon me. I remember, that the sun had set on the fifth day after my wreck, when, without purpose or aim, I quitted the town of Ravenna. I must have been very ill. Had I been possessed by more or less of delirium, that night had surely been my last; for, as I continued to walk on the banks of the Mantone, whose upward course I followed, I looked wistfully on the stream, acknowledging to myself that its pellucid waves could medicine my woes for ever, and was unable to account to myself for my tardiness in seeking their shelter from the poisoned arrows of thought, that were piercing me through and through. I walked a considerable part of the night, and excessive weariness at length conquered my repugnance to the availing myself of the deserted habitations of my species. The waning moon, which had just risen, showed me a cottage, whose neat entrance and trim garden reminded me of my own England. I lifted up the latch of the door and entered. A kitchen first presented itself, where, guided by the moon beams, I found materials for striking a light. Within this was a bed room; the couch was furnished with sheets of snowy whiteness; the wood piled on the hearth, and an array as for a meal, might almost have deceived me into the dear belief that I had here found what I had so long sought — one survivor, a companion for my loneliness, a solace to my despair. I steeled myself against the delusion; the room itself was vacant: it was only prudent, I repeated to myself, to examine the rest of the house. I fancied that I was proof against the expectation; yet my heart beat audibly, as I laid my hand on the lock of each door, and it sunk again, when I perceived in each the same vacancy. Dark and silent they were as vaults; so I returned to the first chamber, wondering what sightless host had spread the materials for my repast, and my repose. I drew a chair to the table, and examined what the viands were of which I was to partake. In truth it was a death feast! The bread was blue and mouldy; the cheese lay a heap of dust. I did not dare examine the other dishes; a troop of ants passed in a double line across the table cloth; every utensil was covered with dust, with cobwebs, and myriads of dead flies: these were objects each and all betokening the fallaciousness of my expectations. Tears rushed into my eyes; surely this was a wanton display of the power of the destroyer. What had I done, that each sensitive nerve was thus to be anatomized? Yet why complain more now than ever? This vacant cottage revealed no new sorrow — the world was empty; mankind was dead — I knew it well — why quarrel therefore with an acknowledged and stale truth? Yet, as I said, I had hoped in the very heart of despair, so that every new impression of the hard-cut reality on my soul brought with it a fresh pang, telling me the yet unstudied lesson, that neither change of place nor time could bring alleviation to my misery, but that, as I now was, I must continue, day after day, month after month, year after year, while I lived. I hardly dared conjecture what space of time that expression implied. It is true, I was no longer in the first blush of manhood; neither had I declined far in the vale of years — men have accounted mine the prime of life: I had just entered my thirty-seventh year; every limb was as well knit, every articulation as true, as when I had acted the shepherd on the hills of Cumberland; and with these advantages I was to commence the train of solitary life. Such were the reflections that ushered in my slumber on that night.

The shelter, however, and less disturbed repose which I enjoyed, restored me the following morning to a greater portion of health and strength, than I had experienced since my fatal shipwreck. Among the stores I had discovered on searching the cottage the preceding night, was a quantity of dried grapes; these refreshed me in the morning, as I left my lodging and proceeded towards a town which I discerned at no great distance. As far as I could divine, it must have been Forli. I entered with pleasure its wide and grassy streets. All, it is true, pictured the excess of desolation; yet I loved to find myself in those spots which had been the abode of my fellow creatures. I delighted to traverse street after street, to look up at the tall houses, and repeat to myself, once they contained beings similar to myself — I was not always the wretch I am now. The wide square of Forli, the arcade around it, its light and pleasant aspect cheered me. I was pleased with the idea, that, if the earth should be again peopled, we, the lost race, would, in the relics left behind, present no contemptible exhibition of our powers to the new comers.

I entered one of the palaces, and opened the door of a magnificent saloon. I started — I looked again with renewed wonder. What wild-looking, unkempt, half-naked savage was that before me? The surprise was momentary.

I perceived that it was I myself whom I beheld in a large mirror at the end of the hall. No wonder that the lover of the princely Idris should fail to recognize himself in the miserable object there portrayed. My tattered dress was that in which I had crawled half alive from the tempestuous sea. My long and tangled hair hung in elf locks on my brow — my dark eyes, now hollow and wild, gleamed from under them — my cheeks were discoloured by the jaundice, which (the effect of misery and neglect) suffused my skin, and were half hid by a beard of many days' growth.

Yet why should I not remain thus, I thought; the world is dead, and this squalid attire is a fitter mourning garb than the foppery of a black suit. And thus, methinks, I should have remained, had not hope, without which I do not believe man could exist, whispered to me, that, in such a plight, I should be an object of fear and aversion to the being, preserved I knew not where, but I fondly trusted, at length, to be found by me. Will my readers scorn the vanity, that made me attire myself with some care, for the sake of this visionary being? Or will they forgive the freaks of a half crazed imagination? I can easily forgive myself — for hope, however vague, was so dear to me, and a sentiment of pleasure of so rare occurrence, that I yielded readily to any idea, that cherished the one, or promised any recurrence of the former to my sorrowing heart.

After such occupation, I visited every street, alley, and nook of Forli. These Italian towns presented an appearance of still greater desolation, than those of England or France. Plague had appeared here earlier — it had finished its course, and achieved its work much sooner than with us. Probably the last summer had found no human being alive, in all the track included between the shores of Calabria and the northern Alps. My search was utterly vain, yet I did not despond. Reason methought was on my side; and the chances were by no means contemptible, that there should exist in some part of Italy a survivor like myself — of a wasted, depopulate land. As therefore I rambled through the empty town, I formed my plan for future operations. I would continue to journey on towards Rome. After I should have satisfied myself, by a narrow search, that I left behind no human being in the towns through which I passed, I would write up in a conspicuous part of each, with white paint, in three languages, that "Verney, the last of the race of Englishmen, had taken up his abode in Rome."

In pursuance of this scheme, I entered a painter's shop, and procured myself the paint. It is strange that so trivial an occupation should have consoled, and even enlivened me. But grief renders one childish, despair fantastic. To this simple inscription, I merely added the adjuration, "Friend, come! I wait for thee! — *Deh, vieni! ti aspetto!*"

On the following morning, with something like hope for my companion, I quitted Forli on my way to Rome. Until now, agonizing retrospect, and dreary prospects for the future, had stung me when awake, and cradled me to my repose. Many times I had delivered myself up to the tyranny of anguish — many times I resolved a speedy end to my woes; and death by my own hands was a remedy, whose practicability was even cheering to me. What could I fear in the other world? If there were an hell, and I were doomed to it, I should come an adept to the sufferance of its tortures — the act were easy, the speedy and certain end of my deplorable tragedy. But now these thoughts faded before the new born expectation. I went on my way, not as before, feeling each hour, each minute, to be an age instinct with incalculable pain.

As I wandered along the plain, at the foot of the Appennines — through their valleys, and over their bleak summits, my path led me through a country which had been trodden by heroes, visited and admired by thousands. They had, as a tide, receded, leaving me blank and bare in the midst. But why complain? Did I not hope? — so I schooled myself, even after the enlivening spirit had really deserted me, and thus I was obliged to call up all the fortitude I could command, and that was not much, to prevent a recurrence of that chaotic and intolerable despair, that had succeeded to the miserable shipwreck, that had consummated every fear, and dashed to annihilation every joy.

I rose each day with the morning sun, and left my desolate inn. As my feet strayed through the unpeopled country, my thoughts rambled through the universe, and I was least miserable when I could, absorbed in reverie, forget the passage of the hours. Each evening, in spite of weariness, I detested to enter any dwelling, there to take up my nightly abode — I have sat, hour after hour, at the door of the cottage I had selected, unable to lift the latch, and meet face to face blank desertion within. Many nights, though autumnal mists were spread around, I passed under an ilex — many times I have supped on arbutus berries and chestnuts, making a fire, gypsy-like, on the ground — because wild natural scenery reminded me less acutely of my hopeless state of loneliness. I counted the days, and bore with me a peeled willow-wand, on which, as well as I could remember, I had notched the days that had elapsed since my wreck, and each night I added another unit to the melancholy sum.

I had toiled up a hill which led to Spoleto. Around was spread a plain, encircled by the chestnut-covered Appennines. A dark ravine was on one side, spanned by an aqueduct, whose tall arches were rooted in the dell below, and attested that man had once deigned to bestow labour and thought here, to adorn and civilise nature. Savage, ungrateful nature, which in wild sport defaced his remains, protruding her easily renewed, and fragile growth of wild flowers and parasite plants around his eternal edifices. I sat on a fragment of rock, and looked round. The sun had bathed in gold the western atmosphere, and in the east the clouds caught the radiance, and budded into transient loveliness. It set on a world that contained me alone for its inhabitant. I took out my wand — I counted the marks. Twenty-five were already traced — twenty-five days had already elapsed, since human voice had gladdened my ears, or human countenance met my gaze. Twenty-five long, weary days, succeeded by dark and lonesome nights, had mingled with foregone years, and had become a part of the past — the never to be recalled — a real, undeniable portion of my life — twenty-five long, long days.

Why this was not a month! — Why talk of days — or weeks — or months — I must grasp years in my imagination, if I would truly picture the future to myself — three, five, ten, twenty, fifty anniversaries of that fatal epoch might elapse — every year containing twelve months, each of more numerous calculation in a diary, than the twenty-five days gone by — Can it be? Will it be? — We had been used to look forward to death tremulously — wherefore, but because its place was obscure? But more terrible, and far more obscure, was the unveiled course of my lone futurity. I broke my wand; I threw it from me. I needed no recorder of the inch and barley-corn growth of my life, while my unquiet thoughts created other divisions, than those ruled over by the planets — and, in looking back on the age that had elapsed since I had been alone, I disdained to give the name of days and hours to the throes of agony which had in truth portioned it out.

I hid my face in my hands. The twitter of the young birds going to rest, and their rustling among the trees, disturbed the still evening-air — the crickets chirped — the aziolo cooed at intervals. My thoughts had been of death — these sounds spoke to me of life. I lifted up my eyes — a bat wheeled round — the sun had sunk behind the jagged line of mountains, and the pale, crescent moon was visible, silver white, amidst the orange sunset, and accompanied by one bright star, prolonged thus the twilight. A herd of cattle passed along in the dell below, untended, towards their watering place — the grass was rustled by a gentle breeze, and the olive-woods, mellowed into soft masses by the moonlight, contrasted their sea-green with the dark chestnut foliage. Yes, this is the earth; there is no change — no ruin — no rent made in her verdurous expanse; she continues to wheel round and round, with alternate night and day, through the sky, though man is not her adorner or inhabitant. Why could I not forget myself like one of those animals, and no longer suffer the wild tumult of misery that I endure? Yet, ah! what a deadly breach yawns between their state and mine! Have not they companions? Have not they each their mate — their cherished young, their home, which, though unexpressed to us, is, I doubt not, endeared and enriched, even in their eyes, by the society which kind nature has created for them? It is I only that am alone — I, on this little hill top, gazing on plain and mountain recess — on sky, and its starry population, listening to every sound of earth, and air, and murmuring wave, — I only cannot express to any companion my many thoughts, nor lay my throbbing head on any loved bosom, nor drink from meeting eyes an intoxicating dew, that transcends the fabulous nectar of the gods. Shall I not then complain? Shall I not curse the murderous engine which has mowed down the children of men, my brethren? Shall I not bestow a malediction on every other of nature’s offspring, which dares live and enjoy, while I live and suffer?

Ah, no! I will discipline my sorrowing heart to sympathy in your joys; I will be happy, because ye are so. Live on, ye innocents, nature’s selected darlings; I am not much unlike to you. Nerves, pulse, brain, joint, and flesh, of such am I composed, and ye are organized by the same laws. I have something beyond this, but I will call it a defect, not an endowment, if it leads me to misery, while ye are happy. Just then, there emerged from a near copse two goats and a little kid, by the mother's side; they began to browse the herbage of the hill. I approached near to them, without their perceiving me; I gathered a handful of fresh grass, and held it out; the little one nestled close to its mother, while she timidly withdrew. The male stepped forward, fixing his eyes on me: I drew near, still holding out my lure, while he, depressing his head, rushed at me with his horns. I was a very fool; I knew it, yet I yielded to my rage. I snatched up a huge fragment of rock; it would have crushed my rash foe. I poised it — aimed it — then my heart failed me. I hurled it wide of the mark; it rolled clattering among the bushes into dell. My little visitants, all aghast, galloped back into the covert of the wood; while I, my very heart bleeding and torn, rushed down the hill, and by the violence of bodily exertion, sought to escape from my miserable self.

No, no, I will not live among the wild scenes of nature, the enemy of all that lives. I will seek the towns — Rome, the capital of the world, the crown of man's achievements. Among its storied streets, hallowed ruins, and stupendous remains of human exertion, I shall not, as here, find every thing forgetful of man; trampling on his memory, defacing his works, proclaiming from hill to hill, and vale to vale, — by the torrents freed from the boundaries which he imposed — by the vegetation liberated from the laws which he enforced — by his habitation abandoned to mildew and weeds, that his power is lost, his race annihilated for ever.

I hailed the Tiber, for that was as it were an unalienable possession of humanity. I hailed the wild Campagna, for every rood had been trod by man; and its savage uncultivation, of no recent date, only proclaimed more distinctly his power, since he had given an honourable name and sacred title to what else would have been a worthless, barren track. I entered Eternal Rome by the Porta del Popolo, and saluted with awe its time-honoured space. The wide square, the churches near, the long extent of the Corso, the near eminence of Trinita de' Monti appeared like fairy work, they were so silent, so peaceful, and so very fair. It was evening; and the population of animals which still existed in this mighty city, had gone to rest; there was no sound, save the murmur of its many fountains, whose soft monotony was harmony to my soul. The knowledge that I was in Rome, soothed me; that wondrous city, hardly more illustrious for its heroes and sages, than for the power it exercised over the imaginations of men. I went to rest that night; the eternal burning of my heart quenched, — my senses tranquil.

The next morning I eagerly began my rambles in search of oblivion. I ascended the many terraces of the garden of the Colonna Palace, under whose roof I had been sleeping; and passing out from it at its summit, I found myself on Monte Cavallo. The fountain sparkled in the sun; the obelisk above pierced the clear dark-blue air. The statues on each side, the works, as they are inscribed, of Phidias and Praxiteles, stood in undiminished grandeur, representing Castor and Pollux, who with majestic power tamed the rearing animal at their side. If those illustrious artists had in truth chiselled these forms, how many passing generations had their giant proportions outlived! and now they were viewed by the last of the species they were sculptured to represent and deify. I had shrunk into insignificance in my own eyes, as I considered the multitudinous beings these stone demigods had outlived, but this after-thought restored me to dignity in my own conception. The sight of the poetry eternized in these statues, took the sting from the thought, arraying it only in poetic ideality.

I repeated to myself, — I am in Rome! I behold, and as it were, familiarly converse with the wonder of the world, sovereign mistress of the imagination, majestic and eternal survivor of millions of generations of extinct men. I endeavoured to quiet the sorrows of my aching heart, by even now taking an interest in what in my youth I had ardently longed to see. Every part of Rome is replete with relics of ancient times. The meanest streets are strewed with truncated columns, broken capitals — Corinthian and Ionic, and sparkling fragments of granite or porphyry. The walls of the most penurious dwellings enclose a fluted pillar or ponderous stone, which once made part of the palace of the Caesars; and the voice of dead time, in still vibrations, is breathed from these dumb things, animated and glorified as they were by man.

I embraced the vast columns of the temple of Jupiter Stator, which survives in the open space that was the Forum, and leaning my burning cheek against its cold durability, I tried to lose the sense of present misery and present desertion, by recalling to the haunted cell of my brain vivid memories of times gone by. I rejoiced at my success, as I figured Camillus, the Gracchi, Cato, and last the heroes of Tacitus, which shine meteors of surpassing brightness during the murky night of the empire; — as the verses of Horace and Virgil, or the glowing periods of Cicero thronged into the opened gates of my mind, I felt myself exalted by long forgotten enthusiasm. I was delighted to know that I beheld the scene which they beheld — the scene which their wives and mothers, and crowds of the unnamed witnessed, while at the same time they honoured, applauded, or wept for these matchless specimens of humanity. At length, then, I had found a consolation. I had not vainly sought the storied precincts of Rome — I had discovered a medicine for my many and vital wounds.

I sat at the foot of these vast columns. The Coliseum, whose naked ruin is robed by nature in a verdurous and glowing veil, lay in the sunlight on my right. Not far off, to the left, was the Tower of the Capitol. Triumphal arches, the falling walls of many temples, strewed the ground at my feet. I strove, I resolved, to force myself to see the Plebeian multitude and lofty Patrician forms congregated around; and, as the Diorama of ages passed across my subdued fancy, they were replaced by the modern Roman; the Pope, in his white stole, distributing benedictions to the kneeling worshippers; the friar in his cowl; the dark-eyed girl, veiled by her mezzera; the noisy, sun-burnt rustic, leading his heard of buffaloes and oxen to the Campo Vaccino. The romance with which, dipping our pencils in the rainbow hues of sky and transcendent nature, we to a degree gratuitously endow the Italians, replaced the solemn grandeur of antiquity. I remembered the dark monk, and floating figures of “The Italian,” and how my boyish blood had thrilled at the description. I called to mind Corinna ascending the Capitol to be crowned, and, passing from the heroine to the author, reflected how the Enchantress Spirit of Rome held sovereign sway over the minds of the imaginative, until it rested on me — sole remaining spectator of its wonders.

I was long wrapt by such ideas; but the soul wearies of a pauseless flight; and, stooping from its wheeling circuits round and round this spot, suddenly it fell ten thousand fathom deep, into the abyss of the present — into self-knowledge — into tenfold sadness. I roused myself — I cast off my waking dreams; and I, who just now could almost hear the shouts of the Roman throng, and was hustled by countless multitudes, now beheld the desert ruins of Rome sleeping under its own blue sky; the shadows lay tranquilly on the ground; sheep were grazing untended on the Palatine, and a buffalo stalked down the Sacred Way that led to the Capitol. I was alone in the

Forum; alone in Rome; alone in the world. Would not one living man — one companion in my weary solitude, be worth all the glory and remembered power of this time-honoured city? Double sorrow — sadness, bred in Cimmerian caves, robed my soul in a mourning garb. The generations I had conjured up to my fancy, contrasted more strongly with the end of all — the single point in which, as a pyramid, the mighty fabric of society had ended, while I, on the giddy height, saw vacant space around me.

From such vague laments I turned to the contemplation of the minutiae of my situation. So far, I had not succeeded in the sole object of my desires, the finding a companion for my desolation. Yet I did not despair. It is true that my inscriptions were set up for the most part, in insignificant towns and villages; yet, even without these memorials, it was possible that the person, who like me should find himself alone in a depopulate land, should, like me, come to Rome. The more slender my expectation was, the more I chose to build on it, and to accommodate my actions to this vague possibility.

It became necessary therefore, that for a time I should domesticate myself at Rome. It became necessary, that I should look my disaster in the face — not playing the school-boy's part of obedience without submission; enduring life, and yet rebelling against the laws by which I lived.

Yet how could I resign myself? Without love, without sympathy, without communion with any, how could I meet the morning sun, and with it trace its oft repeated journey to the evening shades? Why did I continue to live — why not throw off the weary weight of time, and with my own hand, let out the fluttering prisoner from my agonized breast? — It was not cowardice that withheld me; for the true fortitude was to endure; and death had a soothing sound accompanying it, that would easily entice me to enter its demesne. But this I would not do. I had, from the moment I had reasoned on the subject, instituted myself the subject to fate, and the servant of necessity, the visible laws of the invisible God — I believed that my obedience was the result of sound reasoning, pure feeling, and an exalted sense of the true excellence and nobility of my nature. Could I have seen in this empty earth, in the seasons and their change, the hand of a blind power only, most willingly would I have placed my head on the sod, and closed my eyes on its loveliness for ever. But fate had administered life to me, when the plague had already seized on its prey — she had dragged me by the hair from out the strangling waves — By such miracles she had bought me for her own; I admitted her authority, and bowed to her decrees. If, after mature consideration, such was my resolve, it was doubly necessary that I should not lose the end of life, the improvement of my faculties, and poison its flow by repinings without end. Yet how cease to repine, since there was no hand near to extract the barbed spear that had entered my heart of hearts? I stretched out my hand, and it touched none whose sensations were responsive to mine. I was girded, walled in, vaulted over, by seven-fold barriers of loneliness. Occupation alone, if I could deliver myself up to it, would be capable of affording an opiate to my sleepless sense of woe. Having determined to make Rome my abode, at least for some months, I made arrangements for my accommodation — I selected my home. The Colonna Palace was well adapted for my purpose. Its grandeur — its treasure of paintings, its magnificent halls were objects soothing and even exhilarating.

I found the granaries of Rome well stored with grain, and particularly with Indian corn; this product requiring less art in its preparation for food, I selected as my principal support. I now found the hardships and lawlessness of my youth turn to account. A man cannot throw off the habits of sixteen years. Since that age, it is true, I had lived luxuriously, or at least surrounded by all the conveniences civilization afforded. But before that time, I had been “as uncouth a savage, as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome” — and now, in Rome itself, robber and shepherd propensities, similar to those of its founder, were of advantage to its sole inhabitant. I spent the morning riding and shooting in the Campagna — I passed long hours in the various galleries — I gazed at each statue, and lost myself in a reverie before many a fair Madonna or beauteous nymph. I haunted the Vatican, and stood surrounded by marble forms of divine beauty. Each stone deity was possessed by sacred gladness, and the eternal fruition of love. They looked on me with unsympathising complacency, and often in wild accents I reproached them for their supreme indifference — for they were human shapes, the human form divine was manifest in each fairest limb and lineament. The perfect moulding brought with it the idea of colour and motion; often, half in bitter mockery, half in self-delusion, I clasped their icy proportions, and, coming between Cupid and his Psyche’s lips, pressed the unconceiving marble.

I endeavoured to read. I visited the libraries of Rome. I selected a volume, and, choosing some sequestered, shady nook, on the banks of the Tiber, or opposite the fair temple in the Borghese Gardens, or under the old pyramid of Cestius, I endeavoured to conceal me from myself, and immerse myself in the subject traced on the pages before me. As if in the same soil you plant nightshade and a myrtle tree, they will each appropriate the mould, moisture, and air administered, for the fostering their several properties — so did my grief find sustenance, and power of existence, and growth, in what else had been divine manna, to feed radiant meditation. Ah! while I streak this paper with the tale of what my so named occupations were — while I shape the skeleton of my days — my hand trembles — my heart pants, and my brain refuses to lend expression, or phrase, or idea, by which to image forth the veil of unutterable woe that clothed these bare realities. O, worn and beating heart, may I dissect thy fibres, and tell how in each unmitigable misery, sadness dire, repinings, and despair, existed? May I record my many ravings — the wild curses I hurled at torturing nature — and how I have passed days shut out from light and food — from all except the burning hell alive in my own bosom?

I was presented, meantime, with one other occupation, the one best fitted to discipline my melancholy thoughts, which strayed backwards, over many a ruin, and through many a flowery glade, even to the mountain recess, from which in early youth I had first emerged.

During one of my rambles through the habitations of Rome, I found writing materials on a table in an author’s study. Parts of a manuscript lay scattered about. It contained a learned disquisition on the Italian language; one page an unfinished dedication to posterity, for whose profit the writer had sifted and selected the niceties of this harmonious language — to whose everlasting benefit he bequeathed his labours.

I also will write a book, I cried — for whom to read? — to whom dedicated? And then with silly flourish (what so capricious and childish as despair?) I wrote,

DEDICATION
TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD.
SHADOWS, ARISE, AND READ YOUR FALL!
BEHOLD THE HISTORY OF THE

Yet, will not this world be re-peopled, and the children of a saved pair of lovers, in some to me unknown and unattainable seclusion, wandering to these prodigious relics of the ante-pestilential race, seek to learn how beings so wondrous in their achievements, with imaginations infinite, and powers godlike, had departed from their home to an unknown country?

I will write and leave in this most ancient city, this “world’s sole monument,” a record of these things. I will leave a monument of the existence of Verney, the Last Man. At first I thought only to speak of plague, of death, and last, of desertion; but I lingered fondly on my early years, and recorded with sacred zeal the virtues of my companions. They have been with me during the fulfilment of my task. I have brought it to an end — I lift my eyes from my paper — again they are lost to me. Again I feel that I am alone.

A year has passed since I have been thus occupied. The seasons have made their wonted round, and decked this eternal city in a changeful robe of surpassing beauty. A year has passed; and I no longer guess at my state or my prospects — loneliness is my familiar, sorrow my inseparable companion. I have endeavoured to brave the storm — I have endeavoured to school myself to fortitude — I have sought to imbue myself with the lessons of wisdom. It will not do. My hair has become nearly grey — my voice, unused now to utter sound, comes strangely on my ears. My person, with its human powers and features, seem to me a monstrous excrescence of nature. How express in human language a woe human being until this hour never knew! How give intelligible expression to a pang none but I could ever understand! — No one has entered Rome. None will ever come. I smile bitterly at the delusion I have so long nourished, and still more, when I reflect that I have exchanged it for another as delusive, as false, but to which I now cling with the same fond trust.

Winter has come again; and the gardens of Rome have lost their leaves — the sharp air comes over the Campagna, and has driven its brute inhabitants to take up their abode in the many dwellings of the deserted city — frost has suspended the gushing fountains — and Trevi has stilled her eternal music. I had made a rough calculation, aided by the stars, by which I endeavoured to ascertain the first day of the new year. In the old out-worn age, the Sovereign Pontiff was used to go in solemn pomp, and mark the renewal of the year by driving a nail in the gate of the temple of Janus. On that day I ascended St. Peter's, and carved on its topmost stone the æra 2100, last year of the world!

My only companion was a dog, a shaggy fellow, half water and half shepherd's dog, whom I found tending sheep in the Campagna. His master was dead, but nevertheless he continued fulfilling his duties in expectation of his return. If a sheep strayed from the rest, he forced it to return to the flock, and sedulously kept off every intruder. Riding in the Campagna I had come upon his sheep-walk, and for some time observed his repetition of lessons learned from man, now useless, though unforgotten. His delight was excessive when he saw me. He sprung up to my knees; he capered round and round, wagging his tail, with the short, quick bark of pleasure: he left his fold to follow me, and from that day has never neglected to watch by and attend on me, showing boisterous gratitude whenever I caressed or talked to him. His pattering steps and mine alone were heard, when we entered the magnificent extent of nave and aisle of St. Peter's. We ascended the myriad steps together, when on the summit I achieved my design, and in rough figures noted the date of the last year. I then turned to gaze on the country, and to take leave of Rome. I had long determined to quit it, and I now formed the plan I would adopt for my future career, after I had left this magnificent abode.

A solitary being is by instinct a wanderer, and that I would become. A hope of amelioration always attends on change of place, which would even lighten the burthen of my life. I had been a fool to remain in Rome all this time: Rome noted for Malaria, the famous caterer for death. But it was still possible, that, could I visit the whole extent of earth, I should find in some part of the wide extent a survivor. Methought the sea-side was the most probable retreat to be chosen by such a one. If left alone in an inland district, still they could not continue in the spot where their last hopes had been extinguished; they would journey on, like me, in search of a partner for their solitude, till the watery barrier stopped their further progress.

To that water — cause of my woes, perhaps now to be their cure, I would betake myself. Farewell, Italy! — farewell, thou ornament of the world, matchless Rome, the retreat of the solitary one during long months! — to civilized life — to the settled home and succession of monotonous days, farewell! Peril will now be mine; and I hail her as a friend — death will perpetually cross my path, and I will meet him as a benefactor; hardship, inclement weather, and dangerous tempests will be my sworn mates. Ye spirits of storm, receive me! ye powers of destruction, open wide your arms, and clasp me for ever! if a kinder power have not decreed another end, so that after long endurance I may reap my reward, and again feel my heart beat near the heart of another like to me.

Tiber, the road which is spread by nature's own hand, threading her continent, was at my feet, and many a boat was tethered to the banks. I would with a few books, provisions, and my dog, embark in one of these and float down the current of the stream into the sea; and then, keeping near land, I would coast the beauteous shores and sunny promontories of the blue Mediterranean, pass Naples, along Calabria, and would dare the twin perils of Scylla and Charybdis; then, with fearless aim, (for what had I to lose?) skim ocean's surface towards Malta and the further Cyclades. I would avoid Constantinople, the sight of whose well-known towers and inlets belonged to another state of existence from my present one; I would coast Asia Minor, and Syria, and, passing the seven-mouthed Nile, steer northward again, till losing sight of forgotten Carthage and deserted Libya, I should reach the pillars of Hercules. And then — no matter where — the oozy caves, and soundless depths of ocean may be my dwelling, before I accomplish this long-drawn voyage, or the arrow of disease find my heart as I float singly on the weltering Mediterranean; or, in some place I touch at, I may find what I seek — a companion; or if this may not be — to endless time, decrepit and grey headed — youth already in the grave with those I love — the lone wanderer will still unfurl his sail, and clasp the tiller — and, still obeying the breezes of heaven, for ever round another and another promontory, anchoring in another and another bay, still ploughing seedless ocean, leaving behind the verdant land of native Europe, adown the tawny shore of Africa, having weathered the fierce seas of the Cape, I may moor my worn skiff in a creek, shaded by spicy groves of the odorous islands of the far Indian ocean.

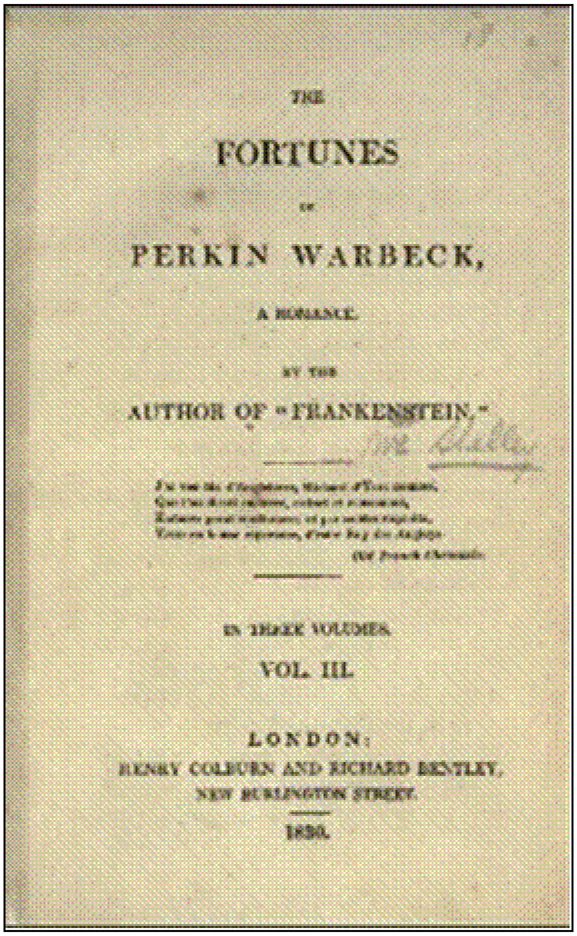
These are wild dreams. Yet since, now a week ago, they came on me, as I stood on the height of St. Peter's, they have ruled my imagination. I have chosen my boat, and laid in my scant stores. I have selected a few books; the principal are Homer and Shakespeare — But the libraries of the world are thrown open to me — and in any port I can renew my stock. I form no expectation of alteration for the better; but the monotonous present is intolerable to me. Neither hope nor joy are my pilots — restless despair and fierce desire of change lead me on. I long to grapple with danger, to be excited by fear, to have some task, however slight or voluntary, for each day's fulfilment. I shall witness all the variety of appearance, that the elements can assume — I shall read fair augury in the rainbow — menace in the cloud — some lesson or record dear to my heart in everything. Thus around the shores of deserted earth, while the sun is high, and the moon waxes or wanes, angels, the spirits of the dead, and the ever-open eye of the Supreme, will behold the tiny bark, freighted with Verney — the LAST MAN.

THE END

THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK

The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck- A Romance is an historical novel. It was first published on June the 7th in 1830 by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley after three years of Shelley unsuccessfully attempting to sell it. Colburn had published her previous novel *The Last Man* to little financial benefit and this resulted in him offering Shelley a low price for this work. The novel focuses on the figure of Perkin Warbeck, a pretender to the English throne, who claimed to be Richard Duke of York and the son of the late Edward IV. Richard and his brother Edward V were imprisoned in the Tower of London by Richard III in 1483 after which their fate was never conclusively proven. It is most frequently believed that this imprisonment resulted in their deaths, but there were rumours that the princes had escaped the tower, and in Burgundy in 1490 Perkin Warbeck declared himself to be Richard of York and made a claim to the throne.

Shelley does not question the validity of his claim and treats Warbeck as the true Richard of York and chooses to begin the novel at the end of the War of the Roses at the famous Battle of Bosworth. Richard's wife Lady Gordon is a central character in the text and represents alternative values to those held by Henry VII and Richard. The novel involves a deliberate juxtaposition between the historical genre associated with the masculine, and romance which was deemed to be feminine and therefore culturally and intellectually inferior. Shelley strives to offer a different perspective on the historical novel and a critique of the masculine motives for power.



THE

FORTUNES

OF

PERKIN WARBECK,

A ROMANCE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1830.

The first edition's title page

CONTENTS

PREFACE.

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.

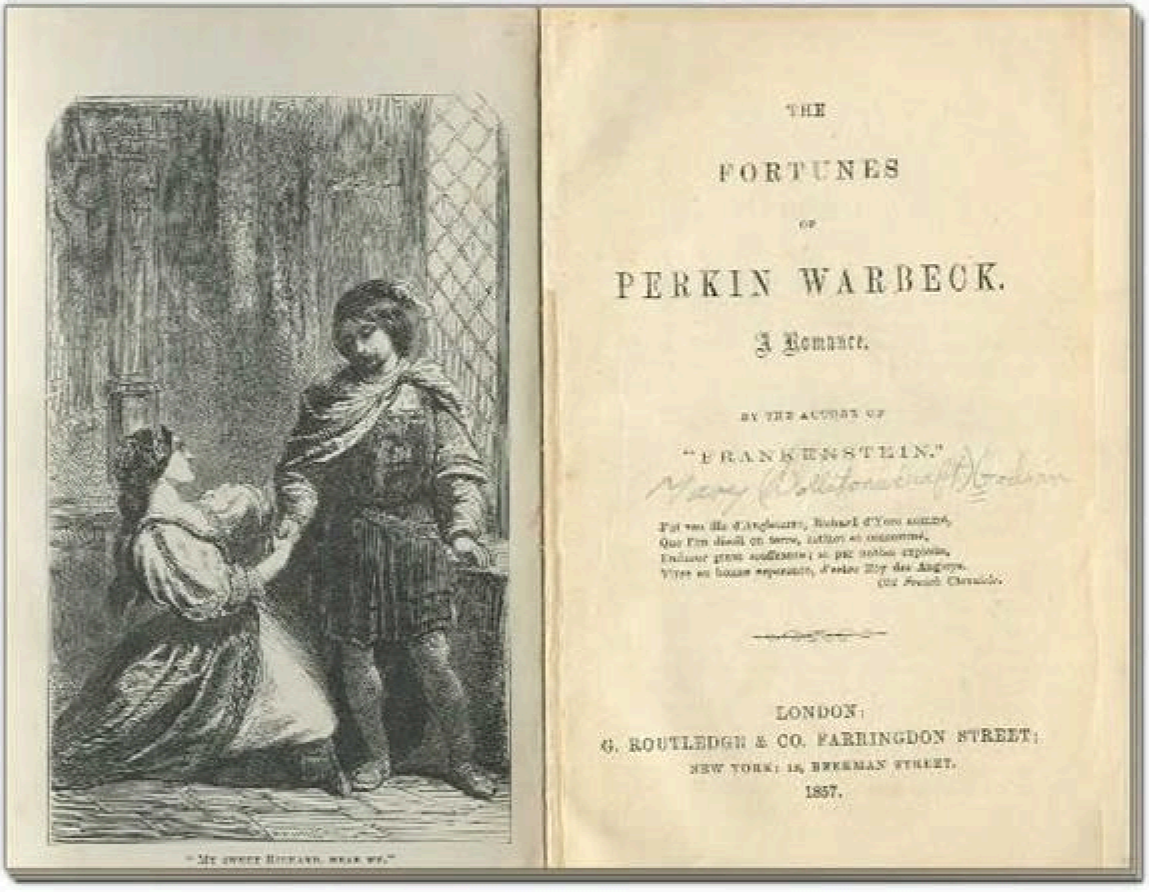
VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.
CHAPTER XIII.

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.
CHAPTER XVIII.
CHAPTER XIX.
CHAPTER XX.
CHAPTER XXI.
CONCLUSION.



"My sweet Richard, hear me."

THE

FORTUNES

OF

PERKIN WARBECK.

A Romance.

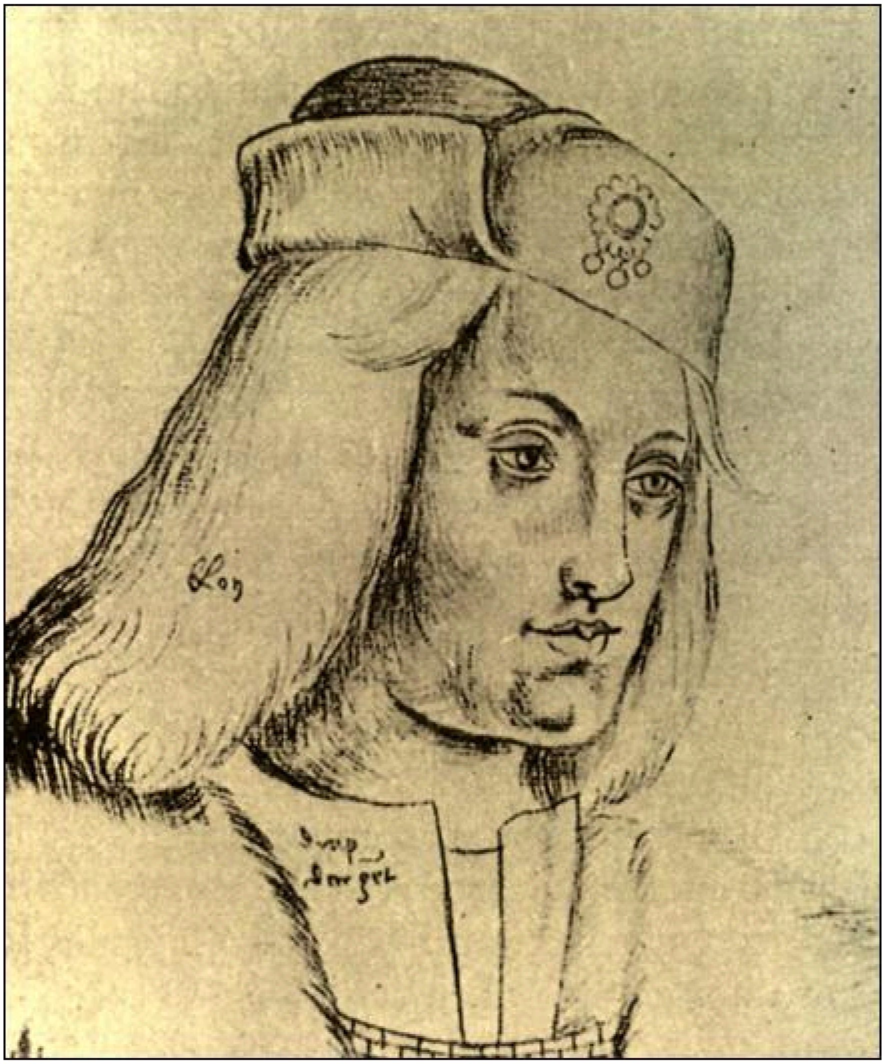
BY THE AUTHOR OF

"FRANKENSTEIN."

Mary (Wollstonecraft) Godwin

LONDON:
G. ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
NEW YORK: 18, BEEKMAN STREET.
1857.

An early edition



Perkin Warbeck (1474–1499) was a pretender to the English throne during the reign of King Henry VII of England.

J’ai veu filz d’Angleterre, Richard d’Yorc nommé.
Que l’on disoit en terre, estinct et consommé.
Endurer grant souffrance; et par nobles exploitz.
Vivre en bonne esperance, d’estre Roy des Angloys.
— Old French Chronicle.

PREFACE.

The story of Perkin Warbeck was first suggested to me as a subject for historical detail. On studying it, I became aware of the romance which his story contains, while, at the same time, I felt that it would be impossible for any narration, that should be confined to the incorporation of facts related by our old Chronicle to do it justice.

It is not singular that I should entertain a belief that Perkin was, in reality, the lost Duke of York. For, in spite of Hume, and the later historians who have followed in his path, no person who has at all studied the subject but arrives at the same conclusion. Records exist in the Tower, some well known, others with which those who have access to those interesting papers are alone acquainted, which put the question almost beyond a doubt.

This is not the place for a discussion of the question. The principal thing that I should wish to be impressed on my reader’s mind is, that whether my hero was or was not an impostor, he was believed to be the true man by his contemporaries. The partial pages of Bacon, of Hall, and Holinshed and others of that date, are replete with proofs of this fact. There are some curious letters, written by Sir John Ramsay, Laird of Balmayne, calling himself Lord Bothwell, addressed to Henry the Seventh himself, which, though written by a spy and hireling of that monarch, tend to confirm my belief, and even demonstrate that in his eagerness to get rid of a formidable competitor, Henry did not hesitate to urge midnight assassination. These letters are printed in the Appendix to Pinkerton’s History of Scotland. The verses which form the motto to these volumes, are part of a rythmical Chronicle, written by two subjects of Burgundy, who lived in those days; it is entitled “Recollection des Merveilles, advenues en nostre temps, commencée par très élégant orateur, Messire Georges Chastellan, et continuée par Maistre Jean Molinet.”

In addition to the unwilling suffrage of his enemies, we may adduce the acts of his friends and allies. Human nature in its leading features is the same in all ages. James the Fourth of Scotland was a man of great talent and discernment: he was proud; attached, as a Scot, to the prejudices of birth; of punctilious honour. No one can believe that he would have bestowed his near kinswoman, nor have induced the Earl of Huntley to give his daughter in marriage, to one who did not bear evident signs of being of royal blood.

The various adventures of this unfortunate Prince in many countries, and his alliance with a beautiful and high-born woman, who proved a faithful, loving wife to him, take away the sting from the ignominy which might attach itself to his fate; and make him, we venture to believe, in spite of the contumely later historians have chosen, in the most arbitrary way, to heap upon him, a fitting object of interest — a hero to ennoble the pages of a humble tale.

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

He seemed breathless, heartless, faint and wan.
And all his armour sprinkled was with blood.
And soiled with dirty gore, that no man can
Discern the hue thereof. He never stood.
But bent his hasty course towards the idle flood.
— Spenser.

After a long series of civil dissension — after many battles, whose issue involved the fate of thousands — after the destruction of nearly all the English nobility in the contest between the two Roses, the decisive battle of Bosworth Field was fought on the 22d of August, 1415, whose result was to entwine, as it was called, the white and red symbols of rivalship, and to restore peace to this unhappy country.

The day had been sunny and warm: as the evening closed in a west wind rose, bringing along troops of fleecy clouds, golden at sunset, and then dun and grey, veiling with pervious network the many stars. Three horsemen at this hour passed through the open country between Hinckley and Welford in Leicestershire. It was broad day when they descended from the elevation on which the former stands, and the villagers crowded to gaze upon the fugitives, and to guess, from the ensigns they bore, to which party they belonged, while the warders from the near castle hastened out to stop them, thus to curry favour with the conqueror; a design wholly baffled. The good steeds of the knights, for such their golden spurs attested them to be, bore them fast and far along the Roman road, which still exists in those parts to shame our modern builders. It was dusk when, turning from the direct route to avoid entering Welford, they reached a ford of the Avon. Hitherto silence had prevailed with the party — for until now their anxiety to fly had solely occupied their thoughts. Their appearance spoke of war, nay, of slaughter. Their cloaks were stained and torn; their armour was disjointed, and parts of it were wanting; yet these losses were so arbitrary, that it was plain that the pieces had been hacked from their fastenings. The helm of the foremost was deprived of its crest; another wore the bonnet of a common soldier, which ill accorded with the rest of his accoutrements; while the third, bareheaded, his hair falling on his shoulders, lank and matted from heat and exercise, gave more visible tokens of the haste of flight. As the night grew darker, one of them, and then another, seemed willing to relax somewhat in their endeavours: one alone continued, with unmitigated energy, to keep his horse at the same pace they had all maintained during the broad light of day.

When they reached the ford, the silence was broken by the hindmost horseman; he spoke in a petulant voice, saying:—"Another half mile at this pace, and poor Floeur-de-Luce founders; if you will not slacken your speed, here we part, my friends. God save you till we meet again!"

"Evil betide the hour that separates us, brother!" said the second fugitive, reining in; "Our cause, our peril, our fate shall be the same. You, my good lord, will consult your own safety."

The third cavalier had already entered the stream: he made a dead halt while his friends spoke, and then replied:—"Let us name some rendezvous where, if we escape, we may again meet. I go on an errand of life and death; my success is doubtful, my danger certain. If I succeed in evading it, where shall I rejoin you?"

"Though the event of this day has been fatal to the king," answered the other, "our fortunes are not decided. I propose taking refuge in some sanctuary, till we perceive how far the Earl of Richmond is inclined to mercy."

"I knew the Earl when a mere youth, Sir Humphrey Stafford," said the foremost rider, "and heard more of him when I visited Brittanny, at the time of King Louis's death, two years ago. When mercy knocks at his heart, suspicion and avarice give her a rough reception. We must fly beyond sea, unless we can make further stand. More of this when we meet again. Where shall that be?"

"I have many friends near Colchester," replied the elder Stafford, "and St. Mary boasts an asylum there which a crowned head would not dare violate. Thence, if all else fail, we can pass with ease to the Low Countries."

"In sanctuary at Colchester — I will not fail you. God bless and preserve you the while!"

The noble, as he said these words, put spurs to his horse, and without looking back crossed the stream, and turning on the skirts of a copse was soon out of sight of his companions. He rode all night, cheering his steed with hand and voice; looking angrily at the early dawning east, which soon cast from her cloudless brow the dimness of night. Yet the morning air was grateful to his heated cheeks. It was a perfect summer's morn. The wheat, golden from ripeness, swayed gracefully to the light breeze; the slender oats shook their small bells in the air with ceaseless motion; the birds twittering, alighted from the full-leaved trees, scattering dew-drops from the branches. With the earliest dawn the Cavalier entered a forest, traversing its depths with the hesitation of one unacquainted with the country, and looked frequently at the sky, to be directed by the position of the glowing east. A path more worn than the one he had hitherto followed now presented itself, leading into the heart of the wood. He hesitated for a few seconds, and then, with a word of cheer to his horse, pursued his way into the embowering thicket. After a short space the path narrowed, the meeting branches of the trees impeded him, and the sudden angle it made from the course he wished to follow served to perplex him still further; but as he vented his impatience by hearty Catholic exclamations, a little tinkling bell spoke of a chapel near, and of the early rising of the priest to perform the matin service at its altar. The horse of the fugitive, a noble war-steed, had long flagged; and hunger gnawed at the rider's own heart, for he had not tasted food since the morning of the previous day. These sounds, therefore, heard in so fearless a seclusion, bore with them pleasant tidings of refreshment and repose. He crossed himself in thankfulness; then throwing himself from his horse (and such change was soothing to his stiffened limbs), he led him through the opening glade to where a humble chapel and a near adjoining hut stood in the bosom of the thicket, emblems of peace and security.

The Cavalier tied his horse to a tree, and entered the chapel. A venerable priest was reading the matin service; one old woman composed his congregation, and she was diligently employed telling her beads. The bright rays of the newly risen sun streamed through the eastern window, casting the chequered shadow of its lattice work on the opposite wall. The chapel was small and rustic; but it was kept exquisitely clean: the sacred appurtenances of the altar also were richer than was usual, and each shrine was decked with clusters of flowers, chiefly composed of white roses. No high praise, indeed, was due to the rude picture of the Virgin of the Annunciation, or of the announcing Angel, a representation of whom formed the altar-piece; but in barbaric England, in those days, piety stood in place of taste, and that which represented. Our Lady received honour, however, unworthy it might be of the inspiress of Raphael or Correggio. The cavalier took his disornamented casque from his head, placed it on the ground, and knelt reverentially on the bare earth. He had lately escaped from battle and slaughter, and he surely thought that he had especial motive for thanks-giving; so that if his lips uttered a mere soldier's "Ave," still it had the merit of fervour and sincerity.

Had he been less occupied by his own feelings, he might have remarked the many glances the priest cast on him, who dishonoured his learning and piety by frequent mistakes of language, as his thoughts wandered from his breviary, to observe with deep attention his unexpected visitor. At length the service ended: the old dame rose from her knees, and satisfied her curiosity which she had excited by many a look askance, by a full and long gaze on the cavalier. His hewn armour, torn cloak, and, unseemly for the sacred spot, the dread stains on his garments and hands were all minutely scanned. Nor did his personal appearance escape remark. His stature was tall, his person well knit, shewing him to be a man of about thirty years of age. His features were finely moulded, his grey eyes full of fire, his step had the dignity of rank, and his look expressed chivalrous courage and frankness. The good woman had not been long engaged in surveying the stranger, when her pastor beckoned her to retire, and himself advanced, replying to the soldier's salute with a benedicite, and then hastily enquiring if he came from the field.

"Even so, Father," said the Cavalier; "I come from the field of the bloody harvest. Has any intelligence of it travelled hither so speedily? If so, I must have wandered from the right road, and am not so far on my journey as I hoped."

"I have only heard that a battle was expected," said the priest, "and your appearance tells me that it is over. The fortunes, nay, perhaps the life, of a dear friend are involved in its issue, and I fear that it is adverse — for you fly from pursuit, and methinks, though stained with dust and blood, that emblem on your breast is the White Rose."

The warrior looked on the old man, whose dignity and language were at variance with his lowly destination; he looked partly in wonder, and partly to assure himself of his questioner's sincerity. "You are weary, Sir Knight," added the Monk, whose experienced eyes had glanced to the golden spurs of his visitant; “come to my hermitage, there to partake of such refreshment as I can bestow. When your repast is ended, I will, by confidence on my part, merit yours.”

This invitation was that of worldy courtesy, rather than the rustic welcome of a recluse monk. The Cavalier thanked him cordially, adding, that he must first provide food and water for his horse, and that afterwards he would gratefully accept his host’s invitation. The old man entered with the spirit of a soldier into his guest’s anxiety for his steed, and assisted in purveying to its wants, ingratiating himself meanwhile with its master, by discovering and praising scientifically its points of beauty. The poor animal shewed tokens of over fatigue, yet still he did not refuse his food, and the Cavalier marked with joy that his eye grew brighter and his knees firmer after feeding.

They then entered the cottage, and the soldier’s eye was attracted from more sacred emblems by a sword which was suspended over a picture of the Virgin:—”You belong to our Chivalry!” he exclaimed, while his countenance lighted up with joyful recognition.

“Now I belong to the holy order whose badge I wear,” the Monk replied, pointing to his Benedictine dress. “In former days I followed a brave leader to the field, and, in his service, incurred such guilt, as I now try to expiate by fasting and prayer.”

The Monk’s features were convulsed by agitation as he spoke, then crossing his arms on his breast, he was absorbed in thought for a few moments, after which he raised his head and resumed the calm and even serene look that characterized him. “Sir Knight,” said he, motioning to the table now spread for the repast, “I have but poor fare to offer, but a soldier will not disdain its meagreness. My wine I may praise, as being the produce of a generous vintage; I have kept it sealed, to open it on occasions like the present, and rejoice that your strength will be recruited by it.”

Bread, fruits, cheese, and a flagon of the wine, which merited the giver’s eulogium, composed the fugitive’s breakfast, whose fatigue required cordial and repose. As he was occupied by his repast, his host eyed him with evident agitation, eager yet fearful to question him on the subject of the battle. At length he again asked, “You come from the field on which the forces of the King and of the Earl of Richmond met?”

“I do.”

"You fought for the White Rose, and you fly?"

"I fought for the White Rose till it was struck to the ground. The king has fallen with his chief nobility around him. Few Yorkists remain to mourn the success of the Lancastrians."

Deep grief clouded the old man's countenance, but accustomed to subdue his feelings, as one on whom, being stricken by an overwhelming misery, all subsequent disasters fall blunted, he continued with greater calmness: "Pardon me, noble gentleman, if I appear to ask an indiscreet question. You are of lordly bearing, and probably filled a place near the royal person. Did you hear, on the night before last, aught of the arrival of a stranger youth at the King's tent?"

The knight eyed the old man with a quick glance, asking, in his turn, "Are you, then, the foster-father of King Richard's son?"

"Did you see my boy?" cried the priest, "Did his father acknowledge him? — Where is he now? — did he enter the ranks to sight and fall for his parent?"

"On the night of which you speak," said the stranger, evading the immediate question, "the King placed his son's hand in mine, as I vowed to protect and guard him if ill befell our party, as it has befallen."

"Surely some presentiment of evil haunted the King's mind."

"I do believe it; for his manner was solemn and affecting. He bade the youth remember that he was a Plantagenet, and spoke proudly of the lineage from which he sprung. The young esquire listened intently, looking at his father with such an ingenuous and thoughtful expression, that he won my heart to love him."

"Now bless thee, Sir Knight, whoever thou art, for this praise of my poor Edmund! I pray you, hasten to tell me what more passed."

The Cavalier continued his account; but his manner was serious, as if the conclusion of his tale would afflict his auditor. He related how, on quitting the royal tent, he had led Edmund Plantagenet to his own, there to converse with him awhile, the better to learn whether his bearing and speech shewed promise of future merit. King Richard had enjoined his son to return to his seclusion early on the following morning; but as soon as he entered his conductor's; tent, he knelt to him and asked a boon, while tears gathered in his eyes, and his voice was broken by the fervour of his desire. The noble was moved by his entreaties, and promised to grant his request, if it did not militate against his honour and allegiance. “It is for honour that I speak,” said Plantagenet; “I am older in years than in seeming, for already I number twenty summers; and spite of my boyish look I am familiar with martial exercises, and the glorious promise of war. Let me draw my sword for my father to-morrow — let me, at your side, prove myself a worthy descendant of the conquerors of France! Who will sight for King Richard with greater courage, fidelity, and devotion, than his acknowledged and duteous son?” The Cavalier yielded to his noble yearnings. Clothed in armour he entered the ranks, and hovered a protecting angel near his parent during the bloody contest. And now, as his venerable guardian watched with trembling eagerness the countenance of his guest while he told his tale, and the stranger, with bitter regret, was about to relate that he had seen Plantagenet felled to the ground by a battle-axe, quick steps, and then a knocking, was heard at the cottage door. The stranger started on his feet, and put his hand upon his sword; but a bright smile illuminated the Monk’s face, as the very youth of whom they spoke, Edmund Plantagenet, rushed into the apartment. His soiled garments and heated brow spoke of travel and fatigue, while his countenance wore an expression of wildness and even of horror. He started when he saw the stranger, but quickly recognized him as his new friend. “Thank God!” he cried, “that you, my dear Lord, have not fallen into the hands of the sacrilegious usurper! It is my father’s spirit that has saved you for his son’s sake, that I may not be utterly abandoned and an orphan.”

With milder accost he bent his knee to his holy guardian, and then turned to answer the Cavalier’s questions of how he had escaped death from the blow he had received, and what new events had occurred since he had quitted the field early on the preceding day? — while the Monk chid him for his disobedience to his father’s commands, in having mingled with the fray. The eyes of Plantagenet flashed fire at this reproach.—”Could I know that my father’s crown and life,” he exclaimed impetuously, “depended on the combat, and not bring to his aid my weak arm? God of Heaven! had there been five hundred true as I, we might all have fallen round him: but never, never, should I have seen the sight which last night I saw — nor heard the sounds I last night heard!”

The youth covered his face with his hands, and the boiling tears trickled between his fingers. “Tell me,” cried the noble, “what has happened? — and swiftly tell me, for I loiter here too long.”

Almost suffocated by emotion, Plantagenet related, that when he recovered from the trance into which the fearful blow he had received had thrown him, the Earl's camp-followers were busy among the slain; and that he had seen the body of King Richard — of his father — thrown half naked across a mule, thus to be borne to be exposed to the public gaze and mockery in Leicester, where, but the day before, he had ridden with the royal crown on his head, the acknowledged sovereign of England. And that crown, base ill-bartered bauble, having been found in the tent by Lord Stanley, he had brought and placed on Richmond's head, while the soldiers, with one acclaim, hailed him Henry the Seventh, King of England.

The last words more than the others, for the death of his royal master was already known to him, moved the knight:—"Is this the end of our hopes?" he cried; "Am I then too late? Farewell, my friends! Plantagenet, I shall never forget my oath to the King; I shall become, I fear, an outcast and a soldier of fortune, even if I escape worse fate; but claim when you will, and it shall be your's, whatever protection I can afford you."

"Yield then, Lord Lovel," said the youth, "to my first request. You are in peril, let me share it: permit me to accompany you. If you refuse, my plan is already formed; I repair to the Earl of Lincoln, whom King Richard named his successor, and offer myself as a soldier in his attempt to discrown the usurping Henry, and to raise again the White Rose to its rightful supremacy."

"To the Earl of Lincoln — the successor of Richard — to him you would repair? It is well — come with me now, and I will present you to that nobleman. If your foster-father consents, bid adieu to this seclusion for a time, and accompany me to London, to new contests — to the combat of right against might — to success and honour, or to defeat and death!"

The sun had risen high when, having taking leave of the venerable Monk, who would not oppose his pupil's gallant spirit of enterprize, Lord Lovel and young. Plantagenet threaded the forest paths, which, by a safer and a shorter route than the highway, took them on their road to London. For a time they led their horses with difficulty through the entangled thicket, when at last reaching the open road, they mounted, and Lord Lovel, who was desirous of estimating the abilities and disposition of his companion, entered into conversation with him, They first conversed on the sad changes which were the work of the eventful day of battle; afterwards the Cavalier and led Edmund to speak of himself, his early life, his acquirements, and his hopes.

When Plantagenet was but ten years old his mother died, and her last request to the father of her boy, founded on a deep knowledge of the world, was, that her son might be educated far from the court, nor be drawn from the occupations and happier scenes of private life, to become a hanger-on of princes and nobles. There was a man, a gentleman and a knight, who had been a partizan of the White Rose, and who had fought and bled for it in various battles between the Duke of York and Henry VI. In one of these, the misery of the times, and horible consequences of civil dissension, caused him unwittingly to lift his armed hand against his twin brother, nor did he discover the mistake till, with his dying voice, that brother called on him to assist him against his slayer. A life of seclusion, penance, and prayer, alone blunted his sense of remorse, and quitting the world, he retired to a monastery, where after due noviciate he took vows, and then shrinking from commerce with his kind, followed by visions that spoke for ever to him of his unnatural crime, he retreated to the forest of Leicester-shire, to dwell alone with his grief and his repentance.

His retreat was known to many of his friends, and chance had brought the Duke of Gloucester at one time to visit him; when the ancient warrier rejoiced with enthusiasm at the exaltation of the party to which he was attached. The death of the mother of Edmund had the effect of softening the Duke's heart, of making for a short interval worldly cares and objects distasteful to him, and of filling him with a desire of seclusion and peace. If he was unable to enjoy these himself, he resolved that at least his child should not be drawn by him into the thorny path of rivalship and ambition. His mother's last injunction strengthened this feeling; and the Duke, visiting again the hermit of the wood, induced him to take charge of Edmund, and bringing him up in ignorance of his real parentage, to bestow such education on him as would enable him to fill with reputation an honourable, if not a distinguished station in society. This order of things was not changed by Richard's exaltation to the crown. On the contrary, the dangers he incurred from his usurpation, made him yet more anxious to secure a peaceful existence for his offspring. When, however, his legitimate son, whom he had created Prince of Wales, died, paternal affection awoke strong in his heart, and he could not resist his desire of seeing Edmund: a memorable visit for the priest-bred nursling of the forest! It gave him a link with society with which before he had felt no connexion: his imagination and curiosity were highly excited. His revered friend, yielding to his eager demands, was easily enticed to recur to the passed scenes of an eventful life. The commencement of the wars of the two Roses, and their dreadful results, furnished inexhaustible topics of discourse. Plantagenet listened with breathless interest, although it was not till the eve of the battle of Bosworth, that he knew how indissolubly his own fortunes were linked with those of the house of York.

The events of the few last days had given him a new existence. For the first time, feeling was the parent of action; and a foregoing event drove him on to the one subsequent. He was excited to meditate on a thousand schemes, while the unknown future inspired him with an awe that thrilled his young heart with mingled pain and pleasure. He uttered his sentiments with the ingenuousness of one who had never been accustomed to converse with any but a friend; and as he spoke, his dark and thoughtful eyes beamed with a tempered fire, that shewed him capable of deep enthusiasm, though utter want of knowledge of the world must make him rather a follower than a leader.

They rode on meanwhile, the noble Cavalier and gentle Squire indulging in short repose. The intense fatigue Edmund at first endured, seemed to be subdued by the necessity of its continuance, nor did it prevent him from conversing with Lord Lovel. He was anxious thoroughly to understand the immediate grounds of the Earl of Richmond's invasion, and to ascertain the relative position of the remaining chiefs of the White Rose: "Where," he asked, "are Edward the Fourth's children?"

"The elder of these," Lord Lovel replied, "the Lady Elizabeth, is, by direction of her uncle, at Sheriff Hutton, in Yorkshire."

"And where the princes? Edward, who was proclaimed king, and his younger brother?"

"They were long imprisoned in the Tower. Young Edward died there more than a year ago."

"And the Duke of York?"

"He is supposed to have died also: they were both sickly boys."

Lord Lovel said these words in a grave voice, and suspicion would have been instilled into any but the unsuspecting Edmund, of some covert meaning. After a short pause, he continued:—”The question of the succession stands thus. Your father, the Duke of Gloucester threw the stigma of illegitimacy on King Edward’s children, and thus took from them their right of inheriting the crown. The attainder of the Duke of Clarence was considered reason sufficient why his children should be excluded from the throne, and their uncle in consequence became, by right of birth, King of England: his son he created Prince of Wales. We submitted; for a child like Edward the Fifth could scarcely be supported against an experienced warrior, a man of talent, a sage and just king, but at the expense of much blood. The wounds inflicted by the opposing houses of York and Lancaster were yet, as the late successful rebellion proves, unhealed; and had the Yorkists contended among themselves, they would yet sooner have lost the supremacy they so hardly acquired: Richard therefore received our oaths of allegiance. When his son died, the question of who was the heir to the crown became agitated; and the king at first declared the Earl of Warwick, the son of the Duke of Clarence, to be his successor. It was a dangerous step — and the impurdent friends of the young Earl made it more so — to name him to succeed, who, if he were permitted at any time to wear the crown, might claim precedence of him who possessed it. Poor Warwick paid the penalty of youth and presumption: he is now a prisoner at Sheriff Hutton; and John de la Poole, Earl of Lincoln, son of Richard’s sister, and by the removal of the children of his elder brothers, his heir by law, was nominated to succeed his uncle. I am now proceeding to him. I am ignorant of the conduct he will pursue; whether he will make head against this Lancastrian King, or — Lincoln is a noble cavalier; a man whom bright honour clothes; he is brave, generous, and good. I shall guide myself by his counsels and resolves; and you, it appears, will follow my example.”

After a pause, Lord Lovel continued: “After the death or disappearance of his princely nephews, the king, wishing to confirm his title, was ready to take the stigma thrown on their birth from his brother’s daughters, and to marry his niece, the Lady Elizabeth. Her mother at first resisted, but the prospect of seeing her children restored to their rights, and herself to her lost dignity, overcame her objections, and the princess yielded a willing consent. Meanwhile the Yorkists, who joined the Earl of Richmond, extorted from him a vow that he would make King Edward’s daughter his queen; and even the Lancastrians, thinking thus to secure a king of their own, are eager for this union: yet the Earl hates us all so cordially that he was hardly brought to consent. Should he, now that he has declared himself king, evade his promise, the children of Elizabeth Woodville will suffer the stain of illegitimacy; but if the marriage has place, and this unhappy race is restored to their honours and rights, our self-named sovereign may find that his own hands have dug the pit into which he will fall."

A long silence succeeded to these explanations. The last expression used by Lovel inspired Edmund with wonder and curiosity; but the noble pressing his horse to a swifter pace, did not hear his observations, or hearing them, replied only by saying, "Three hours' good riding will bring us to London. Courage, Plantagenet! slacken not your speed, my good boy; soft ease will follow this hard labour."

The young moon in its first quarter was near its setting when they arrived at London. They approached from Edgware: without entering the town, they skirted its northern extremity, till Lord Lovel, checking his horse, remarked to his companion, that he judged it fitting to delay approaching the residence of the Earl of Lincoln, until the setting of the moon and subsequent darkness secured them from observation.

CHAPTER II.

Yes, my good Lord.
It doth contain a king; King Richard lies
Within the limits of you lime and stone.
— SHAKESPEARE.

The Earl of Lincoln, declared by Richard the Third, heir to the crown, did not join the royal forces, nor appear at the battle of Bosworth. This distinguished prince was a man of singular abilities and strength of mind, which chivalrous generosity adorned with a lustre superior even to that which he derived from his high rank. Lord Lovel was possessed of knightly courage, untarnished honour, and gentlemanly accomplishment. To these military and graceful qualities Lincoln added the wisdom of a statesman, and the moral energy resulting from inflexible principle. He felt himself responsible to mankind and to all posteriy for his actions. He was brave — that was a virtue of the times; but he was just, in a comprehensive sense of the word, and that exalted him above them. His manly features did not so much wear the stamp of beauty, though, like all the offspring of the House of York, he was handsome, as of the best quality of man, a perception of right, and resolution to achieve that right.

Lord Lincoln disapproved decidedly of the usurpation of his uncle, Richard the Third, over the children of Edward the Fourth. He allowed that the evidence was strong in favour of that king's former marriage, and their consequent illegitimacy; but he said, that Elizabeth Woodville had so long been held Queen of England, and her children heirs to the crown, that it was impossible to eradicate the belief of the English people, that their allegiance was due to him who had been proclaimed even by his uncle, Edward the Fifth. Even if they were put aside, that attainder passed against the Duke of Clarence was an insufficient reason to deprive his son of his lawful inheritance. He saw England wasted, and her nobility extirpated by civil contest; and he perceived the seeds of future strife in the assumption of the crown by the Duke of Gloucester. When the son of Richard the Third died, and the Earl of Warwick was named his successor, the superior right of the nephew before the reigning uncle became so eminent a subject of discussion, that the king was obliged to recall his declaration, and to confine the young Prince in a castle in Yorkshire. The Earl of Lincoln, then seven and twenty years of age, was next named. He remonstrated with his uncle privately; but fear of dividing the House of York against itself, and a disdain to make common cause with the dowager Queen's relations, made him outwardly submit; but his plan was formed, and secretly all his efforts tended towards the restoring the children of Edward to their paternal rights.

The boys were sickly. Edward the Fifth, irritated by the extinction of the hopes which the intrigues of his mother had kept alive in his breast, wasted by imprisonment in the Tower, and brooking with untamed pride the change from a regal to a private station, pined and died. Richard, Duke of York, was between ten and eleven; a sprightly ingenuous boy, whose lively spirit wore out his frame, and this, added to confinement and attention to his dying brother, brought him also near the grave. It was on the death of Edward that the Earl of Lincoln visited the Tower, and saw young Richard. The accounts given by the attendants of his more than a child's devotion to his brother, his replies full of sportive fancy, his beauty, though his cheek was faded and his person grown thin, moved the generous noble to deep compassion. He ventured, under the strong influence of this feeling, to remonstrate warmly with his royal uncle, reproaching him with needless cruelty, and telling him how in fact, though not in appearance, he was the murderer of his nephews, and would be so held by all mankind. Richard's ambition was satisfied by the success of his measures to obtain the crown; but his fears were awake. The Duke of Buckingham was in arms against him — the Queen and her surviving relatives were perpetually employed in exciting discontents in the kingdom. Richard feared, that if they obtained the person of his nephew, he would be turned into an engine for his overthrow; while to obtain possession of him, was the constant aim of their endeavours. He earnestly desired to reconcile himself to the Queen, and to draw her from the sanctuary in which she had immured herself — she refused all his offers, unless her son was first placed in her hands.

His head, ripe with state plots, now conceived a scheme. He consented that Lincoln should take the Duke of York under his charge, if he would first engage to keep his removal from the Tower, and even his existence, a secret from his enemies. Lincoln made the required promise; the young Prince was conveyed to a country seat belonging to the Earl, and Richard, in furtherance of his plan, caused a rumour to go abroad that he also was dead. No one knew with whom this report originated. When, to assure themselves, various nobles visited the Tower, the boy was no longer there. The Queen gave credit to the tale. At this moment, Richard set on foot a negociation of marriage with the eldest daughter of Edward the Fourth, the Lady Elizabeth. The partizans of the Earl of Richmond sought to ensure the success of his enterprize by the same means: and while little Richard grew in health and happiness in his country retreat, his own nearest and most attached relatives were giving away his inheritance — his uncle unwittingly laid the foundation stone of the reputation of cruelty and murder ever after affixed to him; and his mother, endeavouring to exalt her daughter, and to restore herself to her lost station in the kingdom, sealed the fatal decree that first deprived her son of his rights, and afterwards of his life.

On the evening that Lord Lovel and Edmund Plantagenet entered London, the Earl of Lincoln remained waiting intelligence from the field, in a palace he inhabited not far from Tottenham Court, a secluded habitation, surrounded by a garden and a high wall. This was an irksome situation for a warrior; but though his uncle loved, he distrusted him: his projected marriage with the Lady Elizabeth, would probably cause him again to be father of an heir to the crown, and knowing that Lincoln possessed, in the young Duke of York, a dangerous rival, he refused to allow him to take up arms against Richmond. Lord Lincoln was alone, pacing his large and vaulted hall in deep and anxious meditation. He, who with conscience for his rule, takes, or endeavours to take, the reins of fate into his own hands, must experience frequent misgivings; and often feel, that he wheels near the edge of a giddy precipice, down which the tameless steeds he strives to govern, may, in an instant, hurl him and all dependent upon his guidance. The simple feeling of compassion, arising from the seeing childhood lose its buoyancy in undue confinement, had first led the princely noble to take charge of his young cousin. Afterwards, when he beheld the boy grow in health and years, developing the while extraordinary quickness of intellect, and a sweet ingenuous disposition, he began to reflect on the station he held, his rights and his injuries; and then the design was originated on which he was now called to act.

If Richard gained the day, all would stand as before. Should he be defeated — and that second sense, that feeling of coming events, which is one of the commonest, though the least acknowledged of the secret laws of our nature, whispered the yet unrevealed truth to him — who then would assume England's diadem, and how could he secure it for its rightful owner, the only surviving son of Edward the Fourth? All these reflexions coursed themselves through his brain, while, with the zeal of a partizan, and the fervour of one wedded to the justice of his cause, he revolved every probable change of time and fortune.

At this moment a courier was announced: he brought tidings from the field. As is usual on the eve of a great event, they were dubious and contradictory. The armies faced each other, and the battle was impending. The doubts entertained on both sides, as to the part that Lord Stanley would take, gave still a greater uncertainty to the anticipations of each.

Soon after the arrival of this man, the loud ringing at the outer gate was renewed; and the trampling of horses, as they entered the court, announced a more numerous company. There was something in the movements of his domestics, that intimated to the Earl that his visitor was of superior rank. Could it be the king, who had fled; conquered, and fugitive? Could such terms be applied to the high-hearted Richard? The doors of the hall were thrown open, and the question answered by the entrance of his visitant: it was a woman; and her name, "Lady Brampton!" in a tone of wonder, burst from the noble's lips.

"Even I, my good Lord," said the lady; "allow me your private ear; I bring intelligence from Leicestershire. All is lost," she continued, when the closing of the door assured her of privacy; "all is lost, and all is gained — Richard is slain. My emissaries brought swift intelligence of this event to me at Northampton, and I have hastened with it bither, that without loss of time you may act."

There was a quickness and a decision in the lady's manner, that checked rather than encouraged her auditor. She continued: "Vesper hour has long passed — it matters not — London yet is ours. Command instantly that Richard the Fourth be proclaimed king of England."

Lord Lincoln started at these words. The death of his uncle and benefactor could not be received by him like the loss of a move at chess; a piece lost, that required the bringing up of other pieces to support a weak place. "The king is slain," were words that rung in his ears; drowning every other that the lady uttered with rapidity and agitation. "We will speak of that anon," he replied; and going to the high window of his hall, he threw it open, as if the air oppressed him. The wind sighed in melancholy murmurs among the branches of the elms and limes in the garden: the stars were bright, and the setting moon was leaving the earth to their dim illumination. "Yesternight," thought Lincoln, "he was among us, a part of our conversation, our acts, our lives; now his glazed eyes behold not these stars. The past is his: with the present and the future he has no participation."

Lady Brampton's impatience did not permit the Earl long to indulge in that commune with nature, which we eagerly seek when grief and death throws us back on the weakness of our human state, and we feel that we ourselves, our best laid projects and loftiest hopes, are but the play things of destiny. "Wherefore," cried the lady, "does De la Poole linger? Does he hesitate to do his cousin justice? Does he desire to follow in the steps of his usurping predecessor? Wherefore this delay?"

"To strike the surer," replied Lincoln. "May not I ask, wherefore this impatience?"

Even as he spoke, steps were heard near the apartment; and while the eyes of both were turned with inquietude on the expected intruder, Lord Lovel entered: there was no triumph, no eager anticipation on his brow — he was languid from ill success and fatigue. Lincoln met him with the pleasure of one who sees his friend escaped from certain death. He was overjoyed to be assured of his existence; he was glad to have his assistance on the present emergency. "We know," he said, "all the evil tidings you bring us; we are now deliberating on the conduct we are to pursue: your presence will facilitate our measures. Tell me what other friends survive to aid us. The Duke of Norfolk, the Staffords, Sir Robert Brakenbury, where are they?"

Lovel had seen the Duke fall, the Staffords had accompanied his flight; uncertainty still hung over the fate of many others. This detail of the death of many of their common friends, subdued the impetuosity of the lady, till an account of how Richard himself had fought and been slain, recalled her to their former topic of discussion; and, again, she said, "It is strange that you do not perceive the dangers of delay. Why is not the king proclaimed?"

"Do you not know," asked Lord Lovel, "that the king is proclaimed?"

Lady Brampton clasped her hands, exclaiming—"Then Richard the Fourth will wear his father's crown!"

“Henry the Seventh,” said Lovel, “possesses and wears the English crown. Lord Stanley placed the diadem on the head of the Earl of Richmond, and his soldiers, with one acclaim, acknowledged him as their sovereign.”

“This is mere trifling,” said the lady; “the base-born offspring of Lancaster may dare aspire so high, but one act of our’s dethrones him. The Yorkists are numerous, and will defend their king: London is yet ours.”

“Yes,” replied Lincoln, “it is in our power to deluge the streets of London with blood; to bring massacre among its citizens, and worse disaster on its wives and maidens. I would not buy an eternal crown for myself — I will not strive to place that of England on my kinsman’s head — at this cost. We have had over-much of war: I have seen too many of the noble, young, and gallant, fall by the sword. Brute force has had its day; now let us try what policy can do.”

The council these friends held together was long and anxious. The lady still insisted on sudden and resolute measures. Lord Lovel, a soldier in all his nature, looked forward to the calling together the Yorkists from every part of the kingdom. The Earl, with a statesman’s experience, saw more of obstacle to their purpose in the elevation of Henry the Seventh than either of his companions would allow; the extreme youth of the Duke of York, the oblivion into which he had sunk, and the stain on his birth, which was yet unremoved, would disincline the people to hazard life and fortune in his cause. Henry had taken oath to marry his sister, the Lady Elizabeth, and when thus the progeny of Edward the Fourth were freed from the slur under which they now laboured, the whole country would be alive to the claims of his only son. It was necessary now to place him in safety, and far away from the suspicious eyes of his usurping enemy. That morning Lord Lincoln had brought him up from his rural retreat to the metropolis, and sheltered him for a few hours under safe but strange guardianship. He was left at the house of a Flemish money-lender well known at court. It was agreed that Lord Lovel should take him thence, and make him the companion of his journey to Colchester, where they should remain watching the turn of events, and secretly preparing the insurrection which would place him on the throne. Lady Brampton was obliged to proceed immediately northwards to join her husband; the north was entirely Yorkist, and her influence would materially assist the cause. The Earl remained in London; he would sound the inclinations of the nobility, and even coming in contact with the new king, watch over danger and power at its fountain-head. One more question was discussed. Whether the Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, should be made acquainted with the existence of her son. All three, from various reasons decided in the negative. A personal enmity existed between the widow of Edward the Fourth and Lady Brampton: her party was detested by the two nobles. It would be more popular with the nation, they thought, if her kinsmen, whose upstart pretentions were the object of the derision and scorn of the old aristocracy, had no part in bestowing the crown on the heir of the House of York. Time wore away during these deliberations; it was past midnight before the friends separated. Lord Lovel presented his young friend, Edmund Plantagenet, to the Earl, and recommended him to his protection. Refreshment was also necessary after Lovel's fatiguing journey; but he was so intent on accomplishing his purpose, that he wasted but a few minutes in this manner, and then being provided with a fresh horse from Lincoln's stables, he left the palace, to proceed first to the present abode of Richard of York, and afterwards, accompanied by him, on his road to Essex.

Lord Lovel threaded his way through the dark narrow streets of London towards Lothbury. The habitation of the money-lender was well known to him, but it was not easily entered at past midnight. A promised bribe to the apprentice who hailed him from the lofty garret-window, and his signet-ring sent in to his master, at length procured admission into the bed-chamber of Mynheer Jahn Warbeck. The old man sat up in his bed, his red cotton night-cap on his head, his spectacles, with which he had examined the ring, on his nose; his chamber was narrow and dilapidated, his bed of ill condition. "Who would suppose," thought Lovel, "that this man holds half England in pawn?"

When Warbeck heard that the errand of Lovel was to take from him his princely charge, he rose hastily, wrapping a robe round him, and opened a small wainscoat door leading into a little low room, whence he drew the half-sleeping and wondering boy. There was a rush taper in the room, and daylight began to peep through the crevices of the shutters, giving melancholy distinctness to the dirty and dismantled chamber. One ray fell directly on the red night-cap and spectacles of old Jahn, whose parchment face was filled with wrinkles, yet they were lines of care, not of evil, and there was even benevolence in his close mouth; for the good humour and vivacity of the boy had won on him. Besides he had himself a son, for whom he destined all his wealth, of the same age as the little fellow whose plump roseate hand he held in his own brown shrivelled palm. The boy came in, rubbing his large blue eyes, the disordered ringlets of his fair hair shading a face replete with vivacity and intelligence. Mynheer Jahn was somewhat loth to part with the little prince, but the latter clapped his hands in extacy when he heard that Lord Lovel had come to take him away.

"I pray you tell me, Sir Knight," said old Warbeck, "whether intelligence hath arrived of the victory of our gracious sovereign, and the defeat of the Welch rebels."

Richard became grave at these words; he fixed his eyes enquiringly on the noble: "Dear Lord Lovel," he cried, "for I remember you well, my very good Lord, when you came to the Tower and found me and Robert Clifford playing at bowls — tell me, how you have fought, and whether you have won."

"Mine are evil tidings;" said Lovel, "all is lost. We were vanquished, and your royal uncle slain."

Warbeck's countenance changed at these words; he lamented the king; he lamented the defeat of the party which he had aided by various advances of money, and his regrets at once expressed sorrow for the death of some, and dread from the confiscation of the property of others. Meanwhile, Richard of York was full of some thought that swelled his little breast; taking Lovel's hand, he asked again, "My uncle, Richard the Third, is dead?"

"Even so," was the reply; "he died nobly on the field of battle."

The child drew himself up, and his eyes flashed as he said proudly, —"Then I am king of England."

"Who taught your Grace that lesson?" asked Lovel.

"My liege — my brother Edward. Often and often in the long winter nights, and when he was sick in bed, he told me how, after he had been proclaimed king, he had been dethroned; but that when our uncle died he should be king again; and that if it pleased God to remove him, I should stand in his place; and I should restore my mother's honour, and this he made me swear."

"Bless the boy!" cried Warbeck, "he speaks most sagely; may the saints incline my lord, the Earl of Lincoln, to do his royal cousin justice!"

“Your grace,” said Lovel, “shall hear more of this as we proceed on our journey. Mynheer Jahn, the Earl bade me apply to you; you are to repair to him before noon; meanwhile, fill this long empty purse with gold coins. He will be my guarantee.”

“Lend me the money,” cried the little Duke, “I will repay you. We will repay you, when we have our crown.”

This was an inducement not to be resisted. Warbeck counted out the gold; the boy with light steps tripped down the creaking old staircase, and when Lovel had mounted, taking his hand, he sprung in the saddle before him. The fresh morning air was grateful to both, after the close chambers of the Fleming. The noble put his horse to a quick trot, and leaving London by a different road from that by which he had entered, took his way through Romford and Chelmsford to Colchester.

The news of the Earl of Richmond’s victory and assumption of the crown reached London that night. The citizens heard it on their awakening. The market-people from the west related it to those who came in from the east; but it had not hitherto travelled in that direction. Lovel knew that the storm was behind him, but he outrode it; on the evening of the second day he was safe in sanctuary at Colchester. His young charge was lodged at a farmhouse belonging to a tenant of Sir Humphrey Stafford. They all awaited impatiently for the time when the Earl of Lincoln would put a period to their confinement, by informing them that the hour was arrived when they might again take arms against the upstart Lancastrian King.

CHAPTER III.

Small joy have I in being England's Queen!
— SHAKSPEARE.

Henry the Seventh was a man of strong sense and sound understanding. He was prudent, resolute, and valiant; on the other hand, he was totally devoid of generosity, and was actuated all his life by base and had passions. At first the ruling feeling of his heart was hatred of the House of York — nor did he wholly give himself up to the avarice that blotted his latter years, till the extinction of that unhappy family satisfied his revenge, so that for want of fuel the flame died away. Most of his relatives and friends had perished in the field or on the scaffold by the hands of the Yorkists — his own existence had been in jeopardy during their exaltation; and the continuance of his reign, and even of his life, depended on their utter overthrow. Henry had a mind commensurate to the execution of his plans: he had a talent for seizing, as if instinctively, on all the bearings of a question before him; and a ready perception of the means by which he might obviate difficulties and multiply facilities, was the most prominent part of his character. He never aimed at too much, and felt instantaneously when he had arrived at the enough. More of cruelty would have roused England against him; less would have given greater hopes to the partizans of his secreted rival. He had that exact portion of callousness of heart which enabled him to extricate himself in the admirable manner he did from all his embarrassments.

It is impossible to say what his exact views were, when he landed in England, and made head against Richard the Third. His right of succession, even through the House of Lancaster, was ill-founded, and probably he would scarcely have dared to decorate his brows with the royal circlet but for the happy boldness of Stanley, and the enthusiasm felt by his soldiers in the hour of victory, which had bestowed it on him. Once a king, as it was impossible, without risk of life, to sink to a private station, he did not hesitate, but bent every energy of his mind to the contriving the means to seat himself firmly on his newly-acquired throne.

The illegitimacy of Edward the Fourth's children had removed them from the succesion. But though no doubt was entertained as to the fact of Edward having married Lady Eleanor Butler, yet Henry had the taint of illegitimacy on his own race; and, moreover, Elizabeth Woodville having so long filled the station of Queen of England, the public voice went in her favour, and the majority of the English people looked upon the tale which deprived her children of their rights, as a contrivance of their usurping uncle. What then was to become of them? Edward the Fifth was dead: of this fact there was no doubt. It had been rumoured that the Duke of York had not long survived his brother. To ascertain the truth of this report, Henry dispatched one of his most staunch adherents to the Tower. The boy was not there; but a mystery hung over his fate which did not quite assure the new king of his death. Henry feared that he was in the hands of the Yorkists, and this dread gave fresh vigour to his distrust and abhorrence of the partizans of the White Rose. He formed a scheme to defeat their projects; he caused it to be disseminated that both the princes had been found dead — murdered — in the Tower.

The competitors for the crown, whose claims ranked next, were the daughters of Edward the Fourth. Henry immediately saw the necessity of agreeing to the treaty entered into by the Countess of Richmond, for his marriage with the eldest of these princesses. He hated to owe his title to the crown to any part of the House of York; he resolved, if possible, to delay and break the marriage; but his own friends were urgent with him to comply, and prudence dictated the measure; he therefore promised to adopt it — thus effectually to silence the murmurs of the party of the White Rose.

But if the young Duke of York re-appeared meanwhile, it would be necessary not to repeal the Act of Parliament that cast a stigma on his birth. If the children of Elizabeth Woodville and Edward the Fourth, were debarred from the crown, the Earl of Warwick was the next heir. He was confined by Richard the Third at Sheriff Hutton, in Yorkshire. He was the especial object of Henry’s fear, and now he commanded him to be brought from his northern prison to the Tower of London, to be kept a close prisoner in that melancholy and ill-fated place. There was one other rival, the Earl of Lincoln, named by Richard to succeed him; but his pretensions came so far behind the others, and he enjoyed so high a reputation for sagacity and virtue, that Henry believed it best to let him alone for the present, only surrounding him with spies; and resolved, on the first note of danger, to destroy him.

Fortune smiled on the new sovereign. The disappearance of the two children from the Tower, caused the Yorkists to settle their affections on the young Elizabeth. She was at Sheriff-Hutton, waiting impatiently for her union with her uncle; now she received commands to proceed to London, as the affianced bride of that uncle's conqueror. Already the common talk ran on the entwining of the two Roses; and all the adherents of her family, who could gain access, recommended their cause to her, and entreated her, in the first days of power, not to forget her father's friends, but to incline the heart of her husband to an impartial love for the long rival houses of Lancaster and York.

Two parties arrived on the same day at Sheriff-Hutton, on the different missions of conducting the Lady Elizabeth and the Earl of Warwick to London. On the morning of their departure, they met in the garden of their abode to take leave of each other. Elizabeth was nineteen years old, Warwick was the exact age of her brother, Edward the Fifth; he was now sixteen.

"We are about to travel the same road with far different expectations," said Warwick. "I go to be a prisoner; you, fair Cousin, to ascend a throne."

There was a despondency in the youth's manner that deeply affected this Princess. "Dear Edward," she replied, clasping his hand, "we have been fellow-prisoners long, and sympathy has lightened the burthen of our chains. Can I forget our walks in this beauteous park, and the love and confidence we have felt for each other? My dearest boy, when I am Queen, Esther will claim a boon from Ahasuerus, and Warwick shall be the chief noble in my train."

She looked at him with a brilliant smile; her heart glowed with sisterly affection. She might well entertain high anticipations of future power; she was in the pride of youth and beauty; the light spirit of expected triumph lighted up her lovely face. She was about to become the bride of a conqueror, yet one whose laurels would droop without her propping; she was to be Queen of her native land, the pearly clasp to unite the silken bond with which peace now bound long discordant England. She was unable to communicate this spirit of hope to her desponding friend; he gazed on her beauty with admiration and deep grief, asking, with tearful eyes, "Shall we ever meet again?"

"Yes! in London, in the Court of Henry, we shall again be companions — friends."

"I go to the Tower, not to the Court," replied Warwick, "and when those gloomy gates close on me, I shall pray that my head may soon repose on the cold stone that pillows my cousin Edward. I shall sleep uneasily till then."

"Fie, Cousin!" said Elizabeth; "such thoughts ill beseem the nearest kinsman of the future Queen of England. You will remain but a short time in the Tower; but if you nurse thoughts like these, you will pine there as you did before I shared your prison here, and the roses with which my care has painted your cheeks, will again fade."

"Wan and colourless will my cheek be ere your bright eyes look on it again. Is it not sufficient grief that I part from you, beloved friend!"

A gush at once of sorrow, of affection, of long suppressed love, overpowered the youth. "I shall think of you," he added, "in my prison-house; and while I know that you regret my fate, I cannot be wholly a wretch. Do you not love me? And will you not, as a proof, give me one of these golden hairs, to soothe poor Warwick's misery? One only," he said, taking from her braided locks the small gift he demanded, "I will not diminish the rich beauty of your tresses, yet they will not look lovelier, pressed by the jewelled diadem of England, than under the green chaplet I crowned you with a few months past, my Queen of May!"

And thus, the eyes of each glistening with tears, they parted. For a moment Warwick looked as if he wished to press his cousin to his heart; and she, who loved him as a sister, would have yielded to his embrace: but before his arms enfolded her, he started back, bent one knee, pressed her hand to his lips, his eyes, his brow, and bending his head for an instant towards the ground, sprang up, and rushed down the avenue towards the gate at which his guard awaited him. Elizabeth stood motionless, watching him till out of sight. The sun sparkled brightly on a tuft of wild flowers at her feet. The glittering light caught her eye. "It is noon," she thought; "the morning dew is dry; it is Warwick's tears that gem these leaves." She gathered the flowers, and, first kissing them, placed them in her bosom; with slow steps, and a sorrowing heart, she re-entered the Castle.

The progress of the Lady Elizabeth from Sheriff Hutton to London was attended by every circumstance that could sustain her hopes. She was received with acclamation and enthusiasm in every town through which she passed. She indeed looked forward with girlish vanity to the prospect of sharing the throne with Henry. She had long been taught the royal lesson, that with princes, the inclinations are not to bear any part in a disposal of the hand. Her imagination fed on the good she would do for others, when raised to the regal dignity; the hope of liberating Warwick, and of fulfilling her mother's wishes in conferring benefits on various partizans of the White Rose, filled her bosom with the purest joy; youth, beauty, and the expectation of happiness caused the measure of her content to overflow.

With a fluttering heart she entered London: small preparation had been made to receive her, and she was immediately conducted to her mother's abode at the Tower Royal, in the Parish of Walbrook. The first check her hopes received arose from the clouded brow of the Queen, as she embraced her daughter, and welcomed her arrival. Many fears in truth occupied the thoughts of the illustrious widow. She could not forget her sons; and the mystery that hung over the fate of the younger, pressed heavily upon her. It was now the eighteenth of October, and the preparations for the coronation of Henry were in great forwardness; Parliament had recognized his title without any allusion to the union with the heiress of the House of York. She had endeavoured to fathom his purposes, and to understand his character. She knew that he entertained a settled hatred for the White Rose, and that his chief pride lay in establishing himself on the throne, independent of the claim he might acquire by his marriage with the Lady Elizabeth. The common people murmured, the Yorkists were discontented, — the neighbour stage before they should break out into open rebellion. Thus dark clouds interposed before the sun of peace, which had been said to have risen on the event of the battle of Bosworth Field.

Henry the Seventh was crowned on the thirtieth of October. The queen looked on this ceremony as the downfall of her hopes. Roused by this fear, she entered into a sea of intrigue, in which, after all, she had no certain aim, except that of re-animating the zeal of the Yorkists, and of exciting such discontent in the public mind, on the postponement of her daughter's marriage, as to force Henry to consent to an immediate union. The gentle Elizabeth had meanwhile submitted patiently to her destiny. She dismissed regality from her thoughts, and devoted herself to her mother; recreating herself in the society of her sisters, and now and then contemplating the faded leaves she had brought from Sheriff Hutton, and lamenting the fate of

Warwick. She had learned to fear and almost to hate Henry; and, but for the sake of her suffering party, to re-joice that he had apparently relinquished his intention of marrying her.

The dissatisfaction manifested by the English people, forced Henry to comply with the universal wish entertained of seeing the daughter of Edward the Fourth on the throne: yet it was not until the beginning of January that the Princess received intimation to prepare for her nuptials. This prospect, which had before elated, now visited her coldly; for, without the hope of influencing her husband, the state of a Queen appeared mere bondage. In her heart she wished to reject her uncourteous bridegroom; and once she had ventured to express this desire to her mother, who, filled with affright, laid aside her intrigues, devoting herself to cultivate a more rational disposition in her daughter. Henry paid the doomed girl one visit, and saw little in her except a bashful child; while his keener observation was directed towards the dowager queen. She, with smooth brow and winning smiles, did the honours of reception to her future son-in-law — to her bitter foe. The cold courtesy of Henry chilled her; and a strong desire lurked under her glossy mien, to reproach the usurper with his weak title, to set up her daughter's claim in opposition to his, and to defy him to the field. As soon as Henry departed, her suppressed emotions found vent in tears. Elizabeth was astonished: she knelt before her, caressed her, and asked if all were not well now, since the plighted troth had passed between her and the King.

"Has it passed?" murmured the Queen, "and is your hapless fate decided? Why did I not join you at Sheriff Hutton? Why did I not place your hand in that of your noble cousin? Ah, Warwick! could I even now inspire you with my energy, you would be free, in arms; and England to a man would rise in the cause of Edward the Sixth, and my sweet Elizabeth!"

The colour in the Princess's cheeks varied, during the utterance of this speech: first they flushed deep red, but the pale hue of resolution succeeded quickly to the agitation of doubt. "Mother," she said, "I was your child; plastic clay in your hands: had you said these words two hours ago, Warwick might have been liberated — I perhaps happy. But you have given me away; this ring is the symbol of my servitude; I belong to Henry. Say no word, I beseech you, that can interfere with my duty to him. Permit me to retire."

On the eighteenth of January her nuptials were celebrated.

The forbidding manners of Henry threw a chill over the marriage festival. He considered that he had been driven to this step by his enemies; and that the chief among these, influenced by her mother, was Elizabeth herself. The poor girl never raised her eyes from the moment she had encountered at the altar the stern and unkind glance of the king. Her steps were unassured, her voice faltering: the name of wife was to her synonimous with that of slave, while her sense of duty prevented every outward demonstration of the despair that occupied her heart.

Her mother's indignation was deeper, although not less veiled. She could silence, but not quell the rage that arose in her breast from her disappointment; and there were many present who shared her sentiments. As far as he had been able, Henry had visited the Yorkists with the heaviest penalties. An act of attainder had been passed against the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Lovel, the Staffords, and all indeed of note who had appeared against him. Those with whom he could not proceed to extremities, he wholly discountenanced. The Red Rose flourished bright and free — one single white blossom, doomed to untimely blight, being entwined with the gaudier flowers.

CHAPTER IV.

My noble Queen, let former grudges pass.
And henceforth I am thy true servitor.
— SHAKSPEARE.

Meanwhile the Yorkists were impatient for action. The existence of Prince Richard was a secret to all save Lincoln and Lovel — even the Staffords were kept in ignorance: their purpose, therefore, was merely to put down the Lancastrians, and to raise their own party, with Warwick or Lincoln at their head; they cared not which, so that they got a king who would, in his turn, uproot the Red Rose. Lincoln would consent to no decisive step; but from the day of his cousin's marriage, all his emissaries and friends were on foot to cause insurrectionary movements in the kingdom, rousing in the old Yorkists their ancient party spirit, and inspiring the young with hopes of future aggrandizement and victory.

As the spring advanced, Henry sent the young Queen, with her mother and sisters, and the Countess of Richmond, to hold her court at Winchester, while he resolved on a progress through the northern counties of England, the most affected towards the House of York, to endeavour, by the royal presence, to awaken affection towards the reigning sovereign. He passed the festival of Easter at Lincoln, and there he heard that Lord Lovel, and the two Staffords, had escaped from sanctuary. The sound of insurrection is fearful to a newly anointed king; but as no explanation was given to their movements, and no name of import mingled in the tale, he felt less perturbation at this intelligence. As he proceeded on his journey, the affair took a more serious aspect. The Staffords advanced to beseige Worcester; and Lovel, with an increasing army of three or four thousand men, was in the neighbourhood of York.

Sir Edward Brampton joined the forces of Lord Lovel, and he and Lady Brampton again met. The history of this lady was singular. Ten years before the time of which we write, being then eighteen, she married, and attended the Court of Edward the Fourth. She had talent and vivacity: her dark laughing eyes, the animation of her countenance, her gay and naïve manners, attracted her sovereign; and she was soon distinguished as one whose advancement, if so it might be called, to the highest influence over him, depended on her own choice between honour and such preferment. She did not hesitate: but her rejection won Edward as much as her beauty. A kind of friendship, kept up under the chivalrous phraseology of the day, was established between them, that gave, perhaps, more umbrage to the Queen than a less avowed connexion would have done. All was open; and if the good humour of her young rival never permitted her to assume haughtiness, there was something even more revolting in her girlish assumptions of power and consequence. The Queen hated and affected to despise Lady Brampton; Lady Brampton felt that she injured the wife of Edward the Fourth. At first she had earnestly sought to gain her favour, but when rebuffed, she resorted to the weapons of youth, beauty, and wit, and set at defiance the darkened brow of Elizabeth. Ten years had passed since then.

Edward the Fourth died, and under Richard the Third Lady Brampton returned to her natural place in society; nay, the vivacity of speech with which she defended the rights of his nephews, made him absolutely discountenance her. In her days of pride she had refused every mark of favour from Edward, thus to place their avowed friendship far above the petty intrigues of the courtiers. It might have been thought that the Queen and her rival would now, on the grounds of affection for Edward's children, have leagued together: but, on the contrary, the mother expressed contempt and indignation at the presumption of Lady Brampton in assuming a personal interest in her children, and that lady too well remembered how often her manner and speech must have offended the Queen to make any vain attempt at reconciliation. The Earl of Lincoln and Lady Brampton had always been friends; her liveliness amused him, her integrity and real goodness of heart won his esteem. Her passionate love for the princes in the Tower, had caused him when he withdrew thence the young Richard, whose ill-health demanded constant feminine attentions, to confide him to her charge: thus she alone became possessed of the secret of his existence, and now with Lord Lovel she debated how best his interests could be furthered.

Lord Lincoln feared by rash measures to endanger the safety of his nephew. He desired to place him on the throne, but he preferred bringing him up in freedom and obscurity to any ill-judged attempt that might throw him into his enemy's hands, and make him prisoner for life. His plans were all laid upon this principle: he commanded Lord Lovel, who submitted wholly to him, not to breathe the name of the son of Edward till he had gained a decided advantage over the reigning sovereign. If victorious, he might set up the royal standard and proclaim Richard the Fourth, while the Earl, still in London, would call together all the Yorkists, and, in the absence of the king, seize, in his nephew's name, upon the capital of the kingdom. If Lord Lovel's attempt proved unsuccessful, it was decided that the prince should escape immediately to the Continent, there to remain till some new insurrection was organized; for, though cautious, he was resolute, and he had determined never to relinquish his purpose, but to excite rebellion and discontent against Henry till the rightful heir possessed his own.

These plans were in contradiction to Lady Brampton's views, but she was obliged to submit. Her quick woman's wit discovered her another danger. The absolute silence observed concerning the young Prince, then only eleven years of age, might in the end cast a doubt over the justice of his pretensions, and she told Lord Lovel, that, if after a failure Richard quitted England, he must first be seen and acknowledged by his mother. She resolved, therefore, on immediately going to Winchester to prepare Elizabeth for the reception of her son; and Lord Lovel, who agreed in the wisdom of this proposal, promised at all hazards that ere leaving the kingdom the Duke of York should cross the country to that town, whence by Southampton he might escape to France. While therefore Lord Lovel increased his army and marched in high hopes towards York, Lady Brampton proceeded southward, meditating the safest and best manner of introducing herself to the Queen.

There was a man, Richard Simon or Symond, who afterwards figured in the chronicles, that had long been secretly concerned in the course of events. He was the son of a tenant of Sir John Gray, and had been the playmate of the Lady Elizabeth Gray's elder children. His love of books, his sedentary habits, and quick wit on matters of learning, led those interested in his fate to consider him fitted for the church, and therefore he took priest's orders. But his mind, though not attuned to action in its noblest sense, was not one that could remain at rest. He loved power; he was sagacious, astute, and intriguing: when the Lady Gray became Queen, he being still too young for high promotion, preferred an unnoticed but influential situation near her person to more lucrative employ, which would remove him from the pleasures and dignity of the Court. When Edward died he devoted himself to the service of his royal patroness, and hardly escaped being imprisoned for life by Richard, when the latter was most exasperated against the Queen Dowager's relations. From that time Richard Simon found full occupation for his plotting head, in endeavouring to bring about the overthrow of the usurping Gloucester, and to raise the hopes of Henry the Seventh, who requited ill his active zeal: and now again he busied himself in exalting the Queen's party. He looked the man he was — a prier into secrets — one who conducted the drama of life by back-stairs and tell-tale valets: his small grey eyes were quick to discern the meaning of each smile or frown; his young brow was already wrinkled through care and thought; craft lurked in the corners of his lips; and his whispering voice betokened habitual caution. He continued to hover near the Queen; now dispatched to sound some Yorkist, now closeted to discuss some expression of the King's, in which to find a secret meaning. Repose was the thing he hated; and for ever with some plan on foot, some web to weave or unravel, he was seen with brows a little elevated by self-conceit, with a courtly bend of the body and insinuating address, now assuring a Lancastrian of the perfect satisfaction of the Queen, now whispering to a Yorkist a tale of slights and injuries practised by King Henry against his consort and her friends. All the communication that had taken place between Elizabeth Woodville and the Earl of Lincoln had been carried on through this man, though each knew not that he communicated to the other what either said. But Lincoln respected his undeviating fidelity towards his patroness, and valued his talents. It was to this man that Lady Brampton addressed herself on her arrival at Winchester, to procure for her a private audience with the Queen. Her dark hints respecting the insurrection of Lovel and the Staffords excited his curiosity, yet he experienced more difficulty than he expected in bringing the royal dowager to consent to receive her rival. When our days of prosperity are fled we cling fondly to all that reminds us of their brightness, and turn with augmented distaste from every thing that marred their splendour. Elizabeth loved to remember herself as the chosen bride of Edward, and any circumstance that spoke of his inconstancy, or detracted from the entireness of her influence over him, then inspired her with indignation, now with abhorrence. It required all Simon's dexterity to allay her anger, and excite her curiosity, sufficiently to induce her to admit her rival to her presence.

It was at the hour of vespers that the priest introduced Lady Brampton into the Queen's cabinet. Elizabeth was assured that she had secrets of importance to communicate, and she designed by affability to win her to a full disclosure of them. Yet her heart and manner grew cold as she entered the closet where the lady and her guide already were, and bending her head slightly, she said, "The Lady Brampton desired an audience with me — I grant it."

With all her vivacity and consciousness of the importance of her disclosures, the lady felt herself awed and chilled; and the memory of Edward came across her, who had before shielded her from such unkindness, and filled her eyes with tears. A long pause ensued; the Queen looked as in expectation, and Richard Simon, who had retired to an embrasure of a window, was about to come forward, when Lady Brampton, conquering her emotion, said, "Your Grace is the happy mother of the Queen of England, and the hope of an heir, which you now entertain, may make my intelligence distasteful."

"Say on," replied Elizabeth haughtily; "I listen to your words."

The lady felt much inclined not to say another word, but assuming almost equal coldness of manner, she continued, "Would your Grace prefer that your fair daughter should still bear the sceptre, or that Richard the Fourth should wrest it from the husband's grasp?"

Now indeed the Queen started, and cried impetuously, "I charge you, trifle with me no longer! Explain your words; who would supplant my child?"

"Her brother," Lady Brampton replied; and seeing the Queen lost in a mixture of amazement and terror, she added, "The Duke of York still lives: he is now, I trust, at the head of forces sufficient to enforce his rights. In a few days England will acknowledge him as sovereign."

In reply to these words, spoken with rapidity, as if they were pregnant with supreme delight to their auditress, the Queen with an angry look, said, "I shall league with no plotters to establish an impostor."

"Beware," said Lady Brampton indignantly; "let your Majesty bethink yourself, before you consign your son to misery and an early grave. Will his mother be his chief enemy?"

"Who vouches for him?"

"Himself! He is the very Edward who once was yours: his young features are but the miniature mirror of his royal father; his princely grace, his wit, his courage, are all derived from him."

"I must see the boy," said the Queen, "to end at once this silly masque. How do you pretend that he escaped from the Tower?"

The independence and sensibility of Lady Brampton's disposition would not permit her to answer a question asked thus ironically. Had she looked at the Queen, she might have seen, by her change of countenance, that it was nearly all put on by the jealous instinct that would not permit her to acknowledge herself under so great an obligation to her rival. Lady Brampton turned to Simon, saying, "I am ready to depart, Sir Priest; I see her Grace sorrows that the same cold bed does not entomb Richard of York and Edward the Fifth. Poor prince! My Lord of Lincoln counselled well, and I was to blame in not acting on his advice."

"Stay," cried Elizabeth, "speak again. Is the Earl of Lincoln a party to this tale?"

"Your Majesty insults me," said the lady; "I came here to please a mother's ear by assurances of her child's safety, and to conduct the tempest-tost fortunes of this ill-starred boy into the safe harbour of maternal love. I came with a full heart and an ardent desire to serve you; no other motive could have led me hither. You receive me with disdain; you dismiss me with contumely. I fear that so much you hate me, that, for my sake, your heart is steeled against your princely son. But as you already know so much as to make it necessary that you should know all, I will hasten to London, and intreat the noble de la Poole to communicate with you, and to avert a mother's enmity from her child. I take my leave."

She was about to depart; but Simon, who knew that a feud between the prince's partizans must ruin his cause, entreated her to remain; and then addressing the Queen, tried to sooth her, for she was pacing the rushes of her chamber in excessive agitation. "Peace, good friend," said she, "I will speak to Lincoln; I will ask him why I, who was deemed by his honoured uncle fit partaker of his councils, am kept by him in ignorance of the alleged existence of this poor boy? Even now he might be sitting on the throne, had I been consulted: instead of this, to what has this distrust brought him? He is a crownless king, a fugitive prince, branded as an impostor; a seal is put on his fate, which nothing probably will ever remove. I, even I, have called my son, if such he be, a counterfeit!"

Maternal tenderness touched to the quick the royal lady's heart, and she wept. Lady Brampton was all impulse and goodness of disposition: she felt that Elizabeth had wronged her, but in a moment she forgave the offence: she advanced, and kneeling at her feet, touched her hand gently, as she said, "Let not your Grace judge too harshly of our proceedings. We poor faulty human beings, hurried hither and thither by passion, are for ever jostling against and hurting each other, where more perfect natures would coalesce, and thus succeed where we fail. Forgive, forget the past: it cannot now be changed. Forgive the Earl, who, long bound by an oath to his uncle Gloucester, could only save your son's life by feigning his death. Forgive the humblest of your servants, even myself, who acted under his commands, and who now, in disobedience to them, attempts to bring the royal exile to his mother's arms. Would that my humility could appease your displeasure, and that you would acknowledge me your faithful follower. My life should be at the disposal of you and the princely York."

Lady Brampton, full of vivacity, energy, and even of imperiousness, had so much grace in her manner and sweetness in her voice, when she laid these keen weapons aside to assume those of gentleness and love, that she was irresistible. The Queen, at once softened, stretched out her hand, which the lady pressed respectfully to her lips; then, as friends bent on one design, they conversed unreservedly together. Lady Brampton entered into long details concerning the past history of the Duke of York, and the schemes then on foot for his advancement. This was not their sole interview; they met again and again, and mutual affection confirming the link which the fate of Richard caused to exist between them, the Queen named the Lady Brampton one of her ladies, and henceforth they lived together under the same roof.

CHAPTER V.

Poor orphan! in the wide world scattered.
As budding branch rent from the native tree.
— Spenser.

England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle.
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
— Shelley.

The historical account of Lord Lovel's insurrection is contained in a few words. While the two Staffords besieged Worcester, this nobleman advanced against Henry in York. The Duke of Bedford was sent against him, who published a general pardon for all the rebels who should submit. The soldiers of Lord Lovel had no powerful watch-word to ensure their union; the existence of Edward the Fourth's son was a profound secret; they were therefore easily induced to abandon an almost nameless cause; and in three weeks Lord Lovel found himself with only one hundred adherents, or rather personal friends, who at his earnest entreaty disbanded, while he, chiefly bent on saving the life of his princely charge, felt greater security in being left singly with him.

He had promised to traverse England, and to conduct him to Winchester; but the hot pursuit on foot forced him to delay this journey. Meanwhile a present refuge was to be sought. He had a staunch friend in a zealous Yorkist, Sir Thomas Broughton, who resided in Lancashire, to whose residence he directed his steps. Still, even during this short journey, great precaution was necessary. Lord Lovel and his charge travelled disguised, avoiding high roads and great towns. On the second evening, when the red aspect of the setting sun threatened an inclement night, they took shelter in a lone cot on one of the wild moors of that county.

A long habit of personal attendance had instilled into Lovel's mind a parental affection for the little prince. They had journeyed far that day, and Richard was overpowered by fatigue; his friend strewed for him a bed of leaves — he stretched himself on it, and quickly fell into a sound sleep, while the noble kept up the fire he had lighted, and paced the hut, revolving in his mind a thousand schemes. It was a chill February evening; and, as night came on, a thick sleet beat against the windows, while the wind, sweeping over the wide heath, howled round the miserable shepherd's cot. Some time passed thus, and fear in Lovel's mind gave place to the sense of security, inspired by the desolation of the spot and the inclemency of the elements. He needed rest, and as soon as he had thrown himself on the ground, drowsiness overpowered him — the wind sang a wild lullaby to both the sleepers.

Though still lost to the outer world, a change passed over Lovel's countenance — again his features relaxed into sleep, and again expressed disquietude. The tramp of horses' feet was around the hut — voices mingled alien sounds with the raging blast; — at last a loud knocking at the door caused the noble at once to start on his feet wide awake. Richard still slept on. Lord Lovel cautiously withdrew into the shadow behind the door, listening intently to divine the motives of these unwelcome intruders. He felt assured that they were emissaries of Henry, who had traced him hither; he endeavoured to form in his mind some plan of conduct to save the duke, whom he was about to awaken and put on his guard, when a woman's voice struck upon his ear. The knocking at the door was changed into a violent beating, the rude hinges gave way, and it swung back. The fugitive's heart beat quick; it was a moment full of fate; such a one, as when passed, we seem to have concentrated a life into its small space. The man that entered calmed his fears; low in stature, broadly built, a cloak lined with furs added to his bulk, and a Flemish hat completed his peaceable appearance; though he was too much muffled to shew his face. Glancing at Lovel a look which was, doubtless, intended to convey reproach, he muttered some words in a foreign guttural language, and went back to his companions. Two women now entered, both enveloped in furs. One stept lightly on, and drew the bench which had lately pillowed the head of Lovel, closer to the fire, while the other, bending under the burthen in her arms, approached slower, and sitting down on the seat prepared for her, threw back her cloak, and discovered that she bore in her arms a sleeping child, about six years of age. The first, meanwhile, disencumbered herself of her rich furs, and then leaning over the child, kissed its little hands, and regarded its sleeping form with mingled anxiety and tenderness, speaking to the other in a foreign dialect, evidently about the risk the poor babe had ran from exposure to the weather. Lovel remained a mute spectator; he resolved not to come forward, till he should see who their male attendants were. After a brief interval the first intruder again entered; he threw off his cloak, and looking round with keen eyes, the fugitive discovered the well-known features of a friend-His heart now relieved, his countenance lighted up, and he stept forward, saying: “Mynheer Jahn Warbeck, God be with you! you travel on a stormy night.”

“And you, Lord Lovel,” replied the moneylender, angrily, “are sufficiently discourteous to wanderers at such a season. Why even vipers are harmless during a storm.”

“But fair weather returns, and they again find their sting. I might bare my own breast, but—” he pointed to the bed of leaves, on which, in spite of the tumult, young Richard still slept.

Warbeck started: but before he could reply one of his companions turned to speak to him, and a conversation ensued, begun in Dutch, and continued in French, concerning the circumstances which had divided them from their attendants, and their fatiguing wanderings during the storm. A small saddle-bag was produced by Warbeck, containing a few provisions. A bed for the sleeping child was formed, and the travellers sat round the fire, enjoying their simple fare. From time to time the fair blue eyes of the younger lady, who was evidently the mistress, and the other an attendant, turned to look on the chivalric form and manly beauty of Lovel; a few smiling observations escaped her in her native language, which Warbeck answered drily and succinctly. The bench on which the lady sat was soon sacrificed for firing — the cloaks of the party were dried, and the women, wrapt in them, sought repose on the bare ground, which was the sole flooring of the hut, the younger drawing to her bosom the sleeping child. Lovel and Warbeck kept silence, till the deep breathing of their companions shewed that they slept: then, in reply to the Fleming’s questions, Lovel related the history of the last months, and at the conclusion frankly asked his advice and assistance in accomplishing his design of conveying the Duke of York to Winchester. Warbeck looked thoughtful on this demand, and after a pause said “I cannot say wherefore this unfortunate prince excites so strong an interest in me; for in truth my heart yearns towards him as if he were akin to me. Is it because he bore for a time my poor boy’s name?”

Warbeck paused; his hard features were strongly marked by grief—"I and my sister," he continued, "crossed the country to visit my Peterkin, who was ill — who is lost to me now for ever."

A pause again ensued: the young soldier respected too much the father's grief to interrupt it. At length the Fleming said, "Lord Lovel I will — I trust I can — save Duke Richard's life. My sister is kind-hearted; and the silence you have observed concerning the very existence of King Edward's son, makes the task more easy. Madeline is about to return to her own country; she was to have taken my Peterkin with her. Let the Prince again assume that name: it shall be my care to escort him in this character to Winchester; and at Portsmouth they may embark, while you follow your own plans, and take refuge with the friends you mention in these parts."

As Warbeck spoke, Lovel motioned to him to observe his sister, who, unable to sleep, was observing them with attention. "Madeline does not understand our English," said her brother; "but it were well that she joined our counsels, which may continue in French. I have your leave, my Lord, to disclose your secret to her? Fear her not: she would die rather than injure one hair of that poor child's head."

On Warbeck's invitation, the lady rose; and he, taking her hand, led her to the low couch of the Duke of York. Sleep and gentle dreams spread an irradiation of beauty over him: his glowing cheek, his eyes hardly closed, the masses of rich auburn hair that clustered on a brow of infantine smoothness and candour, the little hand and arm, which, thrown above his head, gave an air of helplessness to his attitude, combined to form a picture of childish grace and sweetness, which no woman, and that woman a mother, could look on without emotions of tenderness. "What an angelic child," said the fair sister of Warbeck, as she stooped to kiss his rosy cheek; "what a noble looking boy. Who is he?"

"One proscribed," said the Cavalier, "one whom he who reigns over England would consign to a dungeon. Were he to fall into the hands of his enemies, they might not, indeed dare not cut him off violently; but they would consume and crush him, by denying him all that contributes to health and life."

"Can this sweet boy have enemies" cried the lady: "Ah! if he have, has he not friends also to guard him from them?"

"With our lives!" he replied emphatically; "but that is a small sacrifice and a useless one; for to preserve him we must preserve ourselves. My life, — such acts deserve no record, — I have, and will again and again expose for him; but the will to save him is not enough without the power; and that power you possess, lady, to a far, far greater extent than I."

"The will I have most certainly," said the fair one, regarding the boy with anxious tenderness. "Command me, Sire Chevalier; my power, small as I must believe it to be, and my will, shall unite to preserve this sweet child."

Warbeck disclosed briefly to his sister the secret of young Richard's birth, and detailed his plan for his safe journey to Winchester; nay, and after that, for his crossing the sea, and continuing to personate, in Flanders, the nephew of Madeline, if so his royal mother deemed fitting, till the moment should arrive, when the schemes of his partizans being crowned with success, he could be restored to his country and his birthright. The fair Fleming joyfully assented to this proposition, and entered cordially into the details. Lovel was profuse of thanks: so suddenly and so easily to be relieved from his worst fears, appeared like the special interposition of some guardian saint. His heart overflowed with gratitude; and his glistening eyes gave token of greater thanks than even his emphatic words. Madeline felt all the excitement of being actively employed in a deed of benevolence: her calm features were animated with an angelic expression. The discussion of details, demanding the coolest prudence and most vigilant observation long occupied them; and the lady brought a woman's tact and keen penetration to arrange the crude designs of her brother. All was rendered smooth; every obstacle foreseen and obviated; every pass of danger reconnoitred and provided for. When, at last, their plans were perfected, the lady again returned to her hard couch to seek repose: for some time the Cavalier and the Fleming kept watch, till they also, in such comfortless posture as they might, stretched on the bare ground, yielded to drowsiness; and grey morning found all the dwellers in the sheep cot sunk in profound sleep. Fear, charity, hope, and love, might colour their dreams; but quiet slumber possessed them all, driving care and thought from the heart and brain, to steep both in oblivion of all ill.

When Madeline awoke in the morning, the first sight that met her eyes was the lovely boy she had promised to protect, playing with her dark-eyed girl, who displayed all the extacy of childish glee with her new playmate.

Madeline was a blonde Fleming, with light blue eyes and flaxen ringlets — she was about five-and-twenty years of age; an expression of angelic goodness animated her features, bestowing on them an appearance of loveliness, which of themselves they did not possess. It could hardly be guessed, that Richard's playmate was the daughter of the fair-haired Fleming: but the husband of Warbeck's sister was a Spaniard, and the child resembled her father in every thing except the soft mouth and sweet smile, which was all her mother's: her large full dark eyes, gave to her infantine face a look of sensibility, far beyond her years. The little girl ran to her mother when she awoke; and Madeline caressed both her and the Prince with the greatest tenderness. They stood at the door of the cottage; the early sun shone brightly on the hoar frost that covered the moor; the keen air was bracing, though cold; the morning was cheerful, such as inspires hope and animation, a lively wit to understand, and a roused courage to meet difficulties.

Madeline turned from the glittering scene to look on her young charge — his eyes were fixed on her face. "How beautiful and good you look," said the boy.

"I am glad that you think me good," replied the lady smiling; "you will have less fear in trusting yourself with me: your noble friend has confided your Grace to my care, if, indeed, you will condescend to live with me, and be as a son to me. I have just lost a little nephew whom I fondly loved; will you supply his place, and take his name?"

"Fair cousin," said the Prince, caressing his kind friend as he spoke; "I will wait on you, and serve you as no nephew ever served. What name did your lost kinsman bear? Quickly tell me, that I may know my own, and hereafter call myself by it."

"Perkin Warbeck," said Madeline.

"Now you mock me," cried Richard, "that has long been my name; but I knew not that it gave me a claim to so pretty a relation."

"This courtly language," replied the lady, "betrays your Grace's princeliness. What will our Flemish boors say, when I present the nursling of royalty as mine? You will shame our homely breeding, Duke Richard."

"I beseech you, fair Mistress," said Lovel, who now joined them, "to forget, even in private, such high-sounding titles. It is dangerous to play at majesty, unaided by ten thousand armed assertors of our right. Remember this noble child only as your loving nephew, Perkin Warbeck: he, who well knows the misery of regal claims unallied to regal authority, will shelter himself gladly and gratefully under the shadow of your lowly bower."

And now, as the wintry sun rose higher, the travellers prepared for their departure. Warbeck first left them to find and to dismiss his domestics, who would have been aware of the deception practised in the person of Richard. He returned in a few hours for his sister. The Duke and Lord Lovel then separated. The intervening time had been employed by the noble in schooling the boy as to his future behaviour, in recounting to him his plans and hopes, and in instructing him how to conduct himself with his mother, if indeed he saw her; for Lovel was ignorant how Lady Brampton had succeeded at Winchester, and how far it would be possible to bring about an interview between the Queen and her son. At length Warbeck returned; the travellers mounted; and Lord Lovel, watching from the cottage door, beheld with melancholy regret the Prince depart: the long habit of intercourse, the uncertain future, his high pretensions and his present state, had filled the Cavalier with moody thoughts, unlike his usual sanguine anticipations and energetic resolves. "This is womanly," at last he thought, as the reflection that he was alone, and had perhaps seen his beloved charge for the last time, filled his eyes with unwonted tears. "To horse! To my friends! — There to plan, scheme, devise — and then again to the field!"

Days and weeks past, replete with doubt and anxiety to the Queen and her enthusiastic friend at Winchester. Each day, many, many times, Lady Brampton visited the Cathedral to observe whether the silver heart was suspended near the altar, which she had agreed with Lord Lovel, should be the sign of the Duke's arrival. The part Elizabeth Woodville had to play meanwhile was difficult and painful — she lived in constant intercourse with the Countess of Richmond; the wishes and thoughts of all around were occupied by the hope of an heir to the crown, which the young Queen would soon bestow on England. The birth of a son, it was prognosticated, would win her husband's affection, and all idea of future disturbance, of further risings and disloyalty, through the existence of this joint offspring of the two Roses would be for ever at an end. While these hopes and expectations formed, it was supposed, the most flattering and agreeable subject of congratulation for the dowager Queen, she remained sleepless and watchful, under the anticipation of seeing her fugitive son, the outcast and discrowned claimant of all that was to become the birthright of the unborn child.

At length the unwearied cares of Lady Brampton were rewarded; a small silver heart, bearing the initials of Richard, Duke of York, was suspended near the shrine; and as she turned to look who placed it there, the soft voice of Madeline uttered the word of recognition agreed upon; joy filled Lady Brampton's heart, as the brief answers to her hurried questions assured her of Richard's safety. The same evening she visited, in disguise, the abode of Warbeck, and embraced, in a transport of delight, the princely boy in whose fate she interested herself with all the fervour of her warm heart. She now learnt the design Lord Lovel had of placing Richard in safety under Madeline's care in Flanders, until his friends had prepared for him a triumphant return to England. She concerted with her new friends the best mode of introducing Richard into his mother's presence; and it was agreed that early on the following morning, Madeline and the Duke should seek one of the small chapels of the Cathedral of Winchester, and that Elizabeth should there meet her son. With an overflowing heart, Lady Brampton returned to communicate this intelligence to the royal widow, and to pass with her the intervening hours in oft-renewed conjectures, and anticipations concerning the Duke of York.

To modern and protestant England, a cathedral or a church may appear a strange place for private assignations and concealed meetings. It was otherwise in the days of our ancestors, when through similarity of religion, our manners bore a greater resemblance than they now do to those of foreign countries. The churches stood always open, ready to receive the penitent, who sought the stillness of the holy asylum the more entirely to concentrate his thoughts in prayer. As rank did not exempt its possessors from sin nor sorrow, neither did it from acts of penitence, nor from those visitations of anguish, when the sacred temple was sought, as bringing the votarist into more immediate communication with the Deity. The Queen Dowager excited therefore no suspicion, when, with her rosary formed of the blessed wood of Lebanon encased in gold in her hand, with Lady Brampton for her sole attendant, she sought at five in the morning the dark aisle of the Cathedral of Winchester, there to perform her religious duties. Two figures already knelt near the altar of the chapel designated as the place of meeting; Elizabeth's breath came thick; her knees bent under her;

she leaned against a buttress, while a fair-haired boy turned at the sound. He first looked timidly on her, and then encouraged by the smile that visited her quivering lips, he sprung forward, and kneeling at her feet, buried his face in her dress, sobbing, while bending over him, her own tears fell on his glossy hair. Lady Brampton and Madeline retired up the aisle, leaving the mother and child alone.

"Look up, my Richard," cried the unfortunate widow; "look up, son of King Edward, my noble, my out-cast boy! Thou art much grown, much altered since last I saw thee. Thou art more like thy blessed father than thy infancy promised." She parted his curls on his brow, and looked on him with the very soul of maternal tenderness. "Ah! were I a cottager," she continued, "though bereft of my husband, I should collect my young ones round me, and forget sorrow. I should toil for them, and they would learn to toil for me. How sweet the food my industry procured for them, how hallowed that which their maturer strength would bestow on me! I am the mother of princes. Vain boast! I am childless!"

The Queen, lost in thought, scarcely heard the gentle voice of her son who replied by expressions of endearment, nor felt his caresses; but collecting her ideas, she called to mind how brief the interview must be, and how she was losing many precious moments in vain exclamations and regrets. Recovering that calm majesty which usually characterized her, she said: "Richard, arise! our minutes are counted, and each must be freighted with the warning and wisdom of years. Thou art young, my son! but Lady Brampton tells me that thy understanding is even premature; thy experience indeed must be small, but I will try to adapt my admonitions to that experience. Should you fail to understand me, do not on that account despise my lessons, but treasure them up till thy increased years reveal their meaning to thee. We may never meet again; for once separated, ten thousand swords, and twice ten thousand dangers divide us perhaps for ever. I feel even now that it is given to me to bless thee for the last time, and I would fain to the last be the cause of good to thee. I have lived, ah! how long; and suffered, methinks, beyond human suffering; let the words I now utter, live in thy soul for ever; my soul is in them! Will not my son respect the sacred yearnings of his mother's heart?"

Touched, penetrated by this exordium, the tearful boy promised attention and obedience. Elizabeth sat on a low tomb, Richard knelt before her; one kiss she imprinted on his young brow, while endeavouring to still the beating of her heart, and to command the trembling of her voice. She was silent for a few moments. Richard looked up to her with mingled love and awe; wisdom seemed to beam from her eyes, and the agitation that quivered on her lips gave solemnity to the tone with which she addressed her young auditor.

She spoke of his early prospects, his long imprisonment, and late fortunes. She descanted on the character of Henry Tudor, describing him as wise and crafty, and to be feared. She dwelt on the character of the Earl of Lincoln and other chiefs of the house of York, and mentioned how uneasily they bore the downfal of their party. No pains, no artifice, no risk, she said, would be spared by any one of them, to elevate an offspring of the White Rose, and to annihilate the pretensions and power of Lancaster. “Still a boy, unmeet for such contest, noble blood will be shed for you, my son,” she continued; “and while you are secluded by those who love you from danger, many lives will be spent for your sake. We shall hazard all for you; and all may prove too little for success. We may fail, and you be thrown upon your own guidance, your unformed judgment, and childish indiscretion. Alas! what will then be your fate? Your kinsmen and partizans slain — your mother broken-hearted, it may be, dead! — spies will on every side environ you, nets will be spread to ensnare you, daggers sharpened for your destruction. You must oppose prudence to craft, nor, until your young hand can wield a man’s weapon, dare attempt aught against Henry’s power. Never forget that you are a King’s son, yet suffer not unquiet ambition to haunt you. Sleep in peace, my love, while others wake for you. The time may come when victory will be granted to our arms. Then we shall meet again, not as now, like skulking guilt, but in the open sight of day I shall present my son to his loyal subjects. Now we part, my Richard — again you are lost to me, save in the recollection of this last farewell.”

Her own words fell like a mournful augury on her ear. With a look of agonized affection she opened her arms, and then enclosed in their circle the stripling form of her son. She pressed him passionately to her heart, covering him with her kisses, while the poor boy besought her not to weep; yet, infected by her sorrow, tears streamed from his eyes, and his little heart swelled with insupportable emotion. It was at once a sight of pity and of fear to behold his mother’s grief.

Lady Brampton and Madeline now drew near, and this effusion of sorrow past away. The Queen collected herself, and rising, taking Richard’s hand in hers, with dignity and grace she led him up to the fair Fleming, saying “A widowed mother commits to your protection her beloved child. If heaven favour our right, we may soon claim him, to fill the exalted station to which he is heir. If disaster and death follow our attempts, be kind to my orphan son, protect him from the treachery of his enemies; preserve, I beseech you, his young life!”

Madeline replied in a tone that shewed how deeply she sympathized in the Queen’s sorrows, while she fervently promised never to desert her charge. “Now depart,” said Elizabeth, “leave me, Richard, while I have yet courage to say adieu!”

Elizabeth stood watching, while the forms of the prince and his protectress disappeared down the dark aisle. They reached the door; it swung back on its hinges, and the sound, made as it closed again, reverberated through the arched cathedral. The unfortunate mother did not speak; leaning on her friend’s arm she quitted the church by another entrance. They returned to the palace in silence; and when again they conversed, it was concerning their hopes of the future, the schemes to be devised; nor did the aching heart of Elizabeth relieve itself in tears and complaints, till the intelligence, received some weeks afterwards of the safe arrival of the travellers in France, took the most bitter sting from her fears, and allowed her again to breathe freely.

CHAPTER VI.

"Such when as Archimago him did view.
He weened well to work some uncouth wile;
Eftsoon untwisting his deceitful clew.
He 'gan to weave a web of cunning guile."
— SPENSER.

The birth of Arthur, Prince of Wales, which took place in the month of September of this same year, served to confirm Henry Tudor on the throne, and almost to obliterate the memory of a second and resisting party in the kingdom. That party indeed was overthrown, its chiefs scattered, its hopes few. Most of the principal Yorkists had taken refuge in the court of the Duchess of Burgundy: the Earl of Lincoln only ventured to remain, preserving the appearance of the greatest privacy, while his secret hours were entirely occupied by planning a rising in the kingdom, whose success would establish his cousin Richard Duke of York, the fugitive Perkin Warbeck, on the throne. The chief obstacle that presented itself was the difficulty of exciting the English to any act of rebellion against the king, without bringing forward the young Prince as the principal actor on the scene. The confirmed friendship between the Queen and Lady Brampton had produced a greater degree of intercourse between the former and the Earl; but their joint counsels had yet failed to originate a plan of action: when chance, or rather the unforeseen results of former events, determined their course of action, and brought to a crisis sooner than they expected the wavering purposes of each.

Richard Simon had quitted Winchester to fulfil his duties as priest in the town of Oxford. No man was better fitted than Simon to act a prominent part in a state-plot. He was brave; but the priestly garb having wrested the sword from his hand, circumstances had converted that active courage, which might have signalized him in the field, to a spirit of restless intrigue; to boldness in encountering difficulties, and address in surmounting them. To form plans, to concoct the various parts of a scheme, wedging one into the other; to raise a whirlwind around him, and to know, or to fancy that he knew, the direction the ravager would take, and what would be destroyed and what saved in its course, had been from youth the atmosphere in which he lived. Now absent from the Queen, he was yet on the alert to further her views, and he looked forward to the exaltation of her son to the throne as the foundation-stone of his own fortunes. In what way could this be brought about? After infinite deliberation with himself, Simon conceived the idea of bringing forward an impostor, who, taking the name of Richard of York, whose survival, though unattested, was a current belief in the kingdom, might rouse England in his cause. If unsuccessful, the safety of the rightful prince was not endangered; if triumphant, this counterfeit would doff his mask at once, and the real York come forward in his place.

In the true spirit of intrigue, in which Simon was an adept, he resolved to mature his plans and commence his operations before he communicated them to any. He looked round for a likely actor for his new part, and chance brought him in contact with Lambert Simnel, a baker's son at Oxford. There was something in his fair complexion and regular soft features that was akin to York; his figure was slight, his untaught manners replete with innate grace; he was clever; and his beauty having made him a sort of favourite, he had grown indolent and assuming. His father died about this time, and he was left a penniless orphan. Simon came forward to protect him, and cautiously to point out the road to fortune without labour. The youth proved an apt scholar. To hear speak of princes, crowns, and kingdoms as objects in which he was to have an interest and a share, dazzled his young eyes. He learnt speedily every lesson the priest taught him, and adopted so readily the new language inculcated, that Simon became, more and more enamoured of his scheme, and sanguine as to its results. The next care of Simon was to confirm, in the partizans of the House of York, the suspicion they already entertained of the existence of its noblest scion; he dispatched anonymous letters to the chief nobles, and it became whispered through the country, though none knew the origin of the tale, that the surviving son of Edward the Fourth was about to appear to claim the crown. The peaceful sighed to think that the White and Red Roses would again be watered by the best blood of England. The warlike and ambitious, the partizans of York, who had languished in obscurity, walked more erect; they regarded their disused armour with complacency, for war and tumult was then the favourite pastime of high-born men.

It was at this period that, through the intervention of Lady Brampton, Sir Thomas Broughton, a most zealous Yorkist and chief friend of Lord Lovel, was introduced to the Dowager Queen's presence, then residing in London. He came full of important intelligence. He had been roused from his usual repose by one of Simon's anonymous letters, which hinted at the existence of the Duke of York, and counselled a drawing together of such forces as would be willing to support him: Lord Lovel was with him, and at the name of Richard at once prepared for action. He was busied in raising adherents in the south, sending Sir Thomas to London, that he might there receive the commands of the Prince's mother. Scarcely had he entered the metropolis, when in one of its narrowest alleys he was accosted by Richard Simon, who had earnestly besought him to obtain an audience for Simon himself from the Queen; acknowledging that he was the author of the reports and commotions, and that he had important secrets to disclose.

All this inspired the Queen with the deepest disquietude. She readily arranged with Sir Thomas the desired interview, which, at Simon's request, was to take place that very night, and agreed that he should enter the palace by a private door, Lady Brampton giving him admittance. Broughton departed, and Elizabeth, disturbed and agitated, counted the hours impatiently which must intervene before the riddle was explained.

Even this interval was full of wonder. A report was circulated, which soon reached the palace, that the Earl of Warwick, in endeavouring to escape from the Tower in a boat, had fallen into the river, and was drowned before assistance could be afforded. Such was the current tale; but many suspected that the King was privy to a more guilty termination of his unhappy prisoner, of whose death none entertained a doubt. This circumstance added to the Queen's impatience — Life was bound up in the event of the next few hours.

The time arrived — all was quiet in the palace (the Queen inhabited Tower Royal); and the royal dowager and her friend prepared for their visitor. At the signal given the door was opened; but Simon came not alone; the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Lovel, Sir Thomas Broughton, and an unknown youth, it was Edmund Plantagenet, entered. The tale of the imposture of Lambert Simnel was disclosed, and with it a change of plan, the result of the death of Warwick. Simnel's age and appearance accorded better with this prince than with his younger cousin; it were easy to spread abroad that the report of his death was a fiction contrived by the king; that he had escaped in fact, and was in arms. If a more sinister fate had befallen him, guilt would impose silence on his murderer; if the attempt failed, no evil would occur; if successful, he would give instant place to the superior claims of the Duke of York.

Lincoln unfolded these schemes with sagacity and deliberation, and the Queen eagerly adopted his ideas as he disclosed them. It was also the Earl's suggestion that Simnel should first appear in Ireland. The Duke of Clarence had been Lieutenant there, and was much beloved throughout the island: through neglect and forgetfulness all the counsellors and officers appointed by Clarence had been unremoved by the new government, and might easily be induced to favour his persecuted son. The Duchess of Burgundy was also to be applied to, and counsel was held as to who should be informed of the truth, who deceived in this hazardous attempt; night wore away, while still the conspirators were in deliberation; they separated at last, each full of hope, each teeming with gallant resolution. Henceforth the false smile or ill-concealed frown of their enemy was indifferent to them; their good swords were their sure allies; the very victory gained by Henry at Bosworth raised their expectations; one other battle might give them again all that then they lost.

CHAPTER VII.

Within these ten days take a monastery;
A most strict house; a house where none may whisper.
Where no more light is known but what may make you
Believe there is a day; where no hope dwells.
Nor comfort but in tears.
— BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

With the consciousness of this plot weighing on her mind, Elizabeth Woodville continued her usual routine of life, and made a part of the Court of Henry the Seventh. She had long been accustomed to pass from one evil to the other, and to find that when one cause for unhappiness died away, it gave instant place to another. She felt, with all the poignancy of a mother's disappointed pride, the situation of her daughter. Neglect was the lightest term that could be applied to the systematized and cold-hearted tyranny of Henry towards his wife. For not only he treated her like an unfavoured child, whose duty it was to obey without a murmur, and to endeavour to please, though sure of being repulsed. At the same time that he refused to raise her above this state of degradation, he reproached her with the faults of maturity, and stung her womanly feelings with studied barbarity. He taunted her with her attachment to her family and its partizans; spoke with triumph of its overthrow; and detailed with malignant pleasure every severe enactment passed by himself against the vanquished Yorkists. Then, again, he accused her of participating in her parent's intrigues, and though proud of the son she had given him, as the heir of his crown, he divided, as much as possible, the infant from the mother, under the avowed, though ridiculous pretence, of preventing her from inculcating principles of rebellion towards his liege and father.

This last blow sunk deep. She had hitherto borne his harshness meekly, sustained by the hope of overcoming his flinty nature by softness and yielding. She had anticipated that the fresh enmity conceived against her on the event of Lord Lovel's rebellion, would be entirely allayed by her pretty Arthur, whose birth was solemnized by many rejoicings. But when she found this last hope fail, every expectation of good died away with it.

Among other acts of duty, she had for a long time pursued a system of self-denial, deeming it a breach of duty to complain of her husband, even to her mother. But this mother, acquainted with the secrets of the human heart, and desirous of detaching her entirely from her husband, exerted all the influence that one experienced and firm can exercise over the young and vacillating; she brought her to lament her situation, and to complain of each fresh token of the King's disregard. The barrier of self-restraint once broken through, the sympathy and remonstrances of her parent emboldened her to such a change of conduct towards Henry, as at first excited his surprise, then his contempt. The many rumours afloat concerning the existence of the Duke of York served also to rouse his angry mood: if at first he appeared somewhat complaisant towards his mother-in-law, it was from an endeavour to put her off her guard, and to attract or surprise her confidence on the point which lay nearest his heart; but, when he found that his attacks were vain, his undisguised arrogance and her ill-concealed resentment produced scenes, disgraceful in themselves, and agonizing to the wife and daughter who was their witness.

At this moment, when suspicion was abroad, the Lancastrians fearful, the Yorkists erect with renewed hopes, like the bursting of a thunderstorm came the intelligence of the appearance of the Earl of Warwick in Dublin, his enthusiastic reception there, the rising of the people in his favour, and the menaces held out by him of his intention to wrench the sceptre of England from the hand of him who held it.

Henry alone heard these momentous tidings with contempt. The Earl of Kildare, Lord Lieutenant of the kingdom, had received the pretender with princely honours; yet the very circumstance of a false son of Clarence being supported by the Yorkists was the occasion of satisfaction to him; his only fear arose from the probable mystery covered by these designs. He was angry at the disloyalty manifested, but it was in a distant province, and so came not home to him. There appeared no falling off, no disturbance among his English subjects. Still caution and policy were the weapons he best loved to wield, and he dispatched several spies to Ireland, to endeavour to fathom the extent and nature of the rebellion. The chief among them was his own secretary, Frion, a Frenchman, a crafty and experienced implement. He succeeded in bringing back irrefragable proof that the Dowager Queen mingled deeply in the plot.

Henry hated Elizabeth Woodville. He considered that it was principally through her restless scheming, that he had been forced to marry the portionless (her detested claim to his crown her only dower) daughter of York, instead of forming an union with a foreign princess; perhaps Mary of Burgundy, or Anne of Britanny, either of whom would have brought gold to his coffers, or extensive domains to his empire. He hated her, because he deeply suspected that she was privy to the existence of a formidable rival to his state. He knew that the young Duke of York had not died in the Tower. In every way she was his enemy; besides that linked to her ruin, was the sweet idea of confiscation, one ever entertained with delight by the money-loving king.

He assembled a council in his palace at Shene, which stood near where Richmond now stands. The chiefs of the English nobility were his counsellors. The Duke of Buckingham, son of him who first favoured, and then rose against Richard the Third. The lords Dawbeny and Broke, who had been raised to the peerage for their services in the same cause. Lord and Sir William Stanley, men to whom Henry principally owed his crown. Others there were of high rank and note; but the king paid most attention to two priests: John Morton, Bishop of Ely, and Richard Fox, Bishop of Exeter, were his private advisers aad friends, as well as public counsellors. Morton had watched over his interests while in exile; he first had excited the Duke of Buckingham to revolt, and hatched the plot which placed Richmond on the throne.

The council held was long and solemn, and the results, brought about more by insinuation than open argument, were different from those expected by most of the persons present. First it was resolved that a general pardon should be proclaimed to the insurgents. No exceptions were to be made; those persons then in the very act of setting up his adversary were included; for as, by the second decree, that the real Earl of Warwick should be shown publicly in London, the deception would become manifest; if indeed they were deceived, it was thought more politic to reclaim them by clemency, than by severe measures to drive them to despair.

The third and last enactment was levelled against the Queen Dowager. Many of the council were astonished to hear it proposed, that she should forfeit all her goods and lands, and be confined for life in a convent, for having consented to the marriage of her daughter and Richard the Third, while the ready acquiescence of the King and his chief advisers made them perceive that this measure was no new resolve. These three decrees past, the council separated, and Henry returned to Westminster, accompanied by Sir William Stanley. To him he spoke openly of the treason of the Queen: he even ventured to say, that he was sure that some mystery lurked beneath; he commissioned Stanley, therefore, to notify the order of council to her Majesty; but at the same time to shew her, that disclosure, and reliance on the King, would obtain her pardon. Sir William Stanley was a courtier in the best sense of the term; a man of gentle manners; desirous of doing right, easily excited to compassion, but ambitious and timid; one in truth than whom none could be more dangerous; for his desire to please those immediately before him, led him to assume every appearance of sincerity, and perpetually to sacrifice the absent to the present.

Elizabeth heard, with utter dismay, the sentence passed against her; courage was restored only when she found that her freedom could be purchased, by the confession of her son's existence, and place of abode. She repelled Stanley's solicitations with disdain; answered his entreaties with an appeal to his own feelings, of how far, if such a secret existed, it were possible that she, a mother, should entrust it to the false and cruel king. Stanley speedily found his whole battery of persuasion exhausted; he withdrew in some wonder as to what the real state of things might be, and full of the deepest compassion. She had indeed scarcely veiled the truth to him; for, calling to mind the fate of the wretched Margaret of Anjou, she asked him, whether, like her, she should expose the young orphan York to the fate of the Lancastrian Prince Edward. But Stanley shrunk from being privy to such disclosures, and hastily withdrew.

Henry had no exhausted all his hopes: glad as he was to wreak his vengeance on the Queen, and to secure her possessions to himself, he was not so blind as not to see that the knowledge of her secret were a far greater prize. His next implement was her eldest son, the Marquess of Dorset. Lord Dorset had been so active in his opposition to Richard the Third, and had done such good service to his adversary, that Henry overlooked his near kindred to the Queen Dowager, regarding him rather, as the representative of his father, Sir John Gray, who had fallen in the cause of Lancaster. He became indeed a sort of favourite with the King. Dorset was proud, self-sufficient, and extravagant, but his manners were fascinating, his spirit buoyant, and Henry, who was accustomed to find the storms of party lowering like winter over his domestic circle, found relief only when Dorset was present. The present occasion, however, called forth other feelings in the haughty noble; he might be angry with his mother's plotting, but he was more indignant at the severity exercised against her; and far from furthering Henry's designs, he applauded her resistance, and so irritated the King, that it ended by his sudden arrest, and being committed to the Tower.

And now all hope was at an end for the unhappy lady. The various acts of her tragic history were to close in the obscurity and poverty of a convent-prison. Fearful that her despair would lead her to some deed that might at least disturb the quiet and order he loved, Henry had resolved that no delay should have place, but that on the very morrow she should be conveyed to Bermondsey. She was to be torn from her family — her five young daughters with whom she resided. The heartless tyrant was callous to every pang that he inflicted, or rejoiced that he had the power to wound so deeply one whom he abhorred. Lady Brampton was with her to the last; not to sustain and comfort her; the Queen's courage and firmness was far greater than that of her angry friend: she pointed out the hope, that the cruelties exercised towards her might animate the partizans of York to greater ardour; and tears forced themselves into her eyes only, when she pictured Richard, her victorious sovereign and son, hastening to unbar her prison doors to restore her to liberty and rank. The night was spent in such discourses between the ladies. With early dawn came the fated hour, the guard, the necessity for instant departure. She disdained to shew regret before Henry's emissaries; and with one word only to her friend—"I commit him to your guidance," she yielded to her fate; submitting to be torn from all she loved, and, without an expressed murmur, entered the litter that bore her singly to her living grave.

The same sun that rose upon the melancholy progress of Elizabeth Woodville towards Bermondsey, shone on a procession, more gaudy in appearance, yet, if that were possible, more sad at heart. This was the visit, ordered by the King, of the Earl of Warwick to St. Paul's Gathedral; thus to contradict to the eyes of all men the pretender in Ireland. Warwick had spent a year in the Tower, in almost solitary imprisonment. Hopeless of freedom, worn in health, dejected from the overthrow of all the wild schemes he had nourished at Sheriff Hutton, linked with the love he bore his cousin, the Lady Elizabeth, now Queen of England, he could hardly be recognised as the same youth who had been her companion during her residence there. He was pale; he had been wholly neglectful of his person; carking sorrow had traced lines on his young brow. At first he had contemplated resisting the order of being led out as a show to further his enemies' cause: one futile and vague hope, which could only have sprung up in a lover's heart, made him concede this point. Perhaps the Court — the Queen would be there.

He met several noble friends, commanded by Henry to attend him; for it was the King's policy to surround him with Yorkists, so to prove that he was no counterfeit. Alas!

"These cloudy princes, and heart-sorrowing peers. "

assembled like shadows in the dim abyss, mourning the splendour of the day for ever set. They entered the cathedral, which stood a heavy gothic pile, on a grassy mound, removed from all minor edifices. There was a vast assemblage of ladies and knights; all looked compassionately on this son of poor murdered Clarence, the luckless flower, brought to bloom for an hour, and then to be cast into perpetual darkness. The solemn religious rites, the pealing organ, the grandeur of the church, and chequered painted light thrown from the windows, for a moment filled with almost childish delight the Earl's young heart; that this scene, adapted to his rank, should be so single and so transient, filled his soul with bitterness. Once or twice he thought to appeal to his noble friends, to call on them to resist the tyrant — Elizabeth's husband. His heart chilled at the idea; his natural timidity re-assumed its sway, and he was led back to the prison-fortress, despairing, but unresisting.

Yet, at this hour, events were in progress which filled many hearts with hope of such change as he would gladly hail. On the news of the Queen's arrest, Lord Lincoln had departed with all speed to Flanders, to his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy, to solicit her aid to attack and overcome the enemy of their vanquished family. The Lady Margaret, sister of Edward the Fourth of England, and wife of Charles the Rash of Burgundy, was a woman distinguished by her wisdom and her goodness. When Charles fell before Nancy, and his more than princely domains descended into the hands of his only child, a daughter — and the false Louis the Eleventh of France, on one hand, and the turbulent Flemings on the other, coalesced to rend in pieces, and to prey upon, the orphan's inheritance — her mother-in-law, the Lady Margaret, was her sage and intrepid counsellor; and when this young lady died, leaving two infant children as co-heirs, the Dowager Duchess entirely loved, and tenderly brought them up, attending to their affairs with maternal solicitude, and governing the countries subject to them with wisdom and justice. This lady was warmly attached to her family: to her the Earl of Lincoln and Lord Lovel resorted, revealing the state of things — how her nephew, young Richard, was concealed in poor disguise in French Flanders, and how they had consented to Richard Simon's plots, and hoped that their result would be to restore her brother's son to the throne of their native land.

The Duchess of Burgundy possessed a proud and high spirit. The abasement in which her niece, the lady Elizabeth, was held by the Earl of Richmond; she, the real giver of his crown, not having herself been crowned; the rigour exercised towards the Yorkist chiefs, many of whom had been her defenders and friends in time of flight and defeat; the calumnies heaped on the various members of her royal house; made a prospect of displanting Henry, and of revenge, grateful to her. She acceded to the Earl's request, gave him an aid of two thousand Germans, led by Martin Swartz, a man of family and note in Germany, providing them with vessels to take them to Ireland, and blessing their expedition with her best and earnest wishes.

On their arrival in Dublin a gay and brilliant scene was acted, which raised the enthusiasm of the Irish, and spread a glory round the impostor they supported. The exhibition of the real Earl of Warwick had produced no effect in Ireland; Thomas Geraldine, Earl of Kildare, asserted that Henry had brought forward a counterfeit, and Lambert Simnel lost no credit among them. He was proclaimed King of England; he was crowned by the bishop of Meath with a diadem taken from an image of the Blessed Virgin; a parliament was convoked in his name, and every measure taken to ensure his power in Ireland, and to gather together forces wherewith to invade the sister island.

The English lords felt far more anxiety than their allies in the result of this insurrection. Although it had been disregarded by the Irish, the effect produced in England by the visit of Warwick to St. Paul's was such as Henry had anticipated, and the counterfeit in Ireland found few supporters among the Yorkists. Still it was necessary to end as they had begun; to acknowledge the imposture, so to bring forward the young son of Edward, would have been to all appearance too barefaced a cheat. Lovel, as a gallant soldier, was ready to spend his blood in any enterprize that promised to advance the White Rose; but he, as well as the Earl of Lincoln, mingling sad memories of the past with careful forethought, looked forward to the result of Richard Simon's contrivance with well-founded dread. Still they entertained no thought of retreat, but mustered their forces, and counselled with their associates for the furtherance of the cause. On the 4th of June, Lambert Simnel, under the name of Edward the Sixth, with his, so called, cousin, De la Poole, Lord Lovel, and their constant attendant young Edmund Plantagenet, the Lords Thomas and Maurice Geraldine, with their force of savage scarce-armed Irish, and Martin Swartz with his German auxiliaries, landed at the pile of Foudray in Lancashire, where they were soon after joined by Sir Thomas Broughton, who brought some few English to fight and die for this unhappy conspiracy.

Henry was prepared for their arrival: to gain grace in his subjects' eyes, he first made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham, and then, proceeding to the midland counties, held council to know whether it were best to encounter his foes out of hand, or to let them drag on; so to weary them by delay. A number of nobles and their followers joined the King, and it was agreed among them to press forward, before the enemy should gather force in England. Henry had a further view in this: he could not tell how far the secret of their plot, which he felt assured was the design to advance the young son of Edward, was divulged among the Yorkists, and how far believed; as yet the enterprize bore no ill guise for him, having at its head a manifest impostor; so he hastened onward to crush it utterly, before it assumed a more fearful form. The Earl of Lincoln, eager to try the fortune of battle, advanced also on his side, and the rival armies drew nigh each other at Newark-upon-Trent. The King pitched his tents three miles beyond the town; and on the same night the Earl encamped at Stoke, but a few miles distant. And now, after a reign of two years, as he had forced King Richard to fight for his crown against him, an adventurer and an invader in his realm, did Henry Tudor find himself in his adversary's position, about to risk life and kingdom on one cast of the die against troops as ill-assorted but as desperate and brave as his had been. Henry felt in his heart's core the thrilling pang, which a conviction that all is in the hands of fortune must ever impart to a human being who is her slave. He felt that his crown was but an usurpation, that his anointed and sacred head claimed no reverence from these enemies; he was degraded in his own eyes from being a sceptred king upheld by the laws, to a wild adventurer, his good sword his right; a fierce but disciplined anger filled his heart; his brows were bent, his voice was attuned to harshness, his thoughts were conversant with overthrow and death. The hour was come; he was impatient for its passing, and he led forth his troops, all well-appointed English soldiery, in such hope as the sight of a noble army might well inspire, in such dread as was the natural offspring of the many chances and changes that had occurred to the sovereigns of England during the late struggles.

The Earl of Lincoln cherished still mightier fears: yet there was more of calm and dignity in his meditations than in the impatient misgivings of Henry. His heart sickened at the idea of battle and bloodshed; he felt himself responsible for the lives of all; and, while this nerved his heart to courage, it took rest from his eyes, and planted sorrow deep in his manly breast. The morrow! oh, the morrow! hours full of fate! whoso looks forward and sees in the morrow the crown or ruin of the hopes of many, may well pray the swift-pacing hours to lag, and night to remain for ever as a spell to stop the birth of time.

But the morrow came; a day of slaughter and captivity for the Yorkist party. The battle was hard fought: the German auxiliaries were veteran soldiers, who spared neither blows nor blood; their leader, Martin Swartz, for valour, for strength, and for agility of body, was inferior to none among the warlike captains of those times. The Irish, though half naked and ill-armed, fought with desperate bravery. In vain: the valour of Henry’s soldiers was equal, their discipline and numbers superior. First the noble Lincoln fell, and his comrades were slaughtered around him avenging his death. The Lords Geraldine, Swartz, and Sir Thomas Broughton were found among the slain; Lord Lovel was never heard of more; the young Edmund Plantagenet, struck in the side by a dart, lay for dead upon the ground. Richard Simon and his false-seeming pupil were among the prisoners.

Such was the event of the last attempt of the Yorkists to raise the bruised White Rose to its old supremacy. All of high rank and power that owned this symbol were gone; Lincoln, the best column of its fortunes, was destroyed; nothing remained, save the orphan Prince, the royal exile, a boy of thirteen years of age, brought up as the child of a Flemish money-lender. To hide himself in safe obscurity was his only wisdom, till time should give strength to his arm, sagacity to his plans, and power to his acts; happy if he could find any concealment sufficiently obscure, to baffle the discernment of Henry, and to save him from the arts of those whom he would employ to discover and seize on him.

Henry again felt himself secure on his throne: he deeply lamented the death of Lincoln, as he had hoped to learn from him the secret of the conspiracy. He found in Lambert Simnel the mere tool of others, and in contempt made him a scullion in his kitchen, so to throw derision on the attempt which had been made to exalt him. He dealt otherwise with Richard Simon. In the secrecy of his prison every art was practised to induce him to make a full confession. Simon played a dastardly and a double part, half revealing, half disguising the truth. Henry became assured that his rival, the Duke of York survived, and he was led in some sort to guess at the place of his abode. He had promised liberty to Simon when the young Prince should be in his hands; meanwhile he was imprisoned in the monastery in which he was fated to close his existence.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our king he kept a false stewarde.
 Sir Aldingar they him call;
A falser stewarde than he was one.
 Servde not in bower nor hall.
 — OLD BALLAD.

Whoever writes concerning the actions of the men of the olden time, must sadden the reader by details of war, descriptions of fields of battle, narrations of torture, imprisonment, and death. But here also we find records of high virtues and exalted deeds. It is at first sight strange, that men, whose trade was murder, who habitually wore offensive weapons, whose chief happiness was derived from the glory they acquired by inflicting misery on others, should be among those who live in our memories as examples of what is most graceful and excellent in human nature. Too great security destroys the spirit of manhood, while the habit of hazardous enterprize strengthens and exalts it: it was not because they destroyed others that the warriors of old were famous for honour, courage, and fidelity; but because, from some motive springing from the unselfish part of our nature, they exposed themselves to danger and to death.

It was at times such as these that friendship formed the chief solace of man's life. The thought of his lady-love supported the knight during his wanderings, and rewarded him on his return, but the society of his brothers-in-arms shortened the weary hours, and made peril pleasure. Death, the severer of hearts and destroyer of hope, is in its actual visitation the great evil of life — the ineffaceable blot, the tarnisher of the imagination's brightest hues — but if he never came, but only hovered, the anticipation of his advent might be looked upon as the refiner of our nature. To go out under the shadow of his dark banner; hand in hand, to encounter a thousand times his grim likeness; to travel on through unknown ways, during starless nights, through forests beset with enemies; over mountains, whose defiles hid him but to assure his aim; to meet him arrayed in his full panoply on the field of battle; to separate in danger; to meet on the verge of annihilation; and still through every change to reap joy, because every peril was mutual, every emotion shared, was a school for heroic friendship that does not now exist. In those times also man was closer linked with nature than now; and the sublimity of her creations exalted his imagination, and elevated his enthusiasm — dark woods, wild mountains, and the ocean's vast expanse, form a stage on which, when we act our parts, we feel that mightier natures than our own witness the scenes we present, and our hearts are subdued by awe to resignation.

Edmund Plantagenet, the forest-bred son of Richard the Third, the late companion of the illustrious Lincoln and gallant Lovel, lay long insensible on the field of battle, surrounded by the dead — he awoke from his swoon to the consciousness that they lay strewed around him dead, whom he had worshipped as heroes, loved as friends. Life became a thankless boon; willingly would he have closed his eyes, and bid his soul also go on her journey to the unknown land, to which almost all those to whom he had been linked during his past existence had preceded him. He was rescued by a charitable friar from this sad state — his wound was dressed — life, and with it liberty, restored to him. After some reflection, the first use he resolved to make of these gifts was to visit the young Duke of York at Tournay.

Edmund's mind, without being enterprizing, was full of latent energy, and contemplative enthusiasm. The love of virtue reigned paramount in it; nor could he conceive happiness unallied to some pursuit, whose origin was duty, whose aim was the good of others. His father — his ambition and his downfall — were perpetual subjects for reflection; to atone for the first and redeem the last in the person of his nephew, became, in his idea, the only fitting end of his life. Fostering this sentiment, he speedily formed the determination of attaching himself to the exiled Duke of York: first, to devote himself to the preserving and educating him during childhood — and secondly, to fight and die for him when the time was ripe to assert his rights.

During his hazardous journey to Flanders, Edmund was supported by that glowing sensation which borrows the hues and sometimes the name of happiness: it was an extatic mood that soared above the meaner cares of life, and exalted him by the grandeur of his own ideas. Self-devotion is, while it can keep true to itself, the best source of human enjoyment: there is small alloy when we wholly banish our own wretched clinging individuality, in our entire sacrifice at the worshipped shrine. Edmund became aware of the value of his own life, as he planned how in future he should be the guardian and protector of his unfriended, peril-encircled, orphan cousin. A religious sentiment of filial love also influenced him; for thus he could in some sort repair the wrongs committed by his father. There was much in Edmund's temperament that might have rendered him a mere dreamer. The baser ends of common men possessed no attractions for him; but a lofty purpose developed the best points of his character.

It was early dawn, when, a month after the battle of Stoke, Plantagenet, in pursuance of his design, arrived at the cottage of Madeline de Faro, where, under the lowly name of Perkin Warbeck, dwelt the noble scion of the House of York. It was a lovely spot — trees embowered the cot, roses bloomed in the garden, and jessamine and woodbine were twined round the porch. The morning breeze and rising sun filled the atmosphere with sweets. Already the cottagers were enjoying its fragrance, and Edmund, as he alighted, beheld the object of his journey — the fair-haired stripling Prince and his protectress Madeline. Edmund was one-and-twenty, but his brow was more bent, his eye more thoughtful, his cheek more pale and sunk than befitted his age; it was only when he smiled that frankness displaced solemnity, and those who conversed with him were ever eager to call forth those smiles, which, like sunbeams that chase the shadows on a green hill-side, made darkness light. Confidence readily springs up between the open-hearted and good; and Edmund and the inhabitants of the cottage found no impediment to entire reliance on each other. Madeline was overjoyed that her young charge should find manly guardianship in his cousin, and mentioned how often her fears had been awakened on his account, and how suspicions had got abroad concerning him among the citizens of Tournay.

Madeline, the sister of the Fleming, John Warbeck, was married to a Spaniard in the service of Portugal. In those days, just previous to the discovery of America by Columbus, while that illustrious man was offering his unesteemed services at Lisbon, the Portuguese were full of the spirit of enterprize and maritime adventure. Each year new vessels were sent southward along the unexplored shores of Africa, to discover beyond the torrid zone a route to India. Hernan de Faro was a mariner — it was during one of his voyages to Holland that he had seen and married Madeline, and he left her in her native country, while he pursued his fortunes down the

Golden Coast as far as the Cape of Good Hope. He had been absent longer than she had anticipated, and each day might bring the wanderer back, when he purposed taking her with him to his native Spain. What, then, must become of Richard? Plantagenet saw at once the necessity of visiting the court of Burgundy, and of placing her nephew at the disposition of the Duchess Margaret.

The young prince was now fourteen — he had shot up in height beyond his years, beautiful in his boyhood, and of greater promise for the future. His clear blue laughing eyes — his clustering auburn hair — his cheeks, whose rosy hue contrasted with the milk-white of his brow — his tall and slender but agile person, would have introduced him to notice among a crowd of strangers. His very youthful voice was attuned to sweetness. If Edmund found the Lady Margaret lukewarm, he need only lead the noble boy into her presence to interest her in his favour. Richard heard with tearful eyes of the imprisonment of his mother, and the slaughter of his kinsmen and friends. His heart for the moment desired vengeance; he would himself seek his aunt of Burgundy, and aided by her attack the usurper. With difficulty he permitted his cousin to depart alone; but he was obliged to yield, and Plantagenet set out for Brussels, promising a speedy return.

About a week after Edmund's departure, another visitor arrived at the cottage of the exile. A violent storm had overtaken Duke Richard and his constant companion, Madeline's daughter, in one of their wanderings in the fields near Tournay. As they stood for shelter under a half-ruined building, a traveller came to share the asylum. He was a Frenchman — a Provençal by his accent — for he immediately entered into conversation with them. As he is a man spoken of in the Chronicles, he shall receive his name at once: this apparently chance-traveller was Frion, Stephen Frion, King Henry's secretary. He had been employed to search out the young prince by such tokens as Richard Simon had given, and chance had caused him to fall in with Edmund, whom he had before remarked in attendance on the Earl of Lincoln. Easily guessing that Edmund's journey might have connection with his own, he tracked him to Tournay, and then by some untoward chance lost sight of him. The indefatigable spy had spent the last week in a particular survey of every spot round the town and in the neighbouring cities, to discover his lost clue. Overtaken by a storm on his return from

Lisle, he suddenly found himself under a shed with a youth whose appearance at once excited his strongest curiosity.

What Frion loved beyond all other things was power and craft. He had been a subject of the poetical King René of Provence; but, dispatched on some occasion to Louis the Eleventh, he entered into the service of that monarch, whose subtlety and faithlessness were a school of wisdom to this man. On one subject did he love to dwell — the contrast between Charles of Burgundy and Louis of France; the first commencing his reign by combating and vanquishing the latter, and dying miserably at last by a traitor’s hand, his armies cut to pieces, his domains the unresisting prey of his rival; while Louis, by serpent ways, by words — not deeds — gained every point, won every follower, and established his rule at last over the greater part of the wide territories of the fallen duke. In a minor way Frion aimed at imitating Louis, but he was naturally more fiery and rash. He had visited Italy also, and studied there the wiles and cruelties of the Italian lords; crossing back to Marseilles, he had been seized by corsairs and carried to Africa: — here he put in practice some of his lessons, and contrived to make himself a favorite with his Mahometan master, who afterwards crossed to Spain to serve under the Moorish king of Grenada. Frion was quickly distinguished for his sagacity in the divided counsels of this distracted kingdom, and became the trusty adviser of him called Boabdil El Chico. When this unfortunate sovereign was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, Frion was a chief mediator between them and the Sultana Ayza. At the court of Ferdinand and Isabella he met several Frenchmen, who awakened in his heart a keen desire to revisit his native country. He took advantage of an embassy thither from the court of Spain, to fulfil his wishes, but arrived at Plessis only in time to witness Louis’s death. Two years afterwards he was found in the train of the Earl of Richmond — the future secretary, spy, and favourite of Henry the Seventh — now travelling by his order to find, seize, or destroy, the last blossom of the uprooted White Rose.

Frion was rather handsome in appearance, with bright black eyes and dark hair, a complexion embrowned by the sun, a look of gaiety — unless when controled by the will of a superior, he was always laughing — a quiet kind of sarcastic laugh; he looked not the man Cæsar would have feared, except that his person was rather inclined to leanness, but he was active and well versed in martial exercises, though better in clerkly accomplishments. His early youth had been chiefly employed in copying poetry for King René — he wrote beautifully, and his small white hands were the objects of his own very great admiration. Such was his outward look; he had stores of science and knowledge within, which he seldom displayed, or, when necessary, let appear with all the modesty of one who deemed such acquirements were of little worth — useful sometimes, but fitter for a servitor than his lord. No words could describe his wiliness, his power of being all things to all men, his flattery, his knowledge of human nature, his unparalleled artifice, which, if it could be described, would not have been the perfect thing it was: it was not silken, it was not glossy, but it wound its way unerringly. Could it fail — the rage and vengeance to follow were as certain as dire, for, next to love of power, vanity ruled this man; all he did was right and good, other pursuits contemptible and useless.

Such was the serpent-spirited man who contrived to partake Richard's shelter; he eyed him keenly, he addressed him, and the Prince replied to his questions about an asylum for the night, by a courteous invitation to his home. "The boy speaks not like a cotter: his eye beams with nobleness. What a freak of nature, to make one in appearance a king's son, the plodding offspring of a rude Fleming!" As these thoughts passed through Frion's mind, the truth came not across him; and he even hesitated for a moment whether he should not, now the storm had passed, pursue his way: but his garments were wet, the ways miry, night at hand. At a second thought he accepted the invitation, and leading his horse, he accompanied the youthful pair to their cottage home.

Madeline, unsuspicious of one obviously a Frenchman, received him without fear, and after a fire had dried the visitor's dress, they sat down to a frugal supper. Frion, according to his usual manner, strove to please his hosts. His gay discourse, the laughable yet interesting accounts he gave of various adventures that had befallen him, made all three — the fair Madeline, the ardent princely boy, and the dark-eyed daughter of de Faro — sit in chained attention. When he heard that Madeline was united to a Spaniard, he spoke of Spain, of Granada and the Moorish wars; Richard's eyes flashed, and the dark orbs of the girl dilated with wonder and delight.

At length he spoke of England, and his words implied that he had lately come thence. "How fares the poor island?" asked the youth; "such stories of its tyrant reach us here, that methinks its fields must be barren, its people few."

"Had you been my comrade, young master, through merry Kent," said Frion, "you would speak in another strain. Plenty and comfort, thanks to King Harry and the Red Rose, flourish there. The earth is rich in corn, the green fields peopled with fat kine, such as delight yon islanders. 'Give an Englishman beef and mustard,' says our French proverb, 'and he is happy:' they will find dearth of neither, while the sage Henry lives, and is victorious."

"Yet we are told here," cried the youth, "that this Welch Earl, whom you call King, grinds the poor people he has vanquished to the dust, making them lament him they named Crook-back, who, though an usurper, was a munificent sovereign."

These words from a Fleming or a Frenchman sounded strange to Frion; the doubt, which he wondered had not before presented itself, now came full-fledged, and changed at its birth to certainty; yet, as the angler plays with the hooked fish, he replied, "I, a stranger in the land, saw its fair broad fields, and thought their cultivators prosperous; I heard that the king was victorious over his foes, and deemed his subjects happy. Yet, I bethink me, murmurs were abroad, of taxes and impositions. They spoke, with regret, of the White Rose, and scowled when they said that Elizabeth of York was rather a hand-maiden in her husband's palace, than Queen of fertile England."

"Now, were I an English knight, with golden spurs," said the stripling, "I would challenge to mortal combat that recreant Tudor, and force him to raise fair Elizabeth to her fitting elevation: woe the while, all Engliand's good kinghts are slain, and the noble Lincoln, the last and best of all, has perished!"

"You speak unwisely and unknowingly of things you wot not of," said Madeline, alarmed at the meaning glance of Frion; "good nephew, Perkin, your eyes see not even the English white cliffs, much less can your mind understand its dangerous policy."

"Nay, dear mother," remarked her little daughter, "you have told me that the noble Earl and the good Lord Lovel had been kind guardians to my cousin Peterkin; you chid him not when he wept their death, and you may suffer him to reproach their foe."

“I know nothing of these lords,” said Frion, “whose names are a stumbling block to a Frenchman’s tongue. But methinks it is well for us that they aim at each other’s hearts, and make booty of their own provender, no longer desolating the gay fields of France with their iron hoofs.”

And now, since that he had found him whom he sought, Frion talked again of other matters, and, as before, his smooth and gay discourse gained him pleased auditors. At length the peaceful cottagers retired to rest, and Frion sunk to sleep under their hospitable roof, after he had thought of various plans by which he might possess himself of the prince’s person; — the readiest and safest way was to entice him to accompany him alone some little space, no matter how short; he trusted to his own skill to draw him still further and further on, till he should be put on board the boat that would ferry him to his own revolted England.

CHAPTER IX.

In the high chamber of his highest tower
Sate Conrad, fettered in the Pasha's power.
— BYRON.

Gilderoy was a bonnie boy.
Had roses tull his shoone;
His stockings were of silken soy.
With garters hanging doon.
— OLD BALLAD.

It was a simple scheme, yet with the simple simplicity succeeds best. A new face and talk of distant lands, had excited York beyond his wont. He could not rest during the long night, while the image of his disastrous fortunes haunted him like a ghost. "Were I the son of a falconer or hind," he thought, "I could don my breast-plate, seize my good cross-bow, and away to the fight. Mewed up here with women, the very heart of a Plantagenet will fail, and I shall play the girl at the sight of blood. Wherefore tarries Sir Edmund, our gentle coz? If he be a true man he shall lead me to danger and glory, and England, ere she own her king, shall be proud of her outcast child."

To a mind thus tempered — heated like iron in a smith's forge — Frion, on the morrow, played the crafty artizan, fashioning it to his will. He and the Prince rose early, and the Secretary prepared for immediate departure. As he hastily partook of a slight repast, he renewed the conversation of the preceding night, and like the Sultaness Scheherezade, (perhaps he had heard of her device among the Moors) he got into the midst of the quarrels of El Zagal and El Chico, the kings of Granada, at the moment it was necessary for him to hasten away—"Good youth," said he, "I play the idle prater, while mine errand waits for me — lead me to the stable, and help me to saddle my nag; if you will serve me as a guide to Lisle, you will do a good deed, and I will reward it by finishing the strange history of the Moorish kings."

The horse was quickly in order for departure. “I will but say good day to my kinswoman, and go with you,” said Richard.

“That were idle,” replied the Secretary, “the sun has hardly peeped out from his Eastern window, and dame Madeline and her dark-eyed daughter sleep; we kept them waking yester-night; they will scarce have risen ere you return.”

The Duke suffered himself to be persuaded — with his hand on the neck of the horse, he strode beside his tempter, listening to his cunning tales of Moorish ferocity and Christian valour. The walls of Lisle at length appeared —”Here we part,” said the Duke, who remembered the caution given him, never to enter these border towns, where the English nobles often resided for a space, and the appearance of the gallant stripling, and his close resemblance to other members of the princely house of York, might beget suspicion and danger.

“Wherefore this haste, Sir Perkin?” said Frion, “cooped up under a thatched roof from Lent to Shrovetide, methinks you should be glad to stretch your chain. I remain brief space in yonder walls; leave me not till I depart.”

“Who told you I was cooped up?” said the Prince, hastily; “if I am chained, the key of my fetters is in my own hand.”

“Put it swiftly in the wards then, and cast away the heavy iron; come on with me, to where thou shalt ruffle bravely with satin-coated squires.”

Frion judged his prize already won, and almost threw aside his usual caution. Richard liked not the expression his sharp, black eye assumed, nor the wrinkling of his brow; he began to wonder what there had been in this man so to allure him into friendly converse; now that in a familiar tone he invited him to continue his companion, his haughty spirit revolted, “Good sir,” said he, “I now have done a host’s duty by you. I saved you from a storm, restored you to your road — yonder path, shaded by poplars, leads at once to the town’s gate — farewell!”

“I am but an unmeet comrade for you, gay gentleman,” said Frion; “pardon me if I have said aught unfitting the cottager of Tournay to hear. I now go the noble knight, the Sire de Beverem, and I would fain have shown him what striplings these swamps breed; methought his gilt palace were fitter dwelling than yonder hut for one, who, if his face lie not, aspires to nobler acts than weeding a garden or opening a drain. Come, my Lord —

how tript my tongue? but your eye is so lordly that the word came of itself — gentle youth, trust yourself with one, who loves to see the fiery youngster amid his mates, the gallant boy looked on with love and favour by the noble and valiant.”

Prudence whispered to Richard that this was dangerous sport; pride told him that it were unfit, nameless, and ushered thus, to appear before the high-born — but thoughtless youth urged him on, and even as Frion spoke, at a quick pace they approached the town-gate. The Sire de Beverem too, whom the wily Frenchman named, had been favoured by Edward the Fourth, and was his guest in London—”Let the worst come, and it were well to have made such a friend. I will bear myself gallantly,” thought York, “and win the good knight’s smile; it may profit me hereafter. Now I shall see how the world goes, and if any new device or fashion have sprung up among our chivalry, that I may seem not quite untaught when I lead the sons of my father’s friends to the field. Be it as you please,” he said to his seducer, “before now my hand has grasped a foil, and I will not shame your introduction.”

Frion went forward conning his part; he felt that his task was not so easy as he had imagined: the boy was wild as a bird, and so gave into the lure; but, like a bird, he might away without warning, and speed back to his nest ere his wings were well limed. It was many miles to the coast: Frion’s resolution had been hastily formed. The Lord Fitzwater, a partizan of Henry, was then sojourning at Lisle. He had been to Brussels, and on his return towards Calais a sickness had seized him, which forced him to remain some weeks under the roof of the Sire de Beverem; he was recovering now, and on the eve of his departure: without confiding the whole secret to him, the papers and tokens Frion bore must vouch that the King would thank any of his lieges who should aid him in bringing by force or decoy a pretended son of the traitor Earl of Lincoln (for thus Frion resolved to name his victim) to the English shores.

Yet the decoyer had a dificult part to play; there was a quickness in the Prince’s manner which made him fear that, if his intentions changed, his acts would not lag behind; and though he did not betray suspicion, he was so perfectly alive to every thing said and done, that any circumstance of doubt would not fail immediately to strike him. Although they had hitherto discoursed in French, yet it was certain that his native English had not been forgotten by him; nay, the appearance of the Lord Fitzwater's attendants, their livery, their speech, must awaken the Prince's fears, and confound the wiles of his enemy. Frion pondered on all these obstacles, as he rode gently through the narrow streets of Lisle; at length, they reached the abode of the French noble, and here Frion halted; while the Duke, beginning to be ill-satisfied with the part he played and his promised presentation by such a man, almost resolved to break from him here and to return; shame of appearing feeble of purpose alone prevented him. At last, passing through the court-yard up a dark and massy stair-case, he found himself in a hall, where several men at arms were assembled, some furbishing pieces of armour, others engaged in talk, one or two stretched along the benches asleep: pride awoke in the youth's breast, he had gone too far to retrace his steps, and he resolved to bear himself gallantly towards the noble to whom he was about to be presented: yet pausing for a moment, "My memory," he thought, "leads me far a-field, or some of these men bear English badges, and their wearers seem grey-eyed Englishmen." Frion meanwhile, selecting with quick tact one of the followers of the Sire de Beverem who chanced to be among these men, requested an instant introduction to Lord Fitzwater, using such golden arguments that the man, half afraid of being called on to divide the spoil, motioned him quickly to follow, and, passing through a suite of rooms, as he approached the last, said, "He is there, I will call his page." "It needs not," said Frion; "await me here, Sir Perkin," and pushing forward, to the astonishment of the attendant, entered unannounced to the Baron's presence: Richard thought he heard a "By St. Thomas!" uttered as the door closed hastily; but some Englishman might be with the French noble, and though a momentary wonder crossed him, no doubt of Frion's integrity was awakened.

"By Saint Thomas!" exclaimed the Lord Fitzwater, as Frion almost burst into his apartment, "what rude varlet is this? Are serfs so used to enter a Baron's chamber in France?"

"Most noble Sir," said Frion, "if in three words, or, if you refuse me these, if in one eye-glance, I do not satisfy you, bid your men beat me with staves from the door. I am here in King Henry's service."

"God save him!" said the noble, "and you, Sir knave, from the fate you name; which will be yours undoubtedly, if you do not give me good reason for your ill-mannered intrusion."

Frion looked round. Except the Baron there was no one in the room, save a stripling of about sixteen years. The lad, though short in stature, was handsome; yet there was a look that indicated the early development of qualities, which even in manhood detract from beauty. He seemed conversant in the world's least holy ways, vain, reckless, and selfish; yet the coarser lines drawn by self-indulgence and youthful sensuality, were redeemed in part by the merry twinkling of his eye, and the ready laugh that played upon his lips. "My words are for your ears alone, my Lord," said Frion, "and be assured they touch your liege nearly."

"Go, Robert," said Fitzwater, "but not further than the ante-chamber."

"There is one there," said Frion anxiously: "he must not quit it — he must not escape, nor learn in whose hands he is."

"Your riddles, Sir, ill please me," replied the noble.

"Look at this paper, my Lord, and let it vouch for the heavy import of my business."

Lord Fitzwater recognized his royal master's signature, and with an altered tone he said, "Leave us, Robert; tarry not in the ante-chamber, but bear my greeting to my noble host, and ask him when I may, at his best leisure, pay my thanks to him and my kind lady. I depart to-morrow at dawn; and mark, speak not to the stranger who waits without."

The youth made obeisance, and departed. A piece of tapestry hung before the door, which, together with the massy boards themselves, prevented any sounds from piercing to the other side; the lad was about to proceed on his errand, when curiosity prompted him to look on the stranger, with whom he was commanded not to parley. Richard stood in the embrasure of one of the windows, but turned quickly as the folding door shut with no gentle sound; his candid brow, his bright blue eyes, his frank-hearted smile, who that had ever seen could forget them, nor were the traits of the other's countenance less marked, though less attractive. The words burst at the same instant from either—"My Lord of York!" "Gentle Robin Clifford!"

"My prison play-fellow," cried the Prince, "this for me is a dangerous recognition. I pray you be wise, and — as you were ever — kind, and keep my secret close."

"Alas! my Lord," said Robert, "you have opened your hand, and let the winged fool fly unwittingly, if you think it has not been discovered by yonder false loon. Know you where you are?"

“Then I am betrayed! I see it, feel it. Farewell, Robin, my fleet legs will outrun their slow pursuit.”

“Nay, an’ that were possible,” said Clifford—”but it is not; let me better advise your highness; trust me you shall be free: but, hark, they come; I must not be found here. Show no suspicion; yield to your fate as if you knew it not, and confide in me; my hand on it, this night you are at liberty.”

Clifford quitted the apartment by the opposite door, while Frion entered from the other, beckoning the Duke to approach. He took him by the hand, and led him to Lord Fitzwater, who started back when he saw him, and was about to exclaim; but Frion, in French, addressing him as the Sire de Beverem, entreated his kind favour for Perkin Warbeck, the gallant youth before him. The Baron evidently was ill-pleased at the part he had consented to play; he said a few words with an ill grace, and bidding Perkin welcome, promised him favour, and permission for the present to remain in his abode. Richard saw through the flimsy disguise which the Englishman threw over his native speech, though he did not know who his receiver was; but, feeling that it was best to follow his young friend’s counsel, he replied, also in French, that, at his guide’s invitation, he had eagerly sought an interview with the renowned Sire de Beverem; that the honour done him would be deeply engraven in his heart; that on some future occasion he would gratefully avail himself of his offers; but that, at the present time, he had left his home without intimating any intention of a prolonged absence, and that he owed it to a kind kinswoman not to disquiet her by delaying his return. He prayed the noble to dismiss him therefore, craving leave only to attend him some other day.

“Be it so,” said Fitzwater, “to-morrow at dawn you shall depart hence; but you must not refuse my proffered hospitality. I shall introduce you to my household as one who ere long will be admitted into it, and show my friend, Sir Lalayne, who is now here, what gentle boors our Flanders breeds.”

“I can return to-morrow, my good Lord,” Richard began; but the noble not heeding him, added, “Stay till my return; I now go to hear mass,” and passed hastily from the chamber.

The Prince’s first impulse was to reproach Frion’s knavery, assert his freedom, and, ere any measures had been taken to secure his person, to quit his new prison. But he did not know how deep-laid the plot might be; he was inclined to think that all was prepared for his reception and safe custody, so that any open attempt to regain his liberty would be resisted by force; while, through the assistance of his friend Clifford, he might hope to escape, if, giving in to the stratagem, he took occasion by the curb, and forced it to his purpose. “Are you mad,” said Frion, “my rustic, that you resist the proffers of a high and powerful man of your native land?”

Richard wondered, when he beheld Frion’s sneer and crafty glance, how he had not mistrusted him from the moment he beheld him; the double meaning of his words, and the familiar tone in which they were uttered, grated him like a personal insult. He repressed the angry reply rising to his lips, and said:—”It seems I must submit, yet I should be beholden to you if you contrived an excuse, and lent me your horse, that I might ride back and inform Dame Madeline. To-morrow I might return.”

Frion opposed this intention, and led the Prince to a chamber at some distance from any other, at the end of a corridor, saying, “that it had been assigned to him;” and after a short conversation left him. Richard heard the shooting of the bolt as the door closed: “Son of King Edward,” he thought, “thy folly disgraces thy parentage: thus at once to have run into the gin. Yet I am of good cheer, and my heart tells me that I shall relate the merry tale of my escape to Madeline and my sweet coz, and dry this night the tears my disappearance has caused them to shed.” It soon appeared, by the long absence of his betrayer, that it was not intended to continue the farce longer; but that, from the moment he had entered that chamber, he was in treatment as well as in fact a prisoner. After several weary hours had elapsed, his blithe spirit began to sink; he reflected that Clifford had probably promised more than he could perform: but courage awoke with the sense of danger; he resolved to be true to himself, and to effect his escape singly, if he could gain no assistance. “Men have ears and hearts,” he thought, “and I can work on these; or they may be neglectful while I am on the alert, and I can profit by their carelessness. In all forms my fortune may take, I will not fail to myself; and there is small danger in any change for a true man. With my light spirit and resolved will, I could, I doubt not, persuade an armed band to make way for me, or open prison bolts with charming words, though my witchcraft be only that of gentle courtesy, moulding with skilful hand the wax of soft humanity.” Pacing the apartment, he continued these meditations, imagining every circumstance that might and would arise, and how he was to turn all to the best advantage. He framed persuasive speeches, wily answers to ensnaring questions, cautious movements, by which he might withdraw himself from the hands of his enemies; and while he thus occupied himself, his eyes gleamed, and his cheeks glowed, as if the moment of action had come, and his life and liberty depended on instant deed.

At two hours past noon the door was unclosed, and a servant entered bearing food; impatient to begin his plans of escape, Richard was about to speak to him, when, in the doorway, he beheld the slight, stunted figure of Clifford, whose forefinger was pressed on his lips, and who, after exchanging one glance with his friend, cast aside his stealthy expression of countenance, entering with a half-swaggering look, and saying, in French, "my Lord, young Sir, has sent me on a pleasant embassage, even that of dining with your pageship, saying, two boys like us were better and merrier together, than in the great hall with the arrogant serving-men." Richard felt no great appetite; but taking the tone from his friend, he thanked him, and they fell to on the viands. "Now, kind Thomas," said Clifford, "of your bounty bring us a stoup of wine; the day is rainy, and we cannot abroad; so my gossip and I will tell long stories over our bottle, and lay some plan of merry mischief which you and your fellows may in good time rue."

The domestic obeyed, nor till the wine was brought, the servant fairly dismissed, and the door closed, did Clifford put aside the character he had assumed of a stripling page, in a noble master's abode, entertaining a stranger visitant of his own years. At length, when they were quite alone, the merry boy put his hands to his sides and indulged in so gay a peal of laughter, that the Prince, who at first stared in wonder, at last caught the infection, and laughed too, while tears from superabundant glee, streamed down their cheeks. Once, twice, and thrice, did Richard check himself, and turn seriously to enquire the cause of this merriment, and Clifford strove to answer, but laughter bubbling up choked his voice, and both again yielded in accord to the overpowering fit. At last gasping, holding their sides, and by degrees commanding their muscles, the Duke said, "I would ask you, friend Robin, what this means? but at the word, lo, you! your very voice is lost. Now prithee feel half as weary as I do of this folly, and you will be as grave as tumble-down Dick. Do you remember the simpering fellow we made good sport of in the Tower?"

“You have broke the spell, my Lord,” said Clifford; “that word suffices to make me as grave as Brakenbury himself, when he looked on your brother’s corpse. Ah dear, your Highness, the name of the Tower is worse than a raven’s croak! God and St. Thomas preserve you from ever getting the other side of its moat!”

“Amen, Robin, with all my heart,” said Richard; “a shudder runs through my limbs down to my finger tips, making the skin on my head creep, when I think there is any chance of my passing long years in those dreary cells, with their narrow deep windows; the court yards, which the sun seldom visits; the massy dark walls, whose black stones seemed to frown angrily, if our childs’ voices were ever heard in sport.”

“There your cousin, my Lord of Warwick, pines out his melancholy days,” replied Clifford, “and that is your destined abode. My grandfather was slain by Queen Margaret’s side, and stained the Red Rose with a blood-red die, falling in its cause. Your father and his brothers did many a Clifford much wrong, and woe and mourning possessed my house till the line of Lancaster was restored. I cannot grieve therefore for the exaltation of the Earl of Richmond; yet I will not passively see my playmate mewed up in a cage, nor put in danger of having his head laid on that ungentle pillow in Tower Yard. The daughter of Warwick, our Edward’s affianced bride, your crook-backed uncle’s wife, loved my pranks and nurtured my youth; and by her good leave, many a mirthful hour I spent in the dark place you name. May neither of us ever see it more!”

“You will then assist my escape?” asked Richard.

“As faithfully, gossip Dickon, as God his grace shall await me at the last day! — and now I will tell you a merry tale.”

CHAPTER X.

— It is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery.
— HOMER’S HYMN TO MERCURY.

And then, with you, my friends, and the old man.
We’ll load the hollow depth of our black ship.
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.
— THE CYCLOPS.

Notwithstanding the promise Clifford made of a merry tale, both he and his auditor looked grave as he commenced. Richard expected, with some anxiety, an explanation from his friend, and the other assumed the self-consequence resulting from having achieved a victory. No two beings ever displayed, in their way, a greater contrast than these youths. The prince was many inches taller than his companion, and his slim make promised increase of height. His brow was smooth as infancy, candid as day; his bright blue eyes were lighted up with intelligence, yet there was a liquid lustre in them that betokened tenderness; nor did his lips, that nest of the heart’s best feelings, bely his eyes. They were full, a little curled, can we say in pride, or by what more gentle word can we name a feeling of self-elevation and noble purpose, joined to benevolence and sweetness? His oval cheeks were rounded by the dimpled chin, and his golden hair clustered on a throat of marble whiteness, which, as the white embroidered collar thrown back over the doublet, permitted the out-line to be seen, sustained his head as the Ionic flute rears its graceful capital. Clifford was shorter, but firm set and more manlike in form, his grey eyes were bright or dull as his soul spoke in them; his brow slightly scowled, pending over, and, even thus early, lines were delved in it, hardly seen when he was in repose, but which, as he spoke, showed deep and distorted; his smile was tinctured by a sneer, his voice attracted no confidence, yet Richard now hung intently on it as he spoke:

“When I returned from doing my Lord’s bidding, I found him moving about the room, more like a parched pea than a stately noble; for now he stood still, and then shot off with a quick step, showing every sign of being ill at ease. Now, boy as I am, for I can number but sixteen summers, my Lord more than loves me, he trusts me, and not without cause — for when at hazard — but my story will be too long — enough that ere now I have done him service. Had I not known the cause of his disquiet I should have asked it, but, believing myself fully aware of what this all meant, I went to my post, and busied myself in making some flies for angling, seeming most intent upon my work. My Lord stood over me, and twice or thrice fetched a sigh, and then strode away, and came again, saying, “I am a fool, a dolt — the King can mean no ill to this lad — and yet — I cannot tell you how long this indecision lasted, while I patiently toiled at a fly of green and gold, bright as those which trouts love to snap at in clear streams during May. At length he asked me, ‘Robin, did you mark the boy that stood in the ante-chamber?’ ‘Aye, my good Lord!’ ‘And what thought you of him?’ ‘Thought, my Lord?’ I spoke enquiringly, for it suddenly came across me that he did not know you, and it was not for me to betray your secret. ‘Aye,’ he replied, ‘thought? Does he resemble any one you ever knew? Of what country do you divine him to be?’ ‘These Flemings are sandy-haired,’ I said, ‘yet he does not look of Flanders. Methinks he seems English born.’”

“‘You are right,’ said he, ‘English he is confessedly. This Frion calls him a natural son of De la Poole — of the late Earl of Lincoln. He says that he has knowledge of a secret treasure concealed by his father before this last rebellion, and the king wishes to get him into his hands, thus to secure the gold. The tale is not unlikely, for the Tudor ever loved the glitter — nay, the very dust of the precious metal, — and the boy resembles strangely the House of York. Yet, I care not for the task put upon me of kidnapping a child, and of betraying him into his enemy’s hands — perhaps of delivering him up a prisoner for life, for the sake of — Poor fellow! if he know aught of a concealed treasure, in God’s name, let him confess it while on this side the fatal channel that now divides him from tyranny or death.’ ‘Let me deal with him,’ I said, ‘let me throw out some toy, such as is this gold and green thread to a silly fish, and learn the truth; if he discover the hiding-place of this so coveted coin, we may spare him the trouble of his enforced journey.’ ‘I know not that,’ answered my patron; ‘Master Frion is earnest for his safe keeping; and no one is nearer our liege's inner wishes than this Provencal, who served him in exile, and who followd him in his expedition thence; and yet there is a noble daring in the boy, a mountain freshness in his cheek, a springy freedom in his gait, that it were a thousand pities to fetter and limit within narrow prison bounds.' Seeing that my lord was thus favorably inclined, I used all my poor eloquence to urge him further, and at last brought him to consent that I should converse with you; learn, if possible, your secret; inform you of your danger, and advise you to escape. One only difficulty remained: my Lord had promised this Master Secretary that none should be admitted to talk with you; but when the subtle fiend, the double-dealing Frenchman entered, I told him with a long visage, that our noble host, the Sire de Beverem, had heard that we were carrying off, by force, a Fleming; and that, considering his hospitable mansion stained by the act, he had commanded strict watch to be kept on the morrow, that if any of the English suite were unwilling to go, or appeared in durance, he should be rescued. It was advisable therefore, that you should be kept in good-humour till fairly beyond the gates of Lisle; and this my wisdomship offered to do, if admitted to parlance with you. You look grave, Sir Prince, but had you seen Frion's sage look of hesitation, and heard his many exhortations that I would by no means betray my knowledge of who you really were; and how I, with a bow, careful as if my curls were white from years, promised discretion, you would laugh as I did, when, the mime over which I played before the servitor, I doffed my page's seeming equality, and in duteous phrase to his Highness of York, offer my best services to liberate him."

"That seems already done," said Richard; "usher me to the Lord Fitzwater. I will declare myself to him; his compassion already excited—"

"Would then be cool as snow at Christmas. Wise young Sir, Baron Fitzwater wears the blushing Rose; and for him there is wormwood in the name of York. Now, as a chance offshoot of the white thorn, he only sees in you a harmless boy, whom it were sin to injure; but give yourself a name whose very echo would bring St. Albans, Tewkesbury, Bosworth Field, and a thousand scaffolds streaming with his kinsmen's blood before him, and without remorse he would let Frion have his will of you. Even I, Duke Richard, I am sprung from those who fell for Lancaster—"

"Enough," replied the prince haughtily. "I am content to stand alone, to achieve my freedom singly, or to submit to my fate."

"Not so, my noble playmate," said the other. "I will not offer you my knee, my oath, my sword, for my allegiance belongs to the anointed King of England; but, I beseech you, suffer Robin Clifford to assist high-born Plantagenet to escape from a prison or from death; permit him to pay, if not the duty of a subject, yet that of a loving friend to the former companion of his childish sports."

Richard listened somewhat sullenly to these offers; he ill brooked the thought that any of English parentage should, knowing who he was, refuse to acknowledge him for his liege; but Clifford would not be refused; while it was hardly worth while to contend with his light spirit, which appeared incapable of a serious or profound idea. After a short resistance, therefore, the duke entered willingly into a discussion of the best means of effecting his escape in such a way, that he should have several hours the start of Frion, and be distant from danger, before his seducer could discover that he was not still safe in his hands.

In the midst of this discussion, Frion suddenly entered. The stake for which he played was too momentous to trust it wholly to the stripling page, and distrust of the wily boy entered also into his calculations; he broke in therefore, not only unannounced, but with such stealthy quiet as shewed that he meant to pounce on his victim unawares. The youths sat, their stools drawn close; Clifford was leaning forward earnestly propounding his schemes, and Richard listened, his whole soul in his countenance. Frion was close upon them before he was perceived by either, his eyes glimmering with their usual suspicious look. The artless Richard started, and would with a conscious mien have drawn back; but Clifford, more used to the wiles and watchfulness of others, and his own double mode of action, continued to speak in the same tone the same words, without moving a muscle. The Prince wondered, and regained his self-possession; not from entering into the deceit of his companion, but from the haughty sentiment of his own dignity, which even in danger refused to cower.

Clifford had been saying—"I will hence to the Sire: a word to him, of whose secretary this Provencal is, and insinuation that he is now on a secret expedition to the Flemish towns, will awaken his curiosity; he will send for him; fortunately the good knight speaks so slow that a mass can be said while he is introducing the subject of his enquiries; as each word expires, he pauses while a requiem might be sung for its death; our antagonist will writhe and—" and a glance askance informed the speaker that this man was at his side: he continued—"and strive vainly to escape; the heavy weight will be too much for him, he must submit. Such feints suit well us boys who have not strength nor skill for more declared warfare. Tomorrow's dawn I will practise with you in the court of the castle ere you depart. But indeed, my gossip, you must promise to be at Calais on the sixteenth, when we shall see a combat of good knights fit for royal princesses to look on. And now, fair Sir, farewell; here is your friend. The Sire de Beverem commanded my presence at this hour. If I see you not again to-night, the saints have you in their keeping!"

When Clifford with his pagelike vivacity ran from the room singing a gay romance, Frion felt himself embarrassed; and more so when Richard said—"My guest, it is hard, after giving you harbourage last night, that I should be forced, whether I will or not, to tarry here, leaving my kinswoman in dread and doubt. Make you my excuse to the Chevalier, and delay me no longer, I beseech you."

Frion, without directly replying, said, "Anon I will speak of that; meanwhile I have news for you:" — and he entered into a long account of an expected sedition in Flanders, and how the Sire de Beverem had promised to enlist Perkin Warbeck in his particular troop, when with courage and good fortune he could not fail to rise. While he was talking, one of the men at arms of the noble entered, and notified to Frion that his lord desired an instant interview with him. The Secretary hastened to obey; he thought that good-fortune itself provided this excuse for him to escape from his victim, and resolved not again to present himself before him. He was scarcely gone when Clifford returned—"Now quick," he cried, "down the back staircase! My own steed stands saddled for you; ride fast and far — but whither — whither do you intend to go?"

"In the first place to Dame Madeline's cottage."

"That were midsummer madness," cried Clifford; "Frion will never rest till he ensnares his bird again — nay, though I trust he will not discover your escape till to-morrow morning, that part of my scheme may fail; and his papers from the King are such that my lord could not refuse to aid him. I pray you set space and cloudy mystery between you."

"It shall be so. Probably I shall seek refuge at Brussels; but I must see my gentle guardian and my sweet cousin, calm their fears, and bid them farewell."

They had descended a narrow winding staircase; Clifford unlocked a postern, opening on a dark alley. A small light-limbed horse stood without, held by a stout, almost gigantic fellow. "Here, Bryan," said Clifford, "this is the smuggled article of which I spoke. Convey it in safety to the gate; once without, the road is known. How now, sweeting! you sit your steed as if you were used to this gear — in truth thou art a false one — yet take care, fold your cloak thus — not one kiss ere we part?" He sportively snatched the Prince's hand, and pressing it to his lips, continued, "No weeping, lovely: my merry heart hates tears like verjuice. The Blessed Virgin protect you; I must in. Remember in every ill Robin Clifford is your fast, your sworn friend. Look at her, Bryan: one would swear by her bearing it were a beardless page, and not a long-haired girl; remember, though gamesome, she is gentle, and respect her on your life:"

Laughing at his own deceits, the guileful boy re-entered the mansion; nor could Richard avoid smiling at the merry and ready subterfuges which his friend had at command on every occasion. Bryan demurely held the rein, and hardly hazarded a look or covert joke, as with a pace that put the poney to a trot, he led the Prince through the narrow streets to the western gate. The youth breathed freely when, after having passed the hollow sounding drawbridge, he saw the dark wall of the town behind him, and before, the green plain. In his haste he scarcely bestowed a benison on his guide; but snatching the rein from his hand, and with the other throwing some money at his feet, and exclaiming "Beware of prating, as thou art willing to save thyself from the whipping-post!" he impatiently struck his unarmed heel against the horse's sides, and bounded swiftly forward. Bryan picked up the angles, and told them slowly, as he said "I meant to have paid myself in other coin; but, by St. Julian, she rides more like a trooper than a gentle dame — and her speech — Master Robert has before now entrusted a damsel to my guidance, but they ever spoke me lovingly, with 'fair Sir,' and 'sweet Bryan!' Forsooth, Flemish girls ruffle more like pranksome pages than soft-cheeked wenches!"

The thought of his conductor had passed as swiftly from the Prince's thoughts, as he made the ground fly from under his horse's hoof. He was aware that he did neither the safest or best thing in seeking, like a hunted hare, the form from which he had been roused in the morning; but the desire of calming Madeline's anxiety, and imprinting a farewell kiss on the sweet lips of her daughter, prevented him from altering his first purpose. The night was cloudy and very dark, but the road was known to him, and he continued at full speed till a voice, calling aloud, attracted his attention — the words could not be mistaken — his own name, "Perkin Warbeck!" sounded through the night. His first thought was, that he was pursued, but reflection told him that assuredly his pursuers would not halloo to him, while any sent in search of him by Madeline, might naturally so try to stop him as he rode so fast through the dark. He checked his speed, therefore, and in a few moments a Cavalier, a stranger, was at his side, mounted on a tall black horse; his form seemed gigantic, and little else could be discerned: the stranger spoke to him in French, with a foreign accent. He asked him, "Are you not he they call Perkin Warbeck?" This address was sufficiently startling; and the youth haughtily replied, "My name imports not to you, while to me this interruption is unseasonable."

"Enough; you go towards the cottage of Madeline de Faro; I follow your Highness thither."

Richard grasped the small poinard which hung from his belt; yet how could he, a child, contend with the tall and muscular form beside him? "Whoever thou art," he cried, "and whoever I may be, follow me not; I am no serf to be seized and carried back to his suzerain. Depart in God's name, that the fingers of neither may receive an ill stain!"

"Thou art a gallant boy!" cried the stranger, as placing his hand on the youth's arm, his most gentle touch was felt as an iron vice pressing on his flesh: "Pardon, my Lord, the interference of one unknown to you, though I will not call myself a stranger. I am Hernan de Faro, the husband of Dame Madeline; now stay not your speed, while we hasten to relieve her thousand fears. I am come in search of you."

The heart of Richard warmed towards his new friend: he felt, that with him on his side, he might defy Frion, Fitzwater, and all their followers; for there was something in de Faro's mien, which spoke of a thousand combats, and as many victories; his deep voice out-roared the elements; his hand might arrest a wild horse in mid career. When they arrived at the wicket entrance to the cot, he lifted the boy from the saddle, as a child would handle a toy, and shouted aloud in his own language, "Viva el Duque de Inglatierra y el Marinero, Hernan de Faro."

The dangers Richard had run, and the delight she experienced in seeing him, when again under her roof, stopped all Madeline's reproaches. "Is he not worthy all my fears?" she said to her husband, who stood eyeing the boy as he caressed his daughter. De Faro stretched out his hand, saying, "Will you, Señor Don Ricardo, accept my services, and my vow to protect you till the death, so help me the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Trinity."

De Faro was a mariner who had sailed in the service of the King of Portugal, along the unsounded shores of Africa, and sought beyond the equator a route to the spicy Indian land. His dark skin was burnt to a nearly negro die; his black curled hair, his beard and mustachios of the same dusky hue, half hid his face; his brow somewhat lowered over eyes dark as night; but, when he smiled, his soft mouth and pearly teeth, softened the harshness of his physiognomy, and he looked gentle and kind. Every nerve, every muscle, had been worn and hardened by long toilsome navigation; his strong limbs had withstood the tempest, his hands held unmoved the cordage, which the whirlwind strove vainly to tear from his grasp. He was a tower of a man; yet withal one, to whom the timid and endangered would recur for refuge, secure of his generosity and dauntless nature. He heard the story of Richard's dangers; his plan was formed swiftly: he said, "If you choose, Sir Prince, to await your foes here, I am ready, having put these girls in safety, to barricade the doors, and with arquebus and sword to defend you to the last: but there is a safer and better way for us all. I am come to claim my Madeline and our child, and to carry them with me to my native Spain. My vessel now rides off Ostend. I had meant to make greater preparation, and to have laid up some weeks here before we went on our home-bound voyage; but, as it is, let us depart to-night."

The door suddenly opened as he spoke — Madeline shrieked — Richard sprung upon his feet, while de Faro rose more slowly, placing himself like a vast buttress of stone before the intruder. It was Clifford.

"All is safe for the night," he cried; "your Grace has a few hours the start, and but a few; dally not here!"

Again the discussion of whither he should fly was renewed, and the Duke spoke of Brussels — of his aunt. "Of poison and pit-falls," cried Robert; "think you, boy, as you are, and under pardon, no conjuror, that the King will not contrive your destruction?"

Probably self-interested motives swayed Clifford; but he entered warmly into de Faro's idea of hastening to the sea-coast, and of sailing direct for Spain. "In a few years you will be a man — in a few years—"

"Forgotten! Yes — I may go; but a few months shall mark my return. I go on one condition; that you, Clifford, watch for the return of my cousin, Sir Edmund, and direct him where to find me."

"I will not fail. Sir Mariner, whither are you bound?"

"To Malaga."

And now, urged and quickened by Clifford, who promised to attend to all that this sudden resolve left incomplete, the few arrangements for their departure were made. Favoured by night, and the Prince's perfect knowledge of the country, they were speedily on their way to Ostend. Clifford returned to Lisle, to mark and enjoy Frion's rage and Fitzwater's confusion, when, on the morrow, the quarry was found to have stolen from its lair. Without a moment's delay, the Secretary followed, he hoped, upon his track: he directed his steps to Brussels. A letter meanwhile from Ostend, carefully worded, informed Clifford of the arrival and embarkation of his friends: again he was reminded of Plantagenet; nor had he long to wait before he fulfilled this last commission.

Edmund had found the Lady Margaret glad to receive tidings of her nephew; eager to ensure his safety and careful bringing up, but dispirited by the late overthrow, and deeply grieved by the death of the noble and beloved Lincoln; no attack could now be made; it would be doubly dangerous to bring forward the young Richard at this juncture. She commissioned Plantagenet to accompany him to Brussels that she might see him; and then they could confer upon some fitting plan for the privacy and security of his future life, until maturer age fitted him to enter on his destined struggles.

Edmund returned with brightened hopes to Tournay, to find the cottage deserted, his friends gone. It may easily be imagined that this unexpected blank was a source of terror, almost of despair to the adventurer. He feared to ask questions, and when he did propound a few, the answers only increased his perplexity and fears. It was not until his third hopeless visit to the empty dwelling, that he met a stripling page, who with an expression of slyness in his face, spoke the watchword of the friends of York. Edmund gladly exchanged the countersign, and then the boy asked him, whether he called himself cousin to the fugitive Duke of York, laughing the while at the consternation his auditor exhibited at the utterance of this hidden and sacred word: “You come to seek your prince,” he continued, “and wonder whither he may be flown, and what corner of earth’s wilderness affords him an abode. He is now, by my calculations, tossing about in a weatherbeaten caravel, commanded by Hernan de Faro, in the Bay of Biscay; in another month he may anchor in the port of Malaga; and the dark-eyed girls of Andalusia will inform you in what nook of their sunny land the fair-haired son of England dwells. The King is defeated, master Frion balked, and Lord Fitzwater gone on a bootless errand: the White Rose flourishes free as those that bloom in our Kentish hedges.”

Without waiting for a reply, but with his finger on his lip to repel further speech, the youth vaulted on his horse, and was out of sight in a moment. Edmund doubted for some time whether he should act upon this singular communication. He endeavoured to learn who his informant was, and at last became assured that it was Robert Clifford, a young esquire in Lord Fitzwater’s train. He was the younger son of the Lord Clifford who fell for Lancaster at the battle of St. Alban’s. By birth, by breeding he was of the Red Rose, yet it was evident that his knowledge was perfect as to the existence of the Duke of York; and the return of Lord Fitzwater and King Henry’s secretary to Lisle, disappointed and foiled, served to inspire confidence in the information he had bestowed. After much reflection Plantagenet resolved to visit Paris, where he knew that the brother of Madeline, old John Warbeck, then sojourned; and, if he did not gain surer intelligence from him, to proceed by way of Bordeaux to Spain.

CHAPTER XI.

A day will come when York shall claim his own;
Then York be still a while, till time do serve.
— SHAKSPEARE.

The further Edmund journeyed from the late abode of his lost cousin, the more he felt displeased at the step he had taken; but on his arrival in Paris his uncertainty ended. War-beck had received intimation of the hurried embarkation of his sister, and here also he found Lady Brampton, whose husband had taken refuge in Paris after the battle of Stoke. Like the Queen Dowager, the fate of Margaret of Anjou's son haunted this lady, and she warmly espoused the idea of bringing the Duke of York up in safe obscurity, until his own judgment might lead him to choose another line of action, or the opposing politics of Europe promised some support to his cause. She agreed to repair herself to Brussels, to take counsel with the Duchess, to use all her influence and arts, and as soon as time was ripe to proceed herself to Spain to announce it to the Prince. Meanwhile Plantagenet, following his former purpose, would take up his abode with Richard in Spain; teach him the science of arms, and the more difficult lessons of courage, self-command, and prudent conduct. In pursuance of this plan, Edmund lost no time in going to Bordeaux, whence he embarked for Malaga, and following his friend's steps, arrived shortly after him at the retreat de Faro had chosen among the foldings of the mountains on the borders of Andalusia.

De Faro's was a singular history. In those days that part of Andalusia which comprised the kingdom of Granada, was the seat of perpetual wars, and even when armies did not meet to deluge its fertile plains and valleys with their blood, troops led by noble cavaliers and illustrious commanders overran its districts in search of plunder and glory. During one of these incursions, in the year 1452, some impulse of religion or humanity made a Spanish soldier snatch from a couch in the country-house of a noble wealthy Moor, already half consumed, an infant hardly a year old; the band was already in full retreat, and, fortunately, this incident took place on the very frontiers of Granada, or the benevolence of the soldier would hardly have been proof against the trouble his little charge occasioned him. Toiling up the mountains on their return to the kingdom of Jaen, they entered the little town of Alcala-la-Real, where on the side of the mountainous road rose the walls of a monastery. “How better,” thought the soldier, “save the soul of this boy than by giving him to the monks?” It was not perhaps the present they would most readily have selected, but compassion and piety forbade them to refuse it: the little Moor became a Christian by the name of Hernan, and was brought up within the sacred precincts of the convent. Though the monks were able to make a zealous Catholic of their nursling, they did not succeed so well in taming his fiery spirit, nor could they induce him to devote himself to the inactive and mortifying life of a priest. Yet he was generous and daring, and thus acquired their affection; next to being a recluse vowed to God, the vocation of a soldier for the faith, in the eyes of these holy men, was to be selected. Hernan advancing in life, and shooting up into strong and premature manhood, was recommended by the Abbot to his cousin, the illustrious Don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquess of Cadiz. He fought several times under his banners, and in the year 1471 entered with him the kingdom of Granada, and was wounded at the taking of Cardela. In this last action it was, that a sudden horror of taking up arms against his countrymen sprung up in Hernan’s breast. He quitted Spain in consequence; and, visiting Lisbon, he was led to embrace a sea-faring life, and entered the marine service of the king of Portugal; at one time visiting Holland, where he sought and won the hand of Madeline: and afterwards, with Bartholomew Diaz, he made one of the crew that discovered the Cape of Good Hope. He sailed with three vessels, one of which lost company of the others, and its crew underwent various and dreadful perils at sea, and from the blacks on land: after nine months they again fell in with their companions, three sailors only remaining. One of these was Hernan de Faro; his skill, valour, and fortitude had saved the vessel; he was exalted to its command, and now, in safer voyage over seas more known, he had freighted it with the fugitives from Tournay.

During all his wanderings, even in the gay and rich Portugal, Hernan turned with fond regret to his mountain home. To its rugged peaks, its deep and silent dells; its torrents, its verdure, its straggling and precipitous paths; its prospect over the rich and laughing Vega of Granada. He had promised himself, after weary toils, a long repose in this beloved spot; and hither he now led his wife, resolving to set up his tent for ever in the land of his childhood, his happy childhood. It was a strange place to choose, bordering on Granada, which at that time was as lists in which Death and Havock sat umpires. But the situation of Alcala-la-Real preserved it secure, notwithstanding its dangerous neighbourhood. It was perched high upon the mountain, overlooking a plain which had been for many years the scene of ruthless carnage and devastation, being in itself an asylum for fugitives — a place of rest for the victor — an eagle's nest, unassailable by the vultures of the plain.

Here then Plantagenet found his cousin; here in lovely and romantic Spain. Though defaced and torn by war, Andalusia presented an aspect of rich and various beauty, intoxicating to one whose life had been spent in the plains of England, or the dull flats of Flanders. The purple vineyards; the olive plantations clothing the burning hill-side; the groves of mulberry, cork, pomegranate, and citron, that diversified the fertile vegas or plains; the sweet flowing rivers, with their banks adorned by scarlet geranium and odoriferous myrtle, made this spot Nature's own favoured garden, a paradise unequalled upon earth. On such a scene did the mountainhome of the exiles look down. Alcala too had beauties of her own. Ilex and pine woods clothed the defiles of the rugged Sierra, which stretched far and wide, torn by winter torrents into vast ravines; variegated by a thousand intersecting lines, formed by the foldings of the hills; the clouds found a home on the lofty summits; the wandering mists crept along the abrupt precipices; alternate light and shadow, rich in purple and golden hues, arrayed each rocky peak or verdant slope in radiance all their own.

All this fair land had been under the dominion of the Moors. Now, town by town, stronghold by stronghold, they had lost it; the riches of the land belonged to the Christians, who still, by military conquest or policy, pressed the realm of the Moorish sovereign into a narrower compass; while, divided in itself, the unhappy kingdom fell piecemeal into their hands. De Faro was a devout Catholic; but, with all his intrepidity, more humanity than belonged to that age, warmed his manly heart. He remembered that he was a Moor: whenever he saw a Moslem prisoner in chains, or a cavalgada of hapless women driven from their native towns to slavery, the blood in his veins moved with instinctive horror; and the idea that among them might pine and groan his parents, his own relatives, burned like living coal in his breast. He had half forgotten this, when he came to Alcala, bringing his wife and child, and resolved to set up here his home; but when, in the succeeding spring, the Spanish army assembled on the frontiers of Murcia, and swept on towards the south; when deeds of Moorish valour and Moorish suffering reached Alcala, when the triumph of the Christians and their ravages were repeated, the gallant mariner could endure no longer. “It is a fruitless struggle,” he said, “Granada must fall, and God, who searches hearts, knows that his victory will be dear to me when the cross floats from the towers of the Alhambra. But I cannot behold the dark, blood-stained advances of the invader. I will go — go where man destroys not his brother, where the wild winds and waves are the armies we combat. In a year or two, every sword will be sheathed; the peace of conquest will reign over Andalusia. One other voyage; and I return.”

He went without fear, for Alcala appeared a safe retreat, and left his family spectators of the war. What a school for Richard! Edmund rejoiced that he would be accomplished in knightly exercise in the land of chivalry; but he was not prepared for the warlike enthusiasm that sprung up in his cousin’s heart, and even in his own. It was the cause of God that armed the gentlemen of Spain, that put daring into the politic Ferdinand’s heart, and inspired with martial ardour the magnaminous Isabella. The veteran Cavaliers had lost many relatives and companions in arms, in various defeats under the rocky castles, or within the pathless defiles of Andalusia; and holy zeal possessed them, to avenge their deaths, or to deliver those who pined in bondage. The younger knights, under the eye of their sovereigns, emulated each other in gallantry and glory. They painted war with pomp, and adorned it by their virtues.

Not many months before, the Earl of Rivers, with a band of Englishmen, aided at the siege of Loxa, and distinguished himself by his undaunted bravery; his blunt but gay humour; his eager emulation with the Spanish commanders. The Duke of York heard, with a leaping heart, his mother’s brother’s name. Had he still been there — but no, he had returned to fall in affray in Britanny, the victim of Tudor’s heartless desertion — this circumstance had given distinction and honour to the name of Englishman, nor did Edmund feel inclined to lower the national character by keeping away from the scene of glory. What was to be done? York was a mere boy; yet, when Plantagenet spoke of serving under one of the illustrious Catholic chieftains, York said, “I follow you: I will be your squire, your page, your stirrup-boy; but I follow!”

In 1489 the siege of Baza was formed. — It was defended with desperate valour by the Moors, while every noble Spaniard, capable of bearing arms, assembled in Ferdinand’s camp, which glittered in silks and gay caparisons, yet the very luxury of the warriors was ennobled by their valour. The sallies on the part of the besieged were furious; the repulse they sustained, determined and successful. When closely hemmed in, the Moors relaxed in their desperate efforts; the younger Christian cavaliers used the leisure so afforded them, to unite in making incursions in the surrounding country, to cut off supplies, and to surprise the foraging parties of the enemy. Two youths became conspicuous in these exploits; both proclaimed their English origin. One bore a knight’s golden spurs (Edmund had been knighted on the eve of the battle of Stoke by the Earl of Lincoln), and boasted of his royal, through illegitimate, descent; the other, a beardless, fairhaired, blooming boy, was nameless, save by the Christian appellation of Ricardo, to which was added the further designation of el Muchacho, from his extreme youth. It was a lovely, yet an awful sight, to behold this pair. The elder, whose dark eyes and dun complexion gave him a greater resemblance to his Southern comrades, never lost sight of his young friend; side by side, his shield before Richard’s breast, they went to the field. When Edmund would otherwise have pressed forward he hung back to guard his cousin; and when the boy was hurried forward in the ardour of fight, still his kinsman’s gaze was on him — his sword protecting him in every aspect of danger. If the stripling were attacked, Edmund’s eyes flashed fire, and mortal vengeance fell upon his foe. They became the discourse of the camp; and Plantagenet’s modesty, and Richard’s docility in all, save avoiding peril, advanced them still further in the favour of the grave courteous Spaniards. “Art thou then motherless?” Isabel asked, “If thou art not, thy gentle parent must pass many wakeful nights for thee!” At length, in one skirmish, both the youths got surrounded by the foe. Richard’s young arm, wearied by the very sword he bore, gave ineffectual blows — forgetting that he left himself unguarded, Edmund rushed between him and his assailant — others came to their assistance: but Plantagenet was already struck to the ground; and for many weeks York forgot even the glorious emulation of arms, while watching over his best and dearest friend. Meanwhile Baza surrendered, and the cousins returned to Alcala, to Madeline and her fair child; and domestic peace succeeded to the storms of war. Richard loved Madeline as his mother; her daughter was his sister, his angel sister, whose tenderness and heroism of character commanded deep affection.

Monina de Faro was, even in childhood, a being to worship and to love. There was a dreamy sweetness in her countenance, a mystery in the profound sensibility of her nature, that fascinated beyond all compare. Her characteristic was not so much the facility of being impressed, as the excess of the emotion produced by every new idea or feeling. Was she gay? — her large eyes laughed in their own brightness, her lovely countenance became radiant with smiles, her thrilling voice was attuned to lightest mirth, while the gladness that filled her heart, overflowed from her as light does from the sun, imparting to all around a share of its own essence. Did sorrow oppress her? — dark night fell upon her mind, clouding her face, oppressing her whole person, which staggered and bent beneath the freight. Had she been susceptible of the stormier passions, her subtle and yielding soul would have been their unresisting victim — but though impetuous — wild — the slave of her own sensations, her soft bosom could harbour no emotion unallied to goodness; and the devouring appetite of her soul, was the desire of benefiting all around her. Her countenance was the mirror of her mind. Its outline resembled those we see in Spanish pictures, not being quite oval enough for a northern beauty. It seemed widened at the forehead, to give space for her large long eyes, and the canopy of the darkly fringed and veined lid; her hair was not black, but of a rich sunny chesnut, finer than carded silk, and more glossy; her skin was delicate, somewhat pale, except when emotion suffused it with a deep pink. In person, she was not tall, but softly rounded; and her taper, rosytipped fingers, and little feet, bespoke the delicate proportion that moulded her form to a beauty, whose every motion awakened admiration and love.

With these companions Richard passed the winter. The following spring brought war still nearer to the English exiles — Baza had fallen: one of the kings of Granada, surnamed El Zagal, the Valiant, had submitted to the Spaniards; and now Ferdinand commanded his former ally, Boabdil el Chico, to deliver up to him proud Granada, the loved city of the Moors. Poor Boabdil, whose misfortunes had been prophesied at his birth, and whose whole career had been such as to affix to him the surname of el

Zogoybi, or the Unfortunate, was roused from his state of opprobrious vassalage by this demand, and followed up his refusal by an inroad into the Christian country, near Jaen. Count de Tendilla, a veteran warrior of high reputation and brilliant exploits, commanded this district. His head quarters were in the impregnable fortress of Alcala-la-Real itself; and when the cry came, that the Moors had passed his border, he resolved to stoop from his eagle's eyrie, and to pounce upon the insolent foe, as they returned from their incursion. He chose one hundred and fifty men, and lay in ambush for them. Plantagenet was of the number, and our young warrior also; though with sage entreaties Edmund, and with tears Madeline, had besought him to stay. The Count succeeded to his wish — the Moors fell into his toils — few escaped slaughter or capture: but while the Christian hero exulted in victory, a messenger, pale with horror, spent with weariness, came to tell that a band of Moors had taken advantage of his absence, to fall upon Alcala. Indignation and fury possessed the noble captain: he left half his troop to protect his spoil, and with the rest, all weary as they were, he hurried back to Alcala, eager to fall upon the marauders before they should have secured their prey in a neighbouring fortress. Edmund and Richard were among the foremost; their rage could only be calmed by the swiftness with which they returned to deliver or avenge their friends. The sun was sinking in the west when they arrived at the foot of the Sierra. At first Tendilla desired that his wearied troop should repose; but several stragglers among the enemy, perceiving them, gave the alarm to their comrades, who, laden with booty, were preparing to depart. Harassed as the Christians were, they had no choice, while their position, on the lower ground, rendered their attack very disadvantageous. But nothing could check their fury: with loud cries and flashing weapons they fell upon the enemy, who burthened by their prey, and wearied by their very outrages, could ill resist men fighting to avenge their desolated hearths. Still, so accustomed to war, so innately brave was every soldier on either side, that the combat was long and sanguinary. Night, the swift-walking darkness of the nights of the south, came suddenly upon the combatants: the casques of the one party, and the turbans of the other, were scarce perceptible, to guide the scimetar, or to serve as an aim for the arquebus. The discomfited Moors, leaving their booty, dispersed along the defiles, and, forgetful of their prisoners, availed themselves of the obscurity to make good their flight. Alcala was retaken;

and through the shadows of night, husbands and fathers called aloud on their wives and children to tell them if they were safe, while many a sound of woman's wail arose over the corpse of him who had died to save her.

The troop, diminished in number, was drawn up the following morning in the square of Alcala. "Where," asked the Count, "are my two English soldiers? I saw the elder leading five others across a steep mountain-path, so as to fall on the enemy's rear: it was a sage measure, and succeeded well. Ricardo I beheld contending with two bearded Moors, who held in their fierce grasp a young and fainting girl. I sent Diego to his rescue: Diego they say was slain: night prevented me from knowing more: have both these strangers fallen? I would pay them a Spaniard's thanks for their aid — a knight's praise for their gallantry."

Alas! both thanks and praise would have visited their ears coldly. They had forgotten Tendilla, his troop, the very Christian cause, in the overwhelming calamity that had befallen them. Assisted by Diego, who was cut down in the conflict, Richard had delivered Monina; and, forcing his way through the enemy, now already scattered, clambered with her in his arms to their mountain abode: he was guided towards it by the glaring light of the flames that destroyed it. Meanwhile, the fight still raged; York placed Monina in safety, and returned to share its perils.

The peace of desolation that came with the morning, united the cousins; and they sought the ruins of their home, and their miserable friend, whose broken and harrowing tale recorded how Madeline had fallen a victim to the savage cruelty of the enemy, as she strove to defend her daughter from impending slavery.

This was the result of Moorish wars — death and misery. Richard's young heart had bounded to the sound of trump and clarion; and he returned to hear the melancholy bell that tolled for death. Their very home was in ruins; but it was long before, amidst deeper woe, they remembered to lament the destruction of many papers and hoarded objects, the relics and the testimonies of Richard's royal descent.

CHAPTER XI.

Ah! where are they, who heard in former hours
The voice of song in these neglected bowers?
They are gone!
— MOORE.

The chain is loos'd, the sails are spread.
The living breath is fresh behind;
As with dews and sunrise fed.
Comes the laughing morning wind.
— SHELLEY.

This was a gloomy lesson for these young and affectionate beings: they consoled one another, and wept as they consoled. At first Monina despaired: her ceaseless laments and unassuaged grief appeared to undermine her very life; but, when she marked the sorrow she communicated, when she heard Richard exclaim, “Oh! for spring and battle, when I may avenge Monina's grief or die! Death is a thousand times preferable to the sight of her woe!” and felt that the fate and happiness of those about her depended on her fortitude: she forced smiles back to her lips, and again her sweet eyes beamed, undimmed by tears.

Spring came at last, and with it busy preparation for the siege of Granada: troop after troop defiled through Alcala, bearing the various ensigns of the noble, commanders; the Count Tendilla, leaving his mountain nest, united himself to the regal camp before the devoted city; Isabella joined her royal husband, accompanied by her children. Where women looked on the near face of war, even the timid were inspired to bear arms. The reputation the English warrior youths had gained, forbade inglorious ease, even had they not aspired with their whole hearts for renown; yet Plantagenet looked forward with reluctance to the leading forth his brave, dear cousin to new dangers; divided between pride in his valour, satisfaction at his thus being schooled to arms, and terror from the perils to which he would be exposed in a war, on the side of the enemy, of despair and fury — his thoughtful eyes rested on the young Prince's glowing cheek, his unsullied youth; if wound or fatal hurt maimed his fair proportion, how should he reply to his widowed mother's agony? If, snapt like a poor flowret, he fell upon the deathstrewn Vega, what tale should he report to the ardent Yorkists? None! At least he should be pierced only through him, and Edmund's corse would rampart his heart, even when he had died to save him.

Thus they again appeared in the Spanish army, and were hailed as among its ornaments. Whatever desperate enterprize kindled the young Spaniards to heroic frenzy, found the English pair among their numbers. At the beginning of the siege, the Moors, few in numbers, and often defeated, cheated victory of its triumph by various challenges to single combat, where many a Spaniard fell: their frays resembled, in the splendour of their armour and their equipments, the stately ceremonial of the tournaments, but they were deadly in the event. Ferdinand, sure of victory, and reluctant to expose the noble youth of his kingdom to needless peril, forbade these duels; and the Moors enraged, multiplied their insults and their bravadoes, to draw their enemies to the field; nor lost any opportunity of committing the defence of their beloved city to the risk of battle, rather than the slow progress of famine. One memorable engagement took place on occasion of the visit of Queen Isabella to the hamlet of Zubia, there to obtain a nearer view of beautiful Granada. The Moors seeing the Spanish troops in array before their walls, came out to attack them; a battle was fought under the very eyes of the Queen, wherein it was the good fortune of Richard to make so gallant a figure, that on the very spot the Count Tendilla conferred on him the honour of knighthood.

Proud was the young Duke of York, and eager to paint his maiden shield with worthy device: he was now nearly eighteen, boyish in aspect, yet well-knit in person, and accustomed to the fatigue of arms. He no longer burst on his foes, like an untrained dog, seeking only to slay: there was forethought in his eye, and a most careful selection of worthy and valorous opponents. Edmund still was to be found within a javelin's throw of him; but he no longer feared his untaught rashness, as before he had done.

In July occurred the conflagration of the Christian camp. The day following, Ferdinand led forth his troops to make a last ravage among the gardens and orchards, the emerald girdle of Granada. During the fray, it was the young Duke's chance to throw his javelin so as to slay on the spot a veteran Moor, whose turban having fallen off, exposed him thus. His companion in arms, a tall fierce Moslem, rushed forward to fell the insolent youth: others interposed. Still the Moor kept his eye upon his boyish foe; a thousand times he threw his dart; twice or thrice he rushed on him with uplifted scimetar: the battle raged among the orchardpaths and flowery hedges of the thickly-planted gardens, and ever some obstruction thwarted the infidel. Plantagenet had marked his rage and his purpose; he watched him keenly, and the fierce Gomelez boiled with impatient indignation, as some impediment for ever baffled his design. His last effort was to fling an arrow, which stuck in the ground quivering at Richard's feet: a label was affixed—"Dog and infidel," thus was the cartel worded—"if thou hast courage, meet me at dawn at the Fountain of Myrtles."

The following morning, at the hour when Plantagenet was wont to see his cousin, the Prince was absent. Noon approached; the troops reposed after the battle of the day before, or were employed in clearing the dark ruins of the camp: some thoughtless project might occupy the Duke: some excursion to the other side of Granada. The shades of evening gathered round the lofty towers, and dimmed the prospect of its Vega: still Richard came not. Sad, anxious night drew near. Edmund roved through the camp, questioning, seeking; at last, on the morrow he heard the report, that the previous evening a Cavalier had seen Almoradi Gomelez issue from a little wood half a league from the city, and ride towards a postern; that he was galloping up to him, when he saw the Moor totter in his saddle, and at last fall from his horse: before succour could come, he died. His last words only spoke of the Fountain of Myrtles; in agony of spirit, for Gomelez had surely stricken to death his stripling foe, ere he left the place of combat, Edmund hurried to the spot: the herbage round the fountain was trampled and torn, as by horses' hoofs. It was moistened, but not with water; a bank, thickly overgrown with geraniums, bore the print of a man's form, but none was there.

Monina had been left in Alcala-la-Real, a prey to fear, to gaze from the steep summit on the plain, whereon, beyond her sight, was acted the real drama of her life; to question the wounded, or the messengers that visited Alcala, and to address prayers to the Virgin, were the sad varieties of her day. In the midst of this suspense two unexpected guests visited her abode — her father, and an Irish chieftain; a Yorkist, who came to lead the Duke from his Spanish abode, to where he might combat for his lost crown. De Faro had not heard of the death of Madeline; and with awe his child beheld the tears that bedewed his rugged cheeks at this sad termination of his ocean-haunting vision. He embraced his daughter—”Thou wilt not desert me; we will leave this fated spot: and thou, Monina, will sail for ever with thy father on the less barbarous sea.”

De Faro’s companion was named Lord Barry. He was Baron of Buttevant, in the county of Cork, and allied to the Geraldines, chiefs of that soil. He had fought at Stoke, and been attainted by Henry; so that he was forced to wander a banished man. Eager to reinstate himself, every Yorkist plot numbered him among its warmest partizans. He had for some time resided either at Paris or at Brussels, where he often held counsel with Lady Brampton, Weary of delay he at last stole back to Ireland, to see whether his noble kinsmen there would abet and rise in favour of the Duke of York. He came away, proud and delighted with his success: promises of service for the White Rose had been showered on him — his eloquence and enthusiasm conquered even Lady Brampton. War also seemed impending between France and England: if that were once declared, every objection would be obviated. At any rate, the times seemed so fair, that she agreed with Lord Barry to visit the present home of the young English Prince; and, as if to further their designs, Sir Edward Brampton was at that moment requested by the Archduke Maximilian to undertake a private embassy to Lisbon. Thither they had sailed, and now, leaving this lady in Portugal, Lord Barry had continued his voyage to Andalusia, with the intention of returning again to Lisbon accompanied by the the promise and hope of the House of York: He met de Faro in the port of Malaga: the name was familiar to him. They journeyed together to Alcala-la-Real.

Lord Barry was all eagerness that the English Prince should immediately join Lady Brampton at Lisbon. It was agreed that they should proceed thither in de Faro’s caravel. The mariner abhorred the name of warfare between Spaniard and Moor; and Madeline’s death only added poignancy to this sensation. He would not look on the siege of Granada. While the Irish noble and Monina proceeded to the camp to prepare the cousins, he returned to Malaga to bring round his vessel to the nearer port of Almeria. Lord Barry and the fair Moor commenced their journey on the morning of a most burning day; they wound down the steep declivities of the Sierra, and entered upon the bright blooming plain. Noon with all its heat approached. They rested under a grove of mulberries, reposing by a brook, while Lord Barry's horse and Monina's mule were tied to the nearest shrubs. Slight accidents are the wires and pullies on which the machinery of our lives hang. Stung by flies, the noble's horse grew restive, broke his rein, and galloped away; through the thick shade his master pursued, till tramp of feet and crackling of branches died on Monina's ear. A quarter of an hour, half an hour passed, when on her solitude came a Moorish voice, an exclamation in the name of Allah, and the approach of several men whom already she painted as enemies. To take to her mule, to ride swiftly through the grove, was the impulse of her fear; and, when again silence gave her token of security, she found that she had lost her way. It was only after many vain attempts that she extricated herself from the wood, and then perceived that she had wandered from the direct road to Granada, whose high towers were visible at a distance. The burning July noonday sun scorched her. Her mule lagged in his pace. As a last effort she sought a plantation of elms, not far distant. The grateful murmur of flowing waters saluted her ears as she approached. For a few minutes more she was exposed to the glaring sunshine, and then entered the cool umbrage of the trees — the soft twilight of woven leaves and branches; a fountain rose in the midst, and she hastened to refresh herself by sprinkling herself with cool waters. Thus occupied she thought she was alone in this sequestered nook, when a crash among the underwood startled her; the mule snorted aloud, and from the brake issued a mare caparisoned with saddle and bridle. She had lost her rider; yet her distended nostrils, the foam that flaked her sides, the shiver that made her polished skin quiver, spoke of recent contest or flight. She looked on her — could it be? She called her "Daraxa," and the animal recognized her voice; while in answer to the dreadful surmises that awoke in her heart, a low groan was heard from the near bank. Turning, she beheld the form of a man lying on the herbage; not dead, for he groaned again, and then stirred, as if with returning sense. Quick as lightning she was at his side; she unlaced his helmet, nor did she need to look at his pallid countenance to be assured of what she already knew, that Richard of England lay there, but for her help, expiring. She filled his helm with water, and sprinkling it over him, he opened his eyes, and groaning again, strove to clasp his head with his unnerved hand. With light fairy fingers she released him from his coat of mail, and saw on his right side a mass of congealed blood, which his faintness had made cease to flow from his wound. Fearing that it would bleed again as he revived, she bound it with his scarf and her own veil, and then gave him water to drink; after which he showed still more certain signs of recovery.

It was wonder to him to find himself alive, when already he had believed the bitterness of death to be passed; still greater wonder was it to behold his own sweet Monina, like a spirit of good, hovering over to recover him. He tried to raise himself, and she bent down to support him, resting his head on her gentle heart; he felt its beating, and blest her with a thousand soft thanks and endearing names. Though the wound in his side was deep, yet now that the blood was staunched, it did not seem dangerous. The immediate cause of his swoon was a stunning blow on his head, which had beat in the iron of his helm, but inflicted no further injury. It was long however before he could move; and the evening shades had made it almost night, before he could sit his horse and slowly quit the wood. Wishing to conduct him to where they might find succour, Monina directed his steps to a village, east of the grove. They had hardly ridden half a mile, when Richard felt dizzy; he faintly called her to his side — she received him as he fell, and, supporting him to a bank, called aloud in agony, in hopes that some wandering soldier or peasant might be near to aid them. It happened to her wish; several countrymen, who had been carrying fruit to the Christian camp, passed them — she conjured them in the Virgin's name, to assist a soldier of the faith, a crusader in their cause. Such an appeal was sacred in their ears; they contrived, with the poles and baskets in which they had carried their fruit, covering them with a part of their habiliments and the saddle-cloths of the animals, to form a sort of litter on which they placed Richard. Monina followed on foot, clasping his hand; the men led the horses: and thus they proceeded up the mountains to a village about two leagues from Granada, where every house was open to them. The Prince was permitted to repose in the habitation of the Alcalde, and the deep sleep into which he soon fell was a dear assurance to his friend's anxious heart, of the absence of danger, and a promise of speedy recovery.

Yet the night that began so well for the patient, wore a less prosperous appearance towards the conclusion. Monina sat beside his couch, and perceived with alarm symptoms of pain and fever. According to the custom of the time, she had acquired some little skill in surgery; this, when the wound came to be dressed, made her acquainted with its irritated and dangerous appearance. As the heat of the day came on, the Prince's sufferings increased. In this little village there was neither physician nor medicaments necessary for the emergency; and the place itself, low-built, hedged in by mountains, and inhabited by peasants only, was ill suited for the patient. She resolved that he should that night be removed to a town on the eastern side of the mountains, overlooking the plain bordering the sea. A litter was prepared; and she, fatigued by her journey, and by long and painful solicitude, yet walked beside it, listening to his low breathing, catching the smallest sound he made in complaint or questioning. Before she quitted the village, she employed a peasant to seek Plantagenet, and convey to him intelligence of the actual state of his friends.

After three days of fear and anxious care, the wound began to heal, and Richard became convalescent. Who could tell, during the long hours that composed those days and nights, the varying emotions that agitated poor Monina? That he should die, was a thought in which, in its extent and reality, she never indulged; but an awful fear of what of suffering the coming hours might produce, never for a moment slept within her. She spent long intervals of time kneeling by his couch — her soft fingers on his pulse, counting the rapid vibration — her cool hand alone tempered the burning of his brow; and often, supported by her, he slept, while she remained in the same position, immovable. The very pain this produced was a pleasure to her, since it was endured for him who was the idol of her innocent and pure thoughts; she almost lamented when he no longer needed her undivided attention: the hours she gave to repose came like beggars following in a procession of crowned heads; they were no longer exalted by being devoted to him.

After the lapse of three anxious days he grew rapidly better, and at evening-tide enjoyed at the open casement the thrilling sweetness of the mountain air. How transporting and ineffable are the joys of convalescence! — the calm of mind — the voluptuous languor — the unrebuked abandonment to mere pleasurable sensation — the delight that every natural object imparts, fill those hours with a dream-like, faint ecstacy, more dear to memory than tumultuous joy. Monina sat near him, and it was dangerous for their young hearts thus to be united and alone in a fairy scene of beauty and seclusion. Monina's ardent spirit was entranced by delight at his recovery; no thought of self mingled with the single idea that he was saved — saved for youth, for happiness, and for his long-lost rights. Darkness crept around them, the clumps of chesnut trees grew more massy and indistinct — the fire-fly was alive among the defiles of the hills — the bat wheeled round their humble dwelling — the heavy-winged owl swept with huge flapping wings out of the copse. "Are ye here?" were the first sounds that broke the silence; it was the voice of Edmund. Monina sprung up, and glad to disburthen her full heart, welcomed with an embrace this beloved friend. "Guardian angel of our lives," he cried; "you are destined at all times to save us!" Dear, soothing expressions, which then formed the joy, long afterwards the master-impulse of her fervent and devoted spirit.

Each told their tale; the one of hazard and mischance, the other of agonizing inquietude. For Richard, Edmund had feared; but when, wearied, terrified, and in despair, Lord Barry had brought intelligence of Monina's disappearance from the streamlet's side where he had left her, and of a distant view he had caught of Moorish horsemen who took refuge in Granada — heaven seemed at once to empty on him its direst curses, and his fate was sealed with misery for ever.

The peasant dispatched by Monina had delayed; not for three days did he deliver her letter to Plantagenet, who still, trembling in recollection of his past terror, and what might have been the ultimate event of the Prince's wound, departed on the moment for — .

And now farewell to Spain! to romantic Spain, to Moorish and Christian combat, to the gay fields of the Vega, to the sunny mountains of Andalusia! De Faro's caravel, true to its appointment, arrived at Almeria. They embarked; their immediate destination was Lisbon; but their thoughts were fixed on the promised termination of their wanderings. Soon they would bend their course far away to the islands of the turbid Northern sea, where nature veils herself in clouds, where war assumes a sterner aspect, and the very virtues of the inhabitants grow stubborn and harsh from the struggle they make to be enabled to bear the physical ills of existence.

Farewell to Spain! to boyhood's feats, to the light coursing of shadows as he ran a race with the swift-footed hours. A kingdom calls for Richard! the trials of life attend him, the hope of victory, the fortitude of well-endured defeat.

CHAPTER XII.

To England if you will!
— SHAKSPEARE.

A thousand recollections and forgotten thoughts revived in Richard's bosom when he saw his childhood's friend, the Lady Brampton. He was reminded of his sufferings in the Tower, of his noble cousin Lincoln, of her maternal tenderness, when under her care he quitted the gloomy fortress, his brother Edward's tomb. His mother's last embrace again thrilled through his frame, and Lovel's parting blessing: what sad changes had chanced since last he saw her! Sad in all, but that he, then a boy, had sprung up into the riper age of youthful prowess.

Even with the banished Prince we must recur to the state of affairs in the north of Europe. The French king, Charles the Eighth, had directed all his attempts to the subjugation of Britany, which was now under the dominion of the youthful Anne, its orphan Duchess. The English nation espoused her cause, watched with jealousy and indignation the progress of the French arms, and clamoured loudly for war in her support. Henry, on the contrary, was obstinately bent upon peace, though he took advantage of his subjects' appetite for war, to foist subsidies upon them, which were no sooner collected than his armaments were disbanded, and an ambassador, sent on a mission of peace, was substituted for the herald ready apparelled for defiance. This could not last for ever. French policy triumphed in the marriage of Charles the Eighth with Anne of Britany; and that duchy became finally annexed to the crown of France. England was roused to indignation: the King, forced to listen to their murmurs, promised to invade the rival kingdom the following spring: a benevolence was granted him; all his acts tended to the formation of an expedition, which was the best hope of York.

Lord Barry was urgent against delay, while the English partizans wished that Richard's landing in Ireland, and Henry's in France, should be consentaneous. Nay, they had deeper views. Ireland, since Simnel's defeat, appeared but a forlorn hope, and they fostered the expectation of being able to make England itself the scene of their first attempt, so soon as its king should be fairly engaged in hostilities on the other side of the channel. The Duke himself, eager as he was to begin his career, warmly supported this project; communication with the North was slow meanwhile, and months wore away — not fruitlessly. Richard gained in every way by the delay; his knowledge of English affairs grew clearer; his judgment formed; his strength, weakened by the events of the summer, was restored during the repose and salubrious coolness of the winter months.

Accident furthered their designs: a visitor arrived from England, who brought with him accounts so encouraging, that hope blossomed into certainty in the hearts of the warm-hearted followers of York. But ere we introduce this new and seemingly important personage, we must return awhile to England, to speak of Henry's suspicions, his fears, his artful policy.

All that Frion had achieved through his abortive attempt, had been but to ascertain the existence of the Duke of York, and to spread still wider the momentous secret; so that Henry, suspicious and irritated, received him on his return with anger, resenting his failure as the result of treachery. Frion had been dismissed: and now years passed over, without the occurrence of any circumstances that spoke of the orphan heir of the English crown. The King brooded over the secret, but spoke of it to no one. The royal youth grew to his imagination, as in reality he did, passing from boyhood to almost man's estate. Yet, when Henry reflected on the undisturbed state he had enjoyed for years, on the firmness with which he was seated on the throne, and the strong hold he had acquired through the lapse of time on his subjects' minds, he sometimes thought that even Richard's friends would advise him to continue in an obscurity, which was, at least, void of danger. Nevertheless, whenever there had been a question of attacking France, the feeling that his rival was ready to come forward, and that, instead of a war of invasion, he might have to fight for his own crown, increased his unwillingness to enter on the contest.

Now rumours were afloat — none knew whence they came, from France or Ireland — of the existence of King Edward's younger son, and that he would speedily appear to claim his succession. Henry, who was accustomed to tamper with spies and informers, was yet the last to hear of a circumstance so nearly affecting his interests. The name of Lady Brampton at length reached him, as being abroad on a secret and momentous expedition. This name had made a considerable figure in Richard Simon's confessions; it was connected with Lincoln, Lovel, the Dowager Queen, all whom the Tudor feared and hated. Yet he paused before he acted; his smallest movement might rouse a torpid foe: he only increased his vigilance; and, from past experience knowing that to be the weak point, he dispatched emissaries to Ireland, to learn if any commotion was threatened, any tale rife there, that required his interference. As the time approached, when it was expected that the English Prince would declare himself, the policy of his friends greatly changed; and, far from maintaining their former mysterious silence, the circumstance of his abode in Spain, and the expectation of his speedy appearance in Ireland, made, during the winter of 1491-92, a principal topic among such of the native nobility as the Earl of Desmond had interested in his cause. Henry's spies brought him tidings beyond his fears; and he saw that the struggle was at hand, unless he could arrest the progress of events. Meanwhile, he continued to defer his war with France; he felt that that would be the signal for his enemy's attack.

As he reflected on these things, a scheme developed itself in his mind, on which he resolved to act. The enemy was distant, obscure, almost unknown; were it possible to seize upon his person where he then was, to prevent his proposed journey to Ireland, to prepare for him an unsuspected but secure prison — no cloud would remain to mar his prospect; and, as to the boy himself, he could hope for nothing better than his cousin Warwick's fate, unless he had preferred, to the hazardous endeavour of dethroning his rival, a private and innocuous life in the distant clime where chance had thrown him. This was to be thought of no more: already he was preparing for the bound, but ere he made it he must be crushed for ever.

In those times, when recent civil war had exasperated the minds of men one against the other, it was no difficult thing for a Lancastrian King to find an instrument willing and fitting to work injury against a Yorkist. During Henry's exile in Britany, he had become acquainted with a man, who had resorted to him there for the sole purpose of exciting him against Richard the Third; he had been a favourite page of Henry the Sixth, he had waited on his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, that noble youth whose early years promised every talent and virtue; he had idolized the heroic and unhappy Queen Margaret. Henry died a foul death in the Tower; the gracious Edward was stabbed at Tewkesbury; the royal Margaret had given place to the widow Woodville; while, through the broad lands of England, the sons of York rioted in the full possession of her wealth. Meiler Trangmar felt every success of theirs as a poisoned arrow in his flesh — he hated them, as the mother may hate the tiger, whose tusks are red with the life-blood of her first-born — he hated them, not with the measured aversion of a warlike foe, but the dark frantic vehemence of a wild beast deprived of its young. He had been the father of three sons; the first had died at Prince Edward's feet, ere he was taken prisoner; another lost his head on the scaffold; the third — the boy had been nurtured in hate, bred amid dire curses and bitter imprecations, all levelled against Edward the Fourth and his brothers — his mind had become distorted by the ill food that nurtured it — he brooded over the crimes of these men, till he believed that he should do a good deed in immolating them to the ghosts of the murdered Lancastrians. He attempted the life of the King — was seized — tortured to discover his accomplices: he was tortured, and the father heard his cries beneath the dread instrument, to which death came as a sweet release. Real madness for a time possessed the unhappy man, and when reason returned, it was only the dawn of a tempestuous day, which rises on the wrecks of a gallant fleet and its crew, strewn on the dashing waves of a stormy sea. He dedicated himself to revenge; he had sought Henry in Britany; he had fought at Bosworth, and at Stoke. The success of his cause, and the peace that followed, was at first a triumph, at last almost a pain to him. He was haunted by memories which pursued him like the hell-born Eumenides; often he uttered piercing shrieks, as the scenes, so pregnant with horror, recurred too vividly to his mind. The priests, to whom he had recourse as his soul's physicians, counselled him the church's discipline; he assumed the Franciscan habit, but found sack-cloth and ashes no refuge from the greater torture of his mind. This man, in various ways, had been recalled to Henry's mind, and now he selected him to effect his purpose.

To any other he would have feared to entrust the whole secret; but the knowledge that the destined victim was the son and rightful heir of King Edward, would add to his zealous endeavours to crush him. Besides that Trangmar had a knowledge of the fact, from having been before employed to extract in his priestly character this secret from a Yorkist, Sir George Nevil, who had been entrusted by Sir Thomas Broughton. Every thing yielded in this wretch's mind to his hatred of York; and he scrupled not to hazard his soul, and betray the secrets of the confessional. Nevil fortunately was informed in time of the danger that menaced him, and had fled; while Trangmar, thunderstruck by the magnitude of his discovery, hastened to reveal it to the King. It were long to detail each act of the crafty sovereign, and his scarcely human tool. By his order, the friar introduced himself to the Dowager Queen, at Bermondsey, with a plausible tale, to which she, in spite of her caution, was induced to give ear, and entrusted a message by him, as he said that he was on his way to Spain, to seek and exhort to action the dilatory Prince. He then departed. Henry had rather to restrain than urge his furious zeal. The scheme projected, was, that Richard should be entrapped on board a vessel, and brought with secrecy and speed to England, where he might be immured for life in some obscure castle in Wales. Trangmar promised that either he would accomplish this, or that the boy should find a still more secret prison, whence he could never emerge to disturb the reign of Henry, or put in jeopardy the inheritance of his son.

Such was the man who, in the month of April, 1492, following Lady Brampton's steps, arrived at Lisbon, and found to his wish the Prince there also, and easy access afforded him to his most secret counsels. He brought letters from the Dowager Queen, and some forged ones from other partizans of York, inviting the Prince without application to any foreign sovereigns, or aid from distant provinces, at once to repair to England, and to set up his standard in the midst of his native land, where, so these letters asserted, the Earl of Surrey, and many other powerful lords anxiously awaited him. All this accorded too well with the wishes of the little conclave not to ensure assent; nay, more, when Trangmar urged the inexpediency of the Duke's being accompanied by such notorious Yorkists as Plantagenet and Lady Brampton; it was suddenly agreed that Richard should embark on board a merchantman, to sail with the next fair wind for England, while his friends dispersed themselves variously for his benefit. De Faro, in his caravel, was to convey Lord Barry to Cork. Plantagenet resolved to visit the Duchess of Burgundy, at Brussels. Lady Brampton departed for the court of France, to engage the King at once to admit young Richard's claim, and aid him to make it good. "You, sweet, will bear me company;" and Monina, her whole soul — and her eyes expressed that soul's devotion to Richard's success — remembered starting, that the result of these consultations was to separate her from her childhood's companion, perhaps for ever. As if she had tottered on the brink of a precipice, she shuddered; but all was well again. It was not to be divided from the Prince, to remain with Lady Brampton, to proceed to Paris with her; on his earliest triumph to make a part of it, and to join his court in London. All these words, king, victory, and court, wove a golden tissue before the ardent girl's eyes; she had not yet

"Lifted the painted veil, which men call life;"

as a child who chases the glories of the west, she knew not that night was falling upon her, while still she fancied that she advanced towards the ever-retreating splendour of the sky.

Lady Brampton and Plantagenet trembled, as they committed their beloved charge to other hands; they importuned Trangmar with their injunctions — their entreaties, their thousand last words of care and love — the Friar heard, and smiled assent to all. Monina had need of all her courage for the hour, which she knew not that she dreaded till it came. He was going; the truth flashed suddenly upon her — he, from whom since childhood she had scarcely been absent for a day. So blind had she been to her own sensations, that it was not until he leaped into the boat, and put off from shore, that she became aware of the overwhelming tide of grief, disquiet, almost of despair, that inundated her heart. Where was her gaiety, her light etherial spirit, flown? Why lagged the hours thus? Why did ceaseless reverie seem her only refuge from intolerable wretchedness?

She had one other solace; she was still with his friends, whose whole thoughts were spent upon him; his name enriched their discourse; the chances of his voyage occupied their attention. Little knew they the strange and tragic drama that was acting on board the skiff that bore afar the idol of their hopes.

CHAPTER XIII.

This Friar boasteth that he knoweth hell.
And God it wot that is but litel wonder;
Friars and fiends ben but litel asonder.
— CHAUCER.

Richard meanwhile sailed fearlessly, with treachery for his nearest mate. Trangmar had at once exhibited audacity and prudence in the arrangement of his plan. He had made no great preparation, nor confided to any the real object of his intents. His only care had been, that the Duke should sail on board an English vessel; and chance had brought into the Tagus one whose captain was inclined to the party of Lancaster. He also contrived to have two hirelings of his own engaged on board as part of the crew, who knew that it was their employers design to carry to England a prisoner for the King. He was besides provided with a warrant from Henry, empowering him to seize on his rebel subject — the name a blank, for the Monk to fill up — alive or dead. The paper ran thus; so, in case of struggle, to afford warranty for his darker purpose.

Richard was now a prisoner. The vessel belonging to any country is a portion of that country; and the deck of this merchantman was virtually a part of the British soil. The Prince, not heeding his position, was so far from fearing his enemy's power, that he felt glad to find himself among his countrymen. He looked on the weather-beaten countenances of the honest sailors, and believed that he should find friends and partizans in all. He spoke to Trangmar of his purpose of declaring himself, and gaining them over; making this tiny offshoot of wide England his first conquest. Trangmar had not anticipated this. He was ignorant of the versatile and active spirit of the youth with whom he had to deal; nor had he, by putting himself in imagination in the Prince's place, become aware how the project of acquiring his own was his sleepless incentive to every action, and how he saw in every event a stepping stone in the prosecution of his enterprize. He started at the proposal, and in his own heart said, "I must lose no time; that which I thought to do next week, were better done to-morrow." With Richard he argued against this measure: he showed how the captain was bound to the present English government by his fortunes; how far more likely it was that, instead of gaining him and his crew, he would be made a prisoner by them, and delivered up to his enemy. Richard lent no great credence to this, but he yielded to the authority of the elder and the priest.

It was not in the power of his wily adversary to prevent him from ingratiating himself in the hearts of all around him. Besides his gentleness, his unaffected sympathy, and noble demeanour, his gay and buoyant spirit was congenial to the reckless sailors, who, during the dead calm that succeeded their first day's sail after quitting the Tagus, were glad of amusement to diversify their monotonous lives. He interceded with their captain when any fault was committed; he learned their private histories, promised his assistance, and scattered money among them. Sometimes he called them around him to teach him their art, discoursing about the stars, the magnet, the signs of the weather; he climbed the shrouds, handled the ropes, became an adept in their nautical language. At other times he listened to tales of dreadful shipwrecks and sailors' hardships, and recounted in turn de Faro's adventures. This made them talk of the new African discoveries, and descant on the wild chimeras, or sage conclusions of Columbus, who, at last, it was said, was to be sent by the sovereigns of Spain in quest of the western passage to India, over the slant and boundless Atlantic. All this time, with flapping sails, they lay but at a short distance off the mouth of the Tagus; and Trangmar, impatient of delay, yet found it prudent to postpone his nefarious purpose.

After the calm had continued for nearly a week, signs of bad weather manifested themselves; squalls assailed the ship, settling at last in a gale, which grew into a tempest. Their little vessel was decked, yet hardly able to resist the lashing waves of the Bay of Biscay. A leak, which had shewn itself even during the calm, increased frightfully; the men were day and night employed at the pumps, exposed to the beating rain, and to the waves, which perpetually washed the deck, drenching their clothes and bedding; each hour the wind became more furious; dark water-spouts dipping into the boiling sea, and churning it to fury, swept past them, and the steep sides of the mountain-high billows were ready at every moment to overwhelm them. Their tiny bark, which in these days would scarcely receive a more dignified name than a skiff, was borne as a leaf on the stream of the wind, its only safety consisting in yielding to its violence. Often at the worst the men despaired. The captain himself, frightened at the danger, and, strange inconsistency, still more fearful of the ruin that must attend him if his vessel were wrecked, lost all presence of mind. The Prince displayed meanwhile all his native energy; he commanded the men, and they obeyed him, looking on him as a superior being; when, by following his orders, the progress of the leak was checked, and the tost bark laboured less among the surges. “Sailors have short prayers,” he said; “but if they are sincere ones, the Saints will not the less intercede for us before God. Join me, my men, in a pious vow. I swear by our Lady’s precious name, to walk barefoot to her nearest shrine the first land we touch, and there to make a gift of incense and candles at her altar. This, if we escape; if not, here is Father Meiler, a holy Franciscan, to give us short shrift; so that, like devout Catholics, we may recommend our souls to the mercy of Jesus. And now to the pump, the ropes; bring me a hatchet, our mast must overboard.”

Three days and nights they worked unremittingly; the lull that then succeeded was followed by another tempest, and the exhausted mariners grew desperate. They had been borne far into the Atlantic, and now the wind shifting, drove them with the same fury into the Bay of Biscay. Every moment in expectation of death, the heart of Trangmar softened towards his victim in spite of himself; he was forced to admire his presence of mind, his unvanquishable courage; his light, yet gentle spirit, which made him bear up under every difficulty, yet pity those who sunk beneath, cheering them with accents at once replete with kindness and fearless submission to the decree of Providence. Feeling the crew bound to him as his natural subjects, he extended towards them a paternal love, and felt called upon to guard and save them. After, for a fortnight, they had thus been the sport of the elements, the gale decreased; the violent breakers subsided into one long swell, which bore them into a sheltered cove, in the wild coast that surrounds the Bay of Biscay. The men disembarked, the vessel was drawn up; all hands were employed in unlading and repairing her. “Ye do ill,” said Richard; “do you not remember our vow? Doubtless some village is near which contains a shrine where we may pay it.”

This piety was in accord with the spirit of the times, and the men rebuked, revered still more the youth who had saved them in danger, and who now in safety, paid, with religious zeal, the debt incurred towards their heavenly patroness. A little village lay secluded near the creek, and above it, on a high rock, was a chapel dedicated to Saint Mary of the Ascension, erected by a noble, who had vowed such offering, on escaping, as the Prince of England had, from death on those perilous seas. Bare-headed, bare-footed, bearing lights, following the Franciscan who led the way, the crew of the St. George proceeded towards the shrine. Next to the blessed Virgin, Richard claimed their gratitude; and after due Aves had been said at the altar, still in the sacred place they gathered round him, offering their property and their lives, imploring him to accept from them some pledge of their thankfulness. The heart of the outcast sovereign swelled within him. "I reign here, in their breasts I reign," was the thought that filled his bright eyes with a dew springing from the fullness of his soul; with a smile of triumph, he looked towards Father Meiler, as if to appeal to his judgment, whether now he might not declare himself, and claim these men's allegiance. He was startled by the dark and even ferocious expression of Trangmar's countenance. His coarse brown Franciscan dress, belted in by a rope; the cowl thrown back, displaying the monkish tonsure; the naked feet; these were symbols of humility and Christian virtue in strong contrast with the deep lines of his face, and the glare of his savage eyes: he met the glance of his victim, and became confused, while the Prince in wonder hastened to ask what strange thoughts occupied him, painting his visage with every sign of fierce passion.

"I was thinking," said Trangmar, hesitating, "I was deliberating, since God has cast us back on the land, whether it were not wiser to continue our journey through France, bidding farewell to the perils of the ocean sea?"

"That will I not," cried the Prince. "Father Meiler, I watched you during the storm; you acted no coward's part then; why do you now?"

"When danger is near, I can meet it as a man of courage," said Trangmar; "When it is far, I can avoid it like a prudent one."

"A good clerical distinction, fit for a monk," replied the Duke; "but I, who am a Cavalier, Father, love rather to meet danger, than to avoid it like a woman or a priest."

"Insulting boy!" cried Meiler; "dare you taunt me with cowardice? That I was a soldier ere I was a monk, some of your race dearly rued!"

Before these words were fully uttered, Trangmar recollected himself; his voice died away, so that his last expression was inaudible. The Duke only beheld his burst of passion, and sudden suppression of it, and said gently:

—”Pardon me, Father, it is my fault that you forgot the respect due to me. I forgot the reverence meet from youth to age, most meet from a sinful boy to a holy monk.”

“I thank your Highness,” said the Friar, “for recalling to my memory a truth that had half escaped it. Henceforth be assured that I will not forget that you are the undoubted offspring of the Earl of March — of Edward of England.”

Fate thus urged this wicked and miserable man to his fiendlike purpose. Awakened again to deadly vengeance, he resolved to delay no longer; to trust no more to chance: he saw now all the difficulties of his former scheme of taking his enemy a prisoner to England; and this soothed his conscience as he recurred to more fatal designs. During the short delay that intervened before they again put out to sea, he watched an opportunity, but found none. At length they weighed anchor; and, with a favourable wind, bore down the coast of France. The time was come he surely thought: for during this long voyage he could frame an opportunity; during some dark night, when the ship sailed cheerily before a fair breeze, he would engage the Prince in engrossing talk concerning the conduct he should pursue when in England, taking advantage of his victim’s incautiousness to allure him near the brink, and then push him overboard. His single strength was more than a match for his slight adversary; but to render his scheme doubly sure, he would have the two men in his pay near him, to assist in the case of struggle, and vouch for his innocence if he were accused of foul play.

It is the fortune of those hurried into crime by violent passion, that they can seldom find accomplices as wicked as themselves. Thus was it with Trangmar. The men whose assistance he relied upon, the enthusiasm of their fellow-sailors for their noble passenger. After they had again set sail, the wind blowing gently from the south, bore them onwards with a favourable navigation, till, shifting a few points eastward, it began to freshen. It was then, that the Franciscan, not wholly betraying his purpose, but hinting that their presence would be necessary, ordered his men to contrive that the rest of the crew should be below, and they near at hand, while he that night should be alone with Richard upon deck. One of the men replied by stoutly declaring that if any evil was threatened the Prince, he would not be a party in it. “You possess King Henry’s warrant,” he said, “to make this Fitzroy a prisoner. I will not oppose his Majesty's command. You have him safely; what would you more?"

The other apparently yielded an assent to his employer's commands, and then found a speedy opportunity to warn Richard of his danger. A veil fell from the Prince's eyes. "Surely I knew this before," he thought; "ever since I was in Saint Mary's chapel, I must have known that this dastard monk was my enemy. I am indeed betrayed, alone, friendless, on board an English vessel, surrounded by an English crew. Now let the trial be made, whether simple honesty be not of more avail than cruelty and craft. But first let me fathom the full intention of this man, and learn whether he have a worse design than that of delivering me over defenceless to my adversary. It cannot be that he would really murder me."

The breeze had rather sunk towards sunset, but it arose again with the stars; the vessel's prow struck against the light waves, and danced gaily on through the sea. One man stood at the helm; another, one of the Friar's hirelings, loitered near; the other kept out of the way. Still, beneath the thousand stars of cloudless night, the little bark hurried on, feeling the freshening of the wind; her larboard beam was deep in the water, and close at the deck's leeward edge, Meiler and his intended victim paced. One thoughtless boy, high among the shrouds, whistled in answer to the winds. There was at once solitude and activity in the scene. "This is the hour," thought Richard; "surely if man's sinful heart was ever touched with remorse, this man's may now. God's throne, visible in all its beauty above us — beneath, around, the awful roaring waters, from which we lately so miraculously escaped." He began to speak of England, of his mother, of the hopes held out to him by his companion; eager in his desire of winning a traitor to the cause of truth, he half forgot himself, and then started to find that, ever as he walked, his companion got him nearer to the brink of the slant, slippery deck. Seized with horror at this manifestation of the worst designs, yet scarcely daring to credit his suspicions, he suddenly stopt, seizing a rope that swung near, and steadying himself by winding his arm round it, an act that escaped his enemy's observation, for, as he did it, he spoke: "Do you know, Father Meiler, that I suspect and fear you. I am an inexperienced youth, and if I am wrong, forgive me; but you have changed towards me of late, from the kind friend you once were. Strange doubts have been whispered: do you reply to them. Are you my friend, or are you a treacherous spy? — the agent of the noble Yorkists, or Henry Tudor's hireling murderer?"

As he spoke the Friar drew still nearer, and the Prince recoiled further from him: he got on the sheer edge of the deck. "Rash boy!" cried Trangmar, "know that I am no hireling: sacred vengeance pricks me on! Son of the murderer! tell me, where is sainted Henry? where Prince Edward? where all the noble martyrs of his cause? Where my brave and lost sons? There, even where thou shalt be: quick, look back, thy grave yawns for thee!"

With the words he threw himself furiously on the Prince: the stripling sprung back with all the force lent him by the rope he held, and pushed at the same time Trangmar violently from him, as he cried aloud on the sailors, "What, ho! treason is among us!" A heavy splash of the falling Meiler answered his call: the strong man was cast down in his very pride; the waters divided, and sucked him in. In a moment the crew were on deck; Trangmar's hireling, scared, cried out, "He is King Henry's prisoner! seize him!" thus increasing the confusion. The friar, his garments floating, now appeared struggling among the waves; a rope was thrown to him; the vessel sped on meanwhile, and it fell far short; Richard, horror-struck, would have leapt in to save his enemy; but the time was gone. One loud shriek burst on the ear of night, and all was still; Trangmar, his misery, his vengeance, and his crimes lay buried in the ocean's hoary caves.

What explanation could follow this tremendous incident? The Prince spoke of his life attacked; the men of the warrant their master had for his seizure: what was his crime none knew; "That will I declare freely," said the royal youth; "that unhappy man has sealed my truth by his death. In my childhood I was nurtured in a palace, and bore the title of the Duke of York. Edward the Fourth was my father, Edward the Fifth my brother."

"Why this is foulest treason," cried the trembling captain.

"Aye, or fairest loyalty; speak, my friends; which of you will lay hands on your liege, on Richard the Fourth of England?"

The reckless and ignorant sailors, riotously and with one acclaim, swore to die for him; but their commander shuddered at the peril that beset him: while his men were hanging round their idolized Prince, he retired with his mate to lament the ugly chance of Trangmar's death, and to express terror at the very name of York. If the captain was a coward-friend of Tudor, the mate was a sturdy Lancastrian; he recommended his chief to seize the boy, and convey him a welcome gift to his sovereign; the clamours of the delighted crew showed that this was vain advice. He had said to them, with all the ingenuousness of youth, “My life is in your hands, and I know that it is safe.” Yet, when they spoke of seizing their unwilling commander, and of delivering the vessel in his hands, he said, “My good friends, I will not make lawless acts the stepping-stones to my throne; it is grief enough for me that my young hands have unwittingly destroyed the life of one who, not as an armed knight, but in holy garb set himself against me. I myself will persuade your captain to do me all the service I require.”

This poor man was willing enough to hear what he called reason; at first he would fain have entreated Richard to suffer himself to be carried a prisoner to England; and, when he found his discourse vain, he yielded timid obedience to York’s wishes, in spite of the lowering brow of his mate: thus, at least, his cargo would be saved, and his crew preserved from mutiny. Richard simply requested to be set on shore in Cork harbour, suddenly relinquishing every thought of England, now that he saw the treachery that awaited him there, and recurring to the former plans of Lord Barry. In Ireland, in the county of the Desmonds, he should find friends, adherents, almost prepared for his arrival; and there also, if Barry forgot not his promise, this staunch partizan would speedily join him; the captain gladly assented to any project, that did not force him to land this dangerous pretender on the English shores.

For one week they ran before the wind; and Ireland, far and low, was discernible on the horizon; the dear land of promise to the weary exile, the betrayed, but high-hearted Prince: during this short navigation it had required all his fortitude to banish from his mind the image of the friar struggling in the waves, of a man precipitated in the very act of crime “unhouseled, unanointed, unannealed,” into the life-quenching waters. Besides all other expectations, Richard longed to get on shore, that in a confessional he might lift this burthen of involuntary guilt from his soul.

At length the iron-bound coast was right a-head; the ponderous rocky jaws of the creek were open, and they sailed up Passage, past beautiful and woody islands, under forest-crowned hills, till they cast anchor before the picturesque and hill-set city of Cork, whose quay was crowded by multitudes, gazing on the newly-arrived vessel.

The Duke of York stood on the prow of his skiff, reflecting on the first step he ought to take. He knew little of Ireland, and that little had been gleaned from Lord Barry: he heard from him of its warlike chiefs, its uncivilized septs, and English settlers, scarce less wild, and quite as warlike as its aboriginal inhabitants. He called to mind the names most familiar to him — the Earl of Kildare, abettor of Simnel, pardoned by Henry, and continued in his office of Lord Deputy; the Earl of Desmond, whom Lord Barry had particularly interested in his favour, who affected the state of an Irish chieftain, or rather king, and who, in his remote abode in Munster, disdained to attend the Dublin parliament, or to make one of the lawful governors of the land. Other names he remembered of less note: Plunket, the Lord Chief Justice, whom, with infinite reluctance, Henry had pardoned; Keating, Prior of Kilmainham, who had been constable of Dublin Castle, and who, ejected from his office after the battle of Stoke, had saved himself by flight, and was now concealed in an Abbey near Buttevant. Much however of what he had heard, escaped his memory; and he stood on the threshold of this unknown land, vainly seeking in his recollection for the dim and shadowy forms, which were to guide him in the new and unexplored world before him. Another reflection also presented itself: Lord Barry had quited Ireland the year before, and communication there had been none since then — was Kildare still Deputy? did incursions of the natives, or turbulence among themselves, occupy the Lords of the Pale? Should he find a band of nobles and their followers ready to assist him, or the motley population of a barbarous wild, whose sole ideas were internal struggles for power, whose watch-words for enterprize were names and things in which he had no portion?

In a hurried manner, York resolved on his plan of action. He had, on their approach to land, arrayed himself in gay and rich apparel. The Spain from which he came was parent of this act: there embroidery, housings inlaid with gold, and arms encrusted with jewels, formed the pride of the high-born Cavaliers. He stood prepared to land; he thanked the captain for his enforced courtesy; he held out his hand to the crew who gathered round him with their prayers and blessings. “My own!” was his first thought as he set his foot on shore: “Hail, realm of my fathers! Hear the vow of the fugitive who claims your sway! Justice, mercy, and paternal love, are the gifts with which I will repay your obedience to my call; your submission to my rule.”

“Heave the anchor, and away!” thus spoke the captain of the craft he had left.

“For England; to warn our king of this springal’s insolent presumption;” said the mate.

“To any quarter of the wide world, save England,” replied the timid captain: “Would you have me run my neck into the noose for not having clapped under hatches this mercurial spark? Master mate, learn from an old sailor, that the best you can do with kings and grandees, is to have nought to do with them.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Then Paridell, in whom a kindly pride
Of gracious speech, and skill his words to frame
Abounded, being glad of so fit tide
Him to commend to them, thus spake, of all well eyed.
— SPENSER.

Cork was an asylum for civilization in the centre of a savage district. The cautious burghers, made wealthy by trade, and ever in fear of incursions from the surrounding septs, kept the strictest guard upon their city, as if they had a continual siege laid to it. They forbade all intercourse or intermarriage between those within and without the walls, till every citizen became linked together by some sort of kindred. It is true, that the country around was peopled to a great degree by English lords; but they were the degenerate English, as they were styled, who imitated the state and independance of the native chiefs. Such was the Earl of Desmond, of the family of the Geraldines, who ruled as a king over Munster, and with whom the Barrys, the De Courcys, the Barretts, and the Mac Carthys, Mac Swineys, and other native chiefs, were connected by marriage, or struggling with him for “Chieferie” in the mutable chance of war.

There was no appearance of timidity in the frank and assured aspect of the unfriended adventurer, as without entering the city, but merely passing through its suburbs, he proceeded to the cathedral church. It was twelve o’clock on the twenty-fourth of June, the feast of Saint John the Baptist; and high mass was celebrating. The Duke of York entered the church — his soul was filled with pious gratitude for his escape from the dangers of the sea, and the craft of his enemies; and, as he knelt, he made a vow to his sainted Patroness, the Virgin, to erect a church on the height which first met his eyes as he approached shore, and to endow a foundation of Franciscans — partly, because of all monkish orders they chiefly venerate her name, partly to atone for his involuntary crime in the death of Meiler Trangmar, who wore that habit. The appearance of this young, silken-suited, and handsome Cavalier, drew the eyes of Erin’s blue-eyed daughters: — the men whispered together that he must be some Spanish grandee or English noble; but wherefore, unannounced and unattended, he came and knelt in their church before the shrine of Saint Finbar, was matter of vague conjecture. The congregation passed out; then, impelled by curiosity, formed a wide semicircle round the gates of the cathedral, watching the motions of the graceful stranger. Master John Lavallan the Mayor, John O'Water the wealthiest citizen, and former Mayor of the town, and other rich burghers, stood close to the Round Tower within the walls of the Garth, in expectation of being addressed by their distinguished visitor. The Duke of York cast a quick glance around; and then, as the Mayor advanced, the youth stept forward to meet him. The citizen, as one habituated to exercise hospitality, bade the knight welcome, beseeching him to honour his abode with his presence, and to command his services. The Duke frankly accepted the invitation, and descended with the Mayor into the main street, where that officer resided; and here again Richard was made welcome to the city of Cork.

It was a gala day at the Mayor's; and now, at the dinner hour, twelve o'clock, the long tables groaned under the weight of viands, and round the hospitable board were seated the principal families of the town. No questions were asked the visitor — his golden spurs bespoke his honourable rank; he was placed at the right hand of Lavallan: and, while the clatter of knives and trenchers went on, he was only remarked by the younger guests, who gazed even to the injury of their appetites, on his burnished ringlets, his fair, open brow, his bright, blue eyes, and smile of courteous affability: but time went on; the dishes were carried away, the goblets placed; when the Mayor, rising, drank welcome to the stranger, and asked, if no reason forbade him to reply, his name and mission. Already Richard had become acquainted with most of the countenances of his entertainers — that is, of those nearest him; for, far through the long hall, almost out of sight, the table extended, crowded by city retainers, and a few of the mere "Irishry," whose long hair and loose saffron-coloured mantles, contrasted with the doublet, hose, and trimmed locks of the townsmen. Those near him bore the latter character, though their vivacious glances and quick gestures were more akin to the inhabitants of the South, among whom he had been accustomed to live, than to the steady, dull demeanour of English traders.

When Lavallan drank to the stranger, every eye turned to the object of the toast. Richard arose — his plumed cap was doffed; his shining hair, parted on his brow, clustered round his throat; his sunny countenance was full of confidence and courage—"Sir Mayor," he said, "my most kind entertainer, and you, my friends, men of Cork, may the grateful thanks of the homeless adventurer be as kindly received by you, as they are gladly paid by him. Who am I? you ask. Wherefore do I come? My name is the best in the land; my coming is to claim your aid, to elevate it to its rightful place of pride and honour. Were I cravenhearted, or you less generous, I might dread to declare myself; but fear never entered the heart of a Plantagenet; and, when, unreservedly, I place my life in your hands, will you betray the trust?"

A murmur quickly hushed, the sound of suppressed emotion, as the winds of thought passed over the minds of those around, for an instant interupted the speaker —

"Neither is my name nor lineage unknown to you," he continued: "you honour both and have obeyed them; will you refuse to submit to me, their descendant and representative? Did you not vow fealty to Richard Duke of York, who, driven from his own England by false Lancaster, found refuge and succour here? Was not Clarence your ruler, and Edward of England monarch of your isle? In the name of these, in the name of the White Rose and Mortimer and Plantagenet — I, the son of Edward the Fourth, the victim of my uncle Gloster's treachery, and low-born Tudor's usurpation; I, named in my childhood Duke of York and Lord of Ireland, now, if rightly styled, Richard the Fourth of England, demand my lieges of Cork, to acknowledge my rights, to rise in my cause. I, a Prince and an outcast, place myself in their hands, through them to be a fugitive for ever, or a King."

Had Richard planned this scene, with deep insight into the dispositions of those with whom he had to deal, he could not have projected a better arrangement. They had learned of his existence from Lord Barry, and were prepossessed in his favour. Their fiery hearts were lighted at the word — his name, with a thousand blessings attached to it, rang through the hall: by means of the servants and followers at the lower end of the table, it reached the outer apartments and avenues of the Mansion-house; while, with a kind of exalted rapture, the Mayor and his guests hung over their new-found Prince. The citizens began to gather without, and to call aloud for the White Rose of England; the day was finished in festal tumult; the Mayor led forth his princely visitor — he was hailed Lord of Ireland with one acclaim. Some elders, who had known his grandfather, or had been followers of the

Duke of Clarence, and others who, visiting England, had seen Edward the Fourth, were struck by the likeness he bore to his progenitors, and enthusiastically vouched for his truth. To see and hear the mad exultation of the moment, an uninterested spectator must have thought, that a messenger from heaven had arrived, to bestow liberty on the groaning slaves of some blood-nurtured tyrant. The Duke was installed in the castle with princely state, a town-guard appointed him, and the night was far advanced, before he was permitted to repose, and wondering to collect his thoughts, and feel himself an acknowledged sovereign in the first town of his alienated dominions in which he had set foot.

The morrow brought no diminution to the zeal of his partizans. The first measure of the day was his attending high mass, surrounded by the mayor and citizens: when the holy ceremony was finished, he took oath on the Gospels, that he was the man he had declared himself. The eager people clamoured for him to assume the name of King; but that he said he would win with his good sword, nor, till he possessed its appanage, assume a barren title: he was the Duke of York, until at Westminster he received his paternal crown.

From the church the mayor and citizens attended his council at the Castle, and here Richard more fully explained to them the projects of Lord Barry, his hopes from the Earl of Desmond, and his wish to attach to his cause the Earl of Kildare, Lord Deputy of Ireland. He learned the changes that had taken place but a month or two ago before: some suspicion having entered Henry’s mind, the Earl of Kildare had been dismissed from his high office, and Walter, Archbishop of Dublin, substituted in his room. The Baron of Portlester, who had been treasurer for forty years, was obliged to resign in favour of a Butler, hereditary and bitter enemies of the Geraldines, while the exaltation of Plunket, from the office of Chief Justice to that of Chancellor, only proved that he was entirely gained over to the Lancastrians. The acts of this new government tended to mortify the late deputy, who bore ill his own degradation and the triumph of his enemies. On various occasions brawls had ensued; and when Sir James of Ormond, wished to place a creature of his own in a castle over which Kildare claimed seignory, the latter defended it by arms. This turbulent state of things promised fair for the adventurer; and his first deed was to dispatch letters to the Earls of Kildare and Desmond, soliciting their assistance, setting forth the ready zeal of the city of Cork, and the promises and attachment of Lord Barry, whom he daily expected to see arrive.

In all that the English Prince did, nothing spoke louder for him to his Irish friends, than his fearless confidence, and artless, yet not undignified reliance on their counsels. He had gained a warm friend in the former Mayor, O'Water, a man reverenced throughout Munster. In his youth he had served in the army, and his spirit was hardly yet tamed to the pacific habits of a burgher. He was sixty years of age; but he bore his years lightly, and remembered, but as the occurrence of yesterday, the time when the Duke of York, grandfather of young Richard, was Lord of Ireland. He had attached himself particularly to his person, and followed him to England, returning to his own country after his patron's death. He saw in the descendant of his chief, his rightful lord, to refuse obedience to whom was a sin against the laws of God and man. He fervently swore never to desert him, and dispatched emissaries on all sides to spread the tidings of his arrival, and excite the partizans of the White Rose to his active assistance.

When the letters were written, council held, and a course of conduct determined on, still the caravel of de Faro did not appear, and Richard grew weary of his state of indolence. A week passed; and during the second, at the conclusion of which, the answers from the noble chieftains were expected, the Duke of York announced to O'Water his intention of visiting Buttevant, the seat of Lord Barry, where, in the Abbey of Ballybeg, he hoped to find the Abbot of Kilmainham; a man, who in exile and poverty, exercised great influence over the Irish Yorkists. He had been insolent and cruel towards his enemies when in power, but he was endowed with popular qualities for his followers; while among his friends, he was valued for his boldness, sagacity, and undaunted courage. His career had been turbulent: he had supported himself against his sovereign by acts of lawless violence, till, obliged at last to yield, he found himself, in his old age, a poor brother in a distant monastery, obliged, for safety's sake, to veil his lofty pretensions in the obscurest guise. Lord Barry had offered him an asylum in the Abbey of Ballybeg; venerating, with the blind admiration of a soldier, the learning and craft of the priest, conjoined, as it here was, to dauntless courage. O'Water, on the contrary, disliked the subtle prior, and endeavoured to dissuade the Prince from the journey; but he spurned the city laziness, and in spite of his friends' entreaties, and their fears for his safety among the followers of Desmond, Barry, and Macarthy, departed on his intended visit, attended only by Hubert Burgh, the foster-brother of Lord Barry.

The way from Cork to Buttevant was not far, but more desolate than Granada during the Moorish war. Summer and the sun adorned that smiling land, casting a verdurous mantle over her deep wounds, painting the rude visage of war with brilliant hues. The forests, dark hills, and uncultivated wilds of Munster, showed nakedly the deep traces of the sovereign ill. But lately this neighbourhood had been the seat of war between the Earl of Desmond and the Chief of the Macarthys; the latter had fallen in battle, but his brother and Tanist had succeeded to him, and was already gathering together his sept for a more desperate struggle. Never in Spain had Richard seen such wild strange figures, as crossed his path during this short journey: whether it were the native kern, wrapt in his mantle, disguised by his glibb, or long shaggy hair, or the adherents of Desmond, who affected the state of an Irish chieftain, whose leather-quilted jackets, long saffron-coloured shirts, cloaks and shaggy mustachios, riding without stirrups, bearing spears, formed objects not less uncouth and savage: the very women bore a similar appearance of incivilization. And as a comment on such text, Burgh told, as they rode, the history of the late wars of Desmond with O’Carrol, Prince of Ely, and with Macarthy; and, a still more dread tale, the incursion of Murrogh-en-Ranagh, an O’Brien; who, rising first in Clare, spread through the country, overrunning Munster, and bold from success, advanced into eastern Leinster. All these accounts of battle were interwoven with tales of feuds, handed down from father to son, of the natural hatred of the native chiefs to the lords of English origin; interspersed with such strange wild tales, where the avowedly supernatural was intermingled with deeds of superhuman prowess and barbarity, that the English-born Prince, nursling of romantic Spain, felt as if he were transplanted into a new planet, and stopped the speaker at each moment, to obtain some clearer explanation, or to have interpreted words he had never before heard, the names of customs and things found only in this land.

Thus entertained, the way to Buttevant, or as the Irish called it, Kilnemullagh, which was about twenty miles, seemed short. One thing was evident in all these details, that it was easy to rouse the English lords in Ireland to any act of turbulence and revolt; but that it would be difficult nevertheless for their ill-armed followers, and undisciplined bands, to compete with the soldiery of England.

CHAPTER XV.

Sisters, I from Ireland came.
— COLERIDGE.

The Duke, immediately on his arrival at the Castle of Buttevant, dispatched Hubert Burgh to the Prior of Kilmainham, with a message from himself and a token from Lord Barry, announcing his intention of visiting him at the Abbey the next day. But Keating feared thus to draw the eyes of some enemy upon him, and appointed a meeting in a secluded dell, near the bank of the Mullagh, or Awbeg, the river which Spenser loves to praise. Early in the morning Richard repaired alone to this rural presence-chamber, and found Keating already there. Hearing of the priest's haughty pride, Richard, with a sensation of disgust, had figured a man something like the wretched Trangmar, strong of limb, and with a ferocious expression of countenance. Keating appeared in his monk's humble guise; his light eyes were still lively, though his hair and beard were snowy white; his brow was deeply delved by a thousand lines; his person short, slender, bent; his step infirm; his voice was silver-toned; he was pale, and his aspect in its lower part sweetly serene. Richard looked with wonder on this white, withered leaf — a comparison suggested by his frail tenuity; and again he almost quailed before the eager scrutiny of the prior's eye. A merchant at a Moorish mart he had seen thus scan a slave he was about to purchase. At length, with a look of great satisfaction, the monk said, "This fits exactly; our friends will not hesitate to serve so goodly a gentleman. The daughter of York might in sooth mistake thee for a near kinsman. Thou comest from Portugal, yet that could not have been thy native place?"

Richard started. This was the first time he had heard an expression of doubt of his veracity. How could he reply? His word alone must support his honour; his sword must remain sheathed, for his injurer was a priest. Keating caught his haughty glance, and perceived his mistake. It was with an effort that he altered his manner, for he exchanged with pain a puppet subject to his will, for a man (prince or pretender) who had objects and a state of his own to maintain. "Pardon the obscure vision of an old man," he said; "my eyes were indeed dim not to see the true marks of a Plantagenet in your appearance. I was but a boy when your princely grandsire fell; nor has it been my fortune to visit England or to see your royal father. But the Duke of Clarence honoured me with his friendship, and your cousin de la Poole acknowledged my zeal in furthering his projects. I am now neither prior nor commander; but, poor monk as I am become, I beseech your highness to command my services.”

This swift change of language but ill satisfied the pride of Richard, and in reply he briefly recounted such facts as established his right to the name he claimed. The noble artlessness of his tone conquered the priest’s lurking suspicions: in a more earnest manner he besought the Duke’s pardon; and a cordial intercourse was established between them.

The place where they met was secluded and wild; a bower of trees hid it from the view of the river, and an abrupt rock sheltered it behind. It was apparently accessible by the river only, and it was by its bank that the Duke and Prior had arrived. Nothing could equal the picturesque solitude around them. The waving of the leafy boughs, the scream of the water-fowl, or the splashing they made as they sprung from among the sedge and darted across the stream, alone interrupted the voiceless calm; yet at every moment in his speech Keating stopped, as if listening, and cast his keen eyes, which he libelled much in calling dim, up the steep crag, as if among its herbage and shrubs some dreaded spy or expected messenger might appear. Then again he apologized to the Duke for having selected this wild spot for their interview. A price, he oberved, had been set upon his head, and his only safety lay in perpetual watchfulness and never-sleeping caution. “My zeal in your Highness’ cause,” he added with a courtier smile, “cannot be deemed a strange frenzy, since your success will not only assure my restoration to the dignity of which I have been unjustly deprived, but prevent an old man from perpetually dreaming of the sword of the slayer, or the more frightful executioner’s axe.”

Again the Prior fixed his eyes on a fissure in the rock, adding, “I had appointed to meet one in this place before your message was communicated to me; and in good time: for methinks the object of your visit may be furthered by the intelligence I hope soon to receive. Your Highness must have heard at Cork of the war carried on by the great Earl of Desmond and a native sept of this region. Macarthy, their chief, fell during the struggle, but his successor and Tanist mustered his broken forces to avenge him. The

Earl is impatient of this resistance, for his presence is necessary in Thomond to drive the O'Carrolls from that district. At his invitation he and Macarthy meet this day to parley but a few miles hence. I was to have made one among them; but a boding raven told me that danger was abroad."

The tidings of the near presence of the Earl of Desmond were unexpected, and most welcome to the Duke. He immediately resolved not to lose the golden hour. He eagerly asked where the meeting was to be, and how speedily he might reach the spot.

As he was thus earnestly expressing his desire, a slight rustling caught the Prior's ear: he looked up; a human form hovered as in midair, scarcely, as it were, alighted on the precipitous rock; quickly, but cautiously, it threaded its steep and tortuous path. A large mantle was wrapt round the mountaineer, a large white kerchief enveloped the head in the manner of a turban, yet the Prince caught the outline of a female figure, which soon descended to the little plain on which they stood and advanced towards them; she was evidently very young, but weather-worn even in youth: her wild picturesque dress concealed the proportions of her form; her large white sleeves hid her arm, but the emaciated appearance of her face and hands and bare feet struck Richard with pity. She seemed astonished at seeing him, and spoke to his companion in the language of the country, which he did not understand: the Prior's face darkened as she spoke: there dwelt on it a mixture of disappointment and ferocity, of which it could hardly have been deemed capable by one who had hitherto seen it only bland and smiling; swiftly, however, he dismissed these indications of passion, and addressed the Prince calmly. "I cannot go," he said; "my time is still to be deferred, though it shall not be for ever lost. How does your courage hold? if you are not afraid of going alone with a guide whose very dialect is a mystery to you, through a country torn by opposing factions; if you do not fear presenting yourself friendless to a haughty noble who deems himself sovereign in this domain, I will contrive that, ere four hours elapse, you shall find yourself in Desmond's presence."

"Fear!" the Prince repeated. His eye glanced with some contempt on the priest's cowl, which alone could suggest pardon for such a thought; yet he checked himself from any angry disclaiming of the accusation, as he said, "Whatever in my presumption I may hope, sage forethought tells me that I walk a road strewn with a thousand dangers; leading, it may be, to an early death. Not for that will I deviate one furlong from my path. Sir Prior, where is the guide you promise?”

Keating, after a few minute’s reflection, instead of replying, conversed again with the girl, and then addressed the Duke: “This hapless child is a victim of the wars; she was born far hence, and is the last surviving of my foster-sister’s once blooming family. Her mother saved my life. This child, barefoot as she is, guided me hither. Is not a Keating fallen, when he cannot give succour to an offspring of his fosterer’s house? And she, poor girl! she has walked far for me to-day; but she will not slacken in her toil when I bid her proceed. She shall be your guide, and your Grace may rely upon her; the dog you fed from its birth were less faithful. Now, at the hour of noon, Desmond meets Macarthy of Muskerry, on Ballahourah. But for the bogs and streams that cross your path, it is not far; at the worst, you can reach Mallow, where the Earl will lie to-night. It is best not to delay; for, if there is peace in Munster, very speedily Desmond will be on his way to Thomond.”

This was a fresh spur to Richard. He accepted the proffered guide, who listened attentively to Keating’s instructions given in her native tongue. He followed the girl but a short distance ere he looked back; the Prior was gone; the solitude of the wild crags and shrubs alone met his eye. Meanwhile his companion stepped forward, motioning him to follow. They plunged into the brake; the sun rose high; the birds winged their glad flight among the trees. Now toiling up a steep, now wading a stream, now entangled in a thicket, now stepping lightly over boggy earth; now meditating on Andalusia, and now wondering at his present position, Richard followed his swift and silent guide through the wild country between Buttevant and Mallow.

Already the meeting between the Earl of Desmond and Macarthy, the Chief of Muskerry, was at an end. They parted with fair words and exasperated thoughts. The native Lord could ill brook the settler’s haughty assumptions; nor Geraldine endure the obstinate pride of the conquered native. Still their relative positions enforced a peace.

They had separated, and after a hasty repast spread on the heathy side of Ballahourah, the Earl proceeded towards Mallow. He was surrounded by warriors, who all claimed the Geraldine name, and who variously distinguished themselves as the White Knight, the Knight of Kerry, and the

Knight of the Glen. There was Lord Fermoy, his father-in-law, and others of the Roches. Nor did all the native chiefs absent themselves. One sister of the Earl had married Macarthy Reagh; another an O'Brien, whose daughter had intermarried with an O'Carroll — all this in defiance of the English law, which forbade such alliances, through which the father of the present Earl was beheaded in the year 1467. Their antique costume, tight truise, saffron tunics, and flowing robes distinguished them from the Saxons; yet these had not followed the fashions of the times, but dressed in the garb used by the courtiers of Edward the Third.

Maurice, tenth Earl of Desmond, was brave even to a proverb. He loved war, and deemed himself rather King of Desmond, than a chief of English descent. To extend and secure his possessions, rendering them at once independent of his sovereign and of the native chieftains, was the aim of his life. He now meditated the invasion of Thomond; but Macarthy's angry demeanour showed that he must not be left unchecked in his rear. "Where is my cousin Barry — where the Lord of Buttevant — the Chief of the Barrymores? Flying before a slip of parchment indited in far London, as if my sword held not better sway in these regions than a Parliament attainder! Were he here, the O'Carrolls should hear the thunder of my arms ere this moon waned. Muskerry could make no gathering in the vales, while Barry sat on his perch at Buttevant."

The Earl had time to waste in thought, as he was borne along — at the age of fifteen, pushing rashly forward in an assault, he received a wound in his leg, which lamed him for life, so that he was carried about in a litter, and went by the name of Claudus; yet he was not deemed the less an experienced and gallant warrior. With the virtues of a chieftain he possessed the defects: Munster was his world; his universe was peopled by the Geraldines, the Macarthys, the Barrys, Donegans, Barretts, Roches, O'Briens, O'Carrolls, and the rest; he disdained his noble brethren of the pale. He considered it a mark of distinction to be exempted by a law from attendance of Parliament and the government of the land; he saw in the King of England, not his monarch, but the partizan of Ormond, and therefore an enemy. This, and ancient alliance linked him to the cause of the English outcast Prince, who solicited his aid; he had replied favourably to his request; but his interests and the conquest of a kingdom must be delayed, while he subdued the halfnaked septs who insulted his power.

While thus busied, reflecting upon the events of the day, the Earl sat silent and thoughtful. Suddenly, at a turn in the road, he called on his followers to stop; his eye lighted up, he saw two horsemen swiftly approaching — Lord Barry was the foremost rider. Forgetting his lameness in his joy, the noble warrior almost threw himself from the litter, as he cried, "Jesu speed you, my loving cousin! spur on! spur on! remember your badge, Boutez en avant! No enemy ever turned his back on your sword to avoid, so eagerly as my arms will open to receive you! Were you bound for Mallow?"

"No, my noble coz," replied Lord Barry, "I am for Kilnemullagh; an eaglet I have nursed, has winged its way thither, and I fear, may suffer injury in my absence; for he is young, and his pinions all untried."

"Leave him to his fate, my Lord," said the Earl; "if he be a faithful bird he will find his way back to his fosterer; meanwhile the King of eagles, thy cousin Desmond himself, has need of thee."

"One word, dear Maurice, will explain the greater duty that I owe my princely fowl. The White Rose of England, missing him, loses all; you, I, each, and every one of us, are his servants and must become his soldiers."

"Cousin," replied Desmond, "one son of York made my father, whose soul God assoilzie! Lord Deputy; another chopped off his head — so much for the White Rose! Still I allow this new Lancastrian king is a bitterer enemy: he is a friend of the Butlers, whom the fiend confound. We will first subdue the O'Carrolls, humble the Macarthys, take Coollong from Clan Cartie Reagh, and root out the Desies; and then, when we are kings of Munster, in good hour let us march with your Duke of York, and set our foot on the necks of the Butlers in Dublin."

The Earl spoke with rapidity and energy; all Munster spread before Lord Barry's mind — city, town, strong-hold, held by ancestral enemies; and it was wonderful what a change was wrought in his mind by his cousin's eloquence, and the names of all these sons of Erin, with each of whom he had a mortal quarrel. He agreed therefore to go with the Earl to Mallow that evening, postponing his visit to Buttevant till the following day.

Such were the wise counsels, that stayed the mighty power Barry had promised York should rise at his name to vanquish England. It was better thus; so the royal boy thought himself, when, welcomed by Desmond at Mallow, he looked round on kern and gallowglass, hearing a language that was not English, viewing their strange attire and savage countenances. “It is not thus, my England, that I will seize on you. Your own nobles shall place the crown on my head; your people wield the sword that will injure only our common enemy. Shall I make a Granada of my native land, and shed Christian blood, better spilt in the cause of God against infidel dogs?”

When the Earl of Desmond found that the Prince, whom he regretted to receive with such cold hopes, was well content, nothing doubting that the good-will of the English would prove a better ally than the spears of the Irish, he conceived a sudden affection for him. It was no wonder; for the ingenuousness of untarnished youth is ineffably winning; and here it was added to a quick wit, a grace and gallantry, that shone as a vision of light in this wild region.

A few days brought still greater satisfaction to all parties. An embassy had arrived in Cork from the King of France to the Duke of York to invite him to Paris. Desmond would not relinquish his guest: he carried him to his noble seat at Ardfinnin; and thither repaired in due time the messengers from Charles the Eighth.

The chief of these was our old friend Frion, besides a Frenchman called Lucas, and two Englishmen, Stephen Poytron and John Tiler. The Duke was not well pleased with the selection of Frion; but, while this man by his singular arts of insinuation made good his cause, Barry showed how in two points his cause was benefited by him. First, that having been secretary to Henry, he knew many secrets, and was acquainted with many circumstances that might be turned to use; and, secondly, that his very attempt to entrap the Prince was a proof that he was fully aware of who he was; that he would prove an useful link between Perkin Warbeck, Richard Fitzroy, and the Duke of York; that he need be no more trusted than was deemed expedient; but that meanwhile it were good to entertain him with fair words. Richard yielded; and Frion made good use of this standing-room by which he meant to move the world. Master of the arts of flattery, cunning and wise, he so ingratiated himself with the Duke, and afterwards with his other friends, that by degrees he was admitted to their confidence; and at last succeeded in his chief wish, of becoming follower, secretary, counsellor, he called himself friend, of the English Prince.

Urged by the Earl of Desmond and Lord Barry, and sufficiently inclined in his own mind, the Duke accepted the French king’s invitation, and prepared to cross to France. On the very eve of his departure, he was surprised by a visit from John O'Water of Cork. This warm-hearted old man had conceived a paternal love for the royal youth. He came to recommend his return to Cork — his taking up a kind of regal residence there — the not deserting a nook of his kingdom which acknowledged him. He came too late: — already the Prince was on board the vessel in Youghall Harbour, which was to convey him away. “One day you will return to us, my Lord,” said O'Water, “a future day will afford us opportunity to prove our zeal. I am old; I had given up public life: but I will take to the oar again. John O'Water will once more be Mayor of Cork, and his right beloved Sovereign shall command him in his service.”

The good man departed; with blessings, thanks, and glad prognostics, Desmond and Barry also took leave of him. The wind was fair, the sea smooth: before morning they lost sight of the hospitable shores of Ireland, and turned their thoughts from its quarrels, its chieftains, its warm hearts, and kind reception, to the civilized land of France, and the more influential protection promised by its king to the Royal Adventurer.

CHAPTER XVI.

She has styled him — the fair White Rose of England.
— FORD.

Long die thy happy days before thy death;
And, after many lengthened hours of grief.
Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!
— SHAKSPEARE.

The voyage of the Duke of York was easy and auspicious. He repaired to Paris; and all the exiled Yorkists, to the number of one hundred gentlemen, instantly gathered round him, offering him their services, and forming his court. Charles assigned him magnificent apartments in the Tuileries, and appointed a guard of honour, under the command of the Lord of Concressault, who, as was the case with every one who approached him, soon became warmly attached to the princely youth. Having just concluded a peace with Britany by marrying its young duchess, the King of France found himself in so prosperous a state at home, that he began to look abroad for wars, and resolved to invade Naples, to whose crown he had a claim. Meanwhile, the utmost splendour and gaiety reigned in Paris: — balls, tournaments, and hunting parties, succeeded one to the other; now to celebrate a marriage — now to grace the entrance of some noble gentleman into the order of knighthood. Charles was an amiable prince — his Queen a beautiful and spirited lady — the Duke of Orleans an accomplished and adventurous cavalier. They all vied in acts of courtesy and kindness towards their royal visitor. There was an innocence in Richard's vivacity, an ingenuousness in his reliance on their protection, that particularly captivated the chivalrous Orleans and the fair Queen Anne. How changed the scene from the wilds of Ireland and the semi-barbarous halls of the Desmond! The courtly and soft grace of the French, different from the dignity of the Spaniard, was irresistible to the inexperienced youth. It seemed to him that his standard was set up here for ever. No change could sully the fair favour of these illustrious friends. All young as he was, to be treated as rightful King of England by this potent government, satisfied for the moment his ambition. He and his English friends welcome every where, all honoured — himself beloved — were the ascendant star in Paris. O'Maurice of Desmond! O'Barry, and good honest-hearted O'Water! — though still he acknowledged your kindness, how did your uncivilized hospitalities fade before the golden splendour of King Charles's court!

York might by the sober be blamed for yielding to the current, for setting his swelling canvas with the favouring wind — exulting. It was a boy's blindness; the unsuspiciousness of inexperience; the fault lay in the falsehood; and that was not his.

On the sixth of October Henry the Seventh landed at Calais; on the nineteenth he sate down before Boulogne, with sixteen hundred men at arms, and twenty-five thousand infantry. Charles could not much fear the tardy operations of his foe; but the name of English invasion, so associated with defeat and disaster, was portentous to the French: besides, Charles was eager to prepare for his Italian wars. Thus disposed, peace was easily brought about. One only obstacle presented itself. Henry insisted that the newly-arrived Duke of York should be delivered up to him; Charles rejected the proposition with disdain: the negociations were suspended, and the French King grew uneasy; it was no pleasant thing to have thirty or forty thousand of those English in the kingdom, who had disputed it inch by inch, at the expense of so much misery and slaughter, with his grandfather. Their King was averse to war; but the body of the army, the nobles and leaders, ardently desired it: some intrigue, some accident, might light up a train to be quenched only by seas of blood; and all this for a Prince, in whom, except that he was gallant and unfortunate, Charles took no concern.

Richard, basking in the noon-day of regal favour, of a sudden felt a cloud spread athwart his sun-shine, and a chill take place of the glowing warmth. The complaints of his followers, principally of Lady Brampton, opened his eyes; for the King and Princes, on the eve of betraying him, were in manner kinder than ever. First, Queen Anne asked this lady, if it were not the Duke's intention to repair to Flanders, to claim the support of the Lady Margaret. It seemed as if nothing was to be spoken of but Brussels, the Low Countries, Maximilian of Austria, and, above all, the virtues and sagacity of the illustrious widow of Charles the Rash. In youth we are slow to understand the covert language of duplicity. Frion was next put in requisition; he arrived in Paris after ten day's absence, with an invitation to her so-named nephew from the Duchess of Burgundy; and when, from the disinclination of the French to an act of glaring inhospitality, and of the English so to pain the confiding spirit of their Prince, he was still kept darkling, suddenly one night his friend, the Sire de Concressault, visited him. He brought many sugared words from his sovereigns; but the end was, that their ever dear friend, and most honoured guest, the Duke of York, would render them especial pleasure, if, for some short time, he would visit Brussels. The fiery spirit of youth blazed forth at a dismission, still more when Concressault added, that horses were already prepared, and every thing arranged for his immediate departure. To qualify this insult, Concressault could best bring his own warm, affectionate feelings. He loved the English Prince, and by the frankness of his explanations, soothed him, while he made the wound deeper, by shewing whence it was directed, and that Henry Tudor's was the master-hand.

This name calmed York by elevating his thoughts above the actual evil. "It is well, my Lord: I shall obey," he said; "I had forgotten myself; and your monarch's kindness was an opiate to my unripened purpose. I might have lived his happy guest; reigning over the English hearts around me, forgetful like Dan Ulysse of old in the Lotus land, of my native isle, and rightful kingdom. I thank my enemy he has not permitted this: his insults rouse me; his injuries place the sword in my hand; on him fall the harm."

The French sovereigns did all they could to salve this ill-favoured wound. The Duke of Orleans visited York at the moment of his departure; his English partizans were loaded with presents; he quitted France; and, on the day following, the treaty of peace with England was signed.

Pride, indignation, and heroic resolve sustained the Duke under this insult; but violent, angry emotion was foreign to his disposition, and only kept alive in his bosom at the expense of much suffering. How gladly he took refuge from these painful sensations in the gratitude and affection inspired by his noble aunt. Margaret had never seen him: the Earl of Lincoln, Lady Brampton, Lovel, Plantagenet, and others were vouchers for his truth; still his first unsupported appearance in Ireland, and his long absence in Spain engendered doubts, not in her mind, but in Maximilian and other nobles and counsellors around her. She replied to their arguments, but they remained unconvinced; at once therefore to justify her acknowledgment of him in their eyes, and to force them to the same credence as herself, she caused his first audience to be a solemn one, nor gave him a kinswoman's reception until he had proved his right to it.

He, who has heard some one falsely traduced and vilely calumniated, and, if not quite believing the detraction, yet impelled by it to some distaste of its object, and when that object appeared, radiant in innocence, attended by the dignity of truth and conscious worth, at once has yielded to the evidence of sense, will have some understanding of what passed in the mind of Margaret of Burgundy. None could resist the frank, blue, unclouded eye of the Prince; that voice and manner, replete with simplicity and native honour. He replied to the Duchess's questions briefly or otherwise, as appeared most pertinent, but in a way that vanquished the most sceptical person present. The warm-hearted Duchess had hardly contained herself from the moment she beheld this youthful image of her dead brother. As the tones of a remembered melody awaken from sweet and bitter association unbidden tears, so did his voice, his gestures, the very waving of his glossy curls, strike the mute chords of many a forgotten memory. As soon as she saw belief and satisfaction in the countenances of those around her, she no longer restrained herself; with tears she embraced him; with a broken voice she presented her nephew to all around. Now to heap favours on him was her dear delight: she loved not the name of the Duke of York, because, his pretensions admitted, he was something more; but he objected firmly to the empty title of king, and reiterated his determination to assume that only at Westminster. So she invented other names; the Prince of England, and the White Rose of England, were those he went by; she appointed him a guard of thirty halberdiers in addition to that formed by his English followers. Nor did she rest here; it was her ardent wish to place him on the throne of his father. The glad welcome she gave to the Yorkists, as, from far exile in distant lands, or obscure hiding in England, they repaired to her nephew's court, her discourse of succour, armies, plots quickly raised a spirit that spread to the near island; and the rumour of this new White Rose became a watch-word of hope for York, of fear for Lancaster.

The riches and magnificence of the now extinguished house of Burgundy, almost equalled that of Paris; their cavaliers were as noble and as gallant; their tournaments and feasts as gay and pompous. The Prince felt his situation much changed for the better. His aunt's warm affection was more worth than Charles's politic and courteous protection. There he was an honored visitor, here one of the family — his interests apparently bound up with theirs. His long tried friends exulted in his position; Plantagenet and Lady Brampton congratulated each other. The English exiles, Sir George Neville and Sir John Taylor, the one proud and discontented, the other extravagant and poor, blessed the day which gave them dignity and station, as chief attendants and counsellors of the noble York. One friend he missed: his childhood's companion, his gentle nurse, his beloved Monina.

She had accompanied Lady Brampton to Paris, when intelligence came of Trangmar's treachery, of the falsehood of his pretensions; and, at the same time, letters were covertly conveyed to Lady Brampton from the Dowager Queen, in which mention was made of this man as a trust-worthy agent: the Yorkists desired much to fathom this mystery, and to have some explicit elucidation from the imprisoned Elizabeth. As they canvassed the various modes by which this might be accomplished — the disguises that might be assumed — Monina preferred an earnest prayer, that she might be permitted to undertake the task; a thousand circumstances rendered this desirable — she would be entirely unsuspected, and she was fully acquainted with the circumstances of the case. Three days before Richard landed in France from Ireland, Monina crossed to England — she assumed a pilgrim's garb, and without danger or much difficulty, arrived at London from the sea coast.

The sudden apparition of Richard, first in Ireland, and afterwards in Paris, was a stunning blow to Henry. No Trangmar arrived to explain the riddle; and, in spite of his caution and his cruelty, he had been unable to avert the event he dreaded — nothing could he do now better than to scoff at his rival, and to oppose his statements with counter declarations; spreading around his spies to stop at its very outset any symptom of rebellion in England. He caused stricter watch than ever to be set on the unfortunate Elizabeth Woodville, who had been for six years the melancholy inmate of her convent prison. All necessity of caution there was soon to be at an end; her health had long declined — latterly she had wasted to a mere shadow, so that the continuance of life in her attenuated frame appeared a miracle: a feeling of suffocation prevented her from lying down; she sat propped by pillows; her fleshless hands incapable of any office, her cheeks fallen in; her eyes alone — last retreat of the spirit of life — gleamed brightly amid the human ruin. So long had she been thus, that her death, apparently so near, was hardly feared by those around. Henry almost considered her danger as a new artifice, and absolutely refused her last request, to be permitted to see her daughter and grand-children once again. Her last hour approached; and none were near save the nuns of the convent, who almost revered her as a saint.

There arrived at the monastery a pilgrim, with relics collected in Araby and Spain. She was admitted into the parlour; and one simple sister asked for some wonder-working relic that might give health to the dying. The pilgrim heard of Elizabeth's hopeless state; she begged to be admitted to her presence, that she might try the virtues of a precious balsam given her by the monks of Alcala-la-Real in Spain. Elizabeth was informed of her request: when last she had heard of her son, he was at Alcala — all the strength that had prolonged her life now roused itself; with earnestness she desired that the Spanish maiden might be admitted to her presence. It was Henry's express command that none should see her; but she was dying; his power, so soon to be at an end, might well slacken in its rigour at the very verge of its annihilation.

The pilgrim knelt beside the Queen's couch — the nuns, commanded to retreat, observed a miracle — the dying appeared again to live; the grim spectre, who had planted his banner in the chamber, retreated for a moment, as Elizabeth listened to Monina's whispered words, "Oh, for one hour more," she cried, "I have so much to say. He comes then, my son comes! Oh, rouse England with the tale — Sir William Stanley, you must visit him — bid him not draw his sword against my Edward's son. Say to the Dean of St. Pauls — I feel faint," she continued, "my voice fails me — I must leave all unsaid, save this — His sister must not doubt his truth; Henry must not shed the blood of his wife's brother."

"Madam," said Monina, "let me bear some token to my lady the Queen."

"A token! — no words can these weak fingers trace. Yet stay; in this missal there is a prayer which each day I addressed to heaven to preserve my son. Bear the missal to my Elizabeth, bid her listen to you, and believe."

With trembling hands the young girl took the small, but splendid volume. The Queen then dismissed her with a faintly spoken blessing and a prayer. Before night all was over — the cause of her son moved her no more — her sorrowing heart reposed from every strife — she died. The vase replete with so much anguish was broken — the "silver cord," that bound together a whole life of pain, loosened. Her existence had been woe; her death was the dearest blessing she could receive from Heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

She was most beautiful to see.
Like a lady of a far countree.
— COLERIDGE.

While in attendance on the King at his palace of Shene, the Lord Chamberlain Sir William Stanley, was informed that a young and foreign lady requested an audience with him. Monina was ushered in — her extraordinary beauty — her large soft eyes — the fascinating sweetness of her manner, at once charmed the worthy gentleman. She spoke in good but accentuated English, and informed Sir William that she came from the death-bed of the Queen of England.

"I know," said Stanley, "that her grace has long been ill, but—"

"God take her to his mercy," interrupted Monina, "she died last night."

"Is his majesty informed of this event?" Sir William asked.

"It is not yet noon," replied the maiden, "by that hour the messengers from the convent will arrive. I have reasons for greater speed. I bear the royal lady's last words to her daughter, the Queen Elizabeth; you, my Lord, will favour me by procuring an immediate interview with her majesty."

Stanley knew the aversion the King had to any private intercourse between Elizabeth and her mother. He informed his visitor that she must first obtain the King's permission for this audience, which he did not believe would be granted; but Monina, without hesitation, declared that she would apply for it to the King, and requested the Chamberlain to introduce her. Stanley, good-natured but timid, hesitated — she would not be denied — at last he hit on an expedient. Henry had gone out hawking in the park; if she would place herself at the gate on his return, she might prefer her prayer — he would be near to insure her being heard.

Noontide was approached. The sport was over, and the royal party on their return. Henry rode foremost with Morton, while his retinue followed at a slower pace, conversing gaily about the birds; now and then hazarding a remark on the war, so oft delayed, at last declared. They were interrupted by the arrival of Sir William Stanley, who communicated to the King the tidings of the Dowager Queen's death. Six long years had passed since the battle of Stoke, and the commencement of Elizabeth Woodville’s imprisonment. She was forgotten at Court. Many there had never seen her; few remembered her as the reigning Queen of England. Her history was almost like a romance of the olden time; yet, forgotten during life, her death clouded the hilarity of those who heard it. Among those most affected by these tidings, as was natural, was her son, the Marquess of Dorset; he hastily rode up to receive from Stanley’s own lips confirmation of the news. Feeling that of late he had almost forgotten and wholly neglected his mother, a sudden visitation of remorse was blended with the grief that choked his voice, and blinded his eyes with tears. Henry, who, was attached to him, viewed with pity the bitter regret of his gay unheeding kinsman, and bade him, ere ruder tongues proclaimed it, bear the melancholy tidings to his royal sister. Dorset, gladly escaping from the throng, rode swiftly forward. Meanwhile the order of the ride was disturbed. The nobles conversed earnestly together. After a few questions, Henry remained lost in thought: eager perhaps to know whether her secret had died with her; and viewing in her demise one master testimony the less in favour of his young competitor. Stanley awaited with some inquietude for the moment when they should encounter Monina. They passed the park gate. She was not there. Henry pursued his way, and entered the palace. Still she did not appear.

Lord Dorset had ridden on with the speed of a man who seeks to escape from himself. Death has more power in its mere sound, than the enchanting touch of a wizard’s rod. She was dead — how awful was that word! — the unfailing friend, his mother! All his remissness towards her took a monstrous form: he felt that if he had wearied Henry with prayers, he might have extorted some mitigation of her suffering; and it would have consoled her in her solitude, to have received the balmy medicine of filial tenderness, which he had neglected to pay. At that moment he would have given his marquisate to a beggar, to have purchased the memory of one action done to sooth her woful end. The pomp of a funeral — masses for her soul — these were small compensations, which her arch enemy, even Henry himself, could and probably would concede. The voice of affection — the duteous affection of a child — he only could have afforded; and he had withheld it.

Monina stood at the park-gate, attended by her Spanish domestic, whose singular costume alone must attract regard. “What do you here, maiden?”

cried Dorset; “the King and his court will speedily pass this way: this is no fitting place for you.”

“I am here,” she replied, “to see and speak to your king. I come to prefer a request in the name of one, whom God take to his place; she can disturb him no more.”

“You are from Bermondsey, from—”the words choked Dorset; Monina continued, “I come from the death-bed of the Lady Elizabeth of England.”

“What demand would you make on his Majesty?” said the Marquess; “do you seek a guerdon for your pains? Speak then to me — I am her son.”

He was about to draw forth his purse, but her look, which grew animated, prevented him, as she said, “I come on a holy errand. The dying lady commanded me to convey her last words to her royal daughter; I seek permission from your King to fulfil her wish.”

Dorset was thoughtless and eager. He saw no objection that Henry could have that his sister should have the last message from her now dead parent; so without hesitation he told the maiden that by Henry’s permission he was now about to communicate the sad intelligence to the Queen, and that she might accompany him.

It is thus, by small, invisible threads, that Fate weaves the intricate web of our lives. All hung by the slenderest tissue; had Monina seen Henry, most assuredly he would have prevented the interview she sought, and have used his utmost craft to discover whether the fatal secret made a part of the Queen’s message. Now his sagacity, his caution, his severity were of no avail. Monina stood in the presence of his wife.

Six years had considerably altered Elizabeth; habitual fear had engendered a moral timidity, which was not natural to her, for she was the daughter of a proud race: her sweetness, her affectionate disposition still remained; but her soul was sad, and she looked pale and inanimate. The news of her mother’s death moved her to tears. One expression of bitter regret burst from her lips; it was mingled with blame of her consort; and she checked herself, while she wept still more abundantly. Dorset felt uneasy at the sight of female tears; he longed to escape. Monina’s request for a private interview came to liberate him; he presented her to his sister, and hurried away.

Elizabeth eagerly asked many questions concerning her mother’s dying moments. The Spanish maiden, wondering at her own success, fearful of interruption, presented the missal, and then hastened to declare the motive for which it was sent: she opened the jewelled clasps, and showed the Queen the prayer written in her mother's hand on a blank leaf of the brilliantly illuminated pages: rapidly the enthusiastic girl detailed the escape, the exile of the Duke of York, while Elizabeth, not daring to believe her own senses, astounded, terrified, looked with large open eyes on the animated countenance of her lovely visitant. Before Monina paused, or gave time for an answer, they were interrupted by the entrance of Sir William Stanley. He started when he saw Monina, nor did the confused look of his Queen, as she hastily closed the fatal volume, tend to re-assure him. He came to announce a visit from Henry to Elizabeth. Frightened at what he saw, he hardly permitted a slight interchange of greeting, but hurried Monina away through a door hid by the tapestry, down a narrow staircase into a garden, and then by a small gate that opened on a court. In this court was placed the entrance to the apartments of the pages and esquires of the King. Stanley unlocked the gate cautiously, hesitating before he permitted his fair companion to pass on, in the fear that some mischievous boy, or prying servitor, might be there to wonder at, and question wherefore he led the maiden from the Queen's garden through a door, sacred, and never opened, into the resort of wild and dissolute youth. As he unclosed the wicket, at its very entrance, standing so that in spite of every caution a full view of Monina was at once afforded, stood a young man, whose countenance bespoke him to be ever on the alert for gamesome tricks, or worse mischief. His first aspect was that of recklessness; his second spoke of baser habits; and athwart both broke gleams, now of better feelings, now of desperate passion. He had heard the rusty bolts move, and perceived the slow opening of the door: knowing how sacred was the respect enforced towards this ingress to the Queen's retirement, he stood close, to discover and shame any intruder. "In good season, my Lord Chambelain!" he at first exclaimed, vexed to find no cause for taunt, till perceiving his fair companion, the expression of his countenance changed to irony, as he cried—"Whither so fast and fearfully, my good Lord? Does her Grace deal in contraband: and art thou the huckster?"

"As ill luck will have it, wild Robin clifford!" cried Stanley, angrily.

"Nay, we are brothers in wildness now, fair Sir," retorted the other, "and I claim my part here."

Clifford approached Monina, but Stanley interposed. “Waste your ribaldry on me, good Knight, but spare this child: let us pass in all speed, I pray you.”

Monina drew back, but Clifford still followed. “Child! In good hour she is young; and but that burning suns have made her cheek tawny, I might call her fair. She is well worth your pains, and I praise them. Sweet mistress, I am beholden to my Lord Chamberlain for making us friends.”

He was running on thus, but Monina, collecting her spirits, raised her large eyes on him: his name had caught her ear; she remembered partly having seen him on the night of their flight from Tournay; and frequent mention had subsequently been made of him by the cousins. She began—”Sir Robert Clifford, I know you will not harm me.”

“Thanks for that knowledge, pretty one,” cried the youth; “old grey beards only, with frozen hearts, (pardon me, Sir William!) could injure thee; thou art sure of good from tall fellows (though in troth, tall I am not) like me.”

Sir William writhed with impatience; again and again he would have interrupted the intruder. Monina replied—”We have met before — when you served him I now serve. I speak in his name: for the sake of Perkin Warbeck detain me no longer. Noble Sir, I attend you: Sir Clifford yields respect to the words I have spoken.”

“They are strange indeed, maiden,” he replied, “and I must hear more of this. We have met before, I now believe; and we must meet again. Meanwhile, I will keep off bird-chatchers till you and his reverence get clear of these limed twigs. Ah! I see a gallant; I will go draw William d’Aubigny aside while you pass forth.”

And now again Sir William proceeded on his expedition, and conducted his gentle companion beyond the precincts of the palace. As they parted one from the other, Monina, in a brief energetic manner, delivered the message of the departed Queen to the good Chamberlain: he was more disconcerted than surprised, and the reflection, that Clifford was a party to the secret, added to his consternation. He felt how far he was compromised by the introduction of Monina to the young Queen; fear for a while palsied his better feelings; he replied only by entreating her not to remain longer in London, but to embark in all haste for France: he then quitted her, yet again came back to ask where she sojourned in town, and turned away a second time, as if to escape from his better self, and from the interest he felt in King Edward's son, which impelled him to ask a thousand questions.

He returned to the court-yard of the Palace, and found Clifford pacing its length in deep thought. Monina's words had awakened a thousand ideas in his unquiet bosom. Since the event to which she referred, when he delivered Richard from Frion's hands, he had run a headlong, ruinous course. No character can be wholly evil; and Clifford's was not destitute of good, though overgrown and choked up by weedy vices, so that his better nature too often served but as a spur and incentive to folly and crime. He was generous; but that led to rapacity; since, unable to deny himself or others, if he despoiled himself one day, on the next he engaged in the most desperate enterprises to refil the void. He was bold — that made him fearless in doing wrong; and to drown the gentle spirit of humanity, which too often for his own peace sprung up in his heart, he hardened himself in selfishness; then, as his sensitive, undisciplined nature received new impressions, he was cowardly, cruel, and remorseless. He had never forgotten the princely boy he had saved: he turned to that recollection as to one of the few Oases of virtue in the far extended desart of ill, over which, in hours of satiety or despondency, his sickening memory wandered. Indeed, he was yet too young to be decidedly vicious, for at one-and-twenty a thousand mere human impulses, unrepressed by worldly wisdom, occasion sallies of kindly sympathy. The worst was, that Clifford was a ruined man: his fortunes were nought, his reputation shaken on its base: he veiled, by an appearance of hilarity and recklessness, the real despair that gnawed at his heart, when he considered all that he might have been — the worse than nothing that he was. Hitherto he had, to a great degree, blinded the world, and he longed for some adventure, some commotion, either public or private, that should refil his emptied money-bags, and paint him fair in men's eyes: all these considerations mingled incongruously to make him wish to know more of the outcast Duke. He awaited the return of Stanley — he learned the name of the Spanish girl: as they spoke, both became aware that the other possessed a secret each dreaded to avow. Clifford first dashed through the flimsy barrier of useless discretion, and related his adventure at Lisle; meantime Sir William broke forth in lamentation, that young Richard should have been induced to quit the security of private life, to enter on an unequal and bloody contest, which could only end in destruction to himself and his partizans, while England would again be made the tomb of the Irish (the landing of Richard at Cork was all that was then known), whom he might allure from their woods and bogs to ravage the more gifted sister isle. A new light was let in on Clifford at these words. Was the game already playing — the box shaken — the die about to fall? This required his attention, and determined his half-formed purpose of visiting, that same night, the daughter of de Faro.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

His father was a right good lord.
 His mother a lady of high degree;
But they, alas! were dead him frae.
 And he loved keeping companie. To spend the day with merry cheer.
 To drink and revel every night;
To card and dice from eve to morn.
 It was, I ween, his heart's delight.
 — THE HEIR OF LYNNE.

It had been Monina's design to return to the protection of Lady Brampton, immediately on the fulfilment of her task in England. The appearance of Clifford suggested other ideas. It was the duty of every friend of York to declare his existence, and claim the allegiance of his subjects. It might seem a hopeless enterprise for her, a young foreign girl to do this in the heart of the usurper's power; and yet she fancied that she might attempt it with success. The most distant prospect of serving her beloved friend was hailed by her with romantic ardour; while the knowledge possessed by Stanley and Clifford, promised to render her undertaking less nugatory in its effects. Her purpose was quickly formed. She resolved to postpone her departure, and to busy herself in replanting, in Tudor's own city of London, the uprooted rose-bush, parent of the spotless flower. None but a woman's fond enthusiastic heart can tell the glow of joy, the thrilling gladness, that diffused itself through her frame, as this plan spread itself, clear as a map, beauteous as a champagne country viewed from some overtopping mountain peak, to her keen mind's eye. She rode to London occupied by these thoughts, and on her arrival, announced to the merchant friend, at whose house she resided, her intention of remaining in England: the vessel that was on the morrow to have conveyed her away would bear instead a letter to Lady Brampton, explanatory of her hopes and intentions; that very night in the seclusion of her chamber, she robbed some hours from sleep to write it; her enthusiasm animated her expressions; her cheek glowed as she wrote, for she spoke of services she might render him to who was the idol of her thoughts; though with his idea she consciously mingled no feeling save that of devoted friendship and an intense desire to benefit. The weariness of spirit that oppressed her in his absence, she did not attribute to him.

Thus intently occupied, she was unaware of a parley in the room beneath growing into a loud contention, till steps upon the stairs recalled her wandering thoughts; she looked up from her task; but her gaze of inquiry was changed to an expression of heartfelt pleasure, when Sir Robert Clifford entered the apartment. Here then her enterprise commenced. There was something that did not quite please her in the manners of her visitant, but this was secondary to the great good she might achieve through him. Her eyes danced in their own joy, as she cried, "Welcome, gallant gentleman! you are here to my wish: you come to learn how best you may prove your allegiance to your rightful sovereign, your zeal in his cause."

These words grated somewhat on the ear of a man who had hitherto worn the Red Rose in his cap, and whose ancestors had died for Lancaster. He did not, therefore, reply in the spirit of her wish when he said, "We will not quarrel, pretty one, about names; sooth is it, that I came to learn tidings of my princely gossip, and I am right glad that fortune makes thee the tale-bearer. Prolong as thou wilt, I shall never cry hold, while my eyes serve to make true harmony to the sound of your sweet voice."

Much more he said in the same strain of gallantry, as he placed himself beside the maiden, with the air of one whose soft speeches ever found ready hearing. Monina drew back, replying, gently, "I am the partizan, the vowed conspirator for a cause, whose adherents walk as over the thread-broad ridge spanning an unfathomable gulph, which I have heard spoken of by the Moors in my own Granada; I beseech you, as you are a gentleman, reserve your fair speeches for the fortunate ladies of your native land. I will be a beacon-light to guide you, a clue for your use through a maze, a landmark to point your way; meanwhile, forget me as I am; let me be a voice only."

"As soon forget sunshine or moonshine, or the chance of play when the dice-box rattles," thought Clifford, as she clasped her little fingers in the fervour of her wish, and raised on him her soft, full eyes: but though he gazed with unrepressed admiration, he said nothing as she told the story of Duke Richard's Spanish adventures, and last of his attempt in Ireland and the embassy sent to him by King Charles. How eloquently and well she told his tale! speaking of him with unfeigned admiration, nothing disguising her zealous devotion. “Sir Clifford,” she continued, “you are his friend. His cause will sanctify your sword; it will call you from the paltry arts of peace to the nobler deeds of chivalry; it will give you grace in the eyes of her you love, defending and asserting your king.”

She paused breathless from her own agitation; she looked up into his thoughtful face and placed her hand on his; the soft touch awoke him from a reverie in which he had lost himself.

“Maiden,” he replied, “you plead your cause even too well; you have cast a spell upon me; so that at this moment I would readily swear to perform your bidding, but that, when I do not see your witch’s eyes, nor hear your magic voice, another wind may blow me right to the other side. Do not call this courtly gallantry, would by Saint Cupid that it were! for I am not pleased to behold my sage self fined down into a woman’s tool: nor is it love; — Thor’s hammer could not knock a splinter from my hard heart, nor the Spanish sun thaw its sevenfold coat of ice. I never have loved; I never shall: but there is some strange sorcery about you. When I next see you, I will draw a circle round, knock my head three times on the eastern floor, and call out ‘aroint!’ This twinkling light too, and darkling hour — I must away: — sunshine shall, when next we meet, protect me from your incantations. Will you trust yourself? At tomorrow’s noon a servitor of mine shall await you at the gate of St. Paul’s, dare you commit yourself to one in the Devil’s pay?”

All this incoherent talk was spoken at intervals; he rose, sat down, stood over her as she patiently let him run his tether’s length: his last words were said in an insinuating, and, as well as he could command, a soft voice, as he pressed her hand in his. She crossed herself, as she replied, “Our Lady and my cause shall protect me, while I adventure life fearlessly for its sake! Adieu till then, Sir Knight: the saints guard you, and give you better thoughts.”

The cavalier proceeded homewards, considering deeply the part he was to act. He thought of what he might gain or lose by siding with the Duke; and he was angry to find that the image of Monina presented itself even more vividly, than his ambitious dreams. “God assoil me,” thought he. “I will repeat a paternoster backwards, and so unsay her sorceries. She has persuaded me, even as my own soul did before, that the best mode to mend my broken fortunes, and better still to regild my faded escutcheon, is to join

Duke Richard. Yet, after all, this may be mere magic; for once I will act a wise man's part, and seek old gray-beard, my Lord Fitzwater."

Lord Fitzwater endured impatiently the harsh countenance Henry bore to him, ever since he had permitted his young rival to escape. Some question of right and law which implicated a large portion of his possessions, had, as he believed, been unjustly decided against him through the interposition of the king, who, on every occasion, sought to mortify and injure the old man. He lived as the disgraced and impoverished servants of a court are wont to live, neglected and forgotten. He had no family. He loved Robert Clifford better than any other in the world; and he, when suffering from disappointment or loss, when his own pain reminded him of that of others, sought his ancient friend — too seldom to please him with a show of reverence, often enough to keep alive his affection.

If it were good for him to aid in the replanting of the White Rose, so also were it well that Lord Fitzwater joined the same party. He talked even to himself of asking his experienced friend's advice; he really meant to endeavour to seduce him into a companionship in the projected rebellion against Henry Tudor. In this spirit he paid his visit; nearly three months had elapsed since his preceding one. The noble received him coldly; so at once to break through the ceremony that fettered their discourse, he cried, "I hear from soft Sir William Stanley, that his Majesty has again said that he will find a way to thank you for a service you rendered him some six years ago."

"I have long had knowledge of his Grace's good memory on that point," answered his Lordship, angrily; "and yours, methinks, might remind you of the part you played. By St. Thomas, Robin, I believe you saw further in the game than I. But what makes the King harp on this out-worn tale?"

"Few know — we may guess. Have you not heard tell of a new king of kerns and galolw-glasses? a phantom duke, whose duchy lies without the English pale in Ireland? a ghost whose very name makes the King's knees knock together as he sits on the throne? This ruffler, who calls himself son of Edward the Fourth, the prince Richard of York, escaped from the Tower, bears a strange resemblance to the hero of Lisle, Perkin Warbeck."

"Would, by St. George, he were the same!" exclaimed the noble; "my dagger should sever the entwined roses, our armed heels tread to dust the cankered red blossom."

“You speak treason, my lord,” said Clifford; “but you speak to a friend. Let us talk more calmly. I, the playmate of the imprisoned Prince, know that he, Perkin Warbeck, and the Irish hero are the same — this I can prove: so much for the justice of our cause; as to the expediency, — we, my good lord, are styled Lancastrians, but our meed therefore is small. Tudor is a niggard king; Plantagenet, a young and generous adventurer. What shall we say? Shall Fitzwater and Clifford place the sacred diadem on this boy’s head, and become chiefs in the land where they now pine obscurely?”

Lord Fitzwater fastened his keen eyes on his companion, while his hand involuntarily grasped his dagger’s hilt. “I am not an old man,” he cried; “fifty-seven winters have shed no snows upon my head. I remember when, at Tewkesbury, I smote an iron-capped yeoman who raised his battle-axe against our young Edward, and clove the villain to the throat. I can wield the same weapon — do the same deed now; and I am thrown like a rusty sword among old armour — refused permission to lead my followers to Calais. War in France! — it will never be: the word is grown obsolete in England. Ambassadors thrive instead of valiant captains; crafty penmanship in lieu of straitforward blows. Art sure, Robin, that this youth is King Edward’s son?”

This was the first step Clifford took; and the eagerness of Fitzwater quickly impelled him to spread wider the narrow circle of conspirators. The intelligence meanwhile, that the King of France had received in Paris with meet honour a Yorkist pretender to the crown, burst at once over England, spreading wonder and alarm. Some few despised the pretensions of the youth; the greater number gave to them full and zealous credence. Many, dreading Henry’s sagacity and harshness, recoiled from every thought rebellious to him; others hailed with joy the appearance of a rival who would shake his throne, and hold forth hope of disturbance and change. As yet this was talk merely; nay, there was more thought, than spoken. Men expected that some other would make the first move, which would put in play the menacing forces mustered on either side. Monina saw with joy the work well begun. She remembered the Queen’s injunction to seek the Dean of St. Paul’s: in acquiring him, many reverent and powerful partizans were secured. Her presence added to the interest which the mere name of Richard of York excited. Many who disbelieved his tale, were eager to behold his lovely advocate; they listened to her syren eloquence, and ranged themselves on her side. Clifford watched jealously the influence she acquired. When he first saw her, she had been an untaught girl in comparison with the graceful, self-possessed being who now moved among them. One feeling in her heart separated her indeed from the crowd — but this was veiled, even to herself; and she appeared courteous, benign to all. Clifford often flattered himself that when she spoke to him her expressions were more significant, her voice sweeter. He did not love — no, no — his heart could not entertain the effeminate devotion; but if she loved him, could saints in heaven reap higher glory? Prompted by vanity, and by an unavowed impulse, he watched, hung over her, fed upon her words, and felt that in pleasing her he was for the present repaid for the zeal he manifested for the Duke her friend. Strange he never suspected that she was animated towards the Prince by a deeper feeling. They had lived like near relations from their childhood; that were sufficient to raise the flame that shed so bright a light over her soul: that he was a prince, and she the daughter of a Spanish mariner, forbade their union; and he paid the just tribute to innocent youth, in not judging of its upright purity by the distorted reflection his depraved heart presented, whenever he dared turn his eyes inward.

Foundation was thus laid in England for a momentous combination. Intelligence from the continent was gathered with keen interest. Early in December the army of Henry recrossed the Channel: they brought word of the favour and esteem Richard enjoyed at the French court, of the zeal of the exiled Yorkists, of their satisfied assurance of his truth. Next was spread abroad the news of his reception by the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, and the brilliant figure he made at Brussels. What step would be taken next to advance his cause?

This was a fearful question for the actual King of England. He redoubled his artful policy, while he wore a mask of mere indifference. The Yorkists, not yet considerable enough to act openly, or even covertly to combine for any great attempt, felt fresh bonds thrown over, new and vexatious tyrannies in exercise against them. This served to unite and animate their chiefs; they each and all resolved that, when fit opportunity armed their Prince, their swords should at the same moment leap from the scabbards, darkly to be dyed ere resheathed, or struck useless from their lifeless hands. The days of St. Alban’s and Tewkesbury passed in all their grim conclusions before their eyes, but the event was worth the risk: defeated, they lost nothing; victorious, they exchanged a narrow-hearted, suspicious, exacting tyrant for a chivalrous and munificent sovereign; Henry Tudor, the abhorred Lancastrian, for the grandson of York, the lineal heir of Edward the Third — the true representative of the kings of the glorious and long line of the Plantagenets.

CHAPTER II.

Like one lost in a thorny wood.
That rents the thorns, and is rent with the thorns.
Seeking a way, and straying from the way;
Not knowing how to find the open air.
But toiling desperately to find it out.
— SHAKSPEARE.

In the days of our earlier history, our commerce led us to have more intercourse with Flanders than with France. That which journeyed slowly and doubtfully from Paris came in all the heat of a first impression from the Low Countries. A train had been laid before, which now took light and blazed through the kingdom. The Duchess of Burgundy's reception of the Duke of York, the honours rendered him at her court, the glad gathering together of the fugitive English, gave pledge of his truth, and promise of glorious results. Sedition began to spring up in England on every side; even as, after a mild rain in the birth of the year, a black, ploughed field is suddenly verdant with the young blades of wheat. All who had, since the battles of Bosworth and of Stoke, lived in seclusion or fear; all who from whatever reason had taken sanctuary; men of ruined fortunes, who desired to escape bondage; came singly or in small companies to the coast, embarked for the continent, and hastened to the court of the Dowager of Burgundy. All discontented men, who felt themselves looked coldly on by Tudor, to whom they had yielded the throne of their native land; many, whom it grieved and vexed to see the world stagnate in changeless peace, desirous of novelty and glad of any pretence that called them into activity, dashed headlong into revolt; nor were there few, chiefly indeed among the nobility, who had lamented the fall of the House of York, and hailed gladly this promise of its resuscitation. The common adventurers and soldiers of fortune acted on their single separate resolves; the noble adherents of the White Rose drew together, that there might be plan and strength in their schemes. They were cautious, for their enemy was crafty and powerful; they were resolute, for they hated him.

Out, far in the low flats bordering the river Lea, there stood, in a marshy hollow, a straggling village, now effaced from the landscape. At its extremity was a solid, but gloomy, square, brick house, surrounded by a moat, which the low watery soil easily filled even to overflow; and the superfluity was received in a deep stagnant pool at the back of the mansion. The damp atmosphere had darkened the structure, and thrown a mantle of green moss and speckled lichen over the bricks. Its fantastically carved and heavy portal yawned like a black cavern's mouth, and added to the singularly desolate appearance of the mansion. The village was but half inhabited, and looked as struck by poverty and discomfort. The house belonged to the Clifford family. It had been built, it was said, in Henry the Fifth's time, when Sir Roger Clifford, a stern old man, following his sovereign to the wars, shut up here his beautiful young wife, so to insure her fidelity during his absence. Among her peers and gentle companions, the Lady Clifford had doubtless been true to the bond that linked her to her lord; but, alone in this solitary mansion, surrounded by ill nutured peasants, pining for her father's pleasant halls and her girlish enjoyments, no wonder that she found her state intolerable. Age and jealousy are ill mates for youth and sprightliness, and suspicion easily begets that which it abhors even to imagine. One who had loved her in her virgin days, introduced himself into her suite; the brief months of stolen happiness passed by, and the green stagnant pool was, they said, the cold sepulchre of the betrayed lovers. Since then, during the wars of York and Lancaster, this house had been the resort of Clifford's followers: and, when the White Rose became supreme, that alone of the family possessions had not been forfeited to the crown: it was the last relic of Sir Robert's fortunes. His few tenantry, hard pressed for rent to satisfy his necessities, had deserted their abodes; the green acres had passed into other hands; a band of poor cotters alone remained, and this old house haunted by the ghosts of those who slept beneath the waveless pool, dilapidated, disfurnished. Yet here the wild knight had held lawless carousals; hither he sometimes fled to hide after some ruinous loss, or when he was pursued by those who sought to avenge insults committed during drunken brawls.

Now it would seem some orgie was mediated: liveried servants, one or two only bearing Clifford's coat, the rest wearing different badges, as belonging to different masters, had arrived during the previous day. Some of the ruined huts were pulled down to supply firewood, and the old chimnies sent out volumes of smoke; various carts, laden, some with eatables, fat bucks, young calves, pheasants, hares, and partridges, piles of bread, seven hooped casks of wine, were unladen in the mildew-stained hall. Other carts followed the first, bearing bedding, apparel, furniture, and, it was whispered by the idling villagers, arms. Several apartments were strewed thick with rushes, and the blazing fires, in spite of the tattered plaster and stained ceilings, imparted cheerfulness to the rooms. There was need of internal warmth; a thick snow-storm fell, sheeting the low fields, which, uninterspersed by trees, now looked doubly wild and drear. The waters of the moat and pool were frozen; a sharp north-wind whistled round the house. For the first time for many years its poor dependents were cheered during the severe season by the crumbs, or rather large portions of superfluous food, from the mansion of their landlord.

The first guest that arrived came in a close litter, attended by a Moorish servant, and Clifford himself on horseback. Monina had forgotten her Flemish home: bright Andalusia, its orange groves, myrtle and geranium hedges, the evergreen forests which embowered Alcala, and the fertile laughing Vega of Granada, formed her image of such portions of fair earth, as, unincumbered by houses, afforded on its green and various surface sustenance to its inhabitants. She shivered before the northern blast, and gazed appalled on the white plain, where the drifting snow shifted in whole showers, as the wind passed over it. The looks of the people, sallow, ill-clothed, and stupid, made her turn from contemplating them, as she yet answered the contemptuous and plaintive remarks of her Spanish attendant in a cheerful, deprecating voice.

For two successive days other guests continued to arrive. They were chiefly men of note, yet came atended by few domestics. There was Lord Fitzwater, dissatisfied at the part of rebel he was forced he thought to play; and on that account he was louder than any against King Henry. Sir Simon Mountford was a Yorkist of the days of Edward the Fourth, he personally hated Richmond, and looked on Richard’s as a sacred cause. Sir Thomas Thwaites had been a friend of the Earl of Rivers, and gladly seized this occasion to avenge his death, attributable to the dastardly policy of Henry. William Daubeny was attached to the Earl of Warwick, and entered warmly into projects whose success crowned his freedom. Sir Robert Ratcliffe, cousin of Lord Fitzwater, had lived in poor disguise since the battle of Stoke, and gladly threw off his peasant's attire to act the soldier again in a new war of the Roses. Sir Richard Lessey had been Chaplain to the household of Edward the Fourth. Sir William Worseley, Dean of St. Paul's, was a rare instance of gratitude outliving the period of receiving benefits; he had been a creature, and was a sincere mourner, of the late Queen. Many others, clergy and laity, entered the plot; a thousand different motives impelled them to one line of conduct, and brought them to Clifford's moated-house, to conspire the overthrow of Tudor, and the exaltation of the Duke of York to the throne. One only person invited to this assembly failed, Sir William Stanley; each voice was loud against his tergiversation, and Clifford's whispered sarcasm cut deeper than all.

The debates and consultations lasted three days. After infinite confusion and uncertainty, the deliberations brought forth conclusions that were resolved upon unanimously. First, the house they then occupied, and the village, was to be a repository for arms, a rendezvous for the recruits of the cause. The conspirators levied a tax on themselves, and collected some thousand pounds to be remitted to the Prince. They regulated a system, whose object was to re-awaken party-spirit in England, and to quicken into speedy growth the seeds of discontent and sedition, which Henry's avarice and extortion had sown throughout the land. Those who possessed estates and followers were to organize troops. And last, they deputed two of their number to go over to the Duchess of Burgundy, and to carry their offers of service to her royal nephew. The two selected for this purpose were, first Sir Robert Clifford, who had known the Duke formerly, and who it was supposed would be peculiarly welcome to him; and secondly, Master William Barley, a man advanced in years; he had combated in nearly all the twelve pitched and sanguinary battles that were fought between York and Lancaster. He had been a boy-servitor to the old Duke of York; a yeoman of Edward's guard; an halberdier in Richard the Third's time. He had been left for dead on the field of Bosworth, but came to life again to appear at the battle of Stoke. He had risen in the world, and was a man of substance and reputation: he was not noble; but he was rich, zealous, and honest. The meeting lasted three days, and then gradually dispersed. All had gone well. An assembly, whose individuals were noble, wealthy, or influential, united to acknowledge Richard as their liege. Foreign potentates declared for him;

and hope was high in every bosom at all these forerunners of success. Monina's enthusiastic heart beat with ecstacy. Young — the innocent child of unsophisticated impulse, her gladness showed itself in wild spirits and unconstrained expressions of exultation. She and Clifford returned to London together, for he contrived tacitly and unsuspected by her, to instal himself as her habitual escort. Happy in expectation of her beloved friend's success, she talked without reserve; and the genius, which was her soul's essence, gave power and fascination to every thing she said. She spoke of Spain, of Richard's adventures there, of her father and his voyages. The name of Columbus was mentioned; and the New World — source of wondrous conjecture. They spoke of the desolate waste of waters that hems in the stable earth — of the golden isles beyond: to all these subjects Monina brought vivid imagery, and bright painting, creations of her own quick fancy. Clifford had never before held such discourse. In hours of sickness or distaste, at moments of wild exhilaration, when careering on a high-mettled horse beneath the stars of night, fanned by a strong but balmy wind, he had conceived ideas allied to the lofty aspirations of our nature; but he cast them off as dreams, unworthy of a wise man's attention. The melodious voice of Monina, attuned by the divine impulses of her spirit, as the harp of the winds by celestial breezes, raised a commotion in his mind, such as a prophetess of Delphi felt, when the oracular vapour rose up to fill her with sacred fury. A word, a single word, was a potent northern blast to dash aside the mist, and to re-apparel the world in its, to him, naked, barren truth: So fervently, and so sweetly did she speak of Richard, that Clifford's burning heart was in a moment alight with jealousy; and the love he despised, and thought he mastered, became his tyrant, when it allied itself to his evil passions. He looked angry, he spoke sharply — Monina was astonished; but his libellous insinuations fell innocuous on her pure mind: she only felt that she feared him, half disliked him, and, trembling and laughing as she spoke, said, "Well, well; I will not care for your angry mood. You are going soon: ere you return, our Prince will, by his own bright example, have taught you better things. Learn from him diligently, Sir Knight, for he is all courtesy and nobleness."

Clifford laughed bitterly, and a base resolve of lowering the high-hearted York to his own degrading level arose in his breast: it was all chaos there as yet; but the element, which so lately yielded to a regular master-wind of ambition, was tossed in wild and hideous waves by — we will not call the passion love — by jealousy, envy, and growing hate. Short interval was allowed for the gathering of the storm; he was soon called upon to fulfil his commission, and to accompany Master William Barley on their important embassy to Brussels.

The scene here presented, operated a considerable change on these personages; arriving from England, where the name of the White Rose was whispered, and every act in his favour was hid in the darkness of skulking conspiracy, to his court at Brussels, where noble followers clustered round him, and the Duchess, with a woman's tact and a woman's zeal, studied how best to give importance and splendour to his person and pretensions. The spirit of the Yorkist party, in spite of her natural mildness, still glowed in the bosom of this daughter of Henry the Sixth's unhappy rival, — the child of disaster, and bride of frantic turbulence. Opposed to the remorseless Louis the Eleventh, struggling with the contentious insolence of the free towns of Flanders, war appeared to her the natural destiny of man, and she yielded to its necessity, while her gentle heart sorrowed over the misery which it occasioned.

She first received Clifford and Barley; and with the winning grace of a sovereign, solicited for her nephew their affection and support: then she presented them to him — this was the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy, whom Clifford saved, the gentle, noble-looking being, whose simplicity awed him; whose bright smile said, "I reign over every heart." The Knight shrunk into himself: how had he dyed his soul in a worldliness which painted his countenance in far other colours. — He was not deficient in grace: his dark-grey eyes, veiled by long lashes, were in themselves exceedingly handsome: the variableness of his face, traced with many unseasonable lines, yet gave him the power of assuming a pleasing expression; and his person, though diminutive, was eminently elegant, while his self-possession and easy address, covered a multitude of faults. Now, his first resolve was to insinuate himself into Richard's affections; to become a favourite; and consequently to lead him blindly on the path he desired he should tread.

The Prince's spirits were high; his soul exulted in the attachment of others, in the gratitude that animated him. Until Clifford's arrival (Edmund was for the time in England), Sir George Neville, among his new friends, held the first place. He was proud and reserved; but his aristocracy was so blended with honour, his reserve with perfect attention and deference to the feelings of others, that it was impossible not to esteem him, and find pleasure in his society. Clifford and Neville made harsh discord together. Richard, inexperienced in the world, sought to harmonize that which never could accord: Neville drew back; and Clifford's good humour, and apparent forbearance, made him appear to advantage.

At this period ambassadors from Henry arrived at Brussels: they had been expected; and as a measure of precaution, Richard left that place before their arrival, and took up his temporary abode at Audenarde, a town which made part of the dowry of the Duchess Margaret. All the English, save Lady Brampton, attended him to his retreat. The ambassadors, in their audience with the Archduke, demanded the expulsion of Richard from the Low Countries, taunting the Duchess with her support of the notorious impostor, Lambert Simnel, and speaking of the Duke of York as a fresh puppet of her own making. They received the concise reply — that the gentleman she recognized as her nephew, inhabited the territory of her dowry, of which she was sovereign, and over which the Archduke had no jurisdiction: however, that no disturbance might occur in their commercial relations, which would have roused all Flanders to rebellion, Maximilian was obliged to temporize, and to promise to afford no aid to the illustrious exile.

Their audience accomplished, the ambassadors had only to return. They remained but one night at Brussels: on this night, Sir Edward Poynings and Doctor Wattam, who fulfilled this mission, were seated over a cup of spiced wine, in discourse concerning these strange events, the Lady Margaret's majestic demeanour, and the strangeness of her supporting this young man, if indeed he were an impostor; when a cavalier, whose soiled dress and heated appearance bespoke fatigue and haste, entered the room. It was Sir Robert Clifford: they received him as liege subjects may receive a traitor, with darkened brows and serious looks. Clifford addressed them in his usual careless style:—"Saint Thomas shield me, my masters; can you not afford one benizon to your gossip! Good Sir Edward, we have ruffled together, when we wore both white and red in our caps; and does the loss of a blood-stained rag degrade me from your friendship?"

The bitter accusations of the Knight, and the Doctor's sarcasms, which were urged in reply, awoke a haughty smile. "Oh, yes!" he cried, "ye are true men, faithful liege subjects! I, an inheritance of the block, already marked for quartering, because I am for the weak right, you for the strong might. Right, I say — start not — the Mother of God be my witness! Duke Richard is Duke Richard — is lord of us all — true son of the true king, Ned of the White Rose, whom you swore to protect, cherish, and exalt; you, yes, even you, Sir Knight. Where is now your oath? cast from heaven, to pave the hell where you will reap the meed of your lying treachery!"

Clifford, always insolent, was doubly so now that he felt accused of crimes of which he did not deem himself guilty; but which would (so an obscure presentiment told him) hereafter stain his soul. Doctor Wattam interposed before Poyning's rising indignation: "Wherefore come you here, Sir Robert?" he asked. "Though we are envoys of the king you have betrayed, we may claim respect: Sir Edward, as a gentleman and a cavalier — I as an humble servitor of the Lord Jesus, in whose name I command you not to provoke to a bloody deed the messengers of peace."

"Cease to taunt me with a traitor's name," replied Sir Robert, "and I will chafe no further the kindling blood of my sometime friend. Let us rather leave all idle recrimination. I came hither to learn how wagged the world in London town, and, as a piece of secret intelligence, to assure you that you wrongfully brand this stripling for an impostor. Be he sovereign of our land or not — be it right or wrong to side with York against Lancaster — York he is, the son of Edward and Elizabeth; so never fail me my good sword or my ready wits!"

The best of us are inclined to curiosity. A little fearful of each other, the Ambassadors exchanged looks, to know whether either would accuse the other of treachery if they heard further. "Good Sir," said the Doctor, gravely, "methinks we do our liege service in listening to this gentleman. We can the better report to his Majesty on what grounds the diabolic machination is founded."

So, over another goblet, Clifford sat telling them how Richard had long lived as Perkin Warbeck, in the neighbourhood of Tournay, under the guardianship of Madeline de Faro; and he recounted the history of his escape from the hands of Frion. Doctor Wattam carefully conned these names; and then, in reply, he set forth how unworthy it was of a Clifford to desert from Lancaster; how unlikely, even if it were true, which after all his tale hardly proved, it was, that the outcast boy could compete with success with the sage possessor of England's throne. Poynings asked him how it pleased him to find himself at the same board with a Neville and a Taylor, and hinted that, an exile from his country and a traitor to his sovereign, this was hardly the way to replenish his purse, or to gain anew the broad lands he had lost. The service he might do Henry by a return to his duty, gratitude and reward, were then urged by the priest, while Clifford listened in dogged silence. His brow became flushed; his lips worked with internal commotion. He felt, he knew, that he hated the very man whose cause he espoused; but he was pledged to so many, a whole array of noble and respected names came before him. Could he, in the eyes of these, become a false, foul traitor? He refilled, and quaffed again and again his cup; and at last so wound himself up, as to begin, "My friends, you speak sooth, though I may not listen; yet, if you name one so humble and distasteful, say to my liege —"

A page in green and white — the colours of Lady Brampton, entered, announcing her speedy arrival. Clifford's wits were already disturbed by wine; instinct made him fear in such a state to come in contact with the subtle lady; he drew his cap over his eyes, his cloak around his person, and vanished from the hall, ere his friends were aware of his intention.

The interview between Lady Brampton and the gentlemen was of another sort. Sir Edward had in her younger days worn her colours. She was changed in person since then: but, when, after a short interval, he got over the shock consequent on the first perception of the sad traces of time on the cheek of beauty, he found that her eyes possessed the same fire, her voice the same thrilling tone, her smile the same enchantment. While the Doctor, who had loved her as a daughter, and she regarded him with filial reverence, rebuked her for what he termed her misdeeds; she replied with vivacity, and such true and zealous love for him whose cause she upheld, that they were both moved to listen with respect, if not conviction, to her asseverations. She could not gain her point, nor win them over to her side; but, when she departed, neither spoke of young Richard's rights, unwilling to confess to one another that they were converts to his truth. She went. The next day they departed from Brussels, and it became subject of discussion, what step Henry would now take, and whether, by any new measure, he could disturb the ripening conspiracy against his throne.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, what excuse can my invention make? I do arrest ye of high treason here!
— SHAKSPEARE.

Henry’s ambassadors had wrought little change on any except Clifford. His words had been interrupted; they were nothing in themselves; but their spirit, the spirit of treason, was in his heart. He made up his mind to nothing; he looked forward to no certain project; but he felt that hereafter he might betray his present associates to their arch-enemy. As yet his conscience was not seared; the very anticipation of guilt tortured him, and he longed to fly from thought. Another blind impulse drove him on. He hated the Prince, because he was his opposite; because, while he was a cankered bloom, his heart a waste, his soul crusted over by deceit, his very person sullied by evil deeds and thoughts, Duke Richard stood in all the pride of innocence. Could he degrade him to his own level, there would be a pang the less in his bosom; could he injure him in the eyes of his friends, render him, as he himself had ever been, an object of censure, he would satisfy the ill-cravings of his nature, and do Henry a wondrous benefit by tarnishing the high character his rival bore, causing him whom his adherents set up as an idol, to become a reproach to them.

Clifford thought that it would be an easy task to entice a gay young stripling into vice. Richard loved hawking, hunting, and jousting in the lists, almost more, some of his elder friends thought, than befitted one on the eve of a perilous enterprize. Governed by Edmund, attended by Neville, watched by the noble Duchess and vigilant Lady Brampton, it was no great wonder that he had hitherto escaped error: but Clifford went wilily to work, and hoped in some brief luckless hour to undo the work of years. Richard was glad to find in him a defender of his inclination for manly sports; an intimacy sprung up between them, which it would not be the Knight’s fault, if it did not bring about the catastrophe he desired.

What then perpetually opposed all his measures? What, when he thought he had caused the tide of temptation to flow, suddenly made it ebb and retreat back to its former banks? Clifford, an adept in every art, moulded himself to every needful form, and at last won the secret from the deep recess of Richard's heart: he loved, — he loved Monina, that living emblem of innocent affection; never, he had vowed, would he disturb the sacred calm that reigned in her young heart, nor gift ignorance with fatal knowledge. She knew not the nature of her own feelings, and he would not withdraw the veil; but he was himself conscious of being swayed by the tenderest love. He could not marry her; his own misfortunes had arisen from the misalliance of his father; she herself would have refused to injure thus his cause, and have disdained him, if for her sake he had been inclined to abdicate his rights: he would be her friend, her brother. With passion came sorrow: he fled from sad reflection to the chase, to the exercise of arms. But other temptation became blunted by this very sentiment: his love grew more ardent by restraint; if he yielded in her absence to the contemplation of her image, his soul was filled with a voluptuous languour, from which he rouzed himself by attention to his duties or hardy pastimes; but to every other form of pleasure he was cold. This was a strange, incomprehensible picture to present to the world-worn Clifford; he fancied that it must be a delusion, but he found all the resistance of firm reality. To embitter his defeat came his own fierce passions, and the knowledge that Monina loved his rival; they would see each other, be happy in each other, and laugh him to scorn! He concealed his jealousy, his disappointment: but double, treble rage gnawed at his heart; hatred awoke in her most viperous shape, fanged by a sense of inferiority, envenomed by envy, sharpened by the torture of defeat. How little did any know — above all, how not at all did his innocent victim suspect — the storm that brooded in his heart! There was something in the very slightness and grace of his figure that was at variance with the idea of violence and crime; and his glossing tongue added to the deceit. Lady Brampton feared him a little; Frion saw something in him, that made him pay greater court to him than to any other — these were the only indications. Sunshine and calm brooded over the earthquake's birth.

Meanwhile, Henry was not sleeping at his post. He saw the full extent of his danger, and exerted all his energy to provide against it. His immediate attention was chiefly directed to two points. In the first place it was desirable to forge some tale, to account for the circumstances that spoke so loudly for the truth of York's story, and thus to degrade him from the high esteem in which he was universally held; secondly, it became necessary to certify to the public the death of Edward the Fifth and his brother in the Tower. We may well wonder at his ill success as to the first point: — there never was concocted so ill-fangled, so incongruous, and so contradictory a fable, as that put together by Henry, purporting to be the history of the pretender. He was himself ashamed of it, and tried to call it in. History has in its caprice given more credence to this composition, than its contemporaries gave; it was ridiculed and despised at the time even by the partizans of Lancaster.

He was equally unfortunate in his second effort. To explain his attempts we must go back to the time of Richard the Third. On repeated reports being made to him of his unhappy imprisoned nephew's illness, this monarch had commissioned Sir James Tirrel to visit him. The young Prince had languished without any appearance of immediate danger, and then suddenly drooped even to the grave. Tirrel arrived at the Tower late in the evening, and the first intelligence he received was, that the Lord Edward was dying. At the midnight hour he was admitted into his sick room: his two attendants followed him no further than the ante-chamber. He entered. The glazed eye and death-pale cheek of the victim spoke of instant dissolution: a few slight convulsions, and it was over — Edward was no more! With wild, loud cries poor little York threw himself on his brother's body. Tirrel's servants, affrighted, entered: they found one of the Princes, whose illness had been represented as trivial, dead; the other was carried off, struggling and screaming, by their master and an attendant priest, the only two persons in the chamber. They departed two hours afterwards from the Tower. Tirrel seemed disturbed, and was silent. They would perhaps have thought less about it; but hearing subsequently of the disappearance and supposed death of the young Duke, wonder grew into suspicion, and in thoughtless talk they laid the foundation of a dire tale out of these fragments. Henry had heard it before; now he endeavoured to trace its origin. Tirrel, who for some time had lived obscurely in the country, came to London — he was immediately seized, and thrown into prison. Emissaries were set to work to find the three others, the priest and Sir James's two servants. Only one was to be found; and, when Tirrel was asked concerning this man, by name John Dighton, he told a tale of ingratitude punished by him, which was soothing sweet to King Henry's ear: he was speedily discovered and imprisoned. Both master and follower underwent many examinations; and it was suggested to each, that reward would follow their giving countenance to a tale of midnight murder. Tirrel was indignant at the proposal; Dighton, on the contrary — a needy, bad man — while he told the story so as to gloss his own conduct, was very ready to inculpate his master; and it grew finely under his fosterage. Henry saw that without Tirrel's connivance he could not authenticate any account; but he gave all the weight he could to these reports. Few persons believed them, yet it served to confuse and complicate events; and, while people argued, some at least would take his side of the question, and these would be interested to spread their belief abroad: — Duke Richard must be the loser in every way.

The spies, the traitor-emissaries of the fear-struck monarch, were all busy; there was a whole army of them dispersed in England and Flanders — none could know the false man from the true. To obviate every suspicion, he caused his own hirelings to be proclaimed traitors, and cursed at St. Paul's Cross.

The priests, ever his friends, were impiously permitted to violate the sacrament of confession; and thus several unsuspecting men betrayed their lives, while they fancied that they performed a religious duty. A few names still escaped him — he tampered with Clifford and Frion for them: the former was not yet quite a villain; the latter found that he enjoyed more credit, honour, and power, as the Duke's Secretary, than he could do as Henry's spy; besides, his vanity was hurt — he wished to revenge himself on the master who had discarded him.

In nothing did Henry succeed better than in throwing an impenetrable veil over his manoeuvres. Most people thought, so tranquil and unconcerned he seemed, that he did not suspect the existence of an actual conspiracy, fostered in England itself, containing many influential persons among its numbers. All were sure that he was entirely ignorant of their names and actual purposes. The many months which intervened while he waited patiently, corroborated this belief, and the conspirators slept in security. The winter passed, and they continued to scheme, apparently unobserved; spring came — they prepared for York's landing — for a general rising — for a sudden seizing on many walled towns and fortresses — for the occupation of London itself. A few brief weeks, and Henry's prosperity would be shaken to its centre — his power uprooted — he and his children would wander exiles in a foreign land; and another king, the gallant descendant of the true Plantagenets, reign in his stead.

Thus occupied, thus prepared, were the Yorkists in England; at Brussels, things were carried on more openly, and wore a more promising appearance. The Duchess, Lady Brampton, Plantagenet, triumphed. Sir George Neville anticipated with proud joy a restoration of the fallen race of Warwick, and regarded himself already as another king-maker of that house. Every exile looked northward, and grew joyful with the thought of home. Frion became more busy and important than ever; he had lately gone disguised to England, in pursuance of some project. In another week they expected Lord Barry to join them from Ireland: Clifford was amazed, vacillating, terrified. He knew that Henry was far from idle; he was aware that some of the loudest speakers in Richard's favour in Brussels were his hirelings, whom he would not betray, because he half felt himself one among them, though he could not quite prevail on himself to join their ranks. He believed that the King was in eager expectation of his decision in his favour; that nothing could be done till he said the word; he proposed conditions; wished to conceal some names; exempt others from punishment. Messengers passed continually between him and Bishop Morton, Henry's chief counsellor and friend, and yet he could not determine to be altogether a traitor.

Thus stood affairs; a consummation, all thought to be nigh at hand. It was the spring of 1494, and the coming summer was to decide the fate of York. A ball was given by the Duchess, in honour of her nephew; it was splendidly and gaily attended. Clifford had been conversing with the Prince, when suddenly he left the apartment: it was long ere he came back, and slowly joined the principal groupe in the room, consisting of the Duchess, the Prince, Lady Brampton, Neville, Plantagenet, Taylor, and several others. Clifford's countenance was marked by horror and surprise; so much so, that Lady Brampton looked at him a moment without knowing him. Suddenly she started up and seized his arm—"Holy Virgin!" she cried, "what had dressed your face, Sir Robert, in this pale livery? what tale of death have you heard?"

The brow of Clifford became flushed, his lips grew whiter, as quivering they refused to form the words he attempted to utter. Barley had before this quitted the apartment: he rushed in now, crying aloud, “Treason!”

“Treason!” Neville repeated, laying his hand heavily on Clifford’s shoulder; “hear you that word, Sir Knight? Where is the traitor?”

Clifford in a moment recovered himself, answering, composedly, “Aye, would I could point out the man — would that I could drag him forth, the mark, the very target for the shafts of vengeance. We are lost; the cause is lost; our friends; the good Lord Fitzwater. I would have hid his name in the bowels of the earth!”

Already the festal hall was deserted; already the guests were dispersed, to learn how wide the destruction had spread. By the Prince’s orders, the messenger from England was introduced before himself and his principal friends: it was Adam Floyer, Sir Simon Mountford’s chaplain; escaped himself, he was the bearer of a frightful tale. On one day, almost at the same hour, the Yorkist conspirators were arrested. Lord Fitzwater, Sir Simon Mountford, Sir Thomas Thwaites, Robert Ratcliffe, William Daubeny, Thomas Cressenor, Thomas Astwood, two Dominicans, by name William Richford and Thomas Poyns, Doctor William Sutton, Worseley the Dean of Saint Paul’s, Robert Langborne, and Sir William Lessey, were all seized and cast into prison. Others had escaped: young Gilbert Daubeny, brother of William, and Sir Edward Lisle, had arrived in Flanders. Others made good speed and had fled to Ireland.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, Clifford! but bethink thee once again.
And in thy thought oerrun my former time.
And if thou can’st for blushing, view this face!
— SHAKSPEARE.

“Where is the traitor?” Neville’s question resounded through Flanders, and was reechoed in groans from the English shores. Each man feared the other; and saw the mark of Henry’s malice on the brow of all. It was a worse scene in England; executions followed imprisonment; the scaffolds flowed with blood, and suspicion was still greedy of prey. Among the papers seized by the King, there was found a letter from Clifford to Lord Fitzwater, containing these words: “I do protest, my Lord, that the proof of York’s truth is most pertinent. You know this; and yet he who cut the crooked rose-bush to the roots, still doubts: forsooth, he is still at his ‘ifs’—’if he were sure that that young man were King Edward’s son, he would never bear arms against him.’ Pray, deprive my Lord of his ‘if;’ for arms he must never bear: he is too principal to any cause.”

Henry tormented himself to find who this doubter might be: again he sought to bribe Clifford, who was at first dogged that so much was done without him, and then tried to barter his intelligence for Lord Fitzwater’s life. Such grace had he left, that he was ready to exert his wits to save his former patron; this was granted. This noble alone of the conspirators, who were laymen, was spared; he was sent prisoner to Calais.

At the first word of discovery Monina’s friends had endeavoured to ensure her escape to Flanders; but her name was known to Henry, and there was none whom he was more desirous to get into his power. She remained concealed at a little distance from London; she grew mad in inaction; the work of death and misery around, wound up her tender spirit to torture; and the execution of her former friends filled her with such horror, as made day hateful, night the parent of frightful visions. After several weeks’ seclusion, she all at once resolved to visit London, to seek some one of her former friends; to learn whether the tragedy was over, and what further mischiefs despair might have engendered. She inhabited a solitary mansion, with one old woman, who opposed her going, but vainly. Monina was too young to bear uncertainty with any degree of patience. Some slight joy visited her as she found herself on her road to London: before she arrived a heavy rain fell, but she was not to be discouraged. Sir Edward Lisle, she knew, had not been arrested; she was unaware of his escape, and thought perhaps that he had not been discovered: she might get intelligence from him. His house was deserted and empty: another hope remained; Sir William Stanley. She knew his timidity, and resolved to be cautious as to the manner of her visit. Sir William had ever been peculiarly kind to the gentle maiden: fearing to see her openly, she had often come to him by water: his mansion, near the Palace at Westminster, had a garden upon the Thames: without exciting any remark, she could land here: it was already night, and this favoured secrecy. With some difficulty, in the city, where she then was, she contrived to find her way to an obscure wharf, and embarked in a wherry; fortunately, it was high water, and she landed without difficulty in the garden, and dismissed the men. Now she began to be puzzled as to how she should make her way, dripping with rain, unexpected, to Sir William's presence. She had been accustomed to be admitted by a little door opening on stairs which led to her old friend's library; this was shut now. Suddenly she thought she heard voices, and then perceived a thread of light that streamed through the keyhole of the summer-house in the garden: there was a noise on the water too, and a boat was paddled to the landing-place. Bewildered, yet believing that all this secresy was connected with the grand conspiracy, she moved towards the summer-house; the door was opened, and the light falling full upon her, she saw several figures within, and a female shriek burst upon her ear: quick steps were heard behind: to retreat or go forward equally terrified her; when one of the persons in the summer-house, a man in an uncouth foreign garb, cried—"Thou here, Monina! What miracle is this? Come, come in, there is danger in all we do."

Monina recognized the voice of Frion, and entered; there she saw one, a lady richly attired, yet half disguised in a large black cloak. Fear was painted on her cheek; her blue eyes were cast up to Heaven. A female attendant with her seemed yet more terrified. About the room were scattered globes and astrolabes, and all the gear of an astrologer. In the lady, Monina recognized York's sister, Tudor's Queen, the fair Elizabeth of England. At once compassion and respect entered her heart; she addressed the royal lady with reverence, and all that touching grace that was her sweetest charm; she assured her of inviolable secrecy; she reminded her of their former interview. Elizabeth grew calmer as she recognized her visitor at Shene: she stretched out her hand to the Spaniard, saying—”I do indeed believe and trust thee; thou shalt hear again from me:” then folding her mantle round her, and leaning on her attendant, she quitted the house, and with trembling haste embarked.

For many weeks after this scene Monina continued concealed in Sir William Stanley’s mansion. When the arrest of the conspirators had taken place, Frion, balked in an attempt to escape, for safety’s sake had assumed the habit and character of an astrologer, and so far worked upon Stanley’s fears, and won him by his flattery, that he permitted him to take up his residence in his summer-house. Frion was a clever prophet, and too restless not to become notorious: it was a good mode, he averred, to put hope in the hearts of the Yorkists, by prognosticating all manner of success to them. His fame spread; the Queen questioned Stanley about his new astrologer, and the confusion the poor Chamberlain evinced, served only to excite her curiosity. She sent one of her attendants to see what manner of man he might be, and the subtle Frion profited by this little artifice, which Sir William in his terror divulged, to entice the Queen herself to his cell; she came, and the result of her visit was to bring Monina again before her.

Such were the agents still at work for York in London. Such the materials Clifford strove to mould into a purpose of his own. There was no reason, so many of the White Rose thought, to forego all their plans, because one had come to a fatal end. Still Richard might land in England, and make head against Tudor. On a smaller scale, with lessened hopes and diminished ardour, a scheme of this kind was canvassed. Clifford appeared its chief abettor, and encouraged it by every means in his power; none were averse; it was not an enterprize of such high expectation as the discovered one; but, undertaken with speed, and prosecuted with energy, it might turn out as wel. England was by no means tranquil; the metropolis itself was the scene of tumults: these were raised to a ferment by the embargo Henry had found it necessary to place on all communication with Holland, a measure fraught with ruin to many of the richest merchants in London.

At this time, towards the end of summer, the King came up from his palace at Shene, and held a court at Westminster. One of the immediate subjects that brought him up, was a tumult in the city, to which the embargo had given rise. A vast number of apprentices and journeymen belonging to the ruined merchants, were out of employ, while the traders from Hans, and other free German towns, who went among us by the name of the Easterlings, got the commerce into their own hands, and grew rich upon it. The sight of their prosperity was to the starving Londoners, as the pressed rowel of a spur in a horse’s side; with the usual barbarism of the untaught and rude, they visited on these men the fault of their governors — the discontent augmented till it became loud, furious, and armed. Multitudes of those deprived of their usual means, met, and, in a moment of rage, proceeded from words to acts. They endeavoured to force and rifle the warehouses of the Easterlings, who repulsed them with difficulty; nor did they disperse, till the Mayor arrived with men and weapons, from whom they fled like a flock of sheep. When tidings of this event was brought to Henry; he, who saw in all things the multiplied image of the abhorred White Rose, believed the Yorkists to be its secret cause. The day after his arrival he gave audience to the Mayor, who reported that, from every examination made, none appeared to have a part in it, except servants and apprentices, nearly a hundred of whom were imprisoned in the Tower.

In giving a detail of this circumstance, the Mayor related that the Easterlings declared, that at the first onset their richest store-chambers must have become the prey of the rioters, but for the interposition of one man. He was a sea captain, and had arrived but the day before with his caravel, from Spain — they represented him as a person of gigantic stature and superhuman strength. Entangled by the mob in his progress through the city, he had no sooner discovered their intent, than he contrived to make his way into the stilyard; and, there combining the forces of the defenders, more by his personal prowess than any other means, he beat back the invaders, and succeeded in closing the gates. At the representation of the Mayor, Henry commanded that this man should be brought before him, partly that he might thank him for his services; and partly, for Henry was curious on such points, to learn from him the news from Spain, and if more had been heard of the wild visionary Columbus and his devoted crew, since they had deserted the stable continent, to invade the hidden chambers of the secret western ocean.

The King received the mariner in his closet. None were in attendance save Urswick. There was something grand in the contrast between these men. The courtier priest — the sovereign, whose colourless face was deep-lined with careful thought, whose eyes were skilled in reading the thoughts of men, and whose soul was perpetually alive to every thing that was passing around him — and the ocean rock, the man of tempests and hardships, whose complexion was darkened and puckered by exposure to sun and wind, whose every muscle was hardened by labour, but whose unservile mien bespoke no cringing to any power, save Nature's own. He received Henry's thanks with respect, and replied simply: he answered also several questions put to him concerning his voyages; it appeared that he had but lately arrived from Spain — that he came to seek a relative who resided in England. During this interview a thought flashed on Henry's mind. In his late transactions with Clifford, the base purpose had been formed of enticing the Duke and his principal adherents to England, and of delivering them up to their enemy; there had been some discussion as to providing, at least, one vessel in Henry's pay, to make part of the little fleet which would bring the Duke of York over. This was difficult, as suspicion might attach itself to any English vessel; but here was one, with a stranger captain, and a foreign crew, a man who knew nothing of White or Red Rose, who would merely fulfil his commission. Slow on all occasions to decide, the King appointed another interview with the stranger.

It so happened, that the news of the appearance of the Spanish Captain, had penetrated to the Queen's apartments; and little Arthur, her gentle and darling son, was desirous to see the countrymen of Columbus, whose promised discoveries were the parent of such wonder and delight throughout the world. The Prince of Wales must not be denied this pleasure, and the Spaniard was ushered into the Queen's presence. An enthusiast in his art, his energetic, though simple expressions enchanted the intelligent Prince, and even compelled the attention of his little sturdy brother Henry. He spoke in words, borrowed from Columbus's own lips, of translucent seas, of an atmosphere more softly serene than ours, of shores of supernal beauty, of the happy natives, of stores of treasure, and the bright hopes entertained concerning the further quest to be made in these regions. Elizabeth forgot herself to listen, and regretted the necessity of so soon dismissing him. She asked a few questions relative to himself, his vessel;

"She was a gallant thing once," replied her commander, "when I took her from the Algerines, and new christened her the Adalid; because like her owner, being of Moorish origin she embraced the true faith. My own name, please your Grace, is Hernan De Faro, otherwise called the Captain of the Wreck, in memory of a sad tedious adventure, many years old."

"De Faro — had he not a daughter?"

Anxiety and joy showed itself at once in the mariner's countenance. Monina! — Where was she? How eagerly and vainly had he sought her — faltering, the Queen had only power to say, that Sir William Stanley, the Lord Chamberlain, could inform him, and, terrified, put an end to the interview.

Two days after — already had de Faro found and fondly embraced his beloved child — Urswick, at the King's command, sent for the hero of the stilyard, and after some questioning, disclosed his commission to him; it was such, that, had De Faro been in ignorance, would have led him to suspect nothing — he was simply to sail for Ostend; where he would seek Sir Robert Clifford, and deliver a letter: he was further told that he was to remain at Sir Robert's command, to receive on board his vessel whoever the Knight should cause to embark in her, and to bring them safely to England. To all this De Faro, aware of the dread nature of these orders, assented; and, in Stanley's summer-house, with the Lord Chamberlain, Monina, and Frion, it was discussed how this web of treason could best be destroyed. There was little room for doubt; Monina resolved to sail with her father, to denounce Clifford to the Prince, and so save him and his friends from the frightful snare. Frion still remained in England, to try to fathom the whole extent of the mischief intended; though now, fearful of discovery, he quitted his present abode, and sought a new disguise. Stanley trembled at Clifford's name, but he saw no suspicion in his sovereign's eye, and was reassured.

The Adalid sailed, bearing the King's letters to Clifford, and having Monina on board, who was to unfold to the deceived Prince and his followers the dangers that menaced them.

Already, as the appointed time drew near, most of Richard's partizans were assembled at Ostend; a fleet of three vessels was anchored in the port to convey them to England to fated death; the Prince himself, with Clifford, so-journed in a castle at no great distance. Sir Robert insinuated himself each day more and more into his royal friend's confidence; each day his hatred grew, and he fed himself with it to keep true to his base purpose; among the partizans of York sometimes he felt remorse; beside the bright contrast of his own dark self, never.

Monina landed; and, the Prince being absent, first she sought Lady Brampton — she was at Brussels; then Plantagenet, — he was expected, but not arrived from Paris; then she asked for Sir George Neville, as the chief of the English exiles; to him she communicated her strange, her horrid tidings, to him she showed Henry's still sealed letter to Clifford. What visible Providence was here, laying its finger on the headlong machinery that was bearing them to destruction! Neville was all aghast: he, who did not like, had ceased to suspect Clifford, seeing that he adhered to them at their worst. He lost no time in bringing Monina to the castle, but ten miles distant, where York then was; he introduced her privately, and, wishing that she should tell her tale herself, went about to contrive that, without Clifford's knowledge or suspicion, the Prince should have an interview with her.

Monina did not wonder that her bosom throbbed wildly, as she remained in expectation of seeing her childhood's playfellow, from whom she had been so long absent. Nor did she check her emotion of intense pleasure when she saw him, and heard him in her native Spanish utter expressions of glad delight at so unexpectedly beholding her. Time had changed him very little; his aspect was still boyish; and, if more thought was seated in his eye, his smile was not the less frank and sweet; she was more altered; her little but feminine form had acquired grace; the girl was verging into the woman — blooming as the one, tender and impassioned as the other; her full dark eyes, which none could behold and not feel the very inner depths of their nature stirred, were the home of sensibility and love. A few moments were given to an interchange of affectionate greeting, and then York, recurring to the mysterious mode in which Neville had expressed himself, asked if any thing, save a kind wish to visit the brother of her childhood, had brought her hither; she replied, by relating to him the circumstances of her father's commission from Henry, and delivering to him the letter for Sir Robert. The whole wide world of misery contains no pang so great, as the discovery of treachery where we pictured truth; death is less in the comparison, for both destroy the future, and one, with Gorgon countenance, transforms the past. The world appeared to slide from beneath the Prince, as he became aware that Clifford's smiles were false; his seeming honesty, his discourse of honour, the sympathy apparent between them, a lie, a painted lie, alluring him by fair colours to embrace foulest deformity. The exceeding openness and confidence of his own nature, rendered the blow doubly unnatural and frightful; and Monina, who had half disliked, and latterly had almost forgotten Clifford, was full of surprise and pain to mark the affliction her friend's countenance expressed.

There was no time for regret. Neville interrupted them, and it became necessary to act. Richard held in his hand the sealed proof of his associate's falsehood: Sir George urged him to open it, so to discover the whole extent of the treason. The Prince's eyes were at once lighted up by the suggestion: no, no, because Clifford had been base, he would violate no law of honour — there was no need for the sake of others; his treachery discovered, was fangless; nor would he even undertake the dark office of openly convicting and punishing: his conscience and remorse should be judge and executioner.

Monina and Neville returned to Ostend. The Prince sent a message to Clifford with some trifling commission to execute in the same town; and Sir Robert, who had heard of the arrival of a stranger caravel from England, was glad of an opportunity, to ride over to learn its character. His feet were in the stirrups, when a page brought him a letter from the Duke, which he was bid not to open till he had departed. A sense of a mysterious meaning came over him. Was he discovered? At the first dawn of this suspicion he clapped spurs to his horse, and was already far away; then, impatient of uncertainty, as soon as half the brief space to Ostend was measured, he took out the packet, eyed it curiously, and, after many qualms and revolutions of feeling, suddenly tore it open. King Henry's dispatch, written in Urswick's well-known hand, first met his eye. Worse in action than in thought, a cold dew mantled on his brow; and, while his heart stood still in his labouring breast, he cast his eyes over a few lines, written in Richard's fair clear Spanish hand: —

"This paper, joined to the mode in which it fell into my hands, accuses you of treason. If wrongfully, accord permission that the seal may be broken, and your innocence proved.

"Even if the mystery which this letter contains cannot be divulged nor exculpated, all is not lost. Perhaps you are rather weak than guilty; erring but not wicked. If so, return immediately on your steps; by a frank confession merit my confidence. I were unworthy of the mediation of the

Blessed Saints, whom each night I solicit to intercede for me before our Heavenly Father, were I not ready to pardon one who has sinned, but who repents.

“If your crime be of a deeper dye, and you are allied in soul to my enemy, depart. It is enough for me that I never see you more. If I remain a fugitive for ever, you will lose nothing by deserting my ruined fortunes; if I win the day, my first exercise of the dearest prerogative of kings, will be to pardon you.

“Richard.”

CHAPTER V.

Shall I be the slave
Of — what? a word? which those of this false world
Employ against each other, not themselves.
As men wear daggers not for self offence.
But if I am mistaken, where shall I
Find the disguise to hide me from myself.
As now I skulk from every other eye.
— SHELLEY.

One of the surest results of guilt is to deprive the criminal of belief in the goodness of others. Clifford was discovered. Even, if Richard continued true to his promise of pardon, his adherents and counsellors might force him to another line of conduct. A dungeon and death floated terribly before his confused vision. Flight, instant flight to England, where by a full confession of many things he had reserved, and the disclosure of an important unsuspected name, he might still receive welcome and reward from Henry, was the only course left him to pursue.

His thoughts were chaos. Shame and indignation raged in his heart. He was a convicted traitor, a dishonoured man. "Oh, my envied father!" in his wretchedness he exclaimed, "you died gloriously for Lancaster. I live, steeped in obloquy, for the same cause. Abhorred Plantagenet! what misery has been mine since first your name came to drug me with racking poison! What have I not endured while I cringed to the fair-haired boy! Thank the powers of hell, that time is past! Devil as I have stamped myself, his arch crime, lying, is no more my attribute. To the winds and men's thirsty ears I may cry aloud — I hate Plantagenet!"

It was some relief to this miserable man to array his thoughts in their darkest garb, soothing his evil passions with words, which acted on them as a nurse's fondling talk to a querulous child. His line of conduct was fixed; he remembered Neville's sudden appearance and departure the night before; he had brought the letter; he was waiting for him at Ostend to seize on him, to turn to mockery the Prince's promised pardon. Those were days of violence and sudden bloodshed: the enemy a man could not visit with legal punishment, he thought himself justified in destroying with his own hand; the passions of the Yorkists, who found they had been driven into shambles instead of a fold, must be fierce and dangerous. Without delay, he resolved to embark in one of the vessels then in the roads; he hurried to the beach; the wind seemed fair; there was a poor kind of hostelry, the common resort of sailors near, from whence a signal could be given for a boat to be sent off for him. While waiting for it, he quitted the noisy vulgarity of the inn, and walked towards a kind of ruined tower, that once perhaps had served as a light-house. In all the panic of guilt, a roof, however desolate, appeared a shelter, and he sought it: it was dilapidated and dark; there were some rude, narrow stairs leading to the upper story; these he ascended, and entered what had been a kind of guardroom, and started at the vision he beheld: leaning against the aperture that had served for a casement, looking on the wide green sea, was Monina. Her lustrous eyes turned on him — eyes before whose full softness his violence, his insolence quailed; till shame, despair, and rage, and the deep-seated arrogance of his nature conquered his better feelings. She knew his crime, witnessed his disgrace; there was no more to lose in the world. What more could he win? His presence occasioned her much emotion. She had just quitted Neville, who somewhat angrily remarked upon the Prince's illtimed lenity, and spoke bitterly of all the ill Clifford, thus let loose, might do in England. And here he was, about to embark for that very island, where one at least, Sir William Stanley was at his mercy. Gladly Monina seized on this opportunity to dive into his projects, and to inspire by her energetic words the traitor's bosom with some sense of right. She, alas! inspired passion only, and jealousy, that now at last his rival would see her love-lighted eyes turned affectionately on him; while all the reproach of which they were capable was his meed. What such men as Clifford feel is not love: he had no real friendship for the innocent girl; each feeling that expresses the sympathy of our intellectual nature, was never associated to him with the name of woman. As she spoke therefore of his duties to God and man, violated, but not irretrievably, and with soft persuasion entreated him to spare those whose lives hung upon his word, he recovered his obduracy, and replied in a tone whose hollow vaunting was at discord with the music that fell from her lips—"My pretty maiden, I thank thee for thy good intentions, and if thou wilt wholly undertake my instruction, will prove an apt scholar. Honesty and I are too poor to be messmates; but if thou wilt join us — by God, Monina, I mean what I say — the priest shall say grace for us, and we will partake life's feast or fast together. I will sail with thee to thy Spain, to the Indies of the West. England shall be a forgotten name; the White or Red Rose, neither worse nor better in our eyes, than any blooms that smell as sweet: if thou refusest this, here ends the last chance for honesty; and be the victim who it may, I care not so my fortunes thrive."

"Unworthy man!" cried Monina; "farewell! I go to England also: I to save, you to destroy. Bounteous Heaven will look on our several intentions, and shape our course accordingly. Henry will visit with poor thanks your blighted purpose, barren now of its ill fruit. Mine will be the harvest; yours the unlamented loss."

She would have passed him, but he seized her slender wrist. "We will run no race," he cried; "if we go to England, it will be together: listen to the splash of oars, it is my boat among the breakers. We enter it together; it is vain for you to resist; you are my prisoner."

Monina trembled in every joint: she felt that in very truth she was in Clifford's power. There rode her father's caravel; but he could not guess her pressing danger: he would behold her depart, ignorant of the violence she was suffering, ignorant that she was there. No help! — no form of words was there, that might persuade the ill-minded Knight to free her: her proud spirit disdained to bend; her cheek was flushed; she strove to withdraw her hand. "Pardon me," said Clifford; "if my fingers press too roughly; the slight pain you endure will hardly counterbalance the fierce torture your words inflicted. Be patient, my fellows are already here. Let us not act a silly mime before them; do not oblige me to demonstrate too unkindly, that you are wholly in my power."

Hardly had he spoken the words when with a scream she sprung from him. He turned; but before even he could see the gigantic form of De Faro, a blow was struck which made him reel against the wall. It would have been instantly followed by another, but that Monina had flung herself on her father's breast, and he, supporting her, forgot his enemy, who recovered himself, and drew his sword. He met the fierce glare of the injured parent's eye, and shook. "We meet again, recreant!" were the only words spoken by De Faro; and, as an elephant might snatch a youngling antelope from the pursuit of a tiger, he took his daughter in his arms, descended the steps with her, and, as Clifford stood gazing on the sea, in such bitter mood as is the fruit of baffled malice, he saw the mariner lift his daughter into the boat. It pushed from the shore; and, with long, measured strokes, it swept the waves towards the caravel, whose sails were again unfurled, while every thing bespoke the readiness and anxiety of the crew to depart.

Ere the Adalid had reached the open sea, Clifford in his vessel was but little astern. It was a race they ran. The caravel at first had the best. Night concealed them from each other's view; and, in the morning, already on the tranquil bosom of the Thames Sir Robert's vessel was sailing alone towards London. By one of those strange turns of fortune by which our purposes swim or are wrecked, De Faro, without a pilot, unacquainted with the coast, missed the channel; he grounded on a sand-bank at the river's mouth; and the tide which carried Clifford so swiftly towards London, had several hours to run, before it reached a height sufficient to float the other's vessel; the situation was not without peril, and no boat even could be lowered to carry the anxious Monina to shore.

The very day (it was now the month of January), that Henry heard of Clifford's arrival in London, he removed his court from Westminster to the Tower. Already he divined that his Lord Chamberlain was to be criminated by Sir Robert; and, as Stanley possessed considerable influence in the state, he wished to make his arrest as unexpected as possible. Another motive worked upon the avaricious sovereign; seized thus, without preparation or forethought, his jewels, his rich plate, his valuable moveables, which might otherwise be secreted, now fell the indiscriminate prey of confiscation; the Tower, at once a palace and a prison, favoured this purpose. Here he received Clifford; Urswick had already conversed with the traitor Knight, and represented to him the necessity of ample confession. There was something in the priest's manner that, like iron, entered Clifford's soul; he felt himself, too truly, to be the abject slave, the despised tool of power; there was but little need to use cajoleries or bribes with him now; he was there, to be executed as a felon or pardoned as a spy, according as his disclosures satisfied or not the callous-hearted King.

For his greater punishment, there clung to this unfortunate man a sense of what he ought to and might have been, and a burning consciousness of what he was. Hitherto he had fancied that he loved honour, and had been withheld, as by a hair, from overstepping the demarcation between the merely reprehensible and the disgraceful. The good had blamed him; the reckless wondered at his proficiency in their own bad lessons; but hitherto he had lifted his head haughtily among them, and challenged any man to accuse him of worse, than greater daring, in a career all travelled at a slower and more timid pace.

But that time was gone by. He was now tainted by leprous treachery; his hands were stained by the blood of his deceived confederates; honour disowned him for her son; men looked askance on him as belonging to a Pariah race. He felt this; and even Monina, who had last conversed with him in the summer house of the inn at Ostend, would hardly have recognized him. He was then a bold-faced villain; his step was haughty; his manner insolent. Now his gait was shuffling, his appearance mean, his speech hesitating and confused. Urswick had known him a gay ruffler; he started back: was this Sir Robert Clifford? He was obliged to use with him the usual style of speech adopted towards men in his situation; to speak of his duty towards his liege; the propriety of delivering up the guilty to condign punishment: hackneyed phrases, which sounded cold to the unhappy man.

There was no resource. At Henry's feet, kneeling before a King who used him as a tool, but who hated him as the abettor of his rival, and despised him as the betrayer of his friend, Clifford spoke the fatal word which doomed the confiding Stanley to instant death, himself to the horrors of conscious guilt, or, what as yet was more bitter to the worldling, relentless outlawry from the society and speech of all, however depraved, who yet termed themselves men of honour.

Henry heard him with feigned amazement; and with grating words of insulting unbelief, demanded evidence of his chamberlain's treason: these were easily furnished, yet, such as they were, they comprised such irrefragable proof of the identity of the outcast Duke, that Henry found, that, while they confirmed him more than ever in his resolve that Stanley should suffer the severest penalty of his crime, it made it difficult to bring forward the testimonials of his guilt. This was for after consideration: Clifford was dismissed with cold thanks, with promise of pardon and reward, and an haughty command neither to obtrude himself again into the royal presence, nor to depart from London without especial leave.

Henry’s first act was to command Stanley not to quit his chamber in the Tower. The next day before the hour of noon, the Bishop of Durham, Lord Oxford, Lord Surrey, Urswick, and Lord Dawbeny, met in the fallen chamberlain’s apartment, for the purpose of examining him. A thousand opposing feelings operated upon Stanley: accustomed to pay deference to the King, even now he said nothing to displease him; and his expressions rather spoke of compassion for him who very possibly was Duke of York, than any falling off from his allegiance to the then King of England.

This monarch was tormented by no doubts, — to be actuated by no pity. Stanley’s acknowledgment of the truth of the Burgundian pretender roused his bitterest feelings. In addition, he was rich booty — which weighed heavily against him; so that, when Bishop Fox remarked on the villany and extent of his treason, Henry, off his guard, exclaimed—”I am glad of it; the worse the better; none can speak of mercy now, and confiscation is assured;” — nor did he in the interval before his trial, nor after it, express one regret that the man was about to forfeit his head, who had encircled his own with the regal diadem.

Tried, condemned; but a few days remained before on the fatal block the rich, noble, prudent, royally-connected Sir William Stanley would expiate his guilt to Henry. All wondered; many pitied; few thought of soliciting for or aiding the fallen man; yet one or two there were, whom this last blow against York filled with bitter regret. In a secluded part of London Lord Barry, who had just arrived, Frion, and Monina met. Barry came with intelligence that there had appeared in Ireland a gentleman from Scotland, commissioned by its young monarch to enquire into the truth of Richard’s story; and, if indubitably he were the man he pretended, to counsel him to visit Scotland, where he would find friendship and aid. The Earl of Desmond also had just arrived in London, and Lord Barry was in his company. This downfall of Stanley called their minds from every other consideration. Monina was peculiarly agitated and thoughtful. One evening she joined them late: she was full of some project. “I can, I do believe, save our friend,” she said: “the assistance I need is small — you, Master Stephen, will hasten on board the Adalid, and bid my father have all in readiness for sailing, and to drop down the river as far as Greenwich: you, my dear Lord, must also take a part in my scheme — keep watch on the river, right opposite the Tower, during the coming night and the following:

if you see a light upon the shore beneath its dark walls, come towards it with a boat; the Blessed Virgin aiding my design, it shall be freighted with disappointment to the Tudor, joy to us."

Lord Barry and Frion promised obedience, though they would have dissuaded her from the risk; but she was devoted, enthusiastic, firm: she left them, nor did they delay to execute her commission, and both went down the river to De Faro's caravel. Here a new surprise awaited them. The Duke of York and his friends had not been idle in the interim. Each design, as it failed, gave place to another. They were diminished in numbers, but now no traitors were among them. Their hopes were few; but, unless the present time were seized, there would be none. The false expectations Clifford had held out to them of coalition and succour in England were lost, but attachment to York was alive in many an English bosom: the preparations of arms they had made still existed; it was resolved therefore in early spring to descend on the English shores.

The Duke of York, deeply grieved by the ruin that visited his friends, stung to the heart by Clifford's treachery, resolved meanwhile to seek relief in action. Could not his presence do much? Unknown in England, he might visit the Yorkists, rouse their affection, and form such an union, as, assisted afterwards by his friends and their little fleet, would contribute to ensure success. His friends did not approve of the hazard to which he exposed himself: but every thing they alleged on this score, only confirmed his purpose. "All endanger themselves — all die for me," he cried; "shall I alone be ingloriously safe?" The first sight therefore that presented itself to Lord Barry and Frion on the deck of the Adalid, was Prince Richard and Edmund Plantagenet.

The Duke's presence did not change the purpose of Frison's visit. De Faro got his vessel in readiness for the voyage; and Lord Barry, as evening closed in, prepared to take his stand — not singly: Richard insisted on sharing his watch; docile as he usually was, remonstrance had now no effect; hitherto he had given himself up to guarded safety, now he seemed in love with peril, resolved to court her at every opportunity. The risk to which Monina exposed herself, made him obstinate. He would have thought himself untrue to the laws of chivalry, a recreant knight, had he not hastened to protect her; and, more than this, for the inborn impulses of the heart are more peremptory than men's most sacred laws — he loved; and a mother draws not more instinctively her first-born to her bosom, than does the true and passionate lover feel impelled to hazard even life for the sake of her he loves, to shield her from every danger, or to share them gladly with her.

CHAPTER VI.

I do not like the Tower, of any place.
— SHAKSPEARE.

At nine o'clock in the evening, York and Lord Barry took their station on the Thames, at the appointed place. The boat was tethered to the shore; and the rising tide brought them nearer to the banks. All was dark, during the cold night of early February; to the right and left, nothing was apparent save the glimmering water, and the only sound was the rushing and rippling of the Thames, as it sped downward in its course.

"My mother greets me with a cold kiss," said the Prince; "In truth, she has wedded mine enemy, and cast me out from my inheritance."

A brief pause ensued — a few minutes, which were freighted with the cares and sorrows of years. Back, back young Richard threw his eye over the skeleton shapes of the dead years; and again he sought to penetrate the future. Dark as the starless sky, not one gleam of comfort presented itself to the outcast's hope. But such state of mind was unnatural to the ardent boy, and he sprung from it;

"Like to a lark at break of day, uprising
From sullen earth, to sing at heaven's gate. "

he soared from groveling despondency into recollections of the labour and love that had been expended on him. His harvest might never be the crown at which he aimed; but, better still, the ambrosial food of affection and devoted attachment, that filled him even to sweet satiety.

"A light! our beacon!" cried Lord Barry.

A small gleam appeared on the opposite bank. It moved; then returned to its former place, and was stationary. They watched it, till they became satisfied that it was the guide for which they were waiting. The early matin service rung from several convents, and came pealing faintly across the water. It was the dead of night; and the gentlemen gladly exchanged their inert watch for the labour of contending with the tide and floating ice, which impeded their way, as they rowed across the Thames to where the light was now fixed.

The drear bank of the Tower-moat rose abruptly from the water-side, and the waves lay murky dark beneath the arch of the Traitor’s Gate. The tide, which was setting in, carried them above the point where the light was, to this spot. Their beacon indeed had disappeared; and, as they waited its return, they floated idly on the river, merely giving now and then a few strokes, to keep the wherry stationary. They did not perceive that, while they thus curbed the tide, they had drifted into an eddy which carried them fast down, till, jamming them between the wall of the Tower and a near pile, their boat lurched, partly filled with water, and resisted every attempt they made to extricate it. The clouds were getting thinner before the pale waning moon; but their fancied beacon light had vanished.

Their situation was sufficiently dreary. The cold was piercing. They had difficulty in keeping themselves out of the water that lay at the bottom of the boat. Lord Barry was a soldier, accustomed to hair-breadth escapes and dangerous attempts; Richard a bold youth, who thought that his best safety depended on his own exertions. They were neither of them inclined to linger tamely in their present situation.

“Before our limbs get numbed with this biting breeze, we must use them to our own benefit; your Highness can swim?”

“So say the streams of the Vega,” replied Richard: “but the very remembrance of those sweet brooks makes me shudder at the chilly bath this ice-nourished river affords. I will reconnoitre the land, before I attempt the freezing wave.” With lithe, sinuous limbs he coiled about the pile, and continued to raise himself to where a beam rested on the upright post, and again was fixed in the turret, which spans and guards the entrance to the Tower by water. He had hardly gained this place, and he felt little cold as with nervous fingers he kept fast in the position he had attained, when a ray of light fell upon the water, streaming from out a window of the turret. It was but for a moment, and it disappeared; but Richard’s eyes had glanced keenly on the illuminated spot. The transverse beam he had attained was but little below the window; it had been grated, but two of the stancheons were broken. This to our adventurer, suspended between the unattainable sky and the icy wave, seemed a place of refuge. Carefully and slowly, he with clinging knees and hands contrived to get along the beam, to raise himself on his feet on it, and then to clutch the broken iron bar, and hoist himself into a chamber of the Tower of London.

The immediate physical dangers that beset our adventurers were so great (the least horrific of which was spending the night exposed to freezing blasts, which Barry already felt chilling his very heart's blood), that they both forgot the dangerous nature of the asylum they were seeking. The Irish noble had, as well as darkness permitted, followed the movements of his young companion; the same ray which guided Richard to temporary safety, had showed to Barry the mode of following him. He made the attempt; but, though stronger, he was not so agile as his friend; besides, the minutes which had elapsed during Richard's exertions, had enfeebled by numbing the other's powers; he got nearly to the top of the pile — he felt his fingers slip, and that he could hold on no longer. One desperate struggle he made to cling closer; his grasp seemed rather to relax, than tighten, in the attempt; and Richard, after a second, heard with horror his heavy fall into the water. But Barry was more at his ease in the yielding wave; and the very intensity of the cold, burning his skin, set his blood in motion: the tide also had arrived at its height during this interval, and had turned: without great difficulty the noble cleared, after a few strokes, the abrupt banks that fence the Tower, and landed on a quay below.

Richard heard the waters splash from under his strokes. The silence was so entire, that he thought he could distinguish the change of sound when the swimmer emerged, and plainly heard Lord Barry's shout, in his own native Irish, of thanksgiving and good cheer. For a moment, like lightning, it flashed into his mind, the thought of the ominous refuge he had found; and he was tempted to leap into the water and to rejoin his friend. But by this time the alarm of some one having plunged into the river, had been spread by the sentinels. The court became thronged; some hastened to the wall, others loosened the boats tethered beneath the gate, and issued in them from under the dark arch, over which Duke Richard had found refuge. By the glare of many torches, they discovered the wherry wedged in, as has been described. The splash attested that some one had fallen into the water: that some one should escape from the fortress, was more readily present to their imaginations, than that any should enter. They called to each other, communicating their surmises and intentions; then one boat remained in guard close at the gate, while the other rowed down the stream. Their exertions must end in nothing, for Lord Barry had had full time to ensure his escape.

Richard attended to all their motions: several of the men in pursuit, had issued from the lower chambers of the turret in which he was: it was not thus cooped up, that he chose to be found; all seemed still; the only sounds came from the men in the boat; he descended the stairs; he came out upon the court of the Tower; the dark fortress frowned above, casting, in spite of the dull moon, a shadow dark enough to hide him. Steps were heard approaching; he turned under a dim archway; he ascended a narrow, steep staircase; the steps still followed; hurriedly he opened a door, and entered a chamber; the men, whoever they might be, were unaware of his presence; they passed the door, turned down another gallery; the very echo of their steps died away.

Did he recognize the spot where he then stood? Well! — far too well! — with a sickening feeling, an irresistible impulse to penetrate into the very heart of the horror that made his pulses faint, he gazed on the walls around. Was he then alone changed? had he sprung up into manhood, thought, experienced, suffered; and had the material universe stood still the while? He saw before him a small chamber, enlightened by one deep-set window, half blocked up by projecting buttresses outside: there was the pallet-bed, the prie Dieu, the little crucifix: his infant limbs had reposed there; on that couch his brother had died.

This was the Tower! Ten years before he had escaped from its gloomy walls; and had he done this only to return again, when maturer years gave him a bitterer feeling of the ills he must endure? He had visited England, guided by the traitor-spirit of Clifford it seemed; for he had returned but to render himself a prisoner: yet at first these thoughts were hardly so painful as the memory of his childhood. The superstitious fears of the Tower, which haunted poor Edward, had made it an abode of terror for both: how often had they lain in that bed, curdling each other’s young blood with frightful tales! His brother had pined, and died. Now, true to the pious usage of the times, he knelt to say a paternoster for his soul; he said another for his own perilous state; and then, having, with entire faith committed himself to the protection of his Father in Heaven, he rose with a cheered heart and sustained courage.

What was he to do? He was in the Tower; a fortress so well guarded, that of the unhappy beings confined there for life, none had ever made their escape: high walls, numerous courts, and grated windows, opposed his egress. The clock chimed one. It were as well to remain where he was, as to go on. But it were better still to turn back: quiet would soon be restored; he might attain the same room, the same window, and leap thence into the waters below. He remembered wherefore he had come; the hazardous enterprise of Monina, and the imprisonment of Stanley. Now that he had attained this chamber, the whole Tower presented itself, as in a map, to his memory: he knew where the rooms allotted to state prisoners were situated: confident in his knowledge, his feelings underwent an entire change; instead of considering himself a prisoner in the Tower, he felt lord of its labyrinths. Darkness was his wand of office; the ignorance of all that he was there, was his guard; and his knowledge of the place, better than the jailor's key, might aid him to liberate the victims of his enemy.

In this temper of mind he rejoiced that he had been unable to follow his first impulse in leaping from the window; and he resolved on making his way immediately to the part of the fortress inhabited by the state prisoners. Blindfold, setting out from the point where he was, he could have found his way; yet several images of barred and locked doors presented themselves to his recollection, as intervening between the spot where he then was, and that which he desired to visit. He descended again into the court — he skirted the edifice, keeping close to the shadowy wall — he saw the door but a few paces distant, which led to the prison-chambers. At dead of night it must be locked and barred, guarded by a sentinel, quite inaccessible to him. He paused — he saw no soldier near — he walked on a few steps quickly; the door was wide open — this looked like success — he sprung up the steps; a man below cried, "Who goes there?" adding, "Is it you, sir? My light is puffed out; I will bring one anon." Above he heard another voice — there was no retreat — he went on, relying on some chance, that might afford him a refuge under cover of mirky night from the two-fold danger that beset him. A man stood at the door-way of the nearest chamber; it was not possible to pass him — as he hesitated he heard the words, "Good rest visit your Lordship — I grieve to have disturbed you." Richard retired a few steps — the man closed, locked the door—"A light, ho!" he exclaimed, and the Prince feared to see the servitor ascend the stairs. The moon just beginning to show its clouded rays threw a brief ray upon the landing, where Richard stood, and he moved out of the partial radiance; the slight movement he made attracted notice, which was announced by a challenge of “Who goes there? is it you, Fitzwilliam? How is this? the word, sir!”

The Duke knew that, among the numerous and various inhabitants of the Tower, many were personally unknown to each other; and that any stranger visitor was not entrusted with the word — so he replied immediately, as his best safeguard. “I was roused by the calling of the guard. I knew not that such reveilles were usual; good night, sir.”

Those pay little attention to the impression of their senses, who are not aware, that family resemblance developes itself in nothing so much as the voice; and that it is difficult in the dark to distinguish relatives. In confirmation of this I heard a sagacious observer remark, and have proved the observation true, that the formation of the jaw, and setting of the teeth is peculiar, and the same in families. But this is foreign — enough, that, caught by the voice, hardly able to distinguish the obscure outline of the speaker in the almost blackness of night — the man replied, “I crave pardon, my good Lord, you forget yourself, this way is your chamber. What, ho! a light!”

“It needs not,” said the Prince; “the glare would offend mine eyes — I shall find the door.”

“Permit me,” said the other, going forward, “I will wait on your Lordship so far. I wonder not you were roused; there was an alarm at the river postern, and the whole guard roused. Sir John thought it might concern poor Sir William; and I was fain to see all right with him. It irked me truly to break in on his repose; the last he may ever have.”

They approached a door; the man’s hand was on the lock — Richard’s heart beat so loud and fast, that it seemed to him that that alone must be perceived and excite suspicion — if the door were fastened on the inside he were lost; but the man was in no hurry to try — he talked on: —

“The Lieutenant was the more suspicious, because he gave credit and easy entrance to his pretended stripling son, who craved for it even with tears: yet when they met, we all thought that the Lord Chamberlain did not greet him as a parent would a child at such a time; the truth, indeed, we saw with half an eye, be she his daughter, or his light-of-love; yet not the last, methinks, for she seemed right glad to be accommodated for the night in a separate chamber — she is a mere girl besides, and in spite of her unmeet garb, modest withal.”

"When goes she? With the dawn?" Richard hazarded these questions, for his silence might be more suspected than his speech; and the information he sought, imported to him.

"Nay, she will stay to the end for me," said the man: "Sir William was a kind gentleman, as I can testify, in his prosperity; and it is little to let him have the comfort of this poor child's company for a day longer: he dies on the morrow."

"Could I see this fair one?"

"By my troth, fair she is not, though lovely to look on, but somewhat burnt, as if her mother had been a dweller in the south. If you visit and take leave of Sir Stanley to-morrow, you may chance to behold her: but I detain you, my Lord; a good night, rather, a good morning to your lordship."

He unclosed the door; all was dark within, save that the chamber opened into another at the further end, in which evidently a lamp was burning. Kind thanks and a benison passed; Richard stepped within the apartment, and the door shut on him.

What could this mean? Glad, confused, yet still fearful, the Prince was almost deprived of the power of motion. Recovering himself with a strong effort, he passed on to the inner chamber: it was a bed-room, tapestried, strewed thick with rushes, a silver lamp suspended by a silver chain to the grim claws of a gilt eagle, which was fixed in the ceiling, gave token of rank, as well as the rich damask of the bed-furniture and the curious carving of the couch and seats; the articles of dress also strewed about belonged to the noble born: strange, as yet Richard had not conjectured for whom he had been mistaken! He drew near the bed, and gazed fixedly on its occupier. The short, clustering, auburn curls were tinged with grey, yet the sleeper was young, though made untimely old by suffering; his cheeks were wasted and fallen in; the blue veins on his brow were conspicuous, lifting the clear skin which clung almost to the bones; he was as pale as marble, and the heavy eye-lids were partly raised even in sleep by the large blue ball that showed itself beneath; one hand lay on the coverlid, thin to emaciation. What manner of victim was this to Henry's tyranny? nay, the enigma was easily solved: it must be the Earl of Warwick. "And such, but for my cousin Lincoln, would have been my fate," thought Richard. He remembered his childhood's imprisonment; he thought of the long days and nights of confinement, the utter hopelessness, the freezing despair, blighting the budding hopes of youth, the throes of intolerable, struggling agony, which had reduced poor Warwick to this shadow of humanity; he felt a choking sensation in his throat as he bent over him; large drops gathered in his eyes; they fell, ere he was aware, on the sleeper's wan cheek.

Warwick turned uneasily, opened his eyes, and half started up, "Whom have we here?" he cried; "why am I disturbed?"

"Your pardon, fair gentleman," Richard began —

"My pardon!" repeated Warwick bitterly; "were that needed, you were not here. What means this intrusion — tell me, and be gone?"

"I am not what you take me for, cousin Edward," said the Prince.

Now indeed did Warwick start: shading his eyes from the lamp he gazed earnestly on the speaker, murmuring, "That voice, that name — it cannot be — In the name of sweet charity speak again; tell me what this means, and if you are — why this visit, why that garb?"

"My dear Lord of Warwick," said the Prince, "dismiss this inquietude, and if you will listen with patience to the story of an unhappy kinsman, you shall know all. I am Richard of York; those whose blood is akin to yours as well as mine, have y'cleped me the White Rose of England."

The Earl of Warwick had heard of the Pretender set up by his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy; he had often pondered over the likelihood of his really being his cousin, and the alteration it would occasion in his fortunes, if he were to succeed. Shut out from the world, as he had been so long, the victim of mere despair, he could not even imagine that good could betide to any one, save to the oppressor of his race; to see Perkin, for so he had been taught to call him, within the walls of the ill-fated Tower, appeared to disclose at once his defeat. Even when the Duke rapidly and briefly narrated the accidents that had brought him thither, and his strange position, Prince Edward believed only that he had been decoyed into the trap, which had closed on him for ever.

Still Richard talked on: his ardour, his confidence in his own measures, his vivacious anxiety already to put them into practice, his utter fearlessness, were not lost upon one who had been dead to outward impressions, not from want of sensibility, but from the annihilation of hope. Some of his cousin's spirit overflowed into Warwick's heart; and, in conclusion, he assented to all he said, promising to do whatever was required of him, though after ten years of lone imprisonment he almost shrunk from emerging from his listless state.

CHAPTER VII.

Let all the dukes and all the devils roar.
He is at liberty! I've ventured for him;
And out I've brought him to a little wood
A mile hence.
— TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

Morning, cold and wintry, dawned upon the gloomy chambers of the Tower. York became eager to put in execution some plan of escape in which Warwick should share; but Warwick was full of timidity and fear. His prison was a frightful den; yet all without was a wide, pathless, tiger-infested jungle. He besought his cousin to regard his own safety only. Richard refused; yet the more he meditated, the more did obstacles crowd upon him. After the lapse of an hour, Warwick was called upon to attend early mass, as usual, in the chapel of the fortress. Here he saw Stanley and the disguised shrinking Monina; and, the service ended, attended them to the prison-chamber of the Chamberlain, relating as he went, in quick low whispers, the history of the preceding night. Both his hearers grew pale: one feared for her friend, the other for himself; though on that score all cause of dread was well nigh at an end. All three entered Stanley's cell, and found there Prince Richard himself, whose active mind had led him to watch his opportunity to pass hither unseen from Warwick's apartment.

The young Earl of March, arming for the battle of Northampton, looked not so young, so blooming, and so frankly erect, as his uncrowned son. Stanley saw at once who was before him, and, never forgetting the courtier, addressed his Prince with a subject's respect. York was struck by the placid, though somewhat worldly physiognomy of the man, devoted to die, at the age when human beings are most apt to cling to life; when, having weathered the storms and passions of youth, they desire to repose awhile on the sun-enlightened earth, before they enter the gloomy gates of the tomb.

The Prince spoke eagerly of escape — of safety — of life: Warwick, even timid Warwick, urged an attempt at flight; while Monina kissed her aged friend's hand, and turned her sweet eyes on him, saying: "You will listen to him, though you were deaf to me."

Stanley alone was unmoved—"A thousand heartfelt, useless thanks, my dear and honoured Lord, your poor servant renders; and even when prayer for himself is most needed, earnestly he prays that harm to you arise not from your unexampled generosity. I cannot fly; I do believe that I would not, if I could: and I will spare myself the disgrace of further endangering you, and of being seized myself in the coward's act. Ask me not, with your beseeching eyes, my gentle, venturous child, for it must not be. I die to-morrow; and this fate you would have me avoid. Whither would you drag me from the block? To poverty? to an unhonoured old age? a traitor's reputation, and miserable dependance? I am a sinful man; but I trust in God's mercy, and he holds out better hopes after the brief spasm of death, than you after the torture of difficult escape."

More he would have said, but they were interrupted; they had not been aware of any one's approach; and suddenly Sir John Digby, Lieutenant of the Tower, entered. He was aghast to see one more than he expected, one whose demeanour spoke nobility. Silence followed his entrance, nor did words readily present themselves to the blunt soldier; at length, addressing the cause of this wonder, he in an ironical tone of voice asked—"May I, Lieutenant of this Fortress, delegated by his Majesty to its keeping, be permitted to ask, fair sir, the name, station, and designs, of my unbidden guest?"

"My answer to your two first questions," replied York, "would little satisfy you; my design was to facilitate the escape of this virtuous and unhappy gentleman."

"The King is infinitely your debtor, and I shall prove unmannered in marring your intent."

"You do not mar it, Sir John," said the Prince; "my Lord Chamberlain is a true man, and would rather lay his head on the block at his liege's bidding, than carry it in security at the prayer of any other. Sir William has refused to fly; and, my mission ended, I was about to take my leave."

"Do so, young man; take leave — an eternal one — of Sir William, and follow me. My Lord of Warwick, this is an unmeet scene for you to be present at. This holy man comes to bestow the last words of pious comfort my noble prisoner can receive in this world: please your Lordship to leave them together uninterrupted. I am sorry," continued the Lieutenant, addressing Monina, "to retract the permission I gave you yesterday; but this strange incident must be my excuse: say a last farewell to him you have named your father."

Monina dreaded too much the fate that might befall her friend, to entreat for any change in this decree. Soon poor Sir William found himself separated from the busy scene of life, shut up with the chaplain. He was bid to remember and repent, and to prepare to die. A dark veil fell before the vista of coming years, which was apparent to the eyes of his late companions. He saw in the present hour — one only, almost superfluous, added to the closing account. They beheld in it the arbiter of their undivined destinies.

It is an awful emotion, when we feel that the "very shoal of time" on which we stand, is freighted with the good and ill of futurity — that the instant birth of the hour inherits our entire fortunes. Yet Richard was proof against this rough testimony of our powerless mortality. The ill had not yet arrived, with which he did not believe he could cope; and more — now he was bent upon endeavouring to save Stanley; for his own fate, though about to expose it to the most unquestioned shape of peril, he had no fears.

Sir John Digby, followed by his new prisoners, paced back to his own chamber, and then addressed his uninvited guest. "Fair gentleman," he said, "again I crave to be informed of your name and degree, that his Majesty may be duly made acquainted on whom to bestow his thanks. Your speech and appearance are English?"

"Whoever I may be," replied York, "I will reveal nothing except to your King. If he is willing to listen to disclosures nearly touching his throne and safety, I will rouse him by a tale to shake sleep from one who has steeped his eyes in poppy juice. To no other will I vouch-safe a word."

Monina listened in terror. She would have given her life to beseech her friend to retract that foolish word, but it was too late; while his questioner, startled by his unforeseen reply, said "You make a bold demand; think you that his Grace is of such common use, that it is an easy matter to attain his presence?"

"I have said it, Sir John," answered York; "your liege may hereafter visit with poor thanks the denial you give me."

The Lieutenant fixed his eyes on him; his youth and dignity impressed him favourably; but he hesitated, confused by doubts of who and what he might be. At last he said, “His Majesty is at present at his palace of Shene, ten miles hence.

“The less reason, Sir Lieutenant,” replied Richard, “that you should dally in the execution of your duty. The life of your prisoner, the fortunes of your King, depend upon this interview.”

This was a riddle difficult for Sir John to solve; and he was about to order his enigmatical visitant to the guard-room, while he should consult upon the fitting conduct to pursue; when a beating at the gates, the letting down of the draw-bridge, and the clatter of hoofs announced fresh arrivals at the fortress.

The attention of every one was suspended, till, the usher announcing the excellent Prince, the Earl of Desmond, that noble, attended by followers, almost with regal pomp, entered. He cast his penetrating glance around, and then unbonneting to the Duke, he said respectfully, “Your Highness will believe that as soon as I heard of the position into which, pardon me, your generous rashness has betrayed you, I hastened hither to vouch for you, and deliver you from it.”

To such a speech, so unexpected, so portentous, what answer? Richard felt inclined to laugh, as he heard himself spoken to, in terms which seemed to say that the discovery of who he really was, would occasion his release; but he quickly discerned a hidden meaning beneath this incomprehensible language, and he contented himself with graciously thanking the Earl for his interference, while this noble turned to address the wondering Sir John.

“Sir Lieutenant,” said he, “I have a strange story to tell, fitter for his Majesty’s ears than those of a subject; but his Grace is absent, and it were not well that this noble gentleman should be kept in durance while messengers go to and fro. Rather dismiss your followers, and I will confide a weighty secret to you, and bring such arguments as will induce you to entrust the high-born youth to my care and escort.”

Digby was not much of a statesman; he had a simple heart, and considerable veneration for rank. He knew that the Earl of Desmond had been well received at court, and complied with his desire. The noble then began a long explanation of parties and tumults in Scotland; of the frightful death of James the Third; the accession of James the Fourth; the discontent of several chief nobles, who wished to set up the younger brother of the new king in opposition to him. “Your Highness,” continued Desmond, addressing Richard, “will pardon me for thus introducing your name — this, Sir Lieutenant, is the Duke of Rosse, who has come, and not vainly, to seek the assistance of our liege.”

Sir John bowed low and looked puzzled, while Desmond continued to speak of disguise and secresy, of friendship for Stanley, and of the rash design of Lord Barry of Buttevant and the young Duke to liberate him, chiefly under the idea that thus they should best serve King Henry, who must in his heart be loth to have his zealous friend put to death through the falsehood of faction. “And now, gentle Sir,” he continued, “be guided by me; the King loves peace; he loves state privacy; the very presence of the Duke in this country is a mystery; you will do agreeable service by hushing up this youthful frolic. Permit his Highness to accompany me; I will make fitting report to his Majesty, who will be grateful withal.”

There was a kind of confused tallying in the story; for Richard’s mysterious words were at no discord with Desmond’s explanations; and his excessively youthful and perfectly noble appearance were further corroboration. Digby liked not the responsibility of keeping him: he spoke of sending for the Bishop of Durham. Desmond exclaimed, “A soldier have recourse to a priest — this England is a strange country! Do as you will; only until the thumber of missals arrive, this is no place of entertainment for the Prince. We will receive you and your clericus at Walbrook; and I will entertain the royal gentleman till you come.”

Digby still looked blank and uncertain. Richard, who had remained silent, now spoke: “Farewell, good Sir; in truth, I need your excuse for my impertinent visit; but here it ends. When I travel to Scotland, I will report the favour I met at your hands.”

This sufficed. Sir John sullenly yielded: with a mixture of fear and deference, he attended his visitors to the court; they crossed the drawbridge; and ere the Tower-gates closed behind them, they heard the lieutenant order out a guard and his own horse, that without loss of time he might communicate with the Bishop.

The Duke and his preserver rode gently enough down Tower Hill: scarce had they reached the foot, before the Earl gave a sudden command to his followers, who turned one way, as he, York, and Monina, who had left the Tower at the same time, and was mounted on one of Desmond’s attendants’ horses, went another. “Au galoppe, dear, my lord!” cried the Earl, “we have but a short hour’s grace — this way — still the river to our left.”

They galloped along with loosened reins. Arriving at the vale of Holborn, they followed the upward course of the Fleet, so to reach the open country; and many a wild field they crossed, and briary lane they threaded — the country was flat, marshy, wild; skirted in various directions by brown wintry woods, rarely interspersed by hamlets. The river was their only guide; they followed its course for several miles, till they reached the shelter of Caen Wood. “Thank St. Patrick for this cover!” cried the Irish chieftain; “may my cousin Barry find no let nor hindrance — yon troubled stream will guide him well. We have done a daring deed: for me, I have not ridden so far since my father, God sain him! died — I am well nigh hors de combat.”

The Prince assisted both his companions to dismount. Lord Desmond’s tale was soon told, of how Lord Barry had sought him and suggested this mode of effecting York’s escape. “With the help of your Moorish friend,” said the Earl, “no ill wind betide me — I shall be in Munster before the riddle be half told; that is, if ever we reach the vessel. By my faith! I would rather be knee-deep in a bog in Thomond, than dry shod where I am!”

As day advanced, the situation of the fugitives became still more disquieting. All was tranquil in the leafless wood; but, in spite of the sun, it was very cold. Besides, they were in an unknown spot, without guide; their sole hope being, that each passing minute would bring Lord Barry to their assistance. Earl Maurice was thoroughly disabled; he grumbled at first, and at last wearied out, lay on the cold ground, and fell into a slumber. Monina, serious, timid, and yet in spite of herself happy in her friend’s safety, and in her own being near him, was silent; while Richard, to escape from his own thoughts, talked to her. When, for a moment, his conversation languished, his eyes were fondly fixed upon her downcast face, and a strife of sentiment, of ardent long-restrained love, and a torturous, but severe resolve to protect her even from himself, battled in his heart; so that, in all-engrossing love, every sense of danger was lost.

Desmond at last roused himself: “The shadows grow long; herbage there is little for our horses, pasture for ourselves there is none — if we stay we starve; if we stir, we—”

He was interrupted; strange voices came upon the wind; then the crackling of boughs, and the sound of steps. Through the vista of bare trees the intruders at length appeared, in strange array. There was a band of ill-attired, ruffian-looking men, followed by women and children; their swart visages, their picturesque, but scant and ragged garb, their black hair and dark flashing eyes were not English. Some were on foot, some on asses, some in a cart, drawn by two rough ill-assorted colts — their very language was foreign. Richard and Monina recognised a horde of Gitani, Bohemians, or Gypsies; while Desmond looked in wonder on something almost wilder than the Irish kern.

The savage wanderers were surprised to perceive the previous guests the barren woods had received — they paused and looked around in some fear; for the noble appearance of the gentlemen made them imagine that they must be accompanied by numerous attendants. York's quick wit suggested to him in a moment of what good use such humble friends might be. He addressed them; told them that they were travellers who had lost their way, "And so we have encroached on your rightful domain; but, like courteous hosts, I beseech you, gentlemen, welcome us to your green-wood palace, and make happy, as you will grateful, guests of us."

Thus invited, the whole horde gathered round — the women, fancying all three of an opposite sex, were forward with their prophetic art.

"My fortune," cried Desmond, "shall not be told before supper; it is an ill one, by the rood! at this hour. I have fasted since yesternight."

Preparations were speedily made for a repast, while Richard, alive to his situation, looked around for the most fitting object to address; whose charity and aid he could hope to solicit with the greatest success. One laughing-eyed girl glanced at him with peculiar favour; but near her stood and scowled a tall handsome countryman of her own. York turned to another, fairer, who sat retired apart; she looked more gentle and even refined than the rest. He addressed her in courtly phrase, and her reply, though ready, was modest. The acquaintance was a little in progress, when one of the oldest among the sibyls, with white hair, and a face of wrinkled parchment, hobbled up, muttering, "Aye, aye, the fairest flower is aye the dearest to pluck; any of those gaudy weeds might serve his turn; but no, my young master must needs handle the daintiest bloom of the garden." Notwithstanding this interruption, Richard still stood his ground, bandying pretty speeches with one, not the less pleased, because, strictly guarded by her duenna, she was unaccustomed to the language of flattery.

"Hast never a word for me, fair sir," said the crone, at last; "no comparison of star and gems for one, who in her day has flaunted with silk-clad dames — whose lips have been pressed even by a king?"

His father's reputation for gallantry, thus alluded to, brought the blood into York's cheeks; forgetful of what import his words bore, he replied hastily, "Sleep King Edward's faults with him, mother; it is neither wise nor well to speak irreverently of those gone to their doom — may God assoilzie him!"

"What voice is that?" cried the old woman; "if I boast, Heaven forgive me, of his Grace's slight favour, your mother may take shame—" "Your words are naught," cried York, interrupting her, "my mother's is a sacred name — yet, tell me in very truth, and give me some sign that indeed you knew my father."

The word passed his lips before he was aware, but being spoken, he felt that it were best not to recede. Seizing the old woman's shrivelled hand, he said, "Look — use thy art — read my palm: read rather my features, and learn indeed who I am: I am in danger; you may betray, or you may save me, choose which you will — I am the Duke of York."

An exclamation checked, a look of boundless surprise, changed into a cautious glance around, attested the Gypsy's wish to serve the venturous youth. "Rash boy," she answered, in a low voice, "what idle, or what mortal words are these! How art thou here? With what hope? What aid?"

"Frankly, none but what I derive from your bounty. I have escaped worse peril, so do not fear but that God will protect me; and even turn to profit my parent's sin, if his kiss purchase his son's life."

"Young sir," said the Gypsy, with great seriousness, "the flower of love is gay — its fruit too often bitter. So does she know on whose account I wickedly and shamelessly did the Foul Fiend's bidding, and ruined a sinless soul to gratify the pleasure-loving king. But thou hast paid the penalty: thou and thine, who have been called by the ill-word; thrust from thy place by thy crook-back uncle; and now art nearer a dungeon than a throne, through thy father's fault. I will serve and save thee; tell me quickly, who are thy companions — whither thou wouldst go? that I may judge the best to be done."

It is to be observed, that at the very beginning of this colloquy, the young girl, whom York had first addressed, had stolen away. Now he replied by mentioning the lameness of his elder friend, and his resolve not to be divided from the other. He spoke of the Adalid, and of his further wish to be awhile concealed in England. The old woman continued silent, wrapt in thought. At length she raised her head—"It can be done, and it shall," she said, half to herself, "Come now, they are serving our homely fare. You, who are young, and ill apt for penance, must eat before you go."

The savoury steams of the well-filled and rustic marmite, gave force to her words, and to Richard's appetite. The repast was plentiful and gay, and even too long. Evening was far advanced, the fire grew light in the dusk, and threw its fitful rays upon the strange and incongruous feasters. Monina had cowered close to Richard; the cup went round; scarcely did she put it to her lips; a rude companion of the crew made some rough jest on her sobriety. Richard's face lighted up with anger: his watchful old friend stept forward, in her own jargon she made some communication to her associates, which caused a universal pause, and then a stir: it was evident some movement was intended. She meanwhile drew the three fugitives aside. "In a few minutes," she said, "we shall all be on our way hence; listen how I would provide for your safeties." She then proposed that Desmond should assume the disguise of one of the horde, and so be conveyed in safety to the banks of the Thames, and on board the Adalid. She promised herself to conduct the Prince and his young friend to a secure refuge. The Earl, accustomed to find fidelity and rags near mates, readily acceded to this proposal. In the solitary unknown spot to which chance had directed them, environed by every danger, no step was more perilous than the remaining where they were. York and Monina were familiar with the reports of the gypsy character — its savage honour and untractable constancy. The season was such, though the day had been unusually sunny and warm, as to make a night in the open air no agreeable anticipation; and Richard had a thousand fears on his lovely friend's account. They all readily acceded to the old woman's plan. Desmond was quickly disguised, his visage stained deep brown, his whole person transformed; he was placed in the caravan, and the horde was speedily in movement; the sound of their departing steps died away. They had left a rude cart, to which York's horse, a strong hack, was harnessed. The sibyl undertook to guide it. Richard and

Monina ascended the jumbling fabric. Soon they were on their journey, none but their conductress knew in what direction; but they submitted to her, and through copse and over field they wound their darkling way.

CHAPTER VIII.

So love did vanish with my state.
Which now my soul repents too late;
Then, maids and wives, in time amend.
For love and beauty will have end.
— BALLAD OF JANE SHORE.

Oh, it grieves my soul
That I must draw this metal from my side
To be a widow-maker!
— SHAKSPEARE.

Seated in the rude gypsy-cart, guided, protected, by the uncouth being into whose hands he had so strangely fallen, Richard for the first time felt the degradation and low fortune to which his aspirations, at variance with his means, made him liable. With a strong effort he dismissed these painful ideas, and fixed his contemplation on mightier objects, which gilded his mean estate, or were rather the “gold o’erdusted” by such extraneous poverty. To rise from this lowliness to a throne were an emprise worthy his ambition. Was he not a few hours ago a prisoner in the terror-striking Tower? And now he was free — free in his England; which, when the battle-day was come and past, would claim him for her own. A few words from Monina interrupted the silence: she sat at his feet, and they conversed in whispers in Spanish. Night had gathered round them; Monina, in all the innocence of her pure heart, was supremely happy: to be near her friend in his disasters, united to him in his peril, was a more rapturous destiny to her than the world’s best pomp, and he absent. No busy conscience, no untoward thought, disturbed in her soul the calm of perfect bliss. She grew weary at last; her head sunk on Richard’s knee, and, overworn with watching, she fell into a deep sleep. Richard heard her regular breathing; once or twice his fingers played among her dishevelled ringlets, while his heart whispered to him what a wondrous creation woman was — weak, frail, complaining when she suffers for herself; heroic fortitude and untired self-devotion are hers, when she sacrifices herself for him she loves.

The cart moved on, Richard saw not whither; they almost stuck in some flat low fields, and at last arrived at a solitary, miserable hut. Monina awoke, when they stopt, and the gypsy told them that this wretched dwelling was to be their asylum: the apartment they entered was poor beyond meanness — a bed of straw piled in one corner, a rude bench, formed the furniture; the walls were ragged and weather-stained, and the outer crumbling rafters were visible through the broken ceiling: there appeared to be neither food nor fire. The inhabitant of the hovel alone was there, a white-looking, emaciated female; yet with a look of such sweetness and patience, that she seemed the very enshrinement of Christian resignation, the type of sorrow and suffering, married to meek obedience to the supreme will. She had roused herself from slumber at the voice of the gypsy, and gathered her scant garments around her — scant and poor they were; her coarse woollen dress was tied by a girdle of rope round her slender waist; her head was wrapt in a kerchief; her feet were bare.

"Jane," said the old woman, "you will not refuse the shelter of your roof to these poor wanderers?"

Such an address seemed strange, for the rich attire of her guests ill-accorded with her poverty-stricken home; but she turned with a smile — she spoke — and then a throb of agony seemed to convulse her frame — her head swam; Richard rushed forward to prevent her falling, but she shrunk from him, and leaned on the old woman, who said with a look of triumph, "I knew how it would be; it is vain to hide a bright light behind a veil of gauze! Yes, Jane, this is his son; and you may save him from danger and death."

Jane Shore, the once lovely mistress of King Edward, now the miserable outcast of the world's scorn, heard these words, as if they had been spoken to her in a dream. After the death of her royal lover, she had obeyed the impulse that made her cling to the soft luxuries of life, and yielded to solicitations which tended to guard her from the sharp visitation of the world. She had become the mistress of the Marquess of Dorset; but sorrow and penury were destined to pursue her in their worst shape — and wherefore? She had been good and humane; and in spite of her error, even the sternest moralist might have pitied her. But she was all woman, fearful of repulse, dreading insult; more willing to lie down and die, than, fallen and miserable, to solicit uncertain relief: squalid poverty, famine, and lonely suffering, were hers; yet in all she preserved an unalterable sweetness of disposition, which painted her wan face with its own soft colouring.

The old woman went forth to seek for food, and the two friends were left for several hours alone with Jane. She gazed affectionately on the youthful Duke; she looked more timidly on Monina, whose sex could not be said to be disguised by her page's dress: the fallen woman fears women, their self-sufficient virtues and cold reprobation; yet the sensibility of Monina's countenance, and the soft expression of her eyes, so all-powerful in their sweetness, could not be mistaken; and her first shrinking from censure was exchanged for even a more painful feeling. They were a lovely pair, these lone guests of poverty; innocence sat on the brow of each, yet love beamed in their aspect: — love! the two-edged sword, the flower-strewn poison, the dread cause of every misery! More than famine and sickness Jane feared love; for with it in her mind were linked shame and guilt, and the world's unkindness, hard to bear to one, whose heart was "open as day to melting charity;" and she feared that she saw in this sweet girl a bright reflex of her early days. Oh, might the blotted mirror ne'er pourtray a change like hers! "I am a living lesson of the woes of love," thought poor Jane; "may this chance-visit to my hut, which saves young Richard's life, ensure her innocence!" Thus impelled, she spoke: she spoke of the danger of their solitary companionship; she adjured York to fly the delusive charm — for love's own sake he ought to fly; for if he made her his victim, affection would be married to hate — joy to woe — her he prized to a skeleton, more grim than death. Richard strove to interrupt her, but she misunderstood his meaning; while Monina, somewhat bewildered, fancied that she only alluded to the dangers she incurred in his cause, and with her own beaming look cried, "Oh, Mother, is it not better to suffer for one so noble, than to live in the cold security of prosperity?"

"No, no," said Jane, "Oh, does my miserable fate cry aloud, no! Edward, his father, was bright as he. Libertine he was called — I know not if truly; but sincere was the affection he bore to me. He never changed nor faltered in the faith he promised, when he led me from the dull abode of connubial strife, to the bright home of love. Riches and the world's pleasures were the least of his gifts, for he gave me himself and happiness. Behold me now: twelve long years have passed, and I waste and decay; the wedded wife of shame; famine, sorrow, and remorse, my sole companions."

This language was too plain. The blood rushed into Monina's face. "Oh, love him not," continued the hapless penitent; "fly his love, because he is beautiful, good, noble, worthy — fly from him, and thus preserve him yours for ever."

Monina quickly recovered herself; she interrupted her imprudent monitress, and calmly assured her that her admonition, though unnecessary, should not prove vain; and then both she and York exerted themselves to engage Jane's attention on topics relative to his cause, his hopes, his partizans, thus exciting her curiosity and interest.

Richard passed the whole of the following day in this abode of penury and desolation. That day, indeed, was big with dire event. The morning rose upon Stanley's death. In Jane's hut the hollow bell was heard that tolled the fatal hour. The ear is sometimes the parent of a livelier sense than any other of the soul's apprehensive portals. In Italy, for three days in Passion Week, the sound of every bell and of every clock is suspended. On the noon of the day when the mystery of the Resurrection is solemnized, they all burst forth in one glad peal. Every Catholic kneels in prayer, and even the unimaginative Protestant feels the influence of a religion, which speaks so audibly. And, in this more sombre land, the sad bell that tolls for death, strikes more melancholy to the heart, than the plumed hearse, or any other pageantry of woe. In silence and fear the fugitives heard the funereal knell sweep across the desolate fields, telling them that at that moment Stanley died.

Women nurse grief — dwell with it. Like poor Constance, they dress their past joys in mourning raiment, and so abide with them. But the masculine spirit struggles with suffering. How gladly, that very evening, did the Duke hail Frion's arrival, who, in the garb of a saintly pardoner, came to lead him from Jane's dim abode. In spite of his remonstrances, Monina refused to accompany him: she should endanger him, she said; besides that, his occupation would be to rouse a martial spirit among the Yorkists — hers to seek the Adalid and her dear father's protection.

Frion procured a safe asylum for the Prince; and here, no longer pressed by the sense of immediate danger, his head was rife with projects, his spirit burning to show himself first to the Yorkists, in a manner worthy of his pretensions. The choice was hazardous and difficult: but it so happened, that it was notified that in a few weeks Lord Surrey's eldest sister was to marry the Lord de Walden, and the ceremony was to be graced with much feasting and a solemn tournament.

There was magic in all the associations with this family for Richard. In his early infancy, Thomas Mowbray, the last of the Dukes of Norfolk of that name, died. It almost was beyond his recollection, that he had been married to the little Lady Anne, the Duke's only child and heiress. She died soon after; and the representative of the female branch of the Mowbrays, John Howard, was created Duke of Norfolk by Richard the Third. He fell at Bosworth; and his son, the Earl of Surrey, though attaching himself to Henry the Seventh, and pardoned and taken into favour, was not permitted to assume his father's attainted title.

At this marriage feast the mother of his Anne, the dowager Duchess of Norfolk, daughter of Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, so famous in the French wars, would be present; and others of the Howard and Berkeley families, all Yorkist once. The Prince could not resist the temptation of appearing on the lists that day, where, if success crowned him, as surely it would, he could with prouder hopes call on Surrey to maintain his claims. Frion got gallant armour for him, and contrived to have him, under another name, inserted in the list of combatants.

York's bosom swelled with pride and exultation, when he saw himself among his countrymen — his subjects — with lance in rest and bright shield upon his arm, about to tilt with England's noblest cavaliers. It seemed to him, as if he had never asked more of fortune — and the herald's voice, the clarion's sound, the neigh of steeds, the gallant bearing of the knights, and charmed circle of joyous beauty around, were like a voice from beyond life, speaking of a Paradise he had left, — his own native home. But one emotion of disquiet crossed him: as about to pass the barrier, Frion put his hand on his rein, and whispered, "Beware of Clifford!" The Duke threw his eyes round the vizored throng. With what gladness would he have singled him out, and met him in fierce, mortal combat! A second thought told him that the dishonoured man could not find place in this gallant company.

We will not dwell on the tilt, the thrust, and the parry, the overthrowing of horses, and defeat of knights. Richard gloried in the recollection of his Spanish combats, and the love he bore for martial exercises, which made him, so boyish in figure, emulate the strong acts of men. Fortune had varied; but, when at noon the pastime of that day ended, the Prince remained victor in the field. From the hand of the Queen of the Feast he was receiving his reward, when Surrey, who had led him to her throne, was suddenly called away. The assembly broke up; and Richard was half occupied by polite attention to the Countess, and half by recollecting his peculiar situation, when the Marshall of the Lists whispered him to follow — he led him to a gallery, where Surrey alone was pacing backwards and forwards in great agitation. He stopped when the Prince entered — motioned the Marshall to leave them, and then in a voice of suppressed passion, said, “I will not ask thee why with a false appellation thou hast insulted the feast of nobles? — but well may I ask, what fiend possessed thee to do a deed that affixes the taint of disloyalty to King Henry’s liege subject?”

“My good sword, my Lord,” said Richard, colouring, “were eloquent to answer your questioning, but that you are much deceived; I am not indeed that which I called myself; but honour, not disgrace, attaches itself to my presence. I came to tell you this, to rouse the old fidelity of the Howards; to bid Lord Surrey arm for the last of the true Plantagenets.”

“Saint Thomas speed me! Clifford then spoke true — thou art Perkin Warbeck?”

“I would fain,” said the Duke haughtily, “ask a revered lady, who claims kindred with thee, what name she would give to her sainted daughter’s affianced husband?”

The language of truth is too clear, too complete, for the blots and flaws of incredulity; the very anger Lord Surrey had manifested, now turned to his confusion; the insult he had offered demanded reparation; he could not refuse his visitant’s earnest demand to be led to the widow of Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

Elizabeth, daughter of the gàllant Talbot, was proud of her ancestry, and disappointed in the diminution of her house. When her Anne was affianced to the little Duke of York, and the nobility of Norfolk was merged in the royal style of England, she had gloried; since then, attainder and defeat had eclipsed the ducal honours of her race; nor could she forgive the allegiance of its heirs to Lancaster. Often had she pondered on the reports concerning Margaret of Burgundy’s White Rose; it was with agitation therefore that she heard that he was to be brought for her to decide on his truth.

The Duke had doffed his helm: his golden hair clustered on the almost infantine candour of his brow, and shaded to softer meaning the frank aspect of his clear blue eyes. The aged Duchess fixed her dimmed but steady gaze upon him, and at once became aware that this was no ignoble pretender who stood before her. His dignity inspired Surrey with respect: he hesitated as he introduced the subject of his identity with Edward the Fourth's youngest son. The Duke, with a half smile, began to speak of his boyish recollections, and his little pretty play-fellow, and of one Mistress Margery, her gouvernante; he spoke of a quarrel with his infant bride on the very wedding-day, and how nothing would bribe him to the ceremony, save the gift of a pretty foal, White Surrey, which afterwards bore his uncle Gloucester in the battle of Bosworth. As he spoke he saw a smile mantle over the aged lady's countenance; and then he alluded to his poor wife's death, and reminded the Duchess, that when clad in black, an infant widower, he had visited her in condolence; and how the sad lady had taken a jewel-encircled portrait of her lost child, garnished with the blended arms of Plantagenet and Mowbray, from his neck, promising to restore it on an after day, which day had never come. Tears now rushed into the Duchess's eyes; she drew the miniature from her bosom, and neither she nor Lord Surrey could longer doubt, that the affianced husband of the noble Anne stood before them.

Much confusion painted the Earl's countenance. The Duke of York's first involuntary act had been to stretch out his hand; but the noble hesitated ere he could bestow on it the kiss of allegiance. Richard marked his reluctance, and spoke with gallant frankness: "I am an outcast," he said, "the victim of lukewarm faith and ill-nurtured treason: I am weak, my adversary strong. My lord, I will ask nothing of you: I will not fancy that you would revive the ancient bond of union between York and Norfolk; and yet, were it not a worthy act to pull down a base-minded usurper, and seat upon his father's throne an injured Prince?"

The Duchess answered for him. "Oh, surely, my noble cousin will be no recreant in this cause, the cause of our own so exalted lineage."

But Lord Surrey had different thoughts: it cost him much to express them; for he had loved the House of York, and honoured and pitied its apparent offspring. At length he overcame his feelings, and said, "And, if I do not this, if I do not assist to replant a standard whose staff was broken on the graves of our slaughtered fathers, will your Highness yet bear with me, while I say a few words in my defence?”

“It needs not, gallant Surrey,” interrupted York.

“Under favour, it does need,” replied the Earl; “and withal touches mine honour nearly, that it stand clear in this question. My lord, the Roses contended in a long and sanguinary war, and many thousand of our countrymen fell in the sad conflict. The executioner’s axe accomplished what the murderous sword spared, and poor England became a wide, wide grave. The green-wood glade, the cultivated fields, noble castles, and smiling villages were changed to churchyard and tomb: want, famine and hate ravaged the fated land. My lord, I love not Tudor, but I love my country: and now that I see plenty and peace reign over this fair isle, even though Lancaster be their unworthy vicegerent, shall I cast forth these friends of man, to bring back the deadly horrors of unholy civil war? By the God that made me, I cannot! I have a dear wife and lovely children, sisters, friends, and all the sacred ties of humanity, that cling round my heart, and feed it with delight; these I might sacrifice at the call of honour, but the misery I must then endure I will not inflict on others; I will not people my country with widows and orphans; nor spread the plague of death from the eastern to the western sea.”

Surrey spoke eloquently well; for his heart was upon his lips. Prince Richard heard with burning emotion. “By my fay!” he cried, “thou wouldst teach me to turn spinster, my lord: but oh, cousin Howard! did you know what it is to be an exiled man, dependant on the bounty of others; though your patrimony were but a shepherd’s hut on a wild nameless common, you would think it well done to waste life to dispossess the usurper of your right.”

CHAPTER IX.

Farewell, kind lord, fight valiantly to-day.
And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it.
For thou art framed of the firm truth of valour.
— SHAKSPEARE.

The Duke of York was not of a temperament to sink supinely before the first obstacles. Lord Surrey's deep-felt abjuration of war influenced him to sadness, but the usual habit of his mind returned. He had been educated to believe that his honour called on him to maintain his claims. Honour, always a magic word with the good and brave, was then a part of the religion of every pious heart. He had been nurst in war — the javelin and the sword were as familiar to his hand as the distaff and spindle to the old Tuscan crone. In addition, the present occasion called for activity. The fleet, armed for invasion, prepared by his noble aunt — manned by his exiled zealous friends — would soon appear on the English coast, giving form and force to, while it necessitated, his purposed attempt.

He possessed in his secretary Frion, a counsellor, friend, and servant, admirably calculated to prevent all wavering. This man's vanity, lionstrong, was alive to ensure his new master's success, and to overthrow him by whom he had been discarded. He was an adept in intrigue; an oily flatterer; a man of unwearied activity, both of mind and body. It was his care to prevent York from suffering any of the humiliations incident to his position. He obtained supplies of money for him — he suffered none to approach who were not already full of zeal — when he met with any failure, he proved logically that it was a success, and magnified an escape into a victory — he worked day and night to ensure that nothing came near the Prince, except through his medium, which was one sugared and drugged to please. When he saw Richard's clear spirit clouded by Lord Surrey, he demonstrated that England could not suffer through him; for that in the battle it was a struggle between partizans ready to lay down their lives in their respective causes, so that for their own sakes and pleasure, he ought to call on them to make the sacrifice. As to the ruin and misery of the land — he bade him mark the exactions of Henry; the penury of the peasant, drained to his last stiver — this was real wretchedness; devastating the country, and leaving it barren, as if sown with salt. Fertility and plenty would speedily efface the light wound he must inflict — nay, England would be restored to youth, and laugh through all her shores and plains, when grasping Tudor was exchanged for the munificent Plantagenet.

In one circumstance Frion had been peculiarly fortunate. The part he had played of astrologer during the foregoing summer, had brought him acquainted with a young nobleman zealous in the cause of York, and well able to afford it assistance. Lord Audley was of the west country, but his maternal relations were Kentish, and he possessed a mansion and a small estate not far from Hythe in Kent. Lord Audley was of a class of men common all over the world. He had inherited his title and fortune early in life, and was still a very young man. He loved action, and desired distinction, and was disposed to enter readily into all the turmoil and risk of conspiracy and revolt. His aim was to become a leader: he was vain, but generous; zealous, but deficient in judgment. He was a Yorkist by birth and a soldier by profession — all combined to render him, heart and soul, the friend of the wandering Plantagenet.

Frion led York to the mansion of this noble, and it became the focus of the spirit of sedition and discontent to the country round. The immediate presence of the Duke was concealed; but the activity of his friends was not the less great to collect a band of partizans, to which, when prepared and disciplined, they might present their royal leader. Their chief purpose was to collect such a body of men as might give one impetus to the county, when the invading fleet should arrive on these coasts from Burgundy. Time was wanting for the complete organization of their plan; for each day they expected the vessels, and their operations in consequence were a little abrupt. Still they were in hopes that they should be enabled to assemble an armed force sufficient to facilitate the landing and to ensure the success of the expected troops. Day and night these men were occupied in gathering together followers. It was not long, however, before the wily secretary discovered that some one was at work to counteract their schemes. Those he had left transported with zeal for the cause yesterday, to-day he found lukewarm or icy cold. Their enemy, whoever it might be, observed great mystery in his proceedings; yet he appeared to have intuitive knowledge of theirs. Frion exerted himself to discover the secret cause of all the mischief

— he was liberal of promises and bribes. One day he had appointed a rendezvous for a party of recruits, about a hundred men, who had been exercised for the last fortnight, and promised well — none arrived at the appointed spot. Frion rode sorrowfully through the dusk of the evening towards Lord Audley's dwelling. He was overtaken by a horseman, with a slouched hat, and otherwise muffled up: he rode at his side for a little way, quite mute to all Frion's courteous salutations; and then he suddenly put spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in a moment. Night grew darker; and at the mirk-embowered entrance of a shady lane, Frion was startled by the tramp of a horse — it was the same man:—"Maitre Frion!" he cried.

"Sir Robert Clifford!"

"The same — I knew not that my voice was so treacherous," Clifford began: he went on abruptly to declare that he was the counterminer; he, the secret marplot of the sagacious Frenchman's schemes. He displayed in all that he said a perfect knowledge of every transaction, and of the Prince's present residence. By'r lady's grace, he might have brought King Henry's archers to Lord Audley's very door! Wherefore he had not done this seemed strange; his own account perplexed. In truth, this wretched man, at war with guilt and with himself, loathed the dishonour he had acquired. Like all evil-disposed persons, he had no idea of purging himself from the foul stain by frank confession and reformation: his project was to begin a new career in a new country: to go where his own tarnished reputation was unknown, where the cankerous name of York would poison no more his native language by its perpetual recurrence. His violent passions led him also to other conclusions; he hated Richard, and loved Monina; his desire to satisfy both these sentiments suggested a project on which he now acted, and which dictated his discourse with Frion. He showed how from that very spot he might ride to London, and make disclosures to the King; his knowledge of every detail of the Yorkist plans was startling — ruinous; — his offer was simply this: — That the Duchess of Burgundy should pay him a thousand golden crowns; that the Spanish maiden, Monina, should consent to wed him; and that they should seek together the golden isles of the western ocean, leaving the Old World for York to ruffle in.

Frion desired time: it was necessary to consult Richard, and also Monina; where should they meet again? Clifford would appoint neither time nor place:—"I shall find you," he said: "I may draw your curtain at dead of night; come on you with an armed band of men, whom you think all your own. I will choose my own hour, my own audience-chamber. You have but to get the damsel's consent, and to tell her, an' you list, that she were better as Robin Clifford's wife, than as the light-of-love of the son of Jane Shore's gallant." With these words the Knight rode off; and being much better mounted than the Secretary, put all pursuit to defiance.

Frion was full of thought. He said nothing to the Duke or Lord Audley; but the following day hastened to visit Monina at Canterbury, where she had resided latterly, in the character of a pilgrim to St. Thomas-a-Becket's shrine. Frion had flattered himself that he could easily persuade the young inexperienced girl, whose ardour for York he had often admired. Yet he felt uncomfortable when he saw her. Monina looked a little pale, and her dark religious garb gave no adornment to her beauty; but there was in the innocence and tenderness of her full dark eye, in the soft moulding of the cheek which harmonized with the beautiful lids, and in her

"sweet lips like roses.
With their own fragrance pale, which Spring but half uncloses;"

— there was in all this a purity and soft appeal which even the politician felt, who looked on mankind as mere agents in the drama he caused to be acted. With some hesitation he brought out his story, but of course grew bolder as he proceeded. Monina looked pained, but said—"Double the number of crowns, and Sir Robert will content him. My father will make my ransom good."

Clifford's speech and manner had convinced Frion that this would not be the case; he tried to persuade Monina, and even repeated the Knight's insolent message. Her large eyes grew larger, dilating with surprize and indignation. He little knows woman, who thinks to govern the timid thing by threats. "Answer that bad man," she said, "thus: Monina will wed death, rather than crime and treason. Good master Frion, you have done wrong by so insulting mine ears: it were enough to drive a poor girl to eternal vows and a convent, to dream that such words are spoken of her; and if I do not take that refuge, it is because I will not desert my dear, fond, bereaved father — as soon I shall prove; meanwhile we must not delay to secure our Prince from his enemy's machinations. You know Astley, the poor scrivener in this town? I defy Clifford to win him. Bring his Highness there, I will prepare him. We must show a boldness to Clifford matching his own: let us be fearless for ourselves; and for the White Rose we need not fear. Stay; Clifford watches you; I will provide for the Duke's safety."

That very night by secret, unknown means (it might be through her gypsy friend), Monina had communicated with York, and induced him to take refuge with the man she named. Astley's father had been a soldier in the cause of York, and had died on Bosworth Field, leaving an unprovided widow and five children, one only among them being a son. From his youth upward, the boy had struggled, not with privation on his own account, to that he submitted without a murmur, but for the sake of his mother and sisters, whom he loved with an ardour peculiar to his sensitive and affectionate disposition. Weak in health and strength, he had betaken himself to the occupation of a scrivener, so meagrely to support them. It is probable that, in the frame of all, there was a delicacy of organization that unfitted them for penury. One by one they died. That spring had left Astley comparatively rich, because he could well support himself, but miserable beyond words, for he idolized all and every one of his lost relatives. Frion, had with unwearied care, made an accurate enumeration of all in Canterbury who had ever favoured the White Rose. Astley was on this list; he saw him, and passed him over as useless. Chance brought him and Monina together, who instantly detected his latent, unpractised talents, his integrity and enthusiasm; now his habitation occurred as an unsuspected and faithful asylum for her persecuted friend.

Frion was still at work; Clifford came on him suddenly, and heard with unrepressed rage his rejection by Monina; his threats were unmeasured; but the moment for putting them into execution to their full extent had gone by. On the very day that York arrived in safety at Canterbury, his fleet was seen off Hythe. In the morning the vessels hove in sight; towards evening they bore down upon land, and anchored in the offing. The land-breeze rising at evening tide secured them from the dangers of a lee shore.

Hythe is situated at the water's edge. The cliffs, which at Dover beetle so fearfully over the tremendous deep, have by degrees receded from their apparent task of paling in the ocean, and as they retire inland, lose their barren, precipitous aspect, and become green, wooded hills, overlooking a grassy plain, which extends from their feet to the sands, a distance of about half a mile. In the neighbourhood of Hythe a ravine, the bed of a stream, divides these acclivities, which on one side are abrupt, on the other softly rounded as they gradually disappear. Arcadia seems to breathe from the fertile landscape; the sunny uplands, the fringed banks of the rivulet, the darker shadows of the wooded hills, are contrasted with the verdant meadows, on which cattle and sheep graze. But the sea, the dark, dangerous sea, with barking waves and vast encircling barrenness, suddenly checks the beauty of the earth, adding magnificence to the pastoral prospect.

A few days before, some gypsies had pitched their tents near the stream: some of the wanderers had strolled down to Hythe; but they were looked on for the most part with suspicion and fear. Now, while at the close of day most of the inhabitants of the little town were collected on the beach, gazing on the anchored vessels, two stout-looking gypsy-men, with one old woman of their tribe, were lying on the sands, occupied in their lazy way, by the same object, the vessels in sight. The people of Hythe, fishers, or such poor traders as supplied the fishermen with a few coarse necessaries, were rouzed from the usual monotony of their lives by the aspect of this fleet. Added to these, there were three or four mendicant friars; an old soldier or two, disabled in the wars of the two Roses, and a few dependents on neighbouring nobles or Franklins; while women and children of various ages filled up the group. They all spoke of the fleet: it consisted of five armed vessels; two of these were weather-beaten caravels, two were low-decked Flemish smacks, but the fifth was one of prouder build, and it bore a flag of pretension on its mizen. The French king and the Spaniard were spoken of first; some thought it was a fleet which had sought the unknown, golden lands, driven back upon the old world by the continuous west winds of the last month; some said, they belonged to the Duchy of Burgundy; there was a spell in that word; no one knew who first whispered the name; none could guess whence or wherefore the conjecture arose, but the crowd broke into smaller groups; their talk declined into whispers as “York,” “Duke Perkin,” “The White Rose,” “The Duchess of Burgundy,” were mentioned; and the fleet grew as they spoke into a mighty armada, freighted with invasion, ready to disembark an army, to ravage and conquer the island.

As soon as the appearance and nature of these vessels became confirmed, the gypsies arose from their indolent posture and retreated to their encampment. A few minutes afterwards, a wildlooking youth on a shaggy horse, without a saddle, trotted off at a quick pace through the ravine to the inland country. Lord Audley and Frion heard from him of the arrival of their friends who they had expected would have been layed for another month. Frion instantly set off for Canterbury to apprize the Prince; and the noble lost no time in collecting his retainers and hastening to Hythe. Clifford's spies brought him word also of the arrival of the fleet. Ill luck attended his guiles. King Henry was in the north: there was no time to apprize him, and Clifford's underhand proceedings might turn out bitterly to his disadvantage. He had nothing for it but to endeavour to be the first to convey the already-blown news to Sir John Peachy, sheriff for Kent: his pains were rewarded by his being detained prisoner as a suspected person, while Sir John mustered his yeomanry, and, together with the neighbouring gentry and their retainers, marched towards Hythe, The wavering people, awed by this show of legal and military power, grew cool towards the White Rose, whose name, linked to change and a diminution of taxation, had for a moment excited their enthusiasm. Some had assumed the snowy badge, and collected in groups; but they tore it off when the magistrate appeared: he thanked them for arming for their King, and they in much fear and some wonder joined his standard.

Sir John advanced with his increasing troop towards the village in question. He was informed that a band of the Prince's friends was there before him, consisting of a few Yorkist gentlemen and their retainers. His first idea was to disperse them; his second, "No; this will serve as a decoy: every coast may not be prepared; driven too speedily hence, the armament may make good their landing elsewhere: if we appear unguarded, they will disembark, and fall into our hands." This policy had good effect; the two smaller Dutch vessels and one of the caravels ran as close in shore as their soundings permitted, and hastily landed a part of the troops. The commanders of the expedition on board the fleet had been in considerable anxiety; they had hoped to find the country raised to receive them; they saw but a handful of men: still signs were made to them to disembark; and, eager to ensure the safety of their Prince, they in part obeyed, landing about two hundred and fifty men, with Mountford, Corbet, and some other distinguished exiles, at their head. York and Frion had not yet had time to arrive from Canterbury; Lord Audley and his friends received the troops, and held consultation with their chiefs. It was resolved to go forward, and penetrate into the country, to raise it if possible; and, as they had not yet heard of Sir John Peachy's advance, to forestal resistance by their speed.

They marched forward in good order for nearly ten miles, when they halted; their scouts here brought intelligence of a regular force of at least two thousand men who were near at hand, advancing against them. Audley advised a deviation from their line of march, so to enter the county in a different direction; Mountford proposed to fortify themselves in Hythe; Corbet to re-imbark with all speed on board their vessels. While they deliberated, it was reported that another troop of the King's men were posted in their rear, while an herald from the Sheriff called on them to lay down their arms and to submit. Already a panic ran through this knot of men; already their coward hands dropped their weapons, ready to be held out for servile cords, signs of terror, increased by the near tramp of Peachy's soldiers, and the sound of martial music.

At this moment of irresolution, four persons were seen at the top of a neighbouring eminence; one was a knight in complete armour, the others were more peacefully attired; they paused a moment gazing on the scene below; then the three pursued their way over the hills towards the sea; the cavalier came riding down at a furious pace; Lord Audley advanced towards him, "All is lost!" he cried.

"Or won!" exclaimed the Prince, "surely Neville and my good cousin will send us reinforcements. How strong are ye on board, Mountford?"

"About six hundred; two of which are German well-trained auxiliaries; but we hoped to find an ally army."

"Treason, Sir John, is stronger to break, than truth to bind. Ye are mad: better not have landed at all than thus."

A few scattered shot from Peachy's advanced guard broke in upon these regrets; Richard in a moment recollected that this was a time for action, not for words. He issued a few commands as to the position of his troops, and riding to their front, addressed them: "My merry men, and very good friends," he cried, "let us recollect that we are soldiers; our lives depend upon our swords; draw them for the right, and be strong in it. Our enemies are chiefly raw recruits; cold friends of a tyrant-usurper; but they are many, and death is before us; behind our vessels, the wide ocean, safety and freedom: we must retreat, not as cowardly fugitives, but as men who, while they see, fear not their danger."

The order of the march was speedily established. While the rear retrograded, Richard, with a hundred chosen men, made a stand, receiving so well the first onset of their assailants, that they were staggered and driven back.

"In good hour, spare neither whip nor spur," cried York; and turning his horse's head, he galloped towards his retreating friends. Peachy, who believed that he had them in his toils, followed slowly and in good order. For the first five miles all went well; but when the hills approached and grew more abrupt, forming by degrees a narrow ravine; they found this post guarded by the enemy. "Betrayed!" cried Audley; "we ought to have traversed the hills; now we are between two fires."

"Silence!" said Richard, sternly; "we must give courage to these poor fellows, not deprive them of it — fear you for your life, Baron? By my fay, I had rather mine were spilt, than that of the meanest of our men!"

Combat like this York had shared in the ravines of Andalusia: he remembered that warfare, and founded his present operations upon it. His onset was impetuous: the enemy recoiled, but formed again. The horsemen dismounted, and presented a frightful bulwark of iron-headed lances to the horses of the little troop; while, from the intervals in the ranks, the archers and men armed with matchlocks, kept up a rain of arrows and bullets, that spread consternation among his troop. It was necessary to break through this formidable defence: thrice the Prince charged in vain; the third time his standard-bearer fell; he wore a white scarf; he fixed it to his lance, and drawing his sword, he waved this emblem of his cause as again he dashed forwards, and with greater success; yet, as he drove the enemy before him, the whiz of bullets and arrows from behind showed that their previous resistance had given Sir John Peachy time to come up. York grasped Audley's hand: "Farewell," he cried, "forgive my hasty speech, my valiant friend: may we meet in paradise, where surely, through God's grace, we shall sup this night."

With the words he charged again, and overcame the last faint resistance. Followed by all his troop, pursuing the flying, Richard dashed through the defile: soon the open plain was before them, and he saw the wide, calm, free ocean, with his vessels riding at anchor. The decks were crowded with men, and the water covered with boats, hovering near shore, as they waited to receive tidings of their friends.

Before in the van, Richard now hung back to secure the retreat of those behind. Audley urged him to embark; but he moved slowly towards the beach, now calling his men to form and gather round him, now marking the motions of those behind, ready to ride back to their aid. At length Peachy's troops poured through the defile; the plain was covered by flying Yorkists: it only remained for him to assemble as many as he could, to protect and ensure the embarkation of all.

"One word," cried Audley; "whither do you propose to sail?"

"It is doubtful: if Barry still be true, and my voice be heard, not to Burgundy and dependence, but rather to Ireland, to Cork and Desmond."

"Meanwhile, dear your Highness," said the noble, "I will not believe that all is lost in England. I shall make good speed to the West, and gather my friends together; we shall not be distant neighbours; and if I succeed to my wish, Audley will call you from your Irish fastnesses to your own native England. Our Lady preserve you meanwhile — farewell!"

Audley, swift in all his proceedings, put spurs to his horse, and was away. A few minutes brought Richard to the sands: he guarded the embarkation of his diminished numbers; nor, till Peachy's troop was within bowshot, and the last straggler that arrived was in the last boat, did he throw himself from his horse and leap in: he was rowed to the chief vessel. He cast an anxious glance at the Adalid just under weigh: a green and white flag was hoisted: Monina was on board. Further to re-assure him of his friends' safety, Frion received him as he mounted his own deck. Evening was at hand — the late balmy, summer evening; a land breeze sprung up; the vessels had already weighed their anchors, and swiftly, with swelling sails, they gained the offing. How tranquil and sweet seemed the wide-spread waters; how welcome these arks of refuge, sailing placidly over them, after the strife, the blood, the shouts, the groans of battle. "Farewell England," said the royal exile; "I have no country, save these decks trodden by my friends — where they are, there is my kingdom and my home!"

CHAPTER X.

Why, it cannot choose but be a noble plot:
And then the power of Scotland and of York
To join —
In faith it is exceedingly well aimed!
— SHAKSPEARE.

The Duke of York found Lord Barry, Sir George Neville, Plantagenet, and several other distinguished friends, on board his vessel. In consultation with them, it was agreed to sail immediately for Cork. The loss of many brave friends, killed or prisoners, on the Kentish coast, saddened them: while the diminution of their numbers forbade the idea of a second descent upon England. Towards Ireland they sailed, with such alternation of calm and contrary winds, as made them linger for several weeks upon their way. Here, for the first time, Richard heard from Frion of Clifford's machinations, and of his message, and insolent threat to Monina. Every drop of blood in his veins was alive with indignation: before, he had despised Sir Robert as a traitor; and, while he looked on him as the cause of all his disasters, and of the death of so many of his noble and gallant adherents, his abhorrence was mingled with contemptuous pity. The unchivalrous wrong offered to a woman, that woman his sweet sister-friend, animated him with other feelings: to avenge her, and chastise the arrogant braggart, was his knightly duty, his fervent, impatient wish. He saw her not meanwhile; she was in one of those dark hulls, among which love alone taught him to discern the lighter build and more sea-worn frame of the Adalid.

Ireland was at this time very differently situated, from when the Prince first landed on her shores. After Lambert Simnel's success there, still the King of England had neglected its internal policy. A more terrible name awakened his caution; and he sent Sir Edward Poynings, as the deputy of his infant son Henry, whom he had nominally appointed to the government. Poynings was resolute and successful. He defeated the natives, quelled the Earl of Kildare, and forced the Earl of Desmond to renew his oaths of allegiance. A free pardon was afterwards granted to all, with the exception of Lord Barry.

York was received at Cork most cordially by his old friend O'Water, and immediately, at the Earl of Desmond's invitation, repaired to Ardfinnin. The Earl had found no great difficulty in escaping from England, and returning to his native island. The timely assistance he had afforded Henry's enemy in the Tower, was an impenetrable mystery, though the consciousness of it had made him more yielding, than he would otherwise have been in his concessions to Poynings. He received York with the hospitality of an Irish Chieftain, and the kindness of a friend. But he held out no inducement for him to remain: on the contrary, he was the first to counsel him to turn his eyes, where a new and brighter prospect presented itself. Sir Patrick Hamilton had left Munster a few months before, with a firm belief in Richard's truth; he had assured the Earl of the favourable reception his adventurous friend would obtain from his royal master, and had declared his intention of proceeding to Brussels to see the Prince, and personally to enforce his invitation. York was absent; but the Duchess gave a cordial reception to the renowned Scottish cavalier. He had been present at the sailing of the fleet; and his last words were wishes for their success, and an offer of secure and honourable refuge in Edinburgh, in case of failure. It had been agreed, that on his own return thither, he should be accompanied by messengers from the Duchess, to thank the King of Scotland for the interest he manifested towards her beloved nephew. Sir Edward Brampton was chosen as the chief of these, accompanied of course by his Lady, York's long-tried and zealous friend.

All these circumstances were decisive of the course it became the exile to pursue. He was at that moment in a condition to appear under advantageous circumstances at the Scottish Court. He had lost several valued friends during the late attempt; but many remained of noble birth and good renown. Above a hundred knights graced his train. The treasure his aunt had bestowed for his English struggle remained, besides a considerable sum of money, services of valuable plate and valuable jewels, the munificent gift of the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk. In fine, not a dissentient voice was raised; and the attention of every one was turned towards preparations for the voyage. York continued to be the Earl of Desmond's guest: in his princely halls he received all the honour due to his rank and pretensions.

The Countess, a lady of the noble family of Roche, distinguished him by her kindness, and conceived a peculiar friendship for the Spanish maiden, Monina.

The moment arrived for York's embarkation. He had visited his vessels, and seen that all was in readiness; but his surprise was excited by perceiving that no preparations were made for sailing on board the Adalid. This was explained on his return, by the Countess telling him that a friend of his desired to take leave of him before he sailed, and that she had been besought by her to explain in some measure the reasons of their separation. De Faro's whole soul was set upon becoming one of those immortal pioneers who opened new paths across the unexplored West. He could be of no use to Richard in Scotland; but he could not prevail on himself to leave his lovely, unprotected girl behind. She had at last consented to accompany him in his far and dangerous voyage.

Many had been this poor child's struggles, sad her reflections, ere she wrought herself to this purpose. "Alas!" such were her reveries, "that innocence should be no safeguard in this ill world! If indeed I loved him sinfully, or he sought me wrongfully, I should simply obey the laws of God in flying him; but he is noble, and I know my own heart. Spotless Mother of God, thou knowest it! — there is no single feeling in my woman's soul that I dare not avouch to thy all-blessed gentleness! I ask only to live in the same land, to breathe the same air, to serve him at his need, to associate with his friends; so that when I see him not, I may feed upon discourse of him. This is all I ask — all! — and this must not be! I cannot bear a tainted name; I cannot endure that, linked with any slightest stain of calumny, my image should haunt his dreams; nor that he or any human being should suffer through me, which may so easily happen: for if words like those Frion reported should reach my father's ears, he would clothe his tempestshaken limbs in arms, and expose his breast to the sharp sword's point, to vindicate my honour. No! — no tragedy shall be associated with poor Monina's name; nor agony nor woe shall visit those I love, through me: they shall not even commiserate my sufferings; these shall be garnered up in my own heart, watched with a miser's care. I will not enrich the tell-tale air by one sigh; nor through my broken heart, shall the gloom of my despair appear. I will paint my face with joy's own hue; put sunshine in my eyes: my hapless love shall be no tale of pity for any, save my own desolate thoughts. Nor let me forget every lesson of resignation, nor the dear belief I cherish in the protection and goodness of my sainted guardianess. Let me rejoice at much that exalts my destiny in my own eyes. The Prince's friendship, affection, gratitude and esteem are mine: I have been able to serve him I love — am I not sufficiently fortunate? He needs me no more; but I am no alien upon earth. I shall give delight to my dear father by accompanying him over the untrod watery deserts: through me — for, if I went not, he would remain behind — the name of De Faro will be added to the list of those who bestow a new creation of supernal beauty on our out-worn world. He will call me the partner of his glory; and, though that be a vain word, his dark eyes will flash with joy. My dear, dear father! Should the Prince succeed and ascend his rightful throne, more impassable than that wide sea would be the gulph which ceremony would place between us; and if he fall — ah! mine is no summer day's voyage; the tornados of that wild region may wreck me; the cold sea receive me in her bosom; and I shall never hear of Richard's overthrow, nor endure the intolerable pàng of knowing that he dies."

Fortified in some degree by such thoughts, anxious to conceal her sorrows from one who might compassionate, yet not wholly share them, Monina met Richard with an air of gaiety: glad, in spite of his involuntary mortification, that she should be spared any pain, he copied her manner; and a spectator would have thought, that either they parted for a few hours, or were indifferent to each other. He could not help betraying some anxiety however, when Lady Desmond, who was present, solicited him to make his friend change her purpose, and drew a frightful picture of the hazardous voyage, the storms, the likelihood that they might be driven far, far away, where no land was, where they would perish of famine on the barren, desolate ocean. Monina laughed — she endeavoured thus to put aside her friend's serious entreaties; and, when she found that she failed, she spoke of the Providence that could protect her even on the wastes of innavigable ocean; and proudly reminded him, that she would trust her father, whose reputation as a mariner stood foremost among those in the King of Portugal's employ. Richard looked perplexed — sorrow and pain spoke in his countenance; while she, true to herself to the last, said, "I have now told you my purpose — but this is no farewell; to-morrow we meet again; and another to-morrow will come also, when I bring treasure from my Indian isle to dazzle the monarch of fair, happy England."

On that morrow Richard sought in vain among the Countess of Desmond's companions for his sweet Spaniard; he imaged her as he last saw her, light, laughing, her soft-beaming eyes hardly daring to glance towards him, while he fancied that a shower of precious drops was shaken from their fringed lids. He had meant to say, "Ah! weep, Monina, weep for Andalusia — for our happy childhood — for the hopes that leave us: thy tears will seem to me more glad than thy untrue smile." But she was not there. Could he have seen her from the deck of his vessel, marking its progress from the watch-tower of Youghall, he had been satisfied. The anguish of bitter tears, the heart's agonizing gaspings, were hers, to be succeeded by the dull starless night of despair, when his sail vanished on the glittering plains of the sunny sea.

Farewell to her who mourned; to her who saw neither day nor joy, whose heart lived with him, while she prepared for her melancholy separation from the very world which he inhabited.

The scene shifts to Scotland; and hither, to a new country, a new people, almost to a new language, our royal adventurer is transported. Dark, tumultuous, stained with blood, and rendered foul by treason, are the pages of early Scottish history. A wild and warlike people inhabited its mountainous districts, whose occupation was strife, whose religion was power and revenge. The Lowlanders, a wealthier race, were hardly more cultivated or less savage. One course of rebellion against the sovereign, and discord among themselves, flows, a sanguinary stream from the hidden sources of things, threading a long track of years, or overflowing it with its pernicious waves. Discord, hate and murder were the animating spirits of the scene.

James the Third was a weak, unhappy man. A prophecy had induced him to distrust all the Princes of his house — he extended this distrust to his son, who was brought up consequently in a kind of honourable and obscure imprisonment. He fostered unworthy favourites; and many bold and sanguinary revolts had been the consequence. On one occasion, while encamped, during a foray into England, his nobles had seized on all his personal friends and adherents, and hanged them over Loudon Bridge. The last rebellion cost him his life. The insurgents seized on, and placed at their head, his eldest son, then only sixteen years of age — they met their sovereign in the field — he fled before them; and his death was as miserable and dastardly as his life.

James the Fourth succeeded to the throne. The mean jealousy of his father had caused him to be untutored; but he was one of those beings, who by nature inherit magnaminity, refinement and generosity. His faults were those that belong to such a character. His imagination was active, his impulses warm but capricious. He was benignant to every other, severe only in his judgment of himself. His father's death, to which he had been an unwilling accessary, weighed like parricide on his conscience. To expiate it, in the spirit of those times, he wore perpetually an iron girdle, augmenting the weight each year, as habit or encreasing strength lightened the former one. He devoted much of his life to penance and prayer. Here ended however all of the ascetic in his disposition. He was a gallant knight and an accomplished gentleman. He encouraged tourneys and passages of arms, raising the reputation of the Scottish cavaliers all over Europe, so that many noble foreigners repaired to Edinburgh, to gain new trophies in contests with the heroes of the north. He passed edicts to enforce the schooling of the children of the nobles and lairds. His general love of justice, a little impaired it is true by feudal prejudices, often led him to wander in disguise over his kingdom; seeking hospitality from the poor, and listening with a candid and generous mind to every remark upon himself and his government.

He was singularly handsome, graceful, prepossessing, and yet dignified in his manners. He loved pleasure, and was the slave of the sex, which gives to pleasure all its elegance and refinement; he partook his family's love for the arts, and was himself a poet and a musician; nay more, to emulate the divine patron of these accomplishments, he was well-skilled in surgery and the science of healing. He was ambitious, active, energetic. He ruminated many a project of future glory; meanwhile his chief aim was to reconcile the minds of the alienated nobles — his murdered father's friends — to himself; and, succeeding in this, to abolish the feuds that raged among the peers of Scotland, and civilize their barbarous propensities. He succeeded to a miracle. His personal advantages attracted the affection of his subjects; they were proud of him, and felt exalted by his virtues. His excellent government and amiable disposition, both united to make his reign peaceful in its internal policy, and beneficial to the kingdom. The court of Holyrood vied with those of Paris, London and Brussels: to which capitals many of his high-born subjects, no longer engaged in the struggles of party, travelled; bringing back with them the refinements of gallantry, the poetry, learning and science of the south of Europe. The feuds, last flickerings of the dying torch of discord, which lately spread a fatal glare through the land, ceased; if every noble did not love, they all obeyed their sovereign — thus a new golden age might be said to have dawned upon this eyrie of Boreas, this tempestuous Thule of the world.

We must remember that this was the age of chivalry; the spirit of Edward the Third and the princely Dukes of Burgundy yet survived. Louis the Eleventh in France had done much to quench it; it burnt bright again under the auspices of his son. Henry the Seventh was its bitter enemy; but we are still at the beginning of his reign, while war and arms were unextinguished by his cold, avaricious policy. James of Scotland laboured, and successfully, to pacify his subjects, children of one common parent; but he, as well as they, disdained the ignoble arts of peace. England formed the lists where they desired to display their courage; war with England was a word to animate every heart to dreadful joy: in the end it caused the destruction of him and all his chivalry in Flodden Field; now it made him zealous to upraise a disinherited Prince; so that under the idea of restoring the rightful sovereign to the English throne, he might have fair pretext for invading the neighbour kingdom. At the hope, the soldiers of Scotland — in other words, its whole population — awakened, as an unhooded hawk, ready to soar at its accustomed quarry.

Sir Patrick Hamilton, the most accomplished and renowned of the Scottish cavaliers, and kinsman of the royal house, had returned laden with every testimony of the White Rose’s truth, and a thousand proofs of his nobleness and virtue. Sir Edward Brampton delivered the Duchess’s message of thanks; and his lady had already awakened the zeal of many a gentleman, and the curiosity and interest of many a lady, for the pride of York, the noble, valiant Plantagenet. Woman’s sway was great at Holyrood; as the bachelor king, notwithstanding his iron girdle, and his strict attention to his religious duties, was a devout votary at the shrine of feminine beauty.

There was a hawking party assembled in the neighbourhood of Stirling, which he graced by his presence. All was apparently light-heartedness and joy, till a dispute arose between two damsels upon the merits of their respective falcons. One of these was fair Mary Boyd, daughter of the Laird of Bonshaw. Mary Boyd was the first-love of the young sovereign, and the report went that he was no unsuccesful suitor; it spoke of offspring carefully concealed in a village of Fife, whom James often visited. When afterwards this young lady's example was imitated by others nobly born, this became no secret, and of her children one became Archbishop of St. Andrews, the other, a daughter, married the Earl of Morton.

But these were days of youthful bashfulness and reserve; the mind of Mary Boyd balanced between pride in her lover, and shame for her fault; a state of feeling, that ill-brooked the loss of what gilded her too apparent frailty — the exclusive attention of the King. Mary was older than the King; the dignity which had captivated the boy's imagination, lost its charm, when the tyranny of assumed right took place of that of tenderness. He grew cold, then absent, and at last ventured to fix a regard of admiration on another, sliding easily from the restraint to which he at first submitted, into all of devotion and soft, gallant courtesy, by which kings win lady's love, and in which none grew to be a greater adept than James. The new object that attracted him, was the young, gay and lovely Lady Jane Kennedy, daughter of the Earl of Cassils. Her sparkling eyes, her "bonny brent brow," her dark, clustering hair, contrasted with the transparency of her complexion — her perfect good humour, her vivacity and her wit — made her a chief beauty in the Scottish court, and in all this she was the reverse of the fair, light-haired, sleepy-eyed Mary. Lady Jane saw and gloried in her triumph over the King. Innocent then, she only desired the reputation of such a conquest, fully resolved not to tread in the steps of her rival. It is something of fool's play to strive to enchain fire by links of straw, to throw silken fetters on a bounding torrent, to sport with the strong lion, Love, as he were a playful whelp: some, secure in innocence and principle, may at last discover their mistake and remain uninjured; but not the vain, heedless, self-willed Lady Jane. The courtiers were divided in their attentions; some for shame would not forsake Mary Boyd; some thought that still she would regain her power; one or two imagined that Lady Jane's resistance would restore the king to her rival; but the greater number caught the light spirit of the hour, and gathered round the laughing, happy girl.

The contention between these ladies made many smile. The King betted a diamond against a Scotch pebble on Lady Jane's bird. Mary had thwarted him, and forced him to her side during the first part of the day — now he took this revenge. A heron rose from the river banks. The birds were unhooded; and up soared Lady Jane's in one equal flight through the blue air, cleaving the atmosphere with noiseless wing. Mary's followed slower; but, when Lady Jane's pounced on the quarry, and brought it screaming and flapping to the ground, the rival bird darted on the conqueror, and a sharp struggle ensued. It was unequal; for the Lady Jane's hawk would not quit its prey. "Let them fight it out," said Mary, "and the survivor is surely the victor."

But the spectators cried shame — while Lady Jane with a scream hastened to save her favourite. The other, fiery as a borderer, attacked even her; and, in spite of her gloves, drops of blood from her fair hand stained her silken robe. James came to her rescue, and with one blow put an end to the offender's life. Jane caressed her "tassel gentle;" while Mary looked on her "false carrion's" extinction with unrepressed indignation. They returned to Stirling: immediately on their arrival they received tidings that the Duke of York's fleet had been descried, and was expected to enter the Frith on the following day. None heard the words without emotion; the general sentiment was joy; for Richard's landing was to be the signal of invasion. King Henry had one or two friends among the Scottish nobles, and these alone smiled contemptuously.

"We must have feasts and tourneys, fair mistress," said the King, "to honour our royal visitor. Will your servant intrude unseemingly if while his arms extol your beauty, he wears your colours?"

Lady Jane smiled a reply, as she followed her father towards his mansion. She smiled, while feminine triumph beamed in her eye, and girlish bashfulness blushed in her cheek. "Has she not a bonny ee?" cried James to him, who rode near him. It was Sir Patrick Hamilton, his dear cousin and friend, to whom James often deferred, and respected, while he loved. His serious look recalled the King. "This is not the time, good sooth!" he continued, "for such sweet gauds — but for lance and broad-sword: — the coming of this Prince of Roses will bring our arms into play, all rusty as they are. I wonder what presence our guest may have!"

The friends then conversed concerning the projected war, which both agreed would be well-timed. It would at once give vent to the fiery impulses of the Scotch Lords, otherwise apt to prey upon each other. But lately a band of the Drummonds had burnt the kirk of Moulward, in which were six-score Murrays, with their wives and children; all of whom were victims. But foray in England — war with the land of their hate — the defiance would be echoed in glad shouts from Tweed to Tay; from the Lothians to the Carse of Gowrie; while it should be repeated in groans from the Northumberland wilds.

CHAPTER XI.

Cousin of York, thus once more we embrace thee;
Welcome to James of Scotland! For thy safety.
Know, such as love thee not shall never wrong thee.
Come, we will taste awhile our court delights.
Dream hence afflictions past, and then proceed
To high attempts of honour.
— FORD.

The Duke of York arrived off Leith. While the messengers were going to and fro, and preparation was made to disembark, he and his principal friends were assembled on the deck of their vessel, regarding this strange northern coast with curiosity, wonder, and some contempt.

"I see horses," cried Lord Barry; "By'r Lord's grace, grass grows hitherward — that is much!"

"I see kye," exclaimed Frion, "so we may hope for buttered sowans at least, if not beef, at the palace of feasts."

"Aye," cried Sir Edward Brampton, who had come on board, "you may hope for choice cheer. I promise ye shall live well, ye that are noble — these unclad rocks and desart moors are the home of many an earl and belted knight, whose gorgeousness may vie with the cavaliers of France or Burgundy. In this it differs from England, ye will not find stout franklins or fat burgesses; there are no men of Ghent, nor London Aldermen: the halfnaked kern tills the stony soil. Next to the palace is the hearthless hovel. Wealth and penury, if not mates, are joint masters of the land."

"I have heard," said York, "that there is much paternal love and filial duty between the rich and poor in this country."

"Among the northern mountains thus it is," said Brampton; "a strange and savage race, which, my good Lord Barry, some name Irish, dwell on the barren heights, along the impassable defiles, beside their vast stormy lakes; but the Lowlander looks askance on the Highland clanship. List ye, gentlemen; all bears a different aspect here from the gentle southern kingdoms; but they are men, proud, valiant, warlike men, as such they claim our respect. His Majesty and a few others are moreover right gallant cavaliers.”

“Mark these words,” said York, earnestly, “and remember, dear friends, that we, the world’s wanderers, seek refuge here of our own will, which if we find, we must not disdain our hosts. Remember too the easy rage of the fiery Scot; and that we boast gentler customs: suffer no brawling to mar our concord; let not Richard of York, who of all his wide realm possesses your hearts only, find his dominions narrowed, or violently disturbed by your petulance and pride.”

The Duke’s associates listened with respect. Hitherto the spirited boy had been led by a Barry, a Clifford, a Neville, or a Plantagenet. They had counselled, spoken for him; his sword only had been as active as theirs. A new light seemed to have broken in upon his soul; it assumed a seriousness and power that exalted him in their eyes, while it took nothing from the candour and single-hearted reliance on their loves, which was his dearest charm.

On landing, the Duke of York was escorted to Edinburgh by the Earl of Errol, Sir Patrick Hamilton, and others. The attire, arms, and horses, with their caparisons, of these gentlemen, were little inferior to those displayed at Paris. King James awaited him at the Castle of Edinburgh. The monarch received his guest in state on his throne. The Prince was struck at once by his elegance, his majesty, and sweet animated aspect: his black bonnet, looped up by a large ruby, sat lightly on his brow, his glossy black curly hair escaping in ringlets from underneath; his embroidered shirt collar thrown back, displayed his throat, and the noble expression of his head; his dark grey eyes, his manly sun-burnt complexion, the look of thought, combined with goodness, mingled with dignity, gave an air of distinction to his whole person. Various were the physiognomies, various the guises, of those around him. The swart, gaunt Highlander, in his singular costume; the blue-eyed, red-haired sons of the Lowlands were there; and in each and all were remarkable a martial, sometimes a ferocious expression.

The Prince of England entered, surrounded by his (to the Scotch) foreign-looking knights.

James descended from his throne to embrace his visitant, and then re-assumed it, while all eyes were turned upon the royal Adventurer, whose voice and mien won every heart, before his eloquence had time to move them. “High and mighty King,” said Richard, “your grace, and these your nobles present, be pleased to hear the tragedy of one, who, born a prince, comes even as a beggar to your court. My Lords, sorrow and I were not twins: I am the elder, and for nine years I beheld not the ill-visage of that latest birth of my poor but royal mother’s fortunes. It were a long tale to tell, what rumour has made familiar to every ear: my uncle Gloucester’s usurpation; my brother’s death; and the sorrows of our race. I lost my kingdom ere I possessed it; and while yet my young hands were too feeble to grasp the sceptre of my ancestors, and with it, the sword needful to defend the same, capricious fate bestowed it on Henry of Richmond; a base-born descendant of ill-nurtured Bolingbroke; a scion of that Red Rose that so long and so rightfully had been uprooted in the land, which they had bought with its children’s dearest blood.

“Good, my lords, I might move you to pity did I relate how, in my tender years, that usurer King sought my life, buying the blood of the orphan at the hands of traitors. How, when these cruelties failed him, he used subtler arts; giving me nick-names; meeting my gallant array of partizans, not with an army of their peers, but with a base rout of deceits, treasons, spies, and blood-stained decoyers. It would suit me better to excite your admirations by speaking of the nobleness and fidelity of my friends; the generosity of the sovereigns who have shed invaluable dews upon the fading White Rose, so to refresh and restore it.

“But not to waste my tediousness on you, let this be the sum. I am here, the friend of France, the kinsman of Burgundy; the acknowledged Lord of Ireland; pursued by my powerful foe, I am here, King of Scotland, to claim your friendship and your aid. Here lies the accomplishment of my destiny! The universal justice to be rendered me, which I dreamed of in my childhood, the eagle hopes of my youth, my better fortunes, and future greatness, have fled me. But here they have found a home: here they are garnered up; render them back to me, my lord; unlock with the iron key of fatal battle, the entrance to those treasures, all mine own, whose absence renders me so poor. Arm for me, Scotland; arm for the right! Never for a juster cause could you buckle breast-plate, or poize your lance. Be my captain, and these your peers, my fellow-soldiers. Fear not, but that we vanquish: that I gain a kingdom; you eternal glory from your regal gift. Alas! I am as an helmless vessel drifting towards the murderous rock; but you, as the strong north-wind, may fill the flapping sails, and carry me on my way with victory and gladness."

A murmur filled the presence-chamber, dark Douglas grasped his sword; Hamilton's eyes glanced lightnings; not one there but felt his heart beat with desire to enforce the illustrious exile's right. The tide of rising enthusiasm paused as James arose; and deep attention held them all. He descended from his throne. "My royal brother," he said, "were I a mere errant knight, so good and high I esteem your cause, without more ado I would don my armour, and betake me to the field. The same power which enables me to afford you far better succour than the strength of one arm, obliges me to pause and take council, ere I speak what it is in my heart to promise. But your Highness has made good your interests among my counsellors; and I read in their gestures the desire of war and adventure for your sake. Deem yourself an exile no more. Fancy that your have come from merry England to feast with your brother in the north, and we will escort you back to your capital in triumphant procession, showing the gaping world how slighter than silky cobwebs are the obstacles that oppose the united strength of Plantagenet and Stuart. Welcome — thrice welcome to the Scottish land — kinsmen, nobles, valiant gentlemen, bid dear welcome to my brother England!"

CHAPTER XII.

A lady, the wonder of her kind.
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind;
Which dilating had moulded her mien and motion.
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean.
— SHELLEY.

A few days made it apparent that York acquired a stronger power over the generous and amiable King of Scotland, than could be given by motives of state policy. He became his friend; no empty name with James, whose ardent soul poured itself headlong into this new channel, and revelled in a kind of extacy in the virtues and accomplishments of his favoured guest. Both these Princes were magnanimous and honourable, full of grandeur of purpose, and gentleness of manner: united by these main qualities, the diversities of their dispositions served rather to draw them closer. Though Richard's adventures and disasters had been so many, his countenance, his very mind was less careworn than that of James. The White Rose, even in adversity, was the nursling of love: the Scottish Prince, in his palace-fostered childhood, had been the object of his father's hatred and suspicion: cabal, violence, and duplicity had waited on him. James governed those around him by demonstrating to them, that it was their interest to obey a watchful, loving, generous monarch: Richard's power was addressed to the most exalted emotions of the human heart, to the fidelity, self-devotion, and chivalric attachment of his adherents. James drew towards himself the confidence of men; Richard bestowed his own upon them. James was winning from his courtesy, Richard from his ingenuousness. Remorse had printed a fadeless stamp of thought and pain on the King's countenance an internal self-communion and self-rebuke were seated in the deep shadows of his thoughtful eyes. Richard's sorrow for the disasters he might be said to have occasioned his friends, his disdain of his own vagabond position, his sadness, when his winged thoughts flew after the Adalid, to hover over his sweet Monina; all these emotions were tinged by respect for the virtues of those around him, conscious rectitude, picus resignation to Providence, gratitude to his friends, and a tender admiration of the virgin virtues of her he loved: so that there arose thence only a softer expression for his features, a sweetness in the candour of his smile, a gentle fascination in his frank address, that gave at once the stamp of elevated feeling and goodness to his mien. He looked innocent, while James's aspect gave token, that in his heart good and ill had waged war: the better side had conquered, yet had not come off scatheless from the fight.

In the first enthusiasm of his new attachment, James was eager to lavish on his friend every mark of his favour and interest: he was obliged to check his impatience, and to submit to the necessity of consulting with and deferring to others. His promises, though large, continued therefore to be vague; and York knew that he had several enemies at the council-board. The intimacy between him and the King prevented him from entertaining any doubts as to the result; but he had a difficult task in communicating this spirit of patient forbearance to his friends. Sometimes they took sudden fright, lest they should all at once meet a denial to their desires; sometimes they were indignant at the delays that were interposed. None was more open in his expressions of discontent than Master Secretary Frion. He, who had been the soul of every enterprize until now, who had fancied that his talents for negociation would be of infinite avail in the Scottish court, found that the friendship between the Princes, and Richard's disdain of artfully enticing to his side his host's noble subjects, destroyed at once his diplomatic weaving. He craftily increased the discontent of the proud Neville, the disquietude of the zealous Lady Brampton, and the turbulent intolerance of repose of Lord Barry; while Richard, on the other hand, exerted himself to tranquillize and reduce them to reason: he was sanguine in his expectations, and above all, confident in his friend's sincere intention to do more than merely assist him by force of arms. He saw a thousand projects at work in James's generous heart, every one tending to exalt him in the eyes of the world, and to rescue him for ever from the nameless, fugitive position he occupied. Nor was his constant intercourse with the King of small influence over his happiness: the genius, the versatile talents, the grace and accomplishments of this sovereign, the equality and sympathy that reigned between them, was an exhaustless source of more than amusement, of interest and delight. The friends of James became his friends: Sir Patrick Hamilton was chief among these, and warmly attached to the English Prince: another, whom at first ceremony had placed at a greater distance from him, grew into an object of intense interest and continual excitation.

"This evening," said the King to him, soon after his arrival, "you will see the flower of our Scottish damsels, the flower of the world well may I call her; for assuredly, when you see the Lady Katherine Gordon, you will allow that she is matchless among women."

Richard was surprised: did James's devotion to Lady Jane Kennedy, nay, his conscious look whenever he mentioned her, mean nothing? Besides, on this appeal to his own judgment, he pictured his soft-eyed Spaniard, with all her vivacity and all her tenderness, and he revolted from the idea of being the slave of any other beauty. "Speak to our guest, Sir Patrick," continued the King, "and describe the fair earthly angel who makes a heaven of our bleak wilds; or rather, for his Highness might suspect you, let me, not her lover, but her cousin, her admirer, her friend, tell half the charms, half the virtues of the daughter of Huntley. Is it not strange that I, who have seen her each day since childhood, and who still gaze with wonder on her beauty, should yet find that words fail me when I would paint it? I am apt to see, and ready to praise, the delicate arch of this lady's brow, the fire of another's eyes, another's pouting lip and fair complexion, the gay animation of one, the chiseled symmetry of a second. Often, when our dear Lady Kate has sat, as is often her wont, retired from sight, conversing with some travelled greybeard, or paying the homage of attention to some ancient dame (of late I have remarked her often in discourse with Lady Brampton), I have studied her face and person to discover where the overpowering charm exists, which, like a strain of impassioned music, electrifies the senses, and touches the hearts of all near her. Is it in her eyes? A poet might dream of dark blue orbs like hers, and that he had kissed eyelids soft as those, when he came unawares on the repose of young Aurora, and go mad for ever after, because it was only a dream: yet I have seen brighter; nor are they languishing. Her lips, yes, the soul of beauty is there, and so is it in her dimpled chin. In the delicate rounding of her cheeks, in the swanlike loveliness of her throat, in the soft ringlets of her glossy hair, down to the very tips of her roseate-tinged fingers, there is proportion, expression and grace. You will hardly see all this: at first you will be struck; extreme beauty must strike; but your second thought will be, to wonder what struck you, and then you will look around, and see twenty prettier and more attractive; and then, why, at the first words she speaks, you will fancy it an easy thing to die upon the mere thought of her: her voice alone will take you out of yourself, and carry you into another state of being. She is simple as a child, straight-forward, direct: falsehood — pah! Katherine is Truth. This simplicity, which knows neither colouring nor deviation, might almost make you fear, while you adore her, but that her goodness brings you back to love. She is good, almost beyond the consciousness of being so: she is good, because she gives herself entirely up to sympathy; and, beyond every other, she dives into the sources of your pleasures and pains, and takes a part in them. The better part of yourself will, when she speaks, appear to leap out, as if, for the first time, it found its other half; while the worse is mute, like a stricken dog, before her. She is gay, more eager to create pleasure than to please; for to please, we must think of ourselves, and be ourselves the hero of the story, and Katherine is ever forgetful of self: she is guileless and gall-less; all love her; her proud father, and fiery, contentious Highland brothers, defer to her; yet, to look at her, it is as if the youngest and most innocent of the Graces read a page of Wisdom's book, scarce understanding what it meant, but feeling that it was right."

It was dangerous to provoke the spirit of criticism by excessive praise; Richard felt half inclined to assert that there was something in the style of the King's painting that showed he should not like this lauded lady; but she was his cousin, he was proud of her, and so he was silent. There was a ball at court that night; and he would see many he had never seen before; James made it a point that he should discover which was his cousin. He could not mistake. "She is loveliness itself!" burst from his lips; and from that moment he felt what James had said, that there was a "music breathing from her face," an unearthly, spirit-stirring beauty, that inspired awe, had not her perfect want of pretension, her quiet, unassuming simplicity, at once led him back to every thought associated with the charms and virtues of woman. Lady Brampton was already a link between them; and, in a few minutes, he found himself conversing with more unreserve and pleasure than he had ever done. There are two pleasures in our intercourse in society, one is to listen, another to speak. We may frequently meet agreeable, entertaining people, and even sometimes individuals, whose conversation, either by its wit, its profundity or its variety, commands our whole rapt attention: but very seldom during the course of our lives do we meet those who thaw every lingering particle of ice, who set the warm life-springs flowing, and entice us, with our hearts upon our lips, to give utterance to its most secret mysteries; to disentangle every knot and fold of thought, and, like sea-weed in the wave, to spread the disregarded herbage, as a tracery matchlessly fair before another's eyes. Such pleasure Richard felt with Katherine; and, ever and anon, her melodious voice interposed with some remark, some explanation of his own feelings, at once brilliant and true.

Richard knew that Sir Patrick Hamilton loved the Lady Katherine Gordon; he also was related to the royal family. Hamilton in the eyes of all, fair ladies and sage counsellors, was acknowledged to be the most perfect Knight of Scotland; what obstacle could there be to their union? Probably it was already projected, and acceded to. Richard did not derogate from the faith that he told himself he owed to Monina, by cultivating a friendship for the promised bride of another, and moreover one whom, after the interval of a few short months, he would never see again. Satisfied with this reasoning, York lost no opportunity of devoting himself to the Lady Katherine.

His interests were the continual subject of discussion in the royal council-chamber. There were a few who did not speak in his favour. The principal of these was the Earl of Moray, the King's uncle: the least in consideration, for he was not of the council, though he influenced it: but the bitterest in feeling, was Sir John Ramsey, Laird of Balmayne, who styled himself Lord Bothwell. He had been a favourite of James the Third. His dark, fierce temper was exasperated by his master's death, and he brooded perpetually for revenge. He had once, with several other nobles, entered into a conspiracy to deliver up the present King to Henry the Seventh; and the traitorous intent was defeated, not from want of will, but want of power in his abettors. Since then, Lord Bothwell, though nominally banished and attainted, was suffered to live in Edinburgh, nay, to have access to the royal person. James, whose conscience suffered so dearly by the death of his father, had no desire to display severity towards his ancient faithful servant; besides, one who was really so insignificant as Sir John Ramsey. This man was turbulent, dissatisfied: he was sold to Henry of England, and had long acted as a spy; the appearance of York at Edinburgh gave activity and importance to his function his secret influence and covert intrigues retarded somewhat the projects and desires of the King.

When the first opposition made to acknowledging this pretender to the English crown was set aside, other difficulties ensued. Some of the counsellors were for making hard conditions with the young Duke, saying, that half a kingdom were gift enough to a Prince Lackland: a golden opportunity was this, they averred, to slice away a bonny county or two from wide England; he whom they gifted with the rest could hardly say them nay. But James was indignant at the base proposal, and felt mortified and vexed when obliged to concede in part, and to make conditions which he thought hard with his guest. After a noisy debate, these propositions were drawn out, and York was invited to attend the council, where they were submitted for his assent.

These conditions principally consisted in the surrender of Berwick, and the promised payment of a hundred thousand marks. They were hard; for it would touch the new monarch's honour not to dismember his kingdom; and it were his policy not to burthen himself with a debt which his already oppressed subjects must be drawn on to pay. The Duke asked for a day for consideration, which was readily granted.

With real zeal for his cause on one side, and perfect confidence in his friends' integrity on the other, these difficulties became merely nominal, and the treaty was speedily arranged. But the month of September was near its close; a winter campaign would be of small avail: money, arms, and trained men, were wanting. The winter was to be devoted to preparation; with the spring the Scottish army was to pass the English border. In every discussion, in every act, James acted as his guest's brother, the sharer of his risks and fortunes: one will, one desire, was theirs. Sir Patrick Hamilton went into the west to raise levies: no third person interposed between them. It was the King's disposition to yield himself wholly up to the passion of the hour. He saw in Richard, not only a prince deprived of his own, and driven into exile, but a youth of royal lineage, exposed to the opprobium of nick-names and the accusation of imposture. The King of France acknowledged, but he had deserted him; the Archduke had done the same: how could James prove that he would not follow in these steps? He levied the armies of his kingdom in his favour; he was to fight and conquer for him next spring. The intervening months were intolerable to the fervent spirit of the Stuart — something speedy, something now, he longed, he resolved to do; which, with a trumpet-note, should to all corners of the world declare, that he upheld Richard of York’s right — that he was his defender, his champion. Once he penned a universal challenge, then another specially addressed to Henry Tudor; but his invasion were a better mode than this. Should he give him rank in Scotland? — that would ill beseem one who aspired to the English crown. Should he proclaim him Richard the Fourth in Edinburgh? — York strongly objected to this. Money? — it were a base gilding; besides, James was very poor, and had melted down his plate, and put his jewels to pawn, to furnish forth the intended expedition. Yet there was one way, — the idea was as lightning — James felt satisfied and proud; and then devoted all his sagacity, all his influence, all his ardent soul, to the accomplishment of a plan, which, while it ensured young Richard’s happiness, stampt him indelibly as being no vagabond impostor, but the honoured prince, the kinsman and ally of Scotland’s royal house.

King James and the Duke of York had ridden out to inspect a Lowland regiment, which the Earl of Angus proudly displayed as the force of the Douglas. As they returned, James was melancholy and meditative. “It is strange and hard to endure,” he said at last, fixing on his companion his eyes at once so full of fire and thought, “when two spirits contend within the little microcosm of man. I felt joy at sight of those bold followers of the Douglas, to think that your enemy could not resist them; but I do myself foolish service, when I place you on the English throne. You will leave us, my Lord: you will learn in your bonny realm to despise our barren wilds: it will be irksome to you in prosperity, to think of your friends of the dark hour.”

There was sincerity in these expressions, but exaggeration in the feelings that dictated them. Richard felt half-embarrassed, in spite of gratitude and friendship. The King, following the bent of his own thoughts, not those of others, suddenly continued: “Our cousin Kate at last finds grace in your eyes; is she not good and beautiful, all cold and passionless as she is?”

“Cold!” the Lady Katherine, whose heart felt sympathy, was a sunny clime in which he basked — whose sensibility perpetually varied the bright expression of her features — York repeated the word in astonishment.

“Thou findest her wax?” enquired James, smiling; “by my troth, she has proved but marble before.”

“I cannot guess even at your meaning,” replied York, with all the warmth of a champion; “the lady is in the estimation of all, in your own account, the best daughter, the most devoted friend, the kindest mistress in the world. How can we call that spirit cold, which animates her to these acts? It is not easy to perform, as she does, our simplest duties. How much of self-will, of engrossing humour, even of our innocent desires and cherished tastes, must we not sacrifice, when we devote ourselves to the pleasure and service of others? How much attention does it not require, how sleepless a feeling of interest, merely to perceive and understand the moods and wishes of those around us! An inert, sluggish nature, half ice, half rock, cannot do this. To achieve it, as methinks your fair kinswoman does, requires all her understanding, all her sweetness, all that exquisite tact and penetrative feeling I never saw but in her."

"I am glad you say this," said James. "Yes, Kate has a warm heart: none has a better right to say so than I. There are — there were times, for the gloom of the dark hour is somewhat mitigated — when no priest, no penance, had such power over me as my cousin Katherine's sweet voice. Like a witch she dived into the recesses of my heart, plucking thence my unholy distrust in God's mercy. By St. Andrew! when I look at her, all simple and gentle as she is, I wonder in what part of her resides the wisdom and the eloquence I have heard fall from her lips; nor have I had the heart to reprove her, when I have been angered to see our cousin Sir Patrick driven mad by her sugared courtesies."

"Does she not affect Sir Patrick?" asked Richard, while he wondered at the thrilling sensation of fear that accompanied his words.

"'Yea, heartily,' she will reply," replied the King; "'Would you have me disdain our kinsman? She asks when I rail; but you, who are of gender masculine, though, by the mass! a smooth specimen of our rough kind, know full well that pride and impertinence are better than equable, smiling, impenetrable sweetness. Did the lady of my love treat me thus, 'sdeath, I think I should order myself the rack for pastime. But we forget ourselves; push on, dear Prince. It is the hour, when the hawks and their fair mistresses are to meet us on the hill's side. I serve no such glassy damsel; nor would I that little Kennedy's eye darted fires on me in scorn of my delay. Are not my pretty Lady Jane's eyes bright, Sir Duke?'"

"As a fire-fly among dark-leaved myrtles."

"Or a dew-drop on the heather, when the morning sun glances on it, as we take our mountain morning-way to the chace. You look grave, my friend; surely her eyes are nought save as nature's miracle to you?"

"Assuredly not," replie York; "are they other to your Majesty — you do not love the lady?"

"Oh, no," reiterated James with a meaning glance, "I do not love the Lady Jane; only I would bathe in fire, bask in ice, do each and every impossibility woman's caprice could frame for trials to gain — but I talk wildly to a youthful sage. Say, most revered anchorite, wherefore doubt you my love to my pretty mistress?"

"Love!" exclaimed Richard; his eyes grew lustrous in their own soft dew as he spoke. "Oh, what profanation is this! And this you think is love? to select a young, innocent and beauteous girl — who, did she wed her equal, would become an honoured wife and happy mother — to select her, the more entirely to deprive her of these blessings — to bar her out for ever from a woman's paradise, a happy home; you, who even now are in treaty for a princess-bride, would entice this young thing to give up her heart, her all, into your hands, who will crush it, as boys a gaudy butterfly when the chace is over. Dear my Lord, spare her the pain, yourself, remorse; you are too good, too wise, too generous, to commit this deed and not to suffer bitterly."

A cloud came over James's features. The very word 'remorse' was a sound of terror to him. He smote his right hand against his side, where dwelt his heart in sore neighbourhood to the iron of his penance.

At this moment, sweeping down the near hillside, came a gallant array of ladies and courtiers. The King even lagged behind; when near, he accosted Katherine, he spoke to the Earl of Angus, to Mary Boyd, to all save the Lady Jane, who first looked disdainful, then hurt, and at last, unable to struggle with her pain, rode sorrowfully apart. James tried to see, to feel nothing. Her pride he resisted; her anger he strove to contemn, her dejection he could not endure: and, when riding up to her unaware, he saw the traces of tears on her cheek, usually so sunny bright with smiles, he forgot every thing save his wish to console, to mollify, to cheer her. As they returned, his hand was on her saddle-bow, his head bent down, his eyes looking into hers, and she was smiling, though less gay than usual. From that hour James less coveted the Prince's society. He began a little to fear him: not the less did he love and esteem him; and more, far more did he deem him worthy of the honour, the happiness he intended to bestow upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

She is mine own;
And I as rich in having such a jewel.
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl.
Their water nectar, and the rocks pure gold!
— SHAKSPEARE.

The threads were spun, warp and woof laid on, and Fate busily took up the shuttle, which was to entwine the histories of two beings, at whose birth pomp and royalty stood sponsors, whose career was marked by every circumstance that least accorded with such a nativity. A thousand obstacles stood in the way; the King, with all his fervour, hesitated before he proposed to the Earl of Huntley to bestow his daughter, of whom he was justly proud, on a fugitive sovereign, without a kingdom, almost without a name. Fortune, superstition, ten thousand of those imperceptible threads which fate uses when she weaves her most indissoluble webs, all served to bring about the apparently impossible.

The Earl of Huntley was a man of plain, straightforward, resolved ambition. His head was warm, his heart cold, his purpose one — to advance his house, and himself as the head of it, to as high a situation as the position of subject would permit. In the rebellion which occasioned the death of James the Third, he had vacillated, unable quite to ascertain which party would prove triumphant; and when the rebels, rebels then no more, but lieges to James the Fourth, won the day, they looked coldly on their lukewarm partizan. Huntley grew discontented: though still permitted to hold the baton of Earl Marshal, he saw a cloud of royal disfavour darkening his fortunes; in high indignation he joined in the nefarious plot of Buchan, Bothwell, and Sir Thomas Todd, to deliver his sovereign into the hands of Henry of England, a project afterwards abandoned.

Time had softened the bitter animosities which attended James at the beginning of his reign. He extended his favour to all parties, and reconciled them to each other. A wonder it was, to see the Douglas's, Hamiltons, Gordons, Homes, the Murrays, and Lennoxes, and a thousand others, at peace with each other, and obedient to their sovereign. The Earl of Huntley, a man advanced in life, prudent, resolute and politic, grew into favour. He was among the principal of the Scottish peers; he had sons to whom the honours of his race would descend; and this one daughter, whom he loved as well as he could love any thing, and respected from the extent of her influence and the perfect prudence of her conduct, she was his friend and counsellor, the mediator between him and her brothers; the kind mistress to his vassals; a gentle, but all powerful link between him and his king, whose value he duly appreciated.

Her marraige was often the subject of his meditation. Superstition was ever rife in Scotland. James the Third had driven all his brothers from him, because he had been told to beware of one near of kin; and his death, of which his son was the ostensible agent, fulfilled the prophecy. Second-sight in the Highlands was of more avail than the predictions of a low-land sibyl. The seer of the house of Gordon had, on the day of her birth, seen the Lady Katherine receive homage as a Queen, and standing at the altar with one on whose young brow he perceived all dim and shadowy, “the likeness of a kingly crown.” True, this elevation was succeeded by disasters: he had beheld her a fugitive; he saw her stand on the brow of a cliff that overlooked the sea, while the wild clouds careered over the pale moon, alone, deserted; he saw her a prisoner; he saw her stand desolate beside the corpse of him she had wedded — the diadem was still there, dimly seen amid the disarray of his golden curls. These images haunted the Earl’s imagination, and made him turn a slighting ear to Sir Patrick Hamilton and other noble suitors of his lovely child. Sometimes he thought of the King, her cousin, or one of his brothers: flight, desolation and death were no strange attendants on the state of the King of Scotland, and these miseries he regarded as necessary and predestined; he could not avert, and so he hardly regarded them, while his proud bosom swelled at the anticipation of the thorny diadem which was to press the brow of a daughter of the Gordon.

Lord Huntley had looked coldly on the English Prince. Lord Bothwell, as he called himself, otherwise Sir John Ramsay of Balmaine, his former accomplice, tampered with him on the part of Henry the Seventh, to induce him to oppose warmly the reception of this “feigned boy,” and to negative every proposition to advance his claims. King Henry’s urgent letters, and Ramsay’s zeal, awakened the Earl’s suspicions; a manifest impostor could hardly engender such fears, such hate; and, when midnight assassination, or the poisoned bowl were plainly hinted at by the monarch of wide England, Huntley felt assured that the enemy he so bitterly pursued was no pretender, but the rightful heir of the sceptre Henry held. He did not quite refuse to join with Bothwell, especially when he heard that he was listened to by the Bishop of Moray and the Earl of Buchan; but involuntarily he assumed a different language with regard to York, became more respectful to him, and by his demeanour crushed at once the little party who had hitherto spoken of him with contempt. The King perceived this change; it was the foundation-stone of his project. “Tell me, you who are wise, my lord,” said the Monarch to his Earl Marshal, “how I may raise our English Prince in the eyes of Scotland. We fight for him in the spring, for him, we say: but few of ours echo the word; they disdain to fight for any not akin to them.”

“They would fight for the Foul Fiend,” said Huntley, “whom they would be ill-pleased to call cousin, if he led them over the English border.”

“Aye, if he took them there to foray; but the Duke of York will look on England as his own, and when the nobles of the land gather round him, it will be chauncy work to keep them and our Scots from shedding each other’s blood; they would spill Duke Richard’s like water, if no drop of it can be deemed Scotch.”

“It were giving him a new father and mother,” replied the Earl, “to call him thus.”

“When two even of hostile houses intermarry, our heralds pale their arms; the offspring pale their blood.”

“But what Scottish lady would your Grace bestow on him whose rank were a match for royalty? There is no Princess of the Stuarts.”

“And were there,” asked James quickly, “would it beseem us to bestow our sister on a King Lackland?”

“Or would your Majesty wait till he were King of England, when France, Burgundy and Spain would compete with you? I do believe that this noble gentleman has fair right to his father’s crown; he is gallant and generous, so is not King Henry; he is made to be the idol of a warlike people, such as the English, so is not his rival. Do you strike one stroke, the whole realm rises for him, and he becomes its sovereign: then it were a pride and a glory for us, for him a tie to bind him for ever, did he place his diadem on the head of a Scottish damsel.”

“You are sanguine and speak warmly,” replied the King: “see you beyond your own words? to me they suggest a thought which I entertain, or not, as is your pleasure: there is but one lady in our kingdom fitting mate for him, and she is more Gordon than Stuart. Did your Lordship glance at the Lady Katherine in your speech?”

Lord Huntley changed colour: a sudden rush of thought palsied the beatings of his heart. Was he called upon to give his child, his throne-destined daughter, to this king-errant? Nay, nay, thus did fortune blindly work; her hand would insure to him the crown, and so fulfil to her the dark meaning of the seer: hesitating, lost to his wonted presence of mind, Huntley could only find words to ask for a day for reflection. James wondered at this show of emotion; he could not read its full meaning: “At your pleasure, my Lord,” he said, “but, if you decide against my honoured, royal friend, remember that this question dies without record — you will preserve our secret.”

Every reflection that could most disquiet an ambitious man possessed the Earl Marshal. That his daughter should be Queen of England was beyond his hopes; that she should be the the errant wife of a pretender, who passed his life in seeking ineffectual aid at foreign courts, was far beneath them. He canvassed every likelihood of York’s success; now they dwindled like summer-snow on the southern mountain’s side — now they strode high and triumphant over every obstacle; the clinging feeling was — destiny had decreed it — she being his wife, both would succeed and reign. “There is fate in it,” was his last reflection, “and I will not gainsay the fulfilment. Andrew of the Shawe was the Prince of Seers, as I have good proof. Still to a monarch alone shall she give her hand, and I must make one condition.”

This one condition Lord Huntley communicated to his royal master. It was that York should, as of right he might, assume the style and title of King. James smiled at his Earl Marshal’s childish love of gauds, and did not doubt that the Duke would pay so easy price for a jewel invaluable as Katherine. But granting this, the King, knowing the noble’s despotic character, required one condition also on his part, that he should first announce the intended union to the lady, and that it should not have place without her free and entire consent. Huntley was surprised; “Surely my liege,” he began, “if your Majesty and I command—”

"Our sweet Kate will obey," interrupted James; "but this is no mere marriage of policy; hazards, fearful hazards may attend it. Did I not believe that all would end well, by the Holy Rood he should not have her; but she may see things with different eyes — she may shrink from becoming the wife of an exile, a wanderer without an home: yet that need never be."

York little guessed the projects of his royal friend. Love, in its most subtle guise, had insinuated itself into his soul, becoming a very portion of himself. That part of our nature, which to our reflections appears the most human, and yet which forms the best part of humanity, is our desire of sympathy; the intense essence of sympathy, is love. Love has been called selfish, engrossing, tyrannic — as the root, so the green leaf that shoots from it — love is a part of us — it is our manifestation of life; and poisonous or sweet will be the foliage, according to the stock. When we love, it is our aim and conclusion to make the object a part of ourselves — if we are self-willed and evilly inclined, little good can arise; but deep is the fount of generous, devoted, godlike feeling, which this silver key unlocks in gentle hearts. Richard had found in the Lady Katherine a magic mirror, which gave him back himself, arrayed with a thousand alien virtues; his soul was in her hands, plastic to her fairy touch, and tenderness and worship and wonder took his heart, ere passion woke, and threw a chain over these bosom guests, so that they could never depart. A mild, yet golden light dawned upon his soul, and beamed from it, lighting up creation with splendour — filling his mind with mute, yet entrancing melody. He walked in a dream; but far from being rendered by his abstraction morose or inattentive to others, never had he been so gay, never so considerate and amiable. He felt that, beneath the surface of his life, there was the calm and even the bliss of paradise; and his lightest word or act must be, by its grace and benevolence, in concord with the tranquil spirit that brooded over his deeper-hidden self. All loved him the better for the change, save Frion; there was something in him that the wily Frenchman did not understand; he went about and about, but how could this man of "low-thoughted care" understand the holy mysteries of love.

Katherine accompanied her father to Gordon Castle, in Aberdeenshire. Where was the light now, that had made a summer noon in Richard's soul? There was memory: it brought before him her cherub-face, her voice, the hours when at her side he had poured out his overbrimming soul in talk —

not of love, but of ideas, feelings, imaginations he had never spoken before. Two days past, and by that time he had collected a whole volume of things he wished to say — and she was far: then hope claimed entrance to his heart, and with her came a train he dreamt not of — of fears, anticipations, terror, despair; and then a tenfold ardour for his enterprize. Should he not win Katherine and a kingdom?

On the third day after her departure, King James informed the Prince, that Lord Huntley had invited them to visit him at his castle. “Will your Grace venture,” he asked, “so far into the frozen circles of the icy North? You will traverse many a savage defile and wild mountain-top; torrents and dark pine forests bar the way, and barrenness spreads her hag’s arms to scare the intruder. I speak your language, the effeminate language of an Andalusian, who loves the craggy heights, only when summer basks upon them; and the deep sunless dell, when myrtles and geranium impregnate the air with sweets. I love the mist and snow, the tameless winds and howling torrent, the bleak unadorned precipice, the giant pines where the North makes music. The grassy upland and the cornfield, these belong to man, and to her they call Nature, the fair, gaudy dame; but God takes to himself, and lives among, these sublime rocks, where power, majesty and eternity are shaped forth, and the grandeur of heaven-piercing cliffs allies us to a simple but elevating image of the Creator.”

King James was a poet, and could feel thus — York might smile at his enthusiasm for the bleak and horrific. But had the path to Gordon Castle been ten times more frightful, the thoughts of love were roses, the hopes of love vernal breezes, to adorn it with beauty. “Say, my Lord,” continued James, “shall we go, throwing aside the cumbrous burthen of pomp? We are here in Perth. Yonder, over those peaks, lies our direct path. Shall we, two woodland rovers, with bows in our hand and quivers at our back, take our solitary way through the wild region? It is my pastime ofttimes so to do; and well I know the path that leads me to the abode of my cousin Kate. We will send our attendants by the easier path to the eastern sea-shore, at once to announce our approach, and bear such gear as we may need, not to play too humble a part in Huntley’s eyes.”

A thousand motives of policy and pride had induced the Earl to desire that this marriage should be celebrated in the Highlands. Here he would appear almost a sovereign to his royal son-in-law; here also he should avoid the sarcasms of the Tudor party, and the anger of those who had pretended to fair Katherine's hand. James consented to his wish, and now led his friend and guest, through the very heart of his craggy kingdom over the Grampians, towards Aberdeen. It was the end of October; a few sweet autumnal days still lingered among these northern hills, as if to light on their way the last feathered migrators, hastening towards the south; but dark mists invested their morning progress. The rivers were swollen; and the mountain peaks often saluted the rising sun, garmented in radiant snow. It was a little drear, yet grand, sublime, wondrous. York suppressed his chilling distaste, till it grew into admiration; the King played the guide featly; and the honoured name of the Bruce, which peopled this region with proud memories, was the burthen of many a tale; nor was his account of the fierce people of these wilds unwelcome to a warrior. York remarked that the King was generally known to them, not, indeed, as a monarch, but as a hunter, a traveller, sometimes as a skilful mediciner, or as a bard, and always hospitably received.

After three days they drew near their journey's end: curiosity as to the cause of their visit, anxiety concerning his reception, all faded in Richard's heart; dimmed by the glad expectation of seeing her again, who had dawned, the glowing orient of his darkened heart. They had departed from their rude shelter before the sun rose: the mountain peaks were awake with day, while night still slumbered in the plain below: some natural sights speak to the heart more than others, wherefore we know not: the most eloquent is that of the birth of day on the untrodden hill-tops, while we who behold it, are encompassed by shadows. York paused: the scene appeared to close in on him, and to fill him, even to overflowing, with its imagery. They were toiling up the mountain's side: below, above, the dark pines, in many a tortuous shape, clung to the rifted rocks; the fern clustered round some solitary old oak; while, beetling over, were dark frowning crags, or the foldings of the mountains, softened into upland, painted by the many coloured heather. With the steady pace of a mountaineer, King James breasted the hill-side; nor did York bely his rugged Spanish home. As a bravado, the King in the very sheer ascent trolled a ballad, a wild Scottish song, and Richard answered by a few notes of a Moorish air. A voice seemed to answer him, not an echo, for it was not his own, but taking the thrilling sweetness of Monina's tones. Ah! ungentle waves, and untaught winds, whither bear ye now the soft nursling of Andalusia? Such a thought darkened York's brow; when the King, pausing in his toil, leaned against a jutting crag — both young, both gallant, both so noble and so beautiful; of what could they think — of what speak? Not of the well governed realm of the one, nor the yet unconquered kingdom of the other; of such they might have spoken among statesmen and warriors, in palaces or on the battle plain; but here, in this wild solitude, the vast theatre whose shifting scenes and splendid decorations were the clouds, the mountain, the forest and the wave, where man stood, not as one of the links of society, forced by his relative position to consider his station and his rank, but as a human being, animated only by such emotions as were the growth of his own nature — of what should they speak — the young, the beautiful — but love!

"Tell me, gentle Cavalier," cried James suddenly; "hast thou ever been in love? Now would I give my jewel-hilted dagger to tear thy secret from thee," continued the King laughing; for York's eyes had flashed with sudden light, and then fell downcast. Where were his thoughts? at his journey's goal, or on the ocean sea? If he smiled, it was for Kate; but the tear that glittered on his long eyelashes, spoke of his Spanish maid. Yet it was not the passion of love that he now felt for his childhood companion; it was tenderness, a brother's care, a friend's watchfulness, all that man can feel for woman, unblended with the desire of making her his; but gratitude and distance had so blended and mingled his emotions, that thus addressed, he almost felt as if he had been detected in a crime.

"Now, by the Holy Rood, thou blushest," said James, much amused; "not more deeply was fair Katherine's cheek bedyed, when I put the self-same question to her. Does your Grace guess, wherefore we journey northwards?"

Richard turned an inquiring and unquiet look upon his royal companion. A kind of doubt was communicated to James's mind; he knew little of his friend's former life: was it not possible that engagements were already formed, incompatible with his plans? With some haughtiness, for his impetuous spirit ill brooked the slightest check, he disclosed the object of their visit to Castle Gordon, and the proposal he had made to the Earl to unite him in marriage to the Scottish Princess.

"When I shall possess my kingdom — when I may name my wife, that which she is, or nothing — Queen!" Richard exclaimed.

“Nay, I speak of no millenium, but of the present hour,” said James.

The enthusiastic King, bent upon his purpose, went on to speak of all the advantages that would result from this union. York’s silence nettled him: the Prince’s thoughts were indeed opposed to the exultation and delight which his friend had expected to see painted on his face. The first glad thought of a lover, is to protect and exalt her he loves. Katherine was a princess in her native land; — and what was he? — an outcast and a beggar — a vagabond upon the earth — a man allied to all that was magnificent in hope — to all that imagination could paint of gallant and true in himself, and devoted and noble in his friends. But these were idealities to the vulgar eye; and he had only a title as unreal as these, and a mere shadowy right, to bestow. It had been sinful even to ally Monina to his broken fortunes; but this high offspring of a palace — the very offer, generous as it was, humbled him. A few minutes’ silence intervened; and, in a colder tone James was about to address him, when York gave words to all the conflicting emotions in his breast — speaking such gratitude, love, hope, and despair, as reassured his friend, and made him the more resolve to conquer the difficulties unexpectedly given birth to by the disinterestedness of his guest.

A contest ensued; Richard deprecating the rich gift offered to him — the King warmly asserting that he must accept it. The words vagabond and outcast were treason to his friendship: if, which was impossible, they did not succeed in enforcing the rights to his ancestral kingdom, was not Scotland his home — for ever his home — if he married Katherine? And the Monarch went on to describe the happiness of their future lives — a trio bound by the ties of kindred — by affection — by the virtues, nay, even by the faults of each. He spoke also of the disturbances that so often had wrecked the fortunes of the proudest Scottish nobles, and said, that a princess of that land, united, it might be, to one of its chiefs, trimmed her bark for no summer sea. “Like these wild Highlands are our storm-nursed lives,” continued James. “By our ruder thanes the beautiful and weak are not respected; and tempest and ruin visit ever the topmost places. Kate is familiar to such fears, or rather, to the resignation and courage such prospects may inspire. Look around on these crags! listen! the storm is rising on the hills — howling among the pines. Such has been my cousin’s nursery — such the school which has made her no slave of luxury; no frail flowret, to, be scared when the rough wind visits her cheek.”

In such discussions the travellers beguiled the time. The day was stormy; but, eager to arrive, they did not heed its pelting. York had a sun in his own heart, that beamed on him in spite of the clouds overhead. Notwithstanding his first keen emotion of pain at the idea of linking one so lovely to his dark fate, the entrancing thought of possessing Katherine — that she had already consented to be his — animated him with delight, vague indeed; for yet he struggled against the flattering illusion.

After battling the whole day against a succession of steep acclivities, as evening drew near, the friends gained the last hill-top, and stood on its brow, overlooking a fertile plain or strath — an island of verdure amidst the black, precipitous mountains that girdled it. The sun was hidden by the western mountains, which cast their shadow into the valley; but the clouds were dispersed, and the round full silvery moon was pacing up the eastern heaven. The plain at their feet was studded by villages, adorned' by groves, and threaded by two rivers, whose high, romantic banks varied the scene. An extensive, strongly-built castle stood on the hill that overhung one of the streams, looking proudly down on this strath, which contained nearly thirty-six square miles of fertile ground. “Behold,” said James, “the kingdom of Lord Huntley, where he is far more absolute than I in my bonny Edinburgh. The Gordon fought for the Bruce; and the monarch bestowed on him this fair, wide plain as his reward. Bruce flying before his enemies, on foot, almost alone, among these savage Grampians, then looked upon it as now we do.”

King James’s thoughts were full of that wild exhilaration of spirit, which none, save the inhabitant of a mountainous country, knows, when desolation is around — a desolation which is to him the pledge of freeedom and of power. But York had other ideas: he had been told that the Lady Katherine had yielded a willing consent to the proposal made; and she whom he had before conversed with only as a gentle friend — she, the lovely and the good — his young heart beat thick, — it had no imagery, far less words, expressive of the rapture of love, tortured by the belief that such a prize he ought to — he must — resign.

The petty tyranny of trivial circumstance often has more power over our best-judged designs, than our pride permits us to confess. From the moment York entered Castle Gordon, he found an almost invisible, but all-conquering net thrown over him. The Gordon, for thus the Earl of Huntley preferred being called, when surrounded by his clan in his northern fastness, received the Princes with barbaric, but extreme magnificence: his dress was resplendent; his followers numerous, and richly clad according to Highland ideas of pomp. But no Lady Katherine was there, and it soon became apparent that Richard was first to see her at the altar. Sounds of nuptial festivity rang through the Castle; instead of grace or generosity attending his meditated declining of the honour, it would have borne the guise of an arrogant refusal. There was also something in the savage look of the clansmen, in the rude uncivilization of her native halls, where defence and attack formed the creed and practice of all, that reconciled him to the idea of leading her from the wild north to softer milder scenes; where every disaster wears a gentler shape; soothed, not exasperated by the ministrations of nature.

At midnight, but a very few hours after his arrival, he stood beside her in the chapel to interchange their vows. The Earl had decorated the holy place with every emblem that spoke of his own greatness, and that of his son-in-law. The style of royalty was applied to him, and the ambitious noble, “overleaping” himself, grasped with childish or savage impetuosity at the shadowy sceptre, and obscure cloud-wrapt crown of the royal exile. York, when he saw the Princess, summoned all his discernment to read content or dissatisfaction in her eyes; if any of the latter should appear, even there he would renounce his hopes. All was calm, celestially serene. Nay, something almost of exulation struggled through the placid expression of her features, as she cast her eyes up to Heaven, till modest gentleness veiled them again, and they were bent to earth.

The generosity and pride of woman had kindled these sentiments. The Lady Katherine, a princess by birth, would scarcely have dreamed of resisting her father’s behests, even if they had been in opposition to her desires; but here she was to sacrifice no inclination, nothing but prosperity; that must depart for ever she felt, she knew, when she became the bride of England’s outcast Prince. Yet should aught of good and great cling to him, it was her gift; and to bestow was the passion of her guileless heart. It was not reason; it was feeling, perhaps superstition, that inspired these ideas. The seer who foretold her fortunes, had been her tutor and her poet; she believed in him, and believed that all would be accomplished; even to the death of the beautiful and beloved being who stood in the pride and strength of youth at her side. All must be endured; for it was the will of Heaven. Meanwhile, that he should be happy during his mortal career was to be her study, her gift, the aim of her life. In consenting to be his, she also had made a condition, that, if defeat awaited his arms, and that again a wanderer he was obliged to fly before his enemies, she was not to be divided from him; if no longer here, she was to be permitted to join him; if he departed, she should accompany him.

As the priest bestowed his benediction on the illustrious and beauteous pair, a silent vow was formed in the heart of either. Doomed by his ill-fate to hardship and dependence, he would find in her a medicine for all his woes, a wife, even the better, purer part of himself, who would never suffer him to despair: but who would take the bitterer portion of his sorrow on herself, giving in return the heroism, the piety, the serene content which was the essence of her being. His vow, it depended not on himself, poor fellow! "Never through me shall she suffer," was the fervent resolve. Alas! as if weak mortal hands could hold back giant Calamity, when he seizes the heart, and rends it at his pleasure.

CHAPTER XIV.

But these are chimes for funerals: my business
Attends on fortune of a sprightlier triumph;
For love and majesty are reconciled.
And vow to crown thee Empress of the West.
— FORD.

The royal party returned to Edinburgh, where the nuptials of Richard of England and the Lady Katherine were celebrated with splendour. Festivities of all kinds, tournaments, hunting parties, balls, succeeded to each other; but far beyond every outward demonstration was the real happiness ensured by this marriage. Graced by Katherine, the little English court became a paradise. The Princess assumed her new character among the exiles with facility; yet the phrase is bad, for Katherine could assume nothing, not even a virtue, if she had it not. In every position she was not princess, queen, patroness, or mistress; but woman merely — a true-hearted, gentle, refined woman. She was too young for the maternal character to be appropriate to her, yet the watchfulness and care she had for all resembled it. Her new subjects felt as if before they had been a disconnected, vagabond troop, and that dignity and station were assigned to them through her: through her the charities and elegances of life hallowed and adorned them. The quality most peculiarly her own was the divine simplicity which animated her look, her manners, her acts. Taintless simplicity, that best of fascinations, whose power is not imperious and sudden, but gradual and changeless, where every word spoken is but the genuine interpreter of the feelings of the heart, to which not only falsehood, but even the slightest disguise or affectation, is wholly foreign; and which is the more delicate, winning, and kind, from being spontaneous — so that, as in describing her, her royal cousin had said, “you almost questioned her authority from its want of pretension, yet yielded to it in all its extent.”

Richard’s political position stood higher than ever. The ever-watchful Duchess of Burgundy had sent a renowned Burgundian captain, Sir Roderick-de-Lalayne, with two hundred German mercenaries. The King of France, at the request of Henry the Seventh, had dispatched an embassy to

King James, to advise a peace between England and Scotland. The ambassador was the Sire de Concressault, York's ancient friend, who continued to espouse his cause warmly, and gave it all the grace and honour of his high influence. King James was eager to collect his army, and to prepare for an invasion. If Richard had lost any part of his open-hearted confidence and personal friendship, he had gained in his esteem and consideration. The change that had been operated was imperceptible to York, who naturally found in his marriage a barrier to the hourly intercourse they had formerly had, when both were free. Yet change there was, greater even than the King himself suspected: the causes were easily traced.

The Tudor party in Scotland, instigated by bribes and large promises, were very active in their enmity to the White Rose. They had been obliged to let the torrent of royal favour force its headlong way, but they watched the slightest pause in its flow, to throw impediments in the way of the abundant stream. Soon after his return from the North, it became apparent that the King continued no unsuccessful suitor to the Lady Jane Kennedy. This a good deal estranged him from his English friend, who no longer reproved, but whose tacit condemnation he feared, as well as that of his fair cousin. Nay more, Lady Jane had drawn from him the cause of their transient quarrel, and, now that she had yielded, felt angry and disdainful at the attempt made to estrange her lover. One of those lower eddies or currents of intelligence, so in use at courts, had reported an angry expression of hers to the Earl of Buchan, one of York's most active enemies. This grasping-place in their difficult way was eagerly laid hold of by the conspirators. A coalition was formed between Lady Jane and this party, which ensured the aggravation of any ill-feeling that might arise between the late brothers in heart. Soon after another agent or tool was added to their number.

The most subtle, the most politic, the most wily, are sometimes the slaves of impulse; nay, very often those who fancy that they measure their actions the most narrowly by the rules, either of self-interest or ambition, are more easily influenced to unwise passion by any obstacle thrown in their path. The Secretary Frion had hitherto considered himself of primal import to the English Prince: no project was conceived, that was not first concocted in his brain, and insinuated by him; every new partizan had been enticed by his silvery speeches; whatever of difficult, crooked and hidden was to be done, Frion was consulted, and employed, and deeply trusted in its accomplishment. On his first arrival in Scotland, the intimacy between the King and York destroyed half his influence. James's discernment and experience was not duped by the insinuating flatteries of Frion: as a proud man he disdained, as a conscientious and pious one, he disliked him. It was worse when Katherine's influence became paramount; she put him exactly in his right place, yet was so kind that there was no room for complaint: all his former patrons were her worshippers; her praises were re-echoed from all; and assuredly no intrigue could exist where she was. Yet it was neither comprehensible, nor to be endured, that this banished Prince and his friends should walk straight forward in their allotted route, unaided by plot or manoeuvre. The subtlety of the man quickly revealed to him the existence of the opposing party; he was ready to foment it, were it only to gain reputation afterwards by its destruction. He made one step, and became the confidant of Balmayne, and apparently the tool of the higher confederates: at first he rather perplexed than served them, spinning spiders' webs in their way, and elevating himself in their eyes by brushing them off at his pleasure. He was exactly the man to shine in a dark conspiracy: soon nothing could be done but by his advice, nothing known but as he informed them, nothing said but as he dictated. Balmayne, who, fierce and moody, entered more zealously into these discontents than any other, yet took his counsel — little knew they Maitre Etienne Frion: he only watched the while, sage fisher of men as he was, for the best opportunity of betraying them for his own advantage. In the midst of festivity, of gallant, warlike preparation, Frion had, like a witch gathering poisonous herbs by the silvery light of the quiet moon, sought to extract all that was baleful in what, but for the uses to which he strove to put it, had died innocuous.

The winter grew into spring: these were the happiest months of young Richard's life. He had traversed many a pass of danger and tract of sorrow — falsehood had blotted — loss of friends who had died for him, had darkened the past years: often during their course he had believed that he gave himself up to despair; he had fancied that he had doubted every one and every thing; he imagined that he was tired of existence — vain ideas! Sanguine, confiding, full to the very brim of that spirit of life which is the happiness of the young, he sprung up a fresh Antæus, each time that fortune with Herculean power had thrown him to the earth. And now he congratulated himself even on every misery, every reverse, every sentiment of despondency that he experienced: they were so many links of the chain that made him what he was — the friend of James, the husband of Katherine. It was this best attribute of sunny-hearted youth, this greenness of the soul, that made Richard so frank, so noble, so generous: Care and Time had laboured in vain — no wrinkle, no deforming line marked his mind, or, that mind's interpreter, his open, candid brow.

With the spring the Scottish troops drew together, and encamped near Edinburgh. The occasion seemed seasonable; for news arrived of disturbances which had taken place in England, and which had caused Henry the Seventh to recall the Earl of Surrey, (who was conducting an army northward to oppose the expected attack from Scotland) to check and defeat enemies which had arisen in the west of his kingdom. The inhabitants of Cornwall, vexed by increasing taxes, had long been in a state of turbulence; and now, instigated by two ringleaders from among themselves, combined together, and rose in open and regulated rebellion — sedition, it might have been called; and had perhaps been easily crushed, but for the interference of one, who acted from designs and views which at first had made no part of the projects of the insurgents.

Lord Audley had not forgotten the White Rose. On his return westward, however, he found all so quiet, that no effort of his could rouze the rich and satisfied men of Devon, from their inglorious repose. His imprudence attracted attention; he had notice of the danger of an arrest, and suddenly resolved to quit the post he had chosen, and to join the Duke of York in Ireland. He came too late; the English squadron had sailed; and he, changeful as the winds and as impetuous, despising a danger now remote, resolved to return to England, and to Devonshire. His voyage from Cork to Bristol was sufficiently disastrous; contrary and violent winds drove him from his course into the Atlantic; here he beat about for several days, till the wind, shifting a point or two to the west, he began to make what sail he could in the opposite direction. Still the weather was tempestuous, and his skiff laboured frightfully amidst the stormy waves: not far from them, during the greatest fury of the gale, was a larger vessel, if such might be called the helmless, dismasted hull, tossed by the billows, the sport of the winds, as it rose and fell in the trough of the sea. At length the wind lulled; and the captain of the caravel, which indeed might be called a wreck, lowered a boat, and came alongside Lord Audley's vessel, asking whither he was bound? To England, was the answer; and the vast reef of clouds lifted on the southern horizon, and showing beyond a streak of azure, gave promise of success in their voyage. The questioner, who spoke English imperfectly, went on to say, that in spite of the miserable state of the caravel, he was resolved not to desert her, but to carry her, God willing, into the nearest French port he could make. But there was on board one sick, a woman, whom he wished to spare the dangers and privations of the voyage. Would the Commander take her to England, and bestow her in some convent, where she might be tended and kept in honourable safety? Lord Audley gave a willing consent, and the boat went off speedily, returning again with their stranger passenger. She was in the extremity of illness, even of danger, and lay, like a child, in the arms of the dark, tall, weather-beaten mariner, who, though squalid in his appearance from fatigue and want, stood as a rock that has braved a thousand storms; his muscles seemed iron — his countenance not stern, but calm and resolved — yet tenderness and softness were in the expression of his lips, as he gazed on his fragile charge, and placed her with feminine gentleness on such rude couch as could be afforded; then addressing Lord Audley, "You are an Englishman," he said, "perhaps a father?"

"I am an English noble," replied the other; "confide in my care, my honour; but, to be doubly sure, if you feel distrust, remain with us; yonder wreck will not weather another night."

"She has seen the suns of two worlds," said the sailor proudly, "and the Blessed Virgin has saved her at a worse hazard; if she perish now, it were little worth that her old captain survived; better both go down, as, if not now, some day we shall, together. I will confide my poor child to you, my Lord. If she recover, she has friends in England; she would gain them, even if she had them not. Not one among your boasted island-women is more lovely or more virtuous, than my poor, my much-suffering Monina."

Lord Audley renewed his protestations. De Faro listened with the ingenuous confidence of a sailor; he placed several caskets and a wellfilled bag of gold in the noble's hand, saying, "The Adalid fills a-pace. You but rob the ocean. If my child survives, you can give her the treasure you disdain. If she does" — and he bent over her; she almost seemed to sleep, so oppressed was she by feebleness and fever. A tear fell from the father's eye upon her brow: "And she will; Saint Mary guide us, we shall again."

Such was the strange drama acted on the wide boundless sea. Such the chances that restored the high-minded Andalusian to England, to the White Rose, to all the scenes, to every hope and fear which she had resolved to abandon for ever. For good or ill, we are in the hands of a superior power:

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends.
Rough-hew them how we will."

We can only resolve, or rather endeavour, to act our parts well, such as they are allotted to us. Little choice have we to seek or to eschew our several destinations.

With Monina at his side, and his own restless ambition as a spur, it may be easily imagined what Lord Audley's projects were in joining the Cornish insurgents. He led them from the Western extremity of the island towards Kent, where he hoped to find the seeds of rebellion to Lancaster, which he had sown the year before, ripened into harvest. News of the unimpeded march of the insurgents from Cornwall to the neighbourhood of London was brought to Edinburgh, freshening the zeal and animating the preparations for war.

Already the Scottish army was encamped south of Edinburgh. The English troops set up their tents among them. The day was fixed for the departure of the King, the Prince, and the noble leaders. They quitted Edinburgh in all the pompous array of men assured of victory. James loved the hopes and stirring delights of war: Richard saw his every good in life dependent on this expedition, and fostered sanguine expectation of triumph. The burning desire of asserting himself, of rewarding his faithful friends, of decorating Katherine with the rank and honours due to her — the belief that he should achieve all this — gave dignity, and even gladness, to his last adieu to his lovely wife. Her heart mirrored his hopes; not that she entertained them for her own, but for his sake: yet the quicker sensibilities of a woman imparted fears unknown to him. She concealed them, till when, as her last office and duty, she had fastened an embroidered scarf around him. Softly, whisperingly, as fearful of paining him, she said, "You will return — you have a kingdom here: though England prove false, you must not disdain to be sole monarch of Katherine."

These words had been spoken — earl, baron, and gallant knight thronged the courts of Holyrood. There was the sound of warlike trump and the streaming of painted banners, among which that of the White Rose waved conspicuous. The King vaulted on his saddle; the Prince of England rode at his side. He was surrounded by the rude northern warlike chiefs, ancient enemies of his native land, whose fierce eyes were lighted up by the expectation of meeting their old adversaries in the field; could he fancy that, through such aid, he might win back the crown usurped from him?

King James and Richard rode side by side. At this moment, when the one was spending the riches of his kingdom and the lives of his subjects for the other's sake, while the hearts of both were softened by regret for their abandoned home, and both anticipated the joys of victory or perils of defeat to be shared between them, the sentiment of friendship was rekindled. Never had they been more cordial, more confidential, more happy in each other's society. After several hours' ride, the short spring day declined to evening, which was accompanied by a drizzling rain: the bad roads, and the darkness impeded their progress; and it was night before the twinkling camp-lights appeared in the distance, and the hum of men was heard. To the right of the camp, surrounded by the tents of his nobles, the royal pavilion was pitched. On their arrival the Earl of Buchan was in readiness to hold the King's stirrup. "Nay," said James, "first we will see our royal guest lodged: where is the tent of his Grace of England? we commanded it to be pitched in close neighbourhood to our own."

"Please you, my liege," said Buchan, "Lord Moray gave direction it should be placed out of our line; it is set up a mile eastward of us."

"My uncle forgot himself; and you also, Sir Earl, were bound rather to obey our order," said the King.

"There were reasons," returned Buchan: "your Majesty, I dare aver, will approve the change, and his Highness of England also. There was a brawl between the Scottish borderers and the English; blood has been shed. We feared that the peace of the encampment, not to say the life of his Highness, would be endangered if he were in the midst of our savage Southrons."

"I like not this," said James moodily, "but it is too late to change to-night. The rain-drops begin to freeze upon my hair; your Highness would rather be in your tent, far though it be from mine, than quarrel about its position at this inclement hour. Lord Buchan, you will attend him thither. Prince, good night; tomorrow we will be more brotherly in our fashion; now the fiat of my Lord of Moray must be obeyed.”

The King dismounted and entered his pavilion: as the cloth was raised, a blazing fire, the apparel of silver flagons and golden cups, the trim appearance of silken-suited pages were visible, making strong contrast with the cheerless blank without. One slight glimpse revealed the cause, and partly excused the inhospitality of James, in not inviting his guest to partake his warm cheer. One in a kirtle sat somewhat retired from view; the quick motion of her head, the glance of her dark eye, showed that the monarch had been impatiently expected, and was gladly welcomed by the lovely daughter of the Earl of Cassils.

Lord Buchan accompanied Richard, Lord Barry, and Plantagenet, to their quarters; talking, as he went, of the contention, which had terminated fatally to several. They rode down the elevated ground on which the King’s tent was placed, over a plashy low plain, through a little wood of stunted larch, across a narrow dell, in whose bottom a brook struggled and murmured, to the acclivity on the other side, on which the tents of the English troops were pitched; considerably apart from the rest was Richard’s own pavilion: all looked tranquil and even desolate, compared to the stirring liveliness of the Scotch camp. Richard was received by Sir George Neville, who looked more than usually cold and haughty as he bent to Lord Buchan’s salutation: the Scotchman uttered a hasty good night, galloped down the upland, and across the dell, and was lost to sight in the wood.

“What means this, Sir George?” was the Prince’s first remark: “what dicipline is yours? — brawling and bloodshed with our allies!”

“Did your Highness name them our enemies,” said Neville, “it were more appropriate. Suspend your displeasure, I beseech you, until I can lay before you the reality of what you name a brawl; my honour, and I fear all our safeties are concerned in the discovery. Now, your Grace is wet and fatigued, you will repose.”

Richard desired solitude, not rest: he wished to be alone; for a thousand intricate ideas possessed him, clamouring to be attended to. He dismissed his friends. Frion only remained — Frion, who lately had almost become surly, but who was now smooth, supple as ever; his eye twinkling as of yore, and his ready laugh — that most characteristic part of him — again showing the old secretary returned. To the Prince’s warm heart the appearance of discontent and moodiness was peculiarly grating; the smile or frown even of Frion had power over him; and he felt grateful to the man for his glossy and satisfactory speeches, now that, spite of himself, a feeling — it was not fear, but an anticipation of evil — disturbed his mind.

At length, he dismissed him; yet still he felt utterly disinclined for sleep. For some time he paced his tent; images of war and battle floated before him — and then the vision of an angel with golden hair came, not to calm, but to trouble him with unquiet regret. In vain he strove to awaken the flock of gentle thoughts that usually occupied him; his ideas seemed wolf-visaged; unreal howlings and cries rung in his ears. This unusual state of mind was intolerable: he folded his cloak round him, and step into his outer tent. Frion, two pages, and his esquire, were to occupy it; but he found it solitary. This seemed a little strange; but it was early yet. He lifted the outer cloth; a sentinel was duly at his post; the prince saluted him, and passed on. The fitful winds of spring had dispersed the storm: the scarcely waning moon, encircled by the dark clear ether, was in the east; her yellow light filled the atmosphere, and lay glowing on the trees and little hill-side. The Prince stept onwards, down the declivity, across the dell, into the wood. He thought he heard voices; or was it only the swinging branches of the pines? The breeze raised his hair and freshened his brow. Still he walked on, till now he came in view of the Scottish camp, which lay tranquil as sheep in a fold, the moon's bright eye gazing on it. The sight brought proud Granada and all its towers, with the Christian camp sleeping at her feet, before his mind; and he still lingered. Now the tramp of horses became audible: a troop wound down the hill: the leader stopt, exclaiming, in some wonder, "My Lord of York! does your Highness need any service? do you bend your steps to the royal tent?"

"I blush to answer, Sir Patrick," replied the Prince; "for you will scoff at me as the moon's minion: I came out but to visit her. Yet a knight need not feel shame at loitering beneath her ray, dreaming of his lady-love. You are more actively employed?"

"I was on my way to your Highness's encampment," replied the Knight. "His Majesty is not quite satisfied with Lord Buchan's report, and sent but now his esquire to me, to bid me visit it. With your good leave, I will escort you thither."

CHAPTER XV.

Traitor, what hast thou done? how ever may
Thy cursed hand so cruelly have swayed
Against that knight? Harrow and weal-away!
After so wicked deed why liv’st thou longer day!
— SPENSER.

When he had been dismissed by his royal master, Frion called aside the esquire, and sent him on an errand, it would seem of some import and distance; for the youth uttered a few forcible interjections, and with a lowering brow drew on the riding-boots he had just doffed, muttering, “I must treat my horse better than my Lord treats me; so, master, seek a fresh steed. By my fay! this is to become a Squire of Dames — a love-token to the Duchess, in good hour!”

Having got rid of this young gentleman, Frion’s next care was to give distant employment to the pages, saying he would wait their return. But scarcely had they entered the most crowded part of the camp, before with quick cautious steps the secretary took the same path which the Prince trod half an hour later — he crossed the dell, and arriving at the little wood of larches; instead of traversing, he skirted it, till the gentle eminence on which the English camp was pitched, grew higher and more abrupt, the murmuring brook took the guise of a brawling torrent, grey rocks peeped out from the soil, and the scene became wilder and more mountainous: he walked on, till he arrived where a rustic bridge spanned the stream — under its shadow were three horsemen, two of whom dismounted, and a tall servitor held the bridles. One of these men Frion knew at once to be him who called himself Lord Bothwell, King Henry’s spy, and Richard’s fierce, motiveless, but ruthless enemy; the other — his bonnet was drawn over his brow — a cloak obscured his person. Frion’s quick eyes scrutinized it vainly, for the moon, cloudy at intervals, gave uncertain light; besides, the man had stationed himself within the deepest shadow of the bridge.

“Good befall your watch,” said Frion; “your worship is before your time.”

“Is not all ready?” asked Balmayne.

"That question is mine," replied the other. "You know our treaty — not a hair of my Lord's head must be injured."

"Tush! tush! fear not, good conscience-stickler," replied Bothwell with a contemptuous laugh; "no ill will befall the boy; we but ferry him over the Tweed a few hours earlier than he dreamed of, and land him all gently on the shore he seeks. As for thy reward, I have said, name it thyself."

"Fair words are these, Sir John Ramsay," said Frion; "but I said before, I must have surer pledge, both for my reward and my Lord's safety. King Henry will haggle about payment when the work is done, and the steel you wear is a toper in its way."

"How now, Sir Knave," cried Balmayne; "thinkest thou that I will turn midnight stabber!"

The man in the cloak started at these words. He uttered some sound, but again drew back; while the person who continued on horseback, said, and his voice was that of the Bishop of Moray, King James's uncle, "A truce to this contention, Master Good-fellow — whatever thy name be: I will answer for thy pay, and here is earnest of my truth." He threw a purse at Frion's feet—"The peace of two kingdoms — the honour of a royal, too long dishonoured house are at stake. No time is this to squabble for marks, or the paltry life of a base impostor. I, a prince of Scotland, avouch the deed. It were more friendly, methinks, to unlock his life with the steel key of our friend Wiatt, than to devote him to the gallows. Let Scotland be rid of him, I reck not how."

Again Frion fixed his eyes on the other — the clouds had fallen low in the sky; the moon was clear; the western breeze murmured among the bushes and the trees, and the beams of the silvery planet played upon the unquiet waters. "We have no time for delay, Sir John," said Frion, "prithee introduce me to our fellow labourer — this is the King's emissary? You call yourself Wiatt, master Black Cloak?"

The other made a gesture of impatience as he stepped aside. Balmayne and Moray discoursed aside, till the former bade the Secretary lead on — as they went, the Scotchman and Frion conversed in whispers concerning their plans, while their companion followed as if doggedly. Once he cast an impatient glance at the moon — Frion caught that look. "Have I found you, good friend," he thought; "then by our Lady of Embrun, you shall acquit you of the debt I claim this night."

With quicker steps the Provencal proceeded, till they reached the opening of the valley, and came opposite the slope on which the English camp was pitched. Furthest off and far apart was the royal pavilion, the banner of England flapping in the breeze, and this the only sign of life — but for this, the white silent tents looked like vast druidical stones piled upon a wild moor. They paused—"I must go first," said Frion; "we have wasted more time than I counted for — you will await me here."

"Listen, Master Frion," said Balmayne. "I would hardly trust you, but that I think you are a wise man; silver angels and golden marks, as a wise man, you will love: one thing you will hardly seek, a shroud of moonbeams, a grave in the vulture's maw. Look ye, one soars above even now; he scents dainty fare: twenty true men are vowed that he shall sup on thee, if thou art foresworn: thou wilt give some signal, when all is ready."

"That were difficult," said Frion; "I will return anon if there be any let to your enterprize; else, when the shadow of that tall larch blackens the white stone at your feet, come up without fear: have ye bonds ready for your prisoner?"

"An adamantine chain — away!" Frion cast one more glance at him called Wiatt. "It is even he, I know him, by that trick of his neck; his face was ever looking sideways:" thus assured, the Frenchman ascended the hill. Balmayne watched him, now visible, and now half hid by the deceptive light, till he entered the folds of the pavilion; and then he glanced his eyes upon the shadow of the tree, yet far from the white stone; and then paced the sward, as if disdaining to hold commune with Wiatt. Whatever thoughts possessed this hireling's breast he made no sign, but stood motionless as a statue; his arms folded, his head declined upon his breast. He was short, even slight in make, his motionless, half-shrinking attitude contrasted with the striding pace and the huge, erect form of the borderer. Who that had looked down upon these two figures, sole animations visible on the green earth beneath the moon's bright eye, would have read villany and murder in their appearance; the soft sweet night seemed an antidote to savageness, yet neither moon nor the sleeping face of beauteous earth imparted any gentleness to the Scot; he saw neither, except when impatiently he glanced at the slow-crawling shadow, and the moonlight sleeping on the signal stone. Many minutes past — Bothwell gave one impatient look more — how slowly the dusky line proceeded! He walked to the edge of the brook;

there was no movement about the pavilion; tranquil as an infant's sleep was the whole encampment. Suddenly a cry made him start, it was from Wiatt; the man, heretofore so statue-like, had thrown his arms upward with a passionate gesture, and then, recalled by Bothwell's imprecation, shrunk back into his former quiet, pointing only with a trembling finger to the stone, now deep imbedded in the black shadow of the larch. The Scot gave a short shrill laugh, and crying "Follow!" began the ascent, taking advantage of such broken ground and shrubs, as blotted the brightness of the rays that lit up the acclivity. Bothwell strode on with the activity of a moss-trooper; Wiatt was scarce able to walk; he stumbled several times. At length they reached the pavilion; the Frenchman stood just within, lifting the heavy cloth; they entered. Frion whispered, "I have cleared the coast; my Lord sleeps; we need but cast a cloak around him, to blind him, and so bear him off without more ado on his forced journey."

"There is wisdom in your speech," said Balmayne with something of a grin, "My friend Wiatt has a cloak large and dark enough for the nonce."

Frion drew back the silken lining of the inner tent, saying, "Tread soft, my Lord ever sleeps lightly; he must not be waked too soon."

"Never were the better word," muttered Bothwell: the dimmest twilight reigned in the tent. The Prince's couch was in shadow; the men drew near; the sleeper was wrapt in his silken coverlid, with his face buried in his pillow: his light-brown hair, lying in large clusters on his cheek, veiled him completely. Ramsay bent over him; his breathing was heavy and regular; he put out his large bony hand, and, as gently as he might, removed the quilt, uncovering the sleeper's right side; then turning to Wiatt, who had not yet advanced, he pointed to the heaving heart of his victim with such a glance of murderous callousness, that the very assassin shrunk beneath it; yet he approached; his hand held an unsheathed dagger, but it shook even to impotence; he raised it over his prey, but had no power to strike. Frion had crept round behind; a sound just then, and tramp of feet was heard in the outer tent; as by magic, in one brief second of time the mute dread scene changed its every characteristic. The assassin cried aloud, "It is not he!" Frion had seized his arm — the dagger fell — the pretended sleeper (one of York's pages) leaped from the couch; and the muffling cloak, dropping from the murderer's shoulders, disclosed the wretched, degraded Clifford. Ramsay drew his sword, and rushed towards the outer tent, when at the same moment Richard of York and Sir Patrick Hamilton showed themselves from beneath the hangings, which their attendants had raised. This sight startled Frion, and Clifford, restored to life and energy, tore himself from his grasp, and in a moment had rushed from beneath the pavilion: he was forgotten; all eyes were turned on Bothwell; the dagger at his feet, his drawn sword, his appearance in the retirement of the Prince of England, all accused him. He saw at once his danger, drew himself proudly up, and returned Hamilton's look with a fierce, haughty glare.

"Thy act is worse than thy enemies' speech," said Sir Patrick, sternly; "thou wilt answer this, recreant, to thy royal master."

"To him, to any, to you," said Balmayne; "There is my glove. Now, on the hill's side, or in the lists anon, I will avouch my deed."

Hamilton answered with a look of sovereign contempt; he bade his men seize the traitor. "Before I sleep," he cried, "the King hears this treason."

Richard had looked on in silence and wonder; he placed his hand on Hamilton's arm, stopping him, "Pardon me, valiant knight," he said; "but, I do beseech you, disturb not the King to-night, nor ever, with this ill tale. Too roughly already has the English Prince broken Scotland's rest. No blood is shed; and, strange as appearances are, I take Sir John Ramsay's word, and believe that, as a cavalier, he may maintain his cause, nor stain by it his knightly cognizance. I take up your glove, fair Sir, but only to restore it; without one slightest accusation attaching itself to you therewith. Nay, myself will take up the quarrel, if any blame you. Sir Patrick will not call me to the trial, I am sure. Frion, conduct the gallant gentleman beyond our lines."

Shame for the first time flushed Ramsay's brow as he left the tent. The Prince drew up to let him pass, with a mien so dignified and yet so tranquil, with a smile so bland, that thus it seemed an angelic essence, incapable of wound, might have gazed on a mere mortal, armed to injure him.

"Is this recklessness or nobility of soul?" Sir Patrick thought. He did not doubt, when Richard, changing his look to one of anxious appeal, besought him to omit utterly to report this strange scene. "I much fear," he said, "my wily Secretary to be most in fault; and I caught a glance of one, whose appearance here proves that Ramsay is not alone guilty. Let me enquire, let me learn — punish, if need be. English gold and English steel were the weapons here, and I alone have power over England. You will pledge me your word, Sir Patrick, not to disquiet our royal cousin by our domestic brawls. We must not put in opposing scales our paltry anger against ruffians like these, and the disquiet of the generous-hearted James. Ramsay was his father's favourite; for his sake he bears with him; and more easily may I. I indeed, who am most in fault, for spending the precious minutes wandering, like a shepherd of Arcadia, in listless foolishness, instead of acting the general, and guarding my tents from such visitors. The brawl last night might have forewarned me."

"Does it not shame Scotland," cried Hamilton warmly, "that you should need any guard but our true hearts, while you tread our soil?"

"Were this true," answered York, yet more earnestly, "remember, what shames Scotland, shames her King. Be assured, dear cousin, I speak advisedly. Were this examined, worse might appear; and I and your liege must be the sufferers: I to excite this treason in his subjects' hearts; he to prove that some near him are not true as they seem."

Hamilton yielded to these many pleas; but his heart warmed with admiration and love for the noble being who urged the cause of pardon for his enemies. "Be it as your Highness pleases," he exclaimed. "This I the more readily yield, since any new attempt kills Hamilton ere it reach you. I will be your guard, your sentinel, your wide, invulnerable shield; you will not refuse me this post of honour."

"Or let us both fulfil it," cried York, "one to the other; let us be brothers in arms, noble Hamilton. And yet, how can I, a fugitive, almost a tainted man, seek the alliance of one who stands as you do, fair and free in all men's eyes?"

As he spoke, the Prince held out his hand; the Scottish knight raised it respectfully to his lips. But now Frion returned; and the clash of arms and trumpets' sound spoke of the advance of night, and change of guard: the noble friends took leave of each other, and Sir Patrick departed. As soon as they were private, the Prince questioned his Secretary closely and sternly as to the events of the night. Frion had a plausible and ready tale, of artifice and guile, of how he had a pledge even from the King's uncle that York's life was not to be attempted; and that he had but wished to balk and vex them, by causing the page to be carried off; the discovery of their mistake would shame them from any second enterprize against the Prince of England.

York was but half satisfied; he had caught a transient glimpse of the fugitive. Was it indeed Clifford, who came a hired murderer to his bedside? A man who had partaken his heart’s counsels, long his companion, once his friend? It was frightful, it was humiliating but to imagine how deep the man may fall, who once gives himself over to evil thoughts, and unlawful deeds. Frion here protested his ignorance and surprise. It was almost day before his master dismissed him: and even then, how could Richard repose? That couch, Clifford had marked as his bier — it were a bed of thorns; he threw himself on the bare, hard ground, and innocence had more power than his angelic pity for the vice of others; it shed poppy influence on his lids; and the beams of the morning sun stole softly over, but did not disturb his slumbers.

CHAPTER XVI.

Methinks I see Death and the Furies waiting
What we will do, and all the Heaven at leisure
For the great spectacle. Draw then your swords!
— BEN JONSON.

Faster than the airy slave quicksilver is influenced by the changes of the atmosphere, does the subtle essence of the mind of one, who from love or gratitude hangs upon the smile or frown of another, feel the sunshine or frost of that other's countenance; and an independent disposition speedily revolts from servile obedience to such alteration. On the following day, and afterwards on the succeeding ones, Richard felt that the heart of James was no longer the same. He was courteous, kind — his friend's interests formed the sole topic of their conversations — but York could neither say the thing he wished, nor do that which he desired; the same objects were before him, apparently the same colouring was upon them; yet a pale sickly hue was cast over the before glowing picture; a chill had penetrated the summer warmth in which he basked; the wave was yet calm; but it was clouded, and no longer showed in its limpid depths that sympathy and affection, which made the White Rose's fortunes seem truly and intrinsically Scotland's own.

Friendship was now professed, service tendered; before words had seemed superfluous — the thing was there. James assured his guest that he would not turn back, nor give ear to Henry's propositions; and York felt, with a start, that ear had been given to them, or this conclusion had not been noted. The disunion and continued separation of the camps was another circumstance that spoke loudly of division of thought and counsel.

Frion believed that he should now resume his ancient position with his royal master: he bore his reproofs humbly, and strove to regain his favour by the importance of his services. The arcana of the Tudor party were, to a great degree, revealed to York; and it was easy to mark the ascendancy it was gaining. The presence of Lady Jane Kennedy might explain the ceremony and regulations observed in the intercourse between the King and his friend; but it was Frion's part to disclose the enmity this lady entertained for the White Rose, and the influence she exerted to its detriment. Moray and Lord Buchan were her friends, and they were frequent visitors in the royal pavilion.

A short time somewhat changed this state of things. The army drew near the frontier; and the King separated himself from the fair mistress of his heart. On the third day they arrived on the banks of the Tweed. It was but crossing a little river, but stepping from one stone to another — and Richard would stand on English ground.

The troops had passed the day before; some had proceeded southward; others were even now to be seen defiling in long lines on the distant plain. The sun was up cheerily; the fresh pleasant green of spring had stolen, more like a tinted atmosphere, than in the guise of foliage, over tree and bush; field flowers and crocusses peeped from under the mossy turf. The scene was a wide moor, varied by broken ground; clumps of trees, where many a bird nestled; and here and there thick underwood, where the wild deer made his lair; this had been the scene of a thousand conflicts and of mortal carnage between Scot and Englishman, but the sky-lark above sang of nature's bounty and nature's loveliness, an immemorial and perennial hymn, while nothing spoke of the butchery and wretchedness which once had made the landscape a tragic corpse-strewn stage.

Reining in his pawing courser, King James, in all the gay array of a high-born knight, paused on the Scottish bank — his lips, proud as the Apollo's — spoke of struggle and victory.

—"In his eye
And nostril, beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flashed their full lightnings by." Here was he who, in a later day, led the flower of Scotland to die on the English plains; who himself was doomed to lie with mangled limbs, and in blank, cold extinction, a trophy of victory to his enemy, on Flodden Field: he was alive now, and in his strength; he drank in with buoyant spirit every glorious anticipation, and laughed with fond delight; spurring on his horse, he crossed the ford, and entered England.

In a moment, as by impulse, York, who had lingered, dashed after him; allies they were; friends in seeming, nay, in truth; for the glance of proud enmity Richard cast on the Scot was perhaps the more factitious feeling: it sprung from patriotism, but its energy was borrowed from the deadly feuds of their ancestors, that natural hate which is said to exist now between the French and English, and which was far more envenomed between the near-rival people. Notwithstanding James's change towards him, York felt in the core of his affectionate heart, all that was due to him who had raised him when he was fallen; given him state, power — Katherine; he saw in him his kinsman — his benefactor. But the pride of a son of England rose in his breast, when he beheld the haughty Scot caracol in arrogant triumph on her soil. What was he? What had he done? He was born king and father of this realm: because he was despoiled of his high rights, was he to abjure his natural duty to her, as her child? Yet here he was an invader; not arming one division of her sons against the other, but girt with foreigners, aided by the ancient ravagers of her smiling villages and plenteous harvests. He looked on each individual Scot, and on their gallant king, and felt his bosom swell with rage and hate. These were unwise, nay, ungrateful sentiments; but he could not repel them. His first commands were to his cousin, to hasten to Randal of Dacre, to learn what Yorkists had gathered together to receive him. "If there be any large company," he said, "without more ado we will thank our kind cousin, invite him to recross the Tweed, and leave us to fight our battles by ourselves."

The satisfaction and triumph James felt made him, so far from participating in York's feelings, turn with renewed cordiality towards him. It was his first care to have the standard of the White Rose set up with martial pomp, to disperse his proclamations, and to invite, by his own manner, the Scottish nobles to encrease in observance towards the Prince. Lord Huntley, believing that the prophecy of his daughter's elevation was on the eve of its accomplishment, was prodigal of his shows of honour and service to his son-in-law. For some days the pavilions of the brother kings were pitched side by side, and James each hour thought to hear of the arrival of the Yorkist nobility of England: he had expected so many that he had given orders that care should be taken to recall his own troops, when the English visitants outnumbered his own guard. Day after day passed, and not one came — not one: even Randal of Dacre, Lord Dacre's brother, who had visited Richard in Scotland, seized with panic, had gone southward. Nothing came, save intelligence that the Cornish insurgents had been defeated on Blackheath, their ringleaders taken and executed: among them Lord Audley perished.

Another life! — how many more to complete the sad hecatomb, a useless offering to obdurate fate in Richard's favour! Sir George Neville, gathered up in all the cold pride of disappointed ambition, disdained to regret. Plantagenet saw the hopes and purpose of his life crushed, but dared not give words to his despair; Sir Roderick sneered; Lord Barry was loud in his laments; while the Scots grew taller and prouder, and ceased to frequent the tents of the English exiles. Councils were held by James, in which York had no part: it was only afterwards, that he learnt it had been commanded to the Scotch army to lay waste the country. Now indeed all the Englishman was alive in his heart — he gave sudden orders to raise his camp, and to march forward: he had sat still too long; he would enter the kingdom he claimed; discover for himself his chance of success — and, if there were none, his rights should not be made the pretence of a Scotch invasion.

None cried, "Long live King Richard!" as he passed along. How did his noble, youthful spirit droop at finding that not only he did not meet with, but was judged not to deserve success. It ranks among the most painful of our young feelings, to find that we are justly accused of acting wrong. Our motives — we believed them disinterested or justifiable; we have advanced a wondrous step in life before we can concede even to ourselves that alloy may be mingled with what we deemed pure gold: ignorant of the soil and culture of our own hearts, we feel sure that no base mixture can form a part of what we fancy to be a mine of virgin ore. Richard would have stood erect and challenged the world to accuse him — God and his right, was his defence. His right! Oh, narrow and selfish was that sentiment that could see, in any right appertaining to one man the excuse for the misery of thousands.

War, held in leash during the army's march from Edinburgh, was now let loose; swift and barbarous he tore forward on his way; a thousand destructions waited on him; his track was marked by ruin: the words of Lord Surrey were fulfilled. What a sight for one, whose best hope in acquirring his kingdom, was to bestow the happiness of which the usurper deprived it. The English troops, about five hundred men, crossed the wide-spread plains in the immediate vicinity of Scotland; they entered a beaten track, where the traces of cultivation spoke of man; a village peeped from among the hedge-row trees — York's heart beat high. Would the simple inhabitants refuse to acknowledge him? A few steps disclosed the truth — the village had been sacked by the Scotch: it was half burnt, and quite deserted; one woman alone remained — she sat on a pile of ashes wailing aloud. The exiles dared not read in each other's eyes the expression of their horror; they walked on like men rebuked. This was England, their country, their native home; and they had brought the fierce Scot upon her. Passing forward, they met trains of waggons laden with spoil, droves of cattle and sheep. They overtook a troop roasting an ox by the burning rafters of a farmhouse, whose green palings, trim orchard, and shaved grass-plat, spoke of domestic comfort; the house-dog barked fearfully — a Lowland archer transfixed him with his arrow.

The English marched on; they dared not eye the ravagers; shame and hate contended — these were their allies; while the sarcasm and scornful laugh which followed them, drugged with worm-wood the bitter draught. In vain, west or east or south, did they turn their eyes, a sad variety of the same misery presented itself on every side. A stout yeoman, gashed by an Highlander's claymore, was sometimes the ghastly stepping-stone passed over to enter his own abode; women and children had not been spared, or were only left to perish for want. Often during apparent silence, a fearful shriek, or the voice of lamentation, burst upon the air: now it was a woman's cry, now the shrill plaint of infancy. With the exception of these sufferers, the landscape was a blank. Where were the troops of friends Richard had hoped would hail him? Where the ancient Yorkists? Gone to augment the army which Surrey was bringing against the Scot; attached to these ill-omened allies how could the Prince hope to be met by his partizans? He had lost them all; the first North Briton who crossed the Tweed trampled on and destroyed for ever the fallen White Rose.

Resolutely bent on going forward till he should have advanced beyond the Scotch, on the following day York continued his march. They entered the ruins of another village; the desolation here was even more complete, although more recent; the flame was hardly spent upon the blackened rafters; the piles which the day before had been smiling dwellings, still smoked; a few domestic animals were skulking about. There was a church at the end of what had been a street; this was not spared. The English entered the desecrated aisle; an aged bleeding monk was lying at the altar's foot, who scowled even in death upon the soldiery; suddenly he recognised his countrymen; pleasure gleamed in his sunken eyes, "Ye will avenge us! Deliver the land! — The hand of God will lead ye on!"

Plantagenet rushed forward, “Father!” he cried, “do I find you here?”

The old man spoke, looked faintly; Edmund bent over him: “My father, it is I, Edmund, your boy, your murde—”

“My son,” said the Monk, “I behold you again, and die content! You are in arms, but by the blessing of the saints your sword’s point is turned against the cruel invader. Not one, oh! not one Englishman will fall by his brother’s hand, for not one will fight for that base deceit, the ill-nurtured Perkin, to whom God in his wrath has given such show of right as brings the Scot upon us. Once I thought — but no son of York would ally himself to these cruel border-robbers. God of my country, oh curse, curse him and his cause!”

The dying man spoke with difficulty; a few moments more, a spasm crossed his features, and they settled into stony insensibility. Edmund threw himself on the body; a deathlike silence reigned in the building; every heart beat with breathless horror; the curse uttered by the murdered man was even then breathed before God, and accepted. York spoke first with a calm, firm voice, “Arise, my cousin,” he said; “do not thou fix yet more deeply the barbed arrow, which has entered my heart.”

There are periods when remorse and horror conquer by their intensity every lesser impulse, and reign kings of the waste; this was no time for words or tears. Oh! welcome the grief or crime, which the bitterest of these could express or extenuate; it would insult this sad effigy of death to imagine that the impiety could be expiated. In silence they bore the reverend corpse to the vaults of the church, and then continued their way; some of the under-officers and men whispered together, but when again the chiefs conversed, they did not allude to this frightful scene, or to the awful imprecation which they felt suspended over their heads, shadowing their souls with unknown horror.

This was but the opening scene to worse wretchedness: hitherto they had seen the waste of war now they came upon its active atrocities. A dense smoke, the flickering of pale flames marked the progress of devastation; fierceness gleamed in the open blue eyes of Richard; he bit his lips, and at a quicker pace went forward; screams and horrid shrieks, mixed with shouts — oh! may not a veil be drawn over such horrors — flying children, mothers who stayed to die, fathers who unarmed rushed upon the weapons of the foe, fire and sword, animated by man’s fellest spirit, were there to destroy. Kindled to fury, York and his chief friends had outspeeded their troops: they came to save; they called on the fierce Scot to spare; and, when their words were unheeded, they drew their swords to beat back their allies. A fresh troop of Borderers, headed by Sir John Ramsay, at this moment poured into the village. The grey eye of the Scot was lighted up to the fiercest rage; but when he saw who and how few were they who had assailed his men, a demoniac expression, half exultation and joy, half deadly hate, animated him. Richard was driving before him a whole troop of camp-followers, cowardly and cruel fellows. Balmayne's hand was on his arm. "Your Highness forgets yourself," he said; "or is the fable ended, and you turned friend of Tudor?"

York's blood was up; his cheek, his brow were flushed; the word "assassin" burst from his lips, as he wheeled round and assailed his midnight foe. Thus a natural war began; English and Scotchmen, bent on mutual destruction, spurred on by every feeling of revenge, abhorrence, and national rivalship, dealt cruel blows one on the other. Richard's troops began to arrive in greater numbers; they far out-told their adversaries. Lord Bothwell with his marauders were obliged to retreat, and York was left in possession of his strange conquest. The peasantry gathered round him; they did not recognise the White Rose, they but blest him as their deliverer: yet the sufferers were many, and the flames still raged. One woman with a wild shriek for her children, threw herself into the very heart of her burning cot; while, statue-like, amidst a little helpless brood, his wife at his feet a corse, his dwelling in ashes, a stout yeoman stood; tears unheeded flowing down his weather-beaten cheeks. During the whole day Richard had striven against his own emotions, trying to dispel by pride, and indignation, and enforced fortitude, the softness that invaded his heart and rose, to his eyes, blinding them; but the sight of these miserable beings, victims of his right, grew into a tragedy too sad to endure. One young mother laid her infant offspring at his feet, crying, "Bless thee; thou hast saved her!" and then sunk in insensibility before him; her stained dress and pallid cheeks speaking too plainly of wounds and death. Richard burst into tears, "Oh, my stony and hard-frozen heart!" he cried, "which breakest not to see the loss and slaughter of so many of thy natural-born subjects and vassals!"

He spoke — he looked: Plantagenet was there, grief and horror seated in his dark, expressive eyes; Neville, who had lost his lofty pride; it was shame and self-abhorrence that painted their cheeks with blushes or unusual pallor. “We must hasten, my Lord,” said Barry, “after those evil-doers: they but quit one carcase, to pounce upon another.”

“Do we fight the King of England’s battles?” cried the Burgundian Lalayne, in unfeigned astonishment: “this will be strange intelligence for James of Scotland.”

“So strange, Sir Roderick,” said Richard, “that we will be the bearers of it ourselves. Give orders for the retreat, gentlemen. His Majesty is engaged in the siege of Norham Castle. We will present us before him, and demand mercy for our unhappy subjects.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day.
 And make me travel forth without my cloak.
To let base clouds o'ertake me on the way.
 Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
 — SHAKSPEARE.

It was York's characteristic to be sanguine beyond all men. Pain impressed him more deeply and sorely, than could be imagined by the cold of spirit; but show him the remedy, teach him the path to redress, and he threw off the clogging weight of care, and rose free and bright as in earliest youth. His impatience to behold his royal friend, to speak the little word, which he felt assured would recall the Scots from their ravages, and take from him the guilt of his subjects' blood, grew like a torrent in the spring: — he outspeeded his main troop; he left all but his chiefest friends behind; one by one even these grew fewer; he mounted a fresh horse, it was the third that day—"May-Flower is worse than blown," said Neville; "will not your Highness repose till to-morrow?"

"Repose!" — this echo was his only answer, and already he was far and alone upon his way.

The Scottish lines were passed, and the embattled walls of Norham, grey and impenetrable as rock, were before him; the royal pavilion occupied the centre of the camp. The wearied steed that bore York dropt on one knee as he reined him up before it, flushed, with every mark of travel and haste — he threw himself from his saddle, and entered the tent: it was thronged; he saw not one face, save that of the Monarch himself, who was conversing with a churchman, whose dark, foreign countenance Richard had seen before; now it was like a vision before him. James, in an accent of surprise, cried, "My Lord, this is an unexpected visit."

"Excuse ceremony, my dear cousin," said York; "I come not to speak to the Majesty of Scotland: man to man — a friend to his dearest friend — I have a suit to urge."

James, who was aware that his actual occupation of listening and even acceding to the suggestions of his foreign visitant, in favour of peace with

Henry, was treason to York's cause, thought that news of Don Pedro D'Ayala's arrival was the secret of these words: he blushed as he replied, "As friend to friend, we will hear anon — to-morrow."

"There is no anon to my dear plea," said York; "even now the hellish work is about which you must check. Oh, what am I, King of Scotland, that I am to be made the curse and scourge of my own people? The name of Richard is the bye-word of hate and terror, there, where I seek for blessings and filial love. You know not the mischief your fierce Borderers achieve — it is not yet too late; recall your men; bid them spare my people; let not the blood of my subjects plead against my right; rather would I pine in exile for ever, than occasion the slaughter and misery of my countrymen, my children."

Richard spoke impetuously; his eyes filled with tears, his accents were fraught with passionate entreaty, and yet with a firm persuasion that he spoke not in vain: but his address had the very worst effect. James believed that, hearing that he was in treaty with his foe, he had come to re-urge his suit, to enforce the many promises given, to demand a continuation of the war. James, a Scotchman, bred in civil strife among fierce Highlanders and ruthless Borderers, saw something contemptible in this pity and supplication for cottagers and villains: the shame he had felt, or feared to feel, at the idea of being accused of treachery by his guest, was lightened; his lips were curled even to scorn, as in a cold tone he replied, "Sir, methinketh you take much pains, and very much strive to preserve the realm of another prince, which, I do believe, never will be yours."

A momentary surprise set open wide York's eyes; he glanced round him; the Earl of Huntley's brow was clouded; a smile curled Lord Buchan's lips; the emotion that had convulsed the Prince's features, gave place to the calmest dignity. "If not mine," he said, "let me yield the sway to the lady Peace: the name and presence of a Plantagenet shall no longer sanction the devastation of his country. I would rather be a cotter on your wild Highlands, than buy the sovereignty of my fair England by the blood of her inhabitants."

The warm, though capricious heart of James was quickly recalled by the look and voice of his once dearest friend, to a sense of the ungraciousness of his proceeding: he frankly stretched out his hand; "I was wrong, cousin, forgive me, we will confer anon. Even now, orders have been issued to recal the troops; a few words will explain every thing."

York bent his head in acquiescence. The King dismissed his nobles, and committed to the care of one among them the reverend D'Ayala. With a strong sentiment of selfdefence, which was self-accusation — a half return of his ancient affection, which acted like remorse — James set himself to explain his proceedings. Fearful, unaided by any of the natives, of proceeding with an inadequate force further into the heart of the country, he had set down before the Castle of Norham, which was defended undauntedly by the Bishop of Durham. He had wasted much time here; and now the Cornish insurgents being quelled, the Earl of Surrey was marching northwards, at the head of forty thousand men. Surrey, Howard, might he not be a masked friend? "who," continued James, "has surely some personal enmity to your Highness; for the reverend Father D'Ayala, an embassador from Spain, visited him on his journey northward, and it seems the noble indulged in despiteful language; saying, that he who could bring the fell Scot (I thank him) into England, wore manifest signs of — I will not say — I remember not his words; they are of no import. The sum is, my dear Lord, I cannot meet the English army in the open field; walled town — even those paltry towers — I cannot win: with what shame and haste I may, I must retreat over the border."

Many more words James in the heat of repentant affection said to soothe his English friend. York's blood boiled in his veins; his mind was a chaos of scorn, mortification, and worse anger against himself. The insult inflicted by James before his assembled lords, the bitter speech of Surrey; he almost feared that he deserved the one, while he disdained to resent the other; and both held him silent. As speedily as he might, he took leave of the King: he saw signs in the encampment of the return of the foragers; they were laden with booty: his heart was sick; to ease his pent up burning spirit, when night brought solitude, though not repose, he wrote thus to the Lady Katherine: —

"Wilt thou, dear lady of my heart, descend from thy lofty state, and accept an errant knight, instead of a sceptered king, for thy mate? Alas! sweet Kate, if thou wilt not, I may never see thee more: for not thus, oh not thus, my God, will Richard win a kingdom! Poor England bleeds: our over-zealous cousin has pierced her with dismal wounds; and thou wouldst in thy gentleness shed a thousand tears, hadst thou beheld the misery that even now, grim and ghastly, floats before my sight. What am I, that I should be the parent of evil merely? Oh, my mother, my too kind friends, why did ye not conceal me from myself? Teaching me lessons of humbleness, rearing me as a peasant, consigning me to a cloister, my injuries would have died with me; and the good, the brave, the innocent, who have perished for me, or through me, had been spared!

"I fondly thought that mine was no vulgar ambition. I desired the good of others; the raising up and prosperity of my country. I saw my father's realm sold to an huckster — his subjects the victims of low-souled avarice. What more apparent duty, than to redeem his crown from Jew-hearted Tudor, and to set the bright jewels, pure and sparkling as when they graced his brow, on the head of his only son? Even now I think the day will come when I shall repair the losses of this sad hour — is it the restless ambitious spirit of youth that whispers future good, or true forebodings of the final triumph of the right?

"Now, O sweetest Kate, I forget disgrace, I forget remorse; I bury every sorrow in thought of thee. Thy idea is as a windless haven to some way-worn vessel — its nest in a vast oak tree to a tempest-baffled bird — hope of Paradise to the Martyr who expires in pain. Wilt thou receive me with thine own dear smile? My divine love, I am not worthy of thee; yet thou art mine — Lackland Richard's single treasure. The stars play strange gambols with us — I am richer than Tudor, and but that thy husband must leave no questioned name, I would sign a bond with Fate — let him take England, give me Katherine. But a Prince may not palter with the holy seal God affixes to him — nor one espoused to thee be less than King; fear not, therefore, that I waver though I pause — Adieu!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Yet, noble friends, his mixture with our blood.
Even with our own, shall no way interrupt
A general peace.
— FORD.

Pedro D'Ayala was embassador from Ferdinand and Isabella to the King of England. There was something congenial in the craft and gravity of this man with the cautious policy of Henry. When the latter complained of the vexation occasioned him by the counterfeit Plantagenet and the favour he met with in Scotland, D'Ayala offered to use his influence and counsel to terminate these feuds. He found James out of humour with York's ill success among the English, weary of a siege, where impregnable stone walls were his only enemies, uneasy at the advance of Surrey; pliable, therefore, to all his arguments. A week after d'Ayala's arrival, the Scots had recrossed the Tweed, the King and his nobles had returned to Edinburgh, and York to Katherine.

Richard's northern sun was set, and but for this fair star he had been left darkling. When the English general in his turn crossed the Tweed, and ravaged Scotland, he was looked on by its inhabitants as the cause of their disasters; and, but that some loving friends were still true to him, he had been deserted in the land which so lately was a temple of refuge to him. The Earl of Huntley exerted himself to prevent his falling into too deep disgrace in the eyes of Scotland, and was present at the consultations of the exiles to urge some new attempt in some other part of King Henry's dominions. York was anxious to wash out the memory of his overthrow; so that this check, which seemed so final to his hopes, but operated as an incentive to further exertions. Yet whither should he go? the whole earth was closed upon him. The territory of Burgundy, which had so long been his home, was forbidden. France — Concressault, who was his attached friend, dissuaded him from encountering a mortifying repulse there. Even his own Spain would refuse to receive him, now that d'Ayala had shown himself his enemy; but, no, he was not so far reduced to beg a refuge at the limits of civilization; still he had his sword, his cause, his friends.

A stranger came, an unexpected visitant from over the sea to decide his vacillating councils. The man was aged and silver-haired, smooth in his manners, soft-voiced, yet with quick grey eyes and compressed lips, indications of talent and resolution and subtlety. Frion saw him first, and deceived by his almost fawning manners into an idea of his insignificance, asked his purpose and name. The stranger with the utmost gentleness refused to disclose his object to any but the Prince; and Frion, with great show of insolence, refused to introduce him to his presence. “Then without thy leave, Sir Knave,” said the old man calmly, “I must force my way.”

Astley, the poor scrivener of Canterbury, was present. This honest, simple-hearted fellow had shown so much worth, so much zeal, so much humbleness with such fidelity, that he had become a favourite in York’s court, and principally with the Lady Katherine. Frion hated him, for he was his opposite, but pretended to despise him, and to use him as an underling. Astley meekly submitted, and at last gained a kind of favour in the Frenchman’s eyes by the deference and respect of his manner. The stranger, with the readiness of one accustomed to select agents for his will, addressed him, bidding him announce to his Highness a gentleman from Ireland. “And be assured,” he said, “the Duke will ill-requite any tardiness on thy part.”

An angry burst from Frion interrupted him. This man, rarely off his guard, but roused now by recent mortifications, forgot himself in the violence he displayed, which strangely contrasted with the soft tranquillity of the stranger, and Astley’s modest, but very determined annunciation of his resolve to convey the message to the Prince. Frion, from loud words, was about to proceed to acts, when Lord Barry entered — Barry, who felt Scotland as a limbo of despair, who was for ever urging Richard to visit Ireland, to whom the court life of the English was something like a trim-fenced park to a newcaught lion. Barry saw the stranger — his eyes lighted up, nay, danced with sudden joy: with no gentle hand he thrust Frion away, and then bent his knee, asking a blessing of the Prior of Kilmainham; and in the same breath eagerly demanded what had brought the venerable man from Buttevant across the dangerous seas.

Keating’s presence gave new life to York’s councils: he brought an invitation from Maurice of Desmond to the Duke. The Earl had since Richard’s departure been occupied in training troops, and so fortifying himself as to enable him to rise against Poynings, whose regular government, and above all whose predilection for the Butlers, caused him to be detested by the Geraldines. Hurried on by hatred and revenge, Desmond resolved to do that which would be most dreaded and abhorred of Henry — to assume the badge of the White Rose, and to set up the pretensions of young Richard. The tidings were that York was a loved and honoured guest in Edinburgh; and the impetuous Desmond feared that he would hardly be induced to abandon King James's powerful alliance, for the friendship of a wild Irish chieftain. The very invitation must be committed to no mean or witless hands: the difficulties appeared so great, that the measure was on the point of being abandoned, when the Prior of Kilmainham, who in the extreme of age awoke to fresh life at a prospect of regaining his lost consequence, offered himself to undertake the arduous task. His views went far beyond the Earl's: he hoped to make the King of Scotland an active party in his plots, and to contrive a simultaneous invasion of England from the north and from the west. Already his turbulent and grasping spirit saw Irish and Scotch meeting midway in England, and with conjoined forces dethroning Tudor, and dictating terms to his successor. He came too late: he came to find a peace nearly concluded between James and Henry; the White Rose fallen into disregard; and his arrival looked upon as the best hope, the last refuge of his fallen party.

Richard on the instant accepted his invitation. To a generous heart the feeling of enforced kindness succeeding to spontaneous affection, is intolerable. The very generosity of his own disposition made him recoil from exacting a reluctant boon from his sometime friend. To live a pensioner among the turbulent, arrogant Scots, was not to be thought of. The Earl of Huntley, in fond expectation of his daughter's greatness, would have despised him had he remained inactive. Even Katherine was solicitous to leave Scotland — she knew her countrymen; and, ready as she was to give up every exalted aim, and to make her husband's happiness in the retired quiet of private life, she knew that insult and feud would attend his further tarrying among the Scotch.

York had been for nearly a year the guest of King James; twelve months, in all their long-drawn train of weeks and days, had paced over the wide earth, marking it with change: each one had left its trace in the soul of Richard. There is something frightful, to a spirit partly tired of the world, to find that their life is to be acquainted with no durable prosperity; that happiness is but a modification of a train of events, which, like the fleeting birth of flowers, varies the year with different hues. But York was still too young to be aweary even of disappointment; he met the winter of his fortunes with cheerful fortitude, so that a kind of shame visited James, inspired by the respect his injured friend so well merited.

The capricious, but really noble heart of the Scottish King was at this time put to a hard trial. One of the preliminaries of peace, most insisted upon by Henry, was, that his rival should be given up to him: — this was, at the word, refused. But even to dismiss him from his kingdom, seemed so dastardly an act towards one allied to him by his own choice, that the swelling heart of the cavalier could not yet tame itself to the statesman's necessity. Some of his subjects, meanwhile, were ready enough to cut the Gordian knot by which he was entangled. Tudor had many emissaries in Edinburgh; and Lord Moray, Lord Buchan, and the dark Bothwell, whose enmity had become fierce personal hate, were still egged on by various letters and messages from England to some deed of sanguinary violence.

Sir John Ramsay was sought out by Frion. That goodly diplomatist must have entertained a high opinion of his mollifying eloquence, when he dared encounter the hot temper of him he had dishonoured in the eyes of the English Prince, and of his own countryman Hamilton. But Frion knew that in offering revenge he bought pardon: he was of little mark in Ramsay's eyes, while the man he had injured, and whom he consequently detested beyond every other, survived to tell the grating tale of the defeated villany of the assassin, and the godlike magnanimity of him who pardoned.

Frion's own feelings, which had vacillated, were now fixed to betray the Prince. He had wavered, because he had a kind of personal affection for the noble adventurer. Somehow he managed to fancy him a creature of his own: he had worked so long, and at one time so well for him, that he had fostered the vain belief that his dearest hopes, and best pretensions, would vanish like morning mist, if he blew unkindly on them. It was not so: James had been his friend: Huntley had given him his daughter without his interference; and the Irish project, with Keating at its head, who treated Frion with galling contempt, filled up the measure of his discontents. If anything else had been needed, the Lady Katherine's favour to Astley, and some offices of trust in which York himself had used him, sufficed to add the last sting to malice. "If they will not let me make, they shall rue the day when I shall mar; learn shall they, that Frion can clip an eagle's wings even in its pride of flight."

It is common to say that there is honour among thieves and villains. It is not honour; but an acknowledged loss of shame and conscience, and a mutual trust in the instinctive hatred the bad must bear the good, which strongly unites them. In spite of the Frenchman's former treachery, Balmayne felt that he could now confide, that his guilt would stretch far enough to encircle in its embrace the very act he desired; and he again trusted, and used him as the chief agent of his plots.

The Earl of Surrey was ravaging Scotland; and King James, with the chivalrous spirit of the times, challenged him to single combat. The Earl, in answer, refused to place his master's interests at the hazard of his single prowess, though ready for any other cause to accept the honour tendered him. The herald that brought this reply, Frion reported to Richard to be charged with a letter to him. Its purpose was to declare, that though, while aided and comforted by the enemies of England, the Earl warred against him, yet the Howard remembered the ancient attachments of his house; and that, if the White Rose, wholly renouncing the Scotch, would trust to the honour of the representative of a race of nobles, the army now in the field to his detriment should be turned to an engine of advantage. "Time pressed," the letter concluded by saying—"and if the Duke of York were willing to give his sails to the favouring wind, let him repair with a small company to Greenock, where he would find zealous and powerful friends."

At first this intimation filled the Prince with exultation and delight. The time was at last come when he should lead the native nobility of England to the field, and meet his enemy in worthy guise. There was but one check; he could not join Surrey, while Surrey was in arms against his once generous friend; so that, by a strange shifting of events, he now became anxious for peace between Scotland and England; eager that the seal should be set that destroyed the alliance and amity which had so lately been the sole hope of his life. Neville and Plantagenet entered into his views; and, while seemingly at the bottom of Fortune's scale, a new spirit of gladness animated this little knot of Englishmen.

For one thing young Richard was not prepared: the preliminaries of peace he knew were arranged, and he was aware that its conclusion would take the sword out of James's hand. They had rarely met lately; and this, while it lessened the familiarity, rather added to the apparent kindness of their interviews. There was in both these young Princes a genuine warmth of heart, and brightness of spirit, that drew them close whenever they did meet. James honoured the integrity and the unconquered soul of the outcast monarch, while his own genius, his vivacity, and polished courtesy, in spite of his caprice and late falling off, spread a charm around that forced admiration and affection even from him he injured. It was at this period, that, notwithstanding their real disunion, Richard felt it as strange to find his royal host confused in manner, and backward of speech. They had been at a hunting party, where Lord Moray's haughty glance of triumph, and the sneer that curled the Earl of Buchan's lip, would have disclosed some victory gained by them, had York deigned to regard their aspects. At length, after much hesitation, while riding apart from his peers, James asked—"If there were any news from the Lady Margaret of Burgundy?"

"Sir Roderick Lalayne returned to her a month ago," replied York, "and with him went my dear and zealous Lady Brampton, to urge fresh succour for one, to whom fortune has so long shown a wintry face, that methinks spring must at last be nigh at hand, herald of bright, blossoming summer."

"What promises then my lady Duchess?" said the King, eagerly.

"Alas! her promises are as blank as her power," replied Richard. "Even when the old Dukes of Burgundy were as Emperors in Christendom, they were but as provosts and city-magistrates in the free towns of Flanders; and these towns resolve on peace with England."

"It is the cry of the world," said James with a sigh; "this Tudor is a mighty man. Why, even I, a Scot, a warrior, and a king, am forced to join the universal voice, and exclaim, 'Peace with England,' even though my honour is the sacrifice."

"Your Majesty imparts no strange truth to me," said York. "I have long known that this must be; but surely you speak in soreness of spirit, when you speak of the sacrifice of honour. I thought the terms agreed on were favourable to Scotland."

"King Henry demanded, in the first place, the delivery of your. Highness into his hands." James blushed deeply as he said these words.

"Or he will come seize me," rejoined the Duke, with a laugh. "In good hour. I will deliver myself, if he will walk through the bristling lances, and set at naught the wide-mouthed cannon that will below in his path."

“Have you then new hopes?” cried the King; “Oh! say but so; and half my shame, and all my sorrow vanishes. Say that you have hope of speedy good in some other country; for I have sworn, ere April wear into May, Scotland shall be made poor by your Highness’s absence.”

A long pause followed these words. James felt as if he had given words to his own concealed dishonour, and struck his iron-girdled side with the bitter thought. “O! spirit of my father, this may not atone; but I must pay also in shame and torturous self-contempt for my heavy guilt.” A sudden blow, a precipitous fall when unaware his feet had reached the crumbling brink of a beetling precipice, would not have made such commotion in Richard’s heart, as the forced and frightful conviction that the friend he had trusted heaped this insult on him. For the first time in his life perhaps, pride conquered every other feeling; for reproach had been more friendly, than the spirit that impelled him, with a placid voice, and a glance of haughty condescension, to reply:—”Now that your Majesty dismisses me, I find it fittest season to thank you heartily for your many favours. That you deny me to the suit of your new ally, and send me forth scaithless from your kingdom, is the very least of these. Shall I forget that, when, a wanderer and a stranger, I came hither, you were a brother to me? That when an outcast from the world, Scotland became a home of smiles, and its King my dearest friend? These are lesser favours; for your love was of more value to me than your power, though you used it for my benefit; and, when you gave me the Lady Katherine, I incurred such a debt of gratitude, that it were uncancelled, though you cast me, bound hand and foot, at Tudor’s footstool. That I am bankrupt even in thanks, is my worst misery; yet, if the eye of favour, which I believe Fortune is now opening on me, brighten into noon-day splendour, let James of Scotland ask, and, when England shall be added to his now barren name, Richard will give, though it were himself.”

“Gentle cousin,” replied the King, “you gloss with horrid words a bitter pill to both; for though the skaithe seem yours, mine is the punishment. I lose what I can ill spare, a kinsman, and a friend.”

“Never!” cried York; “Scotland bids a realmless monarch, a beggar prince, depart: the King of Scotland, moved by strong state-necessity is no longer the ally of the disinherited orphan of Edward the Fourth: but James is Richard’s friend; he will rejoice, when he sees him, borne with the flowing tide, rise from lowness to the highest top at which he aims. And now, dear my Lord, grant me one other boon. I am about to depart, even of my own will; dismiss then every rankling feeling; lay no more to your generous, wounded heart a need, which is even more mine than yours; but let smiles and love attend your kinsman to the end, unalloyed by a deeper regret, than that fate wills it, and we must separate.”

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.

‘I am your wife.
No human power can or shall divorce.
My faith from duty.
— FORD.

— With
My fortune and my seeming destiny.
He made the bond, and broke it not with me.
No human tie is snapped betwixt us two.
— SCHILLER’S WALLENSTEIN.

Frion believed that he held the strings, which commanded the movements of all the puppets about him. The intrigues of party, the habitual use of ill-means to what those around him deemed a good end, had so accustomed him to lying and forgery, that his conscience was quite seared to the iniquity of these acts; truth to him was an accident, to be welcomed or not according as it was or was not advantageous to his plots.

King James prepared a fleet for the conveyance of the Prince; and the Earl of Huntley, as a matter of course, promised to entertain his daughter royally, until, in a palace in Westminster, she should find her destined title and fit abode. The Lady Katherine thanked him, but declared that she was nothing moved from her bridal vow, and that she never would desert Richard’s side. All that her father urged was of no avail. State and dignity, or their contraries, humiliation and disgrace, could only touch her through her husband; he was her exalter or debaser, even as he rose or fell; it was too late now to repine at degradation, which it ill-beseemed the daughter of a Gordon to encounter; it was incurred when she plighted her faith at the altar; wherever she was, it must be hers. As a princess she was lost or redeemed by her husband’s fortunes. As a woman, her glory and all her honour must consist in never deviating from the strait line of duty, which forbade her absence from his side.

The Earl disdained to reason with a fond doating girl, as he called the constant-minded lady, but applied to the King, representing how it would redound to his discredit, should a princess of his blood wander a vagrant beggar over sea and land. James had passed his royal word to Katherine, that she should have her will on this point; and when, at her father's suit he tried to dissuade her, he was at once silenced by her simple earnest words; "Ask me not," she said, "to place myself on the list of unworthy women: for your own honour's sake, royal cousin, permit your kinswoman to perform a wife's part unopposed. You and my father bestowed me, a dutiful subject, an obedient daughter, according to your will; you transferred my duty and obedience, and truly as I paid it to you, so will I keep it for my lord."

"What can we reply, my good Earl Marshall," said James, turning to Huntley, "I rebelled against the religion through which I reign, did I deny our sweet Kate free allowance to follow the dictates of her generous heart. Nor let us grudge the White Rose this one fair bloom. Love, such as Katherine feels, love, and the dearest, best gift of God — alas! too oft denied to poor humanity, and most to me — self-complacency, arising from a good conscience, will repay her every sacrifice."

Huntley retired in high indignation; his will was opposed; his word, which he deemed a law, had but a feather's weight. The blood of the Gordon was stirred to rage; and he broke forth in fierce and cruel expressions of anger, calling his daughter, ingrate — her lord base, and a traitor. Such muttered curses were reported to Lord Buchan: in the scheme on foot they had somewhat dreaded to incur Huntley's displeasure and revenge; knowing how dearly he prized the hope of royalty for his daughter; but now they fancied that they might draw him in, ere he was aware, to approve their deed. The crafty Frion was set on to sound him; the iron was hot, most easily, to their eyes, it took the desired form.

Huntley was a Scot, cunning even when angry — cautious when most passionate. The first intimations of the conspiracy were greedily received by him. He learnt the falsehood of the letter pretending to come from the Earl of Surrey; and the use that was to be made of this decoy to seize on the Duke of York's person. He did not scruple to promise his assistance; he reiterated his angry imprecations against his unworthy son-in-law; he thanked Frion with cordial warmth for affording him this opportunity for revenge; he declared his gratitude towards the confederate nobles; and the Frenchman left him, with the full belief that he was ready to lend his best aid to deliver over the English Prince to ignominy and death.

Such was the end of King Henry's last scheme to obtain possession of his too noble, too excelling rival, by means of Scottish fraud, and the treason of York's dependents. The Earl of Huntley conducted the whole affair with the utmost secresy. Apparently he acted the part designed for him by the conspirators. He reconciled himself to the prince; he urged an instant compliance with Surrey's invitation. The English had asked for some guarantee of Surrey's truth. Huntley obviated this difficulty. Through his intervention a new and sufficing impulse was given. Richard appointed the day when he should repair to Greenock, there to meet the envoy who was to lead him to Lord Surrey's presence. In the harbour of Greenock rode the bark which was to convey him to his English prison. King Henry's hirelings were already there; Frion conducted the victims blindfold into the net: they had meant to have gathered together a troop of ruffian borderers to prevent all resistance; but Huntley promised to be there himself with a band of Highlanders. The whole thing only seemed too easy, too secure.

The wily secretary had overshot his mark in taking so readily for granted Huntley's assent to the ruin of the Duke of York. He had come upon him in his angry hour: his honied words were a dew of poison; his adjurations for peace, oil to fire. Then, as the noble strode through the hall, imprecating vengeance, he slid in words that made him stop in full career. Men are apt to see their wishes mirrored in the object before them; and, when the Earl bent his grey eyes upon the Provençal and knit his time-furrowed brow in attention and interest, Frion saw the satisfaction of a man on the brink of dear revenge. He was far a-field. The very rage in which the Earl had indulged, by a natural reaction, softened him towards his children: and, when the traitor spoke of schemes ripe to deliver York into his adversary's hands, he recoiled at once from the path of vengeance opened before him, and listened with horror to the detail of a conspiracy which would tear the very shadow of a diadem from his daughter's brow; yet he listened, and his words still enticed the over wily Frion. "Balmayne," said the Earl, "all must succeed, even to the death. Where he intermeddles, he is ruthless;" thus ran his comments: "My good Lord Buchan, what the Foul Fiend makes him so busy? English gold! Yes: Buchan loves the gilding better than the strong iron that it hides. The honour of the royal house, my most reverend uncle! Is his animosity so stirring? Oh! priests are your only haters. So Richard's tale is told. The chroniclers will speak of Duke Perkin, of the canker that ate out the heart of Gordon's fair rose, the gibbet, instead of a throne, to which she was wed; a fair eminence! My Kate will hardly ascend it with him: she must halt at the gallows' foot." These words, said with bitterness, seemed to Frion the boiling sarcasm of an exasperated parent. The man's vanity was the trap in which he was caught: he could not believe that a savage Scot, an untaught Highlander, could enter the lists with one nurtured in the subtle atmosphere of Provence, with the pupil of Louis the Eleventh; a man schooled in eastern lore, who had passed a whole life of contrivance and deceit.

The Scottish nobles, Moray, Buchan, and Bothwell, were satisfied in having given their countenance to the English hirelings; and, now that the more powerful Huntley promised to watch over the execution of their designs, they were glad enough to withdraw from the rude and inhospitable act. Huntley had every thing in his own hands. He, with a party of Highlanders, escorted the Duke and Duchess of York, with their friends and attendants, to Greenock. Frion had never shown himself so humble or so courteous; he seemed afraid that any one of his victims should escape: he was particularly anxious to entice his old enemy, the Prior of Kilmainham, into the snare. His readiness and vivacity were remarked by all: it was attributed to the high hopes he entertained of his royal master's success through the alliance of the Earl of Surrey; and, while York expressed his affectionate approbation, he smiled blandly, and painted every feature in the very colouring he wished it to wear.

The vessel rode at anchor; the English sailors, on the arrival of York, went on board, got her under weigh, and dropt down the coast. With the dawn Lord Howard of Effingham, with a chosen troop, was, according to the false hopes of Richard, to arrive at the rendezvous, a wood about two miles south of the town, bordering the sands of the sea. Here the English emissaries were congregated, and here a score of Highlanders were in ambush, to assist in the capture of the White Rose. Hither, even before dawn, the wakeful Frion came, to announce the speedy arrival of his lord. He found his English friends in some anxiety. Clifford, who, under the name of Wiatt, had been chief among them, was seized with panic or remorse, and had gone on board the vessel, which had cast anchor but a few furlongs from the shore. The others were mean underlings: Frion's presence gave them courage; he was elated; his laugh was free; he had neither doubt nor scruple; no, not even when he turned from the vulgar, brutalized countenances of these ruffians, to behold the princely victim in all the splendour of innocence, with one beside him so lovely, that the spirit of good itself had selected her form for its best earthly bower; or to see Edmund, whose dark eyes beamed with unknown joy, and Neville, whose haughty glance was exchanged for a glad smile. The man's sole thought was exultation at his own cleverness and success, in having inveigled so many of the noble and the brave to this dark fate.

"What tidings of Effingham?" asked York.

"Are ye ready?" cried Huntley.

"All!" replied Frion; "all save him ye name Wiatt. Sir Robert, forsooth, is but half a man, and never does more than half deed, though that half makes a whole crime. All is ready. I hear the sound of oars; the boat nears the shore."

Through the tall, bare trunks of the trees, a glimpse of the beach might be gained; the roaring of the surges was distinct, now mingled with the cry of sailors.

"Then lose we no time," said Huntley. "My Lord of York, these words sound strange. You expected a noble countryman, to lead you to victory; you find nameless fellows, and the prince of knaves, most ready and willing to lead you to everlasting prison. Lo, the scene shifts again! Never be cast down, Master Frion; you are as subtle as any of your race — only to be outwitted by a niggard Scotchman, who can ill read, and worse write; except when villainy is blazoned in a man's face, and his sword indites a traitor's fate. Your clerkship will find none among us learned enough to afford you benefit of clergy."

Huntley drew his sword; and at the signal his Highlanders arose from their ambush. Frion was seized and bound. None, who even a moment before had seen the smooth-faced villain, could have recognised him; he was pale as the snow on Ben Nevis. A Highlander, an adept in such acts, dexterously threw a knotted rope over his head, and cast his eye up to the trees for a convenient branch. Such had been the orders; such the summary justice of the Earl.

Richard meanwhile looked on the blanched visage and quailing form of his betrayer in mere compassion. "Is it even so, Etienne?" he said; "and after long companionship we part thus."

The trembling craven fell on his knees, though he tightened the halter by the movement, so that when Richard turned away, saying, “I had thought better of thee: Jesu pardon thee as readily as I — farewell!” he had scarce voice to cry for mercy.

“Aye,” cried the Gordon; “such mercy as we grant the wolf and thievish fox. Short shrift be thine, Master Secretary!”

“By our Lady’s grace, stay!” said Katherine; “do not kill the false-hearted knave. He is a coward, and dares survive his honour; let him live.”

Richard looked sternly on the kneeling slave. To the good there is something awful in the sight of a guilty man. It is a mystery to them how the human heart can be so perverted. Is it a spirit from hell, that incorporates itself with the pulsations of our mortal bosom; a darkness that overshadows; a fiendly essence that mingles with the breath God gave to his own image? York felt a shrinking horror. “Thou hast pursued me since my youth,” he said, “forcing thyself into my councils; sometimes as a wily enemy; at others, befriending me in seeming, raising my soul, that flagged beneath the world’s unkind ministry; dropping balm by thy words into a wounded heart; to end thy office thus! Was this thy purpose ever; or what demon whispered thee to betray? Die! oh, no! too many, the good, the great, the true, have died for me; live thou a monument — a mark to tell the world that York can pardon, York can despise — not so base a thing as thee — that were little, but even thy employer. Go, tell my sister’s husband that I bear a charmed life; that love and valour are my guards. Bid him bribe those, nor waste his ill-got crowns on such as thee. Unbind him, sirs; make signal to the boat; let him on board; the winds stand fair for England.”

The fall of many a hope, roused by the forgery on Surrey’s name, was forgotten by Richard, as he sickened at this other mark of man’s wickedness and folly. He was surely the dear sport of fortune, a tale to chronicle how faithless friends may be. If such thoughts, like summer clouds, darkened his mind, they vanished, driven by the winds of life that bore him onward. This was no time for mere gloomy meditation. Though he was obliged to return to his forgotten Irish scheme, and to dismiss the glorious anticipation in which he had indulged, of leading the chivalry of England to the field; though no real defeat had ever visited him so keenly as this mockery of one; yet he was forced to forget himself, and to apply himself to console and rouse his downcast friends; but his skill was well repaid, and soon he again awoke to those feelings of buoyant hope, unwearied energy, and unshaken confidence which were the essence of his character.

In this last trial he felt how much good he might derive from the sweetness and constant spirit of the Lady Katherine. She hoped for none of the world's blessings, except they came in the shape of loves from him to whom she was united; happiness — all her's as centered in her blameless affections; and her confidence was placed in the belief and knowledge, that by devoting herself to her lord, to the wandering outcast who so dearly needed her sacrifice, she fulfilled her destiny upon earth, and pleased the "great Task Master," who for happiness or misery, but certainly for good, had given her life. All her gentle eloquence was spent in dissuading Richard from those unkind thoughts towards his species, which the treason of these base men, the caprice of James, the harsh sentence (for this was again brought home to him by disappointment) of Surrey, awakened in his bosom. It proved no hard task; soon the princely Adventurer, with eagle flight, soared from the sad prostration of spirit, the birth of his disasters, to fresh hopes and lofty resolves.

It was necessary immediately to prepare for his departure. The Earl of Huntley, struck by his magnanimity, no longer opposed his daughter's wish. The English exiles were eager for a new, and, they believed (for untired is Hope in man); for a prosperous career. Scotland grew rude, confined, and remote in their eyes. In Ireland were placed for them the portals of the world, to be opened by their sowrds; the dancing sea-waves invited them; the winds of heaven lent themselves to their service. "My friends," said Richard, "dear and faithful partners of my wayward fortunes, I would fondly believe that we are favoured of heaven. We are few; but the evil and the treacherous are no longer among us. And does old Time in all his outworn tales tell any truer, than that the many, being disunited, and so false, have ever been vanquished by the loving, bold, and heroic few? That a child may scan with its fingers our bare arithmetic, will therefore be to us the source of success, as assuredly it will be of glory. The English were few when they mowed down thickly planted French at Cressy and Poictiers. Which among us, armed as we are in the mail of valour, but would encounter ten of Tudor's scant-paid mercenaries? For me! I do believe that God is on my side, as surely as I know that justice and faith are; and I fear no defeat."

It is thus that man, with fervent imagination, can endue the rough stone with loveliness, forge the mis-shapen metal into a likeness of all that wins our hearts by exceeding beauty, and breathe into a dissonant trump soul-melting harmonies. The mind of man — that mystery, which may lend arms against itself, teaching vain lessons of material philosophy, but which, in the very act, shows its power to play with all created things, adding the sweetness of its own essence to the sweetest, taking its ugliness from the deformed. The creative faculty of man's soul — which, animating Richard, made him see victory in defeat, success and glory in the dark, the tortuous, the thorny path, which it was his destiny to walk from the cradle to the tomb.

Oh, had I, weak and faint of speech, words to teach my fellow-creatures the beauty and capabilities of man's mind; could I, or could one more fortunate, breathe the magic word which would reveal to all the power, which we all possess, to turn evil to good, foul to fair; then vice and pain would desert the new-born world!

It is not thus: the wise have taught, the good suffered for us; we are still the same; and still our own bitter experience and heart-breaking regrets teach us to sympathize too feelingly with a tale like this; which records the various fortunes of one who at his birth received every gift which most we covet; whose strange story is replete with every change of happiness and misery; with every contrast of glorious and disgraceful; who was the noble object of godlike fidelity, and the sad victim of demoniac treason; the mark of man's hate and woman's love; spending thus a short eventful life. It is not spent; he yet breathes: he is on the world of waters. What new scene unfolds itself? Where are they who were false, where those who were true? They congregate around him, and the car of life bears him on, attended by many frightful, many lovely shapes, to his destined end. He has yet much to suffer; and, human as he is, much to enjoy.

CHAPTER II.

One moment these were heard and seen; another
Past, and the two who stood beneath that night.
Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other.
— SHELLEY.

The hour had now arrived when Richard took leave of Scotland. The King was humbled by the necessity he felt himself under, of sending forth his friend and kinsman into the inhospitable world; and he felt deep grief at parting with his lovely cousin. She grew pale, when for the last time she saw the friend of her youth. But Katherine looked upon life in a mode very different from the usual one: the luxuries and dignities of the world never in her mind for a moment came in competition with her affections and her duty; she saw the plain path before her; whatever her father's or her royal cousin's idea had been in giving her to the Duke of York, she knew that, being his, her destiny upon earth was to share his fortunes, and soothe his sorrows. This constant looking on, giving herself up to, and delighting in one aim, one object, one occupation, elevated her far above the common cares of existence. She left

—"All meaner things.
The low ambition and the pride of Kings;"

— to shroud herself in love; to take on herself the hallowed state of one devoting herself to another's happiness. Cleopatra, basking in sunny pomp, borne, the wonder of the world, in her gilded bark, amidst all the aroma of the east, upon the gently rippling Cydnus, felt neither the pride nor joy of Katherine, as, on the poor deck of their dark weather-beaten skiff, she felt pillowed by the downy spirit of love, fanned by its gentle breath.

The Duke of York was more depressed; he thought of how, since his miserable childhood, he had been the sport of fortune and her scorn. He thought of the false, the cold, the perished: a dark wall seemed to rise around him; a murky vault to close over him: success, glory, honour, the world's treasures, which he had been brought up to aspire to as his dearest aim, his right, were unattainable; he was the defeated, the outcast; there was a clog in his way for ever; a foul taint upon his name. Thus seated on the deck, his arm coiled round a rope, his head leaning on his arm, while the stars showered a dim silvery radiance, and the sparkling sea mocked their lustre with brighter fires; while the breeze, that swelled his sail, and drove him merrily along, spent its cold breath on him; he, painting all natural objects with the obscure colouring suggested by his then gloomy spirit, distorting the very scenery of heaven and vast ocean into symbols of his evil fate, gave himself up to the very luxury of woe, — meanwhile the shadow of a lovely form fell on him, soft fingers pressed the curls of his hair, and Katherine asked, "Are the nights of Andalusia more glorious than this?"

At the voice of the charmer the dæmon fled: sky and sea cast off the dim veil his grief had woven, and creation was restored its native beauty. Hitherto the halls of palaces, the gaiety of a court, the council-chamber, had been the scenes in which the princely pair had lived together; linked to an engrossing state of things, surrounded by their partizans, they had been friends, nay lovers, according to the love of the many. But solitary Nature is the true temple of Love, where he is not an adjunct, but an essence; and now she alone was around them, to fill them with sublime awe, and the softest tenderness. In Richard's eyes, the kingdom of his inheritance dwindled into a mere speck; the land of her nativity became but a name to Katherine. It sufficed for their two full hearts that they were together on the dark wide sea; the bright sky above, and calm upon the bosom of the deep. They could ill discern each other in the shadowy twilight; a dream-like veil was cast over their features, as sleep curtains out the soul; so that we look on the beloved slumberer, and say "He is there, though the mystery of repose wraps me from him;" so now darkness blinded and divided them: but hand clasped hand; he felt that one existed who was his own, his faithful; and she rejoiced in the accomplishment of the mastersentiment of her soul, the desire of self-devotion, self-annihilation, for one who loved her. The passion that warmed their hearts had no fears, no tumult, no doubt. One to the other they sufficed; and, but that the trance is fleeting, Happiness, the lost child of the world, would have found here her home; for when love, which is the necessity of affectionate hearts, and the sense of duty, which is the mystery and the law of our souls, blend into one feeling, Paradise has little to promise save immortality.

For many days this state of forgetful extacy lasted. Plantagenet and Neville spoke of wars in England; Lord Barry and Keating of their Irish schemes — the Prince listened and replied; but his soul was far away — Oh, that for ever they might sail thus on the pathless, shoreless sea! — Nothing mean or trivial or ignoble could visit them; no hate, no care, no fear — this might not be, but to have felt, to have lived thus for a few short days, suffices to separate mortal man from the groveling part of his nature — no disgrace, no despair can so bring him back to the low-minded world, as to destroy the sense of having once so existed. And Richard, marked for misery and defeat, acknowledged that power which sentiment possesses to exalt us — to convince us that our minds, endowed with a soaring, restless aspiration, can find no repose on earth except in love.

CHAPTER III.

“Now for our Irish wars!”
— SHAKSPEARE.

Again the Duke of York approached the rocky entrance of the Cove of Cork, again he passed through the narrow passage, which opening, displayed a lovely sheet of tranquil water, decked with islands. The arrival of his fleet in the harbour was hailed with joy. Old John O’Water had returned to his civic labours, and had contrived to get himself chosen mayor for this year, that he might be of greater assistance to the White Rose in his enterprize.

As soon as the arrival of his ships off the coast was known, O’Water dispatched messengers to the Earl of Desmond, and busied himself to give splendour to Richard’s entrance into Cork. Tapestry and gay-coloured silks were hung from the windows; the street was strewn with flowers — citizens and soldiers intermixed crowded to the landing-place. York’s heart palpitated with joy. It was not that thence he much hoped for success to his adventure, which required more than the enthusiasm of the remote inhabitants of the south of Ireland to achieve it, but Cork was a sort of home to him; here he had found safety when he landed, barely escaped from Trangmar’s machinations — here he first assumed his rightful name and title — here, a mere boy, ardent, credulous, and bold — he had seen strangers adopt his badge and avouch his cause. Five years had elapsed since then — the acclaim of a few kind voices, the display of zeal, could no longer influence his hopes as then they had done, but they gladdened his heart, and took from it that painful feeling which we all too often experience — that we are cast away on the inhospitable earth, useless and neglected.

He was glad also in the very first spot of his claimed dominions whereon he set foot, to see the Lady Katherine received with the honours due to her rank. Her beauty and affability won the hearts of all around, and O’Water, with the tenderness that an old man is so apt to feel towards a young and lovely woman, extended to her a paternal affection, the simplicity and warmth of which touched her, thrown as she was among strangers, with gratitude.

Lord Desmond arrived — he was struck by the improvement in York’s manner, still ingenuous and open-hearted: he was more dignified, more confident in himself than before — the husband of Katherine also acquired consideration; as an adventurous boy, he might be used according to the commodity of the hour — now he had place — station in the world, and Desmond paid him greater deference, almost unawares.

But the Earl was sorely disappointed; “Reverend Father,” said he to Keating, “what aid does Scotland promise? Will they draw Tudor with his archers and harquebussiers, and well-horsed Knights, to the north, giving our Irish Kern some chance of safe landing in the west?”

“Peace is concluded between Scotland and England,” replied Keating.

Desmond looked moody. “How thrives the White Rose over the water? How sped the Duke, when he entered England? Some aid somewhere we must have, besides yonder knot of wanderers, and our own hungry, naked kerns.”

“By my fay!” replied Keating, “every budding blossom on the Rose-bush was nipped, as by a north-east wind. When Duke Richard sowed his hopes there, like the dragon’s teeth of Dan Cadmus, they turned into so many armed men to attack him.”

“Sooth, good Prior,” said the Earl, with a sharp laugh, “we shall speed well thereby: would you a re-acting of the gleeful mime at Stowe?”

“Wherefore,” said Keating, “fix your thoughts on England? The dark sea rolls between us, and even the giants of old broke their causeway, which in the north ‘tis said they built, ere it laid its long arm on the English shore. The name of Ireland reads as fair as England; its sons are as brave and politic, able to defend, to rule themselves: blot England from the world, and Ireland stands free and glorious, sufficing to herself. This springal, valorous though he be, can never upset Tudor’s throne in London; but he can do more for us by his very impotence. He is the true Lord of Ireland: we are liegemen in maintaining his right. Plant his banner, rally round it all men who wish well to their country; drive out the good man Poynings; crush the Butlers — aye, down with them; and when Richard is crowned King of Erin, and the Geraldines rule under him, our native land will stand singly, nor want England for a crutch — or, by’r Lady! for a spear to enter her heart, while she leaneth on it; so the wars of York and Lancaster may free us from the proud, imperious English; and the Irish, like the Scotch, have a king and a state of their own."

Desmond's eyes flashed for a moment, as Keating thus presented before them the picture he most desired to behold; but they grew cold again. "The means, reverend Prior, the arms, the money, the soldiers?"

"A bold stroke brings all: strike one blow, and Ireland is at our feet. We must not tarry; now the Butlers and their party are asleep in their security; gather men together; march forward boldly; strike at the highest, Dublin herself."

"Father," replied the Earl, "long before I were half way there, my litter would be abandoned even by its bearers, and we left alone among the bogs and mountains, to feed as we may, or die. If there be any sooth in your scheme, it can only prove good, inasmuch as we secure Connaught to ourselves, and turn this corner of the island into a kingdom; but neither one word, nor one blow, will gain Dublin. You are right so far, something must be done and speedily; and, if it be well done, we may do more, till by the aid of the blessed St. Patrick and white tooth'd Bridget! we tread upon the necks of the Butlers."

This one thing to be undertaken, after much consultation among the chieftains, was the siege of Waterford: it had been summoned to acknowledge Duke Richard as its lord, and had refused: Keating was very averse to spending time before a fortified town. "On, on, boutez en avant!" He reminded Lord Barry of his device, and strove to awaken ambition in him. The Prior of Kilmainham had spent all his life in Dublin, a chief member of the government, a seditious, factious but influential man: the capital to him was all that was worth having, while, to these lords of Munster, the smallest victory over their particular rivals, or the gaining a chief city in a district, which was their world, appeared more glorious than entering London itself victoriously, if meanwhile Waterford, or any one of the many towns of Ireland, held out against them.

On the fifteenth of July, 1497, the Duke of York, the Earl of Desmond, and the other many chief of many names, some Geraldines, all allied to, or subject to them, as the O'Briens, the Roches, the Macarthys, the Barrys, and others, assembled at Youghall, a town subject to the Earl of Desmond, and situated about mid-way between Cork and Waterford, at the mouth of the river Blackwater.

On the twenty-second of July the army was in movement, and entered the county of Waterford; the chiefs, at the head of their respective followers, proceeded to the shrine of St. Declan at Ardmore, to make their vows for the success of their expedition. The church at Ardmore, the round tower, the shrine, and healing-rock, were all objects of peculiar sanctity. The Countess of Desmond, and her young son, and the fair Duchess of York, accompanied this procession from Youghall. After the celebration of mass, the illustrious throng congregated on the rocky eminence, on which the mysterious tower is built overlooking the little bay, where the calm waters broke gently on the pebbly beach. It was a beauteous summer day; the noon-day heat was tempered by the sea breeze, and relieved by the regular plash of the billows, as they spent themselves on the shore. A kind of silence — such silence as there can be among a multitude, such a silence as is preserved when the winds sing among the pines — possessed the crowd: they stood in security, in peace, surrounded by such objects as excited piety and awe; and yet the hopes of the warrior, and, if such a word may be used, a warrior's fears, possessed them; it was such a pause as the mountain-goat makes ere he commits himself to the precipice. A moment afterwards all was in motion; to the sound of warlike instruments the troops wound up the Ardmore mountains, looking down on the little fleet, that stemmed its slow way towards the harbour of Waterford. The ladies were left alone with few attendants. The young Duchess gazed on that band of departing warriors, whose sole standard was the spotless rose; they were soon lost in the foldings of the hills; again they emerged; her straining eye caught them. That little speck upon the mountain-side contained the sole hope and joy of her life, exposed to danger for the sake of little good; for Katharine, accustomed to the sight of armies, and to the companionship of chiefs and rulers, detected at once the small chance there was, that these men could bring to terms a strongly fortified city; but resignation supplied the place of hope; she believed that Richard would be spared; and, but for his own sake, she cared little whether a remote home in Ireland, or a palace in England received them. She looked again on the mountain path; no smallest moving object gave sign of life; the sun-light slept upon the heathy uplands; the grey rocks stood in shadowy grandeur; Katharine sighed and turned again to the chapel, to offer still more fervent prayers, that on this beauteous earth, beneath this bright genial heaven, she might not be left desolate: whatever else her fortune, that Richard might be hers.

The army which the Earl of Desmond led against Waterford, did not consist of more than two thousand men. With these he invested the western division of the city. Richard, with his peculiar troop, took his position at the extremity of this line, nearest Passage, close to Lumbard's Marsh, there to protect the disembarkment of troops from the fleet.

Neither party failed in zeal or activity. The first days were actively employed in erecting works and bringing the cannon to play upon the town. On the third, in the very midst of their labours, while the Earl in his litter was carried close under the walls among the pioneers, and Lord Barry in his eagerness seized a spade and began to work, signals of attack were made from the town, and the troops poured out from the nearest gate. The advanced guard were too few to contend with them; they were driven back on the entrenchments. The citizens were full of fury and indignation; they rushed forward with loud cries, and created a confusion, which Desmond and Lord Barry were not slow to encounter; they brought a few regular troops to stand the assault; a well pointed cannon from the town swept the thin lines; they fell back; a yell of victory was raised by the men of Waterford; it reached the out-post of Duke Richard: he, with a score of men, five among them, with himself, being cavaliers armed at all points, were viewing a portion of the walls that seemed most open to assault; the roar of cannon and the clash of arms called him to more perilous occupation; he galloped towards the scene of action; and, while still the faltering men of Desmond were ashamed to fly, yet dared not stand, he, with his little troop, attacked the enemy on their flank. The white steed, the nodding plume, the flashing sword of York were foremost in the fray; Neville and Plantagenet were close behind; these knights in their iron armour seemed to the half-disciplined Irish like invulnerable statues, machines to offend, impregnable to offence; twenty such might have turned the fortunes of a more desperate day: their antagonists fell back. The knight of Kerry led on at this moment a reinforcement of Geraldines, and a cannon, which hitherto had been rebel to the cannoneer's art, opened its fiery mouth with such loud injurious speech, that for many moments the dread line it traced remained a blank. Richard saw the post of advantage, and endeavoured to throw himself between the enemy and the city: he did not succeed; but, on the contrary, was nearly cut off himself by a reinforcement of townsmen, sent to secure the retreat of their fellows. Those who saw him fight that day spoke of him as a wonder: the heart that had animated him in Andalusia was awake; as there he smote to death the turbaned Moor; so now he dealt mortal blows on all around, fearless of the pressing throng and still encreasing numbers. While thus hurried away by martial enthusiasm, the sound of a distant trumpet caught his ear, and the echo of fire arms followed; it came from the east — his own post was attacked: now, when he wished to retreat, he first discerned how alone and how surrounded he was; yet, looking on his foes he saw, but for their numbers, how despicable they were; to a knight, what was this throng of half-armed burghers and naked kerns, who pell mell aimed at him, every blow ineffectual? But again the loud bellow of distant cannon called him, and he turned to retreat — a cloud of missiles rattled against him; his shield was struck through; the bullets rebounded from his case of iron, while his sword felled an enemy at every stroke; and now, breaking through the opposing rank on the other side, his friends joined him — the citizens recoiled. “Old Reginald’s tower,” they averred, “would have bled sooner than these Sir Tristans — they were charmed men, and lead and good arrow-heads were softer than paper-pellets on their sides.” The first movement of panic was enough; before their leaders could rally them again to the attack, the English knights were far, riding at full speed towards the eastern gate.

Here Richard’s presence was enough to restore victory to his standard — flushed, panting, yet firm in his seat, his hand true and dangerous in its blows, there was something superhuman in his strength and courage, yet more fearful than his sharp sword. The excess of chivalrous ardour, the burning desire to mingle in the thickest fight, made danger happiness, and all the terrible shows of war entrancing joys to York. When reproached for rashness by his cousin, his bright eye was brighter for a tear, as he cried, “Cousin, I must have some part of my inheritance: my kingdom I shall never gain — glory — a deathless name — oh, must not these belong to him who possesses Katherine? The proud Scots, who looked askance at my nuptials, shall avow at least that she wedded no craven-hearted loon.”

With the morrow came a new task. Their little fleet had made its way up Waterford Harbour into the river Suir; and the troops destined to join his were partly disembarked. To protect the landing, he and Neville rode across the marsh to the strand. On their return a fresh sight presented itself — the ponds of Kilbarry were filled, the besieged having raised a mound of earth to stop the course of the river which flows from Kilbarry into the Suir; and the road back to their camp was completely cut off. There was no mode of getting round save by the road to Tramore; yet to the active mind of Richard, it seemed that even this disaster might be turned into a benefit. He reimbarked the troops; he himself went on board the principal vessel; he called to secret council the captains: — the conclusion was not immediately divulged, but some adventure of peril was assuredly planned among them.

The long summer day went slowly down; the hum of men from Waterford reached the ships; the quay was thronged with soldiers; several vessels were anchored in the advance, and manned with troops; but the English fleet, their anchors cast, their sails furled, seemed peacefully inclined. As night came on, the quay became a desert; the ships were worked back to their former stations. It grew darker; the city, with its old rough tower and spires, was mirrored indistinctly in the twilight tide; the walls grew dim and gigantic; the sound of fire-arms ceased; the last roll of the drum died away; the city slept, fearless of its invaders. At this moment, the ebbing tide began to flow. Assisted by the rising waters, Richard and Neville ran a small boat under the cover of the opposite bank of the river, to observe what defences the quay might possess. The lowtide at that hour was its best defence; a watch-tower or two with their centinels, completed the guard of a part of the town, whose defence on that side was neglected: by midnight also the tide would have risen, but it was necessary to wait for the following night; for first he must communicate with Desmond, that a night attack in the opposite direction might effectually leave the waterside deserted. The vessels meanwhile dropt down below Little Island, at once to get out of shot of Reginald’s tower, which commands the harbour, and to remove from the citizens any apprehensions they might entertain of attack. The winding of the river concealed them entirely from the town.

The next day, a burning August day, declined into a dewy night; imperceptibly during the dark the vessels were nearer the city; and, while the warders of the city fancied that the troops on board the fleet were finding a circuitous path over land to Desmond’s camp, the stars of night twinkled through the shrouds upon decks crowded with men, arming themselves in busy silence. Suddenly it was reported to Richard that a stranger caravel was among them; she was the only vessel with set sails, and these were enlarged by night, till as she neared, she seemed a giant, a living thing stalking between heaven and the element beneath. A sudden shiver convulsed the Prince; to his eye it was the likeness of that vessel which long ere this had traversed, he hoped in safety, the western sea, stemming its mountainous waves towards the beauteous Indian Isles. Had it been wrecked, and this the spectre? It was the illusion of a moment; but it was necessary to ascertain the nature and intentions of the stranger, who was now close among them. York's vessel, at his command, got alongside of her; he leapt upon the deck, and saw at once him whom the dim night had concealed before, Hernan de Faro upon the deck.

A thousand emotions, wonder, fear, delight, rushed into the youth's heart; while the Mariner, yet more weather-beaten, thin to emaciation, but still erect, still breathing the same spirit of fortitude and kindliness, grasped his hand, and blessed the Virgin for the meeting. The questions, the anxiety of Richard, could not be uttered in this hour of action; he only said, "You will join us, and we will be doubly strong; or must you remain to guard your daughter?"

"I come from her — she is not with me — more of this anon."

Rapidly he asked and obtained information of the meditated attack; in part he disapproved, and, with all the sagacity of a veteran in such enterprizes, suggested alterations. Now every boat was lowered with silent expedition, each received its freight of troops, and was rowed with the tide up the Suir. One skiff contained York and the Moor. The Prince, in the anticipation of the hazardous contest, looked serious; while every feature of De Faro's face was bright, his animated, glad smile, his flashing eyes — all spoke the exhilaration of one engaged in his elected pleasure. Richard had never seen him thus before: usually he appeared kind, almost deferential; yet, except when he talked of the sea, heavy and silent, and speaking of that in a subdued tone. He now stood the picture of a veteran hero, self-possessed and calm, but for the joyousness that the very feeling of his sword's weight, as his right hand grasped the hilt, imparted to his warlike spirit.

Had an angel, on poized wings of heavenly grain, hovered over the city of Waterford, gazing on its star-pointing spires, the reflecting waters of the

Suir, the tranquil hills and woods that gathered round the river, he would have believed such quiet inviolate, and blessed the sleep that hushed the miserable passions of humanity to repose. Anon there came the splash of waters, the shout of men, the sentinels' startled cry, the sudden rush of the guard, the clash of swords, the scream, the low groan, the protracted howl, and the fierce bark of the watchdog joining in. The celestial angel has soared to heaven, scared; and yet honour, magnanimity, devotion filled the hearts of those who thus turned to hell a seeming paradise. Led by Richard and De Faro, while a party was left behind to ensure retreat, another rushed forward right through the town, to throw open the western gate, and admit Desmond, before the terrified citizens had exchanged their night-caps for helmets; in vain: already the market-place was filled with soldiers ready for the encounter; guided by a native, they endeavoured to find a way through the bye-streets; they lost themselves; they got entangled in narrow allies; the awakened citizens cast upon their heads tiles, blocks of wood, all they could lay hands upon; to get back to the square was their only salvation; although the storm and yell that rose behind, assured them that Desmond had commenced the attack. With diminished numbers York regained the market-place; here he was furiously attacked; the crowd still increased, until the knot of assailants might have been crushed, it seemed, by mere numbers; day, bright day, with its golden clouds and swift pacing sun, dawned upon the scene. In one of those pauses which sometimes occur in the most chaotic roar, a trumpet was heard, sounding as it seemed Desmond's retreat from the walls. Richard felt that he was deserted, that all hope was over; and to secure the retreat of his men was a work of sufficient difficulty. Foot to foot the young hero and the veteran mariner fought; one by the quickness of his blows, the other by his tower-like strength, keeping back the enemy; while retreating slowly, their faces to the foe, they called on their men to make good their escape. They reached the quay — they saw the wide river, their refuge; their vessels near at hand, the boats hovering close, their safety was in sight, and yet hope of safety died in their hearts, so many and so fierce were those who pressed on them. Richard was wounded, weary, faint; De Faro alone — Reginald's old tower, which, dark and scaithless, frowned on them, seemed his type. They were at the water's edge, and the high tide kissed with its waves the very footway of the quay: "Courage, my Lord, a few more blows and we are safe:" the mariner spoke thus, for he saw Richard totter; and his arm, raised feebly, fell again without a stroke. At that moment, a flame, and then a bellowing roar, announced that the tardy cannoneer had at last opened his battery on the fleet, from the tower. One glance De Faro cast on his caravel; the bolt had struck and damaged one of the vessels, but the Adalid escaped. “Courage, my Lord!” again he shouted; and at that moment a blow was struck at Richard which felled him; he lay stretched at De Faro’s feet. Ere it could be repeated, the head of the assailant was cleft by a Moorish scymitar. With furious strength, De Faro then hurled his weapon among the soldiers; the unexpected act made them recoil; he lifted up the insensible form of Richard with the power of an elephant; he cast him into the near waves, and leapt in after: raising him with one hand, he cut the waters with the other, and swam thus towards his vessel, pursued by a rain of missiles; one arrow glanced on Richard’s unstrung helmet, another fixed itself in the joint at the neck; but De Faro was unhurt. He passed, swimming thus, the nearest vessels; the sailors crowded to the sides, imploring him to enter: as if it had been schoolboy’s sport he refused, till he reached the Adalid, till his own men raised Richard, revived now, but feeble, to her worn deck: and he, on board her well-known planks, felt superior to every sovereign in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

Farewell, Erin! farewell all
Who live to weep our fall!
— MOORE.

On the height of the tower of Ardmore, the White Rose of young Richard kept her vigils, and looked across the calm sea, and along the passes of the mountains of Drum, in anxious expectation of the event of the expedition. Sad forebodings oppressed her; the sentiment that mastered every other, was that her lord should require her presence, her assistance, while she was far. He had promised to send a post each day; when these failed, her heart sank within her. The only change that occurred, was when she saw the Adalid proceed slowly in the calm towards Waterford.

One sunny morn she from her watch-tower perceived several straggling groupes descending the mountains. She strained her eyes: no banners waved; no martial music spoke of victory. That was secondary in her eyes; it was for Richard's safety that she was solicitous; yet she would not, did not fear; for there is an instinctive sense in human nature which, in time of doubt, sallies forth from the ark of refuge, and brings back tidings of peace or sorrow to the expectant on the perilous flood; a prophetic spirit which, when it despairs — woe the while! — the omen proves not false. The Lady Katherine watched anxiously but not in despair. At length heavy footsteps ascended the tower-stairs; and, to answer the beatings of her heart, Edmund Plantagenet and the Mayor of Cork presented themselves; they eagerly asked, "Is he not here?"

"Nay, he has not fled?" she replied, while for the first time she grew pale.

"Weigh our words as mere air," said O'Water; "for we know nothing, gentle dame, but that I must to Cork, to bar out the men of Waterford. His Highness left us for the fleet; and the filling up of those cursed ponds of Kilbarry — ill luck to them! — cut off his return. Last night — Saint Patrick knows the deeds of the last night! — weary from our labour the day before, we were all too carelessly asleep, when our camp was assaulted. Earl Maurice had ridden to Lismore to hasten his cousin, the Knight of the Valley. There was some report of an attack upon the town from the ships.

Havock was the cry that roused the welkin from east to west. The sum I know not, save that we are runaways — the siege of Waterford is raised.”

“What skiff is that?” interrupted the Duchess. Round the point of Minehead first peeped the bowsprit, then the prow; and last the complete form of a vessel in full sail, yet scarcely touched by the wind, weathered the promontory. “Haste we, my friends,” she continued; “the Duke may be on board; at least we shall have intelligence.”

“I know that craft full well,” said O’Water; “her captain is a converted Moorish pagan.”

“The White Rose waves from her mast-top,” cried Katherine; “oh, he is there!”

“Holy angels!” exclaimed Edmund; “it is the Adalid! I will on board on the instant.”

Already the Duchess was descending the steep narrow stairs; the villagers of Ardmore, with many of the soldiers who had fled from Waterford, were on the shingles, watching the caravel, now full in sight, yet fearful to venture too near the shelving shore. “They are bound for Cork,” cried a man.

“Oh, not till I first speak to them,” said Katherine; “the day is fair; the sea calm; put off a boat. Ah, my cousin Edmund, take me with thee.”

Plantagenet had already got a boat from its moorings. O’Water was beside the Princess to beseech vainly that she would be patient; and poor Astley, who had been left in special attendance on her, waited near with blanched cheeks. Accompanied by these dear or humble friends, the White Rose was borne with the speed of ten oars towards the Adalid. On the deck, half reclining on a rude bed, very pale, yet with lively, wakeful eyes, lay the Prince of England. In a moment Katherine was assisted on board. There was no death for Richard; she was there, life of his life; so young, so beautiful, and true; the celestial goodness that beamed in her eyes, and dimpled her cherub countenance, was not like that of an inhabitant of this sad planet; except that spirits of beauty and love ever and anon do animate the frames of the earth-born; so that we behold in the aspects of our fellow-beings glances and smiles bright as those of angels. De Faro himself looked with admiration on the bending form of this lovely one, till accosted by Edmund, whose first question was, “Don Hernan here — where then is—”

“My beloved Monina you would ask for,” said De Faro; “she, who to please her vagrant father, would have crossed the wild Atlantic to visit the savage Western Isles. Poor child, even at the threshold of this adventure we were nearly wrecked. She is now in England; she sent me here — to tell of rebellion against King Henry; to invite Duke Richard to his kingdom.”

Thus they were occupied on the sunny deck; the sea was calm, the keel almost stationary in the water; they were bound for Cork; Plantagenet and the Mayor gathered eagerly from De Faro the history of the combat. They learned that it had been expected that Desmond would have assaulted from land, while York invaded the city from the river; but the fellow sent with Richard’s missive had been taken, the city put on her guard. Nothing but the desire of the citizens to do too much, and his own desperate valour, had saved Richard; they resolved at once to receive and destroy him, and to sally unawares on the Earl’s camp: they hoped to make prisoners of all the chiefs. They failed in this, but succeeded in raising the siege of their city.

Towards evening a land-breeze sprung up, and two others of York’s vessels hove in sight, and passed them quickly; for the Adalid was much disabled, and made slow way. Soon in pursuit appeared a ship and two corvettes, which O’Water recognized as belonging to Waterford. The corvettes proceeded on their way; but the larger vessel spied out the Adalid, and, being now in advance of her, hove to, with the manifest resolve of attacking her on her watery way towards Cork. De Faro, with his keen eyes fixed on the enemy’s movements, stood on the forecastle in silence; while Plantagenet and O’Water eagerly demanded arms, and exhorted the sailors to a most vain resistance. From the vessel of the foe the Moorish mariner cast his eyes upwards; the wind was shifting to the west. With a loud voice he shouted to his crew to man the yards; then, seizing the rudder, gave the swift orders that made the caravel go about. Sailing near the wind, her canvas had flapped lazily, now it filled; the keel felt the impulse, and dashed merrily along, bounding forward like a courser in the race; the ship, which had furled its sails in expectation of the combat, was in an instant left far behind; the other vessels from Waterford were still further to the west, towards Cork.

All these manoeuvres were mysteries to the landsmen: they gladly hailed the distance placed between them and a superior enemy; but as with a freshening gale the Adalid still held her swift course towards the east, and the land began to sink on the horizon, O'Water asked with some eagerness whither they were bound.

"To safety," De Faro replied, laconically.

"An idle answer," said Edmund; "we must judge where our safety lies?"

"I have ever found best safety on the wide ocean sea," cried the mariner, looking round proudly on his beloved element. "Your safeties and your Lord's, are, methinks, English born; if this wind hold, on the third morning we shall see the coast of Cornwall."

The mayor was aghast, exclaiming—"Cornwall! England! we are betrayed?"

De Faro looked on him with contempt:—"I do not command here," he continued; "I obey the Prince of England; let him decide. Shall we engage superior force; be boarded; taken by the enemy: or land, be wrecked, perchance, upon this savage coast; alive with vengeful kerns — defeated men among a victorious angry people? Or go where we are called by your leader's cause, where thousands of men are up in arms to receive you like brothers, to fight for you, with you; where England, the long desired kingdom, makes you welcome to her green, sunny shores? Ask ye your Prince this question; let his word be law."

This statement, upheld by York, brought conviction to the minds of Plantagenet and O'Water. The latter was aware of the risk he ran from the awakened vengeance of Henry, to pursue his having fostered rebellion in the city of which he was magistrate; and a moment's reflection showed him that there was no security for him, except in flight from Ireland. Meanwhile the wind, increasing in its strength, and right astern, carried them over the foaming waters. The early dawn showed them far at sea: they had outrun or baffled their pursuers; and, though, now and then, with anxious thought, they reflected on the comrades left behind, on the poor equipage and diminished numbers with which they were about to land in England, still there was something so miraculous in their escape, so unforeseen in the destiny that cut them off, and carried them, a remnant merely of the war, away from its dangers, that they felt as if they were under the immediate direction of a ruling Providence, and so resigned themselves; greedily drinking in the while the highly coloured picture De Faro painted of the Yorkist army which awaited them in Cornwall.

Again upon the sea — again impelled by winds and waves to new scenes — new hopes, tost here and there by Fortune, it was Richard's fate to see one frustrated expectation give place to another, which, in its turn, faded and died. This constant succession of projects kept alive within him that sanguine spirit which never could be vanquished. Eagerly he passed from one idea to another, and almost welcomed the last disaster, which appeared but to pioneer the way to future success. During this voyage, weak as his wounds had made him, he talked of England as his own — the dearer, because he must spend his blood to win it. Circumstances had an exactly contrary effect upon Katherine. The continual change of schemes convinced her of the futility of all. She felt that, if the first appearance of the Duke of York, acknowledged and upheld by various sovereigns and dear highborn relatives, had not animated the party of the White Rose in his favour, it was not now, after many defeats and humiliations on his side, and after triumphs and arrogant assumptions on that of his enemy, that brilliant success could be expected. This conviction must soon become general among the Yorkists, Richard would learn the sad lesson, but she was there to deprive it of its sting; to prove to him, that tranquillity and Katherine were of more worth than struggles, even if they proved successful, for vain power.

It was strange that a girl of royal birth, bred in a palace, accustomed to a queen-like sovereignty over her father's numerous vassals in the Highlands, should aim at restricting the ambitious York to mere privacy; while Monina, the humble daughter of a Moorish mariner, would have felt honour, reputation, all that is dear to man, at stake, if her friend had dreamed of renouncing his claims to the English crown. His cause was her life; his royalty the main spring of all her actions and thoughts. She had sacrificed love to it — she taught her woman's soul to rejoice in his marriage with another, because his union with a princess was pledge to the world of his truth. Perhaps, had the time ever come when he renounced his struggles, she had felt with a pang that his lowly fortunes might not incongruously be shared by her, and self had mingled in the religion of her heart, which was virtuous devotion to him; but as it was, the idea never presented itself. He must win, or die. Did he win, her happiness would result from the contemplation of his glory; were he to die, the young hero's grave would not be watered by her tears: she believed that in that hour her life would cease.

The Lady Katherine saw a vain mask in all the common-place pomp of palaces; she perceived that power failed most, when its end was good; she saw that in accomplishing its purpose in the cottage, or in halls of state, felicity resulted from the affections only. It was but being an actor in different scenes, to be a potentate or a peasant; the outward garb is not the livery of the mind: the refinement of taste, which enables us to gather pleasure from simple objects; the warmth of heart which necessitates the exercise of our affections, but which is content when they are satisfied; these, to her mind, were the only, but they were the complete ingredients of happiness; and it was rarer to find, and more difficult to retain them, among false-hearted, ambitious courtiers, and the luxury of palaces, than among simple-minded peasantry, and a plain natural style of living. There was some romance in this idea; Katherine felt that there was, and subdued herself not to lay too much store by any change or guise of outward circumstance. She taught herself to feel and know, that in the tumult of camps and war, in the anxieties of her present vagrant life, on the throne which she might possess, or in the prison she might share; by devoting herself to the happiness of him to whom she was united, whose heroism, goodness and love merited all her affection, she was performing the part assigned to her on earth, and securing a portion of happiness, far beyond the common lot of those whose colder harder natures require something beyond sympathy to constitute their misnamed felicity.

CHAPTER V.

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right.
If I am not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet.
— SHAKSPEARE.

On the deck of the sea-worn Adalid, watching the renovated strength, and attending on the still remaining weakness of her lord, the soft heart of the Princess possessed to fulness all its desires; while Monina, among the wild rude Cornish rebels, exerted herself, to inspire zeal for his cause, and to increase the number of his partisans, winning them by her thrilling eloquence, ruling them by her beauty and enthusiasm. She had found the whole population ready to second him; but fitting leaders, noble and influential men, were absolutely wanting. She sent her father to urge Richard to this new attempt, and when he should appear, attended, as she fondly hoped, by a train of high-born Irish lords, of gallant Scotch cavaliers, and devoted English warriors; he would be able to give a martial form to the rout of Cornish insurgents, to discipline their wild, untamed valour, to attract others by name and rank, and Tudor at last must grow pale upon his throne. With eagerness she awaited the fleet that was to bring the chosen band of heroes; when, after a long and calm voyage, on the third of September, the Adalid ran into White Sand Bay, on the western coast of Cornwall, and Plantagenet, at Richard's command, disembarked and proceeded forthwith to Bodmin.

It was strange that the chief partizan of the White Rose should, on his invasion of the island, find a Spanish girl the main source of information — the chief mover of the rebellion by which he was to profit. Yet Plantagenet almost forgot his mortal struggle for a kingdom, in the anticipation of seeing Monina. Plantagenet, prouder, more ambitious for his cousin, than Richard for himself — Plantagenet, who had but one object, to be the guardian, supporter, defender of York, now wandered in thought far back through many years to their Spanish home; to his tenderness for the sweet child of Madeline; to the development of the beauty and virtues of the lovely Moor. Thrown apart by their several destinies, he had scarcely seen her since then; and now, in place of the dark, laughing-eyed girl, he beheld a woman, bright with intelligence and sensibility; whose brow wore somewhat the sadtrace of suffering, whose cheek was a little sunk, but in whose eyes there was a soul, in whose smile an enchantment not to be resisted. She was all life, vivacity, and yet softness: all passion, yet yielding and docile. Her purpose was steady, stubborn; but the mode of its attainment, her conduct, she easily permitted to be guided. Edmund scarcely recognized her, but she instantly knew him; her elder brother, her kind but serious guardian, whom she had loved with awe, as the wisest and best of men. Now he bore a dearer name, as the unfailing friend of him she loved. To both their hearts this meeting was an unexpected joy. Monina had thought too much of Richard, to remember his cousin. He had half forgotten his own sensations; or, at least, was quite unprepared for the power and effect of her surpassing beauty.

After the first overflowing of affection, Monina eagerly detailed the forces raised, and dwelt on the spirit and courage of the insurgents. “They are poor fellows,” she said, “but true; burning with zeal to right themselves, and to avenge their losses at Blackheath. They are gathered together by thousands. They want merely leaders, discipline, arms, money, ammunition, and a few regular troops to show them the way: these, of course, you bring.”

“Alas! no,” said Edmund, “we bring merely ourselves.”

“Could Ireland, then, furnish no warlike stores?” continued the zealous girl. “But this can be remedied, doubtless. Yourself, your leader, Lord Desmond, Lord Barry, the gallant Neville; tell me who else — who from Burgundy — what Irish, what Scottish knights?”

The last word was said with difficulty: it made a pause in her rapid utterance; while Edmund, aghast, replied, “Indeed! none of all these, or very few: in a word, we have fled from Waterford in the Adalid. His Highness and myself are the sole English knights. The good old Mayor of Cork must represent all Ireland, gentle and simple, to your eyes — our fair Duchess, Scotland: her attendants will follow in due time, but these are but needy servitors.” Monina laughed. “We came to seek, not bring aid,” continued Plantagenet gravely.

“Do not be angry,” replied Monina. “There is more bitterness and sorrow in my laugh, than in, methinks, a widow’s tears. My dear friend, God send we are not utterly lost. Yet his Highness and yourself may work wonders.

Only report truly our state, that the Duke be not too dissatisfied with our appearance. Tell him Lord Audley headed a worse organized troop: tell him that Master Heron, the mercer, has no silken soul — that Master Skelton, the taylor, disdains a smaller needle than a cloth-yard shaft."

"And is it to head men like these we have been drawn from our Irish friends?" cried Edmund; "better return. Alas! our path is besieged; the very sea is subject to our enemy; in the wide world the King of England has no refuge."

"That he is King of England," said Monina, "let not him, let none of us forget. The very name is powerful: let him, on his native shores, assume it. Surely, if their liege King stand singly in the land of his forefathers, at his sacred name thousands will congregate. He has dared too little, when he had power: at the worst, even now, let him dare all, and triumph."

Her bold, impetuous language had its effect on Edmund: it echoed his own master passion, which ever cried aloud, "He is a King! and, once give himself that sacred name, submission and allegiance from his subjects must follow." Buoyed up by these thoughts, his report on board the Adalid was free from those humiliating details, which, even if he had wished, he would have found no voice to communicate to his royal cousin.

Monina's task of imparting to her friends the destitute condition in which their sovereign arrived, was even easier, "He is come among tall men," said the pompous Heron, "who can uphold him for the better king, even to the satin of his doublet."

"And fight for him, even to the rending of our own," cried Skelton.

"And die for him, as he must too, when all's done," said Trereife. "A soldier's death is better than a dastard's life."

"We will have out our men in goodly array," said Heron. "Master Skelton, are the doublets cut from that piece of sad-coloured velvet, last of my wares, slashed with white, as I directed?"

"Slash me no doublets but with a Spanish rapier," squeaked Skelton, "Have I not cast away the shears? Yet, look you now, good lack! I lie. Here in my pouch be a sharp pair, to clip Master Walter of Horneck's ears — if by the help of the saints we can lay him as flat on the field as his own grey suit was on my board when a shaping; by the same token that he never paid for it."

“In good hour, Sir Taylor,” said Monina: “but the talk now is, how duly to receive his Grace, how induce him to accept your aid.”

“Aye, by Saint Dunstan!” cried Trereife, “he has ruffled in France and Burgundy, my masters, and will look on you as clowns and base-born burghers; but no man has more to give than his life, and if he waste that heartily, time was and time may be when villains trod on the necks of knights, as the ghost of Charles of Burgundy could tell us. Courage is the beginning and end of a soldier’s catechism.”

Such were the chiefs Monina found desirous, and in their own conceit capable, of placing England’s diadem on Duke Richard’s head. Heron, the bankrupt mercer, who fancied himself the base-born offspring of the late Earl of Devonshire, and whose first deed of arms would find him Heron no more, but Sir John Courtney; Skelton, a luckless wight, whose shears ever went astray, (the true cause why Walter of Hornbeck paid not for his misshapen suit,) and who, therefore, believed himself born for greater things; and Trereife, the younger prodigal son of a rural franklin, who, cast off and disinherited, had served in the wars in Flanders, gaining in that country no small reverence for the good Duchess Margaret, and ready therefore to right her nephew; besides, like a true hero, he abhorred this silken time of peace, and hoped to gather spoil, if not laurels, in the meditated insurrection.

The noble passengers disembarked from the Adalid. “Welcome to England, sweet Kate! welcome to the country of which thou art Queen,” said York; “and even if her reception be cold or rough, love her for my sake, for she is my mother.”

“A step-mother I will not call her, dear my Lord,” replied the Princess, “but the maternal embrace is strangely wanting on these deserted sands: the narrow deck of yonder caravel were, methinks, a kindlier home: may we go on and prosper; but, if we fail, my Lord will pardon me, if I welcome the day when I embark again on board the Adalid; to find, when the wide earth proves false, safety and happiness on the free waves of ocean.”

CHAPTER VI.

Skelton. ‘Tis but going to sea and leaping ashore, cut ten or twelve thousand unnecessary throats, fire seven or eight towns, take half a dozen cities, get into the market-place, crown him Richard the Fourth, and the business is finished.
 — FORD.

Am I not king?
Awake, thou coward Majesty! thou sleepest.
Is not the King’s name forty thousand names?
 — SHAKSPEARE.

These doughty leaders drew out their followers in a plain just without Bodmin. There were about two hundred men decently clad from the remnants of the mercer’s wares, tolerably well armed and disciplined by Trereife; this troop obtained the distinction of being selected as King Richard’s body guard. Skelton was their captain, a rare commander, whose real merit was that he felt happiest when stuck close as a burr to Trereife; for at heart he was an errant coward, though a loud braggart, and talked of slaying his thousands, while the very wounding of his doublet had made him wince.

Heron was brave in his way; a true Cornishman, he could wrestle and cast his antagonist with the strength of a lion; he loved better, it is true, to trust to his arm than to his sword, which, in spite of his strength, Trereife always made fly from his hand in their fencing lessons: not the less did he consider himself a gallant knight, and had cut up many a yard of crimson cramoisy to make a rich suit for himself. He wore Monina’s glove in his cap and large yellow roses at his knees; he called himself generalissimo, and marshalled under him full three thousand men, who in truth had

never set a squadron in the field
Nor the division of a battle knew

More than a spinster; but they were sturdy discontented spirits, who valued life at its worth, which was even nothing to them, who had laboured with all their hearts, till labour was of no avail, and who then left the mine and the furrow to carry their loud complaints to the foot of Henry's throne — they were better pleased with the prospect of overthrowing it.

"Now, my masters, make yourselves heard," cried Heron, as he shuffled down a little eminence on a short-legged Welch pony, the only steed he found he could back in safety. "His Grace is within ear-shot, so you be loud. Long life to King Richard! — down with the taxes — Saint Michael and Cornwall for ever!"

The din was prolonged, ended, began, went on, as the Prince arrived at the summit of the hill with his little train — Fair Katherine was at his side. Plantagenet, O'Water, De Faro, with some dozen soldiers who fled from Waterford; sure never invader came so ill equipped. On the hill-top the illustrious wanderers paused. Richard hastily scanned the rough-suited multitude — then, turning to Plantagenet, "Cousin," he said, "You told me that the insurgent army would be drawn out for my view; is it not strange that yonder rabble should hide it from us? As far as my eye can reach, I see no martial discipline, no banners, no lordly crest; fie on those drums! they have no touch of military concord. What makes our army so slack of duty, Cousin?"

Though no fault of his, Edmund blushed deeply in very shame — the approach of Heron, Skelton, Trereife, and three or four other principal rebels, cut off his reply. It had been agreed that Skelton, who had a gift of eloquence, should speak, and many words he used to welcome his liege —"We will have every man with a Red Rose in his cap, in a drag chain, please your Grace, and give a sound lesson to the saucy burghers of Exeter withall. Not a knight shall live in the land, but of your Majesty's dubbing. We have but to put to rout King Henry's army, to hang the false loon for a traitor, and to set fire to London and the Parliament. Such nobles as please to doff their silken cloaks, and don miners' jackets, may work, the rest shall hang. Their mere wardrobes, bless the day will find us and your Grace in cloth of gold, embroidery, and other rich garniture to the end of our lives."

"We thank your zeal, my worthy master," said Richard, courteously, "if our good troops do half your saying, King Henry must look to it."

"Are those men to be worse than their word?" cried Skelton. "There is not one among us but has the arms of ten. We are of a race of giants, please your Majesty, and could knock the walls of Exeter down with our fists. Please you to enter Bodmin, whose very stones will cry for King Richard louder than King Hal's cannon; — to-morrow, God willing, we are for the wars."

The royal party passed on — the dark ferocity or sturdy obstinacy painted on the faces of the ill-armed rout, struck Richard as he passed — he became meditative, while Edmund, shamed and angry, his cheeks burning, his eyes on the ground, listened in indignant silence to Master Skelton, who fastened on him with such talk, that whether a soldier spoke of killing doublets, or a tailor prattled of fashioning a field of slaughter, was a riddle ill to be devised. At length they passed the gates of Bodmin; and here was a louder cry of welcome from the shrill voices of women, who held up their thin hands and half-starved children, crying for vengeance on Tudor, blessing the sweet faces of Richard and his lovely wife. York's eyes flashed again with their wonted fires; his creative spirit had found materials here to work some project, all poor and rude as they might seem.

They entered the town-hall; when, by some sudden revulsion in the tide of the crowd, every Cornishman fell back, closed the doors, and left the wanderers alone. Something was forgotten surely; for Heron had paced pompously up to Richard, when suddenly he turned on his heel, crying, "A word, my masters!" and all were gone. The Lady Katherine had marked their backing and hurrying with becoming gravity; but, when the door was fairly shut, she could restrain no longer a heart-felt laugh. Richard joined in her mirth, while Plantagenet strode through the hall angrily; muttering, "an army a rout of shirtless beggars; is this England's reception for her King?"

"It were fine mumming," said Richard, "under a hedge with the green sward for a stage."

"By our Lady, this passes patience!" reiterated Edmund, "where are the gentlemen of England? Where the sons of those who fell for York? Are we to oppose these half-naked knaves to the chivalry of Henry?"

"It would seem that such is expected," replied the Prince; "and, verily, Cousin, we might do worse. I pray you, treat the honest rogues well; better may come of it; keep we our secret, and have we not an army?"

"My Lord!" cried Plantagenet, in wonder.

"Patience, dear friend," said York; "I have not been apprentice to adversity so many long years, without becoming an adept in my calling. I say, I have an army; bold, though poor — ragged truly, but exceeding faithful. Methinks it were more glorious to put Tudor down with such small means, than to meet him in equal terms, like a vulgar conqueror. I do beseech you, Edmund, put a good face on it; speak to our Cornish giants, as if they had souls of mettle, and bodies decked like Ponce de Leon and his peers, when they welcomed Queen Isabel to the Spanish camp. You remember the golden array of the knights, Cousin?"

Edmund was impatient of the Prince's gay humour; while Katherine, seeing in his bright eyes heroism and lofty resolve, felt a dewy moisture gather in her own: there is something at once awful and affecting, when a man, the sport of fortune, meets her rudest blow unshrinking, and turns her very spite into arms against herself. The whole secret of Richard's present thoughts she could not divine, but she saw that their scope was worthy of his birth, his aim; her respect — her love augmented; and her gentle heart at that moment renewed its vow to devote herself to him entirely and for ever.

In the same spirit, York answered the deputation that waited on him. He commanded a proclamation to be made, in which he assumed the title of Richard the Fourth. He announced his intention of immediately penetrating England, and seizing on some walled town or city, before Henry could be aware of his having landed. Nor did he confine his energy to words: he examined the state of his men; their arms and furniture; he provided for their better discipline, and animated his cousin to take an active part in marshalling them to order. He went among them, learned the causes of their dissatisfaction, promised them better days, and so raised a glad spirit in them, that their hearts overleaping both time and circumstance, paid him the honour and the love he might have claimed, had he already led them through fertile England, and planted his victorious standard on the Tower of London. Trereife swore by his beard, he was a proper youth; the old soldier awoke to the remembrance of harvests of spoil he had gathered in the Netherlands, the stern encounters and the joys of success; he gazed on the rough Cornish men, and wondered how they should withstand the nobility of England: but, when Richard glanced hope and triumph from his bright eyes, when he spoke of the omnipotence of resolved valour, when he drew a picture of their ghastly poverty, and showed them how, by standing firm merely, they might redeem themselves; — while the poor fellows answered with a prolonged shout, or better still, grasped their arms more fiercely, and trod the earth with free and decided steps; — a thousand facilities seemed to be discovered; a thousand resources for the war displayed, undreamt of before. Were these mere words? or at his voice did soldiers rise from the clods, and victory obey the sound?

Plantagenet, seeing his royal Cousin's resolve, strove to second it. With a party of men he assaulted a near fortress, carried it, and seized on a store of arms. This success looked like a mighty victory; Richard exalted it as such; and the very fellows who handled awkwardly their booty, fancied themselves heroes at the mere sight of it.

On the third day they were to proceed to Exeter, it being determined that they should besiege this city. De Faro offered to sail to Cork to invite the warlike chieftains of Munster to come over with their power; and at least himself to bring back in the Adalid, Neville, and the rest of the English exiles. While Edmund, who looked glad at the thought, counselled that they should entrench themselves in this corner of England, which was so entirely devoted to them, till these forces were added to their number, and till by discipline, they should have made regular troops of the rabble, by courtesy y'cleped an army.

"Wherefore, Cousin," asked Richard, "do you desire others to share in our disasters?"

"My Lord!" cried Edmund, astounded.

"I have but one wish," continued the Prince, "that you and my good O'Water were even now in Ireland; so that I might stand the brunt of this war alone. You look amazed. Yet it were more amazing if I expected to do battle against the Veres, the Howards, the Berkeleys, the Courtneys, and ten thousand other names of high renown, backed by their train of martial adherents, with ragged regiments like those we are about to lead to the field; — even though the kerns of Ireland made their number double, and the Geraldines, Barry and Neville added by their nobleness dignity to our victor's conquest. Remember, Stoke, my cousin Edmund; you may well remember it. Remember my honoured kinsman the Earl of Lincoln and my lamented Lovel. Ah, that I did not now peril your life, then spared!"

"Yet, if your Grace fight at all," said O'Water, bluntly; "methinks we were not the worse for being better appointed for the fray. For victims, even those poor honest varlets are too many."

"That one other life should be wasted for me," replied Richard fervently, "is my saddest thought. I fear it must be so; some few lives, each as dear to him that spends it, as is the life-blood to our own hearts. I can say no more.

I have a secret purpose, I confess, in all I do. To accomplish it — and I do believe it to be a just one — I must strike one blow; nor fail. Tudor is yet unprepared; Exeter vacant of garrison; with stout hearts for the work, I trust to be able to seize that city. There the wars of York shall end. So far I confide in your discretions, that you may not deem me mad. More is the single property of my own soul. Will you help me so far, dear friends — so far hazard life — not to conquer a kingdom for Richard, but to redeem his honour?"

The warm-hearted, grey-headed Irish O'Water, with gushing eyes, swore to adhere to him to the last.

Edmund replied, "I am but a bit of thee; deal with me as with thyself; and I know thou wilt be no niggard in giving me away to danger."

De Faro cried, "I am a sailor, and know better how to face death on the waves than victory on shore; but, Santiago! may our blessed Lady herself look shy on me at the great day, if the Mariner of the Wreck prove false to your Grace."

"Now then to our work," cried York, "to speak fair to my faithful fellows and their braggart leaders. They at least shall be winners in our game; for my hand is on my prize; a spirit has whispered success to me; my hope and its consummation are married even at their birth."

CHAPTER VII.

Dost thou hear, lady?
If from the field I shall return once more
To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood;
I and my sword will earn our chronicle;
There is hope in it yet.
— SHAKSPEARE.

Richard was obliged to plead his cause yet once again. Katherine had watched all his movements; she had eyed curiously the army he mustered to the field; she talked to its leaders, and while they vaunted her affability, she was diving with earnest mind, into the truth of things. No fear that it could be hid from her; love for Richard was the bright light that dispelled every deceptive shadow from the scene. She saw the bare reality; some three thousand poor peasants and mechanics, whose swords were more apt to cut themselves than strike the enemy, were arrayed against the whole power and majesty of England. On the morrow they were to set forward. That night, while at the casement of his rude chamber, Richard gazed upon the congregated stars, trying to decipher in their intricate bright tracery the sure omen of the good he was told they charactered for him, Katherine, after a moment's hesitation, with a quivering voice, and hand that shook as it pressed his, knelt on a cushion at his feet, saying, "My sweet Richard, hear me; hear your faithful friend — your true wife; call not my councils weak and feminine, but weigh them sagely ere you resolve. May I speak?"

"Lady of my heart, arise," said Richard; "speak my soft-voiced Katherine — my White Rose of beauty — fair flower, crowning York's withered tree. Has not God done all in giving you to me; yet we must part, love, for awhile. Your soldier is for the wars, Kate, while you sit in your bower, weaving victorious garlands for his return."

"My ever dear Lord," said Katherine, "I speak with fear, because I feel that I shall not address myself to your concealed thought. I do not wish to penetrate your secrets, and yet I tremble at their event. You have not so far deceived yourself as to imagine, that with these unfortunate men, you can ride over the pride and the power of this island; did I see on what else you founded the lofty hope, that has, since we came here, beamed in your eyes, I would resign myself to your better wisdom. But, wherever I turn my view, there is a blank. You do not dream of conquest, though you feel secure of victory. What can this mean, save that you see glory in death?"

"You are too quick-sighted, sweet Kate," said Richard, "and see beyond the mark. I do not set my cast upon falling in this fray; though it may well happen that I should: but I have another aim."

"Without guessing at what that may be," replied the lady, "since you seem desirous to withhold the knowledge, permit me to present another object to your choice; decide between them, and I submit: but do not carelessly turn from mine. There is all to lose, nought to win, in what you now do. Death may blot the future page, so that we read neither disgrace or prison in its sad lines; but wherefore risk to die. While yet, dear love, we are young, life has a thousand charms, and one may be the miserable survivor, whose heart now bleeds at the mere surmise."

She faltered; he kissed her soft cheek, and pressed her to his heart. "Why may we not — why should we not live?" continued Katherine; "what is there in the name or state of king, that should so take captive our thoughts, that we can imagine no life but on a throne? Believe me, careful nights and thorny days are the portion of a monarch: he is lifted to that awful height only to view more clearly destruction beneath; around, fear, hate, disloyalty, all yelling at him. The cold, heartless Tudor may well desire the prize, for he has nothing save the gilt crown to ennoble him; nothing but the supple knees of courtiers to present to him the show of love. But — ah! could I put fire into my weak words — my heart's zeal into my supplicatory voice — persuasion would attend upon me, and you would feel that to the young, to two united as we are, our best kingdom is each other's hearts; our dearest power that which each, without let or envy, exercises over the other. Though our palace roof be the rafters of a lowly cot, our state, the dear affection we bear each other, our attendants the duty and observance of one to the other — I, so served by King Edward's son — you, by the rightful queen of this fair island — were better waited on than Henry and Elizabeth, by their less noble servitors. I almost think that, with words like these, I might draw you from the uneasy throne to the downy paradise of love; and can I not from this hard struggle, while death yet guards the palace gate, and you will be pierced through and through long ere you can enter."

"Thus, my gentle love," said Richard, "you would have me renounce my birth and name; you desire that we become the scorn of the world, and would be content that so dishonoured, the braggart impostor, and his dame Katherine, should spend their shameful days in an ignominious sloth, misnamed tranquillity. I am a king, lady, though no holy oil nor jewelled crown has touched this head; and such I must prove myself."

"Oh, doubt it not," she replied, "it is proved by your own speech and your own nobleness; my heart approves you such; the whole earth, till its latest day, will avouch that the lord of Katherine is no deceiver; but my words avail not with you."

"They do avail, my best, my angel girl, to show me that the world's treasure is mere dross compared with thee: one only thing I prize, not as thy equal, but as that without which, I were a casket not even worthy to encase this jewel of the earth — my honour! A word taught me by my victim brother, by my noble cousin Lincoln, by the generous Plantagenet; I learnt its meaning among a race of heroes — the Christian cavaliers — the Moorish chivalry of Spain; dear is it to me, since without it I would not partake your home of love — an home, more glorious and more blessed than the throne of the universe. It is for that I now fight, Katherine; not for a kingdom; which, as thy royal Cousin truly said, never will be mine. If I fall, that Cousin, the great, the munificent James, will be your refuge."

"Never," interrupted the lady, "Scotland I shall never see again; never show myself, a queen and no queen, the mock of their rude speech; never put myself into my dear, but ambitious father's hands, to be bartered away to another than my Richard; rather with your aunt of Burgundy, rather in Tudor's own court, with your fair sister. Holy angels! of what do I speak? how frightfully distinct has the bereft world spread itself out as my widowed abode!"

A gush of tears closed her speech. "Think of brighter days, my love," said Richard, "they will be ours. You spoke erewhile of the difficulty of giving true imagery to the living thought; thus, I know not how to shape an appropriate garb (to use a trope of my friend Skelton) for my inmost thoughts. I feel sure of success. I feel, that in giving up every prospect of acquiring my birth-right, I make the due oblation to fortune, and that she will bestow the rest — that rest is to rescue my name from the foul slur Henry has cast on it; to establish myself as myself in the eyes of England;

and then to solicit your patience in our calamity — your truth and love as the only sceptre and globe this hand will ever grasp. In my own Spain, among the orange and myrtle groves, the flowery plains and sun-lit hills of Andalusia, we will live unambitious, yet more fortunate than crowned emperors.”

With such words and promises he soothed her fears; to the word honour she had no reply. Yet it was a mere word here; in this case, a barren word, on which her life and happiness were to be wrecked.

The Prince and Monina had met with undisguised delight. No Clifford would now dare traduce her; she need not banish herself from countries where his name enriched the speech of all men; nor even from that which, invited by her, he had come to conquer. He was glad to be able to extend his zealous fraternal protection over her, to feel that he might guard her through life, despite of the fortune that divided them. He obtained for her the Lady Katherine’s regard, which she sought opportunities to demonstrate, while they were avoided by Monina, who honoured and loved her as Richard’s wife and dearest friend, yet made occasion to absent herself from both. Nothing beautiful could be so unlike as these two fair ones. Katherine was the incarnate image of loveliness, such as it might have been conceived by an angelic nature; noble, soft, equable from her tender care not to displease others; in spite of the ills of fate, gay, because self-satisfied and resigned; the bright side of things was that which she contemplated: the bright and the tranquil — although the hazards run by him she loved, at this period informed her thoughts with terror. Monina, — no, there was no evil in Monina; if too much self-devotion, too passionate an attachment to one dear idea, too enthusiastic an adoration of one exalted being, could be called aught but virtue. The full orbs of her dark eyes, once flashing bright, were now more serious, more melancholy; her very smile would make you weep; her vivacity, all concentred in one object, forgot to spend itself on trifles; yet, while the Princess wept that Richard should encounter fruitless danger for a mistaken aim, gladness sat on Monina’s brow: “He goes to conquer; God will give victory to the right: as a warrior he treads his native land; as a monarch he will rule over her. The very name of King he bears, will shame the lukewarm English; they will gather round the apparent sun, now that he shows himself unclouded, leaving the false light, Tudor, to flicker into its native nothingness.”

"Monina," said the Prince, "you in the wide world can bestow richest largess on the beggar, King Richard." She looked on him in wonder. "I go to conquer or to die: this, lovely one, is no new language for you; a warrior's friend must hear such words unflinching. I die without a fear if you take one charge upon you." Her beaming, expressive eyes replied to him. He continued: "The Adalid and safety are images most firmly united in my mind; if I cannot find security on board of her myself, let those dear to me inherit my possession there. The hardest thought that I bear with me, is that my fair Queen should become captive to my base-minded foe. May I not trust that if I fall, the Adalid will be her home and refuge to convey her to her native country, or any whither she may direct? I intrust this charge to you, my sister, my far more than sister, my own kind Monina. You will forget yourself in that fateful hour, to fulfil my latest wish?"

"My Prince," she replied, "your words were cruel, did I not know that you speak in over care, and not from the impulse of your heart. In the same spirit, I promise that your desire shall be accomplished: if you fall, my father will protect — die for my lady the Queen. But why speak these ill-omened words? You will succeed; you will hasten the lagging hand of Fate, and dethrone one never born to reign, to bestow on England its rightful king. The stars promise this in their resplendent, unfailing scrowl — the time-worn student in his lore has proclaimed it — the sacred name of monarch which you bear, is the pledge and assurance of predestined victory."

"And you meanwhile will stay, and assure Katherine's destiny?"

"My dear Lord, I have a task to accomplish. If I leave her Grace, it is because all spirits of good and power watch over her, and my weak support is needed elsewhere. I am bound for London."

They parted thus. The temerity of their designs sometimes inspired them with awe; but more usually animated them to loftier hopes. When the thickening shadows of "coming events" clouded their spirits, they took refuge in the sun-bright imaginations which painted to each the accomplishment of their several hopes. Monina felt assured that the hour of victory was at hand. Richard looked forward to a mortal struggle, to be crowned with success: a few short weeks or briefer days would close the long account: his word redeemed, his honour avenged, he looked forward to his dear reward: not a sceptre — that was a plaything fit for Henry's hand;

but to a life of peace and love; a very eternity of sober, waking bliss, to be passed with her he idolized, in the sunny clime of his regretted Spain.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh, that stern unbending man!
In this unhappy marriage what have I
Not suffered — not endured!
— SCHILLER'S WALLENSTEIN.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more.
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
— SHAKSPEARE.

The lapse of years had confirmed Henry on his throne. He was extortionate and severe, it is true; and thus revolts had been frequent during the earlier portion of his reign; but they took their rise in a class which even in modern days, it is difficult to keep within the boundaries of law. The peasantry, scattered and dependant on the nobles, were tranquil; but artificers, such as the miners of Cornwall, who met in numbers, and could ask each other, "Why, while there is plenty in the land, should we and our children starve? Why pay our hard earnings into the regal coffers?" and, still increasing in boldness, demand at last, "Why should these men govern us?

"We are many — they are few!"

Thus sedition sprung from despair, and assumed arms; to which Henry had many engines to oppose, bulwarks of his power. A commercial spirit had sprung up during his reign, partly arising from the progress of civilization, and partly from so large a portion of the ancient nobility having perished in the civil wars. The spirit of chivalry, which isolates man, had given place to that of trade, which unites them in bodies.

Among these, the White Rose of England had not a single partizan — the nobles who once had upheld the house of York were few; they had for the last eight years been intent upon restoring their fortunes, and were wholly disinclined to the endangering them afresh for a stranger youth. When Fitzwater, Stanley, and their numerous fellow-conspirators, and fellow-victims sided with the Duke of York, nearly all England entertained a timid belief in his identity with King Edward's lost son — but those times were changed. Many were glad to soothe their consciences by declaring him an impostor; many so desired to curry favour with Henry; a still greater number either feared to say their thought, or were averse to disturb the tranquillity of their country, by a contest, which could benefit one man alone, and which must entail on them another war like that so lately ended — Abroad, in France, Burgundy, and Scotland, the Prince might be discountenanced from political motives; but he was treated with respect, and spoken of as being the man he named himself: in England it was otherwise — contempt followed hard upon fear, giving birth to derision, the best weapon against the unhappy, which Henry well knew how to wield. He had two motives in this — one was, that by affixing disgrace and scorn to his adversary, he took away the glitter of his cause, and deterred the young and ambitious from any desire to share in his obloquy. The other was a feeling deeperrooted in his mind — an intense hatred of the House of York — an exultation in its overthrow and disgrace — a gloating over every circumstance that blotted it with ignominy. If Richard had really been an impostor, Henry had not used half the pains to stigmatise him as low-born — to blast his pride with nicknames, nor have looked forward with the joy he now did, to having him in his power — to the degradation — the mortal stain of infamy he intended to taint him with for ever.

Secure in power — fearless of the result, Henry heard with unfeigned joy that his young rival had landed in England, and was advancing into the interior of the island, at the head of the Cornish insurgents. He himself announced the rising to his nobles. Laughing, he said, “I have tidings for you, gentlemen: a flight of wild geese clad in eagles’ feathers, are ready to pounce upon us. Even now they hover over our good city of Exeter, frighting the honest burghers with their dissonance.”

“Blackheath will witness another victory,” said Lord Oxford.

“And my kitchen receive a new scullion,” replied the King; “since Lambert Simnel became falconer, our roast meat thinks itself dishonoured at not being spitted by a pretender to my crown; for no Audley heads these fellows, but the King of Rakehells himself, the most noble Perkin, who, to grace the more the unwashed rogues, calls himself Richard the Fourth for the nonce. I have fair hope to see his Majesty this bout, if he whiz not away in a fog, or sink underground like Lord Lovel, to the disappointment of all merry fellows, who love new masks and gaudy mumming.”

“Please your Majesty,” said the young Lord William Courtney, “it is for the honour of our house that not a stone of Exeter be harmed. With your good leave, my father and myself will gather in haste what force we may: if fortune aid us, we may present your Grace with your new servitor.”

“Be it so, my Lord,” replied the King, “and use good dispatch. We ourselves will not tarry: so that, with less harm to all, we may tread out these hasty lighted embers. Above all, let not Duke Perkin escape; it is my dearest wish that he partake our hospitality.”

“Yes,” so ran Henry’s private thoughts; “he must be mine, mine alive, mine to deal with as I list.” With even more care than he put in the mustering his army, he ordered that the whole of the southern sea-coast of England should be guarded; every paltry fishing village had its garrison, which permitted no boat to put off to sea, nor any to land, without the strictest investigation; not content with this, he committed it to the care of his baser favourites to forge some plot which might betray his enemy without a blow into his hands.

“Give me your benison, good Bess,” said the Monarch, with unwonted gaiety of manner; “with daylight I depart on the ungentle errand of encountering your brother Perkin.”

Elizabeth, not less timid than she had ever been, was alarmed by his show of mirth, and by this appellation bestowed on one she knew to be so near of kin. That very morning she had seen Monina — the enthusiastic Monina, who, confiding in her royal friend’s success, visited London to watch over the fate of Elizabeth and her children. The Queen smiled at her offers of service; she felt that no such army could endanger Henry’s reign; but she feared for Richard, for her ill-fated brother, who had now entered the net, for whom she felt assured there was no escape. Trembling at her own boldness, she answered the King, “Whoever he may be, you will not destroy him in cold blood?”

“You would have me spare the impostor?” asked Henry. “Spare him who claims your son’s throne? By Our Lady of Walsingham, the maternal virtues of the daughter of York deserve high praise.”

Elizabeth, dreading more to offend, horrorstruck at the idea that her husband should shed her brother’s blood, burst into tears. “Silly girl,” said Henry, “I am not angry; nay, more, I grant your prayer. Perkin, if not slain by a chance blow, shall live. My word is passed; trust to it: I neither inquire nor care whether he be the godson or the base brat of the libertine Edward. In either case, my revenge stoops not so low as his paltry life: does this content you?"

"May the saints bless your Grace," said Elizabeth, "you have eased my every fear."

"Remember then that you prove no ingrate," continued the King, "no dupe of report, no traducer of your children's birth. Betray no interest in the knave's downfall, save as he is my enemy. If you display any emotion that awakens a doubt, that this canker rose be aught in your eyes except a base pretender — if you mark any feeling but stern contempt for one so vile — tremble. My vengeance will fall on him; and his blood be on your head."

"Magnanimous Prince!" thought Elizabeth, in bitter scorn, when he had left her: "this is your mercy. You fear! My poor Richard — your sister, a monarch's daughter, is finely taught by this Earl's son. But you will live; then let him do his worst: the Queen of England is not quite a slave; if Henry can bind, Elizabeth may loose; and the Duke of York laugh in another land at the malice of his enemy."

We return to this Prince, whose lofty spirit was sustained by an aim, an object dearer than a kingdom in his eyes. He arrived before Exeter at the head of seven thousand men. All the discontented in Cornwall and Devonshire joined him. Some of these were younger brothers; some men-at-arms who repined at peace; chiefly they were needy, oppressed men, rouzed by a sense of wrong, as destitute, but not so hardy as the kerns of Ireland. Still they were many, they were valiant; Exeter was ungarrisoned, unprepared for defence, and there was a possibility that by sudden assault, he might possess himself of the town. With this intent he did not allow his troops time to repose, but at once set on for the attack, endeavouring to scale the lofty walls; unaided by any fitting machinery, scarcely possessed of a single scaling ladder, he was driven back with loss. Foiled but not vanquished, for his heart was set upon this prize, for three days, though unpossessed of artillery or any warlike engine, he exerted his utmost force to win the city; he contrived rude machinery to cast stones, he planted the ladders himself, he multiplied himself to appear everywhere, flattering, encouraging, leading his troops again and again to the assault. When they found the walls impregnable, he made an attempt on the gates: with fascines and hewed trees he set one of them on fire; his men shouted as they heard the stout oak crackle, and saw it split and crumble, offering a large opening; but the citizens, made desperate, fearful of the ravages this untamed multitude might commit, were true to themselves; they resisted fire by fire, keeping up a fierce blaze within, till with piles of brick and rubbish they had blocked the passage. Richard saw his last hope fail, “This is not the work of the burghers,” he cried, “a soldier’s skill is here.”

“True as my old yard measure!” cried Heron. “It was but last night that my cousin, the Earl of Devon, clambered into the city; he came to the northern wall, where Skelton keeps watch; when my valiant tailor heard the noise, ran to look for Master Trereife, who, poor fellow, lies cold within the moat. The citizens heard and answered my Cousin the Earl’s call; but they were too frightened to let light through the keyhole of a postern; and his lordship, God save him! was obliged to climb the battlements.”

“Climb the battlements, noble Captain?” said Richard; “that is, a ladder was let down?”

“It was a stone ladder he scaled, my liege,” said Heron; “your Grace may walk up the same. It will scarce budge, seeing that it is the old part of the wall itself.”

“Who knows more of this?” asked the Prince.

“I saw the whole,” said Skelton; “That is the end. Master Trereife was dead for the nonce, so I came back to lead my men to the fray. There was the Earl, perched like a crow, on the boughs of an old thorn-bush, that grows at the top of the wall. Surely he must have torn his cloak, for the place is thick with all manner of weeds, and rough stones, and brambles. But more than his broad-cloth got a hole; for Clim of Tregothius handled his bow, and let fly a cloth-yard shaft, which was sticking in his shoulder as he got down the other side.”

While the Tailor talked, Richard was proceeding hastily to the spot. It looked tranquil. The old crumbling wall was green with rank grass and tangled weeds. He drew nearer, and then a whole shower of arrows was discharged against him. The Earl had expected that his success would excite their curiosity, and prepared for them, with not the less zeal on account of his own wound. Richard escaped unhurt; but Edmund, who was scantily armed, received an arrow in his side: he fell. That same hour tidings came of the advance of King Henry at the head of a formidable army.

Plantagenet's wound was dressed; it showed signs of danger, and quite disabled him. "My faithful fellows swear to preserve you in safety, Cousin," said Richard; "I must leave you."

"Do you retreat?" asked Edmund.

"No, by my soul! Truly, my hopes have somewhat quailed; yet it is but a lucky blow, and I gain all. I leave you, my friend; but I will not leave you in doubt and ignorance. Read this paper: it is to enforce its contents — to oblige my haughty foe to lay aside his worst weapon, detraction, that I, against all probability and wisdom, will urge my cause to the last. My kingdom, it is his: my honour he must restore, and I cry him quits. Now you have my secret. Pardon for my poor fellows; pardon, and some alleviation of their cruel lot. For myself, as you will find, I ask little, but I must show no fear, no retreating, to obtain even that. I march forwards, then, towards Taunton: it is a less place than Exeter. The smallest secure port gained, and Henry may grant my boon."

Plantagenet unfolded the paper, and read these words:

"Richard, legitimate and true son of Edward the Fourth, King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, to Henry, the reigning Sovereign of these realms. In my infancy I was made a prisoner by an usurping uncle, escaping from his thrawl by aid of the most noble Earl of Lincoln. This uncle, this usurper, you conquered, and seized upon his crown. You claim the same by right of Bolingbroke, and strengthen your title through your union with my sister, the Lady Elizabeth. I am poor, and an outcast: you a King. God has destroyed my house, and I submit. But I will not submit to the vile slander that takes from me my name, and brands me a dishonoured man.

"Henry of Richmond, I neither admit nor combat your claim to the crown. Lancaster has many partizans, and the victory is yours. But as Duke of York, I challenge and defy you. I call on you, either by person or by champion, to meet me in the lists, that I may defend my honour, and maintain the right. Let us spare the people's blood. In single combat let my pretensions be set at issue; and my good sword shall cut to pieces the wicked lies and base traditions you have calumniously and falsely forged to my disgrace.

"Body to body, I will meet you or your champion. Name the day, the hour, and the place. With my lance and my sword, to the death I will maintain my birth. If I fall, I ask that my wife, the Lady Katherine Gordon, be permitted to return to her royal cousin, James of Scotland; that such of my followers as desire it, may be allowed to go beyond seas; that those of your subjects who, goaded into rebellion by your exactions, have taken up arms, receive free pardon and remission of their imposts. If I conquer, I add but one other demand — that you confess to the wide world how foully you have slandered me; revoke the lies you have published, and acknowledge me to all men, the rightful Duke of York.

"If you deny my just demands, be the blood spilt in defence of my honour on your head; England ravaged, your towns destroyed, your realm subject to all the calamities of war; these evils rest with you. I will not sheathe my sword, nor tread one backward step in my undertaking; but as in the lists, so on the dread battle-field, meet your abettors, and conquer or die in defence of my name. Expecting a fitting answer to this just defiance, I bid you heartily farewell.

"Richard.

"Written under the walls of Exeter, this twelfth day of September, in the year of our Blessed Lord 1497."

Plantagenet was deeply affected by his Cousin's gallantry. He sighed, saying, "Tudor has not, will not reply to your challenge?"

"He has not, but he may," replied Richard. "I have, I know not why, a firm belief that good will come from it. If not, in a few days all will be over. In a very few days you can be conveyed to St. Michael's Mount, where the Queen now is. The Adalid hovers near. Save her, save yourself: save one other, less helpful than my Katherine — be a brother to Monina."

Richard, erring in his mark, was animated by the most sanguine hopes, to which he was seduced by a constant belief that his life was not near its close, and therefore that his claims would be admitted; as otherwise he had resolved to fall in the assertion of them. Leaving the sick couch of his Cousin, he prepared to advance to Taunton. A conversation meanwhile which he dreamt not of, and would have scorned, had place in an obscure and gloomy spot in London, fraught with fate to him.

After the base desertion of his royal master, Frion had sailed to England with the other hirelings of Henry; among these was Clifford. Clifford, whose need and whose malice armed him against York's life, but who tried to hide his shame under an assumed appellation. There had always been a false fellowship and a real enmity between Frion and the knight. On his first arrival in Brussels, the secretary looked on him as an interloper; and Clifford, while he used the other, tried to force him into his place as an underling, and to blind him to his own designs. When he betrayed his party, spreading death among the partizans of York, and annihilating the cause, Frion, whose fortunes depended on its success, was unmeasured in his expressions of indignation and contempt. They had worked in direct opposition the year before in Kent; and, when Frion saw the hand of this reprobated man uplifted in midnight assassination, he triumphed in the lowness of his fall. Both were traitors now, both baffled; Frion looked on Clifford as the worse villain; and Clifford writhed under the familiar impertinence of a menial. They arrived in London; Sir Robert was dismissed with barren thanks, Frion thrown into prison; how far the knight's account gave intimation of the Frenchman's double dealing, and so brought this severity upon him was not known, but for three months this mercurial spirit had languished in confinement.

Addicted to scheming, he had now full leisure to spend his whole thoughts that way; a single, simple plot was too plain for his industrious soul; he wore a whole web of them so intricate, that he sometimes lost the clue himself; not the less did he do his endeavour to put them in action. He intended either to lose Richard or make him; either to be the cause of his overthrowing Henry, or of being overthrown by him; in either case, to reap favour and advantage from the triumphant party.

Sad as is ever a prison-house, it was worse in those days of incivilization: this pen could ill describe the squalid figures and dire visages that crowded its tumultuous court. Even here Frion reigned umpire; but he broke from a knot of noisy squabblers, who held tattered cards, and appealed to him on a question of fair play, as he saw one enter. Even he a wretch, yet many degrees better than the best of his miserable companions; a scarlet suit, trimmed with gold lace, somewhat tarnished, a cloak of ample folds, but threadbare, a dark plumed bonnet, drawn over his brow, above all, a rapier at his side, distinguished him from the prisoners. “This is kind, Sir Robert,” said Frion in his softest manner, “I half feared you were too proud or politic to visit a disgraced man; for these last three days I have despaired of your worship; by my fay! your are right welcome.”

Clifford cast a shuddering look around the walls; his eyes were hollow; his cheek sunk; he was the mere shadow of bold Robert. “Few words are best thanks, Master Stephen," he replied; "I am kind to you because the dice are cruel to me; you promise largely, and my wants are no dwarfs. What are your designs?"

"This is no place for parley," said Frion; "follow me." He led the way through several narrow passages to a miserable cell; straw was heaped in one corner for a bed; the walls were dank and tattered; the floor broken and filthy.

"Welcome to my domicile, Sir Knight," said Frion: whether it were compunction that he had brought him to this, or distrust that the injury would be revenged, Clifford shrunk back and his lips grew livid. "One would not live here from choice," said Frion, "I allow; yet do not grudge me a few moments, it may stead us both."

"To the point then," said the Knight; "it is not the place, Master Frion; but at the hour of noon—"

"No excuses, you like the place as ill as I," said the Frenchman with a bland smile; "but you are more generous, for I would not dwell an instant's space here of my own will to gain any man's salvation. Now, what news from the west? Is it true that the Duke of York is slain? or Exeter taken? both reports are rife. Adam Wicherly and Mat Oldcraft made their escape two days ago, to join the gallant. Mat was seized again, and says that there were bonfires in Southwark for Richard the Fourth."

Clifford, by a brief detail, answered, and then after some hesitation said, "He is not so low but that the King desires him to be lower: he who could bring him, bound hand and foot, to London, would be a made man. Empson saw Garthe yesterday; and he, who calls me Wiatt, came post to consult with me; but it were hazardous to attempt him; he is ten thousand strong."

"You know me, Sir Robert," said Frion; "there are few things I cannot bring about, so that I have room to ruffle in. I have a plot, King Richard is ours in three days, so one word be said; that word is liberty to me. Take you the reward; I ask no further share in your gains than free leave to set the channel between me and this dingy island."

Each despising, each mistrusting the other, these men conspired for the Prince's fall: like "mousing owls" they hawked at an eagle with too true an aim. York's thoughts were of honour; but through them they were to be drugged with ignominy and despair. It is melancholy that circumstance and fortune should have power to reach the very shrine of our dearest thoughts;

degrading them from their original brightness to a likeness of the foul aspect of the outer world. Richard’s free and noble spirit was to become plastic to the touch of such men as the fallen Clifford and crafty Frion. Men, whom he had cast from him as unworthy his regard, could besiege the citadel of his hopes, and garrison it with disgrace; forcing him to occupy himself with ideas as base as those which possessed their own minds. It is the high heart’s curse to be obliged to expend its deep and sacred emotions in hatred of, or struggle with things so mean, so very alien to its own aspiring nature.

CHAPTER IX.

Ah! Richard, with the eyes of heavy mind.
I see thy glory, like a shooting star.
Fall to the base earth from the firmament.
— SHAKSPEARE.

Richard proceeded towards Taunton. Although this was in appearance an advance, his ill-success before Exeter, and report of the large force already brought against them by Sir John Cheney, King Henry's Chamberlain, had so far discouraged his followers as to occasion the desertion of many — so that of the seven thousand he had with him in Devonshire, he retained but three on his arrival near Taunton. These consisted of the original body of insurgents, Cornishmen, who had proceeded too far to go back, and who, partly in affection for their leader, partly from natural stubborness, swore to die in the cause. Poor fellows! rusty rapiers, and misshapen lances were their chief arms; a few had bows; others slings; a still greater number their ponderous tools, implements of labour and of peace, to be used now in slaughter. Their very dress displayed at once their unmartial and poverty-stricken state. In all these might be gathered a troop of three hundred foot, not wholly destitute of arms and discipline. The horse were not less at fault; yet among them there were about one hundred tolerably mounted, the riders indeed, but too frequently, disgracing their steeds.

It required all Richard's energy of purpose to hold him back from despair. The bitter sense of degradation visited him in spite of every effort. Had he ever made one of the chivalry of France and Burgundy? Had he run a tilt with James of Scotland, or grasped in knightly brotherhood the mailed hand of Sir Patrick Hamilton? And were these his comrades? unwashed artificers; ragged and rude peasants; vulgar tongued traders? He felt, "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes;" and now to obtain pardon for them, to send them back skaithless to their own homes, was his chief desire, even to the buying of their safety with his own downfall.

After a two days march he arrived near Taunton. On reconnoitring the town, its position and weakness gave him hope that he might carry it, even with his sorry soldiery. To check these thoughts, tidings came, that Sir John

Cheney was in close neighbourhood, and Henry himself advancing with a chosen body of men. On the evening of their arrival before the town, a detachment of the enemy entered it, cutting off the last hope of Richard.

The next morning it became evident that the crisis of his fortunes was at hand. The whole country teemed with soldiery. As the troops poured towards a common centre, the array and order of a battle-field became apparent in their operations. A battle, between a very myriad of golden-spurred knights, armed at all points, and the naked inhabitants of Richard's camp! call it rather a harvest; there were the reapers, here the bending corn. When in the north Richard wept over the devastation of the land, he felt that a word of his could counteract the harm — but now, his challenge had proved an airy dagger — substanceless — his resolve to encounter his foe, bringing the unarmed against these iron-suited warriors, grew in his eyes into premeditated murder: his heart heaved in his overcharged breast. To add bitterness to his thoughts there were his companions — O'Water brave in despair; Astley pale with fear for his lord; Heron foolish in his unmeaning boasting; Skelton trembling in every joint, and talking incessantly, apparently to deafen himself to "the small still voice" that whispered terror to his heart.

Richard spent the day among his men. They were prepared to fight; if needs must, to fall: protestations of sturdy devotion, the overflowing of the rude, manly heart, always affecting, met him at every turn. He was beloved, for he was generous and kind. Often he had exposed his life, when before Exeter, to save some one among them: when dismayed, he had cheered, when defeated, he had comforted them; nor did he leave the body of the meanest camp-follower uninterred; for one of Richard's characteristics was a quick sympathy with his species, and a reverence for all that bore the shape of man. But, while these qualities rendered him dear to all, they inspired him with a severe sense of his duties towards others, and a quick insight into their feelings; thus increasing to anguish the disquietude that agitated him.

Towards evening he was alone in his tent. At first he was confused by the various aspects, all terrible, that his fortunes assumed. By the caprice of destiny, he who was descended from a line of kings, who had so long been the inhabitant of courts, a Cavalier, honourable in his degree, renowned for his prowess, had not one noble-born partizan near him: not one of his ancient counsellors, to whom he had been used to defer, remained; he was absolutely alone; the sense of right and justice in his own heart was all he possessed, to be a beacon-light in this awful hour, when thousands depended upon his word — yet had he power to save?

An idea, dim at first as a star on the horizon's verge, struggling through vapours, but growing each second brighter and clearer, dawned upon his mind. All then was over! his prophetic soul had proved false in its presumed fore-knowledge; defeat, dishonour, disgrace tracked his steps To lead his troops forth, and then to redeem them at Henry's hand, by the conditionless surrender of himself, was the thought, child of despair and self-devotion, that still struggling with the affections and weaknesses of his nature, presented itself, not yet full fledged, but about to become so.

He had been several times interupted during his meditations by the arrival of scouts, with various reports of the situation and proceedings of the enemy: Richard, better than these untaught recruits, knew the meaning of the various operations. As if on a map, he saw the stationing of a large and powerful army in expectation of battle; and was aware how incapable he was to cope with their numbers and force. At last Astley announced the arrival of two men: one was a Fleming, known to Richard as one of Lalayne's men, but the fellow was stupidly drunk; the other was an English peasant. “Please your worship,” he said, “I am this man's guide, and must act as his interpreter besides; nothing would serve the spungy fellow but he must swallow ale at every tavern on the way.”

“Speak, then,” said Richard; “what is the purport of his journey?”

“Please you, Sir, last night three hundred of them came right pop upon us afore we were aware; sore afraid they made us with their tall iron-shafted poles, steel caps, and short swords, calling each one for bread and beer.”

“Do you mean,” cried the Prince, his eye brightening as he spoke, “that three hundred men, soldiers, armed like yonder fellow, are landed in England?”

So the countryman averred; and that even now they were but at the distance of twenty miles from Richard's encampment. They were still advancing, when the report was spread that the Prince's forces were dispersed, himself taken prisoner. The rustic drew from the Fleming's pocket a letter, in French, signed by Swartz, a son of him who fell at Stoke, a man in high favour with the Lady Margaret of Burgundy. It said how he had been dispatched by her Grace to his succour; how intelligence of the large army of Henry, and his defeat, had so terrified his men, that they refused to proceed, nay, by the next morning would take their way back to Poole, where they had landed, unless Richard himself came to re-assure them, and to lead them on. Every word of the letter lighted up to forgotten joy young Richard’s elastic spirit. With these men to aid him, giving weight and respectability to his powers, he might hope to enforce the conditions of his challenge. All must be decided on the morrow: that very hour he would set forth, to return before morning with these welcome succours.

It was near midnight; his camp was still; the men, in expectation of the morrow’s struggle, had retired to repose; their leaders had orders to visit their commander in his tent at the hour which now the empty hour-glass told was come. Hastily, eagerly, Richard announced the arrival of these German mercenaries; he directed them to accompany him, that with some show of attendance he might present himself to Schwartz. The camp was not to be disturbed; two or three men alone among them were awakened, and ordered to keep guard — in five hours assuredly he must return. In a brief space of time, the troop who were to accompany him, Heron, Skelton, O’Water, and Astley, with some forty more, led their horses to his tent in silence: — there were few lights through all the camp; their honest hearts which beat within slept, while he was awake to succour and save them. This was Richard’s last thought, as, mounted on his good steed, he led the way across the dim heath towards Yeovil.

It was such a night as is frequent at the end of September; a warm but furious west-wind tore along the sky, shaking the dark tresses of the trees, and chasing the broad shadows of the clouds across the plains. The moon, at the beginning of her third quarter, sped through the sky with rapid, silvery wings; now cutting the dark, sea-like ether; now plunging deep amidst the clouds; now buried in utter darkness; anon spreading a broad halo among the thinner woof of vapours. The guide was at the Prince’s side; Heron, upon his short sturdy pony, was just behind; Skelton tried to get his tall mare to an even pace with Richard’s horse, but she fell back continually: the rushing, howling wind, and rustling trees drowned the clatter of the hoofs. They reached the extreme edge of the common; Richard turned his head — the lights of his little camp burnt dim in the moonshine, its poor apparel of tents was lost in the distance: they entered a dark lane, and lost sight of every trace of it; still they rode fleetly on. Night, and the obscure shapes of night around — holy, blinding, all-seeing night! when we feel the power of the Omnipotent as if immediately in contact with us; when religion fills the soul, and our very fears are unearthly; when familiar images assume an unknown power to thrill our hearts; and the winds and trees and shapeless clouds, have a voice not their own, to speak of all that we dream or imagine beyond our actual life. Through embowered lanes, whose darkness seemed thick and palpable — over open, moonshiny fields, where the airy chase of clouds careered in dimmer shapes upon the earth — Richard rode forward, fostering newly-awakened hope; glad in the belief that while he saved all who depended on him, he would not prove a mere victim led in tame submission, an unrighteous sacrifice to the Evil Spirit of the World.

CHAPTER X.

Art thou he, traitor! that with treason vile
 Hast slain my men in this unmanly manner.
And now triumphest in the piteous spoil
 Of these poor folk; whose souls with black dishonour
 And foul defame do deck thy bloody banner?
The meed whereof shall shortly be thy shame.
 And wretched end which still attendeth on her.
With that himself to battle he did frame;
So did his forty yeomen which there with him came.
 — SPENSER.

Some miles to the east of Yeovil there was a deep stream, whose precipitous banks were covered by a thick underwood that almost concealed the turbid waters, which undermined and bared the twisted and gnarled roots of the various overhanging trees or shrubs. The left side of the stream was bounded by an abrupt hill, at the foot of which was a narrow pathway; on the green acclivity flourished a beech grove, whose roots were spread in many directions to catch the soil, while their trunks, some almost horizontal, were all fantastically grown, and the fairy tracery of the foliage shed such soft, mellowed, chequered light as must incline the heart of the wanderer beneath the leafy bower, to delicious musings.

Now the moon silvered the trees, and sometimes glimmered on the waters, whose murmurs contended with the wind that sung among the boughs: and was this all? A straggling moonbeam fell on something bright amid the bushes, and a deep voice cried, “Jack of the Wynd, if thou can’st not get to thicker cover, pluck darnels to cover that cursed steel cap of thine.”

“Hush!” repeated another lower voice, “Your bawling is worse than his headpiece; you outroar the wind. How high the moon is, and our friends not come; — he will be he here before them.”

“Hark! a bell!”

“Matins, by the Fiend! may he seize that double-tongued knave! I much suspect Master Frion; I know him of old.”

“He cannot mar us now, though it be he who made this ambushment.”

“Oh, by your leave! he has the trick of it, and could spring a mine in the broadest way; he can turn, and twist, and show more faces than a die. He laughed this morn — I know the laugh — there is mischief in ‘t.”

“But, your Worship, now, what can he do?”

“Do! darken the moon; set these trees alive and dancing; do! so play the Will o’ the Wisp that the King shall be on Pendennis and the Duke at Greenwich, and each fancy he is within bow-shot of the other; do! ask the Devil what is in his compact, for he is but the Merry Andrew of Doctor Frion. Hush!”

“It is he,” said the other speaker.

A breathless pause ensued; the wind swept through the trees — another sound — its monotonous recurrence showed that it was a dashing waterfall — and yet again it grew louder.

“It is he.”

“No, Gad’s mercy, it comes westward — close, my merry fellows, close, and mind the word! close, for we have but half our number, and yet he may escape.”

Again the scene sank into silence and darkness: such silence as is nature’s own, whose voice is ever musical; such darkness as the embowering trees and vast island-clouds made, dimming and drinking up the radiance of the moon.

The stillness was broken by the tramp of horses drawing near, men’s voices mingled with the clatter, and now several cavaliers entered the defile; they rode in some disorder, and so straggling, that it was probable that many of their party lagged far behind: the principal horseman had reached midway the ravine, when suddenly a tree, with all its growth of green and tangled boughs, fell right across the path; the clatter of the fall deafened the screech which accompanied it, for one rider was overthrown; it was succeeded by a flight of arrows from concealed archers. “Ride for your lives,” cried Richard: but his path was crossed by six horsemen, while, starting from the coppice, a band of near forty men engaged with the van of his troop, who tried to wheel about: some escaped, most fell. With his sword drawn, the Prince rushed at his foremost enemy; it was a mortal struggle, for life and liberty, for hatred and revenge. Richard was the better swordsman, but his horse was blown, and half sunk upon his haunches, when pressed closely by the adversary. Richard saw his danger, and yet his advantage, for his foe, over-eager to press him down, forgot the ward; he rose on his stirrups, and grasped his sword with both hands, when a blow from behind, a coward's blow, from a battle-axe, struck him; it was repeated, and he fell lifeless on the earth.

Sickness, and faintness, and throbbing pain were the first tokens of life that visited his still failing sense; sight and the power of motion seemed to have deserted him, but memory reviving told him that he was a prisoner. Moments were stretched to ages while he strove to collect his sensations; still it was night; the view of fields and uplands and of the varied moon-lit sky, grew upon his languid senses; he was still on horseback, bound to the animal, and supported on either side by men. As his movements communicated his returning strength, one of these fellows rode to impart the tidings to their leader, while the other stayed to guide his horse; the word "gallop!" was called aloud, and he was urged along at full speed, while the sudden motion almost threw him back into his swoon.

Dawn, which at first seemed to add to the dimness and indistinctness of the landscape, struggling through the clouds, and paling the moon, slowly stole upon them. The Prince became sufficiently alive to make observations; he and his fellow-prisoners were five in number only, their guards were ten; foremost among them was one, whom in whatever guise he could not mistake. Each feeling in Richard's heart stimulated him to abhor that man, yet he pitied him more. Gallant, bold Robin, the frolicksome page, the merry-witted sharer of a thousand pleasures. Time, thou art a thief; how base a thief — when thou stealest not only our friends, our youth, our hopes, but, besides, our innocence; giving us in the place of light-hearted confidence — guile, distrust, the consciousness of evil deeds. In these thoughts, Richard drew the louring of the picture, from the fresh and vivid tints that painted his own soul. Clifford's breast had perhaps never been free from the cares of guilt: he had desired honour; he had loved renown; but the early developement of passion and of talent had rendered him even in boyhood, less single-hearted than Richard now.

Clifford was triumphant; he possessed Monina's beloved — the cause of his disgrace — bound, a prisoner and wounded. Why then did pain distort his features, and passion flush his brow? No triumph laughed in his eye, or sat upon his lip. He hated the prince; but he hated and despised himself. He played a dastardly and a villain's part; and shame awaited even success. The notoriety and infamy that attended on him (exaggerated as those things usually are, in his own eyes), made him fear to meet in the neighbouring villages or towns, any noble cavalier who might recognise him; even if he saw a party of horsemen on the road, he turned out of it, and thus got entangled among byepaths in an unfrequented part of the country: They continued the same fast career for several hours, till they entered a wild dark forest, where the interminable branches of the old oaks met high-arched over head, and the paths were beset with fern and underwood. The road they took was at first a clear and open glade, but it quickly narrowed, and branched off in various directions; they followed one of its windings, till it abruptly closed: the leader then reined in, and Clifford's voice was heard. Years had elapsed since it had met Richard's ear; the mere, as it were, abstract idea of Clifford was mingled with crime and hate; his voice, his manner, his look were associated with protestations of fidelity; or, dearer still, the intercourse of friendship and youthful gaiety; no wonder that it seemed a voice from the grave to betrayed York.

"Halloo!" cried Clifford, "Clim of the Lyn, my merry man, thou art to track us through the New Forest to Southampton."

"Please your knightship," said a shaggy-headed fellow, "our way is clear, I am at home now: but, by Saint George, we must halt; a thirty miles ride since matins, his fast unbroken, would have made Robin Hood a laggard."

"What would you eat here?" cried Clifford; "a stoup of canary and beef were blessings for the nonce; but we must get out of this accursed wilderness into more Christian neighbourhood, before we find our hostelry."

Clim of the Lyn grinned. "To a poor forester," said he, "the green-wood is a royal inn; vert and venison, your worship, sound more savoury than four smoky walls, and a platter of beef brought in mine host's left hand, while his right already says—'Pay!'"

"They would feed me with mine own venison in way of courtesy, even as the Lion Heart, my namesake and ancestor, was feasted of old; mine — each acre, each rood, and every noble stag that pastures thereon; but I am not so free as they; and, mine though this wild wood be, I must thank an outlaw ere I dine upon my own."

Thus thought Richard; and at that moment, with his limbs aching through their bondage, and with throbbing temples, liberty in the free forest seemed worth more than a kingdom. The bright sun was high — the sky serene — the merry birds were caroling in the brake — the forest basked in noon-day, while the party wound along the shady path beneath. The languid frame of York revived; at first to pain alone, for memory was serpent-fanged. What bird-lime was this to ensnare the royal eagle! but soon Despair, which had flapped her harpy wings across his face, blinding him, fled away; Hope awoke, and in her train, schemes of escape, freedom, and a renewal of the struggle.

Meanwhile they threaded many a green pathway, and, after another hour's ride, arrived at the opening of a wide grassy dell; a deer, "a stag of ten," leapt from his ferny bed and bounded away; a herd of timid fawns, just visible in the distance, hurried into the thicket; while many a bird flew from the near sprays. Here the party halted; first they unbitted their steeds, and then dismounted the prisoners, binding them for security's sake to a tree. Richard was spared this degradation, for still he was a prince in Clifford's eyes; and his extreme physical weakness, caused by his blow, made even the close watching him superfluous. He was lifted from his horse, and placed upon the turf, and there left. While some of his guards went to seek and slay their repast, others led their animals to a brook, which murmured near: all were variously and busily employed. Clifford alone remained; he called for water; evidently he was more weary than he chose to own; he took off his casque: his features were ghastly; there was a red streak upon his brow, which was knit as if to endurance, and his lips were white and quivering. Never had crime visited with such torment ill-fated man; he looked a Cain after the murder; the Abel he had killed was his own fair fame — the ancestral honour of his race. How changed from when Richard last saw him, but two years before; his hair was nearly grey, his eyes hollow, his cheeks fallen in; yet, though thin to emaciation, he had lost that delicacy and elegance of feature that had characterized him. Almost without reflection, forgetting his own position in painful compassion, the Prince exclaimed, "Thou art an unhappy man, Sir Robert!" The knight replied with a ghastly smile, which he meant to be disdainful. "But now," continued Richard, "while thy visor screened thy face, I was on the point of taunting thee as a coward, of defying thee to mortal combat; but thou art miserable, and broken-hearted, and no match for me."

Clifford's eyes glared, his hand was upon his sword's hilt: he recollected himself, replying, "You cannot provoke me, Sir, you are my prisoner."

"Thy victim, Robin; though once saved by thee; but that is past, and there is no return. The blood of Stanley, and of a hundred other martyrs, rolls between us: I conquer my own nature, when even for a moment I look upon their murderer."

The weakness of the prince gave a melancholy softness to his voice and manner; the deep pity he felt for his fallen friend, imparted a seraphic expression to his clear open countenance. Clifford writhed with pain. Clifford, who, though not quick to feel for others, was all sense and sensitiveness for himself: and how often in the world do we see sensibility attributed to individuals, whose show of feeling arises from excessive susceptibility to their own sorrows and injuries! Clifford wished to answer — to go away — he was spell-bound; his cowering look first animated Richard to an effort, which a moment before he would have ridiculed. "Wherefore," said he, "have you earned all men's hate, and your own to boot? Are you more honoured and loved than in Brussels? Scorn tracks you in your new career, and worst of all, you despise yourself."

"By St. Sathanas and his brood!" fiercely burst from the Knight. Then he bit his lip, and was silent.

"Yet, Clifford, son of a noble father, spare yourself this crowning sin. I have heard from travelled men, that in Heathenesse the unbaptized miscreant is true to him whose hospitality he has shared. There was a time when my eyes brightened when I saw you; when the name of Robin was a benediction to me. You have changed it for the direst curse. Yours are no common crimes. Foremost in the chronicles, your name will stand as a type and symbol of ingratitude and treason, written with the blood of Fitzwater and Stanley. But this is not all. The young and defenceless you destroy: you have stood with uplifted dagger over the couch of a sleeping man."

Clifford had fostered the belief that this vilest act of his life, to which he had been driven rather by fierce revenge than hope of reward, was a secret. A moment before he had advanced with hasty and furious glances towards his enemy. Scarcely had the words passed York's lips, than a kind of paralysis came over him. His knees knocked together: his arms fell nerveless to his side.

"O, man!" continued York, "arouse thy sleeping faculties. Bid the fiend who tortures thee, Avaunt! Even now, at the word, he feels his power over thy miserable soul waver. By Him who died on the Cross, I conjure him to leave thee. Say thou 'amen' to my adjuration, and he departs. Cast off the huge burthen of guilt: deliver thy soul into the care of holy men. As thy first act, depart this spot: leave me. It is I who command — Richard of York, thy sovereign. Begone; or kneeling at my feet, seek the grace thou hast so dearly forfeited."

For a moment it almost seemed as if the wretched man were about to obey; but at the moment his groom came from the spring, where he had been watering his horse. The sight of another human being, to witness his degradation, awoke him to phrenzy. He called aloud, "How now, Sirrah! Why, unbit Dragon? Bring him here. I must begone."

"He can't carry your honour a mile," said the fellow.

"A miracle," cried Richard; "you repent, Sir Robert."

"As Lucifer in hell! Look to the prisoner." Clifford vaulted on his horse: his head was bare, his eyes wild and bloodshot. Clapping spurs to the jaded animal's side, he put him to his speed, and was gone.

"His fit is on him!" cried his attendant, "and what are we to do? He rides a race with the fiend, leaving us to do both their works." More whisperingly he muttered, "Hold Duke Richard in bonds against his will may I not. He gave me gold in Flanders; he is a King's son and a belted Knight, and I a poor servitor."

Richard had conceived a faint hope of working on Clifford's manifest remorse, and enlisting him again under the banner of the White Rose. His wonder was great when he saw him flying through the forest with uncovered head and dishevelled hair; the bridle of his horse in the groom's hand, while the wearied animal, spurred to speed, threw up his head, snorting with fear. Not a moment was to be lost, the Prince flew to his comrades in captivity. Already Heron and O'Water had their bonds cut by the sword of which he possessed himself. Heron, in whose two arms lay his chief strength, and O'Water, at home in a fray, fired with the desire of liberty and life, got speedy hold of battle-axes, and stood at bay. Skelton, the next made free, began to run; but finding his flight was solitary, he secured a bow and arrows, and betook himself to a short, sure aim from behind a tree, while he offered up another sigh to the memory of Trereife. Astley threw himself foremost before his master, unarmed. The weapons of their guard were chiefly in a heap, and these, defended by the enfranchised prisoners, were useless to them. Headed by Clifford's groom, who stood in salutary awe of shedding royal blood, a parley commenced. He entreated Richard to submit; he told him that the whole country was in arms against him, his way back to his army beset, the sea-coasts strictly guarded. What then could he do?

"Die, in arms and at liberty. Stand back, sirs; what would you do with me? Your guilty captain has deserted you; is there one of your number who will raise his accursed weapon against a King and a Knight?"

Clym of the Lyn, and another outlawed forester, (Clifford in mustering a troop had gathered together all manner of wild companions) now appeared dragging in a fat buck. Clym grinned when he saw the altered state of things: "Come, my men," he said, "it is not for us to fight King Henry's battles; the more Majesties there be in England, the merrier for us, I trow; and the wider and freer the range of the King of the New Forest. Put up your rapiers, and let us feast like brethren; ye may fall to with your weapons afterwards. Or, if it please your Grace to trust to me, I will lead you where none of the King's men will follow."

"Wilt thou guide me back to Taunton?" asked the Prince.

"Not for my cap full of rose nobles," replied the outlaw; "the way is beset: and trust me your worship's men are scattered far and wide ere this. You are a tall fellow, and I should ill like to see you in their gripe. Be one of us; you shall be King of the Greenwood-shade; and a merrier, freer monarch than he who lives at Westminster."

"Hark!" the word, spoken in a voice of alarm, made the party all ear. There was a distant tramp — every now and then a breaking of bushes — and a whole herd of deer came bounding up the glade in flight. A forester who had rambled further than the rest, rushed back, saying, "Sixty yeomen of the royal guard! They are coming hitherward. Sir Harry de Vere leads them — I know his bright bay horse."

"Away!"

CHAPTER XI.

He might have dwelt in green forest.
 Under the shadows green;
And have kept both him and us at rest.
 Out of all trouble and teen.
 — OLD BALLAD.

It had been the policy of Richard's captors, to have remained to deliver up their prisoners to a stronger force. But most of them were outlaws by profession, who held the King's men in instinctive horror: these were the first to fly; the panic spread; those who had no cause to fear, fled because they saw others do so. In a moment the sward was cleared of all save the prisoners, who hastily bridled their horses, and followed York down a narrow path into a glen, in an opposite direction from the approaching troop. With what speed they might they made their way through the forest, penetrating its depths, till they got completely entangled in its intricacies. They proceeded for several hours, but their jaded horses one by one foundered: they were in the most savage part of the wood; there was no beginning nor end to the prospect of knotted trunks, which lifted their vast leafy burthen into the air; here was safety and needful repose. Richard, animated to a sudden effort, could now hardly keep his seat: the state of their animals was imperative for a halt; so here, in a wild brake, they alighted near a running brook: and here O'Water slew a buck, while Astley and Skelton unbridled their horses, and all set about preparing a most needful repast. Evening stole upon them before it was concluded: the slant sun-beams lay in golden glory on the twisted ivy-grown trunks, and bathed the higher foliage in radiance. By the time their appetites were satisfied, Heron and Skelton were discovered to be in a sound sleep; it were as well to follow their example; neither men and horses could proceed without repose; darkness also afforded best safety for travelling. It was agreed that they should pursue their way at midnight; and so, stretched on the grassy soil, peace and the beauty of nature around them, each gave himself up to a slumber, which, at that extremity of fatigue, needed no courting.

All slept, save the Prince; he lay in a state of feverish disquietude, looking at the sky through the leafy tracery overhead, till night massed and confused every object. Darkest thoughts thronged his mind; loss of honour, desertion of friends, the fate of his poor men: he was to have devoted himself to them, but a stream, driven by a thundering avalanche from its course, had as much power as he to oppose the circumstances that had brought him from his camp near Taunton, to this secluded spot. For an interval he gave himself up to a tumult of miserable ideas, till from the grim troop some assumed a milder aspect, some a brighter hue; and, after long and painful consideration, he arranged such a plan as promised at least to vindicate his own name, and to save the lives of his adherents. Calmed by these thoughts, soothed to repose by the gentle influence of a south wind, and the sweet monotony of rustling leaves and running water, he sank at last into a dreamless sleep.

A whispering of voices was the first thing that struck his wakening sense: it was quite dark. "Is Master O'Water come back?" asked Heron.

"I am here," replied the Irishman.

"Hast discovered aught?"

"That the night is dark, and the forest wide," replied O'Water; "had we a planet to guide us we might hope to reach its skirts. We are worse off, than the Spanish Admiral on the western sea, for the compass was a star without a cloud to him."

"Saint Mary save us!" said, or rather whined poor Skelton, "our fortunes are slit from top to toe, and no patch-work will make them whole."

"There is hope at the mouth of a culverin," said O'Water, "or at the foot of the gallows, so that a man be true to himself. I have weathered a worse day, when the Macarthys swore to revenge themselves on the Roches."

"And by our Lady's grace," interrupted Richard, "shall again, worthy Mayor. My good fellows, fear nothing, I will save you, the ocean cannot be many miles off, for the sun set at our right hand, and blinded our eyes through the day; the wind by its mildness is southerly; we will face it. When once we reach the seaside, the shore of the free, wide ocean, Tudor's power stops short, and ye are safe; of myself there will then be time to think. Say, shall we proceed now, or give another hour to repose?"

All were eager to start, slowly leading their horses through the tangled paths they could find, the quarter whence the wind blew their only guide:

morning found them toiling on, but morning diminished half their labours; and, as the birds twittered, and the east gleamed, their spirits rose to meet and conquer danger. O'Water was in his native element, that of hairbreadth escape and peril. As to Heron and Skelton, they might have flagged, but for Richard; he flattered their pride, raised their hopes, making weariness and danger a plaything and a jest. As the sun mounted in the sky, their horses showed many a sign of weariness; and, in spite of a store of venison, which the careful Skelton had brought away with him, they needed refreshment: each mile lengthened to ten; each glade grew interminable in their eyes; and the wide forest seemed to possess all England in its extent. Could the Prince's body have conquered his mind, the White Rose had indeed drooped: he was parched with fever, and this, preying on his brain, made him the victim of conflicting thoughts: his heart, his imagination, were in his deserted camp; even fair Katherine, awaiting tidings of him in her far retreat, had not such power to awaken anguish in his heart, as the idea of Henry's vengeance exercised on his faithful, humble friends, whose father and protector he had called himself. There was disease in the fire and rapidity with which these ideas coursed through his mind; with a strong will he overcame them, bent on accomplishing his present purpose, and rescuing these chief rebels, whose lives were most endangered, before he occupied himself with the safety of the rest.

At length, at noon, his quick ear caught a heavy, distant roar. The trees had begun to be more scattered: they reached the verge of the forest; they were too weary to congratulate each other; before them was a rising ground which bounded their view; some straggling cottages crowned the height; slowly they reached the hill-top, and there beheld stormy ocean, clipping in the circular coast with watery girdle; at a crow's flight it might be a mile distant; a few huts, and a single black boat spotted in one place the else desert beach; a south wind swept the sea, and vast surges broke upon the sands; all looked bleak and deserted.

They stopped at a cottage-door inquiring the road; they heard there was one, which went three miles about, but that the plain at their feet was intersected by wide ditches, which their fagged animals could not leap. Moreover, what hope of putting out to sea, in opposition to the big noisy waves which the wind was hurrying towards shore! It were safest and best to take a short repose in this obscure village. Heron and Skelton entered the poor inn, while Richard waited on his horse, striving to win him by caresses to taste the food he at first refused. Heron, who was warm-hearted with all his bluster, brought the Prince out a flagon of excellent wine, such, as by some chance, it might be a wreck, the tide had wafted from the opposite coast: Richard was too ill to drink; but, as he stood, his arm on his poor steed's neck, the creature looked wistfully up in his face, averting his mouth from the proffered grain; half playfully his master held out to him the wide mouthed flagon, and he drank with such eagerness, that Richard vowed he should have another bottle, and, buying the host's consent with gold, filled a large can from the wine-cask; the beast drank, and, had he been a Christian man, could not have appeared more refreshed. The Prince, forgetful of his pains, was amusing himself thus, when Skelton, pale and gasping, came from the house, and voiceless through fear, laid one hand on his leader's arm, and with the other pointed: too soon the hapless fugitive saw to what he called his attention. Along the shore of the sea a moving body was perceptible, approaching towards them from west to east, which soon showed itself to be a troop of horse soldiers. Richard gave speedy order that his friends should assemble and mount, while he continued to watch the proceedings of the enemy.

They were about two hundred strong — they arrived at the huts on the beach, and the Prince perceived that they were making dispositions to leave a part of their number behind. Fifty men were selected, and posted as patrole — the rest then moved forward, still towards the east. By this time the remaining fugitives had mounted, and gathered in one spot — the villagers also were collecting — Skelton's teeth chattered — he asked an old woman if there were any sanctuary near.

"Aye, by our Lady, is there," replied the dame, "sixteen miles along the coast is the monastery of Beaulieu. A sanctuary for Princes; by the same token that the Lady Margaret, Saint Henry's Queen, lived safely there in spite of the wicked Yorkists, who would have taken her precious life."

Richard turned quickly round as the woman spoke and heard her words, but again his eyes were attracted to the coast. As the troop were proceeding along the sands, the little knot of horsemen perched upon the hill, caught the attention of a soldier. He rode along the lines, and spoke to the commanding officer; a halt ensued, "We are lost," cried Skelton, "we are taken, Lord! Lord! will they grant us our lives?"

“These trees are tempting, and apt for hanging,” said O’Water, with the air of a connoisseur.

“Oh, for Bewley — for Bewley, let us ride!” exclaimed Skelton, longing to go, yet afraid of separating himself from his companions.

Still the Prince watched the movements of the adverse party. Ten men were detached, and began to advance inland—”Oh, dear my Lord,” cried Astley, “betake yourself to the forest — there are a thousand ways of baffling these men. I will meet them, and put them to fault. Ride, for my lady’s sake, ride!”

“Master Astley is a cunning gentleman,” said Skelton; “our horses are a-weary, and a little craft would help us mightily.”

Still Richard’s eyes were fixed on the troopers — the men advanced as far as a broad, deep stream, which intersected the plain; here they hesitated; one of the best mounted leapt across, the others drew back, seeking along the steep, shelving banks for a ford, or a narrowing of the stream. The eyes of the troop on the shore were now turned upon their comrades. “Our time is come,” cried Richard; “back to the forest.” One step took them down the other side of the hill, hiding sea and beach and enemy from their eyes, and skreening them also from observation. They soon reached the forest, and entered its shade; and then proceeded along just within its skirts. “Whither?” respectfully O’Water asked, after Skelton had for some time been muttering many a hint concerning sanctuary.

“To Beaulieu,” said the Prince. “We are barred out from the ocean — we are beset at land — the little island, yeleped sanctuary, is all that is left to ye. God speed us safely hither.”

Richard’s horse was lively and refreshed after his generous draught, but those of the others flagged. The Prince exerted himself to keep up the spirits of all; he rallied Skelton, spoke comfort to Astley, and good hope to Heron. The sturdy apprentice of danger, flight and trouble, O’Water, treated it all as a matter of course — even hanging, if it so ehanced, was but a likely accident — the others needed more encouragement. Astley feared for his Lord, even to an appearance of timidity, which, though disinterested, had a bad effect on the others. Heron complained bitterly that his dinner had been left unfinished; while the poor tailor, now fancying that he would run away from all, now fearful of solitary misadventure, kept up a garrulous barangue, of which terror was the burthen and the sum. Richard’s voice was cheerful, his manner gay; but, placing his hand on Astley, it felt scorching; every moment it required more energy to throw off the clinging lethargy that fell upon him. It was again evening — a circumstance that had caused them to enter deeper into the forest; and it was to be feared they had lost their way. All were weary — all, save Richard, hungry. The breeze had died away; the air was oppressive, and more and more it felt like a load intolerable to the Prince's burning brow. Night began to close in so very dark, that the horses refused to go forward. Suddenly a roaring sound arose, which was not the sea; and, but that the atmosphere was so still, the wanderers would have said that it was a fierce wind among the trees. Such must it be, for now it came nearer; like living things, the vast giants of the forest tossed their branches furiously; and entire darkness and sudden, pouring rain revealed the tempest, which their leafy prison had before hidden — all was so instantaneous, that it would seem that nature was undergoing some great revulsion in her laws. The Prince's horse snorted and reared, while O'Water's dashed furiously on, striking against a tree, and throwing his rider, from whose lips there escaped a shriek. What would have been the last overflowing drop in the bitter cup to a weak mind, restored Richard — lassitude and despondency vanished. In an instant he was off his horse at O'Water's side, speaking in his own cheerful, kind voice. "Waste no moment on me," cried the generous Mayor. "My leg is broken — I can go no further — speed you, your Highness, to the sanctuary."

This was the end of hope — the raging storm, the disabled man, dark night, and Richard's resolve not to desert his follower, all were causes of terror and of despair.

A voice in the wood was heard calling aloud; no answer could be returned; it was repeated, and Astley went forward to reconnoitre — even an enemy were help in such disaster, yet Heron and Skelton implored him to remain. Another halloo Richard answered; for he recognized Astley's voice, who in the dark could not find his way back. He came at last, accompanied by a monk — this was heaven's favour revealed; for the holy man was a hermit, and his poor cell was near: poor indeed was it, built with logs, the interstices filled with mud; a bed of dried leaves was nearly all the furniture. The hermit had gone on first, and lit a torch; as they might, they bore along poor O'Water, and placed him in his agony on the low couch.

The hermit looked inquisitively on all the party, neglecting to answer Skelton, who asked for the hundredth time the distance to Beaulieu.

Richard still occupied himself with the Mayor, endeavouring to discover if the limb were broken. “By your leave, your Grace,” said the hermit, “I am somewhat of a chirurgeon; I boast of my cures of horses, and have saved a Christian man ere now.”

Scarcely did the Prince remember to wonder at the title by which the unknown addressed him. By our Lady’s love he besought him to attend to his friend. “Trust me,” said the hermit, “I will not fail; but you, my Lord, must not tarry here; the forest is beset with troops: but for night and storm, you would hardly attain Beaulieu in safety. It is but two miles distant: I will guide your Highness thither; and then return to your follower. Have faith in me, my Lord; I have served your royal uncle, and was enlisted under your banner last year in Kent. I made a shift to escape, and took sanctuary; but the stone walls of a monastery are little better than those of a prison; so I betook me to the woods. Oh, I beseech you, waste no time: I will return to your follower: he is safe till then.”

“Direct us, and I will thank you,” replied Richard; “but you shall not desert your patient even for a moment.”

There was no alternative but to comply: the man gave as clear instructions as he might, and Richard again set forward with his diminished party. They were long entangled by trees; and it was now quite night: the excitement over, the Prince had drooped again. Even this interval was full of peril — a tramp of steeds was heard: they drew up among the trees; a party of horsemen passed; one — could it be the voice of the subtle Frion? — said, “At the end of this glade we shall see the abbey spires. Well I know the same; for when Queen Margaret—”

This speaker was succeeded by a woman’s voice: yet greater wonder, she spoke in Spanish, in unforgotten accents — Richard’s heart stood still, as he heard them; but soon both voice and tramp of steeds grew faint; and his brain, becoming more and more bewildered, allowed no thought to enter, save the one fixed there even in delirium. The fugitives continued to linger in this spot until it was probable that the travellers should have arrived. True to the information they had overheard, the forest opened at the end of the glade into a leafy amphitheatre; an avenue was opposite, which led to the abbey gates, whose Gothic spires, buttresses and carved arches, rose above the tufted trees in dark masses. One end of the building was illuminated — that was the church, and the pealing organ stole mournfully on the night, sounding a Miserere; the chaunting of the monks mingled with the harmonious swell, adding that pathos, that touch of solemn, unutterable sentiment, which perhaps no music, save that of the human voice, possesses. Richard's companions were rough-suited, vulgar-minded; but they were Catholic and religious men, and were awe-struck by this voice from heaven reaching them thus in their desolation; a voice promising safety and repose to their harassed, wearied bodies.

A few steps carried them to the very spot; the bell was rung, the gate was opened, sanctuary was claimed and afforded. Skelton sprang forward; the other two hung back; but, on a sign from Richard, they also passed the sacred threshold. "Farewell, my friends," he said, "a short farewell. Astley, I charge you wait for me. Sir priest, close the gate."

The word was said, the order obeyed, Richard was left alone in darkness. "Now for my task — for my poor trusty fellows. The work of murder cannot yet have begun: my life pays for all. Yet awhile bear me up, thou fainting spirit; desert not Richard's breast till his honour be redeemed!"

Vain prayer!—"I must repose," he thought; "it is of no avail to urge nature beyond herself; a few minutes, and I am strong." He dismounted, and, with a sensation of delicious relief, threw himself at his length on the wet grass, pressing the dank herbage to his fevered brow. At first he felt recovered; but in a few minutes strong spasms shot through his frame; and these yielded to a feebleness, that forced him to sink to the ground, when he endeavoured to rise: he forgot his situation, the near abbey, his friends; he forgot wherefore, but he remembered that his presence was required somewhere, and with a resolved effort he rose and staggered towards his horse — he fell. "A little sleep, and I shall be well." This was his last thought, and he lay in a state between slumber and stupor upon the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought.
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought
To limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
— SHAKSPEARE.

There is a terror whose cause is unrevealed even to its victim, which makes the heart beat wildly; and we ask the voiceless thing — wherefore, when the beauty of the visible universe sickens the aching sense; when we beseech the winds to comfort us, and we implore the Invisible for relief, which is to speed to us from afar? We endeavour, in our impotent struggle with the sense of coming evil, to soar beyond the imprisoning atmosphere of our own identity; we call upon the stars to speak to us, and would fain believe that mother earth, with inorganic voice, prophecies. Driven on by the mad imaginings of a heart hovering between life and death, we fancy that the visible frame of things is replete with oracles — or is it true? And does air and earth, divined by the sorrow-tutored spirit, possess true auguries? At such dread hour we are forced to listen and believe: nor can we ever afterwards, in common life, forget our miserable initiation into the mysteries of the unexplained laws of our nature. To one thus aware of the misfortune that awaits her, the voice of consolation is a mockery. Yet, even while she knows that the die is cast, she will not acknowledge her intimate persuasion of ill; but sits smiling on any hope brought to her, as a mother on the physician who talks of recovery while her child dies.

The Lady Katherine had yielded to Richard’s wishes, because she saw that he really desired her absence. Alone in a monastery, in a distant part of Cornwall, she awaited the fatal tidings, which she knew must come at last. She was too clearsighted not to be aware, that the armed power of a mighty kingdom, such as England, must crush at once his ill-organized revolt. She was prepared for, and ready to meet, all the disasters and humiliations of defeat; but not to be absent from her husband at this crisis. She ordered horses to be kept perpetually in readiness, that she might proceed towards him on the first intimation of change and downfall. She watched from the highest tower of her abode, the arrival of messengers: before she dared open her letters, she read in their faces, what news of Richard? It was a bitter pang to hear that Plantagenet was dangerously wounded; that the Prince had advanced further forward, at the head of his rabble soldiers.

She had no friends, save humble ones, and very few of these: they borrowed their looks from her, yet hoped more than she did. Quickly she was aware of a change in them: they spoke in a low, subdued voice, as if awe-struck by some visitation of destiny. That very day letters arrived from the Prince: they were of ancient date, nor could she lay his terms of endearment and cheering to her heart and be consoled. In the afternoon a torn soiled billet was brought her from Edmund. In spite of his wound, he had dragged himself as far as Launceston, on his way to her. Forced to stop, he sent her tidings of all he knew — Richard's mysterious flight, Henry's bloodless victory, the eagerness the King expressed to learn where she was, and the dispatching of troops in search of her. He besought her to fly. It might be hoped that the Prince had escaped beyond sea, whither she must hasten; or falling into his enemy's hands, she would never see him more.

Perplexed and agitated, knowing that dishonour would result from Richard's strange disappearance, yet persuaded that he had some ulterior view which it behoved her not to thwart, she hesitated what step to take.

An incident ocurred to end her uncertainty. Suddenly, in the evening, Monina stood before her. Monina came with the safety-laden Adalid, to bear her to the shores of Burgundy. She brought the history of the fraud practised upon York, of the ambush laid for his life, of his escape, and the arrival immediately succeeding to hers, of his followers at the Abbey of Beaulieu; how the pawing and trampling of a horse at the gates had brought out the monks, who discovered the hapless Prince senseless on the dark sod. He was carried in, and through her care his name was entered in the sanctuary. She had attended on his sick couch two days and nights, when his first return to reason was to implore her to seek Katherine, to carry her beyond Tudor's power, out of the island prison. Her father's caravel was hovering on the coast. A favouring south-east wind bore her to these shores: she came at his desire: the Adalid was there, and she might sail, not to Burgundy, but even to the spot which harboured Richard. She also could take sanctuary in Beaulieu.

The monastery in which the Duchess of York had taken refuge, was situated on Saint Michael's Mount, not far from the Land's End. The land projects romantically into the sea, forming a little harbour called Mount's Bay. Towards the land the acclivity is at first gradual, becoming precipitous towards the summit: now, at high water, the tide flows between the rock and the land, but it was in those days connected by a kind of natural, rocky causeway. Towards the sea it is nearly perpendicular. A strong fortress was connected with the church; and a stone lantern was attached to one of the towers of the church. Not far from the castle, in a craggy and almost inaccessible part of the cliff, is situated Saint Michael's Chair, which, on account of its dangerous approach, and the traditions attached to it, became the resort of the pious. Many a legend belonged to this spot. Its thick woods, the hoar appearance of the crags, the wide spread sea, for ever warring against the land, which had thrust itself out into the watery space, usurping a part of its empire, made it singularly grand; while the placid beauty of the little bay formed by the rock, and the picturesque grouping of the trees, the straggling paths, and numerous birds, added every softer beauty to the scene.

Often did Katherine watch the changeful ocean, or turn her eyes to the more grateful spectacle of umbrageous words, and rifted rock, and seek for peace in the sight of earth's loveliness. All weighed with tenfold heaviness on her foreboding soul. For the first time, they wore to her the aspect of beauty, when now she hoped to leave them. Hopes so soon to fail. A south wind had borne the caravel swiftly into the bay, but the breeze increased to a gale, and even while the ladies were making a few hasty preparations, De Faro had been obliged to slip his moorings, and run out to sea, to escape the danger of being wrecked on a lee shore. With a pang of intense misery, Katherine saw its little hull hurry over the blackening waters, and its single sail lose itself amidst the sea foam. The mariner had even, on anchoring, anticipated a storm; he had informed his daughter of the probability there was, that he should be driven to seek for safety in the open sea; but he promised with the first favourable change of wind to return. When would this come? Fate was in the hour, nor could even Katherine school herself to patience.

Evening shades gathered round them; the Princess growing each minute, more unquiet and miserable, sought in some kind of activity for relief to her sufferings. “I will go to Saint Michael’s Chair,” she said; “good spirits for ever hover near the sainted spot; they will hear and carry a fond wife’s prayer to the throne of the Eternal.”

In silence Monina followed the lady. They were both mountain-bred, and trod lightly along paths, which seemed scarcely to afford footing to a goat. They reached the seat of the rock; they looked over the sea, whose dark surface was made visible by the sheets of foam that covered it; the roar of waves was at their feet. The sun went down blood-red, and, in its dying glories, the crescent moon shewed first pale, then glowing; the thousand stars rushed from among the vast clouds that blotted the sky; and the wind tore fiercely round the crag, and howled among the trees. O, earth, and sea, and sky! Strange mysteries! that look and are so beautiful even in tumult and in storm; did ye feel pain then, when the elements of which ye are composed, battled together? Were ye tortured by the strife of wind and wave, even as the soul of man when it is the prey of passion? Or were ye unmoved, pain only being the portion of the hearts of the two human beings, who, looking on the commotion, found your wildest rage, calm in comparison with the tempest of fear and grief which had mastery over them.

Sickened by disappointment, impatient of despair, each remained, brooding mutely over their several thoughts.

Poor Katherine; her dearest wish was set upon sharing in all its drear minutiæ the fortune of her lord, her gallant knight, her most sweet Richard. He was her husband; he had taken her, timid yet confiding, from the shelter of her father’s roof; they had entered the young world of hope and hazard together. Custom, the gentle weaver of soft woman’s tenderness, had thrown its silken net over her; his disasters became hers; his wishes, and their defeat, were also hers. She only existed as a part of him; while enthusiastic love made her fondly cling even to the worst that betided, as better in its direst shape than any misnamed good fortune that unlinked them. “My love, my altar-plighted love! must I then wake and say no good day to thee; and sleep, my rest unbenisoned by thy good night! The simple word, the we, that symbolized our common fate, cut in two, each half a nothing, so disjoined.”

While Katherine thus struggled with necessity, Monina was given up to patience. The present hour had fulfilled its fear; her busy thoughts fashioned a thousand plans for his escape, or tremblingly painted a dark futurity. He was a part of her being, though no portion of herself was claimed by him. She was not his, as a lover or a wife, but as a sister might be; if in this ill world such heart's concord could exist: a sharing of fate and of affection, combined with angelic purity. As easily might she fancy animal life to survive in her body after the soul had fled, as soon imagine that the beating of her heart could continue when the living impulse which quickened its palpitations was still, as that he, her childhood's playfellow, the golden dream of her youth, the shrine at which she had sacrificed that youth, should die, and she live on in the widowed world without him.

The stars glittered over their gentle heads, and the moon went down in the west; fitful, thread-like rays were shed upon the raging sea, whose heady billows foamed and roared at their feet: both these fair gentle creatures remained, careless of the wild wind that swept their limbs, or the spray, which high as they stood, besprent their hair: both young, both lovely, both devoted to one, yet confinding in the reality of virtue and purity, trusting fully each other, the one accepting the heart's sacrifice which the other unreservedly made, they watched for the Adalid, which, a plaything of the waves, was carried afar. Day dawned before they could resolve to quit this spot; then they took refuge in the near monastery; and from its towers, looked out over the sea.

A few anxious hours brought the dreaded consummation of their fears. The ascent of a troop of horse up the steep, told Katherine that she was discovered. Their sudden appearance before her proved that she was a prisoner. For the first time she saw the White and Red Rose entwined; the Earl of Oxford was announced to her as their leader, and he soon appeared, to claim his prize.

Katherine received him with dignified sweetness; she conquered her ill fate by smiling at its blows, and looked a Queen, as she yielded herself a slave. The watching of the night had all disordered her dress, and deranged her golden tresses; but her wondrous fairness, the soft moulding of her face, her regal throat, and arched open brow, bending over her intelligent, yet soft, blue eyes; her person majestic, even in its slim beauty, were tokens of a spirit, that in destitution must reign over all who approached it.

Her first words, to ease the awe-struck Earl, were an entreaty to be conducted to the King. She showed more earnest desire than he to present herself to her royal victor. In a very few hours, they had descended the Mount; and hastened out of hearing of the roar of the ocean, which had so cruelly deceived her hopes. In her eyes could only be read the mastery she had obtained over her thoughts; no lurking weakness betrayed fear, or even disappointment. — Surely yet she cherished some dear expectation; yet how, lost to liberty, could she hope to attain it?

But thus we are, while untamed by years. Youth, elastic and bright, disdains to be compelled. When conquered, from its very chains it forges implements for freedom; it alights from one baffled flight, only again to soar on untired wing towards some other aim. Previous defeat is made the bridge to pass the tide to another shore; and, if that break down, its fragments become stepping stones. It will feed upon despair, and call it a medicine which is to renovate its dying hopes.

CHAPTER XIII.

For, when Cymocles saw the foul reproach
Which him appeached, pricked with noble shame
And inward grief, he fiercely ‘gan approach;
Resolved to put away that loathly blame.
Or die with honour and desert of fame.
 — SPENSER.

After the Prince, by the voyage of Monina, had, as he hoped, provided for the escape and safety of the Lady Katherine, he could not, all weak as he was, remain in repose.

From his early childhood he had been nurtured in the idea that it was his first, chief duty to regain his kingdom; his friends lived for that single object; all other occupation was regarded as impertinent or trifling. On the table of his ductile boyish mind, that sole intent was deeply engraved by every hand or circumstance. The base-minded disposition of his rival king adorned his cause with a show of use and the name of virtue.

Those were days when every noble-born youth carved honour for himself with his sword; when passes at arms were resorted to whenever real wars did not put weapons in their hands, and men exposed their breasts to sharp-biting steel in wanton sport. Often during his green and budding youth Richard had gloried in the very obstacles set before him; to be cast out and forced to redeem his state, was a brighter destiny than to be lapped in the bosom of guarded royalty. The treason of Clifford and the sacrifice of devoted friends but whetted his ambition; vengeance, the religion of that age, being a sacred duty in his eyes. He had been shaken by Lord Surrey’s appeal, but cast the awakened pity off as a debasing weakness.

The painted veil of life was torn. His name had not armed the nobles of his native land, his cause had not been trumpeted with praise nor crowned by victory; deserted by foreign allies, unsuccessful in Ireland, he had appeared at the head of a rabble army strong only in wrongs and in revenge. Even these he had abandoned, and with nameless hinds taken sanctuary; his story was a fable, his name a jeer; he no longer, so it seemed, existed; for the appellation of Duke of York was to be lost and merged in the disgraceful misnomer affixed to him by the Usurper.

Richard was no whining monk to lament the inevitable, and tamely to await the result. To see an evil was to spur him to seek a remedy: he had given up every expectation of reigning, except such as sprung from his right, and faith in the justice of God. But honour was a more valued treasure; and to his warm heart dearer still was the safety of the poor fellows abandoned by him. On the third day after his arrival at Beaulieu, he arose from his sick couch, donned his armour, and, yet pale and feeble, sent to speak with the cavalier who commanded the party that guarded all egress from the Abbey. With him he held long parley, in conclusion of which Sir Hugh Luttrel directed three of his followers to be in readiness, and two of his chosen horses to be led to the Abbey gates. Richard took leave of the Abbot; he recommended his poor followers to him, and lightly answered the remonstrance of the holy man, who thought that delirium alone could urge the fugitive to quit the tranquil, sacred spot, where he himself passed his days in quiet, and which held out so secure a protection to the vanquished. His remonstrance was vain; one word weighed more with Richard than a paradise of peace. Infamy, dishonour! No; even if his people were safe — by throwing himself in the self-same peril to which he had apparently exposed them, that stain were effaced. The very gentleman to whom he had surrendered himself, had trespassed on his allegiance to Henry to dissuade him from the fool-hardihood of his adventure. It was a sight of pity to see one so very young walk voluntarily to the sacrifice; and the princely mien and youthful appearance of the self-constituted prisoner, wrought all to compassion and respect. For still this fair White Rose was in the very opening flower of manhood; he looked, after such variety of fortune, as if evil not only never had, but never could tarnish the brightness of his spirit or of his aspect; illness had a little enfeebled him, without detracting from his youthful beauty, giving rather that softness which made it loveliness, yet painted fairer by his self-immolating resolve.

“A sweet regard and amiable grace.
Mixed with manly sternness did appear. “

and eagerness withal: for eager he was, even to almost foolish haste, to redeem the lost hours, and establish himself again no runaway.

With fresh joy he addressed himself to retrace his steps to Taunton. Sanctuary and refuge from death — oh! how he trampled on the slavish thought. Death was to him a word, a shadow, a phantom to deride and scorn, not an enemy to grapple with; disgrace was his abhorred foe, and him he thus overthrew. His resolves, inspired by disdain of permitting one taint to blemish his career, were not the expedients of prudence, but the headlong exploit of daring youth. The iron must indeed have entered our souls, and we be tamed from dear, youthful freedom to age's humble concessions to necessity, before we can bow our head to calumny, smile at the shafts as they rankle in our flesh, and calmly feel that, among the many visitations of evil we undergo, this is one we are compelled to endure.

Thus he, his gentle guide and followers, travelled towards Taunton. In all prudence, from the moment they left sanctuary, Sir Hugh Luttrel ought to have guarded him closely. But even the staid Sir Hugh forgot this duty; rather was Richard the enforcer of this journey, than his guard. Richard it was who at night halted unwillingly, Richard who first cried to horse at morning's dawn; who, in spite of ill-weather, resisted every delay. As they drew near their bourne, the appellation of Perkin first met the Prince's ear; he was unaware that it had ever been applied to him except by Henry's written proclamations. It acted as a galling spur; for he believed, with youth's incapacity of understanding systematized falsehood, that his presence would put to flight the many coloured web of invention, which his rival had cast over him to mar his truth and obscure his nobility.

After three days they drew near Taunton. The stubble fields, the flowery hedges, the plenteous orchards were passed. From a rising ground they looked upon the walls of the town, and the vacant moor where his camp had stood. Richard halted, saying—”Sir Knight, I will await you here — do you seek your King: say, I come a voluntary sacrifice, to purchase with drops of my royal blood the baser tide of my poor followers. I demand no more — bid him rear the scaffold; let the headsman sharpen the axe, to lop off the topmost bough of Plantagenet. The price I ask, is the despised lives of men, who, but that they loved me, were incapable of merit or of crime in his eyes. For their humble sakes, like my grandfather York, I am prepared to die. If pledge of this be denied me, I still am free. I wear a sword, and will sell my life dearly, though alone.”

Sir Hugh Luttrel was perplexed. He knew the stern nature of his royal master, and how heavily he would visit on him any disappointment in his dearest wish of obtaining possession of his rival’s person. The Prince had, during their three days’ companionship, gained great power over him: he felt that he was in truth the son of Edward the Fourth, a man he had never loved (for Sir Hugh was a Lancastrian), but one whom he had feared and obeyed as his sovereign. How could he put slavish force upon his gallant offspring? He hesitated, till the Prince demanded—”Wherefore delay — is there aught else that you desire?”

“You pledge your knightly word,” said Sir Hugh, “not to desert this spot?”

“Else wherefore am I here? — this is idle. Yet, so to content you, I swear by my vow made under the walls of Granada, by our Lady, and by the blessed Saints, I will abide here.”

The knight rode into the town with his followers, leaving young Richard impatient for the hour that was to deliver him to servitude.

Sir Hugh first sought Lord Dawbeny, requesting him to obtain for him instant audience of the King. “His Grace,” said the noble, “is at vespers, or about to attend them.”

“I dare not wait till they are said,” replied Luttrel, who every minute felt the burthen of responsibility weighing heavier on him.

“Nor I interrupt his Majesty — even now he enters the church.”

In haste Sir Hugh crossed the street; and, as the King took the holy water from the chalice, he knelt before him. The few words he spoke painted Henry’s face with exulting gladness. “We thank thee, good Sir Hugh,” he said, “and will make our thanks apparent. By the mass, thou hast deserved well of us this day! Where hast thou bestowed our counterfeit?”

“Please your Majesty, he awaits your Highness’ acceptance of his conditions without the eastern gate.”

“You have placed strong guard over him?”

“He pledged his oath to await my return. He is alone.”

A dark, angry frown chased all glee from Tudor’s brow; bending a stern glance on his erewhile welcome messenger, he commanded Lord Wells, his cousin, to take a strong force and to seize this Duke of Runaways. Sir Hugh, timid as he was, interfered: driven by respect for his prisoner, and fear of what might ensue, he tried to enforce York’s stipulation. Henry looked on him with scorn, then said, “Truly, Cousin, I have vaunted of a bloodless conquest; so let not the blood of the misborn traitor stain our laurels, nor Sir Luttrel’s Duke Perkin shed one precious ruby drop. Say aye to all he asks; for as it seems his demands are as foolish as himself, and need no chaffering. Tell him that his life is safe, but bring him here; set him within our ward and limitation: do this, while we with a Te Deum thank our Heavenly Father for his watchful mercies. Sir Hugh, accompany our cousin, and then wend your way whither it please you. We have no pleasure in your presence.”

Thus duped, even by his own generous proud spirit, the Duke of York became a prisoner — delivering up his sword, and yielding himself an easy prey to his glad victor. Once, twice, thrice, as he waited the return of Luttrel, it had crossed his mind, not to fly, his vow being pledged, but to remember that he was now free and unconstrained, and would soon be in other’s thrall — when farewell to the aspiring thought, the deed of arms, and to the star of his life, to whose idea, now his purpose was accomplished, he fondly turned!—”Poor Katherine,” he whispered, “this is the crown, the fated, fallen youth, the seer foretold.” In after-times that scene dwelt on his memory; he called to mind the evening-tide, for the sun was down, and the clouds, lately gold besprent, waxing dun, as the town walls grew high and dark, and the few trees about him waved fitfully in a soft breeze: that wind was free, and could career over the plain; what spell bound the noble knight and stalwart steed, that they coursed not also free as it?

In a few minutes he was a prisoner — and led within those darksome walls. At first, treated with some observance, he was unaware, as is the case in any new position, with whose circumstances and adjuncts we are unacquainted, how utterly he had fallen. He was led to no barred prison; and, for a time, the nobles and knights who flocked to see him, were no bad exchange for the motley crew he had quitted. But, as if in a dream, he felt gather round him impalpable but adamantine walls — chains hung upon his limbs, not the less heavy, because the iron pierced his soul rather than his flesh. He had been a free man; his name was attended with love and respect, and his aspect commanded the obedience of men. Now, the very appellation given to him was a mortal insult; a stranger seemed to be spoken to when he was addressed, and yet he must answer. He was never alone; and night was the sole suspension from the insulting curiosity of the crowd. He must forego himself; grow an impostor in his own eyes; take on him the shameful name of Perkin: all which native honour, and memory of his Princess bride, made trebly stinging.

To barb the dart came intelligence that the Lady Katherine was a prisoner. King Henry had quitted Taunton, and gone towards Exeter, when, on his arrival there, the Earl of Oxford presented the Scottish Princess to him. Praises of her wondrous beauty became rife, brought by some of the King's train, returned to Taunton; praises so excessive and warm as could not have been inspired by celestial beauty in adversity, if not egged on by some adventitious stimulant. It was the fashion to speak of her as the Queen of Loveliness; as (for beauty's sake the name belonged to her) the fairest White Rose that ever grew on thorny bush. By this name she was mentioned to York; and it visited his heart as the first gleam of sunshine on his enshadowed misery: dear was the name of the White Rose to the fallen one. It had been his own in fresh and happy days, when first he showed his prowess among the knights of France and Burgundy. Still louder grew the echo of some mighty voice, that gave forth encomium of the prisoner's bride; and the smiles with which some spoke, smiles half of wonder half of mockery, told of some secret charm, which at last was openly commented upon. "Again the King saw the fair one yestermorn; and dallied ere he granted the earnest suit she made, as if he loved so to be entreated."

"The grave King Henry caught in the net of the wanton boy! Oh, this were subject for a ballad for the nonce."

"Blythe news for gentle Perkin; his wife thrives at court. She takes occasion by too slender a hold, if she raise not her husband from the kitchen to a higher place at court."

"Now we shall see our Lady, the Queen, jealous of her liege."

"Our Queen? what midsummer's dream is this? The White Rose will never flower in our court garden."

To falsify this assertion came the next day a messenger, with command to convey the noble prisoner with all speed to London; and for the attendance of the Lady Cheney and the Lady Howard, two noble matrons, to wait on the Lady Katherine, who was about to proceed to Westminster. Smiles and whispers were interchanged; and, when to this was added, that as much courtesy should be shewn the counterfeit youth as might not endanger his safe keeping, the light laugh followed; though, as if to meet and overthrow the raillery, it was added, this was ordered for his royal wife's sake, who was cousin to England's dear ally, the King of Scotland. These idle tales did not reach York's ear: wherever he showed himself, he enforced such personal respect, that there was no likelihood that any conjecture, linked with his lady's name, would be hazarded before him. He was told that the King entertained her royally; and when he heard that she was to be presented to his sister, the Queen Elizabeth, a thrill of joy passed into his heart. His sister! as a boy, he remembered the fair, kind girl, whom he had called his loved and most sweet sister: he knew that she was conscious of his truth, and, though wedded to his rival, loved not her lord. It was a pleasing dream, to fancy these gentle ladies together; to know that, while the one spoke her affection and praise, the other must feel the kindred blood warm in her heart, and proudly, though sadly, acknowledge him her worthy brother.

CHAPTER XIV.

They are noble sufferers. I marvel
How they'd have looked, had they been victors, that
With such a constant nobility enforce
A freedom out of bondage.
— TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

The vulgar rabble, fond of any sort of show, were greedy of this new one. In all parts the name of the Duke of York, of the counterfeit Perkin, drew a concourse of gazers. The appetite was keenest in London; and many a tawdry masque and mime was put in motion, to deck the streets through which the defeated youth was to pass. Vainly; he entered London at night, and was conducted privately to Westminster. What strange thing was this? What mark of reality did his very forehead wear, that Henry, so prodigal of contumely on his foes, dared not bring him forward for the public gaze? One man was put in the stocks for a similar remark; and on the following day it was suddenly proclaimed, that Perkin would go in procession from Westminster to Saint Pauls, and back again. A troop of horse at the appointed hour left the Palace: in the midst of them rode a fair young gentleman, whose noble mien and gallant bearing gave lustre to his escort: his sweet aspect, his frank soft smile, and lively but calm manner, had no trace of constraint or debasement. "He is unarmed — is that Perkin? No, the Earl of Warwick — he is a prince sure — yet that is he!" Such murmurs sped around; at some little distance followed another burlesque procession; a poor fellow, a Cornishman, was tied to an ass, his face to the tail, and the beast now proceeding lazily, now driven by sticks, now kicking, now galloping, made an ill-fashioned mirth for the multitude. Whether, as York was not to be disgraced in his own person, the contumely was to reach him through this poor rouge, or whether the eyes of men were to be drawn from him to the rude mummery which followed, could only be guessed: the last was the effect produced. Richard heard mass at St. Paul's, and returned to Westminster unmolested by insult. It seemed but as if some young noble made short pilgrimage from one city to the other, to accomplish a vow. The visit of illfated Warwick to the cathedral, before the battle of Stoke, had more in it of humiliating ostentation.

He returned to the palace of Westminster. A few weeks he spent in mingled curiosity and anxiety concerning his future destiny. It was already accomplished. Modern times could not present any thing more regular and monotonous, than the way of life imposed upon him. It was like the keeping of a lunatic, who, though now sane, might be momentarily expected to break out in some dangerous explosion, rather than the confining of a state-prisoner. Four armed attendants, changed every eight hours, constantly guarded him, never moving, according to the emphatic language of the old chroniclers, the breadth of a nail from his side. He attended early mass each morning: he was permitted to take one hour's ride on every evening that was not a festival. Two large gloomy chambers, with barred windows, were allotted him. Among his guards, he quickly perceived that the same faces seldom appeared; and the most rigorous silence, or monosyllabic discourse was imposed upon them. Harsher measures were perhaps spared, from respect to his real birth, or his alliance with the King of Scotland: yet greater severity had been less tantalizing. As it was, the corpse in the grass-grown grave was not more bereft of intercourse with the sunny world, than the caged Duke of York. From his windows, he looked upon a deserted court-yard; in his rides, purposely directed to unfrequented spots, he now and then saw a few human beings — such name could be hardly bestowed on his stony-faced, stony-hearted guards.

Richard was the very soul of sympathy; he could muse for hours in solitude, but it must be upon dear argument, that had for its subject the pleasures, interests or affections of others. He could not entertain a heartless intercourse. Wherever he saw the human countenance, he beheld a fellow-creature; and, duped a thousand times, and a thousand times deceived, "still he must love." To spend the hour in sportive talk; fondly to interchange the gentle offices of domestic life; to meet peril and endure misery with others; to give away himself, and then return to his inner being, laden like a bee with gathered sweets; to pile up in his store-house memory, the treasured honey of friendship and love, and then away to nestle in the bosom of his own dear flower, and drink up more, or gaily to career the golden fields; such was his nature: and now — this was worse than loneliness; this commune with the mutes of office; to be checked by low-born men; to feel that he must obey the beck of an hireling. A month, interspersed with hopes of change, he had endured the degradation; now he began to meditate escape. Yet he paused. Where was Katherine? where his many zealous friends?

The Lady Katherine was in an apartment of the Palace, whose arched and fretted roof, and thick buttresses, were well adapted to impart a feeling of comfortable seclusion from the rough elements without. The dulness of dark November was gladdened by a huge wood fire. The little Prince of Wales was narrating some strange story of fairyland; and bluff Harry was setting two dogs to quarrel, and then beating his favourite for not conquering, which seeing, his sister Margaret drew the animal from him to console and caress it. The gentle Queen bent over her embroidery. Listening she was to her favourite Arthur, interrupting him with playful questions and exclamations, while Katherine now kindly attended to the boy, now turned anxiously at every sound. She rose at last: “Surely vespers are ringing from the Abbey. My lord the King promised to see me before vespers.”

“My lord the King is very gracious to you, sweet one,” said Elizabeth.

“Methinks by nature he is gracious,” replied the Princess; “at least, I have ever found him so. Surely the shackles of state are very heavy, or ere this he would have granted my prayer, which he has listened to so oft indulgently.”

The Queen smiled faintly, and again pursued her work with seeming earnestness. Was it jealousy that dimmed the silk of her growing rosebud by a tear — or what name shall we give to the feeling? — envy we may not call it, she was too sweetly good — which now whispered, “Even he, the cold, the stern, is kind to her: my brother loves her passionately; and many a lance has been broken for her. Happy girl; happy in adversity; while I, England’s miserable Queen, am forgotten even by my fellow-prisoner of Sheriff Hutton, poor Warwick! he might have been my refuge: for the rest, how hard and rocky seem all human hearts to me.” Her tears now flowed fast. Katherine saw them: she approached her, saying, “Dear and royal lady, none should weep, methinks, but only I, whose mate is caged and kept away; none sigh but poor Kate, whose more than life hangs on state policy; or is it for him these tears are shed?”

Still Elizabeth wept. Accustomed to the excess of self-restraint, timid, schooled to patience, but with the proud fiery spirit of a Plantagenet, tamed, not dead within her, she could be silent, but not speak by halves. The very natural vivacity of her nature made her disdain not to have her will, when once it was awaked. She struggled against her rising feeling; she strove to suppress her emotion; but at last she spoke; and once again, after the ten years that had elapsed since her mother's imprisonment, truth was imaged by her words. To none could she have addressed herself better. The life of the Scottish Princess had been spent in administering balm to wounded minds: the same soft eloquence, the same persuasive counsels, that took the sting of remorse from her royal cousin's conscience, was spent upon the long-hidden sorrows of the neglected wife, the humbled woman. From her own sensitive mind she culled the knowledge which taught her where and how peace and resignation were to be found. The piety that mingled with her talk was the religion of love; her philosophy was mere love; and it was the spirit of love, now kindling the balmy atmosphere of charity of many, now concentred in one point, but ever ready to soothe human suffering with its soft influence, that dwelt upon her lips, and modulated her silver voice. Elizabeth felt as if she had wandered long in a wolf-haunted wild, now suddenly changed to a fairy demesne, fresh and beautiful as poet's dream. Timidly she feared to set her untaught feet within the angel-guarded precincts. The first effect of her new friend's eloquence was to make her speak. After years of silence, to utter her very inner thoughts, her woman's fears, her repinings, her aversions, her lost hopes and affections crushed: she spent her bitterest words; but thus it was as if she emptied a silver chalice of its gall, to be refilled by Katherine with heavenly dew.

The weeks of baffled expectation grew into months. It is a dreary portion of our existence, when we set our hearts upon an object which recedes as we approach, and yet entices us on. The king's courtesy and smiles, and evident pleasure in her society, gave birth to warm hopes in the bosom of the princess. She had asked to share her husband's prison; she had besought to be permitted to see him; it seemed, from Henry's vague but consolatory answers, that to-morrow she would receive even more than her desires. The disappointment of the morrow, which she lamented bitterly at first, then grew into the root, whence fresh hopes sprung again, to be felled by the cruel axe, again to shoot forth: the sickening sensation of despair crept over her sometimes; her very struggles to master it enfeebled her; and yet she did conquer all but the hard purposes of the tyrant. Now a messenger was to be despatched to Scotland; now he expected one thence; now an embassy from

Burgundy: he implored her patience, and talked back the smiles into her saddened countenance. He was almost sincere at first, not in his excuses, but in his desire to please her at any sacrifice; but this disinterested wish grew soon into a mere grasping at self-gratification. In a little while he hoped she would be persuaded how vain it was to expect that he should set free so dangerous a rival; and yet he did not choose to extinguish all her anticipations; for perhaps then she would desire to return to her native country; and Henry would have sacrificed much to keep her where he could command her society. Thus he encouraged her friendship with the Queen, though he wondered how one so wise, so full of reflection and reason as Katherine, could love his feeble-minded wife.

The King underrated the talents of Elizabeth. This hapless woman had perceived that contention was useless; she therefore conceded every thing without a struggle. Her energies, spent upon endurance, made her real strength of mind seem tameness; but Katherine read with clearer eyes. We are all and each of us riddles, when unknown one to the other. The plain map of human powers and purposes, helps us not at all to thread the labyrinth each individual presents in his involution of feelings, desires and capacities; and we must resemble, in quickness of feeling, instinctive sympathy, and warm benevolence, the lovely daughter of Huntley, before we can hope to judge rightly of the good and virtuous among our fellow-creatures.

The strangest sight of all was to see Henry act a lover’s part. At first he was wholly subdued.

“So easy is, t’appease the stormy wind
Of malice, in the calm of pleasant womankind.”

Even generosity and magnanimity, disguises he sometimes wore the better to conceal his inborn littleness of soul, almost possessed him; for a moment he forgot his base exultation in crushing a foe, and for a moment dwelt with genuine pleasure on the reflection, that it was in his power to gratify her every wish, and to heap benefits on one so lovely and so true. When first she was presented to him, in all the calm majesty of her self-conquering mood; her stainless loveliness had such effect, that surely he could deny her nothing; and when she asked that no foul dishonour should be put upon her Lord, he granted almost before she asked: his expressions of service and care were heartfelt; and she lost every fear as she listened.

When custom, which, with man, is the devourer of holy enthusiasm, changed his purer feelings into something he dared not name, he continued to manifest the same feelings, which had bested him so well at first; and to angle with his prey. Though he scarcely knew what he wished, for a thousand worldly motives sufficed to check any dishonourable approach, it was enough that she was there; that, when she saw him, her countenance lighted up with pleasure; that with the sweetest grace she addressed her entreaties to his ear; not in abrupt demands, but in such earnest prayer, such yielding again, to return with another and another argument; that often he thought, even if he had wished to concede, he would hold out a little longer, that still her sweet voice might address him, still her stately neck be bent imploring as she fixed her blue eyes on him.

It was very long before the artless girl suspected that he had any other intent, but to consent at last to her supplications. As it was as easy to him to lure her on with a greater as a lesser hope, she even fancied that, under certain restrictions, York's freedom might be restored; and that with him, in some remote country, she might bless Tudor as a generous adversary. Elizabeth was afraid to discover the truth to her, for she also dreaded to lose her, and was afraid that, on the failure of her hopes, she would seek to return to Scotland; or at least seclude herself from her husband's jailor. Monina first awoke her to the truth. Monina, who had been to Brussels, to consult with the Duchess Margaret and Lady Brampton, and who came back full of projects for her friend's escape, heard with amazement and scorn the false lures held out by Henry; she impatiently put aside every inducement for delay, and with rash, but determined zeal, framed many a scheme for communicating with him, and contriving means for his flight.

He himself — the chained eagle — was sick at heart. No word — no breath — no hope! Had all forgotten him? Was he, yet living, erased from the lists of memory? Cut off from the beloved beings in whom he had confided, through their own act — no longer a part off their thoughts, their lives, themselves? Stood he alone in this miserable world, allied to it by hate only — the hate borne to him by his foe? Such gloomy misgivings were so alien to his nature, that they visited him as cruel iron torture visits soft human flesh. That she — the life of his life, should be false and cold! Each friend forgetful — Monina — Plantagenet — all — all! Oh, to stretch his quivering frame upon burning coals, had been to slumber on a bed of roses, in comparison with the agony these thoughts administered. His calmer moods, when he believed that, though tardy, they were true, were scarcely less painful. Then the real state of things grew more galling: the bluntness or silence of his keepers; their imperturbable or rude resistance to his questions; the certainty that, if one answered graciously — that one he should see no more. Often he felt as if he could not endure his present position one hour longer. Fits of hope, meditations on escape, chequered his days; so that all was not so dark — but the transition from one emotion to another, each to end in blank despair, tasked his mercurial soul. Patience died within him — he might perish in the attempt, but he would be free.

Urged by Monina, by her own awakening fears, and, above all, by the keen burning desire of her heart, the Lady Katherine became very importunate with the crafty monarch to be permitted an interview with her lord. Henry was in no mood to grant her request: the thousand designs he had meditated to disgrace his victim, he had given up for her sake, because he would not refuse himself the pleasure of seeing her, and feared to behold aversion and horror mark an aspect hitherto all smiles towards him. The same fear, nurtured by the expressions of her tender affection, made him hesitate, ere he should endeavour to convince her that she had misallied herself to an impostor. Indeed, when at last he ventured to frame a speech bearing such a meaning, her answer told him, that, if he could have changed the royal York into base-born Perkin, the young and innocent wife would still cling to him to whom she had pledged her vows; to whom she had given himself; whose own, in heaven’s and her own eyes, she unalienably was. But now Henry, grown more callous as time elapsed, coined a new scheme, vile as his own soul: he resolved, by acting on her woman’s fears, tenderness and weakness, to make her the instrument of persuading her lord to some damning confession, that must stamp him as a deceiver for ever. This bright project animated him to fresh endeavours to please, and her with fresh hopes; yet he paused a little before he sought to execute it.

Winter crept on into spring, and spring ripened into summer, and still the various actors in this tragic drama were spending their lives, their every thought and heart’s pulsation, on one object. Richard had latterly received intimation that he would be permitted an interview with his beloved White Rose; and a week or two more were patiently endured with this expectation. Katherine each day believed, that on the morrow she should see him, whom now she conversed with only in her nightly dreams, and woke each morning to find him fled with them. Some change approached: Henry's promises became more clear in their expression; his assertions more peremptory; he would at last name his conditions, which she was to communicate to her lord; even Elizabeth almost dared to hope. Monina alone, deeply impressed with a belief in the malice of Tudor, was incredulous, and reluctantly yielded to Katherine's request to suspend yet a little while her plots.

Whitsuntide arrived, and Henry at last would decide. This festival was to be spent at Shene: thither the royal family went, accompanied by the Princess, who vanquished her disappointment at further delay, not to appear an ingrate to the fair-promising King. Indeed, in the secure hope she cherished of again seeing him who was her earthly paradise, she smiled through the very heart-gushing tears expectation caused to flow. On Whit Sunday she awoke, resolving to discard the heavy load of anticipated evil that involuntarily weighed at her heart. She knelt at mass, and fervently strove to resign her dearest wishes to the direction of her God; and yet that she should see him again soon — oh! how very soon — filled her with such dizzy rapture, that her orisons were forgot midway — remembered, and turned to thanksgivings — till she recollected that still her hope was unfulfilled; and fear awoke, and with tears and prayer she again strove to ease her agitated heart.

That very night a thunder-storm roused her from slumber: with those unexplained emotions, which, in fateful periods, make so large a portion of our lives, she felt as if every clap spoke audibly some annunciation which she could not interpret: as if every lurid flash were sent to disclose a sight which yet she could not see. At length the rain ceased, the thunder grew distant, the lightning faint; a load was lifted from her soul; she slept, with the firm belief that on the morrow tidings, not all evil, would be brought from London.

Some tidings surely came. What they were she was not permitted to know. For the first time Henry made her a real prisoner; she was carefully guarded, and none were allowed to speak to her. Overwrought by her expectations, this seemed a frightful cruelty; and yet, where caution was used, there must be fear: her — his enemy feared — then good had occurred. She dared not permit her imagination to picture forth the thing which yet was for ever present to it; and, while all else were amazed to hear that York had escaped and fled, his lovely, anxious wife, cut off from communication with all, knew only that she alone was ignorant of what she would have given her life to learn.

CHAPTER XV.

Thou, God of winds, that reignest in the seas.
 That reignest also in the continent
At last blow up some gentle gale of ease.
 The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent.
 Unto the gladsome port of her intent.
 — SPENSER.

During the winter and the untoward late spring, Richard had endured his captivity. The warm happy summer season, calling all nature to a jubilee, at first saddened, then animated him to contrive new projects of escape. The promised interview with his White Rose tempted him to delay; while an inner spirit rebelled even against this dear enticement, and bade him fly.

On the evening of the ninth of June, he was permitted to attend vespers in a secluded chapel of Westminster Abbey. During the short passage from the Palace to the Cathedral, it seemed to him as if a new life were awake every where; an unknown power, on the eve of liberating him. Never before had he prayed so fervently for freedom: the pealing organ, the dim arched venerable vault above, acted as stimulants to his roused and eager soul; he stood tiptoe, as on the eve of the accomplishment of his desire.

A deep and awful sound suddenly shook the building; a glaring, lurid flash, filled with strange brilliancy the long, dark aisle. A clap of thunder, loud, and swiftly repeated, reverberated along the heavens; the shrill scream of women answered the mighty voice. The priest who read the service, saw his sacred book glared on by so keen a flash, as blinded him to the dimmer light that succeeded. Every being in the church sank on their knees, crossing themselves, and striving to repeat their paternosters and aves; while Richard stood fearless, enjoying the elemental roar, exulting in the peal, the flash, the tempestuous havock, as powers yet rebellious to his conqueror. Freedom was victorious in the skiey plains; there was freedom in the careering clouds, freedom in the sheeted lightning, freedom in the cataract of sound that tore its way along. On his poor heart, sick of captivity and enforced obedience, the sweet word liberty hung as a spell: every bird and tiny fly he had envied as being free; how much more things more powerful, the chainless destructions of nature. The voice of God speaking in his own consecrated abode was terrible to all; soothing to himself alone. He walked to the southern entrance of the edifice to mark the splashing shower, as it ploughed the stones: two of his keepers remained on their knees, paralyzed by terror; the two others followed trembling. At that moment a louder, a far, far louder clap burst right above them, succeeding so instantaneously the blinding flash, that, while every object was wrapt in flame, the pavement and fretted roof of the Abbey shook with the sound. A bolt had fallen; the priest at the altar was struck: with mingled horror and curiosity one of York's remaining guards rushed towards the spot; the only remaining one was kneeling in an agony of terror. York stood on the threshold of the porch; he advanced a few steps beyond; a new fear possessed the fellow. "He will escape! — halloo! — James! — Martin!" The very words imparted the thought to the Prince, who filled erewhile with wonder and religious awe, had forgotten his own sad plight. He turned to the man, who was doubtful whether to rush into the chapel for his comrades, or singly to seize his prisoner — his dagger was drawn. "Put up that foolish steel," said York, "it cannot harm one whom God calls to freedom — listen, he speaks; — farewell!" The lightning again flashed: with blue and forked flame it ran along the blade of the weapon raised against him; with a shriek the man dashed it to the earth. Richard was already out of sight.

The rain poured in torrents: it came down in continuous cataracts from the eaves of the houses. On this sunny festival few had remained at home; and those, terror-stricken now, were on their knees: no creature was in the streets as the fugitive sped on, ignorant whither he should go. London was a vast, unknown labyrinth to him: as well as he could divine, he directed his flight eastward, and that with such velocity, that he might compete with a horse in full career. If any saw him, as thus with winged heels he flew along, they did not wonder that a person should hasten to shelter out of the storm. It was of slight regard to him, that rain and hail ploughed the earth, and continual thunder echoed through the sky; that alone and friendless he fled through the streets of his victor's chief city. His exulting heart, his light, glad spirit told him that he was free; if for a few minutes only, he would joyfully purchase with his life those few minutes' emancipation from his frightful thraldom. No words could speak, no thought image the supreme gladness of that moment.

Meanwhile, dark night, aided by the thick clouds which still poured down torrents of rain, had crept over the dim twilight, and began to imbarrier with doubt the path of the rejoicing fugitive. He found at last, that the lines of houses receded, and that he was in an open space, in the midst of which rose a gigantic shadow, stretching itself in stillness and vastness on the summit of the rising ground before him; — it was the Cathedral of St. Paul's. Now, cloaked by the dark and inclement night, he began to reflect on his actual situation: London might swarm with his partizans, but he knew not where to find one. Probably all those who were occupied by his fate resided in Westminster, whence he had precipitately fled; whither assuredly he would not return. These reflections perplexed him, but in no way allayed his transport at finding himself free; he felt that if he wandered to the wide fields, and died of hunger there, it were bliss enough to see the sky "unclouded by his dungeon roof;" to behold the woods, the flowers, and the dancing waves; nor be mocked with man's shape, when those who wore it had sold man's dearest privilege — that of allowing his actions to wait upon the free impulses of his heart.

Still therefore he hurried along, and finally became completely bewildered in some swampy, low fields, intersected by wide ditches. The night was pitchy dark; nor was there any clue afforded him, by which he could even guess whether he might not be returning on his path. Suddenly a small ray of light threaded the gloom; it went and came, and at last remained stationary. With wavering will and irregular steps the Prince proceeded towards it; for he would rather have died where he stood, than discover himself, so to fall again into captivity. Once or twice he lost sight of this tiny earth-star, which evidently shone through some low casement; and, as at last he caught sight of the solitary miserable hut where it was sphered, the recollection of his former asylum, of ill-fated Jane Shore's penurious dwelling, flashed across him; with speedy, reassured pace he hurried on, leaping a ditch that obstructed his path, careless of every physical obstacle, when the malice of man was no longer to be apprehended. "Poor Jane!" he ejaculated: and again he reflected with some wonder that, in every adversity, women had been his resource and support; their energies, their undying devotion and enthusiasm, were the armour and weapons with which he had defended himself from and attacked fortune. Even one so fallen and so low as poor Jane Shore, was, through the might of fidelity and affection, of more avail than all his doughty partizans, who, in the hour of need, were scattered and forgetful.

The low-roofed cot was before him unmistaken. The crevice whence the light emanated was too small to admit his enquiring glance; amid the driving, pattering rain he fancied that he distinguished voices within; but, with a boldness which bade him fear nothing, he lifted the latch, and beheld in truth a sight of wonder; — Monina, with a shriek started from her seat; she folded him with wild joy in her fair arms, and then, blushing and trembling, threw herself on the neck of Lady Brampton; and Jane herself rose from her couch of straw, more wan, more emaciated than ever; — yet even over her sad pale face a smile wandered, shewing in yet more ghastly hues the ruin it illumined.

Questions, ejaculations, wonder and delight, burst from every lip: “He is here to our wish; the means of escape are secured, and he is here! Oh, dearest Lady Brampton, do not the blessed angels guard him?” Monina spoke, and her soft luminous eyes were fixed on him, as if not daring to believe the vision; it was not the chastened delight of age, but the burning, ardent joy of a young heart, who had but one thought, one desire, and that about to be accomplished; her flushed cheeks betokened her rapture: “I have repined, despaired, almost blasphemed; yet he is here: how good is Almighty God! Listen, dear my Lord, how wondrously opportune your arrival is: Lady Brampton will tell you all. Oh, this new miracle is the blessed Virgin’s own achievement — you are free!”

Scarcely less animated, the zealous lady detailed the circumstances that united so favourably for him. She had been for some time at Brussels with the Duchess Margaret, who was more grieved than could be imagined at the capture of her beloved nephew. She lived in a state of terror on his account. That his life was awhile spared, availed little to pacify her; the midnight murders and prison-assassinations, so rife during the wars of York and Lancaster were present to her imagination. She exhausted every device, every bribe, to gain partizans for him to achieve his freedom. Among others, most liberal of promises, was the false Clifford. After Richard had escaped from him in the New Forest, he fell in with Frion, whose double plot being defeated, he strove to capture and accuse the accomplice whom, in fact, he had deceived. The Knight fled; he escaped to the Low Countries; and by a glozing tale easily gained the ear of the Duchess. Lost in England, perhaps he wished to rebuild his fallen fortunes; aided by her munificence, perhaps he prepared some new treachery: however it might be, he was trusted, and was the soul of the present enterprise. De Faro's vessel, refitted and well manned, was now anchored in the mouth of the Thames. Clifford undertook the task of foisting some creature of his own, or even himself, disguised, of undertaking the part of one of Richard's keepers, when he doubted not to be able to secure his flight.

With her usual vivacity Lady Brampton gave this account; but no explanations on her part could dissipate the horror York felt at the name of Clifford, or inspire him with any thing but distrust of his intentions. Monina, before silenced by her sanguine associates, now gave expression to the terror and abhorrence his interference occasioned; she had come, exposing herself to a thousand perils and pains, merely that she might watch over his acts, and awaken her too credulous friends to a knowledge of his duplicity. But the danger was past; before Clifford could know that he had escaped, York might reach the Adalid.

Almost as an answering echo to these words there was a sound of hurrying steps. "It is he: the traitor comes. Oh, bar the door!" There was no bar, no mode of securing this dwelling of penury; three women alone were his guard: Monina, pale and trembling; Lady Brampton, endeavouring to reassure her; while Richard stood forward, his gaze fixed on the opening door, whose latch was already touched, resolved to meet, with perfect show of frank reliance and intrepidity, the intruders.

Sir Robert Clifford entered. Confusion, attempted boldness, and, last, sullen malice painted his aspect when he beheld the Prince. He was much changed, and looked almost an old man; his dark and profuse hair was grizzled; his grey eyes hollow; and his dress, though that of a cavalier, exhibited signs of habitual neglect. His person, always slight, had been redeemed from insignificance by its exquisite grace and elegance; every trace of this was flown; and his haggard countenance and diminutive size made even York scarcely credit that this was indeed the gay, reckless Robin. His resolve had been already made; he addressed him kindly, saying, "Sir Robert, I hear that you are willing to renew to me your broken vows: may you hereafter keep them more faithfully."

Clifford muttered a few words; he looked towards the door, as if desirous of escape; he struggled with shame, guilt, and some other emotion. As soon as a consultation began as to the means to be adopted for the Prince to reach the sea in safety, he conquered himself, entering into it with spirit and zeal. The plan he proposed was crafty, his own part in it the principal. He spoke of disguising the prince as a female attendant on Monina; of his and O'Water's accompanying them along the river banks as soon as daylight.

"And wherefore not now? Or rather, wherefore even now do we not hasten to the Thames, and seize a boat?"

"Because," said Clifford, interrupting Monina, "his Highness's flight is already known; a line of boats intersects the Thames below London Bridge; and lower still every craft is on the alert."

Each one exchanged looks; the Knight continued: "You all distrust me, and I wonder not. I am in your power now; here are my unarmed hands; even a woman may bind them. Go forth yourselves; seek the path to the sea: before an hour elapses the Duke will be again a prisoner. You may in this wild spot plant your daggers in my heart to avenge, but that will not save him; for I have no power here. But set me free, confide to my care, and, by the God that made me, he walks the deck of the Adalid ere the setting sun. I could tell you how this can be, and ye would not the more trust me, if I spoke of such alliance with, such power over, the rogues and vagabonds of this saintly city, as enables me to move strange engines to execute my will; even if you credited me, you would disdain that your hero should owe his life to such base means. Be it as you will: believe me; and I pledge my life that his Grace will ride the dancing waves beyond King Henry's reach to-morrow night."

"I accept the pledge," replied York, who had eyed him earnestly as he spoke. "I commit myself to your care; act speedily, without fear of balk or suspicion on my part."

Clifford's lips curled into a triumphant smile; because again he was trusted, or because again he would betray, it was hard to divine. "I must beseech your patience in the first place," said Sir Robert: "I cannot get the fitting disguises during the night."

"Night is no more," replied Richard, throwing open the casement; and the dusky room was illuminated by the day. In the east there was a very fountain of light, which, welling up, flooded the flecked and broken clouds with rosy hues: the stars were gone; a soft azure peeped between the breaking vapours; the morning air was deliciously fresh; the birds chirped; a distant watch-dog barked. Otherwise all was silent; and security seemed to walk the earth.

"I will go seek the needful dresses," said Clifford. "Your Grace will await my return, even though my stay, lengthened beyond my expectation, give some reason for the distrust I read in every eye."

"It is but too natural," said the Prince, "that my kind friends should suspect you; for myself, I have said the word; I place myself in your hands: half measures were of no avail. If indeed you are a traitor, bring Tudor's hirelings here to seize their prey. I cannot fear; I will not doubt; and, if in my soul any suspicion lurk, my actions shall not be guided by it. Go; let your return be speedy or otherwise, I await you here."

Scarcely had the door closed, when Monina, whose eyes had been fixed on Clifford's countenance during the whole scene, exclaimed:—"This moment is our own! Fly, my Prince; trust me — I know that bad man; if he find you here when he returns, you are lost."

"Hist!" Jane spoke the word, and a dead silence fell upon the anxious band. The steps of a horse were heard: Monina flew to the casement. "It is our faith Irish friend, my Lord; it is O'Water." The door was opened; and each one crowded round the visitant. He uttered a "By the mischief!" which sounded like a benediction, when he saw the Duke of York, adding, "all is well, all in readiness; I left the Adalid, after the storm yester evening, in safe anchorage."

"Oh yes, safety," cried the enthusiastic Spaniard; "safety or death! Trust not false Clifford — seize the fleeting, precious opportunity — O'Water's horse—"

"Is blown," said Richard, "he cannot carry me."

"And the ways strangely beset," said the Mayor. "Just now I saw a young gentleman seized, much to his annoyance, by some patrol. He bribed dearly, but they would not listen — the whole country is alarmed."

"I will wait for Clifford," continued York; "and trust in providence. Some kind friend only bestow a dagger on me: I would not be taken like an unarmed girl."

"A tramp of steeds — they are coming, Clifford guides them hither; we are lost!" cried Lady Brampton.

“Oh, fly — fly — my liege,” said O’Water, “expose not these women to the assault. Poor Rose Blanche can yet bear you fast and far.”

The sound as of a troop of horse neared. The Prince saw O’Water blocking up the casement, and then draw his sword. Monina, wild with agony, fell at his feet:—”Fly, my Lord, fly for the Lady Katherine’s sake: fly for mine own: must I see you die? I, who have lived — alas! how vainly. Lady Brampton — beseech — command — he must fly. O, they will be here — to seize, to murder him!”

“Here is my dagger, my lord,” said O’Water coolly;—”Defend yourself — meanwhile — now at our last hour — for surely it is come, Our Lady recommend us to God’s holy grace.”

The gallop of a troop grew yet more distinct; Richard looked round: Jane was kneeling, her face buried in her hands: Lady Brampton pale, but resolved, was ready to sacrifice the life she had spent for him. O’Water had resigned himself to the final act of a life of peril, sealed in his blood. The lovely Spaniard alone lost all her self-possession; tears streaming from her uplifted eyes; her arms twined round his knees: to fly — fly! was the only thought she could express. “I yield,” said York; “throw open the door.” O’Water’s horse had been led within the hut; he vaulted on his back; he placed the dagger in his belt. “That way,” Lady Brampton cried, “it leads to the river’s side below.”

A scream from Monina followed his swift departure. “He perishes — he betrays us!” cried O’Water. Richard galloped on; not across the fields away from town, but right into danger; there, whence the troop was certainly approaching. He was lost to view on the instant, in a straggling lane which stretched out half across the field. A moment after, coming from the other side, unobserved till in the hut, Clifford entered alone. He bore a large bundle; his steps were cautious and swift; his look told that he was intent only on the object of his errand. “I have succeeded beyond my hope. My life on it all is safe. Where have ye hid the Prince? Oh, prithee, fear not, nor trifle: each second is precious.”

The confused, wondering looks of all present replied to him. Clifford laughed, a short, sarcastic, bitter laugh: and then, with a fiendlike expression of face, he said, “The Prince has done well; and ye have all done well: and his Grace will thank you anon. Ye grudge me, maybe, the Duchess

Margaret’s bounty. She promised largely; ‘twere pity to share the boon among so many. Now mark the event!”

These words displayed the baseness of his motive, yet vouched for his sincerity. He threw a menacing glance around, and then quitted the hut; and with hurried pace hastened across the field towards the town.

CHAPTER XVI.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen.
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.
Kissing with golden face the meadows green;
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon, permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face.
— SHAKSPEARE.

The Duke of York, urged so earnestly to fly, felt that to do so was to save himself at the expense of his friends, on whom Henry's vengeance would severely fall, when he found himself balked of his victim. He consented to leave Jane Shore's abode, with the resolve not of effecting his escape, but of securing, by surrendering himself, the safety of his defenceless adherents united under her lowly roof. He directed his course as he believed into the very centre of danger, entering the narrow straggling street whence the sound of the advance of the troop of horse had been heard. He entered the lane; it was empty. The ominous sounds were still sharp and near; it seemed as if they were in some street parallel to the one which he threaded. He turned at right angles into another, to reach the spot; again he turned, led by the baffling noise, in another direction. It was just four in the morning; there were but few abroad so early: he saw a monk gliding stealthily from under a dark archway, and a poor fellow, who looked as if he had slept beneath heaven's roof, and had not wherewithal to break his fast. True to the kindly instincts of his nature, Richard felt at his girdle for his purse; it was long since he had possessed the smallest coin of his adversary's realm. "I, a Prince!" his feeling had been more bitter, but that his fingers came in contact with his dagger's hilt, and the conviction of freedom burst with fresh delight upon him. Free, even in spite of his intents; for the tramp which had gradually grown fainter, was dying absolutely away.

They had probably reached the hut: thither he must return. It was no easy thing to find his way to it, he had so entangled himself in the narrow lanes, and wretched assemblages of dwellings huddled together on the outskirts of London. At length they opened before him; there was the dingy field, there the hut, standing in quiet beneath the rays of the morning sun, of the opening, summer, soft, sweet day. He was quickly at its threshold; he entered. Jane was within, alone, seated in her wooden chair; her hands clasped; her pale face sunk on her bosom: big tears were gathering in her eyes, and rolling down her faded cheeks unheeded. Jane's aspect was usually so marble (a miraculous chiseling of resigned hopelessness,) her mien so unbending, that these signs of emotion struck the Prince with wonder and compassion.

He knelt at her feet and pressed her thin, but little hand to his lips, saying, "Mother, where are my friends? Mother, bless me before I go."

She dried the drops raining from her eyes, saying in a voice that expressed how occupied she was by her own emotion, "I am a sinful woman; well do these tones remind me of the same: those days are quite, quite gone, even from the memory of all; but once they were as the present hour, when so he spoke, and I was lost, and still am lost; for, through hunger, and cold and shame, I love, and cannot quite repent. Will the hour ever come when I can regret that once I was happy."

Many, many sad years had passed since words like these had dropped from poor Jane's lips; her feelings fed on her, possessed her, but she had been mute; overflowing now, her accent was calm; she spoke as if she was unaware that her thoughts framed speech, and that she had an auditor.

"You have paid a dear penalty, and are surely forgiven," said York, striving in his compassion to find the words that might be balm to her.

"Prince," she continued, "some time ago, — I have lost all date; now the chasm seems nought, now a long eternity; it was when my poor heart knew nothing of love save its strong necessity and its delight; methought I would see your father's fair offspring, for I loved them for his sake. At the festival of Easter I placed myself near the gate of the royal chapel: I thought to be unseen. The happy Queen held her sons each by the hand; you were then, as now, his image, a little sportive blue-eyed cherub. The Prince of Wales had his mother's look; her large, dark eye, her soft, rosy mouth, her queenlike brow; her beauty which had won Edward, her chaste sweetness, which had made her his wife; my presence, I thought to conceal it better, was revealed. The Queen turned her face away; there was anguish surely written there, for the Prince darted on me a look of such withering scorn — yes, even he — his stainless, fair brow was knit, his bright angel's face clouded: the look sunk in my heart. Edward's beautiful, pure child reproved me, hated me: for three days I felt that I would never see the deluder more: you do not share his abhorrence; you do not hate the pale ghost of Shore's wife?"

Such clinging to the past, such living memory of what was so absolutely dead to all except herself, awe-struck the Prince, "We are all sinners in the eye of God," he said, "but thy faults are surely forgiven thee, gentle one; thy tears have washed every trace away, and my brother, my poor murdered Edward, now blesses thee. Alas! would that I could soften this last stage of your suffering earthly life."

"'Tis better as it is," she answered hastily, "once I felt disgrace and privation keenly; perhaps that may atone. Now, would it were more bitter, that so I might wean myself from him whose very memory will lose my soul. You are good, and Our Lady will requite you. Now, listen, the damsel Monina and Master O'Water have gone towards Southend: your remaining friends watch for you here. I shall see them again to-night: meanwhile it is to be feared that Clifford plots vengeance, and you must fly; you must at every hazard go towards Southend. Beyond the town, on the lone sands, there is a wooden cross, telling where one escaped dreadful peril through the might of Him who died on it for us; the smallest sign, the waving of your cap, will be watched for by the Adalid, they will send a boat to take you on board. Now swiftly depart: your life hangs on the hour; this purse will furnish you with means: Lady Brampton left it for you."

"Bless me, mother, ere I go."

"Can a sinner's blessing avail? fear rather that God punish me through you, where my heart is garnered. Oh, may he indeed bless and save you; and I shall die in peace."

He kissed her withered hand and was gone; she dragged her failing limbs to the casement; he was already lost among the straggling tenements that bounded her field.

Again York was flying from his foe; again studying to elude pursuit, with how different feelings. Before, his flight was peremptory, for the preservation of others, while he blindly longed to deliver himself to slavery. Now liberty, for its own dear sake, was worth the world to him. He had tasted to its dregs the misery of captivity, and loathed the very name; whatever might betide, he would never submit willingly again to one hour's thraldom. He felt his dagger's hilt; he drew it from the sheath, and eyed its polished blade with gladness; for eight months he had been living unarmed, under the perpetual keeping of armed jailors; what wonder that he looked on this sharp steel as the key to set him free from every ill.

He got clear of the town: the open sky, the expanse of summer — adorned earth was before him. It was the “leafy month of June;” the far spread corn-fields were getting yellow; and on their weltering surface played the shadows of a few clouds, relics of the last night’s storm: the sun was bright, the breeze balmy, already the very foot-paths were dry, and scarcely from its inmost leaves did any tree shake moisture: yet there was a freshness in the scene, a lightness in the air, the gift of tempest. The dazzling sun rose higher, and each island-vapour sunk on the horizon; the garish light clothed all things; the lazy shadows crept up around the objects which occasioned them, while both object and its shade seemed to bask in the sunshine. Now over head the meeting boughs of trees scarce sufficed to shield him from the penetrating glare; now in the open path he was wholly exposed to it, as his diminished shadow clung almost to the horse’s hoofs. The birds twittered above; the lazy mare was stretched basking, while her colt gamboled around; each slight thing spoke of the voluptuous indolence of summer, and the wafted scent of hay, or gummy exhalation of evergreens, distilled by the warm noon, fed with languid sweets every delighted sense. If paradise be ever of this world it now embowered Richard. All was yet insecure; his White Rose was far; but nature showered such extasy on him that his whole being was given up to her influence. Latterly the form of man had been ever before his aching sight under the aspect of an enemy; the absence of every fellow-creature he hailed with gladness — free and alone, alone and free! With the pertinacious dwelling on one idea, which is characteristic of overpowering feeling, this combination of words and ideas haunted his thoughts, fell from his lips, and made a part of the soul-subduing rapture now his portion.

May it be added — we must address the unhappy and imaginative, who know that the future is so linked with the present as to have an influence over that present, when we add — that the intensity of the liberated Prince’s feelings was wrought even to pain, by its being the last time that unalloyed delight would ever be his — the last when he might feel himself the nursling of nature, allied by the bond of enjoyment to all her offspring. He knew not this himself. Immersed in the sense of all that he now possessed, he did not pause to reflect whether this were the last time, that he, the victim of chance and change, might ever see the waving corn or shadowy trees, or hear the caroling birds, or the murmurs of the fresh free brooks gurgling round some pendant bough or jutting stone; but that so it was to be, gave poignancy to his pleasure, a dreamy halo to the whole scene.

It would appear, in spite of the precautions taken by his enemy, that the north bank of the Thames had been neglected. Richard met with no impediment in his progress. Whenever he caught a sight of the river, he perceived unusual signs of activity. Little wherries shot hither and thither on its surface, revealing to him that keen and vigilant search was being made. Meanwhile he rode on, the broad stream for his guide, avoiding towns and villages. He ventured to purchase bread at a lone farmhouse — he alighted in a little grove beside a rivulet, to rest his tired horse, and to refresh himself. The summer heat recalled Andalusia to his mind; and scenes and objects quite forgotten, wandered from their oblivious recesses back into his recollection. “My happy boyhood! My beloved Spain! Why did I leave the land of beauty, where with Monina — ?” The idea of her whose fate was so inextricably linked with his, of his bride, who had quitted her palace home to share his adversity, reproached him. But his imagination could not fix itself on bleak Scotland, its wild haunts, its capricious king: it could only build another bower among the folds of the mountains of Andalusia, and place his White Rose therein.

Again he pursued his way. The slant beams of the descending sun were yet more sultry, but it sank swiftly down; now casting gigantic shadows, bathing the tree tops in golden dew, and flooding the clouds with splendour; now it was gone, and the landscape faded into a brown mellow tint. The birds’ last chirp was given, the beetle winged her noisy flight, the congregated rooks had flown to the belfry of the church, or to their nests in the church-yard trees; silence and twilight crept up from the sedgy banks of the river, leaving the pale water alone to reflect the struggling farewell of day. In a little time the banks shelved away, giving place to broad yellow sand. Richard ventured to bend his course along the beach. There was a bark upon the dim tide, whose progress he had watched since noon, whose flapping or full sails were the signs by which he foretold the prosperity of his destined voyage. Now with swelling canvas it walked swiftly over the water.

He passed South End. He perceived the tall rough-hewn cross. Two figures were seated at its foot. He hesitated, but quickly perceiving that one was a woman, he proceeded onwards. The stars were out; the very west was dim; in the offing there was a vessel, whose build and tall slender masts he thought he recognized. The broad expanse of calm ocean was there, whose waves broke in tiny ripplets on the beach. He reached the cross. O'Water and Monina saw his approach. The Irishman welcomed him boisterously, in his own language. Monina uttered a benediction in Spanish. The scene was solitary and secure. Every danger was past. There floated the caravel which ensured escape, and the stars alone witnessed their flight. Monina gave her white veil to O'Water, who contrived to elevate it on the cross. In a few moments the splash of oars was heard, and a dark speck floated towards them on the waves, from the direction of the Adalid. "They come; you are safe," murmured his lovely friend; "this hour repays for all." The boat was already on the beach: a seaman leaped on shore. "The White English Rose," he said: such was the word agreed upon; and, hailing it, Monina hurried to embark with her companions. The little boat was pushed from shore. O'Water gave vent to his delight in a shout, that resembled a yell. Monina crept close to the Duke of York: that he was safe was a truth so dear, so new, that she forgot every thing, save her wish to assure herself again and again that so it was. At that moment of triumph, something like sadness invaded Richard: he had quitted the land for which his friends had bled, and he had suffered, — for ever: he had left his Katherine there, where all was arrayed against him for his destruction. This was safety; but it was the overthrow of every childish dream, every youthful vision; it put the seal of ineffectual nothingness on his every manhood's act.

While each, occupied by their peculiar reveries, were aware only that they were being borne onwards on the waves, a smaller boat shot athwart their bows, and a voice exclaimed in Spanish, "Desdichados, estais allá?"

"My father — we are betrayed," Monina cried: and she threw her arms round Richard, as if by such frail guard to shelter him — another stronger grasp was upon his arm as he endeavoured to rise — a voice, husky from passion, yet still Clifford's voice, muttered, "The day is mine — you — she — all are mine!"

"Thou fell traitor! What ho! De Faro to the rescue!" already the mariner had thrown a grappling iron — already the Adalid was in motion towards them. Clifford strove to draw his sword. York was upon him in mortal struggle; his keen dagger, unsheathed, uplifted; the boat lurched — his arm descended, but half the force of the intended blow was lost, while both fell overboard. The crew rushed to the boat's side to loosen the grappling iron, which concluded its upset. De Faro, who stood high on the bows of his own boat, had seized Monina. Now another larger skiff was seen approaching, "To your oars!" cried the Moor: they shot swiftly towards the Adalid, and while the sea became alive with craft, they reached the little caravel, who turning her canvass to the wind, dropped down the tide.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Your love and pity doth th’ impression fill.
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill.
So you o’erskreen my bad — my good allow?
-SHAKSPEARE.

On the fourth day of her restraint, imprisonment it could hardly be called, Lady Katherine was brought up to Westminster; she was carried in a close litter, and no familiar face or accustomed attendant came near. Her anxiety, her anguish weighed intolerably upon her — sleep had not visited her eyes; she lived in perpetual terror that each sound was freighted with fatal tidings. It was in vain that even reason bade her nourish hope — a stronger power than reason dwelt in her heart, turning all its yearnings to despair.

As she approached the city she thought each step must reveal the truth of what she was to suffer. Lo! the palace was entered — her habitual chamber — silence and solitude alone manifested that some change was even now in its effect; she had no tears to spend upon her grief; her changing colour, her quickened respiration shewed that every faculty was possessed by terror. Two hours, each minute stretched to a long long century, two hours passed, when a little scroll was delivered to her; it came from the Queen, and contained these words, “My White Rose! the tempest has past — leaving, alas, devastation: we yet remain to each other — come—”

These expressions spoke the worst to her fear-stricken mind — no subsequent agony might ever compare to the pang, that made her very life-blood pause in her failing heart at that moment. Had the present and the future become void for him, to whom she was wedded heart and soul? — wedded in youth, when our hopes stretch themselves not merely to to-day and to-morrow, but even to eternity. In this state of human woe, we do not describe the disheartening and carking sorrows of those who lag on life’s high way — but the swift, poignant, intolerable agonies of the young, to whom the aspiration for happiness is a condition of being. The Queen had been accustomed to witness and admire Katherine’s self-command and quiet fortitude; she was awe-struck on beholding the devastation of the last four days, and the expression of wild horror on her soft features. With feminine instinct she read her heart, her first words were, “Sweet love, he lives — and he will live — his life is spared, and we may still hope.”

Tears at last flowed from the mourner’s eyes, as she asked, “What then will be his fate? — Shall I ever see him more?”

“How can we guess the hidden purposes of the King? By your enforced solitude you have escaped his scowling brow, his violence, his sarcasms; again he smiles. My gentle Kate, my sweet courageous sufferer, hitherto we have played with the lion’s fangs — they are unsheathed in anger now — let us prepare: he will be here anon.”

The Princess desired not to exhibit too humiliating a spectacle of misery to her cruel foe — she checked her weeping — she endeavoured to forget the burning agony that tortured her beating heart. “Let him but live; let me but once more see him;” and the unbidden tears flowed again. The King soon broke in upon them; his look was haughty even to insolence: an expression of vulgar triumph was in his eyes, that baffled the eager scanning gaze of the hapless Princess. He said, scoffingly, (and was it in man’s nature, or only in Henry’s, to look on the sad, but lovely countenance of his victim, and to mock her woe?) “We congratulate you, Lady, on the return of the gentle Perkin to our good city of Westminster — do not weep — he is in safe keeping now, very safe — it is no feathered shoe our Mercury wears this day.”

“Holy Virgin!” cried Katherine, “your Grace does not surely mean—”

“Fear not — he lives,” continued Henry, his scorn growing more bitter as he spoke; “he lives, and shall live, till the White Rose acknowledge on what base stock she is grafted, or he twist the rope by some new sleight. Is Perkin’s honoured dame satisfied?”

“Oh no, no, no; some covert meaning you have; in pity for a woman speak.” The agony her countenance expressed, was the mute echo of the frightful idea that convulsed her frame. “Oh, let me see him! you have tormented me too cruelly; even if my worst fears prove true, he suffers not more than I; and can it be that the young limbs of my own loved Richard are put to torture!”

Elizabeth grew ashy white; the King listened with a sarcastic smile, saying, “I had not thought of that; you are a silly girl to mention such things.”

“I do not believe you,” exclaimed the Princess, “your looks bely your words; let me but see him afar off, let me catch a glimpse of my princely love — is he in the Tower?”

“Neither the Tower, nor any royal palace detains your lord; he is taking the air, pleasantly I hope, in the high places of our town. To finish this war of words, and your incredulity, will you visit your prince of plotters, and behold him on whom the King of Scotland bestowed your virgin hand?”

“See him! Oh, even in death to clasp his decaying limbs were better than this absence!”

An indefinable expression passed over Henry’s countenance as he replied, “Be it as you wish; you must hasten, for in an hour the occasion will be past; it is but a few steps; you shall be attended.”

At last she was to see him; this assurance filled and satisfied her; there was no place in her heart for any other thought, sinister as were her torturer’s looks. Her eyes grew bright, her cheek resumed its vermeil tint, never had she looked more lovely; it was a dazzling beauty; one of those ineffable expressions, which, unless language could express music, or painting image fire, it is in vain to attempt to describe: an irradiation of love passed over her countenance; her form; something like it dwells in Raphael’s Madonna’s and Guido’s Angel of Annunciation, — Henry was awestruck, yet did not falter in his purpose; he let the bright angel go forth on her mission of good and love, to meet on her way a sight fiends might rejoice over. Human life and human nature are, alas! a dread, inexplicable web of suffering and of infliction.

In Westminster, in sight of the Abbey where his ancestors had been crowned kings, the spectacle intended to be so opprobrious, was set forth. Henry, in his angry fear on his escape, in his exultation at his re-capture, forgot the soft tyranny of Katherine’s looks; or rather he despised himself for the obedience he had yielded to them; and, in the true spirit of baseness, was glad to revenge on her the ill effects that had resulted to him through his involuntary enslavement. It was a triumph to him to disgrace the object of her care, for he was ill read, his understanding affording him no key to the unknown language, in that illuminated page of the history of feminine excellence, which tells the delight she feels in exhausting her treasures of devoted love on the fallen, because they need it most: he believed, that to present her husband to her, under the very infliction of ignominy, would turn her affection to cold disdain — he permitted her to go. Attended by some of the body guard and a gentleman usher, she hastened through the courts of the palace into the open square: there was assembled a crowd of common people, hushed to universal silence: at a distance from the centre some were talking aloud, and the name of "Perkin" was the burthen of their speech; but pity stilled those nearest to the spot, towards which, to the surprise and horror of all, she hastened. The crowd instinctively closed to bar her advance; and, when forced to make way, in spite of the despotism of the times, the word "Shame" burst from the lips of many, especially the women. She was agitated by the obstacles, by the numerous uncourtly eyes turned on her; still she went on, and soon saw —

She understood not what — a kind of wooden machine in which the lord of her heart sat. There had been a time when pride and royal majesty of soul had shed such grandeur over York, that, when exposed as a show, he had excited reverence, not scoffing. Now he was evidently labouring under great physical suffering; his brow was streaked with mortal paleness, his cheeks were colourless; his fair hair fell in disordered ringlets round his youthful but wan countenance; he leaned his head against the side of the machine; his eyes were half shut; it was not shame, but suffering, that weighed upon their lids, and diffused an air of languor and pain over his whole person. Katherine hastened towards him, she knelt on the unworthy earth at his side, she kissed his chained hands. "You are ill, my love; my ever dear Richard, what has happened? for you are very ill."

Rouzed by such music from the lethargy that oppressed him, yet still overcome, he replied, "Yes; and I do believe that all will soon end, and that I am stricken to the death."

She grew pale; she called him cruel; asking him how he could dream of leaving her, who was a part of him, alone in the desolate world. "Because," he answered with a faint smile, "the world is kind to all, save me. No taint, dear love, attaches itself to your name; no ill will mark your fate, when you are no longer linked to such a thing as I. God has spoken, and told me that this earth is no dwelling for one, who, from his cradle to this last shame, has been fortune's step-child, and her despised toy. How often have I been dragged to the utmost verge of life: I have felt indignation, anger, despair: now I am resigned; I feel the hand of the Mighty One on me, and I bow to it. In very truth, I am subdued; I sleep away the weary hours, and death will end them all."

With every expression of tenderness, Katherine endeavoured to recall him to life and to herself. She spoke of another escape, which it would be her care to achieve, of the solitude, of the paradise of love they would enjoy together. "My poor girl," he replied, "teach your young heart to seek these blessings apart from me: I were the very wretch Tudor stigmatizes me, could I live under a memory like this. Forget me, my White Rose; paint with gaudier colours the sickly emblem of my fortunes; forget, that, duped by some strange forgery, you were wedded to — Perkin Warbeck."

In spite of himself large drops gathered in his eyes, swelling the downcast lids, and then stealing down. Katherine kissed them from his cheek: "a thousand times more noble, royal, godlike, she called him; had not the best and worthiest suffered ignominious punishment; even our blessed Lord himself? His own acknowledgment alone could disgrace him; he must recal the false words wrung from his agony; this last vile act of his enemy must awaken each sovereign on his throne to indignation; each would see in him a mirror of what might befal themselves, if fallen. James, her royal Cousin, roused by her, should resent the stigma affixed to his kinsman."

"For your own sake, sweet, do so; my soul dying within me is alive again with indignation, to think that your plighted wedded love is he, who is exposed to contumely; but for that, me-thinks, I would call myself by that wretched name I dared pronounce, so that the annals of the House of York escaped this stain: yet even thus I seem more closely allied to them; for violent death, treachery, and ill have waited on each descendant of Mortimer; my grandfather bore a paper crown in shame upon his kingly brow."

He was interrupted by the officer, who unclosed the instrument of disgrace. Richard, weak and failing, was assisted to rise; Katherine supported him as a young mother her feeble offspring; she twined her arms round him as his prop, and, in spite of misery, was enraptured once again to see, to hear, to touch him from whom she had been absent so long. "This is not well; it must not be; his Majesty will be much displeased," said the chief of the guard, witnessing the compassion her tender care inspired, "You must return to the palace, Lady."

“One little step,” pleaded Katherine; “if I should never see him more, how should I curse your cruelty! I will not speak, as I half thought I would to these good people, to tell them that they may well honour him a Princess loves: drag me not away yet — one more good bye! — farewell, noble York, Kate’s only love; — we meet again; this parting is but mockery.”

She wept on his bosom; the sound of wailing arose in the crowd; the Prince’s eyes alone were dry; he whispered comfort to her; he promised to live, to baffle his foe again for her sake; the words revived her, and she saw him depart with hope, with new joy kindled in her bosom.

There had been another, the public gaze, till Katherine came to draw all eyes to a newer wonder. An emaciated, pale woman, in a garb of penury, who knelt, telling her beads beside York’s prison; her face was hid; but her hands were thin and white to ghastliness; during the last scene she had sobbed to agony, and now as the place cleared, went her way silently, with slow, feeble steps. Many marked her with surprize and curiosity; few knew that she was the Jane Shore, whose broken heart whispered misery, as she thought that she beheld King Edward’s guilt, in which she had shared, visited on his son. This cruel lesson of religion was a canker in her heart, and most true it was, as far as regarded her royal lover, that his light loves, and careless playing with sacred ties, had caused the blot of base birth to be affixed to his legitimate offspring, and so strewed the sad way that led them to untimely death.

Henry, cruel as he was, had not the courage to encounter his insulted prisoner on her return. Katherine’s feelings were wrought too high for any display of passion; her anxiety was spent on how she could sooth York’s wounded feelings, and restore his health; it were vain to ask, she feared; yet, if the King would permit her to attend on him, under whatever restrictions, they should be obeyed; and this while poor Elizabeth besought her pardon with tears, for being the wife of her insolent adversary. She, a proud Plantagenet, was more sorely stung than the White Rose, by the indignity offered to her house; and she intreated her not to love her brother less because of this foul disgrace. “So doing,” said the quick-sighted Queen, “you fulfil his dearest wish. While you are Richard’s loving wife, he, even he, the fallen and humiliated, is an object of envy to his Majesty, who sought, by making you witness his ignominy, to detach you from him.”

"How strange a mistake," replied Katherine, "for one so sage as the King: the lower my sweet Richard falls, the more need he surely has of me. But that love, such as ours, knits us too indivisibly to admit a reciprocity of benefit, I should say that it is to make me rich indeed, to enable me to bestow, to lavish good on my Lord; but we are one, and I but give to myself, and myself receive, if my weakness is of any strength to him. Dear sister mine, your liege, wise as he may be, is a tyro in our woman's lore — in the mysteries of devoted love; he never felt one inspiration of the mighty sprite."

This was not quite true. For some few days Henry had been so inspired; but love, an exotic in his heart, degenerated from being a fair, fragrant flower, into a wild, poisonous weed. Love, whose essence is the excess of sympathy, and consequently of self-abandonment and generosity, when it alights on an unworthy soil, appears there at first in all its native bloom, a very wonder even to the heart in which it has taken root. The cold, selfish, narrow-hearted Richmond was lulled to some slight forgetfulness of self, when first he was fascinated by Katherine, and he decked himself with ill-assorted virtues to merit her approbation. This lasted but a brief interval; the uncongenial clime in which the new plant grew, impregnated it with its own poison. Envy, arrogance, base desire to crush the fallen, were his natural propensities; and, when love refused to minister to these, it changed to something like hate in his bosom; it excited his desire to have power over her, if not for her good, then for her bane.

The Duke of York was imprisoned in the Tower. No further measures were apparently in action against him. Katherine no longer hoped any thing from her foe; and day and night there lay beneath her eye-lids the image of Richard, wasting and dying in captivity. Something must be done, some aid afforded him; she was anxious also to learn the details of his flight, and how again he fell into the hands of his foe. Monina, who in a thousand disguises had been used to penetrate every where, was seen no more. Still public report informed her of many things.

It was known, that Sir Robert Clifford, the old spy and traitor of the White Rose, had become aware of the measures taken by York's adherents to insure his escape from England. He had followed him down the river, and by a knowledge of the signs and countersigns of the party, decoyed him into a boat that was to convey his victim back to his prison-house. The deceit was discovered, and a mortal struggle ensured on board the tiny bark; it sunk, and many perished, Clifford among the rest. On the morrow his body was found upon the beach, stiff and stark; a gaping wound in his neck showed that the waters alone had not been his foe; in his clenched hand he grasped a mass of golden hairs, severed by some sharp implement from the head to which they grew: as if nought else could liberate his enemy from his hold. There he lay, bold Robin Clifford, the dauntless, wily boy, hunted through life by his own fell passions, envy, cupidity, and libertinism; they had tracked him to this death; his falsehood were now mute, his deceptions passed away; he could never more win by his smiles, or stab by his lying words; death alone had a share in him, death and the cold sands beneath which he was interred, leaving a name, the mark of scorn, the symbol of treachery.

They had struggled beneath the strangling waves, Richard and his adversary. The Prince was wounded in the scuffle, and became enfeebled almost to insensibility before he could sever from his enemy's grasp the fair locks he clutched — he swam away, as well as he might, and, with the instinct of self-preservation, made for the shore — he forgot, that England was a wide prison — he only strove to master the fate which beat him to the ground. He reached the sands — he sought the covert of some near underwood, and threw himself upon the earth in blind thankfulness; exhausted, almost inanimate, he lay there, given up only to the sense of repose, and safety from death, which visited his failing heart with a strange sense of pleasure.

The following morning was far advanced, before he could rouse himself from this lethargy. He looked upon the waters; but the Adalid was no more to be seen — he was quite alone; he needed succour; and none was afforded him. Well he knew that every field, lane, dingle and copse swarmed with enemies, and he shuddered at the likelihood that unarmed, and weak as he was, he should fall into their hands. He desired to reach London again as his sole refuge; and he journeyed, as he hoped, towards it, all unknowing of the route. No way-worn traveller in savage lands, pursued by barbarous enemies, ever suffered more than the offspring of Edward the Fourth amidst the alienated fields of his paternal kingdom. Cold and rain succeeded to the pleasant summer weather: — during night he lay exposed to the tempests — during day he toiled on, his limbs benumbed, his heart wasted by hunger and fatigue; yet never, at the head of the Scottish chivalry, never in Burgundy or in England, did he feel more resolute not to submit, but, baffling fortune and his enemy's power, to save himself in spite of fate. He had wandered far inland, and knew not where he was — he had indeed passed beyond London, and got up as high as Barnes. It was the fourth day from that of his escape — he had tasted little food, and no strength remained in him, except that which gave energy to his purpose. He found himself on a wide, heathy common, studded with trees, or desolately open — the rainy day closed, and a bleak east wind swept over the plain, and curled the leaden coloured waters of the river — his love of life, his determination not to yield, quailed before the physical miseries of his lot; for some few moments, he thought that he would lie down and die.

At this time another human figure appeared upon the scene. A Benedictine lay-brother, who in the freedom of solitude, in defiance of wind and rain, trolled a ditty, fitter for a ruffling swaggerer's bonnet, than a monk's cowl. He started not a little, on perceiving our wanderer leaning against the scathed trunk of a solitary tree; nor less did he wonder when he recognised the fallen Prince. It was Heron himself, the magnanimous mercer, who having effected his escape with a well-hoarded purse, contrived to introduce himself into the house of Bethlem, at Shene, which was called the Priory. He was a little frightened to perceive his ancient leader; but pity succeeded to fear; and with many fair words and persuasions he induced him to permit himself to be conducted to the Priory. There, since he believed himself to be dying, he might receive the last sacraments — there perhaps, for some few minutes, he might again behold his Katherine.

Thus was the fugitive again led within the pale of his enemy's power. The Prior, a man esteemed for holiness, did not delay to make his sovereign acquainted with the capture of his rival. His awe of Katharine having vanished, Henry was left at liberty to follow the ungenerous dictates of his groveling spirit. Many a courtier, true man or false, counselled the death of the aspiring youth; and they praised their master's magnanimity, when he rejected this advice, and in lieu exposed him, whom he knew to be the descendant of a line of kings, to beggarly disgrace. Thus worn and weak, the ill-fated son of York was made a public spectacle of infamy. But Henry went a step too far; and, when he thrust the Scottish Princess forward on the scene, he turned defeat to triumph.

He was not to die — but rather to pine out a miserable existence — or had the sage monarch any other scheme? The high-spirited Prince was to be cooped up within the Tower — there, where the Earl of Warwick wasted his wretched life. Did he imagine that the resolved and ardent soul of Richard would, on its revival, communicate a part of its energy to the son of Clarence, and that ere long they would be enveloped in one ruin? Some words had transpired that appeared to reveal such an intention; and his order to the Lieutenant of the Tower, that, without permitting, he should connive at any covert intercourse between the two — his recommendation of a noted spy and hireling to a high trust, and the order this fellow had to bring each day intelligence to the palace from the prison — spoke loudly of some design; for Henry never did aught in vain. It was in circulation also among the lower officers in the fortress, that an attempt to escape was expected on the part of the prisoners, and that rich reward would attend its discovery.

CHAPTER XVIII.

And bare, at once, Captivity displayed.
Stands scoffing through the never-opened gate;
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day
And tasteless food.
— BYRON.

The Lady Katherine, no longer trusting the good intentions of the insolent tyrant, was eager to communicate with her royal cousin of Scotland, to urge him to save from death or disgrace, if not to effect the liberation, of him to whom he had given her hand. The difficulty of finding a messenger was great. The Queen, all amiable and sorrowing as she was, shrunk from any act, which, if discovered, would enrage the King. Where did Monina tarry while her friend was in this strait? Of all his sometime associates was there not one who would risk all to retard the last steps of fate. Since York's escape she had been so vigilantly guarded, that a thousand schemes she had formed for her own evasion proved abortive at their very outset.

Help was at length afforded her unexpectedly, when most despairing. Edmund Plantagenet stood before her: changed indeed from what he had been; she had not seen him since the siege of Exeter, where he was wounded; but slight was his bodily hurt in comparison to the deathblow his mind received.

Plantagenet was one of those concentrated characters, whose very outward show of softness and gentleness serves the more to force the texture of their souls to receive one indelible impression. He had passed a boyhood of visions, given up to mighty aspirations and engrossing reverie. His thoughts were stirring as the acts of others; his forest-school had so tutored him, that he could live in bodily repose, while his mind ruminated: he could be quickened to hope and fear, to lofty ambition, to generosity, and devoted courage, feeling in his heart the keenest impulses — while around him were the mute trees of the wild wood and pathless glades. He could be satisfied with such dreamy illusions; so that action with him was never the result of physical restlessness, nor of youthful emulation, nor of that stirring spirit of life which forces us to abhor repose. It flowed from an imperious sense of duty; it welled up from the very sources of his soul. Other men perform the various parts allotted to them, and yet are something else the while; as is the actor, even while he struts in the garb of royalty: but Edmund yielded himself wholly up, and was the mere creature of the thought within.

To be great and good — great from the good he should effect, was his boyhood's aspiration. It is probable that, if he had not been subjected to extraneous influence, he would have devoted himself to religion, and become a saint or martyr; for his all, his understanding, heart, and person, would have been given up to the holy cause he espoused. His being led him to King Richard's tent, the night before the battle of Bosworth Field, gave a new and inextinguishable law to his life. Unknown duties were imposed. The first and dearest was, to redeem his father's soul from the guilt of murderous ambition, by elevating his injured nephew to his original greatness. He devoted himself to his cousin. Soon he learned to love Richard as the work of his own hands. He had reared his tender infancy; he had been his tutor in martial exercises, teaching him to curb the fiery steed, to wield the lance, and, more than all, to meet danger in the field fearlessly; to be honourable, brave and kind. He had led him to war; and shielded him with his own body from the cruel Moor. If ever they were divided, his thoughts dwelt only the more carefully with him. Last, he had brought him from glorious combats in Spain, to conquer his ancestral kingdom, and set him up the rival of a powerful king — the mark of his vengeance.

It was all over. Edmund possessed no innate strength to rise from the blow; he was a mariner on the wide ocean, without compass or rudder. The universe had one central point for him; that was destroyed, and a total blank remained. York's first surrender visited him as a death stroke; he struggled against it. Enfeebled by his wound, more by despair, he passed over to Ireland; there he expected to find friends of the White Rose; he found only enemies of Duke Perkin: men eager to exculpate themselves, from the charges of ill faith or ingratitude, gladly adopted a phraseology, or a belief, that reduced to dust the golden glories of poor Edmund's idol. Perkin Warbeck! Oh thou flower of York! thou nursling of love, though child of calamity, is even thy bright name so to be tainted? Not by those immediately arrayed by self-interest against thee; but by the vulgar crew, ever eager to crush the fallen. There was no hope in Ireland. Keating, the

Prior of Kilmainham, was dead. The Earl of Desmond was reconciled to the English Government. Lord Barry had fled to Spain. The Citizens of Cork were busy redeeming, by eager servility, their Mayor's disloyalty.

Overcome by these sad changes, a malignant fever seized on Edmund: in addition to every other disappointment, he had the consciousness that his aid was necessary to his cousin; that his absence was probably misinterpreted by his friends as cowardly dereliction. York was calling on him in vain. Monina perhaps suspected his truth. Next to the sun of his life, the noble Richard, Monina lay nearest his heart. It was a mixture of many feelings; and even love, subdued by hopelessness, quickened them to greater intensity. As soon as he could rise from his couch, he directed his course to England. He arrived in London on the day of the Duke of York's worst disgrace. It was reported to him as the gossip of the town: at the fatal word a mortal change seized upon his frame: his limbs were as if struck by palsy; his cheeks fell in; his hair grew white. On his arrival he had taken up his abode in a monastery in the habit of a poor pilgrim: the sage monks who beheld his state, possessed no leech-craft to administer his cure: he lay with beating pulses and open eyes, while the work of the grave appeared already in operation against him: he wasted into a fleshless skeleton. And then another secret change came over him; he conquered death, and crawled forth, the ghost of what he was, into the hopeless world.

He contrived to gain admission to the Princess. She did not recognize him, such was the pale disguise disease had put upon him. His voice, hollow as from a tomb, was altered; his dark, melancholy eyes, occupying too large a portion of his face, gleamed from under his streaked and wan brow. Yet his was a visit of comfort, for he could do her mission to Scotland, and invite the forgetful James to succour his friend and kinsman. Edmund listened eagerly to this proposal: a draught of soothing balm descended into his frame, with the thought that yet all was not lost. His physical energy almost returned: he hurried to depart—"How will you traverse this wide kingdom?" asked the lady. "Cannot the Adalid come as before, to aid and speed you on your way?"

"The Adalid is sailing on the far ocean sea," replied Plantagenet; "we are all as dead, in the eyes of De Faro and our Monina."

"Faithless girl!"

With a trace of his ancient warmth and sweetness, Edmund entered upon the gentle maiden's exculpation. He related that a poor fellow lay on the bed next his in the convent hospital, whom he recognised to be an Irishman, who had escaped from Waterford, and sailed with them in the Adalid to Cornwall. From him he heard the tale of what had befallen De Faro and his child. He heard how the mariner had long haunted the English coast waiting for an opportunity to carry off the Prince; of the fatal night, when snatching his daughter from the watery peril, he saw Richard, as he believed, perish in the waves. What more had the Moorish mariner and his daughter to do with this miserable, guilty island? He called his men together; he told them his resolve finally to quit the eastern world for the golden islands of the west, inviting those who were averse to the voyage to go on shore at once, before the fair wind that was rising, should hurry them into the open sea. The poor Irishman alone desired to land: before he went he saw the Spanish damsel; he described her as calm and mild, though there was something unearthly in her gleaming eyes and in the solemn tone of her voice. "If," she said, "you meet any of our friends, any who ask for De Faro and his daughter, if you see Lady Brampton, Lord Barry, or Sir Edmund Plantagenet, tell them that Monina lives, that she tarries with her father, and tasks herself to be his comfort and support. We seek the Western Indies; well may it betide us that we never reach the unknown strand; or we may be cast away in an uninhabited solitude, where my care and companionship may stead my dear father much; or I may teach the sacred truths of our religion to the wild Indians, and speak the dear name of Christ to the unbaptized of those wilds; or soften, as best I may, the cruel Spaniard, and save the devoted people from their barbarity. Tell them, whichever way I look, I perceive a thousand duties to which our great Taskmaster calls me, and these I live to fulfil, if so my feeble body will permit; tell them that my only hope is death; that, and that by my obedience to the Almighty will, I may partly merit to join in Paradise the earthly angel who now survives there."

Tears choked further speech; she imprinted her words by a gift of gold. The boat which had been hailed, came alongside. The man on board, the sails of the Adalid swelled proudly in the gale; the little caravel ran lightly along on the top of the roughening waters. In less than two hours she was out of sight, speeding swiftly over the sea towards the wild western ocean.

Plantagenet departed; and the Princess was yet more cheered when she found that no further injury was meditated against her lord. Imprisonment in the Tower was his sole punishment. Her pure, gentle mind could not divine the full extent of King Henry's villainy, nor guess how he undermined the edifice he claimed praise for not levelling with the ground.

Nor could her resigned, patient, feminine spirit conceive the cruel, biting impatience of his lot that York endured. He had yielded at first to the overwhelming sense of disgrace, and felt that last, worst emotion of the injured, which answers the internal question. "What have I done so to be visited?" in the poet's words, —

—"I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow — but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chastened and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked."

But soon his eager, eagle spirit spurned the tame debasing thought: he resolved again to struggle, and at last to conquer; the fire burned brighter for its short smouldering; almost with a light heart he laughed, as he resolved again to endeavour.

His prison life was more than irksome; it was unendurable. No change, which is the soul of enjoyment, varied it. No sympathy, the parent of content, came anear. In his young days he had trod on the verge of life's wave, watching it recede, and fancying that it would discover glittering treasures as it retreated into the ocean of eternity: now the tide ebbed sullenly; the barren sands grew dark; and the expanse before afforded no hope — what was to be done?

He was in the Tower, whence he had twice escaped; where the Earl of Warwick was immured, pining in fruitless vegetation, rather than living. Should he do as he had done, and become a cypher, a forgotten prisoner, a mere thing to wake and sleep, and be as nothing? The very dog that guards a cottage-door from nightly harm, had more dignity and purpose in his life, than this victim of ambition. The bird that alighted on the sill of his iron-barred casement, and carried off a crumb for her nestlings, was an emblem of utility and freedom in comparison, which Warwick, cut off from all, must weep to mark. How different was Richard's fate; he had dear friends ready to risk all for him, whose life's sacrifice he could repay only by being true to himself: he had a wife, wedded to him in youth's early flower, whose happiness was unalterably linked to his. He had courage, fortitude, energy; he would not cast these gifts away, a thankless boon; he valued them at their price: if death crowned his efforts, it were well; he was a mere toy in the hands of God, and he submitted; but, as a man, he was ready to cope with men, and though defeated never to be vanquished.

Not a month after his removal to the Tower he had observed his facilities, marked his instruments, and resolved to enter on his schemes: they were quickened by other circumstances.

Warwick heard of his cousin's arrival; and he believed this to be the signal of his own deliverance. His first chief desire was to have communication with him. Among his attendants there was one to whom he could apply; he was a lank, tall fellow, with little understanding and but one idea — gratitude to the Duke of Clarence. This man, called Roger, and nicknamed Long Roger, his length being his chief distinction, had been very poor, and burthened besides with several infant children: accidents and a bad season brought them to the verge of starvation, when a chance threw him in the way of the Duke of Clarence, who got him made servitor in the Tower. When this unfortunate Prince was imprisoned within its fatal walls, Long Roger underwent a thousand perils to wait on him by stealth, and to do what service he might. Long Roger had a prodigious appetite, and his chief delight was to smuggle dainties, cooked by his Madge, into the prison chamber of the Duke. The manner of Clarence's death, which Roger affirmed to accord with the popular tradition, alone consoled the faithful sympathizing fellow. Now he had turned the key for thirteen years on the Duke's hapless son: in spite of his watchful care and proffered cates, he had seen the poor youth dwindle to a skeleton, when suddenly the progress of delay was checked by Our Lady: it was a miracle to see Lord Edward grow fat and comely to look upon, changing his woe-begone looks into gracious smiles: by the Mass, there was witchcraft in it! Warwick often thanked Long Roger, and told him what he would do when restored to freedom and rank; which will never be, Roger said, except among the saints in Paradise; unless it pleased God to remove his Majesty, when my Lady the Queen should fully know how fervently her cousin prayed for her; and, forsooth, with sweet Prince Arthur, his royal mother would be all powerful. Long Roger's visions went not beyond. He never imagined the possibility of effecting the Earl's escape; his limited understanding suggested no relief, save a bottle of Canary, or bunches of White Roses in June, which in fact was Dame Madge's feminine idea; and often had the simple flowers soothed Warwick's care. To this man the poor prisoner applied, to enable him to see and converse with the newly arrived Richard: two are better than one to a feast; and, the next time Roger meditated a dainty supper for his lord, he resolved to endeavour that York should partake it with him as a guest.

In his own guileless way, the simple-hearted man began to practise on and bribe one of his fellows, without whom it had been difficult to accomplish his desire. Abel Blewit had lately been appointed to his service: he was nearly a dwarf, with bushy eyebrows and red hair; there was something of ill omen in his physiognomy, but as the tall yeoman looked over the head of his comrade, his courage rose: "The whippersnapper could not rebuff me," he thought, as he drew himself up to his full height, and began to propound the mighty deed of conducting Perkin by mistake to the Lord Edward's chamber, on his return from vespers. Roger paused suddenly; for, in spite of his stature, he was appalled by the glance Blewet shot up from under his penthouses of brows: still he gave a willing assent, and even took upon himself the chief risk of the undertaking.

The following evening, while Richard was yet pondering how to commence his machinations, undecided, though resolved; and while he made up his mind not to betray his thoughts to the sinister-looking being before him, he was surprised to find that he was led through an unaccustomed gallery; and still more, on entering the chamber into which he was introduced, to recognise it as that where he had unexpectedly found refuge during his last visit to the Tower, and to perceive that Warwick himself was there expecting him.

Was this the thin, wasted being he had seen three years before? Had Warwick been then set free to hunt upon the hills, he had not regained more flesh and bloom than now that hope had been his only medicine. His cousin York had inspired him with marvellons confidence; his last entrance into the fortidable Tower, and his speedy exit, had appeared a miracle to the poor Earl, to whom these high walls and sad chambers formed a world, from which, as from the larger one, death only promised egress. He had pined and wasted in his appetite to be free, to be without those gates, beyond that fosse and giant battlements that girded him in: these portentous, insuperable obstacles were mere cobweb chains to Richard. He had come in, he had departed, and all as easily, so Warwick thought, as the unregarded fly, that had perhaps flown from Westminster, from Elizabeth's chamber, to light upon his cheek. In all the subsequent tales of York's checks and overthrow, he smiled at the idea that one born to victory could be thus overcome. He laughed at the chains Henry had thrown over him; and his transfer to the Tower elated him with a firm belief that liberty was at hand. Dwelling on these thoughts Warwick ceased to be the dead alive; he was cheerful, erect, elastic in his gait, his complexion glowed with health, while sickness still lingered on the cheek of the younger Plantagenet, and a more subdued spirit dwelt in his heart.

Long Roger beheld the cousins embrace: he heard the Earl call him, named Perkin, his liege, and most dear kinsman: from that moment the opprobrious name was banished from Roger's lips: he was convinced of York's truth, and the Lord Edward's friend became an object of reverence and of love.

CHAPTER XIX.

Gentle Cousin.
If you be seen, you perish instantly.
For breaking prison. No, no, Cousin.
I will no more be hidden, nor put off
This great adventure to a second trial.
— TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

Quick on the first greeting followed Warwick's question. "And, noble Cousin, what have you projected? when shall we escape?"

Richard's being in durance with him, seemed sufficient pledge, that without delay they should both be free. While York, wearied by opposition to his mighty foe, just foiled in his endeavours to preserve his freedom, even when he had attained it, saw giant obstacles in his path; and, although resolved to endeavour all, was fully conscious of the fatal end that must wait upon his too probable failure. His reply was dictated by these feelings; he was averse to drag one so inexperienced, and so unhappy, into the pit he believed that he was digging for himself. He besought the Earl well to weigh the value he set upon life; to place the fatal scaffold in prospect; to teach himself to know what death was, and to be ready to meet it, before he planned escape from the wily Tudor. Warwick listened with impatient wonder; but when Richard concluded with affirming, that he himself, in sober sadness, preferred hazarding all to the remaining in prison, and that he would be free, the Earl's countenance again grew light and gladsome. "But when, Coz, when?" was still his eager question.

Thus they had changed characters. Warwick, so many years secluded from the world, was in total ignorance of its ways. Had the Tower-gates been opened to him, he had trembled to walk forth alone; but restraint had made him feminine; and with his cousin he would have rushed upon an army of spears, in sure belief that some unseen ægis would protect him. His position rendered him timid, indolent, and dependent; but he relied on Richard, as a woman on her lover. York beheld all things in their clear, true light; he was aware of every difficulty; of the means he possessed for overcoming them, and of the hazards he ran in using these means. A sentiment, born of the highest generosity, made him hesitate before he concerted any plan with Warwick. It was not alone that he was averse to risking another life; but he felt that his cause would receive advantage from this link with an undoubted Plantagenet; nay, that, in the prison itself, the attachment and respect felt towards the son of Clarence, by some of the very men he meant to use, would serve him. That he should reap benefit from exposing the ill-fated Prince to untried dangers, revolted his high and independent nature. Warwick had recourse to many an entreaty and persuasion, ere he brought Richard to consent that their fortunes should be joined, and that, last of the White Rose, they would rise or fall together. Still York was obliged to check his cousin's impatience, and to show that they must slowly work out the end they had in view.

To gratify the Earl's greedy curiosity, York related his adventures; they afforded him an inexhaustible fund of surprise and delight. He sighed over his tale of wedded happiness; and half wondered that angelic woman, seated high on the throne of loveliness and love, should deign to devote herself for man. A pang, not of envy, but of regret, on comparing their fates, shot across him; soon the usual current of feeling returned; and, when he heard that his idolized, lost Elizabeth was the friend and companion of the devoted wife of York, his affection for Richard was increased. Night was far advanced before they separated, and then only in certain expectation of meeting again.

York's hopes grew brighter, and he indulged in visions of the future, which lately had been so blank. He verily believed that he might escape, though still he doubted whether he should. He remembered the fondness of the Duchess of Burgundy for her brother Clarence, and how she had deplored the hard destiny of his offspring; he would present that son, liberated by him, to her. His junction with the Prince must revive the old Yorkists in his favour; this worst blast of fortune might be the gale to speed him to the harbour of his hopes. The royal cousins met again and again; nor was it long before their own desires, and Henry's craft, began to weave that fatal web which entangled them even in the very mode the hard-hearted king devised.

Summer was gone: quicker than he was wont, the sun withdrew his embattled array of light and heat; and cold and tempest, erewhile driven to mountain fastnesses, or to their own frozen kingdoms in the north, took courage and force, and broke with wild fury upon the defenceless world: the bleak winds were their coursers; savagely they yelled and howled over the land they desolated. First, the growth of flowers was their prey; the fruits, and then the verdure of the earth, while the sun, each day retreating, afforded further scope to their inroads. York resolved not to pass another winter in prison. He had quickly perceived that his purpose could only be effected by corrupting their guards, and then all would depend upon the fidelity of these men. His first attempts were followed by an almost too easy success: good-hearted, dullheaded, Long Roger heard with unreplying credulity the assertions of Warwick, that Richard must succeed in all he undertook, and readily promised his aid. Abel Blewet, in spite of his dogged, sinister aspect, yielded at once to the seduction of a promised bribe. Two others, by his advice, were associated as necessary to their success. Strangeways, a ruffling, drunken fellow, who had been thrice dismissed, but whose pretty wife each time procured his re-appointment; and Astwood, a saving miser, who lent money to his fellow-servitors on usury. With these instruments the Cousins went to work: Warwick in full belief of success: York, perceiving treason and discovery close to them, but ready to defy these bloodhounds to their worst.

"And now, Coz," said Warwick, "in very truth there needs no further delay. Methinks were the drawbridge down, you would mistrust some gin, and wait to throw an arch of your own across the moat. Sooth, my Lord, I am a weary of your sloth."

There was a caressing sweetness in Warwick's voice and manner; an ignorant, indolent, confiding enthusiasm, so unlike quick-witted Clifford, or any of Duke Richard's former friends, that he felt a new emotion towards him — hitherto he had been the protected, served, and waited on, of his associates, now he played the protector and the guardian.

"My gentle Cousin," he replied, "even as you trust, so you shall find me — wait but a little, and all will be past. Yet I grieve to say, where you see escape, I perceive an ambushment of death; and, though ready to face the grim skeleton, we must arm ourselves against him. I wish I could show you even as I see, the dangers that environ us — perhaps you would shrink; and it is yet time. What do you do? Not only plan escape, but ally yourself, and give the sanction of your untarnished name, to one whom Tudor brands as an impostor, and abhors as a rival. His vengeance will fall heavily for this deed, if he reach you. While a few years, like the many already gone by, may lead him to his grave, and you to liberty. I have too often met danger to be frightened by him: and I endure worse than death, each day I pass of youth, apart my sweet White Rose. You have no lady-love to beckon you across the path of peril. Bethink you well, my ever dear Lord, will you not regret this prison, when the cruel axe glitters before your eyes?"

"Do you refuse then to take me with you?" said Warwick, mournfully.

"Be the choice yours; to go with me is fraught with danger — to stay—"

"Hush, Cousin!" cried the Earl, eagerly, "speak not the ill-omened word. Stay, — to endure days and nights of guarded doors; to eat viands served up poisoned by the jailor's touch; to see the sky but through those iron bars; alas! in my dreams, when heaven and its stars are before me, they are crossed and paled by those accursed lines. Give me but an hour to tread earth a free man — or, mark, Cousin; sometimes I win good Roger to lead me to the roof of the White Tower; it is high, and overhangs the deep, dangerous river — The day you quit my side, I seek that tower, I leap from its height, and the cold waters shall drink up my being, rather than I endure another hour my prison-life."

"My dear, dear Cousin," said York, "it is written by the Fates, and I yield — our fortunes shall be one. A few days now brings the hour; it will move along the dial; it will become a portion of past time — what it will leave us, is in the hands of God."

That hour came — full soon it came — the evening hour which preceded their escape. Long Roger served supper to the kinsmen, the last they were to partake within the fated walls. The poor fellow heaved a bitter sigh, as he waited by his lord's chair. "Thou art downcast, good Roger," said the Earl, "pledge me, my man, in this ruby wine of Burgundy — think of to-morrow, not of to-night — to-morrow the deed will be done."

Roger quaffed the proffered bowl — he set it down with another sigh, almost a groan, adding, "Better drown reason than life in the vat!" Then recollecting to what he alluded, and before whom, he blushed scarlet to his very ears, and like a bashful man he made it worse by going on blunderingly, "I was never handy at these sort of things; it is for all the world like turning out of a warm bed on a cold snowy morning, only to think of them — and when they are about, — by the Cross, I thought no hole far enough or dark enough, when my Lord your father—"

"Roger!" exclaimed Warwick.

The wine had not decreased the man's terror, but it had opened his mouth, and taken away his discretion; he continued: "It was an awful night. We all knew what was going to be done. I am sure, as Thomas Paulet said, we heard our very hearts beat. Then there was grim-faced Hobler, who at the Judgment might be taken for the born twin of Master Abel, only he was taller by a span — even he looked uglier, nor spoke above his breath—'Is he at his prayers?' asked he, and Sir Brakenbury was as white as the earth itself — it was the beginning of Lent; and the snow lay three feet deep on it."

By no uncommon law of our nature, the dread design of the present night awoke keen recollection in the usually drowsy mind of this man. At first, with thrilling horror, Warwick interrupted him, but now the very terrors of the theme he chose, assumed an awful charm — he was fascinated to listen, while his knees knocked together — Richard felt also the magic of such perilous excitement.

"Oh, Lord Edward," continued Roger, "these walls have seen fiendly sights — the blood of many a Plantagenet, York or Lancaster, is on its pavement. Was it not in this room that the pious King, Saint Henry, as Father Piers calls him — you will not sleep another night in it, so there is no harm now, telling you that his poor ghost has been seen on the battlements coming from this very chamber, where he was murthered."

The night wind rushed round the massy walls, the autumnal wind, fierce and howling — York started up, "No more of this unreason, while we need all our strength, and God's grace to boot, to nerve us to our task. Oh, ghost of Lancaster! if indeed thou hauntest this spot, where those akin to me did the foul deed, be thy pious soul propitiated now; many a mass shall be told for thy repose!"

Roger crossed himself, and said an ave; then in his usual voice he rejoined, "Would the thing did not require blood. Master Abel vows by the saints—'twere better when men make bad oaths to swear by the fiends — that Sir John must die; old wrinkled Astwood squeaks out, 'By'r Lady, it were not worth while, with only promises for reward, if we have not the rifling of the Lieutenant's private chamber. They are bloody-minded men, my Lord; Mat Strangeways, when he is sober, and I, fasting or feasting, hold out that we might bind him, and get the keys.' 'Blockhead,' says Master Blewet, saving your presence, 'thou goest the way to hang us all.'"

Another goblet had set Roger talking. Warwick had quitted the table. He threw open the casement: it was very dark, and the wind howled fearfully —"Oh, iron bars of my prison house," cried the ill-fated Prince, "can only midnight-murder wrench ye asunder? It is a dread act to disobey God's word, and lay the soul under mortal sin — must it be done?"

"My dear Cousin," said York, "do not mistake — a month ago the choice was yours; now there is no going back. We have no right to draw these poor men into peril, and then to quarrel at the precaution they take for their safeties. We said, aye, when the matter was proposed. Again I repeat the word; they must look to it, who so savagely have driven us to the fatal pass. When Digby undertook the ungentle task of jailor, he knew that he must hold it at the hazard of his life."

"Sir John has ever been kind to me," said Warwick, "forgive the word, my Lord, I am firm now — away with mercy! To win an easy egress from these murderous walls, I could myself plant the dagger."

"We are not executioners," interrupted the Duke, who felt none of Warwick's vacillations, now sinking beneath the required tone, now wound up far above it, and was perfectly calm, though his heart, he scarce knew why, entertained no hope of success. Warwick believed that he should win, and mourned the losers in the frightful game. Richard knew that he might fail, and assuredly would, did he not meet each necessity and hazard with a dauntless spirit.

The sound of a bell from a neighbouring convent was brought fitfully by the wind—"They are ringing matins — there is our signal," cried Roger.

"And Digby's knell." The door of the chamber opened as Warwick said these words, and Blewet, with his usual catlike pace, slid in; he walked straight up to Roger, and casting on him a glance from under his brows, said only "Come."

"Are all at rest?" asked the Earl.

"Two hours agone," said Master Abel, "I have kept myself awake sharpening my steel;" he touched the handle of a huge butcher's knife stuck in his girdle, whose glittering blade did credit to his care. Warwick turned pale and sick. "It will be dulled anon," continued Blewet.

“Where are thy comrades?” Richard asked, “They wait at the end of the corridor — Master Astwood is counting his gains. Come, Long Roger.”

Poor Roger followed him to the door, then turning to the Princes; “My royal masters,” said he, “if this deed goes ill, and I never see ye more, by Christ and his Cross, I pray a blessing on ye; if I may pray, but by the mass I fear I shall never pray, nor sup more.”

They were gone — Warwick strove to look, to be firm, but he grew ashy white — a door, clapped to at a distance, made him almost faint. Richard was pale also; but his hand shook not in the least, as he presented a cup of wine to his cousin.

“Give me water rather,” said the Earl, shuddering, “that cup is red — hark — it is his groans!”

“It is the wind around the turret, where my liege and brother died,” said York, endeavouring to give other thoughts to the poor Prince, who cried.

“It is the hell-born laugh of fiends viewing the deed.” With the breeze indeed came a sound of laughter. “Are we betrayed!” cried York: but the sound passed away in wailing. Warwick was on his knees—”I cannot pray,” he cried, “a sea of blood is before me.”

“Hush!”

Steps now approached along the corridor, and Blewet, his stained, half-wiped knife in his hand, appeared — Again the monosyllable “Come,” was pronounced — fraught with how different a meaning. A life had been torn from an innocent breast since then by that fell instrument. The Princes, awestruck, one trembling with dread, the other striving to quell his horror for a murderer, followed him, as he led through the gallery — at the end stood Astwood with a bunch of keys — there were no stains on his hands; he looked anxious, but brightened up when he saw the prisoners.

They trod stealthily along. Warwick’s faltering steps scarce kept pace with their conductor’s. After passing through many narrow high passages, they reached a low postern door. Astwood put the key in the lock — the sound was magical to the fearful Earl. “Farewell, old frightful walls,” he cried, “farewell, dark murderous prison house, the Foul Fiend possess thee! such is my benison.”

Blewet looked at him — York marked the sarcasm, the scorn of his glance — the gate meanwhile was opened: at that moment a clash of arms was heard. “The sentinels at the Eastern gate,” remarked Abel.

“God grant it!” cried Warwick, “God grant — yet can it be! and am I free?”

He rushed through the open door, intent to seize upon liberty, as Tantalus on his forbidden feast — his first step beyond the threshold of his prison was followed by a shriek — almost a woman’s shriek, it was so shrill and piercing. What he quailed before, gave presence of mind to York — experienced in ills. Whatever the new evil might be, he went out to meet it calmly. A party of archers and yeomen were drawn up in the court yard. “This truly is a mime,” he said, “in which one at least wins. Our good Lieutenant is safe; we are lost.”

Grim Sir John had much disliked even this masque of murder. He saw their seizure with a grin of delight. He abhorred Richard, as the prime mover of the mediated assassination; but he hated Warwick more, who thus could lay in ambush for the life of one, who he believed had been a most courteous and soft-hearted jailor to him — he commanded his myrmidons to lead the royal kinsmen to the strongest ward-rooms of the Tower, with dogged, savage joy.

In dark and separate cells, in solitude and night, these ill-fated victims of craft and ambition were consigned to biting reflection and sinister anticipation. Warwick, worn out by the unusual excitement of the last weeks, by his eager hopes, and overwhelming despair, had no one thought, but ten thousand thoughts, making a chaos and hell of his poor heart. Richard felt more for his cousin than for himself. “But for me,” he repeated internally, “he had still been a patient prisoner. Yet to break prison is not crime capital — he may yet be saved. Elizabeth will intercede; Tudor, for very shame, cannot do further wrong to one so near akin, so powerless and unfortunate. For myself; — I am dead already: the Duke of York died, when first I became a slave. So that my memory survive in my own White Rose’s heart — let the victor dispose at his pleasure of this mere shell of Richard.”

CHAPTER XX.

Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her spite.
 And thrilling Sorrow thrown his utmost dart
Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heavy plight
 Than that I feel and harbour in my heart.
 — SPENSER.

The morning of the first of November dawned; a cheery day. Men went to their usual works: the earth, despoiled of her summer garniture, yet bore the change with sober content; for the sun shone, and soft airs, despite the coming winter, lightly shook the scant and altered foliage of the woods:

All rose to do the task
He set to each.
Who shaped us to his ends, and not our own.
And many rose
Whose woe was such, that fear became desire.

Among such fate-hunted victims was the Duke of York. Hope had died in his heart; and his few remaining days were only to be spent in celebrating her dark funeral. Morning opened its eyes on Prince Richard's dungeon, showing him vanquished by grievous overthrow and change. To look back through his tumultuous life, to dwell upon its chances, to think of the many who had suffered for him, were sad but fitting thoughts, to which he betook himself, till death became lovely in his eyes. But intermingled with such retrospection were other memories: his own sweet love was before him, in her tears or smiles; he looked into her dear eyes, he closed his own, and thrilling kisses pressed his burning lips, and soft, white arms were round him; at thought of such he grew impatient of his chains, and the fearful cutting off from all that awaited him. He began to calculate on the probability that his life would be spared, and grew cowardly the while; to feed upon those roseate lips, to drink life from those eyes, to clasp his beautiful, fond wife, feeling that beyond the circle of his arms nought existed worthy his desires, became a fierce, impatient hunger, to gratify which he would call himself impostor, give up fame and reputation, and become Perkin Warbeck in all men's eyes.

There was but one refuge from this battle of youth and life with the grim skeleton. With a strong effort he endeavoured to turn his attention from earth, its victor woes, and still more tyrant joys, to the heaven where alone his future lay. The struggle was difficult, but he effected it; prayer brought resignation, calm; so when his soul, still linked to his mortal frame, and slave to its instincts, again returned to earth, it was with milder wishes and subdued regrets. Monina's lovely form wandered into his mind; she was an angel now, a blessed spirit, he believed; for, what deceived her, deceived him; and he fancied that he alone had escaped from the watery perils of that night; she had arrived there, where he soon should be, in the serene immutability of eternal life; he began, in the revulsion of his thoughts, to pity those destined still to exist. Earth was a skaithed planet, a roofless, shelterless home; a wild where the human soul wandered a little interval, tortured by sharp, cruel storms; lost in thorny, entangled brakes; weary, repining, till the hour came when it could soar to its native birthplace, and find refuge from its ills in promised Paradise.

His cell was indeed the haven of peace, compared to the turbid, frightful atmosphere in which his Katherine lived. Edmund had not returned; every attempt she made to communicate with Scotland or Burgundy, failed. She had past a summer of wretchedness, nor could the tender attention of Elizabeth sooth her. In spite of all, the poor Queen was almost happier than she had ever been; for many years she had been "the cannibal of her own heart," devouring her griefs in voiceless, friendless, solitude; her very joys, and they were those of maternity, were locked up in her own bosom. It was the birth of happiness to share her griefs with another; that other being so gentle, so wise, and yet so sensitive, as the fair White Rose, who concealed her own worst pains, to sooth those of one possessing less fortitude and fewer internal resources than herself. Yet, while thus she forgot herself, she never quitted in thought her Richard's side; since the day she had seen him delivered over to ignominious punishment, pale and ill, he was as it were stamped on every outward object, an image placed between her and her thoughts; for, while those were employed apparently on many things, he, in truth, was their first, last, all-possessing idea, more engrossing than her own identity. At one time she spent every effort to obtain an interview with him in prison; and then she learned, through covert means, of the plots carrying on in the Tower for his escape, while the name of Warwick, mingling in the tale, roused the latent feelings of Elizabeth. When the last, worst hour came, it was less replete with pain than these miserable, unquiet days, and sleepless, tearful nights; the never-ending, still beginning round of hours, spent in fear, doubt, and agonizing prayer.

After a restless night, the Princess opened her eyes upon the day, and felt even the usual weight at her heavy foreboding heart increased. The tale was soon told of Richard's attempted escape and failure: "What can be done?"

"Nothing; God has delivered the innocent into the hands of the cruel; the cruel, to whom mercy is as unknown, as, methinks, it is even to the awful Power who rules our miserable lives." Such words, with a passionate burst of tears, burst from the timid Elizabeth, whose crushed and burning heart even arraigned the Deity for the agony she endured.

Katherine looked on her with sweet compassion, "Gentle one," she said, "what new spirit puts such strange speech into your mouth, whose murmurings heretofore were those of piety?"

"It is a bad world," continued the Queen; "and, if I become bad in it, perchance I shall prosper, and have power to save: I have been too mild, too self-communing and self-condemning; and the frightful result is, that the sole being that ever loved me, perishes on the scaffold. Both will perish, my White Rose, doubt it not. Your own York, and my devoted only loved Edward. In his prison I have been his dream; he breaks it, not to find liberty again, but Elizabeth. Wretched boy! knows he not that he shall never again find her, who roamed with a free spirit the woodland glades, talking to him of the future, as of a scene painted to my will; faded, outworn, a degraded slave — I am not Elizabeth."

"Did you know the dearest truth of religion," replied Katherine, "you would feel that she, who has been tried, and come out pure, is a far nobler being than—"

"I am not pure, not innocent; much you mistake me," said the Queen: "wicked, impious thoughts harbour in my heart, and pollute my soul, even beyond the hope of mediation. Sometimes I hate my beautiful children because they are his; sometimes in the dark hour of night, I renounce my nuptial vow, and lend ready, willing ear to fiendish whisperings which borrow Edward's voice. I court sleep, because he wanders into my dreams; and — What do I say, what am I revealing? Lady, judge me not: you married him you loved, fulfilling thus the best destiny that can be given in this hard world to woman, whose life is merely love. Though he perish in his youth, and you weep for him for ever, hug yourself in the blessed knowledge that your fate is bright as angels; for we reap celestial joys, when love and duty, twined in sisterly embrace, take up their abode together within us: and I — but, Katherine, did you hear me? — They perish even as I speak: his cruel heart knows no touch of mercy, and they perish."

"They shall not, dearest," said York's White Rose; "it cannot be, that so foul a blot darken our whole lives. No; there are words and looks and tones that may persuade. Alas! were we more holy, surely a miracle might be vouchsafed, nor this Pharoah harden his heart for ever."

All her love-laden soul beaming in her eyes, with a voice that even thrilled him, though it moved him not, the White Rose addressed Henry. She had yet to learn that a tyrant's smile is more fatal than his frown: he was all courtesy, for he was resolved, implacable; and she gathered hope from what proved to be the parent of despair. She spoke with so much energy, yet simplicity, in the cause of goodness, and urged so sweetly her debt of gratitude; telling him, how from the altar of their hearts, prayers would rise to the Eternal, fraught with blessings to him, that he encouraged her to go on, that still he might gaze on lineaments, which nobility of soul, the softest tenderness, and exalted belief in good, painted with angelic hues. At length he replied that his Council were examining witnesses, that her cause depended on facts, on its own justice; that he hoped report had blackened the crimes of these rash men; for her sake he sincerely hoped their guilt, as it was detailedto him, had been exaggerated.

For a moment the Princess was unaware what all this jargon might mean; his next words were more perspicuous. "Indeed, fair dame, you must forget this coil: if I consent, for the welfare of my kingdom, to sacrifice the Queen's nearest relative, you also must resign yourself to a necessity from which there is no appeal. Hereafter you will perceive that you gain, instead of losing, by an act of justice which you passionately call cruelty: it is mercy, heaven's mercy doubtless, that breaks the link between a royal princess and a baseborn impostor."

A sudden fear thrilled Katherine: "You cannot mean that he should die," she cried; "for your own sake, for your children's sake, on whom your sins will be visited, you cannot intend such murder: you dare not; for the whole world would rise against the unchristian king who sheds his kinsman's blood. All Europe, the secret hearts of those nearest to you, your own knowledge, all proclaim your victim, your rival — to be your brother, and will brand you a fratricide. You are Lancaster, your ancestors were kings, you conquered this realm in their name, and may reign over it in peace of conscience; but not so may you destroy the Duke of York. His mother avouched him, the Duchess of Burgundy acknowledges him, I was given to him by my royal cousin, as to one of equal rank, and he upholds him — More than all, his princely self declares the truth; nor can evil counsellors, nor false chroniclers, stand between you, and heaven and the avenging world. You vainly seek to heap accusation on him you term Crookback's head: time will affix the worst indelible stain upon you. You cannot, will not slay him."

What were words to the fixed mind of Henry? A summer breeze, whispering round a tempest-withstanding watch-tower — he might grow chill at this echo of the fears his own heart spoke; but still he smiled, and his purpose was unshaken.

It became known that the Princes were to be arraigned for treason: first the unhappy, misnamed Perkin was tried, by the common courts, in Westminster Hall. When a despot gives up the execution of his revenge to the course of law, it is only because he wishes to get rid of passing the sentence of death upon his single authority, and to make the dread voice of misnamed justice, and its executors, the abettors of his crime.

When Tragedy arrays itself in the formal robes of law, it becomes more heart-rending, more odious, than in any other guise. When sickness threatens to deprive us of one, round whom our heart-strings have twined — we think inextricably — the skill of man is our friend; if merciless tempest be the murderer, we feel that it obeys One whose ways are inscrutable, while we strive to believe that they are good. Groping in darkness, we teach our hearts the bitter lesson of resignation. Nor do we hate nor blame the wild winds and murderous waves, though they have drank up a life more precious and more beloved than words have power to speak. But that man's authority should destroy the life of his fellow man; that he who is powerful, should, for his own security and benefit, drive into the darksome void of the tomb, one united to our sun-visited earth by ties of tenderness and love — one whose mind was the abode of honour and virtue; to know that the word of man could still bind to its earthly tabernacle the being, voice, looks, thoughts, affections of our all; and yet, that the man of power unlocks the secret chamber, rifles it of all its treasures, and gives us, for the living mansion of the soul, a low, voiceless grave: — against such tyranny, the softest heart must rebel; nor scarcely could religion in its most powerful guise, the Catholic religion, which almost tore aside for its votaries the veil between time and eternity, teach submission to the victims.

Days flowed on. However replete with event, the past is but a point to us; however empty, the present pervades all things. And when that present is freighted with our whole futurity, it is as an adamantine chain binding us to the hour; there is no escape from its omnipotence and omnipresence; it is as the all-covering sky. We shut our eyes; the monster's hollow breath is on our cheek; we look on all sides; from each his horrid eyes glare on us; we would sleep; he whispers dreams. Are we intelligible? Will those possessed by present tell us whether any bondage, any Bastille, can suggest ideas of more frightful tyranny, misery, than the cruel present, which clings to us, and cannot be removed.

"It is so; he attempted to escape, and was discovered; he is low in his dungeon; his dear eyes are faint from disappointed hope. He will be tried. Tyranny will go forth in a masque, and with hideous antics fancy that she mantles with a decorous garb her blood-thirsty acts. He will be condemned; but he will not die! not die! Oh no, my Richard is immortal — he cannot DIE!"

"My royal Cousin, when you gave me to my sweet love, and pledged your word that in weal or woe I should be his; and I promised myself still dearer things, to be the guardian angel and tutelar genius of his life; and took pleasure, fond, foolish girl that I was, in the anticipation of misfortunes that I should rob of all power to hurt; no thought, among the many that strayed into futurity, told me of this desertion, this impotence of effecting good. Alas! how deaf and cruel man is: I could more easily tear asunder his prison-walls with my hands, and break with my weak fingers his iron chains, than move one, as liable to suffer and to die as even his victim, to pity!"

Elizabeth listened pale and silent to these complaints — bitter as they were, they were hushed to more heart-rending silence, when the hour of trial came — she should only pray to die, before the word that spoke his condemnation met her ear. Accustomed as a Princess — a high-born and respected daughter of one most powerful, to be obeyed and served; to find herself destitute of all influence, seemed to place her in another planet — it was not men — not her fellow-creatures that were around her; but fiends who wore the mask of humanity. An uninhabited desert had not been more solitary than this populous land, whose language she possessed not; for what is language, if it reach not the heart and move it?

Richard, the wonder of the time, gathered courage as ill-fortune pressed more hardly upon him; in the hour of trial he did not quail, but stood in bold, fearless innocence before the men, whose thoughts were armed against his life. He was not guilty, he said, for he could not be guilty of treason. When the indictment was read which treated him as a foreigner and an alien, the spirit of the Plantagenet flashed from his eyes, and the very stony-hearted clerk, who read, casting his regards on him faltered and stammered, overawed by a blaze of dignity, which, did we foster antique creeds, we might believe was shed over him by some such spirit as imparted divine majesty to the person of the King of Ithaca. Proudly and silently Richard listened to the evidence on his trial. It touched only on such points as would afterwards be most material for inculpation of poor Warwick. In the end he was asked what he had to plead, wherefore judgment should not pass upon him — but he was bid to be brief, and to beware not to use any language derogatory to the high and mighty Prince, Henry, king of these realms. A smile curled his lips at this admonition, and with even a playful air he said, “My very good Lord, I ask for nothing, save that a little mercy be extended to the memory of my gracious uncle, my Lord of Gloucester, who was no child-murderer.”

At the word he was interrupted, and sentence pronounced. As the ignominious words were said, Richard, who from the beginning had abstracted himself in prayer, so that his ears might be as little wounded as possible by an unconquerable impulse put his hand where his sword might have been. Its absence and the clanking of his chains recalled him to the truth, and he muttered the words, “Oh, basely murdered York!” in recollection of his unhappy grandfather, to whose miserable fate he often recurred, as an example of suffering and patience.

Thus ended the bitter scene; one he had long expected, for which he had nerved himself. During nearly the whole, his look was as if he were absent from it. But who could read the secrets of his heart, while his impassive eyes and lips were no index to the agonies that tortured it?

CHAPTER XXI.

So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost —
How fearful!
— SHELLEY.

“Speak to me, Lady, sister, speak! your frozen glances frighten me; your fingers as I touch them, have no resistance or life. Dearest and best, do not desert me, speak but one word, my own White Rose.”

Katherine raised her blue eyes heavenward: as if the effort were too great, they fell again on the ground, as she said, in a voice so low that Elizabeth could hardly catch the sound; “I must see him once again before he dies.”

“And you shall, dearest, I promise you. Cheer up, my love, not to affright him by looks like these. Indeed you shall see him, and I will also; he shall know that he has a sister’s prayers, a sister’s love. Patience, sweet Kate, but a little patience.”

“Would I could sleep till then!” replied the miserable wife: and she covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the light of day, and sighed bitterly.

When our purposes are inflexible, how do insurmountable obstacles break before our strong will? so that often it seems that we are more inconstant than fortune, and that with perseverance we might attain the sum of our desires. The Queen, the weak, despised, powerless Queen, resolved to gratify this one last wish of her beloved friend. Many a motive urged her to it; compassion, love, and even self-interest. At first she almost despaired; while Richard continued in the Tower it was impossible; but on the twenty-third of November, two days before the destined termination of his fatal tragedy, on the day of the trial of poor Warwick, he was removed to the prison of Ludgate. And here, at dead of night, Henry, being absent inspecting his new palace at Richmond, Elizabeth, timid, trembling, shrinking now at the last — and Katherine, far too absorbed in one thought to dream of fear, took boat at West-minster, and were rowed along the dark, cold tide to Blackfriars. They were silent; the Queen clasped her friend's hand, which was chill and deathlike. Elizabeth trembled, accustomed to hope for, to seek refuge in her stronger mind, she felt deserted, now that she, engrossed by passion, silent and still, the wife of the near prey of death, could remember only that yet for a little while he was alive. Their short voyage seemed endless; still the oars splashed, still the boat glided, and yet they arrived not. Could it last for ever — with one hope ever in view, never to know that he was dead? The thought passed into Katherine's mind with the sluggish but absorbing tenacity of intense grief, and at last possessed it so wholly, that it was with a scream of fear that she found herself close to shore.

The necessity of motion restored Katherine to her presence of mind, while it deprived the Queen of the little courage she possessed. Something was to be said and done: Elizabeth forgot what; but Katherine spoke in a clear, though unnatural voice, and followed their conductors with a firm step, supporting the faltering Queen. Yet she addressed her not; her energies were wound up to achieve one thing; more than that it would have cost her her life to attempt. They reached the dark walls of the prison; a door was unbarred, and they were admitted. The Princess passed the threshold with a quick step, as if overjoyed thus to be nearer her wish. Elizabeth paused, trembled, and almost wished to turn back.

They crossed the high-walled court, and passed through several dark galleries: it seemed as if they would never arrive; and yet both started, when they stopped at the door of a cell.

"Does his Grace expect us?" asked Katherine.

The turnkey looked as not understanding; but their guide, who was the chaplain of the jail, answered.

"He does not. Fearful that some impediment might intervene, unwilling to disturb by a disappointed hope a soul so near its heavenly home, I have told him nothing."

"Gently, then," said Katherine, "let our speech be low."

The door opened, and displayed the son of the proud, luxurious Edward, sleeping on a wretched mattress, chained to the pavement. The ladies entered alone. Katherine glided noiselessly to his side; her first act was to bend down her cheek, till his breath disturbed the ringlet that rested on it; thus to assure herself that life was within his lips. Elizabeth fixed her earnest gaze on him, to discover if in aught he reminded her of the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired bridegroom of Anne Mowbray: he more resembled a picture of her father in his early manhood; and then again her aunt the Duchess of Burgundy, whom she had seen just before King Edward's death. He lay there in placid eep; thought and feeling absent; yet in that form resided the soul of Richard; a bright casket containing a priceless gem: no flaw — no token of weakness or decay. He lived — and at a word would come back from oblivion to her world of love. A few days and that form would still exist in all its fair proportion. But veil it quick; he is not there! unholy and false is the philosophy, that teaches us that that lurid mockery was the thing we loved.

And now he woke, almost to joy; yet sadness succeeded quickly to rapture. "My poor girl," he said, "weep not for me; weep for thyself rather; a rose grafted on a thorn. The degraded and disgraced claims no such sorrow."

Katherine replied by an embrace; by laying her beautiful head on his bosom, and listening with forgetful, delicious extacy to the throbbings of his beating heart.

"Be not unjust to thyself," said a soft, unknown voice, breaking the silence of the lovers; "be not false to thy house. We are a devoted race, my brother; but we are proud even to the last."

"This is a new miracle," cried the Prince.

"Who, except this sainted one, will claim kindred with Tudor's enemy?"

"Tudor's wife; your sister. Do you not remember Elizabeth?"

As these words were said, Katherine, who appeared to have accomplished her utmost wish, sat beside him, her arms around him, her sweet head reposing, her eyes closed. Kissing her soft hair and fair brow, York disentwined her clasped hands, and rose, addressing the trembling Queen:

"My sister," he said, "you do a deed which calls for blessings from heaven upon you and yours. Till now, such was my unmanly spirit, the stigma affixed to my name, the disgrace of my ignominious death, made me odious to myself. The weakness of that thought is past; the love of this sweetest sweet, and your kindness restore me. Indeed, my sister, I am York — I am Plantagenet."

"As such," replied the Queen, "I ask a boon, for which, selfish as I am, I chiefly came; my brother will not deny me?"

"Trifler, this is vanity. I can give nothing."

"Oh, every thing," exclaimed the lady; "years of peace, almost of happiness, in exchange for a life of bitter loneliness and suffering. You, my dearest Lord, know the celestial goodness of that fair White Rose; in adversity and peril you have known it; — I amidst the cold deceits of a court. She has vowed never to return to her native land, to bear a questioned name among her peers; or perhaps to be forced by her father to change it for one abhorred. Though she must hate me as the wife of her injurer, yet where can she better be than with your sister? She would leave me, for I am Tudor's Queen; bid her stay with her Lord's nearest kinswoman; tell her that we will beguile the long years of our too young life with talk of you; tell her that no where will she find one so ready to bless your name as poor Elizabeth; implore her, ah! on my knees do I implore you to bid her not to leave me, a dead-alive, a miserable, bereft creature, such as I was ere I knew her love."

"What say'st thou, sweet?" asked Richard; "am I yet monarch of that soft heart? Will my single subject obey the crownless Richard?"

Katherine stretched out her hand to the Queen, who was at York's feet, in token of compliance: she could not speak; it was a mighty effort to press the fingers of Elizabeth slightly; who said.

"Before heaven and your dear Lord, I claim your promise; you are mine for ever."

"A precious gift, my Bess; was it not thus my infant lips called you? I trust her to you; and so the sting of death is blunted. Yet let not too fond a lingering on one passed away, tarnish the bright hours that may yet be in store for her. Forget me, sweet ones; I am nought; a vapour which death and darkness inhales — best unremembered. Yet while I live I would ask one question — our victim-cousin, Edward of Warwick?"

Elizabeth could no longer restrain her tears as she related, that, however weak Warwick might heretofore have seemed, he appeared a Plantagenet on his trial. He disdained the insulting formalities of law, where the bitter Lancastrian, Lord Oxford, was the interpreter of justice; he at once declared himself guilty of plotting to put the English crown on the head of his cousin, the Duke of York. He was quickly interrupted, and condemned to be beheaded.

"Generous, unhappy Warwick. Ah! is not life a misery, when all of good, except ye two angelic creatures, die."

The signal was now given that the interview must end. Elizabeth wept. Katherine, still voiceless, clung closer to her husband; while he nerved himself to support these gentle spirits with manly fortitude. One long, affectionate kiss he pressed on the mouth of Katherine; and as her roseate lips yet asked another, another and another followed; their lives mingled with their breath.

"We meet in Paradise, mine only one," whispered York; "through our Lord's mercy assuredly we meet there."

He unwound her arms; he placed her in those of Elizabeth. "Cherish, preserve her. Bless thee, my sister; thee, and thy children. They at least will, by my death, reign rightfully over this kingdom. Farewell!"

He kissed her hand, and then again the lifeless hand of his wife, who stood a breathing statue. She had not spoken; no words could utter her despair. Another moment, and their fair forms were gone; the door of his cell was closed; and, but for the presence of the God he worshipped, Richard was left alone to solitude and night.

CONCLUSION.

Love is too young to know what conscience is.
Yet who knows not, Conscience is born of Love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss.
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
— SHAKSPEARE.

Time, we are told by all philosophers, is the sole medicine for grief. Yet there are immortal regrets which must endure while we exist. Those who have met with one, with whose every feeling and thought their thoughts and feelings were entwined, who knew of no divided past, nor could imagine a solitary futurity, to them what balm can time bring? Time, the giver of hours, months, and years, each one how barren, contemptible, and heavy to bear to the bereft!

There was no consolation for Katherine, which could make her for a moment forget that her present existence was but the lees of life, the spiritless remnants of a nectareous draught. But Katherine was gentle, good, and resigned; she lived on, dispensing pleasure, adored by all who approached her, and gladly hailing any visitation of happiness, which might reach one whose affections were too fondly linked to the grave.

Years had passed, since the last act of the sad tragedy which destroyed her dearest hopes. She accompanied the Queen of England on a progress made by her, and they remained one night at Eastwell Place, the seat of Sir Thomas Moyle. There was a park, and stately pleasure-grounds belonging to the house, undulating uplands, shady copses, and sweet running brooks to diversify the scene. A crowd of the noble and the gay were there, and the royal party was unusually mirthful; fireworks, masks and dances were employed; and all joyously gave themselves up to the spirit of the hour. The chords of a harp, a well-known air, first awoke in the bosom of the White Rose that languid melancholy, so near allied to pleasure, so close a neighbour to pain. By degrees memory grew busy in her brain; she could no longer endure the laughter of her companions, their sallies, nay, nor their kindness; for Elizabeth perceived her dear friend's change of countenance, and was approaching, when Katherine, making her a sign not to remark her, stole away, and entering a straggling path, wandered on, struggling with the tears, which the beauty of the evening, and the very hilarity which just before she had shared, caused to gush, warm and fast from her eyes.

She reached a little streamlet, and was passing forward, when she became aware of the presence of another in the scene. A labouring man, of middle age, (but his hair was grey, and flowed on his shoulders,) was seated on the rustic masonry of a rude fountain, reading; he rose when he saw the lady, and doffed his hat; she, with the cordial sweetness that accompanied her slightest acts, gave him an evening benison. Her voice, her look, her cordial manner moved to its depths a heart lately hardened against her. As she passed on, the man followed hastily, "Lady!" he cried.

It struck the Princess that this poor fellow had some request to prefer to his master, and that he wished to do it through her medium; she turned with a benevolent smile, "Can I do aught for you, good friend?"

His voice failed him; he stretched out his hand, which held his book, she took it: the tiny volume was no stranger to her eyes; as if a ghost had looked on her lonely watching, she trembled and grew pale, when she opened it, and saw written in fair characters, by a hand now dust, "La Rosa Blanca." The rustic knelt before her.

"Lady, Queen!" he cried, "Sole relic of the unforgotten! is it thus that we meet?"

"My cousin Edmund!"

"Hush! breathe not even to the silent woods the unknown word. Fancy not that I am Plantagenet; for all that was of worth in him you name, died when the White Rose scattered its leaves upon the unworthy earth."

"Ah! would that we had all died in that hour," cried Katherine: "why, when the ungrateful world lost him, did not all the good and true die also, so that they might no longer suffer!"

Plantagenet cast a reproachful glance on her, as he said, "Happy indeed are those who die. O God! when I think of the many and the beloved, who, a few years ago, were alive around me, and among whose low silent graves I now walk alone, methinks I am dead; it is but the ghost of him you knew that lingers upon earth."

"Yes, they are all gone," said the Princess; "all who linked me to the past, and were portions of my Richard's being. They are gone from before me. But are they truly no more, or do they live, like you, brooding over the lost, disdaining to communicate with one who lives but to remember them? Of the death of several I have heard; but often I have longed with bitterness to hear of you, and of the Spanish maiden, Monina de Faro."

"Her gentle soul," replied Edmund, "has flown to join him for whom she lived and died. It is now two years since I was assured of this. A friar, whom I had formerly well known, visited Lisbon; and I entreated him to enquire for De Faro and his child. The commander of the Adalid was almost forgotten; at last, an old sailor was found, who remembered that, some years before, he had sailed for the Western Indies, and was never heard of more."

"His daughter accompanied him?"

"In the churchyard of a convent, placed high among the foldings of those lovely hills which overlook Lisbon, he was shown an humble tomb, half defaced; her dear sacred name is carved upon it, and half the date, the 14 — , which showed that she died before the century began, in which we now live. She could not have survived our Prince many months; probably she died before him, nor ever knew the worst pang of all, the ignominy linked with his beloved memory."

"And you, my kinsman, how long have you wedded penury and labour in this obscure disguise?"

"Penury and labour," said Plantagenet, "are not confined to the humble occupation I have adopted. I was made poor by the death-blow of my hopes; and my chief labour is to tame my heart to resignation to the will of God. Obscure you may indeed call my destination. Would I could shroud it in tenfold night! Dearer to me is the silence and loneliness of this spot, where I can for ever commune undisturbed with the past, than a pomp which is stained by the blood of him, whom once I thought we all loved so well.

"When — oh, let me not name the frightful thing! — when he was gone for ever, the whole world was to me but one miserable tomb. I groped in darkness, misery my mate, eternal lamentation my sole delight. The first thing that brought peace to my soul, was the beauty of this visible universe. When God permitted, for some inscrutable purpose, moral evil to be showered so plentifully over us, he gave us a thousand resources out of ourselves in compensation. If I mingled with my fellow-creatures, how dearly should I miss him, who was single among men for goodness, wisdom, and heaven-born nobility of soul. My heart sickens at the evil things that usurp the shape of humanity, and dare deem themselves of the same species: I turn from all, loathing. But here there is no change, no falling-off, no loss of beauty and of good: these glades, these copses, the seasons' change and elemental ministrations, are for ever the same — the type of their Maker in glory and in good. The loveliness of earth saves me from despair: the majesty of Heaven imparts aspiring hope. I bare my bosom to the breeze, and my wretched heart throbs less wildly. I drink in the balmy sweetness of the hour, and repose again on the goodness of my Creator.

"Yours is another existence, Lady; you need the adulation of the crowd — the luxury of palaces; you purchase these, even by communing with the murderer of him who deserved a dearer recompense at your hands."

Katherine smiled sadly at these last words, which betrayed the thought that rankled in her kinsman's mind. "I thank you," she replied, "for your details. I will not blame you for the false judgment you pass on me. When years and quiet thought have brought you back from the tempest of emotion that shakes you, you will read my heart better, and know that it is still faithfully devoted to him I have lost."

"Ah! say those words again," cried Plantagenet, "and teach me to believe them. I would give my right hand to approve your conduct, to love and reverence you once again."

"Will you have patience with me then, while I strive to justify myself?"

"Oh, speak! My life, my soul's salvation, to hang upon your words."

Katherine raised her blue eyes to the now starry sky, as if to adjure that to be the witness of her innocent thoughts; and then she said, "We are all, dear Cousin, impelled by our nature to make ourselves the central point of the universe. Even those, who as they fancy, sacrifice themselves for the love of God, do it more truly for love of themselves; and the followers of virtue too often see their duties through the obscure and deceptive medium, which their own single, individual feelings create. Yet we have one unerring guide; one given us at our birth, and which He who died on the cross for us, taught us to understand and to appreciate, commanding us to make it the master-law of our lives. Call it love, charity, or sympathy; it is the best, the angelic portion of us. It teaches us to feel pain at others pain, joy in their joy. The more entirely we mingle our emotions with those of others, making our well or ill being depend on theirs, the more completely do we cast away selfishness, and approach the perfection of our nature.

"You are going to answer, perhaps to refute me — do not. Remember I am a woman, with a woman's tutelage in my early years, a woman's education in the world, which is that of the heart — alas! for us — not of the head. I have no school-learning, no logic — but simply the voice of my own soul which speaks within me.

"I try to forget, you force me back upon myself. You attack; and you beseech me to defend myself. So to do, I must dwell upon the sentiments of a heart, which is human, and therefore faulty, but which has neither guile nor malice in it.

"In my father's house — and when I wandered with my beloved outcast, I had no difficulty in perceiving, nor — God was so gracious to me — in fulfilling my duties. For, in childhood I was cherished and favoured by all; and when I became a wife, it was no wonder that I should love and idolize the most single-hearted, generous, and kindly being that ever trod the earth. To give myself away to him — to be a part of him — to feel that we were an harmonious one in this discordant world, was a happiness that falls to the lot of few: — defeat, chains, imprisonment — all these were but shows; the reality was deep in our hearts, invulnerable by any tyrant less remorseless than death. If this life were the sum and boundary of our being, I had possessed the consummation and fulfilment of happiness.

"But we are taught to believe that our existence here is but the stepping stone to another beyond, and that 'death is the beginning of life.' When we reach the summit of our desires, then we fall, and death comes to destroy. He was lost to me, my glory, and my good! Little could I avail to him now. The caresses, love, and watchful care, the obedience and the heart's sacrifice, of a poor thing who groped darkling upon earth, could avail nought to a spirit in Paradise. I was forced to feel that I was alone: and, as to me, to love is to exist, so in that dark hour, in the gaspings of my agony, I felt that I must die, if for ever divided from him who possessed my affections.

"Years have passed since then. If grief kills us not, we kill it. Not that I cease to grieve; for each hour, revealing to me how excelling and matchless the being was, who once was mine, but renews the pang with which I deplore my alien state upon earth. But such is God's will; I am doomed to a divided existence, and I submit. Meanwhile I am human; and human affections are the native, luxuriant growth of a heart, whose weakness it is, too eagerly, and too fondly, to seek objects on whom to expend its yearnings. My Richard's last act was to bestow me on his sister: it were impious to retract a gift made by the dying. We wept together — how long, and how bitterly — the loss of our loved one; and then together we turned to fulfil our duties. She had children; they became as dear to me as to her. Margaret I cherish as the betrothed bride of my ever dear cousin, the King of Scotland; and, when I endeavour to foster the many virtues nature has implanted in the noble mind of Prince Arthur, I am fulfilling, methinks, a task grateful in the eyes of Richard, thus doing my part to bestow on the England he loved, a sovereign who will repair the usurper's crimes, and bestow happiness on the realm.

"Nor is this all — despise me if you will, but I confess that I regard others among those with whom I associate, with a clinging affection that forbids me to separate myself from them. Did I not love the noble and good, even as he did, while Richard lived? Does he not now, in his heavenly abode, love them? And must my living heart be stone, because that dear form is dust, which was the medium of my communication with his spirit? Where I see suffering, there I must bring my mite for its relief. We are not deities to bestow in impassive benevolence. We give, because we love — and the meshes of that sweet web, which mutual good offices and sympathy weaves, entangle and enthral me, and force me to pain and pleasure, and to every variety of emotion which is the portion of those whom it holds within its folds.

"I quarrel not with — I admire — those who can be good and benevolent, and yet keep their hearts to themselves, the shrine of worship for God, an haven which no wind can enter. I am not one of these, and yet take no shame therefore: I feel my many weaknesses, and know that some of these form a part of my strength; the reviled part of our nature being a portion of that which elevates us to the godlike. My reason, my sense of duty, my conscientious observance of its dictates, you will set up as the better part; but I venerate also the freer impulses of our souls. My passions, my susceptible imagination, my faltering dependence on others, my clinging to the sense of joy — this makes an integral part of Katherine, nor the worst part of her. When my soul quits this 'bower of flesh,' these leaves and flowers, which are perhaps the growth of it, may decay and die. I know not; as it is, I am content to be an imperfect creature, so that I never lose the ennobling attribute of my species, the constant endeavour to be more perfect.

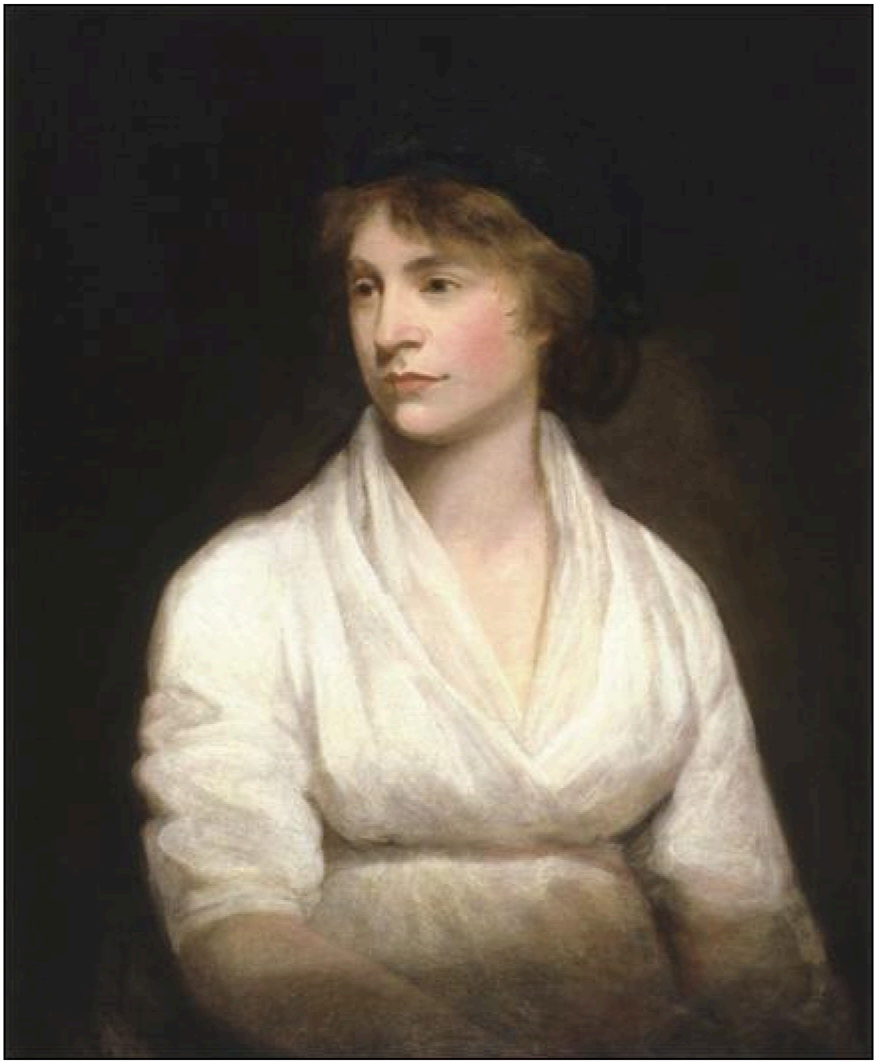
"I do not blame you, my Cousin, for seeking repose in solitude after much endurance. But unquiet should I feel in the unreplying loneliness, which forms your peace. I must love and be loved. I must feel that my dear and chosen friends are happier through me. When I have wandered out of myself in my endeavour to shed pleasure around, I must again return Isden with the gathered sweets on which I feed and live. Permit this to be, unblamed — permit a heart whose sufferings have been, and are, so many and so bitter, to reap what joy it can from the strong necessity it feels to be sympathized with — to love."

THE END

LODORE

Lodore was also known under the title *The Beautiful Widow* and is Shelley's penultimate novel, completed in 1833 and published by Richard Bentley in 1835. The three volume book was well received by many critics at the time and it focuses on the issue of women's education and the importance of the role that women play in attempting to create social justice. When Lord Lodore is beset with jealously over one of his wife's admirers, he moves from England to the American wilderness with his daughter Ethel. After being persuaded to return home Lodore is killed in a duel and Ethel arrives in England to an estranged mother and subsequently undergoes a difficult marriage to a poor husband. The father, daughter and lover dynamic that Shelley deplored in *Matilda* is recreated here but to significantly different ends. The novel also allows Shelley to question whether the possibility of reconciliation between a mother and daughter is achievable and explores elements of that central relationship, which Shelley was denied due to her own mother's death during child birth.

After Lodore's demise the narrative focuses on the fortunes of his wife Cornelia, and Ethel and Fanny Derham who serve as a contrast to both of them. The subject of women's education is raised in the text and affects the behaviour, interests and the level of dependency of the three central female characters. While the novel has been accused of being conservative and sentimental, there are clear echoes of Mary Wollstonecraft's seminal feminist text '*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*' with regards to the need to create an egalitarian education system for men and women. The novel appears to support the notion that women must be educated properly to be able to make choices and avoid the dangers of paternal dependency.



Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) was a philosopher and advocate of women's rights. During her brief career, she wrote novels, treatises, a travel narrative, a history of the French Revolution, a conduct book and a children's book.

CONTENTS

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.

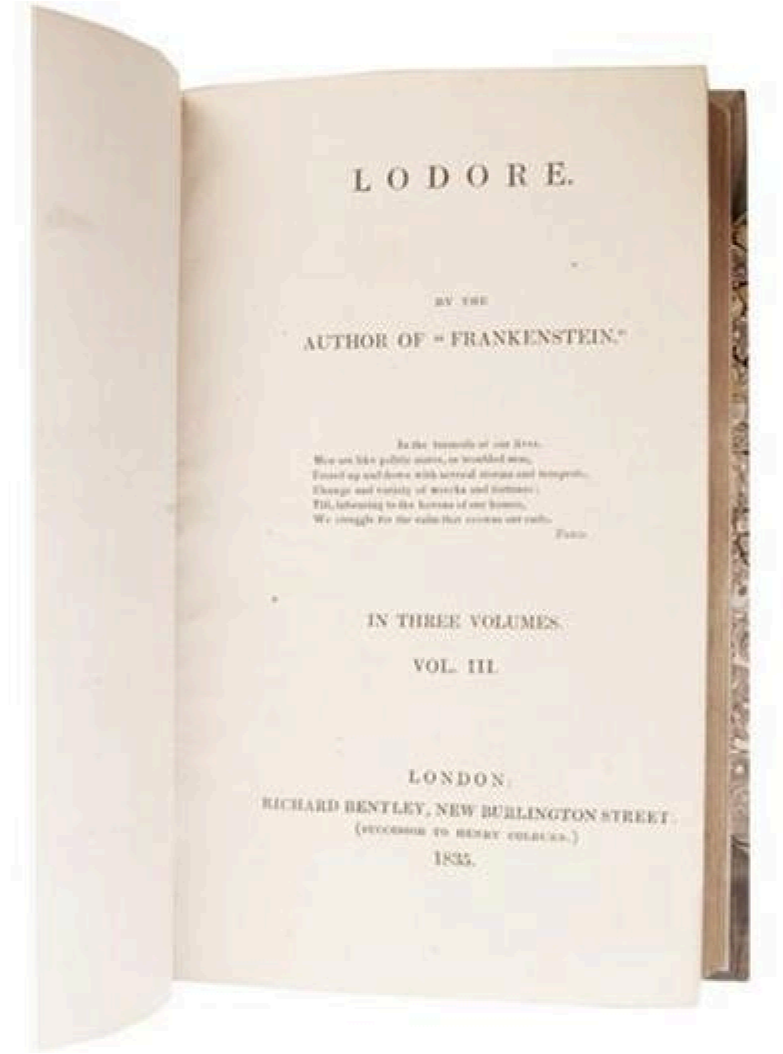
VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVII.
CHAPTER XVIII.

VOL. III.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.
CHAPTER XX.
CONCLUSION.



LODORE.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)
1835.

Inside the first edition

VOLUME I.

In the turmoil of our lives.
Men are like politic states, or troubled seas.
Tossed up and down with several storms and tempests.
Change and variety of wrecks and fortunes;
Till, labouring to the havens of our homes.
We struggle for the calm that crowns our ends.
— Ford

CHAPTER I.

Absent or dead, still let a friend be dear.
A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear.
— Pope.

In the flattest and least agreeable part of the county of Essex, about five miles from the sea, is situated a village or small town, which may be known in these pages by the name of Longfield. Longfield is distant eight miles from any market town, but the simple inhabitants, limiting their desires to their means of satisfying them, are scarcely aware of the kind of desert in which they are placed. Although only fifty miles from London, few among them have ever seen the metropolis. Some claim that distinction from having visited cousins in Lothbury and viewed the lions in the tower. There is a mansion belonging to a wealthy nobleman within four miles, never inhabited, except when a parliamentary election is going forward. No one of any pretension to consequence resided in this secluded nook, except the honourable Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry; she ought to have been the shining star of the place, and she was only its better angel. Benevolent, gentle, and unassuming, this fair sprig of nobility had lived from youth to age in the abode of her forefathers, making a part of this busy world, only through the kindliness of her disposition, and her constant affection for one who was far away.

The mansion of the Fitzhenry family, which looked upon the village green, was wholly incommensurate to our humblest ideas of what belongs to nobility; yet it stood in solitary splendour, the Great House of Longfield. From time immemorial, its possessors had been the magnates of the village; half of it belonged to them, and the whole voted according to their wishes. Cut off from the rest of the world, they claimed here a consideration and a deference, which, with the moderate income of fifteen hundred a-year, they would have vainly sought elsewhere.

There was a family tradition, that a Fitzhenry had sat in parliament; but the time arrived, when they were to rise to greater distinction. The father of the lady, whose name has been already introduced, enjoyed all the privileges attendant on being an only child. Extraordinary efforts were made for his education. He was placed with a clergyman near Harwich, and imbibed in that neighbourhood so passionate a love for the sea, that, though tardily and with regret, his parents at last permitted him to pursue a naval career. He became a brave, a clever, and a lucky officer. In a contested election, his father was the means of insuring the success of the government candidate, and the promotion of his son followed. Those were the glorious days of the English navy, towards the close of the American war; and when that war terminated, and the admiral, now advanced considerably beyond middle life, returned to the Sabine farm, of which he had, by course of descent, become proprietor, he returned adorned with the rank of a peer of the realm, and with sufficient wealth to support respectably the dignity of the baronial title.

Yet an obscure fate pursued the house of Fitzhenry, even in its ennobled condition. The new lord was proud of his elevation, as a merited reward; but next to the deck of his ship, he loved the tranquil precincts of his paternal mansion, and here he spent his latter days in peace. Midway in life, he had married the daughter of the rector of Longfield. Various fates had attended the offspring of this union; several died, and at the time of his being created a peer, Lord found himself a widower, with two children. Elizabeth, who had been born twelve years before, and Henry, whose recent birth had cost the life of his hapless and lamented mother.

But those days were long since passed away; and the first Lord , with most of his generation, was gathered to his ancestors. To the new-sprung race that filled up the vacant ranks, his daughter Elizabeth appeared a somewhat ancient but most amiable maiden, whose gentle melancholy was not (according to innumerable precedents in the traditions regarding unmarried ladies) attributed to an ill-fated attachment, but to the disasters that had visited her house, and still clouded the fortunes of her family. What these misfortunes originated from, or even in what they consisted, was not exactly known; especially at Longfield, whose inhabitants were no adepts in the gossip of the metropolis. It was believed that Mrs. Elizabeth’s brother still lived; that some very strange circumstances had attended his career in life, was known; but conjecture fell lame when it tried to proceed beyond these simple facts: it was whispered, as a wonder and a secret, that though Lord Lodore was far away, no one knew where, his lady (as the Morning Post testified in its lists of fashionable arrivals and fashionable parties) was a frequent visitor to London. Once or twice the bolder gossips, male or female, had resolved to sound (as they called it) Mrs. Elizabeth on the subject. But the fair spinster, though innoffensive to a proverb, and gentle beyond the wont of her gentle sex, was yet gifted with a certain dignity of manner, and a quiet reserve, that checked these good people at their very outset.

Henry Fitzhenry was spoken of by a few of the last generation, as having been a fine, bold, handsome boy — generous, proud, and daring; he was remembered, when as a youth he departed for the continent, as riding fearlessly the best hunter in the field, and attracting the admiration of the village maidens at church by his tall elegant figure and dark eyes; or, when he chanced to accost them, by a nameless fascination of manner, joined to a voice whose thrilling silver tones stirred the listener's heart unaware. He left them like a dream, nor appeared again till after his father's death, when he paid his sister a brief visit. There was then something singularly grave and abstracted about him. When he rode, it was not among the hunters, though it was soft February weather, but in the solitary lanes, or with lightning speed over the moors, when the sun was setting and shadows gathered round the landscape.

Again, some years after, he had appeared among them. He was then married, and Lady accompanied him. They stayed but three days. There was something of fiction in the way in which the appearance of the lady was recorded. An angel bright with celestial hues, breathing heaven, and spreading a halo of calm and light around, as it winged swift way amidst the dusky children of earth: such ideas seemed to appertain to the beautiful apparition, remembered as Lord Lodore's wife. She was so young, that time played with her as a favourite child; so etherial in look, that the language of flowers could alone express the delicate fairness of her skin, or the tints that sat upon her cheek: so light in motion, and so graceful. To talk of eye or lip, of height or form, or even of the colour of her hair, the villagers could not, for they had been dazzled by an assemblage of charms before undreamt of by them. Her voice won adoration, and her smile was as the sudden withdrawing of a curtain displaying paradise upon earth. Her lord's tall, manly figure, was recollected but as a back-ground — a fitting one — and that was all they would allow to him — for this resplendent image. Nor was it remembered that any excessive attachment was exhibited between them.

She had appeared indeed but as a vision — a creature from another sphere, hastily gazing on an unknown world, and lost before they could mark more than that void came again, and she was gone.

Since that time, Lord had been lost to Longfield. Some few months after Mrs. Elizabeth visited London on occasion of a christening, and then after a long interval, it was observed, that she never mentioned her brother, and that the name of his wife acted as a spell, to bring an expression of pain over her sedate features. Much talk circulated, and many blundering rumours went their course through the village, and then faded like smoke in the clear air. Some mystery there was — Lodore was gone — his place vacant: he lived; yet his name, like those of the dead, haunted only the memories of men, and was allied to no act or circumstance of present existence. He was forgotten, and the inhabitants of Longfield, returning to their obscurity, proceeded in their daily course, almost as happy as if they had had their lord among them, to vary the incidents of their quiet existence with the proceedings of the "Great House."

Yet his sister remembered him. In her heart his image was traced indelibly — limned in the colours of life. His form visited her dreams, and was the unseen, yet not mute, companion of her solitary musings. Years stole on, casting their clouding shadows on her cheek, and stealing the colour from her hair, but Henry, but , was before her in bright youth — her brother — her pride — her hope. To muse on the possibility of his return, to read the few letters that reached her from him, till their brief sentences seemed to imply volumes of meaning, was the employment that made winter nights short, summer days swift in their progress. This dreamy kind of existence, added to the old-fashioned habits which a recluse who lives in a state of singleness is sure to acquire, made her singularly unlike the rest of the world — causing her to be a child in its ways, and inexpert to detect the craftiness of others.

, in exile and obscurity, was in her eyes, the first of human beings; she looked forward to the hour, when he would blaze upon the world with renewed effulgence, as to a religious promise. How well did she remember, how in grace of person, how in expression of countenance, and dignity of manner, he transcended all those whom she saw during her visit to London, on occasion of the memorable christening: that from year to year this return was deferred, did not tire her patience, nor diminish her regrets. He never grew old to her — never lost the lustre of early manhood; and when the boyish caprice which kept him afar was sobered, so she framed her thoughts, by the wisdom of time, he would return again to bless her and to adorn the world. The lapse of twelve years did not change this notion, nor the fact that, if she had cast up an easy sum in arithmetic, the parish register would have testified, her brother had now reached the mature age of fifty.

CHAPTER II.

Settled in some secret nest.
In calm leisure let me rest;
And far off the public stage.
Pass away my silent age.
— Seneca. Marvell's Trans.

Twelve years previous to the opening of this tale, an English gentleman, advanced to middle age, accompanied by an infant daughter, and her attendant, arrived at a settlement in the district of the Illinois in North America. It was at the time when this part of the country first began to be cleared, and a new comer, with some show of property, was considered a welcome acquisition. Still the settlement was too young, and the people were too busy in securing for themselves the necessaries of life, for much attention to be paid to any thing but the "overt acts" of the stranger — the number of acres which he bought, which were few, the extent of his clearings, and the number of workmen that he employed, both of which were, proportionately to his possession in land, on a far larger scale than that of any of his fellow colonists. Like magic, a commodious house was raised on a small height that embanked the swift river — every vestige of forest disappeared from its immediate vicinity, replaced by agricultural cultivation, and a garden bloomed in the wilderness. His labourers were many, and golden harvests shone in his fields, while the dark forest, or untilled plain, seemed yet to set at defiance the efforts of his fellow settlers; and at the same time comforts of so civilized a description, that the Americans termed them luxuries, appeared in the abode and reigned in the domestic arrangements of the Englishman, although to his eye every thing was regulated by the strictest regard to republican plainness and simplicity.

He did not mingle much in the affairs of the colony, yet his advice was always to be commanded, and his assistance was readily afforded. He superintended the operations carried on on his own land; and it was observed that they differed often both from American and English modes of agriculture. When questioned, he detailed practices in Poland and Hungary, and gave his reasons why he thought them applicable to the soil in question. Many of these experiments of course failed; others were eminently successful. He did not shun labour of any sort. He joined the hunting parties, and made one on expeditions that went out to explore the neighbouring wilds, and the haunts of the native Indians. He gave money for the carrying on any necessary public work, and came forward willingly when called upon for any useful purpose. In any time of difficulty or sorrow — on the overflowing of the stream, or the failure of a crop, he was earnest in his endeavours to aid and to console. But with all this, there was an insurmountable barrier between him and the other inhabitants of the colony. He never made one at their feasts, nor mingled in the familiar communications of daily life; his dwelling, situated at the distance of a full mile from the village, removed him from out of the very hearing of their festivities and assemblies. He might labour in common with others, but his pleasures were all solitary, and he preserved the utmost independence as far as regarded the sacred privacy of his abode, and the silence he kept in all concerns regarding himself alone.

At first the settlement had to struggle with all the difficulties attendant on colonization. It grew rapidly, however, and bid fair to become a busy and large town, when it met with a sudden check. A new spot was discovered, a few miles distant, possessing peculiar advantages for commercial purposes. An active, enterprising man engaged himself in the task of establishing a town there on a larger scale and with greater pretensions. He succeeded, and its predecessor sunk at once into insignificance. It was matter of conjecture among them whether Mr. Fitzhenry (so was named the English stranger) would remove to the vicinity of the more considerable town, but no such idea seemed to have occurred to him. Probably he rejoiced in an accident that tended to render his abode so entirely secluded. At first the former town rapidly declined, and many a log hut fell to ruin; but at last, having sunk into the appearance and name of a village, it continued to exist, bearing few marks of that busy enterprising stir which usually characterizes a new settlement in America. The ambitious and scheming had deserted it — it was left to those who courted tranquillity, and desired the necessaries of life without the hope of great future gain. It acquired an almost old-fashioned appearance. The houses began to look weatherworn, and none with fresh faces sprung up to shame them. Extensive clearings, suddenly checked, gave entrance to the forests, without the appendages of a manufacture or a farm. The sound of the axe was seldom heard, and primeval quiet again took possession of the wild. Meanwhile Mr. Fitzhenry continued to adorn his dwelling with imported conveniences, the result of European art, and to spend much time and labour in making his surrounding land assume somewhat of the appearance of pleasure-ground.

He lived in peace and solitude, and seemed to enjoy the unchanging tenor of his life. It had not always been so. During the first three or four years of his arrival in America, he had evidently been unquiet in his mind, and dissatisfied with the scene around him. He gave directions to his workmen, but did not overlook their execution. He took great pains to secure a horse, whose fiery spirit and beautiful form might satisfy a fastidious connoisseur. Having with much trouble and expense got several animals of English breed together, he was perpetually seen mounted and forcing his way amid the forest land, or galloping over the unincumbered country. Sadness sat on his brow, and dwelt in eyes, whose dark large orbs were peculiarly expressive of tenderness and melancholy, “Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi.” Often, when in conversation on uninteresting topics, some keen sensation would pierce his heart, his voice faltered, and an expression of unspeakable wretchedness was imprinted on his countenance, mastered after a momentary struggle, yet astounding to the person he might be addressing. Generally on such occasions he would seize an immediate opportunity to break away and to remain alone. He had been seen, believing himself unseen, making passionate gestures, and heard uttering some wild exclamations. Once or twice he had wandered away into the woods, and not returned for several days, to the exceeding terror of his little household. He evidently sought loneliness, there to combat unobserved with the fierce enemy that dwelt within his breast. On such occasions, when intruded upon and disturbed, he was irritated to fury. His resentment was expressed in terms ill-adapted to republican equality — and no one could doubt that in his own country he had filled a high station in society, and been educated in habits of command, so that he involuntarily looked upon himself as of a distinct and superior race to the human beings that each day crossed his path. In general, however, this was only shown by a certain loftiness of demeanour and cold abstraction, which might annoy, but could not be resented. Any ebullition of temper he was not backward to atone for by apology, and to compensate by gifts.

There was no tinge of misanthropy in Fitzhenry's disposition. Even while he shrunk from familiar communication with the rude and unlettered, he took an interest in their welfare. His benevolence was active, his compassion readily afforded. It was quickness of feeling, and not apathy, that made him shy and retired. Sensibility checked and crushed, an ardent thirst for sympathy which could not be allayed in the wildernesses of America, begot a certain appearance of coldness, altogether deceptive. He concealed his sufferings — he abhorred that they should be pryed into; but this reserve was not natural to him, and it added to the misery which his state of banishment occasioned. "Quiet to quick bosoms is a hell." And so was it with him. His passions were powerful, and had been ungoverned. He writhed beneath the dominion of sameness; and tranquillity, allied to loneliness, possessed no charms. He groaned beneath the chains that fettered him to the spot, where he was withering in inaction. They caused unutterable throes and paroxysms of despair. Ennui, the dæmon, waited at the threshold of his noiseless refuge, and drove away the stirring hopes and enlivening expectations, which form the better part of life. Sensibility in such a situation is a curse: men become "cannibals of their own hearts;" remorse, regret, and restless impatience usurp the place of more wholesome feeling: every thing seems better than that which is; and solitude becomes a sort of tangible enemy, the more dangerous, because it dwells within the citadel itself. Borne down by such emotions, Fitzhenry was often about to yield to the yearnings of his soul, and to fly from repose into action, however accompanied by strife and wretchedness; to leave America, to return to Europe, and to face at once all the evils which he had journeyed so far to escape. He did not — he remained. His motives for flight returned on him with full power after any such paroxysm, and held him back. He despised himself for his hesitation. He had made his choice, and would abide by it. He was not so devoid of manliness as to be destitute of fortitude, or so dependent a wretch as not to have resources in himself. He would cultivate these, and obtain that peace which it had been his boast that he should experience.

It came at last. Time and custom accomplished their task, and he became reconciled to his present mode of existence. He grew to love his home in the wilderness. It was all his own creation, and the pains and thought he continued to bestow upon it, rendered it doubly his. The murmur of the neighbouring river became the voice of a friend; it welcomed him on his return from any expedition; and he hailed the first echo of it that struck upon his ear from afar, with a thrill of joy.

Peace descended upon his soul. He became enamoured of the independence of solitude, and the sublime operations of surrounding nature. All further attempts at cultivation having ceased in his neighbourhood, from year to year nothing changed, except at the bidding of the months, in obedience to the varying seasons; — nothing changed, except that the moss grew thicker and greener upon the logs that supported his roof, that the plants he cultivated increased in strength and beauty, and that the fruit-trees yielded their sweet produce in greater abundance. The improvements he had set on foot displayed in their progress the taste and ingenuity of their projector; and as the landscape became more familiar, so did a thousand associations twine themselves with its varied appearances, till the forests and glades became as friends and companions.

As he learnt to be contented with his lot, the inequalities of humour, and singularities of conduct, which had at first attended him, died away. He had grown familiar with the persons of his fellow-colonists, and their various fortunes interested him. Though he could find no friend, tempered like him, like him nursed in the delicacies and fastidiousness of the societies of the old world; — though he, a china vase, dreaded too near a collision with the brazen ones around; yet, though he could not give his confidence, or unburthen the treasure of his soul, he could approve of, and even feel affection for several among them. Personal courage, honesty, and frankness, were to be found among the men; simplicity and kindness among the women. He saw instances of love and devotion in members of families, that made him sigh to be one of them; and the strong sense and shrewd observations of many of the elder settlers exercised his understanding. They opened, by their reasonings and conversation, a new source of amusement, and presented him with another opiate for his too busy memory.

Fitzhenry had been a patron of the fine arts; and thus he had loved books, poetry, and the elegant philosophy of the ancients. But he had not been a student. His mind was now in a fit state to find solace in reading, and excitement in the pursuit of knowledge. At first he sent for a few books, such as he wished immediately to consult, from New York, and made slight additions to the small library of classical literature he had originally brought with him on his emigration. But when once the desire to instruct himself was fully aroused in his mind, he became aware how slight and inadequate his present library was, even for the use of one man. Now each quarter brought chests of a commodity he began to deem the most precious upon earth. Beings with human forms and human feelings he had around him; but, as if made of coarser, half-kneaded clay, they wanted the divine spark of mind and the polish of taste. He had pined for these, and now they were presented to him. Books became his friends: they, when rightly questioned, could answer to his thoughts. Plato could elevate, Epictetus calm, his soul. He could revel with Ovid in the imagery presented by a graceful, though voluptuous imagination; and hang enchanted over the majesty and elegance of Virgil. Homer was as a dear and revered friend — Horace a pleasant companion. English, Italian, German, and French, all yielded their stores in turn; and the abstruse sciences were often a relaxation to a mind, whose chief bane was its dwelling too entirely upon one idea. He made a study, also, of the things peculiarly befitting his present situation; and he rose in the estimation of those around, as they became aware of his talents and his knowledge.

Study and occupation restored to his heart self-complacency, which is an ingredient so necessary to the composition of human happiness. He felt himself to be useful, and knew himself to be honoured. He no longer asked himself, “Why do I live?” or looked on the dark, rapid waves, and longed for the repose that was in their gift. The blood flowed equably in his veins; a healthy temperance regulated his hopes and wishes. He could again bless God for the boon of existence, and look forward to future years, if not with eager anticipation, yet with a calm reliance upon the power of good, wholly remote from despair.

CHAPTER III.

Miranda. — Alack! what trouble
Was I then to you!
Prospero. — O, a cherubim
Thou wast, that did preserve me!
— The Tempest.

Such was the Englishman who had taken refuge in the furthest wilds of an almost untenanted portion of the globe. Like a Corinthian column, left single amidst the ruder forms of the forest oaks, standing in alien beauty, a type of civilization and the arts, among the rougher, though perhaps not less valuable, growth of Nature's own. Refined to fastidiousness, sensitive to morbidity, the stranger was respected without being understood, and loved though the intimate of none.

Many circumstances have been mentioned as tending to reconcile Fitzhenry to his lot; and yet one has been omitted, chiefest of all; — the growth and development of his child was an inexhaustible source of delight and occupation. She was scarcely three years old when her parent first came to the Illinois. She was then a plaything and an object of solicitude to him, and nothing more. Much as her father loved her, he had not then learned to discover the germ of the soul just nascent in her infant form; nor to watch the formation, gradual to imperceptibility, of her childish ideas. He would watch over her as she slept, and gaze on her as she sported in the garden, with ardent and unquiet fondness; and, from time to time, instil some portion of knowledge into her opening mind: but this was all done by snatches, and at intervals. His affection for her was the passion of his soul; but her society was not an occupation for his thoughts. He would have knelt to kiss her footsteps as she bounded across the grass, and tears glistened in his eyes as she embraced his knees on his return from any excursion; but her prattle often wearied him, and her very presence was sometimes the source of intense pain.

He did not know himself how much he loved her, till she became old enough to share his excursions and be a companion. This occurred at a far earlier age than would have been the case had she been in England, living in a nursery with other children. There is a peculiarity in the education of a daughter, brought up by a father only, which tends to develop early a thousand of those portions of mind, which are folded up, and often destroyed, under mere feminine tuition. He made her fearless, by making her the associate of his rides; yet his incessant care and watchfulness, the observant tenderness of his manner, almost reverential on many points, springing from the differences of sex, tended to soften her mind, and make her spirit ductile and dependent. He taught her to scorn pain, but to shrink with excessive timidity from any thing that intrenched on the barrier of womanly reserve which he raised about her. Nothing was dreaded, indeed, by her, except his disapprobation; and a word or look from him made her, with all her childish vivacity and thoughtlessness, turn as with a silken string, and bend at once to his will.

There was an affectionateness of disposition kneaded up in the very texture of her soul, which gave it its “very form and pressure.” It accompanied every word and action; it revealed itself in her voice, and hung like light over the expression of her countenance.

Her earliest feeling was love of her father. She would sit to watch him, guess at his thoughts, and creep close, or recede away, as she read encouragement, or the contrary, in his eyes and gestures. Except him, her only companion was her servant; and very soon she distinguished between them, and felt proud and elate when she quitted her for her father’s side. Soon, she almost never quitted it. Her gentle and docile disposition rendered her unobtrusive, while her inexhaustible spirits were a source of delightful amusement. The goodness of her heart endeared her still more; and when it was called forth by any demand made on it by him, it was attended by such a display of excessive sensibility, as at once caused him to tremble for her future happiness, and love her ten thousand times more. She grew into the image on which his eye doated, and for whose presence his heart perpetually yearned. Was he reading, or otherwise occupied, he was restless, if yet she were not in the room; and she would remain in silence for hours, occupied by some little feminine work, and all the while watching him, catching his first glance towards her, and obeying the expression of his countenance, before he could form his wish into words. When he left her for any of his longer excursions, her little heart would heave, and almost burst with sorrow. On his return, she was always on the watch to see, to fly into his arms, and to load him with infantine caresses.

There was something in her face, that at this early age gave token of truth and affection, and asked for sympathy. Her large brown eyes, such as are called hazel, full of tenderness and sweetness, possessed within their depths an expression and a latent fire, which stirred the heart. It is difficult to describe, or by words to call before another's mind, the picture so palpable to our own. The moulding of her cheek, full just below the eyes, and ending in a soft oval, gave a peculiar expression, at once beseeching and tender, and yet radiant with vivacity and gladness. Frankness and truth were reflected on her brow, like flowers in the clearest pool; the thousand nameless lines and mouldings, which create expression, were replete with beaming innocence and irresistible attraction. Her small chiselled nose, her mouth so delicately curved, gave token of taste. In the whole was harmony, and the upper part of the countenance seemed to reign over the lower and to ennoble it, making her usual placid expression thoughtful and earnest; so that not until she smiled and spoke, did the gaiety of her guileless heart display itself, and the vivacity of her disposition give change and relief to the picture. Her figure was light and airy, tall at an early age, and slender. Her rides and rambles gave elasticity to her limbs, and her step was like that of the antelope, springy and true. She had no fears, no deceit, no untold thought within her. Her matchless sweetness of temper prevented any cloud from ever dimming her pure loveliness: her voice cheered the heart, and her laugh rang so true and joyous on the ear, that it gave token in itself of the sympathizing and buoyant spirit which was her great charm. Nothing with her centred in self; she was always ready to give her soul away: to please her father was the unsleeping law of all her actions, while his approbation imparted a sense of such pure but entire happiness, that every other feeling faded into insignificance in the comparison.

In the first year of exile and despair, Fitzhenry looked forward to the long drawn succession of future years, with an impatience of woe difficult to be borne. He was surprised to find, as he proceeded in the quiet path of life which he had selected, that instead of an increase of unhappiness, a thousand pleasures smiled around him. He had looked on it as a bitter task to forget that he had a name and country, both abandoned for ever; now, the thought of these seldom recurred to his memory. His forest home became all in all to him. Wherever he went, his child was by his side, to cheer and enliven him. When he looked on her, and reflected that within her frame dwelt spotless innocence and filial piety, that within that lovely “bower of flesh,” not one thought or feeling resided that was not akin to heaven in its purity and sweetness, he, as by infection, acquired a portion of the calm enjoyment, which she in her taintless youth naturally possessed.

Even when any distant excursion forced him to absent himself, her idea followed him to light him cheerily on his way. He knew that he should find her on his return busied in little preparations for his welcome. In summer time, the bower in the garden would be adorned; in the inclement season of winter the logs would blaze on the hearth, his chair be drawn towards the fire, the stool for Ethel at his feet, with nothing to remind him of the past, save her dear presence, which drew its greatest charm, not from that, but from the present. Fitzhenry forgot the thousand delights of civilization, for which formerly his heart had painfully yearned. He forgot ambition, and the enticements of gay vanity; peace and security appeared the greatest blessings of life, and he had them here.

Ethel herself was happy beyond the knowledge of her own happiness. She regretted nothing in the old country. She grew up among the grandest objects of nature, and they were the sweet influences to excite her to love and to a sense of pleasure. She had come to the Illinois attended by a black woman and her daughter, whom her father had engaged to attend her at New York, and had been sedulously kept away from communication with the settlers — an arrangement which it would have been difficult to bring about elsewhere, but in this secluded and almost deserted spot the usual characteristics of the Americans were scarcely to be found. Most of the inhabitants were emigrants from Scotland, a peaceable, hard-working population.

Ethel lived alone in their lonely dwelling. Had she been of a more advanced age when taken from England, her curiosity might have been excited by the singularity of her position; but we rarely reason about that which has remained unchanged since infancy; taking it as a part of the immutable order of things, we yield without a question to its controul. Ethel did not know that she was alone. Her attendants she was attached to, and she idolized her father; his image filled all her little heart. Playmate she had none, save a fawn and a kid, a dog grown old in her service, and a succession of minor favourites of the animal species.

It was Fitzhenry's wish to educate his daughter to all the perfection of which the feminine character is susceptible. As the first step, he cut her off from familiar communication with the unrefined, and, watching over her with the fondest care, kept her far aloof from the very knowledge of what might, by its baseness or folly, contaminate the celestial beauty of her nature. He resolved to make her all that woman can be of generous, soft, and devoted; to purge away every alloy of vanity and petty passion — to fill her with honour, and yet to mould her to the sweetest gentleness: to cultivate her tastes and enlarge her mind, yet so to controul her acquirements, as to render her ever pliant to his will. She was to be lifted above every idea of artifice or guile, or the caballing spirit of the worldling — she was to be single-hearted, yet mild. A creature half poetry, half love — one whose pure lips had never been tainted by an untruth — an enthusiastic being, who could give her life away for the sake of another, and yet who honoured herself as a consecrated thing reserved for one worship alone. She was taught that no misfortune should penetrate her soul, except such as visited her affections, or her sense of right; and that, set apart from the vulgar uses of the world, she was connected with the mass only through another — that other, now her father and only friend — hereafter, whosoever her heart might select as her guide and head. Fitzhenry drew his chief ideas from Milton's Eve, and adding to this the romance of chivalry, he satisfied himself that his daughter would be the embodied ideal of all that is adorable and estimable in her sex.

The instructor can scarcely give sensibility where it is essentially wanting, nor talent to the unpercipient block. But he can cultivate and detect the affections of the pupil, who puts forth, as a parasite, tendrils by which to cling, not knowing to what — to a supporter or a destroyer. The careful rearer of the ductile human plant can instil his own religion, and surround the soul by such a moral atmosphere, as shall become to its latest day the air it breathes. Ethel, from her delicate organization and quick parts, was sufficiently plastic in her father's hands. When not with him, she was the playmate of nature. Her birds and pet animals — her untaught but most kind nurse, were her associates: she had her flowers to watch over, her music, her drawings, and her books. Nature, wild, interminable, sublime, was around her. The ceaseless flow of the brawling stream, the wide-spread forest, the changes of the sky, the career of the wide-winged clouds, when the winds drove them athwart the atmosphere, or the repose of the still, and stirless summer air, the stormy war of the elements, and the sense of trust and security amidst their loudest disturbances, were all circumstances to mould her even unconsciously to an admiration of all that is grand and beautiful.

A lofty sense of independence is, in man, the best privilege of his nature. It cannot be doubted, but that it were for the happiness of the other sex that she were taught more to rely on and act for herself. But in the cultivation of this feeling, the education of Fitzhenry was lamentably deficient. Ethel was taught to know herself dependent; the support of another was to be as necessary to her as her daily food. She leant on her father as a prop that could not fail, and she was wholly satisfied with her condition. Her peculiar disposition of course tinged Fitzhenry's theories with colours not always their own, and her entire want of experience in intercourse with her fellow-creatures, gave a more decided tone to her sense of dependence than she could have acquired, if the circumstances of her daily life had brought her into perpetual collision with others. She was habitually cheerful even to gaiety; yet her character was not devoid of petulence, which might become rashness or self-will if left to herself. She had a clear and upright spirit, and suspicion or unkindness roused her to indignation, or sunk her into the depths of sorrow. Place her in danger, and tell her she must encounter it, and she called up all her courage and became a heroine; but on less occasions, difficulties dismayed and annoyed her, and she longed to escape from them into that dreamy existence, for which her solitary mode of life had given her a taste: active in person, in mind she was too often indolent, and apt to think that while she was docile to the injunctions of her parent, all her duties were fulfilled. She seldom thought, and never acted, for herself.

With all this she was so caressingly affectionate, so cheerful and obedient, that she inspired her father with more than a father's fondness. He lived but for her and in her. Away, she was present to his imagination, the loadstone to draw him home, and to fill that home with pleasure. He exalted her in his fancy into angelic perfection, and nothing occurred to blot the fair idea. He in prospect gave up his whole life to the warding off every evil from her dear and sacred head. He knew, or rather believed, that while we possess one real, devoted, and perfect friend, we cannot be truly miserable. He said to himself — though he did not love to dwell on the thought — that of course cares and afflictions might hereafter befal her; but he was to stand the shield to blunt the arrows of sorrow — the shelter in which she might find refuge from every evil ministration. The worst ills of life, penury and desertion, she could never know; and surely he, who would stand so fast by her through all — whose nightly dream and waking thought was for her good, would even, when led to form other connexions in life, so command her affections as to be able to influence her happiness.

Not being able to judge by comparison, Ethel was unaware of the peculiarity of her good fortune in possessing such a father. But she loved him entirely; looked up to him, and saw in him the reward of every exertion, the object of each day's employment. In early youth we have no true notion of what the realities of life are formed, and when we look forward it is without any correct estimate of the chances of existence. Ethel's visionary ideas were all full of peace, seclusion, and her father. America, or rather the little village of the Illinois which she inhabited, was all the world to her; and she had no idea that nearly every thing that connected her to society existed beyond the far Atlantic, in that tiny isle which made so small a show upon her maps. Fitzhenry never mentioned these things to his daughter. She arrived at the age of fifteen without forming a hope that should lead her beyond the pale which had hitherto enclosed her, or having imagined that any train of circumstances might suddenly transplant her from the lonely wilderness to the thronged resorts of mankind.

CHAPTER IV.

Les deserts sont faits pour les amants, mais l'amour
ne se fait pas aux deserts.
— Le Barbier de Paris.

Twelve years had led Ethel from infancy to childhood; and from child's estate to the blooming season of girlhood. It had brought her father from the prime of a man's life, to the period when it began to decline. Our feelings probably are not less strong at fifty than they were ten or fifteen years before; but they have changed their objects, and dwell on far different prospects. At five-and-thirty a man thinks of what his own existence is; when the maturity of age has grown into its autumn, he is wrapt up in that of others. The loss of wife or child then becomes more deplorable, as being impossible to repair; for no fresh connexion can give us back the companion of our earlier years, nor a "new sprung race" compensate for that, whose career we hoped to see run. Fitzhenry had been a man of violent passions; they had visited his life with hurricane and desolation; — were these dead within him? The complacency that now distinguished his physiognomy seemed to vouch for internal peace. But there was an abstracted melancholy in his dark eyes — a look that went beyond the objects immediately before him, that seemed to say that he often anxiously questioned fate, and meditated with roused fears on the secrets of futurity.

Educating his child, and various other employments, had occupied and diverted him. He had been content; he asked for no change, but he dreaded it. Often when packets arrived from England he hesitated to open them. He could not account for his new-born anxieties. Was change approaching? "How long will you be at peace?" Such warning voice startled him in the solitude of the forests: he looked round, but no human being was near, yet the voice had spoken audibly to his sense; and when a transient air swept the dead leaves near, he shrunk as if a spirit passed, invisible to sight, and yet felt by the subtle atmosphere, as it gave articulation and motion to it.

"How long shall I be at peace?" A thrill ran through his veins. "Am I then now at peace? Do love, and hate, and despair, no longer wage their accustomed war in my heart? and is it true that gently flowing as my days have lately been, that during their course I have not felt those mortal throes that once made life so intolerable a burthen? It is so. I am at peace; strange state for suffering mortality! And this is not to last? My daughter! there only am I vulnerable; yet have I surrounded her with a sevenfold shield. My own sweet Ethel! how can I avert from your dear head the dark approaching storm?

"But this is folly. These waking dreams are the curse of inaction and solitude. Yesterday I refused to accompany the exploring party. I will go — I am not old; fatigue, as yet, does not seem a burthen; but I shall sink into premature age, if I allow this indolence to overpower me. I will set out on this expedition, and thus I shall no longer be at peace." Fitzhenry smiled as if thus he were cheating destiny.

The proposed journey was one to be made by a party of his fellow-settlers, to trace the route between their town and a large one, two hundred miles off, to discover the best mode of communication. There was nothing very arduous in the undertaking. It was September, and hunting would diversify the tediousness of their way. Fitzhenry left his daughter under the charge of her attendants, to amuse herself with her books, her music, her gardening, her needle, and, more than all, her new and very favourite study of drawing and sketching. Hitherto the pencil had scarcely been one of her occupations; but an accident gave scope to her acquiring in it that improvement for which she found that she had prodigious inclination, and she was assured, no inconsiderable talent.

The occasion that had given rise to this new employment was this. Three or four months before, a traveller arrived for the purpose of settling, who claimed a rather higher intellectual rank than those around him. He was the son of an honest tradesman of the city of London. He displayed early signs of talent, and parental fondness gave him opportunities of cultivating it. The means of his family were small, but some of the boy's drawings having attracted the attention of an artist, he entered upon the profession of a painter, with sanguine hopes of becoming hereafter an ornament to it.

Two obstacles were in the way of his success. He wanted that intense love of his art — that enthusiastic perseverance in labour, which distinguishes the man of genius from the man of talent merely. He regarded it as a means, not an end. Probably therefore he did not feel that capacity in himself for attaining first-rate excellence, which had been attributed to him.

He had a taste also for social pleasures and vulgar indulgencies, incompatible with industry and with that refinement of mind which is so necessary an adjunct to the cultivation of the imaginative arts. Whitelock had none of all this; but he was quick, clever, and was looked on among his associates as a spirited, agreeable fellow. The death of his parents left him in possession of their little wealth: depending for the future on the resources which his talent promised him, he dissipated the two or three hundred pounds which formed his inheritance: debt, difficulties, with consequent abstraction from his profession, completed his ruin. He arrived at the Illinois in search of an uncle, on whose kindness he intended to depend, with six dollars in his purse. His uncle had long before disappeared from that part of the country. Whitelock found himself destitute. Neither his person, which was diminutive, nor his constitution, which was delicate, fitted him for manual labour; nor was he acquainted with any mechanic art. What could he do in America? He began to feel very deeply the inroads of despair, when hearing of the superior wealth of Mr. Fitzhenry, and that he was an Englishman, he paid him a visit, feeling secure that he could interest him in his favour.

The emigrant's calculations were just. His distinguished countryman exerted himself to enable the young man to obtain a subsistence. He established him in a school, and gave him his best counsels how to proceed. Whitelock thanked him; commenced the most odious task of initiating the young Americans in the rudiments of knowledge, and sought meanwhile to amuse himself to the best of his power. Fitzhenry's house he first made his resort. He was not to be baffled by the reserved courtesy of his host. The comfort and English appearance of the exile's dwelling were charming to him; and while he could hear himself talk, he fancied that every one about him must be satisfied. Fitzhenry was excessively annoyed. There was an innate vulgarity in his visitant, and an unlicensed familiarity that jarred painfully with the refined habits of his sensitive nature. Still, in America he had been forced to tolerate even worse than this, and he bore Whitelock's intrusions as well as he could, seeking only to put such obstacles in the way of his too frequent visits, as would best serve to curtail them. Whitelock's chief merit was his talent; he had a real eye for the outward forms of nature, for the tints in which she loves to robe herself, and the beauty in which she is for ever invested. He occupied himself by sketching the surrounding scenery, and gave life and interest to many a savage glade and solitary nook, which, till he came, had not been discovered to be picturesque. Ethel regarded his drawings with wonder and delight, and easily obtained permission from her father to take lessons in the captivating art. Fitzhenry thought that of all occupations, that of the pencil, if pursued earnestly and with real taste, most conduced to the student's happiness. Its scope is not personal display, as is the case most usually with music, and yet it has a visible result which satisfies the mind that something has been done. It does not fatigue the attention like the study of languages, yet it suffices to call forth the powers, and to fill the mind with pleasurable sensations. It is a most feminine occupation, well replacing, on a more liberal and rational scale, the tapestry of our grandmothers. Ethel had already shown a great inclination for design, and her father was glad of so favourable an opportunity for cultivating it. A few difficulties presented themselves. Whitelock had brought his own materials with him, but he possessed no superfluity — and they were not to be procured at the settlement. The artist offered to transfer them all for Ethel's convenience to her own abode, so that he might have free leave to occupy himself there also. Fitzhenry saw all the annoyances consequent on this plan, and it was finally arranged that his daughter should, three or four times a week, visit the school-house, and in a little room, built apart for her especial use, pursue her study.

The habit of seeing and instructing his lovely pupil awoke new ideas in Whitelock's fruitful brain. Who was Mr. Fitzhenry? What did he in the Illinois? Whitelock sounded him carefully, but gathered no information, except that this gentleman showed no intention of ever quitting the settlement. But this was much. He was evidently in easy circumstances — Ethel was his only child. She was here a garden-rose amidst briars, and Whitelock flattered himself that his position was not materially different. Could he succeed in the scheme that all these considerations suggested to him, his fortune was made, or, at least, he should bid adieu for ever to blockhead boys and the dull labours of instruction. As these views opened upon him, he took more pains to ingratiate himself with Fitzhenry. He became humble; he respectfully sought his advice — and while he contrived a thousand modes of throwing himself in his way, he appeared less intrusive than before — and yet he felt that he did not get on. Fitzhenry was kind to him, as a countryman in need of assistance; he admired his talent as an artist, but he shrunk from the smallest approach to intimacy. Whitelock hoped that he was only shy, but he feared that he was proud; he tried to break through the barrier of reserve opposed to him, and he became a considerable annoyance to the recluse. He waylaid him during his walks with his daughter — forced his company upon them, and forging a thousand obliging excuses for entering their dwelling, he destroyed the charm of their quiet evenings, and yet tempered his manners with such shows of humility and gratitude as Fitzhenry could not resist.

Whitelock next tried his battery on the young lady herself. Her passion for her new acquirement afforded scope for his enterprizing disposition. She was really glad to see him whenever he came; questioned him about the pictures which existed in the old world, and, with a mixture of wonder and curiosity, began to think that there was magic in an art, that produced the effects which he described. With all the enthusiasm of youth, she tried to improve herself, and the alacrity with which she welcomed her master, or hurried to his school, looked almost like — Whitelock could not exactly tell what, but here was ground to work upon.

When Fitzhenry went on the expedition already mentioned, Ethel gave up all her time, with renewed ardour, to her favourite pursuit. Early in the morning she was seen tripping down to the school-house, accompanied by her faithful negro woman. The attendant used her distaff and spindle, Ethel her brush, and the hours flew unheeded. Whitelock would have been glad that her eyes had not always been so intently fixed on the paper before her. He proposed sketching from nature. They made studies from trees, and contemplated the changing hues of earth and sky together. While talking of tints, and tones of colour spread over the celestial hemisphere and the earth beneath, were it not an easy transition to speak of those which glistened in a lady's eye, or warmed her cheek? In the solitude of his chamber, thus our adventurer reasoned; and wondered each night why he hesitated to begin. Whitelock was short and ill-made. His face was not of an agreeable cast: it was impossible to see him without being impressed with the idea that he was a man of talent; but he was otherwise decidedly ugly. This disadvantage was counterbalanced by an overweening vanity, which is often to be remarked in those whose personal defects place them a step below their fellows. He knew the value of an appearance of devotion, and the power which an acknowledgment of entire thraldom exercises over the feminine imagination. He had succeeded ill with the father; but, after all, the surest way was to captivate the daughter: the affection of her parent would induce him to ratify any step necessary to her happiness; and the chance afforded by this parent's absence for putting his plan into execution, might never again occur — why then delay?

It was, perhaps, strange that Fitzhenry, alive to the smallest evil that might approach his darling child, and devoted to her sole guardianship, should have been blind to the sort of danger which she ran during his absence. But the paternal protection is never entirely efficient. A father avenges an insult; but he has seldom watchfulness enough to prevent it. In the present instance, the extreme youth of Ethel might well serve as an excuse. She was scarcely fifteen; and, light-hearted and blithe, none but childish ideas had found place in her unruffled mind. Her father yet regarded her as he had done when she was wont to climb his knee, or to gambol before him: he still looked forward to her womanhood as to a distant event, which would necessitate an entire change in his mode of living, but which need not for several years enter into his calculations. Thus, when he departed, he felt glad to get rid, for a time, of Whitelock's disagreeable society; but it never crossed his imagination that his angelic girl could be annoyed or injured, meanwhile, by the presumptuous advances of a man whom he despised.

Ethel knew nothing of the language of love. She had read of it in her favourite poets; but she was yet too young and guileless to apply any of its feelings to herself. Love had always appeared to her blended with the highest imaginative beauty and heroism, and thus was in her eyes, at once awful and lovely. Nothing had vulgarized it to her. The greatest men were its slaves, and according as their choice fell on the worthy or unworthy, they were elevated or disgraced by passion. It was the part of a woman so to refine and educate her mind, as to be the cause of good alone to him whose fate depended on her smile. There was something of the Orondates' vein in her ideas; but they were too vague and general to influence her actions. Brought up in American solitude, with all the refinement attendant on European society, she was aristocratic, both as regarded rank and sex; but all these were as yet undeveloped feelings — seeds planted by the careful paternal hand, not yet called into life or growth.

Whitelock began his operations, and was obliged to be explicit to be at all understood. He spoke of misery and despair; he urged no plea, sought no favour, except to be allowed to speak of his wretchedness. Ethel listened — Eve listened to the serpent, and since then, her daughters have been accused of an aptitude to give ear to forbidden discourse. He spoke well, too, for he was a man of unquestioned talent. It is a strange feeling for a girl, when first she finds the power put into her hand of influencing the destiny of another to happiness or misery. She is like a magician holding for the first time a fairy wand, not having yet had experience of its potency. Ethel had read of the power of love; but a doubt had often suggested itself, of how far she herself should hereafter exercise the influence which is the attribute of her sex. Whitelock dispelled that doubt. He impressed on her mind the idea that he lived or died through her fiat.

For one instant, vanity awoke in her young heart; and she tripped back to her home with a smile of triumph on her lips. The feeling was short-lived. She entered her father's library; and his image appeared to rise before her, to regulate and purify her thoughts. If he had been there, what could she have said to him — she who never concealed a thought? — or how would he have received the information she had to give? What had happened, had not been the work of a day; Whitelock had for a week or two proceeded in an occult and mysterious manner: but this day he had withdrawn the veil; and she understood much that had appeared strange in him before. The dark, expressive eyes of her father she fancied to be before her, penetrating the depths of her soul, discovering her frivolity, and censuring her lowly vanity; and, even though alone, she felt abashed. Our faults are apt to assume giant and exaggerated forms to our eyes in youth, and Ethel felt degraded and humiliated; and remorse sprung up in her gentle heart, substituting itself for the former pleasurable emotion.

The young are always in extremes. Ethel put away her drawings and paintings. She secluded herself in her home; and arranged so well, that notwithstanding the freedom of American manners, Whitelock contrived to catch but a distant glimpse of her during the one other week that intervened before her father's return. Troubled at this behaviour, he felt his bravery ooze out. To have offended Fitzhenry, was an unwise proceeding, at best; but when he remembered the haughty and reserved demeanour of the man, he recoiled, trembling, from the prospect of encountering him.

Ethel was very concise in the expressions she used, to make her father, on his return, understand what had happened during his absence. Fitzhenry heard her with indignation and bitter self-reproach. The natural impetuosity of his disposition returned on him, like a stream which had been checked in its progress, but which had gathered strength from the delay. On a sudden, the future, with all its difficulties and trials, presented itself to his eyes; and he was determined to go out to meet them, rather than to await their advent in his seclusion. His resolution formed and he put it into immediate execution: he would instantly quit the Illinois. The world was before him; and while he paused on the western shores of the Atlantic, he could decide upon his future path. But he would not remain where he was another season. The present, the calm, placid present, had fled like morning mist before the new risen breeze: all appeared dark and turbid to his heated imagination. Change alone could appease the sense of danger that had risen within him. Change of place, of circumstances, — of all that for the last twelve years had formed his life. “How long am I to remain at peace?” — the prophetic voice heard in the silence of the forests, recurred to his memory, and thrilled through his frame. “Peace! was I ever at peace? Was this unquiet heart ever still, as, one by one, the troubled thoughts which are its essence, have risen and broken against the barriers that embank them? Peace! My own Ethel! — all I have done — all I would do — is to gift thee with that blessing which has for ever fled the thirsting lips of thy unhappy parent.” And thus, governed by a fevered fancy and untamed passions, Fitzhenry forgot the tranquil lot which he had learnt to value and enjoy; and quitting the haven he had sought, as if it had never been a place of shelter to him, unthankful for the many happy hours which had blessed him there, he hastened to reach the stormier seas of life, whose breakers and whose winds were ready to visit him with shipwreck and destruction.

CHAPTER V.

“The boy is father of the man.”
— Wordsworth.

Fitzhenry having formed his resolution, acted upon it immediately: and yet, while hastening every preparation for his departure, he felt return upon him that inquietude and intolerable sense of suffering, which of late years had subsided in his soul. Now and then it struck him as madness to quit his house, his garden, the trees of his planting, the quiet abode which he had reared in the wilderness. He gave his orders, but he was unable to command himself to attend to any of the minutiæ of circumstance connected with his removal. As when he first arrived, again he sought relief in exercise and the open air. He felt each ministration of nature to be his friend, and man, in every guise, to be his enemy. He was about to plunge among them again. What would be the result?

Yet this was no abode for the opening bloom of Ethel. For her good his beloved and safe seclusion must be sacrificed, and that he was acting for her benefit, and not his own, served to calm his mind. She contemplated their migration with something akin to joy. We could almost believe that we are destined by Providence to an unsettled position on the globe, so invariably is a love of change implanted in the young. It seems as if the eternal Lawgiver intended that, at a certain age, man should leave father, mother, and the dwelling of his infancy, to seek his fortunes over the wide world. A few natural tears Ethel shed — they were not many. She, usually so resigned and quiet in her feelings, was now in a state of excitement: dreamy, shadowy visions floated before her of what would result from her journey, and curiosity and hope gave life and a bright colouring to the prospect.

The day came at last. On the previous Sunday she had knelt for the last time in church on the little hassock which had been her’s from infancy, and walked along the accustomed pathway towards her home for the last time.

During the afternoon, she visited the village to bid adieu to her few acquaintances. The sensitive refinement of Fitzhenry had caused him to guard his daughter jealously from familiar intercourse with their fellow settlers, even as a child. But she had been accustomed to enter the poorer cottages, to assist the distressed, and now and then to partake of tea drinking with the minister. This personage, however, was not stationary. At one time they had had a venerable old man whom Ethel had begun to love; but latterly, the pastor had not been a person to engage her liking, and this had loosened her only tie with her fellow colonists.

The day came. The father and daughter, with three attendants, entered their carriage, and would along the scarcely formed road. One by one they passed, and lost sight of objects, that for many years had been woven in with the texture of their lives. Fitzhenry was sad. Ethel wept, unconstrainedly, plentiful showery tears, which cost so much less to the heart, than the few sorrowful drops which, in after life, we expend upon our woes. Still as they proceeded the objects that met their eyes became less familiar and less endeared. They began to converse, and when they arrived at their lodging for the night, Ethel was cheerful, and her father, mastering the unquiet feelings which disturbed him, exerted himself to converse with her on such topics as would serve to introduce her most pleasantly to the new scenes which she was about to visit.

There was one object, however, which lay nearest to the emigrant's heart, to which he had not yet acquired courage to allude; his own position in the world, his former fortunes, and the circumstances that had driven him from Europe, to seek peace and obscurity in the wilderness. It was a strange tale; replete with such incidents as could scarcely be made intelligible to the nursling of solitude — one difficult for a father to disclose to his daughter; involving besides a consideration of his future conduct, to which he did not desire to make her a party. Thus they talked of the cities they might see, and the strange sights she would behold, and but once did her father refer to their own position. After a long silence, on his part sombre and abstracted — as Prospero asked the ever sweet Miranda, so did Fitzhenry inquire of his daughter, if she had memory of aught preceding their residence in the Illinois? And Ethel, as readily as Miranda, replied in the affirmative.

"And what, my love, do you remember? Gold-laced liveries and spacious apartments?"

Ethel shook her head. “It may be the memory of a dream that haunts me,” she replied, “and not a reality; but I have frequently the image before me, of having been kissed and caressed by a beautiful lady, very richly dressed.”

Fitzhenry actually started at this reply. “I have often conjectured,” continued Ethel, “that that lovely vision was my dear mother; and that when — when you lost her, you despised all the rest of the world, and exiled yourself to America.”

Ethel looked inquiringly at her father as she made this leading remark; but he in a sharp and tremulous accent repeated the words, “Lost her!”

“Yes,” said Ethel, “I mean, is she not lost — did she not die?”

Fitzhenry sighed heavily, and turning his head towards the window on his side, became absorbed in thought, and Ethel feared to disturb him by continuing the conversation.

It has not been difficult all along for the reader to imagine, that the lamented brother of the honourable Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry and the exile of the Illinois are one; and while father and daughter are proceeding on their way towards New York, it will be necessary, for the interpretation of the ensuing pages, to dilate somewhat on the previous history of the father of our lovely heroine.

It may be remembered, that Henry Fitzhenry was the only son of Admiral Lord . He was, from infancy, the pride of his father and the idol of his sister; and the lives of both were devoted to exertions for his happiness and well-being. The boy soon became aware of their extravagant fondness, and could not do less in consequence than fancy himself a person of considerable importance. The distinction that Lord Lodore’s title and residence bestowed upon Longfield made his son and heir a demigod among the villagers. As he rode through it on his pony, every one smiled on him and bowed to him; and the habit of regarding himself superior to all the world, became too much an habit to afford triumph, though any circumstances that had lessened his consequence in his own eyes would have been matter of astonishment and indignation. His personal beauty was the delight of the women, his agility and hardihood the topic of the men of the village. For although essentially spoiled, he was not pampered in luxury. His father, with all his fondness, would have despised him heartily had he not been inured to hardship, and rendered careless of it. Rousseau might have passed his approbation upon his physical education, while his moral nurture was the most perniciously indulgent. Thus, at the same time, his passions were fostered, and he possessed none of those habits of effeminacy, which sometimes stand in the gap, preventing our young self-indulged aristocracy from rebelling against the restraints of society. Still generous and brave as was his father, benevolent and pious as was his sister, Henry Fitzhenry was naturally led to love their virtues, and to seek their approbation by imitating them. He would not wantonly have inflicted a pang upon a human being; yet he exerted any power he might possess to quell the smallest resistance to his desires; and unless when they were manifested in the most intelligible manner, he scarcely knew that his fellow-creatures had any feelings at all, except pride and gladness in serving him, and gratitude when he showed them kindness. Any poor family visited by rough adversity, any unfortunate child enduring unjust oppression, he assisted earnestly and with all his heart. He was courageous as a lion, and, upon occasion, soft-hearted and pitiful; but once roused to anger by opposition, his eyes darted fire, his little form swelled, his boyish voice grew big, nor could he be pacified except by the most entire submission on the part of his antagonist. Unfortunately for him, submission usually followed any stand made against his authority, for it was always a contest with an inferior, and he was never brought into wholesome struggle with an equal.

At the age of thirteen he went to Eton, and here every thing wore an altered and unpleasing aspect. Here were no servile menials nor humble friends. He stood one among many — equals, superiors, inferiors, all full of a sense of their own rights, their own powers; he desired to lead, and he had no followers; he wished to stand aloof, and his dignity, even his privacy, was perpetually invaded. His schoolfellows soon discovered his weakness — it became a bye-word among them, and was the object of such practical jokes, as seemed to the self-idolizing boy, at once frightful and disgusting. He had no resource. Did he lay his length under some favourite tree to dream of home and independence, his tormentors were at hand with some new invention to rouse and molest him. He fixed his large dark eyes on them, and he curled his lips in scorn, trying to awe them by haughtiness and frowns, and shouts of laughter replied to the concentrated passion of his soul. He poured forth vehement invective, and hootings were the answer. He had one other resource, and that in the end proved successful: — a pitched battle or two elevated him in the eyes of his fellows, and as they began to respect him, so he grew in better humour with them and with himself. His good-nature procured him friends, and the sun once more shone unclouded upon him.

Yet this was not all. He put himself foremost among a troop of wild and uncivilized school-boys; but he was not of them. His tastes, fostered in solitude, were at once more manly and dangerous than theirs. He could not distinguish the nice line drawn by the customs of the place between a pardonable resistance, or rather evasion of authority, and rebellion against it; and above all, he could not submit to practise equivocation and deceit. His first contests were with his school-fellows, his next were with his masters. He would not stoop to shows of humility, nor tame a nature accustomed to take pride in daring and independence. He resented injustice wherever he encountered or fancied it; he equally spurned it when practised on himself, or defended others when they were its object — freedom was the watchword of his heart. Freedom from all trammels, except those of which he was wholly unconscious, imposed on him by his passions and pride. His good-nature led him to side with the weak; and he was indignant that his mere fiat did not suffice to raise them to his own level, or that his representations did not serve to open the eyes of all around him to the true merits of any disputed question.

He had a friend at school. A youth whose slender frame, fair, effeminate countenance, and gentle habits, rendered him ridiculous to his fellows, while an unhappy incapacity to learn his allotted tasks made him in perpetual disgrace with his masters. The boy was unlike the rest; he had wild fancies and strange inexplicable ideas. He said he was a mystery to himself — he was at once so wise and foolish. The mere aspect of a grammar inspired him with horror, and a kind of delirious stupidity seized him in the classes; and yet he could discourse with eloquence, and pored with unceasing delight over books of the abstrusest philosophy. He seemed incapable of feeling the motives and impulses of other boys: when they jeered him, he would answer gravely with some story of a ghastly spectre, and tell wild legends of weird beings, who roamed through the dark fields by night, or sat wailing by the banks of streams: was he struck, he smiled and turned away; he would not fag; he never refused to learn, but could not; he was the scoff, and butt, and victim, of the whole school.

Fitzhenry stood forward in his behalf, and the face of things was changed. He insisted that his friend should have the same respect paid him as himself, and the boys left off tormenting him. When they ceased to injure, they began to like him, and he had soon a set of friends whom he solaced with his wild stories and mysterious notions. But his powerful advocate was unable to advance his cause with his masters, and the cruelty exercised on him revolted Fitzhenry's generous soul. One day, he stood forth to expostulate, and to show wherefore Derham should not be punished for a defect, that was not his fault. He was ordered to be silent, and he retorted the command with fierceness. As he saw the slender, bending form of his friend seized to be led to punishment, he sprang forward to rescue him. This open rebellion astounded every one; a kind of consternation, which feared to show the gladness it felt, possessed the boyish subjects of the tyro kingdom. Force conquered; Fitzhenry was led away; and the masters deliberated what sentence to pass on him. He saved them from coming to a conclusion by flight.

He hid himself during the day in Windsor Forest, and at night he entered Eton, and scaling a wall, tapped at the bedroom window of his friend. "Come," said he, "come with me. Leave these tyrants to eat their own hearts with rage — my home shall be your home."

Derham embraced him, but would not consent. "My mother," he said, "I have promised my mother to bear all;" and tears gushed from his large light blue eyes; "but for her, the green grass of this spring were growing on my grave. I dare not pain her."

"Be it so," said Fitzhenry; "nevertheless, before the end of a month, you shall be free. I am leaving this wretched place, where men rule because they are strong, for my father's house. I never yet asked for a thing that I ought to have, that it was not granted me. I am a boy here, there I am a man — and can do as men do. Representations shall be made to your parents; you shall be taken from school; we shall be free and happy together this summer at Longfield. Good night; I have far to walk, for the stage coachmen would be shy of me near Eton; but I shall get to London on foot, and sleep to-morrow in my father's house. Keep up your heart, Derham, be a man — this shall not last long; we shall triumph yet."

CHAPTER VI.

What is youth? a dancing billow.
Winds behind, and rocks before!
— Wordsworth.

This exploit terminated Fitzhenry’s career at Eton. A private tutor was engaged, who resided with the family, for the purpose of preparing him for college, and at the age of seventeen he was entered at Oxford. He still continued to cultivate the friendship of Derham. This youth was the younger son of a rich and aristocratic family, whose hopes and cares centred in their heir, and who cared little for the comfort of the younger. Derham had been destined for the sea, and scarcely did his delicate health, and timid, nervous disposition exempt him from the common fate of a boy, whose parents did not know what to do with him. The next idea was to place him in the church; and at last, at his earnest entreaty, he was permitted to go abroad, to study at one of the German universities, so to prepare himself, by a familiarity with modern languages, for diplomacy.

It was singular how well Fitzhenry and his sensitive friend agreed; — the one looked up with unfeigned admiration — the other felt attracted by a mingled compassion and respect, that flattered his vanity, and yet served as excitement and amusement. From Derham, Fitzhenry imbibed in theory much of that contempt of the world’s opinion, and carelessness of consequences, which was inherent in the one, but was an extraneous graft on the proud and imperious spirit of the other. Derham looked with calm yet shy superiority on his fellow-creatures. Yet superiority is not the word, since he did not feel himself superior to, but different from — incapable of sympathizing or extracting sympathy, he turned away with a smile, and pursued his lonely path, thronged with visions and fancies — while his friend, when he met check or rebuff, would fire up, his eyes sparkling, his bosom heaving with intolerable indignation.

After two years spent at Oxford, instead of remaining to take his degree, Fitzhenry made an earnest request to be permitted to visit his friend, who was then at Jena. It was but anticipating the period for his travels, and upon his promise to pursue his studies abroad, he won a somewhat reluctant consent from his father. Once on the continent, the mania of travelling seized him. He visited Italy, Poland, and Russia: he bent his wayward steps from north to south, as the whim seized him. He became of age, and his father earnestly desired his return: but again and again he solicited permission to remain, from autumn till spring, and from spring till autumn, until the very flower of his youth seemed destined to be wasted in aimless rambles, and an intercourse with foreigners, that must tend to unnationalize him, and to render him unfit for a career in his own country. Growing accustomed to regulate his own actions, he changed the tone of request into that of announcing his intentions. At length, he was summoned home to attend the death-bed of his father. He paid the last duties to his remains, provided for the comfortable establishment of his sister in the family mansion at Longfield, and then informed her of his determination of returning immediately to Vienna.

During this visit he had appeared to live rather in a dream than in the actual world. He had mourned for his father; he paid the most affectionate attentions to his sister; but this formed, as it were, the surface of things; a mightier impulse ruled his inner mind. His life seemed to depend upon certain letters which he received; and when the day had been occupied by business, he passed the night in writing answers. He was often agitated in the highest degree, almost always abstracted in reverie. The outward man — the case of was in England — his passionate and undisciplined soul was far away, evidently in the keeping of another.

Elizabeth, sorrowing for the loss of her father, was doubly afflicted when she heard that it was her brother's intention to quit England immediately. She had fondly hoped that he would, adorned by his newly-inherited title, and endowed with the gifts of fortune, step upon the stage of the world, and shine forth the hero of his age and country. Her affections, her future prospects, her ambition, were all centred in him; and it was a bitter pang to feel that the glory of these was to be eclipsed by the obscurity and distant residence which he preferred. Accustomed to obedience, and to regard the resolutions of the men about her, as laws with which she had no right to interfere, she did not remonstrate, she only wept. Moved by her tears, Lord made the immense sacrifice of one month to gratify her, which he spent in reading and writing letters at Longfield, in pacing the rooms or avenues absorbed in reverie, or in riding over the most solitary districts, with no object apparently in view, except that of avoiding his fellow-creatures. Elizabeth had the happiness of seeing the top of his head as he leant over his desk in the library, from a little hillock in the garden, which she sought for the purpose of beholding that blessed vision. She enjoyed also the pleasure of hearing him pace his room during the greater part of the night. Sometimes he conversed with her, and then how like a god he seemed! His extensive acquaintance with men and things, the novel but choice language in which he clothed his ideas; his vivid descriptions, his melodious voice, and the exquisite grace of his manner, made him rise like the planet of day upon her. Too soon her sun set. If ever she hinted at the prolongation of his stay, he grew moody, and she discovered with tearful anguish that his favourite ride was towards the sea, often to the very shore: “I seem half free when I only look upon the waves,” he said; “they remind me that the period of liberty is at hand, when I shall leave this dull land for—”

A sob from his sister checked his speech, and he repented his ingratitude. Yet when the promised month had elapsed, he did not defer his journey a single day: already had he engaged his passage at Harwich. A fair wind favoured his immediate departure. Elizabeth accompanied him on board, almost she wished to be asked to sail with him. No word but that of a kind adieu was uttered by him. She returned to shore, and watched his lessening sail. Wherefore did he leave his native country? Wherefore return to reside in lands, whose language, manners, and religion, were all at variance with his own? These questions occupied the gentle spinster’s thoughts; she had little except such meditations to vary the hours, as years stole on unobserved, and she continued to spend her blameless tranquil days in her native village.

The new Lord was one of those men, not unfrequently met with in the world, whose early youth is replete with mighty promise; who, as they advance in life, continue to excite the expectation, the curiosity, and even the enthusiasm of all around them; but as the sun on a stormy day now and then glimmers forth, giving us hopes of conquering brightness, and yet slips down to its evening eclipse without redeeming the pledge; so do these men present every appearance of one day making a conspicuous figure, and yet to the end, as it were, they only glid the edges of the clouds in which they hide themselves, and arrive at the term of life, the promise of its dawn unfulfilled. Passion, and the consequent engrossing occupations, usurped the place of laudable ambition and useful exertion. He wasted his nobler energies upon pursuits which were mysteries to the world, yet which formed the sum of his existence. It was not that he was destitute of loftier aspirations. Ambition was the darling growth of his soul — but weeds and parasites, an unregulated and unpruned overgrowth, twisted itself around the healthier plant, and threatened its destruction.

Sometimes he appeared among the English in the capital towns of the continent, and was always welcomed with delight. His manners were highly engaging, a little reserved with men, unless they were intimates, attentive to women, and to them a subject of interest, they scarcely knew why. A mysterious fair one was spoken of as the cynosure of his destiny, and some desired to discover his secret, while others would have been glad to break the spell that bound him to this hidden star. Often for months he disappeared altogether, and was spoken of as having secluded himself in some unattainable district of northern Germany, Poland, or Courland. Yet all these errand movements were certainly governed by one law, and that was love; — love unchangeable and intense, else wherefore was he cold to the attractions of his fair countrywomen? And why, though he gazed with admiration and interest on the families of lovely girls, whose successive visitations on the continent strike the natives with such wonder, why did he not select some distinguished beauty, with blue eyes, and auburn locks, as the object of his exclusive admiration? He had often conversed with such with seeming delight; but he could withdraw from the fascination unharmed and free. Sometimes a very kind and agreeable mamma contrived half to domesticate him; but after lounging, and turning over music-books, and teaching steps for a week, he was gone — a farewell card probably the only token of regret.

Yet he was universally liked, and the ladies were never weary of auguring the time to be not far off, when he would desire to break the chains that bound him; — and then — he must marry. He was so quiet, so domestic, so gentle, that he would make, doubtless, a kind and affectionate husband. Among Englishmen, he had a friend or two, by courtesy so called, who were eager for him to return to his native country, and to enter upon public life. He lent a willing ear to these persuasions, and appeared annoyed at some secret necessity that prevented his yielding to them. Once or twice he had said, that his present mode of life should not last for ever, and that he would come among them at no distant day. And yet years stole on, and mystery and obscurity clouded him. He grew grave, almost sombre, and then almost discontented. Any one habituated to him might have discovered struggles beneath the additional seriousness of his demeanour — struggles that promised final emancipation from his long-drawn thraldom.

CHAPTER VII.

Men oftentimes prepare a lot.
Which ere it finds them, is not what
Suits with their genuine station.
— Shelley.

At the age of thirty-two, Lord returned to England. It was subject of discussion among his friends, whether this was to be a merely temporary visit, or whether he was about to establish himself finally in his own country. Meanwhile, he became the lion of the day. As the reputed slave of the fair sex, he found favour in their gentle eyes. Even blooming fifteen saw all that was romantic and winning in his subdued and graceful manners, and in the melancholy which dwelt in his dark eyes. The chief fault found with him was, that he was rather taciturn, and that, from whatever cause, woman had apparently ceased to influence his soul to love. He avoided intimacies among them, and seemed to regard them from afar, with observant but passionless eyes. Some spoke of a spent volcano — others of a fertile valley ravaged by storms, and turned into a desert; while many cherished the hope of renewing the flame, or of replanting flowers on the arid soil.

Lord had just emancipated himself from an influence, which had become the most grievous slavery, from the moment it had ceased to be a voluntary servitude. He had broken the ties that had so long held him; but this had not been done without such difficulties and struggles, as made freedom less delightful, from the languor and regret that accompanied victory. Lodore had formed but one resolve, which was not to entangle himself again in unlawful pursuits, where the better energies of his mind were to be spent in forging deceptions, and tranquillizing the mind of a jealous and unhappy woman. He entertained a vague wish to marry, and to marry one whom his judgment, rather than his love, should select; — an unwise purpose, good in theory, but very defective in practice. Besides this new idea of marrying, which he buried as a profound secret in his own bosom, he wished to accustom himself to the manners and customs of his own country, so as to enable him to enter upon public life. He was fond of the country in England, and entered with zeal upon the pleasures of the chace. He liked the life led at the seats of the great, and endeavoured to do his part in amusing those around him.

Yet he did not feel one of them. Above all, he did not feel within him the charm of life, the glad spirit that looks on each returning day as a blessing; and which, gilding every common object with its own brightness, requires no lustre unborrowed from itself. All things palled upon . The light laughter and gentle voices of women were vacant of attraction; his sympathy was not excited by the discussions or pursuits of men. After striving for a whole year to awaken in himself an interest for some one person or thing, and finding all to be “vanity,” — towards the close of a season in town, of extreme brilliancy and variety to common eyes — of dulness and sameness to his morbid sense, he suddenly withdrew himself from the haunts of men, and plunging into solitude, tried to renovate his soul by self-communings, and an intercourse with silent, but most eloquent, Nature.

Youth wasted; affections sown on sand, barren of return; wealth and station flung as weeds upon the rocks; a name, whose “gold” was “o’erdusted” by the inertness of its wearer; — such were the retrospections that haunted his troubled mind. He envied the ploughboy, who whistled as he went; and the laborious cottager, who each Saturday bestowed upon his family the hard-won and scanty earnings of the week. He pined for an aim in life — a bourne — a necessity, to give zest to his palled appetite, and excitement to his satiated soul. It seemed to him that he could hail poverty and care as blessings; and that the dearest gifts of fortune — youth, health, rank, and riches — were disguised curses. All these he possessed, and despised. Gnawing discontent; energy, rebuked and tamed into mere disquietude, for want of a proper object, preyed upon his soul. Where could a remedy be found? No “green spot” of delight soothed his memory; no cheering prospect appeared in view; all was arid, gloomy, unsunned upon.

He had wandered into Wales. He was charmed with the scenery and solitude about Rhyaider Gowy, in Radnorshire, which lies amidst romantic mountains, and in immediate vicinity to a cataract of the Wye. He fixed himself for some months in a convenient mansion, which he found to let, at a few miles from that place. Here he was secure from unwelcome visitors, or any communication with the throng he had left. He corresponded with no one, read no newspapers. He passed his day, loitering beside waterfalls, clambering the steep mountains, or making longer excursions on horseback, always directing his course away from high roads or towns. His past life had been sufficiently interesting to afford scope for reverie; and as he watched the sunbeams as they climbed the hills at evening, or the shadows of the clouds as they careered across the valleys, his heart by turns mourned or rejoiced over its freedom, and the change that had come over it and stilled its warring passions.

The only circumstance that in the least entrenched upon his feeling of entire seclusion, was the mention, not unfrequently made to him, by his servants, of the "ladies at the farm." The idea of these "ladies" at first annoyed him; but the humble habitation which they had chosen — humble to poverty — impressed him with the belief that, however the "ladies" might awe-strike the Welsh peasantry, he should find in them nothing that would impress him with the idea of station. Two or three times, at the distant sight of a bonnet, instead of the Welsh hat, he had altered his course to avoid the wearer. Once he had suddenly come on one of these wonders of the mountains: she might have passed for a very civilized kind of abigail; but, of course, she was one of the "ladies."

As was neither a poet nor a student, he began at last to tire of loneliness. He was a little ashamed when he remembered that he had taken his present abode for a year: however, he satisfied his conscience by a resolve to return to it; and began seriously to plan crossing the country, to visit his sister in Essex. He was, during one of his rides, deliberating on putting this resolve into execution on the very next morning, when suddenly he was overtaken by a storm. The valley, through which his path wound, was narrow, and the gathering clouds over head made it dark as night; the lightning flashed with peculiar brightness; and the thunder, loud and bellowing, was re-echoed by the hills, and reverberated along the sky in terrific pealings. It was more like a continental storm than any which Lodore had ever witnessed in England, and imparted to him a sensation of thrilling pleasure; till, as the rain came down in torrents, he began to think of seeking some shelter, at least for his horse. Looking round for this, he all at once perceived a vision of white muslin beneath a ledge of rock, which could but half protect the gentle wearer: frightened she was, too, as a slight shriek testified, when a bright flash, succeeded instantaneously by a loud peal of thunder, bespoke the presence of something like danger. Lodore's habitual tenderness of nature rendered it no second thought with him to alight and offer his services; and he was fully repaid when he saw her, who hailed with gladness a protector, though too frightened to smile, or scarcely to speak. She was very young, and more beautiful, Lodore was at once assured, than any thing he had ever before beheld. Her fairness, increased by the paleness of terror, was even snowy; her hair, scarcely dark enough for chesnut, too dark for auburn, clustered in rich curls on her brow; her eyes were dark grey, long, and full of expression, as they beamed from beneath their deeply-fringed lids. But such description says little; it was not the form of eye or the brow's arch, correct and beautiful as these were, in this lovely girl, that imparted her peculiar attraction; beyond these, there was a radiance, a softness, an angel look, that rendered her countenance singular in its fascination; an expression of innocence and sweetness; a pleading gentleness that desired protection; a glance that subdued, because it renounced all victory; and this, now animated by fear, quickly excited, in Lodore, the most ardent desire to re-assure and serve her. She leant, as she stood, against the rock — now hiding her face with her hands — now turning her eyes to her stranger companion, as if in appeal or disbelief; while he again and again protested that there was no danger, and strove to guard her from the rain, which still descended with violence. The thunder died away, and the lightning soon ceased to flash, but this continued; and while the colour revisited the young girl's cheek, and her smiles, displaying a thousand dimples, lighted up new charms, a fresh uneasiness sprung up in her of how she could get home. Her chaussure, ill-fitted even for the mountains, could not protect her for a moment from the wet. Lodore offered his horse, and pledged himself for its quietness, and his care, if she could contrive to sit in the saddle. He lifted her light form on to it; but the high-bred animal, beginning a little to prance, she threw herself off into the arms of her new friend, in a transport of terror, which Lodore could by no means assuage. What was to be done? He felt, light as she was, that he could carry her the short half-mile to her home; but this could not be offered. The rain was now over; and her only resource was to brave the humid soil in kid slippers. With considerable difficulty, half the journey was accomplished, when they met the "lady" whom Lodore had before seen; — really the maid in attendance, who had come out to seek her young mistress, and to declare that "my lady" was beside herself with anxiety on her account.

still insisted on conducting his young charge to her home; and the next day it was but matter of politeness to call to express his hope that she had not suffered from her exposure to the weather. He found the lovely girl, fresh as the morning, with looks all light and sweetness, seated besides her mother, a lady whose appearance was not so prepossessing, though adorned with more than the remains of beauty. She at once struck Lodore as disagreeable and forbidding. Still she was cordial in her welcome, grateful for his kindness, and so perfectly engrossed by the thought of, and love for, her child, that Lodore felt his respect and interest awakened.

An acquaintance, thus begun between the noble recluse and the "ladies of the farm," proceeded prosperously. A month ago, would not have believed that he should feel glad at finding two fair off-shoots of London fashion dwelling so near his retreat; but even if solitude had not rendered him tolerant, the loveliness of the daughter might well perform a greater miracle. In the mother, he found good breeding, good nature, and good sense. He soon became almost domesticated in their rustic habitation.

Lady Santerre was of humble birth, the daughter of a solicitor of a country town. She was handsome, and won the heart of Mr. Santerre, then a minor, who was assisted by her father in the laudable endeavour to obtain more money than his father allowed him. The young gentleman saw, loved, and married. His parents were furiously angry, and tried to illegalize the match; but he confirmed it when he came of age, and a reconciliation with his family never took place. Mr. Santerre sold reversions, turned expectations into money, and lived in the world. For six years, his wife bloomed in the gay parterre of fashionable society, when her husband's father died. Prosperity was to dawn on this event: the new Sir John went down to attend his father's funeral; thence to return to town, to be immersed in recoveries, settlements, and law. He never returned. Riding across the country to a neighbour, his horse shyed, reared, and threw him. His head struck against a fragment of stone: a concussion of the brain ensued; and a fortnight afterwards, he was enclosed beside his father, in the ancestral vault.

His widow was the mother of a daughter only; and her hopes and prospects died with her husband. His brother, and heir, might have treated her better in the sequel; but he was excessively irritated by the variety of debts, and incumbrances, and lawsuits, he had to deal with. He chose to consider the wife most to blame, and she and her child were treated as aliens. He allowed them two hundred a year, and called himself generous. This was all (for her father was not rich, and had a large family) that poor Lady Santerre had to depend upon. She struggled on for some little time, trying to keep up her connexions in the gay world; but poverty is a tyrant, whose laws are more terrible than those of Draco. Lady Santerre yielded, retired to Bath, and fixed her hopes on her daughter, whom she resolved should hereafter make a splendid match. Her excessive beauty promised to render this scheme feasible; and now that she was nearly sixteen, her mother began to look forward anxiously. She had retired to Wales this summer, that, by living with yet stricter economy, she might be enabled, during the winter, to put her plans into execution with greater ease.

Lord became intimate with the mother and daughter, and his imagination speedily painted both in the most attractive colours. Here was the very being his heart had pined for — a girl radiant in innocence and youth, the nursling, so he fancied, of mountains, waterfalls, and solitude; yet endowed with all the softness and refinement of civilized society. Long forgotten emotions awoke in his heart, and he gave himself up to the bewildering feelings that beset him. Every thing was calculated to excite his interest. The desolate situation of the mother, devoted to her daughter only, and that daughter fairer than imagination could paint, young, gentle, blameless, knowing nothing beyond obedience to her parent, and untaught in the guile of mankind. It was impossible to see that intelligent and sweet face, and not feel that to be the first to impress love in the heart which it mirrored, was a destiny which angles might envy. How proud a part was his, to gift her with rank, fortune, and all earthly blessings, and to receive in return, gratitude, tenderness, and unquestioning submission! If love did not, as thus he reasoned, show itself in the tyrant guise it had formerly assumed in the heart of Lodore, it was the more welcome a guest. It spoke not of the miseries of passion, but offered a bright view of lengthened days of peace and contentedness. He was not a slave at the feet of his mistress, but he could watch each gesture and catch each sound of her voice, and say, goodness and beauty are there, and I shall be happy.

He found the lovely girl somewhat ignorant; but white paper to be written upon at will, is a favourite metaphor among those men who have described the ideal of a wife. That she had talent beyond what he had usually found in women, he was delighted to remark. At first she was reserved and shy. Little accustomed to society, she sat beside her mother in something of a company attitude; her eyes cast down, her lips closed. She was never to be found alone, and a jeune personne in France could scarcely be more retired and tranquil. This accorded better with ‘s continental experience, than the ease of English fashionable girls, and he was pleased. He conversed little with Cornelia until he had formed his determination, and solicited her mother’s consent to their union. Then they were allowed to walk together, and she gained on him, as their intimacy increased. She was very lively, witty, and full of playful fancy. Aware of her own deficiencies in education, she was the first to laugh at herself, and to make such remarks as showed an understanding worth all the accomplishments in the world. Lodore now really found himself in love, and blessed the day that led him from among the fair daughters of fashion to this child of nature. His wayward feelings were to change no more — his destiny was fixed. At thirty-four to marry, to settle into the father of a family, his hopes and wishes concentrated in a home, adorned by one whose beauty was that of angels, was a prospect that he dwelt upon each day with renewed satisfaction. Nothing in after years could disturb his felicity, and the very security with which he contemplated the future, imparted a calm delight, at once new and grateful to a heart, weary of storms and struggles, and which, in finding peace, believed that it possessed the consummation of human happiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hopes, what are they? beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass.
Or a spider’s web adorning.
In a strait and treacherous pass.
— Wordsworth.

The months of July, August, and September had passed away. Lord enjoyed, during the two last, a singularly complacent state of mind. He had come to Wales with worn-out spirits, a victim to that darker species of ennui, which colours with gloomy tints the future as well as the present, and is the ministering angel of evil to the rich and prosperous. He despised himself, contemned his pursuits, and called all vanity beneath the vivifying sun of heaven. Real misfortunes have worn the guise of blessings to men so afflicted, but he was withdrawn from this position, by a being who wore the outward semblance of an angel, and from whom he felt assured nothing but good could flow.

Cornelia Santerre was lovely, vivacious, witty, and good-humoured; yet strange to say, her new lover was not rendered happy so much by the presence of these qualities, as by the promise which they gave for the future. He loved her; he believed that she would be to the end of his life a blessing and a delight; yet passion was scarcely roused in his heart; it was “a sober certainty of waking bliss,” and a reasonable belief in the continuance of this state, that made him, while he loved her, regard her rather as a benefactress than a mistress.

Benefactress is a strange word to use, especially as her extreme youth was probably the cause that more intimate sympathies did not unite them, and why passion entered so slightly into their intercourse. It is possible, so great was the discrepancy of their age, and consequently of their feelings and views of life, that would never have thought of marrying Cornelia, but that Lady Santerre was at hand to direct the machinery of the drama. She inspired him with the wish to gift her angelic child with the worldly advantages which his wife must possess; to play a god-like part, and to lift into prosperity and happiness, one who seemed destined by fortune to struggle with adversity. Lady Santerre was a worldly woman and an oily flatterer; Lodore had been accustomed to feminine controul, and he yielded with docility to her silken fetters.

The ninth of October was Cornelia's sixteenth birthday, and on it she became the wife of Lord . This event took place in the parish church of Rhyaider Gowy, and it was communicated to "the world" in the newspapers. Many discussions then arose as to who Miss Santerre could be. "The only daughter of the late Sir John." The only late Sir John Santerre remembered, was, in fact, the grandfather of the bride, and the hiatus in her genealogy, caused by her father's death before he had been known as a baronet, puzzled every fashionable gossip. The whole affair, however, had been forgotten, when curiosity was again awakened in the ensuing month of March, by an announcement in the Morning Post, of the arrival of the noble pair at Mivart's. Lord Lodore had always rented a box at the King's Theatre. It had been newly decorated at the beginning of the season, and on the first Saturday in April all eyes turned towards it as he entered, having the loveliest, fairest, and most sylph-like girl, that ever trod dark earth, leaning on his arm. There was a child-like innocence, a fascinating simplicity, joined to an expression of vivacity and happiness, in Lady Lodore's countenance, which impressed at first sight, as being the completion of feminine beauty. She looked as if no time could touch, no ill stain her; artless affection and amiable dependence spoke in each graceful gesture. Others might be beautiful, but there was that in her, which seemed allied to celestial loveliness.

Such was the prize Lord had won. The new-married pair took up their residence in Berkeley-square, and here Lady Santerre joined them, and took possession of the apartments appropriated to her use, under her daughter's roof. All appeared bright on the outside, and each seemed happy in each other. Yet had any one cared to remark, they had perceived that Lodore looked even more abstracted than before his marriage. They had seen, that, in the domestic coterie, mother and daughter were familiar friends, sharing each thought and wish, but that Lodore was one apart, banished, or exiling himself from the dearest blessings of friendship and love. There might be no concealment, but also there was no frankness between the pair. Neither practised disguise, but there was no outpouring of the heart — no “touch of nature,” which, passing like an electric shock, made their souls one. An insurmountable barrier stood between Lodore and his happiness — between his love and his wife’s confidence; that this obstacle was a shadow — undefined — formless — nothing — yet every thing, made it trebly hateful, and rendered it utterly impossible that it should be removed.

The magician who had raised this ominous phantom, was Lady Santerre. She was a clever though uneducated woman: perfectly selfish, soured with the world, yet clinging to it. To make good her second entrance on its stage, she believed it necessary to preserve unlimited sway over the plastic mind of her daughter. If she had acted with integrity, her end had been equally well secured; but unfortunately, she was by nature framed to prefer the zig-zag to the straight line; added to which, she was imperious, and could not bear a rival near her throne. From the first, therefore, she exerted herself to secure her empire over Cornelia; she spared neither flattery nor artifice; and, well acquainted as she was with every habit and turn of her daughter’s mind, her task was comparatively easy.

The fair girl had been brought up (ah! how different from the sentiments which had thought to find the natural inheritance of the mountain child!) to view society as the glass by which she was to set her feelings, and to which to adapt her conduct. She was ignorant, accustomed to the most frivolous employments, shrinking from any mental exercise, so that although her natural abilities were great, they lay dormant, producing neither bud nor blossom, unless such might be called the elegance of her appearance, and the charm of the softest and most ingenuous manners in the world. When her husband would have educated her mind, and withdrawn her from the dangers of dissipation, she looked on his conduct as tyrannical and cruel. She retreated from his manly guidance, to the pernicious guardianship of Lady Santerre, and she sheltered herself at her side, from any effort Lodore might make for her improvement.

Those who have never experienced a situation of this kind, cannot understand it; the details appear trivial: there seems wanting but one effort to push away the flimsy web, which, after all, is rather an imaginary than real bondage. But the slightest description will bring it home to those who have known it, and groaned beneath a despotism the more intolerable, as it could be less defined. Lord found that he had no home, no dear single-hearted bosom where he could find sympathy and to which to impart pleasure. When he entered his drawing-room with gaiety of spirit to impart some agreeable tidings, to ask his wife's advice, or to propose some plan, Lady Santerre was ever by her side, with her hard features and canting falsetto voice, checking at once the kindling kindness of his soul, and he felt that all that he should say would be turned from its right road, by some insidious remark, and the words he was about to speak died upon his lips. When he looked forward through the day, and would have given the world to have had his wife to himself, and to have sought, in some drive or excursion, for the pleasant unreserved converse he sighed for, Lady Santerre must be consulted; and though she never opposed him, she always carried her point in opposition to his. His wishes were made light of, and he was left to amuse himself, and to know that his wife was imbibing the lessons of one, whom he had learnt to despise and hate.

Lord cherished an ideal of what he thought a woman ought to be; but he had no lofty opinion of women as he had usually found her. He had believed that the germ of all the excellencies which he esteemed was to be found in Cornelia, and he found himself mistaken. He had expected to find truth, clearness of spirit, and complying gentleness, the adorning qualities of the unsophisticated girl, and he found her the willing disciple of one whose selfish and artful character was in direct contradiction to his own. Once or twice at the beginning, he had attempted to withdraw his wife from this sinister influence, but Lady Lodore highly resented any effort of this kind, and saw in it an endeavour to make her neglect her first and dearest duties. Lodore, angry that the wishes of another should be preferred to his, drew back with disappointed pride; he disdained to enforce by authority, that which he thought ought to be yielded to love. The bitter sense of wounded affections was not to be appeased by knowing that, if he chose, he could command that, which was worthless in his eyes, except as a voluntary gift.

And here his error began; he had married one so young, that her education, even if its foundation had been good, required finishing, and who as it was, had every thing to learn. During the days of courtship he had looked forward with pleasure to playing the tutor to his fair mistress: but a tutor can do nothing without authority, either open or concealed — a tutor must sacrifice his own pursuits and immediate pleasures, to study and adapt himself to the disposition of his pupil. As has been said of those who would acquire power in the state — they must in some degree follow, if they would lead, and it is by adapting themselves to the humour of those they would command, that they establish the law of their own will, or of an apparent necessity. But understood nothing of all this. He had been accustomed to be managed by his mistress; he had been yielding, but it was because she contrived to make his will her own; otherwise he was imperious: opposition startled and disconcerted him, and he saw heartlessness in the want of accommodation and compliance he met at home. He had expected from Cornelia a girl's clinging fondness, but that was given to her mother; nor did she feel the womanly tenderness, which sees in her husband the safeguard from the ills of life, the shield to stand between her and the world, to ward off its cruelties; a shelter from adversity, a refuge when tempests were abroad. How could she feel this, who, proud in youth and triumphant beauty, knew nothing of, and disbelieved the tales which sages and old women tell of the perils of life? The world looked to her a velvet strewn walk, canopied from every storm — her husband alone, who endeavoured to reveal the reality of things to her, and to disturb her visions, was the source of any sorrow or discomfort. She was buoyed up by the supercilious arrogance of youth; and while inexperience rendered her incapable of entering into the feelings of her husband, she displayed towards him none of that deference, and yielding submission, which might reasonably have been expected from her youth, but that her mother was there to claim them for herself, and to inculcate, as far as she could, that while she was her natural friend, Lodore was her natural enemy.

He, with strong pride and crushed affections, gave himself up for a disappointed man. He disdained to struggle with the sinister influence of his mother-in-law; he did not endeavour to discipline and invigorate the facile disposition of his bride. He had expected devotion, attention, love; and he scorned to complain or to war against the estrangement that grew up between them. If at any time he was impelled by an overflowing heart to seek his fair wife's side, the eternal presence of Lady Santerre chilled him at once; and to withdraw her from this was a task difficult indeed to one who could not forgive the competition admitted between them. At first he made one or two endeavours to separate them; but the reception his efforts met with galled his haughty soul; and while he cherished a deep and passionate hatred for the cause, he grew to despise the victim of her arts. He thought that he perceived duplicity, low-thoughted pride, and coldness of heart, the native growth of the daughter of such a mother. He yielded her up at once to the world and her parent, and resolved to seek, not happiness, but occupation elsewhere. He felt the wound deeply, but he sought no cure; and pride taught him to mask his soreness of spirit by a studied mildness of manner, which, being joined to cold indifference, and frequent contradiction, soon begot a considerable degree of resentment, and even dislike on her part. Her mother's well-applied flatteries and the adulation of her friends were contrasted with his half-disguised contempt. The system of society tended to increase their mutual estrangement. She embarked at once on the stream of fashion; and her whole time was given up to the engagements and amusements that flowed in on her on all sides; while he — one other regret added to many previous ones — one other disappointment in addition to those which already corroded his heart — bade adieu to every hope of domestic felicity, and tried to create new interests for himself, seeking, in public affairs, for food for a mind eager for excitement.

CHAPTER IX.

What are fears, but voices airy
Whisp’ring harm, where harm is not?
And deluding the unwary.
Till the fatal bolt is shot?
— Wordsworth.

Lord was disgusted at the very threshold of his new purpose. His long residence abroad prevented his ever acquiring the habit of public speaking; nor had he the respect for human nature, nor the enthusiasm for a party or a cause, which is necessary for one who would make a figure as a statesman. His sensitive disposition, his pride, which, when excited, verged into arrogance; his uncompromising integrity, his disdain of most of his associates, his incapacity of yielding obedience, rendered his short political career one of struggle and mortification. “And this is life!” he said; “abroad, to mingle with the senseless and the vulgar; and at home, to find a — wife, who prefers the admiration of fools, to the love of an honest heart!”

Within a year after her marriage, Lady gave birth to a daughter. This circumstance, which naturally tends to draw the parents nearer, unfortunately in this instance set them further apart. Lady Santerre had been near, with so many restrictions and so much interference, which though probably necessary, considering Cornelia’s extreme youth, yet seemed vexatious and impertinent to Lodore. All things appeared to be permitted, except those which he proposed. A drive, a ride, even a walk with him, was to be considered fatal; while, at the same time, Lady Lodore was spending whole nights in heated rooms, and even dancing. Her confinement was followed by a long illness; the child was nursed by a stranger, secluded in a distant part of the house; and during her slow recovery, the young mother seemed scarcely to remember that it existed. The love for children is a passion often developed most fully in the second stage of life. Lodore idolized his little offspring, and felt hurt and angry when his wife, after it had been in her room a minute or two, on the first approach it made to a squall, ordered it to be taken away. At the time, in truth, she was reduced to the lowest ebb of weakness; but Lodore, as men are apt to do, was slow to discern her physical suffering, while his cheeks burnt with indignation, as she peevishly repeated the command that his child should go.

When she grew better this was not mended. She was ordered into the country for air, at a time when the little girl was suffering from some infantine disorder, and could not be moved. It was left with its nurses, but remained also, and rather suffered his wife to travel without him, so to demonstrate openly, that he thought her treatment of her baby unmotherly; not that he expressed this sentiment, nor did Lady Lodore guess at it; she saw only his usual spirit of contradiction and neglect, in his desertion of her at this period.

The mother pressed with careless lips the downy cheek of the little cherub, and departed; while passed most of his time in the child's apartment, or, turning his library into a nursery, it was continually with him there. “Here,” he thought, “I have something to live for, something to love. And even though I am not loved in return, my heart's sacrifice will not be repaid with insolence and contempt.” But when the infant began to show tokens of recognition and affection, when it smiled and stretched out its little hands on seeing him, and crowed with innocent pleasure; and still more, when the lisped paternal name fell from its roseate lips — the father repeated more emphatically, “Here is something that makes it worth while to have been born — to live!” An illness of the child overwhelmed him with anxiety and despair. She recovered; and he thanked God, with a lively emotion of joy, to which he had long been a stranger.

His affection for his child augmented the annoyance which he derived from his domestic circle. He had been hitherto sullenly yielding on any contest; but whatever whim, or whatever plan, he formed with regard to his daughter, he abided by unmoved, and took pleasure in manifesting his partiality for her. was by nature a man of violent and dangerous passions, add to which, his temper was susceptible to irritability. He disdained to cope with the undue influence exercised by Lady Santerre over his wife. He beheld in the latter, a frivolous, childish puppet, endowed with the usual feminine infirmities—”The love of pleasure, and the love of sway;” and destitute of that tact and tenderness of nature which should teach her where to yield and how to reign. He left her therefore to her own devices, resolved only that he would not give up a single point relative to his child, and consequently, according to the weakness of human nature, ever ready to find fault with and prohibit all her wishes on the subject.

Cornelia, accustomed to be guided by her mother's watchful artifices, and to submit to a tyranny which assumed the guise of servitude, felt only with the feelings implanted by her parent. She was not, like Lady Santerre, heartless; but cherished pride, the effect of perpetual misrepresentation, painted her as such. She looked on her husband as a man essentially selfish — one who, worn out by passion, had married her to beguile his hours during a visitation of ennui, and incapable of the softness of love or the kindness of friendship. On occasion of his new conduct with regard to her child, her haughty soul was in arms against him, and something almost akin to hatred sprung up within her. She resented his interference; she believed that his object was to deprive her of the consolation of her daughter's love, and that his chief aim was to annoy and insult her. She was jealous of her daughter with her husband, of her husband with her daughter. If by some chance a word or look passed that might have softened the mutual sentiment of distrust, the evil genius of the scene was there to freeze again the genial current; and any approach to kindness, by an inexplicable but certain result, only tended to place them further apart than before.

Three winters had passed since their marriage, and the third spring was merging into summer, while they continued in this state of warlike neutrality. Any slight incident might have destroyed the fictitious barriers erected by ill-will and guile between them; or, so precarious was their state, any new event might change petty disagreements into violent resentment, and prevent their ever entertaining towards each other those feelings which, but for one fatal influence, would naturally have had root between them. The third summer was come. They were spending the commencement of it in London, when circumstances occurred, unanticipated by either, which changed materially the course of their domestic arrangements.

Lord returned home one evening at a little after eleven, from a dinner-party, and found, as usual, his drawing-room deserted — Lady Lodore had gone to a ball. He had returned in that humour to moralize, which we so often bring from society into solitude; and he paced the empty apartments with impatient step. "Home! — yes, this is my home! I had hoped that gentle peace and smiling love would be its inmates, that returning as now, from those who excite my spleen and contempt, one eye would have lighted up to welcome me, a dear voice have thanked me for my return. Home! a Tartar beneath his tent — a wild Indian in his hut, may speak of home — I have none. Where shall I spend the rest of this dull, deserted evening?” — for it may be supposed that, sharing London habits, eleven o’clock was to him but an evening hour.

He went into his dressing-room, and casting his eyes on the table, a revulsion came over him, a sudden shock — for there lay a vision, which made his breath come thick, and caused the blood to recede to his heart — a like vision has had the same effect on many, though it took but the unobtrusive form of a little note — a note, whose fold, whose seal, whose superscription, were all once so familiar, and now so strange. Time sensibly rolled back; each event of the last few years was broken off, as it were, from his life, leaving it as it had been ten years ago. He seized the note, and then threw it from him. “It is a mere mistake,” he said aloud, while he felt, even to the marrow of his bones, the thrill and shudder as of an occurrence beyond the bounds of nature. Yet still the note lay there, and half as if to undeceive himself, and to set witchcraft at nought, he again took it up — this time in a less agitated mood, so that when the well-known impression of a little foreign coronet on the seal met his eye, he became aware that however unexpected such a sight might be, it was in the moral course of things, and he hastily tore open the epistle: it was written in French, and was very concise. “I arrived in town last night,” the writer said; “I and my son are about to join my husband in Paris. I hear that you are married; I hope to see you and your lady before I leave London.”

After reading these few lines, Lord remained for a considerable time lost in thought. He tried to consider what he should do, but his ideas wandered, as they sadly traced the past, and pictured to him the present. Never did life appear so vain, so contemptible, so odious a thing as now, that he was reminded of the passions and sufferings of former days, which, strewed at his feet like broken glass, might still wound him, though their charm and their delight could never be renewed. He did not go out that night; indeed it seemed as if but a minute had passed, when, lo! morning was pouring her golden summer beams into his room — when Lady Lodore’s carriage drove up; and early sounds in the streets told him that night was gone and the morrow come.

That same day Lord requested Cornelia to call with him on a Polish lady of rank, with whom he had formerly been acquainted, to whom he was under obligations. They went. And what Lodore felt when he stood with his lovely wife before her, who for many by-gone years had commanded his fate, had wound him to her will, through the force of love and woman's wiles — who he knew could read every latent sentiment of his soul, and yet towards whom he was resolved now, and for ever in future, to adopt the reserved manners of a mere acquaintance — what of tremor or pain all this brought to Lodore's bosom was veiled, at least beyond Cornelia's penetration, who seldom truly observed him, and who was now occupied by her new acquaintance.

The lady had passed the bloom of youth, and even mid life; she was verging on fifty, but she had every appearance of having been transcendently beautiful. Her dark full oriental eyes still gleamed from beneath her finelyarched brows, and her black hair, untinged by any grizzly change, was gathered round her head in such tresses as bespoke an admirable profusion. Her person was tall and commanding: her manners were singular, for she mingled so strangely, stateliness and affability, disdain and sweetness, that she seemed like a princess dispensing the favour of her smile, or the terror of her frown on her submissive subjects; her sweetest smiles were for Cornelia, who yet turned from her to another object, who attracted her more peculiar attention. It was her son; a youth inheriting all his mother's beauty, added to the fascination of early manhood, and a frank and ingenuous address, which his parent could never have possessed.

The party separated, apparently well pleased with each other. Lady offered her services, which were frankly accepted; and after an hour spent together, they appointed to meet again the next day, when the ladies should drive out together to shop and see sights.

They became not exactly intimate, yet upon familiar terms. There was a dignity and even a constraint in the Countess Lyzinski's manner that was a bar to cordiality; but they met daily, and Lady introduced her new friend everywhere. The Countess said that motives of curiosity had induced her to take this country in her way to Paris. Her wealth was immense, and her rank among the first in her own country. The Russian ambassador treated her with distinction, so that she gained facile and agreeable entrance into the highest society. The young Count Casimir was an universal favourite, but his dearest pleasure was to attend upon Lady Lodore, who readily offered to school him on his entrance into the English world. They were pretty exactly the same age; Casimir was somewhat the junior, yet he looked the elder, while the lady, accustomed to greater independence, took the lead in their intercourse, and acted the monitress to her docile scholar.

Lord looked on, or took a part, in what was passing around him, with a caprice perfectly unintelligible. With the Countess he was always gentle and obliging, but reserved. While she treated him with a coldness resembling disdain, yet whose chiefest demonstration was silence. Lodore never altered towards her; it was with regard to her son that he displayed his susceptible temper. He took pains to procure for him every proper acquaintance; he was forward in directing him; he watched over his mode of passing his time, he appeared to be interested in every thing he did, and yet to hate him. His demeanour towards him was morose, almost insulting. Lodore, usually so forbearing and courteous, would contradict and silence him, as if he had been a child or a menial. It required all Casimir's deference for one considerably his senior, to prevent him from resenting openly this style of treatment; it required all the fascination of Lady Lodore to persuade him to encounter it a second time. Once he had complained to her, and she remonstrated with her husband. His answer was to reprimand her for listening to the impertinence of the stripling. She coloured angrily, but did not reply. Cold and polite to each other, the noble pair were not in the habit of disputing. Lady Santerre guarded against that. Any thing as familiar as a quarrel might have produced a reconciliation, and with that a better understanding of each other's real disposition. The disdain that rose in Cornelia's bosom on this taunt, fostered by conscious innocence, and a sense of injustice, displayed itself in a scornful smile, and by an augmentation of kindness towards Casimir. He was now almost domesticated at her house; he attended her in the morning, hovered round her during the evening; and she, given up to the desire of pleasing, did not regard, did not even see, the painful earnestness with which Lord Lodore regarded them. His apparent jealousy, if she at all remarked it, was but a new form of selfishness, to which she was not disposed to give quarter. Yet any unconcerned spectator might have started to observe how, from an obscure corner of the room, Lodore watched every step they took, every change of expression of face during their conversation; and then approaching and interrupting them, endeavoured to carry Count Casimir away with him; and when thwarted in this, dart glances of such indignation on the youth, and of scorn upon his wife, as might have awoke a sense of danger, had either chanced to see the fierce, lightning-like passions written in those moments on his countenance, as letters of fire and menace traced upon the prophetic wall.

The Countess appeared to observe him indeed, and sometimes it seemed as if she regarded the angry workings of his heart with malicious pleasure. Once or twice she had drawn near, and said a few words in her native language, on which he endeavoured to stifle each appearance of passion, answering with a smile, in a low calm voice, and retiring, left, as it were, the field to her. Lady Santerre also had remarked his glances of suspicion or fury; they were interpreted into new sins against her daughter, and made with her the subject of ridicule or bitter reproach.

Lord was entirely alone. To no one human being could he speak a word that in the least expressed the violence of his feelings. Perhaps the only person with whom he felt the least inclined to overflow in confidence, was the Countess Lyzinski. But he feared her: he feared the knowledge she possessed of his character, and the power she had once exercised to rule him absolutely; the barrier between them must be insuperable, or the worst results would follow: he redoubled his own cautious reserve, and bore patiently the proud contempt which she exhibited, resolved not to yield one inch in the war he waged with his own heart, with regard to her. But he was alone, and the solitude of sympathy in which he lived, gave force and keenness to all his feelings. Had they evaporated in words, half their power to wound had been lost; as it was, there was danger in his meditations, and each one in collision with him had occasion to dread that any sudden overflow of stormy rage would be the more violent for having been repressed so long.

One day the whole party, with the exception of Lady Santerre, dined at the house of the Russian ambassador. As Lord and Lady proceeded towards their destination, he, with pointed sarcasm of manner, requested her to be less marked in her attentions to Count Casimir. The unfounded suspicions of a lover may please as a proof of love, but those of a husband, who thus claims affections which he has ceased to endeavour to win, are never received except as an impertinence and an insult. Those of Lord Lodore appeared to his haughty wife but a new form of cold-hearted despotism, checking her pleasures whencesoever they might arise. She replied by a bitter smile, and afterwards still more insultingly, by the display of kindness and partiality towards the object of her husband's dislike. Her complete sense of innocence, roused to indignation, by the injury she deemed offered to it, led her thus to sport with feelings, which, had she deigned to remark, she might have seen working with volcano-power in the breast of Lodore.

The ladies retired after dinner. They gathered together in groups in the drawing-room, while Lady , strange to say, sat apart from all. She placed herself on a distant sopha, apparently occupied by examining various specimens of bijouterie, nic-nacs of all kinds, which she took up one after the other, from the table near her. One hand shaded her eyes as she continued thus to amuse herself. She was not apt to be so abstracted; as now, that intent on self-examination, or self-reproach, or on thoughts that wandered to another, she forgot where she was, and by whom surrounded. She did not observe the early entrance of several gentlemen from the dining-room, nor remark a kind of embarrassment which sat upon their features, spreading a sort of uncomfortable wonder among the guests. The first words that roused her, were addressed to her by her husband: "Your carriage waits, Cornelia; will you come?"

"So early?" she asked.

"I particularly wish it," he replied.

"You can go, and send them back for me — and yet it is not worth while, we shall see most of the people here at Lady C—'s to night."

She glanced round the room, Casimir was not there; as she passed the Countess Lyzinski, she was about to ask her whether they should meet again that evening, when she caught the lady's eye fixed on her husband, meeting and returning a look of his. Alarm and disdain were painted on her face, and added to this, a trace of feeling so peculiar, so full of mutual understanding, that Lady was filled with no agreeable emotion of surprise. She entered the carriage, and the reiterated "Home!" of Lord Lodore, prevented her intended directions. Both were silent during their short drive. She sat absorbed in a variety of thoughts, not one of which led her to enter into conversation with her companion; they were rather fixed on her mother, on the observations she should make to, and the conjectures she should share with, her. She became anxious to reach home, and resolved at once to seek Lady Santerre's advice and directions by which to regulate her conduct on this occasion.

CHAPTER X.

Who then to frail mortality shall trust.
But limns the water, or but writes in dust.
— Bacon.

They arrived in Berkeley-square. Lady alighted, and perceived with something of a beating heart, that her husband followed her, as she passed on to the inner drawing-room. Lady Santerre was not there. Taking a letter from the table, so to give herself the appearance of an excuse for having entered a room she was about immediately to quit, she was going, when Lodore, who stood hesitating, evidently desirous of addressing her, and yet uncertain how to begin, stopped her by speaking her name, "Cornelia!"

She turned — she was annoyed; her conscience whispered what was in all probability the subject to which her attention was to be called. Her meditations in the drawing-room of the Russian Ambassador, convinced her that she had, to use the phrase of the day, flirted too much with Count Casimir, and she had inwardly resolved to do so no more. It was particularly disagreeable therefore, that her husband should use authority, as she feared that he was about to do, and exact from his wife's obedience, what she was willing to concede to her own sense of propriety. She was resolved to hear as little as she could on the subject, and stood as if in haste to go. His faltering voice betrayed how much he felt, and once or twice it refused to frame the words he desired to utter: how different was their import from that expected by his impatient auditress!

"Cornelia," said he, at length, "can you immediately, and at once — this very night — prepare to quit England?"

"Quit England! Why? — whither?" she exclaimed.

"I scarcely know," replied , "nor is it of the slightest import. The world is wide, a shelter, a refuge can be purchased any where — and that is all I seek."

The gaming table, the turf, loss of fortune, were the ideas naturally conveyed into the lady's mind by this reply. "Is all — every thing gone — lost?" she asked.

"My honour is," he answered, with an effort, "and the rest is of little worth."

He paused, and then continued in a low but distinct voice, as if every word cost him a struggle, yet as if he wished each one to be fraught with its entire meaning to his hearer; "I cannot well explain to you the motives of my sudden determination, nor will I complain of the part you have had in bringing on this catastrophe. It is over now. No power on earth — no heavenly power can erase the past, nor change one iota of what, but an hour ago, did not exist, but which now exists; altering all things to both of us for ever; I am a dishonoured man."

"Speak without more comment," cried Lady ; "for Heaven's sake explain — I must know what you mean."

"I have insulted a gentleman," replied her husband, "and I will yield no reparation. I have disgraced a nobleman by a blow, and I will offer no apology, could one be accepted — and it could not; nor will I give satisfaction."

Lady remained silent. Her thoughts speedily ran over the dire objects which her husband's speech presented. A quarrel — she too readily guessed with whom — a blow, a duel; her cheek blanched — yet not so; for Lodore refused to fight. In spite of the terror with which an anticipated rencontre had filled her, the idea of cowardice in her husband, or the mere accusation of it, brought the colour back to her face. She felt that her heedlessness had given rise to all this harm; but again she felt insulted that doubts of her sentiments or conduct should be the occasion of a scene of violence. Both remained silent. Lodore stood leaning on the mantelpiece, his cheek flushed, agitation betraying itself in each gesture, mixed with a resolve to command himself. Cornelia had advanced from the door to the middle of the room; she stood irresolute, too indignant and too fearful to ask further explanation, yet anxious to receive it. Still he hesitated. He was desirous of finding some form of words which might convey all the information that it was necessary she should receive, and yet conceal all that he desired should remain untold.

At last he spoke. “It is unnecessary to allude to the irretrievable past. The future is not less unalterable for me. I will not fight with, nor apologize to, the boy I have insulted I must therefore fly — fly my country and the face of man; go where the name of will not be synonymous with infamy — to an island in the east — to the desert wilds of America — it matters not whither. The simple question is, whether you are prepared on a sudden to accompany me? I would not ask this of your generosity, but that, married as we are, our destinies are linked, far beyond any power we possess to sunder them. Miserable as my future fortunes will be, far other than those which I invited you but four years ago to share, you are better off incurring the worst with me, than you could be, struggling alone for a separate existence.”

“Pardon me, ,” said Cornelia, somewhat subdued by the magnitude of the crisis brought about, she believed, however involuntarily by herself, and by the sadness that, as he spoke, filled the dark eyes of her companion with an expression more melancholy than tears; “pardon me, if I seek for further explanation. Your antagonist” (they neither of them ventured to speak a name, which hung on the lips of both) “is a mere boy. Your refusal to fight with him results of course from this consideration; while angry, and if I must allude to so distasteful a falsehood, while unjust suspicion prevent your making him fitting and most due concessions. Were the occasion less terrible, I might disdain to assert my own innocence; but as it is, I do most solemnly declare, that Count Casimir—” “I ask no question on that point, but simply wish to know whether you will accompany me,” interrupted Lodore, hastily; “the rest I am sorry for — but it is over. You, my poor girl, though in some measure the occasion, and altogether the victim, of this disaster, can exercise no controul over it. No foreign noble would accept the most humiliating submissions as compensation for a blow, and this urchin shall never receive from me the shadow of any.”

“Is there no other way?” asked Cornelia.

“Not any,” replied , while his agitation increased, and his voice grew tremulous; “No consideration on earth could arm me against his life. One other mode there is. I might present myself as a mark for his vengeance, with a design of not returning his fire, but I am shut out even from this resource. And this,” continued Lodore, losing as he spoke, all self-command, carried away by the ungovernable passions he had hitherto suppressed, and regardless, as he strode up and down the room, of Cornelia, who half terrified had sunk into a chair; "this — these are the result of my crimes — such, from their consequences, I now term, what by courtesy I have hitherto named my follies — this is the end! Bringing into frightful collision those who are bound by sacred ties — changing natural love into unnatural, deep-rooted, unspeakable hate — arming blood against kindred blood — and making the innocent a parricide. O Theodora, what have you not to answer for!"

Lady started. The image he presented was too detestable. She repressed her emotions, and assuming that air of disdain, which we are so apt to adopt to colour more painful feelings, she said, "This sounds very like a German tragedy, being at once disagreeable and inexplicable."

"It is a tragedy," he replied; "a tragedy brought now to its last dark catastrophe. Casimir is my son. We may neither of us murder the other; nor will I, if again brought into contact with him, do other than chastise the insolent boy. The tiger is roused within me. You have a part in this."

A flash of anger glanced from Cornelia's eyes. She did not reply — she rose — she quitted the room — she passed on with apparent composure, till reaching the door of her mother's chamber, she rushed impetuously in. Overcome with indignation, panting, choked, she threw herself into her arms, saying, "Save me!" A violent fit of hysterics followed.

At first Lady could only speak of the injury and insult she had herself suffered; and Lady Santerre, who by no means wished to encourage feelings, which might lead to violence in action, tried to soothe her irritation. But when allusions to Lodore's intention of quitting England and the civilized world for ever, mingled with Cornelia's exclamations, the affair asumed a new aspect in the wary lady's eyes. The barbarity of such an idea excited her utmost resentment. At once she saw the full extent of the intended mischief, and the risk she incurred of losing the reward of years of suffering and labour. When an instantaneous departure was mentioned, an endless, desolate journey, which it was doubtful whether she should be admitted to share, to be commenced that very night, she perceived that her measures to prevent it must be promptly adopted. The chariot was still waiting which was to have conveyed Lord and Lady Lodore to their assembly; dressed as she was for this, without preparation, she hurried her daughter into the carriage, and bade the coachman drive to a villa they rented at Twickenham; leaving, in explanation, these few lines addressed to her son-in-law.

“The scene of this evening has had an alarming effect upon Cornelia. Time will soften the violence of her feelings, but some immediate step was necessary to save, I verily believe, her life. I take her to Twickenham, and will endeavour to calm her: until I shall have in some measure succeeded, I think you had better not follow us; but let us hear from you; for althogh my attention is so painfully engrossed by my daughter’s sufferings, I am distressed on your account also, and shall continue very uneasy until I hear from you.

“Friday Evening.”

Lady Santerre and her daughter reached Twickenham. Lady went to bed, and assisted by a strong composing draught, administered by her mother, her wrongs and her anger were soon hushed in profound sleep. Night, or rather morning, was far spent before this occurred, so that it was late in the afternoon of the ensuing day before she awoke, and recalled to her memory the various conflicting sentiments which had occupied her previous to her repose.

During the morning, Lady Santerre had despatched a servant to Berkeley-square, to summon her daughter’s peculiar attendants. He now brought back the intelligence that Lord had departed for the continent, about three hours after his wife had quitted his house. But to this he added tidings of another circumstance, for which both ladies were totally unprepared. Cornelia had entered the carriage the preceding night, without spending one thought on the sleeping cherub in the nursery. What was her surprise and indignation, when she heard that her child and its attendant formed a part of his lordship’s travelling suite. The mother’s first impulse was to follow her offspring; but this was speedily exchanged for a bitter sense of wrong, aversion to her husband, and a resolve not to yield one point, in the open warfare thus declared by him.

CHAPTER XI.

Amid two seas, on one small point of land.
Wearied, uncertain, and amazed, we stand;
On either side our thoughts incessant turn.
Forward we dread, and looking back we mourn.
— Prior.

Accustomed to obey the more obvious laws of necessity, those whose situation in life obliges them to earn their daily bread, are already broken in to the yoke of fate. But the rich and great are vanquished more slowly. Their time is their own; as fancy bids them, they can go east, west, north, or south; they wish, and accomplish their wishes; and cloyed by the too easy attainment of the necessaries, and even of the pleasures of life, they fly to the tortures of passion, and to the labour of overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of their forbidden desires, as resources against ennui and satiety. Reason is lost in the appetite for excitement, and a kind of unnatural pleasure springs from their severest pains, because thus alone are they roused to a full sense of their faculties; thus alone is existence and its purposes brought home to them.

In the midst of this, their thoughtless career, the eternal law which links ill to ill, is at hand to rebuke and tame the rebel spirit; and such a tissue of pain and evil is woven from their holiday pastime, as checks them midcourse, and makes them feel that they are slaves. The young are scarcely aware of this; they delight to contend with Fate, and laugh as she clanks their chains. But there is a period — sooner or later comes to all — when the links envelop them, the bolts are shot, the rivets fixed, the iron enters the flesh, the soul is subdued, and they fly to religion or proud philosophy, to seek for an alleviation, which the crushed spirit can no longer draw from its own resources.

This hour! this fatal hour! How many can point to the shadow on the dial, and say, “Then it was that I felt the whole weight of my humanity, and knew myself to be the subject of an unvanquishable power!” This dark moment had arrived for . He had spent his youth in passion, and exhausted his better nature in a struggle for, and in the enjoyment of, pleasure. He found disappointment, and desired change. It came at his beck. He married. He was not satisfied; but still he felt that it was because he did not rouse himself, that the bonds sate so heavily upon him. He was enervated. He sickened at the idea of the struggle it would require to cast off his fetters, and he preferred adapting his nature to endure their weight. But he believed that it was only because he did not raise his hand, nor determine on one true effort, that he was thus enslaved. And now his hand was raised — the effort made; but no change ensued; and he felt that there was no escape from the inextricable bonds that fastened him to misery.

He had believed that he did right in introducing his wife to the Countess Lyzinski. He felt that he could not neglect this lady; and such was her rank, that any affectation of a separate acquaintance would invite those observations which he deprecated. It was, after all, matter of trivial import that he should be the person to bring them acquainted. Moving in the same circles, they must meet — they might clash: it was better that they should be on friendly terms. He did not foresee the intimacy that ensued; and still less, that his own violent passions would be called into action. That they were so, was, to the end, a mystery even to himself. He no longer loved the Countess; and, in the solitude of his chamber, he often felt his heart yearn towards the noble youth, her son; but when they met — when Cornelia spent her blandest smiles upon him, and when the exquisitely beautiful countenance of Casimir became lighted up with gladness and gratitude, a fire of rage was kindled in his heart, and he could no more command himself, than can the soaring flames of a conflagration bend earthward. He felt ashamed; but new fury sprung from this very sensation. For worlds, he would not have his frenzy pried into by another; and yet he had no power to controul its manifestation. His wife expostulated with him concerning Casimir, and laughed his rebuke to scorn. But she did not read the tumult of unutterable jealousy and hate, that slept within his breast, like an earthquake beneath the soil, the day before a city falls.

All tended to add fuel to this unnatural flame. His own exertions to subdue its fierceness but kindled it anew. Often he entered the same room with the young Count, believing that he had given his suspicions to the winds — that he could love him as a son, and rejoice with a father's pride in the graces of his figure and the noble qualities of his mind. For a few seconds the fiction endured: he felt a pang — it was nothing — gone; it would not return again: — another! was he for ever to be thus tortured? And then a word a look, an appearance of slighting him on the part of Casimir, an indiscreet smile on Cornelia's lips, would at once set a-light the whole devastating blaze. The Countess alone had any power over him; but though he yielded to her influence, he was the more enraged that she should behold his weakness; and that while he succeeded in maintaining an elevated impassibility with regard to herself, his heart, with all its flaws and poverty of purpose, should, through the ill-timed interference of this boy, be placed once more naked in her hand.

Such a state of feeling, where passion combated passion, while reason was forgotten in the strife, was necessarily pregnant with ruin. The only safety was in flight; — and would have flown — he would have absented himself until the cause of his sufferings had departed — but that, more and more, jealousy entered into his feelings — a jealousy, wound up by the peculiarity of his situation, into a sensitiveness that bordered on insanity, which saw guilt in a smile, and overwhelming, hopeless ruin, in the simplest expression of kindness. Cornelia herself was disinclined to quit London, and tenacious pride rendered him averse to proposing it, since he could frame no plausible pretext for his change of purpose, and it had been previously arranged that they should remain till the end of July. The presence of the Countess Lyzinski was a tie to keep her; and to have pleaded his feelings with regard to Casimir, could he have brought himself so to do, would probably have roused her at once into rebellion. There was no resource; he must bear, and also he must forbear; — but the last was beyond his power, and his attempt at the first brought with it destruction. In the last instance, at the Russian Ambassador's, irritated by Cornelia's tone of defiance, and subsequent levity, he levelled a scornful remark at the guiltless and unconscious offender. Casimir had endured his arrogance and injustice long. He knew of no tie, no respect due, beyond that which youth owes to maturer years; yet the natural sweetness of his disposition inclined him to forbearance, until now, that surrounded by his own countrymen and by Russians, it became necessary that he should assert himself. He replied with haughtiness; Lodore rejoined with added insult; — and when again

Casimir retorted, he struck him. The young noble's eyes flashed fire: several gentlemen interposed between them; — and yielding to the expediency of the moment, the Pole, with admirable temper, withdrew.

Humiliated and dismayed, but still burning with fury, saw at once the consequences of his angry transport. With all the impetuosity of his fiery spirit, he resolved to quit at once the scene in which he had played his part so ill. There was no other alternative. The most frightful crimes blocked up every other outlet: this was his sole escape, and he must seize on it without delay. Lady Lodore had not even deigned to answer his request that she should accompany him; and her mother's note appeared the very refinement of insolence. They abandoned him. They left the roof from which he was about to exile himself, even before he had quitted it, as if in fear of contamination during his brief delay. Thus he construed their retreat; and worked up, as he was, almost to madness, he considered their departure as the commencement of that universal ban, which for ever, hereafter, was to accompany his name. It opened anew the wound his honour had sustained; and he poured forth a vow never more to ally himself in bonds of love or amity with one among his kind.

His purpose was settled, and he did not postpone its execution. Post-horses were ordered, and hasty preparations made, for his departure. Alone, abandoned, disgraced, in another hour he was to quit his home, his wife, all that endears existence, for ever: yet the short interval that preceded his departure hung like a longdrawn day upon him; and time seemed to make a full stop, at a period when he would have rejoiced had it leaped many years to come. The heart's prayer in agony did not avail: he was still kept lingering, when a knocking at the door announced a visitor, who, at that late hour, could come for one purpose only. Lord ordered himself to be denied, and Count Casimir's second departed to seek him elsewhere. Cold dew-drops stood on Lodore's brow as he heard this gentleman parley in a foreign accent with the servant; trying, doubtless, to make out where it was likely that he should meet with him: the door closed at last, and he listened to the departing steps of his visitor, who could scarcely have left the square, before his travelling chariot drove up. And now, while final arrangements were making, with a heart heavy from bitter self-condemnation, he visited the couch of his sleeping daughter, once more to gaze on her sweet face, and for the last time to bestow a father's blessing on her. The early summer morning was abroad in the sky; and as he opened her curtains, the first sunbeam played upon her features. He stooped to kiss her little rosy lips: —"And I leave this spotless being to the blighting influence of that woman!" His murmurs disturbed the child's slumbers: she woke, and smiled to see her father; and then insisted upon rising, as he was up, and it was day.

"But I am come to say good-bye, sweet," he said; "I am going a long journey."

"O take me with you!" cried the little girl, springing up, and fastening her arms round his neck. He felt her soft cheek prest to his; her hands trying to hold fast, and to resist his endeavours to disengage them. His heart warmed within him. "For a short distance I may indulge myself," he said, and he thought how her prattle would solace his darker cares, during his road to Southampton. So, causing her attendant to make speedy preparation, he took her in the carriage with him; and her infantine delight so occupied him, that he scarcely remembered his situation, or what exactly he was doing, as he drove for the last time through the lightsome and deserted streets of the metropolis.

And now he had quitted these; and the country, in all its summer beauty, opened around him — meadows and fields with their hedge-rows, tufted groves crowning the uplands, and "the blue sky bent over all." "From these they cannot banish me," he thought; "in spite of dishonour and infamy, the loveliness of nature, and the freedom of my will, still are mine: — and is this all?" — his child had sunk to sleep, nestled close in his arms; "Ah! what will these be to me, when I have lost this treasure, dearest of all? — yet why lose her?" This question, when it first presented itself to him, he put aside as one that answered itself — to deprive a mother of her child were barbarity beyond that of savages; — but again and again it came across him, and he began to reason with it, and to convince himself that he should be unjust towards himself in relinquishing this last remaining blessing. His arguments were false, his conclusions rash and selfish; but of this he was not aware. Our several minds, in reflecting to our judgments the occurrences of life, are like mirrors of various shapes and hues, so that we none of us perceive passing objects with exactly similar optics; and while all pretend to regulate themselves by the quadrant of justice, the deceptive medium through which the reality is viewed, causes our ideas of it to be at once various and false. This is the case in immaterial points; how much more so, when self-love magnifies, and passion obscures, the glass through which we look upon others and ourselves. The chief task of the philosopher is to purify and correct the intellectual prism; — but was the reverse of a philosopher; and the more he gazed and considered, the more imperfect and distorted became his perception.

To act justly by ourselves and others, is the aim of every well-conditioned mind: for the sight of pain in our fellow-creatures, and the sense of self-condemnation within ourselves, is fraught with a pang from which we would willingly escape; and every heart not formed of the coarsest materials is keenly alive to such emotions. resolved to judge calmly, and he reviewed coolly, and weighed (he believed) impartially, the various merits of the question. He thought of Lady Santerre's worldliness, her vulgar ambition, her low-born contempt for all that is noble and elevating in human nature. He thought of Cornelia's docility to her mother's lessons, her careless disregard of the nobler duties of life, of her frivolity and unfeeling nature: — then, almost against his will, his own many excellencies rose before him; — his lofty aspirations, his self-sacrifice for the good of others, the affectionateness of his disposition, his mildness, his desire to be just and kind to all, his willingness to devote every hour of the day, and every thought of his mind, to the well-bringing-up of his daughter: a person must be strangely blind who did not perceive that, as far as the child was concerned, she would be far better off with him.

And then, in another point of view: Lady had her mother — and she had the world. She had not only beauty, rank, and wealth; but she had a taste for enjoying the advantages yielded by these on the common soil of daily life. He cared for nothing in the wide world — he loved nothing but this little child. He would willingly exchange for her the far greater portion of his fortune, which Lady Lodore should enjoy; reserving for himself such a pittance merely as would suffice for his own and his daughter's support. He had neither home, nor friends, nor youth, nor taintless reputation; nor any of all the blessings of life, of which Cornelia possessed a superabundance. Her child was as nothing in the midst of these. She had left her without a sigh, even without a thought; while but to imagine the moment of parting was a dagger to her father's heart. What a fool he had been to hesitate so long — to hesitate at all! There she was, this angel of comfort; her little form was cradled in his arms, he felt her soft breath upon his hand, and the regular heaving of her bosom responded to the beatings of his own heart; her golden, glossy hair, her crimsoned cheek, her soft, round limbs; — all this matchless "bower of flesh," that held in the budding soul, and already expanding affections of this earthly cherub, was with him. And had he imagined that he could part with her? Rather would he return to Lady Lodore, to dishonour, to scenes of hate and of the world's contempt, so that thus he preserved her: it could not be required of him; but if Cornelia's heart was animated by a tithe of the fondness that warmed his, she would not hesitate in her choice; but, discarding every unworthy feeling, follow her child into the distant and solitary abode he was about to select.

Thus pacifying his conscience, came to the conclusion of making his daughter the partner of his exile. Soon after mid-day, they arrived at Southampton; a small vessel was on the point of sailing for Havre, and on board this he hurried. Before he went he gave one hasty retrospective view to those he was leaving behind — his wife, his sister, the filial antagonist from whom he was flying; he could readily address himself to the first of these, when landed on the opposite coast; but as he wished to keep his destination a secret from the latter, and to prevent, if possible, his being followed and defied by him, an event still to be feared, he employed the few remaining minutes, before quitting his country for ever, in writing a brief letter to the Countess Lyzinski, which he gave in charge to a servant whom he dismissed, and sent back to town. And thus he now addressed her, who, in his early life, had been as the moon to raise the tide of passion, incapable, alas! of controlling its waves when at the full.

"It is all over: I have fulfilled my part — the rest remains with you. To prevent the ruin which my folly has brought down, from crushing any but myself, I quit country, home, good name — all that is dear to man. I do not complain, nor will I repine. But let the evil, I entreat you, stop here. Casimir must not follow me; he must not know whither I am gone; and while he brands his antagonist with the name of coward, he must not guess that for his sake I endure this stain. I leave it to your prudence and sagacity to calm or to mislead him, to prevent his suspecting the truth, or rashly seeking my life. I sacrifice more, far more, than my heart's blood on his account — let that satisfy even your vengeance.

“I would not write harshly. The dream of life has long been over for me; it matters not how or where the last sands flow out. I do not blame you even for this ill-omened journey to England, which could avail you nothing. Once before we parted for ever, Theodora; but that separation was as the pastime of children in comparison with the tragic scene we now enact. A thousand dangers yawn between us, and we shall neither dare to repass the gulf that divides us. Forget me; — be happy, and forget me! May Casimir be a blessing to you, and while you glory in his perfections and prosperity, cast into oblivion every thought of him, who now bids you an eternal adieu.”

CHAPTER XII.

Her virtue, like our own, was built
Too much on that indignant fuss.
Hypocrite pride stirs up in us.
To bully out another's guilt.
— Shelley.

The fifth day after Lord ‘s departure brought Cornelia a letter from him. She had spent the interval at Twickenham, surrendering her sorrows and their consolation to her mother's care; and inspired by her with deep resentment and angry disdain. The letter she received was dated Havre: the substance of it was as follows.

“Believe me I am actuated by no selfish considerations, when I ask you once again to reflect before the Atlantic divides us — probably for ever. It is for your own sake, your own happiness only, that I ask you to hesitate. I will not urge your duty to me; the dishonour that has fallen on me I am most ready to bear alone; mine towards you, as far as present circumstances permit, I am desirous to fulfil, and this feeling dictates my present address.

“Consider the solitary years you will pass alone, even though in a crowd, divided from your husband and your child — your home desolate — calumny and ill-nature at watch around you — not one protecting arm stretched over you. Your mother's presence, it is true, will suffice to prevent your position from being in the least equivocal; but the time will soon come when you will discover your mistake in her, and find how unworthy she is of your exclusive affection. I will not urge the temptations and dangers that will beset you; your pride will, I doubt not, preserve you from these, yet they will be near you in their worst shape: you will feel their approaches; you will shudder at their menaces, you will desire my death, and the faith pledged to me at the altar will become a chain and a torture to you.

“I can only offer such affection as your sacrifice will deserve to adorn a lonely and obscure home; rank, society, flatterers, the luxuries of civilization — all these blessings you must forego. Your lot will be cast in solitude. The wide forest, the uninhabited plain, will shelter us. Your husband, your child; in us alone you must view the sum and aim of your life. I will not use the language of persuasion, but in inviting you to share my privations, I renew, yet more solemnly, the vows we once interchanged; and it shall be my care to endeavour to fulfil mine with more satisfaction to both of us than has until now been the case.

"It is useless to attempt to veil the truth, that hitherto our hearts have been alienated from each other. The cause is not in ourselves, and must never again be permitted to influence either of us. If amidst the avocations of society, the presence of a third person has been sufficient to place division between us; — if, on the flowery path of our prosperous life, one fatal interference has strewn thorns and burning ashes beneath our feet, how much more keenly would this intervention be felt in the retirement in which we are hereafter to spend our days. — In the lonely spot to which it will be necessary to contract all our thoughts and hopes, love must alone reign; or hell itself would be but pastime in comparison to our ever-renewing and sleepless torments. The spirit of worldliness, of discord, of paltry pride, must not enter the paling which is to surround our simple dwelling. Come, attended by affection, by open-hearted confidence; — come to me — to your child! — you will find with us peace and mutual love, the true secret of life. All that can make your mother happy in England, shall be provided with no niggard hand: — but come alone, Cornelia, my wife! — come, to take possession of the hearts that are truly yours, and to learn a new lesson, in a new world, from him who will dedicate himself entirely to you.

"Alas! I fear that I speak an unknown language, and one that you will never deign to understand. Still I again implore you to reflect before you decide. On one point I am firm — I feel that I am in the right — that every thing depends upon it. Our daughter's guileless heart shall never be tainted by all that I abhor and despise. For her sake, for yours, more than for my own, I am as rock upon one question. Do not strive to move me — it will be useless! Come alone! and ten thousand welcomes and blessings shall hail your arrival!

"A vessel, in which I have engaged a passage, sails for New York, from this place, in five days time. You must not delay your decision; but hasten, if such be your gracious resolve, to join me here.

“If you decide to sacrifice yourself to one who will never repay that sacrifice, and to the world, — that dreary, pain-haunted jungle, — at least you shall receive from me all that can render your situation there prosperous. You shall not complain of want of generosity on my part. I shall, in my new course of life, require little myself; the remainder of my fortune shall be at your disposal.

“I need not recommend secrecy to you as to the real motive of my exile — your own sense of delicacy will dictate reserve and silence. This letter will be delivered to you by Fenton: he will attend you back here, or bring me your negative — the seal, I feel assured, of your future misery. God grant that you choose wisely and well! Adieu.”

The heart of Lady burnt within her bosom as she read these lines. Haughty and proud, was she to be dictated to thus? and to follow, an obedient slave, the master that deigned to recall her to his presence, after he had (so she termed his abrupt departure) deserted her? Her mother sate by, looking at her with an anxious and inquiring glance, as she read the letter. She saw the changes of her countenance, as it expressed anger, scorn, and bitter indignation. She finished — she was still silent; — how could she show this insulting address to her parent? Again she seemed to study its contents — to ponder.

Lady Santerre rose — gently she was taking the paper from Cornelia’s hand. “You must not read it,” she cried;—”and yet you must; — and thus one other wrong is heaped upon the many.”

Lady Santerre read the letter; silently she perused it — folded it — placed it on the table. Cornelia looked up at her. “I do not fear your decision,” she said; “you will not abandon a parent, who has devoted herself to you from your cradle — who lives but for you.”

The unhappy girl, unable to resist her mother’s appeal, threw herself into her arms. Even the cold Lady Santerre was moved — tears flowed from her eyes:—”My dear child!” she exclaimed.

“My dear child!” — the words found an echo in Lady ‘s bosom;—”I am never to see my child more!”

“Such is his threat,” said her mother, “knowing thus the power he has over you; but do not fear that it will be accomplished. Lord ‘s conduct is guided by no principle — by no deference to the opinion of the world — by no just or sober motives. He is as full of passion as a madman, and more vacillating. This is his fancy now — to quit England for the wilderness, and to torture you into following him. You are as lost as he, if you yield. A little patience, and all will be right again. He will soon grow tired of playing the tragic hero on a stage surrounded by no spectators; he will discover the folly of his conduct; he will return, and plead for forgiveness, and feel that he is too fortunate in a wife, who has preserved her own conduct free from censure and remark, while he has made himself a laughing stock to all. Do not permit yourself, dear Cornelia, to be baffled in this war of passion with reason; of jealousy, selfishness, and tyranny, with natural affection, a child's duty, and the respect you owe to yourself. Even if he remain away, he will quickly become weary of being accompanied by an infant and its nurse, and too glad to find that you will still be willing to act the mother towards his child. Firmness and discretion are the arms you must use against folly and violence. Yield, and you are the victim of a despotism without parallel, the slave of a task-master, whose first commands are gentle, soft, and easy injunctions to desert your mother: to exile yourself from your country, and to bury yourself alive in some unheard-of desert, whose name even he does not deign to communicate. All this would be only too silly and too wild, were it not too wicked and too cruel. Believe me, my love, trust yourself to my guidance, and all will be well; Lodore himself will thank, if such thanks be of value, the prudence and generosity you will display."

Cornelia listened, and was persuaded. Above all, Lady Santerre tried to impress upon her mind, that , finding her firm, would give up his rash schemes, and remain in Europe; that even he had, probably, never really contemplated crossing the Atlantic. At all events, that she must not be guided by the resolves, changeable as the moon, of a man governed by no sane purpose; but that, by showing herself determined, he would be brought to bend to her will. In this spirit Lady Lodore replied to her husband's letter. Fenton, Lord Lodore's valet, who had been the bearer, had left it, and proceeded to London. He returned the day following, to receive his lady's orders. Cornelia saw him and questioned him. She heard that Lord Lodore was to dismiss him and all his English servants before embarking for America, with the exception of the child's nurse, whom he had promised to send back on his arrival at New York. He had engaged his passage, and fitted up cabins for his convenience, so that there could be no doubt of his having finally resolved to emigrate. This was all he knew; Cornelia gave him her letter, and he departed on the instant for Southampton.

In giving his wife so short an interval in which to form her determination, conceived that her first impulse would be to join her child, that she would act upon it, and at least come as far as Havre, though perhaps her mother would accompany her, to claim her daughter, even if she did not besides foster a hope of changing his resolves. Lodore had an unacknowledged reserve in his own mind, that if she would give up her mother, and for a time the world, he would leave the choice of their exile to her, and relinquish the dreary scheme of emigrating to America. With these thoughts in his mind, he anxiously awaited each day the arrival of the packets from England. Each day he hoped to see Cornelia disembark from one of them; and even though accompanied by Lady Santerre, he felt that his heart would welcome her. During this interval, his thoughts had recurred to his home; and imagination had already begun to paint the memory of that home, in brighter colours than the reality. Lady Lodore had not been all coldness and alienation; in spite of dissension, she had been his; her form, graceful as a nymph's, had met his eyes each morning; her smile, her voice, her light cheering laugh, had animated and embellished, how many hours during the long days, grown vacant without her. Cherishing a hope of seeing her again, he forgot her petulance — her self-will — her love of pleasure; and remembering only her beauty and her grace, he began, in a lover-like fashion, to impart to this charming image, a soul in accordance to his wishes, rather than to the reality. Each day he attended less carefully to the preparations of his long voyage. Each day he expected her; a chill came over his heart at each evening's still recurring disappointment, till hope awoke on the ensuing morning. More than once he had been on the eve of sailing to England to meet and escort her; a thousand times he reproached himself for not having made Southampton the place of meeting, and he was withheld from proceeding thither only by the fear of missing her. Giving way to these sentiments, the tide of affection, swelling into passion, rose in his breast. He doubted not that, ere long, she would arrive, and taxed himself for modes to show his gratitude and love.

The American vessel was on the point of sailing — it might have gone without him, he cared not; when on the sixth day Fenton arrived, and put into his hand Cornelia's letter. This then was the end of his expectation, this little paper coldly closed in the destruction of his hopes; yet might it not merely contain a request for delay? There was something in the servant's manner, that looked not like that; but still, as soon as the idea crossed him, he tore open the seal. The words were few, they were conceived in all the spirit of resentment.

"You add insult to cruelty," it said, "but I scorn to complain. The very condition you make displays the hollowness and deceit of your proceeding. You well know that I cannot, that I will not, desert my mother; but by calling on me for this dereliction of all duty and virtuous affection, you contrive to throw on me the odium of refusing to accompany you; this is a worthy design, and it is successful.

"I demand my child — restore her to me. It is cruelty beyond compare, to separate one so young from maternal tenderness and fosterage. By what right — through what plea, do you rob me of her? The tyranny and dark jealousy of your vindictive nature display themselves in this act of unprincipled violence, as well as in your insulting treatment of my mother. You alone must reign, be feared, be thought of; all others are to be sacrificed, living victims, at the shrine of your self-love. What have you done to merit so much devotion? Ask your heart — if it be not turned to stone, ask it what you have done to compare with the long years of affection, kindness, and never-ceasing care that my beloved parent has bestowed on me. I am your wife, ; I bear your name; I will be true to the vows I have made you, nor will I number the tears you force me to shed; but my mother's are sacred, and not one falls in vain for me.

"Give me my child — let the rest be yours — depart in peace! If Heaven have blessings for the coldly egotistical, the unfeeling despot, may these blessings be yours; but do not dare to interfere with emotions too pure, too disinterested for you ever to understand. Give me my child, and fear neither my interference nor resentment. I am content to be as dead to you — quite content never to see you more."

CHAPTER XIII.

And so farewell; for we will henceforth be
As we had never seen, ne'er more shall see.
— Heywood.

had passed many days upon the sea, on his voyage to America, before he could in the least calm the bitter emotions to which Cornelia's violent letter had given birth. He was on the wide Atlantic; the turbid ocean swelled and roared around him, and heaven, the mansion of the winds, showed on its horizon an extent of water only. He was cut off from England, from Europe, for ever; and the vast continents he quitted dwindled into a span; but still the images of those he left behind dwelt in his soul, engrossing and filling it. They could no longer personally taunt nor injure him; but the thought of them, of all that they might say or do, haunted his mind; it was like an unreal strife of gigantic shadows beneath dark night, which, when you approach, dwindles into thin air, but which, contemplated at a distance, fills the hemisphere with star-reaching heads, and steps that scale mountains. There was a sleepless tumult in Lodore's heart; it was a waking dream of the most painful description. Again and again Cornelia assailed him with reproaches, and Lady Santerre poured out curses upon him; his fancy lent them words and looks full of menace, hate, and violence. Sometimes the sighing of the breeze in the shrouds assumed a tone that mocked their voices; his sleep was disturbed by dreams more painful than his daylight fancies; and the sense which they imparted of suffering and oppression, was prolonged throughout the day.

He occasionally felt that he might become mad, and at such moments, the presence of his child brought consolation and calm; her caresses, her lisped expressions of affection, her playfulness, her smiles, were spells to drive away the fantastic reveries that tortured him. He looked upon her cherub face, and the world, late so full of wretchedness and ill, assumed brighter hues; the storm was allayed, the dark clouds fled, sunshine poured forth its beams; by degrees, tender and gentle sensations crept over his heart; he forgot the angry contentions in which, in imagination, he had been engaged, and he felt, that alone on the sea, with this earthly angel of peace near him, he was divided from every evil, to dwell with tranquillity and love.

To part with her had become impossible. She was all that rendered him human — that plucked the thorn from his pillow, and poured one mitigating drop into the bitter draught administered to him.

Cornelia, Casimir, Theodora, his mother-in-law, these were all various names and shapes of the spirit of evil, sent upon earth to torture him: but this heavenly sprite could set at nought their machinations and restore him to the calm and hopes of childhood. Extreme in all things, began more than ever to doat upon her and to bind up his life in her. Yet sometimes his heart softened at the recollection of his wife, of her extreme youth, and of the natural pang she must feel at being deprived of her daughter. He figured her pining, and in tears — he remembered that he had vowed to protect and love her for ever; and that deprived of him, never more could the soft attentions and sweet language of love soothe her heart or meet her ear, unattended with a sense of guilt and degradation. He knew that hereafter she might feel this — hereafter, when passion might be roused, and he could afford no remedy. Influenced by such ideas, he wrote to her; many letters he wrote during his voyage, destroying them one after another, dictated by the varying feelings that alternately ruled him. Reason and persuasion, authority and tenderness, reigned by turns in these epistles; they were written with all the fervour of his ardent soul, and breathed irresistible power. Had some of these papers met Cornelia's eye, she had assuredly been vanquished; but fate ordained it otherwise: fate that blindly weaves our web of life, culling her materials at will, and often wholly refusing to make use of our own desires and intentions, as forming a part of our destiny.

arrived at New York, and found, by some chance, letters already waiting for him there. He had concluded one to his wife full of affection and kindness, when a letter with the superscription written by Lady Santerre was delivered to him. It spoke of law proceedings, of eternal separation, and announced her daughter's resolve to receive no communication, to read no address, that was not prefaced by the restoration of her child; it referred him to a solicitor as the medium of future intercourse. With a bitter laugh

Lodore tore to pieces the eloquent and heart-felt appeal he had been on the point of sending; he gave up his thoughts to business only; he wrote to his agent, he arranged for his intended journey; in less than a month he was on his road to the Illinois.

Thus ended all hope of reconciliation, and Lady Santerre won the day. She had worked on the least amiable of her daughter’s feelings, and exalted anger into hatred, disapprobation into contempt and aversion. Soon after Cornelia had dismissed the servant, she felt that she had acted with too little reflection. Her heart died within her at the idea, that too truly might sail away with her child, and leave her widowed and solitary for ever. Her proud heart knew, on this account, no relenting towards her husband, the author of these painful feelings, but she formed the resolve not to lose all without a struggle. She announced her intention of proceeding to Havre to obtain her daughter. Lady Santerre could not oppose so natural a proceeding, especially as her companionship was solicited as in the highest degree necessary. They arrived at Southampton; the day was tempestuous, the wind contrary. Lady Santerre was afraid of the water, and their voyage was deferred. On the evening of the following day, Fenton arrived from Havre. Lord Lodore had sailed, the stormy waves of the Atlantic were between him and the shores of England; pursuit were vain; it would be an acknowledgment of defeat to follow him to America. Cornelia returned to Twickenham, maternal sorrow contending in her heart with mortified pride, and a keen resentful sense of injury.

Lady was nineteen; an age when youth is most arrogant, and most heedless of the feelings of others. Her beauty and the admiration it acquired, sate her on the throne of the world, and, to her own imagination, she looked down like an eastern princess, upon slaves only: her sway she had believed to be absolute; it was happiness for others to obey. Exalted by adulation, it was natural that all that lowered her elevation in her own eyes, should appear impertient and hateful. She had not learned to feel with or for others. To act in contradiction to her wishes was a crime beyond compare, and her soul was in arms to resent the insolence which thus assailed her majesty of will. The act of Lodore, stepping beyond common-place opposition into injury and wrong, found no mitigating excuses in her heart. No gentle return of love, no compassion for the unhappy exile — no generous desire to diminish the sufferings of one, who was the victim of the wildest and most tormenting passions, softened her bosom. She was injured, insulted, despised, and her swelling soul was incapable of any second emotion to the scorn and hate with which she visited the author of her degradation. She was to become the theme of the world's discourse, of its illnatured censure or mortifying pity. In whatever light she viewed her present position, it was full of annoyance and humiliation; her path was traced through a maze of pointed angles, that pained her at every turn, and her reflections magnifying the imprudence of which she accused herself, suggested no excuse for her husband, but caused her wounds to fester and burn. Cornelia was not of a lachrymose disposition; she was a woman who in Sparta had formed an heroine; who in periods of war and revolution, would unflinchingly have met calamity, sustaining and leading her own sex. But through the bad education she had received, and her extreme youth, elevation of feeling degenerated into mere personal pride, and heroism was turned into obstinacy; she had been capable of the most admirable self-sacrifice, had she been taught the right shrine at which to devote herself; but her mind was narrowed by the mode of her bringing up, and her loftiest ideas were centered in worldly advantages the most worthless and pitiable. To defraud her of these, was to deprive her of all that rendered life worth preserving.

Lady Santerre soothed, flattered, and directed her. She poured the balm of gratified vanity upon injured pride. She bade her expect speedy repentance from her husband, and impressed her with the idea, that if she were firm, he must yield. His present blustering prognosticated a speedy calm, when he would regret all that he had done, and seek, by entire submission, to win back his wife. Any appearance of concession on her part would spoil all. Cornelia's eyes flashed fire at the word. Concession! and to whom? To him who had wronged and insulted her? She readily gave into her mother's hands the management of all future intercourse with him, reserving alone, for her own satisfaction, an absolute resolve never to forgive.

The correspondence that ensued, carried on across the Atlantic, and soon with many miles of continent added to the space, only produced an interchange of letters written with cool insolence on one side, with heart-burning and impatience on the other. Each served to widen the breach. When Cornelia was not awakened to resent for herself, she took up arms on her mother’s account. When blamed her for being the puppet of one incapable of any generous feeling, one dedicated to the vulgar worship of Mammon, she repelled the taunt, and denied the servitude of soul of which she was accused; she declared that every virtue was enlisted on her mother’s side, and that she would abide by her for ever. In truth, she loved her the more for Lodore’s hatred, and Lady Santerre spared no pains to impress her with the belief, that she was wholly devoted to her.

Thus years passed away. At first Lady had lived in some degree of retirement, but persuaded again to emerge, she soon entered into the very thickest maze of society. Her fortune was sufficient to command a respectable station, her beauty gained her partizans, her untainted reputation secured her position in the world. Attractive as she was, she was so entirely and proudly correct, that even the women were not afraid of her. All her intimate associates were people whose rank gave weight and brilliancy to her situation, but who were conspicuous for their domestic virtues. She was looked upon as an injured and deserted wife, whose propriety of conduct was the more admirable from the difficulties with which she was surrounded; she became more than ever the fashion, and years glided on, as from season to season she shone a bright star among many luminaries, improving in charms and grace, as knowledge of the world and the desire of pleasing were added to her natural attractions.

The stories at first in circulation on ‘s departure, all sufficiently wide from the truth, were half forgotten, and served merely as an obscure substratum for Cornelia’s bright reputation. He was gone: he could no longer injure nor benefit any, and was therefore no longer an object of fear or love. The most charitable construction put upon his conduct was, that he was mad, and it was piously observed, that his removal from this world would be a blessing. Lady Santerre triumphed. Withering away in unhonoured age, still she appeared in the halls of the great, and played the part of Cerberus in her daughter’s drawing-room. Lady Lodore, beautiful and admired, intoxicated with this sort of prosperity, untouched by passion, unharmed by the temptations that surrounded her, believed that life was spent most worthily in following the routine observed by those about her, and securing the privilege of being exclusive. She was the glass of fashion — the imitated by a vast sect of imitators. The deprivation of her child was the sole cloud that came between her and the sun. In despite of herself, she never saw a little cherub with rosy cheeks and golden hair, but her heart was visited by a pang; and in her dreams she often beheld, instead of the image of the gay saloons in which she spent her evenings, a desert wild — a solitary home — and tiny footsteps on the dewy grass, guiding her to her baby daughter, whose soft cooings, remembered during absence, were agonizing to her. She awoke, and vowed her soul to hatred of the author of her sufferings — the cruel-hearted, insolent Lodore; and then fled to pleasure as the means of banishing these sad and disturbing emotions. She never again saw Casimir. Long before she re-appeared in the world, he and his mother had quitted England. Taught by the slight tinge of weakness that had mingled with her intercourse with him, she sedulously avoided like trials in future; and placing her happiness in universal applause, love saw her set his power at nought, and pride become a more impenetrable shield than wisdom.

CHAPTER XIV.

Time and Change together take their flight.
— L. E. L.

Fitzhenry and his daughter travelled for many days in rain and sunshine, across the vast plains of America. Conversation beguiled the way, and Ethel, delighted by the novelty and variety of all she saw, often felt as if springing from her seat with a new sense of excitement and gladness. So much do the young love change, that we have often thought it the dispensation of the Creator, to show that we are formed, at a certain age, to quit the parental roof, like the patriarch, to seek some new abode where to pitch our tents, and pasture our flocks. The clear soft eyes of the fair girl glistened with pleasure at each picturesque view, each change of earth and sky, each new aspect of civilization and its results, as they were presented to her.

Fitzhenry — or as he approaches the old world, so long deserted by him, he may resume his title — Lord had quitted his abode in the Illinois upon the spur of the moment; he had left his peaceful dwelling impatiently, and in haste, giving himself no time for second thoughts — scarcely for recollection. As the fever of his mind subsided, he saw no cause to repent his proceeding, and yet he began to look forward with an anxious and foreboding mind. He had become aware that the village of the Illinois was not the scene fitted for the development of his daughter's first social feelings, and that he ought to take her among the educated and refined, to give her a chance for happiness. A Gertrude or an Haidée, brought up in the wilds, innocent and free, and bestowing the treasure of their hearts on some accomplished stranger, brought on purpose to realize the ideal of their dreamy existences, is a picture of beauty, that requires a miracle to change into an actual event in life; and that one so pure, so guileless, and so inexperienced as Ethel, should, in sheer ignorance, give her affections away unworthily, was a danger to be avoided beyond all others. Whitelock had performed the part of the wandering stranger, but he was ill-fitted for it; and Lodore’s first idea was to hurry his daughter away before she should invest him, or any other, with attributes of glory, drawn from her own imagination and sensibility, wholly beyond his merits.

This was done. Father and daughter were on their way to New York, having bid an eternal adieu to the savannas and forests of the west. For a time, ‘s thoughts were haunted by the image of the home they had left. The murmuring of its stream was in his ears, the shape of each distant hill, the grouping of the trees, surrounding the wide-spread prairie, the winding pathway and trellised arbour were before his eyes, and he thought of the changes that the seasons would operate around, and of his future plans unfulfilled, as any home-bred farmer might, when his lease was out, and he was forced to remove to another county.

As their steps drew near the city which was their destination, these recollections became fainter, and, except in discourse with Ethel, when their talk usually recurred to the prairie, and their late home, he began to anticipate the future, and to reflect upon the results of his present journey.

Whither was he about to go? To England? What reception should he there meet? and under what auspices introduce his child to her native country? There was a stain upon his reputation that no future conduct could efface. The name of was a by-word and a mark for scorn; it was introduced with a sneer, followed by calumny and rebuke. It could not even be forgotten. His wife had remained to keep alive the censure or derision attached to it. He, it is true, might have ceased to live in the memories of any. He did not imagine that his idea ever recurred to the thoughtless throng, whose very name and identity were changed by the lapse of twelve years. But when it was mentioned, when he should awaken the forgotten sound by his presence, the echo of shame linked to it would awaken also; the love of a sensation so rife among the wealthy and idle, must swell the sound, and Ethel would be led on the world’s stage by one who was the object of its opprobrium.

What then should he do? Solicit Lady to receive and bring out her daughter? Deprive himself of her society; and after having guarded her unassailed infancy, desert her side at the moment when dangers grew thick, and her mother’s example would operate most detrimentally on her? He thought of his sister, with whom he kept up a regular though infrequent correspondence. She was ill fitted to guide a young beauty on a path which she had never trod. He thought of France, Italy, and Germany, and how he might travel about with her during the two or three succeeding years, enlarging and storing her mind, and protracting the happy light-hearted years of youth. His own experience on the continent would facilitate this plan; and though it presented, even on this very account, a variety of objections, it was that to which he felt most attracted.

There was yet another — another image and another prospect to which he turned with a kind of gasping sensation, which was now a shrinking aversion to — now an ardent desire for, its fulfilment. This was the project of a reconciliation with Cornelia, and that they should henceforth unite in their labours to render each other and their child happy.

Twelve years had passed since their separation: twelve years, which had led him from the prime of life to its decline — which forced Cornelia to number, instead of nineteen, more than thirty years — bringing her from crude youth to fullest maturity. What changes might not time have operated in her mind! Latterly no intercourse had passed between them, they were as dead to each other; and yet the fact of the existence of either was a paramount law with both, ruling their actions and preventing them from forming any new tie. Cornelia might be tired of independence, have discovered the hollowness of her mother’s system, and desire, but that pride prevented her, a reunion with her long-exiled husband. Her understanding was good; intercourse with the world had probably operated to cultivate and enlarge it — maternal love might reign in full force, causing her heart to yearn towards the blooming Ethel, and a thousand untold sorrows might make her regard the affection of her child’s father, as the prop, the shelter, the haven, where to find peace, if not happiness.

And yet Cornelia was still young, still beautiful, still admired: he was on the wane — a healthy life had preserved the uprightness of his form and the spring of his limbs; but his countenance, how changed from the who pledged his faith to her in the rustic church at Rhyaider Gowy! The melting softness of his dark eyes was altered to mere sadness — his brow, from which the hair had retreated, was delved by a thousand lines; grey sprinkled his black hair, — a wintry morning stealing drearily upon night — each year had left its trace, and with no Praxitelean hand, engraven lines upon the rounded cheek, and sunk and diminished the full eye. Twelve years had scarcely operated so great a change as here described; but thus he painted it to himself, exaggerating and deforming the image his mirror presented — and where others had only marked the indications of a thoughtful mind, and the traces of over-wrought sensibility, he beheld careful furrows and age-worn wrinkles.

And was he thus to claim the beautiful, the courted — she who still reigned supreme on Love’s own throne? and to whom, so had he been told, time had brought increased charms as its gift, strewing roses and fragrance on her lovely head, so proving that neither grief nor passion had disturbed the proud serenity of her heart.

had lived many years the life of a recluse, having given up ambition, hope, almost life itself, inasmuch as that existence is scarcely to be termed life, which does not bring us into intimate connexion with our fellow-creatures, nor develope in its progress some plan of present action or anticipation for the future. He was roused from his lethargy as he approached peopled cities; a desire to mingle again in human affairs was awakened, together with an impatience under the obscurity to which he had condemned himself. He grew at last to despise his supineness, which had prevented him from struggling with and vanquishing his adverse fortunes. He resolved no longer to be weighed down by the fear of obloquy, while he was conscious of the bravery and determination of his soul, and with what lofty indignation he was prepared to sweep away the stigma attached to him, and to assert the brightness of his honour. This, for his daughter’s sake, as well as for his own, he determined to do.

He had no wish, however, to enter upon the task in America. His native country must be the scene of his exertions, as to re-assert himself among his countrymen was their object. He felt, also, that, from the beginning, he must take no false step; and it behoved him fully to understand the state of things in England as regarded him, before he presented himself. He delayed his voyage, therefore, till he had exchanged letters with Europe. He wrote to his sister, immediately on arriving at New York, asking for intelligence concerning Lady ; and communicating his intention to return immediately, and, if possible, to effect a reconciliation with his estranged wife. He besought an immediate reply, as he did not wish to defer his voyage beyond the spring months.

Having sent this letter, he gave himself up to the society of his daughter. He occupied himself by endeavouring to form her for the new scenes on which she was about to enter, and to divest her of the first raw astonishment excited by the contrast formed by the busy, commercial eastern, with the majestic tranquillity of the western portion of the new world. He wished to accustom her to mingle with her fellow-creatures with ease and dignity; and he sought to enlarge her mind, and to excite her curiosity, by introducing her to the effects of civilization. He would willingly have formed acquaintances for her sake, but that such a circumstance might interfere with the incognito he meant to preserve while away from his native country. We can never divest ourselves of our identity and consciousness, and are apt to fancy that others are equally alive to our peculiar individuality. It was not probable that the name of , or of Fitzhenry, should be known in New York; but as the title had been bestowed as a reward for victories obtained over the Americans, he who bore it was less to be blamed for fancying that they had heard with pleasure the story of his disgrace, and would be ready to visit his fault with malignant severity.

An accident, however, brought him into contact with an English lady, and he gladly availed himself of this opportunity to bring Ethel into the society of her country people. One day he received an elegant little note, such as are written in London by the fashionable and the fair, which, with many apologies, contained a request. The writer had heard that he was about to return to England with his daughter. Would he refuse to take under his charge a young lady, who was desirous of returning thither? The distance from their native land drew English people together, and usually made them kindly disposed towards each other. The circumstances under which this request was made were peculiar; and if he would call to hear them explained, his interest would be excited, and he would not refuse a favour which would lay the writer under the deepest obligation.

answered this application in person. He found an English family residing in one of the best streets of New York, and was introduced to the lady who had addressed him. Her story, the occasion of her request, was detailed without reserve. Her husband's family had formerly been American royalists, refugees in England, where they had lived poor and forgotten. A brother of his father had remained behind in the new country, and acquired a large fortune. He had lived to extreme old age; and dying childless, left his wealth to his English nephew, upon condition that he settled in America. This had caused their emigration. While in England, they had lived at Bath, and been intimate with a clergyman, who resided near. This clergyman was a singular man — a recluse, and a student — a man of ardent soul, held down by a timid, nervous disposition. He was an outcast from his family, which was wealthy and of good station, on account of having formed a mes-alliance. How indeed he could have married his unequal partner was matter of excessive wonder. She was illiterate and vulgar — coarse-minded, though good-natured. This ill-matched pair had two daughters; — one, the younger, now about fourteen years old, was the person whom it was desired to commit to Lodore's protection.

The lady continued: — She had a large family of boys, and but one girl, of the age of Fanny Derham; — they had been for some years companions and friends. When about to emigrate, she believed that she should benefit equally her daughter and her friend, if she made the latter a companion in their emigration. With great reluctance, Mr. Derham had consented to part with his child: he had thought it for her good, and he had let her go. Fanny obeyed her father. She manifested no disinclination to the plan; and it seemed as if the benevolent wishes of Mrs. Greville were fulfilled for the benefit of all. They had been in America nearly a year, and now Fanny was to return. She herself had borne her absence from her father with fortitude: yet it required an exertion of fortitude to bear it, which was destroying the natural vivacity of her disposition. Gloom gathered over her mind; she fled society; she sought solitude; and spent day after day in reverie. Mrs. Greville strove to rouse her, and Fanny lent herself with good grace to any exertion demanded of her; yet it was plain, that even when she gave herself most up to her desire to please her hostess, her thoughts were far away, her eye was tracing the invisible outline of objects divided from her by the ocean; and her inmost sense was absorbed by the recollection of one far distant; while her ear and voice were abstractedly lent to those immediately around her. Mrs. Greville endeavoured vainly to amuse and distract her thoughts. The only pleasure which attracted her young mind was study — a deep and unremitted application to those profound acquirements, to the knowledge of which her father had introduced her.

"When you know my young friend," continued Mrs. Greville, "you will understand the force of character which renders her unlike every other child. Fanny never was a child. Mrs. Derham and her daughter Sarah bustled through the business of life — of the farm and the house; while it devolved on Fanny to attend to, to wait upon, her father. She was his pupil — he her care. The relation of parent and child subsisted between them, on a different footing than in ordinary cases. Fanny nursed her father, watched over his health and humours, with the tenderness and indulgence of a mother; while he instructed her in the dead languages, and other sorts of abstruse learning, which seldom make a part of a girl's education. Fanny, to use her own singular language, loves philosophy, and pants after knowledge, and indulges in a thousand Platonic dreams, which I know nothing about; and this mysterious and fanciful learning she has dwelt upon with tenfold fervour since her arrival in America.

"The contrast," continued Mrs. Greville, "between this wonderful, but strange girl, and her parent, is apparent in nothing more than the incident that made me have recourse to your kindness. Fanny pined for home, and her father. The very air of America was distasteful to her — we were not congenial companions. But she never expressed discontent. As much as she could, she shut herself up in the world of her own mind; but outwardly, she was cheerful and uncomplaining. A week ago we had letters from her parents, requesting her immediate return. Mr. Derham wasted away without her; his health was seriously injured by what, in feminine dialect, is called fretting; and both he and her mother have implored me to send her back to them without delay."

Lord listened with breathless interest, asking now and then such questions as drew on Mrs. Greville to further explanation. He soon became convinced that he was called upon to do this act of kindness for the daughter of his former school-fellow — for Francis Derham, whom he had not known nor seen since they had exchanged the visions of boyhood for the disappointing realities of maturer age. And this was Derham's fate! — poor, mis-matched, destroyed by a morbid sensibility, an object of pity to his own young child, yet adored by her as the gentlest and wisest of men. How different — and yet how similar — the destinies of both! It warmed the heart of Lodore to think that he should renew his boyish intimacy. Derham would not reject him — would not participate in the world's blind scorn: in his bosom no harsh nor unjust feeling could have place; his simple, warm heart would yearn towards him as of yore; and the schoolfellows become again all the world to each other.

After this explanation, Mrs. Greville introduced her young friend. Her resemblance to her father was at first sight remarkable, and awoke with greater keenness the roused sensibility of . She was pale and fair; her light, golden hair clustered in short ringlets over her small, well-formed head, leaving unshaded a high forehead, clear as opening day. Her blue eyes were remarkably light and penetrating, with defined and straight brows. Intelligence, or rather understanding, reigned in every feature; independence of thought, and firmness, spoke in every gesture. She was a mere child in form and mien — even in her expressions; but within her was discernible an embryo of power, and a grandeur of soul, not to be mistaken. Simplicity and equability of temper were her characteristics: these smoothed the ruggedness which the singularity of her character might otherwise have engendered.

rejoiced in the strange accident that gave such a companion to his daughter. Nothing could be in stronger contrast than these two girls; — the fairy form, the romantic and yielding sweetness of Ethel, whose clinging affections formed her whole world, — with the studious and abstracted disciple of ancient learning. Notwithstanding this want of similarity, they soon became mutually attached. Lodore was a link between them. He excited Ethel to admire the concentrated and independent spirit of her new friend; and entered into conversation with Fanny on ancient philosophy, which was unintelligible and mysterious to Ethel. The three became inseparable: they prolonged their excursions in the neighbouring country; while each enjoyed peculiar pleasures in the friendship and sympathy of their companions.

This addition to their society, and an intimacy cultivated with Mrs. Greville, whose husband was absent at Washington, formed, as it were, a weaning time for , from the seclusion of the Illinois. There he had lived, cut off from the past and the future, existing in the present only. He had been happy there; cured of the wounds which had penetrated his heart so deeply, through the ministration of all-healing nature. He felt the gliding of the hours as a blessing; and the occupations of each day were replete with calm enjoyment. He thought of England, as a seaman newly saved from a wreck would of the tempestuous ocean, with fear and loathing, and with heart-felt gladness that he was no longer the sport of its waves. He cultivated such a philosophic turn of mind as often brought a smile of self-pity on his lips, at the recollection of scenes which, during their passage, had provoked bitter and burning sensations. What was all this strife of passion, this eager struggle for something, he knew not what, to him now? The healthy labours of his farm, the tranquillity of his library, the endearing caresses of his child, were worth all the vanities of life.

Thus he had felt in the Illinois; and now again he looked back to his undisturbed life there, wondering how he had endured its monotonous loneliness. A desire for action, for mingling with his fellow-men, had arisen in his heart. He felt like a strong swimmer, who longs to battle with the waves. He desired to feel and to exert his powers, to fill a space in the eyes of others, to re-assert himself in their esteem, or to resent their scorn. He could no longer regard the past with imperturbability. Again his passions were roused, as he thought of his mother-in-law, of his wife, and of the strange scenes which had preceded and caused his flight from England. These ideas had long occupied his mind, without occasioning any emotion. But now again they were full of interest; and pain and struggle again resulted from the recollection. At such times he was glad that Ethel had a companion, that he might leave her and wander alone. He became a prey to the same violence of passion, the same sense of injury and stinging hurry of thought, which for twelve years had ceased to torture him. But no tincture of cowardice entered into his sensations. His soul was set upon victory over the evil fortune to which he had so long submitted. When he thought of returning to England, from which he had fled with dishonour, his cheek tingled as a thousand images of insult and contumely passed rapidly through his mind, as likely to visit him. His heart swelled within him — his very soul grew faint; but instead of desiring to fly the anticipated opprobrium, he longed to meet it and to wash out shame, if need were, with his life’s blood; and, by resolution and daring, to silence his enemies, and redeem his name from obloquy.

One day, occupied by such thoughts, he stood watching that vast and celebrated cataract, whose everlasting and impetuous flow mirrored the dauntless but rash energy of his own soul. A vague desire of plunging into the whirl of waters agitated him. His existence appeared to be a blot in the creation; his hopes, and fears, and resolves, a worthless web of ill-assorted ideas, best swept away at once from the creation. Suddenly his eye caught the little figure of Fanny Derham, standing on a rock not far distant, her meaning eyes fixed on him. The thunder of the waters prevented speech; but as he drew near her, he saw that she had a paper in her hand. She held it out to him; a blush mantled over her usually pale countenance as he took it; and she sprung away up the rocky pathway.

cast his eyes on the open letter, and his own name, half forgotten by him, presented itself on the written page. The letter was from Fanny's father — from Derham, his friend and school-fellow. His heart beat fast as he read the words traced by one formerly so dear. "The beloved name of Fitzhenry" — thus Derham had written—"awakens a strange conjecture. Is not your kind protector, the friend and companion of my boyish days? Is it not the long absent Lodore, who has stretched out a paternal hand to my darling child, and who is about to add to his former generous acts, the dearer one of restoring my Fanny to me? Ask him this question; — extract this secret from him. Tell him how my chilled heart warms with pleasure at the prospect of a renewal of our friendship. He was a god-like boy; daring, generous, and brave. The remembrance of him has been the bright spot which, except yourself, is all of cheering that has chequered my gloomy existence. Ask him whether he remembers him whose life he saved — whom he rescued from oppression and misery. I am an old man now, weighed down by sorrow and infirmity. Adversity has also visited him; but he will have withstood the shocks of fate, as gallantly as a mighty ship stems the waves of ocean: while I, a weather-worn skiff, am battered and wrecked by the tempest. From all you say, he must be Lodore. Mark him, Fanny: if you see one lofty in his mien, yet gracious in all his acts; his person adorned by the noblest attributes of rank; full of dignity, yet devoid of pride; impatient of all that is base and insolent, but with a heart open as a woman's to compassion; — one whose slightest word possesses a charm to attract and enchain the affections: — if such be your new friend, put this letter into his hand; he will remember Francis Derham, and love you for my sake, as well as for your own."

CHAPTER XV.

It is our will
That thus enchains us to permitted ill.
— Shelley.

This was a new inducement to bring back from the wilds of America, to the remembrance of former days. The flattering expressions in Derham's letter soothed his wounded pride, and inspired a desire of associating once more with men who could appreciate his worth, and sympathize with his feelings. His spirits became exhilarated; he talked of Europe and his return thither, with all the animation of sanguine youth. It is one of the necessary attributes of our nature, always to love what we have once loved; and though new objects and change in former ones may chill our affections for a time, we are filled with renewed fervour after every fresh disappointment, and feel an impatient longing to return to the cherishing warmth of our early attachments; happy if we do not find emptiness and desolation, where we left life and hope.

Ethel had never been as happy as at the present time, and her affection for her father gathered strength from the confidence which existed between them. He was the passion of her soul, the engrossing attachment of her loving heart. When she saw a cloud on his brow, she would stand by him with silent but pleading tenderness, as if to ask whether any exertion of hers could dissipate his inquietude. She hung upon his discourse as a heavenly oracle, and welcomed him with gladdened looks of love, when he returned after any short absence. Her heart was bent upon pleasing him, she had no thought or pursuit which was not linked with his participation.

There is perhaps in the list of human sensations, no one so pure, so perfect, and yet so impassioned, as the affection of a child for its parent, during that brief interval when they are leaving childhood, and have not yet felt love. There is something so awful in a father. His words are laws, and to obey them happiness. Reverence and a desire to serve, are mingled with gratitude; and duty, without a flaw or question, so second the instinct of the heart, as to render it imperative. Afterwards we may love, in spite of the faults of the object of our attachment; but during the interval alluded to, we have not yet learnt to tolerate, but also, we have not learned to detect faults. All that a parent does, appears an emanation from a diviner world; while we fear to offend, we believe we have no right to be offended; eager to please, we seek in return approval only, and are too humble to demand a reciprocity of attention; it is enough that we are permitted to demonstrate our devotion. Ethel's heart overflowed with love, reverence, worship of her father. He had stood in the wilds of America a solitary specimen of all that is graceful, cultivated, and wise among men; she knew of nothing that might compare to him; and the world without him, was what the earth might be uninformed by light: he was its sun, its ruling luminary. All this intensity of feeling existed in her, without her being aware scarcely of its existence, without her questioning the cause, or reasoning on the effect. To love her father was the first law of nature, the chief duty of a child, and she fulfilled it unconsciously, but more completely than she could have done had she been associated with others, who might have shared and weakened the concentrated sensibility of her nature.

At length the packet arrived which brought letters from England. Before his eyes lay the closed letter pregnant with fate. He was not of a disposition to recoil from certainty; and yet for a few moments he hesitated to break the seals — appalled by the magnitude of the crisis which he believed to be at hand.

Latterly the idea of a reconciliation with Cornelia had been a favourite in his thoughts. The world was a painful and hard-tasking school. She must have suffered various disappointments, and endured much disgust, and so be prepared to lend a willing ear to his overture. She was so very young when they parted, and since then, had lived entirely under the influence of Lady Santerre. But what had at one time proved injurious, might, in course of years, have opened her eyes to the vanity of the course which she was pursuing. felt persuaded, that there were better things to be expected from his wife, than a love of fashion and an adherence to the prejudices of society. He had failed to bring her good qualities to light, but time and events might have played the tutor better, and it merely required perhaps a seasonable interference, a fortunate circumstance, to prove the truth of his opinion, and to show Lady Lodore as generous, magnanimous, and devoted, as before she had appeared proud, selfish, and cold.

How few there are possessed of any sensibility, who mingle with, and are crushed by the jostling interests of the world, who do not ever and anon exclaim with the Psalmist, “O for the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!” If such an aspiration was ever breathed by Cornelia, how gladly, how fondly would her husband welcome the weary flutterer, open his bosom for her refuge, and study to make her forget all the disquietudes and follies of headstrong youth!

This was a mere dream. sighed to think that his position would not permit him to afford her a shelter from the poisoned arrows of the world. She must come to him prepared to suffer much. It required not only the absence of the vulgar worldliness of Lady Santerre, but great strength of mind to forgive the past, and strong affection to endure the present. He could only invite her to share the lot of a dishonoured man, to become a partner in the struggle which he was prepared to enter upon, to regain his lost reputation. This was no cheering prospect. Pride and generosity equally forbad his endeavouring to persuade his wife to quit a course of life she liked, to enter upon a scene of trials and sorrows with one for whom she did not care.

All these conjectures had long occupied him, but here was certainty — the letter in his hand. It was sealed with black, and a tremulous shudder ran through his frame as he tore it open. He soon satisfied himself — Cornelia lived: he breathed freely again, and proceeded more calmly to make himself master of the intelligence which the paper he held contained.

Cornelia lived; but his sister announced a death which he believed would change the colour of his life. Lady Santerre was no more!

Yes, Cornelia was alive; the bride that had stood beside him at the altar — whose hand he had held while he pronounced his vows — with whom he had domesticated for years — the mother of his child still lived. The cold consuming grave did not wrap her lovely form. The idea of her death, which the appearance of the black seal conveyed suddenly to his imagination, had been appalling beyond words. For the last few weeks his mind had been filled with her image; his thoughts had fed upon the hope that they should meet once more. Had she died while he was living in inactive seclusion in the Illinois, he might have been less moved; his vivid fancy, his passionate heart, could not spare her now, without a pang of agony. It passed away, and his mind reverted to the actual situation in which they were placed by the death of his mother-in-law. Reconciliation had become easy by the removal of that fatal barrier. He felt assured that he could acquire Cornelia's confidence, win her love, and administer to her happiness; he determined to leave nothing untried to bring about so desirable a conclusion to their long and dreary alienation. The one insuperable obstacle was gone; their daughter, that loveliest link, that soft silken tie remained: Cornelia must welcome with maternal delight this better portion of herself.

He glanced over his sister Elizabeth's letter, announcing the death of Lady Santerre, and then read the one enclosed from Lady to her sister-in-law. It was cold, but very decisive. She thanked her first for the inquiries she had made, and then proceeded to say, that she took this opportunity, the only one likely to present itself, of expressing what her own feelings were on this melancholy occasion. "I am afraid," she said, "that your brother will look on the death of my dearest mother as opening the door to our re-union. Some words in your letter seem indeed to intimate this, or I should have hoped that I was entirely forgotten. I trust that I am mistaken. My earnest desire is, that my natural grief, and the tranquillity which I try to secure for myself, may not be disturbed by fruitless endeavours to bring about what can never be. My determination may be supposed to arise from pride and implacable resentment: perhaps it does, but I feel it impossible that we should ever be any thing but strangers to each other. I will not complain, and I wish to avoid harsh allusions, but respect for her I have lost, and a sense of undeserved wrong, are paramount with me. I shall never intrude upon him. Persuade him that it will be unmanly cruelty to force himself, even by a letter, on me."

From this violent declaration of an unforgiving heart, turned to Elizabeth's letter. This excellent lady, to whom the names of dissipation and the metropolis were synonymous, and who knew as much of the world as Parson Adams, assured her brother, that Cornelia, far from feeling deeply the blow of her mother's death, was pursuing her giddy course with greater pertinacity than ever. Surrounded by flatterers, given up to pleasure, she naturally shrunk from being reminded of her exiled husband and her forgotten child. Her letter showed how ill she deserved the tenderness and interest which Lodore had expressed. She was a second Lady Santerre, without being gifted with that maternal affection, which had in some degree dignified that person’s character.

Elizabeth lamented that his wife’s hardness of heart might prevent his proposed visit to England. She did not like to urge it — it might seem selfish: hitherto she had let herself and her sorrows go for nothing; could she think of her own gratification, while her brother was suffering so much calamity? She was growing old — indeed she was old — she had no kin around her — early friends were dead or lost to her — she had nothing to live on but the recollection of her brother; she should think herself blest could she see him once more before she died.

“O my dear brother Henry,” continued the kind-hearted lady, “if you would but say the word — the sea is nothing; people older than I — and I am not at all infirm — make the voyage. Let me come to America — let me embrace my niece, and see you once again — let me share your dear home in the Illinois, which I see every night in my dreams. I should grieve to be a burthen to you, but it would be my endeavour to prove a comfort and a help.”

read both of these letters, one after the other, again and again. He resolved on going to England immediately. Either Cornelia was entirely callous and worthless, and so to be discarded from his heart for ever, or after her first bitter feelings on her mother’s death were over, she would soften towards her child, or there was some dread secret feeling that influenced her, and he must save her from calamity and wretchedness. One of those changes of feeling to which the character of Lodore was peculiarly subject, came over him. Lady Santerre was dead — Cornelia was alone. A thousand dangers surrounded her. It appeared to him that his first imperious duty was to offer himself to guard and watch over her. He resolved to leave nothing untried to make her happy. He would give up Ethel to her — he would gratify every wish she could frame — pour out benefits lavishly before her — force her to see in him a benefactor and a friend; and at last, his heart whispered, induce her to assume again the duties of a wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

What is peace? When life is over.
And love ceases to rebel.
Let the last faint sigh discover.
Which precedes the passing knell.
— Wordsworth.

Lodore was henceforth animated by a new spirit of hope. His projects and resolves gave him something to live for. He looked forward with pleasure; feeling, on his expected return to his native country, as the fabled voyager, who knew that he ought to be contented in the fair island where chance had thrown him, and yet who hailed with rapture the approach of the sail that was to bear him back to the miseries of social life. He reflected that he had in all probability many years before him, and he was earnest that the decline of his life should, by a display of prudence and virtuous exertion, cause the errors of his earlier manhood to be forgotten.

This inspiriting tone of mind was very congenial to Ethel. The prospects that occupied her father had a definite horizon: all was vague and misty to her eyes, yet beautiful and alluring. gave no outline of his plans: he never named her mother. Uncertain himself, he was unwilling to excite feelings in Ethel's mind, to be afterwards checked and disappointed. He painted the future in gay colours, but left it in all the dimness most favourable for an ardent imagination to exercise itself upon.

In a very few days they were to sail for England. Their passage was engaged. had written to his sister to announce his return. He spoke of Longfield, and of her kind and gentle aunt to Ethel, and she, who, like Miranda, had known no relative or intimate except her father, warmed with pleasure to find new ties bind her to her fellow-creatures. She questioned her father, and he, excited by his own newly-awakened emotions, dilated eloquently on the joys of his young days, and pleased Fanny, as well as his own daughter, by a detail of boyish pranks and adventures which his favourite school-fellow shared. The freedom he enjoyed in his paternal home, the worship that waited on him there, the large space which in early youth he appeared to fill in all men's eyes, the buoyancy and innocence associated with those unshadowed days, painted them to his memory cloudless and bright. It would be to renew them to see Longfield again, — to clasp once more the hand of Francis Derham.

A kind of holiday and festal feeling was diffused through Ethel's mind by the vivid descriptions and frank communications of her father. She felt as if about to enter Paradise. America grew dim and sombre in her eyes; its forests, lakes, and wilds, were empty and silent, while England swarmed with a thousand lovely forms of pleasure. Her father strewed a downy velvet path for her, which she trod with light, girlish steps, happy in the present hour, happier in the anticipated future.

A few days before the party were to sail, and his daughter dined with Mrs. Greville. As if they held the reins, and could curb the course of, fate, each and all were filled with hilarity. Lodore had forgotten Theodora and her son — had cast from his recollection the long train of misery, injury, and final ruin, which for so long had occupied his whole thoughts. He was in his own eyes no longer the branded exile. A strange distortion of vision blinded this unfortunate man to the truth, which experience so perpetually teaches us, that the consequences of our actions never die: that repentance and time may paint them to us in different shapes; but though we shut our eyes, they are still beside us, helping the inexorable destinies to spin the fatal thread, and sharpening the implement which is to cut it asunder.

lived the morning of that day, (it was the first of May, realizing by its brilliancy and sweets, the favourite months of the poets,) as if many a morning throughout the changeful seasons was to be his. Some time he spent on board the vessel in which he was to sail; seeing that all the arrangements which he had ordered for Ethel and Fanny's comfort were perfected; then father and daughter rode out together. Often did Ethel try to remember every word of the conversation held during that ride. It concerned the fair fields of England, the splendours of Italy, the refinements and pleasures of Europe. "When we are in London,"—"When we shall visit Naples," — such phrases perpetually occurred. It was Lodore's plan to induce Cornelia to travel with him, and to invite Mr. Derham and Fanny to be their companions; a warmer climate would benefit his friend's health. "And for worlds," he said, "I would not lose Derham. It is the joy of my life to think that by my return to my native country I secure to myself the society of this excellent and oppressed man."

At six o’clock and Ethel repaired to Mrs. Greville’s house. It had been intended that no other persons should be invited, but the unexpected arrival of some friends from Washington, about to sail to England, had obliged the lady to alter this arrangement. The new guests consisted of an English gentleman and his wife, and one other, an American, who had filled a diplomatic situation in London. Annoyed by the sight of strangers, Lodore kept apart, conversing with Ethel and Fanny.

At dinner he sat opposite to the American. There was something in this man’s physiognomy peculiarly disagreeable to him. He was not a pleasing-looking man, but that was not all. fancied that he must have seen him before under very painful circumstances. He felt inclined to quarrel with him — he knew not why; and was disturbed and dissatisfied with himself and every body. The first words which the man spoke were as an electric shock to him. Twelve long years rolled back — the past became the present once again. This very American had sat opposite to him at the memorable dinner at the Russian Ambassador’s. At the moment when he had been hurried away by the fury of his passion against Casimir, he remembered to have seen a sarcastic sneer on his face, as the republican marked the arrogance of the English noble. Lodore had been ready then to turn the fire of his resentment on the insolent observer; but when the occasion passed away he had entirely forgotten him, till now he rose like a ghost to remind him of former pains and crimes.

The lapse of years had scarcely altered this person. His hair was grizzled, but it crowned his head in the same rough abundance as formerly. His face, which looked as if carved out of wood, strongly and deeply lined, showed no tokens of a more advanced age. He was then elderly-looking for a middle-aged man; he was now young-looking for an elderly man. Nature had disdained to change an aspect which showed so little of her divinity, and which no wrinkles nor withering could mar. , turning from this apparition, caught the reflection of himself in an opposite mirror. Association of ideas had made him unconsciously expect to behold the jealous husband of Cornelia. How changed, how passion-worn and tarnished was the countenance that met his eyes. He recovered his self-possession as he became persuaded that this chance visitant, who had seen him but once, would be totally unable to recognize him.

This unwelcome guest had been attached to the American embassy in England, and had but lately returned to New York. He was full of dislike of the English. Contempt for them, and pride in his countrymen, being the cherished feelings of his mind; the latter he held up to admiration from prejudiced views; a natural propensity to envy and depreciation led him to detract from the former. He was, in short, a most disagreeable person; and his insulting observations on his country moved ‘s spleen, while his mind was shaken from its balance by the sight of one who reminded him of his past errors and ruin. He was fast advancing to a state of irritability, when he should lose all command over himself. He felt this, and tried to subdue the impetuous rush of bitterness which agitated him; he remembered that he must expect many trials like this, and that, rightly considered, this was a good school wherein he might tutor himself to self-possession and firmness. He went to another extreme, and addressing himself to, and arguing with, the object of his dislike, endeavoured to gloss over to himself the rising violence of his impassioned temper.

The ladies retired, and the gentlemen entered upon a political discussion on some event passing in Europe. The English guest took his departure early, and and the other continued to converse. Some mention was made of newspapers newly arrived, and the American proposed that they should repair to the coffee-house to see them. Lodore agreed: he thought that this would be a good opportunity to shake off his distasteful companion.

The coffee-room contained nearly twenty persons. They were in loud discussion upon a question of European politics, and reviling England and her manners in the most contemptuous terms. This was not balm for ‘s sore feelings. His heart swelled indignantly at the sarcasms which these strangers levelled against his native country; he felt as if he was acting a coward’s part while he listened tamely. His companion soon entered with vehemence into the conversation; and the noble, who was longing to quarrel with him, now drew himself up with forced composure, fixing his full meaning eyes upon the speaker, hoping by his quiescence to entice him into expressions which he would insist on being retracted. His temper by this time entirely mastered him. In a calmer moment he would have despised himself for being influenced by such a man, to any sentiment except contempt; but the tempest was abroad, and all sobriety of feeling was swept away like chaff before the wind.

Mr. Hatfield, — such was the American’s name, — perceiving that he was listened to, entered with great delight on his favourite topic, a furious and insolent philippic against England, in mass and in detail. still listened; there was a dry sneer in the tones of the speaker’s voice, that thrilled him with hate and rage. At length, by some chance reverting to the successful struggle America had made for her independence, and ridiculing the resistance of the English on the occasion, Hatfield named Lodore.

“!” cried one of the by-standers; “Fitzhenry was the name of the man who took the Oronooko.”

“Aye, Fitzhenry it was,” said Hatfield, “ is his nickname. King George’s bit of gilt gingerbread, which mightily pleased the sapient mariner. An Englishman thinks himself honoured when he changes one name for another. Admiral Fitzhenry was the scum of the earth — Lord Lodore a pillar of state. Pity that infamy should so soon have blackened the glorious title!”

‘s pale cheek suddenly flushed at these words, and then blanched again, as with compressed lips he resolved to hear yet more, till the insult should no longer be equivocal. The word “infamy” was echoed from various lips. Hatfield found that he had insured a hearing, and, glad of an audience, he went on to relate his story — it was of the dinner at the Russian Ambassador’s — of the intemperate violence of Lodore — and the youthful Lyzinski’s wrongs. “I saw the blow given,” continued the narrator, “and I would have caned the fellow on the spot, had I not thought that a bullet would do his business better. But when it came to that, London was regaled by an event which could not have happened here, for we have no such cowards among us. My lord was not to be found — he had absconded — sneaked off like a mean-spirited, pitiful scoundrel!”

The words were still on the man’s lips when a blow, sudden and unexpected, extended him on the floor. After this swiftly-executed act of retaliation, folded his arms, and as his antagonist rose, foaming with rage, said, “You, at least, shall have no cause to complain of not receiving satisfaction for your injuries at my hands. I am ready to give it, even in this room. I am Lord Lodore!”

Duels, that sad relic of feudal barbarism, were more frequent then than now in America; at all times they are more fatal and more openly carried on there than in this country. The nature of the quarrel in the present instance admitted of no delay; and it was resolved, that the antagonists should immediately repair to an open place near the city, to terminate, by the death of one, the insults they had mutually inflicted.

saw himself surrounded by Americans, all strangers to him; nor was he acquainted with one person in New York whom he could ask to be his second. This was matter of slight import: the idea of vindicating his reputation, and of avenging the bitter mortifications received from society, filled him with unnatural gladness; and he was hastening to the meeting, totally regardless of any arrangement for his security.

There was a gentleman, seated at a distant part of the coffee-room, who had been occupied by reading; nor seemed at all to give ear to what was going on, till the name of occurred: he then rose, and when the blow was given, drew nearer the group; though he still stood aloof, while, with raised and angry voices, they assailed Lodore, and he, replying in his deep, subdued voice, agreed to the meeting which they tumultuously demanded. Now, as they were hastening away, and Lodore was following them, confessedly unbefriended, this gentleman approached, and putting his card into the nobleman's hand, said, "I am an Englishman, and should be very glad if you would accept my services on this painful occasion."

looked at the card, on which was simply engraved the name of "Mr. Edward Villiers," and then at him who addressed him. He was a young man — certainly not more than three-and-twenty. An air of London fashion, to which Lodore had been so long unused, was combined with a most prepossessing countenance. He was light-haired and blue-eyed; ingenuousness and sincerity marked his physiognomy. The few words he had spoken were enforced by a graceful cordiality of manner, and a silver-toned voice, that won the heart. Lodore was struck by his prepossessing exterior, and replied with warm thanks; adding, that his services would be most acceptable on certain conditions, — which were merely that he should put no obstacle to the immediate termination of the quarrel, in any mode, however desperate, which his adversary might propose. "Otherwise," Lodore added, "I must entirely decline your interference. All this is to me matter of far higher import than mere life and death, and I can submit to no controul."

"Then my services must be limited to securing fair play for you," said Mr. Villiers.

During this brief parley, they were in the street, proceeding towards the place of meeting. Day had declined, and the crescent moon was high in the heavens: each instant its beams grew more refulgent, as twilight yielded to night.

"We shall have no difficulty in seeing each other," said , in a cheerful voice. He felt cheerful: a burthen was lifted from his heart. How much must a brave man suffer under the accusation of cowardice, and how joyous when an opportunity is granted of proving his courage! Lodore was brave to rashness: at this crisis he felt as if about to be born again to all the earthly blessings of which he had been deprived so long. He did not think of the dread baptism of blood which was to occasion his regeneration — still less of personal danger; he thought only of good name restored — of his reputation for courage vindicated — of the insolence of this ill-spoken fellow signally chastised.

"Have you weapons?" asked his companion.

"They will procure pistols, I suppose," replied : "we should lose much time by going to the hotel for mine."

"We are passing that where I am," said Mr. Villiers. "If you will wait one moment I will fetch mine; — or will you go up with me?"

They entered the house, and the apartments of Mr. Villiers. At such moments slight causes operate changes on the human heart; and as various impulses sweep like winds over its chords, that subtle instrument gives forth various tones. A moment ago, seemed to raise his proud head to the stars: he felt as if escaping from a dim, intricate cavern, into the blessed light of day. The strong excitement permitted no second thought — no second image. With a lighter step than Mr. Villiers, he followed that gentleman up-stairs. For a moment, as he went into an inner apartment for the pistols, Lodore was alone: a desk was open on the table; and paper, unwritten on, upon the desk. Scarcely knowing what he did, Lodore took the pen, and wrote—"Ethel, my child! my life's dearest blessing! be virtuous, be useful, be happy! — farewell, for ever!" — and under this he wrote Mrs. Greville's address. The first words were written with a firm hand; but the recollection of all that might occur, made his fingers tremble as he continued, and the direction was nearly illegible. "If any thing happens to me," said he to Mr. Villiers, "you will add to your kindness immeasurably by going there," — pointing to the address,—"and taking precaution that my daughter may hear of her disaster in as tender a manner as possible.”

“Is there any thing else?” asked his companion. “Command me freely, I beseech you; I will obey your injunctions to the letter.”

“It is too late now,” replied the noble; “and we must not keep these gentlemen waiting. The little I have to say we will talk of as we walk.”

“I feel,” continued , after they were again in the street, “that if this meeting end fatally, I have no power to enforce my wishes and designs beyond the grave. The providence which has so strangely conducted the drama of my life, will proceed in its own way after the final catastrophe. I commit my daughter to a higher power than mine, secure that so much innocence and goodness must receive blessings, even in this ill-grained state of existence. You will see Mrs. Greville: she is a kind-hearted, humane woman, and will exert herself to console my child. Ethel — Miss Fitzhenry, I mean — must, as soon as is practicable, return to England. She will be received there by my sister, and remain with her till — till her fate be otherwise decided. We were on the point of sailing; — I have fitted up a cabin for her; — she might make the voyage in that very vessel. You, perhaps, will consult — though what claim have I on you?”

“A claim most paramount,” interrupted Villiers eagerly,—”that of a countryman in a foreign land — of a gentleman vindicating his honour at the probable expense of life.”

“Thank you!” replied ;—”my heart thanks you — for my own sake, and for my daughter’s — if indeed you will kindly render her such services as her sudden loss may make sadly necessary.”

“Depend upon me; — though God grant she need them not!”

“For her sake, I say Amen!” said ; “for my own — life is a worn-out garment — few tears will be shed upon my grave, except by Ethel.”

“There is yet another,” said Villiers with visible hesitation: “pardon me, if I appear impertinent; but at such a moment, may I not name Lady ?”

“For her, indeed,” answered the peer, “the event of this evening, if fatal to me, will prove fortunate: she will be delivered from a heavy chain. May she be happy in another choice! Are you acquainted with her?”

“I am, slightly — that is, not very intimately.”

“If you meet her on your return to England,” continued the noble;—”if you ever see Lady , tell her that I invoked a blessing on her with my latest breath — that I forgive her, and ask her forgiveness. But we are arrived. Remember Ethel."

"Yet one moment," cried Villiers;—"one moment of reflection, of calm! Is there no way of preventing this encounter?"

"None! — fail me not, I intreat you, in this one thing; — interpose no obstacle — be as eager and as firm as I myself am. Our friends have chosen a rising ground: we shall be excellent marks for one another. Pray do not lose time."

The American and his second stood in dark relief against the moon-lit sky. As the rays fell upon the English noble, Hatfield observed to his companion, that he now perfectly recognized him, and wondered at his previous blindness. Perhaps he felt some compunction for the insult he had offered; but he said nothing, and no attempt was made on either side at amicable explanation. They proceeded at once, with a kind of savage indifference, to execute the murderous designs which caused them to disturb the still and lovely night.

It was indeed a night, that love, and hope, and all the softer emotions of the soul, would have felt congenial to them. A balmy, western breeze lifted the hair lightly from 's brow, and played upon his cheek; the trees were bathed in yellow moonshine; a glowworm stealing along the grass scarce showed its light; and sweet odours were wafted from grove and field. Lodore stood, with folded arms, gazing upon the scene in silence, while the seconds were arranging preliminaries, and loading the firearms. None can tell what thoughts then passed through his mind. Did he rejoice in his honour redeemed, or grieve for the human being at whose breast he was about to aim? — or were his last thoughts spent upon the account he might so speedily be called on to render before his Creator's throne? When at last he took his weapon from the hand of Villiers, his countenance was serene, though solemn; and his voice firm and calm. "Remember me to Ethel," he said; "and tell her to thank you; — I cannot sufficiently; yet I do so from my heart. If I live — then more of this."

The antagonists were placed: they were both perfectly self-possessed — bent, with hardness and cruelty of purpose, on fulfilling the tragic act. As they stood face to face — a few brief paces only intervening — on the moon-lit hill — neither had ever been more alive, more full of conscious power, of moral and physical energy, than at that moment. Villiers saw them standing beneath the silver moonbeams, each in the pride of life, of strength, of resolution. A ray glanced from the barrel of ‘s pistol, as he raised and held it out with a steady hand — a flash — the reports — and then he staggered two steps, fell, and lay on the earth, making no sign of life. Villiers rushed to him: the wound was unapparent — no blood flowed, but the bullet had entered his heart. His friend raised his head in his arms; his eyes opened; his lips moved, but no sound issued from them; — a shadow crossed his face — the body slipped from Villiers’s support to the ground — all was over — Lodore was dead!

CHAPTER XVI.

En cor gentil, amor per mort no passa. — Ausias March, Troubadour.

We return to Longfield and to Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry. The glory of summer invested the world with light, cheerfulness, and beauty, when the sorrowing sister of visited London, to receive her orphan niece from the hands of the friend of Mrs. Greville, under whose protection she had made the voyage. The good lady folded poor Ethel in her arms, overcome by the likeness she saw to her beloved brother Henry, in his youthful days, before passion had worn and misfortune saddened him. Her soft, brown, lamp-like eyes, beamed with the same sensibility. Yet when she examined her more closely, Mrs Elizabeth lost somewhat of the likeness; for the lower part of her face resembled her mother: her hair was lighter and her complexion much fairer than Lodore; besides that the expression of her countenance was peculiar to herself, and possessed that individuality which is so sweet to behold, but impossible to describe.

They lingered but a few days in London. Fanny Derham, who accompanied her on her voyage, had already returned to her father, and there was nothing to detain them from Longfield. Ethel had no adieus to make that touched her heart. Her aunt was more to her than any other living being, and her strongest desire now was, to visit the scenes once hallowed by her father’s presence. The future was a chaos of dark regret and loneliness; her whole life, she thought, would be composed of one long memory.

One memory, and one fatal image. Ethel had not only consecrated her heart to her father, but his society was a habit with her, and, until now, she had never even thought how she could endure existence without the supporting influence of his affection. His conversation, so full of a kind penetration into her thoughts, was calculated to develop and adorn them; his manly sense and paternal solicitude, had all fostered a filial love, the most tender and strong. Add to this, his sudden and awful death. Already had they schemed their future life in a world new to Ethel: he had excited her enthusiasm by descriptions of the wonders of art in the old countries, and raised her curiosity while promising to satisfy it; and she had eagerly looked forward to the time when she should see the magical works of man, and mingle with a system of society, of which, except by books, he alone presented any ensample to her. Their voyage was fixed, and on the other side of their watery way she had figured a very Elysium of wonders and pleasures. The late change in their mode of life had served to endear him doubly to her. It had been the occupation of her life to think of her father, to communicate all her thoughts to him, and in the unreflecting confidence of youth, she had looked forward to no termination of a state of existence, that had began from her cradle. He propped her entire world; the foundations must moulder and crumble away without him — and he was gone — where then was she?

Mr. Villiers had, as soon as he was able, hurried to Mrs. Greville's house. By some strange chance, the fatal tidings had preceded him, and he found the daughter of the unfortunate bewildered and maddened by her frightful calamity. Her first desire was to see all that was left of her parent — she could not believe that he was indeed dead — she was certain that care and skill might revive him — she insisted on being led to his side; her friends strove to restrain her, but she rushed into the street, she knew not whither, to ask for, to find her father. The timidity of her temper was overborne by the wild expectation of yet being able to recall him from among the dead. Villiers followed her, and, yielding to her wishes, guided her towards the hotel whither the remains of Lodore had been carried. He judged that the exertion of walking thither, and the time that must elapse before she arrived, would calm and subdue her. He talked to her of her father as they went along — he endeavoured to awaken the source of tears — but she was silent — absorbed — brooding darkly on her hopes. Pity for herself had not yet arisen, nor the frightful certainty of bereavement. To see those dear lineaments — to touch his hand — the very hand that had so often caressed her, clay-cold and incapable of motion! Could it be!

She did not answer Villiers, she only hurried forward; she feared obstruction to her wishes; her soul was set on one thought only. Had Villiers endeavoured to deceive her, it would have been in vain. Arrived at the hotel, as by instinct, she sprung up the stairs, and reached the door of the room. It was darkened, in useless but decent respect for the death within; there lay a figure covered by a sheet, and already chilling the atmosphere around it. The imagination is slow to act upon the feelings in comparison with the quick operation of the senses. Ethel now knew that her father was dead. Mortal strength could support no more — the energy of hope deserting her, she sunk lifeless on the ground.

For a long time she was passive in the hands of others. A violent illness confined her to her bed, and physical suffering subdued the excess of mental agony. Villiers left her among kind friends. It was resolved that she and Fanny Derham should proceed to England, under the protection of the friends of Mrs. Greville about to return thither; he was himself obliged to return to England without delay.

Ethel's destiny was as yet quite uncertain. It was decided by the opening of her father's will. This had been made twelve years before on his first arrival at New York, and breathed the spirit of resentment, and even revenge, against his wife. had indeed not much wealth to leave. His income chiefly consisted in a grant from the crown, entailed on heirs male, which in default of these, reverted back, and in a sinecure which expired with him. His paternal estate at Longfield, and a sum under twenty thousand pounds, the savings of twelve years, formed all his possessions. The income arising from the former was absorbed by Lady Lodore's jointure of a thousand a year, and five hundred a year settled on his sister, together with permission to occupy the family mansion during her life. The remaining sum was disposed of in a way most singular. Without referring to the amount of what he could leave, he bequeathed the additional sum of six hundred a year to Lady Lodore, on the express condition, that she should not interfere with, nor even see, her child; upon her failing in this condition, this sum was to be left to accumulate till Ethel was of age. Ethel was ultimately to inherit every thing; but while her mother and aunt lived, her fortune consisted of little more than five thousand pounds; and even in this, she was limited to the use of the interest only until she was of age; a previous marriage would have no influence on the disposition of her property. Mrs. Elizabeth was left her guardian.

This will was in absolute contradiction to the wishes and feelings in which Lord died; so true had his prognostic been, that he had no power beyond the grave. He had probably forgotten the existence of this will, or imagined that it had been destroyed: he had determined to make a new one on his arrival in England. Meanwhile it was safely deposited with his solicitor in London, and Mrs. Elizabeth, with mistaken zeal, hastened to put it into force, and showed herself eager to obey her brother's wishes with scrupulous exactitude. The contents of it were communicated to Lady Lodore. She made no comment — returned no answer. She was suddenly reduced from comparative affluence (for her husband's allowance had consisted of several thousands) to a bare sixteen hundred a year. Whether she would be willing to diminish this her scanty income one third, and take on herself, besides, the care of her daughter, was not known. She remained inactive and silent, and Ethel was placed at once under the guardianship of her aunt.

These two ladies left London in the old lumbering chariot which had belonged to the Admiral. Now, indeed, Ethel found herself in a new country, with new friends around her, speaking a new language, and each change of scene made more manifest the complete revolution of her fortunes. She looked on all with languid eyes, and a heart dead to every pleasure. Her aunt, who bore a slight resemblance of her father, won some degree of interest; and the sole consolation offered her, was to trace a similarity of voice and feature, and thus to bring the lost more vividly before her. The journey to Longfield was therefore not wholly without a melancholy charm. Mrs. Elizabeth longed to obtain more minute information concerning her brother, her pride and her delight, than had been contained in his short and infrequent letters. She hazarded a few questions. Grief loves to feed upon itself, and to surround itself with multiplications of its own image; like a bee, it will find sweets in the poison flower, and nestle within its own creations, although they pierce the heart that cherishes them. Ethel felt a fascination in dwelling for ever on the past. She asked for nothing better than to live her life over again, while narrating its simple details, and to bring her father back from his grave to dwell with her, by discoursing perpetually concerning him. She was unwearied in her descriptions, her anecdotes, her praises. The Illinois rose before the eyes of her aunt, like a taintless paradise, inhabited by an angel. Love and good dwelt together there in blameless union; the sky was brighter; the earth fairer, fresher, younger, more magnificent, and more wonderful, than in the old world. The good lady called to mind, with surprise, the melancholy and despairing letters she had received from her brother, while inhabiting this Eden. It was matter of mortification to his mourning daughter to hear, as from himself, as it were, that any sorrows had visited his heart while with her. When we love one to whom we have devoted our lives with undivided affection, the idea that the beloved object suffered any grief while with us, jars with our sacred sorrow. We delight to make the difference between the possession of their society, and our subsequent bereavement, entire in its contrasted happiness and misery; we wish to have engrossed their whole souls, as they do ours, at the period of regret, and it is like the most cruel theft, to know that we have been deprived of any of the power we believed that we possessed, to influence their entire being. But then again, forgetting her aunt's interruptions. Ethel returned to the story of their occupations, their amusements, their fond and unsullied intercourse, her eyes streamed with tears as she spoke, while yet her heart felt relief in the indulgence of her woe.

When the ladies returned to Longfield, it became Mrs. Elizabeth's turn to narrate. She had lived many years feeding silently on the memory of by-gone time. During her brother's exile, she had seldom spoken his name, for she felt little inclined to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the good people of Longfield. But now her long-stored anecdotes, her sacred relics, the spots made dear by his presence, all were a treasure poured out bounteously before Ethel. Nothing appeared so natural to the unfortunate girl as that another should, like herself, worship the recollection of her adored father. To love him while he lived, to see nothing in the world that had lost him, except his shadow cast upon its benighted state, appeared the only existence that could follow his extinction. Some people, when they die, leave but a foot of ground vacant, which the eager pressing ranks of their fellow-creatures fill up immediately, walking on their grave, as on common earth; others leave a gap, a chasm, a fathomless gulf, beside which the survivor sits for ever hopeless. Both Ethel and her aunt, in their several ways, in youth and age, were similarly situated. Both were cut off from the great family of their species; wedded to one single being, and he was gone. Both made the dead the focus to concentrate, and the mirror to reflect, all their sensations and experience. He visited their dreams by night, his name was their study, their pastime, their sole untiring society.

Mrs. Elizabeth, the gentlest visionary that had ever outlived hope, without arriving at its fruition, having reached those years when memory is the natural food of the human mind, found this fare exceedingly well adapted to her constitution. She had pined a little while cut off from all heart-felt communication with her fellow-creatures, but the presence of Ethel fulfilled her soul's desire; she found sympathy, and an auditress, into whose ever-attentive ear she could pour those reveries which she had so long nourished in secret. Whoso had heard the good lady talk of endless tears and mourning for the loss of , of life not worth having when he was gone, of the sad desolation of their position, and looked at her face, beaming with satisfaction, with only so much sensibility painted there as to render it expressive of all that is kind and compassionate, good-humour in her frequent smile, and sleek content in her plump person, might have laughed at the contrast; and yet have pondered on the strange riddle we human beings present, and how contradictions accord in our singular machinery. This good aunt was incapable of affectation, and all was true and real that she said. She lived upon the idea of her brother; he was all in all to her, but they had been divided so long, that his death scarcely increased the separation; and she could talk of meeting him in heaven, with as firm and cheerful a faith, as a few months before she had anticipated his return to England. Though sincere in her regret for his death, habit had turned lamentation into a healthy nutriment, so that she throve upon the tears she shed, and grew fat and cheerful upon her sighs. She would lead the agonized girl to the vault which contained the remains of her brother, and hover near it, as a Catholic beside the shrine of a favourite saint — the visible image giving substance and form to her reverie; for hitherto, her dreamy life had wanted the touch of reality, which the presence of her niece, and the sad memorial of her lost brother, afforded.

The home-felt sensations of the mourning orphan, were in entire contrast to this holiday woe. While her aunt brooded over her sorrow "to keep it warm," it wrapped Ethel's soul as with a fiery torture. Every cheerful thought lay buried with her father, and the tears she shed near his grave were accompanied by a wrenching of her being, and a consequent exhaustion, that destroyed the elasticity of the spirit of youth. The memory of , which soothed his sister, haunted his child like a sad beckoning, yet fatal vision; she yearned to reach the shore where his pale ghost perpetually wandered — the earth seemed a dark prison, and liberty and light dwelt with the dead beyond the grave. Eternally conversant with the image of death, she was brought into too near communion with the grim enemy of life. She wasted and grew pale: nor did any voice speak to her of the unreasonableness of her grief; her father was not near to teach her fortitude, and there appeared a virtue and a filial piety in the excess of her regret, which blinded her aunt to the fatal consequences of its indulgence.

While summer lasted, and the late autumn protracted its serenity almost into winter, Ethel wandered in the lanes and fields; and in spite of wasting grief, the free air of heaven, which swept her cheek, preserved its healthy hue and braced her limbs. But when dreary inclement winter arrived, and the dull fireside of aunt Bessy became the order of the day, without occupation to amuse, or society to distract her thoughts, given up to grief, and growing into a monument of woe, it became evident that the springs of life were becoming poisoned, and that health and existence itself were giving way before the destructive influences at work within. Appetite first, then sleep, deserted her. A slight cold became a cough, and then changed into a preying fever. She grew so thin that her large eyes, shining with unnatural lustre, appeared to occupy too much of her face, and her brow was streaked with ghastly hues. Poor Mrs. Elizabeth, when she found that neither arrow-root nor chickenbroth restored her, grew frightened — the village practitioner exhausted his skill without avail. Ethel herself firmly believed that she was going to die, and fondly cherished the hope of rejoining her father. She was in love with death, which alone could reunite her to the being, apart from whom she believed it impossible to exist.

But limits were now placed to Mrs. Elizabeth's romance. The danger of Ethel was a frightful reality that awoke every natural feeling. Ethel, the representative of her brother, the last of their nearly extinct race, the sole relation she possessed, the only creature whom she could entirely love, was dear to her beyond expression; and the dread of losing her gave activity to her slothful resolves. Having seldom, during the whole course of her life, been called upon to put any plan or wish of her's into actual execution, what another would have immediately and easily done, was an event to call forth all her energies, and to require all her courage; luckily she possessed sufficient to meet the present exigency. She wrote up to London to her single correspondent there, her brother's solicitor. A house was taken, and the first warm days of spring found the ladies established in the metropolis. A physician had been called in, and he pronounced the mind only to be sick. "Amuse her," he said, "occupy her — prevent her from dwelling on those thoughts which have preyed upon her health; let her see new faces, new places, every thing new — and youth, and a good constitution, will do the rest."

There seemed so much truth in this advice, that all dangerous symptoms disappeared from the moment of Ethel's leaving Essex. Her strength returned — her face resumed its former loveliness; and aunt Bessy, overjoyed at the change, occupied herself earnestly in discovering amusements for her niece in the numerous, wide-spread, and very busy congregation of human beings, which forms the western portion of London.

CHAPTER XVII.

You are now
In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow.
At once is deaf and loud.
— Shelley.

There is no uninhabited desart so dreary as the peopled streets of London, to those who have no ties with its inhabitants, nor any pursuits in common with its busy crowds. A drop of water in the ocean is no symbol of the situation of an isolated individual thrown upon the stream of metropolitan life; that amalgamates with its kindred element; but the solitary being finds no pole of attraction to cause a union with its fellows, and bastilled by the laws of society, it is condemned to incommunicative solitude.

Ethel was thrown completely upon her aunt, and her aunt was a cypher in the world. She had not a single acquaintance in London, and was wholly inexperienced in its ways. She dragged Ethel about to see sights, and Ethel was amused for a time. The playhouses were a great source of entertainment to her, and all kinds of exhibitions, panoramas, and shows, served to fill up her day. Still the great want of all shed an air of dulness over every thing — the absence of human intercourse, and of the conversation and sympathy of her species. Ethel, as she drove through the mazy streets, and mingled with the equipages in the park, could not help thinking what pleasant people might be found among the many she saw, and how strange it was that her aunt did not speak even to one among them. This solitude, joined to a sense of exclusion, became very painful. Again and again she sighed for the Illinois; that was inhabited by human beings, humble and uncultivated as they might be. She knew their wants, and could interest herself in their goings on. All the moving crowd of men and women now around her seemed so many automata: she started when she heard them address each other, and express any feeling or intention that distinguished them from the shadows of a phantasmagoria.

Where were the boasted delights of European intercourse which had vaunted? — the elegancies, and the wit, or the improvement to be derived from its society? — the men and women of talent, of refinement, and taste, who by their conversation awaken the soul to new powers, and exhilarate the spirits with a purer madness than wine — who with alternate gaiety and wisdom, humour and sagacity, amuse while they teach; accompanying their lessons with that spirit of sympathy, that speaking to the eye and ear, as well as to the mind, which books can so poorly imitate? “Here, doubtless, I should find all these,” thought Ethel, as she surveyed the audience at the theatres, or the daily congregations she met in her drives; “yet I live here as if not only I inhabited a land whose language was unknown to me, for then I might converse by signs, — but as if I had fallen among beings of another species, with whom I have no affinity: I should almost say that I walked among them invisible, did they not condescend sometimes to gaze at me, proving that at least I am seen.”

Time sped on very quickly, meanwhile, in spite of these repinings; for her days were past in the utmost monotony, — so that though the hours a little lagged, yet she wondered where they were when they were gone: and they had spent more than a month in town, though it seemed but a few days. Ethel had entirely recovered her health, and more than her former beauty. She was nearly seventeen: she was rather tall and slim; but there was a bending elegance in her form, joined to an elastic step, which was singularly graceful. No man could see her without a wish to draw near to afford protection and support; and the soft expression of her full eyes added to the charm. Her deep mourning dress, the simplicity of her appearance, her face so prettily shaded by her bright ringlets, often caused her to be remarked, and people asked one another who she was. None knew; and the old-fashioned appearance of Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, and the want of style which characterized all her arrangements, prevented our very aristocratic gentry from paying as much attention to her as they otherwise would.

One day, this gentle, solitary pair attended a morning concert. Ethel had not been to the Opera, and now heard Pasta for the first time. Her father had cultivated her taste for Italian music; for without cultivation — without in some degree understanding and being familiar with an art, it is rare that we admire even the most perfect specimens of it. Ethel listened with wrapt attention; her heart beat quick, and her eyes became suffused with tears which she could not suppress; — so she leant forward, shading her face as much as she could with her veil, and trying to forget the throng of strangers about her. They were in the pit; and having come in late, sat at the end of one of the forms. Pasta's air was concluded; and she still turned aside, being too much agitated to wish to speak, when she heard her aunt addressing some one as an old acquaintance. She called her friend "Captain Markham," expressed infinite pleasure at seeing him, and whispered her niece that here was an old friend of her father's. Ethel turned and beheld Mr. Villiers. His face lighted up with pleasure, and he expressed his joy at the chance which had produced the meeting; but the poor girl was unable to reply. All colour deserted her cheeks; marble pale and cold, her voice failed, and her heart seemed to die within her. The room where last she saw the lifeless remains of her father rose before her; and the appearance of Mr. Villiers was as a vision from another world, speaking of the dead. Mrs. Elizabeth, considerably surprised, asked her how she came to know Captain Markham. Ethel would have said, "Let us go!" but her voice died away, and she felt that tears would follow any attempt at explanation. Ashamed of the very possibility of occasioning a scene, and yet too disturbed to know well what she was about, she suddenly rose, and though the commencement of a new air was commanding silence and attention; she hastily quitted the room, and found herself alone, outside the door, before her aunt was well aware that she was gone. She claimed Captain Markham's assistance to follow the fugitive; and, attended by him, at length discovered her chariot, to which Ethel had been led by the servant, and in which she was sitting, weeping bitterly. Mrs. Elizabeth felt inclined to ask her whether she was mad; but she also was struck dumb; for her Captain Markham had said—"I am very sorry to have distressed Miss Fitzhenry. My name is Villiers. I cannot wonder at her agitation; but it would give me much pleasure if she would permit me to call on her, when she can see me with more composure."

With these words, he assisted the good lady into the carriage, bowed, and disappeared. He was not Captain Markham! How could she have been so stupid as to imagine that he was? He looked, upon the whole, rather younger than Captain Markham had done, when she formed acquaintance with him, during her expedition to London on the occasion of Ethel's christening. He was taller, too, and not quite so stout; yet he was so like — the same frank, open countenance, the same ingenuous manner, and the same clear blue eyes. Certainly Captain Markham was not so handsome; — and what a fool Mr. Villiers must think her, for having mistaken him for a person who resembled him sixteen years ago; quite forgetting that Mr. Villiers was ignorant who her former friend was, and when she had seen him. All these perplexing thoughts passed through Mrs. Fitzhenry's brain, tinging her aged cheek with a blush of shame; while Ethel, having recovered herself, was shocked to remember how foolishly and rudely she had behaved; and longed to apologize, yet knew not how; and fancied that it was very unlikely that she should ever see Mr. Villiers again. Her aunt, engaged by her own distress, quite forgot the intention he had expressed of calling, and could only exclaim and lament over her folly. The rest of the day was spent with great discomfort to both; for the sight of Mr. Villiers renewed all Ethel's sorrows; and again and again she bestowed the tribute of showers of tears to her dear father's memory.

The following day, much to Ethel's delight, and the annoyance of Mrs. Elizabeth, who could not get over her sense of shame, Mr. Villiers presented himself in their drawing-room. Villiers, however, was a man speedily to overcome even any prejudice formed against him; far more easily, therefore, could he obviate the good aunt's confusion, and put her at her ease. His was one of those sunny countenances that spoke a heart ready to give itself away in kindness; — a cheering voice, whose tones echoed the frankness and cordiality of his nature. Blest with a buoyant, and even careless spirit, as far as regarded himself, he had a softness, a delicacy, and a gentleness, with respect to others, which animated his manners with irresistible fascination. His heart was open to pity — his soul the noblest and clearest ever fashioned by nature in her happiest mood. He had been educated in the world — he lived for the world, for he had not genius to raise himself above the habits and pursuits of his countrymen: yet he took only the better part of their practices; and shed a grace over them, so alien to their essence, that any one might have been deceived, and have fancied that he proceeded on a system and principles of his own.

He had travelled a good deal, and was somewhat inclined, when pleased with his company, to narrate his adventures and experiences. Ethel was naturally rather taciturn; and Mrs. Elizabeth was too much absorbed in the pleasure of listening, to interrupt their visitor. He felt himself peculiarly happy and satisfied between the two, and his visit was excessively long; nor did he go away before he had appointed to call the next day, and opened a long vista of future visits for himself, assisted by the catalogue of all that the ladies had not seen, and all that they desired to see, in London.

Villiers had been animated while with them, but he left the house full of thought. The name of Fitzhenry, or rather that of , was familiar to him; and the strange chance that had caused him to act as second to the lamented noble who bore this title, and which brought him in contact with his orphan and solitary daughter, appeared to him like the enchantment of fairy land. From the presence of Ethel, he proceeded to Lady Lodore’s house, which was still shut up; yet he knocked, and inquired of the servant whether she had returned to England. She was still at Baden, he was told, and not expected for a month or two; and this answer involved him in deeper thought than before.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

Excellent creature! whose perfections make
Even sorrow lovely!
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

Mr. Villiers now became the constant visitor of Mrs. Elizabeth and her niece; and all discontent, all sadness, all listlessness, vanished in his presence. There was in his mind a constant spring of vivacity, which did not display itself in mere gaiety, but in being perfectly alive at every moment, and continually ready to lend himself to the comfort and solace of his companions. Sitting in their dingy London house, the spirit of dulness had drawn a curtain between them and the sun; and neither thought nor event had penetrated the fortification of silence and neglect which environed them. Edward Villiers came; and as mist flies before the wind, so did all Ethel's depression disappear when his voice only met her ear: his step on the stairs announced happiness; and when he was indeed before her, light and day displaced every remnant of cheerless obscurity.

The abstracted, wounded, yet lofty spirit of was totally dissimilar to the airy brightness of Villiers' disposition. Lodore had outlived a storm, and shown himself majestic in ruin. No ill had tarnished the nature of Villiers: he enjoyed life, he was in good-humour with the world, and thought well of mankind. Lodore had endangered his peace from the violence of passion, and reaped misery from the pride of his soul. Villiers was imprudent from his belief in the goodness of his fellow-creatures, and imparted happiness from the store that his warm heart insured to himself. The one had never been a boy — the other had not yet learned to be a man.

Ethel's heart had been filled by her father; and all affection, all interest, borrowed their force from his memory. She did not think of love; and while Villiers was growing into a part of her life, becoming knit to her existence by daily habit, and a thousand thoughts expended on him, she entertained his idea chiefly as having been the friend of . "He is certainly the kindest-hearted creature in the world." This was the third time that, when laying her gentle head on the pillow, this feeling came like a blessing to her closing eyes. She heard his voice in the silence of night, even more distinctly than when it was addressed to her outward sense during the day. For the first time after the lapse of months, she found one to whom she could spontaneously utter every thought, as it rose in her mind. A fond, elder brother, if such ever existed, cherishing the confidence and tenderness of a beloved sister, might fill the place which her new friend assumed for Ethel. She thought of him with overflowing affection; and the name of "Mr. Villiers" sometimes fell from her lips in solitude, and hung upon her ear like sweetest music. In early life there is a moment — perhaps of all the enchantments of love it is the one which is never renewed — when passion, unacknowledged to ourselves, imparts greater delight than any after-stage of that ever-progressive sentiment. We neither wish nor expect. A new joy has isen, like the sun, upon our lives; and we rejoice in the radiance of morning, without adverting to the noon and twilight that is to follow. Ethel stood on the threshold of womanhood: the door of life had been closed before her; — again it was thrown open — and the sudden splendour that manifested itself blinded her to the forms of the objects of menace or injury, which a more experienced eye would have discerned within the brightness of her new-found day.

Ethel expressed a wish to visit Eton. In talking of the past, Lord had never adverted to any events except those which had occurred during his boyish days. His youthful pleasures and exploits had often made a part of their conversation. He had traced for her a plan of Eton college, and the surrounding scenery; spoken of the trembling delight he had felt in escaping from bounds; and told how e and Derham had passed happy hours beside the clear streams, and beneath the copses, of that rural country. There was one fountain which he delighted to celebrate; and the ivied ruins of an old monastery, now become a part of a farm-yard, which had been to these friends the bodily image of many imaginary scenes. Among the sketches of Whitelock, were several taken in the vicinity of Windsor; and there were, in his portfolio, studies of trees, cottages, and also of this same abbey, which Lodore instantly recognized. To many he had some appending anecdote, some school-boy association. He had purchased the whole collection from Whitelock. Ethel had copied a few; and these, together with various sketches made in the Illinois, formed her dearest treasure, more precious in her eyes than diamonds and rubies.

We are most jealous of what sits nearest to our hearts; and we must love fondly before we can et another into the secret of those trivial, but cherished emotions, which form the dearest portion of our solitary meditations. Ethel had several times been on the point of proposing a visit to Eton, to her aunt; but there was an awful sacredness in the very name, which acted like a spell upon her imagination. When first it fell from her lips, the word seemed echoed by unearthly whisperings, and she fled from the idea of going thither, — as it is the feminine disposition often to do, from the full accomplishment of its wishes, as if disaster must necessarily be linked to the consummation of their desires. But a word was enough for Villiers: he eagerly solicited permission to escort them thither, as, being an Etonian himself, his guidance would be of great advantage. Ethel faltered her consent; and the struggle of delight and sensibility made that project appear painful, which was indeed the darling of her thoughts.

On a bright day in the first week of May, they made this excursion. They repaired to one of the inns at Salt Hill, and prolonged their walks and drives about the country. In some of the former, where old walls were to be scrambled up, and rivulets overleaped, Mrs. Elizabeth remained at the hotel, and Ethel and Villiers pursued their rambles together. Ethel's whole soul was given up to the deep filial love that had induced the journey. Every green field was a stage on which her father had played a part; each majestic tree, or humble streamlet, was hallowed by being associated with his image. The pleasant, verdant beauty of the landscape, clad in all the brightness of early summer; the sunny, balmy day — the clouds which pranked the heavens with bright and floating shapes — each hedgerow and each cottage, with its trim garden — each embowered nook — had a voice which was music to her soul. From the college of Eton, they sought the dame's house where and Derham had lived; then crossing the bridge, they entered Windsor, and prolonged their walk into the forest. Ethel knew even the rustic names of the spots she most desired to visit, and to these Villiers led her in succession. Day declined before they got home, and found Mrs. Elizabeth, and their repast, waiting them; and the evening was enlivened by many a tale of boyish pranks, achieved by Villiers, in these scenes. The following morning they set forth again; and three days were spent in these delightful wanderings. Ethel would willingly never have quitted this spot: it appeared to her as if, seeing all, still much remained to be seen — as if she could never exhaust the variety of sentiments and deep interest which endeared every foot of this to her so holy ground. Nor were her emotions silent, and the softness of her voice, and the flowing eloquence with which she expressed herself, formed a new charm for her companion.

Sometimes her heart was too full to admit of expression, and grief for her father's loss was renewed in all its pristine bitterness. One day, on feeling herself thus overcome, she quitted her companions, and sought the shady walks of the garden of the hotel, to indulge in a gush of sorrow which she could not repress. There was something in her gesture and manner as she left them, that reminded Villiers of Lady . It was one of those mysterious family resemblances, which are so striking and powerful, and yet which it is impossible to point out to a stranger. A bligh (as this indescribable resemblance is called in some parts of England) of her mother-struck Villiers forcibly, and he suddenly asked Mrs. Elizabeth, "If Miss Fitzhenry had never expressed a desire to see Lady Lodore."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the old lady; "it was my brother's dying wish, that she should never hear Lady 's name, and I have religiously observed it. Ethel only knows that sause of her father's misfortunes, that she deserted every duty, and is unworthy of the name she bears."

Villiers was astonished at this tirade falling from the lips of the unusually placid maiden, whose heightened colour bespoke implacable resentment. "Do not mention that woman's name, Mr. Villiers," she continued, "I am convinced that I should die on the spot if I saw her; she is as much a murderess, as if she had stabbed her husband to the heart with a dagger. Her letter to me that I sent to my poor brother in America, was more the cause of his death, I am sure, than all the duels in the world. Lady ! I often wonder a thunderbolt from heaven does not fall on and kill her!"

Mrs. Elizabeth's violence was checked by seeing Ethel cross the road to return. "Promise not to mention her name to my niece," she cried.

"For the present be assured that I will not," Villiers answered. He had been struck most painfully by some of Mrs. Elizabeth's expressions, they implied so much more of misconduct on Lady 's part, than he had ever suspected — but she must know best; and it seemed to him, indeed, the probable interpretation of the mystery that enveloped her separation from her husband. The account spread by Lady Santerre, and current in the world, appeared inadequate and improbable; Lodore would not have dared to take her child from her, but on heavier grounds; it was then true, that a dark and disgraceful secret was hidden in her heart, and that her propriety, her good reputation, her seeming pride of innocence, were but the mask to cover the reality that divided her from her daughter for ever.

Villiers was well acquainted with Lady ; circumstances had caused him to take a deep interest in her — these were now at an end: but the singular coincidences that had brought him in contact with her daughter, renewed many forgotten images, and caused him to dwell on the past with mixed curiosity and uneasiness. Mrs. Elizabeth’s expressions added to the perplexity of his ideas; their chief effect was to tarnish to his mind the name of Lady Lodore, and to make him rejoice at the termination that had been put to their more intimate connexion.

CHAPTER II.

One, within whose subtle being.
As light and wind within some delicate cloud.
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky.
Genius and youth contended.
— Shelley.

The party returned to town, and on the following evening they went to the Italian Opera. For the first time since her father's death, Ethel threw aside her mourning attire: for the first time also, she made one of the audience at the King's Theatre. She went to hear the music, and to spend the evening with the only person in the world who was drawn towards her by feelings of kindness and sympathy — the only person — but that sufficed. His being near her, was the occasion of more delight than if she had been made the associate of regal splendour. Yet it was no defined or disturbing sentiment, that sat so lightly on her bosom and shone in her eyes. Her's was the first gentle opening of a girl's heart, who does not busy herself with the future, and reposes on the serene present with unquestioning confidence. She looked round on the gay world assembled, and thought, "All are as happy as I am." She listened to the music with a subdued but charmed spirit, and turned now and then to her companions with a glad smile, expressive of her delight. Fewer words were spoken in their little box, probably than in any in the house; but in none were congregated three hearts so guileless, and so perfectly satisfied with the portion allotted to them.

At length both opera and ballêt were over, and, leaning on the arm of Villiers, the ladies entered the round-room. The house had been very full and the crowd was great. A seat was obtained for Aunt Bessy on one of the sofas near the door, which opened on the principal staircase. Villiers and Ethel stood near her. When the crowd had thinned a little, Villiers went to look for the servant, and Ethel remained surveying the moving numbers with curiosity, wondering at her own fate, that while every one seemed familiar one to the other, she knew, and was known by, none. She did not repine at this; Villiers had dissipated the sense of desertion which before haunted her, and she was much entertained, as she heard the remarks and interchange of compliments going on about her. Her attention was particularly attracted by a very beautiful woman, or rather girl she seemed, standing on the other side of the room, conversing with a very tall personage, to whom she, being not above the middle size, looked up as she talked; which action, perhaps, added to her youthful appearance. There was an ease in her manners that bespoke a matron as to station. She was dressed very simply in white, without any ornament; her cloak hung carelessly from her shoulders, and gave to view her round symmetrical figure; her silky, chesnut-coloured hair, fell in thick ringlets round her face, and was gathered with inimitable elegance in large knots on the top of her head. There was something bewitching in her animated smile, and sensibility beamed from her long and dark grey eyes; her simple gesture as she placed her little hand on her cloak, her attitude as she stood, were wholly unpretending, but graceful beyond measure. Ethel watched her unobserved, with admiration and interest, so that she almost forgot where she was, until the voice of Villiers recalled her. “Your carriage is up — will you come?” The lady turned as he spoke, and recognized him with a cordial and most sweet smile. They moved on, while Ethel turned back to look again, as her carriage was loudly called, and Mrs. Elizabeth seizing her arm, whispered out of breath, “O my dear, do make haste!” She hurried on, therefore, and her glance was momentary; but she saw with wonder, that the lady was looking with eagerness at the party; she caught Ethel’s eye, blushed and turned away, while the folding doors closed, and with a kind of nervous trepidation her companions descended the stairs. In a moment the ladies were in their carriage, which drove off, while Mrs. Elizabeth exclaimed in the tone of one aghast, “Thank God, we got away! O, Ethel, that was Lady !”

“My mother! — impossible!”

“O, that we had never come to town,” continued her aunt. “Long have I prayed that I might never see her again; — and she looking as if nothing had happened, and that had not died through her means! Wicked, wicked woman! I will not stay in London a day longer!”

Ethel did not interrupt her ravings: she remembered Captain Markham, and could not believe but that her aunt laboured under some similar mistake; it was ridiculous to imagine, that this girlish-looking, lovely being, had been the wife of her father, whom she remembered with his high forehead rather bare of hair, his deep marked countenance, his look that bespoke more than mature age. Her aunt was mistaken, she felt sure; and yet when she closed her eyes, the beautiful figure she had seen stole, according to the Arabian image, beneath her lids, and smiled sweetly, and again started forward to look after her. This little act seemed to confirm what Mrs. Elizabeth said; and yet, again, it was impossible! "Had she been named my sister, there were something in it — but my mother, — impossible!"

Yet strange as it seemed, it was so; in this instance, Mrs. Elizabeth had not deceived herself; and thus it was that two so near of kin as mother and daughter, met, it might be said, for the first time. Villiers was inexpressibly shocked; and believing that Lady must suffer keenly from so strange and unnatural an incident, his first kindly impulse was to seek to see her on the following morning. During her absence, the violent attack of her sister-in-law had weighed with him, but her look at once dissipated his uneasy doubts. There was that in this lady, which no man could resist; she had joined to her beauty, the charm of engaging manners, made up of natural grace, vivacity, intuitive tact, and soft sensibility, which infused a kind of idolatry into the admiration with which she was universally regarded. But it was not the beauty and fashion of Lady Lodore which caused Villiers to take a deep interest in her. His intercourse with her had been of long standing, and the object of his very voyage to America was intimately connected with her.

Edward Villiers was the son of a man of fortune. His father had been left a widower young in life, with this only child, who, thus single and solitary in his paternal home, became almost adopted into the family of his mother's brother, Viscount Maristow. This nobleman being rich, married, and blessed with a numerous progeny, the presence of little Edward was not felt as a burthen, and he was brought up with his cousins like one of them. Among these it would have been hard if Villiers could not have found an especial friend: this was not the elder son, who, much his senior, looked down upon him with friendly regard; it was the second, who was likewise several years older. Horatio Saville was a being fashioned for every virtue and distinguished by every excellence; to know that a thing was right to be done, was enough to impel Horatio to go through fire and water to do it; he was one of those who seem not to belong to this world, yet who adorn it most; conscientious, upright, and often cold in seeming, because he could always master his passions; good over-much, he might be called, but that there was no pedantry nor harshness in his nature. Resolute, aspiring, and true, his noble purposes and studious soul, demanded a frame of iron, and he had one of the frailest mechanism. It was not that he was not tall, well-shaped, with earnest eyes, a brow built up high to receive and entertain a capacious mind; but he was thin and shadowy, a hectic flushed his cheek, and his voice was broken and mournful. At school he held the topmost place, at college he was distinguished by the energy with which he pursued his studies; and these, so opposite from what might have been expected to be the pursuits of his ardent mind, were abstruse metaphysics — the highest and most theoretical mathematics, and cross-grained argument, based upon hair-fine logic; to these he addicted himself. His desire was knowledge; his passion truth; his eager and never-sleeping endeavour was to inform and to satisfy his understanding. Villiers waited on him, as an inferior spirit may attend on an archangel, and gathered from him the crumbs of his knowledge, with gladness and content. He could not force his boyish mind to similar exertions, nor feel that keen thirst for knowledge that kept alive his cousin's application, though he could admire and love these with fervour, when exhibited in another. It was indeed a singular fact, that this constant contemplation of so superior a being, added to his careless turn of mind. Not to be like Horatio was to be nothing — to be like him was impossible. So he was content to remain one of the half-ignorant, uninformed creatures most men are, and to found his pride upon his affection for his cousin, who, being several years older, might well be advanced even beyond his emulation. Horatio himself did not desire to be imitated by the light-hearted Edward; he was too familiar with the exhaustion, the sadness, the disappointment of his pursuits; he could not be otherwise himself, but he thought all that he aspired after, was well exchanged for the sparkling eyes, exhaustless spirits, and buoyant step of Villiers. We none of us wish to exchange our identity for that of another; yet we are never satisfied with ourselves. The unknown has always a charm, and unless blinded by miserable vanity, we know ourselves too well to appreciate our especial characteristics at a very high rate. When Horace, after deep midnight study, felt his brain still working like a thousand millwheels, that cannot be stopped; when sleep fled from him, and yet his exhausted mind could no longer continue its labours — he envied the light slumbers of his cousin, which followed exercise and amusement. Villiers loved and revered him; and he felt drawn closer to him than towards any of his brothers, and strove to refine his taste and regulate his conduct through his admonitions and example, while he abstained from following him in the steep and thorny path he had selected.

Horatio quitted college; he was no longer a youth, and his manhood became as studious as his younger days. He had no desire but for knowledge, no thought but for the nobler creations of the soul, and the discernment of the sublime laws of God and nature. He nourished the ambition of showing to these latter days what scholars of old had been, though this feeling was subservient to his instinctive love of learning, and his wish to adorn his mind with the indefeasible attributes of truth. He was universally respected and loved, though little understood. His young cousin Edward only was aware of the earnestness of his affections, and the sensibility that nestled itself in his warm heart. He was outwardly mild, placid, and forbearing, and thus obtained the reputation of being cold — though those who study human nature ought to make it their first maxim, that those who are tolerant of the follies of their fellows — who sympathize with, and assist their wishes, and who apparently forget their own desires, as they devote themselves to the accomplishment of those of their friends, must have the quickest feelings to make them enter into and understand those of others, and the warmest affections to be able to conquer their wayward humours, so that they can divest themselves of selfishness, and incorporate in their own being the pleasures and pains of those around them.

The sparkling eye, the languid step, and flushed cheek of Horatio Saville, were all tokens that there burnt within him a spirit too strong for his frame; but he never complained; or if he ever poured out his pent-up emotions, it was in the ear of Edward only; who but partly understood him, but who loved him entirely. What that thirst for knowledge was that preyed on him, and for ever urged him to drink of the purest streams of wisdom, and yet which ever left him unsatisfied, fevered, and mournful, the gay spirit of Edward Villiers could not guess: often he besought his cousin to close his musty books, to mount a rapid horse, to give his studies to the winds, and deliver his soul to nature. But Horace pointed to some unexplained passage in Plato the divine, or some undiscovered problem in the higher sciences, and turned his eyes from the sun; or if indeed he yielded, and accompanied his youthful friend, some appearance of earth or air would awaken his curiosity, rouze his slumbering mind again to inquire, and making his study of the wide cope of heaven, he gave himself up to abstruse meditation, while nominally seeking for relaxation from his heavier toils.

Horatio Saville was nine-and-twenty when he first met Lady , who was nearly the same age. He had begun to feel that his health was shaken, and he tried to forget for a time his devouring avocations. He changed the scene, and went on a visit to a friend, who had a country house not far from Hastings. Lady Lodore was expected as a guest, together with her mother. She was much talked of, having become an object of interest or curiosity to the many. A mystery hung over her fate; but her reputation was cloudless, and she was warmly supported by the leaders of fashion. Saville heard of her beauty and her sufferings; the injustice with which she had been treated — of her magnanimity and desolate condition; he heard of her talents, her powers of conversation, her fashion. He figured to himself (as we are apt to incarnate to our imagination the various qualities of a human being, of whom we hear much) a woman, brilliant, but rather masculine, majestic in figure, with wild dark eyes, and a very determined manner. Lady Lodore came: she entered the room where he was sitting, and the fabric of his fancy was at once destroyed. He saw a sweet-looking woman; serene, fair, and with a countenance expressive of contented happiness. He found that her manners were winning, from their softness; her conversation was delightful, from its total want of pretension or impertinence.

What the power was that from the first moment they met, drew Horatio Saville and Lady together is one of those natural secrets which it is impossible to explain. Though a student, Saville was a gentleman, with the manners and appearance of the better specimens of our aristocracy. There might be something in his look of ill health, which demanded sympathy; something in his superiority to the rest of the persons about her, in the genius that sat on his brow, and the eloquence that flowed from his lips;

something in the contrast he presented to every one else she had ever seen — neither entering into their gossiping slanders, nor understanding their empty self-sufficiency, that possessed a charm for one satiated with the world's common scene. It was less of wonder that Cornelia pleased the student. There were no rough corners, no harshness about her; she won her way into any heart by her cheerful smiles and kind tones; and she listened to Saville when he talked of what other women would have lent a languid ear to, with such an air of interest, that he found no pleasure so great as that of talking on.

Saville was accustomed to find the men of his acquaintance ignorant. All the knowledge of worldlings was as a point in comparison with his vast acquirements. He did not seek Lady ‘s society either to learn or to teach, but to forget thought, and to feel himself occupied and diverted from the sense of listlessness that haunted him in society, without having recourse to theto him dangerous, attraction of his books.

Lady had, in the very brightness of her earliest youth, selected a proud and independent position. She had refused to bend to her husband's will, or to submit to the tyranny, as she named it, which he had attempted to exercise. Youth is bold and fearless. The forked tongue of scandal, the thousand ills with which woman is threatened in society, without a guide or a protector — all the worldly considerations which might lead her to unite herself again to her husband, she had rejected with unbounded disdain. Her mother was there to stand between her and the shafts of envy and calumny, and she conceived no mistrust of herself; she believed that she could hold her course with taintless feelings and security of soul, through a thousand dangers. At first she had been somewhat annoyed by ill-natured observations, but Lady Santerre poured the balm of flattery on her wounds, and a few tears shed in her presence dissipated the gathering cloud.

Cornelia had every motive a woman could have for guarding her conduct from reproach. She lived in the midst of polished society, and was thoroughly imbued with its maxims and laws. She witnessed the downfall of several, as young and lovely as herself, and heard the sarcasms and beheld the sneers which were heaped as a tomb above their buried fame. She had vowed to herself never to become one of these. She was applauded for her pride, and held up as a pattern. No one feared her. She was no coquette, though she strove universally to please. She formed no intimate friendships, though every man felt honoured by her notice. She had no prudery on her lips, but her conduct was as open and as fair as day. Here lay her defence against her husband; and she preserved even the outposts of such bulwarks with scrupulous yet unobtrusive exactitude.

Her spirits, as well as her spirit, held her up through many a year. More than ten years had passed since her separation from — a long time to tell of; but it had glided away, she scarcely knew how — taking little from her loveliness, adding to the elegance of her appearance, and the grace of her manners. Season after season came, and went, and she had no motive for counting them anxiously. She was sought after and admired; it was a holiday life for her, and she wondered what people meant when they spoke of the delusions of this world, and the dangers of our own hearts. She saw a gay reality about her, and felt the existence of no internal enemy. Nothing ever moved her to sorrow, except the reflection that now and then came across, that she had a child — divorced for ever from her maternal bosom. The sight of a baby cradled in its mother’s arms, or stretching out its little hands to her, had not unoften caused her to turn abruptly away, to hide her tears; and once or twice she had been obliged to quit a theatre to conceal her emotion, when such sentiments were brought too vividly before her. But when her eyes were drowned in tears, and her bosom heaved with sad emotion, pride came to check the torrent, and hatred of her oppressor gave a new impulse to her swelling heart.

She had rather avoided female friendships, and had been warned from them by the treachery of one, and the misconduct of another, of her more intimate acquaintances. Lady renounced friendship, but the world began to grow a little dull. The frivolity of one, the hard-heartedness of another, disgusted. She saw each occupied by themselves and their families, and she was alone. Balls and assemblies palled upon her — country pleasures were stupid — she had began to think all things “stale and unprofitable,” when she became acquainted with Horatio Saville. She was glad again to feel animated with a sense of living enjoyment; she congratulated herself on the idea that she could take interest in some one thing or person among the empty shapes that surrounded her; and without a thought beyond the amusement of the present moment, most of her hours were spent in his company.

CHAPTER III.

Ah now, ye gentle pair, — now think awhile.
Now, while ye still can think and still can smile.
So did they think
Only with graver thoughts, and smiles reduced.
— Leigh Hunt.

A month stole away as if it had been a day, and Lady was engaged to pass some weeks with another friend in a distant county. It was easily contrived, without contrivance, by Saville, that he should visit a relation who lived within a morning's ride of her new abode. The restriction placed upon their intercourse while residing under different roofs contrasted painfully with the perfect freedom they had enjoyed while inhabiting the same. Their attachment was too young and too unacknowledged to need the zest of difficulty. It required indeed the facility of an unobstructed path for it to proceed to the accustomed bourne; and a straw thrown across was sufficient to check its course for ever.

The impatience and restlessness which Cornelia experienced during her journey; the rush of transport that thrilled through her when she heard of Saville's arrival at a neighbouring mansion, awoke her in an instant to a knowledge of the true state of her heart. Her pride was, happily for herself, united to presence of mind and fortitude. She felt the invasion of the enemy, and she lost not a moment in repelling the dangers that menaced her. She resolved to be true to the line of conduct she had marked out for herself — she determined not to love. She did not alter her manner nor her actions. She met Horatio with the same sweet smile — she conversed with the same kind interest; but she did not indulge in one dream, one thought — one reverie (sweet food of love) during his absence, and guarded over herself that no indication of any sentiment less general than the friendship of society might appear. Though she was invariably kind, yet his feelings told him that she was changed, without his being able to discover where the alteration lay; the line of demarcation, which she took care never to pass, was too finely traced, for any but feminine tact to discern, though it obstructed him as if it had been as high and massive as a city wall. Now and then his speaking eye rested on her with a pleading glance, while she answered his look with a frank smile, that spoke a heart at ease, and perfect self-possession. Indeed, while they remained near each other, in despite of all her self-denying resolves, Cornelia was happy. She felt that there was one being in the world who took a deep and present interest in her, whose thoughts hovered round her and whose mind she could influence to the conception of any act or feeling she might desire. That tranquillity yet animation of spirit — that gratitude on closing her eyes at night — that glad anticipation of the morrow's sun — that absence of every harsh and jarring emotion, which is the disposition of the human soul the nearest that we can conceive to perfect happiness, and which now and then visits sad humanity, to teach us of what unmeasured and pure joy our fragile nature is capable, attended her existence, and made each hour of the day a new-born blessing.

This state of things could not last. An accident revealed to Saville the true state of his heart; he became aware that he loved Cornelia, deeply and fervently, and from that moment he resolved to exile himself for ever from her dear presence. Misery is the child of love when happiness is not; this Horatio felt, but he did not shrink from the endurance. All abstracted and lofty as his speculations were, still his place had been in the hot-bed of patrician society, and he was familiar with the repetition of domestic revolutions, too frequent there. For worlds he would not have Cornelia's name become a byeword and mark for scandal — that name which she had so long kept bright and unreachable. His natural modesty prevented him from entertaining the idea that he could indeed destroy her peace; but he knew how many and easy are the paths which lead to the loss of honour in the world's eyes. That it could be observed and surmised that one man had approached Lady with any but sentiments of reverence, was an evil to be avoided at any cost. Saville was firm as rock in his resolves — he neither doubted nor procrastinated. He left the neighbourhood where she resided, and, returning to his father's house, tried to acquire strength to bear the severe pain which he could not master.

His gentle and generous nature, ever thoughtful for others, and prodigal of self, was not however satisfied with this mere negative act of justice towards one who honoured him, he felt conscious, with her friendship and kindest thoughts. He was miserable in the idea that he could not further serve her. He revolved a thousand plans in his mind, tending to her advantage. In fancy he entered the solitude of her meditations, and tried to divine what her sorrows or desires were, that he might minister to their solace or accomplishment. Their previous intercourse had been very unreserved, and though Cornelia spoke but distantly and coldly of , she frequently mentioned her child, and lamented, with much emotion, the deprivation of all those joys which maternal love bestows. Often had Saville said, “Why not appeal more strongly to Lord Lodore? or, if he be inflexible, why calmly endure an outrage shocking to humanity? The laws of your country may assist you.”

“They would not,” said Cornelia, “for his reply would be so fraught with seeming justice, that the blame would fall back on me. He asks but the trivial sacrifice of my duty to my mother — my poor mother! who, since I was born, has lived with me and for me, and who has no existence except through me. I am to tear away, and to trample upon the first of human ties, to render myself worthy of the guardianship of my child! I cannot do it — I should hold myself a parricide. Do not let us talk more of these things; endurance is the fate of woman, and if I have more than my share, let us hope that some other poor creature, less able to bear, has her portion lightened in consequence. I should be glad if once indeed I were permitted to see my cherub girl, though it were only while she slept; but an ocean rolls between us, and patience must be my comforter.”

The soft sweetness of her look and voice, the angelic grace that animated every tone and glance, rendered these maternal complaints mournful, yet enchanting music to the ear of Saville. He could have listened for ever. But when exiled from her, they assumed another form. He began to think whether it were not possible to convince Lord of the inexcusable cruelty of his conduct; and again and again, he imaged the exultation of heart he should feel, if he could succeed in placing her lost babe in the mother’s arms.

Saville was the frankest of human beings. Finding his cousin Edward on a visit at Maristow castle, he imparted his project to him, of making a voyage to America, seeking out Lord , and using every argument and persuasion to induce him to restore her daughter to his wife. Villiers was startled at the mention of this chivalrous intent. What could have rouzed the studious Horace to such sudden energy? By one of those strange caprices of the human mind, which bring forth discord instead of harmony, Edward had never liked Lady Lodore — he held her to be false and dangerous. Circumstances had brought him more in contact with her mother than herself, and the two were associated and confounded in his mind, till he heard Lady Santerre's falsetto voice in the sweet one of Cornelia, and saw her deceitful vulgar devices in the engaging manners of her daughter. He was struck with horror when he discovered that Saville loved, nay, idolized this beauteous piece of mischief, as he would have named her. He saw madness and folly in his Quixotic expedition, and argued against it with all his might. It would not do; Horatio was resolved to dedicate himself to the happiness of her he loved; and since this must be done in absence and distance, what better plan than to restore to her the precious treasure of which she had been robbed?

Saville resolved to cross the Atlantic, and, though opposed to his scheme, Villiers offered to accompany him. A voyage to America was but a trip to an active and unoccupied young man; the society of his cousin would render the journey delightful; he preferred it at all times to the commoner pleasures of life, and besides, on this occasion, he was animated with the hope of being useful to him. There was nothing effeminate in Saville. His energy of purpose and depth of thought forbade the idea. Still there was something that appeared to require kindness and support. His delicate health, of which he took no care, demanded feminine attentions; his careless reliance upon the uprightness of others, and total self-oblivion, often hurried him to the brink of dangers; and though fearlessness and integrity were at hand to extricate him, Edward, who knew his keen sensibility and repressed quickness of temper, was not without fear, that on so delicate a mission his ardent feelings might carry him beyond the mark, and that, in endeavouring to serve a woman whom he loved with enthusiastic adoration, he might rouze the angry passions of her husband.

With such feelings the cousins crossed the Atlantic and arrived at New York. Thence they proceeded to the west of America, and passing and his daughter on the road without knowing it, arrived at the Illinois after their departure. They were astonished to find that Mr. Fitzhenry, as he was named to them, had broken up his establishment, sold his farm, and departed with the intention of returning to Europe. What this change might portend they could not guess. Whether it were the result of any communication with Lady Lodore — whether a reconciliation was under discussion, or whether it were occasioned by caprice merely they could not tell; at any rate, it seemed to put an end to Saville's mediation. If Lodore returned to England, it was probable that Cornelia would herself make an exertion to have her child restored to her. Whether he could be of any use was problematical, but untimely interference was to be deprecated; events must be left to take their own course: Saville was scarcely himself aware how glad he was to escape any kind of intercourse with the husband of Cornelia.

This feeling, however unacknowledged, became paramount with him. Now that was about to leave America, he wished to linger in it; he planned a long tour through the various states, he studied their laws and customs, he endeavoured to form a just estimate of the institutions of the New World, and their influence on those governed by them.

Edward had little sympathy in these pursuits; he was eager to return to London, and felt more inclined to take his gun and shoot in the forests, than to mingle in the society of the various towns. This difference of taste caused the cousins at various times to separate. Saville was at Washington when Villiers made a journey to the borders of Canada, to the falls of the Niagara, and returned by New York; a portion of the United States which his cousin avoided visiting, until should have quitted it.

Thus it was that a strange combination of circumstances brought Villiers into contact with this unfortunate nobleman, and made him a witness of and a participator in the closing scene of his disastrous and wasted life. Villiers did not sympathize in his cousin's admiration of Cornelia, and was easily won to take a deep interest in the fortunes of her husband. The very aspect of commanded attention; his voice entered the soul: ill-starred, and struck by calamity, he rose majestically from the ruin around him, and seemed to defy fate. The first thought that struck Villiers was, how could Lady Lodore desert such a man; how pitifully degraded must she be, who preferred the throng of fools to the society of so matchless a being! The gallantry with which he rushed to his fate, his exultation in the prospect of redeeming his honour, his melting tenderness towards his daughter, filled Villiers with respect and compassion. It was all over now. Lodore was dead: his passions, his wrongs, his errors slept with him in the grave. He had departed from the busy stage, never to be forgotten — yet to be seen no more.

was dead, and Cornelia was free. Her husband had alluded to the gladness with which she would welcome liberty; and Villiers knew that there was another, also, whose heart would rejoice, and open itself at once to the charming visitation of permitted love. Villiers sighed to think that Saville would marry the beautiful widow; but he did not doubt that this event would take place.

Having seen that Ethel was in kind hands, and learnt the satisfactory arrangements made for her return to England, he hastened to join his cousin, and to convey the astounding intelligence. Saville's generous disposition prevented exultation, and subdued joy. Still the prospect of future happiness became familiar to him, shadowed only by the fear of not obtaining the affections of her he so fervently loved. For, strange to say, Saville was diffident to a fault: he could not imagine any qualities in himself to attract a beautiful and fashionable woman. His hopes were slight; his thoughts timid: the pain of eternal division was replaced by the gentler anxieties of love; and he returned to England, scarcely daring to expect that crown to his desires, which seemed too high an honour, too dear a blessing, for earthly love to merit.

CHAPTER IV.

Ma la fede degli Amanti
È come l'Araba fenice;
Che vi sia, ciaschun' lo dice.
Ma dove sia, nessun lo sa.
— Metastasio.

Meanwhile Lady had been enduring the worst miseries of ill-fated love. The illness of Lady Santerre, preceding her death, had demanded all her time; and she nursed her with exemplary patience and kindness. During her midnight watchings and solitary days, she had full time to feel how deep a wound her heart had received. The figure and countenance of her absent friend haunted her in spite of every effort; and when death hovered over the pillow of her mother, she clung, with mad desperation, to the thought, that there was still one, when this parent should be gone, to love her, even though she never saw him more.

Lady Santerre died. After the first burst of natural grief, Cornelia began to reflect that Lord might now imagine that every obstacle to their reconciliation was removed. She had looked upon her husband as her enemy and injurer; she had regarded him with indignation and fear; — but now she hated him. Strong aversion had sprung up, during the struggles of passion, in her bosom. She hated him as the eternal barrier between her and one who loved her with rare disinterestedness. The human heart must desire happiness; — in spite of every effort at resignation, it must aspire to the fulfilment of its wish. Lord Lodore was the cause why she was cut off from it for ever. He had foreseen that this feeling, this combat, this misery, would be her doom, in the deserted situation she chose for herself: she had laughed his fears to scorn. Now she abhorred him the more for having divined her destiny. While she banished the pleasant thoughts of love, she indulged in the poisoned ones of hate; and while she resisted each softer emotion as a crime, she opened her heart to the bitterest resentment, as a permitted solace; nor was she aware that thus she redoubled all her woes. It was under the influence of these feelings, that she had written to Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry that harsh, decided letter, which Lodore received at New York. The intelligence of his violent death came as an answer to her expressions of implacable resentment. A pang of remorse stung her, when she thought how she had emptied the vials of her wrath on a head which had so soon after been laid low for ever.

The double loss of husband and mother caused Lady to seclude herself, not in absolute solitude, but in the agreeable retreat of friendly society. She was residing near Brighton, when Saville returned from America, and, with a heart beating high with its own desires, again beheld the mistress of his affections. His delicate nature caused him to respect the weeds she wore, even though they might be termed a mockery: they were the type of her freedom and his hopes; yet, as the tokens of death, they were to be respected. He saw her more beautiful than ever, more courted, more waited on; and he half despaired. How could he, the abstracted student, the man of dreams, the sensitive and timid invalid, ensnare the fancy of one formed to adorn the circles of wealth and fashion?

Thus it was that Saville and Cornelia were further off than ever, when they imagined themselves most near. Neither of them could afterwards comprehend what divided them; or why, when each would have died for the other's sake, cobweb barriers should have proved inextricable; and wherefore, after weathering every more stormy peril, they should perish beneath the influence of a summer breeze.

The pride of Cornelia's heart, hid by the artificial courtesies of society, was a sentiment resolved, confirmed, active, and far beyond her own controul. The smallest opposition appeared rebellion to her majesty of will; while her own caprices, her own desires, were sacred decrees. She was too haughty to admit of discussion — too firmly intrenched in a sense of what was due to her, not to start indignantly from remonstrance. It is true, all this was but a painted veil. She was tremblingly alive to censure, and wholly devoted to the object of her attachment; but Saville was unable to understand these contradictions. His modesty led him to believe, that he, of all men, was least calculated to excite love in a woman's bosom. He saw in Cornelia a beautiful creation, to admire and adore; but he was slow to perceive the tenderness of soul, which her disposition made her anxious to conceal, and he was conscious of no qualities in himself that could entitle him to a place in her affections. Except that he loved her, what merit had he? And the interests of his affection he was willing to sacrifice at the altar of her wishes, though his life should be the oblation necessary to insure their accomplishment.

This is not the description of true love on either side; for, to be perfect, that sentiment ought to exist through the entireness of mutual sympathy and trust: but not the less did their passionate attachment engross the minds of both. All might have been well, indeed, had the lovers been left to themselves; but friends and relations interfered to mar and to destroy. The sisters of Saville accused Lady of encouraging, and intending to marry, the Marquess of C — . Saville instantly resolved to be no obstacle in the way of her ambition. Cornelia was fired with treble indignation to perceive that he at once conceded the place to his rival. One word or look of gentleness would have changed this; but she resolved to vanquish by other arms, and to force him to show some outward sign of jealousy and resentment. Saville had a natural dignity of mind, founded on simplicity of heart and directness of purpose. Cornelia knew that he loved her; — on that his claim rested: all that might be done to embellish and elevate her existence, he would study to achieve; but he could not enter into, nor understand, the puerile fancies of a spoiled Beauty: and while she was exerting all her powers, and succeeded in fascinating a crowd of flatterers, she saw Saville apart, abstracted from such vanities, pursuing a silent course; ready to approach her when her attention was disengaged, but at no time making one among her ostentatious admirers.

There was no moment of her life in which Cornelia did not fully appreciate her lover’s value, and her own good fortune in having inspired him with a serious and faithful attachment. But she imagined that this must be known and acknowledged; and that to ask any demonstration of gratitude, was ungenerous and tyrannical. An untaught girl could not have acted with more levity and wilfulness. It was worse when she found that she was accused of encouraging a wealthier and more illustrious rival. She disdained to exculpate herself from the charge of such low ambition, but rather furnished new grounds for accusation; and, in the arrogance of conscious power, smiled at the pettiness of the attempts made to destroy her influence. Proud in the belief that she could in an instant dispel the clouds she had conjured athwart her heaven, she cared not how ominously the thunder muttered, nor how dark and portentous lowered the threatening storm. It came when she least expected it: convinced of the fallacy of his confidence, made miserable by her caprices, agonized by the idea that he only lingered to add another trophy to his rival's triumph, Saville, who was always impetuous and precipitate, suddenly quitted England.

This was a severe blow at first; but soon Cornelia smiled at it. He would return — he must. The sincerity of their mutual preference would overcome the petty obstacles of time and distance. She never felt more sure of his devotion than now; and she looked so happy, and spoke so gaily, that those who were more ready to discern indifference, than love, in her sentiments, assured the absent Saville, that Lady rejoiced at his absence, as having shaken off a burthen, and got rid of an impediment, which, in spite of herself, was a clog to her brilliant career. The trusting love that painted her face in smiles was a traitor to itself and while she rose each day in the belief that the one was near at hand which would bring her lover before her, dearer and more attached than ever, she was in reality at work in defacing the whole web of life, and substituting dark, blank, and sad disappointment, for the images of light and joy with which her fancy painted it.

Saville had been gone five months. It was strange that he did not return; and she began to ponder upon how she must unbend, and what demonstration she must make, to attract him again to her side. The Marquess of C — was dismissed; and she visited the daughters of Lord Maristow, to learn what latest news they had received of their brother. "Do you know, Lady ," said Sophia Saville, "that this is Horatio's wedding-day? It is too true: we regret it, because he weds a foreigner — but there is no help now. He is married."

Had sudden disease seized on the frame-work of her body, and dissolved and scattered with poisonous influence and unutterable pains, the atoms that composed it, Lady would have been less agonized, less terrified. A thousand daggers were at once planted in her bosom. Saville was false! married! divided from her for ever! She was stunned: — scarcely understanding the meaning of the phrases addressed to her, and, unable to conceal her perturbation, she replied at random, and hastened to shorten her visit.

But not interval of doubt or hope was afforded. The words she had heard were concise, true to their meaning and all-sufficing. Her heart died within her. What had she done? Was she the cause? She longed to learn all the circumstances that led to this hasty marriage, and whether inconstancy or resentment had impelled him to the fatal act. Yet wherefore ask these things? It was over; the scene was closed. It were little worth to analyze the poison she had imbibed, since she was past all mortal cure.

Her first resolve was to forget — never, never to think of the false one more. But her thoughts never wandered from his image, and she was eternally busied in retrospection and conjecture. She was tempted at one time to disbelieve the intelligence, and to consider it as a piece of malice on the part of Miss Saville; then the common newspaper told her, that at the Ambassador's house at Naples, the Honourable Horatio Saville had married Clorinda, daughter of the Principe Villamarina, a Neapolitan nobleman of the highest rank.

It was true therefore — and how was it true? Did he love his bride? why else marry? — had he forgotten his tenderness towards her? Alas! it needed not forgetting; it was a portion of past time, fleeting as time itself; it had been borne away with the hours as they passed, and remembered as a thing which had been, and was no more. The reveries of love which for months had formed all her occupation, were a blank; or rather to be replaced by the agonies of despair. Her native haughtiness forsook her. She was alone and desolate — hedged in on all sides by insuperable barriers, which shut out every glimpse of hope. She was humbled in her own eyes, through her want of success, and heartily despised herself, and all her caprices and vanities, which had led her to this desart, and then left her to pine. She detested her position in society, her mechanism of being, and every circumstance, self-inherent, or adventitious, that attended her existence. All seemed to her sick fancy so constructed as to ensure disgrace, desertion, and contempt. She lay down each night feeling as if she could never endure to raise her head on the morrow.

The unkindness and cruelty of her lover's conduct next presented themselves to her contemplation. She had suffered much during the past years, more than she had ever acknowledged, even to herself; she had suffered of regret and sorrow, while she brooded over her solitary position, and the privation of every object on whom she might bestow affection. She had had nothing to hope. Saville had changed all this; he had banished her cares, and implanted hope in her heart. Now again his voice recalled the evils, his hand crushed the new-born expectation of happiness. He was the cause of every ill; and the adversity which she had endured proudly and with fortitude while it seemed the work of fate, grew more bitter and heavy when she felt that it arose through the agency of one, whose kind affection and guardianship she had fondly believed would hereafter prove a blessing sent as from Heaven itself, be to the star of her life.

This fit passed off; with struggles and relapses she wore down the first gush of sorrow, and her disposition again assumed force over her. She had found it difficult to persuade herself, in spite of facts, that she was not loved; but it was easy, once convinced of the infidelity of her lover, to regard him with indifference. She now regretted lost happiness — but Saville was no longer regretted. She wept over the vanished forms of delight, lately so dear to her; but she remembered that he who had called them into life had driven them away; and she smiled in proud scorn of his fleeting and unworthy passion. It was not to this love that she had made so tender and lavish a return. She had loved his constancy, his devotion, his generous solicitude for her welfare — for the happiness which she bestowed on him, and for the sympathy that so dearly united them. These were fled; and it were vain to consecrate herself to an empty and deformed mockery of so beautiful a truth.

Then she tried to hate him — to despise and to lessen him in her own estimation. The attempt recoiled on herself. The recollection of his worth stole across her memory, to frustrate her vain endeavours: his voice haunted — his expressive eyes beamed on her. It were better to forget. Indifference was her only refuge, and to attain this she must wholly banish his image from her mind. Cornelia was possessed of wonderful firmness of purpose. It had carried her on so long unharmed, and now that danger was at hand, it served effectually to defend her. She rose calm and free, above unmerited disaster. She grew proud of the power she found that she possessed of conquering the most tyrannical of passions. Peace entered her soul, and she hailed it as a blessing.

The clause in her husband's will which deprived her of the guardianship of her daughter had been forgotten during this crisis. Before, under the supposition that she should marry, she had deferred taking any step to claim her. The idea of a struggle to be made, unassisted, unadvised, and unshielded, was terrible. She had not courage to encounter all the annoyances that might ensue. To get rid for a time of the necessity of action and reflection, she went abroad. She changed the scene — she travelled from place to place. She gave herself up in the solitude of continental journies to the whole force of contending passions; now overcome by despair, and again repressing regret, asserting to herself the lofty pride of her nature.

By degrees she recovered a healthier tone of mind — a distant and faint, yet genuine sense of duty dawned upon her; and she began to think on what her future existence was to depend, and how she could best secure some portion of happiness. Her heart once again warmed towards the image of her daughter — and she felt that in watching the development of her mind, and leading her to love and depend on her, a new interest and real pleasure might spring up in life. She reproached herself for having so long, by silence and passive submission, given scope to the belief that she was willing to be a party against herself, in the injustice of ; and she returned to England with the intention of instantly enforcing her rights over her child, and taking to her bosom and to her fondest care the little being, whose affection and gratitude was to paint her future life with smiles.

She called to mind Lady Santerre's worldly maxims, and her own experience. She knew that the first step to success is the appearance of prosperity and power. To command the good wishes and aid of her friends she must appear independent of them. She was earnest therefore to hide the wounds her heart had received, and the real loathing with which she regarded all things. She arrayed herself in smiles, and banished, far below into the invisible recesses of her bosom, the contempt and disgust with which she viewed the scene around her.

She returned to England. She appeared at the height of the season, in the midst of society, as beautiful, as charming, as happy in look and manner, as in her days of light-hearted enjoyment. She paused yet a moment longer, to reflect on what step she had better take on first enforcing her claim; but her mind was full of its intention, and set upon the fulfilment.

At this time, but a few days after her arrival in London, she went to the opera. She heard the name of Fitzhenry called in the lobby — she saw and recognized Mrs. Elizabeth — the venerable sister Bessy, so little altered, that time might be said to have touched, but not trenched her homely kindly face. With her, in attendance on her, she beheld Horatio Saville's favourite cousin — the gay and fashionable Edward Villiers. It was strange; her curiosity was strongly excited. It had not long to languish: the next morning Villiers called, and was readily admitted.

CHAPTER V.

And as good lost is seld or never found.
— Shakspeare.

Lady and Villiers met for the first time since Horatio Saville's marriage. Neither were exactly aware of what the other knew or thought. Cornelia was ignorant how far her attachment to his cousin was known to him; whether he shared the general belief in her worldly coquetry, or what part he might have had in occasioning their unhappy separation. She could not indeed see him without emotion. He had been Lodore's second, and received the last dying breath of him who had, in her brightest youth, selected her from the world, to share his fortunes. Those days were long past; yet as she grew older, disappointed, and devoid of pleasurable interest in the present, she often turned her thoughts backward, and wondered at the part she had acted.

Similar feelings were in Edward's mind. He was prejudiced against her in every way. He despised her worldly calculations, as reported to him, and rejoiced in their failure. He believed these reports, and despised her; yet he could not see her without being moved at once with admiration and pity. The moon-lit hill, and tragic scene, in which he had played his part, came vividly before his eyes. He had been struck by the nobleness of 's appearance — the sensibility that sat on his countenance — his gentle, yet dignified manners. Ethel's idolatry of her father had confirmed the favourable prepossession. He could not help compassionating Cornelia for the loss of her husband, forgetting, for the moment, their separation. Then again recurred to him the eloquent appeals of Saville; his eulogiums; his fervent, reverential affection. She had lost him also. Could she hold up her head after such miserable events? The evidence of the senses, and the ideas of our own minds, are more forcibly present, than any notion we can form of the feelings of others. In spite, therefore, of his belief in her heartlessness, Villiers had pictured Cornelia attired in dismal weeds, the victim of grief. He saw her, beaming in beauty, at the opera; — he now beheld her, radiant in sweet smiles, in her own home. Nothing touched — nothing harmed her; and the glossy surface, he doubted not, imaged well the insensible, unimpressive soul within.

Lady would have despised herself for ever had she betrayed the tremor that shook her frame when Villiers entered. Her pride of sex was in arms to enable her to convince him, that no regret, no pining, shadowed her days. The reality was abhorrent, and should never be confessed. Thus then they met — each with a whole epic of woe and death alive in their memory; but both wearing the outward appearance of frivolity and thoughtlessness. He saw her as lovely as ever, and as kind. Her softest and sweetest welcome was extended to him. It was this frequent show of frank cordiality which gained her "golden opinions" from the many. Her haughtiness was all of the mind; — a desire to please, and constant association with others, had smoothed the surface, and painted it in the colours most agreeable to every eye.

They addressed each other as if they had met but the day before. At first, a few questions and answers passed, — as to where she had been on the continent, how she liked Baden, & co.; — and then Lady said—"Although I have not seen her for several years, I instantly recognized a relative of mine with you yesterday evening. Does Miss Fitzhenry make any stay in town?"

The idea of Ethel was uppermost in Villiers's mind, and struck by the manner in which the woman of fashion spoke of her daughter, he replied, "During the season, I believe; I scarcely know. Miss Fitzhenry came up for her health; that consideration, I suppose, will regulate her movements."

"She looked very well last night — perhaps she intends to remain till she gets ill, and country air is ordered?" observed Lady .

"That were nothing new at least," replied Villiers, trying to hide the disgust he felt at her mode of speaking; "the young and blooming too often protract their first season, till the roses are exchanged for lilies."

"If Miss Fitzhenry's roses still bloom," said the lady, "they must be perennial ones; they have surely grown more fit for a herbal than a vase."

Villiers now perceived his mistake, and replied, "You are speaking of Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, as the good lady styles herself — I spoke of — her niece—" "Has Ethel been ill?" Lady 's hurried question, and the use of the christian name, as most familiar to her thoughts, brought home to

Villiers's heart the feeling of their near relationship. There was something more than grating; it was deeply painful to speak to a mother of a child who had been torn from her — who did not know — who had even been taught to hate her. He wished himself a hundred miles off, but there was no help, he must reply. "You might have seen last night that she is perfectly recovered."

Lady 's imagination refused to image her child in the tall, elegant, full-formed girl she had seen, and she said, "Was Ethel with you? I did not see her — probably she went home before the opera was over, and I only perceived your party in the crush-room — you appear already intimate."

"It is impossible to see Miss Fitzhenry and not to wish to be intimate," replied Villiers with his usual frankness. "I, at least, cannot help being deeply interested in every thing that relates to her."

"You are very good to take concern in my little girl. I should have imagined that you were too young yourself to like children."

"Children!" repeated Villiers, much amazed; "Miss Fitzhenry! — she is not a child."

Lady scarcely heard him; a sudden pang had shot across her heart, to think how strangers — how every one might draw near her daughter, and be interested for her, while she could not, without making herself the tale of the town, the subject, through the medium of news-papers, for every gossip's tea-table in England — where her sentiments would be scanned, and her conduct criticized — and this through the revengeful feelings of her husband, prolonged beyond the grave. Tears had been gathering in her eyes during the last moments; she turned her head to hide them, and a quick shower fell on her silken dress. Quite ashamed of this self-betrayal, she exerted herself to overcome her emotion. Villiers felt awkwardly situated; his first impulse had been to rise to take her hand, to soothe her; but before he could do more than the first of these acts, as Lady Lodore fancied for the purpose of taking his leave, she said, "It is foolish to feel as I do; yet perhaps more foolish to attempt to conceal from one, as well acquainted as you are with every thing, that I do feel pained at the unnatural separation between me and Ethel, especially when I think of the publicity I must incur by asserting a mother's claims. I am ashamed of intruding this subject on you; but she is no longer the baby cherub I could cradle in my arms, and you have seen her lately, and can tell me whether she has been well brought up — whether she seems tractable — if she promises to be pretty?"

"Did you not think her lovely?" cried Villiers with animation; "you saw her last night, taking my arm."

"Ethel!" cried the lady. "Could that be Ethel? True, she is now sixteen — I had indeed forgot" — her cheeks became suffused with a deep blush as she remembered all the solicisms she had been committing. "She is sixteen," she continued, "and a woman — while I fancied a little girl in a white frock and blue sash: this alters every thing. We have been indeed divided, and must now remain so for evermore. I will not injure her, at her age, by making her the public talk — besides, many, many other considerations would render me fearful of making myself responsible for her future destiny."

"At least," said Villiers, "she ought to wait on you."

"That were beyond Lord 's bond," said the lady; "and why should she wait on me? Were she impelled by affection, it were well. But this is talking very simply — we could only be acquaintance, and I would rather be nothing. I confess, that I repined bitterly, that I was not permitted to have my little girl, as I termed her, for my plaything and companion — but my ideas are now changed: a dear little tractable child would have been delightful — but she is a woman, with a will of her own — prejudiced against me — brought up in that vulgar America, with all kinds of strange notions and ways. Lord Lodore was quite right, I believe — he fashioned her for himself and — Bessy. The worst thing that can happen to a girl, is to have her prejudices and principles unhinged; no new ones can flourish like those that have grown with her growth; and mine, I fear, would differ greatly from those in which she has been educated. A few years hence, she may feel the want of a friend, who understands the world, and who could guide her prudently through its intricacies; then she shall find that friend in me. Now, I feel convinced that I should do more harm than good."

A loud knock at the street door interrupted the conversation. "One thing only I cannot endure," said the lady hastily, "to present a domestic tragedy or farce to the Opera House — we must not meet in public. I shall shut up my house and return to Paris."

Mere written words express little. Lady 's expressions were nothing; but her countenance denoted a change of feeling, a violence of emotion, of which Villiers hardly believed her capable; but before he could reply, the servant threw open the door, and her brow immediately clearing, serenity descended on her face. With her blandest smile she extended her hand to her new visitor. Villiers was too much discomposed to imitate her, so with a silent salutation he departed, and cantered round the park to collect his thoughts before he called in Seymour-street.

The ladies there were not less agitated than Lady , and displayed their feelings with the artlessness of recluses. The first words that Mrs. Elizabeth had addressed to her niece, at the breakfast table, were an awkwardly expressed intimation, that she meant instantly to return to Longfield. Ethel looked up with a face of alarm: her aunt continued; “I do not want to speak ill of Lady Lodore, my dear — God forgive her — that is all I can say. What your dear father thought of her, his last will testifies. I suppose you do not mean to disobey him.”

“His slightest word was ever a law with me,” said Ethel; “and now that he is gone, I would observe his injunctions more religiously than ever. But —”

“Then, my dear, there is but one thing to be done: Lady will assuredly force herself upon us, meet us at every turn, oblige you to pay her your duty; nor could you avoid it. No, my dear Ethel, there is but one escape — your health, thank God, is restored, and Longfield is now in all its beauty; we will return to-morrow.”

Ethel did not reply; she looked very disconsolate — she did not know what to say; at last, “Mr. Villiers will think it so odd,” dropped from her lips.

“Mr. Villiers is nothing to us, my dear,” said aunt Bessy—”not the most distant relation; he is an agreeable, good-hearted young gentleman — but there are so many in the world.”

Ethel left her breakfast untasted and went out of the room: she felt that she could no longer restrain her tears. “My father!” she exclaimed, while a passionate burst of weeping choked her utterance, “my only friend! why, why did you leave me? Why, most cruel, desert your poor orphan child? Gracious God! to what am I reserved! I must not see my mother — a name so dear, so sweet, is for me a curse and a misery! O my father, why did you desert me!”

Her calm reflections were not less bitter; she did not suffer her thoughts to wander to Villiers, or rather the loss of her father was still so much the first grief of her heart, that on any new sorrow, it was to this she recurred with agony. The form of her youthful mother also flitted before her; and she asked herself, "Can she be so wicked?" Lord had never uttered her name; it was not until his death had put the fatal seal on all things, that she heard a garbled exaggerated statement from her aunt, over whose benevolent features a kind of sacred horror mantled, whenever she was mentioned. The will of Lord Lodore, and the stern injunction it contained, that the mother and daughter should never meet, satisfied Ethel of the truth of all that her aunt said; so that educated to obedience and deep reverence for the only parent she had ever known, she recoiled with terror from transgressing his commands, and holding communication with the cause of all his ills. Still it was hard, and very, very sad; nor did she cease from lamenting her fate, till Villiers's horse was heard in the street, and his knock at the door; then she tried to compose herself. "He will surely come to us at Longfield," she thought; "Longfield will be so very stupid after London."

After London! Poor Ethel! she had lived in London as in a desert; but lately it had appeared to her a city of bliss, and all places else the abode of gloom and melancholy. Villiers was shocked at the appearance of sorrow which shadowed her face; and, for a moment, thought that the rencounter with her mother was the sole occasion of the tears, whose traces he plainly discerned. His address was full of sympathetic kindness; — but when she said, "We return to-morrow to Essex — will you come to see us at Longfield?" — his soothing tones were exchanged for those of surprise and vexation.

"Longfield! — impossible! Why?"

"My aunt has determined on it. She thinks me recovered; and so, indeed, I am."

"But are you to be entombed at Longfield, except when dying? If so, do, pray, be ill again directly! But this must not be. Dear Mrs. Fitzhenry," he continued, as she came in, "I will not hear of your going to Longfield. Look; the very idea has already thrown Miss Fitzhenry into a consumption; — you will kill her. Indeed you must not think of it."

"We shall all die, if we stay in town," said Mrs. Elizabeth, with perplexity at her niece's evident suffering.

“Then why stay in town?” asked Villiers.

“You just now said, that we ought not to return to Longfield,” answered the lady; “and I am sure if Ethel is to look so ill and wretched, I don’t know what I am to do.”

“But there are many places in the world besides either London or Longfield. You were charmed with Richmond the other day: there are plenty of houses to be had there; nothing can be prettier or more quiet.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Aunt Bessy, “I never thought of that, to be sure; and I have business which makes our going to Longfield very inconvenient. I expect Mr. Humphries, our solicitor, next week; and I have not seen him yet. You really think, Mr. Villiers, that we could get a house to suit us at Richmond?”

“Let us drive there to-day,” said Villiers; “we can dine at the Star and Garter. You can go in the britzska — I on horseback. The days are long: we can see every thing; and take your house at once.”

This plan sounded very romantic and wild to the sober spinster; but Ethel’s face, lighted up with vivid pleasure, said more in its favour, than what the good lady called prudence could allege against it. “Silly people you women are,” said Villiers: “you can do nothing by yourselves: and are always running against posts, unless guided by others. This will make every thing easy — dispel every difficulty.” His thoughts recurred to Lady , and her intended journey to Paris, as he said this: and again they flew to a charming little villa on the river’s side, whither he could ride every day, and find Ethel among her flowers, alone and happy.

The excursion of this morning was prosperous. The day was warm yet fresh; and as they quitted town, and got surrounded by fields, and hedges, and trees, nature reassumed her rights, and awakened transport in Ethel’s heart. The boyish spirits of Villiers communicated themselves to her; and Mrs. Elizabeth smiled, also, with the most exquisite complacency. A few inquiries conducted them to a pretty rural box, surrounded by a small, but well laid-out shrubbery; and this they engaged. The dinner at the inn, the twilight walk in its garden; — the fair prospect of the rich and cultivated country, with its silvery, meandering river at their feet; and the aspect of the cloudless heavens, where one or two stars silently struggled into sight amidst the pathless wastes of sky, were objects most beautiful to look on, and prodigal of the sweetest emotions. The wide, dark lake, the endless forests, and distant mountains, of the Illinois, were not here; but night bestowed that appearance of solitude, which habit rendered dear to Ethel; and imagination could transform wooded parks and well-trimmed meadows into bowery seclusions, sacred from the foot of man, and fresh fields, untouched by his hand.

A few days found Ethel and her aunt installed at their little villa, and delighted to be away from London. Education made loneliness congenial to both: they might seek transient amusements in towns, or visit them for business; but happiness, the agreeable tenor of unvaried daily life, was to be found in the quiet of the country only; — and Richmond was the country to them; for, cut off from all habits of intercourse with their species, they had but to find trees and meadows near them, at once to feel transported, from the thick of human life, into the most noiseless solitude.

Ethel was very happy. She rose in the morning with a glad and grateful heart, and gazed from her chamber window, watching the early sunbeams as they crept over the various parts of the landscape, visiting with light and warmth each open field or embowered nook. Her bosom overflowed with the kindest feelings, and her charmed senses answered the tremulous beating of her pure heart, bidding it enjoy. How beautiful did earth appear to her! There was a delight and a sympathy in the very action of the shadows, as they pranked the sunshiny ground with their dark and fluctuating forms. The leafy boughs of the tall trees waved gracefully, and each wind of heaven wafted a thousand sweets. A magic spell of beauty and bliss held in one bright chain the whole harmonious universe; and the soul of the enchantment was love — simple, girlish, unacknowledged love; — the love of the young, feminine heart, which feels itself placed, all bleakly and dangerously, in a world, scarce formed to be its home, and which plumes itself with Love to fly to the covert and natural shelter of another’s protecting care.

Ethel did not know — did not fancy — that she was in love; nor did any of the throes of passion disturb the serenity of her mind. She only felt that she was very, very happy; and that Villiers was the kindest of human beings. She did not give herself up to idleness and reverie. The first law of her education had been to be constantly employed. Her studies were various: they, perhaps, did not sufficiently tend to invigorate her understanding, but they sufficed to prevent every incursion of listlessness.

Meanwhile, during each, the thought of Villiers strayed through her mind, like a heavenly visitant, to gild all things with sunny delight. Some time, during the day, he was nearly sure to come; or, at least, she was certain of seeing him on the morrow; and when he came, their boatings and their rides were prolonged; while each moment added to the strength of the ties that bound her to him. She relied on his friendship; and his society was as necessary to her life, as the air she breathed. She so implicitly trusted to his truth, that she was unaware that she trusted at all — never making a doubt about it. That chance, or time, should injure or break off the tie, was a possibility that never suggested itself to her mind. As the silver Thames traversed in silence and beauty the landscape at her feet, so did love flow through her soul in one even and unruffled stream — the great law and emperor of her thoughts; yet more felt from its influence, than from any direct exertion of its power. It was the result and the type of her sensibility, of her constancy, of the gentle, yet lively sympathy, it was her nature to bestow, with guileless confidence. Those around her might be ignorant that her soul was imbued with it, because, being a part of her soul, there was small outward demonstration. None, indeed, near her thought any thing about it: Aunt Bessy was a tyro in such matters; and Villiers — he had resolved, when he perceived love on her side, to retreat for ever: till then he might enjoy the dear delight that her society afforded him.

CHAPTER VI.

Alas! he knows
The laws of Spain appoint me for his heir;
That all must come to me, if I outlive him.
Which sure I must do, by the course of nature.
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

Edward Villiers was the only child of a man of considerable fortune, who had early in life become a widower. From the period of this event, Colonel Villiers (for his youth had been passed in the army, where he obtained promotion) had led the careless life of a single man. His son's home was at Maristow Castle, when not at school; and the father seldom remembered him except as an incumbrance; for his estate was strictly entailed, so that he could only consider himself possessed of a life interest in a property, which would devolve, without restriction, on his more fortunate son.

Edward was brought up in all the magnificence of his uncle's lordly abode. Luxury and profusion were the elements of the air he breathed. To be without any desired object that could be purchased, appeared baseness and lowest penury. He, also, was considered the favoured one of fortune in the family circle. The elder brother among the Savilles rose above, but the younger fell infinitely below, the undoubted heir of eight thousand a year, and one of the most delightful seats in England. He was brought up to look upon himself as a rich man, and to act as such; and meanwhile, until his father's death, he had nothing to depend on, except any allowance he might make him.

Colonel Villiers was a man of fashion, addicted to all the extravagances and even vices of the times. He set no bounds to his expenses. Gambling consumed his nights, and his days were spent at horse-races, or any other occupation that at once excited and impoverished him. His income was as a drop of water in the mighty stream of his expenditure. Involvement followed involvement, until he had not a shilling that he could properly call his own.

Poor Edward heard of these things, but did not mark them. He indulged in no blameworthy pursuits, nor spent more than beseemed a man in his rank of life. The idea of debt was familiar to him: every one — even Lord Maristow — was in debt, far beyond his power of immediate payment. He followed the universal example, and suffered no inconvenience, while his wants were obligingly supplied by the fashionable tradesmen. He regarded the period of his coming of age as a time when he should become disembarrassed, and enter upon life with ample means, and still more brilliant prospects.

The day arrived. It was celebrated with splendour at Maristow Castle. Colonel Villiers was abroad; but Lord Maristow wrote to him to remind him of this event, which otherwise he might have forgotten. A kind letter of congratulation was, in consequence, received from him by Edward; to which was appended a postscript, saying, that on his return, at the end of a few weeks, he would consult concerning some arrangements he wished to make with regard to his future income.

His return was deferred; and Edward began to experience some of the annoyances of debt. Still no real pain was associated with his feelings; though he looked forward with eagerness to the hour of liberation. Colonel Villiers came at last. He spoke largely of his intended generosity, which was shown, meanwhile, by his persuading Edward to join in a mortgage for the sake of raising an immediate sum. Edward scarcely knew what he was about. He was delighted to be of service to his father; and without thought or idea of having made a sacrifice, agreed to all that was asked of him. He was promised an allowance of six hundred a year.

The few years that had passed since then were full of painful experience and bitter initiation. His light and airy spirit was slow to conceive ill, or to resent wrong. When his annuity remained unpaid, he listened to his father’s excuses with implicit credence, and deplored his poverty. One day, he received a note from him, written, as usual, in haste and confusion, but breathing anxiety and regret on his account, and promising to pay over to him the first money he could obtain. On the evening of that day, Edward was led by a friend into the gambling room of a celebrated club. The first man on whom his eyes fell, was his father, who was risking and losing rouleaus and notes in abundance. At one moment, while making over a large sum, he suddenly perceived his son. He grew pale, and then a deep blush spread itself over his countenance. Edward withdrew. His young heart was pierced to the core. The consciousness of a father's falsehood and guilt acted on him as the sudden intelligence of some fatal disaster would have done. He breathed thick — the objects swam round him — he hurried into the streets — he traversed them one after the other. It was not this scene alone — this single act; the veil was withdrawn from a whole series of others similar; and he became aware that his parent had stepped beyond the line of mere extravagance; that he had lost honourable feeling; that lies were common in his mouth; and every other — even his only child — was sacrificed to his own selfish and bad passions.

Edward never again asked his father for money. The immediate result of the meeting in the gambling-room, had been his receiving a portion of what was due to him; but his annuity was always in arrear, and paid so irregularly, that it became worse than nothing in his eyes; especially, as the little that he received was immediately paid over to creditors, and to defray the interest of borrowed money.

He never applied again to Colonel Villiers. He would have considered himself guilty of a crime, had he forced his father to forge fresh subterfuges, and to lie to his own son. Brought up in the midst of the wealthy, he had early imbibed a horror of pecuniary obligation; and this fastidiousness grew more sensitive and peremptory with each added day of his life. Yet with all this, he had not learnt to set a right value upon money; and he squandered whatever he obtained with thoughtless profusion. He had no friend to whose counsel he could recur. Lord Maristow railed against Colonel Villiers; and when he heard of Edward's difficulties, offered to remonstrate and force his brother-in-law to extricate him: but here ended his assistance, which was earnestly rejected. Horatio's means were exceedingly limited; but on a word from his cousin, he eagerly besought him to have recourse to his purse. To avoid his kindness, and his uncle's interference, Edward became reserved: he had recourse to Jews and money-lenders; and appeared at ease, while he was involving himself in countless and still increasing embarrassments.

Edward was naturally extravagant; or, to speak more correctly, his education and position implanted and fostered habits of expense and prodigality, while his careless disposition was unapt to calculate consequences: his very attempts at economy frequently cost him more than his most expensive whims. He was not, like his father, a gambler; nor did he enter into any very reprehensible pleasures: but he had little to spend, and was thoughtless and confiding; and being always in arrear, was forced, in a certain way, to continue a system which perpetually led him further into the maze, and rendered his return impossible. He had no hope of becoming independent, except through his father's death: Colonel Villiers, meanwhile, had no idea of dying. He was not fifty years of age; and considering his own a better life than his son's, involuntarily speculated on what he should do if he should chance to survive him. He was a handsome and a fashionable man: he often meditated a second marriage, if he could render it advantageous; and repined at his inability to make settlements, which was an insuperable impediment to his project. Edward's death would overcome this difficulty. Such were the speculations of father and son; and the portion of filial and paternal affection which their relative position but too usually inspires.

Until he was twenty-one, Edward had never spent a thought upon his scanty resources. Three years had past since then — three brief years, which had a little taught him of what homely stuff the world is made; yet care and even reflection had not yet disturbed his repose. Days, months sped on, and nothing reminded him of his relative wealth or poverty in a way to annoy him, till he knew Ethel. He had been interested for her in America — he had seen her, young and lovely, drowned in grief — sorrowing with the heart's first prodigal sorrow for her adored father. He had left her, and thought of her no more — except, as a passing reflection, that in the natural course of things, she was now to become the pupil of Lady , and consequently, that her unsophisticated feelings and affectionate heart would speedily be tarnished and hardened under her influence. He anticipated meeting her hereafter in ball-rooms and assemblies, changed into a flirting, giddy, yet worldly-minded girl, intent upon a good establishment, and a fashionable partner.

He encountered her under the sober and primitive guardianship of Mrs. Fitzhenry, unchanged and unharmed. The same radiant innocence beamed from her face; her sweet voice was still true and heart-reaching in its tones; her manner mirrored the purity and lustre of a mind incapable of guile, and adorned with every generous and gentle sentiment. Hedrew near her with respect and admiration, and soon no other object showed fair in his eyes except Ethel. She was the star of the world, and he felt happy only when the light of her presence shone upon him. Her voice and smile visited his dreams, and spoke peace and delight to his heart. She was to him as a jewel (yet sweeter and lovelier than any gem) shut up in a casket, of which he alone possessed the key — as a pearl, of whose existence an Indian diver is aware beneath the waves of ocean, deep buried from every other eye.

There was all in Ethel that could excite and keep alive imaginative and tender love. In characterizing a race of women, a delightful writer has described her individually. “She was in her nature a superior being. Her majestic forehead, her dark, thoughtful eye, assured you that she had communed with herself. She could bear to be left in solitude — yet what a look was her’s if animated by mirth or love! She was poetical, if not a poet; and her imagination was high and chivalrous.” The elevated tone of feeling fostered by her father, her worship of his virtues, and the loneliness of her life in the Illinois, combined to render her dissimilar to any girl Villiers had ever before known or admired. When unobserved, he watched her countenance, and marked the varying tracery of high thoughts and deep emotions pass over it; her dark eye looked out from itself on vacancy, but read there a meaning only to be discerned by vivid imagination. And then when that eye, so full of soul, turned on him, and affection and pleasure at once animated and softened its glances — when her sweet lips, so delicate in their shape, so balmy and soft in their repose, were wreathed into a smile — he felt that his whole being was penetrated with enthusiastic admiration, and that his nature had bent to a law, from which it could never again be liberated.

That she should mingle with the world — enter into its contaminating pursuits — be talked of in it with that spirit of depreciation and impertinence, which is its essence, was odious to him, and he was overjoyed to have her safe at Richmond — secure from Lady — shut up apart from all things, except nature — her unsophisticated aunt, and his own admiration — a bird of beauty, brooding in its own fair nest, unendangered by the fowler. These were his feelings; but by degrees other reflections forced themselves on him; and love which, when it has knocked and been admitted, will be a tyrant, obliged him to entertain regrets and fears which agonized him. His hourly aspiration was to make her his own. Would that dear heart open to receive into its recesses his image, and thenceforward dedicate itself to him only? Might he become her lover, guardian, husband — and they tread together the jungle of life, aiding each other to thread its mazes, and to ward off every danger that might impend over them.

Bitter worldly considerations came to mar the dainty colours of this fair picture. He could not conceal from himself the poverty that must attend him during his father’s life. Lord ‘s singular will reduced Ethel’s property to almost nothing: should he then ally her to his scanty means and broken fortune? His resolution was made. He would not deny himself the present pleasure of seeing her, to spare any future pain in which he should be the only sufferer; but on the first token of exclusive regard on her side, he would withdraw for ever.

CHAPTER VII.

The world is too much with us.
— Wordsworth.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry's morning task was to read the newspapers — the only intercourse she held with the world, and all her knowledge of it, was derived from these daily sheets. Ethel never looked at them — her thoughts held no communion with the vulgar routine of life, and she was too much occupied by her studies and reveries to spend any time upon topics so uninteresting as the state of the nation, or the scandal of the day.

One morning, while she was painting, her aunt observed, in her usual tone of voice, scarce lifting her eyes from the paper, "Mr. Villiers did not tell us this — he is going to be married; I wonder who to!"

"Married!" repeated Ethel.

"Yes, my dear, here it is. 'We hear from good authority that Mr. Villiers, of Chiverton Park, is about to lead to the hymeneal altar a young and lovely bride, the only child of a gentleman, said to be the richest commoner in England.' — Who can it be?"

Ethel did not reply, and the elder lady went on to other parts of the newspaper. The poor girl, on whom she had dealt all unaware this chance mortal blow, put down her brush, and hurried into the shrubbery to conceal her agitation. Why did she feel these sharp pangs? Why did a bitter deluge of anguish overflow and seem to choke her breathing, and torture her heart? — she could scarcely tell. "Married! — then I shall never see him more!" And a passion of tears, not refreshing, but forced out by agony, and causing her to feel as if her heart was bursting, shook her delicate frame. At that moment the well-known sound, the galloping of Villiers's horse up the lane, met her ear. "Does he come here to tell us at last of his wedding-day?" The horse came on — it stopped — the bell was rung. Little acts these, which she had watched for, and listened to, for two months, with such placid and innocent delight, now they seemed the notes of preparation for a scene of despair. She wished to retreat to her own room to compose herself; but it was too late; he was already in that through which she must pass — she heard his voice speaking to her aunt. “Now is he telling her,” she thought. No idea of reproach, or of accusation of unkindness in him, dawned on her heart. No word of love had passed between them — even yet she was unaware that she loved herself; it was the instinctive result of this despot sentiment, which exerted its sway over her, without her being conscious of the cause of her sufferings.

The first words of Mrs. Fitzhenry had been to speak of the paragraph in the newspaper, and to show it her visitor. Villiers read it, and considered it curiously. He saw at once, that however blunderingly worded, his father was its hero; and he wondered what foundation there might be for the rumour. “Singular enough!” he said, carelessly, as he put the paper down.

“You have kept your secret well,” said Mrs. Elizabeth.

“My secret! I did not even know that I had one.”

“I, at least, never heard that you were going to be married.”

“I! — married! Where is Miss Fitzhenry?”

The concatenation of ideas presented by these words fell unremarked on the blunt senses of the good lady, and she replied, “In the shrubbery, I believe, or upstairs: she left me but a moment ago.”

Villiers hastened to the garden and soon discerned the tearful girl, who was bending down to pluck and arrange some flowers, so to hide her disturbed countenance.

Could we, at the moment of trial, summon our reason and our foregone resolves — could we put the impression of the present moment at a distance, which, on the contrary, presses on us with a power as omnipotent over our soul, as a pointed sword piercing the flesh over our life, we might become all that we are not — angels or demigods, or any other being that is not human. As it is, the current of the blood and the texture of the brain are the machinery by which the soul acts, and their mechanism is by no means tractable or easily worked; once put in motion, we can seldom controul their operations; but our serener feelings are whirled into the vortex they create. Thus Edward Villiers had a thousand times in his reveries thought over the possibility of a scene occurring, such as the one he was called upon to act in now — and had planned a line of conduct, but, like mist before the wind, this gossamer of the mind was swept away by an immediate appeal to his heart through his outward sensations. There stood before him, in all her loveliness, the creature whose image had lived with him by day and by night, for several long months; and the gaze of her soft tearful eyes, and the faultering tone of her voice, were the laws to which his sense of prudence, of right, was immediately subjected.

A few confused sentences interchanged, revealed to him that she participated in her aunt's mistake, and her simple question, "Why did you conceal this from me?" spoke the guilelessness of her thoughts, while the anguish which her countenance expressed, betrayed that the concealment was not the only source of her grief.

This young pair were ignorant how dear they were to each other. Ethel's affection was that generous giving away of a young heart which is unaware of the value of the gift it makes — she had asked for and thought of no return, though her feeling was the result of a reciprocal one on his side; it was the instinctive love of the dawn of womanhood, subdued and refined by her gentle nature and imaginative mind. Edward was more alive to the nature of his own sentiments — but his knowledge stood him in no stead to fortify him against the power of Ethel's tears. In a moment they understood each other — one second sufficed to cause the before impervious veil to fall at their feet: they had stept beyond this common-place world, and stood beside each other in the new and mysterious region of which Love is emperor.

"Dearest Ethel," said Villiers, "I have much to tell you. Do arrange that we should ride together. I have very much to tell you. You shall know every thing, and judge for us both, though you should condemn me."

She looked up in his face with innocent surprise; but no words could destroy the sunshine that brightened her soul: to know that she was loved sufficed then to fill her being to overflowing with happiness, so that there was no room for a second emotion.

The lovers rode out together, and thus secured the tête-à-tête which Villiers especially yearned for. Although she was country-bred, Mrs. Fitzhenry was too timid to mount on horseback, yet she could not feel fear for her niece who, under her father's guidance, sat her steed with an ease and perfect command of the animal, which long habit rendered second nature to her. As they rode on, considerably in advance of the groom, they were at first silent — the deep sweet silence which is so eloquent of emotion — till with an effort, slackening his pace, and bringing his horse nearer, Villiers began. He spoke of debt, of difficulties, of poverty — of his unconquerable aversion to the making any demands on his father — fruitless demands, for he knew how involved Colonel Villiers was, and how incapable even of paying the allowance he nominally made his son. He declared his reluctance to drag Ethel into the sea of cares and discomforts that he felt must surround his youth. He besought her forgiveness for having loved her — for having linked her heart to his. He could not willingly resign her, while he believed that he, all unworthy, was of any worth in her eyes; but would she not discard him for ever, now that she knew that he was a beggar? and that all to which he could aspire, was an engagement to be fulfilled at some far distant day — a day that might never come — when fortune should smile on him. Ethel listened with exquisite complacency. Every word Villiers spoke was fraught with tenderness; his eye beamed adoration and sincerest love. Consciousness chained her tongue, and her faltering voice refused to frame any echo to the busy instigations of her virgin heart. Yet it seemed to her as if she must speak; as if she were called upon to avow how light and trivial were all worldly considerations in her eyes. With bashful confusion she at length said, “You cannot think that I care for fortune — I was happy in the Illinois.”

Her simplicity of feeling was at this moment infectious. It appeared the excess of selfishness to think of any thing but love in a desart — while she had no desire beyond. Indeed, in England or America, she lived in a desart, as far as society was concerned, and felt not one of those tenacious though cobweb-seeming ties, that held sway over Villiers. All his explanations therefore went for nothing. They only felt that this discourse concerning him had drawn them nearer to each other, and had laid the first stone of an edifice of friendship, henceforth to be raised beside the already established one of love. A sudden shower forced them also to return home with speed, and so interrupted any further discussion.

In the evening Villiers left them; and Ethel sought, as speedily as she might, the solitude of her own chamber. She had no idea of hiding any circumstance from Mrs. Fitzhenry; but confidence is, more than any other thing, a matter of interchange, and cannot be bestowed unless the giver is certain of its being received. They had too little sympathy of taste or idea, and were too little in the habit of communicating their inmost thoughts, to make Ethel recur to her aunt. Besides, young love is ever cradled in mystery; — to reveal it to the vulgar eye, appears at once to deprive it of its celestial loveliness, and to marry it to the clodlike earth. But alone — alone — she could think over the past day — recall its minutest incident; and as she imaged to herself the speaking fondness of her lover’s eyes, her own closed, and a thrilling sense of delight swept through her frame. What a different world was this to what it had been the day before! The whole creation was invested by a purer atmosphere, balmy as paradise, which no disquieting thought could penetrate. She called upon her father’s spirit to approve her attachment; and when she reflected that Edward’s hand had supported his dying head — that to Edward Villiers’s care his latest words had intrusted her, — she felt as if she were a legacy bequeathed to him, and that she fulfilled ‘s last behests in giving herself to him. So sweetly and fondly did her gentle heart strive to make a duty of her wishes; and the idea of her father’s approbation set the seal of perfect satisfaction on her dream of bliss.

It was somewhat otherwise with Villiers. Things went on as before, and he came nearly every day to Richmond; but while Ethel rested satisfied with seeing him, and receiving slight, cherished tokens of his unabated regard, — as his voice assumed a more familiar tone, and his attentions became more affectionate; — while these were enough for Ethel, he thought of the future, and saw it each day dressed in gloomier colours. In Ethel’s presence, indeed, he forgot all but her. He loved her fervently, and beheld in her all that he most admired in woman: her clearness of spirit, her singleness of heart, her unsuspicious and ingenuous disposition, were irresistibly fascinating; — and why not spend their lives thus in solitude? — his — their mutual fortune might afford this: — why not for ever thus — the happy — the beloved? — his life might pass like a dream of joy; and that paradise might be realized on earth, the impossibility of which philosophers have demonstrated, and worldlings scoffed at.

Thus he thought while in the same room with Ethel; — while on his evening ride back to town, her form glided before him, and her voice sounded in his ears, it seemed that where Ethel was, no one earthly bliss could be wanting; where she was not, a void must exist, dark and dreary as a starless night. But his progress onward took him out of the magic circle her presence drew; a portion of his elevated feeling deserted him at each step; it fell off, like the bark pealing from a tree, in successive coats, till he was left with scarce a vestige of its brightness; — as the hue and the scent deserts the flower, when deprived of light, — so, when away from Ethel, her lover lost half the excellence which her presence bestowed.

Edward Villiers was eminently sociable in his disposition. He had been brought up in the thick of life, and knew not how to live apart from it. His frank and cordial heart danced within his bosom, when he was among those who sympathized with, and liked him. He was much courted in society, and had many favourites: and how Ethel would like these, and be liked by them, was a question he perpetually asked himself. He knew the worldliness of many, — their defective moral feeling, and their narrow views; but he believed that they were attached to him, and no man was ever less a misanthrope than he. He wished, if married to Ethel, to see her a favourite in his own circle; but he revolted from the idea of presenting her, except under favourable auspices, surrounded by the decorations of rank and wealth. To give up the world, the English world, formed no portion of his picture of bliss; and to occupy a subordinate, degraded, permitted place in it, was, to one initiated in its supercilious and insolent assumptions, not to be endured.

The picture had also a darker side, which was too often turned towards him. If he felt hesitation when he regarded its brighter aspect, as soon as this was dimmed, the whole current of his feelings turned the other way; and he called himself villain, for dreaming of allying Ethel, not to poverty alone, but to its worst consequences and disgrace, in the shape of debt. “I am a beggar,” he thought; “one of many wants, and unable to provide for any; — the most poverty-stricken of beggars, who has pledged away even his liberty, were it claimed of him. I look forward to the course of years with disgust. I cannot calculate the ills that may occur, or with how tremendous a weight the impending ruin may fall. I can bear it alone; but did I see her humiliated, whom I would gladly place on a throne, — by heavens! I could not endure life on such terms! and a pistol, or some other dreadful means, would put an end to an existence become intolerable.”

As these thoughts fermented within him, he longed to pour them out before Ethel; to unload his mind of its care, to express the sincere affection that led him to her side, and yet urged him to exile himself for ever. He rode over each day to Richmond, intent on such a design; but as he proceeded, the fogs and clouds that thickened round his soul grew lighter. At first his pace was regulated; as he drew nearer, he pressed his horse's flank with impatient heel, and bounded forward. Each turn in the road was a step nearer the sunshine. Now the bridge, the open field, the winding lane, were passed; the walls of her abode, and its embowered windows, presented themselves; — they met; and the glad look that welcomed him drove far away every thought of banishment, and dispelled at once every remnant of doubt and despondency.

This state of things might have gone on much longer, — already had it been protracted for two months, — but for an accidental conversation between Lady and Villiers. Since the morning after the opera, they had scarcely seen each other. Edward's heart was too much occupied to permit him to join in the throng of a ball-room; and they had no chance of meeting, except in general society. One evening, at the opera, the lady who accompanied Lady Lodore, asked a gentleman, who had just come into their box, "What had become of Edward Villiers? — he was never to be seen?"

"He is going to be married," was the reply: "he is in constant attendance on the fair lady at Richmond."

"I had not heard of this," observed Lady , who, for Horatio's sake, felt an interest for his favourite cousin.

"It is very little known. The fiancée lives out of the world, and no one can tell any thing about her. I did hear her name. Young Craycroft has seen them riding together perpetually in Richmond Park and on Wimbledon Common, he told me. Miss Fitzroy — no; — Miss Fitz-something it is; — Fitzgeorge? — no; — Fitzhenry? — yes; Miss Fitzhenry is the name."

Cornelia reddened, and asked no more questions. She controlled her agitation; and at first, indeed, she was scarcely aware how much she felt: but while the whole house was listening to a favourite air, and her thoughts had leisure to rally, they came on her painfully, and involuntary tears filled her eyes. It was sad, indeed, to hear of her child as of a stranger; and to be made to feel sensibly how wide the gulf was that separated them. "My sweet girl — my own Ethel! — are you, indeed, so lost to me?" As her heart breathed this ejaculation, she felt the downy cheek of her babe close to her's, and its little fingers press her bosom. A moment's recollection brought another image: — Ethel, grown up to womanhood, educated in hatred of her, negligent and unfilial; — this was not the little cherub whose loss she lamented. Let her look round the crowd then about her; and among the fair girls she saw, any one was as near her in affection and duty, as the child so early torn from her, to be for ever estranged and lost.

The baleful part of Cornelia's character was roused by these reflections; her pride, her selfwill, her spirit of resistance. "And for this she has been taken from me," she thought, "to marry, while yet a child, a ruined man — to be wedded to care and indigence. Thus would it not have been had she been entrusted to me. O, how hereafter she may regret the injuries of her mother, when she feels the effects of them in her own adversity! It is not for me to prevent this ill-judged union. The aunt and niece would see in my opposition a motive to hasten it: wise as they fancy themselves — wise and good — what I, the reviled, reprobated, they would therefore pursue with more eagerness. Be it so — my day will yet come!"

A glance of triumph shot across her face as she indulged in this emotion of revenge; the most deceitful and reprehensible of human feelings — revenge against a child — how sad at best — how sure to bring with it its recompense of bitterness of spirit and remorse! But Cornelia's heart had been rudely crushed, and in the ruin of her best affections, her mother had substituted noxious passions of many kinds — pride chief of all.

While thus excited and indignant, she saw Edward Villiers. He came into her box; the lady with her was totally unaware of what had been passing in her thoughts, nor reverted to the name mentioned as having any connexion with her. She asked Villiers if it were true that he was going to be married? Lady heard the question; she turned on him her eyes full of significant meaning, and with a smile of scorn answered for him, "O yes, Mr. Villiers is going to be married. His bride is young, beautiful, and portionless; but he has the tastes of a hermit — he means to emigrate to America — his simple and inexpensive habits are admirably suited to the wilderness."

This was said as if in jest, and answered in the same tone. The third in the trio joined in, quite unaware of the secret meaning of the conversation. Several bitter allusions were made by Lady , and the truth of all she said sent her words home to Edward's heart. She drew, as if playfully, a representation of highbred indigence, that made his blood curdle. As if she could read his thoughts, she echoed their worst suggestions, and unrolled the page of futurity, such as he had often depicted it to himself, presenting in sketchy, yet forcible colours, a picture from which his soul recoiled. He would have escaped, but there was a fascination in the topic, and in the very bitterness of spirit which she awakened. He rather encouraged her to proceed, while he abhorred her for so doing, acknowledging the while the justice of all she said. Lady Lodore was angry, and she felt pleasure in the pain she inflicted; her wit became keener, her sarcasm more pointed, yet stopping short with care of any thing that should betray her to their companion, and avoiding, with inimitable tact, any expression that should convey to one not in the secret, that she meant any thing more than raillery or good-humoured quizzing, as it is called.

At length Villiers took his leave. “Were I,” he said, “the unfortunate man you represent me to be, you would have to answer for my life this night. But re-assure yourself — it is all a dream. I have no thoughts of marrying; and the fair girl, whose fate as my wife Lady so kindly compassionates, is safe from every danger of becoming the victim of my selfishness and poverty.”

This was said laughing, yet an expressive intonation of voice conveyed his full meaning to Cornelia. “I have done a good deed if I have prevented this marriage,” she thought; “yet a thankless one. After all, he is a gentleman, and under sister Bessy’s guardianship, poor Ethel might fall into worse hands.”

While Lady thus dismissed her anger and all thought of its cause, Villiers felt more resentment than had ever before entered his kind heart. The truths which the lady had spoken were unpalatable, and the mode in which they were uttered was still more disagreeable. He hated her for having discovered them, and for presenting them so vividly to his sight. At one moment he resolved never to see Ethel more; while he felt that he loved her with tenfold tenderness, and would have given worlds to become the source of all happiness to her — wishing this the more ardently, because her mother had pictured him as being the cause to her of every ill.

Edward’s nature was very impetuous, but perfectly generous. The tempest of anger allayed, he considered all that Lady had said impartially; and while he felt that she had only repeated what he had told himself a thousand times, he resolved not to permit resentment to controul him, and to turn him from the right path. He felt also, that he ought no longer to delay acting on his good resolutions. His intercourse with Miss Fitzhenry had begun to attract attention, and must therefore cease. Once again he would ride over to Richmond — once again see her — say farewell, and then stoically banish every pleasant dream — every heart-enthralling hope — willingly sacrificing his dearest wishes at the shrine of her welfare.

CHAPTER VIII.

She to a window came, that opened west.
Towards which coast her love his way addrest.
There looking forth, she in her heart did find
Many vain fancies working her unrest,
And sent her winged thoughts more swift than wind
To bear unto her love the message of her mind.
— The Faerie Queen.

Ethel, happy in her seclusion, was wholly unaware of her mother's interference and its effects. She had not the remotest suspicion that it would be considered as conducive to her welfare to banish the only friend that she had in the world. In her solitary position, life was a blank without Edward; and while she congratulated herself on her good fortune in the concurrence of circumstances that had brought them together, and, as she believed, established her happiness on the dearest and most secure foundations, she was far from imagining that he was perpetually revolving the necessity of bidding her adieu for ever. If she had been told two years before, that all intercourse between her and her father were to cease, it would scarcely have seemed more unnatural or impossible, than that such a decree should be issued to divide her from one to whom her young heart was entirely given. She relied on him as the support of her life — her guide and protector — she loved him as the giver of good to her — she almost worshipped him for the many virtues, which he either really possessed, or with which her fondness bounteously gifted him.

Meanwhile the unacute observations of Mrs. Fitzhenry began to be awakened. She gave herself great credit for discovering that there was something singular in the constant attendance of Edward, and yet, in fact, she owed her illumination on this point to her man of law. Mr. Humphries, whom she had seen on business the day before, finding how regular a visitor Villiers was, and their only one, first elevated his eyebrows and then relaxed into a smile, as he said, “I suppose I am soon to wish Miss Fitzhenry joy.” This same day Edward had ridden down to them; a violent storm prevented his return to town; he slept at the inn and breakfasted with the ladies in the morning. There was something familiar and home-felt in his appearance at the breakfast-table, that filled Ethel with delight. “Women,” says the accomplished author of Paul Clifford, “think that they must always love a man whom they have seen in his nightcap.” There is deep philosophy in this observation, and it was a portion of that feeling which made Ethel feel so sweetly complacent, when Villiers, unbidden, rang the bell, and gave his orders to the servant, as if he had been at home.

Aunt Bessy started a little; and while the young people were strolling in the shrubbery and renewing the flowers in the vases, she was pondering on the impropriety of their position, and wondering how she could break off an intimacy she had hitherto encouraged. But one way presented itself to her plain imagination, the old resource, a return to Longfield. With light heart and glad looks, Ethel bounded up stairs to dress for dinner, and she was twining her ringlets round her taper fingers before the glass, when her aunt entered with a look of serious import. “My dear Ethel, I have something important to say to you.”

Ethel stopped in her occupation and turned inquiring eyes on her aunt; “My dear,” continued Mrs. Fitzhenry, “we have been a long time away; if you please, we will return to Longfield.”

This time Ethel did not grow pale; she turned again to the mirror, saying with a smile that lighted her whole countenance, “Dear aunt, that is impossible — I would rather not.”

No negative could have been more imposing on the good lady than this; she did not know how to reply, how to urge her wish. “Dearest aunt,” continued her niece, “you are losing time — dinner will be announced, and you are not dressed. We will talk of Longfield to-morrow — we must not keep Mr. Villiers waiting.”

It was often the custom of Aunt Bessy, like the father of Hamlet, to sleep after dinner, she did not betake herself to her orchard, but her arm-chair, for a few minutes’ gentle doze. Ethel and Villiers meanwhile walked out, and, descending to the river side, they were enticed by the beauty of the evening to go upon the water. Ethel was passionately fond of every natural amusement; boating was a pleasure that she enjoyed almost more than any other, and one with which she was seldom indulged; for her spinster aunt had so many fears and objections, and considered every event but sitting still in her drawing-room, or a quiet drive with her old horses, as so fraught with danger and difficulty, that it required an absolute battle ever to obtain her consent for her niece to go on the river — she would have died before she could have entered a boat herself, and, walking at the water's edge, she always insisted that Ethel should keep close to the bank, while, by the repetition of expressions of alarm and entreaties to return, she destroyed every possibility of enjoyment.

The river sped swiftly on, calm and free. There is always life in a stream, of which a lake is frequently deprived, when sleeping beneath a windless sky. A river pursues for ever its course, accomplishing the task its Creator has imposed, and its waters are for ever changing while they seem the same. It was a balmy summer evening; the air seemed to brood over the earth, warming and nourishing it. All nature reposed, and yet not as a lifeless thing, but with the same enjoyment of rest as gladdened the hearts of the two beings, who, with gratitude and love, drank in the influence of this softest hour of day. The equal splash of the oar, or its dripping when suspended, the clear reflection of tree and lawn in the river, the very colour of the stream, stolen as it was from heaven itself, the plash of the wings of the waterfowl who skimmed the waves towards their rushy nests, — every sound and every appearance was beautiful, harmonious, and soothing. Ethel's soul was at peace; grateful to Heaven, and satisfied with every thing around her, a tenderness beamed from her eyes, and was diffused over her attitude, and attuned her voice, which acted as a spell to make Edward forget every thing but herself.

They had both been silent for some time, a sweet silence more eloquent than any words, when Ethel observed, "My aunt wishes to return to Longfield."

Villiers started as if he had trodden upon a serpent, exclaiming, "To Longfield! O yes! that were far best — when shall you go?"

"Why is it best? Why should we go?" asked Ethel with surprise.

"Because," replied Villiers impetuously, "it had been better that you had never left it — that we had never met! It is not thus that I can fulfil my promise to your father to guard and be kind to his child. I am practising on your ignorance, taking advantage of your loneliness, and doing you an injury, for which I should call any other a villain, were he guilty."

It was the very delight that Edward had been a moment before enjoying, the very beauty and calmness of nature, and the serenity and kindness of the sweet face turned towards him, which stirred such bitterness; checking himself, however, he continued after a pause, in a more subsided tone.

"Are there any words by which I can lay bare my heart to you, Ethel? — None! To speak of my true and entire attachment, is almost an insult; and to tell you, that I tear myself from you for your own sake, sounds like impertinence. Yet all this is true; and it is the reverence that I have for your excellence, the idolatry which your singleness of heart and sincere nature inspires, which prompts me to speak the truth, though that be different from the usual language of gallantry, or what is called love.

"Will you hate me or pity me most, when I speak of my determination never to see you more? You cannot guess how absolutely I am a ruined man — how I am one of those despicable hangers-on of the rich and noble, who cover my rags with mere gilding. I am a beggar — I have not a shilling that I can call my own, and it is only by shifts and meannesses that I can go on from day to day, while each one menaces me with a prison or flight to a foreign country.

"I shall go — and you will regret me, Ethel, or you will despise me. It were best of all that you forgot me. I am not worthy of you — no man could be; that I have known you and loved you — and for your sake, banished myself from you, will be the solitary ray of comfort that will shed some faint glow over my chilled and darkened existence. Will you say even now one word of comfort to me?"

Ethel looked up; the pure affectionateness of her heart prevented her from feeling for herself, she thought only of her lover. "Would that I could comfort you," she said. "You will do what you think right, and that will be your best consolation. Do not speak of hatred, or contempt, or indifference. I shall not change though we part for ever: how is it possible that I should ever cease to feel regard for one who has ever been kind, considerate, and generous to me? Go, if you think it right — I am a foolish girl, and know nothing of the world; and I will not doubt that you decide for the best."

Villiers took her hand and held it in his; his heart was penetrated by her disinterested self-forgetfulness and confidence. He felt that he was loved, and that he was about to part from her for ever. The pain and pleasure of these thoughts mingled strangely — he had no words to express them, he felt that it would be easier to die than to give her up.

Aunt Bessy, on the river's bank imploring their return, recalled them from the fairy region to which their spirits had wandered. For one moment they had been united in sentiment; one kindred emotion of perfect affection had, as it were, married their souls one to the other; at the alien sound of poor Bessy's voice the spell fled away on airy wings, leaving them disenchanted. The rudder was turned, the boat reached the shore, and unable to endure frivolous talk about any subject except the one so near his heart, Villiers departed and rode back to town, miserable yet most happy — despairing yet full of joy; to such a riddle, love, which finds its completion in sympathy, and knows no desire beyond, is the only solution.

The feelings of Ethel were even more unalloyed. She had no doubts about the future, the present embraced the world. She did not attempt to unravel the dreamy confusion of her thoughts, or to clear up the golden mist that hung before, curtaining most gloriously the reality beyond. Her step was buoyant, her eyes sparkling and joyous. Love and gladness sat lightly on her bosom, and gratitude to Heaven for bestowing so deep a sense of happiness was the only sentiment that mingled with these. Villiers, on leaving them, had promised to return the next day; and on the morrow she rose, animated with such a spirit as may be kindled within the bosom of an Enchantress, when she pronounces the spell which is to controul the movements of the planetary orbs. She was more than queen of the world, for she was empress of Edward's heart, and ruling there, she reigned over the course of destiny, and bent to her will the conflicting elements of life.

He did not come. It was strange. Now hope, now fear, were interchanged one for the other, till night and certain disappointment arrived. Yet it was not much — the morrow's sun would light him on his way to her. To cheat the lagging hours of the morrow, she occupied herself with her painting and music, tasking herself to give so many hours to her employments, thus to add speed to the dilatory walk of time. The long day was passed in fruitless expectation — another and another succeeded. Was he ill? What strange mutation in the course of nature had occurred to occasion so inexplicable an absence?

A week went by, and even a second was nearly spent. She had not anticipated this estrangement. Day by day she went over in her mind their last conversation, and Edward's expressions gathered decision and a gloomy reality as she pondered on them. The idea of an heroic sacrifice on his part, and submission to his will on hers, at first soothed her — but never to see him more, was an alternative that tasked her fortitude too high; and while her heart felt all the tumults of despair, she found herself asking what his love could be, that could submit to lose her? Love in a cottage is the dream of many a high-born girl, who is not allowed to dance with a younger brother at Almack's; but asecluded, an obscure, an almost cottage life, was all that Ethel had ever known, and all that she coveted. Villiers rejected this — not for her sake, that could not be, but for the sake of a world, which he called frivolous and vain, and yet to whose tyranny he bowed. To disentwine the tangled skein of thought which was thus presented, was her task by day and night. She awoke in the morning, and her first thought was, "Will he come?" She retired at night, and sleep visited her eyes, while she was asking herself, "Why has he not been?" During the day, these questions, in every variety, forced her attention. To escape from her aunt, to seek solitude, to listen to each sound that might be his horse, and to feel her heart sicken at the still renewed disappointment, became, in spite of herself, all her occupation: she might bend over her drawing, or escape from her aunt's conversation to the piano; but these were no longer employments, but rather means adopted to deliver herself up more entirely to her reveries.

The third, the fourth week came, and the silence of death was between Ethel and her friend. O but for one word, one look to break the spell! Was she indeed never to see him more? Was all, all over? — was the harmony their two hearts made, jarred into discord? — was she again the orphan, alone in the world? — and was the fearless reliance she had placed upon fate and Edward's fidelity, mere folly or insanity? — and was desecration and forgetfulness to come over and to destroy the worship she had so fondly cherished? Nothing had she to turn to — nothing to console her. Her life became one thought, it twined round her soul like a serpent, and compressed and crushed every other emotion with its folds. "I could bear all," she thought, "were I permitted to see him only once again."

She and Mrs. Fitzhenry were invited by Mrs. Humphries to dine with her. They were asked to the awful ceremony of spending a long day, which, in the innocence of her heart, Mrs. Fitzhenry fancied the most delightful thing in the world. She thought that kindness and friendship demanded of her that she should be in Montague-square by ten in the morning. Notwithstanding every exertion, she could not get there till two, and then, when luncheon was over, she wondered why the gap of time till seven appeared so formidable. This was to be got over by a drive in Hyde-park. Ethel had shown peculiar pleasure in the idea of visiting London; she had looked bright and happy during their journey to town, but anxiety and agitation clouded her face, at the thought of the park, of the crisis about to arrive, at the doubt and hope she entertained of finding Villiers there.

The park became crowded, but he was not in the drive; at length he entered in the midst of a bevy of fair cousins, whom Ethel did not know as such. He entered on horseback, flanked on either side by pretty equestrians, looking as gay and light-hearted, as she would have done, had she been one, the chosen one among his companions. Twice he passed. The first time his head was averted — he saw nothing, she even did not see his face: the next time, his eye caught the aspect of the well-known chariot — he glanced eagerly at those it contained, kissed his hand, and went on. Ethel's heart died within her. It was all over. She was the neglected, the forgotten; but while she turned her face to the other window of the carriage, so to hide its saddened expression from her companion, a voice, the dearest, sweetest voice she had ever heard, the soft harmonious voice, whose accents were more melodious than music, asked, “Are you in town? have you left Richmond?” In spite of herself, a smile mantled over her countenance, dimpling it into gladness, and she turned to see the beloved speaker who had not deserted her — who was there; she turned, but there was no answering glance of pleasure in the face of Villiers — he looked grave, and bowed, as if in this act of courtesy he fulfilled all of friendly interchange that was expected of him, and rode off. He was gone — and seen no more.

CHAPTER IX.

Sure, when the separation has been tried.
That we, who part in love, shall meet again.
— Wordsworth.

This little event roused Ethel to the necessity of struggling with the sentiment to which hitherto she had permitted unquestioned power. There had been a kind of pleasure mingled with her pain, while she believed that she suffered for her lover’s sake, and in obedience to his will. To love in solitude and absence, was, she well knew, the lot of many of her sex, and all that is imaginative and tender lends poetry to the emotion. But to love without return, her father had taught her was shame and folly — a dangerous and undignified sentiment that leads many women into acts of humiliation and misery. He spoke the more warmly on this subject, because he desired to guard his daughter by every possible means from a fate too common. He knew the sensibility and constancy of her nature. He dreaded to think that these should be played upon, and that her angelic sweetness should be sacrificed at the altar of hopeless passion. That all the powers he might gift her with, all the fortitude and all the pride that he strove to instil, might be insufficient to prevent this one grand evil, he too well knew; but all that could should be done, and his own high-souled Ethel should rise uninjured from the toils of the snarer, the heartless game of the unfaithful lover.

She steeled her heart against every softer thought, she tasked herself each day to devote her entire attention to some absorbing employment; to languages and the composition of music, as occupations that would not permit her thoughts to stray. She felt a pain deep-seated in her inmost heart; but she refused to acknowledge it. When a thought, too sweet and bitter, took perforce possession of the chambers of her brain, she drove it out with stern and unshaken resolve. She pondered on the best means to subdue every rebel idea. She rose with the sun, and passed much time in the open air, that when night came, bodily fatigue might overpower mental regrets. She conversed with her aunt again about her dear lost father; that, by renewing images, so long the only ones dear to her, every subsequent idea might be driven from the place it had usurped. Always she was rewarded by the sense of doing right, often by really mitigating the anguish which rose and went to rest with her, and awakening her in the morning, stung her to renew her endeavours, while it whispered too audibly, "I am here." She grew pale and thin, and her eyes again resumed that lustre which spoke a quick and agitated life within. Her endeavours, by being unremitting, gave too much intensity to every feeling, and made her live each moment of her existence a sensitive, conscious life, wearing out her frame, and threatening, while it accelerated the pulses, to exhaust betimes the animal functions.

She felt this; and she roused herself to contend afresh with her own heart. As a last resource she determined to quit Richmond. Her struggles, and the energy called into action by her fortitude, gave a tone of superiority to her mind, which her aunt felt and submitted to. Now when a change of residence was determined upon, she at once negatived the idea of returning to Longfield — yet whither else betake themselves? Ethel no longer concealed from herself that she and the worthy spinster were solitary wanderers on earth, cut off from human intercourse. A bitter sense of desolation had crept over her from the moment that she knew herself to be deserted by Villiers. All that was bright in her position darkened into shadow. She shrunk into herself when she reflected, that should the ground at her feet open and swallow her, not one among her fellow-creatures would be sensible that the whole universe of thought and feeling, which emanated from her breathing spirit, as water from a living spring, was shrunk up and strangled in a narrow, voiceless grave. A short time before she had regarded death without terror, for her father had been its prey, and his image was often shadowed forth in her fancy, beckoning her to join him. Now it had become more difficult to die. Nature and love were wedded in her mind, and it was a bitter pang for one so young to bid adieu to both for ever. Turning her thoughts from Villiers, she would have been glad to discover any link that might enchain her to the mass. She reverted to her mother. Her inexperience, her youth, and the timidity of her disposition, prevented her from making any endeavour to break through the wall of unnatural separation raised between them. She could only lament. One sign, one word from Lady , would have been balm to her poor heart, and she would have met it with fervent gratitude. But she feared to offend. She had no hope that any advance would have been met by other than a disdainful repulse; and she shrunk from intruding herself on her unwilling parent. She often wept to think that there was none near to support and comfort her, and yet that at the distance of but a few miles her mother lived — whose very name was the source of the dearest, sweetest, and most cruel emotions. She thought, therefore, of her surviving parent only to despair, and to shrink with terror from the mere possibility of an accidental meeting.

She earnestly desired to leave England, which had treated her with but a step-mother's welcome, and to travel away, she knew not whither. Yet most she wished to go to Italy. Her father had often talked of taking her to that country, and it was painted in her eyes with the hues of paradise. She spoke of her desire to her aunt, who thought her mad, and believed that it was as easy to adventure to the moon, as for two solitary women to brave alps and earthquakes, banditti and volcanoes, a savage people and an unknown land. Still, even while she trembled at the mere notion, she felt that Ethel might lead her thither if she pleased. It is one of the most beneficent dispensations of the Creator, that there is nothing so attractive and attaching as affection. The smile of an infant may command absolutely, because its source is in dependent love, and the human heart for ever yearns for such demonstration from another. What would this strange world be without that "touch of nature?" It is to the immaterial universe, what light is to the visible creation, scent to the flower, hue to the rainbow; hope, joy, succour, and self-forgetfulness, where otherwise all would be swallowed up in vacant and obscure egotism.

No one could approach Ethel without feeling that she possessed an irresistible charm. The overflowing and trusting affectionateness of her nature was a loadstone to draw all hearts. Each one felt, even without knowing wherefore, that it was happiness to obey, to gratify her. Thus while a journey to Italy filled Mrs. Elizabeth with alarm, a consent hovered on her lips, because she felt that any risk was preferable to disappointing a wish of her gentle niece.

And yet even then Ethel paused. She began to repent her desire of leaving the country inhabited by her dearest friend. She felt that she should have an uncongenial companion in her aunt — the child of the wilderness and the good lady of Longfield, were like a living and dead body in conjunction — the one inquiring, eager, enthusiastic even in her contemplativeness, sensitively awake to every passing object; while the other dozed her hours away, and fancied that pitfalls and wild beasts menaced her, if she dared step one inch from the beaten way.

At this moment, while embarrassed by the very yielding to her desires, and experiencing a lingering sad regret for all that she was about to leave behind, Ethel received a letter from Villiers. Her heart beat, and her fingers trembled, when first she saw, as now she held a paper, which might be every thing, yet might be nothing to her; she opened it at last, and forced herself to consider and understand its contents. It was as follows: —

“Dear Miss Fitzhenry, “Will your aunt receive me with her wonted kindness when I call to-morrow? I fear to have offended by an appearance of neglect, while my heart has never been absent from Richmond. Plead my cause, I entreat you. I leave it in your hands.

“Ever and ever yours.
“Edward Villiers.”

Grosvenor Square, Saturday.

“Dearest Ethel, have you guessed at my sufferings? Shall you hail with half the joy that I do, a change which enables you to revoke the decree of absence so galling at least to one of us? If indeed you have not forgotten me, I shall be rewarded for the wretchedness of these last weeks.”

Ethel kissed the letter and placed it near her heart. A calm joy diffused itself over her mind; and that she could indeed trust and believe in him she loved, was the source of a grateful delight, more medicinal than all the balmy winds of Italy and its promised pleasures.

When Villiers had last quitted Richmond, he had resolved not to expose himself again to the influence of Ethel. It was necessary that they should be divided — how far better that they should never meet again! He was not worthy of her. Another, more fortunate, would replace him, if he sacrificed his own selfish feelings, and determinately absented himself from her. As if to confirm his view of their mutual interest, his elder cousin, Mr. Saville, had just offered his hand to the daughter of a wealthy Earl, and had been accepted. Villiers took refuge from his anxious thoughts among his pretty cousins, sisters of the bridegroom, and with them the discussion of estates, settlements, princely mansions, and equipages, was the order of the day. Edward sickened to reflect how opposite would be the prospect, if his marriage with Ethel were in contemplation. It was not that a noble establishment would be exchanged for a modest, humble dwelling — he loved with sufficient truth to feel that happiness with Ethel transcended the wealth of the world. It was the absolute penury, the debt, the care, that haunted him and made such miserable contrast with the tens and hundreds of thousands that were the subject of discussion on the present occasion. His resolution not to entangle Ethel in this wilderness of ills, gained strength by every chance word that fell from the lips of those around him; and the image, before so vivid, of her home at Richmond, which he might at each hour enter, of her dear face, which at any minute might again bless his sight, faded into a far-off vision of paradise, from which he was banished for ever.

For a time he persevered in his purpose, if not with ease, yet with less of struggle than he himself anticipated. That he could at any hour break the self-enacted law, and behold Ethel, enabled him day after day to continue to obey it, and to submit to the decree of banishment he had passed upon himself. He loved his pretty cousins, and their kindness and friendship soothed him; he spent his days with them, and the familiar, sisterly intercourse, hallowed by long association, and made tender by the grace and sweetness of these good girls, compensated somewhat for the absence of deeper interest. They talked of Horatio also, and that was a more touching string than all. The almost worship, joined to pity and fear for him, with which Edward regarded his cousin, made him cling fondly to those so closely related to him, and who sympathized with, and shared, his enthusiastic affection.

This state of half indifference did not last long. His meeting with Ethel in Hyde Park operated an entire change. He had seen her face but a moment — her dear face, animated with pleasure at beholding him, and adorned with more than her usual loveliness. He hurried away, but the image still pursued him. All at once the world around grew dark and blank; at every instant his heart asked for Ethel. He thirsted for the sweet delight of gazing on her soft lustrous eyes, touching her hand, listening to her voice, whose tones were so familiar and beloved. He avoided his cousins to hide his regrets; he sought solitude, to commune with memory; and the intense desire kindled within him to return to her, was all but irresistible. He had received a letter from Horace Saville entreating him to join him at Naples; he had contemplated complying, as a means of obtaining forgetfulness. Should he not, on the contrary, make this visit with Ethel for his companion? It was a picture of happiness most enticing; and then he recollected with a pang, that it was impossible for him to quit England; that it was only by being on the spot, that he obtained the supplies necessary for his existence. With bitterness of spirit he recognized once again his state of beggary, and the hopelessness that attended on all his wishes.

All at once he was surprised by a message from his father, through Lord Maristow. He was told of Colonel Villiers's intended marriage with the only daughter of a wealthy commoner, which yet could not be arranged without the concurrence of Edward, or rather without sacrifices on his part for the making of settlements. The entire payment of his debts, and the promise of fifteen hundred a year for the future, were the bribes offered to induce him to consent. Edward at once notified his compliance. He saw the hour of freedom at hand, and the present was too full of interest, too pregnant with misery or happiness, to allow the injury done to his future prospects to weigh with him for a moment. Thus he might purchase his union with Ethel — claim her for his own. With the thought, a whole tide of tenderness and joy poured quick and warm into his heart, and it seemed as if he had never loved so devotedly as now. How false an illusion had blinded him! he fancied that he had banished hope, while indeed his soul was wedded to her image, and the very struggle to free himself, had served to make the thought of her more peremptory and indelible.

With these thoughts, he again presented himself at Richmond. He asked Mrs. Fitzhenry's consent to address her niece, and became the accepted lover of Ethel. The meeting of their two young hearts in the security of an avowed attachment, after so many hours wasted in despondency and painful struggles, did not visit the fair girl with emotions of burning transport: she felt it rather like a return to a natural state of things, after unnatural deprivation. As if, a young nestling, she had been driven from her mother's side, and was now restored to the dear fosterage of her care. She delivered herself up to a calm reliance upon the future, and saw in the interweaving of duty and affection, the fulfilment of her destiny, and the confirmation of her earthly happiness. They were to be joined never to part more! While each breathed the breath of life, no power could sever them; health or sickness, prosperity or adversity — these became mere words; her health and her riches were garnered in his heart, and while she bestowed the treasures of her affection upon him, could he be poor? It was not therefore to be her odious part to crush the first and single attachment of her soul — to tear at once the "painted veil of life," delivering herself up to cheerless realities — to know that, to do right, she must banish from her recollection those inward-spoken vows which she should deem herself of a base inconstant disposition ever to forget. It was not reserved for her to pass joyless years of solitude, reconciling herself to the necessity of divorcing her dearest thoughts from their wedded image. The serene and fair-showing home she coveted was open before her — she might pass within its threshold, and listen to the closing of the doors behind, as they shut out the world from her, with pure and unalloyed delight.

Ethel was very young, yet in youth such feelings are warmer in our hearts than in after years. We do not know then that we can ever change; or that, snake-like, casting the skin of an old, care-worn habit, a new one will come fresh and bright in seeming, as the one before had been, at the hour of its birth. We fancy then, that if our present and first hope is disappointed, our lives are a mere blank, not worth a "pin's fee;" the singleness of our hearts has not been split into the million hair-like differences, which, woven by time into one texture, clothes us in prudence as with a garment. We are as if exposed naked to the action of passions and events, and receive their influence with keen and fearful sensitiveness. Ethel scarcely heard, and did not listen to nor understand, the change of circumstances that brought Villiers back to her — she only knew, that he was confirmed her own. Satisfied with this delightful conclusion to her sufferings, she placed her destiny in his hands, without fear or question.

Mrs. Elizabeth thought her niece very young to marry; but Villiers, who had, while hesitating, done his best to hide his sweet Ethel away from every inquisitive eye, now that she was to be his own, hastened to introduce Lord Maristow (Lady Maristow had died two years before) to her, and to bring her among his cousins, whom her regarded as sisters. The change was complete and overwhelming to the fair recluses. Where before they lived in perpetual tête-à-tête, or separated but to be alone, they were now plunged into what appeared to them a crowd. Sophia, Harriet, and Lucy Saville, were high-born, high-bred, and elegant girls, accustomed to what they called the quiet of domestic life, amidst a thousand relations and ten thousand acquaintances. No female relative had stepped into their mother's place, and they were peculiarly independent and high-spirited; they had always lived in what they called the world, and knew nothing but what that world contained. Their manners were easy, their tempers equable and affectionate. If their dispositions were not all exactly alike, they had a family resemblance that drew them habitually near each other. They received Ethel among their number with cordiality, bestowing on her every attention which politeness and kindness dictated. Yet Ethel felt somewhat as a wild antelope among tame ones. Their language, the topics of their discourse, their very occupations, were all new to her. She lent herself to their customs with smiles and sweetness, but her eye brightened when Edward came, and she often unconsciously retreated to his side as a shelter and a refuge. Edward's avocations had been as worldly perhaps as those of his pretty cousins; but a man is more thrown upon the reality of life, while girls live altogether in a factitious state. He had travelled much, and seen all sorts of people. Besides, between him and Ethel, there was that mute language which will make those of opposite sexes intelligible to one another, even when literally not understanding each other's dialect. Villiers found no deficiency of intelligence or sympathy in Ethel, while the fashionable girls to whom he had introduced her felt a little at a loss how to entertain the stranger.

Lord Maristow and his family had been detained in town till after Mr. Saville's marriage, and were now very eager to leave it. They remained out of compliment to Edward, and looked forward impatiently to his wedding as the event that would set them free. London was empty, the shooting season had begun; yet still he was delayed by his father. He wished to sign the necessary papers, and free himself from all business, that he and his bride might immediately join Horatio at Naples. Yet still Colonel Villiers's marriage was delayed; till at last he intimated to his son, that it was postponed for the present, and begged that he would not remain in England on his account.

Edward was somewhat staggered by this intelligence. Yet as the letter that communicated it contained a considerable remittance, he quieted himself. To give up Ethel now was a thought that did not for a moment enter his mind; it was but the reflection of the difficulties that would surround them, if his prospects failed, that for a few seconds clouded his brow with care. But it was his nature usually to hope the best, and to trust to fortune. He had never been so prudent as with regard to his marriage with Ethel; but that was for her sake. This consideration could not again enter; for, like her, he would, under the near hope of making her his, have preferred the wilds of the Illinois, with her for his wife, than the position of the richest English nobleman, deprived of such a companion. His heart, delivered up to love, was complete in its devotion and tenderness. He was already wedded to her in soul, and would sooner have severed his right arm from his body, than voluntarily have divided himself from this dearer part of himself. This "other half," towards whom he felt as if literally he had, to give her being, "Lent Out of his side to her, nearest his heart; Substantial life, to have her by his side, Henceforth an individual solace dear."

With these feelings, an early day was urged and named; and, drawing near, Ethel was soon to become a bride. On first making his offer, Villiers had written to Lady ; and Mrs. Fitzhenry, much against her will, by the advice of her solicitor, did the same. Lady Lodore was in Scotland. No answer came. The promised day approached; but still she preserved this silence: it became necessary to proceed without her consent. Banns were published; and Ethel became the wife of Villiers on the 25th of October. Lord Maristow hastened down to his Castle to kill pheasants: while, on her part, Mrs. Fitzhenry took her solitary way to Longfield, half consoled for separating from Ethel, by this return to the habits of more than sixty years. In vain had London or Richmond wooed her stay; in vain was she pressed to pay a visit to Maristow Castle: to return to her home was a more enticing prospect. Her good old heart danced within her when she first perceived the village steeple; the chimneys of her own house made tears spring into her eyes; and when, indeed, she found herself by the familiar hearth, in the accustomed arm-chair, and her attentive housekeeper came to ask if she would not take any thing after her journey, it seemed to her as if all the delights of life were summed up in this welcome return to monotony and silence.

CHAPTER X.

Let me
Awake your love to my uncomforted brother.
— Old Play.

Meanwhile Villiers and his bride proceeded on their way to Naples. It mattered little to Ethel whither they were going, or to whom. Edward was all in all to her; and the vehicle that bore them along in their journey was a complete and perfect world, containing all that her heart desired. They avoided large towns, and every place where there was any chance of meeting an acquaintance. They passed up the Rhine, and Ethel often imaged forth, in her fancy, a dear home in a secluded nook; and longed to remain there, cut off from the world, for ever. She had no thought but for her husband, and gratitude to Heaven for the happiness showered on her. Her soul might have been laid bare, each faculty examined, each idea sifted, and one spirit, one sentiment, one love, would have been found pervading and uniting them all. The heart of a man is seldom as single and devoted as that of a woman. In the present instance, it was natural that Edward should not be so absolutely given up to one thought as was his bride. Ethel's affections had never been called forth except by her father, and by him who was now her husband. When it has been said, that she thought of heaven to hallow and bless her happiness, it must be understood that the dead made a part of that heaven, to which she turned her eyes with such sweet thankfulness. She was constant to the first affection of her heart. She might be said to live perpetually in thought beside her father's grave. Before she had wept and sorrowed near it; now she placed the home of her happy married life close to the sacred earth, and fancied that its mute inhabitant was the guardian angel to watch over and preserve her.

Villiers had lived among many friends, and was warmly attached to several. His cousin Horatio was dearer to him than any thing had ever been, till he knew Ethel. Even now he revered him more, and felt a kind of duteous attachment drawing him towards him. He wanted Horatio to see and approve of Ethel: — not that he doubted what his opinion of her would be; but the delight which his own adoration of her excellence imparted to him would be doubled, when he saw it shared and confirmed by his friend. Besides this, he was anxious to see Horace on his own account. He wished to know whether he was happy in his marriage; whether Clorinda were worthy of him; and if Lady were entirely forgotten. As they advanced on their journey, his desire to see his cousin became more and more present to his mind; and he talked of him to Ethel, and imparted to her a portion of his fervent and affectionate feelings.

Entering Switzerland, they came into a world of snow. Here and there, on the southern side of a mountain, a lawny upland might disclose itself in summer verdure; and the brawling torrents, increased by the rains, were not yet made silent by frost. Edward had visited these scenes before; and he could act the guide to his enraptured Ethel, who remembered her father's glowing descriptions; and while she gazed with breathless admiration, saw his step among the hills, and thought that his eye had rested on the wonders she now beheld. Soon the mountains, the sky-seeking "palaces of nature," were passed, and they entered fair, joyous Italy. At each step they left winter far behind. Ethel would willingly have lingered in Florence and Rome; but once south of the Appenines, Edward was eager to reach Naples; and the letters he got from Saville spurred him on to yet greater speed.

Before leaving England, Lucy Saville had said to Ethel,—"You are now taking our other comfort from us; and what we are to do without either Horatio or Edward, I am unable to conjecture. We shall be like a house without its props. Divided, they are not either of them half what they were joined. Horace is so prudent, so wise, so considerate, so sympathizing; Edward so active and so kind-hearted. In any difficulty, we always asked Horace what we ought to do; and Edward did the thing which he pointed out.

"Horatio's marriage was a sad blow to us all. You will bring Edward back, and we shall be the happier for your being with him; but shall we ever see our brother again? — or shall we only see him to lament the change? Not that he can ever really alter; his heart, his understanding, his goodness, are as firm as rock; but there is that about him which makes him too much the slave of those he is in immediate contact with. He abhors strife; the slightest disunion is mortal to him. He is not of this world. Pure-minded as a woman, honourable as a knight of old, he is more like a being we read of, and his match is not to be found upon earth. Horatio never loved but once, and his attachment was unfortunate. He loved Lady—" Here recollection dyed Miss Saville's cheeks with crimson: she had forgotten that Lady was the mother of Ethel. After a moment's hesitation she continued:—"I have no right to betray the secrets of others. Horace was a discarded lover; and he was forced to despise the lady whom he had imagined possessed of every excellence. For the first time he was absorbed in what may be termed a selfish sentiment. He could not bear to see any of us: he fled even from Edward, and wandering away, we heard at last that he was at Naples, whither he had gone quite unconscious of the spot of earth to which he was bending his steps. The first letter we got from him was dated from that place. His letter was to me; for I am his favourite sister; and God knows my devoted affection, my worship of him, deserves this preference. You shall read it; it is the most perfect specimen of enthusiastic and heart-moving eloquence ever penned. He had been as in a trance, and awoke again to life as he looked down from Pausilippo on the Bay of Naples. The attachment to one earthly object, which preyed on his being, was suddenly merged in one universal love and adoration. He saw that the "creation was good;" he purged his heart at once of the black spot which had blotted and marred its beauty; and opened his whole soul to pure, elevated, heavenly love. I tamely quote his burning and transparent expressions, through which you may discern, as in a glass, the glorious excellence of his soul.

"But, alas! this state of holy excitement could not endure; something human will still creep in to mingle with and sully our noblest aspirations. Horatio was taken by an acquaintance to see a beautiful girl at a convent; in a fatal moment an English lady said to him, 'Come, and I will show you what perfect beauty is:' and those words decided my poor brother's destiny. Of course I only know our new sister through his letters. He told us that Clorinda was shut up in this convent through the heartless vanity of her mother, who dreaded her as a rival, to wait there till her parents should find some suitable match, which she must instantly accept, or be doomed to seclusion for ever. In his younger days Horace had said, 'I am in love with an idea, and therefore women have no power over me.' But the time came when his heart was to be the dupe of his imagination — so was it with his first love — so now, I fear, did he deceive himself with regard to Clorinda. He declared indeed that his love for her was not an absorbing passion like his first, but a mingling of pity, admiration, and that tenderness which his warm heart was ever ready to bestow. He described her as full of genius and sensibility, a creature of fire and power, but dimmed by sorrow, and struggling with her chains. He visited her again; he tried to comfort, he offered to serve her. It was the first time that a manly, generous spirit had ever presented itself to the desponding girl. The high-souled Englishman appeared as a god beside her sordid countrymen; indeed, Horatio would have seemed such compared with any of his sex; his fascination is irresistible — Clorinda felt it; she loved him with Italian fervour, and the first word of kindness from him elicited a whole torrent of gratitude and passion. Horace had no wish to marry; his old wound was by no means healed, but rather opened, and bled afresh, when he was called upon to answer the enthusiastic ardour of the Italian girl. He felt at once the difference of his feeling for her, and the engrossing sentiment of which he had been nearly the victim. But he could rescue her from an unworthy fate, and make her happy. He acted with his usual determination and precipitancy, and within a month she became his wife. Here ends my story; his letters were more concise after his marriage. At first I attributed this to his having a new and dearer friend, but latterly when he has written he has spoken with such yearning fondness for home, that I fear — And then when I offered to visit him, he negatived my proposition. How unlike Horatio! it can only mean that his wife was averse to my coming. I have questioned slightly any travellers from Italy. Mrs. Saville seldom appears in English society except at balls, and then she is always surrounded by Italians. She is decidedly correct in her conduct, but more I cannot tell. Her letters to us are beautifully written, and of her talents, even her genius, I do not entertain a doubt. Perhaps I am prejudiced, but I fear a Neapolitan, or rather, I should say, I fear a convent education; and that taste which leads her to associate with her own demonstrative, unrefined countrymen, instead of trying to link herself to her husband’s friends. I may be wrong — I shall be glad to be found so. Will you tell me whether I am? I rather ask you than Edward, because your feminine eyes will discern the truth of these things quicker than he. Happy girl! you are going to see Horatio — to find a new, gifted, fond friend; one as superior to his fellow-creatures, as perfection is superior to frailty."

This account, remembered with more interest now that she approached the subject of it, excited Ethel's curiosity, and she began, as they went on their way from Rome to Naples, in a great degree to participate in Edward's eagerness to see his cousin.

CHAPTER XI.

Sad and troubled?
How brave her anger shows! How it sets off
Her natural beauty! Under what happy star
Was Virolet born, to be beloved and sought
By two incomparable women?
— Fletcher.

It was the month of December when the travellers arrived at this "piece of heaven dropt upon earth," as the natives themselves name it. The moon hung a glowing orb in the heavens, and lighted up the sea to beauty. A blood-red flash shot up now and then from Vesuvius; a summer softness was in the atmosphere, while a thousand tokens presented themselves of a climate more friendly, more joyous, and more redundant than that of the northern Isle from which they came. It was very late at night when they reached their hotel, and they were heartily fatigued, so that it was not till the next morning, that immediately after breakfast, Villiers left Ethel, and went out to seek the abode of his cousin.

He had been gone some little time, when a waiter of the hotel, throwing open Ethel's drawing-room door, announced "Signor Orazio." Quite new to Italy, Ethel was ignorant of the custom in that country, of designating people by their christian names; and that Horatio Saville, being a resident in Naples, and married to a Neapolitan, was known everywhere by the appellation which the servant now used. Ethel was not in the least aware that it was Lucy's brother who presented himself to her. She saw a gentleman, tall, very slight in person, with a face denoting habitual thoughtfulness, and stamped by an individuality which she could not tell whether to think plain, and yet it was certainly open and kind. An appearance of extreme shyness, almost amounting to awkwardness, was diffused over him, and his words came hesitatingly; he spoke English, and was an Englishman — so much Ethel discovered by his first words, which were, “Villiers is not at home?” and then he began to ask her about her journey, and how she liked the view of the bay of Naples, which she beheld from her windows. They were in this kind of trivial conversation when Edward came bounding up-stairs, and with exclamations of delight greeted his cousin. Ethel, infinitely surprised, examined her guest with more care. In a few minutes she began to wonder how she came to think him plain. His deep-set, darkgrey eyes struck her as expressive, if not handsome. His features were delicately moulded, and his fine forehead betokened depth of intellect; but the charm of his face was a kind of fitful, beamy, inconstant smile, which diffused incomparable sweetness over his physiognomy. His usual look was cold and abstracted — his eye speculated with an inward thoughtfulness — a chilling seriousness sat on his features, but this glancing and varying half-smile came to dispel gloom, and to invite and please those with whom he conversed. His voice was modulated by feeling, his language was fluent, graceful in its turns of expression, and original in the thoughts which it expressed. His manners were marked by high breeding, yet they were peculiar. They were formed by his individual disposition, and under the dominion of sensibility. Hence they were often abrupt and reserved. He forgot the world around him, and gave token, by absence of mind, of the absorbing nature of his contemplations. But at a touch this vanished, and a sweet earnestness, and a beaming kindliness of spirit, at once displaced his abstraction, rendering him attentive, cordial, and gay.

Never had Horatio Saville appeared to so little advantage as during his short tête-à-tête with his new relative. At all times, when quiescent, he had a retiring manner, and an appearance, whose want of pretension did not at first allure, and yet which afterwards formed his greatest attraction. He was always unembarrassed, and Ethel could not guess that towards her alone he felt as timid and shy as a girl. It was with considerable effect that Horatio had commanded himself to appear before the daughter of Lady . There was something incongruous and inconceivable in the idea of the child of Cornelia a woman, married to his cousin. He feared to see in her an image of the being who had subdued his heart of hearts, and laid prostrate his whole soul; he trembled to catch the sound of her voice, lest it might echo tones which could disturb to their depths his inmost thoughts. Ethel was so unlike her mother, that by degrees he became reassured; her eyes, her hair, her stature, and tall slender shape, were the reverse of Lady Lodore; so that in a little while he ventured to raise his eyes to her face, and to listen to her, without being preoccupied by a painful sensation, which, in its violence, resembled terror. It is true that by degrees this dissimilarity to her mother became less; she had gestures, smiles, and tones, that were all Lady Lodore, and which, when discerned, struck his heart with a pang, stealing away his voice, and causing him to stand suspended in the act he was about, like one acted upon by magic.

While this mute and curious examination was going on in the minds of Ethel and her visitant, the conversation had not tarried. Edward had never been so far south, and the wonders of Naples were as new to him as to Ethel. Saville was eager to show them, and proposed going that very day to Pompeii. For, as he said, all their winter was not like the present day, so that it was best to seize the genial weather while it lasted. Was Mrs. Villiers too much fatigued? On the contrary, Ethel was quite on the alert; but first she asked whether Mrs. Saville would not accompany them.

“Clorinda,” said Horatio, “promises herself much pleasure from your acquaintance, and intends calling on you to-day at twenty-four o’clock, that is, at the Ave Maria: how stupid I am,” he continued, laughing, “I quite forget that you are not Italianized, as I am, and do not know the way in which the people here count their time. Clorinda will call late in the afternoon, the usual visiting hour at Naples, but she would find no pleasure in visiting a ruined city and fallen fragments. One house in the Chiaja is worth fifty Pompeiis in the eyes of a Neapolitan, and Clorinda is one, heart and soul. I hope you will be pleased with her, for she is an admirable specimen of her countrywomen, and they are wonderful and often sublime creatures in their way; but do not mistake her for an English woman, or you will be disappointed — she has not one atom of body, one particle of mind, that bears the least affinity to England. And now, is your carriage ordered? — there it is at the door; so, as I should say to one of my own dear sistes, put on your bonnet, Ethel, quickly, and do not keep us waiting; for though at Naples, days are short in December, and we have none of their light to lose.”

When, after this explanation, Ethel first saw Clorinda, she was inclined to think that Saville had scarcely done his wife justice. Certainly she was entirely Italian, but she was very beautiful; her complexion was delicate, though dark and without much colour. Her hair silken and glossy as the raven's wing; her large bright black eyes resplendent; the perfect arch of her brows, and the marmoreal and harmonious grace of her forehead, such as is never seen in northern lands, except in sculpture imitated from the Greeks. The lower part of her face was not so good; her smile was deficient in sweetness, her voice wanted melody, and sounded loud to an English ear. Her gestures were expressive, but quick and wanting in grace. She was more agreeable when silent and could be regarded as a picture, than when called into action. She was complimentary in her conversation, and her manners were winning by their frankness and ease. She gesticulated too much, and her features were too much in motion, — too pantomimely expressive, so to speak, not to impress disagreeably one accustomed to the composure of the English. Still she was a beautiful creature; young, artless, desirous to please, and endowed, moreover, with the vivacious genius, the imaginative talent of her country. She spoke as if she were passionately attached to her husband; but when Ethel mentioned his English home and his relations, a cloud came over the lovely Neapolitan's countenance, and a tremor shook her frame. “Do not think hardly of me,” she said, “I do not hate England, but I fear it. I am sure I should be disliked there — I should be censured, perhaps taunted, for a thousand habits and feelings as natural to me as the air I breathe. I am proud, and I should retort impertinence, and, displeasing my husband, become miserable beyond words. Stay with us; you I love, and should be wretched to part from. Stay and enjoy this paradise with us. Intreat his sisters, if they wish to see Horatio, to come over. I will be more than a sister to them; but let us all forget that such a place as that cold, distant England exists.”

This was Clorinda's usual mode of speaking of her husband's native country: but once, when Ethel had urged her going there with more earnestness than usual, suddenly her countenance became disturbed; and with a lowering and stormy expression of face, that her English friend could never afterwards forget, she said, “Say not another word, I pray. Horatio loved — he loves an Englishwoman — it is torture enough for me to know this. I would rather be torn in quarters by wild horses, broken in pieces on the rack, than set foot in England. My cousin, as you have pity for me, and value the life of Horace, use your influence to prevent his only dreaming of a return to England. Methinks I could strike him dead, if I only knew that such a thought lived for a second in his heart."

These words said, Clorinda resumed her smiles, and was, more than usual, desirous of flattering and pleasing Ethel; so that she softened, though she could not erase, the impression her vehemence had made. However, there appeared no necessity for Ethel to exert her influence. Horace was equally averse to going to England. He loved to talk of it; he remembered, with yearning fondness, its verdant beauty, its pretty villages, its meandering streams, its embowered groves; the spots he had inhabited, the trivial incidents of his daily life, were recalled with affection: but he did not wish to return. Villiers attributed this somewhat to his unforgotten attachment to Lady ; but it was more strange that he negatived the idea of one of his sisters visiting him:—"She would not like it," was all the explanation he gave.

Several months passed lightly over the heads of the new-married pair; while they, bee-like, sipped the honey of life, and, never cloyed, fed perpetually on sweets. Naples, its galleries, its classic and beautiful environs, offered an endless succession of occupation and amusement. The presence of Saville elevated their pleasures; for he added the living spirit of poetry to their sensations, and associated the treasures of human genius with the sublime beauty of nature. He had a tact, a delicacy, a kind of electric sympathy in his disposition, that endeared him to every one that approached him. His very singularities, by keeping alive an interest in him, added to the charm. Sometimes he was so abstracted as to do the most absent things in the world; and the quick alternations of his gaiety and seriousness were often ludicrous from their excess. There was one thing, indeed, to which Ethel found it difficult to accustom herself, which was his want of punctuality, which often caused hours to be lost, and their excursions spoiled. Nor did he ever furnish good excuses, but seemed annoyed at being questioned on the subject.

Clorinda never joined them in their drives and rides out of the city. She feared to trust herself to winds and waves; the heat, the breeze, the dust, annoyed her; and she found no pleasure in looking at mountains, which, after all, were only mountains; or ruins, which were only ruins — stones, fit for nothing but to be removed and thrown away. But Clorinda had an empire of her own, to which she gladly admitted her English relatives, and the delights of which they fully appreciated. Music, heard in such perfection at the glory of Naples, the theatre of San Carlo, and the heavenly strains which filled the churches with an atmosphere of sound more entrancing than incense — all these were hers; and her own voice, rich, full, and well-cultivated, made a temple of melody of her own home.

There was — it could not be called a wall — but there was certainly a paling, of separation between Ethel and Clorinda. The young English girl could not discover in what it consisted, or why she could not pass beyond. The more she saw of the Neapolitan, the more she believed that she liked her — certainly her admiration increased; — still she felt that on the first day that Clorinda had visited her, with her caressing manners and well-turned flatteries, she was quite as intimate with her as now, after several weeks. She had surely nothing to conceal; all was open in her conduct; yet often Ethel thought of her as a magician guarding a secret treasure. Something there was that she watched over and hid. There was often a look of anxiety about her which Ethel unconsciously dispelled by some chance word; or a cloud all at once dimmed her face, and her magnificent and dazzling eyes flashed sudden fire, without apparent cause. There was something in her manner that always said, “You are English, I am Italian; and there is natural war between my fire and your snow.” But no word, no act, ever betrayed alienation of feeling. Thus a sort of mystery pervaded their intercourse, which, though it might excite curiosity, and was not unakin to admiration, kept the affections in check.

Sometimes Ethel thought that Clorinda feared to compromise her salvation, for she was a Catholic. During the revelries of the Carnival, this difference of religion was not so apparent; but when Lent began, it showed itself, and divided them, on various occasions, more than before. At last, Lent also was drawing to a close; and as Villiers and Ethel were anxious to see the ceremonies of Passion Week at Rome, it was arranged that they, and Mr. and Mrs. Saville, should visit the Eternal City together. Horatio manifested a distaste even to the short residence that it was agreed they should make together during the month they were to spend at Rome; but Clorinda showed herself particularly anxious for the fulfilment of this plan, and, the majority prevailing, the whole party left Naples together.

Full soon was the veil of mystery then withdrawn, and Villiers and his wife let into the arcana of their cousin’s life. Horatio had yielded unwillingly to Clorinda’s intreaties, and extracted many promises from her before he gave his consent; but all would not do — the natural, the uncontrollable violence of her disposition broke down every barrier; and in spite of his caution, and her struggles with herself, the reality opened fearfully upon the English pair. The lava torrent of Neapolitan blood flowed in her veins; and restraining it for some time, it at last poured itself forth with volcanic violence. It was at the inn at Terracina, on their way to Rome, that a scene took place, such as an English person must cross Alps and Apennines to behold. Ethel had seen that something was wrong. She saw the beauty of Clorinda vanished, changed, melted away and awfully transformed into actual ugliness: she saw tiger like glances from her eyes, and her lips pale and quivering. Poor Saville strove, with gentle words, to allay the storm to which some jealous freak gave rise: perceiving that his endeavours were vain, he rose to quit the room. They were at dinner: she sprung on him with a knife in her hand: Edward seized her arm; and she sunk on the floor in convulsions. Ethel was scarcely less moved. Seeing her terrified beyond all expression, Horatio led her from the room. He was pale — his voice failed him. He left her; and sending Edward to her, returned to his wife.

The same evening he said to Villiers,—”Do not ask me to stay; — let me go without another word. You see how it is. With what Herculean labour I have concealed this sad truth so long, is scarcely conceivable. When Ethel’s sweet smile has sometimes reproached my tardiness, I have escaped, but half alive, from a scene like the one you witnessed.

“In a few hours, it is true, Clorinda will be shocked — full of remorse — at my feet; — that is worse still. Her repentance is as violent as her rage; and both transform her from a woman into something too painful to dwell upon. She is generous, virtuous, full of power and talent; but this fatal vehemence more than neutralizes her good qualities. I can do nothing; I am chained to the oar. I have but one hope: time, reason, and steadiness of conduct on my part, may subdue her; and as she will at no distant period become a mother, softer feelings may develop themselves. Sometimes I am violently impelled to fly from her for ever. But she loves me, and I will not desert her. If she will permit me, I will do my duty to the end. Let us go back now. You will return to Naples next winter; and with this separation, which will gall her proud spirit to its core, as a lesson, I hope by that time that she will prove more worthy of Ethel's society."

Nothing could be said to this. Saville, though he asked, "Let us go back," had decreed, irrevocably, in his own mind, not to advance another step with his companions. The parting was melancholy and ominous. He would not permit Clorinda to appear again; for, as he said, he feared her repentance more than her violence, and would not expose Ethel as the witness of a scene of humiliation and shame. A thousand times over, his friends promised to return immediately to Naples, not deferring their visit till the following winter. He was to take a house for them, for the summer, at Castel à Mare, or Sorrento; and immediately after Easter they were to return. These kind promises were a balm to his disturbed mind. He watched their carriage from the inn at Terracina, as it skimmed along the level road of the Pontine Marshes, and could not despair while he expected its quick return. Turning his eyes away, he resumed his yoke again; and, melancholy beyond his wont, joined his remorseful wife. They were soon on their way back to Naples: — she less demonstrative in her repentance, because more internally and deeply touched, than she had ever been before.

CHAPTER XII.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade.
— Shakspeare.

Parting thus sadly from their unfortunate cousin, Villiers and Ethel were drawn together yet nearer, and, if possible, with a deeper tenderness of affection than before. Here was an example before their eyes, that all their fellow-creatures were not equally fortunate in the lottery of life, and that worse than a blank befell many, while the ticket which they had drawn was a prize beyond all summing. Edward felt indeed disappointed at losing his cousin's society, as well as deeply grieved at the wretched fate which he had selected for himself. Ethel, on the contrary, was in her heart glad that he was absent. She had no place in that heart to spare away from her husband; and however much she liked Horatio, and worthy as he was of her friendship, she felt him as an encroacher. Now she delivered herself up to Edward, and to the thought of Edward solely, with fresh and genuine delight. No one stood between her and him — none called off his attention, or forced her to pass one second of time unoccupied by his idea. When she expressed these feelings to Villiers, he called her selfish and narrow-hearted, yet his pride and his affection were gratified; for he knew how true was every word she uttered, and how without flaw or blot was her faith and her attachment.

"And yet, my Ethel," he said, "I sometimes ask myself, how this boasted affection of yours will stand the trials which I fear are preparing for it."

"What trials?" she asked anxiously.

"Care, poverty; the want of all the luxuries, perhaps of the comforts of life."

Ethel smiled again. “That is your affair,” she replied, “do you rouse your courage, if you look upon these as evils. I shall feel nothing of all this, while near you; care — poverty — want! as if I needed any thing except your love — you yourself — who are mine.”

“Yes, dear,” replied Villiers, “that is all very well at this moment; rolling along in a comfortable carriage — an hotel ready to receive us, with all its luxuries; but suppose us without any of these, Ethel — suppose yourself in a melancholy, little, dingy abode, without servants, without carriage, going out on foot.”

“Not alone,” replied his wife, laughing, and kissing his hand; “I shall have you to wait on me — to wait upon—” “You take it very well now,” said Edward; “I hope that you will never be put to the trial. I am far from anticipating this excess of wretchedness, of course, but I cannot help feeling, that the prospects of to-morrow are uncertain, and I am anxious for my long-delayed letters from England.”

With Ethel’s deep and warm affection, had she been ten or only five years older, she also must have participated in Edward’s inquietude. But care is a word, not an emotion, for the very young. She was only seventeen. She had never attended to the disbursements of money — she was ignorant of the mechanism of giving and receiving, on which the course of our life depends. It was in vain that she sought in the interior of her mind for an image that should produce fear or regret, with regard to the absence or presence of money. No one reflection or association brought into being an idea on the subject. Again she kissed Edward’s hand, and looked on him with her soft clear eyes, thinking only, “He is here — and Heaven has given me all I ask.”

Left again to themselves, they were anxious to avoid acquaintances. Yet this was impossible during the Holy Week at Rome. Villiers found many persons whom he knew; women of high rank and fashion, men of wealth, or with the appearance of it, enjoying the present, and, while away from England, unencumbered by care. Mr. and Mrs. Villiers were among these, and of them; their rank and their style of living resembling theirs, associated them together. All this was necessary to Edward, for he had been accustomed to it — it was natural to Ethel, because, being wholly inexperienced, she did as others did, and as Villiers wished her to do, without reflection or forethought.

Yet each day added to Edward's careful thoughts. Easter was gone, and the period approached when they had talked of returning to Naples. The covey of English had taken flight towards the north; they were almost the only strangers in the ancient and silent city, whose every stone breathes of a world gone by — whose surpassing beauty crowns her still the glory of the world. The English pair, left to themselves, roamed through the ruins and loitered in the galleries, never weary of the very ocean of beauty and grandeur which they coursed over in their summer bark. The weather grew warm, for the month of May had commenced, and they took refuge in the vast churches from the heat; at twilight they sought the neighbouring gardens, or scrambled about the Coliseum, or the more ruined and weedgrown baths of Caracalla. The fire-flies came out, and the splashing of the many fountains reached their ears from afar, while the clear azure of the Roman sky bent over them in beauty and peace.

Ethel never alluded to their proposed return to Naples — she feared each day to hear Villiers mention it — she was so happy where she was, she shrunk from any change. The majesty, the simplicity, the quiet of Rome, were in unison with the holy stillness that dwelt in her soul, absorbed as it was by one unchanging image. She had reached the summit of human happiness — she had nothing more to ask; her full heart, not bursting, yet gently overflowing in its bliss, thanked Heaven, and drew nearer Edward, and was at peace.

"God help us!" exclaimed Villiers, "I wonder what on earth will become of us!"

They were sitting together on fragment of the Coliseum; they had clambered up its fallen wall, and reached a kind of weed-grown chasm whose depth, as it was moonlight, they could not measure by the eye; so they sat beside it on a small fragment, and Villiers held Ethel close to him lest she should fall. The heartfelt and innocent caress of two united in the sight of Heaven, wedded together for the endurance of the good and ills of life, hallowed the spot and hour; and then, even while Ethel nestled nearer to him in fondness, Edward made the exclamation that she heard with a wonder which mingled with, yet could not disturb, the calm joy which she felt.

"What but good can come of us, while we are thus?" she asked.

"You will not listen to me, nor understand me," replied her husband. "But I do assure you, that our position is more than critical. No remittances, no letters come from England; we are in debt here — in debt in Italy! A thousand miles from our resources! I grope in the dark and see no outlet — every day's post, with the nothing that it brings, adds to my anxiety."

"All will be well," replied Ethel gently; "no real evil will happen to us, be assured."

"I wish," said Villiers, "your experience, instead of your ignorance, suggested the assertion. I would rather die a thousand deaths than apply to dear Horace, who is ill enough off himself; but every day here adds to our difficulties. Our only hope is in our instant return to England — and, by heavens! — you kiss me, Ethel, as if we lived in fairy land, and that such were our food — have you no fears?"

"I am sorry to say, none," she answered in a soft voice; "I wish I could contrive some, because I appear unsympathizing to you — but I cannot fear; — you are in health and near me. Heaven and my dear father's spirit will watch over us, and all will be well. This is the end and beginning of my anxiety; so dismiss yours, love — for, believe me, in a day or two, these forebodings of yours will be as a dream."

"It is very strange," replied Edward, "were you not so close to me, I should fancy you a spirit instead of a woman; you seem to have no touch of earthly solicitude. Well, I will do as you bid me, and hope for to-morrow. And now let us get down from this place before the moon sets and leaves us in darkness."

As if to confirm the auguries of Ethel, the following morning brought the long-expected letters. One contained a remittance, another was from Colonel Villiers, to say, that Edward's immediate presence was requisite in England to make the final arrangements before his marriage. With a glad heart Villiers turned his steps northward; while Ethel, if she could have regretted aught while with him, would have sighed to leave their lonely haunts in Rome. She well knew that whatever of sublime nature might display, or man might congregate of beautiful in art elsewhere, there was a calm majesty, a silent and awful repose in the ruins of Rome, joined to the delights of a southern climate, and the luxuriant vegetation of a sunny soil, more in unison with her single and devoted heart, than any other spot in the universe could boast. They would both have rejoiced to have seen Saville again; yet they were unacknowledgedly glad not to pursue their plan of domesticating near him at Naples. A remediless evil, which is for ever the source of fresh disquietude, is one that tasks human fortitude and human patience, more than those vaster misfortunes which elevate while they wound. The proud aspiring spirit of man craves something to raise him from the dust, and to adorn his insignificance; he seeks to strengthen his alliance with the lofty and the eternal, and shrinks from low-born cares, as being the fetters and bolts that link him to his baser origin. Saville, the slave of a violent woman's caprice, struggling with passions, at once so fiery and so feeble as to excite contempt, was a spectacle which they were glad to shun. Their own souls were in perfect harmony, and discord was peculiarly abhorrent to them.

They travelled by the beaten route of Mont Cenis, Lyons, and Calais, and in less than a month arrived in England. As the presence of Villiers was requisite in London, after staying a few days at an hotel in Brook-street, they took a furnished house in the same street for a short time. The London season had passed its zenith, but its decline was scarcely perceptible. Ethel had no wish to enter into its gaieties, and it had been Edward's plan to avoid them until they were richer. But here they were, placed by fate in the very midst of them; and as, when their affairs were settled, they intended again to return abroad, he could not refuse himself the pleasure of seeing Ethel, in the first flower of her loveliness, mingling with, and outshining, every other beauty of her country. It would have been difficult indeed, placed within the verge of the English aristocracy assembled in London, to avoid its engagements and pleasures — for he "also was an Arcadian," and made one of the self-enthroned "world." The next two months, therefore, while still every settlement was delayed by his father, they spent in the fashionable circles of London.

They did not indeed enter into its amusements with the zest and resolution of tyros. To Villiers the scene was not new, and therefore not exceedingly enticing; and Ethel's mind was not of the sort to be borne along in the stream of folly. They avoided going to crowded entertainments — they were always satisfied with one or two parties in the evening. Nay, once or twice in the week they usually remained at home, and not unseldom dined tête-à-tête. The serpent fang of pleasure, and the paltry ambition of society, had no power over Ethel. She often enjoyed herself, because she often met people of either sex, whose fame, or wit, or manners, interested and pleased her. But as little vanity as mortal woman ever had fell to her share. Very young, and (to use the phrase of the day) very new, flattery and admiration glanced harmlessly by her. Her personal vanity was satisfied when Villiers was pleased, and, for the rest, she was glad to improve her mind, and to wear away the timidity, which she felt that her lonely education had induced, by mingling with the best society of her country.

She had also some curiosity, and as she promised herself but a brief sojourn in this land of lions, she wished to see several things and persons she might never come in contact with again. Various names which had reached her in the Illinois, here grew from shadows into real human beings — ministers of state, beauties, authors, and wits. She visited once or twice the ventilator of St. Stephen’s, and graced a red bench of the House of Lords on the prorogation of Parliament. Villiers was very much pleased with her throughout. His pride was gratified by the approval she elicited from all. Men admired her, but distantly — as a being they could not rudely nor impertinently approach. Women were not afraid of her, because they saw, that though she made no display of conjugal attachment, she loved her husband. Her extreme youth, the perpetual sunshine of her countenance, and the gentle grace of her manners, won more the liking than the praise of her associates. They drew near her as to one too untaught to understand their mysteries, and too innocent to judge them severely; an atmosphere of kindness and of repose followed her wherever she went: this her husband felt more than any other, and he prized his Ethel at the worth she so truly deserved.

One of the reasons which caused Mrs. Villiers to avoid large assemblies, was that Lady was in town, and that in such places they sometimes met. Ethel did not well know how to act. Youth is ever fearful of making unwelcome demonstration, and false shame often acts more powerfully to influence it, than the call of duty or the voice of affection. Villiers had no desire to bring the mother and daughter together, and stood neutral. Lady Lodore had once or twice recognized her by a bow and a smile, but after such, she always vanished and was seen no more that evening. Ethel often yearned to approach, to claim her tenderness and to offer her filial affection. Villiers laughed at such flights. “The safe thing to do,” he said, “is to take the tone of Lady Lodore. She is held back by no bashfulness — she does the thing she wishes, without hesitation or difficulty. Did she desire her lovely grown-up daughter to play a child's part towards her, she would soon contrive to bring it about. Lady Lodore is a woman of the world — she was nursed in its lessons, and piously adheres to its code; its ways are her's, and the objects of ambition which it holds out, are those which she desires to attain. She is talked of as admired and followed by the Earl of D — . You may spoil all, if you put yourself forward."

Ethel was not quite satisfied. The voice of nature was awake within, and she yearned to claim her mother's affection. Until now, she had regarded her more as a stranger; but at this time, a filial instinct stirred her heart, impelling her to some outward act — some demonstration of duty. Whenever she saw Lady , which was rarely, and at a distance, she gazed earnestly on her, and tried to read within her soul, whether Villiers was right, and her mother happy. The shining, uniform outside of a woman of fashion baffled her endeavours without convincing her. One evening at the Opera, she discerned Lady Lodore in the tier below her. Ethel drew back and shaded herself with the curtain of her box, so that she could not be perceived, while she watched her mother intently. A succession of visitors came into Lady Lodore's box, and she spoke to all with the animation of a heart at ease. There was an almost voluptuous repose in her manner and appearance, that contrasted with, while it adorned, the easy flow of her conversation, and the springtide of wit, which, to judge from the amusement of her auditors, flowed from her lips. Yet Ethel fancied that her smile was often forced, so suddenly did it displace an expression of listlessness and languor, which when she turned from the people in her box to the stage, came across her countenance like a shadow. It might be the gas, which shadows so unbecomingly the fair audience at the King's Theatre; it might be the consequences of raking, for Lady Lodore was out every night; but Ethel thought that she saw a change; she was less brilliant, her person thinner, and had lost some of its exquisite roundness. Still, as her daughter gazed, she thought, She is not happy. Yet what could she do? How pour sweetness into the bitter stream of life? As Villiers had said, any advance of hers might spoil all. The sister of the nobleman he had mentioned, was her companion at the opera. Lord D — himself came, though late, to fetch her away. She had therefore her own prospects, her own plans, which doubtless she desired to pursue undisturbed, however they might fail to charm away the burthen of life.

Once, and only once, Ethel heard her mother’s voice, and was spoken to by her. She had gone to hear the speech from the throne, on the prorogation of Parliament. She got there late, so that every bench was filled. Room was made for her near the throne, immediately under the gallery, (as the house was constructed until last year,) but she was obliged to be separated from her party, and sat half annoyed at being surrounded by strangers. A peer, whom she recognized as the Earl of D — , came up, and entered into conversation with the lady sitting behind her. Could it be her mother? She remembered, that as she sat down she had glanced at some one whom she thought she knew, and she did not doubt that this was Lady . A sudden thrill passed as an electric shock through her frame, every joint in her body trembled, her knees knocked together, and the colour forsook her cheeks. She tried to rally. Why should she feel agitated, as if possessed by terror, on account of this near contact with the dearest relation Heaven has bestowed on its creatures? Why not turn; and if she did not speak, claim, with beseeching eyes, her mother’s love? Was it indeed her? The lady spoke, and her voice entered and stirred Ethel’s beating heart with strange emotion; every drop of blood within her seemed to leap at the sound; but she sat still as a statue, saying to herself, “When Lord D — leaves her I will turn and speak.” After some trivial conversation on topics of the day, the peers were ordered to take their seats, and Lord D — departed; — then Ethel tried to summon all her courage; but now the doors were thrown open, the king entered, and every one stood up. At this moment, — as she, in the confusion of being called upon, while abstracted, to do any act, however slight, had for a moment half forgotten her mother, — her arm was touched; and the same voice which had replied to Lord D — , said to her, “Your ear-ring is unfastened, Ethel; it will fall out.” Ethel could not speak; she raised her hands, mechanically, to arrange the ornament; but her trembling fingers refused to perform the office. “Permit me,” said the lady, drawing off her glove;” and Ethel felt her mother’s hand touch her cheek: her very life stood suspended; it was a bitter pain, yet a pleasure inconceivable; there was a suffocation in her throat, and the tears filled her eyes; but even the simple words, “I thank you,” died on her lips — her voice could frame no sound. The world, and all within its sphere, might have passed away at that moment, and she been unconscious of any change. “Yes, she will love me!” was the idea that spoke audibly within; and a feeling of confidence, a flow of sympathy and enthusiastic affection, burst on her heart. As soon as she could recollect herself, she turned: Lady Lodore was no longer there; she had glided from her seat; and Ethel just caught a glimpse of her, as she contrived another for herself, behind a column, which afterwards so hid her, that her daughter could only see the waving of her plumes. On these she fixed her eyes until all was over; and then Lady Lodore went out hurriedly, with averted face, as if to escape her recognition. This put the seal on Ethel’s dream. She believed that her mother obviously signified her desire that they should continue strangers to each other. It was hard, but she must submit. She had no longer that prejudice against Lady Lodore, that exaggerated notion of her demerits, which the long exile of her father, and the abhorrence of Mrs. Fitzhenry, had before instilled. Her mother was no longer a semi-gorgon, hid behind a deceptive mask — a Medea, without a touch of human pity. She was a lovely, soft-voiced, angelic-looking woman, whom she would have given worlds to be permitted to love and wait upon. She found excuses for her errors; she lavished admiration on all her attractions; she could do all but muster courage to vanquish the obstacles that existed to their intercourse. She fondly cherished her image, as an idol placed in the sanctuary of her heart, which she could regard with silent reverence and worship, but whose concealing veil she could not raise. Villiers smiled when she spoke in this way to him. He saw, in her enthusiasm, the overflowing of an affectionate heart, which longed to exhaust itself in loving. He kissed her, and bade her think any thing, so that she did nothing. The time for doing had indeed, for the present, passed away. Lady Lodore left town; and when mother and daughter met again, it was not destined to be beneath a palace roof, surrounded by the nobility of the land.

CHAPTER XIII.

I choose to comfort myself by considering, that even while I am lamenting my present uneasiness, it is passing away.
— Horace Walpole.

An event occurred at this time, which considerably altered the plans of Mr. and Mrs. Villiers. They had been invited to spend some time at Maristow Castle, and were about to proceed thither with Lord Maristow and his daughters, when the sudden death of Mr. Saville changed every thing. He died of a malignant fever, leaving a young widow, and no child, to inherit his place in society.

Through this unlooked-for event, Horatio became the immediate heir of his father's title. He stept, from the slighted position of a younger son into the rank of the eldest; and thus became another being in all men's eyes — but chiefly in his father's.

Viscount Maristow had deeply regretted his son's foreign marriage, and argued against his choice of remaining abroad. He was a statesman, and conceived that Horatio's talents and eloquence would place him high among the legislators of St. Stephen's. The soundness of his understanding, and the flowing brilliancy of his language, were pledges of his success. But Saville was not ambitious. His imagination rose high above the empty honours of the world — to be useful was a better aim; but he did not conceive that his was a mind calculated to lead others in its train: its framework was too delicate, too finely strung, to sound in accord with the many. He wanted the desire to triumph; and was content to adore truth in the temple of his own mind, without defacing its worship by truckling to the many falsehoods and errors which demand subserviency in the world.

Lord Maristow had hitherto submitted to his disappointment, not without murmurs, but without making any great effort at victory. He had written many letters intreating his son to cast off the drowsy Neapolitan sloth; — he had besought Villiers, previous to his departure the preceding year, to bring his cousin back with him; — and this was all.

The death of his eldest son quickened him to exertion. He resolved to trust no longer to written arguments, but to go himself to Italy, and by force of paternal authority, or persuasions, to induce his son to come back to his native country, and to fill with honour the post to which fortune had advanced him. He did not doubt that Horatio would himself feel the force of his new duties; but it would be clenching his purpose, and paying an agreeable compliment to Clorinda, to make this journey, and to bring them back with him when he returned. Whatever Mrs. Saville's distaste to England might be, it must yield to the necessity that now drew her thither. Lord Maristow could not imagine any resistance so violent as to impede his wishes. The projected journey charmed his daughters, saddened as they were by their recent loss. Lucy was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing her beloved brother. She felt sure that Clorinda would be brought to reason and thus, with their hearts set upon one object, one idea, they bade adieu to Ethel and her husband, as if their career was to be as sunny and as prosperous as they doubted not that their own would be.

Lord Maristow alone guessed how things might stand. "Edward, my dear boy," he said, "give me credit for great anxiety on your account. I wish this marriage of yours had not taken place, then you might have roughed it as other young men do, and have been the better for a little tart experience. I do not like this shuffling on your father's part. I hear for a certainty that this marriage of his will come to nothing — the friends of the young lady are against it, and she is very young, and only an heiress by courtesy — her father can give her as many tens of thousands as he pleases, but he has sworn not to give her a shilling if she marries without his consent; and he has forbidden Colonel Villiers his house. He still continues at Cheltenham, and assures every one that he is on safe ground; that the girl loves him, and that when once his, the father must yield. It is too ridiculous to see him playing a boy-lover's part at his time of life, trying to undermine a daughter's sense of duty — he, who may soon be a grandfather! The poor little thing, I am told, is quite fascinated by his dashing manners and station in society. We shall see how it will end — I fear ill; her father might pardon a runaway match with a lover of her own age; but he will never forgive the coldblooded villany, excuse me, of a man of three times her age; who for gain, and gain only, is seeking to steal her from him. Such is the sum of what I am told by a friend of mine, just arrived from Cheltenham. The whole thing is the farce of the day, and the stolen interviews of the lovers, and the loud, vulgarly-spoken denunciations of her father, vary the scene from a travestie of Romeo and Juliet to the comedies of Plautus or Molière. I beg your pardon, Edward, for my frankness, but I am angry. I have been used as a cat's-paw — I have been treated unfairly — I was told that the marriage wanted but your signature — my representations induced you to offer to Miss Fitzhenry, and now you are a ruined man. I am hampered by my own family, and cannot come forward to your assistance. My advice is, that you wait a little, and see what turn matters take; once decided, however they conclude, strong representations shall be made to your father, and he shall be forced to render proper assistance; then if politics take a better turn, I may do something for you — or you can live abroad till better times."

Villiers thanked Lord Maristow for his advice, and made no remarks either on his details or promises. He saw his own fate stretched drearily before him; but his pride made him strong to bear without any outward signs of wincing. He would suffer all, conceal all, and be pitied by none. The thought of Ethel alone made him weak. Were she sheltered during the storm which he saw gathering so darkly, he would have felt satisfied.

What was to be done? To go abroad, was to encounter beggary and famine. To remain, exposed him to a thousand insults and dangers from which there was no escape. Such were the whisperings of despair — but brighter hopes often visited him. All could not be so evil as it seemed. Fortune, so long his enemy, would yield at last one inch of ground — one inch to stand upon, where he might wait in patience for better days. Had he indeed done his utmost to avert the calamities he apprehended? Certainly not. Thus spoke his sanguine spirit: more could and should be done. His father might find means, he himself be enabled to arrange with his lawyer some mode of raising a sum of money which would at least enable him to go on the continent with his wife. He spent his thoughts in wishes for the attainment of this desirable conclusion to his adversity, till the very earnestness of his expectations seemed to promise their realization. It could not be that the worst would come. Absurd! Something must happen to assist them. Seeking for this unknown something which, in spite of all his efforts, would take no visible or tangible form, he spent weary days and sleepless nights, his brain spinning webs of thought, not like those of the spider, useful to their weaver — a tangled skein they were rather, where the clue was inextricably hid. He did not speak of these things to Ethel, but he grew sad, and she was anxious to go out of town, to have him all to herself, when she promised herself to dispel his gloom; and, as she darkly guessed at the source of his disquietude, by economy and a system of rigid privation, to show him how willing and able she was to meet the adversity which he so much dreaded.

CHAPTER XIV.

The pure, the open, prosperous love.
That pledged on earth, and sealed above.
Grows in the world's approving eyes.
 In friendship's smile and home's caress.
Collecting all the heart's sweet ties
 Into one knot of happiness.
 — Lalla Rookh.

Another month withered away in fruitless expectation. Villiers felt that he was following an ignis fatuus, yet knew not how to give up his pursuit. At length, he listened more docilely to Ethel's representations of the expediency of quitting town. She wished to pay her long-promised visit to her aunt, and Villiers at last consented to accompany her. They gave up their house, dispersed a tolerably numerous establishment, and left town for their sober and rural seclusion in Essex.

Taken from the immediate scene where care met him at every turn, Edward's spirits rose; and the very tranquillity and remoteness of Longfield became a relief and an enjoyment. It was bright October weather. The fields were green, the hedges yet in verdant trim. The air was so still that the dead leaves hung too lazy to fall, from the topmost boughs of the earlier trees. The oak was still dressed in a dark sober green — the fresh July shoot, having lost its summer hue, was unapparent among the foliage; the varying tints of beach, ash, and elm, diversified the woods. The morning and evening skies were resplendent with crimson and gold, and the moonlight nights were sweeter than the day.

Fatigued by the hurry of town, and one at least worn out with care, the young pair took a new lease of love in idleness in this lonely spot. A slight attack of rheumatism confined Aunt Bessy to her chimney-corner, but in spite of her caution to Ethel not to incur the same penalty from all the array of wet walks and damp shoes, it was her best pleasure each morning to tie on her bonnet, take her husband’s arm, and they wandered away together, returning only to find their horses ready, and then they departed for hours, coming back late and unwillingly after the sun was down. Mrs. Elizabeth wondered where all the beautiful spots were, which Ethel described so enthusiastically as to be found in the neighbourhood. The good lady longed to go out herself to see if she could not reap equal delight from viewing the grouping of trees, whose various autumnal tints were painted in Ethel’s speech with hues too bright for earth, or to discover what there could be so extraordinarily picturesque in a moss-grown cottage, near a brook, with a high bank clothed with wood behind, which she believed must be one Dame Nixon’s cottage, in the Vale of Bewling, and which she knew she must have passed a thousand times, and yet she had never noticed its beauty. Very often Ethel could give no information of whither they had been, only they had lost themselves in majestic woods, lingered in winding lanes, which led to resplendent views, or even reached the margin of the barren sea, to behold the enveloping atmosphere reflected in its fitful mirror — to watch the progress of evanescent storms, or to see the moon light up her silvery pathway on the dusky waste. Villiers took his gun with him in his walks, but, though American bred, Ethel was so unfeignedly distressed by the sight of death, that he never brought down a bird: he shot in its direction now and then, to keep his pointer in practice, and to laugh at his wife’s glad triumph when he missed his feathery mark.

Ethel was especially delighted to renew her acquaintance with Longfield, her father’s boyhood home, under such sunny circumstances. She had loved it before: with anguish in her heart, and heavy sadness weighing on her steps, she had loved it for his sake. But now that it became the home, the dedicated garden of love, it received additional beauty in her eyes from its association with the memory of Lord . All things conjoined; the season, calmed and brightened, as if for her especial enjoyment; remembrance of the past, and the undivided possession of her Edward’s society, combined to steep her soul in happiness. Even he, whose more active and masculine spirit might have fretted in solitude and sloth, was subdued by care and uncertainty to look on the peace of the present moment as the dearest gift of the gods. Both so young, and the minds of both open as day to each other’s eyes, no single blot obscured their intercourse. They never tired of each other, and the teeming spirit of youth filled the empty space of each hour as it came, with a new growth of sentiments and ideas. The long evening had its pleasures, with its close-drawn curtains and cheerful fire. Even whist with the white-haired parson, and Mrs. Fitzhenry in her spectacles, imparted pleasure. Could any thing duller have been devised, which would have been difficult, it had not been so to them; and a stranger coming in and seeing their animated looks, and hearing their cheerful tones and light-hearted laugh, must have envied the very Elysium of delight, which aunt Bessy's usually so sober drawing-room contained. Merely to see Ethel leaning on her husband's arm, and looking up in his face as he drew her yet closer, and, while his fingers were twined among her silken ringlets, kissed so fondly her fair brow, must have demonstrated to a worldling the irrefragable truth that happiness is born a twin, love being the parent.

The beauty of a pastoral picture has but short duration in this cloudy land, — and happiness, the sun of our moral existence, is yet more fitful in its visitations. Villiers and his young wife took their accustomed ride through shady lanes and copses, and through parks, where, though the magnificent features of nature were wanting, the eye was delighted by a various prospect of wood and lawny upland. The soft though wild west wind drove along vast masses of snowy clouds, which displayed in their intervals the deep stainless azure of the boundless sky. The shadows of the clouds now darkened the pathway of our riders, and now they saw the sunlight advance from a distance, coming on with steps of light and air, till it reached them, and they felt the warmth and gladness of sunshine descend on them. The various coloured woods were now painted brightly in the beams, and now half lost in shadow. There was life and action everywhere — yet not the awakening activity of spring, but rather a vague, uneasy restlessness, allied to languor, and pregnant with melancholy.

Villiers was silent and sad. Ethel too well knew the cause wherefore he was dispirited. He had received letters that morning which stung him into a perception of the bitter realities which were gathering about them. One was to say that no communication had been received from his father, but that it was believed that he was somewhere in London — the other was from his banker, to remind him that he had overdrawn his credit — nearly the most disagreeable intelligence a man can hear when he possesses no immediate means of replenishing his drained purse. Ethel was grieved to see him pained, but she could not acutely feel these pecuniary distresses. She tried to divert his thoughts by conversation, and pointing out the changes which the advancing season made in the aspect of the country.

"Yes," said Villiers, "it is a beautiful world; poets tell us this, and religious men have drawn an argument for their creed from the wisdom and loveliness displayed in the external universe, which speaks to every heart and every understanding. The azure canopy fretted with golden lights, or, as now, curtained by wondrous shapes, which, though they are akin to earth, yet partake the glory of the sky — the green expanse, variegated by streams, teeming with life, and prolific of food to sustain that life, and that very food the chief cause of the beauty we enjoy — with such magnificence has the Creator set forth our table — all this, and the winds that fan us so balmily, and the flowers that enchant our sight — do not all these make earth a type of heaven?"

Ethel turned her eyes on him to read in his face the expression of the enthusiasm and enjoyment that seemed to dictate his words. But his countenance was gloomy, and as he continued to speak, his expressions took more the colour of his uneasy feelings. "How false and senseless all this really is!" he pursued. "Find a people who truly make earth, its woods and fells, and inclement sky, their unadorned dwelling-place, who pluck the spontaneous fruits of the soil, or slay the animals as they find them, attending neither to culture nor property, and we give them the name of barbarians and savages — untaught, uncivilized, miserable beings — and we, the wiser and more refined, hunt and exterminate them: — we, who spend so many words, either as preachers or philosophers, to vaunt that with which they are satisfied, we feel ourselves the greater, the wiser, the nobler, the more barriers we place between ourselves and nature, the more completely we cut ourselves off from her generous but simple munificence."

"But is this necessary?" asked the forestbred girl: "when I lived in the wilds of the Illinois — the simplest abode, food and attire, were all I knew of human refinements, and I was satisfied."

Villiers did not appear to heed her remark, but continued the train of his own reflections. "The first desire of man is not for wealth nor luxury, but for sympathy and applause. He desires to remove to the furthest extremity of the world contempt and degradation; and according to the ideas of the society in which he is bred, so are his desires fashioned. We, the most civilized, high-bred, prosperous people in the world, make no account of nature, unless we add the ideas of possession, and of the labours of man. We rate each individual, (and we all desire to be rated as individuals, distinct from and superior to the mass,) not by himself, but by his house, his park, his income. This is a trite observation, yet it appears new when it comes home: what is lower, humbler, more despicable than a poor man? Give him learning, give him goodness — see him with manners acquired in poverty, habits dyed in the dusky hues of penury; and if we do not despise him, yet we do not admit him to our tables or society. Refinement may only be the varnish of the picture, yet it is necessary to make apparent to the vulgar eye even the beauties of Raphael."

"To the vulgar eye!" repeated Ethel, emphatically.

"And I seem one of those, by the way I speak," said Edward, smiling. "Yet, indeed, I do not despise any man for being poor, except myself. I can feel pride in showing honour where honour is due, even though clad in the uncouth and forbidding garb of plebeianism; but I cannot claim this for myself — I cannot demand the justice of men, which they would nickname pity. The Illinois would be preferable far."

"And the Illinois might be a paradise," said Ethel.

"We hope for a better — we hope for Italy. Do you remember Rome and the Coliseum, my love? — Naples, the Chiaja, and San Carlo? — these were better than the savannas of the west. Our hopes are good; it is the present only which is so thorny, so worse than barren: like the souls of Dante, we have a fiery pass to get through before we reach our place of bliss; that we have it in prospect will gift us with fortitude. Meanwhile I must string myself to my task. Ethel, dearest, I shall go to town to-morrow."

"And I with you, surely?"

"Do not ask it; this is your first lesson in the lore you were so ready to learn, of bearing all for me—"

"With you," interrupted his wife.

"With me — it shall soon be," replied Edward; "but to speak according to the ways of this world, my presence in London is necessary for a few days — for a very few days; a journey there and back for me is nothing, but it would be a real and useless expense if you went. Indeed, Ethel, you must submit to my going without you — I ask it of you, and you will not refuse."

“A few days, you say,” answered Ethel—”a very few days? It is hard. But you will not be angry, if I should join you if your return is delayed?”

“You will not be so mad,” said Villiers. “I go with a light heart, because I leave you in security and comfort. I will return — I need not protest — you know that I shall return the moment I can. I speak of a few days; it cannot be a week: let me go then, with what satisfaction I may, to the den of darkness and toil, and not be farther annoyed by the fear that you will not support my absence with cheerfulness. As you love me, wait for me with patience — remain with your aunt till I return.”

“I will stay for a week, if it must be so,” replied Ethel.

“Indeed, my love, it must — nor will I task you beyond — before a week is gone by, you shall see me.”

Ethel looked wistfully at him, but said no more. She thought it hard — she did not think it right that he should go — that he should toil and suffer without her; but she had no words for argument or contention, so she yielded. The next morning — a cold but cheerful morning — at seven o’clock, she drove over with him in Mrs. Fitzhenry’s little pony chaise to the town, four miles off, through which the stages passed. A first parting is a kind of landmark in life — a starting post whence we begin our career out of illusion and the land of dreams, into reality and endurance. They arrived not a moment too soon: she had yet a thousand things to say — one or two very particular things, which she had reserved for the last moment; there was no time, and she was forced to concentrate all her injunctions into one word, “Write!”

“Every day — and do you.”

“It will be my only pleasure,” replied his wife. “Take care of yourself.”

He was on the top of the stage and gone; and Ethel felt that a blank loneliness had swallowed up the dearest joy of her life.

She drew her cloak round her — she gazed along the road — there were no traces of him — she gave herself up to thought, and as he was the object of all her thoughts, this was her best consolation. She reviewed the happy days they had spent together — she dwelt on the memory of his unalterable affection and endearing kindness, and then tears rushed into her eyes. “Will any ill every befall him?” she thought. “O no, none ever can! he must be rewarded for his goodness and his love. How dear he ought to be to me! Did he not take the poor friendless girl from solitude and grief; and disdaining neither her poverty nor her orphan state, give her himself, his care, his affection? O, my Edward! what would Ethel have been without you? Her father was gone — her mother repulsed her — she was alone in the wide world, till you generously made her your own!"

With the true enthusiasm of passion, Ethel delighted to magnify the benefits she had received, and to make those which she herself conferred nothing, that gratitude and love might become yet stronger duties. In her heart, though she reproached herself for what she termed selfishness, she could not regret his poverty and difficulties, if thus she should acquire an opportunity of being useful to him; but she felt herself defrauded of her best privileges, of serving and consoling, by their separation.

Thus, — now congratulating herself on her husband's attachment, now repining at the fate that divided them, — agitated by various emotions too sweet and bitter for words, she returned to Longfield. Aunt Bessy was in her arm-chair, waiting for her to begin breakfast. Edward's seat was empty — his cup was not placed — he was omitted in the domestic arrangements; — tears rushed into her eyes; and in vain trying to calm herself, she sobbed aloud. Aunt Bessy was astonished; and when all the explanation she got was, "He is gone!" she congratulated herself, that her single state had spared her the endurance of these conjugal distresses.

CHAPTER XIV.

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen.
What old December's bareness every where!
— Shakspeare.

Ethel cheered herself to amuse her aunt; and, as in her days of hopeless love, she tried to shorten the hours by occupation. It was difficult; for all her thoughts were employed in conjectures as to where Edward was, what doing — in looking at her watch, and following in her mind all his actions — or in meditating how hereafter she might remedy any remissness on her part, (so tender was her conscience,) and best contribute to his happiness. Such reveries beguiled many hours, and enabled her to endure with some show of courage the pains of absence. Each day she heard from him — each day she wrote, and this entire pouring out of herself on paper formed the charm of her existence. She endeavoured to persuade him how fortunate their lot might hereafter be — how many of his fears were unfounded or misplaced.

"Remember, dearest love," she said, "that I have nothing of the fine lady about me. I do not even feel the want of those luxuries so necessary to most women. This I owe to my father. It was his first care, while he brought me up in the most jealous retirement, to render me independent of the services of others. Solitude is to me no evil, and the delight of my life would be to wait upon you. I am not therefore an object of pity, when fortunes deprives me of the appurtenances of wealth, which rather annoy than serve me. My devotion and sacrifice, as you are pleased to call the intense wish of my heart to contribute to your happiness, are nothing. I sacrifice all, when I give up one hour of your society — there is the sting — there the merit of my permitting you to go without me. I can ill bear it. I am impatient and weak; do not then, Edward dearest, task me too far — recall me to your side, if your return is delayed — recall your fond girl to the place near your heart, where she desires to remain for ever."

Villiers answered with few but expressive words of gratitude and fidelity. His letters breathed disappointment and anxiety. "It is too true," he said, "as I found it announced when I first came to town, my father is married. He got the banns published in an obscure church in London; he persuaded Miss Gregory to elope with him, and they are married. Her father is furious, he returns every letter unopened; his house and heart, he says, are still open to his daughter — but the — , I will not repeat his words, who stole her from him, shall never benefit by a shilling of his money — let her return, and all shall be pardoned — let her remain with her husband, and starve, he cares not. My father has spent much time and more money on this pursuit: in the hope of securing many thousands, he raised hundreds at a prodigal and ruinous interest, which must now be paid. He has not ten pounds in the world — so he says. My belief is, that he is going abroad to secure to himself the payment of the scanty remnant of his income. I have no hopes. I would beg at the corner of a street, rather than apply to a man who never has been a parent to me, and whose last act is that of a villain. Excuse me; you will be angry that I speak thus of my father, but I know that he speaks of the poor girl he has deluded, with a bitterness and insult, which prove what his views were in marrying her. In this moment of absolute beggary, my only resource is to raise money. I believe I shall succeed; and the moment I have put things in train, with what heartfelt, what unspeakable joy, shall I leave this miserable place for my own Ethel's side, long to remain!"

Villiers's letters varied little, but yet they got more desponding; and Ethel grew very impatient to see him again. She had counted the days of her week — they were fulfilled, and her husband did not return. Every thing depended, he said, on his presence; and he must remain yet for another day or two. At first he implored her to be patient. He besought her, as she loved him, to endure their separation yet for a few more days. His letters were very short, but all in this style. They were imperative with his wife — she obeyed; yet she did so, she told him, against her will and against her sense of right. She ought to be at his side to cheer him under his difficulties. She had married him because she loved him, and because the first and only wish of her heart was to conduce to his happiness. To travel together, to enjoy society and the beauties of nature in each other's society, were indeed blessings, and she valued them; but there was another dearer still, of which she felt herself defrauded, and for which she yearned. "The aim of my life, and its only real joy," she said, "is to make your existence happier than it would have been without me. When I know and feel that such a moment or hour has been passed by you with sensations of pleasure, and that through me, I have fulfilled the purpose of my destiny. Deprived of the opportunity to accomplish this, I am bereft of that for which I breathe. You speak as if I were better off here than if I shared the inconveniences of your lot — is not this strange language, my own Edward? You talk of security and comfort; where can I be so secure as near you? And for comfort! what heart-elevating joy it would be to exchange this barren, meagre scene of absence, for the delight, the comfort of seeing you, of waiting on you! I do not ask you to hasten your return, so as to injure your prospects, but permit me to join you. Would not London itself, dismal as you describe it, become sunny and glad, if Ethel were with you?"

To these adjurations Villiers scarcely replied. Time crept on; three weeks had already elapsed. Now and then a day intervened, and he did not write, and his wife's anxiety grew to an intolerable pitch. She did not for an instant suspect his faith, but she feared that he must be utterly miserable, since he shrunk from communicating his feelings to her. His last letter was brief; "I have just come from my solicitor," he said, "and have but time to say, that I must go there again to-morrow, so I shall not be with you. O the heavy hours in this dark prison! You will reward me and make me forget them when I see you — but how shall I pass the time till then!"

These words made Ethel conceive the idea of joining him in town. He would not, he could not be angry? He could not bring his mind to ask her to share his discomforts — but ought she not to volunteer — to insist upon his permitting her to come? Permit! the same pride that prevented his asking, would induce him to refuse her request; but should she do wrong, if, without his express permission, she were to join him? A thrill, half fear, half transport, made her heart's blood stand still at the thought. The day after this last, she got no letter; the following day was Monday, and there would be no post from town. Her resolution was taken, and she told her aunt, that she should go up to London the following day. Mrs. Elizabeth knew little of the actual circumstances of the young pair. Villiers had made it an express condition, that she should not be informed of their difficulties, for he was resolute not to take from her little store, which, in the way she lived, was sufficient, yet barely so, for her wants. She did not question her niece as to her journey; she imagined that it was a thing arranged. But Ethel herself was full of perplexity; she remembered what Villiers had said of expense; she knew that he would be deeply hurt if she used a public conveyance, and yet to go post would consume the little money she had left, and she did not like to reach London pennyless. She began to talk to her aunt, and faltered out something about want of money for posting — the good lady's purse was instantly in her hand. Ethel had not the same horror as her husband of pecuniary obligation — she was too inexperienced to know its annoyances; and in the present instance, to receive a small sum from her aunt, appeared to her an affair that did not merit hesitation. She took twenty pounds for her journey, and felt her heart lighter. There yet remained another question. Hitherto they had travelled in their own carriage, with a valet and lady's maid. Villiers had taken his servant to town with him. In a postscript to one of his letters, he said, "I was able to recommend Laurie to a good place, so I have parted with him, and I shall not take another servant at this moment." Laurie had been long and faithfully attached to her husband, who had never lived without an attendant, and who, from his careless habits, was peculiarly helpless. Ethel felt that this dismissal was a measure of economy, and that she ought to imitate it. Still as any measure to be taken always frightened her, she had not courage to discharge her maid, but resolved to go up to town without her. Aunt Bessy was shocked at her going alone, but Ethel was firm; nothing could happen to her, and she should prove to Edward her readiness to endure privation.

On Monday, at eleven in the forenoon, on the 28th of November, Ethel, having put together but a few things, — for she expected a speedy return, — stept into her travelling chariot, and began her journey to town. She was all delight at the idea of seeing Edward. She reproached herself for having so long delayed giving this proof of her earnest affection. She listened with beaming smiles to all her aunt's injunctions and cautions: and, the carriage once in motion, drawing her shawl round her, as she sat in the corner, looking on the despoiled yet clear prospect, her mind was filled with the most agreeable reveries — her heart soothed by the dearest anticipations.

To pay the post-horses — to gift the postillion herself, were all events for her: she felt proud. “Edward said, I must begin to learn the ways of the world; and this is my first lesson in economy and care,” she thought, as she put into the post-boy’s hand just double the sum he had ever received before. “And how good, and attentive, and willing every body is! I am sure women can very well travel alone. Every one is respectful, and desirous to serve,” was her next internal remark, as she undrew her little silken purse, to give a waiter half-a-crown, who had brought her a glass of water, and whose extreme alacrity struck her as so very kind-hearted.

Her spirits flagged as the day advanced. In spite of herself, an uneasy feeling diffused itself through her mind, when, the sun going down, a misty, chilly twilight crept over the landscape. Had she done right? she asked herself; would Edward indeed be glad to see her? She felt half frightened at her temerity — alarmed at the length of her journey — timid when she thought of the vast London she was about to enter, without any certain bourn. She supposed that Villiers went each day to his club, and she knew that he lodged in Duke street, St. James’s; but she was ignorant of the number of the house, and the street itself was unknown to her; she did not remember ever to have been in it in her life.

Her carriage entered labyrinthine London by Blackwall, and threaded the wilds of Lothbury. A dense and ever-thickening mist, palpable, yellow, and impervious to the eye, enveloped the whole town. Ethel had heard of a November fog; but she had never witnessed one, and the idea of it did not occur to her memory: she was half-frightened, thinking that some strange phænomena were going on, and fancying that her postillion was hurrying forward in terror. At last, in Cheapside, they stopped jammed up by carts and coaches; and then she contrived to make herself heard, asking what was the matter? The word “eclipse” hung upon her lips.

“Only, ma’am, the street has got blocked up like in the fog: we shall get on presently.”

The word “fog” solved the mystery; and again her thoughts were with Villiers. What a horrible place for him to live in! And he had been enduring all this wretchedness, while she was breathing the pure atmosphere of the country. Again they proceeded through the “murky air,” and through an infinitude of mischances; — the noise — the hubbub — the crowd, as she could distinguish it, as if veiled by dirty gauze, by the lights in the shops —

all agitated and vexed her. Through Fleet Street and the Strand they went; and it seemed as if their progress would never come to an end. The whole previous journey from Longfield was short in comparison to this tedious procession: twenty times she longed to get out and walk. At last they got free, and with a quicker pace drove up to the door of the Union Club, in Charing Cross.

The post-boy called one of the waiters to the carriage door; and Ethel asked—"Is Mr. Villiers here?"

"Mr. Villiers, ma'am, has left town."

Ethel was aghast. She had watched assiduously along the road; yet she had felt certain that if he had meant to come, she would have seen him on Sunday; and till this moment, she had not entertained a real doubt but that she should find him. She asked, falteringly, "When did he go?"

"Last week, ma'am: last Thursday, I think it was."

Ethel breathed again: the man's information must be false. She was too inexperienced to be aware that servants and common people have a singular tact in selecting the most unpleasant intelligence, and being very alert in communicating it. "Do you know," she inquired, "where Mr. Villiers lodges?"

"Can't say, indeed, ma'am; but the porter knows; — here, Saunders!"

No Saunders answered. "The porter is not in the way; but if you can wait, ma'am, he'll be back presently."

The waiter disappeared: the post-boy came up — he touched his hat. "Wait," said Ethel;—"we must wait a little;" and he removed himself to the horses' heads. Ethel sat in her lonely corner, shrouded by fog and darkness, watching every face as it passed under the lamp near, fancying that Edward might appear among them. The ugly faces that haunt, in quick succession, the imagination of one oppressed by night-mare, might vie with those that passed successively in review before Ethel. Most of them hurried on, looking neither to the right nor left. Some entered the house; some glanced at her carriage: one or two, perceiving a bonnet, evidently questioned the waiter. He stood there for her own service, Ethel thought; and she watched his every movement — his successive disappearances and returns — the people he talked to. Once she signed to him to come; but—"No, ma'am, the porter is not come back yet," — was all his answer. At last, after having stood, half whistling, for some five minutes, (it appeared to Ethel half-an-hour,) without having received any visible communication, he suddenly came up to the carriage door, saying, “The porter could not stay to speak to you, ma’am, he was in such a hurry. He says, Mr. Villiers lodges in Duke Street, St. James’s: he should know the house, but has forgotten the number.”

“Then I must wait till he comes back again. I knew all that before. Will he be long?”

“A long time, ma’am; two hours at least. He said that the woman of the house is a widow woman — Mrs. Derham.”

Thus, as if by torture, (but, as with the whipping boys of old, her’s was the torture, not the delinquent’s,) Ethel extracted some information from the stupid, conceited fellow. On she went to Duke Street, to discover Mrs. Derham’s residence. A few wrong doors were knocked at; and a beer-boy, at last, was the Mercury that brought the impatient, longing wife, to the threshold of her husband’s residence. Happy beer-boy! She gave him a sovereign: he had never been so rich in his life before; — such chance-medleys do occur in this strange world!

CHAPTER XV.

O my reviving joy! thy quickening presence
Makes the sad night
Sit like a youthful spring upon my blood.
I cannot make thy welcome rich enough
With all the wealth of words.
— Middleton.

The boy knocked at the door. A servant-girl opened it. “Does Mr. Villiers lodge here?” asked the postillion, from his horse.

“Yes,” said the girl.

“Open the door quickly, and let me out!” cried Ethel, as her heart beat fast and loud.

The door was opened — the steps let down — operations tedious beyond measures, as she thought. She got out, and was in the hall, going up stairs.

“Mr. Villiers is not at home,” said the maid.

Through the low blinds of the parlour window, Mrs. Derham had been watching what was going on. She heard what her servant said, and now came out. “Mr. Villiers is not at home,” she reiterated; “will you leave any message?”

“No; I will wait for him. Show me into his room.”

“I am afraid that it is locked,” answered Mrs. Derham repulsively: “perhaps you can call again. Who shall I say asked for him?”

“O no!” cried Ethel, “I must wait for him. Will you permit me to wait in your parlour? I am Mrs. Villiers.”

“I beg pardon,” said the good woman; “Mrs. Villiers is in the country.”

“And so I am,” replied Ethel—”at least, so I was this morning. Don’t you see my travelling carriage? — look; you may be sure that I am Mrs. Villiers.”

She took out of her little bag one of Edward’s letters, with the perusal of which she had beguiled much of her way to town. Mrs. Derham looked at the direction—”The Honourable Mrs. Villiers;” — her countenance brightened. Mrs. Derham was a little, plump, well-preserved woman of fifty-four or five. She was kind-hearted, and of course shared the worship for rank which possesses every heart born within the four seas. She was now all attention. Villiers’s room was open; he was expected very soon: —”He is so seldom out in an evening: it is very unlucky; but he must be back directly,” said Mrs. Derham, as she showed the way up the narrow staircase. Ethel reached the landing, and entered a room of tolerable dimensions, considerably encumbered with litter, which opened into a smaller room, with a tent bed. A little bit of fire glimmered in the grate. The whole place looked excessively forlorn and comfortless.

Mrs. Derham bustled about to bestow a little neatness on the room, saying something of the “untidiness of gentlemen,” and “so many lodgers in the house.” Ethel sat down she longed to be alone. There was the post-boy to be paid, and to be ordered to take the carriage to a coach-house; and then — Mrs. Derham asked her if she would not have something to eat: she herself was at tea, and offered a cup, which Ethel thankfully accepted, acknowledging that she had not eaten since the morning. Mrs. Derham was shocked. The rank, beauty, and sweet manners of Ethel had made a conquest, which her extreme youth redoubled. “So young a lady,” she said, “to go about alone: she did not know how to take care of herself, she was sure. She must have some supper: a roast chicken should be ready in an hour — by the time Mr. Villiers came in.”

“But the tea,” said Ethel, smiling; “you will let me have that now?”

Mrs. Derham hurried away on this hint, and the young wife was left alone. She had been married a year; but there was still a freshness about her feelings, which gave zest to every change in her wedded life. “This is where he has been living without me,” she thought; “Poor Edward! it does not look as if he were very comfortable.”

She rose from her seat, and began to arrange the books and papers. A glove of her husband’s lay on the table: she kissed it with a glad feeling of welcome. When the servant came in, she had the fire replenished — the hearth swept; and in a minute or two, the room had lost much of its disconsolate appearance. Then, with a continuation of her feminine love of order she arranged her own dress and hair; giving to her attire, as much as possible, an at-home appearance. She had just finished — just sat down, and begun to find the time long — when a quick, imperative knock at the door, which she recognized at once, made her heart beat, and her cheek grow pale. She heard a step — a voice — and Mrs. Derham answer—”Yes, sir; the fire is in — every thing comfortable;” — and Ethel opened the door, as she spoke, and in an instant was clasped in her husband’s arms.

It was not a moment whose joy could be expressed by words. He had been miserable during her absence, and had thought of sending for her; but he looked round his single room, remembered that he was in lodgings, and gave up his purpose with a bitter murmur: and here she was, uncalled for, but most welcome: she was here, in her youth, her loveliness, her sweetness: these were charms; but others more transcendent now attended on, and invested her; — the sacred tenderness of a wife had led her to his side; and love, in its most genuine and beautiful shape, shed an atmosphere of delight and worship about her. Not one circumstance could alloy the unspeakable bliss of their meeting. Poverty, and its humiliations, vanished from before the eyes of Villiers; he was overflowingly rich in the possession of her affections — her presence. Again and again he thanked her, in broken accents of expressive transport.

“Nothing in the whole world could make me unhappy now!” he cried; and Ethel, who had seen his face look elongated and gloomy at the moment he had entered, felt indeed that Medea, with all her potent herbs, was less of a magician than she, in the power of infusing the sparkling spirit of life into one human frame. It was long before either were coherent in their inquiries and replies. There was nothing, indeed, that either wished to know. Life, and its purposes, were fulfilled, rounded, complete, without a flaw. They loved, and were together — together, not for a transitory moment, but for the whole duration of the eternity of love, which never could be exhausted in their hearts.

After more than an hour spent in gradually becoming acquainted and familiar with the transporting change, from separate loneliness to mutual society and sympathy, the good-natured face of Mrs. Derham showed itself, to announce that Ethel’s supper was ready. These words brought back to Edward’s recollection his wife’s journey, and consequent fatigues: he grew more desirous than Mrs. Derham to feed his poor famished bird, whose eyes, in spite of the joy that shone in them, began to look languid, and whose cheek was pale. The little supper-table was laid, and they sat down together.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu has recorded the pleasure to be reaped "When we meet with champagne and a chicken at last;" and perhaps social life contains no combination so full of enjoyment as a tête-à-tête supper. Here it was, with its highest zest. They feared no prying eyes — they knew no ill: it was not a scanty hour of joy snatched from an age of pain — a single spark illuminating a long blank night. It came after separation, and possessed, therefore, the charm of novelty; but it was the prelude to a long reunion — the seal set on their being once again joined, to go through together each hour of the livelong day. Full of unutterable thankfulness and gladness, as were the minds of each, there was, besides, "A sacred and home-felt delight, A sober certainty of waking bliss," which is the crown and fulfilment of perfect human happiness. "Imparadised" by each other's presence — no doubt — no fear of division on the morrow-no dread of untoward event, suspicion, or blame, clouded the balmy atmosphere which their hearts created around them. No. Eden was required to enhance their happiness; there needed no "Crisped brooks, Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold;" — no "Happy, rural seat, with various view," decked with "Flowers of all hue," "All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;" — nor "cool recess," nor "Vernal airs, Breathing the smell of field and grove." In their narrow abode — their nook of a room, cut off from the world, redolent only of smoke and fog — their two fond hearts could build up bowers of delight, and store them with all of ecstasy which the soul of man can know, without any assistance of eye, or ear, or scent. So rich, and prodigal, and glorious, in its gifts, is faithful and true-hearted love, — when it knows the sacrifices which it must make to merit them, and consents willingly to forego vanity, selfishness, and the exactions of self-will, in unlimited and unregretted exchange.

Mutual esteem and gratitude sanctified the unreserved sympathy which made each so happy in the other. Did they love the less for not loving "in sin and fear?" Far from it. The certainty of being the cause of good to each other tended to foster the most delicate of all passions, more than the rougher ministrations of terror, and a knowledge that each was the occasion of injury to the other. A woman's heart is peculiarly unfitted to sustain this conflict. Her sensibility gives keenness to her imagination, and she magnifies every peril, and writhes beneath every sacrifice which tends to humiliate her in her own eyes. The natural pride of her sex struggles with her desire to confer happiness, and her peace is wrecked.

Far different was the happy Ethel's situation — far otherwise were her thoughts employed than in concealing the pangs of care and shame. The sense of right adorned the devotion of love. She read approbation in Edward's eyes, and drew near him in full consciousness of deserving it. They sat at their supper, and long after, by the cheerful fire, talking of a thousand things connected with the present and the future — the long, long future which they were to spend together; and every now and then their eyes sparkled with the gladness of renewed delight in seeing each other. "Mine, my own, for ever!" — And was this exultation in possession to be termed selfish? by no other reasoning surely, than that used by a cold and meaningless philosophy, which gives this name to generosity and truth, and all the nobler passions of the soul. They congratulated themselves on this mutual property, partly because it had been a free gift one to the other; partly because they looked forward to the right it ensured to each, of conferring mutual benefits; and partly through the instinctive love God has implanted for that which, being ours, is become the better part of ourselves. They were united for "better and worse," and there was a sacredness in the thought of the "worse" they might share, which gave a mysterious and celestial charm to the present "better."

CHAPTER XVII.

Do you not think yourself truly happy?
You have the abstract of all sweetness by you.
The precious wealth youth labours to arrive at.
Nor is she less in honour than in beauty.
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

The following day was one of pouring, unintermitting rain. Villiers and Ethel drew their chairs near their cheerful fire, and were happy. Edward could not quite conquer his repugnance to seeing his wife in lodgings, and in those also of so mean and narrow a description. But the spirit of Ethel was more disencumbered of earthly particles: that had found its rest in the very home of Love. The rosy light of the divinity invested all things for her. Cleopatra on the Cydnus, in the bark which—"Like a burnished throne Burnt on the water," borne along "By purple sails ... ... So perfumed, that The winds were love-sick with them;" was not more gorgeously attended than Ethel was to her own fancy, lapped and cradled in all that love has of tender, voluptuous, and confiding.

Several days past before Villiers could withdraw her from this blissful dream, to gaze upon the world as it was. He could not make her disgusted with her fortunes nor her abode, but he awakened anxiety on his own account. His father, as he had conjectured, was gone to Paris, leaving merely a message for his son, that he would willingly join him in any act for raising money, by mortgage or the absolute disposal of a part of the estate. Edward had consulted with his solicitor, who was to look over a vast variety of papers, to discover the most eligible mode of making some kind of sale. Delay, in all its various shapes, waited on these arrangements; and Villiers was very averse to leaving town till he held some clue to the labyrinth of obstacles which presented themselves at every turn. He talked of their taking a house in town; but Ethel would not hear of such extravagance. In the first place, their actual means were at a very low ebb, with little hope of a speedy supply. There was another circumstance, the annoyance of which he understood far better than Ethel could. He had raised money on annuities, the interest of which he was totally unable to pay; this exposed him to a personal risk of the most disagreeable kind, and he knew that his chief creditor was on the point of resorting to harsh measures against him. These things, dingy-visaged, dirty-handed realities as they were, made a strange contrast with Ethel's feeling of serene and elevated bliss; but she, with unshrinking heart, brought the same fortitude and love into the crooked and sordid ways of modern London, which had adorned heroines of old, as they wandered amids trackless forests, and over barren mountains.

Several days passed, and the weather became clear, though cold. The young pair walked together in the parks at such morning hours as would prevent their meeting any acquaintances, for Edward was desiours that it should not be known that they were in town. Villiers also traced his daily, weary, disappointing way to his solicitor, where he found things look more blank and dismal each day. Then when evening came, and the curtains were drawn, they might have been at the top of Mount Caucasus, instead of in the centre of London, so completely were they cut off from every thing except each other. They then felt absolutely happy: the lingering disgusts of Edward were washed clean away by the bounteous, everspringing love, that flowed, as waters from a fountain, from the heart of Ethel, in one perpetual tide.

In those hours of unchecked talk, she learned many things she had not known before — the love of Horatio Saville for Lady was revealed to her; but the story was not truly told, for the prejudices as well as the ignorance of Villiers rendered him blind to the sincerity of Cornelia's affection and regret. Ethel wondered, and in spite of the charm with which she delighted to invest the image of her mother, she could not help agreeing with her husband that she must be irrevocably wedded to the most despicable worldly feelings, so to have played with the heart of a man such as Horatio: a man, whose simplest word bore the stamp of truth and genius; one of those elected few whom nature elevats to her own high list of nobility and greatness. How could she, a simple girl, interest feelings which were not alive to Saville's merits? She could only hope that in some dazzling marriage Lady Lodore would find a compensation for the higher destiny which might have been hers, but that, like the “base Indian,” she had thrown “A pearl away, Richer than all his tribe.”

There was a peaceful quiet in their secluded and obscure life, which somewhat resembled the hours spent on board ship, when you long for, yet fear, the conclusion of the voyage, and shrink involuntarily from exchanging a state, whose chief blessing is an absence of every care, for the variety of pains and pleasures which chequer life. Ethel possessed her all — so near, so undivided, so entirely her own, that she could not enter into Villiers’s impatience, nor quite sympathize with the disquietude he could not repress. After considerable delays, his solicitor informed him that his father had so entirely disposed of all his interest in the property, that his readiness to join in any act of sale would be useless. The next thing to be done was for Edward to sell a part of his expectations, and the lawyer promised to find a purchaser, and begged to see him three days hence, when no doubt he should have some proposal to communicate.

Whoever has known what such things are — whoever has waited on the demurs and objections, and suffered the alternations of total failure and suddenly renewed hopes, which are the Tantalus-food held to the lips of those under the circumstances of Villiers, can follow in imagination his various conferences with his solicitor, as day after day something new was discovered, still to drag on, or to impede, the tortoise pace of his negociations. It will be no matter of wonder to such, that a month instead of three days wasted away, and found him precisely in the same position, with hopes a little raised, though so frequently blasted, and nothing done.

In recording the annoyances, or rather the adversity which the young pair endured at this period, a risk is run, on the one hand, of being censured for bringing the reader into contact with degrading and sordid miseries; and on the other, of laying too much stress on circumstances which will appear to those in a lower sphere of life, as scarcely deserving the name of misfortune. It is very easy to embark on the wild ocean of romance, and to steer a danger-fraught passage, amidst giant perils, — the very words employed, excite the imagination, and give grace to the narrative. But all beautiful and fairylike as was Ethel Villiers, in tracing her fortunes, it is necessary to descend from such altitudes, to employ terms of vulgar use, and to describe scenes of common-place and debasing interest; so that, if she herself, in her youth and feminine tenderness, does not shed light and holiness around her, we shall grope darkling, and fail utterly in the scope which we proposed to ourselves in selecting her history for the entertainment of the reader.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I saw her upon nearer view.
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles.
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
— Wordsworth.

The end of December had come. New year's day found and left them still in Duke Street. On the 4th of January Villiers received a letter from his uncle, Lord Maristow, entrusting a commission to him, which obliged him to go to the neighbourhood of Egham. Not having a horse, he went by the stage. He set out so late in the day that there was no chance of his returning the same night; and he promised to be back early on the morrow. Ethel had letters to write to Italy and to her aunt; and with these she tried to beguile the time. She felt lonely; the absence of Villiers for so many hours engendered an anxiety, which she found some difficulty in repressing. Accustomed to have him perpetually at her side, and without any other companion or resource, she repined at her solitude. There was his empty chair, and no hope that he would occupy it; and she sat in her little room so near to thousands, and yet so cut off from every one, with such a sense of desolation as Mungo Park might have felt in central Africa, or a shipwrecked mariner on an uninhabited island.

Her pen was taken up, but she did not write. She could not command her thoughts to express any thing but the overflowing, devoted, allengrossing affection of her heart, her adoration for her husband; that would not amuse Lucy, — she thought: and she had commenced another sheet with "My dearest Aunt," when the maid-servant ushered a man into her presence — a stranger, a working man. What could he want with her? He seemed confused, and stammered out, "Mr. Villiers is not in?"

"He will be at home to-morrow, if you want him; or have you any message that I can give?"

"You are Mrs. Villiers, ma'am?"

"Yes, my good man, I am Mrs. Villiers."

"If you please, ma'am, I am Saunders, one of the porters at the Union Club."

"I remember: has any message come there? or does Mr. Villiers owe you any money?" and her purse was in her hand.

"O no, ma'am. Mr. Villiers is a good gentleman; and he has been petiklar generous to me — and that is why I come, because I am afraid," continued the man, lowering his tone, "that he is in danger."

"Good heavens! Where? how?" cried Ethel, starting from her chair. "tell me at once."

"Yes, ma'am, I will; so you must know that this evening—" "Yes, this evening. What has happened? he left me at six o'clock — what is it?"

"Nothing, I hope, this evening, ma'am. I am only afraid for to-morrow morning. And I will tell you all I know, as quick as ever I can."

The man then proceeded to relate, that some one had been inquiring about Mr. Villiers at the Club House. One of the servants had told him that he lived in Duke Street, St. James's, and that was all he knew; but Saunders came up, and the man questioned him. He instantly recognized the fellow, and knew what his business must be. And he tried to deceive him, and declared that Mr. Villiers was gone out of town; but the fellow said that he knew better than that; and that he had been seen that very day in the Strand. He should look for him, no thanks to Saunders, in Duke Street. "And so, ma'am, you see they'll be sure to be here early to-morrow morning. So don't let Mr. Villiers stay here, on no account whatsomever."

"Why?" asked Ethel, simply; "they can't hurt him."

"I am sure, ma'am," said Saunders, his face brightening, "I am very glad to hear that — you know best. They will arrest him for sure, but—" "Arrest him!"

"Yes, ma'am, for I've seen the tall one before. There were two of them — bailiffs."

Ethel now began to tremble violently; these were strange, cabalistic words to her, the more awful from their mystery. "What am I to do?" she exclaimed; “Mr. Villiers will be here in the morning, he sleeps at Egham, and will be here early; I must go to him directly.”

“I am glad to hear he is so far,” said Saunders; “and if I can be of any use you have but to say it; shall I go to Egham? there are night coaches that go through, and I might warn him.”

Ethel thought — she feared to do any thing — she imagined that she should be watched, that all her endeavours would be of no avail. She looked at the man, honesty was written on his face; but there was no intelligence, nothing to tell her that his advice was good. The possibility of such an event as the present had never occurred to her. Villiers had been silent with regard to his fears on this head. She was suddenly transported into a strange sea, hemmed in by danger, without a pilot or knowledge of a passage. Again she looked at the man’s face: “What is best to be done!” she exclaimed.

“I am sure, ma’am” he replied, as if she had asked him the question, “I think what I said is best, if you will tell me where I can find Mr. Villiers. I should think nothing of going, and he could send word by me what he wished you to do.”

“Yes, that would indeed be a comfort. I will write three lines, and you shall take them.” In a moment she had written. “Give this note into his own hand, he will sleep there — I have written the direction of the house — or at some inn, at Egham. Do not rest till you have given the letter, and here is for your trouble.” She held out two sovereigns.

“Depend on me, ma’am; and I will bring an answer to you by nine in the morning. Mr. Villiers will pay me what he thinks fit — you may want your money. Only, ma’am, don’t be frightened when them men come to-morrow — if the people here are good sort of folks, you had better give them a hint — it may save you trouble.”

“Thank you: you are a good man, and I will remember you, and reward you. By nine to-morrow — you will be punctual?”

The man again assured her that he would use all diligence, and took his leave.

Ethel felt totally overwhelmed by these tidings. The unknown is always terrible, and the ideas of arrest, and prison, and bolts, and bars, and straw, floated before her imagination. Was Villiers safe even where he was? Would not the men make inquiries, learn where he had gone, and follow him, even if it were to the end of the world? She had heard of the activity empolyed to arrest criminals, and mingled every kind of story in her head, till she grew desperate from terror. Not knowing what else to do, she became eager for Mrs. Derham's advice, and hurried down stairs to ask it.

She had not seen much of the good lady since her first arrival. Every day, when Villiers went out, she came up, indeed, on the momentous question of "orders for dinner;" and then she bestowed the benefit of some five or ten minutes garrulity on her fair lodger. Ethel learnt that she had seen better days, and that were justice done her, she ought to be riding in her coach, instead of letting lodgings. She learnt that she had a married daughter living at Kennington: poor enough, but struggling on cheerfully with her mother's help. The best girl in the world she was, and a jewel of a wife, and had two of the most beautiful children that ever were beheld.

This was all that Ethel knew, except that once Mrs. Derham had brought her one of her grandchildren to be seen and admired. In all that the good woman said, there was so much kindness, such a cheerful endurance of the ills of life, and she had shown such a readiness to oblige, that the idea of applying to her for advice, relieved Ethel's mind of much of its load of anxiety.

She was too much agitated to think of ringing for the servant, to ask to see her; but hurried down stairs, and knocked at the parlour-door almost before she was aware of what she was doing. "Come in," said a feminine voice. Ethel entered, and started to see one she knew; — and yet again she doubted; — was it indeed Fanny Derham whom she beheld?

The recognition afforded mutual pleasure: checked a little on Ethel's part, by her anxieties; and on Fanny's, by a feeling that she had been neglected by her friend. A few letters had passed between them, when first Ethel had visited Longfield: since then their correspondence had been discontinued till after her return to England, from Italy, when Mrs. Villiers had wrote; but her letter was returned by the postoffice, no such person being to be found according to the address.

The embarrassment of the moment passed away. Ethel forgot, or rather did not advert to, her friend's lowly destiny, in the joy of meeting her again. After a minute or two, also, they had become familiar with the change that time had operated in their youthful appearance, which was not much, and most in Ethel. Her marriage, and conversance with the world, had changed her into a woman, and endowed her with easy manners and self-possession.

Fanny was still a mere girl; tall, beyond the middle height, yet her young, ingenuous countenance was unaltered, as well as that singular mixture of mildness and independence, in her manners, which had always characterized her. Her light blue eyes beamed with intelligence, and her smile expressed the complacency and condescension of a superior being. Her beauty was all intellectual: open, sincere, passionless, yet benignant, you approached her without fear of encountering any of the baser qualities of human beings, — their hypocrisy, or selfishness. Those who have seen the paintings of the calm-visaged, blue-eyed deities of the frescos of Pompeii, may form an idea of the serene beauty of Fanny Derham.

When Mrs. villiers entered, she was reading earnestly — a large dictionary open before her. The book on which she was intent was in Greek characters. "You have not forgotten your old pursuits," said Ethel, smiling.

"Say rather I am more wedded to them than ever," she replied; "since, more than ever, I need them to give light and glory to a dingy world. But you, dear Ethel, if so I may call you, — you looked anxious as you entered: you wish to speak to my mother; — she is gone to Kennington, and will not return to-night. Can I be of any use?"

Her mother! how strange! and Mrs. Derham, while she had dilated with pride on her elder daughter, had never mentioned this pearl of price, which was her's also.

"Alas! I fear not!" replied Ethel; "it is experience I need — experience in things you can know nothing about, nor your mother either, probably; yet she may have heard of such things, and know how to advise me."

Mrs. Villiers then explained the sources of her disquietude. Fanny listened with looks of the kindest sympathy. "Even in such things," she said, "I have had experience. Adversity and I are become very close friends since I last saw you: we are intimate, and I know much good of her; so she is grateful, and repays me by prolonging her stay. Be composed: no ill will happen, I trust, to Mr. Villiers; — at least you need not be afraid of his being pursued. It the man you have sent be active and faithful, all will be well. I will see these troublesome people to-morrow, when they come, and prevent your being annoyed. If Saunders returns early, and brings tidings of Mr. Villiers, you will know what his wishes are. You can do nothing more to-night; and there is every probability that all will be well."

“Do you really think so?” cried Mrs. Villiers. “O that I had gone with him! — never will I again let him go any where without me.”

Fanny entered into more minute explanations, and succeeded, to a great degree, in calming her friend. She accompanied her back to her own room, and sat with her long. She entered into the details of her own history: — the illness and death of her father; the insulting treatment her mother had met from his family; the kindness of a relation of her own, who had assisted them, and enabled them to pursue their present mode of life, which procured them a livelihood. Fanny spoke generally of these circumstances, and in a spirit that seemed to disdain that such things were; not because they were degrading in the eyes of others, but because they interfered with the philosophic leisure, and enjoyment of nature, which she so dearly prized. She thought nothing of privation, or the world’s impertinence; but much of being immured in the midst of London, and being forced to consider the inglorious necessities of life. Her desire to be useful to her mother induced her often to spend precious time in “making the best of things,” which she would readily have dispensed with altogether, as the easiest, as well as the wisest, way of freeing herself from their trammels. Her narration interested Ethel, and served to calm her mind. She thought —”Can I not bear those cares with equanimity for Edward’s sake, which Fanny regards as so trivial, merely because Plato and Epictetus bid her do so? Will not the good God, who has implanted in her heart so cheerless a consolation, bring comfort to mine, which has no sorrow but for another’s sake?”

These reflections tranquillized her, when she laid her head on her pillow at night. She resigned her being and destiny to a Power superior to any earthly authority, with a conviction, that its most benign influence would be extended over her.

VOL. III.

CHAPTER I.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought.
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought;
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
— Shakspeare.

The still hours of darkness passed silently away, and morning dawned, when All rose to do the task, he set to each Who shaped us to his ends, and not our own. Ethel had slept peacefully through the livelong night; nor woke till a knock at her door roused her. A rush of fear — a sense of ill, made her heart palpitate as she opened her eyes to the light of day. While she was striving to recall her thoughts, and to remember what the evil was with which she was threatened, again the servant tapped at her door, to say that Saunders had returned, and to deliver the letter he had brought. She looked at her watch: it was past ten o'clock. She felt glad that it had grown so late, and she not disturbed: yet as she took the letter brought to her from her husband, all her tremor returned; and she read it with agitation, as if it contained the announcement of her final doom.

"You send me disagreeable tidings, my sweet Ethel," wrote Villiers,—"I hope unfounded; but caution is necessary: I shall not, therefore, come to Duke Street. Send me a few lines, by Saunders, to tell me if any thing has happened. If what he apprehended has really taken place, you must bear, my love, the separation of a day. You do not understand these things, and will wonder when I tell you, that when the clock strikes twelve on Saturday night, the magic spells and potent charms of Saunders's friends cease to have power: at that hour I shall be restored to you. Wait till then — and then we will consult for the future. Have patience, dearest love: you have wedded poverty, hardship, and annoyance; but, joined to these, is the fondest, the most faithful heart in the world; — a heart you deign to prize, so I will not repine at ill fortune. Adieu, till this evening; — and then, as Belvidera says, 'Remember twelve!'

"Saturday Morning."

After reading these lines, Ethel dressed herself hastily. Fanny Derham had already asked permission to see her; and she found her waiting in her sitting-room. It was an unspeakable comfort to have one as intelligent and kind as Fanny, to communicate with, during Edward's absence. The soft, pleading eyes of Ethel asked her for comfort and counsel; and, in spite of her extreme youth, the benignant and intelligent expression of Fanny's countenance promised both.

"I am sorry to say," she said, "that Saunders's prognostics are too ture. Such men as he describes have been here this morning. They were tolerably civil, and I convinced them, with greater ease than I had hoped, that Mr. Villiers was absent from the house; and I assured them, that after this visit of theirs, he was not likely to return."

"And do you really believe that they were" — Ethel faltered.

"Bailiffs? Assuredly," replied Fanny: "they told me that they had the power to search the house; but if they were 'strong,' they were also 'merciful.' And now, what do you do? Saunders tells me he is waiting to take back a letter to Mr. Villiers, at the London Coffee House. Write quickly, while I make your breakfast."

Ethel gladly obeyed. She wrote a few words to her husband. That it was already Saturday, cheered her: twelve at night would soon come.

After her note was dispatched, she addressed Fanny. "What trouble I give," she said: "what will your mother think of such degrading proceedings?"

"My mother," said Fanny, "is the kindest-hearted woman in the world. We have never exactly suffered this disaster; but we are in a rank of life which causes us to be brought into contact with such among our friends and relations; and she is familiar with trouble in almost all shapes. You are a great favourite of hers; and now that she can claim a sort of acquaintance, she will be heart and soul your friend."

"It is odd," observed Ethel, "that she never mentioned you to me. Had the name of Fanny been mentioned, I should have recollected who Mrs. Derham was."

“Perhaps not,” said Fanny; “it would have required a great effort of the imagination to have fancied Mrs. Derham the wife of my father. You never knew him; but Lord made you familiar with his qualities: the most shrinking susceptibility to the world’s scorn, joined to the most entire abstraction from all that is vulgar; a morbid sensibility and delicate health placed him in glaring contrast with my mother. They never in the least assimilated; and her character has gained in excellence since his loss. Before she was fretted and galled by his finer feelings — now she can be good in her own way. Nothing reminds her of his exalted sentiments, except myself; and she is willing enough to forget me.”

“And you do not repine?” asked her friend.

“I do not: she is happy in and with Sarah. I should spoil their notions of comfort, did I mingle with them; — they would torture and destroy me, did they interfere with me. I lost my guide, preserver, my guardian angel, when my father died. Nothing remains but the philosophy which he taught me — the disdain of lowthoughted care which he sedulously cultivated: this, joined to my cherished independence, which my disposition renders necessary to me.”

“And thus you foster sorrow, and waste your life in vain regrets?”

“Pardon me! I do not waste my life,” replied Fanny, with her sunny smile;—”nor am I unhappy — far otherwise. An ardent thirst for knowledge, is as the air I breathe; and the acquisition of it, is pure and unalloyed happiness. I aspire to be useful to my fellow-creatures: but that is a consideration for the future, when fortune shall smile on me; now I have but one passion; it swallows up every other; it dwells with my darling books, and is fed by the treasures of beauty and wisdom which they contain.”

Ethel could not understand. Fanny continued:—”I aspire to be useful; — sometimes I think I am — once I know I was. I was my father’s almoner.

“We lived in a district where there was a great deal of distress, and a great deal of oppression. We had no money to give, but I soon found that determination and earnestness will do much. Is was my father’s lesson, that I should never fear any thing but myself. He taught me to penetrate, to anatomize, to purify my motives; but once assured of my own integrity, to be afraid of nothing. Words have more power than any one can guess; it is by words that the world’s great fight, now in these civilized times, is carried on; I never hesitated to use them, when I fought any battle for the miserable and oppressed. People are so afraid to speak, it would seem as if half our fellow-creatures were born with deficient organs; like parrots they can repeat a lesson, but their voice fails them, when that alone is wanting to make the tyrant quail."

As Fanny spoke, her blue eyes brightened, and a smile irradiated her face; these were all the tokens of enthusiasm she displayed, yet her words moved Ethel strangely, and she looked on her with wonder as a superior being. Her youth gave grace to her sentiments, and were an assurance of their sincerity. She continued: —

"I am becoming flightly, as my mother calls it; but, as I spoke, many scenes of cottage distress passed through my memory, when, holding my father's hand, I witnessed his endeavours to relieve the poor. That is all over now — he is gone, and I have but one consolation — that of endeavouring to render myself worthy to rejoin him in a better world. It is this hope that impels me continually and without any flagging of spirit, to cultivate my understanding and to refine it. O what has this life to give, as worldlings describe it, worth one of those glorious emotions, which raise me from this petty sphere, into the sun-bright regions of mind, which my father inhabits! I am rewarded even here by the elevated feelings which the authors, whom I love so passionately, inspire; while I converse each day with Plato, and Cicero, and Epictetus, the world, as it is, passes from before me like a vain shadow."

These enthusiastic words were spoken with so calm a manner, and in so equable a voice, that there seemed nothing strange nor exaggerated in them. It is vanity and affectation that shock, or any manifestation of feeling not in accordance with the real character. But while we follow our natural bent, and only speak that which our minds spontaneously inspire, there is a harmony, which, however novel, is never grating. Fanny Derham spoke of things, which, to use her own expression, were to her as the air she breathed, and the simplicity of her manner entirely obviated the wonder which the energy of her expressions might occasion.

Such a woman as Fanny was more made to be loved by her own sex than by the opposite one. Superiority of intellect, joined to acquisitions beyond those usual even to men; and both announced with frankness, though without pretension, forms a kind of anomaly little in accord with masculine taste. Fanny could not be the rival of women, and, therefore, all her merits were appreciated by them. They love to look up to a superior being, to rest on a firmer support than their own minds can afford; and they are glad to find such in one of their own sex, and thus destitute of those dangers which usually attend any services conferred by men.

From talk like this, they diverged to subjects nearer to the heart of Ethel. They spoke of Lord , and her father's name soothed her agitation even more than the consolatory arguments of her friend. She remembered how often he had talked of the trials to which the constancy of her temper and the truth of her affection might be put, and she felt her courage rise to encounter those now before her, without discontent, or rather with that cheerful fortitude, which sheds grace over the rugged form of adversity.

CHAPTER II.

Marian. Could you so long be absent?
Robin. What a week?
Was that so long?
Marian. How long are lovers' weeks.
Do you think, Robin, when they are asunder?
Are they not pris'ners' years?
— Ben Jonson.

The day passed on more lightly than Ethel could have hoped; much of it indeed was gone before she opened her eyes to greet it. Night soon closed in, and she busied herself with arrangements for the welcome of her husband. Fanny loved solitude too well herself not to believe that others shared her taste. She retired therefore when evening commenced. No sooner was Ethel alone, than every image except Edward's passed out of her mind. Her heart was bursting with affection. Every other idea and thought, to use a chemical expression, was held in solution by that powerful feeling, which mingled and united with every particle of her soul. She could not write nor read; if she attempted, before she had finished the shortest sentence, she found that her understanding was wandering, and she re-read it with no better success. It was as if a spring, a gush from the fountain of love poured itself in, bearing away every object which she strove to throw upon the stream of thought, till its own sweet waters alone filled the channel through which it flowed. She gave herself up to the bewildering influence, and almost forgot to count the hours till Edward's expected arrival. At last it was ten o'clock, and then the sting of impatience and uncertainty was felt. It appeared to her as if a whole age had passed since she had seen or heard of him — as if countless events and incalculable changes might have taken place. She read again and again his note, to assure herself that she might really expect him: the minutes meanwhile stood still, or were told heavily by the distinct beating of her heart. The east wind bore to her ear the sound of the quarters of hours, as they chimed from various churches. At length eleven, half-past eleven was passed, and the hand of her watch began to climb slowly upwards toward the zenith, which she desired so ardently that it should reach. She gazed on the dial-plate, till she fancied that the pointers did not move; she placed her hands before her eyes resolutely, and would not look for a long long time; three minutes had not been travelled over when again she viewed it; she tried to count her pulse, as a measurement of time; her trembling fingers refused to press the fluttering artery. At length another quarter of an hour elapsed, and then the succeeding one hurried on more speedily. Clock after clock struck; they mingled their various tones, as the hour of twelve was tolled throughout London. It seemed as if they would never end. Silence came at last — a brief silence succeeded by a firm quick step in the street below, and a knock at the door. "Is he not too soon?" poor fearful Ethel asked herself. But no; and in a moment after, he was with her, safe in her glad embrace.

Perhaps of the two, Villiers showed himself the most enraptured at this meeting. He gazed on his sweet wife, followed every motion, and hung upon her voice, with all the delight of an exile, restored to his long-lost home. "What a transporting change," he said, "to find myself with you — to see you in the same room with me — to know again that, lovely and dear as you are, that you are mine — that I am again myself — not the miserable dog that has been wandering about all day — a body without a soul! For a few short hours, at least, Ethel will call me hers."

"Indeed, indeed, love," she replied, "we will not be separated again."

"We will not even think about that tonight," said Villiers. "The future is dark and blank, the present as radiant as your own sweet self can make it."

On the following day — and the following day did come, in spite of Ethel's wishes, which would have held back the progress of time: it came and passed away; hour after hour stealing along, till it dwindled to a mere point. On the following day, they consulted earnestly on what was to be done. Villiers was greatly averse to Ethel's leaving her present abode, where every one was so very kind and attentive to her, and he was sanguine in his hopes of obtaining in the course of the week, just commenced, a sum, sufficient to carry them to Paris or Brussels, were they could remain till his affairs were finally arranged, and the payment of his debts regulated in a way to satisfy his creditors. One week of absence; Villiers used all his persuasion to induce Ethel to submit to it. “Where you can be, I can be also,” was her answer; and she listened unconvinced to the detail of the inconveniences which Villiers pointed out: at last he almost got angry. “I could call you unkind, Ethel,” he said, “not to yield to me.”

“I will yield to you,” said Ethel, “but you are wrong to ask me.”

“Never mind that,” replied her husband, “do concede this point, dearest; if not because it is best that you should, then because I wish it, and ask it of you. You say that your first desire is to make me happy, and you pain me exceedingly by your — I had almost said perverseness.”

Thus, not convinced, but obedient, Ethel agreed to allow him to depart alone. She bargained that she should be permitted to come each day in a hackney coach to a place where he might meet her, and they could spend an hour or two together. Edward did not like this plan at all, but there was no remedy. “You are at least resolved,” he said, “to spur my endeavours; I will not rest day or night, till I am enabled to get away from this vast dungeon.”

The hours stole on. Even Edward’s buoyant spirits could not bear up against the sadness of watching the fleeting moments till the one should come, which must separate him from his wife. “This nice, dear room,” he said, “I am sure I beg its pardon for having despised it so much formerly — it is not as lofty as a church, nor as grand as a palace, but it is very snug; and now you are in it, I discern even elegance in its exceedingly queer tables and chairs. When our carriage broke down on the Apennines, how glad we should have been if a room like this had risen, ‘like an exhalation’ for our shelter! Do you remember the barn of a place we got into there, and our droll bed of the leaves of Indian corn, which crackled all night long, and awoke us twenty times with the fear of robbers? Then, indeed, twelve o’clock was not to separate us!”

As he said this he sighed; the hour of eleven was indicated by Ethel’s watch, and still he lingered; but she grew frightened for him, and forced him to go away, while he besought the delay of but a few minutes.

Ethel exerted herself to endure as well as she could the separation of the ensuing week. She was not of a repining disposition, yet she found it very hard to bear. The discomfort to which Villiers was exposed annoyed her, and the idea that she was not permitted to alleviate it added to her painful feelings. In her prospect of life every evil was neutralized when shared — now they were doubled, because the pain of absence from each other was superadded. She did not yield to her husband, in her opinion that this was wrong. She was willing to go anywhere with him, and where he was, she also could be. There could be no degradation in a wife waiting on the fallen fortunes of her husband. No debasement can arise from any services dictated by love. It is despicable to submit to hardship for unworthy and worldly objects, but every thing that is suffered for the sake of affection, is hallowed by the disinterested sentiment, and affords triumph and delight to the willing victim. Sometimes she tried in speech or on paper to express these feelings, and so by the force of irresistible reasoning to persuade Edward to permit her to join him; but all argument was weak; there was something beyond, that no words could express, which was stronger than any reason in her heart. Who can express the power of faithful and single-hearted love? As well attempt to define the laws of life, which occasions a continuity of feeling from the brain to the extremity of the frame, as try to explain how love can so unite two souls, as to make each feel maimed and half alive, while divided. A powerful impulse was perpetually urging Ethel to go — to place herself near Villiers — to refuse to depart. It was with the most violent struggles that she overcame the instigation.

She never could forget herself while away from him, or find the slightest alleviation to her disquietude, except while conversing with Fanny Derham, or rather while drawing her out, and listening to her, and wondering at a mechanism of mind so different from her own. Each had been the favourite daughter of men of superior qualities of mind. They had been educated by their several fathers with the most sedulous care, and nothing could be more opposite than the result, except that, indeed, both made duty the master motive of their actions. Ethel had received, so to speak, a sexual education. Lord had formed his ideal of what a woman ought to be, of what he had wished to find his wife, and sought to mould his daughter accordingly. Mr. Derham contemplated the duties and objects befitting an immortal soul, and had educated his child for the performance of them. The one fashioned his offspring to be the wife of a frail human being, and instructed her to be yielding, and to make it her duty to devote herself to his happiness, and to obey his will. The other sought to guard his from all weakness, to make her complete in herself, and to render her independent and self-sufficing. Born to poverty as Fanny was, it was thus only that she could find happiness in rising above her sphere; and, besides, a sense of pride, surviving his sense of injury, caused him to wish that his child should set her heart on higher things, than the distinctions and advantages of riches or rank; so that if ever brought into collision with his own family, she could look down with calm superiority on the "low ambition" of the wealthy. While Ethel made it her happiness and duty to give herself away with unreserved prodigality to him, whom she thought had every claim to her entire devotion; Fanny zealously guarded her individuality, and would have scorned herself could she have been brought to place the treasures of her soul at the disposal of any power, except those moral laws which it was her earnest endeavour never to transgress. Religion, reason, and justice — these were the landmarks of her life. She was kind-hearted, generous, and true — so also was Ethel; but the one was guided by the tenderness of her heart, while the other consulted her understanding, and would have died rather than have acted contrary to its dictates.

To guard Ethel from every contamination, Lord had secluded her from all society, and forestalled every circumstance that might bring her into conjunction with her fellow-creatures. He was equally careful to prevent her fostering any pride, except that of sex; and never spoke to her as if she were of an elevated rank: and the communication, however small, which she necessarily had with the Americans, made such ideas foreign to her mind. But she was excedingly shy; tremblingly alive to the slightest repulse; and never perfectly fearless, (morally so, that is), except when under the shelter of another's care. Fanny's first principle was, that what she ought to do, that she could do, without hesitation or regard for obstacles. She had something Quixotic in her nature; or rather she would have had, if a clear head and some experience, even young as she was, had not stood in the way of her making any glaring mistakes; so that her enterprises were never ridiculous; and being usually successful, could not be called extravagant. For herself, she needed but her liberty and her books; — for others, she had her time, her thoughts, her decided and resolute modes of action, all at their command, whenever she was convinced that they had a just claim upon them.

It was singular that the resolute and unshrinking Fanny should be the daughter of Francis Derham; and the timid, retiring Ethel, of his bold and daring protector. But this is no uncommon case. We feel the evil results of our own faults, and endeavour to guard our children from them; forgetful that the opposite extreme has also its peculiar dangers. Lord attributed his early misfortunes to the too great freedom he had enjoyed, or rather to the unlimited scope given to his will, from his birth. Mr. Derham saw the unhappiness that had sprung from his own yielding and undecided disposition. The one brought up his child to dependence; the other taught his to disdain every support, except the applause of her own conscience. Lodore fostered all the sensibility, all the softness, of Ethel's feminine and delicat nature; while Fanny's father strove to harden and confirm a character, in itself singularly stedfast and upright.

In spite of the great contrast thus exhibited between Ethel and Fanny, one quality created a good deal of similarity between them. There was in both a total absence of every factitious sentiment. They acted from their own hearts — from their own sense of right, without the intervention of worldly considerations. A feeling of duty ruled all their actions; and, however excellent a person's dispositions may be, it yet requires considerable elevation of character never to deviate from the strict line of honour and integrity.

Fanny's society a little relieved Ethel's solitude: yet that did not weigh on her; and had she not been the child of her father's earliest friend, and the companion of past days, she would have been disinclined, at this period, to cultivate an intimacy with her. She needed no companion except the thought of Edward, which was never absent from her mind. But amidst all her affection for her husband, which gained strength, and, as it were, covered each day a larger portion of her being, any one associated with the name of — of her beloved father, had a magic power to call forth her warmest feelings of interest. Both ladies repeated to each other what they had heard from their several parents. Mr. Derham had, among his many lessons of usefulness, descanted on the generosity and boldness of Fitzhenry, as offering an example to be followed. And during the last months of Lodore's life, he had recurred, with passionate fondness, to the memory of his early years, and painted in glowing colours the delicacy of feeling, the deep sense of gratitude, and the latent but fervid enthusiasm, which adorned the character of Francis Derham.

CHAPTER III.

It does much trouble me to live without you:
Our loves and loving souls have been so used
To one household in us.
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

The week passed on. It was the month of January, and very cold. A black frost bound up every thing with ice, and the piercing air congealed the very blood. Each day Ethel went to see her husband; — each day she had to encounter Mrs. Derham's intreaties not to go, and the reproaches of Villiers for coming. Both were unavailing to prevent the daily pilgrimage. Mrs. Derham sighed heavily when she saw her enter the ricketty hackney-coach, whose damp lining, gaping windows, and miserable straw, made it a cold-bed for catarrh — a very temple for the spirit of winter. Villiers each day besought her to have horses put to their chariot, if she must come; but Ethel remembered all he had ever said of expense, and his prognostications of how ill she would be able to endure the petty, yet galling annoyances of poverty; and she resolved to prove, that she could cheerfully bear every thing except separation from him. With this laudable motive to incite her, she tasked her strength too far. She kept up her spirits to meet him with a cheerful countenance; and she contrived to conceal the sufferings she endured while they were together. They got out and walked now and then; and this tended to keep up the vital warmth. Their course was generally taken over Blackfriars Bridge; and it was on their return across the river, on whose surface large masses of ice floated, while a bitter north-east wind swept up, bearing on its blasts the unthawed breath of the German Ocean, that she felt the cold enter her heart, and make her head feel dizzy. Still she could smile, and ask Villiers why he objected to her taking an exercise even necessary for her health; and repeat again and again, that, bred in America, an English winter was but a faint reflex of what she had encountered there, and insist upon being permitted to come on the following day. These were precious moments in her eyes, worth all the pain they occasioned, — well worth the struggle she made for the repetition. Edward's endearing attentions — the knowledge she had that she was loved — the swelling and earnest affection that warmed her own heart, — hallowed these hard-earned minutes, and gave her the sweet pleasure of knowing that she demonstrated, in some slight degree, the profound and all engrossing attachment which pervaded her entire being. They parted; and often she arrived nearly senseless at Duke Street, and once or twice fainted on entering the warm room: but it was not pain she felt then — the emotions of the soul conquered the sensation of her body, and pleasure, the intense pleasure of affection, was predominant through all.

Sunday came again, and brought Villiers to her home. Mrs. Derham took the opportunity to represent to him the injury that Ethel was doing herself; and begged him, as he cared for her health, to forbid her exposing herself to the inclement weather.

"You hear this, Ethel," said Villiers; "and yet you are obstinate. It this right? What can I urge, what can I do, to prevent this wrong-headed pertinacity?"

"You use such very hard words," replied Ethel, smiling, "that you frighten me into believing myself criminal. But so far am I from conceding, that you only give me courage to say, that I cannot any longer endure the sad and separate life we lead. It must be changed, dearest; we must be together."

Villiers was pacing the room impatiently: with an exclamation almost approaching to anger, he stopped before his wife, to remonstrate and to reproach. But as he gazed upon her upturned face, fixed so beseechingly and fondly on him, he fancied that he saw the hues of ill-health stealing across her cheeks, and thinness displacing the roundness of her form. A strange emotion flashed across him; a new fear, too terrible even to be acknowledged to himself, which passed, like the shadow of a storm, across his anticipations, and filled him with inquietude. His reprehension was changed to a caress, as he said, "You are right, my love, quite right; we must not live thus. You are unable to take care of yourself; and I am very wrong to give up my dearest privilege, of watching day and night over the welfare of my only treasure. We will be together, Ethel; if the worst come, it cannot be very bad, while we are true to each other."

Tears filled the poor girl's eyes — tears of joy and tenderness — at hearing Edward echo the sentiments she cherished as the most sacred in the world. For a few minutes, they forgot every thing in the affectionate kiss, which ratified, as it were, this new law; and then Edward considered how best he could carry it into effect.

"Gayland," he said, (he was his solicitor,) "has appointed to see me on Thursday morning, and has good hopes of definitively arranging the conditions for the loan of the five hundred pounds, which is to enable us to wait for better things. On Thursday evening, we will leave town. We will go to some pretty country inn, to wait till I have signed these papers; and trust to Providence that no ill will arise. We must not be more than fifteen or twenty miles from London; so that when I am obliged to go up, I can return again in a few hours. Tell me, sweet, does this scheme please you?"

Ethel expressed her warmest gratitude; and then Villiers insinuated his condition, that she should not come to see him in the interval, but remain, taking care of herself, till, on Thursday afternoon, at six o'clock, she came, with their chariot, to the northern side of St. Paul's Churchyard, where he would immediately join her. They might write, meanwhile: he promised letters as long as if they were to go to India; and soothed her annoyance with every expression of thankfulness at her giving up this point. She did give it up, with all the readiness she could muster; and this increased, as he dwelt upon the enjoyment they would share, in exchanging foggy, smoky London, for the ever-pleasing aspect of nature, which, even during frost and snow, possesses her own charms — her own wonders; and can gratify our senses by a thousand forms of beauty, which have no existence in a dingy metropolis.

When the evening hour came for the young pair to separate, their hearts were cheered by the near prospect of re-union; and a belief that theto them, trivial privations of poverty were the only ones they would have to endure. The thrill of fear which had crossed the mind of Villiers, as to the health and preservation of his wife, had served to dissipate the lingering sense of shame and degradation inspired by the penury of their situation. He felt that there was something better than wealth, and the attendance of his fellow-creatures; something worse than poverty, and the world's scorn. Within the fragile form of Ethel, there beat a heart of more worth than a king's ransom; and its pulsations were ruled by him. To lose her! What would all that earth can afford, of power or splendour, appear without her? He pressed her to his bosom, and knew that his arms encircled all life's worth for him. Never again could he forget the deep-felt appreciation of her value, which then took root in his mind; while she, become conscious, by force of sympathy, of the kind of revolution that was made in his sentiments, felt that the foundations of her life grew strong, and that her hopes in this world became stedfast and enduring. Before, a wall of separation, however slight, had divided them; they had followed a system of conduct independent of each other, and passed their censure upon the ideas of either. This was over now — they were one — one sense of right — one feeling of happiness; and when they parted that night, each felt that they truly possessed the other; and that by mingling every hope and wish, they had confirmed the marriage of their hearts.

CHAPTER IV.

Think but whither
Now you can go; what you can do to live;
How near you have barred all ports to your own succour.
Except this one that here I open, love.
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

The most pleasing thoughts shed their balmy influence on Ethel's repose that night. Edward's scheme of a country inn, where the very freedom would make them more entirely dependent upon each other, was absolutely enchanting. Where we establish ourselves, and look forward to the passage of a long interval of time, we form ties with, and assume duties towards, many of our fellow-creatures, each of which must diminish the singleness of the soul's devotion towards the selected one. No doubt this is the fitting position for human beings to place themselves in, as affording a greater scope for utility: but for a brief space, to have no occupation but that of contributing to the happiness of him to whom her life was consecrated, appeared to Ethel a very heaven upon earth. It was not that she was narrow-hearted: so much affection demands a spacious mansion for its abode; but in their present position of struggle and difficulty, there was no possibility of extending her sphere of benevolence, and she gladly concentrated her endeavours in the one object whose happiness was in her hands.

All night, even in sleep, a peculiar sense of calm enjoyment soothed the mind of Ethel, and she awoke in the morning with buoyant spirits, and a soul all alive to its own pleasurable existence. She sat at her little solitary breakfast table, musing with still renewed delight upon the prospect opened before her, when suddenly she was startled by the vision of an empty purse. What could Villiers intend? She felt assured that his stock was very nearly exhausted, and for herself two sovereigns, which were not sufficient to meet the demands of the last week, was all that she possessed. She tried to recollect if Edward had said any thing that denoted any expectation of receiving money; on the contrary — diving into the recesses of her memory, she called to mind that he had said, “We shall receive your poor little dividend of a hundred pounds, in less than a fortnight, so we shall be able to live, even if Gayland should delay getting the other money — I suppose we have enough to get on till then.”

He had said this inquiringly, and she knew that she had made a sign of assent, though at the time, she had no thought of the real purport of his question or of her answer. What was to be done? The obvious consequence of her reflections was at once to destroy the cherished scheme of going out of town with Villiers. This was a misfortune too great to bear, and she at last decided upon having again recourse to her aunt. Unused to every money transaction, she had not that terror of obligation, nor dislike of asking, which is so necessary to preserve our independence, and even our sense of justice, through life. Money had always been placed like counters in her hand; she had never known whence it came, and until her marriage, she had never disposed of more than very small sums. Subsequently Villiers had been the director of their expenses. This was the faulty part of her father’s system of education. But ‘s domestic habits were for a great part founded on experience in foreign countries, and he forgot that an English wife is usually the cashier — the sole controller of the disbursements of her family. It seemed as easy a thing for Ethel to ask for money from Mrs. Fitzhenry, as she knew it would be easy for her to give. In compliance, however, with Villier’s notions, she limited her request to ten pounds, and tried to word her letter so as to create no suspicion in her aunt’s mind with regard to their resources. This task achieved, she dismissed every annoying thought, and when Fanny came to express her hope, that, bleak and snowy as was the day, she did not intend to make her accustomed pilgrimage, with a countenance beaming with delight, she dilated on their plan, and spoke as if on the much-desired Thursday, the gates of Elysium were to be thrown open for her.

There would have appeared something childish in her gladness to the abstracted and philosophic mind of Fanny, but that the real evils of her situation, and the fortitude, touching in its unconscious simplicity, with which she encountered them, commanded respect. Ethel, as well as her friend, was elevated above the common place of life; she also fostered a state of mind, “lofty and magnificent, fitted rather to command than to obey, not only suffering patiently, but even making light of all human cares; a grand and dignified self-possession, which fears nothing, yields to no one, and remains for ever unvanquished.” When Fanny, in one of their conversations, while describing the uses of philosophy, had translated this eulogium of its effects from Cicero, Ethel had exclaimed, “This is love — it is love alone that divides us from sordid earthborn thoughts, and causes us to walk alone, girt by its own beauty and power.”

Fanny smiled; yet while she saw slavery rather than a proud independence in the creed of Ethel, she admired the warmth of heart which could endow with so much brilliancy a state of privation and solitude. At the present moment, when Mrs. Villiers was rapturously announcing their scheme for leaving London, an expression of pain mantled over Fanny’s features; her clear blue eyes became suffused, a large tear gathered on her lashes. “What is the matter?” asked Ethel anxiously.

“That I am a fool — but pardon me, for the folly is already passed away. For the first time you have made it hard for me to keep my soul firm in its own single existence. I have been debarred from all intercourse with those whose ideas rise above the soil on which they tread, except in my dear books, and I thought I should never be attached to any thing but them. Yet do not think me selfish, Mr. Villiers is quite right — it is much better that you should not be apart — I am delighted with his plan.”

“Away or near, dear Fanny,” said Ethel, in a caressing tone, “I never can forget your kindness — never cease to feel the warmest friendship for you. Remember, our fathers were friends, and their children ought to inherit the same faithful attachment.”

Fanny smiled faintly. “You must not seduce me from my resolves,” she said. “I know my fate in this world, and I am determined to be true to myself to the end. Yet I am not ungrateful to you, even while I declare, that I shall do my best to forget this brief interval, during which, I have no longer, like Demogorgon, lived alone in my own world, but become aware that there are ties of sympathy between me and my fellow-creatures, in whose existence I did not believe before.”

Fanny’s language, drawn from her books, not because she tried to imitate, but because conversing perpetually with them, it was natural that she should adopt their style, was always energetic and imaginative; but her quiet manner destroyed every idea of exaggeration of sentiment: it was necessary to hear her soft and low, but very distinct voice utter her lofty sentiments, to be conscious that the calm of deep waters was the element in which she dwelt — not the fretful breakers that spend themselves in sound.

The day seemed rather long to Ethel, who counted the hours until Thursday. Gladly she laid her head on the pillow at night, and bade adieu to the foregone hours. The first thing that awoke her in the morning, was the postman's knock; it brought, as she had been promised, a long, long letter from Edward. He had never before written with so much affection or with such an overflowing of tenderness, that made her the centre of his world — the calm fair lake to receive into its bosom the streams of thought and feeling which flowed from him, and yet which, after all, had their primal source in her. "I am a very happy girl," thought Ethel, as she kissed the beloved papers, and gazed on them in ecstasy; "more happy than I thought it was ever given us to be in this world."

She rose and began to dress; she delayed reading more than a line or two, that she might enjoy her dearest pleasure for a longer time — then again, unable to controul her impatience, she sat half dressed, and finished all — and was begining anew, when there was a tap at her door. It was Fanny. She looked disturbed and anxious, and Ethel's fears were in a moment awake.

"Something annoying has occurred," she said; "yet I do not think that there is any thing to dread, though there is a danger to prevent." "Speak quickly," cried Ethel, "do not keep me in suspense."

"Be calm — it is nothing sudden, it is only a repetition of the old story. A boy has just been here — a boy you gave a sovereign to — do you remember?-the night of your arrival. It seems that he has vowed himself to your service ever since. Those two odious men, who were here once, are often at his master's place-an alehouse, you know. Well, yesterday night, he overheard them saying, that Mr. Villier's resort at the London coffee-house, was discovered, or at least suspected, and that a writ was to be taken out against him in the city."

"What does that mean?" cried Ethel.

"That Mr. Villiers will probably be arrested to-day, or to-morrow, if he remains where he is."

"I will go directly to him," cried Ethel; "we must leave town at once. God grant that I am not too late!"

Seeing her extreme agitation, Fanny remained with her — forced her to take some breakfast, and then, fearing that if any thing had really taken place, she would be quite bewildered, asked her permission to accompany her. “Will you indeed come with me?” Ethel exclaimed, “How dear, how good you are! O yes, do come — I can never go through it all alone; I shall die, if I do not find him.”

A hackney coach had been called, and they hastened with what speed they might, to their destination. A kind of panic seized upon Ethel, a tremor shook her limbs, so that when they at last stopped, she was unable to speak. Fanny was about to ask for Mr. Villiers, when an exclamation of joy from Ethel stopped her; Edward had seen them, and was at the coach door. The snow lay thick around on the roofs of the houses, and on every atom of vantage ground it could obtain; it was then snowing, and as the chilly fleece dropped through or was driven about in the dark atmosphere, it spread a most disconsolate appearance over every thing; and nothing could look more dreary than poor Ethel’s jumbling vehicle, with its drooping animals, and the half-frozen driver. Villiers had made up his mind that he should never be mortified by seeing her again in this sort of equipage, and he hurried down, the words of reproach already on his lips, “Is this your promise?” he asked.

“Yes, dearest, it is. Come in, there is danger here. — Come in — we must go directly.”

Seeing Fanny, Villiers became aware that there was some absolute cause for their journey, so he obeyed and quickly heard the danger that threatened him. “It would have been better,” he said, “that you had come in the carriage, and that we had instantly left town.”

“Impossible!” cried Ethel; “till to-morrow — that is quite impossible. We have no money until to-morrow.”

“Well, my love, since it is so, we must arrange as well as we can. Do you return home immediately — this cold will kill you. I will take care of myself, and you can come for me on Thursday evening, as we proposed.”

“Do not ask it of me, Edward,” said Ethel; “I cannot leave you. I could never live through these two days away from you — you must not desire it — you will kill me.”

Edward kissed her pale cheek. “You tremble,” he said; “how violently you tremble! Good God! what can we do? What would you have me do?”

"Any thing, so that we remain together. It is of so little consequence where we pass the next twenty-four hours, so that we are together. There are many hotels in town."

"I must not venture to any of these; and then to take you in this miserable manner, without servants, or any thing to command attendance. But you shall have your own way; having deprived you of every other luxury, at least, you shall have your will; which, you know, compensates for every thing with your obstinate sex."

Ethel smiled, rejoicing to find him in so good and accommodating a humour. "Yes, pretty one," he continued, marking her feelings, "you shall be as wretched and uncomfortable as your heart can desire. We will play the incognito in such a style, that if our adventures were printed, they would compete with those of Don Quixote and the fair Dulcinea. But Miss Derham must not be admitted into our vagabondizing — we will not detain her."

"Yet she must know whither we are going, to bring us the letters that will confer freedom on us."

Villiers wrote hastily an address on a card. "You will find us there," he said. "Do not mention names when you come. We shall remain, I suppose, till Thursday."

"But we shall see you some time to-morrow, dear Fanny?" asked Ethel. Already she looked bright and happy; she esteemed herself fortunate to have gained so easily a point she had feared she must struggle for — or perhaps give up altogether. Fanny left them, and the coachman having received his directions, drove slowly on through the deep snow, which fell thickly on the road; while they, nestling close to each other, were so engrossed by the gladness of re-union, that had Cinderella's godmother transmuted their crazy vehicle for a golden coach, redolent of the perfumes of fairy land, they had scarcely been aware of the change. Their own hearts formed a more real fairy land, which accompanied them whithersoever they went, and could as easily spread its enchantments over the shattered machine in which they now jumbled along, as amidst the cloth of gold and marbles of an eastern palace.

CHAPTER V.

Few people know how little is necessary to live.
What is called or thought hardship is nothing; one
unhappy feeling is worse than a thousand years of it.
— Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Uncertain what to do, Villiers had hastily determined that they should take up their abode at a little inn near Brixton, to wait till Thursday. He did not know the place except by having passed it, and observed a smart landlady at the door; so he trusted that it would be neat and clean. There was nothing imposing in the apperance of the young pair and their hackney coach, accordingly there was no bustling civility displayed to receive them. However, when the fire was once lighted, the old-fashioned sofa drawn near, and dinner ordered, they sat together and felt very happy; outcasts though they were, wanderers from civilized existence, shut out, through poverty, from the refinements and gilt elegancies of life.

One only cloud there was, when Villiers asked his wife an explanation about their resources, and inquired whence she expected to receive money on the following day. Ethel explained. Villiers looked disturbed. There was something almost of anger in his voice, when he said, “And so, Ethel, you feel no compunction in acting in exact opposition to my wishes, my principles, my resolves?”

“But, dear Edward, what can principles have to do with borrowing a few pounds from dear good Aunt Bessy? Besides, we can repay her.”

“Be assured that we shall,” replied Villiers; “and you will never again, I trust, behave so unjustly by me. There are certain things in which we must judged and act for ourselves, and the question of money transactions is one. I may suffer — and you, alas! may also, through poverty; though you have taken pains to persuade me, that you do not feel that struggles, which, for your sake chiefly, embitter my existence. Yet they are nothing in comparison with the loss of my independence — the sense of obligation —

the knowledge that my kind friends can talk over my affairs, take me to task, and call me a burthen to them. Why am I as I am? I have friends and connexions who would readily assist me at this extremity, if I asked it, and I might turn their kind feelings into sterling gold if I would; but I have no desire to work this transmutation — I prefer their friendship."

"Do you mean," inquired his wife, "that your friends would not love you the better for having been of service to you?"

"If they could serve me without annoyance to themselves they might; but high in rank and wealthy as many of my relations are, there is not one among them, at least of those to whom I could have recourse, who do not dispose of their resources to the uttermost shilling, in their own way. I then come to interfere with and to disarrange their plans; at first, this might not be much — but presently they would weigh me against the gold I needed, and it might happen, that my scale would kick the beam.

"I speak for myself not for others; I may be too proud, too sensitive — but so I am. Ever since I knew what pecuniary obligations were, I resolved to lay under such to no man, and this resolve was stronger than my love for you; judge therefore of its force, and the violence you do me, when you would oblige me to act against it. Did I begin to borrow, a train of thoughts would enter the lender's mind; the consciousness of which, would haunt me like a crime. My actions would be scanned — I should be blamed for this, rebuked for that — even your name, my Ethel, which I would place, like a star in the sky, far above their mathematical measurements, would become stale in their mouths, and the propriety of our marriage canvassed: could you bear that?"

"I yield to all you say," she answered; "yet this is strange morality. Are generosity, benevolence, and gratitude, to be exploded among us? Is justice, which orders that the rich give of his superfluity to the poor, to be banished from the world?"

"You are eloquent," said Villiers; "but, my little wild American, this is philosophy for the back-woods only. We have got beyond the primeval simplicity of barter and exchange among gentlemen; and it is such if I give gratitude in return for fifty pounds: by-and-by my fellow-trader may grumble at the bargain. All this will become very clear to you hereafter, I fear — when knowledge of the world teaches you what sordid knaves we all are; it is to prevent your learning this lesson in a painful way, that I guard you so jealously from making a wrong step at this crisis."

"You speak of dreams," said Ethel, "as if dear aunt Bessy would feel any thing but pleasure in sending her mite to her own dear niece."

"I have told you what I wish," replied her husband, "my honour is in your hands; and I implore you, on this point, to preserve it in the way I desire. There is but one relationship that authorizes any thing like community of goods, it is that of parent and child; but we are orphans, dearest — step-children, who are not permitted to foster our filial sentiments. My father is unworthy of his name — the animal who destroys its offspring at its birth is merciful in comparison with him: had he cast me off at once, I should have hardened my hands with labour, and earned my daily bread; but I was trained to 'high-born necessities,' and have all the 'wide wants and narrow powers' of the heir of wealth. But let us dismiss this ungrateful subject. I never willingly advert, even in my own mind, to my father's unpaternal conduct. Let us instead fancy, sweet love, that we were born to what we have — that we are cottagers, the children of mechanics, or wanderers in a barbarous country, where money is not; and imagine that this repose, this cheerful fire, this shelter from the pelting snow without, is an unexpected blessing. Strip a man bare to what nature made him, and place him here, and what a hoard of luxury and wealth would not this room contain! In the Illinois, love, few mansions could compete with this."

This was speaking in a language which Ethel could easily comprehend; she had several times wished to express this very idea, but she feared to hurt the refined and exclusive feelings of her husband. A splendid dwelling, costly living, and many attendants, were with her the adjuncts, not the material, of life. If the stage on which she played her part was to be so decorated, it was well; if otherwise, the change did not merit her attention. Love scoffed at such idle trappings, and could build his tent of canvas, and sleep close nestled in her heart as softly, being only the more lovely and the more true, from the absence of every meretricious ornament.

This was another of Ethel's happy evenings, when she felt drawn close to him she loved, and found elysium in the intimate union of their thoughts. The dusky room showed them but half to each other; and the looks of each, beaming with tenderness, drank life from one another's gaze. The soft shadows thrown on their countenances, gave a lamp-like lustre to their eyes, in which the purest spirit of affection sat, weaving such unity of sentiment, such strong bonds of attachment, as made all life dwindle to a point, and freighted the passing minute with the hopes and fears of their entire existence. Not much was said, and their words were childish — words Intellette dar loro soli ambedui, which a listener would have judged to be meaningless. But the mystery of love gave a deep sense to each syllable. The hours flew lightly away. There was nothing to interrupt, nothing to disturb. Night came and the day was at an end; but Ethel looked forward to the next, with faith in its equal felicity, and did not regret the fleet passage of time.

They had been asked during the evening if they were going by any early coach on the following morning, and a simple negative was given. On that morning they sat at their breakfast, with some diminution of the sanguine hopes of the previous evening. For morning is the time for action, of looking forward, of expectation, — and they must spend this in waiting, cooped up in a little room, overlooking no cheering scene. A high road, thickly covered with snow, on which various vehicles were perpetually passing, was immediately before them. Opposite was a row of mean-looking houses, between which might be distinguished low fields buried in snow; and the dreary dark-looking sky bending over all, added to the forlorn aspect of nature. Villiers was very impatient to get away, yet another day must be passed here, and there was no help.

On the breakfast-table the waiter had placed the bill of the previous day; it remained unnoticed, and he left it on the table when the things were taken away. “I wonder when Fanny will come,” said Ethel.

“Perhaps not at all to-day,” observed Villiers, “she knows that we intend to remain till tomorrow here; and if your aunt’s letter is delayed till then, I see no chance of her coming, nor any use in it.”

“But Aunt Bessy will not delay; her answer is certain of arriving this morning.”

“So you imagine, love. You know little of the various chances that wait upon borrowing.”

Soon after, unable to bear confinement to the house, uneasy in his thoughts, and desirous a little to dissipate them by exercise, Villiers went out. Ethel, taking a small Shakspeare, which her husband had had with him at the coffee-house, occupied herself by reading, or turning from the written page to her own thoughts, gave herself up to reverie, dwelling on many an evanescent idea, and reverting delightedly to many scenes, which her memory recalled. She was one of those who "know the pleasures of solitude, when we hold commune alone with the tranquil solemnity of nature." The thought of her father, of the Illinois, and the measureless forest rose before her, and in her ear was the dashing of the stream which flowed near their abode. Her light feet again crossed the prairie, and a thousand appearances of sky and earth departed for ever, were retraced in her brain. "Would not Edward be happy there?" she thought: "why should we not go? We should miss dear Horatio; but what else could we regret that we leave behind? and perhaps he would join us, and then we should be quite happy." And then her fancy pictured her new home and all its delights, till her eyes were suffused with tender feeling, as her imagination sketched a variety of scenes — the pleasant labours of cultivation, the rides, the hunting, the boating, all common-place occurrences, which, attended on by love, were exalted into a perpetual gorgeous procession of beatified hours. And then again she allowed to herself that Europe or America could contain the same delights. She recollected Italy, and her feelings grew more solemn and blissful as she meditated on the wondrous beauty and changeful but deep interest of that land of memory.

Villiers did not return for some hours; — he also had indulged in reverie — long-drawn, but not quite so pleasant as that of his inexperienced wife. The realities of life were kneaded up too entirely with his prospects and schemes, for them to assume the fairy hues that adorned Ethel's. He could not see the end to his present struggle for the narrowest independence. Very slender hopes had been held out to him; and thus he was to drag out an embittered existence, spent upon sordid cares, till his father died — an ungrateful idea, from which he turned with a sigh. He walked speedily, on account of the cold; and as his blood began to circulate more cheerily in his frame, a change came over the tenor of his thoughts. From the midst of the desolation in which he was lost, a vision of happiness arose, that forced itself on his speculations, in spite, as he imagined, of his better reason. The image of an elegant home, here or in Italy, adorned by Ethel — cheered by the presence of friends, unshadowed by any cares, presented itself to his mind with strange distinctness and pertinacity. At no time had Villiers loved so passionately as now. The difficulties of their situation had exalted her, who shared them with such cheerful fortitude, into an angel of consolation. The pride of man in possessing the affections of this lovely and noble-minded creature, was blended with the tenderest desire of protecting and serving her. His heart glowed with honest joy at the reflection that her happiness depended upon him solely, and that he was ready to devote his life to secure it. Was there any action too arduous, any care too minute, to display his gratitude and his perfect affection? As his recollection came back, he found that he was at a considerable distance from her, so he swiftly turned his steps homeward, (that was his home where she was,) and scarcely felt that he trod earth as he recollected that each moment carried him nearer, and that he should soon meet the fond gaze of the kindest, sweetest eyes in the world.

Thus they met, with a renewed joy, after a short absence, each reaping, from their separate meditations, a fresh harvest of loving thoughts and interchange of grateful emotion. Great was the pity that such was their situation — that circumstances, all mean and trivial, drew them from their heaven-high elevation, to the more sordid cares of this dirty planet. Yet why name it pity? their pure natures could turn the grovelling substance presented to them, to ambrosial food for the sustenance of love.

CHAPTER VI.

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told.
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie.
With heart never changing, and brow never cold.
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.
— Lalla Rookh.

Villiers had not been returned long, when the waiter came in, and informed them, that his mistress declined serving their dinner, till her bill of the morning was paid; and then he left the room. The gentle pair looked at each other, and laughed. "We must wait till Fanny comes, I fear," said Ethel; "for my purse is literally empty."

"And if Miss Derham should not come?" remarked Villiers.

"But she will! — she has delayed, but I am perfectly certain that she will come in the course of the day: I do not feel the least doubt about it."

To quicken the passage of time, Ethel employed herself in netting a purse, (the inutility of which Villiers smilingly remarked,) while her husband read to her some of the scenes from Shakspeare's play of "Troilus and Cressida." The profound philosophy, and intense passion, of this drama, adorned by the most magnificent poetry that can even be found in the pages of this prince of poets, caused each to hang attentive and delighted upon their occupation. As it grew dark, Villiers stirred up the fire, and still went on; till having with difficulty decyphered the lines—"She was beloved — she loved; — she is, and doth; But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth," — he closed the books. "It is in vain," he said; "our liberator does not come; and these churls will not give us lights."

"It is early yet, dearest," replied Ethel;—"not yet four o'clock. Would Troilus and Cressida have repined at having been left darkling a few minutes? How much happier we are than all the heroes and heroines that ever lived or were imagined! they grasped at the mere shadow of the thing, whose substance we absolutely possess. Let us know and acknowledge our good fortune. God knows, I do, and am beyond words grateful!"

"It is much to be grateful for — sharing the fortunes of a ruined man!"

"You do not speak as Troilus does," replied Ethel smiling: "he knew better the worth of love compared with worldly trifles."

"You would have me protest, then," said Villiers;—"But, alas! I am as true as truth's simplicity, And simpler than the infancy of truth;" so that all I can say is, that you are a very ill-used little girl, to be mated as you are — so buried, with all your loveliness, in this obscurity — so bound, though akin to heaven, to the basest dross of earth."

"You are poetical, dearest, and I thank you. For my own part, I am in love with ill luck. I do not think we should have discovered how very dear we are to each other, had we sailed for ever on a summer sea."

Such talk, a little prolonged, at length dwindled to silence. Edward drew her nearer to him; and as his arm encircled her waist, she placed her sweet head on his bosom, and they remained in silent reverie. He, as with his other hand he played with her shining ringlets, and parted them on her fair brow, was disturbed in thought, and saddened by a sense of degradation. Not to be able to defend the angelic creature, who depended on him, from the world's insults, galled his soul, and embittered even the heart's union that existed between them. She did not think — she did know of these things. After many minutes of silence, she said,—"I have been trying to discover why it is absolute pleasure to suffer pain for those we love."

"Pleasure in pain! — you speak riddles."

"I do," she replied, raising her head; "but I have divined this. The great pleasure of love is derived from sympathy — the feeling of union — of unity. Any thing that makes us alive to the sense of love — that imprints deeper on our plastic consciousness the knowledge of the existence of our affection, causes an increase of happiness. There are two things to which we are most sensitive — pleasure and pain. But habit can somewhat dull the first; and that which was in its newness, ecstasy — our being joined for ever — becomes, like the air we breathe, a thing we could not live without, but yet in which we are rather passively than actively happy. But when pain comes to awaken us to a true sense of how much we love — when we suffer for one another's dear sake — the consciousness of attachment swells our hearts: we are recalled from the forgetfulness engendered by custom; and the awakening and renewal of the sense of affection brings with it a joy, that sweetens to its dregs the bitterest cup."

"Encourage this philosophy, dear Ethel," replied Villiers; "you will need it: but it shames me to think that I am your teacher in this mournful truth." As he spoke, his whole frame was agitated by tenderness and grief. Ethel could see, by the dull fire-light, a tear gather on his eye-lashes: it fell upon her hand. She threw her arms round him, and pressed him to her heart with a passionate gush of weeping, occasioned partly by remorse at having so moved him, and partly by her heart's overflowing with the dear security of being loved.

They had but a little recovered from this scene, when the waiter, bringing in lights, announced Miss Derham. Her coming had been full of disasters. After many threatenings, and much time consumed in clumsy repairs, her hackney-coach had fairly broken down: she had walked the rest of the way; but they were much further from town than she expected; and thus she accounted for her delay. She brought no news; but held in her hand the letter that contained the means of freeing them from their awkward predicament.

"We will not stay another minute in this cursed place," said Villiers: "we will go immediately to Salt Hill, where I intended to take you to-morrow. I can return by one of the many stages which pass continually, to keep my appointment with Gayland; and be back with you again by night. So if these stupid people possess a post-chaise, we will be gone directly."

Ethel was well pleased with this arrangement; and it was put it execution immediately. The chaise and horses were easily procured. They set Fanny down in their way through town. Ethel tried to repay her kindness by heartfelt thanks; and she, in her placid way, showed clearly how pleased she was to serve them.

Leaving her in Piccadilly, not far from her own door, they pursued their way to Salt Hill; and it seemed as if, in this more change of place, they had escaped from a kind of prison, to partake again in the immunities and comforts of civilized life. Ethel was considerably fatigued when she arrived; and her husband feared that he had tasked her strength too far. The falling and fallen snow clogged up the roads, and their journey had been long. She slept, indeed, the greater part of the way, her head resting on him;

and her languor and physical suffering were soothed by emotions the most balmy and by the gladdening sense of confidence and security.

They arrived at Salt Hill late in the evening. The hours were precious; for early on the following day, Villiers was obliged to return to town. On inquiry, he found that his best mode was to go by a night-coach from Bath, which would pass at seven in the morning. They were awake half the night, talking of their hopes, their plans, their probable deliverance from their besetting annoyances. By this time Ethel had taught her own phraseology, and Villiers had learned to believe that whatever must happen would fall upon both, and that no separation could take place fraught with any good to either.

When Ethel awoke, late in the morning, Villiers was gone. Her watch told her, indeed, that it was near ten o'clock, and that he must have departed long before. She felt inclined to reproach him for leaving her, though only for a few hours, without an interchange of adieu. In truth, she was vexed that he was not there: the world appeared to her so blank, without his voice to welcome her back to it from out of the regions of sleep. While this slight cloud of ill-humour (may it be called?) was passing over her mind, she perceived a little note, left by her husband, lying on her pillow. Kissing it a thousand times, she read its contents, as if they possessed talismanic power. They breathed the most passionate tenderness: they besought her, as she loved him, to take care of herself, and to keep up her spirits until his return, which would be as speedy as the dove flies back to its nest, where its sweet mate fondly expects him. With these assurances and blessings to cheer her, Ethel arose. The sun poured its wintry yet cheering beams into the parlour, and the sparkling, snow-clad earth glittered beneath. She wrapped herself in her cloak, and walked into the garden of the hotel. Long immured in London, living as if its fogs were the universal vesture of all things, her spirits rose to exultation and delight, as she looked on the blue sky spread cloudlessly around. As the pure breeze freshened her cheek, a kind of transport seized her; her spirit took wings; she felt as if she could float on the bosom of the air — as if there was a sympathy in nature, whose child and nursling she was, to welcome her back to her haunts, and to reward her bounteously for coming. The trees, all leafless and snow-bedecked, were friends and intimates: she kissed their rough barks, and then laughed at her own folly at being so rapt. The snow-drop, as it peeped from the ground, was a thing of wonder and mystery; and the shapes of frost, beautiful forms to be worshipped. All sorrow — all care passed away, and left her mind as clear and bright as the unclouded heavens that bent over her.

CHAPTER VII.

Herein
Shall my captivity be made my happiness;
Since what I lose in freedom, I regain
With interest.
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

The glow of enthusiasm and gladness, thus kindled in her soul, faded slowly as the sun descended; and human tenderness returned in full tide upon her. She longed for Edward to speak to; when would he come back? She walked a little way on the London road; she returned: still her patience was not exhausted. The sun's orb grew red and dusky as it approached the horizon: she returned to the house. It was yet early: Edward could not be expected yet: he had promised to come as soon as possible; but he had prepared her for the likelihood of his arrival only by the mail at night. It was long since she had written to Saville. Cooped up in town, saddened by her separation from her husband, or enjoying the brief hours of reunion, she had felt disinclined to write. Her enlivened spirits now prompted her to pour out some of their overflowings to him. She did not allude to any of the circumstances of their situation, for Edward had forbidden that topic: still she had much to say; for her heart was full of benevolence to all mankind; besides her attachment to her husband, the prospect of becoming a mother within a few months, opened another source of tenderness; there seemed to be a superabundance of happiness within her, a portion of which she desired to impart to those she loved.

Daylight had long vanished, and Villiers did not return. She felt uneasy: — of course he would come by the mail; yet if he should not — what could prevent him? Conjectures would force themselves on her, unreasonable, she told herself; yet her doubts were painful, and she listened attentively each time that the sound of wheels grew, and again faded, upon her ear. If the vehicle stopped, she was in a state of excitation that approached alarm. She knew not what she feared; yet her disquiet increased into anxiety. “Shall I ever see him again?” were words that her lips did not utter, and yet which lingered in her heart, although unaccompanied by any precise idea to her understanding.

She had given a thousand messages to the servants; — and at last the mail arrived. She heard a step — it was the waiter:—”The gentleman is not come, ma’am,” he said. “I knew it,” she thought;—”yet why? why?” At one time she resolved to set off for town; yet whither to go — where to find him? An idea struck her, that he had missed the mail; but as he would not leave her a prey to uncertainty, he would come by some other conveyance. She got a little comfort from this notion, and resumed her occupation of waiting; though the vagueness of her expectations rendered her a thousand times more restless than before. And all was vain. The mail had arrived at eleven o’clock — at twelve she retired to her room. She read again and again his note: his injunction, that she should take care of herself, induced her to go to bed at a little after one; but sleep was still far from her. Till she could no longer expect — till it became certain that it must be morning before he could come, she did not close her eyes. As her last hope quitted her, she wept bitterly. Where was the joyousness of the morning? — the exuberant delight with which her veins had tingled, which had painted life as a blessing? She hid her face in her pillow, and gave herself up to tears, till sleep at last stole over her senses.

Early in the morning her door opened and her curtain was drawn aside. She awoke immediately, and saw Fanny Derham standing at her bed-side.

“Edward! where is he?” she exclaimed, starting up.

“Well, quite well,” replied Fanny: “do not alarm yourself, dear Mrs. Villiers, — he has been arrested.”

“I must go to him immediately. Leave me for a little while, dear Fanny, — I will dress and come to you; do you order the chaise meanwhile. I can hear every thing as we are going to town.”

Ethel trembled violently — her speech was rapid but inarticulate; the paleness that overspread her face, blanching even her marble brow, and the sudden contraction of her features, alarmed Fanny. The words she had used in communicating her intelligence were cabalistic to Ethel, and her fears were the more intolerable because mysterious and undefined; the blood trickled cold in her veins, and a chilly moisture stood on her forehead. She exerted herself violently to conquer this weakness, but it shackled her powers, as bands of rope would her limbs, and after a few moments she sank back on her pillow almost bereft of life. Fanny sprang to the bell, then sprinkled her with water; some salts were procured from the landlady, and gradually the colour revisited her cheeks, and her frame resumed its functions — an hysteric fit, the first she had ever had, left her at last exhausted but more composed. She herself became frightened lest illness should keep her from Villiers; she exerted herself to become tranquil, and lay for some time without speaking or moving. A little refreshment contributed to restore her, and she turned to Fanny with a faint sweet smile, "You see," said she, "what a weak, foolish thing I am; but I am well now, quite rallied — there must be no more delay."

Her cheerful voice and lively manner gave her friend confidence. Fanny was one who believed much in the mastery of mind, and felt sure that nothing would be so prejudicial to Mrs. Villiers as contradiction, and obstacles put in the way of her attaining the object of her wishes. In spite therefore of the good people about, who insisted that the most disastrous consequences would ensue, she ordered the horses, and prepared for their immediate journey to town. Ethel repaid her cares with smiles, while she restrained her curiosity, laid as it were a check on her too impatient movements, and forced a calm of manner which gave her friend courage to proceed.

It was not until they were on their way that the object of their journey was mentioned. Fanny then spoke of the arrest as a trifling circumstance — mentioned bail, and twenty things, which Ethel only comprehended to be mysterious methods of setting him free; and then also she asked the history of what had happened. The tale was soon told. The moment Mr. Villiers had entered Piccadilly he had caused a coach to be called, but on passing to it from the stage, two men entered it with him, whose errand was too easily explained. He had driven first to his solicitor's, hoping to put every thing in train for his instant liberation. The day was consumed in these fruitless endeavours — he did not give up hope till past ten at night, when he sent to Fanny, asking her to go down to Mrs. Villiers as early as possible in the morning, and to bring her up to town. His wish was, he said, that Ethel should take up her abode at Mrs. Derham's till this affair could be arranged, and they were enabled to leave London. His note was hurried; he promised that another, more explicit, should await his wife on her arrival.

"You will tell the driver," said Ethel, when this story was finished, "to drive to Edward's prison. I would not stay away five minutes from him in his present situation to purchase the universe."

Any one but Miss Derham might have resisted Ethel's wish — have argued with her, and irritated her by the display of obstacles and inconveniences. It was not Fanny's method ever to oppose the desires of others. They knew best, she affirmed, their own sensations, and what was most fitting for them. What is best for me, habit, education, and a different texture of character, may render the worst for them. In the present instance, also, she saw that Ethel's feelings were almost too high wrought for her strength — that opposition, by making a further call on her powers, might upset them wholly. She had besides, the deepest respect for her attachment to her husband, and was willing to reward it by bringing her to him without delay. Having thus fortunately fallen into reasonable hands, guided by one who could understand her character, and not torture her by forcing notions the opposite of those on which she felt herself compelled to act, Ethel became tranquil, and saw the mere panic of inexperience in her previous excessive alarm.

They now approached London. Fanny called the post-boy to the window of the chaise, and gave him directions, at which he a little stared, but said nothing. She gave things their own names, and never dreamt of saving appearances, as it is called. What ought to be done, that she dared do in the face of the whole world, and therefore to make a mystery of their destination never once occurred to her. They drove through the long interminable suburbs — through Piccadilly and the Strand. Ethel's cheeks flushed with the excitement, and something like apprehension made her heart flutter. She had endeavoured to form an image in her own mind of whither they were going — it was vague and therefore frightful — but Edward was there, and she also would share the horrors of his prison-house.

They passed through Temple Bar, and going down an obscure street or two, stopped at a dingy door-way. "This is not right," said Ethel, almost gasping for breath, "this is not a prison."

"Something very like it, as you will find too soon," said her friend.

Still Ethel's imagination was relieved by the absence of the massy walls, the portentous gates, the gloomy immensity of an absolute prison. The door of the house being opened, Ethel stepped out from the chaise and asked for Mr. Villiers. The man whom she addressed hesitated, but Ethel had learnt one only worldly lesson, which was, whenever she needed the services of people of the lower orders, to disseminate money plentifully. Her purse was in her hand, and she gave a sovereign to the man, who then at once showed them upstairs; which she ascended, though every limb nearly refused to perform its office as she approached the spot where again she was to find — to see him, whose image lived eternally in her heart, and whom it was the sole joy of her life to wait on, to be sheltered by, to live near.

The door was opened. In the dingy, dusty room, beside the fire, which looked as if it could not burn, and was never meant to warm even the black neglected grate, Villiers sat, reading. His first emotion was shame when he saw Ethel enter. There was no accord between her spotless loveliness and his squalid prison-room. Any one who has seen a sunbeam suddenly enter and light up a scene of housewifely neglect, and vulgar discomfort, and felt how obtrusive it rendered all that might be half-forgotten in the shade, can picture how the simple elegance of Ethel displayed yet more distinctly to her husband the worse than beggarly scene in which she found him. His cheeks flushed, and almost he would have turned away. He would have reproached, but a tenderness and an elevation of feeling animated her expressive countenance, which turned the current of his thoughts. Whether it were their fate to suffer the extremes of fortune in the savage wilderness, or in the more appalling privations of civilized life — love, and the poetry of love accompanied her, and gilded, and irradiated the commonest forms of penury. She looked at him, and her eyes then glanced to the barred windows. As Fanny and their conductor left them, she heard the key turn in the lock with an impertinent intrusive loudness. She felt pained for him, but for herself it was as if the world and all its cares were locked out, and as if in this near association with him, she reaped the reward of all her previous anxiety. There was no repining in her thoughts, no dejection in her manner; Villiers could read in her open countenance, as plainly as through the clearest crystal, the sentiments that were passing in her mind — it was something more satisfied than resignation, more contented than fortitude. It was a knowledge that whatever evil might attend her lot, the good so far outweighed it, that, for his sake only, could she advert to any feeling of distress. It was a consciousness of being in her place, and of fulfilling her duty, accompanied by a sort of rapture in remembering how thrice dear and hallowed that duty was. Angels could not feel as she did, for they cannot sacrifice to those they love; yet there was in her that absence of all self-emanating pain, which is the characteristic of what we are told of the angelic essences.

As when at night autumnal winds are howling, and vast masses of winged clouds are driven with indescribable speed across the sky — we note the islands of dark ether, built round by the white fleecy shapes; and as we mark the stars which gem their unfathomable depth, silence and sublime tranquillity appear to have found a home in that deep vault, and we love to dwell on the peace and beauty that live there, while the clouds still rush on, and the face of the lower heaven is more mutable than water. Thus the mind of Ethel, surrounded by the world's worst forms of adversity, showed clear and serene, entirely possessed by the repose of love. It was impossible but that, in spite of shame and regret, Villiers should not participate in these feelings. He gave himself up to the softening influence: he knew not how to repine on his own account; Ethel's affection demanded to stand in place of prosperity, and he could not refuse to admit so dear a claim.

The door had closed on them, and every outlet to liberty, or the enjoyment of life, was barred up. Edward drew Ethel towards him and kissed her fondly. Their eyes met, and the speechless tenderness that beamed from hers reached his heart and soothed every ruffled feeling. Sitting together, and interchanging a few words of comfort and hope, mingled with kind looks and affectionate caresses, they neither of them remembered indignity nor privation. The tedious mechanism of civilized life, and the odious interference of their fellow-creatures were forgotten, and they were happy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Veggo pur troppo
Che favola è la vita.
E la favola mia non è compita.
— Petrarca.

The darker months of winter had passed away, and the chilly, blighting English spring begun. Towards the end of March Lady came to town. She had long ago, in her days of wealth, fitted up a house in Park Lane, so she returned to it, as to a home — if home it might be called — where no one welcomed her — where none sat beside her at the domestic hearth.

For the first time she felt keenly this circumstance. During her mother's lifetime she had had her constantly for a companion, and afterwards as events pressed upon her, and while the anguish she felt upon Horatio Saville's marriage was still fresh, she had not reverted to her lonely position as the source of pain.

The haughty, the firm, the self-exalting soul of Cornelia had borne up long. She had often felt that she walked on the borders of a precipice, and that if once she admitted sentiments of regret, she should plunge without retrieve into a gulph, dark, portentous, inextricable. She had often repeated to herself that fate should not vanquish her, and that in spite of despair she would be happy: it is true that the misery occasioned by Saville's marriage was a canker at her heart, for which there was no cure, but she had recourse to dissipation that she might endeavour to forget it. A sad and ineffectual remedy. She was surrounded by admirers, whom she disdained, and by friends to whom she would have died rather than betray the naked misery of her soul. She had never planned nor thought of marriage. The report concerning the Earl of D — was one of those which the world always makes current, when two persons of opposite sexes are, by any chance, thrown much together. His sister was Lady 's friend, and she had chaperoned her, and been of assistance to her, during the courtship of the gentleman who was at present her husband. It was their house that Lady Lodore had just quitted on arriving in town. The new-born happiness of early wedded life had been a scene to call her back to thoughts which were the sources of the bitterest anguish. She abhorred herself that she could envy, that she could desire to exchange places with, any created being. She abridged her visit, and fancied that she should regain peace in the independence of her own home. But the enjoyment of liberty was cold in her heart, and loneliness added a freezing chilliness to her feeling.

The mind of Cornelia was much above the world she lived in, though she had sacrificed all to it; and, so to speak, much above herself. Take pride from her, and there was understanding, magnanimity, and great kindliness of disposition: but pride had been the wall of China to shut up all her better qualities, and to keep them from communicating with the world beyond; — pride, which grew strong by resistance, and towered above every aggressor; — pride, which crumbled away, when time and change were its sole assailants, till her inner being was left unprotected and bare.

She found herself alone in the world. She felt that her life was aimless, unprofitable, blank. She was humiliated and saddened by her relative position in the world. She did not think of her daughter as a resource; she was in the hands of her enemies, and no hope lay there. She entertained the belief that Mrs. Villiers was weak both in character and understanding; and that to make any attempt to interest herself in her, would end in disappointment, if not disgust. Imagining, as we are all apt to do, how we should act in another person's place, she had formed a notion of what she would have done, had she been Ethel; and as nothing was done, she almost despised, and quite pitied her. No! there was no help. She was alone; — none loved, none cared for her; and the flower of the field, which a child plucks and wears for an hour, and then casts aside, was of more worth than she.

Every amusement grew tedious — all society vacant and dull. When she came back from dinners or assemblies, to her luxurious but empty abode, the darkest thoughts, engendered by spleen, hung over its threshold, and welcomed her return. At such times, she would dismiss her attendant, and remain half the night by her fireside, encouraging sickly reveries, struggling with the fate that bound her, yet unable in any way to make an effort for freedom.

“Time” — thus would her thoughts fashion themselves—”yes, time rolls on, and what does it bring? I live in a desert; its barren sands feed my hour-glass, and they come out fruitless as they went in. Months change their names — years their cyphers: my brow is sadly trenched; the bloom of youth is faded: my mind gathers wrinkles. What will become of me?

“Hopes of my youth, where are ye? — my aspirations, my pride, my belief that I could grasp and possess all things? Alas! there is nothing of all this! My soul lies in the dust; and I look up to know that I have been playing with shadows, and that I am fallen for ever! What do I see around me? The tide of life is ebbing fast! I had fancied that pearls and gold would have been left by the retiring waves; and I find only barren, lonely sands! No voice reaches me from across the waters — no one stands beside me on the shore! Would — O would I could lay my head on the spray-sprinkled beach, and sleep for ever!

“This is madness! — these incoherent images that throng my brain are the ravings of insanity! — yet what greater madness, than to know that love, affection, the charities of life, the hopes of existence, are empty words for me. Am I indeed to have done with these? What is it that still moves up and down in my soul, making me feel as if something might yet be accomplished? Is it that the ardour of youth is not yet tamed? Alas! my youth has departed for ever. Yet wherefore these sighs, which wrap an eternity of wretchedness in their evanescent breath? — why these tears, that, flowing from the inmost fountains of the soul, endeavour to give passage to the flood of sorrow that deluges and overwhelms it? The husband of my youth! — the thought of him passes like a shadow across me! Had he borne with me a little longer — had I submitted to his controul — how different my destiny had been! But I will not think of that — I do not! A mightier storm than any he could raise has swept across me since, and laid all waste. My soul has been set upon a hope, which has vanished, and desolation has come in its room. Could God, in his anger, bestow a bitterer curse on a condemned spirit, than that which weighs on me, when I reflect, that through my own fault I lost him, whom but to see was paradise? The thought haunts me like a crime; yet when is it absent from me? — it sleeps with me, rises with me — it is by me now, and I would willingly die only to dismiss it for ever.

"Miserable Cornelia! Thou hast been courted, lauded, waited on, loved! — it is all over! I am alone! My poor, poor mother! — my much reviled, my dearest mother! — by you, at least, I was valued! Ah! why are you gone, leaving your wretched child alone?

"O that I could take wings and rise from out of the abyss into which I am fallen! Can I not, myself being miserable, take pleasure in the pleasure of others; and by force of strong sympathy, forget my selfish woes? With whom can I sympathize? None desire my care, and all would repay my officiousness with ingratitude, perhaps with scorn. Once I could assist the poor; now I am poor myself: my limited means scarce suffice to keep me in that station in society, from which, did I once descend, I were indeed trampled upon and destroyed for ever. Tears rush from my eyes — my heart sinks within me, as I look forward. Again the same cares, the same coil, the same bitter result. Hopes held out, only to be crushed; affections excited, only to be scattered to the winds. I blamed myself for struggling too much with fate, for rowing against wind and tide, for resolving to controul the events that form existence: now I yield — I have long yielded — I have let myself drift, as I hoped, into a quiet creek, where indifference and peace ruled the hour; and lo! it is a whirlpool, to swallow all I had left of enjoyment upon earth!"

It was not until she had exhausted herself by these gloomy and restless reflections, that she laid her head upon her pillow, and tried to sleep. Morning usually dawned before she closed her eyes; and it was nearly noon before she rose, weary and unrefreshed. It was with a struggle that she commenced a new day — a day that was to be cheered by no event nor feeling capable of animating her to any sense of joy. She had never occupied herself by intellectual exertion: her employments had been the cultivation of what are called accomplishments merely; and when now she reverted to these, it was with bitterness. She remembered the interval when she had been inspirited by the delightful wish to please Horatio. Now none cared how the forlorn Cornelia passed her time; — no one would hang enraptured on her voice, or hail with gladness the developement of some new talent. "It is the same," she thought, "how I get rid of the heavy hours, so that they go. I have but to give myself up to the sluggish stream that bears me on to old age, not more bereft or unregarded than these wretched years."

Thus she lingered idly through the morning; her only enjoyment being, when she secured to herself a solitary drive, and reclining back in her carriage, felt herself safe from every intrusion, and yet enjoying a succession of objects, that a little varied the tenor of her thoughts. She had deserted the park, and sought unfrequented drives in the environs of London. Evening at last came, and with it her uninteresting engagements, which yet she found better than entire seclusion. Forced to rouse herself to adopt, as a mask, the smiling appearance which had been natural to her for many years, she often abhorred every one around her; and yet, hating herself more, took refuge among them, from her own society. Her chief care was to repress any manifestation of her despair, which too readily rose to her lips or in her eyes. The glorious hues of sunset — the subduing sounds of music — even the sight of a beautiful girl, resplendent with happiness and youth, moving gracefully in dance — had power to move her to tears: her blood seemed to curdle and grow thick, while gloomy shadows mantled over her features. Often, she could scarcely forbear expressing the bitterness of her feelings, and indulging in acrimonious remarks on the deceits of life, and the inanity of all things. It seemed to her, sometimes, that she must die if she did not give vent to the still increasing horror with which she regarded the whole system of the world.

Nor were her sufferings always thus negative. One evening, especially, a young travelled gentleman approached her, with all the satisfaction painted on his countenance, which he felt at having secured a topic for the entertainment of the fashionable Lady .

“You are intimate with the Misses Saville,” he said; “what charming girls they are! I have just left them at Naples, where they have been spending the carnival. I saw them almost every day, and capitally we enjoyed ourselves. Their Italian sister-in-law spirited them up to mask, and to make a real carnival of it. A most lovely woman that. Did you ever see Mrs. Saville, Lady ?”

“Never,” replied his auditress.

“Such eyes! Gazelles, and stars, and suns, and the whole range of poetic imagery, might be sought in vain, to do justice to her large dark eyes. She is very young — scarcely twenty: and to see her with her child, is positively a finer tableau than any Raphael or Correggio in the world. She has a little girl, not a year old, with golden hair, and eyes as black as the mother’s —

the most beautiful little thing, and so intelligent. Saville doats on it: no wonder — he is not himself handsome, you know; though the lovely Clorinda would stab me if she heard me say so. She positively adores him. You should have seen them together."

Lady turned on him one of her sweetest smiles, and in her blandest tone, said, "If you could only get me an ice from that servant, who I see immovable behind those dear, wonderful dowagers, you would so oblige me."

He was gone in a minute; and on his return, Lady was so deeply engrossed in being persuaded to go to the next drawing room, by the young and new-married Countess of G — , that she could only reward him with another heavenly smile. He was obliged to take his carnival at Naples to some other listener.

Cornelia scarcely closed her eyes that night. The thought of the happy wife and lovely child of Saville, pierced her as with remorse. She had entirely broken off her acquaintance with his family, so that she was ignorant of Clorinda's disposition, and readily fancied that she was as happy as she believed that the wife of Horatio Saville must be. She would not acknowledge that she was wicked enough to repine at her felicity; but that he should be rendered happy by any other woman than herself — that any other woman should have become the sharer of his dearest affections, stung her to the core. Yet why should she regret? She were well exchanged for one so lovely and so young. At the age of thirty-four, which she had now reached, Cornelia persuaded herself, that the name of beauty was a mockery as applied to her — though her own glass might have told her otherwise; for time had dealt lightly with her, so that the extreme fascination of her manner, and the animation and intelligence of her countenance, made her compete with many younger beauties. She felt that she was deteriorated from the angelic being she had seemed when she first appeared as 's bride; and this made all compliments show false and vain. Now she figured to herself the dark eyes of the Neapolitan; and easily believed that the memory of her would contrast, like a faded picture, with the rich hues of Clorinda's face; while her sad and withered feelings were in yet greater opposition to the vivacity she had heard described and praised — to the triumphant and glad feelings of a beloved wife. It seemed to her as if she must weep for ever, and yet that tears were unavailing to diminish in any degree the sorrow that weighed so heavily at her heart. These reflections sat like a night-mare on her pillow, troubling the repose she in vain courted. She arose in the morning, scarcely conscious that she had slept at all — languid from exhaustion — her sufferings blunted by their very excess.

CHAPTER IX.

O, where have I been all this time? How ‘friended
That I should lose myself thus desp’rately.
And none for pity show me how I wandered!
— Beaumont and Fletcher.

While it was yet too early for visitors, and before she had ordered herself to be denied to every one, as she intended to do, she was surprised by a double knock at the door, and she rang hastily to prevent any one being admitted. The servants, with contradictory orders, found it difficult to evade the earnest desire of the visitor to see their lady; and at last they brought up a card, on which was written, “Miss Derham wishes to be permitted to see Lady for Mrs. Villiers.” From had first been written, erased, and for substituted. Lady Lodore was alarmed; and the ideas of danger and death instantly presenting themselves, she desired Miss Derham to be shown up. She met her with a face of anxiety, and with that frankness and kindness of manner which was the irresistible sceptre she wielded to subdue all hearts. Fanny had hitherto disliked Lady Lodore. She believed her to be cold, worldly, and selfish — now, in a moment, she was convinced, by the powerful influence of manner, that she was the contrary of all this; so that instead of the chilling address she meditated, she was impelled to throw off her reserve, and to tell her story with animation and detail. She spoke of what Mrs. Villiers had gone through previous to the arrest of her husband — and how constantly she had kept her resolve of remaining with him — though her situation day by day becoming more critical, demanded attentions and luxuries which she had no means of attaining. “Yet,” said Fanny, “I should not have intruded on you even now, but that they cannot go on as they are; their resources are utterly exhausted, — and until next June I see no prospect for them.”

“Why does not Mr. Villiers apply to his father? even if letters were of no avail, a personal appeal—” “I am afraid that Colonel Villiers has nothing to give," replied Fanny, "and at all events, Mr. Villiers's imprisonment—" "Prison!" cried Lady , "you do not mean — Ethel cannot be living in prison!"

"They live within the rules, if you understand that term. They rent a lodging close to the prison on the other side of the river."

"This must indeed be altered," said Lady , "this is far too shocking — poor Ethel, she must come here! Dear Miss Derham, will you tell her how much I desire to see her, and entreat her to make my house her home."

Fanny shook head. "She will not leave her husband — I should make your proposal in vain."

Lady looked incredulous. After a moment's thought she persuaded herself that Ethel's having refused to return to the house of Mrs. Derham, or having negatived some other proposed kindness originated this notion, and she believed that she had only to make her invitation in the most gracious possible way, not to have it refused. "I will go to Ethel myself," she said; "I will myself bring her here, and so smooth all difficulties."

Fanny did not object. Under her new favourable opinion of Lady , she felt that all would be well if the mother and daughter were brought together, though only for a few minutes. She wrote down Ethel's address, and took her leave, while at the same moment Lady Lodore ordered her carriage, and assured her that no time should be lost in removing Mrs. Villiers to a more suitable abode.

Lady 's feelings on this occasion were not so smiling as her looks. She was grieved for her daughter, but she was exceedingly vexed for herself. She had desired some interest, some employment in life, but she recoiled from any that should link her with Ethel. She desired occupation, and not slavery; but to bring the young wife to her own house, and make it a home for her, was at once destructive of her own independence. She looked forward with repugnance to the familiarity that must thence ensue between her and Villiers. Even the first step was full of annoyance, and she was displeased that Fanny had given her the task of going to her daughter's habitation, and forced her to appear personally on so degrading a scene; there was however no help — she had undertaken it, and it must be done.

Every advance she made towards the wretched part of the town where Ethel lived, added to her ill-humour. She felt almost personally affronted by the necessity she was under of first coming in contact with her daughter under such disastrous circumstances. Her spleen against Lord revived: she viewed every evil that had ever befallen her, as arising from his machinations. If Ethel had been entrusted to her guardianship, she certainly had never become the wife of Edward Villiers — nor ever have tasted the dregs of opprobrious poverty.

At length, her carriage drew near a row of low, shabby houses; and as the name caught her eye she found that she had reached her destination. She resolved not to see Villiers, if it could possibly be avoided; and then making up her mind to perform her part with grace, and every show of kindness, she made an effort to smooth her brow and recall her smiles. The carriage stopped at a door — a servant-maid answered to the knock. She ordered Mr. Villiers to be asked for; he was not at home. One objection to her proceeding was removed by this answer. Mrs. Villiers was in the house, and she alighted and desired to be shown to her.

CHAPTER X.

As flowers beneath May's footsteps waken
As stars from night's loose hair are shaken;
As waves arise when loud winds call.
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.
— Shelley.

Never before had the elegant and fastidious Lady entered such an abode, or ascended such stairs. The servant had told her to enter the room at the head of the first flight, so she made her way by herself, and knocked at the door. The voice that told her to come in, thrilled through her, she knew not why, and she became disturbed at finding that her self-possession was failing her. Slight things act powerfully on the subtle mechanism of the human mind. She had dressed with scrupulous plainness, yet her silks and furs were strangely contrasted with the room she entered, and she felt ashamed of all the adjuncts of wealth and luxury that attended her. She opened the door with an effort: Ethel was seated near the fire at work — no place or circumstance could deteriorate from her appearance — in her simple, unadorned morning-dress, she looked as elegant and as distinguished as she had done when her mother had last seen her in diamonds and plumes in the presence of royalty. There was a charm about both, strikingly in contrast, and yet equal in fascination — the polish of Lady Lodore, and the simplicity of Ethel were both manifestations of inward grace and dignity; and as they now met, it would have been difficult to say which had the advantage of the other. Ethel's extreme youth, by adding to the interest with which she must be regarded, was in her favour. Yet full of sensibility and loveliness as was her face, she had never been, nor was she even now, as strikingly beautiful as her mother.

Lady could not restrain the tear that started into her eye on beholding her daughter situated as she was. Ethel's feelings, on the contrary, were all gladness. She had no pride to allay her gratitude for her mother's kindness.

“How very good of you to come!” she said, “how could you find out where we were?”

“How long have you been here?” asked Lady , looking round the wretched little room.

“Only a few weeks — I assure you it is not so bad as it seems. I should not much mind it, but that Edward feels it so deeply on my account.”

“I do not wonder,” said her mother, “he must be cut to the soul — but thank God it is over now. You shall come to me immediately, my house is quite large enough to accommodate you — I am come to fetch you.”

“My own dearest mother!” — the words scarcely formed themselves on Ethel’s lips; she half feared to offend the lovely woman before her by showing her a daughter’s affection.

“Yes, call me mother,” said Lady ; “I may, at last, I hope, be allowed to prove myself one. Come then, dear Ethel, you will not refuse my request — you will come with me?”

“How gladly — but — will they let Edward go? I thought there was no hope of so much good fortune.”

“I fear indeed,” replied her mother, “that Mr. Villiers must endure the annoyance of remaining here a little longer; but I hope his affairs will soon be arranged.”

Ethel bent her large eyes inquiringly on her mother, as if not understanding; and then, as her meaning opened on her, a smile diffused itself over her countenance as she said, “Your intentions are the kindest in the world — I am grateful, how far more grateful than I can at all express, for your goodness. That you have had the kindness to come to this odious place is more than I could ever dare expect.”

“It is not worth your thanks, although I think I deserve your acquiescence to my proposal. You will come home with me?”

Ethel shook her head, smilingly. “All my wishes are accomplished,” she said, “through this kind visit. I would not have you for the world come here again; but the wall between us is broken down, and we shall not become strangers again.”

“My dearest Ethel,” said Lady , seriously, “I see what you mean. I wish Mr. Villiers were here to advocate my cause. You must come with me — he will be much more at ease when you are no longer forced to share his annoyances. This is in every way an unfit place for you, especially at this time."

"I shall appear ungrateful, I fear," replied Ethel, "if I assure you how much better off I am here than I could be any where else in the world. This place appears miserable to you — so I dare say it is; to me it seems to possess every requisite for happiness, and were it not so, I would rather live in an actual dungeon with Edward, than in the most splendid mansion in England, away from him."

Her face was lighted up with such radiance as she spoke — there was so much fervour in her voice — such deep affection in her speaking eyes — such an earnest demonstration of heartfelt sincerity, that Lady was confounded and overcome. Swift, as if a map had been unrolled before her, the picture of her own passed life was retraced in her mind — its loneless and unmeaning pursuits — and the bitter disappointments that had blasted every hope of seeing better days. She burst into tears. Ethel was shocked and tried to soothe her by caresses and assurances of gratitude and affection. "And yet you will not come with me?" said Lady Lodore, making an effort to resume her self-command.

"I cannot. It is impossible for me voluntarily to separate myself from Edward — I am too weak, too great a coward."

"And is there no hope of liberation for him?" This question of Lady forced them back to matter-of-fact topics, and she became composed. Ethel related how ineffectual every endeavour had yet been to arrange his affairs, how large his debts, how inexorable his creditors, how neglectful his attorney.

"And his father?" inquired her mother.

"He seems to me to be kind-hearted," replied Ethel, "and to feel deeply his son's situation; but he has no means — he himself is in want."

"He is keeping a carriage at this moment in Paris," said Lady , "and giving parties — however, I allow that that is no proof of his having money. Still you must not stay here."

"Nor shall we always," replied Ethel; "something of course will happen to take us away, though as yet it is all hopeless enough."

"Aunt Bessy, Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, might give you assistance. Have you asked her? — has she refused?"

“Edward has exacted a promise from me not to reveal our perplexities to her — he is punctilious about money obligations, and I have given my word not to hurt his delicacy on that point.”

“Then that, perhaps, is the reason why you refused my request to go home with me?” said Lady reproachfully.

“No,” replied Ethel, “I do not think that he is so scrupulous as to prevent a mother from serving her child, but he shall answer for himself; I expect him back from his walk every minute.”

“Then forgive me if I run away,” said Lady ; “I am not fit to see him now. Better times will come, dearest Ethel, and we shall meet again. God bless you, my child, as so much virtue and patience deserve to be blest. Remember me with kindness.”

“Do not you forget me,” replied Ethel, “or rather, do not think of me and my fortunes with too much disgust. We shall meet again, I hope?”

Lady kissed her, and hurried away. Scarcely was she in her carriage than she saw Villiers advancing: his prepossessing appearance, ingenuous countenance, and patrician figure, made more intelligible to her world-practised eyes the fond fidelity of his wife. She drew up the window that he might not see her, as she gave her directions for “home,” and then retreating to the corner of her carriage, she tried to compose her thoughts, and to reflect calmly on what was to be done.

But the effort was vain. The further she was removed from the strange scene of the morning, the more powerfully did it act on, and agitate her mind. Her soul was in tumults. This was the being she had pitied, almost despised! Her eager imagination now exalted her into an angel. There was something heart-moving in the gentle patience, and unrepining contentment with which she bore her hard lot. She appeared in her eyes to be one of those rare examples sent upon earth to purify human nature, and to demonstrate how near akin to perfection we can become. Latent maternal pride might increase her admiration, and maternal tenderness add to its warmth. Her nature had acknowledged its affinity to her child, and she felt drawn towards her with inexpressible yearnings. A vehement desire to serve her sprung up — but all was confused and tumultuous. She pressed her hand on her forehead, as if so to restrain the strong current of thought. She compressed her lips, so to repress her tears.

Arrived at home, she found herself in prison within the walls of her chamber. She abhorred its gilding and luxury — she longed for Ethel's scant abode and glorious privations. To alleviate her restlessness, she again drove out, and directed her course through the Regent's Park, and along the new road to Hampstead, where she was least liable to meet any one she knew. It was one of the first fine days of spring. The green meadows, the dark boughs swelling and bursting into bud, the fresh enlivening air, the holiday of nature's birth — all this was lost on her, or but added to her agitation. Still her thoughts were with her child in her narrow abode; every lovely object served but to recall her image, and the wafting of the soft breeze seemed an emanation from her. It was dark before she came back, and sent a hurried note of excuse to the house where she was to have dined. "No more, O never more," she cried, "will I so waste my being, but learn from Ethel to be happy, and to love."

Many thoughts and many schemes thronged her brain. Something must be done, or her heart would burst. Pride, affection, repentance, all occupied the same channel, and increased the flood that swept away every idea but one. Her very love for Horatio, true and engrossing as it had been, the source of many tears and endless regrets, appeared as slight as the web of gossamer, compared to the chain that bound her to her daughter. She could not herself understand, nor did she wish to know, whence and why this enthusiasm had risen like an exhalation in her soul, covering and occupying its entire space. She only knew it was there, interpenetrating, paramount. Ethel's dark eyes and silken curls, her sweet voice and heavenly smile, formed a moving, speaking picture, which she felt that it were bliss to contemplate for ever. She retired at last to bed, but not to rest; and as she lay with open eyes, thinking not of sleep — alive in every pore — her brain working with ten thousand thoughts, one at last grew more importunate than the rest, and demanded all her attention. Her ideas became more consecutive, though not less rapid and imperious. She drew forth in prospect, as it were, a map of what was to be done, and the results. Her mind became fixed, and sensations of ineffable pleasure accompanied her reveries. She was resolved to sacrifice every thing to her daughter — to liberate Villiers, and to establish her in ease and comfort. The image of self-sacrifice, and of the ruin of her own fortunes, was attended with a kind of rapture. She felt as if, in securing Ethel's happiness, she could never feel sorrow more. This was something worth living for: the burden of life was gone — its darkness dissipated — a soft light invested all things, and angels' voices invited her to proceed. While indulging in these reveries, she sunk into a balmy sleep — such a one she had not enjoyed for many months — nay, her whole past life had never afforded her so sweet a joy. The thoughts of love, when she believed that she should be united to Saville, were not so blissful; for self-approbation, derived from a consciousness of virtue and well-doing, hallowed every thought.

CHAPTER XI.

Like gentle rains on the dry plains.
 Making that green which late was grey;
Or like the sudden moon, that stains
 Some gloomy chamber's window panes.
With a broad light like day.
 — Shelley.

How mysterious a thing is the action of repentance in the human mind! We will not dive into the debasing secrets of remorse for guilt. Lady could accuse herself of none. Yet when she looked back, a new light shone on the tedious maze in which she had been lost; a light — and she blessed it — that showed her a pathway out of tempest and confusion into serenity and peace. She wondered at her previous blindness; it was as if she had closed her eyelids, and then fancied it was night. No fear that she should return to darkness; her heart felt so light, her spirit so clear and animated, that she could only wonder how it was she had missed happiness so long, when it needed only that she should stretch out her hand to take it.

Her first act on the morrow was to have an interview with her son-in-law's solicitor. Nothing could be more hopeless than Mr. Gayland's representation of his client's affairs. The various deeds of settlement and entail, through which he inherited his estate, were clogged in such a manner as to render an absolute sale of his reversionary prospects impossible, so that the raising of money on them could only be effected at an immense future sacrifice. Under these circumstances Gayland had been unwilling to proceed, and appeared lukewarm and dilatory, while he was impelled by that love for the preservation of property, which often finds place in the mind of a legal adviser.

Lady listened attentively to his statements. She asked the extent of Edward's debts, and somewhat started at the sum named as necessary to clear him. She then told Mr. Gayland that their ensuing conversation must continue under a pledge of secrecy on his part. He assented, and she proceeded to represent her intention of disposing of her jointure for the purpose of extricating Villiers from his embarrassments. She gave directions for its sale, and instructions for obtaining the necessary papers to effect it. Mr. Gayland's countenance brightened; yet he offered a few words of remonstrance against such unexampled generosity.

"The sacrifice," said Lady , "is not so great as you imagine. A variety of circumstances tend to compensate me for it. I do not depend upon this source of income alone; and be assured, that what I do, I consider, on the whole, as benefiting me even more than Mr. Villiers."

Mr. Gayland bowed; and Cornelia returned home with a light heart. For months she had not felt such an exhilaration of spirits. A warm joy thrilled through her frame, and involuntary smiles dimpled her cheeks. Dusky and dingy as was the day, the sunshine of her soul dissipated its shadows, and spread brightness over her path. She could scarcely controul the expression of her delight; and when she sat down to write to Ethel, it was several minutes before she was able to collect her thoughts, so as to remember what she had intended to say. Two notes were destroyed before she had succeeded in imparting that sobriety to her expressions, which was needful to veil her purpose, which she had resolved to lock within her own breast for ever. At length she was obliged to satisfy herself with a few vague expressions. This was her letter: —

"I cannot help believing, my dearest girl, that your trials are coming to a conclusion. I have seen Mr. Gayland; and it appears to me that energy and activity are chiefly wanting for the arrangement of your husband's affairs: I think I have in some degree inspired these. He has promised to write to Mr. Villiers, who, I trust, will find satisfaction in his views. Do you, my dearest Ethel, keep up your spirits, and take care of your precious health. We shall meet again in better days, when you will be rewarded for your sufferings and goodness. Believe me, I love as much as I admire you; so, in spite of the past, think of me with indulgence and affection."

Lady dressed to dine out, and for an evening assembly. She looked so radiant and so beautiful, that admiration and compliments were showered upon her. How vain and paltry they all seemed; and yet her feelings were wholly changed from that period, when she desired to reject and scoff at the courtesy of her fellow-creatures. The bitterness of spirit was gone, which had prompted her to pour out gall and sarcasm, and had made it her greatest pleasure to revel in the contempt and hate that filled her bosom towards herself and others. She was now at peace with the world, and disposed to view its follies charitably. Yet how immeasurably superior she felt herself to all those around her! not through vanity or supercilious egotism, but from the natural spring of inward joy and self-approbation, which a consciousness of doing well opened in her before dried-up heart. She somewhat contemned her friends, and wholly pitied them. But she could not dwell on any disagreeable sentiment. Her thoughts, while she reverted to the circumstances that so changed their tenor, were stained with the fairest hues, harmonized by the most delicious music. She had risen to a sphere above, beyond the ordinary soarings of mortals — a world without a cloud, without one ungenial breath. She wondered at herself. She looked back with mingled horror and surprise on the miserable state of despondence to which she had been reduced. Where were now her regrets? — where her ennui, her repinings, her despair? "In the deep bosom of the ocean buried!" — and she arose, as from a second birth, to new hopes, new prospects, new feelings; or rather to another state of being, which had no affinity to the former. For poverty was now her pursuit, obscurity her desire, ruin her hope; and she smiled on, and beckoned to these, as if life possessed no greater blessings.

Her impetuosity and pride served to sustain the high tone of her soul. She had none of that sloth of purpose, or weakness of feeling, that leads to hesitation and regret. To resolve with her had been, during the whole course of her life, to do; and what her mind was set upon she accomplished — it might be rashly, but still with that independence and energy, that gave dignity even to her more ambiguous actions. As before, when she cast off , she had never admitted a doubt that she was justified before God and her conscience for refusing to submit to the most insulting tyranny; so now, believing that she had acted ill in not demanding the guardianship of her daughter, and resolving to atone for the evils which were the consequence of this neglect of duty on her part, she had no misgivings as to the future, but rushed precipitately onwards. As a racer at the Olympic games, she panted to arrive at the goal, though it were only to expire at the moment of its attainment.

Meanwhile, Ethel had been enchanted by her mother's visit, and spoke of it to Villiers as a proof of the real goodness of her heart, insisting that she was judged harshly and falsely. Villiers smiled incredulously. "She gains your esteem at an easy rate," he observed; "cultivate it, if it makes you happier. It will need more than a mere act of ordinary courtesy — more than a slight invitation to her house, to persuade me that Lady is not — what she is — a worshipper of the world, a frivolous, unfeeling woman. Mark me whether she comes again."

Her letter, on the following day, strengthened his opinion. "This is even insulting," he said: "she takes care to inform you that she will not look again on your poverty, but will wait for better days to bring you together. The kindness of such an intimation is quite admirable. She has inspired Gayland with energy and activity! — O, then, she must be a Medea, in more senses than the more obvious one."

Ethel looked reproachfully. She saw that Villiers was deeply hurt that Lady had become acquainted with their distresses, and been a witness of the nakedness of the land. She could not inspire him with the tenderness that warmed her heart towards her mother, and the conviction she entertained, in spite of appearances, (for she was forced to confess to herself that Lady Lodore's letter was not exactly the one she expected,) that her heart was generous and affectionate. It was a comfort to her that Fanny Derham participated in her opinions. Fanny was quite sure that Lady Lodore would prove herself worthy of the esteem she had so suddenly conceived for her; and Ethel listened delightedly to her assertions — it was so soothing to think well of, to love, and praise her mother.

The solicitor's letter, which came, as Lady announced, somewhat surprised Villiers; yet, after a little reflection, he gave no heed to its contents. It said, that upon further consideration of particular points, Gayland perceived certain facilities; by improving upon which, he hoped soon to make a favourable arrangement, and to extricate Mr. Villiers from his involvements. Any thing so vague demanded explanation. Edward wrote earnestly, requesting one; but his letter remained unanswered. Perplexed and annoyed, he obtained permission to quit his bounds for a few hours, and called upon the man of law. Gayland was so busy, that he could not afford him more than five minutes' conversation. He said that he had hopes — even expectations; that a little time would show more; and he begged his client to be patient. Villiers returned in despair. The only circumstance that at all served to inspire him with any hope, was, that on the day succeeding to his visit, he received a remittance of an hundred pounds from Gayland, who begged to be considered as his banker till the present negociations should be concluded.

There was some humiliation in the knowledge of how welcome this supply had become, and Ethel used her gentle influence to mitigate the pain of such reflections. If she ever drooped, it was not for herself, but for Villiers; and she carefully hid even these disinterested repinings. Her own condition did not inspire her with any fears, and the anxiety that she experienced for her unborn child was untinctured by bitterness or despair. She felt assured that their present misfortunes would be of short duration; and instead of letting her thoughts dwell on the mortifications or shame that marked the passing hour, she loved to fill her mind with pleasing sensations, inspired by the tenderness of her husband, the kindness of poor Fanny, and the reliance she had in the reality of her mother's affection. In vain, she said, did the harsher elements of life try to disturb the serenity which the love of those around her produced in her soul. Her happiness was treasured in their hearts, and did not emanate from the furniture of a room, nor the comfort of an equipage. Her babe, if destined to open its eyes first on such a scene, would be still less acted upon by its apparent cheerlessness. Cradled in her arms, and nourished at her bosom, what more benign fate could await the little stranger? What was there in their destiny worthy of grief, while they remained true to each other?

With such arguments she tried to inspire Villiers with a portion of that fortitude and patience which was a natural growth in herself They had but slender effect upon him. Their different educations had made her greatly his superior in these virtues; besides that she, with her simpler habits and unprejudiced mind, was less shocked by the concomitants of penury, than he, bred in high notions of aristocratic exclusiveness. She had spent her youth among settlers in a new country, and did not associate the idea of disgrace with want. Nakedness and gaunt hunger had often been the invaders of her forest home, scarcely to be repelled by her father's forethought and resources. How could she deem these shameful, when they had often assailed the most worthy and industrious, who were not the less regarded or esteemed on that account. She had acquired a practical philosophy, while inhabiting the western wilderness, and beholding the vast variety of life that it presents, which stood her in good stead under her European vicissitudes. The white inhabitants of America did not form her only school. The Red Indian and his squaw were also human beings, subject to the same necessities, moved, in the first instance, by the same impulses as herself. All that bore the human form were sanctified to her by the spirit of sympathy; and she could not, as Edward did, feel herself wholly outcast and under ban, while kindness, however humble, and intelligence, however lowly, attended upon her.

Villiers could not yield to her arguments, nor partake her wisdom; yet he was glad that she possessed any source of consolation, however unimaginable by himself. He buried within his heart the haughty sense of wrong. He uttered no complaint, though his whole being rebelled against the state of inaction to which he was reduced. It maddened him to feel that he could not stir a finger to help himself, even while he fancied that he saw his young wife withering before his eyes; and looked forward to the birth of his child, under circumstances, that rendered even the necessary attendance difficult, if not impracticable. The heaviest weight of slavery fell upon him, for it was he that was imprisoned, and forbidden to go beyond certain limits; and though Ethel religiously confined herself within yet narrower bounds than those allotted to him, he only saw, in this delicacy, another source of evil. Nor were these real tangible ills those which inflicted the greatest pain. Had these misfortunes visited him in the American wilderness, or in any part of the world where the majesty of nature had surrounded them, he fancied that he should have been less alive to their sinister influence. But here shame was conjoined with the perpetual spectacle of the least reputable class of the civilized community. Their walks were haunted by men who bore the stamp of profligacy and crime; and the very shelter of their dwelling was shared by the mean and vulgar. His aristocratic pride was sorely wounded at every turn; — not for himself so much, for he was manly enough to feel “that a man’s a man for all that,” — but for Ethel’s sake, whom he would have fondly placed apart from all that is deformed and unseemly, guarded even from the rougher airs of heaven, and surrounded by every thing most luxurious and beautiful in the world.

There was no help. Now and then he got a letter from his father, full of unmeaning apologies and unmanly complaints. The more irretrievable his poverty became, the firmer grew his resolve not to burden with his wants any more distant relation. He would readily give up every prospect of future wealth to purchase ease and comfort for Ethel; but he could not bend to any unworthy act; and the harder he felt pressed upon and injured by fortune, the more jealously he maintained his independence of feeling; on that he would lean to the last, though it proved a sword to pierce him.

He looked forward with despair, yet he tried to conceal his worst thoughts, which would still be brooding upon absolute want and starvation. He answered Ethel's cheering tones in accents of like cheer, and met the melting tenderness of her gaze with eyes that spoke of love only. He endeavoured to persuade her that he did not wholly shut his heart from the hopes she was continually presenting to him. Hopes, the very names of which were mockery. For they must necessarily be embodied in words and ideas — and his father or uncle were mentioned — the one had proved a curse, the other a temptation. He could trace his reversees as to the habits of expence and the false views of his resources, acquired under Lord Maristow's tutelage, as to the prodigality and neglect of his parent. Even the name of Horation Saville produced bitterness. Why was he not here? He would not intrude his wants upon him in his Italian home; but had he been in England, they had been saved from these worst blows of fate.

The only luxury of Villiers was to steal some few hours of solitude, when he could indulge in his miserable reflections without restraint. The loveliness and love of Ethel were then before his imagination to drive him to despair. To suffer alone would have been nothing; but to see this child of beauty and tenderness, this fairest nursling of nature and liberty, droop and fade in their narrow, poverty-striken home, bred thoughts akin to madness. During each live-long night he was kept awake by the anguish of such reflections. Darker thoughts sometimes intruded themselves. He fancied that if he were dead, Ethel would be happier. He mother, his relations, each and all would come forward to gift her with opulence and ease. The idea of self-destruction thus became soothing; and he pondered with a kind of savage pleasure on the means by which he should end the coil of misery that had wound round him.

At such times the knowledge of Ethel's devoted affection checked him. Or sometimes, as he gazed on her as she lay sleeping at his side, he fel that every sorrow was less than that which separation must produce; and that to share adversity with her was greater happiness than the enjoyment of prosperity apart from her. Once, when brought back from the gloomiest desperation by such a return of softer emotions, the words of Francesca da Rimini rushed upon his mind and completed the change. He recollected how she and her lover were consoled by their eternal companionship in the midst of the infernal whirlwind. "And do I love you less, my angel?" he thought; "are you not more dear to me than woman ever was to man, and would I divide myself from you because we suffer? Perish the thought! Whether for good or ill, let our existences still continue one, and from the sanctity and sympathy of our union, a sweet will be extracted, sufficient to destroy the bitterness of this hour. We prefer remaining together, mine own sweet love, for ever together, though it were for an eternity of pain. And these woes are finite. Your pure and exalted nature will be rewarded for its sufferings, and I, for your sake, shall be saved. I could not live without you in this world; and yet with insane purpose I would rush into the unknown, away from you, leaving you to seek comfort and support from other hands than mine. I was base and cowardly to entertain the thought, but for one moment — a traitor to my own affection, and the stabber of your peace. Ah, dearest Ethel, when in a few hours your eyes will open on the light, and seek me as the object most beloved by them, were I away, unable to return their fondness, incapable of the blessing of beholding them, what hell could be contrived to punish more severely my dereliction of duty?"

With this last thought another train of feeling was introduced, and he strung himself to more manly endurance. He saw that his post was assigned him in this world, and that he ought to fulfil its duties with courage and patience. Hope came hand in hand with such ideas — and the dawn of content on his soul was a proof that the exercise of virtue brought with it its own reward. He could not always keep his feelings in the same tone, but he no longer saw greatness of mind in the indulgence of sorrow.

He remembered that throughout the various stations into which society has divided human beings, adversity and pain belong to each, and that death and treachery are more frightful evils than all the hardships of life. He thought of his unborn child, and of his duties towards it — not only in a worldly point of view, but as its teacher and guide in morals and religion. The beauty and use of the ties of blood, to which his peculiar situation had hitherto blinded him, became intelligible at once to his heart and his understanding; and while he felt how ill his father had fulfilled the paternal duties, he resolved that his own offspring should never have cause to reproach him for similar misconduct. Before he had repined because the evils of his lot seemed gratuitous suffering; but now he felt, as Ethel had often expressed it, that the sting of humiliation is taken from misfortune, when we nerve ourselves to endure it for another’s sake.

CHAPTER XII.

The world had just begun to steal
 Each hope that led me lightly on.
I felt not as I used to feel.
 And life grew dark and love was gone.
 — Thomas Moore.

While the young pair were thus struggling with the severe visitation of adversity, Lady was earnestly engaged in her endeavours to extricate them from their difficulties. The ardour of her zeal had made her take the first steps in this undertaking, with a resolution that would not look behind, and a courage not to be dismayed by the dreary prospect which the future afforded. The scheme which she had planned, and was now proceeding to execute, was unbounded in generosity and self-sacrifice. It was not in her nature to stop short at half-measures, nor to pause when once she had fixed her purpose. If she ever trembled on looking forward to the utter ruin she was about to encounter, her second emotion was to despise herself for such pusillanimity, and to be roused to renewed energy. She intended to devote as much as was necessary of the money arising from the sale of her jointure, as fixed by her marriage settlement, for the liquidation of her son-in-law's debts. The remaining six hundred a-year, bequeathed to her in Lord Lodore's will, under circumstances of cruel insult, she resolved to give up to her daughter's use, for her future subsistence. She hoped to save enough from the sum produced by the disposal of her jointure, to procure the necessaries of life for a few years, and she did not look beyond. She would quit London for ever. She must leave her house, which she had bought during her days of prosperity, and which she had felt so much pride and delight in adorning with every luxury and comfort: to crown her good work, she intended to give it up to Ethel. And then with her scant means she would take refuge in the solitude where Lodore found her, and spend the residue of her days among the uncouth and lonely mountains of Wales, in poverty and seclusion. It was from no agreeable association with her early youth, that she selected the neighbourhood of Rhaider Gowy for her future residence; nor from a desire of renewing the recollections of the period spent there, nor of revisiting the scenes, where she had stepped beyond infancy into the paths of life. Her choice simply arose from being obliged to think of economy in its strictest sense, and she remembered this place as the cheapest in the world, and the most retired. Besides, that in fixing on a part of the country which she had before inhabited, and yet where she would be utterly unknown, the idea of her future home assumed distinctness, and a greater sense of practicability was imparted to her schemes, than could have been the case, had she been unable to form any image in her mind of the exact spot whither she was about to betake herself.

The first conception of this plan had dawned on her soul, as the design of some sublime poem or magnificent work of art may present itself to the contemplation of the poet and man of genius. She dwelt on it in its entire result, with a glow of joy; she entered into its details with childish eagerness. She pictured to herself the satisfaction of Villiers and Ethel at finding themselves suddenly, as by magic, restored to freedom and the pleasures of life. She figured their gladness in exchanging their miserable lodging for the luxury of her elegant dwelling; their pleasure in forgetting the long train of previous misfortunes, or remembering them only to enhance their prosperity, when pain and fear, disgrace and shame, should be exchanged for security and comfort. She repeated to herself, “I do all this — I, the despised Cornelia! I who was deemed unworthy to have the guardianship of my own child. I, who was sentenced to desertion and misery, because I was too worldly and selfish to be worthy of Horace Saville! How little through life has my genuine character been known, or its qualities appreciated! Nor will it be better understood now. My sacrifices will continue a mystery, and even the benefits I am forced to acknowledge to flow from me, I shall diminish in their eyes, by bestowing them with apparent indifference. Will they ever deign to discover the reality under the deceitful appearances which it will be my pride to exhibit? I care not; conscience will approve me — and when I am alone and unthought of, the knowledge that Ethel is happy through my means will make poverty a blessing.”

It was not pride alone that induced Lady to resolve on concealing the extent of her benefits. All that she could give was not much if compared with the fortunes of the wealthy — but it was a competence, which would enable her daughter and her husband to expect better days with patience; but if they knew how greatly she was a sufferer for their good, they would insist at least upon her sharing their income — and what was scanty in its entireness, would be wholly insufficient when divided. Villiers also might dispute or reject her kindness, and deeply injured as she believed herself to have been by him — injured by his disesteem, and the influence he had used over Saville, in a manner so baneful to her happiness, she felt irrepressible exultation at the idea of heaping obligation on him, — and knowing herself to be deserving of his deepest gratitude. All these sentiments might be deemed fantastic, or at least extravagant. Yet her conclusions were reasonable, for it was perfectly true that Villiers would rather have returned to his prison, than have purchased freedom at the vast price she was about to pay for it. No, her design was faultless in its completeness, meagre and profitless if she stopt short of its full execution. Nor would she see Ethel again in the interim — partly fearful of not preserving her secret inviolate — partly because she felt so strongly drawn towards her, that she dreaded finding herself the slave of an affection — a passion, which, under her circumstances, she could not indulge. Without counsellor, without one friendly voice to encourage, she advanced in the path she had marked out, and drew from her own heart only the courage to proceed.

It required, however, all her force of character to carry her forward. A thousand difficulties were born at every minute, and the demands made were increased to such an extent as to make it possible that they would go beyond her means of satisfying them. She had not the assistance of one friend acquainted with the real state of things to direct her — her only adviser was a man of law, who did what he was directed — not indeed with passive obedience, but whose deviations from mere acquiescence, arose from technical objections and legal difficulties, at once unintelligible and tormenting.

Besides these more palpable annoyances, other clouds arose, natural to wavering humanity, which would sometimes shadow Cornelia’s soul, so that she drooped from he height she had reached, with a timid and dejected spirit. At first she looked forward to ruin, exile, and privation, as to possessions which she coveted — but the further she proceeded, the more she lost view of the light and gladness which had attended on the dawn of her new visions. Futurity became enveloped in an appalling obscurity, while the present was sad and cheerless. The ties which she had formed in the world, which she had fancied it would be so easy to cut asunder, assumed strength; and she felt that she must endure many pangs in the act of renouncing them for ever. The scenes and persons which, a little while ago, she had regarded as uninteresting and frivolous — she was now forced to acknowledge to be too inextricably interwoven with her habits and pursuits, to be all at once quitted without severe pain. When the future was spoken of by others with joyous anticipation, her heart sunk within her, to think how her hereafter was to become disjointed and cast away from all that had preceded it. The mere pleasures of society grew into delights, when thought of as about to become unattainable; and slight partialities were regarded as if founded upon strong friendship and tender affection. She was not aware till now how habit and association will endear the otherwise indifferent, and how the human heart, prone to love, will entwine its ever-sprouting tendrils around any object, not absolutely repulsive, which is brought into near contact with it. When any of her favourites addressed her in cordial tones, when she met the glance of one she esteemed, directed towards her with an expression of kindliness and sympathy, her eyes grew dim, and a thrill of anguish passed through her frame. All that she had a little while ago scorned as false and empty, she now looked upon as the pleasant reality of life, which she was to exchange for she scarcely knew what — a living grave, a friendless desart — for silence and despair.

It is a hard trial at all times to begin the world anew, even when we exchange a mediocre station for one which our imagination paints as full of enjoyment and distinction. How much more difficult it was for Lady to despoil herself of every good, and voluntarily to encounter poverty in its most unadorned guise. As time advanced, she became fully aware of what she would have to go through, and her heroism was the greater, because, though the charm had vanished, and no hope of compensation or reward was held out, she did not shrink from accomplishing her task. She could not exactly say, like old Adam in the play, At seventeen years many their fortunes seek, But at fourscore it is too late a week. Yet at her age it was perhaps more difficult to cast off the goods of this world, than at a more advanced one. Midway in life, we are not weaned from affections and pleasures — we still hope. We even demand more of solid advantages, because the romantic ideas of youth have disappeared, and yet we are not content to give up the game. We no longer set our hearts on ephemeral joys, but require to be enabled to put our trust in the continuance of any good offered to our choice. This desire of durability in our pleasures is equally felt by the young; but ardour of feeling and ductility of imagination is then at hand to bestow a quality, so dear and so unattainable to fragile humanity, on any object we desire should be so gifted. But at a riper age we pause, and seek that our reason may be convinced, and frequently prefer a state of prosperity less extatic and elevated, because its very sobriety satisfies us that it will not slip suddenly from our grasp.

The comforts of life, the esteem of friends — these are things which we then regard with the greatest satisfaction; and other feelings, less reasonable, yet not less keenly felt, may enter into the circle of sensations, which forms the existence of a beautiful woman. It is less easy for one who has been all her life admired and waited upon, to give up the few last years of such power, than it would have been to cast away the gift in earlier life. She has learned to doubt her influence, to know its value, and to prize it. In girlhood it may be matter of mere triumph — in after years it will be looked on as an inestimable quality by which she may more easily and firmly secure the benevolence of her fellow-creatures. All this depends upon the polish of the skin and the fire of the eye, which a few years will deface and quench — and while the opprobrious epithet of old woman approaches within view, she is glad to feel secure from its being applied to her, by perceiving the signs of the influence of her surviving attractions marked in the countenances of her admirers. Lady never felt so kindly inclined towards hers, as now that she was about to withdraw from them. Their admiration, for its own sake, she might contemn, but she valued it as the testimony that those charms were still hers, which once had subdued the soul of him she loved — and this was no disagreeable assurance to one who was on the eve of becoming a grandmother.

Her sensibility, awakened by the considerations forced on her by her new circumstances, caused her to make more progress in the knowledge of life, and in the philosophy of its laws, than love or ambition had ever done before. The last had rendered her proud from success, the first had caused her to feel dependent on one only; but now that she was about to abandon all, she found herself bound to all by stronger ties than she could have imagined. She became aware that any new connexion could never be adorned by the endearing recollections attending those she had already formed. The friends of her youth, her mere acquaintances, she regarded with peculiar partiality, as being the witnesses or sharers of her past joys and successes. Each familiar face was sanctified in her eyes by association; and she walked among those whom she had so lately scorned, as if they were saintly memorials to be approached with awe, and quitted with eternal regret. Her hopes and prospects had hinged upon them, but her life became out of joint when she quitted them. Her sensitive nature melted in unwonted tenderness while occupied by such contemplations, and they turned the path, she had so lately entered as one of triumph and gladness, to gloom and despondence.

Sometimes she pondered upon means for preserving her connexion with the world. But any scheme of that kind was fraught, on the one hand, with mortification to herself, on the other, with the overthrow of her designs, through the repugnance which Ethel and her husband would feel at occasioning such unmeasured sacrifices. She often regretted that there were no convents, to which she might retire with safety and dignity. Conduct, such as she contemplated pursuing, would, under the old regime in France, have been recompensed by praise and gratitude; while its irrevocability must prevent any resistance to her wishes. In giving up fortune and station, she would have placed herself under the guardianship of a community; and have found protection and security, to compensate for poverty and slavery. The very reverse of all this must now happen. Alone, friendless, unknown, and therefore despised, she must shift for herself, and rely on her own resources for prudence to insure safety, and courage to endure the evils of her lot. To one of another sex, the name of loneliness can never convey the idea of desolation and disregard, which gives it so painful a meaning in a woman’s mind. They have not been taught always to look up to others, and to do nothing for themselves; so that business becomes a matter of heroism to a woman, when conducted in the most common-place way; but when it is accompanied by mystery, she feels herself transported from her fitting place, and as if about to encounter shame and contumely. Lady had never been conversant with any mode of life, except that of being waited on and watched over. In the poverty of her early girlhood, her mother had been constantly at her side. The necessity of so conducting herself as to prevent the shadow of slander from visiting her, had continued this state of dependence during all her married life. She had never stept across a street without attendance; nor put on her gloves, but as brought to her by a servant. Her look had commanded obedience, and her will had been law with those about her. This was now to be altered. She scarcely reverted in her mind to these minutiæ; and when she did, it was to smile at herself for being able to give weight to such trifles. She was not aware how, hereafter, these small things would become the shapings and embodyings which desertion and penury would adopt, to sting her most severely. The new course she was about to enter, was too unknown to make her fears distinct. There was one vast blank before her, one gigantic and mishapen image of desertion, which filled her mind to the exclusion of every other, but whose parts were not made out, though this very indistinctness was the thing that often chiefly appalled her.

She said, with the noble exile,—"I am too old to fawn upon a nurse, Too far in years to be a pupil now." It is true that she had not, like him, to lament that—"My native English, now I must forego;" but there is another language, even more natural than the mere dialect in which we have been educated. When our lips no longer utter the sentiments of our heart — when we are forced to exchange the spontaneous effusions of the soul for cramped and guarded phrases, which give no indication of the thought within, — then, indeed, may we say, that our tongue becomes ..."an unstringed viol, or a harp, ... put into his hands, That knows no touch to tune the harmony."

And this was to be Lady ‘s position. Her only companions would be villagers; or, at best, a few Welsh gentry, with whom she could have no real communication. Sympathy, the charm of life, was dead for her, and her state of banishment would be far more complete than if mountains and seas only constituted its barriers.

Lady was often disturbed by these reflections, but she did not on that account waver in her purpose. The flesh might shrink, but the spirit was firm. Sometimes, indeed, she wondered how it was that she had first conceived the design, which had become the tyrant of her life. She had long known that she had a daughter, young, lovely, and interesting, without any great desire to become intimate with her. Sometimes pride, sometimes indignation, had checked her maternal feelings. The only time before, in which she had felt any emotion similar to that which now governed her, was on the day when she had spoken to her in the House of Lords. But instead of indulging it, she had fled from it as an enemy, and despised herself as a dupe, for being for one instant its subject. When her fingers then touched her daughter's cheek, she had not trembled like Ethel; yet an awful sensation passed through her frame, which for a moment stunned her, and she hastily retreated, to recover herself. Now, on the contrary, she longed to strain her child to her heart; she thought no sacrifice too great, which was to conduce to her advantage; and that she condemned herself never to see her more, appeared the hardest part of the lot she was to undergo. Why was this change? She could not tell — memory could not inform her. She only knew that since she had seen Ethel in her adversity, the stoniness of her heart had dissolved within her, that her whole being was subdued to tenderness, and that the world was changed from what it had been in her eyes. She felt that she could not endure life, unless for the sake of benefiting her child; and that this sentiment mastered her in spite of herself, so that every struggle with it was utterly vain.

Thus if she sometimes repined at the hard fate that drove her into exile, yet she never wavered in her intentions; and in the midst of regret, a kind of exultation was born, which calmed her pain. Smiles sat upon her features, and her voice was attuned to cheerfulness. The new-sprung tenderness of her soul imparted a fascination to her manner far more irresistible than that to which tact and polish had given rise. She was more kind and affectionate, and, above all, more sincere, and therefore more winning. Every one felt, though none could divine the cause of, this change. It was remarked that she was improved: some shrewdly suspected that she was in love. And so she was — with an object more enchanting than any earthly lover. For the first time she knew and loved the Spirit of good and beauty, an affinity to which affords the greatest bliss that our nature can receive.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is the same, for be it joy or sorrow.
The path of its departure still is free;
Man’s yesterday can ne’er be like his morrow.
Nor aught endure save mutability.
— Shelley.

The month of June had commenced. In spite of lawyer’s delays and the difficulties attendant on all such negociations, they were at last concluded, and nothing remained but for Lady to sign the paper which was to consign her to comparative destitution. In all changes we feel most keenly the operation of small circumstances, and are chiefly depressed by the necessity of stooping to the direction of petty arrangements, and having to deal with subordinate persons. To complete her design, Lady Lodore had to make many arrangements, trivial yet imperative, which called for her attention, when she was least fitted to give it. She had met these demands on her patience without shrinking; and all was prepared for the finishing stroke about to be put to her plans. She dismissed those servants whom she did not intend to leave in the house for Ethel’s use. She contrived to hasten the intended marriage of her own maid, so to disburthen herself wholly. The mode by which she was, solitary and unknown, to reach the mountains of Wales, without creating suspicion, or leaving room for conjecture, was no easy matter. In human life, one act is born of another, so that any one that disjoins itself from the rest, instantly gives rise to curiosity and inquiry. Lady Lodore, though fertile in expedients, was almost foiled: the eligibility of having one confidant pressed itself upon her. She thought of Fanny Derham; but her extreme youth, and her intimacy with Mrs. Villiers, which would have necessitated many falsehoods, so to preserve the secret, deterred her: she determined at last to trust to herself alone. She resolved to take with her one servant only, who had not been long in her service, and to dismiss him immediately after leaving London. Difficulties presented themselves on every side; but she believed that they could be best surmounted by obviating them in succession as they arose, and that any fixed artificial plan would only tend to embarrass, while a simple mode of proceeding would continue unquestioned.

Her chief art consisted in not appearing to be making any change at all. She talked of a visit of two or three months to Emms, and mentioned her intention of lending her house, during the interval, to her daughter. She thus secured to herself a certain period during which no curiosity would be exicited; and after a month or two had passed away, she would be utterly forgotten: — thus she reasoned; and whether it were a real tomb that she entered, or the living grave which she anticipated, her name and memory would equally vanish from the earth, and she be thought of no more. If Ethel ever entertained a wish to see her, Villiers would be at hand to check and divert it. Who else was there to spend a thought upon her? Alone upon earth, no friendly eye, solicitous for her welfare, would seek to penetrate the mystery in which she was about to envelope herself.

The day came, it was the second of June, when every preliminary was accomplished. She had signed away all that she possessed — she had done it with a smile — and her voice was unfaltering. The sum which she had saved for herself consisted of but a few hundred pounds, on which she was to subsist for the future. Again she enforced his pledge of secrecy on Mr. Gayland; and glad that all was over, yet heavy at heart in spite of her gladness, she returned to her home, which in a few hours she was to quit for ever.

During all this time, her thoughts had seldom reverted to Saville. Hope was dead, and the regrets of love had vanished with it. That he would approve her conduct, was an idea that now and then flashed across her mind; but he would remain in eternal ignorance, and therefore it could not bring their thoughts into any communion. Whether he came to England, or remained at Naples, availed her nothing. No circumstance could add to, or diminish, the insuperable barrier which his marriage placed between them.

She returned home from her last interview with Mr. Gayland: it was four o’clock in the day; at six she had appointed Fanny Derham to call on her; and an hour afterwards, the horses were ordered to be at the door, which were to convey her away.

She became strangely agitated. She took herself to task for her weakness; but every moment disturbed yet more the calm she was so anxious to attain. She walked through the rooms of the house she had dwelt in for so many years. She looked on the scene presented from her windows. The drive in Hyde Park was beginning to fill with carriages and equestrians, to be thronged with her friends whom she was never again to see. Deep sadness crept over her mind. Her uncontrollable thoughts, by some association of ideas, which she could not disentangle — brought before her the image of , with more vividness than it had possessed for years. A kind of wish to cross the Atlantic, and to visit the scenes where he had dwelt so long, arose within her; and then again she felt a desire to visit Longfield, and to view the spot in which his mortal remains were laid. As her imagination pictured the grave of the husband of her youth, whom she had abandoned and forgotten, tears streamed from her eyes — the first she had shed, even in idea, beside it. “It is not to atone — for surely I was not guilty towards him” — such were Lady Lodore’s reflections,—”yet, methinks, in this crisis of my fate, when about to imitate his abrupt and miserable act of self-banishment, my heart yearns for some communication with him; and it seems to me as if, approaching his cold, silent dust, he would hear me if I said, ‘Be at peace! your child is happy through my means!”’

Again her reveries were attended by a gush of tears. “How strange a fate is mine, ever to be abandoned by, or to abandon, those towards whom I am naturally drawn into near contact. Fifteen years are flown since I parted from for ever! Then by inspiring one so high-minded, so richly gifted, as Saville, with love for me, fortune appeared ready to compensate for my previous sufferings; but the curse again operated, and I shall never see him more. Yet do I not forget thee, Saville, nor thy love! — nor can it be a crime to think of the past, which is as irretrievable as if the grave had closed over it. Through Saville it has been that I have not lived quite in vain — that I have known what love is; and might have even tasted of happiness, but for the poison which perpetually mingles with my cup. I never wish to see him more; but if I earnestly desire to visit Lodore’s grave, how gladly would I make a far longer pilgrimage to see Saville’s child, and to devote myself to one who owes its existence to him. Wretched Cornelia! what thoughts are these? Is it now, that you are a beggar and an outcast, that you first encourage unattainable desires?”

Still as she looked round, and remembered how often Saville had been beside her in that room, thoughts and regrets thronged faster and more thickly on her. She recollected the haughty self-will and capricious coquetry which had caused the destruction of her dearest hopes. She took down a miniature of herself, which her lover had so fruitlessly besought her to give him. It was on the belief that she had bestowed this picture on a rival that he had so suddenly come to the determination of quitting England. It seemed now in its smiles and youth to reproach her for having wasted both; and the sight of it agitated her bosom, and produced a tumult of regret and despair at his loss — till she threw it from her, as too dearly associated with one she must forget. And yet wherefore forget? — he had forgotten; but as a dead wife might in her grave, love her husband, though wedded to another, so might the lost, buried Cornelia remember him, though the husband of Clorinda. Self-compassion now moved her to tears, and she wept plentiful showers, which rather exhausted than relieved her.

With a strong effort she recalled her sense of what was actually going on, and struggling resolutely to calm herself, she sat down and began a letter to her daughter, which was necessary, as some sort of explanation, at once to allay wonder and baffle curiosity. Thus she wrote:

“Dearest Ethel.

“My hopes have not been deceived. Mr. Gayland has at last contrived means for the liberation of your husband; and to-morrow morning you will leave that shocking place. Perhaps I receive more pleasure from this piece of good fortune than you, for your sense of duty and sweet disposition so gild the vilest objects, that you live in a world of your own, as beautiful as yourself, and the accident of situation is immaterial to you.

“It is not enough, however, that you should be free. I hope that the punctilious delicacy of Mr. Villiers will not cause you to reject the benefits of a mother. In this instance there is more of justice than generosity in my offer; and it may therefore be accepted without the smallest hesitation. My jointure ought to satisfy me, and the additional six hundred a year — which I may call the price of blood, since I bought it at the sacrifice of the dearest ties and duties, — is most freely at your service. It will delight me to get rid of it, as much as if thus I threw off the consciousness of a crime. It is yours by every law of equity, and will be hereafter paid into your banker’s hands. Do not thank me, my dear child — be happy, that will be my best reward.

Be happy, be prudent — this sum will not make you rich; and the only acknowledgment I ask of you is, that you make it suffice, and avoid debt and embarrassment.

"By singular coincidence I am imperatively obliged to leave England at this moment. The horses are ordered to be here in half an hour — I am obliged therefore to forego the pleasure of seeing you until my return. Will you forgive me this apparent neglect, which is the result of necessity, and favour me by coming to my house to-morrow, on leaving your present abode, and making it your home until my return? Miss Derham has promised to call here this afternoon; I shall see her before I go, and through her you will learn how much you will make me your debtor by accepting my offers, and permitting me to be of some slight use to you.

"Excuse the brevity and insufficiency of this letter, written at the moment of departure. — You will hear from me again, when I am able to send you my address, and I shall hope to have a letter from you. Meanwhile Heaven bless you, my angelic Ethel! Love your mother, and never, in spite of every thing, permit unkind thoughts of her to harbour in your mind. Make Mr. Villiers think as well of me as he can, and believe me that your welfare will always be the dearest wish of my heart. Adieu.

"Ever affectionately yours.

"C. ."

She folded and sealed this letter, and at the same moment there was a knock at the door of her house, which she knew announced the arrival of Fanny Derham. She was still much agitated, and trying to calm herself, she took up a newspaper, and cast her eyes down the columns; so, by one of the most common place of the actions of our life, to surmount the painful intensity of her thoughts. She read mechanically one or two paragraphs — she saw the announcements of births, marriages, and deaths. "My moral death will not be recorded here," she thought, "and yet, I shall be more dead than any of these." The thought in her mind remained as it were truncated; her eye was arrested — a paleness came over her — the pulses of her heart paused, and then beat tumultuously — how strange — how fatal were the words she read! —

"Died suddenly at the inn at the Mola di Gaeta, on her way from Naples, Clorinda, the wife of the honourable Horatio Saville, in the twenty-second year of her age."

Her drawing-room door was opened, the butler announced Miss Derham, while her eyes still were fixed on the paragraph: her head swam round — the world seemed to slide from under her. Fanny's calm clear voice recalled her. She conquered her agitation — she spoke as if she had not just crossed a gulf — not been transported to a new world; and, again, swifter than light, brought back to the old one. She conversed with Fanny for some time; giving some kind of explanation for not having been to see Ethel, begging her young friend to press her invitation, and speaking as if in autumn they should all meet again. Fanny, philosophic as she was, regarded Lady with a kind of idolatry. The same charm that had fascinated the unworldly and abstracted Saville, she exercised over the thoughtful and ingenuous mind of the fair young student. It was the attraction of engaging manners, added now to the sense of right, joined to the timid softness of a woman, who trembled on acting unsupported, even though her conscience approved her deeds. It was her loveliness which had gained in expression what it had lost in youth, and kindness of heart was the soul of the enchantment. Fanny ventured to remonstrate against her sudden departure. "O we shall soon meet again," said Cornelia; but her thoughts were more of heaven than earth, as the scene of meeting; for her heart was chilled — her head throbbed — the words she had read operated a revolution in her frame, more allied to sickness and death, than hope or triumph.

Fanny at length took her leave, and Lady was again alone. She took up the newspaper — hastily she read again the tidings; she sunk on the sofa, burying her face in the pillow, trying not to think, while she was indeed the prey to the wildest thoughts.

"Yes," thus ran her reflections, "he is free — he is no longer married! Fool, fool! he is still lost to you! — an outcast and a beggar, shall I solicit his love! which he believes that I rejected when prosperous. Rather never, never, let me see him again. My beauty is tarnished, my youth flown; he would only see me to wonder how he had ever loved me. Better hide beneath the mountains among which I am soon to find a home — better, far better, die, than see Saville and read no love in his eyes.

"Yet thus again I cast happiness from me. What then would I do? Unweave the web — implore Mr. Villiers to endure my presence — reveal my state of beggary — ask thanks for my generosity, and humbly wait for a kind glance from Saville, to raise me to wealth as well as to happiness. —

Cornelia, awake! — be not subdued at the last-act not against your disposition, the pride of your soul — the determinations you have formed — do not learn to be humble in adversity — you, who were disdainful in happier days — no! if they need me — if they love me — if Saville still remembers the worship — the heart's entire sacrifice which once he made to me — will a few miles-the obscurity of my abode — or the silence and mystery that surrounds me, check his endeavours that we should once again meet?

"No!" she said, rising, "my destiny is in other and higher hands than my own. It were vain to endeavour to controul it. Whatever I do, works against me; now let the thread be spun to the end, while I do nothing; I can but endure the worst patiently; and how much better to bear in silence, than to struggle vainly with the irrevocable decree! I submit. Let Providence work out its own ends, and God dispose of the being he has made — whether I reap the harvest in this world or in the next, my part is played, I will strive no more!"

She believed in her own singleness of purpose as she said this, and yet she was never more deceived. While she boasted of her resignation, she was yielding not to a high moral power, but to the pride of her soul. Her resolutions were in accordance with the haughtiness of her disposition, and she felt satisfied, not because she was making a noble sacrifice, but because she thus adorned more magnificently the idol she set up for worship, and believed herself to be more worthy of applause and love. Yet who could condemn even errors that led to such unbending and heroic forgetfulness of all the baser propensities of our nature. Nor was this feeling of triumph long-lived; the wounding and humiliating realities of life, soon degraded her from her pedestal, and made her feel, as it were, the disgrace and indignities of abdication.

Her travelling chariot drove up to the door, and, after a few moments' preparation, she was summoned. Again she looked round the room; her heart swelled high with impatience and repining, but again she conquered herself. She took up her miniature — that now she might possess — for she could remember without sin — she took up the newspaper, which did or did not contain the fiat of her fate; but this action appeared to militate against the state of resignation she had resolved to attain, so she threw it down: she walked down the stairs, and passed out from her house for the last time —

she got into the carriage — the door was closed — the horses were in motion-all was over.

Her head felt sick and heavy; she leaned back in her carriage half stupified. When at last London and its suburbs were passed, the sight of the open country a little revived her — but she soon drooped again. Nothing presented itself to her thoughts with any clearness, and the exultation which had supported her vanished totally. She only knew that she was alone, poor, forgotten; these words hovered on her lips, mingled with others, by which she endeavoured to charm away her despondency. Fortitude and resignation for herself — freedom and happiness for Ethel. "O yes, she is free and happy — it matters not then what I am!" No tears flowed to soften this thought. The bright green country — the meadows mingled with unripe corn-fields — the tufted woods — the hedgerows full of flowers, could not attract her eye; pangs every now and then seized upon her heart — she had talked of resignation, but she was delivered up to despair.

At length she sank into a kind of stupor. She was accompanied by one servant only; she had told him where she intended to remain that night. It was past eleven before they arrived at Reading; the night was chill, and she shivered while she felt as if it were impossible to move, even to draw up the glasses of her chariot. When she arrived at the inn where she was to pass the night, she felt keenly the discomfort of having no female attendant. It was new — she felt as if it were disgraceful, to find herself alone among strangers, to be obliged to give orders herself, and to prepare alone for her repose.

All night she could not sleep, and she became aware at last that she was ill. She burnt with fever — her whole frame was tormented by aches, by alternate hot and shivering fits, and by a feeling of sickness. When morning dawned, it was worse. She grew impatient — she rose. She had arranged that her servant should quit her at this place. He had been but a short time with her, and was easily dismissed under the idea, that she was to be joined by a man recommended by a friend, who was accustomed to the continent, whither it was supposed that she was going. She had dismissed him the night before, he was already gone, when on the morrow she ordered the horses. — She paid the bills herself — and had to answer questions about luggage; all these things are customary to the poor, and to the other sex. But take a high-born woman and place her in immediate contact with the rough material of the world, and see how like a sensitive plant she will shrink, close herself up and droop, and feel as if she had fallen from her native sphere into a spot unknown, ungenial, and full of storms.

The illness that oppressed Lady , made these natural feelings even more acute, till at last they were blunted by the same cause. She now wondered what it was that ailed her, and became terrified at the occasional wanderings that interrupted her torpor. Once or twice she wished to speak to the post-boy, but her voice failed her. At length they drove up to the inn at Newbury; fresh horses were called for, and the landlady came up to the door of the carriage, to ask whether the lady had breakfasted — whether she would take anything. There was something ghastly in Lady Lodore's appearance, which at once frightened the good woman, and excited her compassion. She renewed her questions, which Lady Lodore had not at first heard, adding, "You seem ill, ma'am; do take something — had you not better alight?"

"O yes, far better," said Cornelia, "for I think I must be very ill."

The change of posture and cessation of motion a little revived her, and she began to think that she was mistaken, and that it was all nothing, and that she was well. She was conducted into the parlour of the inn, and the landlady left her to order refreshment. "How foolish I am," she thought; "this is mere fancy; there is nothing the matter with me;" and she rose to ring the bell, and to order horses. When suddenly, without any previous warning, struck as by a bolt, she fainted, and fell on the floor, without any power of saving herself. The sound of her fall quickened the steps of the landlady, who was returning; all the chamber-maids were summoned, a doctor sent for, and when Lady opened her eyes she saw unknown faces about her, a strange place, and voices yet stranger. She did not speak, but tried to collect her thoughts, and to unravel the mystery, as it appeared, of her situation. But soon her thoughts wandered, and fever and weakness made her yield to the solicitations of those around. The doctor came, and could make out nothing but that she was in a high fever: he ordered her to be put to bed. And thus — Saville, and Ethel, and all hopes and fears, having vanished from her thoughts, — given up to delirium and suffering, poor Lady Lodore, alone, unknown, and unattended, remained for several weeks at a country inn — under the hands of a village doctor — to recover, if God pleased, if not, to sink, unmourned and unheard of, into an untimely grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

But if for me thou dost forsake
Some other maid, and rudely break
Her worshipped image from its base.
To give to me the ruined place —
Then fare thee well — I'd rather make
My bower upon some icy lake.
When thawing suns begin to shine.
Than trust to love so false as thine!
— Lalla Rookh.

On the same day Mr. and Mrs. Villiers left their sad dwelling to take possession of lady ‘s house. The generosity and kindness of her mother, such as it appeared, though she knew but the smallest portion of it, charmed Ethel. Her heart, which had so long struggled to love her, was gladdened by the proofs given that she deserved her warmest affection. The truest delight beamed from her lovely countenance. Even she had felt the gloom and depression of adversity. The sight of misery or vice in those around her tarnished the holy fervour with which she would otherwise have made every sacrifice for Edward's sake. There is something in this world, which even while it gives an unknown grace to rough, and hard, and mean circumstances, contaminates the beauty and harmony of the noble and exalted. Ethel had been aware of this; she dreaded its sinister influence over Villiers, and in spite of herself she pined; she had felt with a shudder that in spite of love and fortitude, a sense, chilling and deponding, was creeping over her, making her feel the earth alien to her, and calling her away from the sadness of the scene around to a world bright and pure as herself. Her very despair thus dressed itself in the garb of religion; and though these visitations of melancholy only came during the absence of Villiers and were never indulged in, yet they were too natural a growth of their wretched abode to be easily or entirely dismissed. Even now that she was restored to the fairer scences of life, compassion for the unfortunate beings she quitted haunted her, and her feelings were too keenly alive to the miseries which her fellow-creatures suffered, to permit her to be relieved from all pain by her own exemption. She turned from such reflections to the image of her dear kind mother with delight. The roof that sheltered her was hallowed as hers; all the blessings of life which she enjoyed came to her from the same source as life itself. She delighted to trace the current of feeling which had occasioned her to give up so much, and to imagine the sweetness of disposition, the vivacity of mind, the talents and accomplishments which her physiognomy expressed, and the taste manifested in her house, and all the things which she had collected around her, evinced.

In less than a month after their liberation, she gave birth to son. The mingled danger and rejoicing attendant on this event, imparted fresh strength to the attachment that united Edward to her; and the little stranger himself was a new object of tenderness and interest. Thus their days of mourning were exchanged for a happiness most natural and welcome to the human heart. At this time also Horatio Saville returned from Italy with his little girl. She was scarcely more than a year old, but displayed an intelligence to be equalled only by her extraordinary beauty. Her golden silken ringlets were even then profuse, her eyes were as dark and brilliant as her mother’s, but her complexion was fair, and the same sweet smile flitted round her infant mouth, as gave the charm to her father’s face. He idolized her, and tried by his tenderness and attention to appease, as it were, the manes of the unfortunate Clorinda.

She, poor girl, had been the victim of the violence of passion and ill-regulated feelings native to her country, excited into unnatural force by the singularity of her fate. When Saville saw her first in her convent, she was pining for liberty; she did not think of any joy beyond escaping the troublesome impertinence of the nuns and the monotonous tenor of monastic life, of associating with people she loved, and enjoying the common usages of life, unfettered by the restrictions that rendered her present existence a burthen. But though she desired no more, her disgust for the present, her longing for a change, was a powerful passion. She was adorned by talents, by genius; she was eloquent and beautiful, and full of enthusiasm and feeling. Saville pitied her; he lamented her future fate among her unworthy countrymen; he longed to cherish, to comfort, and to benefit her. His heart, so easily won to tenderness, gave her readily a brother’s regard. Others, seeing the active benevolence and lively interest that this sentiment elicited, might have fancied him inspired by a warmer feeling; but he well knew the difference, he ardently desired her happiness, but did not seek his own in her.

He visited her frequently, he brought her books, he taught her English. They were allowed to meet daily in the parlour of the convent, in the presence of a female attendant; and his admiration of her talents, her imagination, her ardent comprehensive mind, increased on every interview. They talked of literature — the poets — the arts; Clorinda sang to him, and her fine voice, cultivated by the nicest art, was a source of deep pleasure and pain to her auditor. His sensibility was awakened by the tones of love and rapture — sensibility, not alas! for her who sang, but for the false and absent. While listening, his fancy recalled Lady ‘s image; the hopes she had inspired, the rapture he had felt in her presence — the warm vivifying effect her voice and looks had on him were remembered, and his heart sank within him to think that all this sweetness was deceptive, fleeting, lost. Once, overcome by these thoughts, he resolved to return suddenly to England, to make one effort more to exchange unendurable wretchedness for the most transporting happiness; — absence from Cornelia, to the joy of pouring out the overflowing sentiments of his heart at her feet. While indulging in this idea, a letter from his sister Lucy caused a painful revulsion; she painted the woman of the world given up to ambition and fashion, rejoicing in his departure, and waiting only the moment when she might with decency become the wife of another. Saville was almost maddened — he did not visit Clorinda for three days. She received him, when at last he came, without reproach, but with transport; she saw that sadness, even sickness, dimmed his eye; she soothed him, she hung over him with fondness, she sung to him her sweetest, softest airs; his heart melted, a tear stole from his eye. Clorinda saw his emotion; it excited hers; her Neapolitan vivacity was not restrained by shame nor fear, — she spoke of her love for him with the vehemence she felt, and youth and beauty hallowed the frankness and energy of her expressions. Saville was touched and pleased, — he left her to meditate on this new state of things — for free from passion himself, he had never suspected the growth of it in her heart. He reflected on all her admirable qualities, and the pity it was that they should be cast at the feet of one of her own unrefined, uneducated countrymen, who would be incapable of appreciating her talents — even her love — so that at last she would herself become degraded, and sink into that system of depravity which makes a prey of all that is lovely or noble in our nature. He could save her — she loved him, and he could save her; lost as he was to real happiness, it were to approximate to it, if he consecrated his life to her welfare.

Yet he would not deceive her. The excess of love which she bestowed demanded a return which he could not give. She must choose whether, such as he was, he were worth accepting. Actuated by a sense of justice, he opened his heart to her without disguise: he told her of his ill-fated attachment to another — of his self-banishment, and misery — he declared his real and earnest affection for her — his desire to rescue her from her present fate, and to devote his life to her. Clorinda scarcely heard what he said, — she felt only that she might become his — that he would marry her; her rapture was undisguised, and he enjoyed the felicity of believing that one so lovely and excellent would at once owe every blessing of life to him, and that the knowledge of this must ensure his own content. The consent of her parents was easily yielded, — the Pope is always ready to grant a dispensation to a Catholic wife marrying a Protestant husband, — the wedding speedily took place — and Saville became her husband.

Their mutual torments now began. Horatio was a man of high and unshrinking principle. He never permitted himself to think of Lady , and the warmth and tenderness of his heart led him to attach himself truly and affectionately to his wife. But this did not suffice for the Neapolitan. Her marriage withdrew the veil of life — she imagined that she distinguished the real from the fictitious, but her new sense of discernment was the source of torture. She desired to be loved as she loved; she insisted that her rival should be hated — she was shaken by continual tempests of jealousy, and the violence of her temper, restrained by no reserve of disposition, displayed itself frightfully. Saville reasoned, reproached, reprehended, without any avail, except that when her violence had passed its crisis, she repented, and wept, and besought forgiveness. Ethel’s visit had been a blow hard to bear. She was the daughter of her whom Saville loved — whom he regretted — on whom he expended that passion and idolatry, to attain which she would have endured the most dreadful tortures. These were the reflections, or rather, these were the ravings, of Clorinda. She had never been so furious in her jealousy, or so frequent in her fits of passion, as during the visit of the unconscious and gentle Ethel.

The birth of her child operated a beneficial change for a time; and except when Saville spoke of England, or she imagined that he was thinking of it, she ceased to torment him. He was glad; but the moment was passed when she could command his esteem, or excite his spontaneous sympathy. He pitied and he loved her; but it was almost as we may become attached to an unfortunate and lovely maniac; less than ever did he seek his happiness in her. He loved his infant daughter now better than any other earthly thing. Clorinda rejoiced in this tie, though she soon grew jealous even of her own child.

The arrival of Lord Maristow and his daughters was at first full of benefit to the discordant pair. Clorinda was really desirous of obtaining their esteem, and she exerted herself to please: when they talked of her return to England with them, it only excited her to try to render Italy so agreeable as to induce them to remain there. They were not like Ethel. They were good girls, but fashionable and fond of pleasure. Clorinda devised a thousand amusements — concerts, tableaux, the masquerades of the carnival, were all put in requisition. They carried their zeal for amusement so far as to take up their abode for a day or two at Pompeii, feigning to be its ancient inhabitants, and, bringing the corps operatique to their aid, got up Rossini's opera of the Ultimi Giorni di Pompeii among the ruins, ending their masquerade by a mimic eruption. These gaieties did not accord with the classic and refined tastes of Saville; but he was glad to find his wife and sisters agree so well, and under the blue sky, and in the laughing land of Naples, it was impossible not to find beauty and enjoyment even in extravagance and folly.

Still, like a funeral bell heard amidst a feast, the name of England, and the necessity of her going thither, struck on the ear and chilled the heart of the Neapolitan. She resolved never to go; but how could she refuse to accompany her husband's sisters? how resist the admonitions and commands of his father? She did not refuse therefore — she seemed to consent — while she said to Saville, "Poison, stab me — cast me down the crater of the mountain — exhaust your malice and hatred on me as you please here — but you shall never take me to England but as a corpse."

Saville replied, "As you will." He was tired of the struggle, and left the management of his departure to others.

One day his sisters described the delights of a London season, and strove to win Clorinda by the mention of its balls, parties, and opera; they spoke of Almack's, and the leaders of fashion; they mentioned Lady . They were unaware that Clorinda knew any thing of their brother's attachment, and speaking of her as one of the most distinguished of their associates in the London world, made their sister — in-law aware, that when she made a part of it, she would come into perpetual contact with her rival. This allusion caused one of her most violent paroxysms of rage as soon as she found herself alone with her husband. So frantic did she seem, that Horatio spoke seriously to his father, and declared he knew of no argument nor power which could induce Clorinda to accompany them to England. "Then you must go without her," said Lord Maristow; "your career, your family, your country, must not be sacrificed to her unreasonable folly." And then, wholly unaware of the character of the person with whom he had to deal, he repeated the same thing to Clorinda. "You must choose," he said, "between Naples and your husband — he must go; do you prefer being left behind?"

Clorinda grew pale, even livid. She returned home. Horatio was not there; she raved through her house like a maniac; her servants even hid her child from her, and she rushed from room to room tearing her hair, and calling for Saville. At length he entered; her eyes were starting from her head, her frame working with convulsive violence; she strove to speak — to give utterance to the vehemence pent up within her. She darted towards him; when suddenly, as if shot to the heart, she fell on the marble pavement of her chamber, and a red stream poured from her lips — she had burst a blood-vessel.

For many days she was not allowed to speak nor move. Saville nursed her unremittingly — he watched by her at night — he tried to soothe her — he brought her child to her side — his sweetness, and gentleness, and real tenderness were all expended on her. Although violent, she was not ungenerous. She was touched by his attentions, and the undisguished solicitude of his manner. She resolved to conquer herself, and in a fit of heroism formed the determination to yield, and to go to England. Her first words, when permitted to speak, were to signify her assent. Saville kissed and thanked her. She had half imagined that he would imitate her generosity, and give up the journey. No such thought crossed his mind; her distaste was too unreasonable to elicit the smallest sympathy, and consequently any concession. He thanked her warmly, it is true; and looked delighted at this change, but without giving her time to retract, he hurried to communicate to his relations the agreeable tidings.

As she grew better she did not recede, but she felt miserable. The good spirits and ready preparations of Horatio were all acts of treason against her: sometimes she felt angry — but she checked herself. Like all Italians, Clorinda feared death excessively; besides that, to die was to yield the entire victory to her rival. She struggled therefore, and conquered herself; and neither expressed her angry jealousy nor her terrors. She had many causes of fear; she was again in a situation to increase her family within a few months; and while her safety depended on her being able to attain a state of calm, she feared a confinement in England, and believed that it was impossible that she should survive.

She was worn to a skeleton — her large eyes were sunk and ringed with black, while they burnt with unnatural brilliancy, for her vivacity did not desert her, and that deceived those around; they fancied that she was convalescent, and would soon recover strength and good looks, while she nourished a deep sense of wrong for the slight attention paid to her sufferings. She wept over herself and her friendless state. Her husband was not her friend, for he was not her countryman: and full as Saville was of generous sympathy and kindliness for all, the idea of returning to England, to his home and friends, to the stirring scenes of life, and the society of those who loved literature, and were endowed with the spirit of liberal inquiry and manly habits of thinking, so absorbed and delighted him, that he could only thank Clorinda again and again — caress her, and entreat her to get well, that she might share his pleasures. His words chilled her, and she shrunk from his caresses. “He is thinking of her, and of seeing her again,” she thought. She did him the most flagrant injustice. Saville was a man of high and firm principle, and had he been aware of any latent weakness, of any emotion allied to the master-passion of his soul, he would have conquered it, or have fled from the temptation. He never thought less of Lady than now. The unwonted gentleness and concessions of his wife — his love for his child, and the presence of his father and dear sisters, dissipated his regrets, — his conscience was wholly at ease, and he was happy.

Clorinda dared not complain to her English relatives, but she listened to the lamentations of her Neapolitan friends with a luxury of woe. They mourned over her as if she were going to visit another sphere; they pointed out the little island on a map, and seated far off as it was amidst the northern sea, night and storms, they averred, perpetually brooded over it, while from the shape of the earth they absolutely proved that it was impossible to get there. It is true that Lord Maristow and his daughters, and Saville himself, had come thence — that was nothing — it was easy to come away. "You see," they said, "the earth slopes down, and the sun is before them; but when they have to go back, ah! it is quite another affair; the Alps rise, and the sea boils over, and they have to toil up the wall of the world itself into winter and darkness. It is tempting God to go there. O stay, Clorinda, stay in sunny Italy. Orazio will return: do not go to die in that miserable birth-place of night and frost."

Clorinda wept yet more bitterly over her hard fate, and the impossibility of yielding to their wishes. "Would to God," she thought, "I could abandon the ingrate, and let him go far from Italy and Clorinda, to die in his wretched country! Would I could forget, hate, desert him! Ah, why do I idolize one born in that chilly land, where love and passion are unknown or despised!"

At length the day arrived when they left Naples. It was the month of May, and very warm. No imagination could paint the glorious beauty of this country of enchantment, on the completion of spring, before the heats of summer had withered its freshness. The sparkling waves of the blue Mediterranean encircled the land, and contrasted with its hues: the rich foliage of the trees — the festooning of the luxuriant vines, and the abundant vegetation which sprung fresh from the soil, decorating the rocks, and mantling the earth with flowers and verdure, were all in the very prime and blossoming of beauty. The sisters of Saville expressed their admiration in warm and enthusiastic terms; the words trembled on poor Clorinda's lips; she was about to say, "Why then desert this land of bliss?" but Horatio spoke instead: "It is splendid, I own, and once I felt all that you express. Now a path along a grassy field — a hedge-row — a copse with a rill murmuring through it — a white cottage with simple palings enclosing a flower-garden — the spire of a country church rising from among a tuft of elms — the skies all shadowy with soft clouds — and the homesteads of a happy thriving peasantry — these are the things I sigh for. A true English home-scene seems to me a thousand times more beautiful, as it must be a thousand times dearer than the garish showy splendour of Naples."

Clorinda's thoughts crept back into her chilled heart; large tear-drops rose in her eyes, but she concealed them, and shrinking into a corner of the carriage, she felt more lonely and deserted than she would have done among strangers who had loved Italy, and participated in her feelings.

They arrived at the inn called the Villa di Cicerone, at the Mola di Gaeta. All the beauty of the most beautiful part of the Peninsula seems concentered in that enchanting spot — the perfume of orange flowers filled the air — the sea was at their feet — the vine-clad hills around. All this excess of loveliness only added to the unutterable misery of the Neapolitan girl. Her companions talked and laughed, while she felt her frame convulsed by internal combats, and the unwonted command she exercised over her habitual vehemence. Horatio conversed gaily with his sisters, till catching a glimpse of the pale face of his wretched wife, her mournful eyes and wasted cheeks, he drew near her. "You are fatigued, dearest Clorinda," he said, "will you not go to rest?"

He said this in a tender caressing tone, but she felt, "He wants to send me away — to get rid even of the sight of me." But he sat down by her, and perceiving her dejection, and guessing partly at its cause, he soothed her, and talked of their return to her native land, and cheered her by expressions of gratitude for the sacrifice she was making. Her heart began to soften, and her tears to flow more freely, when a man entered, such as haunt the inns in Italy, and watch for the arrival of rich strangers to make profit in various ways out of them. This man had a small picture for sale, which he declared to be an original Carlo Dolce. It was the head of a seraph painted on copper — it was probably a copy, but it was beautifully executed; besides the depth of colour and grace of design, there was something singularly beautiful in the expression of the countenance portrayed, — it symbolized happiness and love; a beaming softness animated the whole face; a perfect joy, an ineffable radiance shone out of it. Clorinda took it in her hand — the representation of heart-felt gladness increased her self-pity; she was turning towards her husband with a reproachful look, thinking, "Such smiles you have banished from my face for ever," — when Sophia Saville, who was looking over her shoulder, exclaimed, “What an extraordinary resemblance! there was never any thing so like.”

“Who? what?” asked her sister.

“It is Lady herself,” replied Sophia; “her eyes, her mouth, her very smile.”

Lucy gave a quick glance towards her brother. Horatio involuntarily stepped forward to look, and then as hastily drew back. Clorinda saw it all — she put down the picture, and left the room — she could not stay — she could not speak — she knew not what she felt, but that a fiery torture was eating into her, and she must fly, she knew not whither. Saville was pained; he hesitated what to do or say — so he remained; supper was brought in, and Clorinda not appearing, it was supposed that she had retired to rest. In about an hour and a half after, Horatio went into her room, and to his horror beheld her stretched upon the cold bricks of the chamber, senseless; the moon-beams rested on her pale face, which bore the hues of death. In a moment the house was alarmed, the village doctor summoned, a courier dispatched to Naples for an English physician, and every possible aid-afforded the wretched sufferer. She was placed on the bed, — she still lived; her faint pulse could not be felt, and no blood flowed when a vein was opened, but she groaned, and now and then opened her eyes with a ghastly stare, and closed them again as if mechanically. All was horror and despair — no help — no resource presented itself; they hung round her, they listened to her groans with terror, and yet they were the only signs of life that disturbed her death-like state. At tast, soon after the dawn of day, she became convulsed, her pulse fluttered, and blood flowed from her wounded arm; in about an hour from this time she gave birth to a dead child. After this she grew calmer and fainter. The physician arrived, but she was past mortal cure, — she never opened her eyes more, nor spoke, nor gave any token of consciousness. By degrees her groans ceased, and she faded into death: the slender manifestations of lingering vitality gradually decreasing till all was still and cold. After an hour or two her face resumed its loveliness, pale and wasted as it was: she seemed to sleep, and none could regret that repose possessed that heart, which had been alive only to the deadliest throes of unhappy passion. Yet Saville did more than regret — he mourned her sincerely and deeply, — he accused himself of hard-heartedness, — he remembered what she was when he had first seen her; —

how full of animation, beauty, and love. He did not remember that she had perished the victim of uncontrolled passion; he felt that she was his victim. He would have given worlds to restore her to life and enjoyment. What was a residence in England — the promises of ambition — the pleasures of his native land — all that he could feel or know, compared to the existence of one so young, so blessed with Heaven's choicest gifts of mind and person. She was his victim, and he could never forgive himself.

For his father's and sisters' sake he subdued the expression of his grief, for they also loved Clorinda, and were struck with sorrow at the sudden catastrophe. His strong mind, also, before long, mastered the false view he had taken of the cause of her death. He lamented her deeply, but he did not give way to unavailing remorse, which was founded on his sensibility, and not on any just cause for repentance. He turned all his thoughts to repairing her errors, rather than his own, by cherishing her child with redoubled fondness. The little girl was too young to feel her loss; she had always loved her father, and now she clung to his bosom and pressed her infant lips to his cheek, and by her playfulness and caresses repaid him for the tenderness that he lavished on her.

After some weeks spent in the north of Italy he returned to England with her. Lord Maristow and his daughters were already there, and had gone to Maristow Castle. Saville took up his abode with his cousin Villiers. His situation was new and strange. He found himself in the very abode of the dreaded Cornelia, yet she was away, unheard of, almost, it seemed, forgotten. Did he think of her as he saw the traces of by-gone scenes around? He played with his child — he secluded himself among his books — he talked with Ethel of what had happened since their parting, and reproached Villiers bitterly for not having applied to him in his distress. But a kind of spell sealed the lips of each, and Lady , who was the living spirit of the scene around — the creator of its peace and happiness — seemed to have passed away from the memory of all. It was in appearance only. Not an hour, not a minute of the day passed, that did not bring her idea to their minds, and Saville and Ethel each longed for the word to be uttered by either, which would permit them to give expression to the thoughts that so entirely possessed them.

CHAPTER XV.

The music
Of man’s fair composition best accords.
When ‘tis in consort, not in single strains:
My heart has been untuned these many months.
Wanting her presence, in whose equal love
True harmony consisted.
— Ford.

At the beginning of September the whole party assembled at Maristow Castle. Even Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was among the guests. She had not visited Ethel in London, because she would not enter Lady ‘s house, but she had the true spinster’s desire of seeing the baby, and thus overcame her reluctance to quitting Longfield for a few weeks. Fanny Derham also accompanied them, unable to deny Ethel’s affectionate entreaties. Fanny’s situation had been beneficially changed. Sir Gilbert Derham, finding that his granddaughter associated with people in the world, and being applied to by Lord Maristow, was induced to withdraw Mrs. Derham from her mean situation, and to settle a small fortune on each of her children. Fanny was too young, and too wedded to her platonic notions of the supremacy of mind, to be fully aware of the invaluable advantages of pecuniary independence for a woman. She fancied that she could enter on the career — the only career permitted her sex — of servitude, and yet possess her soul in freedom and power. She had never, indeed, thought much of these things: life was, as it concerned herself, a system of words only. As always happens to the young, she only knew suffering through her affections, and the real chain of life — its necessities and cares — and the sinister influences exercised by the bad passions of our fellow-creatures — had not yet begun to fetter her aspiring thoughts. Beautiful in her freedom, in her enthusiasm, and even in her learning, but, above all, in the lively kindliness of her heart, she excited the wonder and commanded the affections of all.

Saville had never seen any one like her — she brought to his recollection his own young feelings before experience had lifted “the painted veil which those who live call life,” or passion and sorrow had tamed the ardour of his mind; he looked on her with admiration, and yet with compassion, wondering where and how the evil spirit of the world would show its power to torment, and conquer the free soul of the disciple of wisdom.

Yet Saville’s own mind was rather rebuked than tamed: he knew what suffering was, yet he knew also how to endure it, and to turn it to advantage, deriving thence lessons of fortitude, of forbearance, and even of hope. It was not, however, till the seal on his lips was taken off, and the name of Cornelia mentioned, that he became aware that the same heart warmed his bosom, as had been the cause at once of such rapture and misery in former times. Yet even now he did not acknowledge to himself that he still loved, passionately, devotedly loved, Lady . The image of the pale Clorinda stretched on the pavement — his victim — still dwelt in his memory, and he made a sacrifice at her tomb of every living feeling of his own. He fancied, therefore, that he spoke coldly of Cornelia, with speculation only, while in fact, at the very mention of her name a revulsion took place in his being — his eyes brightened, his face beamed with animation, his very figure enlarged, his heart was on fire within him. Villiers saw and appreciated these tokens of passion; but Ethel only perceived an interest in her mother, shared with herself, and was half angry that he made no professions of the constancy of his attachment.

Still, day after day, and soon, all day long, they talked of Lady . None but a lover and a daughter could have adhered so pertinaciously to one subject; and thus Saville and Ethel were often left to themselves, or joined only by Fanny. Fanny was very mysterious and alarming in what she said of her beautiful and interesting favourite. While Ethel lamented her mother’s love of the continent, conjectured concerning her return, and dwelt on the pleasures of their future intercourse, Fanny shook her head, and said, “It was strange, very strange, that not one letter had yet reached them from her.” She was asked to explain, but she could only say, that when she last saw Lady Lodore, she was impressed by the idea that all was not as it seemed. She tried to appear as if acting according to the ordinary routine of life, and yet was evidently agitated by violent and irrepressible feeling. Her manner, she had herself fancied, to be calm, and yet it betrayed a wandering of thought, a fear of being scrutinized, manifested in her repetition of the same phrases, and in the earnestness with which she made assurances concerning matters of the most trivial import. This was all that Fanny could say, but she was intimately persuaded of the correctness of her observation, and lamented that she had not inquired further and discovered more. “For,” she said, “the mystery, whatever it is, springs from the most honourable motives. There was nothing personal nor frivolous in the feelings that mastered her;” and Fanny feared that at that very moment she was sacrificing herself to some project — some determination, which, while it benefited others, was injuring herself. Ethel, with all her affection for her mother, was not persuaded of the justice of these suspicions, nor could be brought to acknowledge that the mystery of Lady Lodore’s absence was induced by any motives as strange and forcible as those suggested by Fanny; but believed that her young friend was carried away by her own imagination and high-flown ideas. Saville was operated differently upon. He became uneasy, thoughtful, restless: a thousand times he was on the point of setting out to find a clue to the mystery, and to discover the abode of the runaway, — but he was restrained. It is usually supposed that women are always under the influence of one sentiment, and if Lady Lodore acted under the direction and for the sake of another, wherefore should Saville interfere? what right had he to investigate her secrets, and disturb her arrangements?

Several months passed. Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry returned to Longfield, and still the mystery concerning Ethel’s mother continued, and the wonder increased, Soon after Christmas Mr. Gayland, who was also Lord Maristow’s solicitor, came down to the Castle for a few days. He made inquiries concerning Lady , and was somewhat surprised at her strange disappearance and protracted absence. He asked several questions, and seemed to form conclusions in his own mind; he excited the curiosity of all, yet restrained himself from satisfying it; he was evidently disquieted by her unbroken silence, yet feared to betray the origin of his uneasiness.

While he remained curiosity was dominant: when he went he requested Villiers to be good enough to let him know if any thing should be heard of Lady . He asked this more than once, and required an absolute promise. After his departure, his questions, his manner, and his last words recurred, exciting even more surprise than when he had been present. Fanny brought forward all he said to support her own conjectures; a shadow of disquiet crossed Ethel's mind; she asked Villiers to take some steps to discover where her mother was, and on his refusal argued earnestly, though vainly, to persuade him to comply. Villiers was actuated by the common-place maxim of not interfering with the actions and projects of others. "Lady Lodore is not a child," he said, "she knows what she is about — has she not always avoided you, Ethel? Why press yourself inopportunely upon her?"

But Ethel was not now to be convinced by the repetition of these arguments. She urged her mother's kindness and sacrifice; her having given up her home to them; her house still unclaimed by her, still at their disposal, and which contained so many things which must have been endeared by long use and habit, and the relinquishing of which showed something extraordinary in her motives. This was a woman's feeling, and made little impression on Villiers — he was willing to praise and to thank Lady for her generosity and kindness, but he suspected nothing beyond her acknowledged acts.

Saville heard this disquisition; he wished Villiers to be convinced — he was persuaded that Ethel was right — he was angry at his cousin's obstinacy — he was miserable at the idea that Cornelia should feel herself treated with neglect — that she should need protection and not have it — that she should be alone, and not find assistance proffered, urged upon her. He mounted his horse and took a solitary ride, meditating on these things — his imagination became heated, his soul on fire. He pictured Lady in solitude and desertion, and his heart boiled within him. Was she sick, and none near her? — was she dead, and her grave unvisited and unknown? A lover's fancy is as creative as a poet's and when once it takes hold of any idea, it clings to it tenaciously. If it is thus even with ordinary minds, how much more with Saville, with all energy which was his characteristic, and the latent fire of love burning in his heart. His resolution was sudden, and acted on at once. He turned his horse's head towards London. On reaching the nearest town, he ordered a chaise and four post horses. He wrote a few hurried lines announcing an absence of two or three days, and with the rapidity that always attended the conception of his purposes and their execution, the next morning, having travelled all night, he was in Mr. Gayland's office, questioning that gentleman concerning Lady Lodore, and seeking from him all the light he could throw upon her long-continued and mysterious absence.

Mr. Gayland had promised Lady not to reveal her secret to Mr. or Mrs. Villiers; but he felt himself free to communicate it to any other person. He was very glad to get rid of the burden and even the responsibility of being her sole confidant. He related all he knew to Saville, and the truth flashed on the lover's mind. His imagination could not dupe him — he could conceive, and therefore believe in her generosity, her magnanimity. He had before, in some degree, divined the greatness of mind of which Lady Lodore was capable; though as far as regarded himself, her pride, and his modesty, had deceived him. Now he became at once aware that Cornelia had beggared herself for Ethel's sake. She had disposed of her jointure, given up the residue of her income, and wandered away, poor and alone, to avoid the discovery of the extent and consequences of her sacrifices. Saville left Mr. Gayland's office with a bursting and a burning heart. At once he paid a warm tribute of admiration to her virtues, and acknowledged to himself his own passionate love. It became a duty, in his eyes, to respect, revere, adore one so generous and noble. He was proud of the selection his heart had made, and ofhis constancy. "My own Cornelia," such was his reverie, "how express your merit and the admiration it deserves! — other people talk of generosity, and friendship, and parental affection — but you manifest a visible image of these things; and while others theorize, you embody in your actions all that can be imagined of glorious and angelic." He congratulated himself on being able to return to the genuine sentiments of his heart, and in finding reality give sanction to the idolatry of his soul.

He longed to pour out his feelings at her feet, and to plead the cause of his fidelity and affection, to read in her eyes whether she would see a reward for her sufferings in his attachment. Where was she, to receive his protestations and vows? He half forgot, in the fervour of his feelings, that he knew not whither she had retreated, nor possessed any clue whereby to find her. He returned to Mr. Gayland to inquire from him; but he could tell nothing; he went to her house and questioned the servants, they remembered nothings; at last he found her maid, and learnt from her, where she was accustomed to hire her post-horses; this was all the information at which he could arrive.

Going to Newman's, with some difficulty he found the post-boy, who remembered driving her. By his means he traced her to Reading, but here all clue was lost. The inn to which she had gone had passed into other hands, and no one knew any thing about the arrivals and departures of the preceding summer. He made various perquisitions, and lighted by chance on the servant she had taken with her to Reading, and there dismissed. From what he said, and a variety of other circumstances, he became convinced that she had gone abroad. He searched the foreign passport-office, and found that one had been taken out at the French Ambassador's in the month of April, by a Mrs. Fitzhenry. He persuaded himself that this was proof that she had gone to Paris. It was most probable that, impoverished as she was, and desirous of concealing her altered situation, that she should, as had formerly done, dismiss a title which would at once encumber and betray her. He immediately resolved to cross to France. And yet for a moment he hesitated, and reflected on what it was best to do.

He had given no intimation of his proceedings to his cousin, and they were unaware that his journey was connected with Lady . He had a lover's wish to find her himself — himself to be the only source of consolation — the only mediator to restore her to her daughter and to happiness. But his fruitless attempts at discovery made him see that his wishes were not to be effected easily. He felt that he ought to communicate all he knew to his cousins, and even to ensure their assistance in his researches. Before going abroad, therefore, he returned to Maristow Castle.

He arrived late in the evening. Lord Maristow and his daughters were gone out to dinner. The three persons whom Saville especially wished to see, alone occupied the drawing-room. Edward was writing to his father, who had advised him, now that he had a son, entirely to cut off the entail and mortgage a great part of the property: it was a distasteful task to answer the suggestions of unprincipled selfishness. While he was thus occupied, Ethel had taken from her desk her mother's last letter, and was reading it again and again, weighing every syllable, and endeavouring to discover a hidden meaning. She went over to the sofa on which Fanny was sitting, to communicate to her a new idea that had struck her. The studious girl had got into a corner with her Cicero, and was reading the Tusculan Questions, which she readily laid aside to enter on a subject so deeply interesting. Saville opened the door, and appeared most unexpectedly among them. His manner was eager and abrupt, and the first words he uttered were, “I am come to disturb you all, and to beg of you to return to London: — no time must be lost — can you go to-morrow?”

“Certainly,” said Villiers, “if you wish it.”

“But why?” asked Ethel.

“You have found Lady !” exclaimed Fanny.

“You are dreaming, Fanny,” said Ethel; “you see Horace shakes his head. But if we go to-morrow, yet rest to-night. You are fatigued, pale, and ill, Horace — you have been exerting yourself too much — explain your wishes, but take repose and refreshment.”

Saville was in too excited a state to think of either. He repelled Ethel’s feminine offers, till he had related his story. His listeners heard him with amazement. Villiers’s cheeks glowed with shame, partly at the injustice of his former conduct — partly at being the object of so much sacrifice and beneficence on the part of his mother-in-law. Fanny’s colour also heightened; she clasped her hands in delight, mingling various exclamations with Saville’s story. “Did I not say so? I was sure of it. If you had seen her when I did, on the day of her going away, you would have been as certain as I.” Ethel wept in silence, her heart was touched to the core, “the remorse of love” awakened in it. How cold and ungrateful had been all her actions: engrossed by her love for her husband, she had bestowed no sympathy, made no demonstrations towards her mother. The false shame and Edward’s oft-repeated arguments which had kept her back, vanished from her mind. She reproached herself bitterly for lukewarmness and neglect; she yearned to show her repentance — to seek forgiveness — to express, however feebly, her sense of her mother’s angelic goodness. Her tears flowed to think of these things, and that her mother was away, poor and alone, believing herself wronged in all their thoughts, resenting perhaps their unkindness, mourning over the ingratitude of her child.

When the first burst of feeling was over, they discussed their future proceedings. Saville communicated his discoveries and his plan of crossing to France. Villiers was as eager as his cousin to exert himself actively in the pursuit. His ingenuous and feeling mind was struck by his injustice, and he was earnest in his wish to atone for the past, and to recompense her, if possible, for her sacrifices. As every one is apt to do with regard to the ideas of others, he was not satisfied with his cousin’s efforts or conclusions; he thought more questions might be asked — more learnt at the inns on the route which Lady had taken. The passport Saville had imagined to be hers, was taken out for Dover. Reading was far removed from any road to Kent. They argued this. Horatio was not convinced; but while he was bent on proceeding to Paris, Edward resolved to visit Reading — to examine the neighbourhood — to requestion the servants — to put on foot a system of inquiry which must in the end assure them whether she was still in the kingdom. It was at once resolved, that on the morrow they should go to London.

Thither they accordingly went. They repaired to Lady ‘s house. Saville on the next morning departed for France, and a letter soon reached them from him, saying, that he felt persuaded that the Mrs. Fitzhenry was Lady Lodore, and that he should pursue his way with all speed to Paris. It appeared, that the lady in question had crossed to Calais on the eleventh of June, and intimated her design of going to the Bagneres de Bigorre among the Pyrennees, passing through Paris on her way. The mention of the Bagneres de Bigorre clinched Saville’s suspicions — it was such a place as one in Lady Lodore’s position might select for her abode — distant, secluded, situated in sublime and beautiful scenery, singularly cheap, and seldom visited by strangers; yet the annual resort of the French from Bordeaux and Lyons, civilized what otherwise had been too rude and wild for an English lady. It was a long journey thither — the less wonder that nothing was heard, or seen, or surmised concerning the absentee by her numerous acquaintances, many of whom were scattered on the continent. Saville represented all these things, and expressed his conviction that he should find her. His letter was brief, for he was hurried, and he felt that it were better to say nothing than to express imperfectly the conflicting emotions alive in his heart. “My life seems a dream,” he said at the conclusion of his letter; “a long painful dream, since last I saw her. I awake, she is not here; I go to seek her — my actions have that single scope — my thoughts tend to that aim only; I go to find her — to restore her to Ethel. If I succeed in bestowing this happiness on her, I shall have my reward, and, whatever happens, no selfish regret shall tarnish my delight.”

He urged Villiers, meanwhile, not to rely too entirely on the conviction so strong in himself, but to pursue his plan of discovery with vigour. Villiers needed no spur. His eagerness was fully alive; he could not rest till he had rescued his mother-in-law from solitude and obscurity. He visited Reading; he extended his inquiries to Newbury: here more light broke in on his researches. He heard of Lady ‘s illness — of her having resided for several months at a villa in the neighbourhood, while slowly recovering from a fever by which for a long time her life had been endangered. He heard also of her departure, her return to London. Then again all was obscurity. The innkeepers and letters of post-horses in London, were all visited in vain — the mystery became as impenetrable as ever. It seemed most probable that she was living in some obscure part of the metropolis — Ethel’s heart sunk within her at the thought.

Edward wrote to Saville to communicate this intelligence, which put an end to the idea of her being in France — but he was already gone on to Bagneres. He himself perambulated London and its outskirts, but all in vain. The very thought that she should be residing in a place so sad, nay, so humiliating, without one gilding circumstance to solace poverty and obscurity, was unspeakably painful both to Villiers and his wife. Ethel thought of her own abode in Duke street during her husband’s absence, and how miserable and forlorn it had been — she now wept bitterly over her mother’s fate; even Fanny’s philosophy could not afford consolation for these ideas.

An accident, however, gave a new turn to their conjectures. In the draw of a work-table, Ethel found an advertisement cut out of a newspaper, setting forth the merits of a cottage to be let near Rhaiyder Gowy in Radnorshire, and with this, a letter from the agent at Rhaiyder, dated the 13th of May, in answer to inquiries concerning the rent and particulars. The letter intimated, that if the account gave satisfaction, the writer would get the cottage prepared for the tenant immediately, and the lady might take possession at the time mentioned, on the 1st of June. The day after finding this letter, Villiers set out for Wales.

But first he persuaded Ethel to spend the interval of his absence at Longfield. She had lately fretted much concerning her mother, and as she was still nursing her baby, Edward became uneasy at her pale cheeks and thinness. Ethel was anxious to preserve her health for her child; she felt that her uneasiness and pining would be lessened by a removal into the country. She was useless in London, and there was something in her residence in her mother’s house — in the aspect of the streets — in the memory of what she had suffered there, and the fear that Lady was enduring a worse repetition of the same evils, that agitated and preyed upon her. Her aunt had pressed her very much to come and see her, and she wrote to say, that she might be expected on the following day. She bade adieu to Villiers with more of hope with regard to his success than she had formerly felt. She became half convinced that her mother was not in London. Fanny supported her in these ideas; they talked continually of all they knew — of the illness of Lady Lodore — of her firmness of purpose in not sending for her daughter, or altering her plans in consequence; they comforted themselves that the air of Wales would restore her health, and the beauty of the scenery and the freedom of nature sooth her mind. They were full of hope — of more — of expectation. Ethel, indeed, had at one time proposed accompanying her husband, but she yielded to his entreaties, and to the fear suggested, that she might injure her child's health. Villiers's motions would be more prompt without her. They separated. Ethel wrote to Saville a letter to find him at Paris, containing an account of their new discoveries, and then prepared for her journey to Essex with Fanny, her baby, and the beautiful little Clorinda Saville, who had been left under her care, on the following day.

CHAPTER XVI.

I am not One who much or oft delights
To season my Friends with personal talk, —
Of Friends who live within an easy walk.
Or Neighbours, daily, weekly in my sight:
And, for my chance acquaintance, Ladies bright.
Sons, Mothers, Maidens with ering on the stalk.
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
 — Wordsworth.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry returned to Longfield from Maristow Castle at the end of the month of November. She gladly came back, in all the dinginess and bleakness of that dismal season, to her beloved seclusion at Longfield. The weather was dreary, a black frost invested every thing with its icy chains, the landscape looked disconsolate, and now and then wintry blasts brought on snow-storms, and howled loudly through the long dark nights. The amiable spinster drew her chair close to the fire; with half-shut eyes she contemplated the glowing embers, and recalled many past winters just like this, when was alive and in America; or, diving yet deeper into memory, when the honoured chair she now occupied, had been dignified by her father, and she had tried to sooth his querulous complaints on the continued absence of her brother Henry. When, instead of these familiar thoughts, the novel ones of Ethel and Villiers intruded themselves, she rubbed her eyes to be quite sure that she did not dream. It was a lamentable change; and who the cause? Even she whose absence had been, she felt, wickedly lamented at Maristow Castle, Cornelia Santerre-she, who in an evil hour, had become Lady Lodore, and who would before God, answer for the disasters and untimely death of her ill-fated husband.

With any but Mrs. Fitzhenry, such accusations had, after the softening process of time, been changed to an admission, that, despite her errors, Lady had rather been misled and mistaken, than heinously faulty; and her last act, in sacrificing so much to her daughter, although the extent of her sacrifice was unknown to her sister-in-law, had cancelled her former delinquencies. But the prejudiced old lady was not so easily mollified; she was harsh alone towards her, but all the gall of her nature was collected and expended on the head of her brother's widow. Probably an instinctive feeling of her unreasonableness made her more violent. Her language was bitter whenever she alluded to her — she rejoiced at her absence, and instead of entering into Ethel's gratitude and impatience, she fervently prayed that she might never appear on the scene again.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was less of a gossip than any maiden lady who had ever lived singly in the centre of a little village. Her heart was full of the dead and the absent — of past events, and their long train of consequences, so that the history of the inhabitants of her village, possessed no charm for her. If any one among them suffered from misfortune she endeavoured to relieve them, and if any died, she lamented, moralized on the passage of time, and talked of 's death; but the scandal, the marriages, the feuds, and wonderful things that came to pass at Longfield, appeared childish and contemptible, the flickering of earth-born tapers compared to the splendour, the obscuration, and final setting of the celestial luminary which had been the pole-star of her life.

It was from this reason that Mrs. Fitzhenry had not heard of the Lady who lodged at Dame Nixon's cottage, in the Vale of Bewling, till the time, when, after having exhausted the curiosity of Longfield, she was almost forgotten. The Lady, she was known by no other name, had arrived in the town during Mrs. Fitzhenry's visit to Maristow castle. She had arrived in her own chariot, unattended by any servant; the following day she had taken up her abode at Dame Nixon's cottage, saying, that she was only going to stay a week: she had continued there for more than three months.

Dame Nixon's cottage was situated about a mile and a half from Longfield. It stood alone in a little hollow embowered by trees; the ground behind rose to a slight upland, and a rill trickled through the garden. You got to it by a bye path, which no wheeled vehicle could traverse, though a horse might, and it was indeed the very dingle and cottage which Ethel had praised during her visit into Essex in the preceding year. The silence and seclusion were in summer tranquillizing and beautiful; in winter sad and drear; the fields were swampy in wet weather, and in snow and frost it seemed cut off from the rest of the world. Dame Nixon and her granddaughter lived there alone. The girl had been engaged to be married.

Her lover jilted her, and wedded a richer bride. The story is so old, that it is to be wondered that women have not ceased to lament so common an occurrence. Poor Margaret was, on the contrary, struck to the heart — she despised herself for being unable to preserve her lover's affections, rather than the deceiver for his infidelity. She neglected her personal appearance, nor ever showed herself among her former companions, except to support her grandmother to church. Her false lover sat in the adjoining pew. She fixed her eyes on her Prayer-book during the service, and on the ground as she went away. She did not wish him to see the change which his faithlessness had wrought, for surely it would afflict him. Once there had not bloomed a fresher or gayer rose in the fields of Essex — now she had grown thin and pale — her young light step had become slow and heavy — sickness and sorrow made her eyes hollow, and her cheeks sunken. She avoided every one, devoting herself to attendance on her grandmother. Dame Nixon was nearly doting. Life was ebbing fast from her old frame; her best pleasure was to sun herself in the garden in summer, or to bask before the winter's fire. While enjoying these delights, her dimmed eyes brightened, and a smile wreathed her withered lips; she said, "Ah! this is comfortable;" while her broken-hearted grandchild envied a state of being which could content itself with mere animal enjoyment. They were very poor. Margaret had to work hard; but the thoughts of the head, or, at least, the feelings of the heart, need not wait on the labour of the hands. The Sunday visit to church kept alive her pain; her very prayers were bitter, breathed close to the deceiver and her who had usurped her happiness: the memory and anticipation haunted her through the week; she was often blinded by tears as she patiently pursued her household duties, or her toil in their little garden. Her hands were hardened with work, her throat, her face sunburnt; but exercise and occupation did not prevent her from wasting away, or her cheek from becoming sunk and wan.

Dame Nixon's cottage was poor but roomy; some years before, a gentleman from London had, in a freak, hired two rooms in it, and furnished them. Since then, she had sometimes let them, and now they were occupied by the stranger lady. At first all three of the inhabitants appeared each Sunday at church. The Lady was dressed in spotless and simple white, and so closely veiled, that no one could see her face; of course she was beautiful. Soon after Mrs. Elizabeth's return from Maristow Castle, it was discovered that first the lady stayed away, and soon, that the whole party absented themselves on Sunday; and as this defalcation demanded inquiry, it was discovered that a pony chaise took them three miles off to the church of the nearest village. This was a singular and yet a beneficial change. The false swain must rejoice at losing sight of the memento of his sin, and Margaret would certainly pray with a freer heart, when she no longer shrunk from his gaze and that of his wife.

It was not until the end of January that Mrs. Elizabeth heard of the Lady; it was not till the beginning of February that she asked a single question about her.

In January, passing the inn-yard, the curate's wife, who was walking with her, said, "There is the chariot belonging to the Lady who lodges at dame Nixon's cottage. I wonder who she is. The arms are painted out."

"Ah, dame Nixon has a lodger then; that is a good thing, it will help her through the winter. I have not seen her or her daughter at church lately."

"No," replied the other, "they go now to Bewling church."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mrs. Fitzhenry; "it is much better for poor Margaret not to come here."

The conversation went on, and the Lady was alluded to, but no questions were asked or curiosity excited. In February she heard from the doctor's wife, that the doctor had been to the cottage, and that the Lady was indisposed. She heard at the same time that this Lady had refused to receive the visits of the curate's lady and the doctor's lady — excusing herself, that she was going to leave Essex immediately. This had happened two months before. On hearing of her illness, Mrs. Elizabeth thought of calling on her, but this stopped her. "It is very odd," said the doctor's wife, "she came in her own carriage, and yet has no servants. She lives in as poor a way as can be, down in that cottage, yet my husband says she is more like the Queen of England in her looks and ways than any one he ever saw."

"Like the Queen of England?" said Mrs. Fitzhenry, "What queen? — Queen Charlotte?" who had been the queen of the greater part of the good lady's life.

"She is as young and beautiful as an angel," said the other, half angry; "it is very mysterious. She did not look downcast like, as if any thing was wrong, but was as cheerful and condescending as could be. 'Condescending, Doctor,' said I, for my husband used the word; 'you don't want condescension from a poor body lodging at dame Nixon's.'—'A poor body!' said he, in a huff, 'she is more of a lady, indeed more like the Queen of England than any rich body you ever saw.' And what is odd, no one knows her name — Dame Nixon and Margaret always call her Lady — the very marks are picked out from her pocket handkerchiefs. Yet I did hear that there was a coronet plain to be seen on one — a thing impossible unless she was a poor cast-away; and the doctor says he'd lay his life that she was nothing of that. He must know her name when he makes out her bill, and I told him to ask it plump, but he puts off, and puts off, till I am out of all patience."

A misty confused sense of discomfort stole over Mrs. Elizabeth when she heard of the coronet in the corner of the pocket handkerchief, but it passed away without suggesting any distinct idea to her mind. Nor did she feel curiosity about the stranger — she was too much accustomed to the astonishment, the conjectures, the gossip of Longfield, to suppose that there was any real foundation for surprise, because its wonder-loving inhabitants choose to build up a mystery out of every common occurrence of life.

This absence of inquisitiveness must long have kept Mrs. Fitzhenry in ignorance of who her neighbour was, and the inhabitants of Longfield would probably have discovered it before her, had not the truth been revealed even before she entertained a suspicion that there was any secret to be found out.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said her maid to her one evening, as she was superintending the couchée of the worthy spinster, "I think you ought to know, though I am afraid you may be angry."

The woman hesitated; her mistress encouraged her. "If it is any thing I ought to know, Wilmot, tell it at once, and don't be afraid. What has happened to you?"

"To me, ma'am, — la! nothing," replied the maid; "it's something about the Lady at dame Nixon's, only you commanded me never to speak the name of—"

And again the good woman stopped short. Mrs. Fitzhenry, a little surprised, and somewhat angry, bade her go on. At length, in plain words she was told:

"Why, ma'am, the Lady down in the Vale is no other than my lady — than Lady ."

"Ridiculous — who told you so?"

"My own eyes, ma'am; I shouldn't have believed any thing else. I saw the Lady, and it was my Lady, as sure as I stand here."

"But how could you know her? it is years since you saw her."

"Yes, ma'am," said the woman, with a smile of superiority; "but it is not easy to forget Lady . See her yourself, ma'am, — you will know then that I am right."

Wilmot had lived twenty years with Mrs. Fitzhenry. She had visited town with her at the time of Ethel's christening. She had been kept in vexatious ignorance of subsequent events, till the period of the visit of her mistress and niece to London two years before, when she indemnified herself. Through the servants of Villiers, and of the Misses Saville, she had learnt a vast deal; and not satisfied with mere hearsay, she had seen Lady several times getting into her carriage at her own door, and had even been into her house: such energy is there in a liberal curiosity. The same disinterested feeling had caused her to go down to dame Nixon's with an offer from her mistress of service to the Lady, hearing she was ill. She went perfectly unsuspicious of the wonderful discovery she was about to make, and was thus rewarded beyond her most sanguine hopes, by being in possession of a secret, known to herself alone. The keeping of a secret is, however, a post of no honour if all knowledge be confined to the possessor alone. Mrs. Wilmot was tolerably faithful, with all her love of knowledge; she was sure it would vex her mistress if Lady Lodore's strange place of abode were known at Longfield, and Mrs. Fitzhenry was consequently the first person to whom she had hinted the fact. All this account she detailed with great volubility. Her mistress recommended discretion most earnestly; and at the same time expressed a doubt whether her information was correct.

"I wish you would go and judge for yourself, ma'am," said the maid.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzhenry. "God grant I never see Lady again! She will go soon. You tell me that dame Nixon says she is only staying till she is well. She will go soon, and it need never be known, except to ourselves, Wilmot, that she was ever here."

There was a dignity in this eternal mystery that somewhat compensated for the absence of wonder and fuss which the woman had anticipated with intense pleasure. She assured her mistress, over and over again, of her secrecy and discretion, and was dismissed with the exhortation to forget all she had learnt as quickly as possible.

“Wherefore did she come here? what can she be doing?” Mrs. Fitzhenry asked herself over and over again. She could not guess. It was strange, it was mysterious, and some mischief was at the bottom — but she would go soon—”would that she were already gone!”

It must be mentioned that Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry had left Maristow Castle before the arrival of Mr. Gayland, and had therefore no knowledge of the still more mysterious cloud that enveloped Lady ‘s absence. Ignorant of her self-destroying sacrifices and generosity, her pity was not excited, her feelings were all against her. She counted the days as they passed, and looked wistfully at Wilmot, hoping that she would quickly bring tidings of the Lady’s departure. In vain; the doctor ceased to visit the cottage, but the Lady remained. All at once the doctor visited it again with greater assiduity than ever — not on account of his beautiful patient — but Dame Nixon had had a paralytic stroke, and the kind Lady had sent for him, and promised to defray all the expenses of the poor woman’s illness.

All this was truly vexatious. Mrs. Fitzhenry fretted, and even asked Wilmot questions, but the unwelcome visitor was still there. Wherefore? What could have put so disagreeable a whim into her head? The good lady could think of no motive, while she considered her presence an insult. She was still more annoyed when she received a letter from Ethel. It had been proposed that Mr. and Mrs. Villiers should pay her a visit in the spring; but now Ethel wrote to say that she might be immediately expected. “I have strange things to tell you about my dear mother,” wrote Ethel; “it is very uncertain where she is. Horatio can hear nothing of her at Paris, and will soon return. Edward is going to Wales, as there seems a great likelihood that she has secluded herself there. While he is away you may expect me. I shall not be able to stay long — he will come at the end of a week to fetch me.”

Mrs. Fitzhenry shuddered. Her prejudices were stronger than ever. She experienced the utmost wretchedness from the idea that the residence of Lady would be discovered, and a family union effected. It seemed desecration to the memory of her brother, ruin to Ethel — the greatest misfortune that could befal any of them. Her feelings were exaggerated, but they were on that account the more powerful. How could she avert the evil? — a remedy must be sought, and she fixed on one — a desperate one, in truth, which appeared to her the sole mode of saving them all from the greatest disasters.

She resolved to visit Lady ; to represent to her the impropriety and wickedness of her having any intercourse with her daughter, and to entreat her to depart before Ethel’s arrival. Her violence might almost seem madness; but all people who live in solitude become to a certain degree insane. Their views of things are not corrected by comparing them with those of others; and the strangest want of proportion always reigns in their ideas and sentiments.

CHAPTER XVII.

So loth we part from all we love.
 From all the links that bind us;
So turn our hearts, where'er we rove.
 To those we've left behind us.
 — Thomas Moore.

On the following morning Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry drove to the Vale of Bewling. It was the last day of February. The March winds were hushed as yet; the breezes were balmy, the sunshine cheerful; a few soft clouds flecked the heavens, and the blue sky appeared between them calm and pure. Each passing air breathed life and happiness — it caressed the cheek — and the swelling buds of the trees felt its quickening influence. The almond-trees were in bloom — the pear blossoms began to whiten — the tender green of the young leaves showed themselves here and there among the hedges. The old lady felt the cheering influence, and would have become even gay, had not the idea of the errand she was on checked her spirits. Sometimes the remembrance that she was really going to see her sister-in-law absolutely startled her; once or twice she thought of turning back; she passed through the lanes, and then alighting from her carriage, walked by a raised foot-way, across some arable fields — and again through a little grove; the winding path made a turn, and dame Nixon's white, low-roofed cottage was before her. Every thing about it looked trim, but very humble: and it was unadorned during this early season by the luxury of flowers and plants, which usually give even an appearance of elegance to an English cottage. Mrs. Fitzhenry opened the little gate — her knees trembled as she walked through the scanty garden, which breathed of the new-sprung violets. The entrance to the cottage was by the kitchen: she entered this, and found Margaret occupied by a culinary preparation for her grandmother. Mrs. Fitzhenry asked after the old woman's health, and thus gained a little time. Margaret answered in her own former quiet yet cheerful voice; she was changed from what she had been a few weeks before. The bloom had not returned to her cheeks, but they no longer appeared streaked with deathly paleness; her motions had lost the heaviness that showed a mind ill at ease. Mrs. Elizabeth congratulated her on the restoration of her health.

"O yes," she replied, with a blush, "I am not the same creature I used to be, thank God, and the angel he has sent us here; — if my poor grandmother would but get well I should be quite happy; but that is asking too much at her time of life."

The old lady made no further observations: she did not wish to hear the praises of her sister-in-law. "Your lodger is still here?" at length she said.

"Yes, God be praised!" replied Margaret.

"Will you give her my compliments, and say I am here, and that I wish to see her."

"Yes, ma'am," said Margaret; "only the lady has refused to see any one, and she does not like being asked."

"I do not wish to be impertinent or intrusive," answered Mrs. Elizabeth; "only tell her my name, and if she makes any objection, of course she will do as she likes. Where is she?"

"She is sitting with my poor grandmother; the nurse — Heaven bless her! she would hire a nurse, to spare me, as she said — is lain down to sleep, and she said she would watch by grandmother while I got the gruel; but it's ready now, and I will go and tell her."

Away tripped Margaret, leaving her guest lost in wonder. Lady watching the sick-bed of an old cottager — Lady Lodore immured in a poverty-stricken abode, fit only for the poorer sort of country people. It was more than strange, it was miraculous. "Yet she refused to accompany poor Henry to America! there must be some strange mystery in all this, that does not tell well for her."

So bitterly uncharitable was the unforgiving old lady towards her brother's widow. She ruminated on these things for a minute or two, and then Margaret came to usher her into the wicked one's presence. The sitting-room destined for the lodger was neat, though very plain. The walls were wainscotted and painted white, — the windows small and latticed, — the furniture was old black, shining mahogany; the chairs high-backed and clumsy; the table heavy and incommodious; the fire-place large and airy; and the shelf of the mantel-piece almost as high as the low ceiling: there were a few things of a more modern construction; a comfortable sofa, a rose-wood bureau and large folding screen; near the fire was a large easy chair of Gillows's manufacture, two light cane ones, and two small tables; vases filled with hyacinths, jonquils, and other spring flowers stood on one, and an embroidery frame occupied the other. There was a perfume of fresh-gathered flowers in the room, which the open window rendered very agreeable. Lady was standing near the fire — (for Wilmot was not mistaken, and it was she indeed who now presented herself to Mrs. Fitzhenry's eyes) — she might be agitated — she did not show it — she came forward and held out her hand. "Dear Bessy," she said, "you are very kind to visit me; I thank you very much."

The poor recluse was overpowered. The cordiality of the greeting frightened her: she who had come full of bitter reproach and hard purposes, to be thanked with that sweet voice and smile. "I thought," at length she stammered out, "that you did not wish to be known. I am glad you are not offended, Cornelia."

"Offended by kindness? O no! It is true I did not wish — I do not wish that it should be known that I am here — but since, by some strange accident, you have discovered me, how can I help being grateful for your visit? I am indeed glad to see you; it is so long since I have heard any thing. Ah! dear Bessy, tell me, how is Ethel?"

Tears glistened in the mother's eyes: she asked many questions, and Mrs. Fitzhenry a little recovered her self-possession, as she answered them. She looked at Lady — she was changed — she could not fail of being changed after so many years, — she was no longer a beautiful girl, but she was a lovely woman. Despite the traces of years, which however lightly they impressed, yet might be discerned; expression so embellished her that it was impossible not to admire; brilliancy had given place to softness, animation to serenity; still she was fair — still her silken hair clustered on her brow, and her sweet eyes were full of fire; her smile had more than its former charm — it came from the heart.

Mrs. Fitzhenry was not, however, to be subdued by a little outward show. She was there, who had betrayed and deserted (such were the energetic words she was accustomed to employ) the noble, broken-hearted . The thought steeled her purpose, and she contrived at last to ask whether Lady Lodore was going to remain much longer in Essex?

"I have been going every day since I came here. In a few weeks I shall certainly be gone. Why do you ask?"

"Because I thought — that is — you have made a secret of your being here, and I expect Ethel in a day or two, and she would certainly discover you."

"Why should she not?" asked Lady . "Why should you be averse to my seeing Ethel?"

It is very difficult to say a disagreeable thing, especially to one unaccustomed to society, and who is quite ignorant of the art of concealing the sting of her intentions by flowery words. Mrs. Fitzhenry said something about her sister-in-law's own wishes, and the desire expressed by that there should be no intercourse between the mother and daughter.

Cornelia's eyes flashed fire—"Am I," she exclaimed, "to be always the sacrifice? Is my husband's vengeance to pursue me beyond his grave — even till I reach mine? Unjust as he was, he would not have desired this."

Mrs. Elizabeth coloured with anger. Lady continued—"Pardon me, Bessy, I do not wish to say any thing annoying to you or in blame of Lodore. God knows I did him great wrong — but—"

"O Cornelia," cried the old lady, "do you indeed acknowledge that you were to blame?"

Lady smiled, and said, "I were strangely blind to the defects of my own character, and to the consequences of my actions, were I not conscious of my errors; but retrospection is useless, and the punishment has been — is — sufficiently severe. Lodore himself would not have perpetuated his resentment, had he lived only a very little while longer. But I will speak frankly to you, Bessy, as frankly as I may, and you shall decide on my further tay here. From circumstances which it is immaterial to explain, I have resolved on retiring into absolute solitude. I shall never live in London again — never again see any of my old friends and acquaintances. The course of my life is entirely changed; and whether I live here or elsewhere, I shall live in obscurity and poverty. I do not wish Ethel to know this. She would wish to assist me, and she has scarcely enough for herself. I do not like being a burthen — I do not like being pitied — I do not like being argued with, or to have my actions commented upon. You know that my disposition was always independent."

Mrs. Elizabeth assented with a sigh, casting up her eyes to heaven.

Lady smiled, and went on. “You think this is a strange place for me to live in: whether here or elsewhere, I shall never live in any better: I shall be fortunate if I find myself as well off when I leave Essex, for the people here are good and honest, and the poor girl loves me, — it is always pleasant to be loved.”

A tear again filled Cornelia’s eyes — she tried to animate herself to smile. “I have nothing to love in all the wide world except Ethel; I do love her; every one must love her — she is so gentle — so kind — so warm-hearted and beautiful, — I love her more than my own heart’s blood; she is my child — part of that blood — part of myself — the better part; I have seen little of her, but every look and word is engraved on my heart. I love her voice — her smiles — the pressure of her soft white hand. Pity me, dear Bessy, I am never to see any of these, which are all that I love on earth, again. This idea fills me with regret — with worse — with sorrow. There is a grave not far from here which contains one you loved beyond all others, — what would you not give to see him alive once again? To visit his tomb is a consolation to you. I must not seen even the walls within which my blessed child lives. You alone can help me — can be of comfort to me. Do not refuse — do not send me away. If I leave this place, I shall go to some secluded nook in Wales, and be quite — quite alone; the sun will shine, and the grass will grow at my feet, but my heart will be dead within me, and I shall pine and die. I have intended to do this; I have waited only till the sufferings of the poor woman here should be at an end, that I may be of service to Margaret, and then go. Your visit, which I fancied meant in kindness, has put other thoughts into my head.

“Do not object to my staying here; let me remain; and do yet more for me — come to me sometimes, and bring me tidings of my daughter — tell me what she says — how she looks, — tell me that she is at each moment well and happy. Ah! do this, dear Bessy, and I will bless you. I shall never see her — at least not for years; there are many things to prevent it: yet how could I drag out those years quite estranged from her? My heart has died within me each time I have thought of it. But I can live as I say; I shall expect you every now and then to come and talk to me of her; she need never know that I am so near — she comes so seldom to Essex. I shall soon be forgotten at Longfield. Will you consent? you will do a kind action, and God will bless you.”

Mrs. Fitzhenry was one of those persons who always find it difficult to say, No; and Lady asked with so much earnestness that she commanded; she felt that her request ought to be granted, and therefore it was impossible to refuse it. Before she well knew what she had said, the good lady had yielded her consent and received her sister-in-law's warm and heart-felt thanks.

Mrs. Fitzhenry looked round the room: "But how can you think of staying here, Cornelia?" she said; "this place is not fit for you. I should have thought that you could never have endured such homely rooms."

"Do you think them so bad?" replied the lady; "I think them very pleasant, for I have done with pride, and I find peace and comfort here. Look," she continued, throwing open a door that led into the garden, "is not that delightful? This garden is very pretty: that clear rivulet murmurs by with so lulling a sound; — and look at these violets, are they not beautiful? I have planted a great many flowers, and they will soon come up. Do you not know how pleasant it is to watch the shrubs we plant, and water, and rear ourselves? — to see the little green shoots peep out, and the leaves unfold, and then the flower blossom and expand, diffusing its delicious odour around, — all, as it were, created by oneself, by one's own nursing, out of a bit of stick or an ugly bulb? This place is very pretty, I assure you: when the leaves are on the trees they make a bower, and the grove behind the house is shady, and leads to lanes and fields more beautiful than any I ever saw. I have loitered for hours in this garden, and been quite happy. Now I shall be happier than ever, thanks to you. You will not forget me. Come as often as you can. You say that you expect Ethel soon?"

Lady Ladore walked with her sister-in-law to the garden-gate, and beyond, through the little copse, still talking of her daughter. "I cannot go further," she said, at last, "without a bonnet — so good-bye, dear Bessy. Come soon. Thank you — thank you for this visit."

She held out her hand: Mrs. Fitzhenry took it, pressed it, a half feeling came over her as if she were about to kiss the check of her offeneding relative, but her heart hardened, she blushed, and muttering a hasty good-bye, she hurried away. She was bewildered, and after walking a few steps, she turned round, and saw again the white dress of Cornelia, as a turn in the path hid her. The grand, the exclusive Lady — the haughty, fashionable, worldly-heartless wife thus metamorphosed into a tender-hearted mother —

suing to her for crumbs of charitable love — and hiding all her boasted advantages in that low-roofed cottage! What could it all mean?

Mrs. Fitzhenry walked on. Again she thought, "How odd! I went there, determining to persuade her to go away, and miserable at the thoughts of seeing her only once; and now I have promised to visit her often, and agreed that she shall live here. Have I not done wrong? What would my poor brother say? Yet I could not refuse. Poor thing! how could I refuse, when she said that she had nothing else to live for? Besides, to go away and live alone in Wales — it would be too dreadful; and she thanked me as if she were so grateful. I hope I have not done wrong.

"But how strange it is that Henry's widow should have become so poor; she has given up a part of her income to Ethel, but a great deal remains. What can she have done with it? She is mysterious, and there is never any good in mystery. Who knows what she may have to conceal?" Mrs. Elizabeth got in her carriage, and each step of the horses took her farther from the web of enchantment which Cornelia had thrown over her. "She is always strange," — thus ran her meditations; "and how am I to see her, and no one find it out? and what a story for Longfield, that Lady should be living in poverty in dame Nixon's cottage. I forgot to tell her that — I forgot to say so many things I meant to say — I don't know why, except that she talked so much, and I did not know how to bring in my objections. But it cannot be right: and Ethel in her long rambles and rides with Miss Derham or Mr. Villiers, will be sure to find her out. I wish I had not seen her — I will write and tell her I have changed my mind, and entreat her to go away."

As it occurs to all really good-natured persons, it was very disagreeable to Mrs. Fitzhenry to be angry, and she visited the ill-temper so engendered on the head of poor Cornelia. She disturbed herself by the idea of all the disagreeable things that might happen — of her sister-in-law's positive refusal to go; the very wording which she imagined for her intended letter puzzled and irritated her. She no longer felt the breath of spring as pleasant, but sat back in the chariot, "nursing her wrath to keep it warm." When she reached her home, Ethel's carriage was at her door.

The meeting, as ever, between aunt and niece was affectionate. Fanny was welcomed, the baby was kissed, and little Clorinda admired, but the theme nearest Ethel's heart was speedily introduced — her mother. The disquietudes she felt on her account — Mr. Saville's journey to Paris — the visit of Villiers to Wales to discover her place of concealment — the inutility of all their endeavours.

"But why are they so anxious?" asked her aunt; "I can understand you: you have some fantastic notion about your mother, but how can Mr. Villiers desire so very much to find her?"

"I could almost say," said Ethel, "that Edward is more eager than myself, though I should wrong my own affection and gratitude; but he was more unjust towards her, and thus he feels the weight of obligation more keenly; but, perhaps, dear aunt, you do not know all that my dearest mother has done for us — the unparalleled sacrifices she has made."

Then Ethel went on to tell her all that Mr. Gayland had communicated — the sale of her jointure — the very small residue of money she had kept for herself — the entire payment of Villiers's debts — and afterwards the surrender of the remainder of her income and of her house to them. Her eyes glistened as she spoke; her heart, overflowing with admiration and affection, shone in her beautiful face, her voice was pregnant with sensibility, and her expressions full of deep feeling.

Mrs. Elizabeth's heart was not of stone — far from it; it was, except in the one instance of her sister-in-law, made of pliable materials. She heard Ethel's story — she caught by sympathy the tenderness and pity she poured forth — she thought of Lady at the cottage, a dwelling so unlike any she had ever inhabited before — poverty-stricken and mean; she remembered her praises of it — her cheerfulness — the simplicity of taste which she displayed — the light-hearted content with which she spoke of every privation except the absence of Ethel. What before was mysterious wrong, was now manifest heroism. The loftiness and generosity of her mind rose upon the old lady unclouded; her own uncharitable deductions stung her with remorse; she continued to listen, and Ethel to narrate, and the big tears gathered in her eyes, and rolled down her venerable cheeks, — tears at once of repentance and admiration.

CHAPTER XX.

Repentance is a tender sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might.
‘Tis lodged within her silent tear.
 — Wordsworth.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was not herself aware of all that Lady had suffered, or the extent of her sacrifices. She guessed darkly at them, but it was the detail that rendered them so painful, and, but for their motive, humiliating to one nursed in luxury, and accustomed to all those intermediate servitors and circumstances, which stand between the rich and the bare outside of the working-day world. Cornelia shrunk from the address of those she did not know, and from the petty acts of daily life, which had gone on before without her entering into their detail.

Her illness at Newbury had been severe. She was attacked by the scarlet fever; the doctor had ordered her to be removed from the bustle of the inn, and a furnished villa had been taken for her, while she could only give a languid assent to propositions which she understood confusedly. She was a long time very ill — a long time weak and slowly convalescent. At length health dawned on her, accompanied by a disposition attuned to content and a wish for tranquillity. Her residence was retired, commodious, and pretty; she was pleased with it, she did not wish to remove, and was glad to procrastinate from day to day any consideration of the future. Thus it was a long time before the strength of her thoughts and purposes was renewed, or that she began to think seriously of where she was, and what she was going to do.

During the half delirium, the disturbed and uncontrollable, but not unmeaning reveries, of her fever, the idea of visiting ‘s grave had haunted her pertinaciously. She had often dreamt of it: at one time the tomb seemed to rise in a lonely desert; and the dead slept peacefully beneath sunshine or starlight. At another, storms and howling winds were around, groans and sighs, mingled with the sound of the tempest, and menaces and reproaches against her were breathed from the cold marble. Now her imagination pictured it within the aisles of a magnificent cathedral; and now again the real scene — the rustic church of Longfield was vividly present to her mind. She saw the pathway through the green churchyard — the ruined ivy-mantled tower, which showed how much larger the edifice had been in former days, near which might be still discerned on high a niche containing the holy mother and divine child — the half-defaced porch on which rude monkish imagery was carved — the time-worn pews, and painted window. She had never entered this church but once, many, many years ago; and it was strange how in sleep and fever-troubled reverie, each portion of it presented itself distinctly and vividly to her imagination. During these perturbed visions, one other form and voice perpetually recurred. She heard Ethel continually repeat, "Come! come!" and often her figure flitted round the tomb or sat beside it. Once, on awakening from a dream, which impressed her deeply by the importunity and earnestness of her daughter's appeal, she was forcibly impelled to consider it her duty to obey, and she made a vow that on recovering from her illness, she would visit her husband's grave.

Now while pondering on the humiliations and cheerless necessities which darkened her future, and rousing herself to form some kind of resolution concerning them, this dream was repeated, and on awakening, the memory of her forgotten vow renewed itself in her. She dwelt on it with pleasure. Here was something to be done that was not mere wretchedness and lonely wandering — something that, connecting her with the past, took away the sense of desertion and solitude, so hard to bear. In the morning, at breakfast, it so chanced that she read in the Morning Herald a little paragraph announcing that Viscount Maristow was entertaining a party of friends at Maristow Castle, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Villiers, and the Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry. This was a fortunate coincidence. The dragon ceased for a moment to watch the garden, and she might avail herself of its absence to visit its treasure unnoticed and unknown. She put her project into immediate execution. She crossed the country, passing through London on her way to Longfield — she arrived. Without delay she fulfilled her purpose. She entered the church and viewed the tablet, inscribed simply with the name of , and the date of his birth and death. The words were few and common-place, but they were eloquent to her. They told her that the cold decaying shape lay beneath, which in the pride of life and love had clasped her in its arms as its own for evermore. Short-lived had been the possession. She had loosened the tie even while thought and feeling ruled the now insentient brain — he had been scarcely less dead to her while inhabiting the distant Illinois, than now that a stone placed above him, gave visible token of his material presence, and the eternal absence of his immortal part. Cornelia had never before felt so sensibly that she had been a wife neglecting her duties, despising a vow she had solemnly pledged, estranging herself from him, who by religious ordinance, and the laws of society, alone had privilege to protect and love her. Nor had she before felt so intimately the change — that she was a widow; that her lover, her husband, the father of her child, the forsaken, dead Lodore, was indeed no part of the tissue of life, action, and feeling to which she belonged.

Solitude and sickness had before awakened many thoughts in her mind, and she recalled them as she sat beside her dead husband's grave. She looked into her motives, tried to understand the deceits she had practised on herself, and to purify her conscience. She meditated on time, that law of the world, which is so mysterious, and so potent; ruling us despotically, and yet wholly unappreciated till we think upon it. Petrarch says, that he was never so young, but that he knew that he was growing old. Lady had never thought of this till a few months back; it seemed to her, that she had never known it until now — that she felt that she was older — older than the vain and lovely bride of Lodore — than the haughty high-spirited friend of Casimir Lyzinski. And where was Casimir? She had never heard of him again, she had scarcely ever thought of him; he had grown older too — change, the effects of passion or of destiny, must have visited him also; — they were all embarked on one mighty stream — Lodore had gained a haven; but the living were still at the mercy of the vast torrent — whither would. it hurry them?

There was a charm in these melancholy and speculative thoughts to the beautiful exile — for we may be indeed as easily exiled by a few roods of ground, as by mountains and seas. A strong decree of fate banished Cornelia from the familiar past, into an unknown and strange present. Still she clung to the recollection of bygone years, and for the first time gave way to reflections full of scenes and persons to be seen no more. The tomb beside which she lingered, was an outward sign of these past events, and she did not like to lose sight of it so soon. She heard that Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry was to remain away for a month — so much time at least was hers. She inquired for lodgings, and was directed to Dame Nixon's cottage. She was somewhat dismayed at first by its penurious appearance, but "it would do for a few days;" and she found that what would serve for a few days, might serve for months. "Man wants but little here below, Nor wants that little long." Most true for solitary man. It is society that increases his desires. If Lady had been visited in her humble dwelling by the least regarded among her acquaintances, she would have felt keenly its glaring deficiencies. But although used to luxury, Margaret's cuisine sufficed for herself alone; the low-roofed rooms were high enough, and the latticed windows which let in the light of heaven, fulfilled their purpose as well as the plate-glass and lofty embrasures of a palace.

Lady was obliged also to consider one other thing, which forms so large a portion of our meditations in real life — her purse. She found when settled in the cottage, in the Vale of Bewling, that her stock of money was reduced to one hundred pounds. She could not cross the country and establish herself at a distance from London with this sum only. She had before looked forward to selling her jewels and carriage as to a distant event, but now she felt that it was the next thing she must do. She shrunk from it naturally: the very idea of revisiting London — of seeing its busy shops and streets — once so full of life and its purposes to her, and in which she would now wander an alien, was inconceivably saddening; she was willing to put off the necessity as long as possible, and thus continued to procrastinate her departure from Essex.

Mrs. Fitzhenry returned; but she could neither know nor dream of the vicinity of her sister-in-law. We are apt to think, when we know nothing of any one, that no one knows any thing of us; experience can scarcely teach us, that the reverse of this is often the truth. Seeing only an old woman in her dotage — and a poor love-sick girl, who knew nothing beyond the one event which had blasted all her happiness — she never heard the inhabitants of Longfield mentioned, and believed that she was equally unheard of by them. Then her indisposition protracted her stay, and now the mortal illness of the poor woman. For she had become interested for Margaret and promised to befriend her; and in case of her grandmother's death, to take her from a spot where every association and appearance kept open the wounds inflicted by her unfaithful lover.

Time had thus passed on: now sad, now cheerful, she tried to banish every thought of the future, and to make the occurrences of each day fill and satisfy her mind. She lived obscurely and humbly, and perhaps as wisely as mortal may in this mysterious world, where hope is perpetually follwed by disappointment, and action by repentance and regret. The days succeeded to each other in one unvaried tenor. The weather was cheerful, the breath of spring animating. She watched the swelling of the buds — the peeping heads of the crocuses — the opening of the anemones and wild wind-flowers, and at last, the sweet odour of the new-born violets, with all the interest created by novelty; not that she had not observed and watched these things before, with transitory pleasure, but now the operations of nature filled all her world; the earth was no longer merely the dwelling place of her acquaintance, the stage on which the business of society was carried on, but the mother of life — the temple of God — the beautiful and varied store-house of bounteous nature.

Dwelling on these ideas, Cornelia often thought of Horatio Saville, whose conversations, now remembered, were the source whence she drew the knowledge and poetry of her present reveries. As solitude and nature grew lovely in her eyes, she yearned yet more fondly for the one who could embellish all she saw. Yet while her mind needed a companion so congenial to her present feelings, her heart was fuller of Ethel; her affection for Saville was a calm though deep-rooted sentiment, resulting from the conviction, that she should find entire happiness if united to him, and in an esteem or rather an enthusiastic admiration of his talents and virtues, that led her to dwell with complacency on the hope, that he still remembered and loved her: but the human heart is jealous, and with difficulty admits two emotions of equal force, and her love for her daughter was the master passion. The instinct of nature spoke audibly within her; the atoms of her frame seemed alive each one as she thought of her; often her tears flowed, often her eyes brightened with gladness when alone, and the beloved image of her beautiful daughter as she saw her last, smiling amidst penury and indignity, was her dearest companion by day and night. She alone made her present situation endurable, and yet separation from her was irksome beyond expression. Was she never to see or hear of her more? It was very hard: she implored Providence to change the harsh decree — she longed inexpressibly for one word that had reference to her — one event, however slight, which should make her existence palpable.

When Margaret announced Mrs. Fitzhenry, her heart bounded with joy. She could ask concerning Ethel — hear; her countenance was radiant with delight, and she really for a moment thought her sister-in-law's visit was meant in kindness, since so much pleasure was the result. This conviction had produced the very thing it anticipated. She had given poor Bessy no time to announce the actual intention with which she came; she had borne away her sullen mood by force of sweet smiles and sweeter words; and saw her depart with gladdened spirits, whispering to herself the fresh hopes and fond emotions which filled her bosom. She walked back to her little garden and stooped to gather some fresh violets, and to prop a drooping jonquil heavy with its burthen of sweet blooms. She inhaled the vernal odours with rapture. "Yes," she thought, "nature is the refuge and home for women: they have no public career — no aim nor end beyond their domestic circle; but they can extend that, and make all the creations of nature their own, to foster and do good to. We complain, when shut up in cities of the niggard rules of society, which gives us only the drawing-room or ball-room in which to display our talents, and which, for ever turning the sympathy of those around us into envy on the part of women, or what is called love on that of men, besets our path with dangers or sorrows. But throw aside all vanity, no longer seek to surpass your own sex, nor to inspire the other with feelings which are pregnant with disquiet or misery, and which seldom end in mutual benevolence, turn your steps to the habitation which God has given as befitting his creatures, contemplate the lovely ornaments with which he has blessed the earth; — here is no heart-burning nor calumny; it is better to love, to be of use to one of these flowers, than to be the admired of the many — the mere puppet of one's own vanity."

Lady entered the house; she asked concerning her poor hostess, and learnt that she slept. For a short time she employed herself with her embroidery; her thoughts were all awake; and as her fingers created likenesses of the flowers she loved, several times her eyes filled with tears as she thought of Ethel, and how happy she could be if her fate permitted her to cultivate her affection and enjoy her society.

"It is very sad," she thought; "only a few minutes ago my spirits were buoyant, gladdened as they were by Bessy's visit; but they flag again, when I think of my loneliness and the unreplying silence of this place. What is to become of me? I shall remain here: yes; I shall not banish myself to some inhospitable nook, where I should never hear her name. But am I not to see her again? Am I to be nothing to her? Is she satisfied with my absence — and are they all — to whom I am bound by ties of consanguinity or affection, indifferent to the knowledge of whether I exist or not? Nothing gives token to them of my life; it is as if the grave had closed abruptly over me — and had it closed, thus I should have been mourned, in coldness and neglect."

Again her eyes were suffused; but as she wiped away the blinding tears, she was recalled from her reflections by the bright rays of the sun which entered her little room. She threw open the door, stepped out into the garden — the sun was setting; the atmosphere was calm, and lighted up by golden beams; the few clouds were dyed in the same splendid hues, the birds sent forth a joyous song at intervals, and a band of rooks passed above the little wood, cawing loudly. The air was balmy, the indescribable freshness of spring was abroad, interpenetrating and cheerful. Cornelia's melancholy fled as she felt and gave way to its influence. "God blesses all things," she thought, "and he will also bless me. Much wrong have I done, but love pure and disinterested is in my heart, and I shall be repaid. My own sweet Ethel! I have sacrificed every thing except my life for your sake, and I would add my life to the gift, could it avail you. I ask but for you and your love. The world has many blessings, and I have asked for them before, with tears and anguish, but I give up all now, except you, my child. You are all the world to me! Will you not come, even now, as I implore Heaven to give you to me?"

She raised her eyes in prayer, and it seemed as if her wishes were to be accomplished — surely once in a life God will grant the earnest entreaty of a loving heart. Cornelia believed that he would, that happiness was near at hand, and life not all a blank. She heard a rustling among the trees, a light step; — was it Margaret? She had scarcely asked herself this question, when the dear object of her every thought and hope was before her — in her arms; — Ethel had entered from the wood, had seen her mother, had sprung forward and clasped her to her heart.

"My dear, dear child!"

"Dearest mother!" repeated Ethel, as her eyes were filled with tears of delight, "why did you go — why conceal yourself? You do not know the anxiety we have suffered, and how very unhappy your absence has made us. But I have found you — of all that have gone to seek you, I have found you; I deserve this reward, for I love you most of all."

Lady returned her daughter's caresses — and her tears flowed fast for very joy, and then she turned to Mrs. Fitzhenry, who followed Ethel, but who had been outspeeded by her in her eagerness. The old lady's face was beaming with happiness. "Ah, Bessy, you have betrayed me — traitress! I did not expect this — I do not deserve such excessive happiness."

"You deserve all, and much more than we can any of us bestow," cried Ethel, "except that your dear generous heart will repay you beyond any reward we can give, and you will be blest in the happiness we owe to you alone. Edward is gone far away into Wales in quest of you."

"An Angelica run after by the Paladins," said Lady , smiling through her tears.

"Paladins, worthy the name!" replied Ethel. "Horatio is even now on the salt seas for your sake — he is returning discomfited and hopeless from his journey of discovery to the Pyrenees — his zeal almost deserved the reward which I have found, yet who but she, for whom you sacrificed so much, ought to be the first to thank you? And while we all try to show you an inexpressible gratitude, ought not I to be the first to see, first to kiss, first — always the first — to love you?"

CONCLUSION.

None, I trust, Repines at these delights, they are free and harmless: After distress at sea, the dangers o'er, Safety and welcomes better taste ashore.
— Ford.

Thus the tale of "" is ended. The person who bore that title by right of descent, has long slept in peace in the church of his native village. Neither his own passions, nor those of others, can renew the pulsations of his heart. "The silver cord is loosed, and the pitcher broken at the fountain." His life had not been fruitless. The sedulous care and admirable education he had bestowed on Ethel, would, had he lived, have compensated to him for his many sufferings, and been a source of pure and unfading joy to the end. He was not destined in this world to reap the harvest of his virtues, though his errors had been punished severely. Still his memory is the presiding genius of his daughter's life, and the name of Lodore contains for her a spell that dignifies existence in her own eyes, and incites her to render all her thoughts and actions such as her beloved father would have approved. It was fated that the evil which he did should die with him — but the good out-lived him long, and was a blessing to those whom he loved far better than himself.

She who received the title on her marriage, henceforth continued her existence under another; and the wife of Saville, who soon after became Viscountess Maristow, loses her right to be chronicled in these pages. So few years indeed are passed since the period to which the last chapter brought us, that it may be safely announced that Cornelia Santerre possesses that happiness, through her generosity and devoted affection, which she had lost through pride and self-exaltation. She wonders at her past self — and laments the many opportunities she lost for benefiting others, and proving herself worthy of their attachment. Her pride is gone, or rather, her pride is now placed in redeeming her faults. She is humble, knowing how much she was deceived in herself — she is forgiving, for she feels that she needs forgiveness. She looks on the track of years she has passed over as wasted, and she wishes to retrieve their loss. She respects, admires, in some sense it may be said, that she adores her husband; but even while consenting to be his, and thus securing her own happiness, she told him that her first duties were towards Ethel — and that he took a divided heart, over the better part of which reigned maternal love. Saville, the least egoistic of human beings, smiled to hear her name that a defect, which was in his eyes her crowning virtue.

Edward Villiers learnt to prize worldly prosperity at its true value, and each day blesses the train of circumstances that led him to wed Ethel, even though poverty and suffering had followed close behind. Ethel herself might be said to have been always happy. She was incapable of being impressed by any sorrow, that did not touch her for another's sake: and while she exerted herself to alleviate the pain endured by those she loved, she passed on unhurt. Heaven spared her life's most cruel evils. Death had done its worst when she lost her father. Now, surrounded by dear friends, and the object of her husband's constant tenderness, she pursues a tranquil course: which for any one to consider the most blissful allotted to mortals, they must have a heart like her own — faithful, affectionate, and generous.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry, kind and gentle aunt Bessy, always felt her heaven clouded while she indulged in her aversion to her sister-in-law. She is happy now that she is reconciled to Cornelia; strange to say, she loves her even more than she loves Ethel — she is more intimately connected in her mind with the memory of . She often visits her at Maristow Castle; in the neighbourhood of which Margaret is settled, being happily married. Colonel Villiers still lives in Paris. He is in a miserable state of poverty, difficulty, and ill-health. His wife has deserted him: he neglected and outraged her, and she in a fit of remorse left him, and returned to nurse her father during a lingering illness, which is likely to continue to the end of his life, though he shows no symptoms of immediate decay. He is eager to lavish all his wealth on his child, if he can be sure that no portion of it is shared by her husband. With infinite difficulty, and at the cost of many privations, she, with a true woman's feeling, contrives to send him remittances now and then, though she receives in return neither thanks nor kindness. He pursues a course of dissipation in its most degraded form — a wretched hanger-on at resorts, misnamed of pleasure — gambling while he has any money to lose — trying to ruin others as he has been ruined.

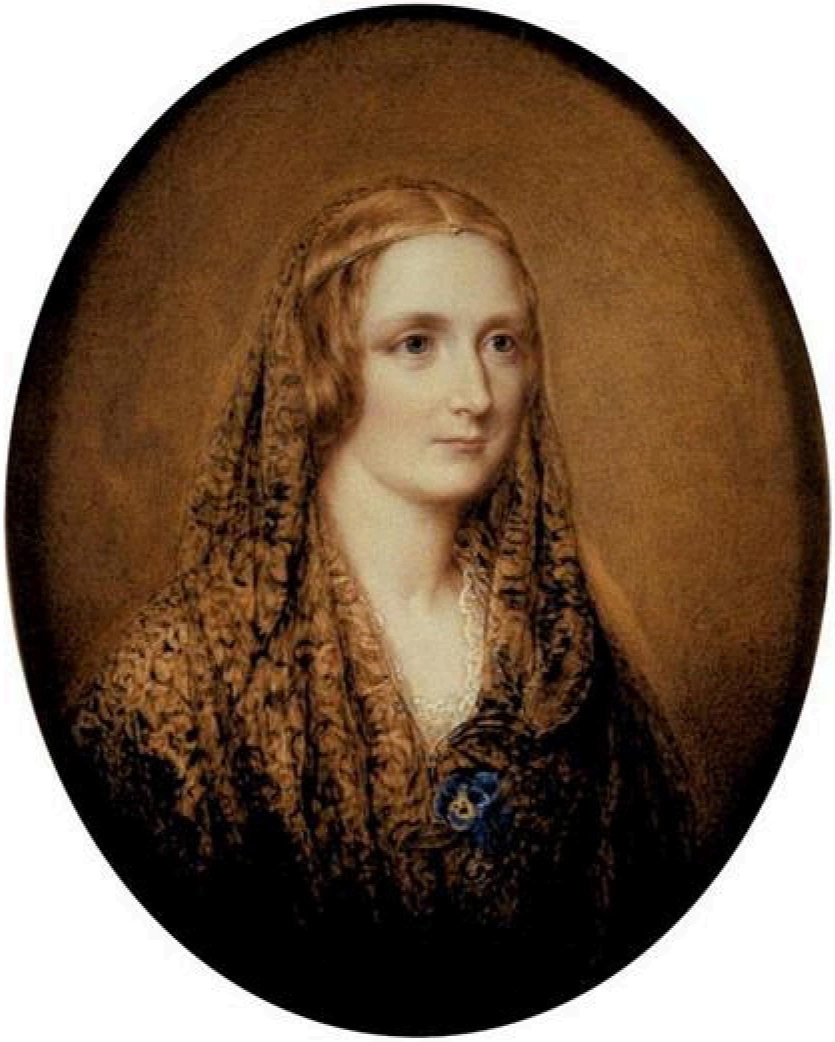
Thus we have done our duty, in bringing under view, in a brief summary, the little that there is to tell of the personages who formed the drama of this tale. One only remains to be mentioned: but it is not in a few tame lines that we can revert to the varied fate of Fanny Derham. She continued for some time among her beloved friends, innocent and calm as she was beautiful and wise; circumstances at last led her away from them, and she has entered upon life. One who feels so deeply for others, and yet is so stern a censor over herself — at once so sensitive and so rigidly conscientious — so single-minded and upright, and yet open as day to charity and affection, cannot hope to pass from youth to age unharmed. Deceit, and selfishness, and the whole web of human passion must envelope her, and occasion her many sorrows; and the unworthiness of her fellow-creatures inflict infinite pain on her noble heart: still she cannot be contaminated — she will turn neither to the right nor left, but pursue her way unflinching; and, in her lofty idea of the dignity of her nature, in her love of truth and in her integrity, she will find support and reward in her various fortunes. What the events are, that have already diversified her existence, cannot now be recounted; and it would require the gift of prophecy to foretell the conclusion. In after times these may be told, and the life of Fanny Derham be presented as a useful lesson, at once to teach what goodness and genius can achieve in palliating the woes of life, and to encourage those, who would in any way imitate her, by an example of calumny refuted by patience, errors rectified by charity, and the passions of our nature purified and ennobled by an underviating observance of those moral laws on which all human excellence is founded — a love of truth in ourselves, and a sincere sympathy with our fellow-creatures.

THE END

FALKNER

Falkner was the last novel that Shelley wrote and it was published in three volumes by Saunders and Otley in 1837. The book is often viewed as a conservative text, which elevates and separates the domestic sphere, suggesting a reactionary stance and therefore criticised for being a 'pot boiler' romance. Once again the father-daughter-lover dynamic is central to the text, although in this novel the girl is an orphan adopted by a rakish guardian called Falkner. The novel also once again explores the notion of the absent mother being replaced by an overbearing father figure, another recurring theme in Shelley's fiction. The theme of female education also has repeated prevalence in *Falkner* and the text investigates the best means to arrive at social justice and harmony.

Falkner is revealed to be a character with a mysterious and haunted past that begins to conflict with his daughter's future when Elizabeth comes into contact with Gerard Neville. Falkner's past behaviour towards Neville's mother creates a tense and bitter environment for Elizabeth to navigate, while Shelley delves into the psychological struggle tormenting Falkner and the impact of his behaviour and past on those close to him. Elizabeth is forced to confront and attempt to quell the destructive natures of her father and lover, without becoming submerged under the weight of their damaged lives.



Reginald Easton's miniature of Mary Shelley is allegedly drawn from her death mask, c. 1857

CONTENTS

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX. FALKNER’S NARRATIVE.
CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
CHAPTER IV.
CHAPTER V.
CHAPTER VI.
CHAPTER VII.
CHAPTER VIII.
CHAPTER IX.
CHAPTER X.
CHAPTER XI.
CHAPTER XII.
CHAPTER XIII.
CHAPTER XIV.
CHAPTER XV.
CHAPTER XVI.
CHAPTER XVII.
CHAPTER XVIII.
CHAPTER XIX.
CHAPTER XX.

VOLUME I.

“there stood
In record of a sweet sad story,
An altar, and a temple bright,
Circled by steps, and o’er the gate
Was sculptured, ‘To Fidelity!’”

— Shelley.

CHAPTER I.

The opening scene of this tale took place in a little village on the southern coast of Cornwall. Treby (by that name we choose to designate a spot, whose true one, for several reasons, will not be given,) was, indeed, rather a hamlet than a village, although, being at the sea-side, there were two or three houses which, by dint of green paint and chintz curtains, pretended to give the accommodation of “Apartments Furnished” to the few bathers who, having heard of its cheapness, seclusion, and beauty, now and then resorted thither from the neighbouring towns.

This part of Cornwall shares much of the peculiar and exquisite beauty which every Englishman knows adorns “the sweet shire of Devon.” The hedges near Treby, like those round Dawlish and Torquay, are redolent with a thousand flowers: the neighbouring fields are prankt with all the colours of Flora, — its soft air, — the picturesque bay in which it stood, as it were, enshrined, — its red cliffs, and verdure reaching to the very verge of the tide, — all breathe the same festive and genial atmosphere. The cottages give the same promise of comfort, and are adorned by nature with more luxurious loveliness than the villas of the rich in a less happy climate.

Treby was almost unknown; yet, whoever visited it might well prefer its sequestered beauties to many more renowned competitors. Situated in the depths of a little bay, it was sheltered on all sides by the cliffs. Just behind the hamlet the cliff made a break, forming a little ravine, in the depth of which ran a clear stream, on whose banks were spread the orchards of the villagers, whence they derived their chief wealth. Tangled bushes and luxuriant herbage diversified the cliffs, some of which were crowned by woods; and in “every nook and coign of ‘vantage” were to be seen and scented the glory of that coast — its exhaustless store of flowers. The village was, as has been said, in the depth of a bay; towards the east the coast rounded off with a broad sweep, forming a varied line of bay and headland: to the west a little promontory shot out abruptly, and at once closed in the view. This point of land was the peculiarity of Treby. The cliff that gave it its picturesque appearance was not high, but was remarkable for being crowned by the village church, with its slender spire.

Long may it be before the village church-yard ceases to be in England a favoured spot — the home of rural and holy seclusion. At Treby it derived a new beauty, from its distance from the village, and the eminence on which it was placed, overlooking the wide ocean, the sands, the village itself, with its gardens, orchards, and gaily painted fields. From the church a straggling, steep, yet not impracticable path, led down to the sands; by way of the beach; indeed, the distance from the village to the church was scarcely more than half a mile; but no vehicle could approach, except by the higher road, which, following the line of coast, measured nearly two miles. The edifice itself, picturesque in its rustic simplicity, seemed at the distance to be embosomed in a neighbouring grove. There was no house, nor even cottage, near. The contiguous church-yard contained about two acres; a light, white paling surrounded it on three sides; on the fourth was a high wall, clothed thickly with ivy: the trees of the near wood overhung both wall and paling, except on the side of the cliff: the waving of their branches, the murmur of the tide, and the occasional scream of sea-fowl, were all the sounds that disturbed, or rather harmonized with, the repose and solitude of the spot.

On Sunday, the inhabitants of several hamlets congregated here to attend divine service. Those of Treby usually approached by the beach, and the path of the cliff, the old and infirm only taking the longer, but more easy road. On every other day of the week, all was quiet, except when the hallowed precincts were visited by happy parents with a new-born babe, by bride and bridegroom hastening all gladly to enter on the joys and cares of life — or by the train of mourners who attended relation or friend to the last repose of the dead.

The poor are not sentimental — and, except on Sunday, after evening service, when a mother might linger for a few moments near the fresh grave of a lately lost child — or, loitering among the rustic tombs, some of the elder peasants told tales of the feats of the dead companions of their youth, a race unequalled, so they said, by the generation around them. Save on that day, none ever visited or wandered among the graves, with the one exception of a child, who had early learned to mourn, yet whose infantine mind could scarcely understand the extent of the cause she had for tears. A little girl, unnoticed and alone, was wont, each evening, to trip over the sands — to scale, with light steps, the cliff, which was of no gigantic height, and then, unlatching the low, white gate, of the church-yard, to repair to one corner, where the boughs of the near trees shadowed over two graves — two graves, of which one only was distinguished by a simple head-stone, to commemorate the name of him who mouldered beneath. This tomb was inscribed to the memory of Edwin Raby, but the neighbouring and less honoured grave claimed more of the child's attention — for her mother lay beneath the unrecorded turf.

Beside this grassy hillock she would sit and talk to herself, and play, till, warned home by the twilight, she knelt and said her little prayer, and, with a "Good night, mamma," took leave of a spot with which was associated the being whose caresses and love she called to mind, hoping that one day she might again enjoy them. Her appearance had much in it to invite remark, had there been any who cared to notice a poor little orphan. Her dress, in some of its parts, betokened that she belonged to the better classes of society; but she had no stockings, and her little feet peeped from the holes of her well-worn shoes. Her straw bonnet was dyed dark with sun and sea spray, and its blue ribbon faded. The child herself would, in any other spot, have attracted more attention than the incongruities of her attire. There is an expression of face which we name angelic, from its purity, its tenderness, and, so to speak, plaintive serenity, which we oftener see in young children than in persons of a more advanced age. And such was hers: her hair, of a light golden brown, was parted over a brow, fair and open as day: her eyes, deep set and earnest, were full of thought and tenderness: her complexion was pure and stainless, except by the roses that glowed in her cheek, while each vein could be traced on her temples, and you could almost mark the flow of the violet-coloured blood beneath: her mouth was the very nest of love: her serious look was at once fond and imploring; but when she smiled, it was as if sunshine broke out at once, warm and unclouded: her figure had the plumpness of infancy; but her tiny hands and feet, and tapering waist, denoted the faultless perfection of her form. She was about six years old — a friendless orphan, cast, thus young, pennyless on a thorny, stony-hearted world.

Nearly two years previous, a gentleman, with his wife and little daughter, arrived at Treby, and took up his abode at one of the moderate priced lodging-houses before mentioned. The occasion of their visit was but too evident. The husband, Mr. Raby, was dying of a consumption. The family had migrated early in September, so to receive the full benefit of a mild winter in this favoured spot. It did not appear to those about him that he could live to see that winter. He was wasted to a shadow — the hectic in his cheek, the brightness of his eyes and the debility apparent in every movement, showed that disease was triumphing over the principles of life. Yet, contrary to every prognostic, he lived on from week to week, from month to month. Now he was said to be better — now worse — and thus a winter of extraordinary mildness was passed. But with the east winds of spring a great deterioration was visible. His invalid walks in the sun grew shorter, and then were exchanged for a few minutes passed sitting in his garden. Soon he was confined to his room — then to his bed. During the first week of a bleak, ungenial May, he died.

The extreme affection that subsisted between the pair rendered his widow an object of interest even to the villagers. They were both young, and she was beautiful; and more beautiful was their offspring — the little girl we have mentioned — who, watched over and attended on by her mother, attracted admiration as well as interest, by the peculiar style of her childish, yet perfect loveliness. Every one wondered what the bereaved lady would do; and she, poor soul, wondered herself, and would sit watching the gambols of her child in an attitude of unutterable despondency, till the little girl, remarking the sadness of her mother, gave over playing to caress, and kiss her, and to bid her smile. At such a word the tears fell fast from the widow's eyes, and the frightened child joined her sobs and cries to hers.

Whatever might be the sorrows and difficulties of the unhappy lady, it was soon evident to all but herself, that her own life was a fragile tenure. She had attended on her husband with unwearied assiduity, and, added to bodily fatigue, was mental suffering; partly arising from anxiety and grief, and partly from the very virtues of the sufferer. He knew that he was dying, and tried to reconcile his wife to her anticipated loss. But his words, breathing the most passionate love and purest piety, seemed almost to call her also from the desolation to which he was leaving her, and to dissolve the ties that held her to earth. When he was gone, life possessed no one attraction except their child. Often while her father, with pathetic eloquence, tried to pour the balm of resignation, and hopes of eternal reunion, into his wife's heart, she had sat on her mother's knee, or on a little stool at her feet, and looked up, with her cherub face, a little perplexed, a little fearful, till, at some words of too plain and too dread an import, she sprung into her father’s arms, and clinging to his neck, amidst tears and sobs, cried out, “You must not leave us, papa! you must stay — you shall not go away!”

Consumption, in all countries except our own, is considered a contagious disorder, and it too often proves such here. During her close attendance, Mrs. Raby had imbibed the seeds of the fatal malady, and grief, and a delicate texture of nerves, caused them to d’evelop with alarming rapidity. Every one perceived this except herself. She thought that her indisposition sprung from over-fatigue and grief, but that repose would soon restore her; and each day, as her flesh wasted and her blood flowed more rapidly, she said, “I shall be better to-morrow.” There was no one at Treby to advise or assist her. She was not one of those who make friends and intimates of all who fall in their way. She was gentle, considerate, courteous — but her refined mind shrunk from displaying its deep wounds to the vulgar and unfeeling.

After her husband’s death she had written several letters, which she carefully put into the post-office herself — going on purpose to the nearest post town, three miles distant. She had received one in answer, and it had the effect of increasing every fatal symptom, through the anguish and excessive agitation it excited. Sometimes she talked of leaving Treby, but she delayed till she should be better; which time, the villagers plainly saw, would never come, but they were not aware how awfully near the crisis really was.

One morning — her husband had now been dead about four months — she called up the woman of the house in which she lodged; there was a smile on her face, and a pink spot burnt brightly in either cheek, while her brow was ashy pale; there was something ghastly in the very gladness her countenance expressed; yet she felt nothing of all this, but said, “The newspaper you lent me had good news in it, Mrs. Baker. It tells me that a dear friend of mine is arrived in England, whom I thought still on the Continent. I am going to write to her. Will you let your daughter take my little girl a walk while I write?”

Mrs. Baker consented. The child was equipped and sent out, while her mother sat down to write. In about an hour she came out of her parlour; Mrs. Baker saw her going towards the garden; she tottered as she walked, so the woman hastened to her. “Thank you,” she said; “I feel strangely faint

— I had much to say, and that letter had unhinged me — I must finish it to-morrow — now the air will restore me — I can scarcely breathe."

Mrs. Baker offered her arm. The sufferer walked faintly and feebly to a little bench, and, sitting down, supported herself by her companion. Her breath grew shorter; she murmured some words; Mrs. Baker bent down, but could catch only the name of her child, which was the last sound that hovered on the mother's lips. With one sigh her heart ceased to beat, and life quitted her exhausted frame. The poor woman screamed loudly for help, as she felt her press heavily against her; and then, sliding from her seat, sink lifeless on the ground.

CHAPTER II.

It was to Mrs. Baker's credit that she did not attempt to investigate the affairs of her hapless lodger till after the funeral. A purse, containing twelve guineas, which she found on her table, served, indeed, to satisfy her that she would be no immediate loser. However, as soon as the sod covered the gentle form of the unfortunate lady, she proceeded to examine her papers. The first that presented itself was the unfinished letter which Mrs. Raby was engaged in writing at the time of her death. This promised information, and Mrs. Baker read it with eagerness. It was as follows: —

"My dearest Friend,

"A newspaper has just informed me that you are returned to England, while I still believed you to be, I know not where, on the Continent. Dearest girl, it is long since I have written, for I have been too sad, too uncertain about your movements, and too unwilling to cloud your happiness, by forcing you to remember one so miserable. My beloved friend, my schoolfellow, my benefactress; you will grieve to hear of my misfortunes, and it is selfish in me, even now, to intrude upon you with the tale; but, under heaven, I have no hope, except in my generous, my warm-hearted Alithea. Perhaps you have already heard of my disaster, and are aware that death has robbed me of the happiness which, under your kind fosterage, I had acquired and enjoyed. He is dead who was my all in this world, and but for one tie I should bless the day when I might be permitted to rest for ever beside him.

"I often wonder, dear Alithea, at the heedlessness and want of foresight with which I entered life. Doomed, through poverty and my orphan state, to earn my bread as a governess, my entrance on that irksome task was only delayed by my visit to you: then under your dear roof I saw and was beloved by Edwin; and his entreaties, and your encouragement, permitted my trembling heart to dream of — to possess happiness. Timidity of character made me shrink from my career: diffidence never allowed me to suppose that any one would interest themselves enough in me to raise the poor trembler from the ground, to shelter and protect her; and this kind of despondency rendered Edwin's love a new, glorious, and divine joy. Yet, when I thought of his parents, I trembled — I could not bear to enter a family where I was to be regarded as an unwelcome intruder; yet Edwin was already an outcast — already father and brothers, every relation, had disowned him — and he, like I, was alone. And you, Alithea, how fondly, how sweetly did you encourage me — making that appear my duty which was the fulfilment of my wildest dreams of joy. Surely no being ever felt friendship as you have done — sympathizing even in the untold secrets of a timid heart — enjoying the happiness that you conferred with an ardour few can feel, even for themselves. Your transports of delight when you saw me, through your means, blest, touched me with a gratitude that can never die. And do I show this by asking now for your pity, and saddening you by my grief? Pardon me, sweet friend, and do not wonder that this thought has long delayed my letter.

"We were happy — poor, but content. Poverty was no evil to me, and Edwin supported every privation as if he had never been accustomed to luxury. The spirit that had caused him to shake off the shackles his bigoted family threw over him, animated him to exertions beyond his strength. He had chosen for himself — he wished to prove that his choice was good. I do not allude to our marriage, but to his desertion of the family religion, and determination to follow a career not permitted by the policy of his relations to any younger son. He was called to the bar — he toiled incessantly — he was ambitious, and his talents gave every promise of success. He is gone — gone for ever! I have lost the noblest, wisest friend that ever breathed, the most devoted lover, and truest husband that ever blessed woman!

"I write incoherently. You know what our life in London was — obscure but happy — the scanty pittance allowed him seemed to me amply to suffice for all our wants; I only then knew of the wants of youth and health, which were love and sympathy. I had all this, crowning to the brim my cup of life — the birth of our sweet child filled it to overflowing. Our dingy lodgings, near the courts of law, were a palace to me; I should have despised myself heartily could I have desired any thing beyond what I possessed. I never did — nor did I fear its loss. I was grateful to Heaven, and thus, I fancied, that I paid the debt of my unmeasured prosperity.

"Can I say what I felt when I marked Edwin's restless nights, flushed cheek, and the cough that would not go away? these things I dare not dwell upon — my tears overflow — my heart beats to bursting — the fatal truth was at last declared; the fatal word, consumption, spoken: change of air was all the hope held out — we came here; the church-yard near holds now all earthly that remains of him — would that my dust were mingling with his!

"Yet I have a child, my Alithea; and you, who are incomparable as a mother, will feel that I ought not to grieve so bitterly while this dear angel remains to me. I know, indeed, that without her, life would at once suspend all its functions; why, then, is it, that while she is with me I am not stronger, more heroic? for, to keep her with me, I must leave the indolence of my present life — I must earn the bread of both. I should not repine at this — I shall not, when I am better; but I am very ill and weak; and though each day I rise, resolving to exert myself, before the morning has past away I lie down exhausted, trembling, and faint.

"When I lost Edwin, I wrote to Mr. Raby, acquainting him with the sad intelligence, and asking for a maintenance for myself and my child. The family solicitor answered my letter. Edwin's conduct had, I was told, estranged his family from him; and they could only regard me as one encouraging his disobedience and apostacy. I had no claim on them. If my child were sent to them, and I would promise to abstain from all intercourse with her, she should be brought up with her cousins, and treated in all respects like one of the family. I answered this letter hastily and proudly. I declined their barbarous offer, and haughtily, and in few words, relinquished every claim on their bounty, declaring my intention to support and bring up my child myself. This was foolishly done, I fear; but I cannot regret it even now.

"I cannot regret the impulse that made me disdain these unnatural and cruel relatives, or that led me to take my poor orphan to my heart with pride, as being all my own. What had they done to merit such a treasure? How did they show themselves capable of replacing a fond and anxious mother? How many blooming girls have they sacrificed to their peculiar views! With what careless eyes they regard the sweetest emotions of nature! — never shall my adored girl be made the victim of that loveless race. Do you remember our sweet child? She was lovely from her birth; and surely, if ever angel assumed an earthly vesture, it took a form like my darling: her loveliness expresses only the beauty of her disposition; so young, yet so full of sensibility; her temper is without a flaw, and her intelligence transcends her age. You will not laugh at me for my maternal enthusiasm, nor will you wonder at it; her endearing caresses, her cherub smiles, the silver accents of her infantine voice, fill me with trembling rapture. Is she not too good for this bad world? I fear it, I fear to lose her; I fear to die and to leave her; yet if I should, will you not cherish, will you not be a mother to her? I may be presumptuous; but if I were to die, even now, I should die in the belief that I left my child another mother in you—".

The letter broke off here, and these were the last words of the unfortunate writer. It contained a sad, but too common story of the hardheartedness of the wealthy, and the misery endured by the children of the high-born. Blood is not water, it is said, but gold with them is dearer far than the ties of nature; to keep and augment their possessions being the aim and end of their lives, the existence, and, more especially, the happiness of their children, appears to them a consideration at once trivial and impertinent, when it would compete with family views and family greatness. To this common and iniquitous feeling these luckless beings were sacrificed; they had endured the worst, and could be injured no more; but their orphan child was a living victim, less thought of than the progeny of the meanest animal which might serve to augment their possessions.

Mrs. Baker felt some complacency on reading this letter; with the common English respect for wealth and rank, she was glad to find that her humble roof had sheltered a man who was the son — she did not exactly know of whom, but of somebody, who had younger sons and elder sons, and possessed, through wealth, the power of behaving frightfully ill to a vast number of persons. There was a grandeur and dignity in the very idea; but the good woman felt less satisfaction as she proceeded in her operations — no other letter or paper appeared to inform or to direct. Every letter had been destroyed, and the young pair had brought no papers or documents with them. She could not guess to whom the unfinished letter she held was addressed, all was darkness and ignorance. She was aghast — there was none to whom to apply — none to whom to send the orphan. In a more busy part of the world, an advertisement in the newspapers would have presented itself as a resource; but Treby was too much cut off from the rest of the world, for its inhabitants to conceive so daring an idea; and Mrs. Baker, repining much at the burthen fallen upon her, and fearful of the future, could imagine no means by which to discover the relations of the little orphan; and her only notion was to wait, in hopes that some among them would at last make inquiries concerning her.

Nearly a year had passed away, and no one had appeared. The unfortunate lady's purse was soon emptied — and her watch, with one or two trinkets of slight value, disposed of. The child was of small cost, but still her sordid protectress harped perpetually on her ill luck: — she had a family of her own, and plenty of mouths to feed. Missy was but little, but she would get bigger — though for that matter it was worse now, as she wanted more taking care of — besides, she was getting quite a disgrace — her bonnet was so shabby, and her shoes worn out — and how could she afford to buy others for one who was not a bit of her flesh and blood, to the evident hurt of her own children? It was bad enough now, but, by and by, she saw nothing but the parish; though Missy was born for better than that, and her poor mamma would turn in her grave at the name of such a thing. For her part she was to blame, she feared, and too generous — but she would wait yet a little longer before it came to that — for who could tell — and here Mrs. Baker's prudence dammed up the stream of her eloquence — to no living ear did she dare trust her dream of the coach and six that might one day come for her little charge — and the remuneration and presents that would be heaped upon her; — she actually saved the child's best frock, though she had quite outgrown it, that on such a day her appearance might do her honour. But this was a secret — she hid these vague but splendid images deep in her heart, lest some neighbour might be seized with a noble emulation — and through some artifice share in her dreamy gains. It was these anticipations that prevented Mrs. Baker from taking any decisive step injurious to her charge — but they did not shed any rosy hues over her diurnal complaints — they grew more peevish and frequent, as time passed away, and her visions attained no realization.

The little orphan grew meanwhile as a garden rose, that accident has thrown amidst briers and weeds — blooming with alien beauty, and unfolding its soft petals — and shedding its ambrosial odour beneath the airs of heaven, unharmed by its strange position. Lovely as a day of paradise, which by some strange chance visits this nether world to gladden every heart, she charmed even her selfish protectress, and, despite her shabby attire, her cherub smiles — the free and noble steps which her tiny feet could take even now, and the music of her voice, rendered her the object of respect and admiration, as well as love, to the whole village.

The loss of her father had acquainted the poor child with death. Her mother had explained the awful mystery as well as she could to her infantine intellects, and, indulging in her own womanish and tender fancies, had often spoken of the dead as hovering over and watching around his loved ones, even in the new state of existence to which he had been called. Yet she wept as she spoke: "He is happy," she exclaimed, "but he is not here! Why did he leave us? Ah, why desert those who loved him so well, who need him so dearly. How forlorn and cast away are we without him!"

These scenes made a deep impression upon the sensitive child — and when her mother died too, and was carried away and placed in the cold earth, beside her husband, the orphan would sit for hours by the graves, now fancying that her mother must soon return, now exclaiming, "Why are you gone away? Come, dear mamma, come back — come quickly!" Young as she was, it was no wonder that such thoughts were familiar to her. The minds of children are often as intelligent as those of persons of maturer age — and differ only by containing fewer ideas — but these had so often been presented to her — and she so fixed her little heart on the idea that her mother was watching over her, that at last it became a part of her religion to visit, every evening, the two graves, and saying her prayers near them, to believe that her mother's spirit, which was obscurely associated with her mortal remains reposing below, listened to and blest her on that spot.

At other times, neglected as she was, and left to wander at will, she conned her lesson, as she had been accustomed at her mother's feet, beside her grave. She took her picture-books there — and even her playthings. The villagers were affected by her childish notion of being "with mamma;" and Missy became something of an angel in their eyes, so that no one interfered with her visits, or tried to explain away her fancies. She was the nursling of love and nature: but the human hearts which could have felt the greatest tenderness for her, beat no longer, and had become clods of the soil, —

Borne round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

There was no knee on which she could playfully climb — no neck round which she could fondly hang — no parent's cheek on which to print her happy kisses — these two graves were all of relationship she knew upon the earth — and she would kiss the ground and the flowers, not one of which she plucked — as she sat embracing the sod. “Mamma” was everywhere around. “Mamma” was there beneath, and still she could love and feel herself beloved.

At other times she played gaily with her young companions in the village — and sometimes she fancied that she loved some one among them — she made them presents of books and toys, the relics of happier days; for the desire to benefit, which springs up so naturally in a loving heart, was strong within her, even in that early age. But she never took any one with her in her church-yard visits — she needed none while she was with mamma. Once indeed a favourite kitten was carried to the sacred spot, and the little animal played amidst the grass and flowers, and the child joined in its frolics — her solitary gay laugh might be heard among the tombs — she did not think it solitary; mamma was there to smile on her, as she sported with her tiny favourite.

CHAPTER III.

Towards the end of a hot, calm day of June, a stranger arrived at Treby. The variations of calm and wind are always remarkable at the sea-side, and are more particularly to be noticed on this occasion; since it was the stillness of the elements that caused the arrival of the stranger. During the whole day several vessels had been observed in the offing, lying to for a wind, or making small way under press of sail. As evening came on, the water beyond the bay lay calmer than ever; but a slight breeze blew from shore, and these vessels, principally colliers, bore down close under it, endeavouring by short tacks to procure a long one, and at last to gain sea-room to make the eastern headland of the bay. The fishermen on shore watched the manoeuvres of the different craft; and even interchanged shouts with the sailors, as they lay lazily on the beach. At length they were put in motion by a hail for a boat from a small merchantman — the call was obeyed — the boat neared the vessel — a gentleman descended into it — his portmanteau was handed after him — a few strokes of the oar drove the boat on the beach, and the stranger leapt out upon the sands.

The new comer gave a brief order, directing his slight luggage to be carried to the best inn, and, paying the boatmen liberally, strolled away to a more solitary part of the beach. “A gentleman,” all the spectators decided him to be — and such a designation served for a full description of the new arrival to the villagers of Treby. But it were better to say a few words to draw him from among a vast multitude who might be similarly named, and to bestow individuality on the person in question. It would be best so to present his appearance and manner to the “mind’s eye” of the reader, that if any met him by chance, he might exclaim, “That is the man!” Yet there is no task more difficult, than to convey to another, by mere words, an image, however distinctly it is impressed on our own minds. The individual expression, and peculiar traits, which cause a man to be recognized among ten thousand of his fellow men, by one who has known him, though so palpable to the eye, escape when we would find words whereby to delineate them.

There was something in the stranger that at once arrested attention — a freedom, and a command of manner — self-possession joined to energy. It might be difficult to guess his age, for his face had been exposed to the bronzing influence of a tropical climate, and the smoothness of youth was exchanged for the deeper lines of maturity, without anything being as yet taken from the vigour of the limbs, or the perfection of those portions of the frame and face, which so soon show marks of decay. He might have reached the verge of thirty, but he could not be older — and might be younger. His figure was active, sinewy and strong — upright as a soldier (indeed a military air was diffused all over his person); he was tall, and, to a certain degree, handsome; his dark grey eyes were piercing as an eagle's, and his forehead high and expansive, though somewhat distorted by various lines that spoke more of passion than thought; yet his face was eminently intelligent; his mouth, rather too large in its proportions, yet grew into beauty when he smiled — indeed, the remarkable trait of his physiognomy was its great variation — restless, and even fierce, the expression was often that of passionate and unquiet thoughts; while at other times it was almost bland from the apparent smoothness and graceful undulation of the lines. It was singular, that when communing only with himself, storms appeared to shake his muscles, and disfigure the harmony of his countenance — and that when he addressed others, all was composed — full of meaning, and yet of repose. His complexion, naturally of an olive tint, had grown red and adust under the influence of climate — and often flushed from the inroads of vehement feeling. You could not doubt at the instant of seeing him, that many singular, perhaps tragical, incidents were attached to his history — but, conviction was enforced that he reversed the line of Shakspeare, and was less sinned against, than sinning — or, at least, that he had been the active machinator of his fate, not the passive recipient of disappointment and sorrow. When he believed himself to be unobserved, his face worked with a thousand contending emotions, fiery glances shot from his eyes — he appeared to wince from sudden anguish — to be transported by a rage that changed his beauty into utter deformity: was he spoken to, all these tokens vanished on the instant — dignified — calm, and even courteous, though cold, he would persuade those whom he addressed that he was one of themselves — and not a being transported by his own passions and actions into a sphere which every other human being would have trembled to approach. A superficial observer had pronounced him a good fellow, though a little too stately — a wise man had been pleased by the intelligence and information he displayed — the variety of his powers, and the ease with which he brought forward the stores of his intellect to enlighten any topic of discourse. An independent and a gallant spirit he surely had — what, then, had touched it with destruction — shaken it to ruin, and made him, while yet so young, abhorrent even to himself?

Such is an outline of the stranger of Treby; and his actions were in conformity with the incongruities of his appearance — outwardly unemployed and tranquil; inwardly torn by throes of the most tempestuous and agonizing feelings. After landing he had strolled away, and was soon out of sight; nor did he return till night, when he looked fatigued and depressed. For form's sake, — or for the sake of the bill at the inn, — he allowed food to be placed before him; but he neither ate nor drank — soon he hurried to the solitude of his chamber — not to bed — he paced the room for some hours; but as soon as all was still — when his watch and the quiet stars told him that it was midnight, he left the house — he wandered down to the beach — he threw himself upon the sands — and then again he started up and strode along the verge of the tide — and then sitting down, covering his face with his hands, remained motionless: early dawn found him thus — but, on the first appearance of a fisherman, he left the neighbourhood of the village, nor returned till the afternoon — and now when food was placed before him, he ate like one half famished; but after the keen sensation of extreme hunger was satisfied, he left the table and retired to his own room.

Taking a case of pistols from his portmanteau, he examined the weapons with care, and, putting them in his pocket, walked out upon the sands. The sun was fast descending in the sky, and he looked, with varying glances, at it, and at the blue sea, which slumbered peacefully, giving forth scarcely any sound, as it receded from the shore. Now he seemed wistful — now impatient — now struck by bitterer pangs, that caused drops of agony to gather on his brow. He spoke no word; but these were the thoughts that hovered, though unexpressed, upon his lips: “Another day! Another sun! Oh, never, never more for me shall day or sun exist. Coward! Why fear to die! And do I fear? No! no! I fear nothing but this pain — this unutterable anguish — this image of fell despair! If I could feel secure that memory would cease when my brain lies scattered on the earth, I should again feel joy before I die. Yet that is false. While I live, and memory lives, and the knowledge of my crime still creeps through every particle of my frame, I have a hell around me, even to the last pulsation! For ever and for ever I see her, lost and dead at my feet — I the cause — the murderer! My death shall atone. And yet even in death the curse is on me — I cannot give back the breath of life to her sweet pale lips! O fool! O villain! Haste to the last act; linger no more, lest you grow mad, and fetters and stripes become your fitter punishment than the death you covet!"

"Yet," — after a pause, his thoughts thus continued:—"not here, nor now: there must be darkness on the earth before the deed is done! Hasten and hide thyself, O sun! Thou wilt never be cursed by the sight of my living form again!"

Thus did the transport of passion embrace the universe in its grasp; and the very sunlight seemed to have a pulse responsive to his own. The bright orb sunk lower; and the little western promontory, with its crowning spire, was thrown into bold relief against the glowing sky. As if some new idea were awakened, the stranger proceeded along the sands, towards the extremity of the headland. A short time before, unobserved by him, the little orphan had tripped along, and, scaling the cliff, had seated herself, as usual, beside her mother's grave.

The stranger proceeded slowly, and with irregular steps. He was waiting till darkness should blind the eyes of day, which now appeared to gaze on him with intolerable scrutiny, and to read his very soul, that sickened and writhed with its burthen of sin and sorrow. When out of the immediate neighbourhood of the village, he threw himself upon a fragment of rock, and — he could not be said to meditate — for that supposes some sort of voluntary action of the mind — while to him might be applied the figure of the poet, who represented himself as hunted by his own thoughts — pursued by memory, and torn to pieces, as Actæon by his own hounds. A troop of horrid recollections assailed his soul: there was no shelter, no escape! various passions, by turns, fastened themselves upon him — jealousy, disappointed love, rage, fear, and last and worst, remorse and despair. No bodily torture, invented by revengeful tyrant, could produce agony equal to that which he had worked out for his own mind. His better nature, and the powers of his intellect, served but to sharpen and strike deeper the pangs of unavailing regret. Fool! He had foreseen nothing of all this! He had fancied that he could bend the course of fate to his own will; and that to desire with energy was to insure success. And to what had the immutable resolve to accomplish his ends brought him? She was dead — the loveliest and best of created beings: torn from the affections and the pleasures of life! from her home, her child! He had seen her stretched dead at his feet: he had heaped the earth upon her clay-cold form; — and he the cause! he the murderer!

Stung to intolerable anguish by these ideas, he felt hastily for his pistols, and rising, pursued his way. Evening was closing in; yet he could distinguish the winding path of the cliff: he ascended, opened the little gate, and entered the church-yard. Oh! how he envied the dead! — the guiltless dead, who had closed their eyes on this mortal scene, surrounded by weeping friends, cheered by religious hope. All that imaged innocence and repose, appeared in his eyes so beautiful and desirable: and how could he, the criminal, hope to rest like one of these? A star or two came out in the heavens above, and the church spire seemed almost to reach them, as it pointed upwards. The dim, silent sea was spread beneath: the dead slept around: scarcely did the tall grass bend its head to the summer air. Soft, balmy peace possessed the scene. With what thrilling sensations of self-enjoyment and gratitude to the Creator, might the mind at ease drink in the tranquil loveliness of such an hour. The stranger felt every nerve wakened to fresh anguish. His brow contracted convulsively. “Shall I ever die!” he cried; “Will not the dead reject me!”

He looked round with the natural instinct that leads a human being, at the moment of dissolution, to withdraw into a cave or corner, where least to offend the eyes of the living by the loathsome form of death. The ivyed wall and paling, overhung by trees, formed a nook, whose shadow at that hour was becoming deep. He approached the spot; for a moment he stood looking afar: he knew not at what; and drew forth his pistol, cocked it, and, throwing himself on the grassy mound, raised the mouth of the fatal instrument to his forehead. “Oh go away! go away from mamma!” were words that might have met his ear, but that every sense was absorbed. As he drew the trigger, his arm was pulled; the ball whizzed harmlessly by his ear: but the shock of the sound, the unconsciousness that he had been touched at that moment — the belief that the mortal wound was given, made him fall back; and, as he himself said afterwards, he fancied that he had uttered the scream he heard, which had, indeed, proceeded from other lips.

In a few seconds he recovered himself. Yet so had he worked up his mind to die; so impossible did it appear that his aim should fail him, that in those few seconds, the earth and all belonging to it had passed away — and his first exclamation, as he started up, was, “Where am I!” Something caught his gaze; a little white figure, which lay but a few paces distant, and two eyes that gleamed on him — the horrible thought darted into his head — had another instead of himself been the victim? and he exclaimed in agony, “Gracious God! who are you? — speak! What have I done!” Still more was he horror-struck when he saw that it was a little child who lay before him — he raised her — but her eyes had glared with terror, not death; she did not speak; but she was not wounded, and he endeavoured to comfort and reassure her, till she, a little restored, began to cry bitterly, and he felt, thankfully, that her tears were a pledge that the worst consequences of her fright had passed away. He lifted her from the ground, while she, in the midst of her tears, tried to get him away from the grave he desecrated. The twilight scarcely showed her features; but her surpassing fairness — her lovely countenance and silken hair, so betokened a child of love and care, that he was the more surprised to find her alone, at that hour, in the solitary church-yard.

He soothed her gently, and asked, “How came you here? what could you be doing so late, so far from home?”

“I came to see mamma.”

“To see mamma! Where? how? Your mother is not here.”

“Yes, she is; mamma is there;” and she pointed with her little finger to the grave.

The stranger started up — there was something awful in this childish simplicity and affection: he tried to read the inscription on the stone near — he could just make out the name of Edwin Raby. “That is not your mother’s grave,” he said.

“No; papa is there — mamma is here, next to him.”

The man, just bent on self-destruction, with a conscience burning him to the heart’s core — all concentrated in the omnipotence of his own sensations — shuddered at the tale of dereliction and misery these words conveyed; he looked earnestly on the child, and was fascinated by her angel look; she spoke with a pretty seriousness, shaking her head, her lips trembling — her large eyes shining in brimming tears. “My poor child,” he said, “your name is Raby, then?”

“Mamma used to call me Baby,” she replied; “they call me Missy at home — my name is Elizabeth.”

“Well, dear Elizabeth, let me take you home; you cannot stay all night with mamma.”

“O no; I was just going home, when you frightened me.”

“You must forget that; I will buy you a doll to make it up again, and all sorts of toys; — see, here is a pretty thing for you!” and he took the chain of his watch, and threw it over her head; he wanted so to distract her attention, as to make her forget what had passed, and not to tell a shocking story when she got home.

“But,” she said, looking up into his face, “you will not be so naughty again, and sit down where mamma is lying.”

The stranger promised, and kissed her, and, taking her hand, they walked together to the village; she prattled as she went, and he sometimes listened to her stories of mamma, and answered, and sometimes thought with wonder that he still lived — that the ocean’s tide still broke at his feet — and the stars still shone above; he felt angry and impatient at the delay, as if it betokened a failing of purpose. They walked along the sands, and stopped at last at Mrs. Baker’s door. She was standing at it, and exclaimed, “Here you are, Missy, at last! What have you been doing with yourself? I declare I was quite frightened — it is long past your bed-time.”

“You must not scold her,” said the stranger; “I detained her. But why do you let her go out alone? it is not right.”

“Lord, sir,” she replied, “there is none hereabouts to do her a harm — and she would not thank me if I kept her from going to see her mamma, as she calls it. I have no one to spare to go with her; it’s hard enough on me to keep her on charity, as I do. But,” — and her voice changed, as a thought flashed across her,—”I beg your pardon, sir, perhaps you come for Missy, and know all about her. I am sure I have done all I can; it’s a long time since her mamma died; and, but for me, she must have gone to the parish. I hope you will judge that I have done my duty toward her.”

“You mistake,” said the stranger; “I know nothing of this young lady, nor of her parents, who, it would seem, are both dead. Of course she has other relations?"

"That she has, and rich ones too," replied Mrs. Baker, "if one could but find them out. It's hard upon me, who am a widow woman, with four children of my own, to have other people's upon me — very-hard, sir, as you must allow; and often I think that I cannot answer it to myself, taking the bread from my own children and grandchildren, to feed a stranger. But, to be sure, Missy has rich relations, and some day they will inquire for her; though come the tenth of next August, and it's a year since her mother died, and no one has come to ask good or bad about her, or Missy."

"Her father died also in this village?" asked the stranger.

"True enough," said the woman; "both father and mother died in this very house, and lie up in the church-yard yonder. Come, Missy, don't cry; that's an old story now, and it's no use fretting."

The poor child, who had hitherto listened in simple ignorance, began to sob at this mention of her parents; and the stranger, shocked by the woman's unfeeling tone, said, "I should like to hear more of this sad story. Pray let the poor dear child be put to bed, and then if you will relate what you know of her parents, I dare say I can give you some advice, to enable you to discover her relations, and relieve you from the burthen of her maintenance."

"These are the first comfortable words I have heard a long time," said Mrs. Baker. "Come, Missy, Nancy shall put you to bed; it's far past your hour. Don't cry, dear; this kind gentleman will take you along with him, to a fine house, among grand folks, and all our troubles will be over. Be pleased, sir, to step into the parlour, and I will show you a letter of the lady, and tell you all I know. I dare say, if you are going to London, you will find out that Missy ought to be riding in her coach at this very moment."

This was a golden idea of Mrs. Baker, and, in truth, went a little beyond her anticipations; but she had got tired of her first dreams of greatness, and feared that, in sad truth, the little orphan's relations would entirely disown her; but it struck her that if she could persuade this strange gentleman that all she said was true, he might be induced to take the little girl with him, when he went away, and undertake the task of restoring her to her father's family, by which means she at least would be released from all further care on her account:—"Upon this hint she spake."

She related how Mr. and Mrs. Raby had arrived with their almost infant child — death already streaked the brow of the dying man; each day threatened to be his last; yet he lived on. His sufferings were great; and night and day his wife was at his side, waiting on him, watching each turn of his eye, each change of complexion, or of pulse. They were poor, and had only one servant, hired at the village soon after their arrival, when Mrs. Raby found herself unable to bestow adequate attention on both husband and child; yet she did so much as evidently to cause her to sink beneath her too great exertions. She was delicate and fragile in appearance; but she never owned to being fatigued, or relaxed in her attentions. Her voice was always attuned to cheerfulness, her eyes beaming with tenderness; she, doubtless, wept in secret; but when conversing with her husband, or playing with her child, a natural vivacity animated her, that looked like hope; indeed, it was certain that, in spite of every fatal symptom, she did not wholly despair. When her husband declared himself better, and resumed for a day his task of instructor to his little girl, she believed that his disorder had taken a favourable turn, and would say, "O, Mrs. Baker, please God, he is really better; doctors are not infallible; he may live!" And as she spoke, her eyes swam in tears, while a smile lay like a sunbeam on her features. She did not sink till her husband died, and even then struggled, both with her grief and the wasting malady already at work within her, with a fortitude a mother only could practise; for all her exertions were for her dear child; and she could smile on her, a wintry smile — yet sweet as if warmed by seraphic faith and love. She lingered thus, hovering on the very limits of life and death; her heart warm and affectionate, and hoping, and full of fire to the end, for her child's sake, while she herself pined for the freedom of the grave, and to soar from the cares and sorrows of a sordid world, to the heaven already open to receive her. In homely phrase, Mrs. Baker dwelt upon this touching mixture of maternal tenderness and soft languor, that would not mourn for him she was so soon to join. The woman then described her sudden death, and placed the fragment of her last letter before her auditor.

Deeply interested, the stranger began to read, when suddenly he became ghastly pale, and, trembling all over, he asked, "To whom was this letter addressed?"

“Ah, sir,” replied Mrs. Baker, “would that I could tell, and all my troubles would be over. Read on, sir, and you will see that Mrs. Raby feels sure that the lady would have been a mother to poor Missy; but who, or where she is, is past all my guessing.”

The stranger strove to read on, but violent emotion, and the struggle to hide what he felt, hindered him from taking in the meaning of a single word. At length he told Mrs. Baker, that, with her leave, he would take the letter away, and read it at his leisure. He promised her his aid in discovering Miss Raby’s relatives, and assured her that there would be small difficulty in so doing. He then retired, and Mrs. Baker exclaimed, “Please God, this will prove a good day’s work.”

A voice from the grave had spoken to the stranger. It was not the dead mother’s voice — she, whatever her merits and sufferings had been, was to him an image of the mind only — he had never known her. But her benefactress, her hope and trust, who and where was she? Alithea! the warm-hearted friend — the incomparable mother! She to whom all hearts in distress turned, sure of relief — who went before the desires of the necessitous; whose generous and free spirit made her empress of all hearts; who, while she lived, spread, as does the sun, radiance and warmth around — her pulses were stilled; her powers cribbed up in the grave. She was nothing now; and he had reduced to this nothing the living frame of this glorious being.

The stranger read the letter again and again; again he writhed, as her name appeared, traced by her friend’s delicate hand, and the concluding hope seemed the acme of his despair. She would indeed have been a mother to the orphan — he remembered expressions that told him that she was making diligent inquiry for her friend, whose luckless fate had not reached her. Yes, it was his Alithea; he could not doubt. His? Fatal mistake — his she had never been; and the wild resolve to make her such, had ended in death and ruin.

The stranger had taken the letter to his inn — but any roof seemed to imprison and oppress him — again he sought relief in the open air, and wandered far along the sands, with the speed of a misery that strove to escape from itself. The whole night he spent thus — sometimes climbing the jagged cliffs, then descending to the beach, and throwing himself his length upon the sands. The tide ebbed and flowed — the roar of ocean filled the lone night with sound — the owl flapped down from its home in the rock, and hooted. Hour after hour passed, — and, driven by a thousand thoughts — tormented by the direst pangs of memory — still the stranger hurried along the winding shores. Morning found him many miles from Treby. He did not stop till the appearance of another village put a limit to solitude, and he returned upon his steps.

Those who could guess his crime, could alone divine the combat of life and death waging in his heart. He had, through accident and forgetfulness, left his pistols on the table of his chamber at the inn, or, in some of the wildest of the paroxysms of despair, they had ended all. To die, he fondly hoped, was to destroy memory and to defeat remorse; and yet there arose within his mind that feeling, mysterious and inexplicable to common reason, which generates a desire to expiate and to atone. Should he be the cause of good to the friendless orphan, bequeathed so vainly to his victim, would not that, in some sort, compensate for his crime? Would it not double it to have destroyed her, and also the good of which she would have been the author? The very finger of God pointed to this act, since the child's little hand had arrested his arm at the fatal moment when he believed that no interval of a second's duration intervened between him and the grave. Then to aid those dim religious misgivings, came the manly wish to protect the oppressed, and assist the helpless. The struggle was long and terrible. Now he made up his mind that it was cowardice to postpone his resolve — that to live was to stamp himself poltroon and traitor. And now again, he felt that the true cowardice was to die — to fly from the consequences of his actions, and the burthen of existence. He gazed upon the dim waste of waters, as if from its misty skirt some vision would arise to guide or to command. He cast his eyes upward to interrogate the silent stars — the roaring of the tide appeared to assume an inorganic voice, and to murmur hoarsely, "Live! miserable wretch! Dare you hope for the repose which your victim enjoys? Know that the guilty are unworthy to die — that is the reward of innocence!"

The cool air of morning chilled his brow; and the broad sun arose from the eastern sea, as, pale and haggard, he re-trod many a weary step towards Treby. He was faint and weary. He had resolved to live yet a little longer — till he had fulfilled some portion of his duty towards the lovely orphan. So resolving, he felt as if he paid a part of the penalty due. A soothing feeling, which resembled repentance, stole over his heart, already rewarding him. How swiftly and audibly does the inner voice of our nature speak, telling us when we do right. Besides, he believed that to live was to suffer; to live, therefore, was in him a virtue; and the exultation, the balmy intoxication which always follows our first attempt to execute a virtuous resolve, crept over him, and elevated his spirits, though body and soul were alike weary. Arriving at Treby, he sought his bed. He slept peacefully; and it was the first slumber he had enjoyed since he had torn himself from the spot where she lay, whom he had loved so truly, even to the death to which he had brought her.

CHAPTER IV.

Two days after, the stranger and the orphan had departed for London. When it came to the point of decision, Mrs. Baker's conscience began to reproach her; and she doubted the propriety of intrusting her innocent charge to one totally unknown. But the stranger satisfied her doubts; he showed her papers betokening his name and station, as John Falkner, Captain in the Native Cavalry of the East India Company, and moreover possessed of such an independence as looked like wealth in the eyes of Mrs. Baker, and at once commanded her respect.

His own care was to collect every testimony and relic that might prove the identity of the little Elizabeth. Her unfortunate mother's unfinished letter — her Bible and prayer-book — in the first of which was recorded the birth of her child — and a seal, (which Mrs. Baker's prudence had saved, when her avarice caused her to sell the watch,) with Mr. Raby's coat of arms and crest engraved — a small desk, containing a few immaterial papers, and letters from strangers, addressed to Edwin Raby — such was Elizabeth's inheritance. In looking over the desk, Mr. Falkner found a little foreign almanac, embellished with prints, and fancifully bound — on the first page of which was written, in a woman's elegant hand, To dearest Isabella — from her A. R.

Had Falkner wanted proof as to the reality of his suspicions with regard to the friend of Mrs. Raby, here was conviction; he was about to press the dear hand-writing to his lips, when, feeling his own unworthiness, he shuddered through every limb, and thrusting the book into his bosom, he, by a strong effort, prevented every outward mark of the thrilling agony which the sight of his victim's writing occasioned. It gave, at the same time, fresh firmness to his resolve to do all that was requisite to restore the orphan daughter of her friend to her place in society. She was, as a bequest, left him by her whom he last saw pale and senseless at his feet — who had been the dream of his life from boyhood, and was now the phantom to haunt him with remorse to his latest hour. To replace the dead to the lovely child was impossible. He knew the incomparable virtues of her to whom her mother bequeathed her, while every thought that tended to recall her to his memory was armed with a double sting — regret at having lost — horror at the fate he had brought upon her.

By what strange, incalculable, and yet sure enchainment of events had he been brought to supply her place! She was dead — through his accursed machinations she no longer formed a portion of the breathing world — how marvellous that he, flying from memory and conscience, resolved to expiate his half involuntary guilt by his own death, should have landed at Treby! Still more wondrous were the motives — hair-slight in appearance, yet on which so vast a weight of circumstance hung — that led him to the twilight church-yard, and had made Mrs. Raby's grave the scene of the projected tragedy — which had brought the orphan to guard that grave from pollution, caused her to stay his upraised hand, and gained for herself a protector by the very act.

Whoever has been the victim of a tragic event — whoever has experienced life and hope — the past and the future wrecked by one fatal catastrophe, must be at once dismayed and awestruck to trace the secret agency of a thousand foregone, disregarded, and trivial events, which all led to the deplored end, and served, as it were, as invisible meshes to envelop the victim in the fatal net. Had the meanest among these been turned aside, the progress of the destroying destiny had been stopped; but there is no voice to cry "Hold!" no prophesying eye to discern the unborn event — and the future inherits its whole portion of woe.

Awed by the mysteries that encompassed and directed his steps, which used no agency except the unseen, but not unfelt, power which surrounds us with motive, as with an atmosphere, Falkner yielded his hitherto unbending mind to control. He was satisfied to be led, and not to command; his impatient spirit wondered at this new docility, while yet he felt some slight self-satisfaction steal over him; and the prospect of being useful to the helpless little being who stood before him, weak in all except her irresistible claim to his aid, imparted such pleasure as he was surprised to feel.

Once again he visited the church-yard of Treby, accompanied by the orphan. She was loath to quit the spot — she could with difficulty consent to leave mamma. But Mrs. Baker had made free use of a grown-up person's much abused privilege of deceit, and told her lies in abundance; sometimes promising that she should soon return; sometimes assuring that she would find her mother alive and well at the grand place whither she was going:

yet, despite the fallacious hopes, she cried and sobbed bitterly during her last visits to her parents' graves. Falkner tried to soothe her, saying, "We must leave papa and mamma, dearest; God has taken them from you; but I will be a new papa to you."

The child raised her head, which she had buried in his breast, and in infantine dialect and accent, said, "Will you be good to her, and love Baby, as papa did?"

"Yes, dearest child, I promise always to love you: will you love me, and call me your papa?"

"Papa, dear papa," she cried, clinging round his neck—"My new, good papa!" And then whispering in his ear, she softly, but seriously, added, "I can't have a new mamma — I won't have any but my own mamma."

"No, pretty one," said Falkner, with a sigh, "you will never have another mamma; she is gone who would have been a second mother, and you are wholly orphaned."

An hour after they were on the road to London, and, full of engrossing and torturing thoughts as Falkner was, still he was called out of himself and forced to admire the winning ways, the enchanting innocence, and loveliness of his little charge. We human beings are so unlike one to the other, that it is often difficult to make one person understand that there is any force in an impulse which is omnipotent with another. Children, to some, are mere animals, unendued with instinct, troublesome, and unsightly — with others they possess a charm that reaches to the heart's core, and stirs the purest and most generous portions of our nature. Falkner had always loved children. In the Indian wilds, which for many years he had inhabited, the sight of a young native mother, with her babe, had moved him to envious tears. The fair, fragile offspring of European women, with blooming faces and golden hair, had often attracted him to bestow kind offices on parents, whom otherwise he would have disregarded; the fiery passions of his own heart caused him to feel a soothing repose, while watching the innocent gambols of childhood, while his natural energy, which scarcely ever found sufficient scope for exercise, led him to delight in protecting the distressed. If the mere chance spectacle of infant helplessness was wont to excite his sympathy, this sentiment, by the natural workings of the human heart, became far more lively when so beautiful and perfect a creature as Elizabeth Raby was thrown upon his protection. No one could have regarded her unmoved; her silver-toned laugh went to the heart; her alternately serious or gay looks, each emanating from the spirit of love; her caresses, her little words of endearment; the soft pressure of her tiny hand and warm, rosy lips, — were all as charming as beauty, and the absence of guile, could make them. And he, the miserable man, was charmed, and pitied the mother who had been forced to desert so sweet a flower — leaving to the bleak elements a blossom which it had been paradise for her to have cherished and sheltered in her own bosom for ever.

At each moment Falkner became more enchanted with his companion. Sometimes they got out of the chaise to walk up a hill; then taking the child in his arms, he plucked flowers for her from the hedges, or she ran on before and gathered them for herself — now pulling ineffectually at some stubborn parasite — now pricking herself with briar, when his help was necessary to assist and make all well again. When again in the carriage she climbed on his knee and stuck the flowers in his hair "to make papa fine;" and as trifles affect the mind when rendered sensitive by suffering, so was he moved by her trying to remove the thorns of the wild roses before she decorated him with them; at other times she twisted them among her own ringlets, and laughed to see herself mirrored in the front glasses of the chaise. Sometimes her mood changed, and she prattled seriously about "mamma." Asked if he did not think that she was sorry at Baby's going so far — far away — or, remembering the fanciful talk of her mother, when her father died, she asked, whether she were not following them through the air. As evening closed in, she looked out to see whether she could not perceive her; "I cannot hear her; she does not speak to me," she said; "perhaps she is a long way off, in that tiny star; but then she can see us — Are you there, mamma?"

Artlessness and beauty are more truly imaged on the canvass than in the written page. Were we to see the lovely orphan thus pictured (and Italian artists, and our own Reynolds, have painted such), with uplifted finger; her large earnest eyes looking inquiringly and tenderly for the shadowy form of her mother, as she might fancy it descending towards her from the little star her childish fancy singled out, a half smile on her lips, contrasted with the seriousness of her baby brow — if we could see such visibly presented on the canvass, the world would crowd round to admire. This pen but feebly traces the living grace of the little angel; but it was before Falkner; it stirred him to pity first, and then to deeper regret: he strained the child to his breast, thinking, “O, yes, I might have been a better and a happy man! False Alithea! why, through your inconstancy, are such joys buried for ever in your grave!”

A few minutes after and the little girl fell asleep, nestled in his arms. Her attitude had all the inartificial grace of childhood; her face hushed to repose, yet breathed of affection. Falkner turned his eyes from her to the starry sky. His heart swelled impatiently — his past life lay as a map unrolled before him. He had desired a peaceful happiness — the happiness of love. His fond aspirations had been snakes to destroy others, and to sting his own soul to torture. He writhed under the consciousness of the remorse and horror which were henceforth to track his path of life. Yet, even while he shuddered, he felt that a revolution was operating within himself — he no longer contemplated suicide. That which had so lately appeared a mark of courage, wore now the guise of cowardice. And yet, if he were to live, where and how should his life be passed? He recoiled from the solitude of the heart which had marked his early years — and yet he felt that he could never more link himself in love or friendship to any.

He looked upon the sleeping child, and began to conjecture whether he might not find in her the solace he needed. Should he not adopt her, mould her heart to affection, teach her to lean on him only, be all the world to her, while her gentleness and caresses would give life a charm — without which it were vain to attempt to endure existence?

He reflected what Elizabeth’s probable fate would be if he restored her to her father’s family. Personal experience had given him a horror for the forbidding; ostentatious kindness of distant relations. That hers resembled such as he had known, and were imperious and cold-hearted, their conduct not only to Mrs. Raby, but previously to a meritorious son, did not permit him to doubt. If he made the orphan over to them, their luxuries and station would ill stand instead of affection and heart-felt kindness. Soft, delicate, and fond, she would pine and die. With him, on the contrary, she would be happy — he would devote himself to her — every wish gratified — her gentle disposition carefully cultivated — no rebuke, no harshness; his arms ever open to receive her in grief — his hand to support her in danger. Was not this a fate her mother would have preferred? In bequeathing her to her friend, she showed how little she wished that her sweet girl should pass into the hands of her husband's relations. Could he not replace that friend of whom he had cruelly robbed her — whose loss was to be attributed to him alone?

We all are apt to think that when we discard a motive we cure a fault, and foster the same error from a new cause with a safe conscience. Thus, even now, aching and sore from the tortures of remorse for past faults, Falkner indulged in the same propensity, which, apparently innocent in its commencement, had led to fatal results. He meditated doing rather what he wished, than what was strictly just. He did not look forward to the evils his own course involved, while he saw in disproportionate magnitude those to be brought about if he gave up his favourite project. What ills might arise to the orphan from his interweaving her fate with his — he, a criminal, in act, if not in intention — who might be called upon hereafter to answer for his deeds, and who at least must fly and hide himself — of this he thought not; while he determined, that, fostered and guarded by him, Elizabeth must be happy — and; under the tutelage of her relations, she would become the victim of hardhearted neglect. These ideas floated somewhat indistinctly in his mind — and it was half unconsciously that he was building from them a fabric for the future, as deceitful as it was alluring.

After several days' travelling, Falkner found himself with his young charge in London, and then he began to wonder wherefore he had repaired thither, and to consider that he must form some settled scheme for the future. He had in England neither relation nor friend whom he cared for. Orphaned at an early age, neglected by those who supported him, at least as far as the affections were concerned, he had, even in boyhood, known intimately, and loved but one person only — she who had ruled his fate to this hour — and was now among the dead. Sent to India in early youth, he had there to make his way in defiance of poverty, of want of connexion, of his own overbearing disposition — and the sense of wrong early awakened, that made him proud and reserved. At last, most unexpectedly, the death of several relations caused the family estate to devolve upon him — and he had sold his commission in India and hastened home — with his heart so set upon one object, that he scarcely reflected, or reflected only to congratulate himself, on how alone he stood. And now that his impetuosity and ill-regulated passions had driven the dear object of all his thoughts to destruction — still he was glad that there were none to question him — none to wonder at his resolves; to advise or to reproach.

Still a plan was necessary. The very act of his life which had been so big with ruin and remorse enjoined some forethought. It was probable that he was already suspected, if not known. Detection and punishment in a shape most loathsome would overtake him, did he not shape his measures with prudence; and, as hate as well as love had mixed strongly in his motives, he was in no humour to give his enemies the triumph of visiting his crime on him.

What is written in glaring character in our own consciousness, we believe to be visible to the whole world; and Falkner, after arriving in London, after leaving Elizabeth at an hotel, and walking into the streets, felt as if discovery was already on him, when he was accosted by an acquaintance, who asked him where he had been — what he had been doing — and why he was looking so deucedly ill? He stammered some reply, and was hastening away, when his friend, passing his arm through his, said, “I must tell you of the strangest occurrence I ever heard of — I have just parted from a man — do you remember a Mr. Neville, whom you dined with at my house, when last in town?”

Falkner, at this moment, exercised with success the wonderful mastery which he possessed over feature and voice, and coldly replied that he did remember.

“And do you remember our conversation after he left us?” said his friend, “and my praises of his wife, who I exalted as the pattern of virtue? Who can know women! I could have bet any sum that she would have preserved her good name to the end — and she has eloped.”

“Well!” said Falkner, “is that all? — is that the most wonderful circumstance ever heard?”

“Had you known Mrs. Neville,” replied his companion, “you would be as astonished as I: with all her charms — all her vivacity — never had the breath of scandal reached her — she seemed one of those whose hearts, though warm, are proof against the attacks of love; and with ardent affections yet turn away from passion, superior and unharmed. Yet she has eloped with a lover — there is no doubt of that fact, for he was seen — they were seen going off together, and she has not been heard of since.”

“Did Mr. Neville pursue them?” asked Falkner.

"He is even now in full pursuit — vowing vengeance — more enraged than I ever beheld man. Unfortunately he does not know who the seducer is; nor have the fugitives yet been traced. The whole affair is the most mysterious — a lover dropped from the clouds — an angel of virtue subdued, almost before she is sought. Still they must be found out — they cannot hide themselves for ever."

"And then there will be a duel to the death?" asked Falkner, in the same icy accents.

"No," replied the other, "Mrs. Neville has no brother to fight for her, and her husband breathes law only. Whatever vengeance the law will afford, that he will use to the utmost — he is too angry to fight."

"The poltroon!" exclaimed Falkner, "and thus he loses his sole chance of revenge."

"I know not that," replied his companion; "he has formed a thousand schemes of chastisement for both offenders, more dread than the field of honour — there is, to be sure, a mean as well as an indignant spirit in him, that revels rather in the thought of inflicting infamy than death. He utters a thousand mysterious threats — I do not see exactly what he can do — but when he discovers his injurer, as he must some day — and I believe there are letters that afford a clue, — he will wreak all that a savage, and yet a sordid desire of vengeance can suggest. — Poor Mrs. Neville! — after all, she must have lived a sad life with such a fellow!"

"And here we part," said Falkner; "I am going another way. You have told me a strange story — it will be curious to mark the end. Farewell!"

Brave to rashness as Falkner was, yet there was much in what he had just heard that made him recoil, and almost tremble. What the vengeance was that Mr. Neville could take — he too well knew — and he resolved to defeat it. His plans, before vague, were formed on the instant. His lip curled with a disdainful smile when he recollected what his friend had said of the mystery that hung over the late occurrences — he would steep them all in tenfold obscurity. To grieve for the past was futile, or rather, nothing he could do, would prevent or alleviate the piercing regret that tortured him — but that need not influence his conduct. To leave his arch enemy writhing from injury, yet powerless to revenge himself — blindly cursing he knew not who, and removing the object of his curses from all danger of being hurt by them, was an image not devoid of satisfaction. Acting in conformity with these ideas, the next morning saw him on the road to Dover — Elizabeth still his companion, resolved to seek oblivion in foreign countries and far climes — and happy, at the same time, to have her with him, whose infantine caresses already poured balm upon his rankling wounds.

CHAPTER V.

Paris was the next, but transient, resting-place of the travellers. Here Falkner made such arrangements with regard to remittances, as he believed would best insure his scheme of concealment. He laid the map of Europe before him, and traced a course with his pencil, somewhat erratic, yet not without a plan. Paris, Hamburgh, Stockholm, St. Petersburgh, Moscow, Odessa, Constantinople, through Hungary to Vienna. How many thousand miles! miles — which while he traversed, he could possess his soul in freedom — fear no scrutiny — be asked no insidious questions. He could look each man in the face, and none trace his crime in his own.

It was a wild scheme to make so young a child as Elizabeth the companion of these devious and long wanderings; yet it was her idea that shed golden rays on the boundless prospect he contemplated. He could not have undertaken this long journey alone — memory and remorse his only companions. He was not one of those, unfortunately, whom a bright eye and kindly smile can light at once into a flame — soon burnt out, it is true, but warming and cheering, and yet harmless while it lasted. He could not among strangers at once discern the points to admire, and make himself the companion of the intelligent and good, through a sort of freemasonry some spirits possess. This was a great defect of character. He was proud and reserved. His esteem must be won — long habits of intimacy formed — his fastidious taste never wounded — his imagination never baulked — without this, he was silent and wrapt in himself. All his life he had cherished a secret and ardent passion, beyond whose bounds every thing was sterile — this had changed from the hopes of love to the gnawing pangs of remorse — but still his heart fed on itself — and unless that was interested, and by the force of affection he were called out of himself, he must be miserable. To arrive unwelcomed at an inn — to wander through unknown streets and cities, without any stimulus of interest or curiosity — to traverse vast tracts of country, useless to others, a burthen to himself — alone, this would have been intolerable. But Elizabeth was the cure; she was the animating soul of his project: her smiles — her caresses — the knowledge that he benefited her, was the life-blood of his design. He indulged with a sort of rapture in the feeling, that he loved, and was beloved by an angel of innocence, who grew, each day, into a creature endowed with intelligence, sympathies, hopes, fears, and affections — all individually her own, and yet all modelled by him — centred in him — to whom he was necessary — who would be his: not like the vain love of his youth, only in imagination, but in every thought and sensation, to the end of time.

Nor did he intend to pursue his journey in such a way as to overtask her strength, or injure her health. He cared not how much time elapsed before its completion. It would certainly employ years; it mattered not how many. When winter rendered travelling painful, he could take up his abode in a metropolis abounding in luxuries. During the summer heats he might fix himself in some villa, where the season would be mitigated to pleasantness. If impelled by a capricious predilection, he could stay for months in any chance selected spot: but his home was, with Elizabeth beside him, in his travelling carriage. Perpetual change would baffle pursuit, if any were set on foot; while the restlessness of his life, the petty annoyances and fleeting pleasures of a traveller's existence, would serve to occupy his mind, and prevent its being mastered by those passions to which one victim had been immolated, and which rendered the remnant of his days loathsome to himself. "I have determined to live," he thought, "and I must therefore insure the means of life. I must adopt a method by which I can secure for each day that stock of patrence which is necessary to lead me to the end of it. In the plan I have laid down, every day will have a task to be fulfilled; and, while I employ myself in executing it, I need look neither before nor behind; and each day added thus, one by one, to one another, will form months and years, and I shall grow old, travelling post over Europe."

His resolution made, he was eager to enter on his travels, which, singular to say, he performed even in the very manner he had determined; for the slight changes in the exact route, introduced afterwards, from motives of convenience or pleasure, might be deemed rather as in accordance with, than deviating from, his original project.

Falkner was not a man ordinarily met with. He possessed wild and fierce passions, joined to extreme sensibility, beneficence, and generosity. His boyhood had been rendered miserable by the violence of a temper roused to anger, even from trifles. Collision with his fellow-creatures, a sense of dignity with his equals, and of justice towards his inferiors, had subdued this; still his blood was apt to boil when roused by any impediment to his designs, or the sight of injury towards others; and it was with great difficulty that he kept down the outward marks of indignation or contempt. To tame the vehemence of his disposition, he had endeavoured to shackle his imagination, and to cultivate his reason — and perhaps he fancied that he succeeded best, when, in fact, he entirely failed. As now, when he took the little orphan with him away from all the ties of blood — the manners and customs of her country — from the discipline of regular education, and the society of others of her sex — had not Elizabeth been the creature she was, with a character not to be disharmonized by any circumstances, this had been a fearful experiment.

Yet he fondly hoped to derive happiness from it. Traversing long tracts of country with vast speed, cut off from intercourse with every one but her, and she endearing herself more, daily, by extreme sweetness of disposition, he began almost to forget the worm gnawing at his bosom; and, feeling himself free, to fancy himself happy. Unfortunately, it was not so: he had passed the fatal Rubicon, placed by conscience between innocence and crime; and however much he might for a time deaden the stings of feeling, or baffle the inevitable punishment, hereafter to arise from the consequences of his guilt, still there was a burthen on his soul that took all real zest from life, and made his attempts at enjoyment more like the experiments of a physician to dissipate sickness, than the buoyant sensations of one in health.

But then he thought not of himself — he did not live in himself, but in the joyous being at his side. Her happiness was exuberant. She might be compared to an exotic, lately pinched, and drooping from the effects of the wintry air, transported back in the first opening of a balmy southern spring, to its native clime. The young and tender green leaves unfolded themselves in the pleasant air; blossoms appeared among the foliage, and sweet fruit might be anticipated. Nor was it only the kindness of her protector that endeared him to her: much of the warm sentiment of affection arose from their singular modes of life. Had they continued at a fixed residence, in town or country, in a civilized land, Elizabeth had seen her guardian at stated periods; have now and then taken a walk with him, or gambolled in the garden at his side; while, for the chief part, their occupation and pursuits being different, they had been little together. As it was, they were never apart: side by side in a travelling carriage — now arriving, now departing; now visiting the objects worthy of observation in various cities. They shared in all the pleasures and pains of travel, and each incident called forth her sense of dependence, and his desire to protect; or, changing places, even at that early age, she soothed his impatience, while he was beguiled of his irritability by her cheerful voice and smiling face. In all this, Elizabeth felt most strongly the tie that bound them. Sometimes benighted; sometimes delayed by swollen rivers; reduced to bear together the miseries of a bad inn, or, at times, of no inn at all; — sometimes in danger — often worn by fatigue — Elizabeth found in her adopted parent a shelter, a support, and a preserver. Creeping close to him, her little hand clasped in his, or carried in his arms, she feared nothing, because he was there. During storms at sea, he had placed his own person between her and the bitter violence of the wind, and had often exposed himself to the inclemency of the weather to cover her, and save her from wet and cold. At all times he was on the alert to assist, and his assistance was like the coming of a superior being, sufficient to save her from harm, and inspire her with courage. Such circumstances had, perhaps, made a slight impression on many children; but Elizabeth had senses and sensibilities so delicately strung, as to be true to the slightest touch of harmony.

She had not forgotten the time when, neglected, and almost in rags, she only heard the voice of complaint or chiding; when she crept alone over the sands to her mother's grave, and, did a tempest overtake her, there was none to shield or be of comfort; she remembered little accidents that had at times befallen her, which, to her infantine feelings, seemed mighty dangers. But there had been none, as now, to pluck her from peril, and insure her safety. She recollected when, on one occasion, a thunder-storm had overtaken her in the church-yard; when, hurrying home, her foot slipped, as she attempted to descend the wet path of the cliff — frightened, she clambered up again, and, returning home by the upper road, had lost her way, and found night darkening round her — wet, tired, and shivering with fear and cold; and then, on her return, her welcome had been a scolding — well meant, perhaps, but vulgar, loud, and painful: and now the contrast! Her wishes guessed — her thoughts divined — ready succour and perpetual vigilance were for ever close at hand; and all this accompanied by a gentleness, kindness, and even by a respect, which the ardent, yet refined feelings of her protector readily bestowed. Thus a physical gratitude — so to speak — sprung up in her child's heart, a precursor to the sense of moral obligation, to be developed in after years. Every hour added strength to her affection, and habit generated fidelity, and an attachment, not to be shaken by any circumstances.

Nor was kindness from him the only tie between them. Elizabeth discerned his sadness, and tried to cheer his gloom. Now and then the fierceness of his temper broke forth towards others; but she was never terrified, and grieved for the object of his indignation; or if she felt it to be unjust, she pleaded the cause of the injured, and, by her caresses, brought him back to himself. She early learnt the power she had over him, and loved him the more fondly on that account. Thus there existed a perpetual interchange of benefit — of watchful care — of mutual forbearance — of tender pity and thankfulness. If all this seems beyond the orphan's years, it must be remembered that peculiar circumstances develop peculiar faculties; and that, besides, what is latent does not the less exist on that account. Elizabeth could not have expressed, and was, indeed, unconscious of the train of feeling here narrated. It was the microcosm of a plant, folded up in its germ. Sometimes looking at a green, unformed bud, we wonder why a particular texture of leaves must inevitably spring from it, and why another sort of plant should not shoot out from the dark stem: but, as the tiny leaflet uncloses, it is there in all its peculiarity, and endowed with all the especial qualities of its kind. Thus with Elizabeth, however, in the thoughtlessness and inexperience of childhood, small outward show was made of the inner sense; yet in her heart tenderness, fidelity, and unshaken truth, were folded up, to be developed as her mind gained ideas, and sensation gradually verged into sentiment.

The course of years, also, is included in this sketch. She was six years old when she left Paris — she was nearly ten when, after many wanderings, and a vast tract of country over-passed, they arrived at Odessa. There had always been a singular mixture of childishness and reflection in her, and this continued even now. As far as her own pleasures were concerned, she might be thought behind her age: to chase a butterfly — to hunt for a flower — to play with a favourite animal — to listen with eagerness to the wildest fairy tales, — such were her pleasures; but there was something more as she watched the turns of countenance in him she named her father — adapted herself to his gloomy or communicative mood — pressed near him when she thought he was annoyed — and restrained every appearance of discomfort, when he was distressed by her being exposed to fatigue or the inclement sky.

When at St. Petersburgh he fell ill, she never left his bed-side; and, remembering the death of her parents, she wasted away with terror and grief. At another time, in a wild district of Russia, she sickened of the measles. They were obliged to take refuge in a miserable hovel; and, despite all his care, the want of medical assistance endangered her life; while her convalescence was rendered tedious and painful by the absence of every comfort. Her sweet eyes grew dim; her little head drooped. No mother could have attended on her more assiduously than Falkner; and she long after remembered his sitting by her in the night to give her drink — her pillow smoothed by him — and, when she grew a little better, his carrying her in his arms under a shady grove, so to give her the benefit of the air, in a manner that would least incommode her. These incidents were never forgotten. They were as the colour and fragrance to the rose — the very beauty and delight of both their lives. Falkner felt a half remorse at the too great pleasure he derived from her society; while hers was a sort of rapturous, thrilling adoration, that dreamt not of the necessity of a check, and luxuriated in its boundless excess.

CHAPTER VI.

It was late in the autumn when the travellers arrived at Odessa, whence they were to embark for Constantinople; in the neighbourhood of which city they intended to pass the winter.

It must not be supposed that Falkner journeyed in the luxurious and troublesome style of a Milord Anglais. A calèche was his only carriage. He had no attendant for himself, and was often obliged to change the woman hired for the service of Elizabeth. The Parisian, with whom they commenced their journey, was reduced to despair by the time they arrived at Hamburgh. The German who replaced her, was dismissed at Stockholm. The Swede next hired, became homesick at Moscow, and they arrived at Odessa without any servant. Falkner scarcely knew what to do, being quite tired of the exactions, caprices, and repinings of each expatriated menial — yet it was necessary that Elizabeth should have a female attendant; and, on his arrival at Odessa, he immediately set on foot various inquiries to procure one. Several presented themselves, who proved wholly unfit; and Falkner was made angry by their extortionate demands, and total incapacity.

At length a person was ushered into him, who looked, who was, English. She was below the middle stature — spare, and upright in figure, with a composed countenance, and an appearance of tidiness and quiet that was quite novel, and by no means unpleasing, contrasted with the animated gestures, loud voices, and exaggerated protestations of the foreigners.

"I hear, sir," she began, "that you are inquiring for an attendant to wait on Miss Falkner, during your journey to Vienna: I should be very glad if you would accept my services."

"Are you a lady's maid, in any English family here?" asked Falkner.

"I beg your pardon, sir," continued the little woman, primly, "I am a governess. I lived many years with a Russian lady, at St. Petersburgh; she brought me here, and is gone and left me."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Falkner; "that seems a very unjust proceeding — how did it happen?"

"On our arrival at Odessa, sir, the lady, who had no such notion before, insisted on converting me to her church; and because I refused, she used me, I may say, very ill; and, hiring a Greek girl, left me here quite destitute."

"It seems that you have the spirit of a martyr," observed Falkner, smiling.

"I do not pretend to that," she replied; "but I was born and brought up a Protestant — and I did not like to pretend to believe what I could not."

Falkner was pleased with the answer, and looked more scrutinizingly on the applicant. She was not ugly — but slightly pitted with the small-pox — and with insignificant features; her mouth looked obstinate — and her light grey eyes, though very quick and intelligent, yet from their smallness, and the lids and brows being injured by the traces of the malady, did not redeem her countenance from an entirely common-place appearance, which might not disgust, but could not attract.

"Do you understand," asked Falkner, "that I need a servant, and not a governess. I have no other attendant for my daughter; and you must not be above waiting on her as she has been accustomed."

"I can make no objection," she replied; "my first wish is to get away from this place, free from expense. At Vienna I can find a situation such as I have been accustomed to — now I shall be very glad to reach Germany safely in any creditable capacity — and I shall be grateful to you, sir, if you do not consider my being destitute against me, but be willing to help a countrywoman in distress."

There was a simplicity, though a hardness in her manner, and an entire want of pretension or affectation that pleased Falkner. He inquired concerning her abilities as a governess, and began to feel that in that capacity also, she might be useful to Elizabeth. He had been accustomed, on all convenient occasions, to hire a profusion of masters; but this desultory sort of teaching did not inculcate those habits of industry and daily application which it is the best aim of education to promote. At the same time he much feared an improper female companion for the child, and had suffered a good deal of anxiety on account of the many changes he had been forced to make. He observed the lady before him narrowly — there was nothing prepossessing, but all seemed plain and unassuming; though formal, she was direct — her words few — her voice quiet and low, without being soft or constrained. He asked her what remuneration she would expect — she said that her present aim was to get to Vienna free of expense, and she did not expect much beyond — she had been accustomed to receive eighty pounds a year as governess, but as she was to serve Miss Falkner as maid, she would only ask twenty.

"But as I wish you to act as both," said Falkner, "we must join the two sums, and I will pay you a hundred."

A ray of pleasure actually for a second illuminated the little woman's face; while with an unaltered tone of voice she replied: "I shall be very thankful, sir, if you think proper."

"You must, however, understand our conditions," said Falkner. "I talk of Vienna — but I travel for my pleasure, with no fixed bourn or time. I am not going direct to Germany — I spend the winter at Constantinople. It may be that I shall linger in those parts — it may be that from Greece I shall cross to Italy. You must not insist on my taking you to Vienna: it is enough for your purpose, I suppose, if you reach a civilized part of the world, and are comfortably situated, till you find some other family going whither you desire."

She was acquiescent. She insisted, however, with much formality, that he should make inquiries concerning her from several respectable families at Odessa; otherwise, she said, he could not fitly recommend her to any other situation. Falkner complied. Every one spoke of her in high terms, lauding her integrity and kindness of heart. "Miss Jervis is the best creature in the world," said the wife of the French Consul; "only she is English to the core — so precise, and formal, and silent, and quiet, and cold. Nothing can persuade her to do what she does not think right. After being so shamefully deserted, she might have lived in my house, or four or five others, doing nothing; but she chose to have pupils, and to earn money by teaching. This might have been merely for the sake of paying for her journey; but, besides this, we discovered that she supports some poor relation in England, and, while cast away here, she still remembered and sent remittances to one whom she thought in want. She has a heart of gold, though it does not shine."

Pleased with this testimony, Falkner thought himself fortunate in securing her services, at the same time that he feared he should find her presence a considerable encumbrance. A servant was a cipher, but a governess must receive attention — she was an equal, who would perpetually form a third with him and Elizabeth. His reserve, his love of independence, and his regard for the feelings of another, would be perpetually at war. To be obliged to talk, when he wished to be silent; to listen to, and answer frivolous remarks; to know that at all times a stranger was there — all this seemed to him a gigantic evil; but it vanished after a few days' trial of their new companion's qualities. Whatever Miss Jervis's latent virtues might be, she thought that the chief among them was to be

Content to dwell in decencies for ever —

her ambition was to be unimpeachably correct in conduct. It a little jarred with her notions to be in the house of a single gentleman — but her desolate situation at Odessa allowed her no choice; and she tried to counterbalance the evil by seeing as little of her employer as possible. Brought up from childhood to her present occupation, she was moulded to its very form; and her thoughts never strayed beyond her theory of a good governess. Her methods were all straight forward — pointing steadily to one undisguised aim — no freak of imagination ever led her out of one hard, defined, unerratic line. She had no pretension, even in the innermost recess of her heart, beyond her station. To be diligent and conscientious in her task of teaching, was the sole virtue to which she pretended; and, possessed of much good sense, great integrity, and untiring industry, she succeeded beyond what could have been expected from one apparently so insignificant and taciturn.

She was, at the beginning, limited very narrowly in the exercise of any authority over her pupil. She was obliged, therefore, to exert herself in winning influence, instead of controlling by reprimands. She took great pains to excite Elizabeth to learn; and once having gained her consent to apply to any particular study, she kept her to it with patience and perseverance; and the very zeal and diligence she displayed in teaching, made Elizabeth ashamed to repay her with an inattention that looked like ingratitude. Soon, also, curiosity, and a love of knowledge, developed itself. Elizabeth's mind was of that high order which soon found something congenial in study. The acquirement of new ideas — the sense of order, and afterwards of power — awoke a desire for improvement. Falkner was a man of no common intellect; but his education had been desultory; and he had never lived with the learned and well-informed. His mind was strong in its own elements, but these lay scattered, and somewhat chaotic. His observation was keen, and his imagination fervid; but it was inborn, uncultivated, and unenriched by any vast stores of reading. He was the very opposite of a pedant. Miss Jervis was much of the latter; but the two served to form Elizabeth to something better than either. She learned from Falkner the uses of learning: from Miss Jervis she acquired the thoughts and experience of other men. Like all young and ardent minds, which are capable of enthusiasm, she found infinite delight in the pages of ancient history: she read biography, and speedily found models for herself, whereby she measured her own thoughts and conduct, rectifying her defects, and aiming at that honour and generosity which made her heart beat, and cheeks glow, when narrated of others.

There was another very prominent distinction between Falkner and the governess: it made a part of the system of the latter never to praise. All that she tasked her pupil to do, was a duty — when not done it was a deplorable fault — when executed, the duty was fulfilled, and she need not reproach herself, — that was all. Falkner, on the contrary, fond and eager, soon looked upon her as a prodigy; and though reserved, as far as his own emotions were concerned, he made no secret of his almost adoration of Elizabeth. His praise was enthusiastic — it brought tears into her eyes — and yet, strange to say, it is doubtful whether she ever strived so eagerly, or felt so satisfied with it, as for the parsimonious expressions of bare satisfaction from Miss Jervis. They excited two distinct sensations. She loved her protector the more for his fervid approbation — it was the crown of all his gifts — she wept sometimes only to remember his ardent expressions of approbation; but Miss Jervis inspired self-diffidence, and with it a stronger desire for improvement. Thus the sensibility of her nature was cultivated, while her conceit was checked; to feel that to be meritorious with Miss Jervis was impossible, — not to be faulty was an ambitious aim. She easily discovered that affection rather than discernment dictated the approbation of Falkner; and loved him better, but did not prize herself the more.

He, indeed, was transported by the progress she made. Like most self-educated, or uneducated men, he had a prodigious respect for learning, and was easily deceived into thinking much of what was little: he felt elated when he found Elizabeth eager to recite the wonders recorded in history, and to delineate the characters of ancient heroes — narrating their achievements, and quoting their sayings. His imagination and keen spirit of observation were, at the same time, of the utmost use. He analyzed with discrimination the actions of her favourites — brought the experience of a mind full of passion and reflection to comment upon every subject, and taught her to refer each maxim and boasted virtue to her own sentiments and situation; thus to form a store of principle by which to direct her future life.

Nor were these more masculine studies the only lessons of Miss Jervis — needlework entered into her plan of education, as well as the careful inculcation of habits of neatness and order; and thus Elizabeth escaped for ever the danger she had hitherto run of wanting those feminine qualities without which every woman must be unhappy — and, to a certain degree, unsexed. The governess, meanwhile, was the most unobtrusive of human beings. She never showed any propensity to incommode her employer by making him feel her presence. Seated in a corner of the carriage, with a book in her hand, she adopted the ghostly rule of never speaking, except when spoken to. When stopping at inns, or when, on arriving at Constantinople, they became stationary, she was even less obtrusive. At first Falkner had deemed it proper to ask her to accompany them in their excursions and drives; but she was so alive to the impropriety of being seen with a gentleman, with only a young child for their companion, that she always preferred staying at home. After ranging a beautiful landscape, after enjoying the breezes of heaven and the sight of the finest views in the world, when Elizabeth returned, she always found her governess sitting in the same place, away from the window, (because, when in London, she had been told that it was not proper to look out of window,) even though the sublimest objects of nature were spread for her view; and employed on needlework, or the study of some language that might hereafter serve to raise her in the class of governesses. She had travelled over half the habitable globe, and part of the uninhabited — but she had never diverged from the prejudices and habits of home — no gleam of imagination shed its golden hue over her drab-coloured mind: whatever of sensibility existed to soften or dulcify, she sedulously hid; yet such was her serenity, her justice, her trustworthiness, and total absence of pretension, that it was impossible not to esteem, and almost to like her.

The trio, thus diverse in disposition, yet, by the force of a secret harmony, never fell into discord. Miss Jervis was valued, and by Elizabeth obeyed in all that concerned her vocation — she therefore was satisfied. Falkner felt her use, and gladly marked the good effects of application and knowledge on the character of his beloved ward — it was the moulding of a block of Parian marble into a Muse; all corners — all superfluous surface — all roughness departed — the intelligent, noble brow — the serious, inquiring eye — the mouth — seat of sensibility — all these were developed with new beauty, as animated by the aspiring soul within. Her gentleness and sweetness increased with the cultivation of her mind. To be wise and good was her ambition — partly to please her beloved father — partly because her young mind perceived the uses and beauty of knowledge.

If any thing could have cured the rankling wounds of Falkner's mind, it was the excellence of the young Elizabeth. Again and again he repeated to himself, that, brought up among the worldly and cold, her noblest qualities would either have been destroyed, or produced misery. In contributing to her happiness and goodness, he hoped to make some atonement for the past. There were many periods when remorse, and regret, and self-abhorrence held powerful sway over him: he was, indeed, during the larger portion of his time, in the fullest sense of the word — miserable. Yet there were gleams of sunshine he had never hoped to experience again — and he readily gave way to this relief; while he hoped that the worst of his pains were over.

In this idea he was egregiously mistaken. He was allowed to repose for a few years. But the cry of blood was yet unanswered — the evil he had committed unatoned; though they did not approach him, the consequences of his crime were full of venom and bitterness to others — and, unawares and unexpectedly, he was brought to view and feel the wretchedness of which he was the sole author.

CHAPTER VII.

Three more years passed thus over the head of the young Elizabeth; when, during the warm summer months, the wanderers established themselves for a season at Baden. They had hitherto lived in great seclusion — and Falkner continued to do so; but he was not sorry to find his adopted child noticed and courted by various noble ladies, who were charmed by the pure complexion — the golden hair, and spirited, though gentle, manners of the young English girl.

Elizabeth's characteristic was an enthusiastic affectionateness — every little act of kindness that she received excited her gratitude: she felt as if she never could — though she would constantly endeavour — repay the vast debt she owed her benefactor. She loved to repass in her mind those sad days when, under the care of the sordid Mrs. Baker, she ran every hazard of incurring the worst evils of poverty; ignorance, and blunted sensibility. She had preserved her little well-worn shoes, full of holes, and slipping from her feet, as a sort of record of her neglected situation. She remembered how her hours had been spent loitering on the beach — sometimes with her little book, from which her mother had taught her — oftener in constructing sand castles, decorated with pebbles and broken shells. She recollected how she had thus built an imitation of the church and church-yard, with its shady corner, and single stone, marking two graves: she remembered the vulgar, loud voice that called her from her employment, with, "Come, Missy, come to your dinner! The Lord help me! I wonder when any body else will give you a dinner." She called to mind the boasts of Mrs. Baker's children, contrasting their Sunday frock with hers — the smallest portion of cake given to her last, and with a taunt that made her little heart swell, and her throat feel choked, so that she could not eat it, but scattered it to the birds — on which she was beat for being wasteful; all this was contrasted with the vigilance, the tenderness, the respect of her protector. She brooded over these thoughts till he became sacred in her eyes; and, young as she was, her heart yearned and sickened for an occasion to demonstrate the deep and unutterable thankfulness that possessed her soul.

She was not aware of the services she rendered him in her turn. The very sight of her was the dearest — almost the only joy of his life. Devoured by disappointment, gloom, and remorse, he found no relief except in her artless prattle, or the consciousness of the good he did her. She perceived this, and was ever on the alert to watch his mood, and to try by every art to awaken complacent feelings. She did not know, it is true, the cause of his sufferings — the fatal memories that haunted him in the silence of night — and threw a dusky veil over the radiance of day. She did not see the fair, reproachful figure, that was often before him to startle and appal — she did not hear the shrieks that rung in his ears — nor behold her floating away, lifeless, on the turbid waves — who, but a little before, had stood in all the glow of life and beauty before him. All these agonizing images haunted silently his miserable soul, and Elizabeth could only see the shadow they cast over him, and strive to dissipate it. When she could perceive the dark hour passing off, chased away by her endeavours, she felt proud and happy. And when he told her that she had saved his life, and was his only tie to it — that she alone prevented his perishing miserably, or lingering in anguish and despair, her fond heart swelled with rapture; and what soul-felt vows she made to remain for ever beside him, and pay back to the last the incalculable debt she owed! If it be true that the most perfect love subsists between unequals — no more entire attachment ever existed, than that between this man of sorrows, and the happy innocent child. He, worn by passion, oppressed by a sense of guilt, his brow trenched by the struggles of many years — she, stepping pure and free into life, innocent as an angel — animated only by the most disinterested feelings. The link between them of mutual benefit and mutual interest had been cemented by time and habit — by each waking thought, and nightly dream. What is so often a slothful, unapparent sense of parental and filial duty, was with them a living, active spirit, for ever manifesting itself in some new form. It woke with them, went abroad with them — attuned the voice, and shone brightly in the eyes.

It is a singular law of human life, that the past, which apparently no longer forms a portion of our existence, never dies; new shoots, as it were, spring up at different intervals and places, all bearing the indelible characteristics of the parent stalk; the circular emblem of eternity is suggested by this meeting and recurrence of the broken ends of our life. Falkner had been many years absent from England. He had quitted it to get rid of the consequences of an act which he deeply deplored, but which he did not wish his enemies to have the triumph of avenging. So completely during this interval had he been cut off from any, even allusion to the past, that he often tried to deceive himself into thinking it a dream; — often into the persuasion, that, tragical as was the catastrophe he had brought about, it was in its result for the best. The remembrance of the young and lovely victim lying dead at his feet, prevented his ever being really the dupe of these fond deceits — but still, memory and imagination alone ministered to remorse — it was brought home to him by none of the effects from which he had separated himself by a vast extent of sea and land.

The sight of the English at Baden was exceedingly painful to him. They seemed so many accusers and judges; he sedulously avoided their resorts, and turned away when he saw any approach. Yet he permitted Elizabeth to visit among them, and heard her accounts of what she saw and heard even with pleasure; for every word showed the favourable impression she made, and the simplicity of her own tastes and feelings. It was a new world to her, to find herself talked to, praised and caressed, by decrepit, painted, but courteous old princesses, dowagers, and all the tribe of German nobility and English fashionable wanderers. She was much amused, and her lively descriptions often made Falkner smile, and pleased him by proving that her firm and unsophisticated heart was not to be deluded by adulation.

Soon, however, she became more interested by a strange tale she brought home, of a solitary boy. He was English — handsome, and well born — but savage, and secluded to a degree that admitted of no attention being paid him. She heard him spoken of at first, at the house of some foreigners. They entered on a dissertation on the peculiar melancholy of the English, that could develop itself in a lad scarcely sixteen. He was a misanthrope. He was seen rambling the country, either on foot, or on a pony — but he would accept no invitations — shunned the very aspect of his fellows — never appearing, by any chance, in the frequented walks about the baths. Was he deaf and dumb? Some replied in the affirmative, and yet this opinion gained no general belief. Elizabeth once saw him at a little distance, seated under a wide-spreading tree in a little dell — to her he seemed more handsome than any thing she had ever seen, and more sad. One day she was in company with a gentleman, who she was told was his father; a man somewhat advanced in years — of a stern, saturnine aspect — whose smile was a sneer, and who spoke of his only child, calling him that “unhappy boy,” in a tone that bespoke rather contempt than commiseration. It soon became rumoured that he was somewhat alienated in mind through the ill-treatment of his parent — and Elizabeth could almost believe this — she was so struck by the unfeeling and disagreeable appearance of the stranger.

All this she related to Falkner with peculiar earnestness—”If you could only see him,” she said, “if we could only get him here — we would cure his misery, and his wicked father should no longer torment him. If he is deranged, he is harmless, and I am sure he would love us. — It is too sad to see one so gentle and so beautiful pining away without any to love him.”

Falkner smiled at the desire to cure every evil that crossed her path, which is one of the sweetest illusions of youth, and asked, “Has he no mother?”

“No,” replied Elizabeth, “he is an orphan like me, and his father is worse than dead, as he is so inhuman. Oh! how I wish you would save him as you saved me.”

“That, I am afraid, would be out of my power,” said Falkner; “yet, if you can make any acquaintance with him, and can bring him here, perhaps we may discover some method of serving him.”

For Falkner had, with all his sufferings and his faults, much of the Don Quixote about him, and never heard a story of oppression without forming a scheme to relieve the victim. On this permission, Elizabeth watched for some opportunity to become acquainted with the poor boy. But it was vain. Sometimes she saw him at a distance; but if walking in the same path, he turned off as soon as he saw her; or, if sitting down, he got up, and disappeared, as if by magic. Miss Jervis thought her endeavours by no means proper, and would give her no assistance. “If any lady introduced him to you,” she said, “it would be very well; but, to run after a young gentleman, only because he looks unhappy, is very odd, and even wrong.”

Still Elizabeth persisted; she argued, that she did not want to know him herself, but that her father should be acquainted with him — and either induce his father to treat him better, or take him home to live with them.

They lived at some distance from the baths, in a shady dell, whose sides, a little further on, were broken and abrupt. One afternoon, they were lingering not far from their house, when they heard a noise among the underwood and shrubs above them, as if some one was breaking his way through. “It is he, — look!” cried Elizabeth; and there emerged from the covert, on to a more open, but still more precipitous path, the youth they had remarked: he was urging his horse, with wilful blindness to danger, down a declivity which the animal was unwilling to attempt. Falkner saw the danger, and was sure that the boy was unaware of how steep the path grew at the foot of the hill. He called out to him, but the lad did not heed his voice — in another minute the horse’s feet slipped, the rider was thrown over his head, and the animal himself rolled over. With a scream, Elizabeth sprang to the side of the fallen youth, but he rose without any appearance of great injury — or any complaint — evidently displeased at being observed: his sullen look merged into one of anxiety as he approached his fallen horse, whom, together with Falkner, he assisted to rise — the poor thing had fallen on a sharp point of a rock, and his side was cut and bleeding. The lad was now all activity, he rushed to the stream that watered the little dell, to procure water, which he brought in his hat to wash the wound; and as he did so, Elizabeth remarked to her father that he used only one hand, and that the other arm was surely hurt. Meanwhile Falkner had gazed on the boy with a mixture of admiration and pain. He was wondrously handsome; large, deep-set hazel eyes, shaded by long dark lashes — full at once of fire, and softness; a brow of extreme beauty, over which clustered a profusion of chesnut-coloured hair; an oval face; a person, light and graceful as a sculptured image — all this, added to an expression of gloom that amounted to sullenness, with which, despite the extreme refinement of his features, a certain fierceness even was mingled, formed a study a painter would have selected for a kind of ideal poetic sort of bandit stripling; but, besides this, there was resemblance, strange, and thrilling, that struck Falkner, and made him eye him with a painful curiosity. The lad spoke with fondness to his horse, and accepted the offer made that it should be taken to Falkner’s stable, and looked to by his groom.

“And you, too,” said Elizabeth, “you are in pain, you are hurt.”

“That is nothing,” said the youth; “let me see that I have not killed this poor fellow — and I am not hurt to signify.”

Elizabeth felt by no means sure of this. And while the horse was carefully led home, and his wound visited, she sent a servant off for a surgeon, believing, in her own mind, that the stranger had broken his arm. She was not far wrong — he had dislocated his wrist. “It were better had it been my neck," he muttered, as he yielded his hand to the gripe of the surgeon, nor did he seem to wince during the painful operation; far more annoyed was he by the eyes fixed upon him, and the questions asked — his manner, which had become mollified as he waited on his poor horse, resumed all its former repulsiveness; he looked like a young savage, surrounded by enemies whom he suspects, yet is unwilling to assail: and when his hand was bandaged, and his horse again and again recommended to the groom, he was about to take leave, with thanks that almost seemed reproaches, for having an obligation thrust on him, when Miss Jervis exclaimed, "Surely I am not mistaken — are you not Master Neville?"

Falkner started as if a snake had glided across his path, while the youth, colouring to the very roots of his hair, and looking at her with a sort of rage at being thus in a matter detected, replied, "My name is Neville."

"I thought so," said the other; "I used to see you at Lady Glenfell's. How is your father, Sir Boyvill?"

But the youth would answer to more; he darted at the questioner a look of fury, and rushed away. "Poor fellow!" cried Miss Jervis, "he is wilder than ever — his is a very sad case. His mother was the Mrs. Neville talked of so much once — she deserted him, and his father hates him. The young gentleman is half crazed, by ill treatment and neglect."

"Dearest father, are you ill?" cried Elizabeth — for Falkner had turned ashy pale — but he commanded his voice to say that he was well, and left the room; a few minutes afterwards he had left the house, and, seeking the most secluded pathways, walked quickly on as if to escape from himself. It would not do — the form of her son was before him — a ghost to haunt him to madness. Her son, whom she had loved with passion inexpressible, crazed by neglect and unkindness. Crazed he was not — every word he spoke showed a perfect possession of acute faculties — but it was almost worse to see so much misery in one so young. In person, he was a model of beauty and grace — his mind seemed formed with equal perfection; a quick apprehension, a sensibility, all alive to every touch; but these were nursed in anguish and wrong, and strained from their true conclusions into resentment, suspicion, and a fierce disdain of all who injured, which seemed to his morbid feelings all who named or approached him. Falkner knew that he was the cause of this evil. How different a life he had led, if his mother had lived! The tenderness of her disposition, joined to her great talents and sweetness, rendered her unparalleled in the attention she paid to his happiness and education. No mother ever equalled her — for no woman ever possessed at once equal virtues and equal capacities. How tenderly she had reared him, how devotedly fond she was, Falkner too well knew; and tones and looks, half forgotten, were recalled vividly to his mind at the sight of this poor boy, wretched and desolate through his rashness. What availed it to hate, to curse the father! — he had never been delivered over to this father, had never been hated by him, had his mother survived. All these thoughts crowded into Falkner's mind, and awoke an anguish, which time had rendered, to a certain degree, torpid. He regarded himself with bitter contempt and abhorrence — he feared, with a kind of insane terror, to see the youth again, whose eyes, so like hers, he had robbed of all expression of happiness, and clouded by eternal sorrow. He wandered on — shrouded himself in the deepest thickets, and clambered abrupt hills, so that, by breathless fatigue of body, he might cheat his soul of its agony.

Night came on, and he did not return home. Elizabeth grew uneasy — till at last, on making more minute inquiry, she found that he had come back, and was retired to his room.

It was the custom of Falkner to ride every morning with his daughter soon after sunrise; and on the morrow, Elizabeth had just equipped herself, her thoughts full of the handsome boy — whose humanity to his horse, combined with fortitude in enduring great personal pain, rendered far more interesting than ever. She felt sure that, having once commenced, their acquaintance would go on, and that his savage shyness would be conquered by her father's kindness. To alleviate the sorrows of his lot — to win his confidence by affection, and to render him happy, was a project that was occupying her delightfully — when the tramp of a horse attracted her attention — and, looking from the window, she saw Falkner ride off at a quick pace. A few minutes afterwards a note was brought to her from him. It said: —

"Dear Elizabeth,

"Some intelligence which I received yesterday obliges me unexpectedly to leave Baden. You will find me at Mayence. Request Miss Jervis to have every thing packed up as speedily as possible; and to send for the landlord, and give up the possession of our house. The rent is paid. Come in the carriage. I shall expect you this evening.

“Yours, dearest,

“J. Falkner.”

Nothing could be more disappointing than this note. Her first fairy dream beyond the limits of her home, to be thus brushed away at once. No word of young Neville — no hope held out of return! For a moment an emotion ruffled her mind, very like ill humour. She read the note again — it seemed yet more unsatisfactory — but in turning the page, she found a postscript. “Pardon me,” it said, “for not seeing you last night; I was not well — nor am I now.”

These few words instantly gave a new direction to her thoughts — her father not well, and she absent, was very painful — then she recurred to the beginning of the note. “Intelligence received yesterday,” — some evil news, surely — since the result was to make him ill — at such a word the recollection of his sufferings rushed upon her, and she thought no more of the unhappy boy, but, hurrying to Miss Jervis, entreated her to use the utmost expedition that they might depart speedily. Once she visited Neville’s horse; it was doing well, and she ordered it to be led carefully and slowly to Sir Boyvill’s stables.

So great was her impatience, that by noon they were in the carriage — and in a few hours they joined Falkner at Mayence. Elizabeth gazed anxiously on him. He was an altered man — there was something wild and haggard in his looks, that bespoke a sleepless night, and a struggle of painful emotion by which the very elements of his being were convulsed —”You are ill, dear father,” cried Elizabeth; “you have heard some news that afflicts you very much.”

“I have,” he replied; “but do not regard me: I shall recover the shock soon, and then all will be as it was before. Do not ask questions — but we must return to England immediately.”

To England! such a word Falkner had never before spoken — Miss Jervis looked almost surprised, and really pleased. A return to her native country, so long deserted, and almost forgotten, was an event to excite Elizabeth even to agitation — the very name was full of so many associations. Were they hereafter to reside there? Should they visit Treby? What was about to happen? She was bid ask no questions, and she obeyed — but her thoughts were the more busy. She remembered also that Neville was English, and she looked forward to meeting him, and renewing her projects for his welfare.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the human heart — and if observation does not err — more particularly in the heart of man, the passions exert their influence fitfully. With some analogy to the laws which govern the elements — they now sleep in calm, and now arise with the violence of furious winds. Falkner had latterly attained a state of feeling approaching to equanimity. He displayed more cheerfulness — a readier interest in the daily course of events — a power to give himself up to any topic discussed in his presence; but this had now vanished. Gloom sat on his brow — he was inattentive even to Elizabeth. Sunk back in the carriage — his eyes bent on vacancy, he was the prey of thoughts, each of which had the power to wound.

It was a melancholy journey. And when they arrived in London, Falkner became still more absorbed and wretched. The action of remorse, which had been for some time suspended, renewed its attacks, and made him look upon himself as a creature at once hateful and accursed. We are such weak beings that the senses have power to impress us with a vividness, which no mere mental operation can produce. Falkner had been at various time haunted by the probable consequences of his guilt on the child of his victim. He recollected the selfish and arrogant character of his father; and conscience had led him to reproach himself with the conviction, that whatever virtues young Neville derived from his mother, or had been implanted by her care, must have been rooted out by the neglect or evil example of his surviving parent. The actual effect of her loss he had not anticipated. There was something heart-breaking to see a youth, nobly gifted by nature and fortune, delivered over to a sullen resentment for unmerited wrongs — to dejection, if not to despair. An uninterested observer must deeply compassionate him; Elizabeth had done so, child as she was — with a pity almost painful from its excess — what then must he feel who knew himself to be the cause of all his woe?

Falkner was not a man to sit quietly under these emotions. In their first onset they had driven him to suicide; preserved, as by a miracle, he had exerted strong self-command, and, by dint of resolution, forced himself to live. Year after year had passed, and he abided by the sentence of life he had passed on himself — and, like the galley slave, the iron which had eaten into the flesh, galled less than when newly applied. But he was brought back from the patience engendered by custom, at the sight of the unfortunate boy. He felt himself accursed — God-reprobated — mankind (though they knew it not) abhorred him. He would no longer live — for he deserved to die. He would not again raise his hand against himself — but there are many gates to the tomb; he found no difficulty on selecting one by which to enter. He resolved to enter upon a scene of desperate warfare in a distant country, and to seek a deliverance from the pains of life by the bullet or the sword on the field of battle. Above all, he resolved that Elizabeth's innocence should no longer be associated with his guilt. The catastrophe he meditated must be sought alone; and she, whom he had lived to protect and foster, must be guarded from the hardships and perils to which he was about to deliver himself up.

Meditation on this new course absorbed him for some days. At first he had been sunk in despondency; as the prospect opened before him of activity allied to peril, and sought for the sake of the destruction to which it unavoidably led, his spirits rose; like a war-horse dreaming of the sound of a trumpet, his heart beat high in the hope of forgetting the consciousness of remorse in all the turbulence of battle, or the last forgetfulness of the grave. Still it was a difficult task to impart his plan to the orphan, and to prepare her for a separation. Several times he had tried to commence the subject, and felt his courage fail him. At length, being together one day, some weeks after their arrival in London — when, indeed, many steps had been already taken by him in furtherance of his project; at twilight, as they sat together near the window which looked upon one of the London squares — and they had been comparing this metropolis with many foreign cities — Falkner abruptly, fearful if he lost this occasion, of not finding another so appropriate, said, "I must bid you good-by, to-night, Elizabeth — to-morrow, early, I set out for the north of England."

"You mean to leave me behind?" she asked; "but you will not be away long?"

"I am going to visit your relations," he replied; "to disclose to them that you are under my care, and to prepare them to receive you. I hope soon to return, either to conduct you to them, or to bring one among them to welcome you here."

Elizabeth was startled. Many years had elapsed since Falkner had alluded to her alien parentage. She went by his name, she called him father; and the appellation scarcely seemed a fiction — he had been the kindest, fondest parent to her — nor had he ever hinted that he meant to forego the claim his adoption had given him, and to make her over to those who were worse than strangers in her eyes. If ever they had recurred to her real situation, he had not been chary of expressions of indignation against the Raby family. He had described with warm resentment the selfishness, the hardness of heart, and disdain of the well-being of those allied to them by blood, which too often subsists in aristocratic English families, when the first bond has been broken by any act of disobedience. He grew angry as he spoke of the indignity with which her mother had been treated — and the barbarous proposition of separating her from her only child; and he had fondly assured her that it was his dearest pride to render her independent of these unworthy and inhuman relations. Why were his intentions changed? His voice and look were ominous. Elizabeth was hurt — she did not like to object; she was silent — but Falkner deciphered her wounded feelings in her ingenuous countenance, and he too was pained; he could not bear that she should think him ungrateful — mindless of her affection, her filial attentions, and endearing virtues: he felt that he must, to a certain degree, explain his views — difficult as it was to make a segment of his feelings in any way take a definite or satisfactory shape.

"Do not think hardly of me, my own dear girl," he began; "for wishing that we should separate. God knows that it is a blow that will visit me far more severely than you. You will find relations and friends, who will be proud of you — whose affections you will win; — wherever you are, you will meet with love and admiration — and your sweet disposition and excellent qualities will make life happy. I depart alone. You are my only tie — my only friend — I break it and leave you — never can I find another. Henceforth, alone — I shall wander into distant and uncivilized countries, enter on a new and perilous career, during which I may perish miserably. You cannot share these dangers with me."

"But why do you seek them?" exclaimed Elizabeth, alarmed by this sudden prophecy of ill.

"Do you remember the day when we first met?" replied Falkner; "when my hand was raised against my own life, because I knew myself unworthy to exist. It is the same now. It is cowardly to live, feeling that I have forfeited every right to enjoy the blessings of life. I go that I may die — not by my own hand — but where I can meet death by the hand of others.”

Strangely and frightfully did these words fall on the ear of his appalled listener; he went on rapidly — for having once begun, the words he uttered relieved, in some degree, the misery that burthened his soul.

“This idea cannot astonish you, my love; you have seen too much of the secret of my heart; you have witnessed my fits of distress and anguish, and are not now told, for the first time, that grief and remorse weigh intolerably on me. I can endure the infliction no longer. May God forgive me in another world — the light of this I will see no more!”

Falkner saw the sort of astonished distress her countenance depicted; and, angry with himself for being its cause, was going on in a voice changed to one less expressive of misery, but Elizabeth, seized with dismay — the unbidden tears pouring from her eyes; her young — her child’s heart bursting with a new sense of horror — cast herself at his feet and, embracing his knees as he sat, exclaimed, “My dear, dear father! — my more than father, and only friend — you break my heart by speaking thus. If you are miserable, the more need that your child — the creature you preserved, and taught to love you — should be at your side to comfort — I had almost said to help you. You must not cast me off! Were you happy, you might desert me; but if you are miserable, I cannot leave you — you must not ask me — it kills me to think of it!”

The youthful, who have no experience of the changes of life, regard the present with far more awe and terror than those who have seen one turn in the hour-glass suffice to change, and change again, the colour of their lives. To be divided from Falkner, was to have the pillars of the earth shaken under her — and she clung to him, and looked up imploringly in his face, as if the next word he spoke were to decide all; he kissed her, and, seating her on his knee, said, “Let us talk of this more calmly, dearest — I was wrong to agitate you — or to mix the miserable thoughts forced on me by my wretchedness — with the prudent consideration of your future destiny. I feel it to be unjust to keep you from your relations. They are rich. We are ignorant of what changes and losses may have taken place among them, to soften their hearts — which, after all, were never shut against you. You may have become of importance in their eyes. Raby is a proud name, and we must not heedlessly forego the advantages that may belong to your right to it.”

“My dear father,” replied Elizabeth, “this talk is not for me. I have no wish to claim the kindness of those who treated my true parents ill. You are every thing to me. I am little more than a child, and cannot find words to express all I mean; but my truest meaning is, to show my gratitude to you till my dying day; to remain with you for ever, while you love me; and to be the most miserable creature in the world if you drive me from you. Have we not lived together since I was a little thing, no higher than your knee? And all the time you have been kinder than any father. When we have been exposed to storms, you have wrapped me round in your arms so that no drop could fall on my head. Do you remember that dreadful evening, when our carriage broke down in the wide, dark steppe; and you, covering me up, carried me in your arms, while the wind howled, and the freezing rain drove against you? You could hardly bear up; and when we arrived at the post-house, you, strong man as you are, fainted from exhaustion; while I, sheltered in your arms, was as warm and well as if it had been a summer’s day. You have earned me — you have bought me by all this kindness, and you must not cast me away!”

She clung round his neck — her face bathed in tears, sobbing and speaking in broken accents. As she saw him soften, she implored him yet more earnestly, till his heart was quite subdued; and, clasping her to his heart, he showered kisses on her head and neck; while, to his surprise, forgotten tears sprung to his own eyes. “For worlds I would not desert you,” he cried. “It is not casting you away that we should separate for a short time; for where I go, indeed, dearest, you cannot accompany me. I cannot go on living as I have done. For many years now my life has been spent in pleasantness and peace — I have no right to this — hardship and toil, and death, I ought to repay. I abhor myself for a coward, when I think of what others suffer through my deeds — while I am scathless. You can scarcely remember the hour when the touch of your little hand saved my life. My heart is not changed since then — I am unworthy to exist. Dear Elizabeth, you may one day hate me, when you know the misery I have caused to those who deserved better at my hands. The cry of my victim rings in my ears, and I am base to survive my crime. Let me, dearest, make my own the praise, that nothing graced my life more than the leaving it. To live a coward and a drone, suits vilely with my former acts of violence and ill. Let me gain peace of mind by exposing my life to danger. By advocating a just cause I may bring a blessing down upon my endeavours. I shall go to Greece. Theirs is a good cause — that of liberty and Christianity against tyranny and an evil faith. Let me die for it; and when it is known, as it will one day be, that the innocent perished through me, it will be added, that I died in the defence of the suffering and the brave. But you cannot go with me to Greece, dearest; you must await my return in this country."

"You go to die!" she exclaimed, "and I am to be far away. No, dear father, I am a little girl, but no harm can happen to me. The Ionian Isles are under the English government — there, at least, I may go. Athens too, I dare say, is safe. Dear Athens — we spent a happy winter there before the revolution began. You forget what a traveller I am — how accustomed to find my home among strangers in foreign and savage lands. No, dear father, you will not leave me behind. I am not unreasonable — I do not ask to follow you to the camp — but you must let me be near — in the same country as yourself."

"You force me to yield against my better reason," said Falkner. "This is not right — I feel that it is not so — one of your sex, and so young, ought not to be exposed to all I am about to encounter; — and if I should die, and leave you there desolate?"

"There are good Christians everywhere to protect the orphan," persisted Elizabeth. "As if you could die when I am with you! And if you died while I was far, what would become of me? Am I to be left, like a poor sailor's wife — to get a shocking, black-sealed letter, to tell me that, while I was enjoying myself, and hoping that you had long been — ? It is wicked to speak of these things — but I shall go with my own dear, dear father, and he shall not die!"

Falkner yielded to her tears, her caresses, and persuasions. He was not convinced, but he could not withstand the excess of grief she displayed at the thought of parting. It was agreed that she should accompany him to the Ionian Isles, and take up her residence there while he joined the patriot band in Greece. This point being decided upon, he was anxious that their departure should not be delayed a single hour, for most earnest was he to go, to throw off the sense of the present — to forget its pangs in anticipated danger.

Falkner played no false part with himself. He longed to die; nor did the tenderness and fidelity of Elizabeth disarm his purpose. He was convinced that she must be happier and more prosperous when he was removed. His tortured mind found relief when he thought of sacrificing his life, and quitting it honourably on the field of battle. It was only by the prospect of such a fate that he shut his eyes to sterner duties. In his secret heart, he knew that the course demanded of him by honour and conscience, was to stand forth, declare his crime, and reveal the mysterious tragedy, of which he was the occasion, to the world; but he dared not accuse himself, and live. It was this that urged him to the thoughts of death. “When I am no more,” he told himself, “let all be declared — let my name be loaded with curses — but let it be added, that I died to expiate my guilt. I cannot be called upon to live with a brand upon my name; soon it will be all over, and then let them heap obloquy, pyramid-high, upon my grave! Poor Elizabeth will become a Raby; and, once cold beneath the sod, no more misery will spring from acts of mine!”

Actuated by these thoughts, Falkner drew up two narratives — both short. The tenor of one need not be mentioned in this place. The other stated how he had found Elizabeth, and adopted her. He sealed up with this the few documents that proved her birth. He also made his will — dividing his property between his heir at law and adopted child — and smiled proudly to think, that, dowered thus by him, she would be gladly received into her father’s family.

Every other arrangement for their voyage was quickly made, and it remained only to determine whether Miss Jervis should accompany them. Elizabeth’s mind was divided. She was averse to parting with an unoffending and kind companion, and to forego her instructions — though, in truth, she had got beyond them. But she feared that the governess might hereafter shackle her conduct. Every word Falkner had let fall concerning his desire to die, she remembered and pondered upon. To watch over and to serve him was her aim in going with him. Child as she was, a thousand combinations of danger presented themselves to her imagination, when her resolution and fearlessness might bring safety. The narrow views and timid disposition of Miss Jervis might impede her grievously.

The governess herself was perplexed. She was startled when she heard of the new scheme. She was pleased to find herself once again in England, and repugnant to the idea of leaving so soon again for so distant a region, where a thousand perils of war and pestilence would beset every step. She was sorry to part with Elizabeth, but some day that time must come; and others, dearer from ties of relationship, lived in England from whom she had been too long divided. Weighing these things, she showed a degree of hesitation that caused Falkner to decide as his heart inclined, and to determine that she should not accompany him. She went with them as far as Plymouth, where they embarked. Elizabeth, so long a wanderer, felt no regret in leaving England. She was to remain with one who was far more than country — who was indeed her all. Falkner felt a load taken from his heart when his feet touched the deck of the vessel that was to bear them away — half his duty was accomplished — the course begun which would lead to the catastrophe he coveted. The sun shone brightly on the ocean, the breeze was fresh and favourable. Miss Jervis saw them push from shore with smiles and happy looks — she saw them on the deck of the vessel, which, with sails unfurled, had already begun its course over the sea. Elizabeth waved her handkerchief — all grew confused; the vessel itself was sinking beneath the horizon, and long before night no portion of her canvass could be perceived.

“I wonder,” thought Miss Jervis, “whether I shall ever see them again!”

CHAPTER IX.

Three years from this time, Elizabeth found herself in the position she had vaguely anticipated at the outset, but which every day spent in Greece showed her as probable, if not inevitable. These three years brought Falkner to the verge of the death he had gone out to seek. He lay wounded, a prey of the Greek fever, to all appearance about to die; while she watched over him, striving, not only to avert the fatal consequences of disease, but also to combat the desire to die which destroyed him.

In describing Elizabeth's conduct during these three years, it may be thought that the type is presented of ideal and almost unnatural perfection. She was, it is true, a remarkable creature; and unless she had possessed rare and exalted qualities, her history had not afforded a topic for these pages. She was intelligent, warm-hearted, courageous, and sincere. Her lively sense of duty was perhaps her chief peculiarity. It was that which strung to such sweet harmony the other portions of her character. This had been fostered by the circumstances of her life. Her earliest recollection was of her dying parents. Their mutual consolations, the bereaved widow's lament, and her talk of another and better world, where all would meet again who fulfilled their part virtuously in this world. She had been taught to remember her parents as inheriting the immortal life promised to the just, and to aspire to the same. She had learnt, from her mother's example, that there is nothing so beautiful and praiseworthy as the sacrifice of life to the good and happiness of one beloved. She never forgot her debt to Falkner. She felt herself bound to him by stronger than filial ties. A father performs an imperious duty in cherishing his child; but all had been spontaneous benevolence in Falkner. His very faults and passions made his sacrifice the greater, and his generosity the more conspicuous. Elizabeth believed that she could never adequately repay the vast obligation which she was under to him.

Miss Jervis also had conduced to perfectionize her mind by adding to its harmony and justness. Miss Jervis, it is true, might be compared to the rough-handed gardener, whose labours are without elegance, and yet to whose waterings and vigilance the fragrant carnation owes its peculiar tint, and the waxlike camellia its especial variety. It was through her that she had methodized her mind — through her that she had learnt to concentrate and prolong her attention, and to devote it to study. She had taught her order and industry — and, without knowing it, she had done more — she had inspired ardour for knowledge, delight in its acquisition, and a glad sense of self-approbation when difficulties were conquered by perseverance; and, when by dint of resolution, ignorance was exchanged for a clear perception of any portion of learning.

It has been said that every clever person is, to a certain degree, mad. By which it is to be understood, that every person whose mind soars above the vulgar, has some exalted and disinterested object in view to which they are ready to sacrifice the common blessings of life. Thus, from the moment that Elizabeth had brought Falkner to consent to her accompanying him to Greece, she had devoted herself to the task, first of saving his life, if it should be in danger; and, secondly, of reconciling him in the end to prolonged existence. There were many difficulties which presented themselves, since she was unaware of the circumstances that drove him to seek death as a remedy and an atonement; nor had she any desire to pry into her benefactor’s secrets: in her own heart, she suspected an overstrained delicacy or generosity of feeling, which exaggerated error, and gave the sting to remorse. But whatever was the occasion of his sufferings, she dedicated herself to their relief; and resolved to educate herself so as to fulfil the task of reconciling him to life, to the best of her ability.

Left at Zante, while he proceeded to join the patriot bands of Greece, she boarded in the house of a respectable family, but lived in the most retired manner possible. Her chief time was spent in study. She read to store her mind — to confirm its fortitude — to elevate its tone. She read also to acquire such precepts of philosophy and religion as might best apply to her peculiar task, and to learn those secrets of life and death which Falkner’s desire to die had brought so home to her juvenile imagination.

If a time is to be named when the human heart is nearest moral perfection, most alive and yet most innocent, aspiring to good, without a knowledge of evil, the period at which Elizabeth had arrived, — from thirteen to sixteen, — is it. Vague forebodings are awakened; a sense of the opening drama of life, unaccompanied with any longing to enter on it — that feeling is reserved for the years that follow; but at fourteen and fifteen we only feel that we are emerging from childhood, and we rejoice, having yet a sense that as yet it is not fitting that we should make one of the real actors on the world's stage. A dreamy delicious period, when all is unknown; and yet we feel that all is soon to be unveiled. The first pang has not been felt; for we consider childhood's woes (real and frightful as those sometimes are,) as puerile, and no longer belonging to us. We look upon the menaced evils of life as a fiction. How can care touch the soul which places its desires beyond lowminded thought! Ingratitude, deceit, treason — these have not yet engendered distrust of others, nor have our own weaknesses and errors planted the thorn of self-disapprobation and regret. Solitude is no evil, for the thoughts are rife with busy visions; and the shadows that flit around and people our reveries, have almost the substance and vitality of the actual world.

Elizabeth was no dreamer. Though brought up abstracted from common worldly pursuits, there was something singularly practical about her. She aimed at being useful in all her reveries. This desire was rendered still more fervent by her affection for Falkner — by her fears on his account — by her ardent wish to make life dear to him. All her employments, all her pleasures, referred themselves, as it were, to this primary motive, and were entirely ruled by it.

She portioned out the hours of each day, and adhered steadily to her self-imposed rules. To the early morning's ride, succeeded her various studies, of which music, for which she developed a true ear and delicate taste, formed one; one occupation relieved the other; from her dear books she had recourse to her needle, and, bending over her embroidery frame, she meditated on what she read; or, occupied by many conjectures and many airy dreams concerning Falkner, she became absorbed in reverie. Sometimes, from the immediate object of these, her memory reverted to the melancholy boy she had seen at Baden. His wild eyes — his haughty glance — his lively solicitude about the animal he had hurt, and uncomplaining fortitude with which he had endured bodily pain, were often present to her. She wished that they had not quitted Baden so suddenly: if they had remained but a few days longer, he might have learnt to love them; and even now he might be with Falkner, sharing his dangers, it is true, but also each guarding the other from that rash contempt of life in which they both indulged.

Her whole mind being filled by duties and affection, each day seemed short, yet each was varied. At dawn she rose lightly from her bed, and looked out over the blue sea and rocky shore; she prayed, as she gazed, for the safety of her benefactor; and her thoughts, soaring to her mother in heaven, asked her blessing to descend upon her child. Morning was not so fresh as her, as she met its first sweet breath; and, cantering along the beach, she thought of Falkner — his absence, his toils and dangers — with resignation, mingled with a hope that warmed into an ardent desire to see him again. Surely there is no object so sweet as the young in solitude. In after years — when death has bereaved us of the dearest — when cares, and regrets, and fears, and passions, evil either in their nature or their results, have stained our lives with black, solitude is too sadly peopled to be pleasing; and when we see one of mature years alone, we believe that sadness must be the companion. But the solitary thoughts of the young are glorious dreams, —

— their state,
Like to a lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate.

To behold this young and lovely girl wandering by the lonely shore, her thoughts her only companions; love for her benefactor her only passion, no touch of earth and its sordid woes about her, it was as if a new Eve, watched over by angels, had been placed in the desecrated land, and the very ground she trod grew into paradise.

Sometimes the day was sadly chequered by bad news brought from the continent of Greece. Sometimes it was rendered joyous by the arrival of a letter from her adored father. Sometimes he was with her, and he, animated by the sense of danger, and the knowledge of his usefulness to the cause he espoused, was eloquent in his narrations, overflowing in his affection to her, and almost happy in the belief that he was atoning for the past. The idea that he should fall in the fields of Greece, and wash out with his heart’s blood the dark blot on his name, gave an elevation to his thoughts, a strained and eager courage and fortitude that accorded with his fiery character. He was born to be a soldier; not the military man of modern days, but the hero who exposed his life without fear, and found joy in battle and hard-earned victory, when these were sought and won for a good cause, from the cruel oppressor.

CHAPTER X.

During Falkner's visits to Zante, Elizabeth had been led to remark the faithful attentions of his chief follower, an Albanian Greek. This man had complained to his young mistress of the recklessness with which Falkner exposed himself — of the incredible fatigue he underwent — and his belief that he must ere long fall a victim to his disdain of safety and repose; which, while it augmented the admiration his courage excited, was yet not called for by the circumstances of the times. He would have been termed rash and fool-hardy, but that he maintained a dignified composure throughout, joined to military skill and fertility of resource; and while contempt of life led him invariably to select the post of danger for himself, he was sedulous to preserve the lives of those under his command. His early life had familiarized him with the practices of war. He was a valuable officer; kind to his men, and careful to supply their wants, while he contended for no vain distinctions; and was ready, on all occasions, to undertake such duties as others shrunk from, as leading to certain death.

Elizabeth listened to Vasili's account of his hair-breadth escapes, his toils, and desperate valour, with tearful eyes and an aching heart. "Oh! that I could attach him to life!" she thought. She never complained to him, nor persuaded him to alter his desperate purpose, but redoubled her affectionate attentions. When he left her, after a hurried visit, she did not beseech him to preserve himself; but her tearful eyes, the agony with which she returned his parting embrace, her despondent attitude as his bark left the shore; and when he returned, her eager joy — her eye lighted up with thankful love — all bespoke emotions that needed no other interpreter, and which often made him half shrink from acting up to the belief he had arrived at, that he ought to die, and that he could only escape worse and ignominious evils, by a present and honourable death.

As time passed on — as by the arrival of the forces from Egypt the warfare grew more keen and perilous — as Vasili renewed the sad tale of his perils at each visit, with some added story of lately and narrowly escaped peril — fear began to make too large and engrossing a portion of her daily thoughts. She ceased to take in the ideas as she read — her needle dropped from her hand — and, as she played, the music brought streams of tears from her eyes, to think of the scene of desolation and suffering in which she felt that she should soon be called upon to take a part. There was no help or hope, and she must early learn the woman's first and hardest lesson, to bear in silence the advance of an evil, which might be avoided, but for the unconquerable will of another. Almost she could have called her father cruel, had not the remembrance of the misery that drove him to desperation, inspired pity, instead of selfish resentment.

He had passed a few days with her, and the intercourse they held, had been more intimate and more affectionate than ever. As she grew older, her mind enriched by cultivation, and developed by the ardour of her attachment, grew more on an equality with his experienced one, than could have been the case in mere childhood. They did not take the usual position of father and child, — the instructor and instructed — the commander and the obedient — They talked with open heart, and tongue

Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends. —

And the inequality which made her depend on him, and caused him to regard her as the creature who was to prolong his existence, as it were, beyond the grave, into which he believed himself to be descending, gave a touch of something melancholy to their sympathy, without which, in this shadowy world, nothing seems beautiful and enduring.

He left her; and his little bark, under press of sail, sped merrily through the waves. She stood to watch — her heart warmed by the recollection of his fervent affection — his attentive kindness. He had ever been brave and generous; but now he had become so sympathising and gentle, that she hoped that the time was not far off when moral courage would spring from that personal hardihood which is at once so glorious and so fearful. "God shield you, my father!" she thought, "God preserve you, my more than father, for happier thoughts and better days! For the full enjoyment of, and control over, those splendid qualities with which nature has gifted you!"

Such was the tenor of her thoughts. Enthusiasm mingled with fond solicitude — and thus she continued her anxious watchings. By every opportunity she received brief letters, breathing affection, yet containing no word of self. Sometimes a phrase occurred directing her what to do if any thing fatal occurred to him, which startled and pained her; but there was nothing else that spoke of death — nor any allusion to his distaste for life. Autumn was far advanced — the sounds of war were somewhat lulled; and, except in small skirmishing parties, that met and fought under cover of the ravines and woods, all was quiet. Elizabeth felt less fearful than usual. She wrote to ask when Falkner would again visit her; and he, in reply, promised so to do, immediately after a meditated attack on a small fortress, the carrying of which was of the first import to the safe quartering of his little troop during the winter. She read this with delight — she solaced herself with the prospect of a speedier and longer visit than usual; with childish thoughtlessness she forgot that the attack on the town was a work of war, and might bring with it the fatal results of mortal struggle.

A few days after, a small, ill-looking letter was put into her hands — it was written in Romaic, and the meaning of its illegible ciphers could only be guessed at by a Greek. It was from Vasili — to tell her, in few words, that Falkner was lying in a small village, not far from the sea coast, opposite Zante. It mentioned that he had been long suffering from the Greek fever; and having been badly wounded in the late attack, the combined effects of wound and malady left little hopes of recovery; while the fatal moment was hastened by the absence of all medical assistance — the miserable state of the village where he was lying — and the bad air of the country around.

Elizabeth read as if in a dream — the moment then had come, the fatal moment which she had often contemplated with terror, and prayed Heaven to avert — she grew pale and trembling; but again in a moment she recalled her presence of mind, and summoned all the resolution she had endeavoured to store up to assist her at this extremity. She went herself to the chief English authority in the island — and obtained an order for a vessel to bring him off — instantly she embarked. She neither wept nor spoke; but sitting on the deck, tearless and pale, she prayed for speed, and that she might not find him dead. A few hours brought her to the desired port. Here a thousand difficulties awaited her — but she was not to be intimidated by all the threatened dangers — and only besought the people about her to admit of no excuses for delay. She was accompanied by an English surgeon and a few attendants. She longed to outspeed them all, and yet she commanded herself to direct every thing that was done; nor did her heart quail when a few shot, and the cry of the men about her, spoke of the neighbourhood of the enemy. It proved a false alarm — the shots came from a straggling party of Greeks — salutations were exchanged, and still she pushed on — her only thought was:—”Let me but find him alive — and then surely he will live!”

As she passed along, the sallow countenances and wasted figures of the peasants spoke of the frightful ravages of the epidemic by which Falkner was attacked — and the squalidness of the cabins and the filth of the villages were sights to make her heart ache; at length they drew near one which the guide told her was that named by Vasili. On inquiring they were directed down a sort of lane to a wretched dilapidated dwelling — in the court-yard of which were a party of armed Greeks, gathered together in a sort of ominous silence. This was the abode of Falkner; she alighted — and in a few minutes Vasili presented himself — his face painted with every mark of apprehension and sorrow — he led her on. The house was desolate beyond expression — there was no furniture — no glass in the windows — no token of human habitation beyond the weather-stained walls. She entered the room where her father lay — some mattrasses placed on the divan were all his bed — and there was nothing else in the room except a brazier to heat his food. Elizabeth drew near — and gazed in awe and grief. Already he was so changed that she could scarcely know him — his eyes sunk — his cheeks fallen, his brow streaked with pallid hues — a ghastly shadow lay upon his face, the apparent forerunner of death. He had scarcely strength sufficient to raise his hand — and his voice was hollow — yet he smiled when he saw her — and that smile, the last refuge of the soul that informs our clay, and even sometimes survives it, was all his own; it struck her to the heart — and her eyes were dimmed with tears while Vasili cast a wistful glance on her — as much as to say, “I have lost hope!”

“Thank you for coming — yet you ought not to be here,” hoarsely murmured the sick man. — Elizabeth kissed his hand and brow in answer — and despite of all her endeavours the tears fell from her eyes on his sunken cheek; again he smiled. “It is not so bad,” he said—”do not weep, I am willing to die! I do not suffer very much — though I am weary of life.” —

The surgeon was now admitted. He examined the wound, which was of a musket ball, in his side. He dressed it, and administered some potion, from which the patient received instant relief; and then joined the anxious girl, who had retired to another room.

"He is in a very dangerous state," the surgeon remarked, in reply to her anxious looks. "Nothing certain can be pronounced yet. But our first care must be to remove him from this pestiferous place — the fever and wound combined, must destroy him. — Change of air may produce an amelioration in the former."

With all the energy, which was her prominent characteristic, Elizabeth caused a litter to be prepared — horses hired and every thing arranged so that their journey might be commenced at day-break. Every one went early to rest, to enjoy some repose before the morrow's journey, except Elizabeth; she spent the livelong night watching beside Falkner, marking each change, tortured by the groans that escaped him in sleep, or the suppressed complaints that fell from his lips — by the restlessness and fever that rendered each moment full of fate. The glimmering and dreary light of the lamp increased even the squalid and bare appearance of the wretched chamber in which he lay — Elizabeth gazed for a moment from the casement to see how moved the stars — and there, without — nature asserted herself — and it was the lovely land of Greece that met her eyes; the southern night reigned in all its beauty — the stars hung refulgent lamps in the transparent ether — the fire-flies darted and wheeled among the olive groves or rested in the myrtle hedges, flashing intermittingly, and filling for an instant a small space around them with fairy brightness; each form of tree, of rocky fragment, and broken upland, lay in calm and beautiful repose; she turned to the low couch on which lay all her hope — her idolized father — the streaked brow — the nerveless hand — half open eye, and hard breathing, betokened a frightful stage of weakness and suffering.

The scene brought unsought into her mind the lines of the English poet, which so touchingly describes the desolation of Greece, — blending the idea of mortal suffering with the long drawn calamities of that oppressed country. The words, the lines, crowded on her memory; and a chord was struck in her heart, as she ejaculated, "No! no, not so! Not the first day of death — not now, or ever!" As she spoke, she dissolved in tears — and weeping long and bitterly, she became afterwards calmer — the rest of her watch passed more peacefully. Even the patient suffered less as night verged into morning.

At an early hour all was ready. Falkner was placed in the litter; and the little party, gladly leaving the precincts of the miserable village, proceeded slowly towards the sea shore. Every step was replete with pain and danger. Elizabeth was again all herself. Self-possessed and vigilant — she seemed at once to attain years of experience. No one could remember that it was a girl of sixteen who directed them. Hovering round the litter of the wounded man, and pointing out how best to carry him, so that he might suffer least — as the inequalities of the ground, the heights to climb, and the ravines to cross, made it a task of difficulty. Now and then the report of a musket was heard, sometimes a Greek cap — not unoften mistaken for a turban, peered above the precipice that overlooked the road — frequent alarms were given — but she was frightened by none. Her large eyes dilated and darkened as she looked towards the danger pointed out — and she drew nearer the litter, as a lonely mother might to the cradle of her child, when in the stillness of night some ravenous beast intruded on a savage solitude; but she never spoke, except to point out the mistakes she was the first to perceive — or to order the men to proceed lightly, but without fear — nor to allow their progress to be checked by vain alarms.

At length the sea shore was gained — and Falkner at last placed on the deck of the vessel — reposing after the torture which, despite every care, the journey had inflicted. Already Elizabeth believed that he was saved — and yet, one glance at his wan face, and emaciated figure re-awakened every fear He looked — and all around believed him to be — a dying man.

CHAPTER XI.

Arrived at Zante, placed in a cool and pleasant chamber, attended by a skilful surgeon — and watched over by the unsleeping vigilance of Elizabeth, Falkner slowly receded from the shadow of death — whose livid hue had sat upon his countenance. Still health was far. His wound was attended by bad symptoms — and the fever eluded every attempt to dislodge it from his frame. He was but half saved from the grave; emaciated and feeble, his disorder even tried to vanquish his mind; but that resisted with more energy than his prostrate body. The death he had gone out to seek — he awaited with courage — yet he no longer expressed an impatience of existence, but struggled to support with manly fortitude at once the inroads of disease, and the long nourished sickness of his soul.

It had been a hard trial to Elizabeth to watch over him, while each day the surgeon's serious face gave no token of hope. But she would not despond, and in the end his recovery was attributed to her careful nursing. She never quitted his apartment, except for a few hours sleep; and even then, her bed was placed in the chamber adjoining his. If he moved, she was roused, and at his side, divining the cause of his uneasiness, and alleviating it. There were other nurses about him, and Vasili the most faithful of all — but she directed them, and brought that discernment and tact of which a woman only is capable. Her little soft hand smoothed his pillow, or placed upon his brow, cooled and refreshed him. She scarcely seemed to feel the effects of sleepless nights and watchful days — every minor sensation was merged in the hope and resolution to preserve him.

Several months were passed in a state of the utmost solicitude. At last he grew a little better — the fever intermitted — and the wound gave signs of healing. On the first day that he was moved to an open alcove, and felt some enjoyment from the soft air of evening, all that Elizabeth had gone through was repaid. She sat on a low cushion near; and his thin fingers now resting on her head, now playing with the ringlets of her hair, gave token by that caress, that though he was silent and his look abstracted, his thoughts were occupied upon her. At length he said:—”Elizabeth, you have again saved my life.”

She looked up with a quick, glad look, and her eyes brightened with pleasure.

"You have saved my life twice," he continued; "and through you, it seems, I am destined to live. I will not quarrel again with existence, since it is your gift; I will hope, prolonged as it has been by you, that it will prove beneficial to you. I have but one desire now — it is to be the source of happiness to you."

"Live! dear father, live! and I must be happy!" she exclaimed.

"God grant that it prove so!" he replied, pressing her hand to his lips. "The prayers of such as I, too often turn to curses. But you, my own dearest, must be blest; and as my life is preserved, I must hope that this is done for your sake, and that you will derive some advantage from it."

"Can you doubt it?" said Elizabeth. "Could I ever be consoled if I lost you? I have no other tie on earth — no other friend — nor do I wish for any. Only put aside your cruel thoughts of leaving me for ever, and every blessing is mine."

"Dear, generous, faithful girl! Yet the time will come when I shall not be all in all to you; and then, will not my name — my adoption — prove a stumbling-block to your wishes?"

"How could that happen?" she said. "But do not, dear father, perplex yourself with looking either forward or backward — repose on the present, which has nothing in it to annoy you; or rather, your gallantry — your devotion to the cause of an injured people, must inspire you with feelings of self-gratulation, and speak peace to your troubles. Let the rest of your life pass away as a dream; banish quite those thoughts that have hitherto made you wretched. Your life is saved, despite yourself. Accept existence as an immediate gift from heaven; and begin life, from this moment, with new hopes, new resolves. Whatever your error was, which you so bitterly repent, it belonged to another state of being. Your remorse, your resignation, has effaced it; or if any evil results remain, you will rather exert yourself to repair them — than uselessly to lament.

"To repair my error — my crime!" cried Falkner, in an altered voice, while a cloud gathered over his face, "No! no! that is impossible! never till we meet in another life, can I offer reparation to the dead! But I must not think of this now; it is too ungrateful to you to dwell upon thoughts which would deliver me over to the tomb. Yet one thing I would say. I left a short detail in England of the miserable event that must at last destroy me, but it is brief and unsatisfactory. During my midnight watchings in Greece, I prepared a longer account. You know that little rosewood box, which, even when dying, I asked for; it is now close to my bed; the key is here attached to my watch-chain. That box contains the narrative of my crime; when I die, you will read it and judge me."

"Never! never!" exclaimed Elizabeth, earnestly. "Dear father, how cruelly you have tormented yourself by dwelling on and writing about the past! and do you think that I would ever read accusations against you, the guardian angel of my life, even though written by yourself? Let me bring the box — let me burn the papers — let no word remain to tell of misery you repent, and have atoned for."

Falkner detained her, as she would have gone to execute her purpose. "Not alone for you, my child," he said, "did I write, though hereafter, when you hear me accused, it may be satisfactory to learn the truth from my own hand. But there are others to satisfy — an injured angel to be vindicated — a frightful mystery to be unveiled to the world. I have waited till I should die to fulfil this duty, and still, for your sake, I will wait; for while you love me and bear my name, I will not cover it with obloquy. But if I die, this secret must not die with me. I will say no more now, nor ask any promises: when the time comes, you will understand and submit to the necessity that urged me to disclosure."

"You shall be obeyed, I promise you," she replied. "I will never set my reason above yours, except in asking you to live for the sake of the poor little thing you have preserved."

"Have I preserved you, dearest? I often fear I did wrong in not restoring you to your natural relations. In making you mine, and linking you to my blighted fortunes, I may have prepared unnumbered ills for you. Oh, how sad a riddle is life! we hear of the straight and narrow path of right in youth, and we disdain the precept; and now would I were sitting among the nameless crowd on the common road-side, instead of wandering blindly in this dark desolation; and you — I have brought you with me into the wilderness of error and suffering; it was wrong — it was mere selfishness; yet who could foresee?"

"Talk not of foreseeing," said Elizabeth, soothingly, as she pressed his thin hand to her warm young lips, "think only of the present; you have made me yours for ever — you cannot cast me off without inflicting real pangs of misery, instead of those dreamy ills you speak of. I am happy with you, attending on, being of use to you. What would you more?"

"Perhaps it is so," replied Falkner, "and your good and grateful heart will repay itself for all its sacrifices. I never can. Henceforth I will be guided by you, my Elizabeth. I will no longer think of what I have done, and what yet must be suffered, but wrap up my existence in you; live in your smiles, your hopes, your affections."

This interchange of heart-felt emotions did good to both. Perplexed, nay, tormented by conflicting duties, Falkner was led by her entreaties to dismiss the most painful of his thoughts, and to repose at last on those more healing. The evil and the good of the day, he resolved should henceforth be sufficient; his duty towards Elizabeth was a primary one, and he would restrict himself to the performing it.

There is a magic in sympathy, and the heart's overflowing, that we feel as bliss, though we cannot explain it. This sort of joy Elizabeth felt after this conversation with her father. Their hearts had united; they had mingled thought and sensation, and the intimacy of affection that resulted was an ample reward to her for every suffering. She loved her benefactor with inexpressible truth and devotedness, and their entire and full interchange of confidence gave a vivacity to this sentiment which of itself was happiness.

CHAPTER XII.

Though saved from immediate death, Falkner could hardly be called convalescent. His wound did not heal healthily, and the intermitting fever, returning again and again, laid him prostrate after he had acquired a little strength. After a winter full of danger, it was pronounced that the heats of a southern summer would probably prove fatal to him, and that he must be removed without delay to the bracing air of his native country.

Towards the end of the month of April, they took their passage to Leghorn. It was a sad departure; the more so that they were obliged to part with their Greek servant, on whose attachment Elizabeth so much depended. Vasili had entered into Falkner's service at the instigation of the Protokleft, or chief of his clan; when the Englishman was obliged to abandon the cause of Greece, and return to his own country, Vasili, though lothe and weeping, went back to his native master. The young girl, being left without any attendant on whom she could wholly rely, felt singularly desolate; for as her father lay on the deck, weak from the exertion of being removed, she felt that his life hung by a very slender thread, and she shrank half affrighted from what might ensue to her, friendless and alone.

Her presence of mind and apparent cheerfulness was never, however, diminished by these secret misgivings; and she sat by her father's low couch, and placed her hands in his, speaking encouragingly, while her eyes filled with tears as the rocky shores of Zante became indistinct and vanished.

Their voyage was without any ill accident, except that the warm south-east wind, which favoured their navigation, sensibly weakened the patient; and Elizabeth grew more and more eager to proceed northward. At Leghorn they were detained by a long and vexatious quarantine. The summer had commenced early, with great heats; and the detention of several weeks in the lazaretto nearly brought about what they had left Greece to escape. Falkner grew worse. The sea breezes a little mitigated his sufferings; but life was worn away by repeated struggles, and the most frightful debility threatened his frame with speedy dissolution. How could it be otherwise? He had wished to die. He sought death where it lurked insidiously in the balmy airs of Greece, or met it openly armed against him on the field of battle. Death wielded many weapons; and he was struck by many, and the most dangerous. Elizabeth hoped, in spite of despair; yet, if called away from him, her heart throbbed wildly as she re-entered his apartment; there was no moment when the fear did not assail her, that she might, on a sudden, hear and see that all was over.

An incident happened at this period, to which Elizabeth paid little attention at the time, engrossed as she was by mortal fears. They had been in quarantine about a fortnight, when, one day, there entered the gloomy precincts of the lazaretto, a tribe of English people. Such a horde of men, women, and children, as gives foreigners a lively belief that we islanders are all mad, to migrate in this way, with the young and helpless, from comfortable homes, in search of the dangerous and comfortless. This roving band consisted of the eldest son of an English nobleman and his wife — four children, the eldest being six years old — a governess — three nursery-maids, two lady's maids, and a sufficient appendage of men-servants. They had all just arrived from viewing the pyramids of Egypt. The noise and bustle — the servants insisting on making every body comfortable, where comfort was not — the spreading out of all their own camp apparatus — joined to the seeming indifference of the parties chiefly concerned, and the unconstrained astonishment of the Italians — was very amusing. Lord Cecil, a tall, thin, plain, quiet, aristocratic-looking man, of middle age, dropped into the first chair — called for his writing-case — began a letter, and saw and heard nothing that was going on. Lady Cecil — who was not pretty, but lively and elegant — was surrounded by her children — they seemed so many little angels, with blooming cheeks and golden hair — the youngest cherub slept profoundly amidst the din; the others were looking eagerly out for their dinner.

Elizabeth had seen their entrance — she saw them walking in the garden of the lazaretto — one figure, the governess, though disguised by a green shade over her eyes, she recognized — it was Miss Jervis. Desolate and sad as the poor girl was, a familiar face and voice was a cordial drop to comfort her; and Miss Jervis was infinitely delighted to meet her former pupil. She usually looked on those intrusted to her care as a part of the machinery that supported her life; but Elizabeth had become dear to her from the irresistible attraction that hovered round her — arising from her carelessness of self, and her touching sensibility to the sufferings of all around. She had often regretted having quitted her, and she now expressed this, and even her silence grew into something like talkativeness upon the unexpected meeting. “I am very unlucky,” she said; “I would rather, if I could with propriety, live in the meanest lodging in London, than in the grandest tumble-down palace of the East, which people are pleased to call so fine — I am sure they are always dirty and out of order. Lady Glenfell recommended me to Lady Cecil — and, certainly, a more generous and sweet-tempered woman does not exist — and I was very comfortable, living at the Earl of G—’s seat in Hampshire, and having almost all my time to myself. One day, to my misfortune, Lady Cecil made a scheme to travel — to get out of her father-in-law’s way, I believe — he is rather a tiresome old man. Lord Cecil does any thing she likes. All was arranged, and I really thought I should leave them — I so hated the idea of going abroad again, but Lady Cecil said that I should be quite a treasure, having been everywhere, and knowing so many languages, and that she should have never thought of going, but from my being with her; so, in short, she was very generous, and I could not say no: accordingly we set out on our travels, and went first to Portugal — where I had never been — and do not know a word of Portuguese; and then through Spain — and Spanish is Greek to me — and worse — for I do know a good deal of Romaic. I am sure I do not know scarcely where we went — but our last journey was to see the pyramids of Egypt — only, unfortunately, I caught the ophthalmia the moment we got to Alexandria, and could never bear to see a ray of light the whole time we were in that country.”

As they talked, Lady Cecil came to join her children. She was struck by Elizabeth’s beaming and noble countenance, which bore the impress of high thought, and elevated sentiments. Her figure, too, had sprung up into womanhood — tall and graceful — there was an elasticity joined to much majesty in all her appearance; not the majesty of assumption, but the stamp of natural grandeur of soul, refined by education, and softened by sympathetic kindness for the meanest thing that breathed. Her dignity did not spring in the slightest degree from self-worship, but simply from a reliance on her own powers, and a forgetfulness of every triviality which haunts the petty-minded. No one could chance to see her, without stopping to gaze; and her peculiar circumstances — the affectionate and anxious daughter of a dying man — without friend or support, except her own courage and patience — never daunted, yet always fearfully alive to his danger — rendered her infinitely interesting to one of her own sex. Lady Cecil was introduced to her by Miss Jervis, and was eager to show her kindness. She offered that they should travel together; but as Elizabeth's quarantine was out long before that of the new comers, and she was anxious to reach a more temperate climate, she refused; yet she was thankful, and charmed by the sweetness and cordiality of her new acquaintance.

Lady Cecil was not handsome, but there was something, not exactly amounting to fascination, but infinitely taking in her manner and appearance. — Her cheerfulness, good-nature, and high breeding, diffused a grace and a pleasurable easiness over her manners, that charmed every body; good sense and vivacity, never loud nor ever dull, rendered her spirits agreeable. She was apparently the same to every body; but she well knew how to regulate the inner spirit of her attentions while their surface looked so equal: no one ventured to go beyond her wishes, — and where she wished, any one was astonished to find how far they could depend on her sincerity and friendliness. Had Elizabeth's spirit been more free, she had been delighted; as it was, she felt thankful, merely for a kindness that availed her nothing.

Lady Cecil viewed the dying Falkner and his devoted, affectionate daughter with the sincerest compassion; dying she thought him, for he was wasted to a shadow, his cheeks colourless, his hands yellow and thin — he could not stand upright — and when, in the cool of evening, he was carried into the open air, he seemed scarcely able to speak from very feebleness. Elizabeth's face bespoke continual anxiety; her vigilance, her patience, her grief, and her resignation, formed a touching picture which it was impossible to contemplate without admiration. Lady Cecil often tried to win her away from her father's couch, and to give herself a little repose from perpetual attendance; she yielded but for a minute; while she conversed, she assumed cheerfulness — but in a moment after, she had glided back and taken her accustomed place at her father's pillow.

At length their prison-gates were opened, and Falkner was borne on board a felucca, bound for Genoa. Elizabeth took leave of her new friend, and promised to write, but while she spoke, she forgot what she said — for, dreading at each moment the death of her benefactor, she did not dare look forward, and had little heart to go beyond the circle of her immediate, though dreary sensations. A fair wind bore them to Genoa, and Falkner sustained the journey very well: at Genoa they transferred themselves to another vessel, and each mile they gained towards France lightened the fears of Elizabeth. But this portion of their voyage was not destined to be so prosperous. They had embarked at night, and had made some way during the first hours; but by noon on the following day they were becalmed; the small vessel — the burning sun — the shocking smells — the want of all comfortable accommodation, combined to bring on a relapse — and again Falkner seemed dying. The very crew were struck with pity; while Elizabeth, wild almost with terror, and the impotent wish to save, preserved an outward calm, more shocking almost than shrieks and cries. At evening she caused him to be carried on the deck, and placed on a couch, with a little sort of shed prepared for him there; he was too much debilitated to feel any great degree of relief — there was a ghastly hue settled on his face that seemed gradually sinking into death. Elizabeth's courage almost gave way; there was no physician, no friend; the servants were frightened, the crew pitying, but none could help.

As this sense of desertion grew strong, a despair she had never felt before invaded her; and it was as she thus hung over Falkner's couch, the tears fast gathering in her eyes, and striving to check the convulsive throb that rose in her throat, that a gentle voice said, "Let me place this pillow under your father's head, he will rest more quietly." The voice came as from a guardian angel; she looked up thankfully, the pillow was placed, some drink administered, a sail extended, so as to shield him from the evening sun, and a variety of little attentions paid, which evidently solaced the invalid; and the evening breeze rising as the sun went down, the air grew cool, and he sunk at last into a profound sleep. When night came on, the stranger conjured Elizabeth to take some repose, promising to watch by Falkner. She could not resist the entreaty, which was urged with sincere earnestness; going down, she found a couch had been prepared for her with almost a woman's care by the stranger; and before she slept, he knocked at her door to tell her — Falkner having awoke, expressed himself as much easier, and very glad to hear that Elizabeth had retired to rest; after this he had dropped asleep again.

It was a new and pleasant sensation to the lone girl to feel that there was one sharing her task, on whom she might rely. She had scarcely looked at or attended to the stranger while on deck; she only perceived that he was English, and that he was young; but now, in the quiet that preceded her falling asleep, his low, melodious voice sounded sweetly in her ears, and the melancholy and earnest expression of his handsome countenance reminded her of some one she had seen before, probably a Greek; for there was something almost foreign in his olive complexion, his soft, dark eyes, and the air of sentiment, mingled with a sort of poetic fervour, that characterized his countenance. With these thoughts Elizabeth fell asleep, and when early in the morning she rose, and made what haste she could to visit the little sort of hut erected for her father on deck, the first person she saw was the stranger, leaning on the bulwark, and looking on the sea with an air of softness and sadness that excited her sympathy. He greeted her with extreme kindness. “Your father is awake, and has inquired for you;” he said. Elizabeth, after thanking him, took her accustomed post beside Falkner. He might be better, but he was too weak to make much sign, and one glance at his colourless face renewed all her half-forgotten terrors.

Meanwhile the breeze freshened, and the vessel scudded through the blue sparkling waves. The heats of noon, though tempered by the gale, still had a bad effect on Falkner; and when, at about five in the evening — often in the south the hottest portion of the day, the air being thoroughly penetrated by the sun’s rays — they arrived at Marseilles, it became a task of some difficulty to remove him. Elizabeth and the stranger had interchanged little talk during the day; but he now came forward to assist in removing him to the boat — acting, without question, as if he had been her brother, guessing, as if by instinct, the best thing to be done, and performing all with activity and zeal. Poor Elizabeth, cast on these difficult circumstances, without relation or friend, looked on him as a guardian angel, consulted him freely, and witnessed his exertions in her behalf in a transport of gratitude. He did every thing for her, and would sit for hours in the room at the hotel, next to that in which Falkner lay, waiting to hear how he was, and if there was any thing to be done. Elizabeth joined him now and then; they were in a manner already intimate, though strangers; he took a lively interest in her anxieties, and she looked towards him for advice and help, relied on his counsels, and was encouraged by his consolations. It was the first time she had felt any friendship or confidence, except in Falkner; but it was impossible not to be won by her new friend’s gentleness, and almost feminine delicacy of attention, joined to all a man’s activity and readiness to do the thing that was necessary to be done. “I have an adopted father,” thought Elizabeth, “and this seems a brother dropped from the clouds.” He was of an age to be her brother, but few years older; in all the ardour and grace of early manhood, when developed in one of happy nature, unsoiled by the world.

Elizabeth, however, remained but a few days at Marseilles — it was of the first necessity to escape the southern heats, and Falkner was pronounced able to bear the voyage up the Rhone. The stranger showed some sadness at the idea of being left behind. In truth, if Elizabeth was gladdened and comforted by her new friend — he felt double pleasure in the contemplation of her beauty and admirable qualities. No word of self ever passed her lips. All thought, all care, was spent on him she called her father — and the stranger was deeply touched by her demonstrations of filial affection — her total abnegation of every feeling that did not centre in his comfort and recovery. He had been present one evening — though standing apart, when Falkner, awakening from sleep, spoke with regret of the fatigue Elizabeth endured, and the worthlessness of his life compared with all that she went through for his sake. Elizabeth replied at once with such energy of affection, such touching representation of the comfort she derived from his returning health, and such earnest entreaties for him to love life, that the stranger listened as if an angel spoke. Falkner answered, but the remorse that burthened his heart gave something of bitterness to his reply. And her eloquent, though gentle solicitations, that he would look on life in a better and nobler light — not rashly to leave its duties here, to encounter those he knew not of, in an existence beyond; and kind intimations, which exalting his repentance into a virtue, might reconcile him to himself — all this won the listener to a deep and wondering admiration. Not in human form had he ever seen embodied so much wisdom, and so much strong, yet tender emotion — none but woman could feel thus, but it was beyond woman to speak and to endure as she did. She spoke only just so openly, remembering the stranger’s presence, as to cast a veil over her actual relationship to Falkner, whom she called and wished to have believed to be her true father.

The fever of the sufferer being abated, a day was fixed for their departure from Marseilles. Their new friend appeared to show some inclination to accompany them in their river navigation as far as Lyons. Elizabeth thanked him with her gladdened eyes; she had felt the want of support, or rather she had experienced the inestimable benefit of being supported, during the sad crisis now and then brought about by Falkner's changeful illness; there was something, too, in the stranger very attractive, not the less so for the melancholy which often quenched the latent fire of his nature. That his disposition was really ardent, and even vivacious, many little incidents, when he appeared to forget himself, evinced — nay, sometimes his very gloom merged into sullen savageness, that showed that coldness was not the secret of his frequent fits of abstraction. Once or twice, on these occasions, Elizabeth was reminded, she knew not of whom — but some one she had seen before — till one day it flashed across her; could it be the sullen, solitary boy of Baden! Singularly enough, she did not even know her new friend's name; to those accustomed to foreign servants this will not appear strange; he was their only visitor, and "le monsieur" was sufficient announcement when he arrived — but Elizabeth remembered well that the youth's name was Neville — and, on inquiry, she learnt that this also was the appellation of her new acquaintance.

She now regarded him with greater interest. She recalled her girlish wish that he should reside with them, and benefit by the kindness of Falkner — hoping that his sullenness would be softened, and his gloom dissipated, by the affectionate attentions he would receive. She wished to discover in what degree time and other circumstances had operated to bring about the amelioration she had wished to be an instrument in achieving. He was altered — he was no longer fierce nor sullen — yet he was still melancholy, and still unhappy — and she could discern that as his former mood had been produced by the vehemence of his character fretting against the misfortunes of his lot; so it was by subduing every violence of temper that the change was operated — and she suspected that the causes that originally produced his unhappiness still remained. Yet violence of temper is not a right word to use; his temper was eminently sweet — he had a boiling ardour within — a fervent and a warm heart, which might produce vehemence of feeling, but never asperity of temper. All this Elizabeth remarked — and, as before, she longed to dissipate the melancholy that so evidently clouded his mind; and again she indulged fancies, that if he accompanied them, and was drawn near them, the affection he would receive must dissipate a sadness created by unfortunate circumstances in early youth — but not the growth of a saturnine disposition. She pitied him intensely, for she saw that he was often speechlessly wretched; but she reverenced his self-control, and the manner in which he threw off all his own engrossing feelings to sympathize with, and assist her.

They were now soon to depart, and Elizabeth was not quite sure whether Neville was to accompany them — he had gone to the boat to look after some arrangements made for the patient's comfort — and she sat with the invalid, expecting his return. Falkner reclined near a window, clasping her hand, looking on her with fondness, and speaking of all he owed her; and how he would endeavour to repay, by living, and making life a blessing to her. "I shall live," he said; "I feel that this malady will pass away, and I shall live to devote myself to rewarding you for all your anxieties, to dissipating the cloud with which I have so cruelly overshadowed your young life, and to making all the rest sunshine. I will think only of you; all the rest, all that grieves me, and all that I repent, I cast even now into oblivion."

At this moment the stranger entered and drew near. Elizabeth saw him and said: "And here, dearest father, is another to whom you owe more than you can guess — for kindness to me and the help to you. I do not think I should have preserved you without Mr. Neville."

The young man was standing near the couch, looking on the invalid, and rejoicing in the change for the better that appeared. Falkner turned his eyes on him as Elizabeth spoke, a tremor ran through all his limbs, he grew ghastly pale, and fainted.

An evil change from this time appeared in his state — and the physician was afraid of the journey, attributing his fainting to his inability to bear any excitement; while Falkner, who was before passive, grew eager to depart. "Change of scene and moving will do me good," he said, "so that no one comes near me, no one speaks to me but Elizabeth."

At one time the idea of Neville's accompanying them was alluded to — he was greatly disturbed — and seriously implored Elizabeth not to allow it. It was rather hard on the poor girl, who found so much support and solace in her new friend's society — but Falkner's slightest wish was with her a law, and she submitted without a murmur. "Do not let me even see him before we go," said Falkner. "Act on this wish, dearest, without hurting his feelings — without betraying to him that I have formed it — it would be an ungracious return for the services he has rendered you — for which I would fain show gratitude; but that cannot be — you alone can repay — do so, as you best may, with thanks — but do not let me see him more.”

Elizabeth wondered — and as a last effort to vanquish his dislike, she said: “Do you know that he is the same boy, who interested us so much at Baden? — he is no longer savage as he was then — but I fear that he is as unhappy as ever.”

“Too well do I know it” — replied Falkner—”do not question me — do not speak to me again of him.” He spoke in disjointed sentences — a cold dew stood on his brow — and Elizabeth, who knew that a mysterious wound rankled in his heart, more painful than any physical injury, was eager to calm him. Something, she might wonder; but she thought more of sparing Falkner pain, than of satisfying her curiosity — and she mentally resolved never to mention the name of Neville again.

They were to embark at sunrise — in the evening her new friend came to take leave — she having evaded the notion of his accompanying them, and insisted that he should not join them in the morning to assist at their departure. Though she had done this with sweetness, and so much cordiality of manner as prevented his feeling any sort of slight; yet in some sort he guessed that they wished to dismiss him, and this notion added to his melancholy, while some latent feeling made him readily acquiesce in it. Elizabeth was told that he had come, and left Falkner to join him. It was painful to her to take leave — to feel that she should see him no more — and to know that their separation was not merely casual, but occasioned by her father’s choice, which hereafter might again and again interfere to separate them. As she entered the room, he was leaning against the casement, and looking on the sea which glanced before their windows, still as a lake, blue as the twilight sky that bent over it. It was a July evening — soft, genial, and soothing; but no portion of the gladness of nature was reflected in the countenance of Neville. His large dark eyes seemed two wells of unfathomable sadness. The drooping lids gave them an expression of irresistible softness, which added interest to their melancholy earnestness. His complexion was olive, but so clear that each vein could be discerned. His full, and finely shaped lips bespoke the ardour and sensibility of his disposition; while his slim, youthful form appeared half bending with a weight of thought and sorrow. Elizabeth's heart beat as she came near and stood beside him. Neither spoke; but he took her hand — and they both felt that each regretted the moment of parting too deeply for the mere ceremony of thanks and leave-taking.

"I have grieved," said Neville, as if answering her, though no word had been said, "very much grieved at the idea of seeing you no more; and yet it is for the best, I feel — and am sure. You do not know the usual unhappy tenor of my thoughts, nor the cause I have to look on life as an unwelcome burthen. This is no new sentiment — it has been my companion since I was nine years old. At one time, before I knew how to rein and manage it, it was more intolerable than now; as a boy, it drove me to solitude — to abhorrence of the sight of man — to anger against God for creating me. These feelings have passed away; nay, more — I live for a purpose — a sacred purpose, that shall be fulfilled despite of every obstacle — every seeming impossibility. Too often indeed the difficulties in my way have made me fear that I should never succeed, and I have desponded; but never, till I saw you, did I know pleasure unconnected with my ultimate object. With you I have been at times taken out of myself; and I have almost forgotten — this must not be. I must resume my burthen, nor form one thought beyond the resolution I have made to die, if need be, to secure success."

"You must not speak thus," said Elizabeth, looking at once with pity and admiration on a face expressive of so much sensitive pride and sadness springing from a sense of injury. "If your purpose is a good one, as I must believe that it is — you will either succeed, or receive a compensation from your endeavours equivalent to success. We shall meet again, and I shall see you happier."

"When I am happier," he said, with more than his usual earnestness, "we shall indeed meet — for I will seek you at the furthest end of the globe. Till then, I shrink from seeing any one who interests me — or from renewing sentiments of friendship which had better end here. You are too good and kind not to be made unhappy by the sight of suffering, and I must suffer till my end is accomplished. Even now I regret that I ever saw you — though that feeling springs from a foolish pride. For hereafter you will hear my name — and if you already do not know — you will learn the miserable tale that hangs upon it — you will hear me commiserated; you will learn why

— and share the feeling. I would even avoid your pity — judge then how loathsome it is to receive that of others, and yet I must bear it, or fly them as I do. This will change. I have the fullest confidence that one day I may throw back on others the slur now cast upon me. This confidence, this full and sanguine trust, has altered me from what I once was; it has changed the impatience, the almost ferocity I felt as a boy, into fortitude and resolution."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "I remember once I saw you a long time since, when I was a mere girl, at Baden. Were you not there about four years ago? Do you not remember falling with your horse and dislocating your wrist?"

A tracery of strange wild thought came over the countenance of Neville. "Do I remember?" he cried—"Yes — and I remember a beautiful girl — and I thought such would have been my sister, and I had not been alone — if fate, if cruel, inexorable, horrible destiny had not deprived me of her as well as all — all that made my childish existence Paradise. It is so — and I see you again, whom then my heart called sister — it is strange."

"Did you give me that name?" said Elizabeth. "Ah, if you knew the strange ideas I then had of giving you my father for your friend, instead of one spoken harshly — perhaps unjustly of—"

As she spoke — he grew gloomy again — his eyes drooped, and the expression of his face became at first despondent, then proud, and even fierce; it reminded her more forcibly than it had ever done before of the Boy of Baden—"It is better as it is," he continued, "much better that you do not share the evil that pursues me; you ought not to be humiliated, pressed down — goaded to hatred and contempt.

"Farewell — I grieve to leave you — yet I feel deeply how it is for the best. Hereafter you will acknowledge your acquaintance with me, when we meet in a happier hour. God preserve you and your dear father, as he will for your sake! Twice we have met — the third time, if sibyls' tales are true, is the test of good or evil in our friendship — till then, farewell."

Thus they parted. Had Elizabeth been free from care with regard to Falkner — she had regretted the separation more; and pondered more over the mysterious wretchedness that darkened the lives of the only two beings, the inner emotions of whose souls had been opened to her. As it was, she returned to watch and fear beside her father's couch — and scarcely to remember that a few minutes before she had been interested by another —

so entirely were her feelings absorbed by her affection and solicitude for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

From this time their homeward journey was more prosperous. They arrived safely at Lyons, and thence proceeded to Basle — to take advantage again of river, navigation; the motion of a carriage being so inimical to the invalid. They proceeded down the Rhine to Rotterdam, and crossing the sea, returned at last to England, after an absence of four years.

This journey, though at first begun in terror and danger, grew less hazardous at each mile they traversed towards the North; and while going down the Rhine, Falkner and his adopted daughter spent several tranquil and happy hours — comparing the scenery they saw to other and distant landscapes — and recalling incidents that had occurred many years ago. Falkner exerted himself for Elizabeth's sake — she had suffered so much, and he had inflicted so much anguish upon her while endeavouring to free himself from the burthen of life, that he felt remorse at having thus trifled with the deepest emotions of her heart — and anxious to recal the more pleasurable sensations adapted to her age. The listless, yet pleasing feelings attendant on convalescence influenced his mind also — and he enjoyed a peace to which he had long been a stranger.

Elizabeth, it is true, had another source of reverie beside that ministered to her by her father. She often thought of Neville; and, though he was sad, the remembrance of him was full of pleasure. He had been so kind, so sympathizing, so helpful; besides there was a poetry in his very gloom that added a charm to every thought spent upon him. She did not only recall his conversation, but conjectured the causes of his sorrow, and felt deeply interested by the mystery that hung about him. So young and so unhappy! And he had been long so — he was more miserable when they saw him roving wildly among the Alsatian hills. What could it mean? — She strove to recollect what Miss Jervis mentioned at that time; she remembered only that he had no mother, and that his father was severe and unkind.

Yet why, when nature is so full of joyousness, when, at the summer season, vegetation basks in beauty and delight, and the very clouds seemed to enjoy their aerial abode in upper sky, why should misery find a home in the mind of man? a misery which balmy winds will not lull, nor the verdant landscape and its winding river dissipate? She thought thus as she saw Falkner reclining apart, a cloud gathered on his brow, his piercing eyes fixed in vacancy, as if it beheld there a heart-moving tragedy; but she was accustomed to his melancholy, she had ever known him as a man of sorrows; he had lived long before she knew him, and the bygone years were filled by events pregnant with wretchedness, nay, if he spoke truth, with guilt. But Neville, the young, the innocent, who had been struck in boyhood through no fault of his own, nor any act in which he bore a part; was there no remedy for him? and would not friendship, and kindness, and the elastic spirit of youth, suffice to cure his wound? She remembered that he declared that he had an aim in view, in which he resolved to succeed, and, succeeding, he should be happy: a noble aim, doubtless; for his soft eyes lighted joyously up, and his face expressed a glad pride when he prognosticated ultimate triumph. Her heart went with him in his efforts; she prayed earnestly for his success, and was as sure as he, that Heaven would favour an object which she felt certain was generous and pure.

A sigh, a half groan from Falkner, called her to his side, while she meditated on these things. Both suffer, she thought; would that some link united them, so that both might find relief in the accomplishment of the same resolves! Little did she think of the real link that existed, mysterious, yet adamantine; that to pray for the success of one, was to solicit destruction for the other. A dark veil was before her eyes, totally impervious; nor did she know that the withdrawing it, as was soon to be, would deliver her over to conflicting duties, sad struggles of feeling, and stain her life with the dark hues that now, missing her, blotted the existence of the two upon earth, for whom she was most interested.

They arrived in London. Falkner's fever was gone, but his wound was rankling, painful, and even dangerous. The bullet had grazed the bone, and this, at first neglected, and afterwards improperly treated, now betrayed symptoms of exfoliation; his sufferings were great — he bore them patiently; he looked on them as an atonement. He had gone out in his remorse to die — he was yet to live, broken and destroyed; and if suffered to live, was it not for Elizabeth's sake? and having bound her fate to his, what right had he to die? The air of London being injurious, and yet it being necessary to continue in the vicinity of the most celebrated surgeons, they took a pleasant villa on Wimbledon Common, situated in the midst of a garden, and presenting to the eye that mixture of neatness, seclusion and comfort, that renders some of our smaller English country houses so delightful. Elizabeth, despite her wanderings, had a true feminine love of home. She busied herself in adding elegance to their dwelling, by a thousand little arts, which seem nothing, and are every thing in giving grace and cheerfulness to an abode.

Their life became tranquil, and a confidence and friendship existed between them, the source of a thousand pleasant conversations, and happy hours. One subject, it is true, was forbidden, the name of Neville was never mentioned; perhaps, on that very account, it assumed more power over Elizabeth's imagination. A casual intercourse with one, however interesting, might have faded into the common light of day, had not the silence enjoined, kept him in that indistinct mysterious darkness so favourable to the processes of the imagination. On every other subject, the so called father and daughter talked with open heart, and Falkner was totally unaware of a secret growth of unspoken interest, which had taken root in separation and secrecy.

Elizabeth, accustomed to fear death for one dearest to her, and to contemplate its near approaches so often, had something holy and solemn kneaded into the very elements of her mind, that gave sublimity to her thoughts, resignation to her disposition, and a stirring inquiring spirit to her conversation, which, separated as they were from the busy and trivial duties of life, took from the monotony and stillness of their existence, by bringing thoughts beyond the world to people the commonplace of each day's routine. Falkner had not much of this; but he had a spirit of observation, a ready memory, and a liveliness of expression and description which corrected her wilder flights, and gave the interest of flesh and blood to her fairy dreams. When they read of the heroes of old, or the creations of the poets, she dwelt on the moral to be deduced, the theories of life and death, religion and virtue, therein displayed; while he compared them to his own experience, criticised their truth, and gave pictures of real human nature, either contrasting with, or resembling, those presented on the written page.

Their lives, thus spent, would have been equable and pleasant, but for the sufferings of Falkner; and as those diminished, another evil arose, in his eyes of far more awful magnitude. They had resided at Wimbledon about a year, when Elizabeth fell ill. Her medical advisers explained her malady as the effect of the extreme nervous excitement she had gone through during the last years, which, borne with a patience and fortitude almost superhuman, had meanwhile undermined her physical strength. This was a mortal blow to Falkner; while with self-absorbed, and, he now felt, criminal pertinacity, he had sought death, he had forgotten the results such acts of his might have on one so dear, and innocent. He had thought that when she lost him, Elizabeth would feel a transitory sorrow; while new scenes, another family, and the absence of his griefs, would soon bring comfort. But he lived, and the consequences of his resolve to die fell upon her — she was his victim! there was something maddening in the thought. He looked at her dear face, grown so pale — viewed her wasting form — watched her loss of appetite, and nervous tremours, with an impatient agony that irritated his wound, and brought back malady on himself.

All that the physicians could order for Elizabeth, was change of air — added to an intimation that an entirely new scene, and a short separation from her father, would be of the utmost benefit. Where could she go? it was not now that she drooped — and trembled at every sound, that he could restore her to her father's family. No time ought to be lost, he was told, and the word consumption mentioned; the deaths of her parents gave a sting to that word, which filled him with terror. Something must be done immediately — what he knew not; and he gazed on his darling, whom he felt that by his own act he had destroyed, with an ardour to save that he felt was impotent, and he writhed beneath the thought.

One morning, while Falkner was brooding over these miserable ideas — and Elizabeth was vainly trying to assume a look of cheerfulness and health, which her languid step and pale cheek belied — a carriage entered their quiet grounds, and a visitor was announced. It was Lady Cecil. Elizabeth had nearly forgotten, nor ever expected to see her again — but that lady, whose mind was at ease at the period of their acquaintance, and who had been charmed by the beauty and virtues of the devoted daughter, had never ceased to determine at some time to seek her, and renew their acquaintance. She, indeed, never expected to see Falkner again, and she often wondered what would be his daughter's fate when he died; she and her family had remained abroad till the present spring, when being in London, she, by Miss Jervis's assistance, learned that he still lived, and that they were both at Wimbledon.

Lady Cecil was a welcome visitor wherever she went, for there was an atmosphere of cheerful and kindly warmth around her, that never failed to communicate pleasure. Falkner, who had not seen her at Leghorn, and had scarcely heard her name mentioned, was won at once; and when she spoke with ardent praise of Elizabeth, and looked upon her altered appearance with undisguised distress, his heart warmed towards her, and he was ready to ask her assistance in his dilemma. That was offered, however, before it was asked — she heard that change of air was recommended — she guessed that too great anxiety for her father had produced her illness — she felt sure that her own pleasant residence, and cheerful family, was the best remedy that could be administered.

"I will not be denied," she said, after having made her invitation, that both father and daughter should pay her a visit. "You must come to me: Lord Cecil is gone to Ireland for two months, to look after his estate there; and our little Julius being weakly, I could not accompany him. I have taken a house near Hastings — the air is salubrious, the place beautiful — I lead a domestic, quiet life, and I am sure Miss Falkner will soon be well with me."

As her invitation was urged with warmth and sincerity, Falkner did not hesitate to accept it. To a certain degree, he modified it, by begging that Elizabeth should accompany Lady Cecil, in the first place, alone. As the visit was to be for two months, he promised after the first was elapsed to join them. He alleged various reasons for this arrangement; his real one being, that he had gathered from the physicians, that they considered a short separation from him as essential to the invalid's recovery. She acceded, for she was anxious to get well, and hoped that the change would restore her. Every thing was therefore soon agreed upon; and, two days afterwards, the two ladies were on their road to Hastings, where Lady Cecil's family already was — she having come to town with her husband only, who by this time had set out on his Irish tour.

"I feel convinced that three days of my nursing will make you quite well," said Lady Cecil, as they were together in her travelling carriage; "I wish you to look as you did in Italy. One so young, and naturally so healthy, will soon recover strength. You overtasked yourself — and your energetic mind is too strong for your body; but repose, and my care, will restore you. I am sure we shall be very happy — my children are dear little angels, and will entertain you when you like, and never be in your way. I shall be your head nurse — and Miss Jervis, dear odd soul! will act under my orders. The situation of my house is enchanting; and, to add to our family circle, I expect my brother Gerard, whom I am sure you will like. Did I ever mention him to you? perhaps not — but you must like Gerard — and you will delight him. He is serious — nay, to say the truth, sad — but it is a sadness a thousand times more interesting than the gaiety of common-place worldly men. It is a seriousness full of noble thoughts, and affectionate feelings. I never knew, I never dreamt, that there was a creature resembling, or to be compared to him in the world, till I saw you. You have the same freedom from worldliness — the same noble and elevated ideas — feeling for others, and thinking not of the petty circle of ideas that encompasses and presses down every other mind, so that they cannot see or feel beyond their Lilliputian selves.

"In one thing you do not resemble Gerard. You, though quiet, are cheerful; while he, naturally more vivacious, is melancholy. You look an inquiry, but I cannot tell you the cause of my brother's unhappiness; for his friendship for me, which I highly prize, depends upon my keeping sacredly the promise I have given never to make his sorrows a topic of conversation. All I can say is, that they result from a sensibility, and a delicate pride, which is overstrained, yet which makes me love him ten thousand times more dearly. He is better now than he used to be, and I hope that time and reason will altogether dissipate the vain regrets that embitter his life. Some new — some strong feeling may one day spring up, and scatter the clouds. I pray for this; for though I love him tenderly, and sympathize in his grief, yet I think it excessive and deplorable; and, alas! never to be remedied, though it may be forgotten."

Elizabeth listened with some surprise to hear of another so highly praised, and yet unhappy; while in her heart she thought "Though this sound like one to be compared to Neville, yet, when I see him, how I shall scorn the very thought of finding another as high-minded, kind, and interesting as he?" She gave no utterance however to this reflection, and merely asked, "Is your brother older than you?"

"No, younger — he is only two-and-twenty; but passion and grief, endured almost since infancy, prevented him when a child from being childish; and now he has all that is beautiful in youth, with none of its follies. Pardon my enthusiasm; but you will grow enthusiastic also when you see Gerard."

"I doubt that," thought Elizabeth—"my enthusiasm is spent — and I should hate myself if I could think of another as of Neville." This latent thought made the excessive praises which Lady Cecil bestowed on her brother sound almost distastefully. Her thoughts flew back to Marseilles; to his sedulous attentions — their parting interview — and fixed at last upon the strange emotion Falkner had displayed when seeing him; and his desire that his name even should not be mentioned. Again she wondered what this meant, and her thoughts became abstracted; Lady Cecil conjectured that she was tired, and permitted her to indulge in her silent reveries.

CHAPTER XIV.

Lady Cecil's house was situated on the heights that overlook Fairlight Bay, near Hastings. Any one who has visited that coast, knows the peculiar beauty of the rocks, downs, and groves of Fairlight. The oak, which clothes each dell, and, in a dwarf and clipped state, forms the hedges, imparts a richness not only to the wide landscape, but to each broken nook of ground and sequestered corner; the fern, which grows only in contiguity to the oak, giving a wild forest appearance to the glades. The mansion itself was large, convenient, and cheerful. The grounds were extensive; and from points of view you could see the wide sea — the more picturesque bay — and the undulating varied shore that curves in towards Winchelsea. It was impossible to conceive a scene more adapted to revive the spirits, and give variety and amusement to the thoughts.

Elizabeth grew better, as by a miracle, the very day after her arrival; and within a week a sensible change had taken place in her appearance, as well as her health. The roses bloomed in her cheeks — her step regained its elasticity — her spirits rose even to gaiety. All was new and animating. Lady Cecil's beautiful and spirited children delighted her. It was a domestic scene, adorned by elegance, and warmed by affection. Elizabeth had, despite her attachment to her father, often felt the weight of loneliness when left by him at Zante; or when his illness threw her back entirely on herself. Now on each side there were sweet, kind faces — playful, tender caresses — and a laughing mirth, cheering in its perfect innocence.

The only annoyance she suffered, arose from the great influx of visitors. Having lived a life disjoined from the crowd, she soon began to conceive the hermitess delight in loneliness, and the vexation of being intruded upon by the frivolous and indifferent. She found that she loved friends, but hated acquaintance. Nor was this strange. Her mind was quite empty of conventional frivolities. She had not been at a ball twice in her life, and then only when a mere child; yet all had been interest and occupation. To unbend with her was to converse with a friend — to play with children — or to enjoy the scenes of nature with one who felt their beauties with her. "It was hard labour," she often said, "to talk with people with whom she had not one pursuit — one taste in common.” Often when a barouche, crowded with gay bonnets, appeared, she stole away. Lady Cecil could not understand this. Brought up in the thick of fashionable life, no person of her clique was a stranger; and if any odd people called on her — still they were in some way entertaining; or if bores — bores are an integral portion of life, not to be shaken off with impunity, for as oysters they often retain the fairest pearls in close conjunction. “You are wrong,” said Lady Cecil. “You must not be savage — I cannot have mercy on you; this little jagged point in your character must be worn off — you must be as smooth and glossy in exterior, as you are incalculably precious in the substance of your mind.”

Elizabeth smiled; but not the less when a sleek, self-satisfied dowager, all smiles to those she knew — all impertinent scrutiny to the unknown — and a train of ugly old women in embryo — called, for the present, misses — followed, each honouring her with an insolent stare. “There was a spirit in her feet,” and she could not stay, but hurried out into the woodland dells, and with a book, her own reveries, and the beautiful objects around her, as her companions; and feeling ecstatically happy, both at what she possessed, and what she had escaped from.

Thus it was one day that she deserted Lady Cecil, who was smiling sweetly on a red-faced gouty ‘squire, and listening placidly to his angry wife, who was complaining that her name had been put too low down in some charity list. She stole out from the glassdoor that opened on the lawn, and, delighted that her escape was secure, hurried to join the little group of children whom she saw speeding beyond into the park.

“Without a bonnet, Miss Falkner!” cried Miss Jervis.

“Yes; and the sun is warm. You are not using your parasol, Miss Jervis; lend it me, and let us go into the shade.” Then, taking her favourite child by the hand, she said, “Come, let us pay visits. Mamma has got some visitors; so we will go and seek for some. There is my Lord Deer, and pretty Lady Doe. Ah! pretty Miss Fawn, what a nice dappled frock you have on!”

The child was enchanted; and they wandered on through the glades, among the fern, into a shady dell, quite at the other side of the park, and sat down beneath a spreading oak tree. By this time they had got into a serious talk of where the clouds were going, and where the first tree came from, when a gentleman, who had entered the park gates unperceived, rode by, and pulling up his horse suddenly, with a start, and an exclamation of surprise, he and Elizabeth recognized each other.

"Mr. Neville!" she cried, and her heart was full in a moment of a thousand recollections — of the gratitude she owed — their parting scene — and the many conjectures she had formed about him since they separated. He looked more than pleased; and the expression of gloomy abstraction which his face too often wore, was lit up by a smile that went straight to the heart. He sprung from his horse, gave the rein to his groom, and joining Elizabeth and her little companion, walked towards the house.

Explanations and surprise followed. He was the praised, expected brother of Lady Cecil. How strange that Elizabeth had not discovered this relationship at Marseilles! and yet, at that time, she had scarcely a thought to spare beyond Falkner. His recovery surprised Neville, and he expressed the warmest pleasure. He looked with tenderness and admiration at the soft and beautiful creature beside him, whose courage and unwearied assiduity had preserved her father's life. It was a bewitching contrast to remember her face shadowed by fear — her vigilant, anxious eyes fixed on her father's wan countenance — her thoughts filled with one sad fear; and now to see it beaming in youthful beauty, animated by the happy, generous feelings which were her nature. Yet this very circumstance had a sad reaction upon Neville. His heart still bore the burthen of its sorrow, and he felt more sure of the sympathy of the afflicted mourner, than of one who looked untouched by any adversity. The sentiment was transitory, for Elizabeth, with that delicate tact which is natural to a feeling mind, soon gave such a subdued tone to their conversation as made it accord with the mysterious unhappiness of her companion.

When near the house, they were met by Lady Cecil, who smiled at what she deemed a sudden intimacy naturally sprung between two who had so many qualities in common. Lady Cecil really believed them made for each other, and had been anxious to bring them together; for being passionately attached to her brother, and grieving at the melancholy that darkened his existence, she thought she had found a cure in her new friend; and that the many charms of Elizabeth would cause him to forget the misfortunes on which he so vainly brooded. She was still more pleased when an explanation was given, and she found that they were already intimate — already acquainted with the claims each possessed to the other's admiration and interest; and each naturally drawn to seek in the other that mirror of their better nature, that touch of kindred soul, which showed that they were formed to share existence, or, separated, to pine eternally for a reunion.

Lady Cecil, with playful curiosity, questioned why they had concealed their being acquainted. Elizabeth could not well tell; she had thought much of Neville, but first the prohibition of Falkner, and then the excessive praises Lady Cecil bestowed upon her brother, chained her tongue. The one had accustomed her to preserve silence on a subject deeply interesting to her; the other jarred with any confidence, for there would have been a comparing Neville with the Gerard which was indeed himself; and Elizabeth neither wished to have her friend depreciated, nor to struggle against the enthusiasm felt by the lady for her brother. The forced silence of to-day on such a subject, renders the silence of to-morrow almost a matter of necessity; and she was ashamed to mention one she had not already named. It may be remarked that this sort of shame arises in all dispositions; it is the seal and symbol of love. Shame of any kind was not akin to the sincere and ingenuous nature of Elizabeth; but love, though young and unacknowledged, will tyrannise from the first, and produce emotions never felt before.

Neville hoarded yet more avariciously the name of Elizabeth. There was delight in the very thought of her; but he shrunk from being questioned. He had resolved to avoid her; for, till his purpose was achieved, and the aim of his existence fulfilled, he would not yield to the charms of love, which he felt hovered round the beautiful Elizabeth. Sworn to a sacred duty, no self-centred or self-prodigal passion should come between him and its accomplishment. But, meeting her thus unawares, he could not continue guarded; his very soul drank in gladness at the sight of her. He remarked with joy the cheerfulness that had replaced her cares; he looked upon her open brow, her eyes of mingled tenderness and fire, her figure free and graceful in every motion, and felt that she realised every idea he had formed of feminine beauty. He fancied indeed that he looked upon her as a picture; that his heart was too absorbed by its own griefs to catch a thought beyond; he was unmindful, while he gazed, of that emanation, that shadow of the shape, which the Latin poet tells us flows from every object, that impalpable impress of her form and being, which the air took and then folded round him, so that all he saw entered, as it were, into his own substance, and became mingled up for evermore with his identity.

CHAPTER XV.

Three or four days passed in great tranquillity; and Lady Cecil rejoiced that the great medicine acted so well on the rankling malady of her brother's soul. It was the leafy month of June, and nature was as beautiful as these lovely beings themselves, who enjoyed her sweets with enthusiastic and new-sprung delight. They sailed on the sunny sea — or lingered by the summer brooks, and among the rich woodlands — ignorant, why all appeared robed in a brightness, which before they had never observed. Elizabeth had little thought beyond the present hour — except to wish for the time when Falkner was to join them. Neville rebelled somewhat against the new law he obeyed, but it was a slothful rebellion — till on a day, he was awakened from his dream of peace.

One morning Elizabeth, on entering the breakfast room, found Lady Cecil leaning discontentedly by the window, resting her cheek on her hand, and her brow overcast.

"He is gone," she exclaimed; "it is too provoking! Gerard is gone! A letter came, and I could not detain him — it will take him probably to the other end of the kingdom — and who knows when we shall see him again!"

They sat down to breakfast, but Lady Cecil was full of discontent. "It is not only that he is gone," she continued; "but the cause of his going is full of pain, and care — and unfortunately, you cannot sympathize with me, for I have not obtained his consent to confide his hapless story to you. Would that I might! — you would feel for him — for us all."

"He has been unhappy since childhood," observed Elizabeth.

"He has, it is true; but how did you learn that? has he ever told you any thing?"

"I saw him many years ago at Baden. How wild, how sullen he was — unlike his present self! for then there was a violence, and a savageness in his gloom, which has vanished."

"Poor boy!" said Lady Cecil, "I remember well — and it is a pleasure to think that I am, to a great degree, the cause of the change. He had no friend at that time — none to love — to listen to him, and foster hopes which, however vain, diminish his torments, and are all the cure he can obtain, till he forgets them. But what can this mean?” she continued, starting up; “what can bring him back? It is Gerard returned!”

She threw open the glass-door, and went out to meet him as he rode up the avenue — he threw himself from his horse, and advanced exclaiming, “Is my father here?”

“Sir Boyvill? No; is he coming?”

“O yes! we shall see him soon. I met a servant with a letter sent express — the post was too slow — he will be here soon; he left London last night — you know with what speed he travels.”

“But why this sudden visit?”

“Can you not guess? He received a letter from the same person — containing the same account; he knew I was here — he comes to balk my purpose, to forbid, to storm, to reproach; to do all that he has done a thousand times before, with the same success.”

Neville looked flushed, and disturbed; his face, usually, “more in sorrow than in anger,” now expressed the latter emotion, mingled with scorn and resolution; he gave the letter he had received to Lady Cecil. “I am wrong, perhaps, in returning at his bidding, since I do not mean ultimately to obey — yet he charges me on my duty to hear him once again; so I am come to hear — to listen to the old war of his vanity, with what he calls my pride — his vindictiveness with my sense of duty — his vituperation of her I worship — and I must bear this!”

Lady Cecil read the letter, and Neville pressed Elizabeth’s hand, and besought her excuse, while she, much bewildered, was desirous to leave the room. At this moment the noise of a carriage was heard on the gravel. “He is here,” said Neville; “see him first, Sophia, tell him how resolved I am — how right in my resolves. Try to prevent a struggle, as disgraceful as vain; and most so to my father, since he must suffer defeat.”

With a look of much distress, Lady Cecil left the room to receive her new guest; while Elizabeth stole out by another door into the grove, and mused under the shady covert on what had passed. She felt curious, yet saddened. Concord, affection, and sympathy, are so delightful, that all that disturbs the harmony is eminently distasteful. Family contentions are worst of all. Yet she would not prejudge Neville. He felt, in its full bitterness, the pain of disobeying his parent; and whatever motive led to such a mode of action, it hung like an eclipse over his life. What it might be, she could not guess; but it was no ignoble, self-centred passion. Hope, and joy were sacrificed to it. She remembered him as she first saw him, a boy driven to wildness by a sense of injury; she remembered him when reason, and his better nature, had subdued the selfish portion of his feeling — grown kind as a woman — active, friendly, and sympathizing, as few men are; she recollected him by Falkner's sick couch, and when he took leave of her, auguring that they should meet in a happier hour. That hour had not yet come, and she confessed to herself that she longed to know the cause of his unhappiness; and wondered whether, by counsel or sympathy, she could bring any cure.

She was plunged in reverie, walking slowly beneath the forest trees, when she heard a quick step brushing the dead leaves and fern, and Neville joined her. "I have escaped," he cried, "and left poor Sophy to bear the scoldings of an unjust and angry man. I could not stay — it was not cowardice — but I have recollections joined to such contests, that make my heart sick. Besides, I should reply — and I would not willingly forget that he is my father."

"It must be indeed painful," said Elizabeth, "to quarrel with, to disobey a parent."

"Yet there are motives that might, that must excuse it. Do you remember the character of Hamlet, Miss Falkner?"

"Perfectly — it is the embodying of the most refined, the most genuine, and yet the most harrowing feelings and situation, that the imagination ever conceived."

"I have read that play," said Neville, "till each word seems instinct with a message direct to my heart — as if my own emotions gave a conscious soul to every line. Hamlet was called upon to avenge a father — in execution of his task he did not spare a dearer, a far more sacred name — if he used no daggers with his mother, he spoke them; nor winced though she writhed beneath his hand. Mine is a lighter — yet a holier duty. I would vindicate a mother — without judging my father — without any accusation against him, I would establish her innocence. Is this blameable? What would you do, Miss Falkner, if your father were accused of a crime?"

"My father and a crime! Impossible!" exclaimed Elizabeth; for, strange to say, all the self-accusations of Falkner fell empty on her ear. It was a virtue in him to be conscience-stricken for an error; of any real guilt she would have pledged her life that he was free.

“Yes — impossible!” cried Neville—”doubtless it is so; but did you hear his name stigmatized — shame attend your very kindred to him — What would you do? — defend him — prove his innocence — Would you not?”

“A life were well sacrificed to such a duty.”

“And to that very duty mine is devoted. In childhood I rebelled against the accusation with vain, but earnest indignation; now I am calmer because I am more resolved; but I will yield to no impediment — be stopped by no difficulty — not even by my father’s blind commands. My mother! dear name — dearer for the ills attached to it — my angel mother shall find an unfaltering champion in her son.”

“You must not be angry,” he continued, in reply to her look of wonder, “that I mention circumstances which it is customary to slur over and conceal. It is shame for me to speak — for you to hear — my mother’s name. That very thought gives a keener edge to my purpose. God knows what miserable truth is hidden by the veils which vanity, revenge and selfishness have drawn around my mother’s fate; but that truth — though it be a bleeding one — shall be disclosed, and her innocence be made as clear as the sun now shining above us.

“It is dreadful, very dreadful, to be told — to be persuaded that the idol of one’s thoughts is corrupt and vile. It is no new story, it is true — wives have been false to their husbands ere now, and some have found excuses, and sometimes been justified; it is the manner makes the thing. That my mother should have left her happy home — which, under her guardian eye, was Paradise — have deserted me, her child, whom she so fondly loved — and who even in that unconscious age adored her — and her poor little girl, who died neglected — that year after year she has never inquired after us — nor sent nor sought a word — while following a stranger’s fortune through the world! That she whose nightly sleep was broken by her tender cares — whose voice so often lulled me, and whose every thought and act was pure as an angel’s — that she, tempted by the arch fiend, strayed from hell for her destruction, should leave us all to misery, and her own name to obloquy. No! no! The earth is yet sheltered by heaven, and sweet, and good things abide in it — and she was, and is, among them sweetest and best!”

Neville was carried away by his feelings — while Elizabeth, overpowered by his vehemence — astonished by the wild, strange tale he disclosed, listened in silence, yet an eloquent silence — for her eyes filled with tears — and her heart burned in her bosom with a desire to show how entirely she shared his deep emotion.

“I have made a vow,” he continued—”it is registered in heaven; and each night as I lay my head on my pillow I renew it; and beside you — the best of earthly things now that my dear mother is gone. I repeat — that I devote my life to vindicate her who gave me life; and my selfish, revengeful father is here to impede — to forbid — but I trample on such obstacles, as on these dead leaves beneath our feet. You do not speak, Miss Falkner — did you ever hear of Mrs. Neville?”

“I have spent all my life out of England,” replied Elizabeth, “yet I have some recollection.”

“I do not doubt it — to the ends of the earth the base-minded love to carry the tale of slander and crime. You have heard of Mrs. Neville, who for the sake of a stranger deserted her home, her husband, her helpless children — and has never been heard of since; who, unheard and undefended, was divorced from her husband — whose miserable son was brought to witness against her. It is a story well fitted to raise vulgar wonder — vulgar abhorrence; do you wonder that I, who since I was nine years old have slept and waked on the thought, should have been filled with hate, rancour, and every evil passion, till the blessed thought dawned on my soul, that I would prove her innocence, and that she should be avenged — for this I live.”

“And now I must leave you. I received yesterday a letter which promises a clue to guide me through this labyrinth; wherever it leads, there I follow. My father has come to impede me — but I have, after using unvailing remonstrance, told him that I will obey a sense of duty independent of parental authority. I do not mean to see him again — I now go — but I could not resist the temptation of seeing you before I went, and proving to you the justice of my resolves. If you wish for further explanation, ask Sophia — tell her that she may relate all; there is not a thought or act of my life with which I would have you unacquainted, if you will deign to listen.”

“Thank you for this permission,” said Elizabeth; “Lady Cecil is desirous, I know, of telling me the cause of a melancholy which, good and kind as you are, you ought not to suffer. Alas! this is a miserable world: and when I hear of your sorrows, and remember my dear father’s, I think that I must be stone to feel no more than I do; and yet, I would give my life to assist you in your task.”

"I know well how generous you are, though I cannot now express how my heart thanks you. I will return before you leave my sister; wherever fate and duty drives me, I will see you again."

They returned towards the house, and he left her; his horse was already saddled, and standing at the door; he was on it, and gone in a moment.

Elizabeth felt herself as in a dream when he was gone, yet her heart and wishes went with him; for she believed the truth of all he said, and revered the enthusiasm of affection that impelled his actions. There was something wild and proud in his manner, which forcibly reminded her of the boy of sixteen, who had so much interested her girlish mind; and his expressions, indignant and passionate as they were, yet vouched, by the very sentiment they conveyed, for the justice of his cause. "Gallant, noble-hearted being! God assist your endeavours! God and every good spirit that animates this world!" Thus her soul spoke as she saw him ride off; and, turning into the house, a half involuntary feeling made her take up the volume of Shakspeare containing Hamlet; and she was soon buried, not only in the interest of the drama itself, but in the various emotions it excited by the association it now bore to one she loved more even than she knew. It was nothing strange that Neville, essentially a dreamer and a poet, should have identified himself with the Prince of Denmark; while the very idea that he took to himself, and acted on sentiments thus high-souled and pure, adorned him yet more in her eyes, endowing him in ample measue with that ideality which the young and noble love to bestow on the objects of their attachment.

After a short time, she was interrupted by Lady Cecil, who looked disturbed and vexed. She said little, except to repine at Gerard's going, and Sir Boyvill's stay — he also was to depart the following morning: but Sir Boyvill was a man who made his presence felt disagreeably, even when it was limited to a few hours. Strangers acknowledged this; no one liked the scornful, morose old man; and a near connexion, who was open to so many attacks, and sincerely loved one whom Sir Boyvill pretended most to depreciate, was even more susceptible to the painful feelings he always contrived to spread round him. To despise every body, to contradict every body with marks of sarcasm and contempt, to set himself up for an idol, and yet to scorn his worshippers; these were the prominent traits of his character, added to a galled and sore spirit, which was for ever taking offence, which discerned an attack in every word, and was on the alert to repay these fancied injuries with real and undoubted insult. He had been a man of fashion, and retained as much good breeding as was compatible with a tetchy and revengeful temper; this was his only merit.

He was nearly seventy years of age, remarkably well preserved, but with strongly marked features, and a countenance deeply lined, set off by a young looking wig, which took all venerableness from his appearance, without bestowing juvenility; his lips were twisted into a sneer, and there was something in his evident vanity that might have provoked ridicule, but that traces of a violent, unforgiving temper prevented him from being merely despicable, while they destroyed every particle of compassion with which he might have been regarded; for he was a forlorn old man, separating himself from those allied to him by blood or connexion, excellent as they were. His only pleasure had been in society; secluding himself from that, or presenting himself only in crowds, where he writhed to find that he went for nothing, he was miserable, yet not to be comforted, for the torments he endured were integral portions of his own nature.

He looked surprised to see Elizabeth, and was at first very civil to her, with a sort of old-fashioned gallantry which, had it been good-humoured, might have amused, but, as it was, appeared forced, misplaced, and rendered its object very uncomfortable. Whatever Lady Cecil said, he contradicted. He made disagreeable remarks about her children, prophesying in them so much future torment; and when not personally impertinent, amused them by recapitulating all the most scandalous stories rife in London of unfaithful wives and divided families, absolutely gloating with delight, when he narrated any thing peculiarly disgraceful. After half an hour, Elizabeth quite hated him; and he extended the same sentiment to her on her bestowing a meed of praise on his son. “Yes,” he said, in reply, “Gerard is a very pleasant person; if I said he was half madman, half fool, I should certainly say too much, and appear an unkind father; but the sort of imbecility that characterizes his understanding is, I think, only equalled by his self-willed defiance of all laws which society has established; in conduct he very much resembles a lunatic armed with a weapon of offence, which he does not fear himself, and deals about on those unfortunately connected with him, with the same indifference to wounds.”

On this speech, Lady Cecil coloured and rose from the table, and her friend gladly followed; leaving Sir Boyvill to his solitary wine. Never had Elizabeth experienced before the intolerable weight of an odious person's society — she was stunned. "We have but one resource," said Lady Cecil; "you must sit down to the piano. Sir Boyvill is too polite not to entreat you to play on, and too weary not to fall asleep; he is worse than ever."

"But he is your father!" cried Elizabeth, astonished.

"No, thank heaven!" said Lady Cecil.—"What could have put that into your head? Oh, I see — I call Gerard my brother. Sir Boyvill married my poor mother, who is since dead. We are only connected — I am happy to say — there is no drop of his blood in my veins. But I hear him coming. Do play something of Herz. The noise will drown every other sound, and even astonish my father-in-law."

The evening was quickly over, for Sir Boyvill retired early; the next morning he was gone, and the ladies breathed freely again. It is impossible to attempt to describe the sort of moral nightmare the presence of such a man produces. "Do you remember in Madame de Sévigné's Letters," said Lady Cecil, "where she observes that disagreeable society is better than good — because one is so pleased to get rid of it? In this sense, Sir Boyvill is the best company in the whole world. We will take a long drive to-day, to get rid of the last symptoms of the Sir Boyvill fever."

"And you will tell me what all this mystery means," said Elizabeth. "Mr. Neville gave some hints yesterday; but referred me to you. You may tell me all."

"Yes; I am aware," replied Lady Cecil. "This one good, at least, I have reaped from Sir Boyvill's angry visit. I am permitted to explain to you the causes of our discord, and of dear Gerard's sadness. I shall win your sympathy for him, and exculpate us both. It is a mournful tale — full of unexplainable mystery — shame — and dreaded ill. It fills me perpetually with wonder and regret; nor do I see any happy termination, except in the oblivion, in which I wish that it was buried. Here is the carriage. We will not take any of the children with us, that we may suffer no interruption."

Elizabeth's interest was deeply excited, and she was as eager to listen as her friend to tell. The story outlasted a long drive. It was ended in the dusky twilight — as they sat after dinner, looking out on the summer woods — while the stars came out twinkling amidst the foliage of the trees — and the deer crept close to graze. The hour was still — and was rendered solemn by a tale as full of heartfelt sorrow, and generous enthusiasm, as ever won maiden's attention, and bespoke her favour for him who loved and suffered.

CHAPTER XVI.

Lady Cecil began: —

"I have already told you that though I call Gerard my brother, and he possesses my sisterly affection, we are only connexions by marriage, and not the least related in blood. His father married my mother; but Gerard is the offspring of a former marriage, as I am also. Sir Boyvill's first wife is the unfortunate lady who is the heroine of my tale.

"Sir Boyvill, then Mr. Neville, for he inherited his baronetcy only a few years ago, had advanced beyond middle age when he first married. He was a man of the world, and of pleasure; and being also clever, handsome, and rich, had great success in the circles of fashion. He was often involved in liaisons with ladies, whose names were rife among the last generation for loving notoriety and amusement better than duty and honour. As he made a considerable figure, he conceived that he had a right to entertain a high opinion of himself, and not without some foundation; his good sayings were repeated; his songs were set to music, and sung with enthusiasm in his own set — he was courted and feared. Favoured by women, imitated by men, he reached the zenith of a system, any connection with which is considered as enviable.

"He was some five-and-forty when he fell in love, and married. Like many dissipated men, he had a mean idea of female virtue — and especially disbelieved that any portion of it was to be found in London; so he married a country girl, without fortune, but with beauty and attractions sufficient to justify his choice. I never saw his lady; but several of her early friends have described her to me. She was something like Gerard — yet how unlike! In the colour of the eyes and hair, and the formation of the features, they resembled; but the expression was wholly different. Her clear complexion was tinged by a pure blood, that ebbed and flowed rapidly in her veins, driven by the pulsations of her soul, rather than of her body. Her large dark eyes were irresistibly brilliant; and opened their lids on the spectator, with an effect such as the sun has, when it drops majestically below a heavy cloud, and dazzles the beholder with its unexpected beams. She was vivacious — nay wild of spirit; but though raised far above the dull monotony of common life by her exuberant joyousness of soul, yet every thought and act was ruled by a pure, unsullied heart. Her impulses were keen and imperative; her sensibility, true to the touch of nature, was tremblingly alive; but their more dangerous tendencies were guarded by excellent principles, and a truth never shadowed by a cloud. Her generous and confiding heart might be duped — might spring forward too eagerly — and she might be imprudent; but she was never false. An ingenuous confession of error, if ever she fell into it, purged away all suspicion that any thing mysterious or forbidden lurked in her most thoughtless acts. Other women, who like her are keenly sensitive, and who are driven by ungovernable spirits to do what they afterwards repent, and are endowed, as she was, with an aptitude to shame when rebuked, guard their dignity or their fears by falsehood; and while their conduct is essentially innocent, immesh themselves in such a web of deceit, as not only renders them absolutely criminal in the eyes of those who detect them, but in the end hardens and perverts their better nature. Alithea Neville never sheltered herself from the consequences of her faults; rather she met them too eagerly, acknowledged a venial error with too much contrition, and never rested till she had laid her heart bare to her friend and judge, and vindicated its every impulse. To this admirable frankness, soft tenderness, and heart-cheering gaiety, was added a great store of common sense. Her fault, if fault it could be called, was a too earnest craving for the sympathy and affection of those she loved; to obtain this, she was unwearied, nay prodigal, in her endeavours to please and serve. Her generosity was a ready prompter, while her sensibility enlightened her. She sought love, and not applause; and she obtained both from all who knew her. To sum up all with the mention of a defect — though she could feel the dignity which an adherence to the dictates of duty imparts, yet sometimes going wrong — sometimes wounded by censure, and always keenly alive to blame, she had a good deal of timidity in her character. She was so susceptible to pain, that she feared it too much, too agonizingly; and this terror of meeting any thing harsh or grating in her path, rendered her too diffident of herself — too submissive to authority — too miserable, and too yielding, when any thing disturbed the harmony with which she desired to be surrounded.

"It was these last qualities probably that led her to accept Mr. Neville's offer. Her father wished it, and she obeyed. He was a retired lieutenant in the navy. Sir Boyvill got him raised to the rank of post captain; and what naval officer but would feel unbounded gratitude for such a favour! He was appointed to a ship — sailed — and fell in an engagement not many months after his daughter's marriage — grateful, even in his last moments, that he died commanding the deck of a man-of-war. Meanwhile his daughter bore the effects of his promotion in a less gratifying way. Yet, at first, she loved and esteemed her husband. He was not then what he is now. He was handsome; and his good-breeding had the polish of the day. He was popular, through a sort of liveliness which passes for wit, though it was rather a conventional ease in conversation than the sparkle of real intellect. Besides, he loved her to idolatry. Whatever he is now, still vehemence of passion forms his characteristic; and though the selfishness of his disposition gave an evil bias even to his love, yet it was there, and for a time it shed its delusions over his real character. While her artless and sweet caresses could create smiles — while he played the slave at her feet, or folded her in his arms with genuine and undisguised transport, even his darker nature was adorned by the, to him, alien and transitory magic of love.

"But marriage too soon changed Sir Boyvill for the worse. Close intimacy disclosed the distortions of his character. He was a vain and a selfish man. Both qualities rendered him exacting in the extreme; and the first give birth to the most outrageous jealousy. Alithea was too ingenuous for him to be able to entertain suspicions; but his jealousy was nourished by the difference of their age and temper. She was nineteen — in the first bloom of loveliness — in the freshest spring of youthful spirits — too innocent to suspect his doubts — too kind in her most joyous hour to fancy that she could offend. He was a man of the world — a thousand times had seen men duped and women deceive. He did not know of the existence of a truth as spotless and uncompromising as existed in Alithea's bosom. He imagined that he was marked out as the old husband of a young wife; he feared that she would learn that she might have married more happily; and, desirous of engrossing her all to himself, a smile spent on another was treason to the absolute nature of his rights. At first she was blind to his bad qualities. A thousand times he frowned when she was gay — a thousand times ill humour and cutting reproofs were the results of her appearing charming to others, before she discovered the selfish and contemptible nature of his passion, and became aware that, to please him, she must blight and uproot all her accomplishments, all her fascinations; that she must for ever curb her wish to spread happiness around; that she, the very soul of generous unsuspecting goodness, must become cramped in a sort of bed of Procrustes, now having one portion lopped off, and then another, till the maimed, and half-alive remnant should resemble the soulless niggard tyrant, whose every thought and feeling centred in his Lilliputian self. That she did at last make this discovery, cannot be doubted; though she never disclosed her disappointment, nor complained of the tyranny from which she suffered. She grew heedful not to displease, guarded in her behaviour to others, and so accommodated her manner to his wishes, as showed that she feared, but concealed that she no longer esteemed him. A new reserve sprang up in her character, which after all was not reserve; for it was only the result of her fear to give pain, and of her unalterable principles. Had she spoken of her husband's faults, it would have been to himself — but she had no spirit of governing — and quarrelling and contention were the antipodes of her nature. If, indeed, this silent yielding to her husband's despotism was contrary to her original frankness, it was a sacrifice made to what she esteemed her duty, and never went beyond the silence which best becomes the injured.

"It cannot be doubted that she was alive to her husband's faults. Generous, she was restrained by his selfishness; enthusiastic, she was chilled by his worldly wisdom; sympathetic, she was rebuked by a jealousy that demanded every feeling. She was like a poor bird, that with untired wing would mount gaily to the skies, when on each side the wires of the aviary impede its flight. Still it was her principle that we ought not to endeavour to form a destiny for ourselves, but to act well our part on the scene where Providence has placed us. She reflected seriously, and perhaps sadly, for the first time in her life; and she formed a system for herself, which would give the largest extent to the exercise of her natural benevolence, and yet obviate the suspicions, and cure the fears, of her narrowminded, self-engrossed husband.

"In pursuance of her scheme, she made it her request that they should take up their residence entirely at their seat in the north of England; giving up London society, and transforming herself altogether into a country lady. In her benevolent schemes, in the good she could there do, and in the few friends she could gather round her, against whom her husband could form no possible objection, she felt certain of possessing a considerable share of rational happiness — exempt from the hurry and excitement of town, for which her sensitive and ardent mind rendered her very unfit, under the guidance of a man who at once desired that she should hold a foremost place, and was yet disturbed by the admiration which she elicited. Sir Boyvill complied with seeming reluctance, but real exultation. He possesses a delightful seat in the southern part of Cumberland. Here, amidst a simple-hearted peasantry, and in a neighbourhood where she could cultivate many social pleasures, she gave herself up to a life which would have been one of extreme happiness, had not the exactions, the selfishness, the uncongenial mind of Sir Boyvill, debarred her from the dearest blessing of all — sympathy and friendship with the partner of her life.

"Still she was contented. Her temper was sweet, and yielding. She did not look on each cross in circumstance as an injury, or a misfortune; but rather as a call on her philosophy, which it was her duty to meet cheerfully. Her heart was too warm not to shrink with pain from her husband's ungenerous nature, but she had a resource, to which she gave herself up with ardour. She turned the full, but checked tide of her affections, from her husband to her son. Gerard was all in all to her — her hope, her joy, her idol, and he returned her love with more than a child's affection. His sensibility developed early, and she cultivated it perhaps too much. She wished to secure a friend — and the temptation afforded by the singular affectionateness of his disposition, and his great intelligence, was too strong. Mr. Neville strongly objected to the excess to which she carried her maternal cares, and augured ill of the boy's devotion to her; but here his interference was vain, the mother could not alter; and the child, standing at her side, eyed his father even then with a sort of proud indignation, on his daring to step in between them.

"To Mrs. Neville, this boy was as an angel sent to comfort her. She could not bear that any one should attend on him except herself — she was his playmate, and instructress. When he opened his eyes from sleep, his mother's face was the first he saw; she hushed him to rest at night — did he hurt himself, she flew to his side in agony — did she utter one word of tender reproach, it curbed his childish passions on the instant — he seldom left her side, but she was young enough to share his pastimes — her heart overflowed with its excess of love, and he, even as a mere child, regarded her as something to protect, as well as worship.

“Mr. Neville was angry, and often reproved her too great partiality, though by degrees it won some favour in his eyes. Gerard was his son and heir, and he might be supposed to have a share in the affection lavished on him. He respected, also, the absence of frivolous vanity, that led her to be happy with her child — contented, away from London — satisfied in fulfilling the duties of her station, though his eyes only were there to admire. He persuaded himself that there must exist much latent attachment towards himself, to reconcile her to this sort of exile; and her disinterestedness received the reward of his confidence, — he who never before believed or respected woman. He began to yield to her more than he was wont, and to consider that he ought now and then to show some approbation of her conduct.

“When Gerard was about six years old, they went abroad on a tour. Travelling was a mode of passing the time, that accorded well with Mr. Neville’s matrimonial view of keeping his wife to himself. In the travelling carriage, he only was beside her; in seeing sights, he, who had visited Italy before, and had some taste, could guide and instruct her; and short as their stay in each town was, there was no possibility of forming serious attachments, or lasting friendships; at the same time his vanity was gratified by seeing his wife and son admired by strangers and natives. While abroad, Mrs. Neville bore another child, a little girl. This added greatly to her domestic happiness. Her husband grew extremely fond of his baby daughter; there was too much difference of age, to set her up as a rival to Gerard; she was by contradistinction the father’s darling it is true, but this rather produced harmony than discord — for the mother loved both children too well to feel hurt by the preference; and, softened by having an object he really loved to lavish his favour on, Sir Boyvill grew much more of a tender father, and indulgent husband, than he had hitherto shown himself.

CHAPTER XVII.

"It was not until a year after their return from abroad that the events happened which terminated so disastrously Mrs. Neville's career in her own family. I am perplexed how to begin the narration, the story is so confused and obscure; the mystery that envelops the catastrophe, so impenetrable; the circumstances that we really know so few, and these gleaned, as it were ear by ear, as dropped in the passage of the event; so making, if you will excuse my rustic metaphor, a meagre, illassorted sheaf. Mrs. Neville had been a wife nearly ten years; never had she done one act that could be disapproved by the most circumspect; never had she swerved from that veracity and open line of conduct which was a safeguard against the mingled ardour and timidity of her disposition. It required extraordinary circumstances to taint her reputation, as, to say the least, it is tainted; and we are still in the dark as to the main instrument by which these circumstances were brought about. Their result is too obvious. At one moment Mrs. Neville was an honoured and beloved wife; a mother, whose heart's pulsations depended on the well-being of her children; and whose fond affection was to them as the sun's warmth to the opening flower. At the next, where is she? Silence and mystery wrap her from us; and surmise is busy in tracing shapes of infamy from the fragments of truth that we can gather.

"On the return of the family from abroad, they again repaired to their seat of Dromore; and, at the time to which I allude, Mr. Neville had left them there, to go to London on business. He went for a week; but his stay was prolonged to nearly two months. He heard regularly from his wife. Her letters were more full of her children and household than herself; but they were kind; and her maternal heart warmed, as she wrote, into anticipations of future happiness in her children, greater even than she now enjoyed. Every line breathed of home and peace; every word seemed to emanate from a mind in which lurked no concealed feeling, no one thought unconfessed or unapproved. To such a home, cheered by so much beauty and excellence, Sir Boyvill returned, as he declares, with eager and grateful affection. The time came when he was expected at home; and true, both to the day and to the hour, he arrived. It was at eleven at night. His carriage drove through the grounds; the doors of the house were thrown open; several eager faces were thrust forward with more of curiosity and anxiety than is at all usual in an English household; and as he alighted, the servants looked aghast, and exchanged glances of terror. The truth was soon divulged. At about six in the evening, Mrs. Neville, who dined early in the absence of her husband, had gone to walk in the park with Gerard; since then neither had returned.

"When the darkness, which closed in with a furious wind and thunder-storm, rendered her prolonged absence a matter of solicitude, the servants had gone to seek her in the grounds. They found their mistress's key in the lock of a small masked gate that opened on a green lane. They went one way up the lane to meet her; but found no trace. They followed the other, with like ill success. Again they searched the park with more care; and again resorted to the lanes and fields; but in vain. The obvious idea was, that she had taken shelter from the strom; and a horrible fear presented itself, that she might have found no better retreat than a tree or hayrick, and that she had been struck by the lightning. A slight hope remained, that she had gone along the high-road to meet her husband, and would return with him. His arrival alone took from them this last hope.

"The country was now raised. Servants and tenants were sent divers ways; some on horseback, some on foot. Though summer-time, the night was inclement and tempestuous; a furious west wind swept the earth; high trees were bowed to the ground; and the blast howled and roared, at once baffling and braving every attempt to hear cries or distinguish sounds.

"Dromore is situated in a beautiful, but wild and thinly inhabited part of Cumberland, on the verge of the plain that forms the coast where it first breaks into uplands, dingles and ravines; there is no high road towards the sea — but as they took the one that led to Lancaster, they approached the ocean, and the distant roar of its breakers filled up the pauses of the gale. It was on this road, at the distance of some five miles from the house, that Gerard was found. He was lying on the road in a sort of stupor — which could be hardly called sleep — his clothes were drenched by the storm — and his limbs stiff from cold. When first found, and disturbed, he looked wildly round; and his cry was for his mother — terror was painted in his face — and his intellects seemed deranged by a sudden and terrific shock. He was taken home. His father hurried to him, questioning him eagerly —

but the child only raved that his mother was being carried from him; and his pathetic cry of, ‘Come back, mamma — stop — stop for me!’ filled every one with terror and amazement. As speedily as possible medical assistance was sent for; the physician found the boy in a high fever, the result of fright, exposure to the storm, and subsequent sleep in his wet clothes in the open air. It was many days before his life could be answered for — or the delirium left him — and still he raved that his mother was being carried off — and would not stop for him, and often he tried to rise from his bed under the notion of pursuing her.

“At length consciousness returned — consciousness of the actual objects around him, mingled with an indistinct recollection of the events that immediately preceded his illness. His pulse was calm; his reason restored; and he lay quietly with open eyes fixed on the door of his chamber. At last he showed symptoms of uneasiness, and asked for his mother. Mr. Neville was called, as he had desired he might be, the moment his son showed signs of being rational. Gerard looked up in his father’s face with an expression of disappointment, and again murmured, ‘Send mamma to me.’

“Fearful of renewing his fever by awakening his disquietude, his father told him that mamma was tired and asleep, and could not be disturbed.

“‘Then she has come back?’ he cried; ‘that man did not take her quite away? The carriage drove here at last.’

“Such words renewed all their consternation. Afraid of questioning the child himself, lest he should terrify him, Mr. Neville sent the nurse who had been with him from infancy, to extract information. His story was wild and strange; and here I must remark that the account drawn from him by the woman’s questions, differs somewhat from that to which he afterwards adhered; though not so much in actual circumstances, as in the colouring given. This his father attributes to his subsequent endeavours to clear his mother from blame; while he asserts, and I believe with truth, that time and knowledge, by giving him an insight into motives, threw a new light on the words and actions which he remembered; and that circumstances which bore one aspect to his ignorance, became clearly visible in another, when he was able to understand the real meaning of several fragments of conversation which had at first been devoid of sense.

“All that he could tell during this first stage of inquiry was, that his mother had taken him to walk with her in the grounds, that she had unlocked the gate that opened out on the lane with her own key, and that a gentleman was without waiting.

"Had he ever seen the gentleman before?

"Never; he did not know him, and the stranger took no notice of him; he heard his mamma call him Rupert.

"His mother took the stranger's arm, and walked on through the lane, while he sometimes ran on before, and sometimes remained at her side. They conversed earnestly, and his mother at one time cried; he, Gerard, felt very angry with the gentleman for making her cry, and took her hand and begged her to leave him and come away; but she kissed the boy, told him to run on, and they would return very soon.

"Yet they did not return, but walked on to where the lane was intersected by the high road. Here they stopped, and continued to converse; but it seemed as if she were saying good bye to the stranger, when a carriage, driven at full speed, was seen approaching; it stopped close to them; it was an open carriage, a sort of calèhe, with the head pulled forward low down; as it stopped, his mother went up to it, when the stranger, pulling the child's hand from hers, hurried her into the carriage, and sprang in after, crying out to him, 'Jump in, my boy!' but before he could do so, the postillion whipped the horses, who started forward almost with a bound, and were in a gallop on the instant; he heard his mother scream; the words 'My child! my son!' reached his ears, shrieked in agony. He ran wildly after the carriage; it disappeared, but still he ran on. It must stop somewhere, and he would reach it, his mother had called for him: and thus, crying, breathless, panting, he ran along the high road; the carriage had long been out of sight, the sun had set; the wind, rising in gusts, brought on the thunder storm; yet, still he pursued, till nature and his boyish strength gave way, and he threw himself on the ground to gain breath. At every sound which he fancied might be that of carriage wheels, he started up; but it was only the howling of the blast in the trees, and the hoarse muttering of the now distant thunder; twice and thrice he rose from the earth, and ran forwards; till, wet through, and utterly exhausted, he lay on the ground, weeping bitterly, and expecting to die.

"This was all his story. It produced a strict inquiry among the servants, and then circumstances scarcely adverted to were remembered, and some sort of information gained. About a week or ten days before, a gentleman on horseback, unattended by any servant, had called. He asked for Mrs.

Neville; the servant requested his name, but he muttered that it was no matter. He was ushered into the room, where their mistress was sitting; he staid at least two hours; and when he was gone, they remarked that her eyes were red, as if she had been weeping. The stranger called again, and Mrs. Neville was denied to him.

“Inquiries were now instituted in the neighbourhood. One or two persons remembered something of a stranger gentleman who had been seen riding about the country, mounted on a fine bay horse. One evening, he was seen coming from the masked gate in the park, which caused it to be believed that he was on a visit at Dromore. Nothing more was known of him.

“The servants tasked themselves to remember more particularly the actions of their lady, and it was remembered that one evening she went to walk alone in the grounds, some accident having prevented Gerard from accompanying her. She returned very late, at ten o’clock; and there was, her maid declared, a good deal of confusion in her manner. She threw herself on a sofa, ordered the lights to be taken away, and remained alone for two hours past her usual time for retiring for the night, till, at last, her maid ventured in to ask her if she needed anything. She was awake, and when lights were brought, had evidently been weeping. After this, she only went out in the carriage with the children, until the fatal night of her disappearance. It was remembered, also, that she received several letters, brought by a strange man, who left them without waiting for any answer. She received one the very morning of the day when she left her home, and this last note was found; it threw some light on the fatal mystery. It was only dated with the day of the week, and began abruptly: —

“On one condition I will obey you; I will never see you more — I will leave the country; I will forget my threats against the most hated life in the world; he is safe, on one condition. You must meet me this evening; I desire to see you for the last time. Come to the gate of your park that opens on the lane, which you opened for me a few nights ago; you will find me waiting outside. I will not detain you long. A farewell to you and to my just revenge shall be breathed at once. If you do not come, I will wait till night, till I am past hope, and then enter your grounds, wait till he returns, and — Oh, do not force me to say what you will call wicked and worse than unkind, but come, come, and prevent all ill. I charge you come, and hereafter you shall, if you please, be for ever delivered from your

"'Rupert.'

"On this letter she went; yet in innocence, for she took her child with her. Could any one doubt that she was betrayed, carried off, the victim of the foulest treachery? No one did doubt it. Police were sent for from London, the country searched, the most minute inquiries set on foot. Sometimes it was supposed that a clue was found, but in the end all failed. Month after month passed; hope became despair; pity merged into surmise; and condemnation quickly followed. If she had been carried forcibly from her home, still she could not for ever be imprisoned and debarred from all possibility at least of writing. She might have sent tidings from the ends of the earth, nay, it was madness to think that she could be carried far against her own will. In any town, in any village, she might appeal to the justice and humanity of her fellow-creatures, and be set free. She would not have remained with the man of violence who had torn her away, unless she had at last become a party in his act, and lost all right to return to her husband's roof.

"Such suspicions began to creep about — rather felt in men's minds, than inferred in their speech — till her husband first uttered the fatal word; and then, as if set free from a spell, each one was full of indignation at her dereliction, and his injuries. Sir Boyvill was beyond all men vain — vanity rendered him liable to jealousy — and when jealous, full of sore and angry feelings. His selfishness and unforgiving nature, which had been neutralized by his wife's virtues, now quickened by the idea of her guilt, burst forth and engrossed every other emotion. He was injured there where the pride of man is most accessible — branded by pity — the tale of the world. He had feared such a catastrophe during the first years of his wedded life, being conscious of the difference which age and nature had placed between him and his wife. In the recesses of his heart he had felt deeply grateful to her for having dissipated these fears. From the moment that her prudent conduct had made him secure, he had become another man — as far as his defective nature and narrow mind permitted — he had grown virtuous and disinterested; but this fabric of good qualities was the result of her influence; and it was swept away and utterly erased from the moment she left him, and that love and esteem were exchanged for contempt and hatred.

"Soon, very soon, had doubts of his wife's allegiance, and a suspicion of her connivance, insinuated themselves. Like all evilly inclined persons, he jumped at once into a belief of the worst; her taking her son with her was a mere contrivance, or worse, since her design had probably been to carry him with her — a design frustrated by accident, and the lukewarmness of her lover on that point; the letter left behind, he looked on as a fabrication left there to gloss over her conduct. He forgot her patient goodness — her purity of soul — her devoted attachment to her children — her truth; and attributed at once the basest artifice — the grossest want of feeling. Want of feeling in her! She whose pulses quickened, and whose blushes were, called up at a word; she who idolized her child even to a fault, and whose tender sympathy was alive to every call; but these demonstrations of sensibility grew into accusations. Her very goodness and guarded propriety were against her. Why appear so perfect, except to blind? Why seclude herself, except from fears, which real virtue need never entertain? Why foster the morbid sensibility of her child, except from a craving for that excitement which is a token of depravity? In this bad world we are apt to consider every deviation from stony apathy as tending at last to the indulgence of passions against which society has declared a ban; and thus with poor Alithea, all could see, it was said, that a nature so sensitive must end in ill at last; and that, if tempted, she must yield to an influence, which few, even of the coldest natures, can resist.

“While Sir Boyvill revolved these thoughts, he grew gloomy and sullen. At first his increased unhappiness was attributed to sorrow; but a little word betrayed the real source — a little word that named his wife with scorn. That word turned the tide of public feeling; and she, who had been pitied and wept as dead, was now regarded as a voluntary deserter from her home. Her virtues were remembered against her; and surmises, which before would have been reprobated almost as blasphemy, became current as undoubted truths.

“It was long before Gerard became aware of this altered feeling. The minds of children are such a mystery to us! They are so blank, yet so susceptible of impression, that the point where ignorance ends and knowledge is perfected, is an enigma often impossible to solve. From the time that he rose from his sick bed, the boy was perpetually on the watch for intelligence — eagerly inquiring what discoveries were made — what means were used for, what hopes entertained of, his mother’s rescue. He had asked his father, whether he should not be justified in shooting the villain who had stolen her, if ever he met him? He had shed tears of sorrow and pity, until indignation swallowed up each softer feeling, and a desire to succour and to avenge became paramount. His dear, dear mother! that she should be away — kept from him by force — that he could not find — not get at her, were ideas to incense his young heart to its very height of impatience and rage. Every one seemed too tame — too devoid of expedients and energy. It appeared an easy thing to measure the whole earth, step by step, and inch by inch, leaving no portion uninspected, till she was found and liberated. He longed to set off on such an expedition; it was his dream by night and day; and he communicated these bursting feelings to every one, with an overflowing eloquence, inexpressibly touching from its truth and earnestness.

"Suddenly he felt the change. Perhaps some officious domestic suggested the idea. He says himself, it came on him as infection may be caught by one who enters an hospital. He saw it in the eyes — he felt it in the air and manner of all: his mother was believed to be a voluntary fugitive; of her own accord she went, and never would return. At the thought his heart grew sick within him:

"'To see his nobleness!
Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,
He straight declined upon't, drooped, took it deeply;
Fastened and fixed the shame on't in himself;
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,
And downright languished.'

"He refused food, and turned in disgust from every former pursuit. Hitherto he had ardently longed for the return of his mother; and it seemed to him that give his limbs but a manlier growth, let a few years go over, and he should find and bring her back in triumph. But that contumely and disgrace should fall on that dear mother's head; how could he avert that? The evil was remediless, and death was slight in comparison. One day he walked up to his father, and fixing his clear young eyes upon him, said: 'I know what you think, but it is not true. Mamma would come back if she could. When I am a man I will find and bring her back, and you will be sorry then!'

"What more he would have said was lost in sobs. His heart had beat impetuously as he had worked on himself to address his father, and assert his mother's truth; but the consciousness that she was indeed gone, and that for years there was no hope of seeing her, broke in — his throat swelled, he felt suffocated, and fell down in a fit."

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

Lady Cecil had broken off her tale on their return from their morning drive. She resumed it in the evening, as she and Elizabeth sat looking on the summer woods; and the soft but dim twilight better accorded with her melancholy story.

"Poor Gerard! His young heart was almost broken by struggling passions, and the want of tenderness in those about him. After this scene with his father his life was again in the greatest danger for some days, but at last health of body returned. He lay on his little couch, pale and wasted, an altered child — but his heart was the same, and he adhered tenaciously to one idea. 'Nurse,' he said one day, to the woman who had attended him from his birth, 'I wish you would take pen and paper, and write down what I am going to say. Or if that is too much trouble, I wish you would remember every word and repeat it to my father. I cannot speak to him. He does not love mamma as he used; he is unjust, and I cannot speak to him — but I wish to tell every little thing that happened, that people may see that what I say is true — and be as sure as I am that mamma never meant to go away.

"'When we met the strange gentleman first, we walked along the lane, and I ran about gathering flowers — yet I remember I kept thinking, why is mamma offended with that gentleman? — what right has he to displease her? and I came back with it in my mind to tell him that he should not say anything to annoy mamma; but when I took her hand, she seemed no longer angry, but very, very sorry. I remember she said—"I grieve deeply for you, Rupert" — and then she added—"My good wishes are all I have to give" — I remember the words, for they made me fancy, in a most childish manner, mamma must have left her purse at home — and I began to think of my own — but seeing him so well dressed, I felt a few shillings would do him no good. Mamma talked on very softly — looking up in the stranger's face; he was tall — taller, younger — and better looking than papa: and I ran on again, for I did not know what they were talking about. At one time mamma called me and said she would go back, and I was very glad, for it was growing late and I felt hungry — but the stranger said: "Only a little further

— to the end of the lane only," so we walked on and he talked about her forgetting him, and she said something that that was best — and he ought to forget her. On this he burst forth very angrily, and I grew angry too — but he changed, and asked her to forgive him — and so we reached the end of the lane.

"'We stopped there, and mamma held out her hand and said — Farewell! — and something more — when suddenly we heard the sound of wheels, and a carriage came at full speed round from a turn in the road; it stopped close to us — her hand trembled which held mine — and the stranger said —"You see I said true — I am going — and shall soon be far distant; I ask but for one half hour — sit in the carriage, it is getting cold." — Mamma said: "No, no — it is late — farewell;" but as she spoke, the stranger as it were led her forward, and in a moment lifted her up; he seemed stronger than any two men — and put her in the carriage — and got in himself, crying to me to jump after, which I would have done, but the postillion whipped the horses. I was thrown almost under the wheel by the sudden motion — I heard mamma scream, but when I got up the carriage was already a long way off — and though I called as loud as I could — and ran after it — it never stopped, and the horses were going at full gallop. I ran on — thinking it would stop or turn back — and I cried out on mamma — while I ran so fast that I was soon breathless — and she was out of hearing — and then I shrieked and cried, and threw myself on the ground — till I thought I heard wheels, and I got up and ran again — but it was only the thunder — and that pealed, and the wind roared, and the rain came down — and I could keep my feet no longer, but fell on the ground and forgot every thing, except that mamma must come back and I was watching for her. And this, nurse, is my story — Every word is true — and is it not plain that mamma was carried away by force?'

"'Yes,' said the woman, 'no one doubts that, Master Gerard — but why does she not come back? — no man could keep her against her will in a Christian country like this.'

"'Because she is dead or in prison,' cried the boy, bursting into tears —'but I see you are as wicked as every body else — and have wicked thoughts too — and I hate you and every body — except mamma.'

"From that time Gerard was entirely altered; his boyish spirit was dashed — he brooded perpetually over the wrong done his mother — and was irritated to madness, by feeling that by a look and a word he could not make others share his belief in her spotless innocence. He became sullen, shy — shut up in himself — above all, he shunned his father. Months passed away: — requisitions, set on foot at first from a desire to succour, were continued from a resolve to revenge; no pains nor expense were spared to discover the fugitives, and all in vain. The opinion took root that they had fled to America — and who on that vast continent could find two beings resolved on concealment? Inquiries were made at New York and other principal towns: but all in vain.

"The strangest, and most baffling circumstance in this mystery was, that no guess could be formed as to who the stranger was. Though he seemed to have dropped from the clouds, he had evidently been known long before to Mrs. Neville. His name, it appeared, was Rupert — no one knew of any bearing that name. Had Alithea loved before her marriage? such a circumstance must have been carefully hidden, for her husband had never suspected it. Her childhood had been spent with her mother, her father being mostly at sea. When sixteen, she lost her mother, and after a short interval resided with her father, then retired from service. He had assured Sir Boyvill that his daughter had never loved; and the husband, jealous as he was, had never seen cause to doubt the truth of this statement. Had she formed any attachment during the first years of her married life? Was it to escape the temptation so held out, that she secluded herself in the country? Rupert was probably a feigned name; and Sir Boyvill tried to recollect who her favourites were, so to find a clue by their actions to her disappearance. It was in vain that he called to mind every minute circumstance, and pondered over the name of each visitor: he could remember nothing that helped discovery. Yet the idea that she had, several years ago, conceived a partiality for some man, who, as it proved, loved her to distraction, became fixed in Sir Boyvill's mind. The thought poured venom on the time gone by. It might have been a virtue in her to banish him she loved and to seclude herself: but this mystery, where all seemed so frank and open, this defalcation of the heart, this inward thought which made no sign, yet ruled every action, was gall and wormwood to her proud, susceptible husband. That in her secret soul she loved this other, was manifest — for though it might be admitted that he used art and violence to tear her from her home

— yet in the end she was vanquished; and even maternal duties and affections sacrificed to irresistible passion.

"Can you wonder that such a man as Sir Boyvill, ever engrossed by the mighty idea of self — yet fearful that that self should receive the minutest wound; proud of his wife — because, being so lovely and so admired, she was all his — grateful to her, for being so glorious and enviable a possession — can you wonder that this vain, but sensitive man, should be wound up to the height of jealous rage, by the loss of such a good, accompanied by circumstances of deception and dishonour? He had been fond of his wife in return for her affection, while she in reality loved another; he had respected the perfection of her truth, and there was falsehood at the core. Had she avowed the traitor passion; declared her struggles, and, laying bare her heart, confessed that, while she preferred his honour and happiness, yet in the weakness of her nature, another had stolen a portion of that sentiment which she desired to consecrate to him — then with what tenderness he had forgiven her — with what soothing forbearance he had borne her fault — how magnanimous and merciful he had shown himself! But she had acted the generous part; thanks had come from him — the shows of obligation from her. He fancied that he held a flower in his hand, from which the sweetest perfume alone could be extracted — but the germ was blighted, and the very core turned to bitter ashes and dust.

"Such a theme is painful; howsoever we view it, it is scarcely possible to imagine any event in life more desolating. To be happy, is to attain one's wishes, and to look forward to the lastingness of their possession. Sir Boyvill had long been sceptical and distrusting — but at last he was brought to believe that he had drawn the fortunate ticket; that his wife's faith was a pure and perfect chrysolite — and if in his heart he deemed that she did not regard him with all the reverence that was his due; if she did not nurture all the pride of place, and disdain of her fellow-creatures which he thought that his wife ought to feel — yet her many charms and virtues left him no room for complain. Her sensibility, her vivacity, her wit, her accomplishments — her exceeding loveliness — they were all undeniably his — and all made her a piece of enchantment. This merit was laid low — deprived of its crown — her fidelity to him; and the selfish, the heartless, and the cold, whom she reproved and disliked, were lifted to the eminence of virtue, while she lay fallen, degraded, worthless.

“Sir Boyvill was, in his own conceit, for ever placed on a pedestal; and he loved to imagine that he could say, ‘Look at me, you can see no defect! I am a wealthy, and a well-born man. I have a wife the envy of all — children, who promise to inherit all our virtues. I am prosperous — no harm can reach me — look at me!’ He was still on his pedestal, but had become a mark for scorn, for pity! Oh, how he loathed himself — how he abhorred her who had brought him to this pass! He had, in her best days, often fancied that he loved her too well, yielded too often his pride-nurtured schemes to her soft persuasions. He had indeed believed that Providence had created this exquisite and most beautiful being, that life might be made perfect to him. Besides, his months, and days, and hours, had been replete with her image; her very admirable qualities, accompanied as they were by the trembling delicacy, that droops at a touch, and then revives at a word; her quickness, not of temper, but of feeling, which received such sudden and powerful impression, formed her to be at once admired and cherished with the care a sweet exotic needs, when transplanted from its sunny, native clime, to the ungenial temperature of a northern land. It was madness to recollect all the fears he had wasted on her. He had foregone the dignity of manhood to wait on her — he had often feared to pursue his projects, lest they should jar some delicate chord in her frame; to his own recollection it seemed, that he had become but the lackey to her behests — and all for the sake of a love, which she bestowed on another — to preserve that honour, which she blasted without pity.

“It were in vain to attempt to delineate the full force of jealousy; — natural sorrow at losing a thing so sweet and dear was blended with anger, that he should be thrown off by her; the misery of knowing that he should never see her more, was mingled with a ferocious desire to learn that every disaster was heaped on one whom hitherto he had, as well as he could, guarded from every ill. To this we may add, commiseration for his deserted children. His son, late so animated, so free-spirited and joyous, a more promising child had never blessed a father’s hopes, was changed into a brooding grief-struck, blighted visionary. His little girl, the fairy thing he loved best of all, she was taken from him; the carelessness of a nurse during a childish illness caused her death, within a year after her mother’s flight.

Had that mother remained, such carelessness had been impossible. Sir Boyvill felt that all good fell from him — the only remaining golden fruit dropped from the tree — calamity encompassed him; with his whole soul he abhorred and desired to wreak vengeance on her who caused the ill.

"After two years were past, and no tidings were received of the fugitives, it seemed plain that there could be but one solution to the mystery. No doubt she and her lover concealed themselves in some far land, under a feigned name. If indeed it were — if it be so, it might move any heart to imagine poor Alithea's misery — the obloquy that mantles over her remembrance at home, while she broods over the desolation of the hearth she so long adorned, and the pining, impatient anguish of her beloved boy. What could or can keep her away, is matter of fearful conjecture; but this much is certain, that, at that time at least, and now, if she survives, she must be miserable. Sir Boyvill, if he deigned to recollect these things, enjoyed the idea of her anguish. But, without adverting to her state and feelings, he was desirous of obtaining what reparation he could; and to dispossess her of his name. Endeavours to find the fugitives in America, and false hopes held out, had delayed the process. He at last entered on it with eagerness. A thousand obvious reasons rendered a divorce desirable; and to him, with all his pride, then only would his pillow be without a thorn, when she lost his name, and every right, or tie, that bound them together. Under the singular circumstances of the case, he could only obtain a divorce by a bill in parliament, and to this measure he resorted.

"There was nothing reprehensible in this step; self-defence, as well as revenge, suggested its expediency. Besides this, it may be said, that he was glad of the publicity that would ensue, that he might be proved blameless to all the world. He accused his wife of a fault so great as tarnished irrecoverably her golden name. He accused her of being a false wife and an unnatural mother, under circumstances of no common delinquency. But he might be mistaken; he might view his injuries with the eye of passion, and others, more disinterested, might pronounce that she was unfortunate, but not guilty. By means of the bill for divorce, the truth would be investigated and judged by several hundreds of the best born and best educated of his countrymen. The publicity also might induce discovery. It was fair and just; and though his pride rebelled against becoming the tale of the day, he saw no alternative. Indeed it was reported to him by some officious friend, that many had observed that it was strange that he had not sought this remedy before. Something of wonder, or blame, or both, was attached to his passiveness. Such hints galled him to the quick, and he pursued his purpose with all the obstinacy and imperious haste peculiar to him.

"When every other preliminary had been gone through, it was deemed necessary that Gerard should give his evidence at the bar of the House of Lords. Sir Boyvill looked upon his lost wife as a criminal, so steeped in deserved infamy, so odious, and so justly condemned, that none could hesitate in siding with him to free him from the bondage of those laws, which, while she bore his name, might be productive of incalculable injury. His honour too was wounded. His honour, which he would have sacrificed his life to have preserved untainted, he had intrusted to Alithea, and loved her the more fervently that she regarded the trust with reverence. She had foully betrayed it; and must not all who respected the world's customs, and the laws of social life; above all, must not any who loved him — be forward to cast her out from any inheritance of good that could reach her through him?

"Above all, must not their son — his son, share his indignation, and assist his revenge? Gerard was but a boy; but his mother's tenderness, his own quick nature, and lastly, the sufferings he had endured through her flight, had early developed a knowledge of the realities of life, and so keen a sense of right and justice, as made his father regard him as capable of forming opinions, and acting from such motives, as usually are little understood by one so young. And true it was that Gerard fostered sentiments independent of any teaching; and cherished ideas the more obstinately, because they were confined to his single breast. He understood the pity with which his father was regarded — the stigma cast upon his mother — the suppressed voice — the wink of the eye — the covert hint. He understood it all; and, like the poet, longed for a word, sharp as a sword, to pierce the falsehood through and through.

"For many months he and his father had seen little of each other. Sir Boyvill had not a mind that takes pleasure in watching the ingenuous sallies of childhood, or the development of the youthful mind; the idea of making a friend of his child, which had been Alithea's fond and earnest aim, could never occur to his self-engrossed heart. Since his illness Gerard had been weakly, or he would have been sent to school. As it was, a tutor resided in the house. This person was written to by Sir Boyvill's man of business, and directed to break the matter to his pupil; to explain the formalities, to soothe and encourage any timidity he might show, and to incite him, if need were, to a desire to assist in a measure, whose operation was to yrender justice to his father.

"The first allusion to his mother made by Mr. Carter, caused the blood to rush from the boy's heart and to dye crimson his cheeks, his temples, his throat; then he grew deadly pale, and without uttering a word, listened to his preceptor, till suddenly taking in the nature of the task assigned to him, every limb shook, and he answered by a simple request to be left alone, and he would consider. No more was thought by the unapprehensive people about, than that he was shy of being spoken to on the subject — that he would make up his mind in his own way — and Mr. Carter at once yielded to his request; the reserve which had shrouded him since he lost his mother, had accustomed those about him to habitual silence. None — no one watchful, attached, intelligent eye marked the struggles which shook his delicate frame, blanched his cheek, took the flesh from his bones, and quickened his pulse into fever. None marked him as he lay in bed the livelong night, with open eyes and beating heart, a prey to contending emotion. He was passed carelessly by as he lay on the dewy grass from morn to evening, his soul torn by grief — uttering his mother's name in accents of despair, and shedding floods of tears.

"I said that these signs of intense feeling were not remarked — and yet they were, in a vulgar way, by the menials, who said it would be well when the affair was over, Master Neville took it so to heart, and was sadly frightened. Frightened! such a coarse, undistinguishing name was given to the sacred terror of doing his still loved mother injury, which heaved his breast with convulsive sobs and filled his veins with fire.

"The thought of what he was called upon to do haunted him day and night with agony. He, her nursling, her idol, her child — he who could not think of her name without tears, and dreamed often that she kissed him in his sleep, and woke to weep over the delusion — he was to accuse her before an assembled multitude — to give support to the most infamous falsehoods — to lend his voice to stigmatise her name; and wherever she was, kept from him by some irresistible power, but innocent as an angel, and still loving him, she was to hear of him as her enemy, and receive a last wound from his hand. Such appeared the task assigned to him in his eyes, for his blunt-witted tutor had spoken of the justice to be rendered his father, by freeing him from his fugitive wife, without regarding the inner heart of his pupil, or being aware that his mother sat throned there an angel of light and goodness, — the victim of ill, but doing none.

"Soon after Mrs. Neville's flight, the family had abandoned the seat in Cumberland, and inhabited a house taken near the Thames, in Buckinghamshire. Here Gerard resided, while his father was in town, watching the progress of the bill. At last the day drew near when Gerard's presence was required. The peers showed a disposition, either from curiosity or a love of justice, to sift the affair to the uttermost, and the boy's testimony was declared absolutely necessary. Mr. Carter told Gerard that on the following morning they were to proceed to London, in pursuance of the circumstances which he had explained to him a few days before.

"'Is it then true,' said the boy, 'that I am to be called upon to give evidence, as you call it, against my mother?'

"'You are called upon by every feeling of duty,' replied the sapient preceptor, 'to speak the truth to those whose decision will render justice to your father. If the truth injure Mrs. Neville, that is her affair.'

"Again Gerard's cheeks burned with blushes, and his eyes, dimmed as they were with tears, flashed fire. 'In that case,' he said, 'I beg to see my father.'

"'You will see him when in town,' replied Mr. Carter. 'Come, Neville, you must not take the matter in this girlish style; show yourself a man. Your mother is unworthy—'

"'If you please, sir,' said Gerrard, half choked, yet restraining himself, 'I will speak to my father; I do not like any one else to talk to me about these things.'

"'As you please, sir,' said Mr. Carter, much offended.

"No more was said — it was evening. The next morning they set out for London. The poor boy had lain awake the whole night; but no one knew or cared for his painful vigils."

CHAPTER II.

“On the following day the journey was performed; and it had been arranged that Gerard should rest on the subsequent one; the third being fixed for his attendance in the House of Lords. Sir Boyvill had been informed how sullenly (that was the word they used) the boy had received the information conveyed to him by his tutor. He would rather have been excused saying a word himself to his son on the subject; but this account, and the boy’s request to see him, forced him to change his purpose. He did not expect opposition; but he wished to give a right turn to Gerard’s expressions. The sort of cold distance that separation and variance of feeling produced, rendered their intercourse little like the tender interchange of parental and filial love.

“‘Gerard, my boy,’ Sir Boyvill began, we are both sufferers; and you, like me, are not of a race tamely to endure injury. I would willingly have risked my life to revenge the ruin brought on us; so I believe would you, child as you are; but the sculking villain is safe from my arm. The laws of his country cannot even pursue him; yet, what reparation is left, I must endeavour to get.’

“Sir Boyvill showed tact in thus, bringing forward only that party, whose act none could do other than reprobate, and who was the object of Gerard’s liveliest hatred. His face lightened up with something of pleasure — his eye flashed fire; to prove to the world the guilt and violence of the wretch who had torn his mother from him, was indeed a task of duty and justice. A little more forbearance on his father’s part had wound him easily to his will; but the policy Sir Boyvill displayed was involuntary, and his next words overturned all. ‘Your miserable mother,’ he continued, ‘must bear her share of infamy; and if she be not wholly hardened, it will prove a sufficient punishment. When the events of to-morrow reach her, she will begin to taste of the bitter cup she has dealt out so largely to others. It were folly to pretend to regret that — I own that I rejoice.’

Every idea now suffered revulsion, and the stream of feeling flowed again in its old channel. What right had his father to speak thus of the beloved and honoured parent, he had so cruelly lost? His blood boiled within him, and, despite childish fear and reverence, he said, ‘If my mother will grieve or be injured by my appearing to-morrow, I will not go — I cannot.’

“‘You are a fool to speak thus,’ said his father, ‘a galless animal, without sense of pride or duty. Come, sir, no more of this. You owe me obedience, and you must pay it on this occasion. You are only bid speak the truth, and that you must speak. I had thought, notwithstanding your youth, higher and more generous motives might be urged — a father’s honour vindicated — a mother’s vileness punished.’

“‘My mother is not vile!’ cried Gerard, and there stopped; for a thousand things restrain a child’s tongue; inexperience, reverence, ignorance of the effect his words may produce, terror at the mightiness of the power with which he has to contend. After a pause, he muttered, ‘I honour my mother; I will tell the whole world that she deserves honour.’

“‘Now, Gerard, on my soul,’ cried Sir Boyvill, roused to anger, as parents too easily are against their offspring, when they show any will of their own, while they expect to move them like puppets; ‘On my soul, my fine fellow, I could find it in my heart to knock you down. Enough of this; I don’t want to terrify you: be a good boy to-morrow, and I will forgive all.’

“‘Forgive me now, father,’ cried the youth, bursting into tears; ‘forgive me and spare me! I cannot obey you, I cannot do any thing that will grieve my mother; she loved me so much — I am sure she loves me still — that I cannot do her a harm. I will not go to-morrow.’

“‘This is most extraordinary,’ said Sir Boyvill, controlling, as well as he could, the rage swelling within him. ‘And are you such an idiot as not to know that your wretched mother has forfeited all claim to your affection? and am I of so little worth in your eyes, I, your father, who have a right to your obedience from the justice of my cause, not to speak of parental authority, am I nothing? to receive no duty, expect no service? I was, indeed, mistaken; I thought you were older than your years, and had that touch of gentlemanly pride about you, that would have made you eager to avenge my injuries, to stand by me as a friend and ally, compensating, as well as you could, for the wrongs done me by your mother. I thought I had a son in whose veins my own blood flowed, who would be ready to prove his true birth by siding with me. Are you stone — or a base-born thing, that you cannot even conceive what thing honour is?’

“Gerard listened, he wept; the tears poured in torrents from his eyes; but as his father continued, and heaped many an opprobrious epithet on him, a proud and sullen spirit was indeed awakened; he longed to say — Abuse me, strike me, but I will not yield! Yet he did not speak; he dried his eyes, and stood in silence before his parent, his face darkening, and something ferocious gleaming in eyes, hitherto so soft and sorrowing. Sir Boyvill saw that he was far from making the impression he desired; but he wished to avoid reiterated refusals to obey, and he summed up at last with vague but violent threats of what would ensue — exile from his home, penury; nay, starvation, the abhorrence of the world, his own malediction; and, after having worked himself up into a towering rage, and real detestation of the shivering, feeble, yet determined child before him, he left him to consider, and to be vanquished.

“Far other thoughts occupied Gerard. ‘I had thought,’ he has told me, ‘once or twice to throw myself into his arms, and pray for mercy; to kneel at his feet and implore him to spare me; one kind word had made the struggle intolerable, but no kind word did he say; and while he stormed, it seemed to me as if my dear mother were singing as she was used, while I gathered flowers and played beside her in the park, and I thought of her, not of him; the words kick me out of doors, suggested but the idea I shall be free, and I will find my mother. I feel intensely now; but surely a boy’s feelings are far wilder, far more vehement than a man’s; for I cannot now, violent as you think me, call up one sensation so whirlwind-like as those that possessed me while my father spoke!’

“Thus has Gerard described his emotions; his father ordered him to quit the room, and he went to brood upon the fate impending over him. On the morrow early, he was bid prepare to attend the House of Lords. His father did not appear; he thought that the boy was terrified, and would make no further resistance. Gerard, indeed, obeyed in silence. He disdained to argue with strangers and hirelings; he had an idea that if he openly rebelled, he might be carried by force, and his proud heart swelled at the idea of compulsion. He got into the carriage, and, as he went, Mr. Carter, who was with him, thought it advisable to explain the forms, and give some instructions. Gerard listened with composure, nay, asked a question or two concerning the preliminaries; he was told of the oath that would be administered; and how the words he spoke after taking that oath would be implicitly believed, and that he must be careful to say nothing that was not strictly true. The colour, not an indignant blush, but a suffusion as of pleasure, mantled over his cheeks as this was explained.

“They arrived; they were conducted into some outer room to await the call of the peers. What tortures the boy felt as strangers came up, some to speak, and others to gaze; all of indignation, resolution, grief, and more than manhood’s struggles that tore his bosom during the annoying delays that always protract these sort of scenes, none cared to scan. He was there unresisting, apparently composed; if now his cheek flushed, and now his lips withered into paleness, if now the sense of suffocation rose in his throat, and now tears rushed into his eyes, as the image of his sweet mother passed across his memory, none regarded, none cared. When I have thought of the spasms and throes which his tender and high-wrought soul endured during this interval, I often wonder his heart-strings did not crack, or his reason for ever unsettle; as it is, he has not yet escaped the influence of that hour; it shadows his life with eclipse, it comes whispering agony to him, when otherwise he might forget. Some author has described the effect of misfortune on the virtuous, as the crushing of perfumes, so to force them to give forth their fragrance. Gerard is all nobleness, all virtue, all tenderness; do we owe any part of his excellence to this hour of anguish? If so, I may be consoled; but I can never think of it without pain. He says himself, ‘Yes! without these sharp goadings, I had not devoted my whole life to clearing my mother’s fame.’ Is this devotion a good? As yet no apparent benefit has sprung from it.

“At length he was addressed: ‘Young gentleman, are you ready?’ and he was led into that stately chamber, fit for solemn and high debate — thronged with the judges of his mother’s cause. There was a dimness in his eye — a tumult in his heart that confused him, while on his appearance there was first a murmur — then a general hush. Each regarded him with compassion as they discerned the marks of suffering in his countenance. A few moments passed before he was addressed; and when it was supposed that he had had time to collect himself, the proper officer administered the oath, and then the barrister asked him some slight questions, not to startle, but to lead back his memory by insensible degrees to the necessary facts. The boy looked at him with scorn — he tried to be calm, to elevate his voice; twice it faltered — the third time he spoke slowly but distinctly: ‘I have sworn to speak the truth, and I am to be believed. My mother is innocent.'

"'But this is not the point, young gentleman,' interrupted his interrogator, 'I only asked if you remembered your father's house in Cumberland.'

"The boy replied more loudly, but with broken accents—'I have said all I mean to say — you may murder me, but I will say no more — how dare you entice me into injuring my mother?'

"At the word, uncontrollable tears burst forth, pouring in torrents down his burning cheeks. He told me that he well remembers the feeling that rose to his tongue, instigating him to cry shame on all present — but his voice failed, his purpose was too mighty for his young heart; he sobbed and wept; the more he tried to control the impulse, the more hysterical the fit grew — he was taken from the bar, and the peers, moved by his distress, came to a resolve that they would dispense with his attendance, and be satisfied by hearing his account of the transaction, from those persons to whom he made it, at the period when it occurred. I will now mention, that the result of this judicial inquiry was a decree of divorce in Sir Boyvill's favour.

"Gerard, removed from the bar, and carried home, recovered his composure — but he was silent — revolving the consequences which he expected would ensure from disobedience. His father had menaced to turn him out of doors, and he did not doubt but that this threat would be put into execution, so that he was somewhat surprised that he was taken home at all; perhaps they meant to send him to a place of exile of their own choosing, perhaps to make the expulsion public and ignominious. The powers of grown-up people appear so illimitable in a child's eyes, who have no data whereby to discover the probable from the improbable. At length the fear of confinement became paramount; he revolted from it; his notion was to go and seek his mother — and his mind was quickly made up to forestall their violence, and to run away.

"He was ordered to confine himself to his own room — his food was brought to him — this looked like the confirmation of his fears. His heart swelled high: 'They think to treat me like a child, but I will show myself independent — wherever my mother is, she is better than they all — if she is imprisoned, I will free her, or I will remain with her; how glad she will be to see me — how happy shall we be again together! My father may have all the rest of the world to himself, when I am with my mother, in a cavern or a dungeon, I care not where.'

"Night came on — he went to bed — he even slept, and awoke terrified to think that the opportune hour might be overpast — daylight was dawning faintly in the east; the clocks of London struck four — he was still in time — every one in the house slept; he rose and dressed — he had nearly ten guineas of his own, this was all his possession, he had counted them the night before — he opened the door of his chamber — daylight was struggling with darkness, and all was very still — he stepped out, he descended the stairs, he got into the hall — every accustomed object seemed new and strange at that early hour, and he looked with some dismay at the bars and bolts of the house door — he feared making a noise, and rousing some servant, still the thing must be attempted; slowly and cautiously he pushed back the bolts, he lifted up the chain — it fell from his hands with terrific clatter on the stone pavement — his heart was in his mouth — he did not fear punishment, but he feared ill success; he listened as well as his throbbing pulses permitted — all was still — the key of the door was in the lock, it turned easily at his touch, and in another moment the door was open; the fresh air blew upon his cheeks — the deserted treet was before him. He closed the door after him, and with a sort of extra caution locked it on the outside and then took to his heels, throwing the key down a neighbouring street. When out of sight of his home, he walked more slowly, and began to think seriously of the course to pursue. To find his mother! — all the world had been trying to find her, and had not succeeded — but he believed that by some means she would hear of his escape and come to him — but whither go in the first instance? — his heart replied, to Cumberland, to Dromore — there he had lived with his mother — there had he lost her — he felt assured that in its neighbourhood he should again be restored to her.

"Travelling had given him some idea of distance, and of the modes of getting from one place to another — he felt that it would be a task of too great difficulty to attempt walking across England — he had no carriage, he knew of no ship to take him, some conveyance he must get, so he applied to a hackney coach. It was standing solitary in the middle of the street, the driver asleep on the steps — the skeleton horses hanging down their heads — with the peculiarly disconsolate look these poor hacked animals have.

Gerard, as the son of a wealthy man, was accustomed to consider that he had a right to command those whom he could pay — yet fear of discovery and being sent back to his father, filled him with unusual fears; he looked at the horses and the man — he advanced nearer, but he was afraid to take the decisive step, till the driver awaking, started up and shook himself, stared at the boy, and seeing him well dressed — and he looked too, older than his years, from being tall — he asked, ‘Do you want me, sir?’

“‘Yes,’ said Gerard, ‘I want you to drive me.’

“‘Get in then. Where are you going?’

“‘I am going a long way — to Dromore, that is in Cumberland—’

“The boy hesitated; it struck him that those miserable horses could not carry him far. ‘Then you want me to take you to the stage,’ said the man. ‘It goes from Piccadilly — at five — we have no time to lose.’

“Gerard got in — on they jumbled — and arriving at the coach office, saw some half dozen stages ready to start. The name of Liverpool on one struck the boy, by the familiar name. If he could get to Liverpool, it were easy afterwards even to walk to Dromore; so getting out of the hackney coach, he went up to the coachman, who was mounting his box, and asked, ‘Will you take me to Liverpool?’

“‘Yes, my fine fellow, if you can pay the fare.’

“‘How much is it?’ drawing out his purse.

“‘Inside or outside?’

“From the moment he had addressed these men, and they began to talk of money, Gerard, calling to mind the vast disbursements of gold coin he had seen made by his father and the courier on their travels, began to fear that his little stock would ill suffice to carry him so far; and the first suggestion of prudence the little fellow ever experienced made him now answer, ‘Whichever costs least.’

“‘Outside then.’

“‘Oh I have that — I can pay you.’

“‘Jump up then, my lad — lend me your hand — here, by me — that’s right — all’s well, you’re just in the nick, we are off directly.’

“He cracked his whip, and away they flew; and as they went, Gerard felt free, and going to his mother.

“Such in these civilized times are the facilities offered to the execution of our wildest wishes! the consequences, the moral consequences, are still the same, still require the same exertions to overcome them; but we have no longer to fight with physical impediments. If Gerard had begun his expedition from any other town, curiosity had perhaps been excited; but in the vast, busy metropolis each one takes care of himself, and few scrutinize the motives or means of others. Perched up on the coach-box, Gerard had a few questions to answer — Was he going home? did he live in Liverpool? but the name of Dromore was a sufficing answer. The coachman had never heard of such a place; but it was a gentleman's seat, and it was Gerard's home, and that was enough.

"Some day you must ask Gerard to relate to you his adventures during this journey. They will come warmly and vividly from him; while mine, as a mere reflex, must be tame. It is his mind I would describe; and I will not pause to narrate the tantalizing cross questioning that he underwent from a Scotchman — nor the heart-heavings with which he heard allusions made to the divorce case before the Lords. A newspaper describing his own conduct was in the hands of one of the passengers; he heard his mother lightly alluded to. He would have leaped from the coach; but that was to give up all. He pressed his hands to his ears — he scowled on those around — his heart was on fire. Yet he had one consolation. He was free. He was going to her — he resolved never to mingle with his fellow creatures more. Buried in some rural retreat with his mother, it mattered little what the vulgar and the indifferent said about either.

"Some qualms did assail him. Should he find his dear mother? Where was she? his childish imagination refused to paint her distant from Dromore — his own removal from that mansion so soon after losing her, associated her indelibly with the mountains, the ravines, the brawling streams, and clustering woods of his natal county. She must be there. He would drive away the man of violence who took her from him, and they would be happy together.

"A day and a night brought him to Liver-pool, and the coachman hearing whither he wished to go, deposited him in the stage for Lancaster on his arrival. He went inside this time, and slept all the way. At Lancaster he was recognized by several persons, and they wondered to see him alone. He was annoyed at their recognition and questionings; and though it was night when he arrived, instantly set off to walk to Dromore.

“For two months from this time he lived wandering from cottage to cottage, seeking his mother. The journey from Lancaster to Dromore he performed as speedily as he well could. He did not enter the house — that would be delivering himself up as a prisoner. By night he clambered the park railings, and entered like a thief the demesnes where he had spent his childhood. Each path was known to him, and almost every tree. Here he sat with his mother; there they found the first violet of spring. His pilgrimage was achieved; but where was she? His heart beat as he reached the little gate whence they had issued on that fatal night. All the grounds bore marks of neglect and the master’s absence; and the lock of this gate was spoiled; a sort of rough bolt had been substituted. Gerard pushed it back. The rank grass had gathered thick on the threshold; but it was the same spot. How well he remembered it!

“Two years only had since passed, he was still a child; yet to his own fancy how much taller, how much more of a man he had become! Besides, he now fancied himself master of his own actions — he had escaped from his father; and he — who had threatened to turn him out of doors — would not seek to possess himself of him again. He belonged to no one — he was cared for by no one — by none but her whom he sought with firm, yet anxious expectation. There he had seen her last — he stepped forward; he followed the course of the lane — he came to where the road crossed it — where the carriage drove up, where she had been torn from him.

“It was day-break — a June morning; all was golden and still — a few birds twittered, but the breeze was hushed, and he looked out on the extent of country commanded from the spot where he stood, and saw only nature, the rugged hills, the green corn-fields, the flowery meads, and the umbrageous trees in deep repose. How different from the wild, tempestuous night, when she whom he sought was torn away; he could then see only a few yards before him, now he could mark the devious windings of the road, and, afar off, distinguish the hazy line of the ocean. He sat down to reflect — what was he to do? in what nook of the wide expanse was his mother hid? that some portion of the landscape he viewed, harboured her, was his fixed belief; a belief founded in inexperience and fancy, but not the less deep-rooted. He meditated for some time, and then walked forward — he remembered when he ran panting and screaming along that road; he was a mere child then, and what was he now? a boy of eleven, yet he looked back with disdain to the endeavours of two years before.

"He walked along in the same direction that he had at that time pursued, and soon found that he reached the turnpike road to Lancaster. He turned off, and went by the cross road that leads to the wild and dreary plains that form the coast. The inner range of picturesque hills, on the declivity of which Dromore is situated, is not more than five miles from the sea; but the shore itself is singularly blank and uninteresting, varied only by sandhills thrown up to the height of thirty or forty feet, intersected by rivers, which at low water are fordable even on foot; but which, when the tide is up, are dangerous to those who do not know the right track, from the holes and ruts which render the bed of the river uneven. In winter, indeed, at the period of spring tides, or in stormy weather, with a west wind which drives the ocean towards the shore, the passage is often exceedingly dangerous, and, except under the direction of an experienced guide, fatal accidents occur.

"Gerard reached the borders of the ocean, near one of these streams; behind him rose his native mountains, range above range, divided by tremendous gulfs, varied by the shadows of the clouds, and the gleams of sunlight; close to him was the waste sea shore; the ebbing tide gave a dreary sluggish appearance to the ocean, and the river — a shallow, rapid stream — emptied its slender pittance of mountain water noiselessly into the lazy deep. It was a scene of singular desolation. On the other side of the river, not far from the mouth, was a rude hut, unroofed, and fallen to decay — erected, perhaps, as the abode of a guide; near it grew a stunted tree, withered, moss-covered, spectre-like — the sand hills lay scattered around — the sea gull screamed above, and skimmed over the waste. Gerard sat down and wept — motherless — escaped from his angry father; even to his young imagination, his fate seemed as drear and gloomy as the scene around.

CHAPTER III.

"I donot know why I have dwelt on these circumstances so long. Let me hasten to finish. For two months Gerard wandered in the neighbourhood of Dromore. If he saw a lone cottage, embowered in trees, hidden in some green recess of the hills, sequestered and peaceful, he thought, Perhaps my mother is there! and he clambered towards it, finding it at last, probably, a mere shepherd's hut, poverty stricken, and tenanted by a noisy family. His money was exhausted — he made a journey to Lancaster to sell his watch, and then returned to Cumberland — his clothes, his shoes were worn out — often he slept in the open air — ewes' milk cheese and black bread were his fare — his hope was to find his mother — his fear, to fall again into his father's hands. But as the first sentiment failed, his friendless condition grew more sad; he began to feel that he was indeed a feeble helpless boy — abandoned by all — he thought nothing was left for him, but to lie down and die.

"Meanwhile he was noticed, and at last recognized, by some of the tenants; and information reached his father of where he was. Unfortunately the circumstance of his disappearance became public. It was put into the newspapers as a mysterious occurrence; and the proud Sir Boyvill found himself not only pitied on account of his wife's conduct, but suspected of cruelty towards his only child. At first he was himself frightened and miserable; but when he heard where Gerard was, and that he could be recovered at any time, these softer feelings were replaced by fury. He sent the tutor to possess himself of his son's person. He was seized with the help of a constable; treated more like a criminal than an unfortunate erring child; carried back to Buckinghamshire; shut up in a barricadoed room; debarred from air and exercise; lectured; menaced; treated with indignity. The boy, hitherto accustomed to more than usual indulgence and freedom, was at first astonished, and then wildly indignant at the treatment he suffered. He was told that he should not be set free till he submitted. He believed that to mean, until he should give testimony against his mother. He resolved rather to die. Several times he endeavoured to escape, and was brought back and treated with fresh barbarity — his hands bound, and stripes inflicted by menials; till driven to despair, he at one time determined to starve himself, and at another, tried to bribe a servant to bring him poison. The trusting piety inculcated by his gentle mother, was destroyed by the ill-judged cruelty of his father and his doltish substitute. It is painful to dwell on such circumstances; to think of a sensitive, helpless child treated with the brutality exercised towards a galleyslave. Under this restraint, Gerard grew such as you saw him at Baden — sullen, ferocious, plunged in melancholy, delivered up to despair.

"It was some time before he discovered that the submission demanded of him was, not to run away again. On learning this, he wrote to his father. He spoke with horror of the personal indignities he had endured; of his imprisonment; of the conduct of Mr. Carter. He did not mean it as such; but his letter grew into an affecting, irresistible appeal, that even moved Sir Boyvill. His stupid pride prevented him from showing the regret he felt. He still used the language of reproof and conditional pardon; but the tutor was dismissed, and Gerard restored to liberty. Had his father been generous or just enough to show his regret, he might probably have obliterated the effects of his harshness; as it was, Gerard gave no thanks for a boon which saved his life, but restored him to none of its social blessings. He was still friendless; still orphaned in his affections; still the memory of intolerable tyranny, the recurrence of which was threatened, if he made an ill use of the freedom accorded him, clung like the shirt of Nessus; and his noble, ardent nature was lacerated by the intolerable recollection of slavish terrors.

"You saw him at Baden; and it was at Baden that I also first knew him. You had left the baths when my mother and I arrived. We became acquainted with Sir Boyvill. He was still handsome; he was rich; and those qualities of mind which ill agreed with Alithea's finer nature, did not displease a fashionable woman of the world. Such was my mother. Something that was called an attachment sprang up, and they married. She preferred the situation of wife to that of widow; and he, having been accustomed to the social comforts of a domestic circle, despite his disasters, disliked his bachelor state. They married; and I, just then eighteen — just out, as it is called — became the sister of my beloved Gerard.

"I feel pride when I think of the services that I have rendered him. He had another fall from his horse not long after, or rather again urging the animal down a precipice, it fell. He was underneath, and his leg was broken.

During the long confinement that ensued, I was his faithful nurse and companion. Naturally lively, yet I could sympathise in his sorrows. By degrees I won his confidence. He told me all his story; all his feelings. He grew mild and soft under my influence. He grew to regret that he had been vanquished by adversity, so as to become almost what he was accused of being, a frantic idiot. As he talked of his mother, and the care she bestowed on his early years, he wept to think how unlike he was to the creature she had wished him to become. A desire to reform, to repair past faults, to school himself, grew out of such talk. He threw off his sullenness and gloom. He became studious at the same time that he grew gentle. His education, which had proceeded but badly, while he refused to lend his mind to improvement, was now the object of his own thoughts and exertions. Instead of careering wildly over the hills, or being thrown under some tree, delivered up to miserable reverie, he asked for masters, and was continually seen with a book in his hands.

"The passion of his soul still subsisted, modulated by his new feelings. He continued to believe in the innocence of his mother, though he often doubted her existence. He longed inexpressibly to unveil the mystery that shrouded her fate. He devoted himself in his heart to discovering the truth. He resolved to occupy his whole life in the dear task of reinstating her in that cloudless purity of reputation which he intimately felt she had never deserved to forfeit. He considered the promise exacted from him by his father as preventing him from following up his design, and as binding him till he was twenty-one. Till then he deferred his endeavours. No young spendthrift ever aspired for the attainment of the age of freedom, and the possession of an estate, as vehemently as did Gerard for the hour which was to permit him to deliver himself wholly up to this task.

"Before that time arrived, I married. I wished to take him abroad with us; but the unfounded (as I believe) notion, that the secret of his mother's fate is linked to the English shores, made him dislike to leave his native country. It was only on our return that he consented to come as far as Marseilles to meet us.

"When he had reached the age of twenty-one, he announced to his father his resolve to discover his mother's fate. Sir Boyvill was highly indignant. The only circumstance that at all mitigated the disgrace of his wife's flight, was the oblivion into which she and all concerning her had sunk. To have new inquiries set on foot, and the forgotten shame recalled to the memories of men, appeared not less wicked than insane. He remonstrated, he grew angry, he stormed, he forbade; but Gerard considered that time had set a limit to his authority, and only withdrew in silence, not the less determined to pursue his own course.

"I need not say that he met with no success; a mystery, so impenetrable at first, does not acquire clearness, after time has obscured the little ever known. Whatever were the real circumstances, and feelings, that occasioned her flight, however innocent she might then be, time has cemented his mother's union with another, and made her forget those she left behind. Or may I not say, what I am inclined to believe, that though the violence of another was the cause, at last, of guilt in her, yet she pined for those she deserted, that her heart was soon broken, that the sod has long since covered her form; while the miserable man who caused all this evil, is but too eager to observe a silence, which prevents his name from being loaded with the execrations he deserves? I cannot help, therefore, regretting that Gerard insists upon discovering the obscure grave of his miserable mother — while he, who, whether living or dead, believes her to have been always innocent, is to be dissuaded by no arguments, still less by the angry denunciations of Sir Boyvill, whose conduct throughout he looks on as being the primal cause of his mother's misfortunes.

"I have told you the tale, as nearly as I can, in the spirit in which Gerard himself would have communicated it — such was my tacit pledge to him — nor do I wish by my suspicions, or conjectures, to deprive him of your sympathy, and the belief he wishes you to entertain of his mother's innocence; but truth will force its way, and who can think her wholly guiltless? would to God! Oh, how often, and how fervently have I prayed that Gerard were cured of the madness which renders his life a wild, unprofitable dream; and looking soberly on the past, consent to bury in oblivion misfortunes and errors which are beyond all cure, and which it is worse than vain to remember."

CHAPTER IV.

There was to Elizabeth a fascinating interest in the story related by Lady Cecil. Elizabeth had no wild fairy-like imagination. Her talents, which were remarkable, her serious, thoughtful mind, was warmed by the vital heat emanating from her affections — whatever regarded these, moved her deeply.

Here was a tale full of human interest, of love, error, of filial tenderness, and deep rooted, uneradicable fidelity. Elizabeth, who knew little of life, except through such experience as she gathered from the emotions of her own heart, and the struggling passions of Falkner, could not regard the story in the same worldly light as Lady Cecil. There was an unfathomable mystery; but, was there guilt as far as regarded Mrs. Neville? Elizabeth could not believe it. She believed, that in a nature as finely formed as hers was described to have been, maternal love, and love for such a child as Gerard, must have risen paramount to every other feeling. Philosophers have said that the most exalted natures are endowed with the strongest and deepest-seated passions. It is by combating, and purifying them, that the human being rises into excellence; and the combat is assisted by setting the good in opposition to the evil. Perhaps, Mrs. Neville had loved — though, even that seemed strange — but her devoted affection to her child must have been more powerful than a love, which, did it exist, appeared unaccompanied by one sanctifying or extenuating circumstance.

Thus thought Elizabeth. Gerard appeared in a beautiful, and heroic light, bent on his holy mission of redeeming his mother’s name from the stigma accumulated on it. Her heart warmed within her at the thought, that such a task assimilated to hers. She was endeavouring to reconcile her benefactor to life, and to remove from his existence the stings of unavailing remorse. She tried to fancy that some secret tie existed between their two distinct tasks; and that a united happy end would spring up for both.

After musing for some time in silence, at length she said, “But you do not tell me whither Mr. Neville is now gone, and what it is that has so newly awakened his hopes.”

"You remind me," replied Lady Cecil, "of what I had nearly forgotten. It is a provoking and painful circumstance; the artifice of cupidity to dupe enthusiasm. You must know that Gerard, in furtherance of his wild project, has left an intimation among the cottages and villages near Dromore, and in Lancaster itself, that he will give two hundred pounds to any one who shall bring any information that will conduce to the discovery of Mrs. Neville's fate. This is a large bribe to falsehood, and yet, until now, no one has pretended to have any thing to tell. But the other day he received a letter, and the person who wrote it was so earnest, that he sent a duplicate to Sir Boyvill. This letter stated that the writer, Gregory Hoskins, believed himself to be in possession of some facts connected with Mrs. Neville of Dromore, and on the two hundred pounds being properly secured to him by a written bond, he would communicate them. This letter was dated Lancaster — thither Gerard is gone."

"Does it speak of Mrs. Neville as still alive?" asked Elizabeth.

"It says barely the words which I have repeated," Lady Cecil replied. "Sir Boyvill, knowing his son's impetuosity, hurried down here, to stop, if he could, his reviving, through such means, the recollection of his unfortunate lady, — with what success you have seen; Gerard is gone, nor can any one guess what tale will be trumped up to deceive and rob him."

Elizabeth could not feel as secure as her friend, that nothing would come of the promised information. This was not strange; besides the different view taken by a worldly and an inexperienced person, the tale, with all its mystery, was an old one to Lady Cecil; while, to her friend, it bore the freshness of novelty: to the one, it was a story of the dead and the forgotten, to the other, it was replete with living interest; the enthusiasm of Gerard communicated itself to her, and she felt that his present journey was full of event, the first step in a discovery of all that hitherto had been inscrutable.

A few days brought a letter from Gerard. Lady Cecil read it, and then gave it to her young friend to peruse. It was dated Lancaster; it said, "My journey has hitherto been fruitless; this man Hoskins has gone from Lancaster, leaving word that I should find him in London, but in so negligent a way as to lower my hopes considerably. His chief aim must be to earn the promised reward, and I feel sure that he would take more pains to obtain it, did he think that it was really within his grasp.

“He arrived but a few weeks since, it seems, from America, whither he migrated, some twenty years ago, from Ravenglass. How can he bring news of her I seek from across the Atlantic? The very idea fills me with disturbance. Has he seen her? Great God! does she yet live? Did she commission him to make inquiries concerning her abandoned child? No, Sophia, my life on it, it is not so; she is dead! My heart too truly reveals the sad truth to me.

“Can I then wish to hear that she is no more? My dear, dear mother! Were all the accusations true which are brought against you, still would I seek your retreat, endeavour to assuage your sorrows; wherever, whatever you are, you are of more worth to me — methinks that you must still be more worthy of affection, than all else that the earth contains! But it is not so. I feel it — I know it — she is dead. Yet when, where, how? Oh, my father’s vain commands! I would walk barefoot to the summit of the Andes to have these questions answered. The interval that must elapse before I reach London, and see this man, is hard to bear. What will he tell? Nothing! often, in my lucid intervals, as my father would call them, in my hours of despondency, I fear — nothing!

“You have not played me false, dearest Sophy? In telling your lovely friend the strange story of my woes, you have taught her to mourn my mother’s fate, not to suspect her goodness? I am half angry with myself for devolving the task upon you. For, despite your kind endeavours, I read your heart, my worldly-wise sister, and know its unbelief. I forgive you, for you never saw my mother’s face, nor heard her voice. Had you ever beheld the purity and integrity that sat upon her brow, and listened to her sweet tones, she would visit your dreams by day and night, as she does mine, in the guise of an angel robed in perfect innocence. I cannot forgive my father for his accusations; his own heart must be bad, or he could not credit that any evil inhabited hers. For how many years that guileless heart was laid bare to him! and if it was not so fond and admiring towards himself as he could have wished, still there was no concealment, no tortuosity; he saw it all, though now he discredits the evidence of his senses — shuts his eyes,

“And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, ‘Where is it?’

For truth was her attribute; the open heart, which made the brow, the eyes, the cheerful mien, the sweet, loving smile and thrilling voice, all transcripts of its pure emotions. It was this that rendered her the adorable being, which all who knew her acknowledge that she was.

"I am solicitous beyond measure that Miss Falkner should receive no false impression. Her image is before me, when I saw her first, pale in the agony of fear, bending over her dying father; by day and by night she forgot herself to attend on him. She, who loves a parent so well, can understand me better than any other. She, I am convinced, will form a true judgment. She will approve my perseverance and share my doubts and fears; will she not? ask her — or am I too vain, too credulous? Is there in the whole world one creature, who will join with me in my faith and my labours? You do not, Sophia; that I have long known, and the feeling of disappointment is already blunted; but it will revive, it will be barbed with a new sting, if I am deceived in my belief that Elizabeth Falkner shares my convictions, and appreciates the utility, the necessity of my endeavours. I do not desire her pity, that you give me; but at this moment I am blest by the hope that she feels with me. I cannot tell you the good that this idea does me. It spurs me to double energy in my pursuit, and it sustains me during the uncertainty that attends it; it makes me inexpressibly more anxious to clear my mother's name in her eyes; since she deigns to partake my griefs, I desire that she should hereafter share in the triumph of my success.

"My success! the word throws me ten thousand fathoms deep, from the thoughts of innocence and goodness, to those of wrongs, death, or living misery. Farewell, dearest Sophia. This letter is written at night; to-morrow, early, I set out by a fast coach to London. I shall write again, or you will see me soon. Keep Miss Falkner with you till I return, and write me a few words of encouragement."

Not a line in this letter but interested and gratified Elizabeth — and Lady Cecil saw the blush of pleasure mantle over her speaking countenance; she was half glad — half sorry — she looked on Elizabeth as she who could cure Gerard of his Quixotic devotion, by inspiring him with feelings which, while they had all the enthusiasm natural to his disposition, would detach him from his vain endeavours, and centre his views and happiness in the living instead of the dead. Lady Cecil knew that Gerard already loved her friend — he had never loved before — and the tenderness of his manner, and the admiration that lighted up his eyes whenever he looked on her, revealed the birth of passion. Elizabeth, less quick to feel, or at least more tranquil in the display of feeling, yet sympathised too warmly with him — felt too deeply interested in all he said and did, not to betray that she was touched by the divine fire that smooths the ruggedness of life, and fills with peace and smiles a darkling, stormy world. But instead of weaning Gerard from his madness, she encouraged him in it — as she well knew; for when she wrote to Gerard, she asked Elizabeth to add a few lines, and thus she wrote:

"I thank you for the confidence you repose in me, and more than that, I must express how deeply I feel for you — the more that I think that justice and truth are on your side. Whether you succeed or not, I confess that I think you are right in your endeavours — your aim is a noble and a sacred one — and like you, I cherish the hope that it will end in the exculpation of one deeply injured — and your being rewarded for your fidelity to her memory. God bless you with all the happiness you deserve."

No subsequent letter arrived from Gerard. Lady Cecil wondered and conjectured, and expected impatiently. She and her friend could talk of nothing else. The strange fact that a traveller from America proclaimed that he had tidings of the lost one, offered a fertile field for suppositions. Had Mrs. Neville been carried across the Atlantic? How impossible was this, against her own consent! No pirate's bark was there, with a crew experienced in crime, ready to acquiesce in a deed of violence; no fortalice existed, in whose impenetrable walls she could have been immured; yet so much of strange and fearful must belong to her fate, which the imagination mourned to think of! Love, though in these days it carries on its tragedies more covertly — and kills by the slow, untold pang — by the worm in the bosom — and exerts its influence rather by teaching deceit, than instigating to acts of violence, yet love reigns in the hearts of men as tyrannically and fiercely — and causes as much evil, as much ruin and as many tears, as when, in the younger world, hecatombs were slain in his honour. In former days mortals wasted rather life than feeling, and every blow was a physical one; now the heart dies, though the body lives — and a miserable existence is dragged out, after hope and joy have ceased to adorn it; yet love is still, despite the school-master and the legislator, the prime law of human life, and Alithea Neville was well fitted to inspire an ardent passion. She had a sensibility which, while it gave strength to her affections, yet diffused a certain weakness over the mechanism of her being, that made those around her tremble; she had genius which added lustre to her eye, and shed around her a fascination of manner, which no man could witness without desiring to dedicate himself to her service. She seemed the very object whom Sheridan addressed when he said —

“For friends in every age you’ll meet,
And lovers in the young.”

That she should be loved to desperation could excite no wonder — but what had been the effects of this love? a distant home across the ocean — a home of privation and sorrow — the yearning for her lost children — the slow breaking of the contrite heart; a life dragged on despite the pangs of memory — or a nameless grave. Such were the conjectures caused by the letter of the American.

At length Neville returned. Each turned her eye on his face, to read the intelligence he had acquired in his speaking countenance. It was sad. “She lives and is lost,” thought Lady Cecil; “He mourns her dead!” was the supposition of the single-minded Elizabeth. At first he avoided the subject of his inquiry, and his companions did not question him; till at last he suddenly exclaimed, “Do you not wish to learn something, Sophia? — Have you forgotten the object of my journey?”

“Dear Gerard,” replied Lady Cecil, “these walls and woods, had they a voice, could tell you that we have thought and spoken of nothing else.”

“She is dead!” he answered abruptly.

A start — an exclamation was the reply. He continued: “If there be any truth in the tale I have heard, my dear injured mother is dead; that is, if what I have heard concern her — mean any thing, or is not a mere fabrication. You shall hear all by and by; I will relate all I have been told. It is a sad story if it be hers, if it be a true story at all.”

These disjointed expressions raised the curiosity and interest of his auditors to their height. It was evening; instead of going on with his account, he passed into the adjoining room, opened the glass door, and stepped out into the open air. It was dark, scarcely could you see the dim outline of the woods — yet, far on the horizon where sky and sea met, there was a streak of light. Sophia and Elizabeth followed to the room whence he had gone, and drew their chairs near the open window and pressed each other’s hands.

“What can it all mean?” at length said Lady Cecil. “Hush!” whispered Elizabeth—”he is here, I saw him cross the streak of light.”

“True,” said Gerard’s voice — his person they could not distinguish, for they were in darkness; “I am here, and I will tell you now all I have heard. I will sit at your feet: give me your hand, Sophy, that I may feel that you are really present — it is too dark to see any thing.”

He did not ask for Elizabeth’s hand, but he took it, and placing it on Lady Cecil’s, gently clasped both: “I cannot see either of you — but indulge my wayward humour; so much of coarse and commonplace has been thrown on the most sacred subject in the world — that I want to bathe my soul in darkness — a darkness as profound as that which wraps my mother’s fate. Now for my story.”

CHAPTER V.

“You know that I did not find this man, this Hoskins, at Lancaster. By his direction I sought him in London, and after some trouble found him. He was busy in his own affairs, and it was difficult to get at him; but by perseverance, and asking him to dine with me at a coffeehouse, I at last succeeded. He is a native of Ravenglass, a miserable town on the sea-shore of Cumberland, with which I am well acquainted, for it is not far from Dromore. He emigrated to America before I was born; and after various speculations, is at last settled at Boston, in some sort of trade, the exigencies of which brought him over here, and he seized the opportunity to visit his family. There they were, still inhabiting the forlorn town of Ravenglass; their cottage still looking out on a dreary extent of sand, mud, and marsh; and the far mountains, which would seem to invite the miserable dwellers of the flats to shelter themselves in their green recesses, but they invite in vain.

“Hoskins found his mother, a woman nearly a hundred years of age, alive; and a widowed sister living with her, surrounded by a dozen children of all ages. He passed two days with them, and naturally recurred to the changes that had taken place in the neighbourhood. He had at one time had dealings with the steward of Dromore, and had seen my father. When he emigrated, Sir Boyvill had just married. Hoskins asked how it went on with him and his bride. It is our glorious fate to be in the mouths of the vulgar, so he heard the story of my mother’s mysterious flight; and in addition to this he was told of my boyish wanderings, my search for my mother, and my declaration that I would give two hundred pounds to any one through whose means I should discover her fate.

“The words fell at first upon a heedless ear, but the next morning it all at once struck him that he might gain the reward, and he wrote to me; and as I was described as a wanderer without a home, he wrote also to my father. When I saw him in town, he seemed ashamed of the trouble I had taken. ‘It is I who am to get the two hundred pounds,’ he said, ‘not you; the chance was worth wasting a little breath; but you may not think the little I have to tell worth your long journey.’

"At length I brought him to the point. At one period, a good many years ago, he was a settler in New York, and by some chance he fell in with a man lately arrived from England, who asked his advice as to obtaining employment: he had some little money — some few hundred pounds, but he did not wish to sink it in trade or the purchase of land, but to get some situation with a tolerable salary, and keep his little capital at command. A strange way of using money and time in America! but such was the fancy of the stranger; he said he should not be easy unless he could draw out his money at any time, and emigrate at an hour's notice. This man's name was Osborne; he was shrewd, ready-witted, and good-natured, but idle, and even unprincipled. 'He did me a good turn once,' said Hoskins, 'which makes me unwilling to do him a bad one; but you cannot injure him, I think, in America. He has risen in the world since the time I mention, and has an employment under our minister at Mexico. After all he did not tell me much, and what I learnt came out in long talks by degrees, during a journey or two we took together to the west. He had been a traveller, a soldier in the East Indies, and unlucky every where; and it had gone hard with him at one time in Bengal, but for the kindness of a friend. He was a gentleman far above him in station, who got him out of trouble, and paid his passage to England; and afterwards, when this gentleman returned himself to the island, he found Osborne in trouble again, and again he assisted him. In short, sir, it came out, that if this gentleman (Osborne would never tell his name) stood his friend, it was not for nothing this time. There was a lady to be carried off. Osborne swore he did not know who — he thought it a runaway match; but it turned out something worse, for never did girl take on so for leaving her home with a lover. I tell the story badly, for I never got the rights of it. It ended tragically — the lady died — was drowned, as well as I could make out, in some river. You know how dangerous the streams are on our coast.

"'It was the naming Cumberland and our estuaries that set me asking questions, which frightened Osborne. When he found that I was a native of that part of the world, he grew as mute as a fish, and never a word more of lady or friend did I get from him; except, as I guessed, he was well rewarded, and sent over the water out of the way; and he swore he believed that the gentleman was dead too. It was no murder — that he averred, but a sad tragic accident that might look like one; and he grew as white as a sheet if ever I tried to bring him to speak of it again. It haunted his thoughts nevertheless: and he would talk in his sleep, and dream of being hanged — and mutter about a grave dug in the sands, and there being no parson; and the dark breakers of the ocean — and horses scampering away, and the lady's wet hair — nothing regular, but such as often made me waken him; for in wild nights, such mutterings were no lullaby.

"'Now, sir, whether the lady he spoke of were your lady mother, is more than I can say; but the time and place tally. It is twelve years this summer since he came out; and it had just happened, for his heart and head were full of horrors, and he feared every vessel from Europe brought out a warrant to arrest him, or the like. He was a chicken-hearted fellow; and I have known him hide himself for a week when a packet came from Liverpool. But he got courage as time went on; when I saw him last, he had forgotten all about it; and when I jeered him about his terrors, he laughed, and said all was well, and he should not care going to England; for that the story was blown over, and neither he nor his friend even so much as suspected.

"'This, sir, is my story; and I don't think he ever told me any more, or that I can remember any thing else; but such as I tell it, I can swear to it. There was a lady run off with, and she died, by fair means or foul, before she quitted the coast; and was buried, as we might bury in the far west, without bell or prayer-book. And Osborne does not know the name of the lady; but the gentleman he knew, though he has never since heard of him, and believes him to be dead. You best know whether my story is worth the two hundred pounds.'

"Such, Sophia, is the tale I heard. Such is the coarse hand and vulgar tongue that first touches the veil that conceals my mother's fate."

"It is a strange story," said Lady Cecil, shuddering.

"But, on my life, a true one," cried Neville, "as I will prove. Osborne is now at Mexico. I have inquired at the American consul's. He is expected back to Washington at the end of this summer. In a few weeks, I shall embark and see this man, who now bears a creditable character, and learn if there is any foundation for Hoskins's conjectures. If there is, and can I doubt it? if my mother died as he says, I shall learn the manner of her death, and who is the murderer."

"Murderer!" echoed both his auditors.

"Yes; I cannot retract the word. Murderer in effect, if not in deed. Remember, I witnessed the act of violence which tore my mother from me. He who carried her away is, in all justice, an assassin, even if his hands be not embued with blood. Blood! did I say. Nay, none was shed. I know the spot; I have viewed the very scene. Our waste and desolate coast — the perilous, deceitful rivers, in one of which she perished — the very night, so tempestuous — the wild west-wind bearing the tide with irresistible impetuosity up the estuaries — he seeking the solitary sands — perhaps some smuggling vessel lying in wait — to carry her off unseen, unheard. To me it is as if I knew each act of the tragedy, and heard her last sigh beneath the waves breathed for me. She was dragged out by these men; buried without friend; without decent rites; her tomb the evil report her enemy raised above her; her grave the sands of that dreary shore. Oh, what wild, what miserable thoughts are these! This tale, instead of alleviating my anxious doubts, has taken the sleep out from my eyes. Images of death are for ever passing before me; I think of the murderer with a heart that pants for revenge, and of my beloved mother with such pity, such religious woe, that I would spend my life on that shore seeking her remains, so that at last I might shed my tears above them, and bear them to a more sacred spot. There is an easier way to gain both ends."

"It is a sad, but a wild and uncertain story," remarked Lady Cecil, "and not sufficiently plain, I think, to take you away from us all across the Atlantic."

"A far slighter clue would take me so far," replied Gerard, "as you well know. It is not for a traveller to Egypt to measure miles with such timidity. My dear Sophy, you would indeed think me mad if, after devoting my life to one pursuit, I were now to permit a voyage across the Atlantic to stand between me and the slightest chance of having my doubts cleared up. It is a voyage which thousands take every week for their interest or their pleasure. I do much, I think, in postponing my journey till this man returns to Washington. At first I had thought of taking my passage on the instant, and meeting him on his journey homeward from Mexico; but I might miss him. Yet I long to be on the spot, in America; for, if any thing should happen to him; if he should die, and his secret die with him, how for ever after I should be stung by self-reproach!"

"But there seems to me so little foundation—" Lady Cecil began. Neville made an impatient gesture, exclaiming, "Are you not unreasonable, Sophy? my father has made a complete convert of you."

Elizabeth interposed, and asked, "You saw this man more than once?"

"Who? Hoskins? Yes, three times, and he always told the same story. He persisted in the main points. That the scene of the carrying off of the lady was his native shore, the coast of Cumberland; that the act immediately preceded Osborne's arrival in America, twelve years ago; and that she died miserably, the victim of her wretched lover. He knew Osborne immediately on his coming to New York, when he was still suffering from the panic of such a tragedy, dreading the arrival of every vessel from England. At that time he concealed carefully from his new friend what he afterwards, in the overflow of his heart, communicated so freely; and, in aftertimes, he reminded him how, when an emissary of the police came from London to seek after some fraudulent defaulter, he, only hearing vaguely that there was search made for a criminal, hid himself for several days. That Osborne was privy to, was participator in, a frightful tragedy, which, to my eyes, bears the aspect of murder, seems certain. I do not, I cannot doubt that my mother died then and there. How? the blood curdles to ask; but I would compass the earth to learn, to vindicate her name, to avenge her death."

Elizabeth felt Gerard's hand tremble and grow cold. He rose, and led the way into the drawing-room, while Lady Cecil whispered to her friend, "I am so very, very sorry! To go to America on such a story as this, a story which, if it bear any semblance to the truth, had better be for ever buried in oblivion. Dear Elizabeth, dissuade him, I entreat you."

"Do you think Mr. Neville so easy of persuasion, or that he ought to be?" replied her companion. "Certainly all that he has heard is vague, coming, as it does, from a third, and an interested person. But his whole life has been devoted to the exculpation of his mother; and, if he believes that this tale affords a clue to lead to discovery, he is a son, and the nature that stirs within him may gift him with a clearer vision and a truer instinct than we can pretend to. Who can say but that a mysterious, yet powerful, hand is at last held out to guide him to the completion of his task? Oh, dear Lady Cecil, there are secrets in the moral, sentient world, of which we know nothing: such as brought Hamlet's father before his eyes; such as now may be stirring in your brother's heart, revealing to him the truth, almost without his own knowledge."

"You are as mad as he," said Lady Cecil, peevishly. "I thought you a calm and reasonable being, who would co-operate with me in weaning Gerard from his wild fancies, and in reconciling him to the world as it is; but you indulge in metaphysical sallies and sublime flights, which my common-place mind can only regard as a sort of intellectual will-of-the-wisp. You betray, instead of assisting me. Peace be with Mrs. Neville, whether in her grave, or, in some obscure retreat, she grieve over the follies of her youth. She has been mourned for, as never mother was mourned before; but be reasonable, dear Elizabeth, and aid me in putting a stop to Gerard's insane career. You can, if you will; he reveres you — he would listen to you. Do not talk of mysterious hands, and Hamlet's ghost, and all that is to carry us away to Fairyland; but of the rational duties of life, and the proper aim of a man, to be useful to the living, and not spend the best years of his life in dreams of the dead."

"What can I say?" replied Elizabeth: "you will be angry, but I sympathise with Mr. Neville; and I cannot help saying, though you scoff at me, that I think that, in all he is doing, he is obeying the most sacred law of our nature, exculpating the innocent, and rendering duty to her who has a right, living or dead, to demand all his love."

"Well," said Lady Cecil, "I have managed very ill; I had meant to make you my ally, and have failed. I do not oppose Gerard in Sir Boyvill's open angry manner, but it has been my endeavour throughout to mitigate his zeal, and to change him, from a wild sort of visionary, into a man of this world. He has talents, he is the heir to large possessions, his father would gladly assist any rational pursuit; he might make a figure in his country, he might be any thing he pleased; and instead of this, all is wasted on the unhappy dead. You do wrong to encourage him; think of what I say, and use your influence in a more beneficial manner."

During the following days, this sort of argument was several times renewed. Lady Cecil, who had heretofore opposed Neville covertly, with some show of sympathy, the fallacy of which he easily detected, and who had striven rather to lead him to forget, than to argue against his views, now openly opposed his voyage to America. Gerard heard in silence. He would not reply. Nothing she said carried the slightest weight with him, and he had long been accustomed to opposition, and to take his own way in spite of it. He was satisfied to do so now, without making an effort to convince her. Yet he was hurt, and turned gladly to Elizabeth for consolation. Her avowed and warm approval, her anxious sympathy, the certainty she expressed that in the end he would succeed, and that his enthusiasm and zeal were implanted in his heart for the express purpose of his mother's vindication, and that he would fail in every higher duty if he now held back; all this echoed so faithfully his own thoughts, that she already appeared a portion of his existence that he could never part from, the dear and promised reward of all his exertions.

In the ardour of her sympathy, Elizabeth wrote to Falkner. She had before written to tell him that she had seen again her friend of Marseilles; she wrote trembling, fearful of being recalled home; for she remembered the mysterious shrinking of her father from the name of Neville. His replies, however, only spoke of a short journey he was making, and a delay in his own joining her. Now again she wrote to speak of Neville's filial piety, his mother's death, her alleged dishonour, his sufferings and heroism; she dilated on this subject with fond approval, and expressed her wishes for his success in warm and eager terms; for many days she had no reply; a letter came at last — it was short. It besought her instantly to return. "This is the last act of duty, of affection, I shall ever ask," Falkner wrote: "comply without demurring, come at once; come, and hear the fatal secret that will divide us for ever. Come! I ask but for a day; the eternal future you may, you will, pass with your new friends."

Had the writing not been firm and clear, such words had seemed to portend her benefactor's death; wondering, struck by fear, inexpressibly anxious to comply with his wishes, pale and trembling, she besought Lady Cecil to arrange for her instant return. Gerard heard with sorrow, but without surprise; he knew, if her father demanded her presence, her first act would be obedience. But he grieved to see her suffer, and he began also to wonder by what strange coincidence they should both be doomed to sorrow, through the disasters of their parents.

CHAPTER VI.

Falkner had parted with his dear adopted child, under a strong excitement of fear concerning her health. The change of air and scene restored her so speedily, that his anxieties were of short duration. He was, however, in no hurry to rejoin her, as he was taught to consider a temporary separation from him as important to her convalescence.

For the first time, after many years, Falkner was alone. True, he was so in Greece; but there, he had an object. In Greece also, it is true that he had dwelt on the past, writing even a narrative of his actions, and that remorse sat heavy at his heart, while he pursued this task. Yet he went to Greece to assist in a glorious cause, and to redeem his name from the obloquy his confession would throw on it, by his gallantry and death. There was something animating in these reflections. Then also disease had not attacked him, nor pain made him its prey — his sensations were healthful — and if his reflections were melancholy and self-condemning, yet they were attended by grandeur, and even by sublimity, the result of the danger that surrounded him, and the courage with which he met it.

Now he was left alone — broken in health — dashed in spirit; consenting to live — wishing to live for Elizabeth's sake — yet haunted still by one pale ghost, and the knowledge that his bosom contained a secret which, if divulged, would acquire for him universal detestation. He did not fear discovery; but little do they know the human heart, who are not aware of the throes of shame and anguish that attend the knowledge that we are in reality a cheat, that we disguise our own real selves, and that truth is our worst enemy. Left to himself, Falkner thought of these things with bitterness, he loathed the burthen that sat upon his soul, he longed to cast it off; yet, when he thought of Elizabeth, her devoted affection, and earnest entreaties, he was again a coward; how could he consent to give her up, and plant a dagger in her heart!

There was but one cure to the irritation that his spirit endured, which was — to take refuge in her society; and he was about to join her, when a letter came, speaking of Gerard Neville — the same wild boy they had seen at Baden — the kind friend of Marseilles, still melancholy, still stricken by adversity; but endowed with a thousand qualities to attract love and admiration; full of sentiment, and poetry — kind and tender as woman — resolute and independent as a man. — Elizabeth said little, remembering Falkner's previous restriction upon his name — but she considered it her duty to mention him to her benefactor; and that being her duty to him, it became another to her new friend, to assert his excellence, lest by some chance Falkner had mistaken, and attributed qualities that did not belong to him.

Falkner's thoughts became busy on this with new ideas. It was at once pleasing, and painful, to hear of the virtues of Gerard Neville. The pleasure was derived from the better portion of human nature — the pain from the worst; a lurking envy, and dislike to excellence derived in any degree from one he hated, and with such sentiment he regarded the father of Gerard. Still he was the son of the angel he worshipped, and had destroyed; she had loved her child to adoration, and to know that he grew up all she would have wished, would console her wandering, unappeased spirit. He remembered his likeness to her, and that softened him even more. Yet he thought of the past — and what he had done; and the very idea of her son lamenting for ever his lost mother, filled him with renewed and racking remorse.

That Elizabeth should now for the third time be thrown in his way, was strange, and his first impulse was to recall her. It was well that Gerard should be noble-minded, endowed with talent, a rare and exalted being — but that she should be brought into near contact with him, was evil: between Falkner and Gerard Neville, there existed a gulf unfathomable, horrific, deadly; and any friendship between him and his adopted child, must cause disunion between her and Falkner. He had suffered much, but this last blow, a cause for disuniting them, would tax his fortitude too much.

Yet thus it was to be taxed. He received a letter from Lady Cecil, of which Elizabeth was ignorant. Its ostensible object was to give good tidings of her fair guest's health, and to renew her invitation to him. But there was a covert meaning which Falkner detected. Lady Cecil, though too young to be an inveterate match-maker, yet conceived and cherished the idea of the marriage of Neville and Elizabeth. In common parlance, Gerard might look higher; but so also might Elizabeth, apparently the only daughter and heiress of a man of good birth, and easy fortune. But this went for little with

Lady Cecil; — Gerard's peculiar disposition — his devotion to his dead mother, his distaste to all society — the coldness he had hitherto manifested to feminine attractions, made the choice of a wife difficult for him. Elizabeth's heroic, and congenial character; her total inexperience in the world, and readiness to sympathize with sentiments which, to the ordinary class of women would appear extravagant and foolish; all this suited them for each other. Lady Cecil saw them together, and felt that intimacy would produce love. She was delighted; but thinking it right that the father should have a voice, she wrote to Falkner, scarcely alluding to these things, but with a delicate tact that enabled her to convey her meaning, and Falkner jumping at once to the conclusion, saw that his child was lost to him for ever.

There arose from this idea a convulsion of feeling, that shook him as an earthquake shakes the firm land, making the most stable edifices totter. A chill horror ran through his veins, a cold dew broke out on his forehead; it was unnatural — it was fatal, it must bring on all their heads tenfold ruin.

Yet wherefore? Elizabeth was no child of his — Elizabeth Falkner could never wed Gerard Neville — but between him and Elizabeth Raby there existed no obstacle. Nay, how better could he repay the injury he had done him in depriving him of his mother, than by bestowing on him a creature, perhaps more perfect, to be his solace and delight to the end of his life? So must it be — here Falkner's punishment would begin; to exile himself for ever from her, who was the child of his heart, the prop of his existence. It was dreadful to think of, but it must be done.

And how was the sacrifice to be fulfilled? by restoring Elizabeth to her father's family, and then withdrawing himself to a distant land. He need not add to this the confession of his crime. No! thus should he compensate to Gerard for the injury done him; and burning his papers, leaving still in mystery the unknown past, die, without it ever being known to Elizabeth, that he was the cause of her husband's sorrows. It was travelling fast, to arrange this future for all three; but there are moments when the future, with all its contingencies and possibilities, becomes glaringly distinct to our foreseeing eye; and we act as if that was, which we believe must be. He would become a soldier once again — and the boon of death would not be for ever denied to him.

To restore Elizabeth to her family was at any rate but doing her a long-withheld justice. The child of honour and faithful affection — who bore a proud name — whose loveliness of person and mind would make her a welcome treasure in any family; she, despite her generous sacrifices, should follow his broken fortunes no longer. If the notion of her marrying Neville were a mere dream, still to give back to her name and station, was a benefit which it was unjust any longer to withhold; nor should it be a question between them. They were now divided, so should they remain. He would reveal her existence to her family, claim their protection, and then withdraw himself; while she, occupied by a new and engrossing sentiment, would easily get reconciled to his absence.

The first step he took in furtherance of this new resolution, was to make inquiries concerning the present state of Elizabeth's family — of which hitherto he knew no more than what he gathered from her mother's unfinished letter, and this was limited to their being a wealthy Catholic family, proud of their ancestry, and devoted to their faith. Through his solicitor he gained intelligence of their exact situation. He heard that there was a family of that name in Northumberland; it was Roman Catholic, and exceedingly rich. The present head of the family was an old man; he had long been a widower; left with a family of six sons. The eldest had married early, and was dead, leaving his widow with four daughters and one son, yet a child, who was the heir of the family honours and estates, and resided with his mother, for the most part, at the mansion of his grandfather. Of the remaining sons little account could be gained. It was the family custom to concentrate all its prosperity and wealth on the head of the eldest son; and the younger, precluded by their religion, at that time, from advancement in their own country, entered foreign service. One only had exempted himself from the common lot, and become an outcast, and, in the eyes of his family, a reprobate. Edwin Raby had apostatized from the Catholic faith; he had married a portionless girl of inferior birth, and entered the profession of the law. His parents looked with indignation on the dishonour entailed on their name through his falling off; but his death relieved their terrors — he died, leaving a widow and an infant daughter. As the marriage had never been acknowledged, and female offspring were held supernumerary, and an incumbrance in the Raby family, they had refused to receive her, and never heard of her more; she was, it was conjectured, living in obscurity among her own relations. Falkner at once detected the truth. The despised, deserted widow had died in her youth; and the daughter of Edwin Raby was the child of his adoption. On this information Falkner regulated his conduct; and finding that Elizabeth's grandfather, old Oswi Raby, resided habitually at his seat in the north of England, he — his health now restored sufficiently to make the journey without inconvenience — set out for Northumberland, to communicate the existence, and claim his acknowledgment, of his granddaughter.

There are periods in our lives when we seem to run away from ourselves and our afflictions; to commence a new course of existence, upon fresh ground, towards a happier goal. Sometimes, on the contrary, the stream of life doubles — runs back to old scenes, and we are constrained to linger amidst the desolation we had hoped to leave far behind. Thus was it with Falkner; the past clung to him inextricably. What had he to do with those who had suffered through his misdeed? He had fled from them — he had traversed a quarter of the earth — he had placed a series of years between them; but there he was again — in the same spot — the same forms before him — the same names sounding in his ears — the effects of his actions impending darkly and portentously over him; seeing no escape but by casting away the only treasure of his life — his adopted child — and becoming again a solitary, miserable wanderer.

No man ever suffered more keenly than Falkner the stings of remorse; no man ever resolved more firmly to meet the consequences of his actions systematically, and without outward flinching. It was perseverance to one goal that had occasioned all his sin and woe; it followed him in his repentance; and though misery set a visible mark on his brow, he did not hesitate nor delay. The journey to Northumberland was long, for he could only proceed by short stages; and all the time miserable reflection doubled every mile, and stretched each hour into twice its duration. He was alone. To look back was wretchedness — to think of Elizabeth was no solace; hereafter they were to be divided — hereafter, no voice of love or gentle caress would chase the darkness from his brow — he was to be for ever alone.

At length he arrived at his destination, and reached the entrance to Belleforest. The mansion, a fine old Gothic building, adorned by the ruins of an ancient abbey, was in itself venerable and extensive, and surrounded by a princely demesne. This was the residence of Elizabeth's ancestors — of her nearest relations. Here her childhood would have been spent — under these venerable oaks — within these ancestral walls. Falkner was glad to think, that, in being forced to withdraw from her his own protection, she would take a higher station, and in the world's eye become more on an equality with Gerard Neville. Every thing around denoted grandeur and wealth; the very circumstance that the family adhered to the ancient faith of the land — to a form of worship, which, though evil in its effects on the human mind, is to the eye imposing and magnificent, shed a greater lustre round the place. On inquiry, Falkner heard that the old gentleman was at Belleforest; indeed he never quitted it; but that his daughter-in-law, with her family, were in the south of England. Mr. Raby was very accessible; on asking for him, Falkner was instantly ushered in,

He entered a library of vast dimensions, and fitted up with a sort of heavy splendour; very imposing, but very sombre. The high windows, painted ceiling, and massy furniture, bespoke an old-fashioned, but almost regal taste. Falkner, for a moment, thought himself alone, when a slight noise attracted his attention to a diminutive, and very white old gentleman, who advanced towards him. The mansion looked built for a giant race; and Falkner, expecting the majesty of size, could hardly contract his view to the slender and insignificant figure of the present possessor. Oswi Raby looked shrivelled, not so much by age as the narrowness of his mind; to whose dimensions his outward figure had contracted itself. His face was pale and thin; his light blue eyes grown dim; you might have thought that he was drying up and vanishing from the earth by degrees. Contrasted with this slight shadow of a man, was a mind that saw the whole world almost concentrated in himself. He, Oswi Raby, he, head of the oldest family in England, was first of created beings. Without being assuming in manner, he was self-important in heart; and there was an obstinacy, and an incapacity to understand that any thing was of consequence except himself, or rather, except the house he represented, that gave extreme repulsion to his manners.

It is always awkward to disclose an errand such as Falkner's; it was only by plunging at once into it, and warming himself by his own words, that he contrived to throw grace round his subject. A cloud gathered over the old man's features; he grew whiter, and his thin lips closed as if they had never opened except with a refusal.

"You speak of very painful circumstances," he said; "I have sometimes feared that I should be intruded upon in behalf of this person; yet, after so many years, there is less pretence than ever for encroaching upon an injured family. Edwin himself broke the tie. He was rebellious and apostate. He had talents, and might have distinguished himself to his honour; he preferred irreparable disgrace. He abandoned the religion which we consider as the most precious part of our inheritance; and he added imprudence to guilt, by, he being himself unprovided for, marrying a portionless, low-born girl. He never hoped for my forgiveness; he never even asked it. His death — it is hard for a father to feel thus — but his death was a relief. We were applied to by his widow; but with her we could have nothing to do. She was the partner of his rebellion — nay, we looked upon her as its primal cause. I was willing to take charge of my grandchild, if delivered entirely up to me. She did not even think proper to reply to the letter making this concession. I had, indeed, come to the determination of continuing to her a portion of the allowance I made to my son, despite his disobedience; but from that time to this no tidings of either mother or daughter have reached us."

"Death must bear the blame of that negligence," said Falkner, mastering his rising disgust. "Mrs. Raby was hurried to the grave but a few months after your son's death, the victim of her devoted affection to her husband. Their innocent daughter was left among strangers, who did not know to whom to apply. She, at least, is free from all fault, and has every claim on her father's family."

"She is nothing, and has no claim," interrupted Mr. Raby, peevishly, "beyond a bare maintenance, even if she be the person you represent. I beg your pardon, sir, but you may be deceived yourself on this subject; but taking it for granted that this young person is the daughter of my son, what is she to me?"

"A grand-daughter is a relation," Falkner began; "a near and dear one—"

"Under such circumstances," interrupted Mr. Raby; "under the circumstances of a marriage to which I gave no consent, and her being brought up at a distance from us all, I should rather call her a connexion than a relation. We cannot look with favour on the child of an apostate; educated in a faith which we consider pernicious. I am an old-fashioned man, accustomed only to the society of those whose feelings coincide with mine; and I must apologize, sir, if I say any thing to shock you; but the truth is self-evident, a child of a discarded son may have a slender claim for support, none for favour or countenance. This young person has no right to raise her eyes to us; she must regulate her expectations by the condition of her mother, who was a sort of servant, a humble companion or governess, in the house of Mrs. Neville of Dromore—"

Falkner grew pale at the name, but, commanding himself, replied, "I believe she was a friend of that lady! I have said I was unacquainted with the parents of Miss Raby; I found her an orphan, subsisting on precarious charity. Her few years — her forlorn situation — her beauty and sweetness, claimed my compassion — I adopted her—"

"And would now throw her off," again interrupted the ill-tempered old man. "Had you restored her to us in her childhood — had she been brought up in our religion among us — she would have shared this home with her cousins. As it is, you must yourself be aware, that it will be impossible to admit, as an inmate, a stranger — a person ignorant of our peculiar systems — an alien from our religion. Mrs. Raby would never consent to it; and I would on no account annoy her who, as the mother and guardian of my heir, merits every deference. I will, however, consult with her, and with the gentleman who has the conduct of my affairs; and as you wish to get rid of an embarrassment, which, pardon me if I say you entirely brought on yourself, we will do what we judge due to the honour of the family; but I cannot hold out any hopes beyond a maintenance — unless this young person, whom I should then regard as my grand-daughter, felt a vocation for a religion, out of whose pale I will never acknowledge a relation."

At every word Falkner grew more angry. He always repressed any manifestation of passion, and only grew pale, and spoke in a lower, calmer voice. There was a pause; he glanced at the white hair, and attenuated form of the old man, so to acquire a sufficient portion of forbearance; and then replied: "It is enough — forget this visit; you shall never hear again of the existence of your outraged grandchild. Could you for a moment comprehend her worth, you might feel regret at casting from you one whose qualities render her the admiration of all who know her. Some day, when the infirmities of age increase upon you, you may remember that you might have had a being near, the most compassionate and kind that breathes. If ever you feel the want of an affectionate hand to smooth your pillow, you may remember that you have shut your heart to one who would have been a daily blessing. I do not wish to disembarrass myself of Miss Raby — Miss Falkner, rather, let me call her; she has borne my name as my daughter for many years, and shall continue to retain it, together with my paternal guardianship, while I live. I have the honour to wish you a good morning."

Falkner hastily departed; and, as he threw himself on his horse, and at a quick pace traversed the long avenues of Belleforest, he felt that boiling of the blood, that inexpressible bursting and tumult of the heart, that accompanies fierce indignation and disdain. A vehement desire to pour out the cataract of his contempt and anger on the offender, was mingled with redoubled tenderness for Elizabeth, with renewed gratitude for all he owed her, and a yearning, heart-warming desire to take her again to the shelter of his love, from whence she should never more depart.

CHAPTER VII.

Falkner's mind had undergone a total change; he had gone to Belleforest, believing it to be his duty to restore to its possessors a dearer treasure than any held by them; he left it, resolved never to part from his adopted child. "Get rid of an embarrassment!" he repeated to himself; "get rid of Elizabeth, of tender affection, truth and fidelity! of the heart's fondest ties, my soul's only solace! How often has my life been saved, and cheered by her only! And when I would sacrifice blessings of which I hold myself unworthy, I hear the noblest and most generous being in the world degraded by the vulgar, sordid prejudices of that narrow-minded bigot! How paltry seems the pomp of wealth, or the majesty of these ancient woods, when it is recollected that they are lorded over by such a thing as that!"

Falkner's reflections were all painful; his heavily-burthened conscience weighed him to the earth. He felt that there was justice in a part of Mr. Raby's representations; that if Elizabeth had been brought up under his care, in a religion which, because it was persecuted, was the more valuable in their eyes; participating in their prejudices, and endeared to them by habit, she would have had claims, which, as she was, unseen, unknown, and totally disjoined from them in opinions and feelings, she could never possess. He was the cause of this, having, in her infancy, chosen to take her to himself, to link his desolate fate to her brighter one; and now, he could only repent for her sake; yet, for her sake, he did repent, when, looking forward, he thought of the growing attachment between her and the son of his victim.

What could he do? recall her? forbid her again to see Gerard Neville? Unexplained commands are ever unjust, and had any strong feeling sprung up in either of their hearts, they could not be obeyed. Should he tell her all, and throw himself on her mercy? He would thus inflict deep, irreparable pangs, and, besides, place her in a painful situation, where duty would struggle with inclination; and pride and affection both made it detestable to him to create such a combat in her heart, and cause her to feel pangs and make sacrifices for him. What other part was there to take? to remain neuter? let events take their course? If it ended as he foresaw, when a marriage was mentioned, he could reveal her real birth. Married to Gerard Neville, her relations would gladly acknowledge her, and then he could withdraw for ever. He should have much to endure meanwhile; to hear a name perpetually repeated that thrilled to the very marrow of his bones; perhaps, to see the husband and son of her he had destroyed: he felt sick at heart at such a thought; he put it aside. It was not to-day, it could not be to-morrow, that he should be called upon to encounter these evils; meanwhile, he would shut his eyes upon them.

Returning homeward, he felt impelled to prolong his tour; he visited some of the lakes of Westmoreland, and the mountain scenery of Derbyshire. The thought of return was painful, so he lingered on the way, and wrote for his letters to be forwarded to him. He had been some weeks without receiving any from Elizabeth, and he felt extreme impatience again to be blest with the sight of her handwriting — he felt how passionately he loved her — how to part from her was to part from every joy of life; he called himself her father — his heart acknowledged the tie in every pulsation; no father ever worshipped a child so fervently; her voice, her smile — and dear loving eyes, where were they? — they were far, but here was something — a little packet of letters, that must for the present stand in lieu of the dearer blessing of her presence. He looked at the papers with delight — he pressed them to his lips — he delayed to open them, as if he did not deserve the joy they would communicate — as if its excess would overpower him. “I purpose parting from her” — he thought—”but still she is mine, mine when she traced those lines — mine as I read the expressions of her affection; there are hours of delight garnered for me in those little sealed talismans that nothing future or past can tarnish, and yet the name of Neville will be there!” The thought brought a cold chill with it, and he opened the letters hastily to know the worst.

Elizabeth had half forgotten the pain with which Falkner had at one time shrunk from a name become so dear to her; when she wrote, her heart was full of Gerard’s story — and besides she had had letters from her father speaking of him with kindness, so that she indulged herself by alluding to it — to the disappearance of his mother and Gerard’s misery; the trial — the brutality of Sir Boyvill; and last, to the resolution formed in childhood, brooded over through youth, now acted upon, to discover his mother’s destroyer. “Nor is it,” she wrote, “any vulgar feeling of vengeance that influences him — but the purest and noblest motives. She is stigmatized as unworthy — he would vindicate her fame. When I hear the surmises, the accusations cast on her, I feel with him. To hear a beloved parent accused of guilt, must indeed be the most bitter woe; to believe her innocent, and to prove her such, the only alleviation. God grant that he may succeed! — and though I wish no ill to any human being, yet rather may the height of evil fall on the head of the true criminal, than continue to cloud the days of a being whose soul is moulded in sensibility and honour!"

"Thus do you pray, heedless Elizabeth! May the true criminal feel the height of evil; may he — whom you have saved from death — endure tortures compared to which a thousand deaths were nothing! Be it so! you shall have your wish!"

Impetuous as fire, Falkner did not pause; something, some emotion devouring as fire, was lighted up in his heart — there must be no delay! — never had he seen the effects of his crime in so vivid a light; avoiding the name of Neville, he had never heard that of his victim coupled with shame — she was unfortunate, but he persuaded himself that she was not thought guilty; dear injured saint! had then her sacred name been bandied about by the vulgar, she pronounced unworthy by the judges of her acts; ignominy heaped upon the grave he had dug for her? Was her beloved son the victim of his belief in her goodness? Had his youthful life been blighted by his cowardly concealments? Oh, rather a thousand deaths than such a weight of sin upon his soul! — He would declare all; offer his life in expiation — what more could be demanded!

And again — this might be thought a more sordid motive; and yet it was not — Gerard was vowed to the discovery of the true criminal; he would discover him — earth would render up her secrets, Heaven lead the son to the very point — by slow degrees his crime would be unveiled — Elizabeth called upon to doubt and to believe. His vehement disposition was not calculated to bear the slow process of such discoveries; he would meet them, avow all — let the worst fall on him: it was happiness to know and feel the worst.

Lost for ever, he would deliver himself up to reprobation and the punishment of his guilt. Too long he had delayed — now all his motives for concealment melted away like snow overspread by volcanic fire. Fierce, hurrying destiny seized him by the hair of his head — crying aloud, Murderer, offer up thy blood — shade of Alithea, take thy victim!

He wrote instantly to Elizabeth to meet him at their home at Wimbledon, and proceeded thither himself. Unfortunately the tumult of his thoughts acted on his health; after he had proceeded a few miles, he was taken ill — for three days he was confined to his bed, in a high fever. He thought he was about to die — his secret untold. Copious bleeding, however, subdued the violence of the attack — and weak and faint, he, despite his physician's advice, proceeded homewards; weak and faint, an altered man — life had no charms, no calls, but one duty. Hitherto he had lived in contempt of the chain of effects, which ever links pain to evil; and of the Providence, which will not let the innocent be for ever traduced. It had fallen on him; now his punishment had begun, not as he, in the happier vehemence of passion, had determined, not by sudden — self-inflicted, or glorious death — but the slow grinding of the iron wheels of destiny, as they passed over him, crushing him in the dust.

Yet his heart, despite its sufferings, warmed with something like pleasure when, after a tedious journey of three days, he drew near his home where he hoped to find Elizabeth. He had misgivings, he had asked her to return, but she might have written to request a delay — no! she was there; she had been there two days, anxiously expecting him. It is so sweet a thing to hear the voice of one we love welcoming us on our return home! It seems to assure us of a double existence; not only in our own identity — which we bear perpetually about with us — but in the heart we leave behind, which has thought of us — lived for us, and now beats with warm pleasure on beholding the expected one. On the whole earth Falkner loved none but Elizabeth. He hated himself; the past — the present — the future, as they appertained to him, were all detestable; remorse, grief, and loathsome anticipation, made up the sum of feelings with which he regarded them: but here, bright and beautiful; without taint; all affection and innocence — a monument of his own good feelings, a lasting rock to which to moor his every hope; stood before him, the child of his adoption; his heart felt bursting when he thought of all she was to him.

Yet a doubt entered to mar his satisfaction — was she changed? If love had insinuated itself into her heart, he was ejected; at least the plenteous abundant fountain, that gave from its own source, would be changed to the still waters that neither received increase, nor bestowed any overflowing. Worse than this — she loved Gerard Neville, the son of his victim, he whose life was devastated by him, who would regard him with abhorrence. He would teach Elizabeth to partake this feeling. The blood stood chilled in Falkner's heart, when he thought of thus losing the only being he loved on earth.

He mastered these feelings when he saw her. The first moment, indeed, when she flew to his arms and expressed with eager fondness her delight in seeing him again, was all happiness. She perceived the traces of suffering on his brow, and chided herself for having remained away so long; she promised never to absent herself thus again. Every remembered look, and tone, of her dear face, and voice, now brought palpably before him, was a medicine to Falkner. He repressed his uneasiness, he banished his fears; for a few hours he made happiness his own again.

The evening was passed in calm and cheering conversation. No word was said of the friends whom Elizabeth had left. She had forgotten them, during the first few hours she spent with her father; and when she did allude to her visit, Falkner said, "We will talk of these things to-morrow; to-night, let us only think of ourselves." Elizabeth felt a little mortified; the past weeks, the fortunes of her friends, and the sentiments they excited, had become a part of herself; and she was pained that so much of disjunction existed between her and Falkner, as to make that which was so vivid and present to her, vacant of interest to him; but she checked her disappointment: soon he would know her new friend, sympathize in his devotion towards his injured mother, enter as warmly as she did, into the result of his endeavours for her exculpation. Meanwhile she yielded to his wish, and they talked of scenes and countries they had visited together, and all the feelings and opinions engendered by the past; as they were wont to do in days gone by, before a stranger influence had disturbed a world in which they lived for each other only — father and daughter — without an interest beyond.

Nothing could be more pure and entire than their affection, and there was between them that mingling of hearts, which words cannot describe; but which, whenever it is experienced, in whatever relation in life, is unalloyed happiness. There was a total absence of disguise, of covert censure, of mutual diffidence; perfect confidence gave rise to the fearless utterance of every idea, and there was a repose, and yet an enjoyment in the sense of sympathy and truth, which filled and satisfied. Falkner was surprised at the balmy sense of joy that, despite every thing, stole over him; and he kissed, and blessed his child, as she retired for the night, with more grateful affection, a fuller sense of her merits, and a more fervent desire of preserving her always near him, than he had ever before been conscious of experiencing.

CHAPTER VIII.

Elizabeth rose on the following morning, her bosom glowing with a sensation of acknowledged happiness. So much of young love brooded in her heart, as quickened its pulsations, and gave lightness and joy to her thoughts. She had no doubts, nor fears, nor even hopes: she was not aware that love was the real cause of the grateful sense of happiness, with which she avowed, to Heaven and herself, that all was peace. She was glad to be reunited to Falkner, for whom she felt an attachment at once so respectful, and yet, on account of his illness and melancholy, so watchful and tender, as never allowed her to be wholly free from solicitude, when absent from him. Also she expected on that morning to see Gerard Neville. When Falkner's letter came to hasten her departure from Oakly, she felt grieved at the recall, at the moment when she was expecting him to join her, so to fill up the measure of her enjoyments; with all this, she was eager to obey, and anxious to be with him again. Lady Cecil deputed Miss Jervis to accompany her. On the very morning of their departure, Neville asked for a seat in the carriage; they travelled to town together, and when they separated, Neville told her of his intention of immediately securing a passage to America, and since then, had written a note to mention that he should ride over to Wimbledon on that morning.

The deep interest that Elizabeth took in his enterprise, made her solicitous to know whether he had procured any further information; but her paramount desire was to introduce him to Falkner, to inspire him with her sentiments of friendship; and to see two persons, whom she considered superior to the rest of the world, bound to each other by a mutual attachment; she wanted to impart to her father a pity for Alithea's wrongs, and an admiration for her devoted son. She walked in the shrubbery before breakfast, enjoying nature with the enthusiasm of love; she gathered the last roses of the departing season, and mingling them with a few carnations, hung, with a new sense of rapture, over these fairest children of nature; for it is the property of love to enhance all our enjoyments, "to paint the lily, and add a perfume to the rose." When she returned to the house, she was told that Falkner still slept, and had begged not to be disturbed. She breakfasted, therefore, by herself, sitting by the open casement, and looking on the waving trees, her flowers shedding a sweet atmosphere around; sometimes turning to her open book, where she read of

“The heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb,”

and sometimes leaning her cheek upon her hand, in one of those reveries where we rather feel than think, and every articulation of the frame thrills with a living bliss.

The quick canter of a horse, the stopping at the gate, the ringing of the bell, and the entrance of Neville, made her heart beat, and her eyes light up with gladness. He entered with a lighter step, a more cheerful and animated mien, than usual. He was aware that he loved. He was assured that Elizabeth was the being selected from the whole world who could make him happy; while he regarded her with all the admiration, the worship, due to her virtues. He had never loved before. The gloom that had absorbed him, the shyness inspired by his extreme sensitiveness, had hitherto made him avoid the society of women, their pleasures, their gaiety, their light, airy converse, were a blank to him; it was Elizabeth’s sufferings that first led him to remark her: the clearness of her understanding, her simplicity, tenderness, and dignity of soul won him; and lastly, the unbounded, undisguised sympathy she felt for his endeavours, which all else regarded as futile and insane, riveted him to her indissolubly.

Events were about to separate them, but her thoughts would accompany him across the Atlantic — stand suspended while his success was dubious, and hail his triumph with a joy equal to his own. The very thought gave fresh ardour to his desire to fulfil his task; he had no doubt of success, and, though the idea of his mother’s fate was still a cloud in the prospect, it only mellowed, without defacing, the glowing tints shed over it by love.

They met with undisguised pleasure; he sat near her, and gazed with such delight as, to one less inexperienced than Elizabeth, would have at once betrayed the secret of his heart. He told her that he had found a vessel about to sail for New York, and that he had engaged a passage on board. He was restless and uneasy, he feared a thousand chances; he felt as if he were neglecting his most sacred duty by any delay; there was something in him urging him on, telling him that the crisis was at hand; and yet, that any neglect on his part might cause the moment to slip by for ever. When arrived at New York, he should proceed with all speed to Washington, and then, if Osborne had not arrived, he should set forward to meet him. So much might intervene to balk his hopes! Osborne might die, and his secret die with him. Every moment's delay was crime. The vessel was to drop down the river that very night, and to-morrow he was to join her at Sheerness. He had come to say farewell.

This sudden departure led to a thousand topics of interest; to his hopes — his certainty, that all would soon be revealed, and he rewarded for his long suffering. Such ideas led him to speak of the virtues of his mother, which were the foundation of his hopes. He spoke of her as he remembered her; he described her watchful tenderness, her playful but well-regulated treatment of himself. Still in his dreams, he said, he sometimes felt pressed in her arms, and kissed with all the passionate affection of her maternal heart; in such sweet visions her cry of agony would mingle; it seemed the last shriek of woe and death. "Can you wonder," continued Neville, "can my father, can Sophia wonder, that, recollecting all these things, I will not bear without a struggle that my mother's name should be clouded, her fate encompassed by mystery and blame; her very warm, kind feelings and enchanting sensibility turned into accusations against her. I do indeed hope and believe, that I shall learn the truth whither I am going, and that the unfortunate victim of lawless violence, of whom Osborne spoke, is my lost mother; but, if I am disappointed in this expectation, I shall not for that give up my pursuit; it will only whet my purpose to seek the truth elsewhere."

"And that truth may be less sad than you anticipate," said Elizabeth, "yet I cannot help fearing that the miserable tragedy which you have heard, is connected with your mother's fate."

"That it is a tragedy may well dash my eagerness," replied Neville; "for, right or wrong, I cannot help feeling that to see her again — to console her for her sufferings — to show that she is remembered, loved, idolized, by her son, would be a dearer reward to me, than triumph over the barbarous condemnation of the world, if that triumph is to be purchased by having lost her for ever. This is not an heroic feeling, I confess—"

"If it be heroism," said Elizabeth, "to find our chief good in serving others; if compassion, sympathy, and generosity, be greater virtues, as I believe, than cold self-absorbed severity, then is your feeling founded on the purest portion of our nature."

While they were thus talking, seated near each other, Elizabeth's face beaming with celestial benignity, and Neville, in the warmth of his gratitude for her approval, had taken her hand and pressed it to his lips, the door opened, and Falkner slowly entered. He had not heard of the arrival of the stranger; but seeing a guest with Elizabeth, he divined in a moment who it was. The thought ran through his frame like an ice-bolt — his knees trembled under him — cold dew gathered on his brow — for a moment he leaned against the door-way, unable to support himself; while Elizabeth, perceiving his entrance, blushing she knew not why, and now frightened by the ghastly pallor of his face, started up, exclaiming, "My father! Are you ill?—"

Falkner struggled a moment longer, and then recovered his self-possession. The disordered expression of his countenance was replaced by a cold and stern look, which, aided by the marble paleness that settled over it, looked more like the chiselling of a statue than mortal endurance. A lofty resolve, to bear unflinchingly, was the spirit that moulded his features into an appearance of calm. From this moment he acquired strength of body, as well as of mind, to meet the destiny before him. The energy of his soul did not again fail. Every instant — every word, seemed to add to his courage — to nerve him to the utmost height of endurance; to make him ready to leap, without one tremor, into the abyss which he had so long and so fearfully avoided.

The likeness of Neville to his mother had shaken him more than all. His voice, whose tones were the same with hers, was another shock. His very name jarred upon his sense, but he betrayed no token of suffering. "Mr. Neville," said Elizabeth, "is come to take leave of me. To-morrow he sails to America."

"To America! Wherefore?" asked Falkner.

"I wrote to you," she replied; "I explained the motives of this voyage. You know—"

"I know all," said Falkner; "and this voyage to America is superfluous."

Neville echoed the word with surprise, while Elizabeth exclaimed, "Do you think so? You must have good reasons for this opinion. Tell them to Mr. Neville. Your counsels, I am sure, will be of use to him. I have often wished that you had been with us. I am so glad that he sees you before he goes — if he does go. You say his voyage is superfluous; tell him wherefore; advise him. Your advice will, I am sure, be good. I would give the world that he did the exact thing that is best — that is most likely to succeed."

Neville looked gratefully at her as she spoke thus eagerly; while Falkner, still standing, his eyes fixed on, and scanning the person of the son of his victim, marble pale, but displaying feeling by no other outward sign, scarcely heard what she said, till her last words drew his attention. He smiled, as in scorn, and said, "Oh, yes, I can advise; and he shall succeed — and he will not go."

"I shall be happy," said Neville, with surprise. "I am willing to be advised — that is, if your advice coincides with my wishes."

"It shall do so," interrupted Falkner.

"Then," exclaimed Neville, impetuously, "the moments that I linger here will appear to you too many. You will desire that I should be on board already — already under sail — already arrived. You will wish the man whom I seek should be waiting on the sands when I reach the shore!"

"He is much nearer," said Falkner, calmly; "he is before you. I am he!"

Neville started; "You! What mean you? You are not Osborne."

"I am Rupert Falkner; your mother's destroyer."

Neville glanced at Elizabeth — his eye met hers — their thought was the same, that this declaration proceeded from insanity. The fire that flashed from Falkner's eye as he spoke — the sudden crimson that dyed his cheeks — the hollow, though subdued, tone of his voice, gave warrant for such a suspicion.

Elizabeth gazed on him with painful solicitude.

"I will not stay one moment longer," continued Falkner, "to pain you by the sight of one so accursed as I. You will hear more from me this very evening. You will hear enough to arrest your voyage; and remember that I shall remain ready to answer any call — to make any reparation — any atonement you may require."

He was gone — the door closed; it was as if a dread spectre had vanished, and Neville and Elizabeth looked at each other to read in the face of either, whether both were conscious of having been visited by the same vision.

"What does he mean? Can you tell me what to think?" cried Neville, almost gasping for breath.

"I will tell you in a few hours," said Elizabeth. "I must go to him now; I fear he is very ill. This is madness. When your mother died, Mr. Neville, my father and I were travelling together in Russia or Poland. I remember dates — I am sure that it was so. This is too dreadful. Farewell. You sail to-morrow — you shall hear from me to-night."

"Be sure that I do," said Neville; "for there is a method in his speech — a dignity and a composure in his manner, that enforces a sort of belief. What can he mean?"

"Do you imagine," cried Elizabeth, "that there is any truth in these unhappy ravings? That my father, who would not tread upon a worm — whose compassionate disposition and disinterestedness have been known to me since early childhood — the noblest, and yet the gentlest, of human beings — do you imagine that he is a murderer? Dear Mr. Neville, he never could have seen your mother!"

"Is it indeed so?" said Neville; "yet he said one word — did you not remark? — he called himself Rupert. But I will not distress you. You will write; or rather, as my time will be occupied in preparations for my voyage, and I scarcely know where the day will be spent, I will call here this evening at nine. If you cannot see me, send me a note to the gate, containing some information, either to expedite or delay my journey. Even if this strange scene be the work of insanity, how can I leave you in distress? and if it be true what he says — if he be the man I saw tear my mother from me — how altered! how turned to age and decrepitude! Yet, if he be that man, then I have a new and horrible course to take."

"Is it so!" cried Elizabeth, with indignation; "and can a man so cloud his fair fame, so destroy his very existence, by the wild words of delirium — that my dear father should be accused of being the most odious criminal!"

"Nay," replied Neville, "I make no accusation. Do not part from me in anger. You are right, I do not doubt; and I am unjust. I will call to-night."

"Do so without fail. Do not lose your passage. I little knew that personal feeling would add to my eagerness to learn the truth. Do not stay for my sake. Come to-night and learn how false and wild my father's words were; and then hasten to depart — to see Osborne — to learn all! Farewell till this evening."

She hurried away to Falkner's room, while stunned — doubting — forced, by Elizabeth, to entertain doubts, and yet convinced in his heart; for the name of Rupert brought conviction home — Neville left the house. He had entered it fostering the sweetest dreams of happiness, and now he dared not look at the reverse.

Elizabeth, filled with the most poignant inquietude with regard to his health, hastened to the sitting-room which Falkner usually occupied. She found him seated at the table, with a small box — a box she well remembered — open before him. He was looking over the papers it contained. His manner was perfectly composed — the natural hue had returned to his cheeks — his look was sedate. He was, indeed, very different from the man who, thirteen years before, had landed in Cornwall. He was then in the prime of life; and if passion defaced his features, still youth, and health, and power, animated his frame. Long years of grief and remorse, with sickness superadded, had made him old before his time. The hair had receded from the temples, and what remained was sprinkled with grey; his figure was bent and attenuated; his face care-worn; yet, at this moment, he had regained a portion of his former self. There was an expression on his face of satisfaction, almost of triumph; and when he saw Elizabeth, the old, sweet smile, she knew and loved so well, lighted up his countenance. He held out his hand; she took it. There was no fever in the palm — his pulse was equable; and when he spoke, his voice did not falter. He said, “This blow has fallen heavily on you, my dear girl; yet all will be well soon, I trust. Meanwhile it cannot be quite unexpected.”

Elizabeth looked her astonishment — he continued:—”You have long known that a heavy crime weighs on my conscience. It renders me unfit to live; yet, I have not been permitted to die. I sought death, but we are seldom allowed to direct our fate. I do not, however, complain; I am well content with the end which will speedily terminate all.”

“My dearest father,” cried Elizabeth, “I cannot guess what you mean. I thought — but no — you are not ill — you are not—”

“Not mad, dearest? was that your thought? It is a madness, at least, that has lasted long — since first you staid my hand on your mother’s grave. You are too good, too affectionate, to regret having saved me, even when you hear who I am. You are too resigned to Providence not to acquiesce in the way chosen, to bring all things to their destined end.”

Elizabeth put her arm round his neck, and kissed him. “Thank you,” said Falkner, “and God bless you for this kindness. I shall indeed be glad if you, from your heart, pardon and excuse me. Meanwhile, my love, there is something to be done. These papers contain an account of the miserable past; you must read them, and then let Mr. Neville have them without delay."

"Nay," said Elizabeth, "spare me this one thing — do not ask me to read the history of any one error of yours. In my eyes you must ever be the first, and best of human beings — if it has ever been otherwise, I will not hear of it. You shall never be accused of guilt before me, even by yourself."

"Call it, then, my justification," said Falkner. "But do not refuse my request — it is necessary. If it be pain, pardon me for inflicting it; but bear it for my sake — I wrote this narrative when I believed myself about to die in Greece, for the chief purpose of disclosing the truth to you. I have told my story truly and simply, you can have it from no one else, for no human being breathes who knows the truth except myself. Yield then — you have ever been yielding to me — yield, I beseech you, to my solemn request; do not shrink from hearing of my crimes, I hope soon to atone them. And then perform one other duty: send these papers to your friend — you know where he is."

"He will call here this evening at nine."

"By that time you will have finished; I am going to town now, but shall return to-night. Mr. Neville will be come and gone before then, and you will know all. I do not doubt but that you will pity me — such is your generosity, that perhaps you may love me still — but you will be shocked and wretched, and I the cause. Alas! how many weapons do our errors wield, and how surely does retribution aim at our defenceless side! To know that I am the cause of unhappiness to you, my sweet girl, inflicts a pang I cannot endure with any fortitude. But there is a remedy, and all will be well in the end."

Elizabeth hung over him as he spoke, and he felt a tear warm on his cheek, fallen from her eye — he was subdued by this testimony of her sympathy — he strained her to his heart; but in a moment after he reassumed his self-command, and kissing her, bade her farewell, and then left her to the task of sorrow he had assigned.

She knew not what to think, what image to conjure up. His words were free from all incoherence; before her also were the papers that would tell all — she turned from them with disgust; and then again she thought of

Neville, his departure, his promised return, and what she could say to him. It was a hideous dream, but there was no awakening; she sat down, she took out the papers: the number of pages written in her father's hand seemed a reprieve — she should not hear all the dreadful truth in a few, short, piercing words — there was preparation. For a moment she paused to gather her thoughts — to pray for fortitude — to hope that the worst was not there, but in its stead some venial error, that looked like crime to his sensitive mind — and then — She began to read.

CHAPTER IX.
FALKNER'S NARRATIVE.

"To palliate crime, and by investigating motive to render guilt less odious — such is not the feeling that rules my pen; to confer honour upon innocence, to vindicate virtue, and announce truth — though that offer my own name as a mark for deserved infamy — such are my motives. And if I reveal the secrets of my heart and dwell on the circumstances that led to the fatal catastrophe I record, so that, though a criminal, I do not appear quite a monster, let the egotism be excused for her dear sake — within whose young and gentle heart I would fain that my memory should be enshrined without horror — though with blame.

"The truth, the pure and sacred truth, will alone find expression in these pages. I write them in a land of beauty, but of desolation — in a country whose inhabitants are purchasing by blood and misery the dearest privileges of human nature — where I have come to die! It is night; the cooing aziolo, the hooting owl, the flashing fire-fly — the murmur of time-honoured streams; the moonlit foliage of the grey olive woods — dark crags and rugged mountains, throwing awful shadows — and the light of the eternal stars; such are the objects around me. Can a man speak false in the silence of night, when God and his own heart alone keep watch! when conscience hears the moaning of the dead in the pauses of the breeze, and sees one pale, lifeless figure float away on the current of the stream! My heart whispers that, before such witnesses, the truth will be truly recorded; and my blood curdles, and my nerves, so firm amidst the din of battle, shrink and shudder at the tale I am about to narrate.

"What is crime?

"A deed done injurious to others — forbidden by religion, condemned by morality, and which human laws are enacted to punish.

"A criminal feels all mankind to be his foes, the whole frame of society is erected for his especial ruin. Before, he had a right to choose his habitation in the land of his forefathers — and placing the sacred name of liberty between himself and power, none dared check his free-born steps — his will was his law; the limits of his physical strength were the only barriers to his wildest wanderings; he could walk erect and fear the eye of no man. He who commits a crime forfeits these privileges. Men from out the lowest grade of society can say to him—'You must come with us!' — they can drag him from those he loves — immure him in a loathsome cell, dole out scant portions of the unchartered air, make a show of him, lead him to death — and throw his body to the dogs; and society, which for the innocent would have raised one cry of horror against the perpetrators of such outrages, look on and clap their hands with applause.

"This is a vulgar aspect of the misery of which I speak — a crime may never be discovered. Mine lies buried in my own breast. Years have passed and none point at me, and whisper, 'There goes the murderer!' — But do I not feel that God is my enemy, and my own heart whispers condemnation? I know that I am an impostor, that any day may discover the truth; but, more heavy than any fear of detection, is the secret hidden in my own heart, the icy touch of the death I caused creeps over me during the night. I am pursued by the knowledge that nought I do can prosper, for the cry of innocence is raised against me, and the earth groans with the secret burthen I have committed to her bosom. That the death-blow was not actually dealt by my hand, in no manner mitigates the stings of conscience. My act was the murderer, though my intention was guiltless of death.

"Is there a man who at some time has not desired to possess by illegal means a portion of another's property, or to obey the dictates of an animal instinct, and plant his foot on the neck of his enemy? Few are so cold of blood, or temperate of mood, as not at some one time to have felt hurried beyond the demarcations set up by conscience and law: few but have been tempted without the brink of the forbidden; but they stopped, while I leaped beyond, — there is the difference between us. Falsely do they say who allege that there is no difference in guilt between the thought and act: to be tempted is human; to resist temptation — surely if framed like me, such is to raise us from our humanity, into the sphere of angels.

"Many are the checks afforded us. Some are possessed by fear; others are endowed by a sensibility so prophetic of the evil that must ensue, that perforce they cannot act the thing they desire; they tremble at the idea of being the cause of events, over whose future course they can have no control; they fear injuring others — and their own remorse.

“But I disdained all these considerations; they occurred but faintly and ineffectually to my mind. Piety, conscience, and moral respect yielded before a feeling which decked its desires in the garb of necessity. Oh, how vain it is to analyse motive! Each man has the same motives; but it is the materials of each mind — the plastic or rocky nature, the mild or the burning temperament, that rejects the alien influence or receives it into its own essence, and causes the act. Such an impulse is as a summer healthy breeze, just dimpling a still lake, to one; while to another it is the whirlwind that rouses him to spread ruin around.

“The Almighty who framed my miserable being, made me a man of passion. They say that of such are formed the great and good. I know not that — I am neither; but I will not arraign the Creator. I will hope that in feeling my guilt — in acknowledging the superexcellence of virtue, I fulfil, in part, his design. After me, let no man doubt but that to do what is right, is to insure his own happiness; or that self-restraint, and submission to the voice of conscience implanted in our souls, impart more dignity of feeling, more true majesty of being, than a puerile assertion of will, and a senseless disregard of immutable principles.

“Is passion known in these days? Such as I felt, has any other experienced it? The expression has fled from our lips; but it is as deep-seated as ever in our hearts. Who, of created beings, has not loved? Who of my sex has not felt the struggle, and the yielding in the struggle, of the better to the worse parts of our nature? Who so dead to nature’s influence as not, at least for some brief moments, to have felt that body and soul were a slight sacrifice to obtain possession of the affections of her he loved? Who, for some moment in his life, would not have seen his mistress dead at his feet, rather than wedded to another? To feel this tyranny of passion, is to be human; to conquer it, is to be virtuous. He who conquers himself is, in my eyes, the only true hero. Alas, I am not such! I am among the vanquished, and view the wretch I am; and learn that there is nothing so contemptible, so pitiable, so eternally miserable, as he who is defeated in his conflict with passion.

“That I am such, this very scene — this very occupation testifies. Once, the slave of head-long impulse; I am now the victim of remorse. I am come to seek death, because I cannot retrieve the past; I long for the moment when the bullet shall pierce my flesh, and the pains of dissolution gather round me. Then I may hope to be, that for which I thirst, free! There is one who loves me. She is pure and kind as a guardian angel — she is as my own child — she implores me to live. With her my days might pass in a peace and innocence that saints might envy; but so heavy are the fetters of memory, so bitter the slavery of my soul, that even she cannot take away the sting from life.

"Death is all I covet. When these pages are read, the hand that traces them will be powerless — the brain that dictates will have lost its functions. This is my last labour — my legacy to my fellow beings. Do not let them disdain the outpourings of a heart which for years has buried its recollections and remorse in silence. The waters were pent up by a dam — now they rush impetuously forth — they roar as if pursued by a thousand torrents — their turmoil deafens heaven; and what though their sound be only conveyed by the little implement that traces these lines — not less headlong than the swelling waves is the spirit that pours itself out in these words.

"I am calmer now — I have been wandering beside the stream — and, despite the lurking foe and deceptive moonbeams, I have ascended the steep mountain's side — and looked out on the misty sea, and sought to gain from reposing nature some relief to my sense of pain. The hour of midnight is at hand — all is still — I am calm, and with deliberation begin to narrate that train of circumstances, or rather of feelings, that hurried me first to error, then to crime, and lastly, brought me here to die.

"I lost my mother before I can well remember. I have a confused recollection of her crying — and of her caressing me — and I can call to mind seeing her ill in bed, and her blessing me; but these ideas are rather like revelations of an ante-natal life, than belonging to reality. She died when I was four years old. My childhood's years were stormy and drear. My father, a social, and I believe even a polite man in society, was rough and ill-tempered at home. He had gambled away his own slender younger brother's fortune and his wife's portion, and was too idle to attend to a profession, and yet not indolent enough for a life devoid of purpose and pursuit. Our family was a good one; it consisted of two brothers, my father, and my uncle. This latter, favoured of birth and fortune, remained long unmarried; and was in weak health. My father expected him to die. His death and his own consequent inheritance of the family estate, was his constant theme; but the delayed hope irritated him to madness. I knew his humour even as a child, and escaped it as I could. His voice, calling my name, made my blood run cold; his epithets of abuse, so frequently applied, filled me with boiling but ineffectual rage.

"I am not going to dwell on those painful days, when a weak, tiny boy, I felt as if I could contend with the paternal giant; and did contend, till his hand felled me to the ground, or cast me from his threshold with scorn and seeming hate. I dare say he did not hate me; but certainly no touch of natural love warmed his heart.

"One day he received a letter from his brother — I was but ten years old, but rendered old and care-worn by suffering; I remember that I looked on him as he took it and exclaimed, 'From Uncle John! What have we here?' with a nervous tremor as to the passions the perusal of it might excite. He chuckled as he broke the seal — he fancied that he called him to his dying bed—'And that well over, you shall go to school, my fine fellow,' he cried; 'we shall have no more of your tricks at home.' He broke the seal, he read the letter. It announced his brother's marriage, and asked him to the wedding. I let fall the curtain over the scene that ensued: you would have thought that a villanous fraud had been committed, in which I was implicated. He drove me with blows from his door; I foamed with rage, and then I sat down and wept, and crept away to the fields, and wondered why I was born, and longed to kill my uncle, who was the cause to me of so much misery.

"Every thing changed for the worse now. Hitherto my father had lived on hope — now he despaired. He took to drinking, which exalted his passions, and debased his reason. This at times gave me a superiority over him — when tipsy, I could escape his blows — which yet, when sober, fell on me with double severity. But even the respite I gained through his inebriety, afforded me no consolation — I felt at once humbled and indignant at the shame so brought on us. I, child as I was, expostulated with him — I was knocked down, and kicked from the room. Oh, what a world this appeared to me! a war of the weak with the strong — and how I despised every thing except victory.

"Time wore on. My uncle's wife bore him in succession two girls. This was a respite. My father's spirits rose — but fallen as he was he could only celebrate his re-awakened hopes by deeper potations and coarse jokes. The next offspring was a boy — he cost my father his life. Habits of drink had inflamed his blood — and his violence of temper made him nearly a maniac. On hearing of the birth of the heir, he drank to drown thought; wine was too slow a medicine, he quaffed deeply of brandy, and fell into a sleep, or rather torpor, from which he never after awoke. It was better so — he had spent every thing — he was deeply in debt — he had lost all power of raising himself from the state of debasement into which he had fallen — the next day would have seen him in prison.

"I was taken in by my uncle. At first the peace and order of the household seemed to me paradise — the comfort and regularity of the meals was a sort of happy and perpetual miracle. My eye was no longer blasted by the sight of frightful excesses, nor my ear wounded by obstreperous shouts. I was no longer reviled — I no longer feared being felled to the ground — I was not any more obliged to obtain food by stratagem, or by expostulations, which always ended by my being the victim of personal violence. The mere calm was balmy, and I fancied myself free, because I was no longer in a state of perpetual terror.

"But soon I felt the cold and rigid atmosphere that, as far as regarded me, ruled this calm. No eye of love ever turned on me, no voice ever spoke a cheering word. I was there on sufferance, and was quickly deemed a troublesome inmate; while the order and regularity required of me, and the law passed that I was never to quit the house alone, became at last more tormenting than the precarious, but wild and precious liberty of my former life. My habits were bad enough; my father's vices had fostered my evil qualities — I had never learnt to lie or cheat, for such was foreign to my nature, but I was rough, self-willed, lazy, and insolent. I have a feeling, such was my sense of bliss on first entering the circle of order and peace, that a very little kindness would have subdued my temper, and awakened a desire to please. It was not tried. From the very first, I was treated with a coldness to which a child is peculiarly sensitive; the servants, by enforcing the rules of the house, became first my tormentors, and then my enemies. I grew imperious and violent — complaint, reprehension, and punishment, despoiled my paradise of its matin glow — and then I returned at once to my own bad self; I was disobedient and reckless; soon it was decreed that I was utterly intolerable, and I was sent to school.

"This, a boy's common fate, I had endured without a murmur, had it not been inflicted as a punishment, and I made over to my new tyrants, even in my own hearing, as a little blackguard, quite irreclaimable, and only to be kept in order by brute force. It is impossible to describe the effect of this declaration of my uncle — followed up by the master's recommendation to the usher to break my spirit, if he could not bend it — had on my heart, which was bursting with a sense of injury, panting for freedom, and resolved not to be daunted by the menaces of the tyrants before me. I declared war with my whole soul against the world; I became all I had been painted; I was sullen, vindictive, desperate. I resolved to run away; I cared not what would befall me — I was nearly fourteen — I was strong, and could work — I could join a gang of gipsies, I could act their life singly, and, subsisting by nightly depredation, spend my days in liberty.

"It was at an hour when I was meditating flight, that the master sent for me. I believed that some punishment was in preparation. I hesitated whether I should not instantly fly — a moment's thought told me that that was impossible, and that I must obey. I went with a dogged air, and a determination to resist. I found my tyrant with a letter in his hand. 'I do not know what to do with you,' he said; 'I have a letter here from a relation, asking you to spend the day. You deserve no indulgence; but for this once you may go. Remember, any future permission depends upon your turning over an entirely new leaf. Go, sir; and be grateful to my lenity, if you can. Remember, you are to be home at nine.' I' asked no questions — I did not know where I was to go; yet I left him without a word. I was sauntering back to the prison yard, which they called a play-ground, when I was told that there was a pony-chaise at the door, ready to take me. My heart leaped at the word; I fancied that, by means of this conveyance, I could proceed on the first stage of my flight. The pony-carriage was of the humblest description; an old man drove. I got in, and away we trotted, the little cob that drew it going much faster than his looks gave warrant. The driver was deaf — I was sullen — not a word did we exchange. My plan was, that he should take me to the farthest point he intended, and then that I should leap out and take to my heels. As we proceeded, however, my rebel fit somewhat subsided. We quitted the town in which the school was situated, and the dreary dusty roads I was accustomed to perambulate under the superintendence of the ushers. We entered shady lanes and umbrageous groves; we perceived extensive prospects, and saw the winding of romantic streams; a curtain seemed drawn from before the scenes of nature; and my spirits rose as I gazed on new objects, and saw earth spread wide and free around. At first this only animated me to a keener resolve to fly; but as we went on, a vague sentiment possessed my soul. The sky-larks winged up to heaven, and the swallows skimmed the green earth; I felt happy because nature was gay, and all things free and at peace. We turned from a lane redolent with honeysuckle into a little wood, whose short, thick turf was interspersed with moss, and starred with flowers. Just as we emerged, I saw a little railing, a rustic green gate, and a cottage clustered over with woodbine and jessamine, standing secluded among, yet peeping out from the overshadowing trees. A little peasant boy threw open the gate, and we drove up to the cottage door.

"At a low window, which opened on the lawn, in a large arm-chair, sat a lady, evidently marked by ill health, yet with something so gentle and unearthly in her appearance as at once to attract and please. Her complexion had faded into whiteness — her hair was nearly silver, yet not a grisly greyish white, but silken still in its change; her dress was also white — and there was something of a withered look about her — redeemed by a soft, but bright grey eye, and more by the sweetest smile in the world, which she wore, as rising from her chair, she embraced me, exclaiming, 'I know you from your likeness to your mother — dear, dear Rupert.'

"That name of itself touched a chord which for many years had been mine. My mother had called me by that name; so, indeed, had my father, when any momentary softness of feeling allowed him to give me any other appellation except, 'You sir!' 'You dog, you!' My uncle, after whom I was also called John, chose to drop what he called a silly, romantic name; and in his house, and in his letters, I was always John. Rupert breathed of a dear home, and my mother's kiss; and I looked inquiringly oon her who gave it me, when my attention was attracted, riveted by the vision of a lovely girl, who had glided in from another room, and stood near us, radiant in youth and beauty. She was indeed supremely lovely — exuberant in all the charms of girlhood — and her beauty was enhanced by the very contrast to the pale lady by whom she stood — a houri she seemed, standing by a disembodied spirit — black, soft, large eyes, overpowering in their lustre, and yet more so from the soul that dwelt within — a cherub look — a fairy form; with a complexion and shape that spoke of health and joy. What could it mean? Who could she be? And who was she who knew my name? It was an enigma; but one full of promise to me, who had so long been exiled from the charities of life; and who, ‘as the hart panteth for the water brooks,’ panted for love.

CHAPTER X.

After a little explanation, I discovered who my new friends were. The lady and my mother were remotely related; but they had been educated together, and separated only when they married. My mother's death had prevented my knowing that such a relation existed; far less that she took the warmest interest in the son of her earliest friend. Mrs. Rivers had been the poorer of the two, and for a long time considered that her childhood's companion was moving in an elevated sphere of life, while she had married a lieutenant in the navy; and while he was away attending the duties of his profession, she lived in retirement and economy, in the rustic, low-roofed, yet picturesque and secluded cottage, whose leaf-shrouded casements and flowery lawn, even now, are before me, and speak of peace. I never call to mind that abode of tranquillity without associating it with the poet's wish:

'Mine be a cot beside the hill —
A beehive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.'

To any one who fully understands and appreciates the peculiar beauties of England — who knows how much elegance, content, and knowledge can be sheltered under such a roof, these lines must ever, I think, as to me, have a music of their own, and, unpretending as they are, breathe the very soul of happiness. In this embowered cot, near which a clear stream murmured — which was clustered over by a thousand odoriferous parasites — which stood in the seclusion of a beech wood — there dwelt something more endearing even than all this — and one glance at the only daughter of Mrs. Rivers, served to disclose that an angel dwelt in the paradise.

"Alithea Rivers — there is music, and smiles, and tears — a whole life of happiness — and moments of intensest transport, in the sound. Her beauty was radiant; her dark eastern eye, shaded by the veined and darkly fringed lid, beamed with a soft, but penetrating fire; her face of a perfect oval; and lips, which were wreathed into a thousand smiles, or, softly and silently parted, seemed the home of every tender and poetic expression which one longed to hear them breathe forth; her brow clear as day; her swan throat, and symmetrical and fairy-like form, disclosed a perfection of loveliness, that the youngest and least susceptible must have felt, even if they did not acknowledge.

"She had two qualities which I have never seen equalled separately, but which, united in her, formed a spell no one could resist — the most acute sensitiveness to joy or grief in her own person, and the most lively sympathy with these feelings in others. I have seen her so enter heart and soul into the sentiments of one in whom she was interested, that her whole being took the colour of their mood; and her very features and complexion appeared to alter in unison with theirs. Her temper was never ruffled; she could not be angry; she grieved too deeply for those who did wrong: but she could be glad; and never have I seen joy, the very sunshine of the soul, so cloudlessly expressed as in her countenance. She could subdue the stoniest heart by a look — a word; and were she ever wrong herself, a sincere acknowledgment, an ingenuous shame — grief to have offended, and eagerness to make reparation, turned her very error into a virtue. Her spirits were high, even to wildness; but, at their height, tempered by such thought for others, such inbred feminine softness, that her most exuberant gaiety resembled heart-cheering music, and made each bosom respond. All, every thing loved her; her mother idolized her; each bird of the grove knew her; and I felt sure that the very flowers she tended were conscious of, and rejoiced in, her presence.

"Since my birth — or at least since I had lost my mother in early infancy, my path had been cast upon thorns and brambles — blows and stripes, cold neglect, reprehension, and debasing slavery; to such was I doomed. I had longed for something to love — and in the desire to possess something whose affections were my own, I had secreted at school a little nest of field mice on which I tended; but human being there was none who marked me, except to revile, and my proud heart rose in indignation against them. Mrs. Rivers had heard a sad story of my obduracy, my indolence, my violence; she had expected to see a savage, but my likeness to my mother won her heart at once, and the affection I met transformed me at once into something worthy of her. I had been told I was a reprobate till I half believed. I felt that there was war between me and my tyrants, and I was desirous to make them suffer even as they made me. I read in books of the charities of life — and the very words seemed only a portion of that vast system of imposture with which the strong oppressed the weak. I did not believe in love or beauty; or if ever my heart opened to it — it was to view it in external nature, and to wonder how all of perceptive and sentient in this wondrous fabric of the universe was instinct with injury and wrong.

"Mrs. Rivers was a woman of feeling and sense. She drew me out — she dived into the secrets of my heart; for my mother's sake she loved me, and she saw that to implant sentiments of affection was to redeem a character not ungenerous, and far, far from cold — whose evil passions had been fostered as in a hot-bed, and whose better propensities were nipped in the bud. She strove to awaken my susceptibility to kindness, by lavishing a thousand marks of favour. She called me her son — her friend; she taught me to look upon her regard as a possession of which nothing could deprive me — and to consider herself and her daughter as near and dear ties that could not be rent away. She imparted happiness, she awoke gratitude, and made me in my innermost heart swear to deserve her favour.

"I now entered on a new state of being, and one of which I had formed no previous idea. I believed that the wish to please one who was dear to me, would render every task easy; that I did wrong merely from caprice and revenge, and that if I chose, I could with my finger stem and direct the tide of my passions. I was astonished to find that I could not even bend my mind to attention — and I was angry with myself, when I felt my breast boiling with tumultuous rage, when I promised myself to be meek, enduring and gentle. My endeavours to conquer these evil habits were indeed arduous. I forced myself by fits and starts to study sedulously — I yielded obedience to our school laws; I taxed myself to bear with patience the injustice and impertinence of the ushers, and the undisguised tyranny of the master. But I could not for ever string myself to this pitch. Meanness and falsehood, and injustice, again and again awoke the tiger in me. I am not going to narrate my boyhood's wrongs; I was doomed. Sent to school with a bad character which at first I had taken pains to deserve; and afterwards doing right in my own way, and still holding myself aloof from all, scorning their praise, and untouched by their censure, I gained no approbation, and was deemed a dangerous savage — whose nails must be kept close pared — and whose limbs were still to be fettered, lest he should rend his keepers.

"From such a scene I turned, each Sunday morning, my willing steps to the cottage of Mrs. Rivers. There was something fascinating to me in the very peculiarities of her appearance. Ill health had brought premature age upon her person — but her mind was as active and young — her feelings as warm as ever. She could only stand for a few minutes, and could not unassisted walk across the room — she took hardly any nourishment, and looked as I have said more like a spirit than a woman. Thus deprived of every outward resource, her mind acquired, from habits of reflection and resignation, aided by judicious reading, a penetration and delicacy quite unequalled. There was a philosophical truth in all her remarks, adorned by a feminine tact and extreme warmth of heart, that rendered her as admirable as she was endearing. Sometimes she suffered great pain, but for the most part her malady, which was connected with the spine, had only the effect ofextreme weakness, and at the same time of rendering her sensations acute and delicate. The odour of flowers, the balmy air of morning, the evening breeze almost intoxicated her with delight; any dissonant sound appeared to shatter her — peace was within and she coveted peace around; and it was her dearest pleasure when we — I and her lovely daughter — were at her feet, she playing with the sunny ringlets of Alithea's hair, and I listening, with a thirst for knowledge — and ardour to be taught; while she with eloquence mild and cheering, full of love and wisdom, charmed our attentive ears, and caused us to hang on all she said as on the oracles of a divinity.

"At times we left her, and Alithea and I wandered through the woods and over the hills; our talk was inexhaustible, now canvassing some observation of her mother, now pouring out our own youthful bright ideas, and enjoying the breezes and the waterfalls, and every sight of nature, with a rapture unspeakable. When we came to rugged uplands, or some swollen brook, I carried my young companion over in my arms; I sheltered her with my body from the storms that sometimes overtook us. I was her protector and her stay; and the very office filled me with pride and joy. When fatigued by our rambles, we returned home, bringing garlands of wild-flowers for the invalid, whose wisdom we revered, whose maternal tenderness was our joy; and yet, whose weakness made her, in some degree, dependent on us, and gave the form of a voluntary tribute to the attentions we delighted to pay her.

"Oh, had I never returned to school, this life had been a foretaste of heaven! but there I returned, and there again I found rebuke, injustice, my evil passions, and the fiends who tormented me. How my heart revolted from the contrast! with what inconceivable struggles I tried to subdue my hatred, to be as charitable and forgiving as Mrs. Rivers implored me to be; but my tormentors had the art of rousing the savage again, and despite good resolves, despite my very pride, which urged me merely to despise, I was again violent and rebellious; again punished, again vowing revenge, and longing to obtain it. I cannot imagine — even the wild passions of my after life do not disclose — more violent struggles than those I went through. I returned from my friends, my heart stored with affectionate sentiments and good intentions; my brow was smooth, my mind unruffled; my whole soul set upon at once commanding myself, and proving to my tyrants that they could not disturb the sort of heavenly calm with which I was penetrated.

"On such a day, and feeling thus, I came back one evening from the cottage. I was met by one of the ushers, who, in a furious voice, demanded the key of my room, threatening me with punishment if I ever dared lock it again. This was a sore point; my little family of mice had their warm nest in my room, and I knew that they would be torn from me if the animal before me penetrated into my sanctuary before I could get in to hide them; but the fellow had learnt from the maids that I had some pets, and was resolute to discover them. I cannot dwell on the puerile, yet hideous, minutia of such a scene; the loud voice, the blow, the key torn from me, the roar of malice with which my pets were hailed, the call for the cat. My blood ran cold; some slave — among boys even there are slaves — threw into the room the tiger animal; the usher showed her her prey, but before she could spring, I caught her up, and whirled her out of window. The usher gave me a blow with a stick; I was a well-grown boy, and a match for him unarmed; he struck me on the head, and then drew out a knife, that he might himself commence the butcher's work on my favourites: stunned by the blow, but casting aside all the cherished calm I had hitherto maintained, my blood boiling, my whole frame convulsed with passion, I sprung on him. We both fell on the ground, his knife was in hand, open; in our struggle I seized the weapon, and the fellow got cut in the head — of course I inflicted the wound; but had, neither before or at the time, the intention; our struggle was furious, we were both in a state of frenzy, and an open knife at such a moment can hardly fail to do injury; I saw the blood pouring from his temple, and his efforts slacken. I jumped up, called furiously for help, and when the servants and boys rushed into the room, I made my escape. I leaped from the window, high as it was, and alighting, almost by a miracle, unhurt on the turf below, I made my way with all speed across the fields. Methought the guilt of murder was on my soul, and yet I felt exultation that at last I, a boy, had brought upon the head of my foe some of the tortures he had so often inflicted upon me. By this desperate act, I believed that I had severed the cords that bound me to the vilest servitude. I knew not but that houseless want would be my reward, but I felt light as air, and free as a bird.

"Instinctively my steps took the direction of my beloved cottage; yet I dared not enter it. A few hours ago I had left it in a pure and generous frame of mind. I called to mind the conversation of the evening before, the gentle eloquence of Mrs. Rivers, inculcating those lessons of mild forbearance and lofty self-command, which had filled me with generous resolve; and how was I to return? — my hands dyed in blood.

"I hid myself in the thicket near her house, sometimes I stole near it; then, as I heard voices, I retreated further into the wild part of the wood. Night came on at last, and that night I slept under a tree, but at a short distance from the cottage.

"The cool morning air woke me; and I began seriously to consider my situation; destitute of friends and money, whither should I direct my steps? I was resolved never to return to my school. I was nearly sixteen; I was tall and athletic in my frame, though still a mere boy in my thoughts and pursuits; still, I told myself that, such as I, many a stripling was cast upon the world, and that I ought to summon courage, and to show my tyrants that I could exist independent of them. My determination was to enlist as a soldier; I believed that I should so distinguish myself by my valour, as speedily to become a great man. I saw myself singled out by the generals, applauded, honoured, and rewarded. I fancied my return, and how proudly I should present myself before Alithea, having carved out my own fortune, and become all that her sweet mother entreated me to be — brave, generous, and true. But could I put my scheme in execution without seeing my young companion again? Oh, no! my heart, my whole soul led me to her side, to demand her sympathy, to ask her prayers, to bid her never forget me; at the same time that I dreaded seeing her mother, for I feared her lessons of wisdom. I felt sure, I knew not why, that she would wholly disapprove of my design.

“I tore a leaf from my pocket-book, and, with the pencil, implored Alithea to meet me in the wood, whence I resolved not to stir till I should see her. But how was I to convey my paper without the knowledge of her mother? or being seen by the servants? I hovered about all day; it was not till nightfall that I ventured near, and, knowing well the casement of her room, I wrapped my letter round a stone, and threw it in. Then I retreated speedily.

“It was night again; I had not eaten for twenty-four hours; I knew not when Alithea could come to me, but I resolved not to move from the spot I had designated, till she came. I hunted for a few berries, and a turnip that had fallen from a cart was as the manna of the desert. For a short half hour it stilled the gnawings of my appetite, and then I lay down unable to sleep. Eyeing the stars through the leafy boughs above, thinking alternately of a prisoner deserted by his gaoler, and starved to death, while at each moment he fancied the far step approaching, and the key turning in the lock; and then, again, of feasts, of a paradise of fruits, of the simple, cheerful repasts at the cottage, which, for many a long year, I was destined never again to partake of.

“It was midnight; the air was still, not a leaf moved; sometimes I believed I dozed; but I had a sense of being awake, always present to my mind; the hours seemed changed to eternity. I began suddenly to think I was dying; I thought I never should see the morrow’s sun. Alithea would come, but her friend would not answer to her call; he would never speak to her more. At this moment, I heard a rustling; was there some animal about? it drew near, it was steps; a white figure appeared between the trunks of the trees; again, I thought it was a dream, till the dearest of all voices spoke my name, the loveliest and kindest face in the world bent over me; my cold, clammy hand was taken in hers, so soft and warm. I started up, I threw my arms around her, I pressed her to my bosom. She had found my note on retiring for the night; fearful of disobeying my injunctions of secresy, she had waited till all was at rest, before she stole out to me; and now, with all the thoughtfulness that characterized her, when another’s wants and sufferings were in question, she brought food with her, and a large cloak to wrap my shivering limbs. She sat beside me as I ate, smiling through her tears; no reproach fell from her lips, it was only joy to see me, and expressions of kind encouragement.

"I dwell too much on these days; my tale grows long, and I must abridge the dear recollections of those moments of innocence and happiness. Alithea easily persuaded me to see her mother, and Mrs. Rivers received me as a mother would a son, who has been in danger of death, and is recovering. I saw only smiles, I heard only congratulations. I wondered where the misery and despair which gathered so thickly round me had flown — no vestige remained; the sun shone unclouded on my soul.

"I asked no questions, I remained passive; I felt that something was being done for me, but I did not inquire what. Each day I spent several hours in study, so to reward the kindness of my indulgent friend. Each day I listened to her gentle converse, and wandered with Alithea over hill and dale, and poured into her ear my resolutions to become great and good. Surely in this world there are no aspirations so noble, pure, and godlike as those breathed by an enthusiastic boy, who dreams of love and virtue, and who is still guarded by childlike innocence.

"Mrs. Rivers, meanwhile, was in correspondence with my uncle, and, by a fortunate coincidence, a cadetship long sought by him was presented at this moment, and I was removed to the East Indian military college. Before I went, my maternal friend spoke with all the fervour of affection of my errors, my duties, the expectation she had that I should show myself worthy of the hopes she entertained of me. I promised to her and to her Alithea — I vowed to become all they wished; my bosom swelled with generous ambition and ardent gratitude; the drama of life, methought, was unrolling before me, the scene on which I was to act appeared resplendent in fairy and gorgeous colours; neither vanity, nor pride, swelled me up; but a desire to prove myself worthy of those adored beings who were all the world to me, who had saved me from myself, to restore me to the pure and happy shelter of their hearts. Can it be wondered that, from that day to the present hour, they have seemed to me portions of heaven incarnate upon earth; that I have prized the thought of them as a rich inheritance? And how did I repay? cold wan figure of the dead! reproach me not thus with your closed eyes, and the dank strings of your wet clinging hair. Give me space to breathe, that I may record your vindication, and my crime.

"I was placed at the military college. Had I gone there at once, it had been well; but first I spent a month at my uncle's, where I was treated like a reprobate and a criminal. I tried to consider this but as a trial of my promises and good resolution to be gentle — to turn one cheek when the other was smitten. It is not for me to accuse others or defend myself; but yet I think that I had imbibed so much of the celestial virtues of my instructress, that, had I been treated with any kindness, my heart must have warmed towards my relatives; as it was, I left my uncle's, having made a vow never to sleep beneath his roof again.

"I reached the military college, and here I might fairly begin a new career. I exerted myself to study — to obey — to conciliate. The applause that followed my endeavours gave me a little pleasure; but when I wrote to Alithea and her mother, and felt no weight on my conscience, no drawback to my hope, that I was rendering myself worthy of them, then indeed my felicity was without alloy; and when my fiery temper kindled, when injustice and meanness caused my blood to boil, I thought of the mild appealing look of Mrs. Rivers, and the dearer smiles of her daughter, and I suppressed every outward sign of anger and scorn.

"For two whole years I did not see these dear, dear friends, while I lived upon the thought of them — alas! when have I ceased to do that? — I wrote constantly and received letters. Those dictated by Mrs. Rivers — traced by her sweet daughter's hand — were full of all that generous benevolence, and enlightened sensibility, which rendered her the very being to instruct and rule me; while the playful phrases of Alithea — her mention of the spots we had visited together, and history of all the slight events of her innocent life, breathed so truly of the abode of peace from which they emanated, that they carried the charm of a soft repose even to my restless spirit. A year passed, and then tidings of misery came. Mrs. Rivers was dying. Alithea wrote in despair — she was alone — her father distant. She implored my assistance — my presence. I did not hesitate. Her appeal came during the period that preceded an examination; I believed that it would be useless to ask leave to absent myself, and I resolved at once to go without permission. I wrote a letter to the master, mentioning that the sickness of a friend forced me to this step; and then, almost moneyless and on foot, I set out to cross the country. I do not record trivialties — I will not mention the physical sufferings of that journey, they were so much less than the agony of suspense I suffered, the fear that I should not find my maternal friend alive. Life burnt low indeed — when I, at last, stepped within the threshold of her sick chamber; yet she smiled when she saw me, and tried to hold out her hand — one already clasped that of Alithea. For hours we thus watched her, exchanging looks, not speech. Alithea, naturally impetuous, and even vehement, now controlled all sign of grief, except the expression of woe, that took all colour from her face, and clouded her brow with anguish. She knelt beside her mother — her lips glued to her hand, as if to the last to feel her pulse of life, and assure herself that she still existed. The room was darkened; a broken ray tinged the head of the mourner, while her mother lay in shadow — a shadow that seemed to deepen as the hue of death crept over her face, now and then she opened her eyes — now and then murmured inarticuately, and then she seemed to sleep. We neither moved — sometimes Alithea raised her head and looked on her mother's countenance, and then seeing the change already operated, it drooped over the wan hand she held. Suddenly there was a slight sound — a slight convulsion in the fingers. I saw a shade darken over the face — something seemed to pass over, and then away — and all was marble still — and the lips, wreathed into a smile, became fixed and breathless. Alithea started up, uttered a shriek, and threw herself on her mother's body — such name I give — the blameless soul was gone for ever.

"It was my task to console the miserable daughter; and such was the angelic softness of Alithea's disposition, that when the first burst of grief was over, she yielded to be consoled. There was no hardness in her regrets. She collected every relic, surrounded herself with every object, that might keep alive the memory of her parent. She talked of her continually; and together we spoke of her virtues — her wisdom, her ardent affection — and felt a thrilling, trembling pleasure in recalling every act and word that most displayed her excellence. As we were thus employed, I could contemplate and remark the change the interval of my absence had operated in the beautiful girl — she had sprung into womanhood, her figure was surrounded by a thousand graces; a tender charm was diffused over each lineament and motion that intoxicated me with delight. Before I loved — now I revered her — her mother's angelic essence seemed united to hers, forming two in one. The sentiments these beings had divided, were now concentrated in her; and added to this, a breathless adoration, a heart's devotion — which still even now dwells beside her grave, and hallows every memory that remains.

"The cold tomb held the gentle form of Mrs. Rivers: each day we visited it, and each day we collected fresh memorials, and exhausted ourselves in talk concerning the lost one. Immediately on my arrival I had written to my uncle, and the cause of my rash act pleading my excuse, it was visited less severely than I expected; I was told that it was well that I displayed affection and gratitude towards a too indulgent friend, though my depravity betrayed itself in the manner even in which I fulfilled a duty. I was bid at once return to the college — after a fortnight had passed I obeyed; and now I lived on Alithea's letters, which breathed only her eloquent regrets — already my own dream of life was formed to be for ever her protector, her friend, her servant, her all that she could deign to make me; to devote myself day after day, year after year, through all my life to her only. While with her, oppressed by grief as we both were, I did not understand my own sensations, and the burning of my heart, which opened as a volcano when I heard her only speak my name, or felt the touch of her soft hand. But, returned to college, a veil fell from my eyes. I knew that I loved her, I hailed the discovery with transport; I hugged to my bosom the idea that she was the first and last being to awaken the tumultuous sensations that took away my breath, dimmed my eyes, and dissolved me into tenderness.

"Soon after her mother's death she was placed as a parlour boarder at a school — I saw her once there, but I did not see her alone — I could not speak, I could only gaze on her unexampled loveliness; nor, strange to say, did I wish to disclose the passion that agitated me; she was so young, so confiding, so innocent, I wished to be but as a brother to her, for I had a sort of restless presentiment, that distance and reserve would ensue on my disclosing my other feeling. In fact, I was a mere boy; I knew myself to be a friendless one, and I desired time and consideration, and the fortunate moment to occur, before I exchanged our present guileless, but warm and tender attachment, for the hopes and throes of a passion which demands a future, and is therefore full of peril. True, when I left her I reproached myself for my cowardice; but I would not write, and deferred, till I saw her, all explanation of my feelings.

"Some months after, the time arrived when I was to embark for India. Captain Rivers had returned, and inhabited the beloved cottage, and Alithea dwelt with him; I went to see her previous to my departure. My soul was in tumults; I desired to take her with me; but that was impossible, and yet to leave her thus, and go into a far and long exile away from her, was too frightful; I could not believe that I could exist without the near hope and expectation of seeing her, without that constant mingling of hearts which made her life-blood but as a portion of my own. My resolution was easily made to claim her as mine, my betrothed, my future bride; and I had a vague notion that, if I were accepted, Captain Rivers would form some plan to prevent my going to India, or to bring me back speedily. I arrived at the cottage, and the first sight of her father was painful to me — he was rough and uncouth; and though proud of his daughter, yet treated her with little of that deference to which she had a right even from him — the more reason, I thought, to make her mine; and that very evening I expressed my desire to Captain Rivers: a horse-laugh was the reply — he treated me partly as a mad boy, partly as an impertinent beggar. My passions were roused, my indignation burst all the fetters I sought to throw over it — I answered haughtily — insolently — our words were loud and rude; I laughed at his menaces, and scoffed at his authority. I retorted scorn with scorn, till the fiery old sailor was provoked to knock me down. In all this I thought not of him in the sacred character of Alithea's father — I knew but one parent for her, she had as it were joined us by making us companions, and friends — both children of her heart; she was gone, and the rude tyrant who usurped her place excited only detestation and loathing, from the insolence of his pretensions. Still, when he struck me, his age, and his infirmities — for he was lame — prevented my returning the blow. I rose, and folding my arms, and looking at him with a smile of ineffable contempt, I said, "Poor miserable man! do you think to degrade me by a blow? but for pity, I could return it so that you would never lift up your head again from that floor — I spare you — farewell. You have taught me one lesson — I will die rather than leave Alithea in the hands of a ruffian, such as you." With these words I turned on my heel, and walked out of the house.

"I repaired to a neighbouring public-house, and wrote to Alithea, asking, demanding an interview; I claimed it in her mother's name. Her answer came, it was wetted with her tears — dear gentle being! — so alien was her nature from all strife, that the very idea of contention shook her delicate frame, and seemed almost to unhinge her reason. She respected her father, and she loved me with an affection nourished by long companionship, and sacred associations. She promised to meet me, if I would abstain from again seeing her father.

"In the same wood, and at the same midnight hour, as when before she came to bring assistance and consolation to the outcast boy three years before, I saw her again; and for the last time, before I quitted England. Alithea had one fault, if such name may be given to a delicacy of structure that rendered every clash of human passion, terrifying. In physical danger, she could show herself a heroine; but awaken her terror of moral evil, and she was hurried away beyond all self-command by spasms of fear. Thus, as she came now clandestinely, under the cover of night, her father's denunciations still sounding in her ears — the friend of her youth banished — going away for ever; and that departure disturbed by strife, her reason almost forsook her — she was bewildered — clinging to me with tears — yet fearful at every minute of discovery. It was a parting of anguish. She did not feel the passion that ruled my bosom. Hers was a gentler, sisterly feeling; yet not the less entwined with the principles of her being, and necessary to her existence. She lavished caresses and words of endearment on me: she could not tear herself away; yet she rejected firmly every idea of disobedience to her father; and the burning expressions of my love found no echo in her bosom.

"Thus we parted; and a few days afterwards I was on the wide sea, sailing for my distant bourn. At first I had felt disappointed and angry; but soon imagination shed radiance over what had seemed chilly and dim. I felt her dear head repose on my heart; I saw her bright eyes overbrimming with tears; and heard her sweet voice repeat again and again her vow never to forget her brother, her more than brother, her only friend; the only being left her to love. No wonder that, during the various changes of a long voyage — during reveries indulged endlessly through calm nights, and the mightier emotions awakened by storm and danger, that the memory of this affection grew into a conviction that I was loved, and a belief that she was mine forever.

"I am not writing my life; and, but for the wish to appear less criminal in my dear child's eyes, I had not written a word of the foregone pages, but leaped at once to the mere facts that justify poor Alithea, and tell the tragic story of her death. Years have past, and oblivion has swept away all memory of the events of which I speak. Who recollects the wise, white lady of the secluded cot, and her houri daughter? This heart alone, there they live enshrined. My dreams call up their forms. I visit them in my solitary reveries. I try to forget the ensuing years, and to become the heedless, half-savage boy, who listened with wonder, yet conviction, to lessons of virtue; and to call back the melting of the heart which the wise lady's words produced, and the bounding, wild joy I felt beside her child. If there is a hell, it need no other torment but memory to call back such scenes as these, and bid me remember the destruction that ensued.

"I remained ten years in India, an officer in a regiment of the Company's cavalry. I saw a good deal of service; went through much suffering; and doing my duty on the field of battle, or at the hour of attack, I gained that approbation in the field, which I lost when in quarters by a sort of systematized insubordination, which was a part of my untameable nature. In action even, I went beyond my orders — however that was forgiven; but when in quarters, I took part with the weak, and showed contempt for the powerful. I was looked upon as dangerous; and the more so, that the violence of my temper often made my manner in a high degree reprehensible. I attached myself to several natives; that was a misdemeanor. I strove to inculcate European tastes and spirit, enlightened views, and liberal policy, to one or two native princes, whom, from some ill-luck, the English governors wished to keep in ignorance and darkness. I was for ever entangled in the intimacy, and driven to try to serve the oppressed; while the affection I excited was considered disaffection on my part to the rulers. Sometimes also I met with ingratitude and treachery; my actions were misrepresented, either by prejudice or malice; and my situation, of a subordinate officer, without fortune, gave to the influence I acquired, through learning the language and respecting the habits and feelings of the natives, an air of something so inexplicable, as might, in the dark ages, have been attributed to witchcraft, and in these enlightened times was considered a tendency to the most dangerous intrigues. Having saved an old rajah's life, and having taken great pains to extricate him from a difficulty in which the Europeans had purposely entangled him, it became rumoured that I aspired to succeed to a native principality, and I was peremptorily ordered off to another station. My views were in diametrical opposition to the then Indian government. My conversation was heedless — my youthful imagination exalted by native magnificence; I own I often dreamt of the practicability of driving the merchant sovereigns from Hindostan. There was, as is the essence of my character, much boyish folly joined to dangerous passion; all of which took the guise in my own heart of that high heroic adventure with which I longed to adorn my life. A subaltern in the Company's service, I could never gain my Alithea, or do her the honour with which I longed to crown her. The acquisition of power, of influence, of station, would exalt me in her father's eyes — so much of what was selfish mingled in my conduct — but I was too young and impetuous to succeed. Those in power watched me narrowly. The elevation of a day was always followed by a quick transfer to an unknown and distant province.

"In all my wildest schemes the thought of Alithea reigned paramount. My only object was to prove myself worthy of her; and my only dream for the future was to make her mine for ever.

"A constancy of ten years, strung perpetually up to the height of passion, may appear improbable; yet it was so. It was my nature to hold an object with tenacious grasp — to show a proud contempt of obstacles — to resolve on ultimate triumph. Besides this, the idea of Alithea was so kneaded up and incorporate with my being, that my living heart must have been searched and anatomized to its core, before the portion belonging to her could have been divided from the rest. I disdained the thought of every other woman. It was my pride to look coldly on every charm, and to shut my heart against all but Alithea. During the first years of my residence in India, I often wrote to her, and pouring out my soul on paper, I conjured her to preserve herself for me. I told her how each solitary jungle or mountain ravine spoke to me of a secluded home with her; how every palace and gorgeous hall seemed yet a shrine too humble for her. The very soul of passion breathed along the lines I traced — they were such as an affianced lover would have written, pure in their tenderness; but heart-felt, penetrating, and eloquent; they were my dearest comfort. After long, wearisome marches — after the dangers of an assault or a skirmish — after a day spent among the sick or dying — in the midst of many disappointments and harassing cares; during the storms of pride and the languor of despair, it was my consolation to fly to her image and to recall the tender happiness of reunion — to endeavour to convey to her how she was my hope and aim — my fountain in the desert, the shadowy tree to shelter me from the burning sun — the soft breeze to refresh me — the angelic visitor to the unfortunate martyr. Not one of these letters ever reached her — her father destroyed them all: on his head be the crime and the remorse of his daughter's death! Fool and coward! would I shift to other shoulders the heavy weight? No! no! crime and remorse still link me to her. Let them eat into my frame with fiery torture; they are better than forgetfulness!

"I had two hopes in India: one was, to raise myself to such a station as would render me worthy of Alithea in the eyes of Captain Rivers; the other, to return to England — to find change there — to find love in her heart — and to move her to quit all for me. By turns these two dreams reigned over me; I indulged in them with complacency — I returned to them with ardour — I nourished them with perseverance. I never saw a young Indian mother with her infant but my soul dissolved in tender fancies of domestic union and bliss with Alithea. There was something in her soft, dark eye, and in the turn of her countenance, purely eastern; and many a lovely, half-veiled face I could have taken for hers; many a slight, symmetrical figure, round, elegant and delicate, seemed her own, as, with elastic undulating motion, they passed on their way to temple or feast. I cultivated all these fancies; they nourished my fidelity, and made the thought of her the absolute law of my life.

"Ten years passed, and then news came that altered my whole situation. My uncle and his only son died; the family estate devolved on me. I was rich and free. Rich in my own eyes, and in the eyes of all to whom competency is wealth. I felt sure that, with this inheritance, Captain Rivers would not disdain me for his child. I gave up my commission immediately, and returned to England.

"England and Alithea! How balmy, how ineffably sweet was the idea of once more beholding the rural spot where she resided; of treading the woodland paths with her — of visiting her dear mother's grave — of renewing our old associations, and knitting our destinies inextricably in one. It was a voyage of bliss. I longed for its conclusion; but feeling that a pathway was stretched across the ocean, leading even into her very presence, I blessed each wave or tract of azure sea we passed over. The limitless Atlantic was my road to her, and became glorified as the vision of the Hebrew shepherd boy; and yet loved, with the same home-felt sweetness as that with which I used to regard the lime-tree walk that led to her garden-gate. I forgot the years that had elapsed since we met; it was with difficulty that I forced my imagination to remember that I should not find her pale mother beside her to sanctify our union.

CHAPTER XI.

"On landing in England, I at once set off to the far northern county where she resided. I arrived at the well-known village; all looked the same; I recognized the cottages and their flower-gardens, and even some of the elder inhabitants, looking, methought, no older than when I left them. My heart hailed my return home with rapture, and I quickened my steps towards the cottage. It was shut up and abandoned. This was the first check my sanguine spirit had met. Hitherto I had not pronounced her name nor asked a question — I longed to return, as from a walk, and to find all things as I had left it. Living in a dream, I had not considered the chances and the storms, or even the mere changes, of the seasons of life.

"My pen lags in its task — I dilate on things best hurried over, yet they serve as a screen between me and fate. A few inquiries revealed the truth. Captain Rivers was dead — his daughter married. I had lived in a fool's paradise. None of the obstacles existed that I expected to meet and conquer but in their stead a fourfold brazen door had risen, locked, barred and guarded, and I could not even shake a hinge, or put back a bolt.

"I hurried from the fatal spot; it became a hell to me. And oh, to think that I had lived in vain — vainly dreamt of the angel of my idolatry, vainly hoped — and most vainly loved; called her mine when another held her, sold myself to perpetual slavery to her shadow, while her living image enriched the shrine of another's home! The tempest that shook my soul did not permit me to give form, or indeed to dwell consecutively on such desolating thoughts. As a man who arrives from a pleasant journey, and turns the corner where he expects to view the dwelling in which repose his wife, his children — all dear to him — and when he gains the desired spot, beholds it smouldering in ashes, and is told that all are consumed, and that their bones lie beneath the ruins; thus was I — my imagination had created home, and bride, and fair beings sprung from her side, who called me father, and one word defaced my whole future life and widowed me for ever. "Now began that chain of incidents that led to a deed I had not thought of. Incidents or accidents; acts, done I know not why; nothing in themselves; but meeting, and kindled by the fiery spirit that raged in my bosom, they gave such direction to its ruinous powers, as produced the tragedy for ever to be deplored.

"Bewildered and overwhelmed by the loss which to me had all the novelty and keenness of a disaster of yesterday, though I found that many years had gone by, since, in reality, it was completed, I fled from the spot I had so fondly sought, and hurried up to London on no fixed errand, with no determined idea, yet vaguely desiring to do something. Scarcely arrived, I met a man whom I had known in India. He asked me to dine with him, and I complied; because to refuse would have required explanation, and the affirmative was more easily given. I did not mean to keep my engagement; yet when the hour came, so intolerable had I become to myself — so poignant and loathsome were my thoughts — that I went, so to lose for a few moments the present sense of ill. It was a bachelor's dinner, and there were in addition to myself three or four other guests — among them a Mr. Neville. From the moment this man opened his lips to speak, I took a violent dislike to him. He was, and always must have been, the man whom among ten thousand I should have marked out to abhor. He was cold, proud, and sarcastic, withal a decayed dandy, turned cynic — who, half despising himself, tried wholly to disdain his fellow creatures. A man whose bosom never glowed with a generous emotion, and who took pride in the sagacity which enabled him to detect worms and corruption in the loveliness of virtue. A poor, mean-spirited fellow, despite his haughty outside; and then when he spoke of women, how base a thing he seemed! his disbelief in their excellence, his contemptuous pity, his insulting love, made my blood boil. To me there was something sacred in a woman's very shadow. Was she evil, I regarded her with the pious regret with which I might view a shrine desecrated by sacrilegious hands — the odour of sanctity still floated around the rifled altar; I never could regard them as mere fellow-creatures — they were beings of a better species, sometimes gone astray in the world's wilderness, but always elevated above the best among us. For Alithea's sake I respected every woman. How much good I knew of them! Generous, devoted, delicate — their very faults were but misdirected virtues; and this animal dared revile beings of whose very nature he could form no conception. A burthen was lifted from my soul when he left us.

"'It is strange,' said our host, 'that Neville should indulge in this kind of talk; he is married to the most beautiful, and the best woman in the world.

Much younger than himself, she yet performs her duties as a wife with steadiness and cheerfulness; lovely beyond her sex, she is without its weakness; to please some jealous freak of his, she has withdrawn herself from the world, and buried herself alive at his seat in the North. How she can endure an eternal tête-à-tête with that empty, conceited, and arrogant husband of hers is beyond any guessing.'

"I made some observation expressive of my abhorrence of Mr. Neville's character, and my friend continued—'Disagreeable and shallow as he is, one would have thought that the society of so superior, so perfect a woman, would have reconciled him to her sex, but I verily believe he is jealous of her surpassing excellence; and that it is not so much a natural, and I might almost call it generous, fear of losing her affections, as a dislike of seeing her admired, and knowing that she is preferred to him, especially now that he absolutely looks an old fellow. Poor Alithea Rivers — hers is a hard fate!'

"I had a glass of wine in my hand; my convulsive grasp shivered the brittle thing, but I gave no other outward sign; before, I was miserable, I had lost all that made life dear; but to know that she was lost to herself, bound for life to a human brute, curdled my heart's blood, and spread an unnatural chilliness through my frame.

"What a sacrifice was there! a sacrifice of how much more than life, of the heart's sweetest feelings, when a spirit, sent to gladden the world, and cast one drop of celestial nectar into the bitterness of existence, was made garbage for that detested animal; from that moment, from the moment I felt assured that I had seen Alithea's husband, something departed from the world, such as I had once known it, never to return again. A sense of acquiescence in the decrees of Providence, of confidence in the benevolence and beauty of the universe, of pride, despite all my misfortunes, in being man, of pleasure in the loveliness of nature, all departed! I had lost her — that was nothing; it was my disaster, but did not injure the order and grace of the creation; she was, I fondly trusted, married to a better man than I; but, bound to that grovelling and loathsome type of the world's worst qualities, the devil usurped at once the throne of God, and life became a hell.

"'You are miserable, Alithea! you must be miserable! For you there is no sympathy, no mingling of hearts, no generous confidence in another's esteem and kindness, no indulgence in golden imaginations of the beauty of life. You are tied to a foul, corrupting corpse. You are cut off from the dear associations of the social hearth, from the dignified sense of having exchanged virgin purity for a sweeter and more valuable possession in another's heart; coldly and listlessly you look on the day which brings no hope to you, if, indeed, you do not rave and blaspheme in your despair. Oh! with me, the brother of your soul, your servant, lover, untiring friend, how differently had your lot been cast!'

"I rushed from my friend's house; I entered no roof that night; my passions were awake, my fierce, volcanic passions! Had I encountered Neville, I had assuredly murdered him; my soul was chaos, yet a tempestuous ray gave a dark light amidst the storm; a glimmering, yet permanent irradiation mantled over the ruins among which I stood. I said to myself, 'I am mad, driven to desperation;' but, beneath this outward garb of my thought, I knew and recognized an interior form. I knew what I desired, what I intended, and what, though I tried to cheat myself into the belief that I wavered, I henceforth steadily pursued. There is, perhaps, no more dangerous mood of mind than when we doggedly pursue means, recklessly uncertain of their end.

"Thus was I led to the fatal hour; a life of love, and a sudden bereavement, with such a thing the instrument of my ruin! A contempt for the order of the universe, a stern demoniacal braving of fate, because I would rule, and put that right which God had let go wrong. Oh, let me not again blaspheme. God made the stars, and the green earth, within whose bosom Alithea lies. She also is his, and I will believe, despite the hellish interference that tainted and deflowered her earthly life, that now she is with the source of all good, reaping the reward of her virtues, the compensation for her suffering. Else, why are we created? To crawl forth, to suffer and die? I cannot believe it. Spirit of the blest, omnipotence did not form perfection to shatter and dissipate the elements like broken glass! But I rave and wander; Alithea still lives and suffers at the time of which I write, and I, erecting myself into a providence, resolved to put that right which was wrong, and cure the world's misrule. From that moment I never paused or looked back; I set my soul upon the cast, and I am here. And Alithea! her mysterious grave you shall now approach.

“Bent upon a dangerous purpose, fate led before me an instrument, without which I should have found it difficult to execute my plan. I got a letter from a man in great distress, asking for some small help; he was on the point of quitting England for America, and working his passage; slight assistance would be of inestimable benefit in furthering his plans. The petitioner followed his petition quickly, and was ushered in before me. I scrutinized his shrewd, yet down-looking countenance; I scanned his supple, yet uncertain carriage; I felt that he was a coward, yet knew he would tamper with roguery, in all safety, for a due reward. I had known the fellow in India; James Osborne was his name; he dabbled in various disreputable money transactions, both with natives and Englishmen, and at last, having excited the suspicion of government, got thrown into prison. He had then written to me, who was considered a sort of refuge for the destitute, and I went to see him. There was no great harm in the man; on the contrary, he was soft-hearted and humane; the infection of dishonesty, caught in bad company, and fostered in poverty, was his ruin; and he joined to this a strong desire to be respectable, if he could only contrive to subsist without double-dealing. I thought, that by extricating him from his embarrassments, and removing him from temptation, I might save him from ignominy; so I paid his passage to England; where he told me that he had friends and resources. But his old habits pursued him, and even now, though poverty was the alleged motive for his emigration, I saw that there was secret fear of legal pursuit for dishonest practices; he had been inveigled, he said, to lend his name to a transaction which turned out a knavish one. With all this, Osborne was not a villain, and scarcely a rogue; there was truth in what he said; he had always an aspiration for a better place in society, but he saw no way of attaining it except by money, and no way of gaining money except by cheating.

“I listened to his story. ‘You are an incorrigible fellow,’ said I. ‘How can I give ear to your promises? Still I am willing to assist you. I am myself going to America; you shall accompany me.’ By degrees I afterwards explained the service I needed; yet I only half disclosed the truth. Osborne never knew the name or position of the lady who was to be my companion across the Atlantic. A man’s notions of the conduct of others are always coloured by his own ruling passion. Osborne thought I was intent on carrying off an heiress.

“With this ally I proceeded to Cumberland — my mind more intent on the result of my schemes than their intermediate detail. I learned before I went that Mr. Neville was still in town. This was a golden opportunity, and I hastened to use it. I reached the spot that Alithea inhabited — I entered the outer gate of the demesne — I rode up to the avenue that led to the house — I was ushered into the room where I knew that I should find her. I summoned every power to calm the throbbing of my heart. I expected to find her changed; but when I saw her, I discovered no alteration. It was strange that so much of girlish appearance should remain. Her figure was light and airy; her rich clustering ringlets abundant as before; her face — it was Alithea! All herself! That soft, loving eye — that clear brow — those music-breathing lips — time had not harmed her — it was herself.

“She did not at once recognize me; the beardless stripling was become a weather-beaten, thought-worn man: but when I told her who I was — the name so long forgotten — never heard since last she spoke it, ‘Rupert!’ burst from her lips — it united our severed lives; and her look of rapture, her accent all breathless with joy, told me that her heart was still the same — ardent, affectionate, and true.

“We sat together, hand linked in hand, looking at each other with undisguised delight. At first, with satanic cunning, I assumed the brother’s part. I questioned her concerning her fate — her feelings; and seeing that she was averse to confess the truth of her disappointed, joyless married state, I led her back to past days. I spoke of her dear mother. I said that often had the image of that pale, wise spirit checked, guided, and whispered sage lessons to me in my banishment. I recalled a thousand scenes of our childhood, when we wandered together — hand in hand — heart linked to heart — confiding every pain — avowing every wild or rebellious thought, or discussing the mighty secrets of nature and of fate, which to our young hearts were full of awe and mystery, and yet of beauty and joy. As I spoke, I examined her more narrowly. At first she had appeared to me the same; now I marked a difference. Her mouth, the home of smiles, had ever its sweet, benignant expression; but her eyes, there was a heaviness in the lids, a liquid melancholy in their gaze, which said that they were acquainted with tears; her cheeks, once round, peachlike, and downy, were not fallen, yet they had lost their rich fulness. She was more beautiful; there was more reflection, more sentiment in her face; but there was far, far less happiness.

Before, smiles sprung up wherever she turned to gaze; now, an interest akin to pity and tears made the spectator's heart ache as he watched the turns of a countenance which was the faithful mirror of the truest heart that ever beat. Worse than this, there ever and anon shot across her face a look that seemed like fear. Oh, how unlike the trusting, dreadless Alithea!

"My talk of other days at first soothed, then excited, and threw her off her guard. By degrees I approached the object of all my talk, and drew her to speak of her father, and the motives that induced her marriage. My knowledge and vivid recollections of all that belonged to her, made her unawares speak, as she had not done since we parted, the undisguised truth; and before she knew what she had said, I had led her to confess that she had never loved her husband; that she found no sympathy, and little kindness in him; that her life had been one of endurance of faults alien to her own temperament. Had I been more cautious, I had allowed this to pass off at first, and won her entire confidence before I laid bare my own thoughts; for all she said had never before been breathed into any living ear but mine. It was her principle to submit, and to hide her sense of her husband's defective disposition; and had I not, with a serpent's subtlety, glided on imperceptibly; had I not brought forward her mother's name, and the memory of childhood's cloudless years, she had been mute with me. But now I could contain myself no longer. I told her that I had seen the miserable being to whom she was linked. I uttered curses on the fate that had joined them together. She laid her hand on my arm, and looking in my face with confiding innocence, 'Hush, Rupert,' she said, 'you make me mean more than I would willingly have you think. He is not unkind; I have no right to complain; it is not in every man that we can find a brother's or a friend's heart. Neville does not understand these things; but he is my husband; as such I honour him.'

"I saw the internal feeling that led her to speak thus; I saw the delicate forbearance that filled her noble mind. She thought of her virgin faith plighted — long years spent at his side — her children — her fidelity, which, if it had ceased to cling to him, had never wandered, even in thought, to another; duties exemplarily fulfilled — earnest strivings to forget his worthlessness. All this honour for her own pure nature, she cheated herself into believing was honour paid to him. I resolved to tear the veil which her gentleness and sense of right had drawn before the truth, and

I exclaimed, impetuously, ‘Wrong yourself not so much! dear girl; do not fancy that your high soul can really bow down to baseness. You pay reverence to your own sense of duty; but you hate — you must hate that man.’

“She started, and her face and neck became dyed in blushes, proceeding half from anger at being urged beyond her wish, half from native modesty at hearing her husband thus spoken of. As for myself, I grew mad as I looked on her, and felt the sweet, transporting influences that gathered round; here indeed was the creature whom I had loved through so many years, who was mine in my dreams, whose faith and true affection I fancied I held for ever; and she was torn from me, given away, not to one who, like me, knew and felt her matchless excellence, but to a base-minded thing, from whom she must shrink as from an animal of another species. All that her soul contained of elevated thought and celestial aspirations, all of generous, high, and heroic, that warmed her heart, what were they before a blind, creeping worm, who held a matchless jewel in his hand, and deemed it dross? He even could not understand, or share the more sober affections — mutual trust and mutual forbearance; the utterance of love, the caresses of tenderness, what were these to a wretch who saw baseness and deceit in the most lofty and pure feelings of a woman’s heart?

“I expressed these thoughts, or rather, they burst from me. She interrupted me. ‘I do not deny,’ she said, ‘for I know not how you have cheated me of my secret, but that repinings have at times entered my mind; and I have shed foolish tears, to think that the dreams of my girlhood were as a bright morning, quickly followed by a dim, cloudy day. But I have reproved myself for this discontent, and you do very wrong to revive it; the heart will rebel, but religion, and philosophy, and the very tears I shed, soothe its ruffled mood, and make me remember that we do not live to be happy, but to perform our duties; to fulfil mine is the aim of my life; teach me how to do that more completely, more entirely to resign myself, and you will be my benefactor. It is true that my husband does not understand the childish overflowings of my heart, which is too ready to seek its joys among the clouds; he does not dwell with rapture on the thoughts and sentiments which give me so much life and happiness — his is a stronger, and sterner nature; a slower one also, I acknowledge, one less ready to sympathize and feel. But if I have in my intercourse with him regretted that lively, cheering interchange of sentiment which I enjoyed with you — you are now here to bestow it, and my life, hitherto defective, your return may render complete.'

"I laughed bitterly. 'Poor innocent bird,' I cried; 'think you at once to be free, and in a cage? at once to feel the fowler's grasp, and fly away to heaven? Alithea, you miserably deceive yourself; hitherto you have but half guessed the secrets of a base grovelling spirit — have you never seen your husband jealous?'

"She shuddered — and I saw a spasm of exquisite pain cloud her features as she averted her head from me, and the look of trembling fear I had before remarked, crept over her. I was shocked to see so much of the slave had entered her soul. I told her this; I told her she was being degraded by the very duties which she was devoting herself, body and soul, to perform; I told her that she must be free; she looked wonderingly, but I continued. 'Is not the very name of liberty dear and exhilarating, does it not draw you irresistibly onwards, is not the very thought of casting your heavy chains from off you, full of new and inexpressible joy? Poor prisoner, do you not yearn to breathe without a fear; would you not with transport escape from your jailor to a home of love and freedom?'

"Hitherto she had fancied that I but regretted her sorrows as she did, and repined as she did over a fate whose real misery she alone could entirely feel; she repented having spoken so openly — yet she loved me for my unfeigned sympathy; but now she saw that something more was meant, she looked earnestly at me, as if to read my heart; she saw its wishes in my eyes, and shrunk from them as from a snake, as she exclaimed, 'Never, dear Rupert, speak thus to me again, or we must again part — I have a son.'

"The radiance of angelic love lighted up her face as she uttered these words; and then, my error and weakness being her strength, she resumed the self-possession she had lost during our previous conversation; with bewitching grace she held out her hand to me, and in a voice modulated by the soul of persuasion, said, 'Let us be friends, Rupert, such as we once were, brother and sister; I will not believe that you are returned only to pain and injure me — I am happy in my children — stay but a little, and you will see how foolish I have been to complain at all. You also will love my boy.'

"Would you not think that these words had sufficed to cure my madness, and banish every guilty project? Had you seen her, her inimitable grace of attitude, the blushing, tender expression of her face, and her modest earnest manner, a manner which spoke the maternal nature, such as Catholics imagine it, without a tincture of the wife, a girlish, yet enthusiastic rapture at the very thought of her child, you would have known that every scheme I meditated was riveted faster, every desire to make her my own for ever, more fixed and eager. I went on to urge her, till I saw every feature given token of distress; and at last she suddenly left me, as if unable any longer to bear my pertinacity. She left me without a word, but I saw her face bathed in tears. I was indeed insane. These tears, which sprung from anguish of soul to think that her childhood's companion should thus show himself an injurer instead of a friend, I interpreted into signs of relenting — into a struggle with her heart.

CHAPTER XII.

"I called again the following morning, but she was denied to me; twice this happened. She feared me, I believed; and still more franticly I was driven to continue my persecutions. I wrote to her; she did not answer my letters. I entered the grounds of her house clandestinely; I lay in wait for her; I resolved to see her again. At length, one afternoon I found her alone, walking and musing in the more solitary part of the park; I stood suddenly before her, and her first emotion was pleasure, so true was she to her affections, so constant to her hope that at last I should be persuaded not to pain her by a renewal of my former conversation. But I believed that I had a hold on her that I would not forego. When she offered to renew our childhood's compact of friendship, I asked her how that could be if she refused me her confidence; I asked how she could promise me happiness, whose every hope was blighted. I told her that it was my firm conviction that her mother had intended us for one another, that she had brought her up for me, given her to me, and that thus she was indeed mine. Her eyes flashed fire at this. 'My mother,' she said, 'brought me up for a higher purpose than even conducing to your happiness. She brought me up to fulfil my duties, to be a mother in my turn. I do not deny,' she continued, 'that I share in some sort my mother's fate, and am more maternal than wife-like; and as I fondly wish to resemble her in all her virtues, I will not repine at the circumstances that lead me rather to devote my existence to my children, than to be that most blessed creature, a happy wife — I do not ask for that happiness, I am contented with my lot; my very girlish, romantic repinings do not really make me unhappy.'

"'Nor your fears, nor his base jealousy, his selfishness, his narrow soul, and brutish violence? I know more than you think, Alithea — I read your heart — you must be miserable, submissive, yet tyrannized over; wedded to your duty, yet watched, suspected, accused. There are traces of tears on your cheeks, my poor girl; your neck is bowed by the yoke, your eyes have no longer the radiance of conscious rectitude, and yet you are innocent.'

"'God knows I am,' she replied, as a shower of tears fell from her eyes — but she was ashamed, and brushed them away—'I am, and will be, Rupert, though you would mislead me. Where indeed can I find a consciousness of rectitude, except in my heart? My husband mistrusts me, I acknowledge it — by torture you force the truth — he does not understand, and you would pervert me; in God and my own heart I put my trust, and I will never do that which my conscience tells me is wrong — and despite both I shall be happy. A mother is, in my eyes, a more sacred name than wife. My life is wrapped in my boy, in him I find blameless joy, though all the rest pierce my heart with poisoned arrows.'

"'You shall, sweet Alithea,' I cried, 'preserve him, and every other blessing. You were not born to inherit this maimed, poverty-stricken life, the widowed mother of an orphan child, such are you now; I will be a father to him for your sake, and many other joys will be yours, and the fondest, truest heart that ever warmed man's bosom shall be all your own. Alithea, you must not offer yourself up a living sacrifice to that base idol, but belong to one whose love, and honour, and eternal devotion merit you, though he possess no other claim. Let me save you from him, I ask no more.'

"I felt a tear, for many long years forgotten, steal down my cheek — my heart worshipped her excellence, and pity, and grief, mingled with my deep regrets; she saw how sincerely I was moved, and tried to comfort me. She wept also, for, despite her steadier thoughts, she knew the cruelty of her destiny, and I do believe her heart yearned to taste, once more before she died, the full joy of complete sympathy. But, if indeed her tears were partly shed for herself, yet she never wavered; she deplored my unhappiness, but she reproved my perversion of principle; she tried to awaken patience, piety, or philosophic fortitude — any of the noble virtues that might enable me to combat the passion by which I was enslaved.

"Time was forgotten as we thus talked with the same openness of heart as in former days, yet those hearts how saddened, and wounded since then! I would not let her go: while the moon rose high, shedding its silvery light over the forest trees, and casting dark shadows on our path, still we indulged in what she deemed our last conference. As I must answer my crimes before God, I swear I could discern no wavering thought, no one idea that strayed to the forbidden ground, toward which I strove to lead her. She told me that she had intended not to see me again till her husband returned; she said that she must implore me not again to seek her in this way, or I should make her a prisoner in her house. I listened — I answered, I knew not what — I was more resolved than ever not to lose her — despite all, I still was mad enough to hope. She left me at last, hoping to have conquered, yet resolved not to see me again, she said, till her husband returned. This determination on her part was in absolute contradiction to what I resolved should be. I had decreed to see her again; nay, more, I would see her, not within the precincts of her home, where all spoke against me; but where she should be free, where, seeing nothing to remind her of the heavy yoke to which she bent her neck, I fondly dreamed I might induce her wholly to throw it aside. If it so pleased her, I would detain her but a few short hours, and restore her to her home in all liberty; but, could I induce her to assert her freedom, and follow me voluntarily — then — to think that possible, the earth reeled under me, and my passion gained strength from its very folly.

"I prepared all things for my plan; I went to Liverpool, and bought two fleet horses and a light foreign calèche suited to my purpose. Returning northward towards Dromore, I sought a solitary spot, for the scene of our last interview, or of the first hour of my lasting bliss. What more solitary than the wild and drear sea shore of the south of Cumberland? Landward it is screened by a sublime background of mountains; but in itself presenting to the view a wide extent of uninhabited sands, intersected by rivers, which when the tide is up presents a dreary expanse of shallow water, and at ebb are left, except in the channels of the rivers, a barren extent of mud and marsh; the surrounding waste being variegated only by a line of sand hills thrown up to the height of thirty or forty feet, shutting in the view from shore, while seaward no boat appeared ever to spread its sail on that lonely sea. On these sands, near the mouth of one of the rivers, there was a small hut deserted, but not in ruins; it was probably occasionally inhabited by guides who are used in this part of the country, to show the track of the fords when the tide is full, and any deviation from the right path is attended by peril, the beds of the rivers being full of ruts and deep holes; that hut I selected as the spot where all should be determined. If she consented to accompany me, we would proceed rapidly forward to Liverpool, and embark for America; if she resolved to return, this spot was but five miles from her home, and I could easily lead her back without suspicion being excited. I was anxious to put my scheme in execution, as her husband was shortly expected.

“It seemed a feasible one. In my own heart I did not expect to induce her to forsake her home; but I might; and the very doubt maddened me. And if I did not, yet for a few hours to have her near me, not in any spot that called her detested husband master, but in the wide, free scenes of nature, the ocean, parent of all liberty, spread at our feet; the way easy to escape, no eye, no ear, to watch and spy out the uncontrolled and genuine emotions of her heart, or no hand to check our progress if she consented to follow. In this plan Osborne, whom I had left at the miserable town of Ravenglass — and who indeed had been the man to find and point out to me the solitary hut, was necessary. My explanation and directions to him were few and peremptory: he was to appear with the calèche, he acting as postillion, at a certain spot; the moment he saw me arrive, as soon as I had placed the lady who was to be my companion in the carriage, he was to put spurs to his horses, and not by any cry of hers, nor command of mine, nor interference of strangers, to be induced to stop till he reached the hut: there she should be free; till then I would have her a prisoner even beyond my own control, lest her entreaties should cheat me out of my resolves. Osborne looked frightened at some portion of these orders, but I glossed over any inconsistency; my bribe was high, and he submitted.

“At every step I took in this mad and guilty scheme I became more resolved to carry it on. Here is my crime — here the tale of sin, I have to relate. The rest is disaster and endless remorse. What moved me to this height of insanity — what blinded me to the senseless, as well as the unpardonable nature of my design, I cannot tell; except that, for years, I had lived in a dream, and waking in the real world, I refused to accommodate myself to its necessities, but resolved to bend its laws to my desires. I loved Alithea — I had loved her through years of absence; she was the wife of my reveries, my hopes, my heart. I could no more part with the thought of her, as such, than with a consciousness of my own identity. To see her married and a mother might be supposed capable of dissipating these fancies; far from it. Her presence — her beauty — the witchery of her eye, her heart-subduing voice, her sensibility, the perfection of her nature, which her inimitable loveliness only half expressed, but which reached my soul, through a sort of inner sense that acknowledged it with worship; all this added to my frenzy, and steeped me to the very lips in intoxication.

“What right had I to call this matchless creature mine? — None! That I acknowledged — but that he, the man without a soul, the incarnate Belial, should claim her, was not for a moment to be endured. Mad as I was, I aver, and He who reads all hearts be now my testimony, that it was more my wish to set her free from him, than to bind her to myself, that urged me on. I had in the solitary shades of her park, during the arguments and struggles of our last interview, sworn, that if she would suffer me to take her, and her boy too if she chose, away from him, I would claim no share in her myself. I would place her in some romantic spot, build a home worthy of her, surrounded with all the glory of nature, and only see her as a servant and a slave. I pledged my soul to this, and I would have kept my oath. Those who have not loved may look on this as the very acme of my hallucination; it might be — I cannot tell — but so it was.

“All was ready; and I wrote to her to meet me for the last time. In this also I was, in one sense, sincere; for I had determined, if I should fail in my persuasions, never to see her more. She came, but several hours later than I intended, which, to a certain degree, deranged my plans. The weather had a sultriness about it all day, portending storm, occasioning a state of atmosphere that operates to render the human frame uneasy and restless. I paced the lane that bounded the demesnes of Dromore, for hours; I threw myself on a grassy bank. The rack in the upper sky sped along with fearful impetuosity; it traversed the heavens from west to east, driven by a furious wind which had not yet descended to us; for below on earth, no breath of air moved the herbage, or could be perceived amidst the’ topmost boughs of the trees. Every thing in nature, acted upon by these contrary influences, had a strange and wild appearance. The sun descended red towards the ocean before Alithea opened the private gate of the grounds, and stood in all her loveliness before me.

“She brought her son with her. At first this annoyed me; but at a second thought, it seemed to render my whole design more conclusive. She had spoken of this child with such rapture that it would have been a barbarity beyond my acting to have separated her from him. By making him her companion, she completed my purpose; I would take them away together. I met her I thought with self-possession, but she read the conflict of passion in my face, and, half fearful, asked what disturbed me. I attributed my agitation to our approaching parting; and drawing her hand through my arm, walked forward along the lane. At the moment of executing my project, its wickedness and cruelty became so apparent, that a thousand times I was about to confess all, solicit her forgiveness, and leave her for ever: but that hardness, which in the ancient religions is deemed the immediate work of God, crept over my heart, turning its human misgiving to stony resolution. I endeavoured to close every aperture of my soul against the relenting moods that assailed me; yet they came with greater power each time, and at length wholly mastering me, I consented to be subdued. I determined to relinquish my schemes, to bid her an eternal adieu; and moved by self-pity at the desolate lot I was about to encounter, I spoke of separation and absence, and the death of hope, with such heart-felt pathos, as moved her to tears.

"Surely there is no greater enemy to virtue and good intentions, than that want of self-command, the exterior of which, though I had acquired, no portion existed in the inner substance of my mind. Calm, proud, and stern, as I seemed to others, capable of governing the vehemence of my temper, — within I was the same slave of passion I had ever been. I never could force myself to do the thing I hated; I never could persuade myself to relinquish the thing I desired. There is the secret of my crimes; there the vice of my disposition, which produced for her I loved a miserable death, and for myself endless, unutterable woe. For a moment I had become virtuous and heroic. We reached the end of the lane — my emissary appeared with the carriage. I had worked myself up by this time to determine to restore her to her home; to part with her for ever. She believed this. The despair written on my brow — my sombre, mute, yet heart-broken mien — my thoughts, which had totally relinquished their favourite project, and consented to be widowed of her for ever, expressed in brief passionate sentences, proved to her, who had never suspected that I meant otherwise, that I took my last look, and spoke my last words. We reached the end of the lane; Osborne drove up. 'Be not surprised,' I said. 'Yes, it is there, Alithea; the carriage that is to convey me far, far away. Gracious God, do I live to see this hour!'

"The carriage stopped; we walked up to it. A devil at that moment whispered in my ear, a devil, who feeds on human crimes and groans, prompted my arm. Coward and dolt! to use such words — my own hellish mind was the sole instigator. In a moment it was done. I lifted her light figure into the carriage; I jumped in after her; I bade her boy follow. It was too late. One cry from him, one long, piercing shriek from her, and we were gone. With the swiftness of the winds we descended the eminence towards the shore, and left child and all return far behind.

"At that moment the storm burst over us; but the thunder was unheard amidst the rattling of the wheels. Even her cries were lost in the uproar; but as the thickening clouds changed twilight into night, the vivid lightning showed me Alithea at my feet, in convulsions of fear and anguish. There was no help. I raised her in my arms; and she struggled in them without meaning, without knowledge. Spasm succeeded to spasm; I saw them by the flashes of the frequent lightning distort her features with agony, but I could not even hear her groans; the furious haste at which we went, the thunder from above, the plash of the rain, suspended only by the howlings of the rising wind, drowned every other sound. I called to Osborne to stop; he gave no heed to my cries. Methought the horses had taken fright, and held the bit in their teeth, with such unimaginable speed we swept along. The roar of ocean, torn up by the wild west wind, now mingled with the universal uproar — hell had broken loose upon earth — yet what was every other and more noisy tempest compared to that which shook my soul, as I pressed Alithea to my heart in agony, vainly hoping to see the colour revisit her cheeks, and her dear eyes open! Was she already a corpse? I tried to feel her breath upon my cheek; but the speed of our course, and the uproar of the elements, prevented my being able to ascertain whether she was alive or dead. And thus I bore her — thus I made her my bride, thus I, her worshipper, emptied the vials of pain on her beloved head!

CHAPTER XIII.

"At last I became aware that the wheels of the carriage passed through water. Hope revived with the thought. The hut where Osborne was to stop, was to the south of the river we were now crossing; the tide was ebbing, and despite the wind and storm, we passed the ford in safety; a moment more, and the carriage stopped amidst the sands. I took the unfortunate lady in my arms, and carried her into the hut; then fetching the cushions of the carriage, I bade Osborne take the horses on to a covered shed about half a mile off, which he had prepared for them, and return immediately.

"I re-entered the hut — still Alithea lay motionless on the ground where I had placed her. The lightning showed me her pale face; and another flash permitted me to discover a portion of luggage brought here by Osborne — necessary if we fled. Among other things which, soldier-like, I always carried with me, I saw my canteen; it contained the implements for striking a light, and tapers. By such means I could at last discover that my victim still lived; and sometimes also she groaned and sighed heavily. What had happened to her I could not tell, nor by what means consciousness might be restored. I chafed her head and hands in spirituous waters; I made her swallow some — in vain. For a moment she somewhat revived, but relapsed again; and the icy cold of her hands and feet seemed to portend instant dissolution. Osborne returned, as I had ordered; he was totally unaware of the state to which my devilish machinations had brought my victim. He found me hanging over her — calling her by every endearing name — chafing her hands in mine — watching in torture for such signs of returning sense as would assure me that I was not about to see her expire before my eyes. He was scared by what he saw; but I silenced him, and made him light a fire — and heat sand, which I placed at her feet; and then by degrees, with help of large doses of sal-volatile and other drugs, circulation was restored. She opened her eyes and gazed wildly round, and tears gushed from under the lids in large, slow drops. My soul blessed God! Every mad desire and guilty scheme had faded before the expectation of her death. All I asked of Heaven was her life, and leave to restore her to her child and her home. Heaven granted, as I thought, my prayer. The livid streaks which had settled round her mouth and eyes disappeared; her features lost the rigidity of convulsions, a slight colour tinged her cheeks; her hands, late chill and stiff, now had warmth, and voluntary motions of their own. Once or twice she looked round and tried to speak. ‘Gerard!’ that word, the name of her boy, was murmured; I caught the sound as I bent eagerly over her. ‘He is safe — he is well,’ I whispered. ‘All is well; be comforted, Alithea.’ The poor victim smiled; yes, her own sweet smile dawned upon her face. ‘She too is safe,’ I thought. Once again I felt my heart beat freely and at ease.

“She continued however in a state of torpor. There were two rooms in the hut. I prepared a sort of couch for her in the inner one. I placed her on it; I covered her with her cloak. By degrees the sort of insensibility in which she sunk changed to sleep. We left her then, and sat watching in the outer room. I kept my eyes fixed on her, and saw that each hour added to the tranquillity of her repose; I could not hear her breathe; for though the thunder and rain had ceased, the wind howled and the near ocean roared; its billows, driven by the western gale, encroached upon the sands almost to the threshold of the hut.

“A revulsion had taken place within me; I felt that there was something dearer to me than the fulfilment of my schemes, which was her life. She appeared almost miraculously restored, and my softened heart thanked God and blessed her. I believed I could be happy even in eternal absence, now that the guilt of her death was taken from my soul. Well do I remember the kind of rapture that flowed in upon my heart, as at dawn of day I crept noiselessly to her side, and marked the regular heaving of her bosom; and saw her eye-lids, heavy and dark with suffering, it is true, yet gently closed over the dear orbs which again and for many a long year would enjoy the light of day. I felt a new man, I felt happy. In a few short hours I should receive her pardon — convey her home — declare my own guilt; and while absolving her, offer myself as the mark of whatever vengeance her husband might choose to take. Me! — Oh, what was I? I had no being; it was dissolved into a mere yearning for her life — her contentment. I was about to render myself up as a criminal to a man whose most generous act would be to meet me in the field; but that was nothing: I thought not of it, either with gladness or regret. She lives — she shall be restored to all she loves — she once again will be at peace.

"These were my dreams as I hung over her, and gradually the break of day became more decided; by the increasing light I could perceive that I had not deceived myself, she slept a healthy, profound, healing sleep: I returned to the outer room; Osborne had wrapt himself in his great coat, and lay stretched on the floor. I roused him, and told him to go for the horses and carriage immediately, so that the first thing that might welcome Alithea's awakening should be the offer of an immediate return home. He gladly obeyed, and left the hut; but scarcely was he gone than a sort of consciousness came over me, that I would not remain with her alone; so I followed him at some little distance towards the shed where the carriage and horses were.

"The wind had scattered every cloud, and still howled through the clear gray morning sky, the sea was in violent commotion, and huge surges broke heavily and rapidly on the beach. The tide was flowing fast, and the bed of the river, we had crossed so safely the night before, was covered by the waves; in a little time the ford would be impassable, and this was another reason to hasten the arrival of the horses. To the east each crag and precipice, each vast mountain top, showed in dark relief against the golden eastern sky; seaward the horizon was misty from the gale, and the ocean stretched out illimitably; curlews and gulls screamed as they skimmed the crested waves, and breaker after breaker dashed furiously at my feet. It was a desolate, but a magnificent spectacle, and my throbbing heart was in unison with its vast grandeurs. I blessed sea and wind, and heaven, and the dawn; the guilt of my soul had passed from me, and without the grievous penalty I had dreaded; all again was well. I walked swiftly on, I reached the shed. Osborne was busy with the horses; he had done what he could for them the night before, and they seemed tolerably fresh. I spoke cheerfully to the man, as I helped to harness them. Osborne was still pale with fright, but when I told him that I was going to carry the lady back to her friends, and that there was nothing to fear, he took heart; I bade him come slowly along, that the noise of the wheels might not waken her, if she still slept, and I walked beside, my hand on the neck of one horse while he bestrode the other, and we gazed around and pointed to each other signs of the recent tempest, which had been so much more violent than I in my pre-occupation had known; and then as the idea of the ford being rendered impassable crossed me again, I bid him get on at a quicker rate, there was no fear of disturbing the sleeping lady, for the wheels were noiseless on the heavy sands.

"I have mentioned that huge sand hills were thrown up here and there on the beach; two of the highest of these shut out all view of the hut, and even of the river, till we were close upon them. As we passed these mounds, my first glance was to see the state of the tide. The bed of the river was entirely filled with dashing crested waves, which poured in from the sea with inconceivable rapidity, and obliterated every trace of the ford. I looked anxiously round, but it was plain we must wait for the ebbing tide, or make a long detour to seek the upper part of the stream. As I gazed, something caught my eyes as peculiar. The foam of the breaking waves was white, and this object also was white; yet was it real, or but the mockery of a human form? For a moment my heart ceased to beat, and then with wings to my feet I ran to the hut: I rushed into the inner room — the couch was deserted, the whole dwelling empty! I hurried back to the river's brink and strained my eyeballs to catch a sight of the same fearful object; it was there! I could not mistake, a wave lifted up and then again overwhelmed and swallowed in its abyss, the form, no longer living, the dead body of Alithea. I threw myself into the water, I battled with the waves, the tide bore me on. Again and again I was blinded and overwhelmed by the surges, but still I held on, and made my way into the middle of the roaring flood. As I rose gasping from one large billow, that had, for more than a minute, ingulfed me in its strangling depths, I felt a substance strike against me; instinctively I clutched at it, and grasping her long, streaming hair, now with renewed strength and frantic energy I made for shore. I was as a plaything to the foaming billows, but by yielding to them, by suffering myself to be carried up the tide, to where the river grew shallower and the waves less powerful, I was miserable enough at last to escape. Fool! did I not know that she was dead! — why did I not, clasping her in my arms, resign my life to the waters? No! she had returned to me from the gates of death the night before, and I madly deemed the miracle would be twice performed.

"I reached the bank. Osborne, trembling and ghastly, helped me to lift her on shore; we endeavoured by various means to recall the spark of life: it was too late. She had been long in the water, and was quite dead!

"How can I write these words, how linger on these hideous details? Alas! they are for ever before me; no day, no hour passes but the whole scene is acted over again with startling vividness — and my soul shrinks and shudders from the present image of death. Even now that the dawn of Greece is breaking among the hills; that the balmy summer air fans my cheek, that the distant mountain tops are gilded by the morning beams — and the rich tranquil beauty of a southern clime is around; yet even now the roar of that distant ocean is in my ear, the desolate coast stretches out far away, and Alithea lies pale, drenched and lifeless, at my feet.

"I saw it all; and how often, and for ever, do I go over in my thoughts what had passed during the interval of my absence! She had awoke refreshed, she collected her scattered senses, she remembered the hideous vision of her carrying off. She knew not of my relenting, she feared my violence, she resolved to escape; she was familiar with that shore; its rivers and the laws which governed their tides, were known to her. She believed that she could pass the water in safety, for often when the bed of the estuary was apparently full, she knew that she had forded the stream on horseback, and the waters scarce covered the animal's fetlock. Intent on escaping the man of violence, of reaching her beloved home, she had entered the stream without calculating the difference of a calm neap tide, and the mass of irresistible waves borne up by the strong western wind; they perhaps seemed less terrible than I; to fly from me, she encountered, delivered herself up to them! and there she lay destroyed, dead, lost for ever!

"No more of this! What then I did, may, I now conceive, appear more shocking to my countrymen, than all that went before. But I knew little of English customs. I had gone out an inexperienced stripling to India, and my modes of action were formed there. I now know that when one dies in England, they keep the lifeless corpse, weeping and watching beside it for many days, and then with lingering ceremonies, and the attendance of relations and friends, lay it solemnly in the dismal tomb. But I had seen whole armies mown down by the sword and disease; I was accustomed to the soldier's hastily dug grave, in a climate where corruption follows fast upon death. To hide the dead with speed from every eye, was the Indian custom.

"And then, should I take the corpse of Alithea, wet with the ocean tide, ghastly from the throes of recent death, and bear her to her home, and say, here she is — she enjoyed life and happiness yester-evening; I bore her away, behold my work! Should I present myself to her husband, answer his questions, detail the various stages of my crime, and tamely await his vengeance, or his pardon? never!

"Or should I destroy myself at her side, and leave our bodies to tell a frightful tale of mystery and horror? The miserable terrors of my associate would of itself have prevented this catastrophe. I had to reassure and protect him.

"My resolution was quickly made not to outlive my victim, and making atonement by my death, what other penalty could I be called upon to pay? But my death should not be a tale to appal or amuse the vulgar, or to swell with triumph the heart of Alithea's tyrant husband. Secrecy and oblivion should cover all. My plan was laid, and I acted accordingly.

"Osborne entered into the design with alacrity. He was moved by other feelings, he was possessed by an agony of fear; he did not doubt but that we should be accused of murdering the hapless lady, and the image of the gallows flitted before his eyes.

"Understanding each other without many words, Osborne said that in the shed where we had placed the horses, he had remarked a spade; it was so early, that no one was about to observe him, and he went to fetch it. He returned in about half an hour; I sat keeping watch the while, by the dead, and feasted my eyes with the sight of my pale victim, as she lay at my feet. Of what tough materials is man formed, that my heart-strings did not break, and that I outlived that hour!

"Osborne returned, and we went to work. Some ten yards above high water mark, there was a single, leafless, moss-grown, skeleton tree, with something like soil about its roots, and sheltered from the spray and breeze by the vicinity of a sand-hill: close to it we dug a deep grave. I placed the cushions in it, on which her fair form, all warm, and soft, had reposed during the preceding night. Then I composed her stark limbs, banding the long wet tresses of her abundant hair across her eyes, for ever closed, crossing her hands upon her pure, death-cold bosom; I touched her reverently, I did not even profane her hand by a kiss; I wrapped her in her cloak, and laid her in the open grave. I tore down some of the decaying boughs of the withered tree, and arching them above her body, threw my own cloak above, so with vain care to protect her lifeless form from immediate contact with the soil. Then we filled up the grave, and scattering dry sand above, removed every sign of recent opening. This was performed in silence, or with whispered words — the roaring waves were her knell, the rising sun her funeral torch; I was satisfied with the solemnity of the scene around; and I was composed, for I was resolved on death. Osborne trembled in every limb, and his face rivalled in hue her wan, bloodless countenance.

“We carefully removed every article from the hut, and put all in the same state as when we found it. I did not, indeed, fear discovery; who would imagine that my course would be to the desolate sea beach? and if they did, and found all, I should be far, I should be dead. But Osborne was eager to obliterate every mark of the hut having been visited. When he was satisfied that he had accomplished this, without looking behind, I got into the carriage, we drove with what speed we could to Lancaster, and thence to Liverpool. Osborne was in a transport of fear till he got on board an American vessel: fortunately, the wind having veered towards the north, there was one about to weigh anchor. I placed a considerable sum of money in my accomplice’s hands, and recommended discretion. He would have questioned me as to my own designs, but he respected my stern silence, and we parted never to meet again. A small coasting vessel, bound for Plymouth, was at that moment making her way out of harbour; I hailed a man on board, and threw myself on to the deck.

“Elizabeth can tell the rest. She knows how I landed in a secluded village of Cornwall, with the intent there to make due sacrifice to the outraged manes of Alithea. Still I grieve for the unaccomplished purpose; still I repine that I did not there die. She stopped my hand. An angel, in likeness of a human child, arrested my arm; and winning my wonder by her extraordinary loveliness, and my interest by her orphan and desolate position, I seemed called upon to live for her sake. The struggle was violent, for I longed to make atonement by my death; and I longed to forget my crimes, and their consequences, in the oblivious grave. At first I thought that the respite I granted myself would be short, but it lasted for year; and I dragged out a living death, having survived love and hope: remorse my follower; ghastly images of crime and death my comrades. I travelled from place to place, pursued by Alithea’s upbraiding ghost, and my own torturing thoughts. By frequent change of place, I sought to assuage my pangs; I believe that I increased them. They might, perhaps, have been mitigated by the monotony of a stationary life. But a traveller’s existence is all sensation, and every emotion is rendered active and penetrating by the perpetual variation of the appearances of natural objects. Thought and feeling awaken with the sun, and dewy eve and the radiant stars cause the eyes to turn towards the backward path; while darkness, felt palpably, as one proceeds onward in an unknown land, awakens the snakes of conscience. The storm and expected wreck are images of retribution; while yet the destruction I pined for, receded from before my thirsting lips.

"Yet still I dragged on life, most unworthily and unworthy, till on a day I saw the son of my victim at Baden. I witnessed misery, widely spread, through my means; and felt that her disembodied spirit must curse me for the evil I had brought on her beloved child. I remembered all she had fondly said of him: and the cloudless beauty of his face, his joyous laugh, and free step when last I saw him at her side. He was blighted and destroyed by me; gloomy, savage and wild, eternal sorrow was written on his brow, fear and hatred gleamed in his eyes. Such by my means had the son of Alithea become; such had his base-minded father rendered him; but mine the guilt — mine be the punishment! What a wretch was I, to live in peace and security, ministered to by an angel — while this dearest part of herself was doomed to anguish, and to the unmitigated influence of the demon for ever at his side, through my accursed means.

"From that hour I became thrice hateful to myself; I had tried to live for my Elizabeth; but that idea passed away with every other solace, in which hitherto I had iniquitously indulged. I resolved to die; but as a taint has been cast by the most villanous heart in the world upon her hallowed name, my first task was to redeem that out of her unworthy husband's hands; and yet I could not, I would not, while living, disclose the truth and give a triumph to my enemy. But soon, oh very soon, will the soil of Greece drink up my life-blood! and while this writing proclaims her innocence, I shall be sheltered by the grave from the taunts and revilings of men.

"And you, dear child of my affection, who have been to me as a blessing immediate from heaven, who have warmed my heart with your love and smoothed the fierceness of my temper by your unalterable sweetness; who having blessed me with your virtues, clinging to the ruin with a fidelity I believed impossible, how shall I say farewell to you? Forgive your friend that he deserts you; long ago he deserted himself and the better part of life; it is but the shell of him that remains; and that corroded by remorse, and the desire to die. You deserve better than to have your young days clouded by the shadow of my crime thrown over them. Forget me, and be happy; you must be so, while I! — The sun is up; the martial trumpet sounds. It is a joy to think that I shall have a soldier’s grave.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Such was the tale presented to the young, enthusiastic, innocent Elizabeth, unveiling the secret of the life of him whom she revered above all the world. Her soul was in her eyes as she read, or rather devoured, page after page, till she arrived at the catastrophe; when a burst of passionate tears relieved her swelling bosom, and carried away upon their stream a thousand, trembling, unspeakable fears that had gathered in wild multitude around her heart. “He is innocent! He, my benefactor, my father, when he accused himself of murder, spoke, as I thought, of a consequence, not an act; and if the chief principle of religion be true, that repentance washes away sin, he is pardoned, and the crime forgotten. Noble, generous heart! What drops of anguish have you not shed in atonement! What glorious obsequies you pay your victim! For she also is acquitted. Gerard’s mother is more than innocent. She was true to him, and to the purest sentiments of nature, to the end; nay more, her life was sacrificed to them.” And Elizabeth went over in her mind, as Falkner had often done, the emotions that actuated her to attempt the dangerous passage across the ford. She fancied her awakening on the fatal morning, her wild look around. No familiar object met her view — nor did any friendly voice re-assure her; the strange scene and solitary hut were testimonies that she did not dream, and that she had really been torn from home and all she loved by a violence she could not resist. At first she must have listened tremblingly, and fancied her lover-enemy at hand. But all is still. She rises; she ventures to examine the strange dwelling to which she has been carried — no human being presents himself. She quits the threshold of the hut — a familiar scene is before her eyes, the ocean, and the dreary, but well known shore — the river which she has so often crossed — and among the foldings of the not distant hills, embosomed in trees, she sees Dromore, her tranquil home. She knows that it is but a few miles distant; and while she fancies her enemy near at hand, yet the hope animates her that she may cross the stream unseen, and escape. Elizabeth imaged all her hopes and fears; she seemed to see the hapless lady place her uncertain feet, her purpose being staunch and unfaltering, within the shallow wave, which she believed she could traverse in safety; the roar of the advancing tide was in her ears, the spray dashed round her, and her footing grew uncertain, as she sought to find her way across the rugged bed of the river. But she thought only of her child, from whom she had been torn, and her fears of being, through the deed of violence which had carried her off, excluded from her home for ever. To arrive at that home was all her desire. As she advanced she still fixed her eyes on the clustering woods of Dromore, sleeping stilly in the grey, quiet dawn: and she risked her life unhesitatingly to gain the sacred shelter. All depended on her reaching it, quickly and alone; and she was doomed never to see it more. She advances resolutely, but cautiously. The waves rise higher — she is in the midst of the stream — her footing becomes more unsteady — does she look back? — there is no return — her heart proudly repels the very thought of desiring it. She gathers her garments about her — she looks right onward — she steps more carefully — the surges buffet her — they rise higher and higher — the spray is dashed over her head, and blinds her sight — a false step — she falls — the waters open to engulf her — she is borne away. One thought of her Gerard — one prayer to Heaven, and the human eye can pursue the parting soul no further. She is lost to earth — none upon it can any longer claim a portion in her.

But she is innocent. The last word murmured in her last sleep — the last word human ears heard her utter, was her son’s name. To the last she was all mother; her heart filled with that deep yearning, which a young mother feels to be the very essence of her life, for the presence of her child. There is something so beautiful in a young mother’s feelings. Usually a creature to be fostered and protected — taught to look to another for aid and safety; yet a woman is the undaunted guardian of her little child. She will expose herself to a thousand dangers to shield his fragile being from harm. If sickness or injury approach him, her heart is transfixed by terror: readily, joyfully, she would give her own blood to sustain him. The world is a hideous desert when she is threatened to be deprived of him; and when he is near, and she takes him to the shelter of her bosom, and wraps him in her soft, warm embrace, she cares for nothing beyond that circle; and his smiles and infantine caresses are the life of her life. Such a mother was Alithea; and in Gerard she possessed a son capable of calling forth in its intensity, and of fully rewarding, her maternal tenderness. What wonder, when she saw him cast pitilessly down, on the road side — alive or dead she knew not — the wheel of the carriage that bore her away, might have crushed and destroyed his tender limbs — what wonder that she should be threatened by instant death, through the excess of her agony? What wonder that, reviving from death, her first and only thought was to escape — to get back to him — to clasp him to her heart — never to be severed more?

How glad, and yet how miserable, Gerard would be to read this tale. His proudest and fondest assertions certified as true, and yet to feel that he had lost her for ever, whose excellence was proved to be thus paramount. Elizabeth's reflections now rested on him — and now turned to Falkner — and now she opened the manuscript again, and read anew — and then again her heart made its commentary, and she wept and rejoiced; and longed to comfort her father, and congratulate Neville, all in a breath.

She never thought of herself. This was Elizabeth's peculiarity. She could be so engrossed by sympathy for others, that she could forget herself wholly. At length she remembered her father's directions, that his manuscript should be given to Neville when he called. She had no thought of disobeying; nor could she help being glad that Gerard's filial affection should receive its reward, even while she was pained to think that Falkner should be changed at once into an enemy in her new friend's eyes. Still her generous nature led her instantly to ally herself to the weaker side. Neville was triumphant — Falkner humiliated and fallen; and thus he drew her closer to him, and riveted the chain of gratitude and fidelity by which she was bound. She had shed many tears for Alithea's untimely fate; for the virtues and happiness hurried to a mysterious end — buried in an untold grave. But she had her reward. Long had she been there, where there is no trouble, no strife — her pure soul received into the company of kindred angels. Her heroism would now be known; her actions justified; she would be raised above her sex in praise; her memory crowned with unfading glory. It was Falkner who needed the exertion of present service, to forgive and console. He must be raised from his self-abasement; his despair must be cured. He must feel that the hour of remorse was past; that of repentance and forgiveness come. He must be rewarded for all his goodness to her, by being made to love life for her sake. Neville, whose heart was free from every base alloy, would enter into these feelings. Content to rescue the fame of his mother from the injury done it; happy in being assured that his faithful, filial love had not been mistaken in its reliance, the first emotion of his generous soul would be to forgive. Yet Elizabeth fancied that, borne away by his ardour in his mother's cause, he might altogether pass over and forget the extenuating circumstances that rendered Falkner worthy of pardon; and she thought it right to accompany the narrative with an explanatory letter. Thus she wrote:

"My father has given me these papers for the purpose of transmitting them to you. I need not tell you that I read them this day for the first time; that till now I was in total ignorance of the facts they disclose.

"It is most true that I, a little child, stopped his arm as he was about to destroy himself. Moved by pity for my orphan state, he consented to live. Is this a crime? Yet I could not reconcile him to life, and he went to Greece, seeking death. He went there in the pride of life and health. You saw him at Marseilles; you saw him to-day — the living effigy of remorse and woe.

"It is hard, at the moment you discover that he was the cause of your mother's death, to ask your sympathy for his sufferings and high-minded contrition. I leave you to follow the dictates of your own heart, with regard to him. For myself, attached to him as I am by every sentiment of affection and gratitude, I am, from this moment, more than ever devoted to his service, and eager to prove to him my fidelity.

"These words come from myself. My father knows not what I write. He simply told me to inform you that he should remain here; and if you desired aught of him, he was ready at your call. He thinks, perhaps, you may require further explanation — further guidance to your mother's grave. Oh, secret and obscure as it is, is it not guarded by angels? Have you not been already led to it?"

She left off abruptly — she heard a ring at the outer gate — the hour had come — it must be Neville! She placed the papers in the writing-case, and directing and sealing the letter, gave both to the servant, to be delivered to him. Scarcely was this done, when, suddenly it flashed across her, how the relative situations of Neville and herself were changed. That morning she had been his chosen friend — into her ear he poured the history of his hopes and fears — he claimed her sympathy — and she felt that from her he derived a happiness never felt before. Now he must regard her as the daughter of his mother's destroyer, and should she ever see him more? Instinctively she rushed to the highest room of the house to catch one other glimpse. By the time she reached the window, the act was fulfilled that changed both their lives — the packet given. Dimly, in the twilight, she saw a horseman emerge from under the wall of the garden, and slowly cross the heath; slowly at first, as if he did not comprehend what had happened, or what he was doing. There is something that excites unspeakable tenderness when the form of the loved one is seen, even from far; and Elizabeth, though unaware of the nature and depth of her sensations, yet felt her heart soften and yearn towards her friend. A blessing fell from her lips; while the consciousness of all of doubtful and sad that he must at that moment experience, at being sent from her door with a written communication only, joined to the knowledge that each succeeding hour would add to the barriers that separated them, so overcame her, that when at last he put spurs to his horse, and was borne out of sight into the thickening twilight, she burst into a passion of tears, and wept for some time, not knowing what she did, nor where she was; but feeling that from that hour the colour of her existence was changed — its golden hue departed — and that patience and resignation must henceforth take place of gladness and hope.

She roused herself after a few minutes from this sort of trance, and her thoughts reverted to Falkner. There are few crimes so enormous but that, when we undertake to analyse their motives, they do not find some excuse and pardon in the eyes of all, except their perpetrators. Sympathy is more of a deceiver than conscience. The stander-by may dilate on the force of passion and the power of temptation, but the guilty are not cheated by such subterfuges; he knows that the still voice within was articulate to him. He remembers that at the moment of action he felt his arm checked, his ear warned; he could have stopped, and been innocent. Perhaps of all the scourges wielded by the dread Eumenides, there is none so torturing as the consciousness of the wilfulness of the act deplored. It is a mysterious principle, to be driven out by no reasonings, no commonplace philosophy. It had eaten into Falkner's soul; taken sleep from his eyes, strength from his limbs, every healthy and self-complacent sentiment from his soul.

Elizabeth, however, innocent and good as she was, fancied a thousand excuses for an act, whose frightful catastrophe was not foreseen. Falkner called himself a murderer; but though the untimely death of the unfortunate Alithea was brought about by his means, so far from being guilty of the deed, he would have given a thousand lives to save her. Since her death, she well knew that sleep had not refreshed, nor food nourished him. He was blighted, turned from all the uses, and enjoyments of life; he desired the repose of the grave; he had sought death; he had made himself akin to the grim destroyer.

That he had acted wrongly, nay criminally, Elizabeth acknowledged. But by how many throes of anguish, by what repentance and sacrifice of all that life holds dear, had he not expiated the past! Elizabeth longed to see him again, to tell him how fondly she still loved him, how he was exalted, not debased in her eyes; to comfort him with her sympathy, cherish him with her love. It was true that she did not quite approve of the present state of his mind; there was too much of pride, too much despair. But when he found that, instead of scorn, his confessions met with compassion and redoubled affection, his heart would soften, he would no longer desire to die, so to escape from blame and retribution; but be content to endure, and teach himself that resignation which is the noblest, and most unattainable temper of mind to which humanity may aspire.

CHAPTER XV.

While these thoughts, founded on a natural piety, pure and gentle as herself, occupied Elizabeth, Falkner indulged in far other speculations. He triumphed. It is strange, that although perpetually deceived and led astray by our imagination, we always fancy that we can foresee, and in some sort command, the consequences of our actions. Falkner, while he deplored his beloved victim with the most heartfelt grief, yet at no time experienced a qualm of fear, because he believed that he held the means of escape in his own hands, and could always shelter himself from the obloquy that he now incurred, in an unapproachable tomb. Through strange accidents, that resource had failed him; he was alive, and his secret was in the hands of his enemies. But as he confronted the injured son of a more injured mother, another thought, dearer to his lawless yet heroic imagination, presented itself. There was one reparation he could make, and doubtless it would be demanded of him. The law of honour would be resorted to, to avenge the death of Alithea. He did not for a moment doubt but that Neville would challenge him. His care must be to fall by the young man's hand. There was a sort of poetical justice in this idea, a noble and fitting ending to his disastrous story, that solaced his pride, and filled him, as has been said, with triumph.

Having arrived at this conclusion, he felt sure also that the consummation would follow immediately on Neville's perusal of the narration put into his hands. This very day might be his last, and it was necessary to make every preliminary arrangement. Leaving Elizabeth occupied with his fatal papers, he drove to town to seek Mr. Raby's solicitor, to place in his hands the proofs of his adopted child's birth, so to secure her future acknowledgment by her father's family. She was not his child; no drop of his blood flowed in her veins; his name did not belong to her. As Miss Raby, Neville would gladly seek her, while as Miss Falkner, an insuperable barrier existed between them; and though he fell by Gerard's hand, yet he meant to leave a letter to convince her that this was but a sort of cunning suicide, and that it need place no obstacle between two persons, whom he believed were formed for each other. What more delightful than that his own Elizabeth, should love the son of Alithea! If he survived, indeed, this mutual attachment would be beset by difficulties; his death was like the levelling of a mountain, all was plain, easy, happy, when he no longer deformed the scene.

He had some difficulty in meeting with Mr. Raby's man of business. He found him however perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances, and eager to examine the documents placed in his hands. He had already written to Treby and received confirmation of all Falkner's statements. This activity had been imparted by Mrs. Raby, then at Tunbridge Wells, who was anxious to render justice to the orphan, the moment she had been informed of her existence; Falkner heard with great satisfaction of the excellent qualities of this lady, and the interest she showed in poor Edwin Raby's orphan child. The day was consumed, and part of the evening in these arrangements, and a final interview with his own solicitor. His will was already made, he divided his property between Elizabeth, and his cousin, the only surviving daughter of his uncle.

Something of shame was in his heart when he returned and met again his adopted child, a shame ennobled by the sense that he was soon to offer up his life as atonement; while she, who had long been reflecting on all that occurred, yet felt it brought home more keenly when she again saw him, and read in his countenance the tale of remorse and grief, more legibly than in the written page. Passionately and gratefully attached, her heart warmed towards him, his very look of suffering was an urgent call upon her fidelity; and though she felt all the change that his disclosures operated, though she saw the flowery path she had been treading, at once wasted and barren, all sense of personal disappointment was merged in her desire to prove her affection at that moment; silently, but with heroic fervour, she offered herself up at the shrine of his broken fortunes: love, friendship, good name, life itself, if need were, should be set at nought; weighed in a balance against her duty to him, they were but as a feather in the scale.

They sat together as of old, their looks were affectionate, their talk cheerful; it seemed to embrace the future as well as the present, and yet to exclude every painful reflection. The heart of each bore its own secret without betrayal. Falkner expected in a few hours to be called upon to expiate with his life the evils he had caused, while Elizabeth's thoughts wandered to Neville. Now he was reading the fatal narrative; now agonized pity for his mother, now abhorrence of Falkner, alternated in his heart; her image was cast out, or only called up to be associated with the hated name of the destroyer. Her sensibility was keenly excited. How ardently had she prayed, how fervently had she believed that he would succeed in establishing his mother's innocence; in what high honour she had held his filial piety, — these things were still the same; yet how changed were both towards each other! It was impossible that they should ever meet again as formerly, ever take counsel together, that she should ever be made happy by the reflection that she was his friend and comforter.

Falkner called her attention by a detail of his journey to Belleforest, and the probability that she would soon have a visit from her aunt. Here was a new revulsion; Elizabeth was forced to remember that her name was Raby. Falkner described the majestic beauties of the ancestral seat of her family, tried to impress her with the imposing grandeur of its antiquity, to interest her in its religion and prejudices, to gild the reality of pride and desertion with the false colours of principle and faith. He spoke of Mrs. Raby, as he had heard her mentioned, as a woman of warm feeling, strong intellect, and extreme generosity. Elizabeth listened, but her eyes were fondly fixed on Falkner's face, and at last she exclaimed with spontaneous earnestness, "For all this I am your child, and we shall never be divided!"

It was now near midnight; at each moment Falkner expected a message from the son of his victim. He engaged Elizabeth to retire to her room, that her suspicions might not be excited by the arrival of a visitor at that unaccustomed hour. He was glad to see her wholly unsuspicious of what he deemed the inevitable consequence of his confession; for though her thoughts evidently wandered, and traces of regret clouded her brow, it was regret, not fear, that inspired sadness; she tried to cheer, to comfort for the past, and gain fortitude to meet the future; but that future presented no more appalling image than the never seeing Gerard Neville more.

She went, and he remained waiting and watching the livelong night, but no one came. The following day passed, and the same mysterious silence was observed. What could it mean? It was impossible to accuse Alithea's child of lukewarmness in her cause, or want of courage. A sort of dark, mysterious fear crept over Falkner's heart; something would be done; some vengeance taken. In what frightful shape would the ghost of the past haunt him? He seemed to scent horror and disgrace in the very winds, yet he was spellbound; he must await Neville's call, he must remain as he had promised, to offer the atonement demanded. He had felt glad and triumphant when he believed that reparation to be his life in the field; but the delay was ominous; he knew not why, but at each ring at the gate, each step along the passages of the house, his heart grew chill, his soul quailed. He despised himself for cowardice, yet it was not that; but he knew that evil was at hand; he pitied Elizabeth, and he shrunk from himself as one doomed to dishonour, and unspeakable misery.

END OF VOL. II.

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.

On arriving in London from Hastings, Neville had repaired as usual to his father's house; which, as was to be supposed at that season of the year, he found empty. On the second day Sir Boyvill presented himself unexpectedly. He looked cold and stern as ever. The father and son met as they were wont: the latter anticipating rebuke and angry unjust commands; the other assuming the lofty tone of legitimate authority, indignant at being disputed. "I hear from Sophia," said Sir Boyvill, "that you are on the point of sailing for America, and this without deigning to acquaint me with your purpose. Is this fair? Common acquaintances act with more ceremony towards each other."

"I feared your disapproval, sir," replied Neville.

"And thought it less faulty to act without, than against a father's consent: such is the vulgar notion; but a very erroneous one. It doubles the injury, both to disobey me, and to keep me in the dark with regard to my danger."

"But if the danger be only imaginary?" observed his son.

Sir Boyvill replied, "I am not come to argue with you, nor to dissuade, nor to issue commands. I come with the more humble intention of being instructed. Sophy, though she evidently regrets your purposed journey, yet avers that it is not so wild and aimless as your expeditions have hitherto been — that the letters from Lancaster did lead to some unlooked-for disclosure. You little know me if you are not aware that I have the question, which you debate in so rash and boyish a manner, as deeply and more sorely at heart than you. Let me then hear the tale you have heard."

Surprised and even touched to find his father unbend so far as to listen to him, Neville related the American's story, and the information that it seemed probable that Osborne could afford. Sir Boyvill listened attentively, and then observed: "It will be matter of triumph to you, Gerard, to learn that your strange perseverance has a little overcome me. You are no longer a mere lad; and though inexperienced and headstrong, you have shown talents and decision; and I am willing to believe, though perhaps I am wrong, that you are guided by conviction, and not by a blind wish to disobey. Your conduct has been consistent throughout, and so far is entitled to respect. But you are, as I have said (and forgive a father for saying so) — inexperienced — a mere child in the world's ways. You go straight-forward to your object, reckless of the remark that you excite, and the gall and wormwood that such remark imparts. Why will you not in some degree be swayed by me? Our views, if you would deign to inquire into mine, are not so dissimilar."

Neville knew not what to answer, for every reply and explanation were likely to offend. "Hitherto," continued Sir Boyvill, "in disgust at your wilfulness, I have only issued disregarded commands. But I am willing to treat my son as my friend, if he will let me; but it must be on one condition. I exact one promise."

"I am ready, sir," replied Neville, "to enter into any engagement that does not defeat my purpose."

"It is simply," said Sir Boyvill, "that you shall do nothing without consulting me. I, on the other hand, will promise not to interfere by issuing orders which you will not obey. But if there is any sense in your pursuit, my councils may assist. I ask no more than to offer advice, and to have opportunity afforded me to express my opinion. Will you not allow that so much is due to me? Will you not engage to communicate your projects, and to acquaint me unreservedly with every circumstance that falls to your knowledge? This is the limit of my exactions."

"Most willingly I make this promise," exclaimed Neville. "It will indeed be my pride to have your participation in my sacred task."

"How far I can afford that," replied Sir Boyvill, "depends on the conduct you will pursue. With regard to this Osborne, I consent at once that his story should be sifted — nay, that you should go to America for that purpose, while you are ready to engage that you will not act on any information you may gather, without my knowledge."

"You may depend," said Gerard, "that I will keep to the letter of my promise — and I pledge my honour gladly and unreservedly to tell you everything, to learn your wishes, and to endeavour throughout to act with your approbation."

This concession made on both sides, the father and son conversed on more unreserved and kinder terms than they had ever before done. They passed the evening together, and though the arrogance, the wounded pride, the irritated feelings, and unredeemed selfishness of Sir Boyvill betrayed themselves at every moment, Gerard saw with surprise the weakness masked by so imposing an exterior. His angry commands and insulting blame had been used as batteries to defend the accessible part. He still loved and regretted Alithea, he pined to be assured of her truth — but he despised himself for these emotions — calling them feebleness and credulity. He felt assured that his worst suspicions would be proved true. — She might now be dead; he thought it probable that ere this her faults and sorrows were hushed in the grave: but had she remained voluntarily one half hour in the power of the man who had carried her from her home, no subsequent repentance, no remorse, no suffering could exculpate her. What he feared was the revival of a story so full of dishonour — the dragging a mangled half-formed tale again before the public, which would jeer his credulity, and make merry over the new gloss of a time-worn subject. When such a notion occupied his brain, his heart swelled with uncontrollable emotions of pride and indignation.

Neville cared little for the world. He thought of his mother’s wrongs and sufferings. He conjured up the long years which might have been spent in wretchedness; he longed, whatever she had done, to feel her maternal embrace, to show his gratitude for her early care of him. This was one view, one class of emotions present to his mind, when any occurrence tended to shake his belief in her unblemished honour and integrity, which was the religion of his heart. At the same time he, as much as his father, abhorred that the indifferent and light-hearted, the levelling and base, should have any food administered to their loathsome appetite for slander. So far as his father’s views were limited to the guarding Alithea’s name from further discussion, Neville honoured them. He showed Sir Boyvill that he was not so imprudent as he seemed, and brought him at last to allow that some discovery might ensue from his voyage. This open-hearted and peaceful interchange of sentiment between them was very cheering to both; and when Gerard visited Elizabeth the following day, his spirit was lighter and happier than it had ever been, and love was there to mingle its roseate visions with the sterner calls of duty. He entered Falkner’s house with much of triumph, and more of hope gladdening his heart; he left it horror-struck, aghast, and almost despairing.

He would not return to his father. Elizabeth’s supposition that Falkner spoke under a delusion, produced by sudden insanity; and his reluctance that while doubt hung over the event, that her dear name should be needlessly mixed up with the tragedy of his mother's death, restrained him. He resolved at once to take no final step till the evening, till he had again seen Elizabeth, and learned what foundation there was for the tremendous avowal that still rung in his ears. The evening — he had mentioned the evening — but would it ever come? till then he walked in a frightful dream. He first went to the docks, withdrew his luggage, and yet left word that by possibility he might still join the vessel at Sheerness. He did this, for he was glad to give himself something to do; and yet, soon after, how gladly would he have exchanged those hours of suspense, for the certainty that too quickly came like a sudden ray of light, to show that he had long been walking at the edge of a giddy precipice. He received the packet and letter from the servant; dizzy and confounded he rode away; by the light of the first lamp he read Elizabeth's letter, it disordered the current of his blood, it confused and maddened the functions of reason; putting spurs to his horse he galloped furiously on till he reached his father's house.

Sir Boyvill was seated solitarily in his drawing-room, sipping his coffee, and indulging in various thought. His wedded life with Alithea — her charms, her admirable qualities, and sweet, endearing disposition — occupied him as they had never done before since her flight. For the first time the veil, woven by anger and vanity, fell from his eyes, and he saw distinctly the rashness and injustice of his past actions. He became convinced that deceit could never have had a part in her; — did not her child resemble her, and was he not truth itself? He had nourished an aversion to his son, as her offspring; now he looked on his virtues as an inheritance derived from his sweet mother, and his heart instinctively, unaccountably, warmed towards both.

Gerard opened the door of the room and looked in; Sir Boyvill could hardly have recognized him, his face whiter than marble, his eyes wild and wandering, his whole countenance convulsed, his person shrunk up and writhing. He threw the packet on the table, crying out, "Victory, my father, victory!" in a voice so shrill and dissonant, so near a shriek, as to inspire his auditor with fear rather than triumph: "Read! read!" he continued, "I have not yet — I keep my word, you shall know all, even before me — and yet, I do know all, I have seen my mother's destroyer! She is dead!"

Sir Boyvill now, in some degree, comprehended his son's agitation. He saw that he was too much excited to act with any calmness; he could not guess how he had discovered the villain on whom both would desire to heap endless, unsatiable revenge; but he did not wonder, that if he had really encountered this man, and learned his deeds, that he should be transported into a sort of frenzy. He took up the packet — he cut the string that tied it — he turned over the papers, and his brow darkened. “Here is a long narrative,” he said; “there is much of excuse, and much of explanation here. The story ought to be short that exculpates her; I do not like these varnishings of the simple truth.”

“You will find none,” said Neville; “at least I heard none. His words were direct — his avowal contained no subterfuge.”

“Of whom do you speak?” asked Sir Boyvill.

“Read,” said Neville; “and you will know more than I; but half an hour ago those papers were put into my hands. I have not read them. I give them to you before I am aware of their contents, that I might fully acquit myself of my promise. They come from Rupert Falkner, my mother’s destroyer.”

“Leave me then to my task,” said Sir Boyvill, in an altered and subdued tone. “You speak of strange things: facts to undo a frightful past, and to generate a future, dedicated to a new revenge. Leave me; let me remain alone while I read — while I ponder on what credit I may give — what course I must pursue. Leave me, Gerard. I have long injured you; but at last you will be repaid. Come back in a few hours; the moment I am master of the contents of the manuscript I will see you.”

Gerard left him. He had scarcely been aware of what he was doing when he carried the packet, unopened, unexamined, to his father. He had feared that he might be tempted — to what? — to conceal his mother’s vindication? Never! Yet the responsibility sat heavy on him; and, driven by an irresistible impulse, he had resolved to deprive himself of all power of acting basely, by giving at once publicity to all that passed. When he had done this, he felt as if he had applied a match to some fatal rocket which would carry destruction to the very temple and shrine of his dearest hopes — to Elizabeth’s happiness and life. But the deed was done; he could but shut his eyes and let the mortal ball proceed towards its destined prey.

Gerard was young. He aspired to happiness with all the ardour of youth. While we are young, we feel as if happiness were the birthright of humanity; after a long and cruel apprenticeship, we disengage ourselves from this illusion — or from (a yet more difficult sacrifice) the realities that produce felicity — for on earth there are such, though they are too often linked with adjuncts that make the purchase of them cost in the end peace of mind and a pure conscience. Thus was it with Gerard. With Elizabeth, winning her love and making her his own, he felt assured of a life of happiness; but to sacrifice his mother's name — the holy task to which he had dedicated himself from childhood, for the sake of obtaining her — it must not be!

With this thought came destruction to the fresh-sprung hopes that adorned his existence. Gerard's poetic and tender nature led him to form sweet dreams of joys derived from a union which would be cemented by affection, sympathy, and enthusiastic admiration of the virtues of his companion. In Elizabeth he had beheld the embodying of all his wishes; in her eyes he had read their accomplishment. Her love for her father had first awakened his love. Her wise, simple, upright train of thinking — the sensibility ennobled by self-command, yet ever ready to spring forth and comfort the unhappy — her generosity — her total abnegation of self — her understanding so just and true, yet tempered with feminine aptitude to adapt itself to the situation and sentiments of others, all these qualities, discovered one by one, and made dear by the friendship she displayed towards him, had opened the hitherto closed gates of the world's only paradise; and now he found that, as the poet says, evil had entered even there—"and the trail of the serpent," marked with slimy poison the fairest and purest of Eden's flowers.

Neville had looked forward to a life of blameless but ecstatic happiness, as her friend, her protector, her husband. Youth, without being presumptuous, is often sanguine. Prodigal of self, it expects, as of right, a full return. Ready to assist Elizabeth in her task of watching over her father's health — who in his eyes, was wasting gradually away — he felt that he should be near to soften her regrets, and fill his place; and soothe her sinking spirits when struck by a loss which to her would seem so dire.

And now — Falkner! — He believed him to be in a state of health that did not leave him many years to live. He recollected him at Marseilles, stretched on his couch, feeble as an infant, the hues of death on his brow. He thought of him as he had seen him that morning — his figure bent by disease — his face ashy pale and worn. He was the man whom thirteen years before he remembered in upright, proud, and youthful strength —

woe and disease had brought on the ravages of age — he was struck by premature decay — a few years, by the course of nature, he would be laid in his grave. But Gerard could not leave him this respite — he must at once meet him in such encounter as must end in the death of one of the combatants — whichever that might be, there was no hope for Elizabeth — in either case she lost her all — in either case Falkner would die, and an insuperable barrier be raised between her and her only other friend. Neville's ardent and gentle spirit quivered with agony as he thought of these things. "O ye destructive powers of nature!" he cried; "come all! Storm — flood and fire — mingled in one dire whirlwind; or bring the deadlier tortures tyrants have inflicted, and martyrs undergone, and say, can any agony equal that which convulses the human heart, when writhing under contending passions — torn by contrary purposes. This very morning Elizabeth was all the universe of hope and joy. I would not for worlds have injured one hair of her dear head, and now I meditate a deed that is to consign her to eternal grief."

Athwart this tumult of thought, came the recollection that he was still in ignorance of the truth. He called to mind the narrative which his father was then reading — would it reveal aught that must alter the line of conduct which he now considered inevitable? a devouring curiosity was awakened. Leaving his father, he had rushed into the open air, in obedience to the instinct that always leads the unquiet mind to seek the solace of bodily activity. He had hurried into Hyde Park, which then, in the dimness of night, appeared a wide expanse — a limitless waste. He hurried to and fro on the turf — he saw nothing — he was aware of nothing, except the internal war that shook him. Now, as he felt the eager desire to get quit of doubt, he fancied that several hours must have elapsed, and that his father must be waiting for him. The clocks of London struck — he counted — it was but eleven — he had been there scarcely more than an hour.

CHAPTER II.

Neville returned home — he paused at the drawing-room door — a slight noise indicated that his father was within — his hand was on the lock, but he retreated; he would not intrude uncalled for — he wandered through the dark empty rooms, till a bell rang. Sir Boyvill inquired for him — he hurried into his presence — he devoured the expression of his countenance with his eyes, trying to read the thought within. Sir Boyvill's face was usually stamped with an unvarying expression of cold self-possession, mingled with sarcasm. These feelings were now at their height — his aged countenance, withered and deep lined, was admirably calculated to depict the concentrated disdain that sat upon his lips and elevated his brows. He pointed to the papers before him, and said in a composed, yet hollow voice, "Take these away — read, for it is necessary you should — the amplified confession of the murderer."

Gerard's blood ran cold. "Yet why call it a confession," continued Sir Boyvill, his assumed contempt rising into angry scorn; "from the beginning to the end it is a lie. He would varnish over his unparalleled guilt — he would shelter himself from its punishment, but in vain. Read, Gerard — read and be satisfied. I have wronged your mother — she was innocent — murdered. Be assured that her vindication shall be heard as loudly as her accusation, and that her destroyer shall die to expiate her death."

"Be that my task," said Gerard, trembling and pale from the conflict of passion; "I take the office of vengeance on myself — I will meet Mr. Falkner."

"Ha! you think of a duel!" cried his father. "Remember your promise, young man — I hold you strictly to it — you do nothing without first communicating with me. You must read these papers before you decide; I have decided — be not afraid, I shall not forestall your purpose, I will not challenge the murderer; but, in return for this pledge, give me your word that you have no communication with the villain till you see me again. I will not baulk you of your revenge, be sure of that; but you must see me first."

"I promise" — said Gerard.

"And one word more," continued Sir Boyvill; "Is there any possibility of this man's escape? Is he wrapped in the security which his lie affords, or has he even now fled beyond our vengeance?"

"Be his crimes what they may," replied Neville, "I believe him to entertain a delicate sense of worldly honour. He has promised to remain in his home till he hears from me. He doubtless expects to be challenged, and I verily believe desires to die. I feel convinced that the idea of flight has not crossed his mind."

"Enough; good night. We are now one, Gerard; united by our love and honour for your wronged mother's memory, and by our revenge; dissimilar only in this, that my desire to repair her injuries is more vehement even than yours." Sir Boyvill pressed his son's hand, and left him. A few minutes afterwards, it would seem, he quitted the house.

"Now to my task," thought Neville; "and oh, thou God, who watchest over the innocent, and yet gavest the innocent into the hands of the destroyer, rule thou the throbbings of my heart; that neither mad hate, nor hunger for revenge, take away my human nature, and turn me into a fiend!"

He took up the manuscript; at first the words seemed written in fire, but he grew calmer as he found how far back the narration went; and curiosity succeeding to devouring impatience, he became attentive.

He read and pitied. All that awoke Sir Boyvill's ire; Falkner's presumption in daring to love, and his long-cherished constancy, excited his compassion. When he came to the account of the meeting of the forsaken lover and happy husband, he found, in the epithets so liberally bestowed in the contemptuous description of his father, a cause for his augmented desire for vengeance. When he read that his mother herself repined, herself spoke disparagingly of her husband, he wondered at the mildness of Sir Boyvill's expressions with regard to her, and began to suspect that some strange and appalling design must be working in his head to produce this unnatural composure. The rest was madness, madness and misery, thus to take a wife and mother from her home, to gratify the insane desire to exert for one half hour a power he had lost for ever; the vain hope of turning her from her duties, which at least, as far as her children were concerned, were the dearest part of herself; her terror, her incapacity of mastering her alarm, the night of insensibility which she passed in the hut — with a start, Gerard felt sure that he had seen and marked that very spot; all wrought him up to the height of breathless interest; till, when he read the sad end of all, cold dew gathered on his brow, the tears that filled his eyes changed to convulsive sobbings, and, despite his manhood, he wept with the agony of a child.

He ended the tale, and he thought—”Yes, there is but one termination to this tragedy; I must avenge my sweet mother, and, by the death of Falkner, proclaim her innocence. But wherefore, it came across his mind, had his father called him murderer? in intention and very deed he was none; why term the narrative a lie. He followed it word by word, and felt that truth was stamped in every line.

The house was still; it was two in the morning. Had his father retired to rest? He had been so absorbed by his occupation, that he had heard no sound, knew nothing that might have been passing around. He remembered at last Sir Boyvill’s Good night, and believing, as all was hushed, that all slept, he retired to his own room. He could not think of Elizabeth, or of the projected duel; he could think only of the narrative he had read. When in bed, unable to sleep, he rose, lighted his candle, and read much of it again: he pondered over every word, in the concluding pages; it was all true, he would have staked his existence on the accuracy of every word: was it not stamped on Falkner’s brow, as he had seen him but a few hours ago? sad, and worn with grief and suffering, but without the stain of concealed guilt, lofty in its very woe. It was break of day, just as Gerard was thinking of rising to find and consult with his father, that sleep crept unawares over him. Sleep will visit the young unbidden; he had suffered so much fatigue of mind and body, that nature sought relief; sleep, at first disturbed, but soon profound and refreshing, steeped his distracted thoughts in peace, his wearied limbs in delightful repose.

The morning was far advanced when he awoke, refreshed, ready to meet the necessities of the hour, grieved, but composed, sad, but strengthened and resolved. He inquired for his father, and heard, to his infinite astonishment, that he had left town; he had set out in his travelling carriage at four that morning; a note from him was put into Neville’s hands. It contained few words: “Remember your engagement — that you take no steps, with regard to Mr. Falkner, till you have seen me. I am setting out for Dromore; on my return, which will be speedy, I will communicate my wishes, to which I do not doubt you will accede.”

Neville was startled; he guessed at once Sir Boyvill's aim in the sudden journey; — but was he not a fit partner in such an act? ought he not to share in the duty of rendering honour to his mother's grave? He felt that he ought to be at his father's side, and, ordering his own chariot, set out with the hope of overtaking him.

But Sir Boyvill travelled with equal speed, and was many miles and many hours in advance. Gerard hoped to come up with him when he stopped at night. But the old gentleman was so eager in his pursuit, that he prosecuted his journey without rest. Gerard continued in the same way; travelling alone, he revolved again and again all that must be, all that might have been. Whatever happened, he was divided from Elizabeth for ever. Did she love him? he had scarcely questioned the return his affection would one day meet, till now that he had lost her for ever; and, like a true lover, earnestly desirous to preserve some property in her he loved, he cherished the hope that she would share his deep regrets, and so prove that in heart they were one. How pleasant were the days they had passed at Oakly; all his sorrows there, and his passionate desire to unveil the mystery of his mother's fate, how had it given an interest to each hour, and imparted an untold and most sweet grace to the loved Elizabeth, that she should sympathize with so much fervour and kindness.

How strange the chance that led the daughter of the destroyer to share the feelings of the unhappy victim's son; yet stranger still that that destroyer had a child. Rambling among many tangled thoughts, Gerard started when first this idea suggested itself. Where was Falkner's boasted fidelity, on which he laid claim to compassion and pardon; where his assertion, that all his soul was centred in Alithea? and this child, an angel from her birth, was even then born to him; he opened the writing-case which contained the papers, and which he carried with him; he referred to them for explanation. Yes, Elizabeth then lived, and was not far from him; her hand had staid his arm, raised against his life. It was not enough that the frenzy of passion urged him to tear Alithea from her home and children, but even the existence of his own daughter was no restraint, he was willing to doom her from very childhood to a partnership in guilt and misery. Hitherto, despite all, and in despite of his resolve to meet him in mortal encounter, Neville had pitied Falkner; but now his heart grew hard against him, he began to revolve thoughts similar to those expressed by Sir Boyvill, and to call

Elizabeth’s father an impostor, his tale a lie. He re-read the manuscript with a new feeling of scepticism; this time he was against the writer, he detected exaggeration, where, before, he had only found the energy of passion: he saw an attempt to gloss over guilt, where, before, he had read merely the struggles of conscience, the innate innocence of profound feeling, combating with the guilt, which circumstances may impart to our loftiest emotions; his very sufferings became but the just visitation of angry Heaven; he was a wretch, whom to kill were mercy — and Elizabeth, beautiful, generous, and pure, was his child!

CHAPTER III.

That night was spent in travelling, and without any sleep. Neville saw the daybreak in melancholy guise, struggling with the clouds, with which a south-east wind veiled the sky. Nature looked bleak and desolate, even though she was still dressed in her summer garments. It was only the latter end of August, but so changeable is our climate, that the bright festive days which he had lately enjoyed in Sussex, were already followed by chill and dreary precursors of the year's decline. Gerard reached Dromore at about noon. He learned that his father had arrived during the night — he had slept a few hours, but was already gone out; it appeared that he had ridden over to a neighbour, Mr. Ashley; for he had inquired if he were in the county, and had, with his groom, both on horseback, taken the road that led towards his house.

Neville hastily took some refreshment, while he ordered a horse to be saddled. — His heart led him to seek and view a spot which he had once before visited, and which seemed accurately described in Falkner's narrative. He left behind him the woods of Dromore, and the foldings of the green hills in which it was situated — he descended towards the barren dreary shore — the roar of ocean soon met his ear, and he reached the waste sands that border that melancholy coast — he saw the line of sand-hills, which formed a sort of bulwark against the tide — he reached at length a rapid, yet shallow stream, which was but about twenty yards wide, flowing over a rough bottom of pebbles; the eye easily reached its utmost depth, it could not be more than two feet. Could that be the murderous, furious estuary in which his mother had been borne away? he looked across — there stood the hut — there the moss-grown, leafless oak, and gathered round it was a crowd of men. His father, and two or three other gentlemen on horseback, were stationed near — while some labourers were throwing up the sand beneath the withered trunk. When we have long thought of and grieved over an incident — if any outward object bring the image of our thoughts bodily before us, it is strange what an accession of emotion stirs the depths of the heart. For many hours Neville's mind had dwelt upon the scene in all its parts — the wild waste sea, dark and purple beneath the lowering clouds — the dreary extent of beach — the far, stupendous mountains, thrown up in sublime, irregular grandeur, with cloud-capt peaks, and vast gulfs between — a sort of Cyclopean screen to the noble landscape, which they encompassed with their wide majestic extent — his reflections had selected the smaller objects — the river, the hut, the monumental tree; and it seemed as if actual vision could not bring it home more truly; but when he actually beheld these objects, and the very motive of his coming was revealed, as it were, by the occupation of the men at work, his young heart, unhardened by many sufferings, sickened, the tears rushed into his eyes, and the words—"O my mother!" burst from his lips. It was a spasm of uncontrollable pain — an instant afterwards he had mastered it, and guiding his horse through the ford, with tranquil mien, though pale and sad, he took his station abreast with his father. Sir Boyvill turned as he rode up; he manifested no surprise, but he looked thankful, and even triumphant, Gerard thought; and the young man himself, as he contemplated the glazed eyes and attenuated form of his parent, which spoke of the weight of years, despite his still upright carriage, and the stern expression of his face, felt that his right place was at his side, to render the support of his youthful strength, and active faculties. The men went on with their work in silence, nor did any speak; the sand was thrown up in heaps, the horses pawed the ground impatiently, and the hollow murmurs of the neighbouring breakers filled every pause with sound, but no voice spoke; or if one of the labourers had a direction to give, it was done in whispers. At length some harder substance opposed their progress, and they worked more cautiously. Mingled with sand they threw out pieces of dark substance like cloth or silk, and at length got out of the wide long trench they had been opening. With one consent, though in silence, every one gathered nearer, and looked in — they saw a human skeleton. The action of the elements, which the sands had not been able to impede, had destroyed every vestige of a human frame, except those discoloured bones, and long tresses of dark hair, which were wound around the skull. A universal yet suppressed groan burst from all. Gerard felt inclined to leap into the grave, but the thought of the many eyes all gazing, acted as a check; and a second instinctive feeling of pious reverence induced him to unfasten his large black horseman's cloak, and to cast it over the opening. Sir Boyvill then broke the silence: "You have done well, my son; let no man lift that covering, or in any way disturb the remains beneath. Do you know, my friends, who lies there? Do you remember the night when Mrs. Neville was carried off? The country was raised, but we sought for her in vain. On that night she was murdered, and was buried here."

A hollow murmur ran through the crowd, already augmented by several stragglers, who had heard that something strange was going on. All pressed forward, though but to see the cloak, now become an object of curiosity and interest. Several remembered the lady, whose mouldered remains were thus revealed, in the pride of youth and beauty, warm of heart, kind, beloved; and this was all left of her! these unseemly bones were all earth had to show of the ever sweet Alithea!

"Mr. Ashley kindly assists me," continued Sir Boyvill; "we are both magistrates. The coroner is already sent for, a jury will be summoned; when that duty is performed, the remains of my unfortunate, much-wronged wife will be fitly interred. These ceremonies are necessary for the punishment of the murderer. We know him, he cannot escape; and you, every one of you, will rejoice in that vengeance which will be mine at last."

Execrations against the villain burst from every lip; yet even then each eye turned from old Sir Boyvill, whose vindictive nature had been showed before towards the hapless victim herself, to the young man, the son, whose grief and pious zeal had been the theme of many a gossip's story, and who now, pale and mute as he was, showed, in his intent and woe-struck gaze, more true touch of natural sorrow than Sir Boyvill's wordy harangue could denote.

"We must appoint constables to guard this place," said Sir Boyvill.

Mr. Ashley assented; the proper arrangements were made; the curious were to be kept off, and two servants from Dromore were added to the constables; then the gentlemen rode off. Neville, bewildered, desirous to stay to look once again on what had been his mother, yet averse to the vulgar gaze, followed them at a slower pace, till Mr. Ashley, taking leave of Sir Boyvill, rode away, and he perceived that his father was waiting for him, and that he must join him.

"Thank you, my son," said Sir Boyvill, "for your zeal and timely arrival. I expected it of you. We are one now; one to honour your mother; one in our revenge. You will not this time refuse your evidence."

"Do you then believe that Mr. Falkner is actually a murderer?" cried Neville.

"Let the laws of his country decide on that question," replied Sir Boyvill, with a sneering laugh. "I bring forward the facts only, you do the same; let the laws of his country, and a jury of his equals, acquit or condemn him."

"Your design then is to bring him to a trial?" asked Gerard. "I should have thought that the publicity—"

"I design," cried Sir Boyvill, with uncontrolled passion, "to bring him to a fate more miserable than his victim's; and I thank all-seeing Heaven, which places such ample revenge in my hands. He will die by the hands of the hangman, and I shall be satisfied."

There was something horrible in the old man's look and voice; he gloated on the foul disgrace about to be heaped on his enemy. The chivalrous notions of Gerard, a duel between the destroyer and his victim's son, was a paltry, trifling vengeance, compared with the ignominy he contemplated. "Was not the accusation against your mother loud," continued Sir Boyvill, "public, universal? Did not the assembled parliament pronounce upon her guilt, and decree her shame? And shall her exculpation be hushed up and private? I court publicity. A less august tribunal, but one whose decisions are no less widely circulated, shall proclaim her innocence. This idea alone would decide my course, if I could so far unman my soul as to forget that vengeance is due. Let it decide yours, if so much milk still mingle with your blood, that it sicken at the thought of justice against a felon."

Transported by rage, Sir Boyvill sought for words bitter and venomous enough to convey his meaning; and Neville discerned at once how much he was incensed by the language used with regard to him in Falkner's manuscript. Wounded vanity sought to ape injured feelings; in such petty selfish passions, Gerard could take no share, and he observed: "Mr. Falkner is a gentleman. I confess that his narration has won belief from me. His crime, dressed in his own words, is frightful enough; and heavily, if it be left to me, shall I visit it; but the plan you adopt is too discordant with the habits of persons of our rank of life, for me to view it without aversion. There is another which I prefer adopting."

"You mean," replied Sir Boyvill, "that you would challenge him, risk your life on the chance of taking his. Pardon me; I can by no means acquiesce in the propriety of such an act. I look on the wrongs he has done us as depriving him of the right to be treated with courtesy; nor do I wish him to add the death of my only son, to the list of the injuries I have sustained."

The old man paused: his lip quivered — his voice dropped. Neville fancied that tenderness of feeling caused these indications; he was deceived; his father continued: "I am endeavouring so far to command myself as to speak with moderation. It is difficult to find words to express implacable hatred, so let that go by, and let us talk, since you can, and believe doubtless that I ought, calmly and reasonably. You would challenge this villain, this gentleman, as you name him. You would put your life on a par with his. He murdered your mother, and to repay me, you would die by the same hand.

"If you speak the truth, if he possess a spark of those feelings, which, as a soldier, you have a right to believe may animate him, do you think that he would return your fire? He raves about remorse in that tissue of infamous falsehoods which you put into my hands; if he be human, he must have some touch of that; and he could not, if he would, raise his weapon against the child of poor Alithea. He will therefore refuse to meet you, or, meeting you, refuse to fire; and either it will end in a farce for the amusement of the world, or you will shoot a defenceless man. I do not see the mercy of this proceeding."

"Of that, sir," said Neville, "we must take our chance."

"I will take no chance," cried his father. "My unfortunate wife was borne off forcibly from her home; you can bear witness to that. Two men carried her away, and no tidings ever again reached us of her fate. And now one of these men, the arch criminal, chooses to gloss over these circumstances, events as pleases him; tells his own story, giving it such graces of style as may dupe the inexperienced, and we are to rest satisfied, and say, It is so. The absurdity of such conduct would mark us as madmen. Enough of this; I have reasoned with you as if the decision lay with me; when, in fact, I have no voice on the subject. It is out of my hands; I have made it over to the law, and we can but stand by and view its course. I believe, and before Heaven and your country you must assert the same, that the remains we have uncovered, are all that is left us of your lost mother; the clandestine burial at once declares the guilt of murder; such must be the opinion of impartial judges, if I mistake not. I can interfere no further. The truth will be sifted by three juries; this is no hole-and-corner vengeance; let our enemy escape, in God's name, if they acquit him; but if he be guilty, then let him die, as I believe he will, a felon's death."

Sir Boyvill looked on his son with glassy eyes, but a sneering lip, that spoke of the cruel triumph he desired. "There is Ravenglass," he added, "there the coroner is summoned — there the court meets. We go to give our deposition. We shall not lie, nor pervert facts; we tell who it was revealed to us your mother's unknown grave; it rests with them to decide whether he, who by his own avowal placed her therein, has not the crime of murder on his soul."

CHAPTER IV.

Sir Boyvill quickened his pace; Neville followed. He was still the same being who in his youth had been driven to the verge of insanity by the despotism of his father. His free and feeling heart revolted from arbitrary commands and selfishness. It was not only that his thoughts flew back, wounded and sore, to Elizabeth, and figured her agony; but he detested the fierce and vulgar revenge of his father. It is true that he had seen Falkner, and in the noble, though tarnished, grandeur of his countenance, he had read the truth of the sad tale he related; and he could not treat him with the contempt Sir Boyvill evinced; to whom he was an image of the mind — unseen, unfelt. And then Falkner had loved his mother; nay more, she as a sister had loved him; and faulty and cruel as had been his return for her kindness, he, through her, was endued with sacredness in his eyes.

To oppose these softening feelings, came a sort of rage that Elizabeth was his child, that through him a barrier was raised to separate him from the chosen friend of his heart, the one sweet angel who had first whispered peace to his soul. The struggle was violent — he did not see how he could refuse his evidence at the inquest already summoned; in every way his motives might be misunderstood, and his mother's fame might suffer. This idea became the victor — he would do all that he was called upon to do — to exculpate her; the rest he must leave to the mysterious guidance of Providence.

He arrived at the poverty-stricken town of Ravenglass — the legal authorities were assembled; and while preliminaries were being arranged, he was addressed by Sir Boyvill's solicitor, who asked him to relate what he knew, that his legal knowledge might assist in framing his evidence briefly, and conclusively. Neville recounted his story simply, confining himself as much as possible to the bare outline of the facts. The man of law was evidently struck by the new turn he gave to the tale; for Sir Boyvill had unhesitatingly accused Falkner of murder. "This Falkner," he said, "had concealed himself for the space of thirteen years, till his accomplice Osborne was discovered — and till he heard of Gerard's perseverance in sifting the truth — then, fearful the tale might be disclosed in America, he came forward with his own narrative, which glossed over the chief crime, and yet, by revealing the burial-place of his victim, at once demonstrated the truth of the present accusation. It is impossible that the facts could have occurred as he represents them, plausible as his account is. Could a woman as timid as Alithea have rushed on certain death, as he describes? Why should she have crossed the stream in its fury? A bare half mile would have carried her to a cottage where she had been safe from Falkner's pursuit. What lady in a well-known country, where every face she met must prove a friend, but would not have betaken herself to the nearest village, instead of to an estuary renowned for danger. The very wetting her feet in a brook had terrified her — never could she have encountered the roar of waves sufficient to overwhelm and destroy her."

Such were the observations of Sir Boyvill; and though Gerard, by his simple assertion that he believed Falkner's tale, somewhat staggered the solicitor, yet he could not banish his notion that a trial was the inevitable and best mode of bringing the truth to light. The jury were now met, and Sir Boyvill gave such a turn to his evidence, as at once impressed them unfavourably towards the accused. In melancholy procession they visited poor Alithea's grave. A crowd of country people were collected about it — they did not dare touch the cloak, but gazed on it with curiosity and grief. Many remembered Mrs. Neville, and their rude exclamations showed how deeply they felt her injuries. "When I was ill," said an old woman, "she gave me medicine with her own hand." "When my son James was lost at sea," said another, "she came to comfort me, and brought young master Gerard — and cried, bless her! When she saw me take on — rich and grand as she was, she cried for poor James, — and that she should be there now!" "My dear mistress," cried another, "never did she speak a harsh word to me — but for her, I could not have married — if she had lived, I had never known sorrow!"

Execrations against the murderer followed these laments. The arrival of the jury caused a universal murmur — the crowd was driven back — the cloak lifted from the grave — the men looked in; the skull, bound by her long hair — hair whose colour and luxuriance many remembered — attracted peculiar observation; the women, as they saw it, wept aloud — fragments of her dress were examined, which yet retained a sort of identity, as silk or muslin — though stained and colourless. As further proof, among the bones were found a few ornaments — among them, on the skeleton hand, were her wedding-ring, with two others — both of which were sworn to by Sir Boyvill as belonging to his wife. No doubt could exist concerning the identity of the remains; it was sacrilege to gaze on them a moment longer than was necessary — while each beholder, as they contemplated so much beauty and excellence reduced to a small heap of bones, abhorrent to the eye, imbibed a heart-felt lesson on the nothingness of life. Stout-hearted men wept — and each bosom glowed with hatred against her destroyer.

After a few moments the cloak was again extended — the crowd pressed nearer: the jury retired, and returned to Ravenglass. Neville's evidence was only necessary to prove the name and residence of the assassin — there was no hesitation about the verdict. That of wilful murder against Falkner was unhesitatingly pronounced — a warrant issued for his apprehension, and proper officers dispatched to execute it.

The moment that the verdict was delivered, Sir Boyvill and his son rode back to Dromore. Mr. Ashley and the solicitor accompanied them — and all the ordinary mechanism of life, which intrudes so often for our good, so to jostle together discordant characters, and wear off poignant impressions, now forced Neville, who was desirous to give himself up to meditation, to abide for several hours in the society of these gentlemen. There was a dinner to be eaten — Mr. Ashley partook of it, and Gerard felt that his absence would be indecorous. After dinner he was put to a trial — more severe to a sensitive, imaginative mind than any sharp strokes of commonplace adversity. He was minutely questioned as to the extent of his acquaintance with Falkner — how he came to form it, how often he had seen him — and what had drawn confession from him they named the criminal. These inquiries had been easily answered, but that the name of Elizabeth must be introduced — and, as he expected, at the mention of a daughter, a world of inquiry followed — and coarse remarks fell from his father's lips — which harrowed up his soul; while he felt that he had no exculpation to offer, nor any explanation that might take from her the name and association of the child of a murderer.

As soon as he could, he burst away. He rushed into the open air, and hurried to the spot where he could best combat with, and purify the rebellious emotions of his heart — none but the men placed as watch were near his mother's grave. Seeing the young squire, they retreated — and he who had come on foot at such quick pace, that he scarcely felt the ground he trod, threw himself on the sands, grateful to find himself alone with nature. The moon was hurrying on among the clouds — now bright in the clear ether, now darkened by heavy masses — and the mirroring ocean was sometimes alive with sparkling silver, now veiled and dim, so that you could hear, but not see, the breaking of the surge.

An eloquent author has said, in contempt of such a being: “Try to conceive a man without the ideas of God and eternity; of the good, the true, the beautiful, and the infinite.” Neville was certainly not such. There was poetry in his very essence, and enthusiasm for the ideal of the excellent, gave his character a peculiar charm, to any one equally exalted and refined. His mother’s decaying form lay beneath the sands on which he was stretched, death was there in its most hideous form; beauty, and even form had deserted that frame-work which once was the dear being, whose caresses, so warm and fond, it yet often thrilled him to remember. He had demanded from Heaven the revelation of his mother’s fate, here he found it, here in the narrow grave lay the evidence of her virtues and her death; — did he thank Heaven? even while he did, he felt with bitterness that the granting of his prayer was inextricably linked with the ruin of a being, as good and fair as she, whose honour he had so earnestly desired to vindicate.

He thought of all the sordid, vulgar, but heart-thrilling misery, which by his means was brought on Elizabeth; and he sought his heart for excuses for the success for which he had pined. They came ready; no desire of vulgar vengeance had been his, his motives had been exalted, his conduct straightforward. The divine stamp on woman is her maternal character — it was to prove that his idolized mother had not deserted the first and most sacred duty in the world, that had urged him — and he could not foresee that the innocent would suffer through his inquiries. The crime must fall on its first promoter — on Falkner’s head must be heaped the consequences of his act; all else were guiltless. — These reflections, however, only served to cheat his wound of its pain for a time — again other thoughts recurred; the realities, the squalid realities of the scene, in which she, miserable, was about to take a part. The thief-takers and the gyves — the prison, and the public ignominious trial — Falkner was to be subjected to all these indignities, and he well knew that his daughter would not leave his side. “And I, her son, the offspring of these sainted bones — placed here by him

— how can I draw near his child! God have mercy on her, for man will have none!”

Still he could not be satisfied. “Surely,” he thought, “something can be done, and something I will do. Already men are gone, who are to tear him from his home, and to deliver him up to all those vile contrivances devised for the coercion of the lowest of mankind — she will accompany him, while I must remain here. To-morrow these remains will be conveyed to our house — on the following day they are to be interred in the family vault, and I must be present — I am tied, forced to inaction — the privilege of free action taken from me.”

Hope was awakened, however, as he pursued these thoughts, and recollected the generous, kindly disposition of Lady Cecil, and her attachment to her young friend. He determined to write to her. He felt assured that she would do all in her power to alleviate Elizabeth’s sufferings — what she could do, he did not well understand — but it was a relief to him to take some step for the benefit of the devoted daughter. Bitterly, as he thought of these things, did he regret that he had ever seen Elizabeth? So complicated was the web of event, that he knew not how to wish any event to have occurred differently; except, that he had not trusted to the hollow pretences of his father. He saw at once how the generous and petty-minded can never coalesce — he ought to have acted for himself, by himself; and miserable as in any case the end must have been, he felt that his own open, honourable revenge would have been less cruel in its effects, than the malicious pursuit of his vindictive father.

CHAPTER V.

There is an impatient spirit in the young, that will not suffer them to take into consideration the pauses that occur between events. That which they do not see move, they believe to be stationary. Falkner was surprised by the silence of several days on the part of Neville; but he did not the less expect and prepare for the time, when he should be called upon to render an account for the wrong he had done. Elizabeth, on the contrary, deemed that the scene was closed, the curtain fallen. What more could arise? Neville had obtained assurance of the innocence and miserable end of his mother. In some manner this would be declared to the world; but the echo of such a voice would not penetrate the solitude in which she and her guardian were hereafter to live. Silence and exclusion were the signal and seal of discovered guilt — other punishment she did not expect. The name of Falkner had become abhorrent to all who bore any relationship to the injured Alithea. She had bid an eternal adieu to the domestic circle at Oakly — to the kind and frank-hearted Lady Cecil — and, with her, to Gerard. His mind, fraught with a thousand virtues — his heart, whose sensibility had awoke her tenderness, were shut irrevocably against her.

Did she love Gerard? This question never entered her own mind. She felt, but did not reason on, her emotions. — Elizabeth was formed to be alive to the better part of love. Her enthusiasm gave ideality, her affectionate disposition warmth, to all her feelings. She loved Falkner, and that with so much truth and delicacy, yet fervour of passion, that scarcely could her virgin heart conceive a power more absolute, a tie more endearing, than the gratitude she had vowed to him; yet she intimately felt the difference that existed between her deep-rooted attachment for him she named and looked on as her father, and the spring of playful, happy, absorbing emotions that animated her intercourse with Neville. To the one she dedicated her life and services; she watched him as a mother may a child; a smile or cheerful tone of voice were warmth and gladness to her anxious bosom, and she wept over his misfortunes with the truest grief.

But there was more of the genuine attachment of mind for mind in her sentiment for Neville. Falkner was gloomy and self-absorbed. Elizabeth might grieve for, but she found it impossible to comfort him. With Gerard it was far otherwise. Elizabeth had opened in his soul an unknown spring of sympathy, to relieve the melancholy which had hitherto overwhelmed him. With her he gave way freely to the impulses of a heart, which longed to mingle its hitherto checked stream of feeling with other and sweeter waters. In every way he excited her admiration as well as kindness. The poetry of his nature suggested expressions and ideas at once varied and fascinating. He led her to new and delightful studies, by unfolding to her the pages of the poets of her native country, with which she was little conversant. Except Shakspeare and Milton, she knew nothing of English poetry. The volumes of Chaucer and Spenser, of ancient date; of Pope, Gray, and Burns; and, in addition, the writings of a younger, but divine race of poets, were all opened to her by him. In music, also, he became her teacher. She was a fine musician of the German school. He introduced her to the simpler graces of song; and brought her the melodies of Moore, so "married to immortal verse," that they can only be thought of conjointly. Oh the happy days of Oakly! How had each succeeding hour been gilded by the pleasures of a nascent passion, of the existence of which she had never before dreamed — and these were fled for ever! It was impossible to feel assured of so sad a truth, and not to weep over the miserable blight. Elizabeth commanded herself to appear cheerful, but sadness crept over her solitary hours. She felt that the world had grown, from being a copy of Paradise, into a land of labour and disappointment; where self-approbation was to be gained through self-sacrifice; and duty and happiness became separate, instead of united objects at which to aim.

From such thoughts she took refuge in the society of Falkner. She loved him so truly, that she forgot her personal regrets — she forgot even Neville when with him. Her affection for her benefactor was not a stagnant pool, mantled over by memories, existing in the depths of her soul, but giving no outward sign; it was a fresh spring of ever-flowing love — it was redundant with all the better portion of our nature — gratitude, admiration, and pity, for ever fed it, as from a perennial fountain.

It was on a day, the fifth after the disclosure of Falkner, that she had been taking her accustomed ride, and, as she rode, given herself up to all those reveries — now enthusiastic, now drooping and mournful — that sprung from her singular and painful position. She returned home, eager to forget in Falkner's society many a rebel thought, and to drive away the image of her younger friend, by gazing on the wasted, sinking form of her benefactor, in whose singularly noble countenance she ever found new cause to devote her fortunes and her heart. To say that he was "not less than archangel ruined," is not to express the peculiar interest of Falkner's appearance. Thus had he seemed, perhaps, thirteen years before at Treby; but gentle and kindly sentiments, the softening intercourse of Elizabeth, the improvement of his intellect, and the command he had exercised over the demonstration of passion, had moulded his face into an expression of benevolence and sweetness, joined to melancholy thoughtfulness; an abstracted, but not sullen, seriousness, that rendered it interesting to every beholder. Since his confession to Neville, since the die was cast, and he had delivered himself up to his fate, to atone for his victim, something more was added; exalted resolution, and serene lofty composure had replaced his usual sadness; and the passions of his soul, which had before deformed his handsome lineaments, now animated them with a beauty of mind, which struck Elizabeth at once with tenderness and admiration.

Now, longing to behold, to contemplate, this dear face, and to listen to a voice that always charmed her out of herself, and made her forget her sorrows — she was disappointed to find his usual sitting-room empty — it appeared even as if the furniture had been thrown into disorder; there were marks of several dirty feet upon the carpet; on the half-written letter that lay on the desk, the pen had hastily been thrown, blotting it. Elizabeth wondered a little, but the emotion was passing away, when the head servant came into the room, and informed her, that his master had gone out, and would not return that night.

"Not to night!" exclaimed Elizabeth; "what has happened? who have been here?"

"Two men, miss."

"Men! gentlemen?"

"No, miss, not gentlemen."

"And my father went away with them?"

"Yes, miss," replied the man, "he did indeed. He would not take the carriage; he went in a hired postchaise. He ordered me to tell you, miss, that he would write directly, and let you know when you might expect him."

"Strange, very strange is this!" thought Elizabeth. She did not know why she should be disturbed, but disquiet invaded her mind; she felt abandoned and forlorn, and, as the shades of evening gathered round, even desolate. She walked from room to room, she looked from the window, the air was chill, and from the east, yet she repaired to the garden; she felt restless and miserable; — what could the event be that took Falkner away? She pondered vainly. The most probable conjecture was, that he obeyed some summons from her own relations. At length one idea rushed into her mind, and she returned to the house, and rang for the servant. Falkner's wandering life had prevented his having any servant of long-tried fidelity about him — but this man was good-hearted, and respectable — he felt for his young mistress, and had consulted with her maid as to the course they should take, under the present painful circumstances; and had concluded that they should preserve silence as to what had occurred, leaving her to learn it from their master's expected letter. Yet the secret was in some danger, when, fixing her eyes on him, Elizabeth said, "Tell me truly, have you no guess what the business is that has taken your master away?"

The man looked confused; but, like many persons not practised in the art of cross-questioning, Elizabeth baulked herself, by adding another inquiry before the first was answered; saying with a faltering voice, "Are you sure, Thompson, that it was not a challenge — a duel?"

The domestic's face cleared up: "Quite certain, miss, it was no duel — it could not be — the men were not gentlemen."

"Then," thought Elizabeth, as she dismissed the man, "I will no longer torment myself. It is evidently some affair of mere business that has called him away. I shall learn all tomorrow."

Yet the morrow and the next day came, and Falkner neither wrote nor returned. Like all persons who determine to conjecture no more, Elizabeth's whole time was spent in endeavouring to divine the cause of his prolonged absence, and strange silence. Had any communication from Neville occasioned his departure? was he sent for to point out his victim's grave? That idea carried some probability with it; and Elizabeth's thoughts flew fast to picture the solitary shore, and the sad receptacle of beauty and love. Would Falkner and Neville meet at such an hour? without a clue to guide her, she wandered for ever in a maze of thought, and each hour added to her disquietude. She had not gone beyond the garden for several days, she was fearful of being absent when any thing might arise; but nothing occurred, and the mystery became more tantalizing and profound.

On the third day she could endure the suspense no longer; she ordered horses to be put to the carriage, and told the servant of her intention to drive into town, and to call on Falkner's solicitor, to learn if he had any tidings; that he was ill she felt assured — where and how? away from her, perhaps deserted by all the world: the idea of his sick-bed became intolerably painful; she blamed herself for her inaction, she resolved not to rest till she saw her father again.

Thompson knew not what to say; he hesitated, begged her not to go; the truth hovered on his lips, yet he feared to give it utterance. Elizabeth saw his confusion; it gave birth to a thousand fears, and she exclaimed, "What frightful event are you concealing? Tell me at once. Great God! why this silence? Is my father dead?"

"No, indeed, miss," said the man, "but my master is not in London, he is a long way off. I heard he was taken to Carlisle."

"Taken to Carlisle! Why taken? What do you mean?"

"There was a charge against him, miss;" Thompson continued, hesitating at every word, "the men who came — they apprehended him for murder."

"Murder!" echoed his auditress; "then they fought! Gerard is killed!"

The agony of her look made Thompson more explicit. "It was no duel," he said, "it was done many years ago; it was a lady who was murdered, a Mrs. or Lady Neville."

Elizabeth smiled — a painful, yet a genuine smile; so glad was she to have her worst fears removed, so futile did the accusation appear; the smile passed away, as she thought of the ignominy, the disgraceful realities of such a process; — of Falkner torn from his home, imprisoned, a mark for infamy. Weak minds are stunned by a blow like this, while the stronger rise to the level of the exigency, and grow calm from the very call made upon their courage. Elizabeth might weep to remember past or anticipated misfortunes, but she was always calm when called upon to decide and act; her form seemed to dilate, her eyes flashed with a living fire, her whole countenance beamed with lofty and proud confidence in herself. "Why did you not tell me this before!" she exclaimed. "What madness possessed you to keep me in ignorance? How much time has been lost! Order the horses! I must begone at once, and join my father."

“He is in gaol, miss,” said Thompson. “I beg your pardon, but you had better see some friend before you go.”

“I must decide upon that,” replied Elizabeth. “Let there be no delay on your part, you have caused too much. But the bell rings; — did I not hear wheels? perhaps he is returned.” She rushed to the outer door; she believed that it was her father returned; the garden gate opened — two ladies entered; one was Lady Cecil. In a moment Elizabeth felt herself embraced by her warm-hearted friend; she burst into tears. “This is kind, more than kind!” she exclaimed; “and you bring good news, do you not? My father is liberated, and all is again well!”

CHAPTER VI.

The family of Raby must be considered collectively, as each member united in one feeling, and acted on one principle. They were Catholics, and never forgot it. They were not bent on proselytism; on the contrary, they rather shunned admitting strangers into their circle; but they never ceased to remember that they belonged to the ancient faith of the land, and looked upon their fidelity to the tenets of their ancestors as a privilege, and a distinction far more honourable than a patent of nobility. Surrounded by Protestants, and consequently, as they believed, by enemies, it was the aim of their existence to keep their honour unsullied; and that each member of the family should act for the good and glory of the whole, unmindful of private interests, and individual affections. The result of such a system may be divined. The pleasures of mediocrity — toiling merit — the happy home — the cheerful family union, where smiles glitter brighter than gold; all these were unknown or despised. Young hearts were pitilessly crushed; young hopes blighted without remorse. The daughters were doomed, for the most part, to the cloister; the sons to foreign service. This indeed was not to be attributed entirely to the family failing — a few years ago, English Catholics were barred out from every road to emolument and distinction in their native country.

Edwin Raby had thus been sacrificed. His enlightened mind disdained the trammels thrown over it; but his apostacy doomed him to become an outcast. He had previously been the favourite and hope of his parents; from the moment that he renounced his religion, he became the opprobrium. His name was never mentioned; and his death hailed as a piece of good fortune, that freed his family from a living disgrace. The only person among them who regretted him, was the wife of his eldest brother; she had appreciated his talents and virtues, and had entertained a sincere friendship for him; — but even she renounced him. Her heart, naturally warm and noble, was narrowed by prejudice; but while she acted in conformity with the family principle, she suffered severely from the shock thus given to her better feelings. When Edwin died, her eyes were a little opened; she began to suspect that human life and human suffering deserved more regard than articles of belief. The “late remorse of love” was awakened, and she never wholly forgot the impression. She had not been consulted concerning, she knew nothing of, his widow and orphan child. Young at that time, the weight of authority pressed also on her, and she had been bred to submission. There was a latent energy, however, in her character that developed itself as she grew older. Her husband died, and her consequence increased in old Oswi Raby’s eyes. By degrees her authority became paramount; it was greatly regulated by the prejudices and systems cherished by the family, as far as regarded the world in general; but it was softened in her own circle by the influence of the affections. Her daughters were educated at home — not one was destined for the cloister. Her only son was brought up at Eton; the privileges granted of late years to the Catholics, made her entertain the belief, that it was no longer necessary to preserve the old defences and fortifications, which intolerance had forced its victims to institute; still pride — pride of religion, pride of family, pride in an unblemished name, were too deeply rooted, too carefully nurtured, not to form an integral part of her character.

When a letter from her father-in-law revealed to her the existence of Elizabeth, her heart warmed towards the orphan and deserted daughter of Edwin. She felt all the repentance which duties neglected bring on a well-regulated mind — her pride revolted at the idea that a daughter of the house of Raby was dependent on the beneficence of a stranger — she resolved that no time should be lost in claiming and receiving her, even while she trembled to think of how, brought up as an alien, she might prove rather a burthen than an acquisition. She had written to make inquiries as to her niece’s abode. She heard that she was on a visit, at Lady Cecil’s, at Hastings — Mrs. Raby was at Tunbridge — she instantly ordered horses, and proceeded to Oakly.

On the morning of her visit, Lady Cecil had received a letter from Gerard: it was incoherent, and had been written by snatches in the carriage on his way to Dromore. Its first words proclaimed his mother’s innocence, and the acknowledgment of her wrongs by Sir Boyvill himself. As he went on, his pen lingered — he trembled to write the words, “Our friend, our Elizabeth, is the daughter of the destroyer.” It was unnatural, it was impossible — the very thought added acrimony to his detestation of Falkner — it prevented the compassion his generous nature would otherwise have afforded, and yet roused every wish to spare him, as much as he might be spared, for his heroic daughter's sake. He felt deceived, trepanned, doomed. In after-life we are willing to compromise with fate — to take the good with the bad — and are satisfied if we can at all lighten the burthen of life. In youth we aim at completeness and perfection. Ardent and single-minded, Neville disdained prejudices; and his impulse was, to separate the idea of father and daughter, and to cherish Elizabeth as a being totally distinct from her parentage. But she would not yield to this delusion — she would cling to her father — and if he died by his hand, he would for ever become an object of detestation. Well has Alfieri said, "There is no struggle so vehement as when an upright, but passionate, heart is divided between inclination and duty." Neville's soul was set upon honour and well-doing; never before had he found the execution of the dictates of his conscience so full of bitterness and impatience. Something of these feelings betrayed themselves in his letter.—"We have lost Elizabeth," he wrote; "for ever lost her! Is there no help for this? No help for her? None! She clings to the destroyer's side, and shares his miserable fate — lost to happiness — to the innocence and sunshine of life. She will live a victim, and die a martyr, to her duties; and she is lost to us for ever!"

Lady Cecil read again and again — she wondered — she grieved — she uttered impatient reproaches against Gerard for having sought the truth; and yet her heart was with him, and she rejoiced in the acknowledged innocence of Alithea. She thought of Elizabeth with the deepest grief — had they never met — had she and Gerard never seen each other, neither had loved, and half this woe had been spared. How strange and devious are the ways of fate — how difficult to resign oneself to its mysterious and destructive course! Naturally serene, though vivacious — kind-hearted, but not informed with trembling sensibility — yet so struck was Lady Cecil by the prospects of misery for those she best loved, that she wept bitterly, and wrung her hands in impatient, impotent despair. At this moment Mrs. Raby was announced.

Mrs. Raby had something of the tragedy queen in her appearance. She was tall, and dignified in person. Her black full eyes were melancholy — her brow shadowing them over had a world of thought and feeling in its sculpture-like lines. The lower part of her face harmonized, though something of pride lurked about her beautiful mouth — her voice was melodious, but deep-toned. Her manners had not the ease of the well-bred Lady Cecil — something of the outcast was imprinted upon them, which imparted consciousness, reserve, and alternate timidity and haughtiness. There was nothing embarrassed, however, in her mien, and she asked at once for Elizabeth with obvious impatience. She heard that she was gone with regret. The praises Lady Cecil almost involuntarily showered on her late guest, at once dissipated this feeling; and caused her, with all the frankness natural to her, to unfold at once the object of her visit — the parentage of the orphan — the discovery of her niece. Lady Cecil clasped her hands in a transport, which was not all joy. There was so much of wonder, almost of disbelief, at the strange tale — had a fairy's wand operated the change, it had not been more magical in her eyes. Heaven's ways were vindicated — all of evil vanished from the scene — her friend snatched from ignominy and crime, to be shrined for ever in their hearts and love.

She poured out these feelings impetuously. Mrs. Raby was well acquainted with Alithea's story, and was familiar with Gerard Neville's conduct; all that she now heard was strange indeed. She did not imbibe any of Lady Cecil's gladness, but much of her eagerness. It became of paramount importance in her mind to break at once the link between Elizabeth and her guardian, before the story gained publicity, and the name of Raby became mingled in a tale of horror and crime, which, to the peculiar tone of Mrs. Raby's mind, was singularly odious and disgraceful. No time must be lost — Elizabeth must be claimed — must at once leave the guilty and tainted one, while yet her name received no infection; or she would be disowned for ever by her father's family. When Lady Cecil learned Mrs. Raby's intention of proceeding to London to see her niece, she resolved to go also, to act as mediator, and to soften the style of the demands made, even while she persuaded Elizabeth to submit to them. She expressed her intention, and the ladies agreed to travel together. Both were desirous of further communication. Lady Cecil wished to interest Mrs. Raby still more deeply in her matchless kinswoman's splendid qualities of heart and mind; while Mrs. Raby felt that her conduct must be founded on the character and worth of her niece; even while she was more convinced at every minute, that no half measures would be permitted by Oswi Raby, and others of their family and connection, and that Elizabeth's welfare depended on her breaking away entirely from her present position, and throwing herself unreservedly upon the kindness and affection of her father's relations.

Strange tidings awaited their arrival in London, and added to the eagerness of both. The proceedings of Sir Boyvill, the accusation of Falkner, and his actual arrest, with all its consequent disgrace, made each fear that it was too late to interpose. Mrs. Raby showed most energy. The circumstances were already in the newspapers, but there was no mention of Elizabeth. Falkner had been taken from his home, but no daughter accompanied him, no daughter appeared to have had any part in the shocking scene. Had Falkner had the generosity to save her from disgrace? If so, it became her duty to co-operate in his measures. Where Elizabeth had taken refuge, was uncertain; but, on inquiry, it seemed that she was still at Wimbledon. Thither the ladies proceeded together. Anxiety possessed both to a painful degree. There was a mysteriousness in the progress of events, which they could not unveil — all depended on a clear and a happy explanation. The first words, and first embrace of Elizabeth reassured her friend; all indeed would be well, she restored to her place in society, and punishment would fall on the guilty alone.

CHAPTER VII.

The first words Elizabeth spoke, as she embraced Lady Cecil, “You are come, then all is well,” seemed to confirm her belief that the offered protection of Mrs. Raby would sound to the poor orphan as a hospitable shore to the wrecked mariner. She pressed her fondly to her heart, repeating her own words, “All is well — dear, dear Elizabeth, you are restored to us, after I believed you lost for ever.”

“What then has happened?” asked Elizabeth; “and where is my dear father?”

“Your father! Miss Raby,” repeated a deep, serious, but melodious voice; “whom do you call your father?”

Elizabeth, in her agitation, had not caught her aunt’s name, and turned with surprise to the questioner, whom Lady Cecil introduced as one who had known and loved her real father; as her aunt, come to offer a happy and honourable home — and the affection of a relative, to one so long lost, so gladly found.

“We have come to carry you off with us,” said Lady Cecil; “your position here is altogether disagreeable; but every thing is changed now, and you will come with us.”

“But my father,” cried Elizabeth; “for what other name can I give to my benefactor? Dear Lady Cecil, where is he?”

“Do you not then know?” asked Lady Cecil, hesitatingly.”

“This very morning I heard something frightful, heart-breaking; but since you are here, it must be all a fiction, or at least the dreadful mistake is put right. Tell me, where is Mr. Falkner?”

“I know less than you, I believe,” replied her friend; “my information is only gathered from the hasty letters of my brother, which explain nothing.”

“But Mr. Neville has told you,” said Elizabeth, “that my dear father is accused of murder; accused by him who possesses the best proof of his innocence. I had thought Mr. Neville generous, unsuspicious” —

“Nor is it he,” interrupted Lady Cecil, “who brings this accusation. I tell you I know little; but Sir Boyvill is the origin of Mr. Falkner’s arrest. The account he read seemed to him unsatisfactory, and the remains of poor Mrs.

Neville. — Indeed, dear Elizabeth, you must not question me, for I know nothing; much less than you. Gerard puts much faith in the innocence of Mr. Falkner."

"Bless him for that!" cried Elizabeth, tears gushing into her eyes. "Oh yes, I knew that he would be just and generous. My poor, poor father! by what fatal mistake is your cause judged by one incapable of understanding or appreciating you."

"Yet," said Lady Cecil, "he cannot be wholly innocent; the flight, the catastrophe, the concealment of his victim's death; — is there not guilt in these events?"

"Much, much; I will not excuse or extenuate. If ever you read his narrative, which, at his desire, I gave Mr. Neville, you will learn from that every exculpation he can allege. It is not for me to speak, nor to hear even of his past errors; never was remorse more bitter, contrition more sincere. But for me, he had not survived the unhappy lady a week; but for me, he had died in Greece, to expiate his fault. Will not this satisfy his angry accusers?

"I must act from higher motives. Gratitude, duty, every human obligation bind me to him. He took me, a deserted orphan, from a state of miserable dependence on a grudging, vulgar woman; he brought me up as his child; he was more to me than father ever was. He has nursed me as my own mother would in sickness; in perilous voyages he has carried me in his arms, and sheltered me from the storm, while he exposed himself for my sake; year after year, while none else have cared for, have thought of me, I have been the object of his solicitude. He has consented to endure life, that I might not be left desolate, when I knew not that one of my father's family would acknowledge me. Shall I desert him now? Never!"

"But you cannot help him," said Lady Cecil; "he must be tried by the laws of his country. I hope he has not in truth offended against them; but you cannot serve him."

"Where is he?" dear Lady Cecil; "tell me where he is?"

"I fear there can be no doubt he is in prison at Carlisle."

"And do you think that I cannot serve him there? in prison as a criminal! Miserable as his fate makes me, miserable as I too well know that he is, it is some compensation to my selfish heart to know that I can serve him, that I can be all in all of happiness and comfort to him. Even now he pines for me; he knows that I never leave his side when in sorrow; he wonders I am not already there. Yes, in prison, in shame, he will be happy when he sees me again. I shall go to him, and then, too, I shall have comfort."

She spoke with a generous animation, while yet her eyes glistened, and her voice trembled with emotion. Lady Cecil was moved, while she deplored; she caressed her; she praised, while Mrs. Raby said, "It is impossible not to honour your intentions, which spring from so pure and noble a source. I think, indeed, that you overrate your obligations to Mr. Falkner. Had he restored you to us after your mother's death, you would have found, I trust, a happy home with me. He adopted you, because it best pleased him so to do. He disregarded the evil he brought upon us by so doing; and only restored you to us when the consequence of his crimes prevented him from being any longer a protection."

"Pardon me," said Elizabeth, "if I interrupt you. Mr. Falkner is a suffering, he believed himself to be a dying, man; he lived in anguish till he could declare his error, to clear the name of his unhappy victim; he wished first to secure my future lot, before he dared fate for himself; chance altered his designs; such were his motives, generous towards me as they ever were."

"And you, dear Elizabeth," said Lady Cecil, "must act in obedience to them and to his wishes. He anticipated disgrace from his disclosures, a disgrace which you must not share. You speak like a romantic girl of serving him in prison. You cannot guess what a modern gaol is, its vulgar and shocking inhabitants: the hideous language and squalid sights are such, that their very existence should be a secret to the innocent: be assured that Mr. Falkner, if he be, as I believe him, a man of honour and delicacy, will shudder at the very thought of your approaching such contamination; he will be best pleased to know you safe and happy with your family."

"What a picture do you draw!" cried Elizabeth, trying to suppress her tears; "my poor, poor father, whose life hangs by a thread! how can he survive the accumulation of evil? But he will forget all these horrors when I am with him. I know, thank God, I do indeed know, that I have power to cheer and support him, even at the worst."

"This is madness!" observed Lady Cecil, in a tone of distress.

Mrs. Raby interposed with her suggestions. She spoke of her own desire, the desire of all the family, to welcome Elizabeth; she told her that with them, belonging to them, she had new duties; her obedience was due to her relatives; she must not act so as to injure them. She alluded to their oppressed religion; to the malicious joy their enemies would have in divulging such a tale as that would be, if their niece's conduct made the whole course of events public. And, as well as she could, she intimated that if she mixed up her name in a tale so full of horror and guilt, her father's family could never after receive her.

Elizabeth heard all this with considerable coldness. "It grieves me," she said, "to repay intended kindness with something like repulse. I have no wish to speak of the past; nor to remind you that if I was not brought up in obedience to you all, it was because my father was disowned, my mother abandoned; and I, a little child, an orphan, was left to live and die in dependence. I, who then bore your name, had become a subject of niggard and degrading charity. Then, young as I was, I felt gratitude, obedience, duty, all due to the generous benefactor who raised me from this depth of want, and made me the child of his heart. It is a lesson I have been learning many years; I cannot unlearn it now. I am his; bought by his kindness; earned by his unceasing care for me, I belong to him — his child — if you will, his servant — I do not quarrel with names — a child's duty I pay him, and will ever. Do not be angry with me, dear aunt, if I may give you that name — dearest Lady Cecil, do not look so imploringly on me — I am very unhappy. Mr. Falkner, a prisoner, accused of the most hideous crime — treated with ignominy — he whose nerves are agonized by a touch — whose frame is even now decaying through sickness and sorrow — and I, and every hope, away. I am very unhappy. Do not urge me to what is impossible, and thrice, thrice wicked. I must go to him; day and night I shall have no peace till I am at his side; do not, for my sake do not, dispute this sacred duty."

It was not thus that the two ladies could be led to desist; they soothed her, but again returned to the charge. Lady Cecil brought a thousand arguments of worldly wisdom, of feminine delicacy. Mrs. Raby insinuated the duty owed to her family, to shield it from the disgrace she was bringing on it. They both insisted on the impossibility, on the foolish romance of her notions. Had she been really his daughter, her joining him in prison was impracticable — out of all propriety. But Elizabeth had been brought up to regard feelings, rather than conventional observances; duties, not proprieties. All her life Falkner had been law, rule, every tie to her; she knew and felt nothing beyond. When she had followed him to Greece — when she had visited the Morea, to bear him dying away — when at Zante she had watched by his sick couch, the world, and all the Rabys it contained, were nothing to her; and now, when he was visited by a far heavier calamity, when in solitude and misery, he had besides her, no one comfort under heaven, was she to adopt a new system of conduct, become a timid, home-bred young lady, tied by the most frivolous rules, impeded by fictitious notions of propriety and false delicacy? Whether they were right, and she were wrong — whether indeed such submission to society — such useless, degrading dereliction of nobler duties, was adapted for feminine conduct, and whether she, despising such bonds, sought a bold and dangerous freedom, she could not tell; she only knew and felt, that for her, educated as she had been, beyond the narrow paling of boarding-school ideas, or the refinements of a lady's boudoir, that, where her benefactor was, there she ought to be; and that to prove her gratitude, to preserve her faithful attachment to him amidst dire adversity, was her sacred duty — a virtue, before which every minor moral faded and disappeared.

The discussion was long; and even when they found her proof against every attack, they would not give up. They entreated her to go home with them for that day. A wild light beamed from her eyes. "I am going home," she cried; "an hour hence, and I shall be gone to where my true home is. How strange it is that you should imagine that I could linger here!

"Be not afraid for me, dear Lady Cecil," she continued, "all will go well with me; and you will, after a little reflection, acknowledge that I could not act other than I do. And will you, Mrs. Raby, forgive my seeming ingratitude? I acknowledge the justice of your demands. I thank you for your proposed kindness. The name of Raby shall receive no injury; it shall never escape my lips. My father will preserve the same silence. Be not angry with me; but — except that I remember my dear parents with affection — I would say, I take more joy and pride in being his daughter — his friend at this need — than in the distinction and prosperity your kindness offers. I give up every claim on my family; the name of Raby shall not be tainted: but Elizabeth Falkner, with all her wilfulness and faults, shall, at least, prove her gratitude to him who bestowed that appellation on her."

And thus they parted. Lady Cecil veiling her distress in sullenness; while Mrs. Raby was struck and moved by her niece’s generosity, which was in accordance with her own noble mind. But she felt that other judges would sit upon the cause, and decide from other motives. She parted from her as a Pagan relative might from a young Christian martyr — admiring, while she deplored her sacrifice, and feeling herself wholly incapable of saving.

CHAPTER VIII.

Elizabeth delayed not a moment proceeding on her journey; an exalted enthusiasm made her heart beat high, and almost joyously. This buoyancy of spirit, springing from a generous course of action, is the compensation provided for our sacrifices of inclination — and at least, on first setting out, blinds us to the sad results we may be preparing for ourselves. Elated by a sense of acting according to the dictates of her conscience, despite the horror of the circumstances that closed in the prospect, her spirits were light, and her eyes glistened with a feeling at once triumphant and tender, while reflecting on the comfort she was bringing to her unfortunate benefactor. A spasm of horror seized her now and then, as the recollection pressed that he was in prison — accused as a murderer — but her young heart refused to be cowed, even by the ignominy and anguish of such a reflection.

A philosopher not long ago remarked, when adverting to the principle of destruction latent in all works of art, and the overthrow of the most durable edifices; "but when they are destroyed, so as to produce only dust, Nature asserts an empire over them; and the vegetative world rises in constant youth, and in a period of annual successions, by the labours of man, providing food, vitality and beauty adorn the wrecks of monuments, which were once raised for purposes of glory." Thus when crime and woe attack and wreck an erring human being, the affections and virtues of one faithfully attached, decorate the ruin with alien beauty; and make that pleasant to the eye and heart, which otherwise we might turn from as a loathsome spectacle.

It was a cold September day when she began her journey, and the solitary hours spent on the road exhausted her spirits. In the evening she arrived at Stony Stratford, and here, at the invitation of her servant, consented to spend the night. The solitary inn room, without a fire, and her lonely supper, chilled her; so susceptible are we to the minor casualties of life, even when we meet the greater with heroic resolution. She longed to skip the present hour, to be arrived — she longed to see Falkner, and to hear his voice — she felt forlorn and deserted. At this moment the door was opened, "a gentleman" was announced, and Gerard Neville entered. Love and nature at this moment asserted their full sway — her heart bounded in her bosom, her cheek flushed, her soul was deluged at once with a sense of living delight — she had never thought to see him more — she had tried to forget that she regretted this; but he was there, and she felt that such a pleasure were cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of her existence. He also felt the influence of the spell. He came agitated by many fears, perplexed by the very motive that led him to her — but she was there in all her charms, the dear object of his nightly dreams and waking reveries — hesitation and reserve vanished in her presence, and they both felt the alliance of their hearts.

"Now that I am here, and see you," said Neville, "it seems to me the most natural thing in the world, that I should have followed you as I have done. While away, I had a thousand misgivings — and wherefore? did you not sympathize in my sufferings, and desire to aid me in my endeavours; and I feel convinced that fate, while by the turn of events it appeared to disunite, has, in fact, linked us closer than ever. I am come with a message from Sophia — and to urge also, on my own part, a change in your resolves; you must not pursue your present journey."

"You have, indeed, been taking a lesson from Lady Cecil, when you say this," replied Elizabeth; "she has taught you to be worldly for me — a lesson you would not learn on your own account — she did not seduce me in this way; I gave you my support when you were going to America."

Elizabeth began to speak almost sportively, but the mention of America brought to her recollection the cause of his going, and the circumstances that prevented him; and the tears gushed from her eyes as she continued in a voice broken by emotion. "Oh, Mr. Neville, I smile while my heart is breaking — My dear, dear father! What misery is this that you have brought on him — and how, while he treated you with unreserve, have you falsely — you must know — accused him of crime, and pursued your vengeance in a vindictive and ignominious manner? It is not well done!"

"I pardon your injustice," said Neville; "though it is very great. One of my reasons for coming, was to explain the exact state of things, though I believed that your knowledge of me would have caused you to reject the idea of my being a party to my father's feelings of revenge."

Neville then related all that had passed; — the discovery of his mother's remains in the very spot Falkner had indicated, and Sir Boyvill's resolve to bring the whole train of events before the public. "Perhaps," he continued, "my father believes in the justice of his accusation — he never saw Mr. Falkner, and cannot be impressed as I am by the tokens of a noble mind, which, despite his errors, are indelibly imprinted on his brow. At all events, he is filled with a sense of his own injuries — stung by the disdain heaped on him in that narration, and angry that he had been led to wrong a wife, the memory of whose virtues and beauty now revives, bitterly to reproach him. I cannot wonder at his conduct, even while I deplore it: I do deplore it on your account; — for Mr. Falkner, God knows I would have visited his crime in another mode; yet all he suffers he has brought on himself — he must feel it due — and must bear it as best he may: forgive me if I seem harsh — I compassionate him through you — I cannot for his own sake."

"How falsely do you reason," cried Elizabeth, "and you also are swayed and perverted by passion. He is innocent of the hideous crime laid to his charge — you know and feel that he is innocent; and were he guilty — I have heard you lament that crime is so hardly visited by the laws of society. I have heard you say, that even where guilt is joined to the hardness of habitual vice, that it ought to be treated with the indulgence of a correcting father, not by the cruel vengeance of the law. And now, when one whose very substance and flesh are corroded by remorse — one whose conscience acts as a perpetual scourge — one who has expiated his fault by many years spent in acts of benevolence and heroism; this man, because his error has injured you, you, forgetting your own philosophy, would make over to a fate, which, considering who and what he is, is the most calamitous human imagination can conceive."

Neville could not hear this appeal without the deepest pain.—"Let us forget," he at last said, "these things for a few minutes. They did not arise through me, nor can I prevent them; indeed they are now beyond all human control. Falkner could as easily restore my mother, whose remains we found mouldering in the grave which he dug for them; he could as easily bring her back to the life and happiness of which he deprived her, as I, my father, or any one, free him from the course of law to which he is made over. We must all abide by the issue — there is no remedy. But you — I would speak of you—"

“I cannot speak, cannot think of myself,” replied Elizabeth, “except in one way — to think all delays tedious that keep me from my father’s side, and prevent me from sharing his wretchedness.”

“And yet you must not go to him,” said Neville; “yours is the scheme of inexperience — but it must not be. How can you share Mr. Falkner’s sorrows? you will scarcely be admitted to see him. And how unfit for you is such a scene. You cannot guess what these things are; believe me, they are most unfit for one of your sex and age. I grieve to say in what execration the supposed murderer of my mother is held. You would be subjected to insult, you are alone and unprotected — even your high spirit would be broken by the evils that will gather round you.”

“I think not,” replied Elizabeth; “I cannot believe that my spirit can be broken by injustice, or that it can quail while I perform a duty. It would indeed — spirit and heart would both break — were my conscience burthened with the sin of deserting my father. In prison — amidst the hootings of the mob — if for such I am reserved, I shall be safe and well guarded by the approbation of my own mind.”

“Would that an angel from heaven would descend to guard you!” cried Neville, passionately, “but in this inexplicable world, guilt and innocence are so mingled, that the one reaps the blessings deserved by the other; and the latter sinks beneath the punishment incurred by the former. Else why, removed by birth, space, and time from all natural connexion with the cause of all this misery, are you cast on this evil hour? Were you his daughter, my heart would not rebel — blood calls to blood, and a child’s duty is paramount. But you are no child of his; you spring from another race — honour, affection, prosperity await you in your proper sphere. What have you to do with that unhappy man?

“Yet another word,” he continued, seeing Elizabeth about to reply with eagerness; “and yet how vain are words to persuade. Could I but take you to a tower, and show you, spread below, the course of events, and the fatal results of your present resolves, you would suffer me to lead you from the dangerous path you are treading. If once you reach Cumberland, and appear publicly as Falkner’s daughter, the name of Raby is lost to you for ever; and if the worst should come, where will you turn for support? Where fly for refuge? Unable to convince, I would substitute entreaty, and implore you to spare yourself these evils. You know not, indeed you do not know, what you are about to do."

Thus impetuously urged, Elizabeth was for a few minutes half bewildered; "I am afraid," she said, "I suppose indeed that I am something of a savage — unable to bend to the laws of civilization. I did not know this — I thought I was much like other girls — attached to their home and parents — fulfilling their daily duties, as the necessities of those parents demand. I nursed my father when sick: now that he is in worse adversity, I still feel my proper place to be at his side, as his comforter and companion, glad if I can be of any solace to him. He is my father — my more than father — my preserver in helpless childhood from the worst fate. May I suffer every evil when I forget that! Even if a false belief of his guilt renders the world inimical to him, it will not be so unjust to one as inoffending as I; and if it is, it cannot touch me. Methinks we speak two languages — I speak of duties the most sacred; to fail in which, would entail self-condemnation on me to the end of my days. You speak of the conveniences, the paint, the outside of life, which is as nothing in comparison. I cannot yield — I grieve to seem eccentric and headstrong — it is my hard fate, not my will, so to appear."

"Do not give such a name," replied Neville, deeply moved, "to an heroic generosity, only too exalted for this bad world. It is I that must yield, and pray to God to shield and recompense you as you deserve — he only can — he and your own noble heart. And will you pardon me, Miss Raby?"

"Do not give me that name," interrupted Elizabeth. "I act in contradiction to my relations' wishes — I will not assume their name. The other, too, must be painful to you. Call me Elizabeth—"

Neville took her hand. "I am," he said, "a selfish, odious being; you are full of self-sacrifice, of thought for others, of every blessed virtue. I think of myself — and hate myself while I yield to the impulse. Dear, dear Elizabeth, since thus I may call you, are you not all I have ever imagined of excellent; I love you beyond all thought or word; and have for many, many months, since first I saw you at Marseilles. Without reflection, I knew and felt you to be the being my soul thirsted for. I find you, and you are lost!"

Love's own colour dyed deeply the cheeks of Elizabeth — she felt recompensed for every suffering in the simple knowledge of the sentiment she inspired. A moment before, clouds and storms had surrounded her horizon; now the sun broke in upon it. It was a transcendent though a transient gleam. The thought of Falkner again obscured the radiance, which, even in its momentary flash, was as if an angel, bearing with it the airs of Paradise, had revealed itself, and then again become obscured.

Neville was less composed. He had never fully entered into his father's bitter thoughts against Falkner — and Elizabeth's fidelity to the unhappy man, made him half suspect the unexampled cruelty and injustice of the whole proceeding. Still compassion for the prisoner was a passive feeling; while horror at the fate preparing for Elizabeth stirred his sensitive nature to its depths, and filled him with anguish. He walked impatiently about the room — and stopped before her, fixing on her his soft lustrous eyes, whose expression was so full of tenderness and passion. Elizabeth felt their influence; but this was not the hour to yield to the delusions of love, and she said—"Now you will leave me, Mr. Neville — I have far to travel to-morrow — good night."

"Have patience with me yet a moment longer," said Neville; "I cannot leave you thus — without offering from my whole heart, and conjuring you to accept my services. Parting thus, it is very uncertain when we meet again, and fearful sufferings are prepared for you. I believe that you esteem, that you have confidence in me. You know that my disposition is constant and persevering. You know, that the aim of my early life being fulfilled, and my mother's name freed from the unworthy aspersions cast upon it, I at once transfer every thought, every hope, to your well-being. At a distance, knowing the scene of misery in which you are placed, I shall be agitated by perpetual fears, and pass unnumbered hours of bitter disquietude. Will you promise me, that, despite all that divides us, if you need any aid or service, you will write to me, commanding me, in the full assurance that all you order shall be executed in its very spirit and letter."

"I will indeed," replied Elizabeth, "for I know that whatever happens you will always be my friend."

"Your true, your best, your devoted friend," cried Neville; "it will always be my dearest ambition to prove all this. I will not adopt the name of brother — yet use me as a brother — no brother ever cherished the honour, safety, and happiness of a sister as I do yours."

"You know," said Elizabeth, "that I shall not be alone — that I go to one to whom I owe obedience, and who can direct me. If in his frightful situation he needs counsel and assistance, it is not you, alas, that can render them; still in the world of sorrow in which I shall soon be an inhabitant, it will be a solace and support to think of your kindness, and rely upon it as unreservedly as I do."

"A world of sorrow, indeed!" repeated Neville,—"A world of ignominy and woe, such as ought never to have visited you, even in a dream. — Its duration will be prolonged also beyond all fortitude or patience. Of course Mr. Falkner's legal advisers will insist on the necessity of Osborne's testimony — he must be sent for, and brought over. This demands time; it will be spring before the trial takes place."

"And all this time my father will be imprisoned as a felon in a gaol," cried Elizabeth; tears, bitter tears, springing into her eyes. "Most horrible! Oh how necessary that I should be with him, to lighten the weary, unending hours. I thought all would soon be over — and his liberation at hand; this delay of justice is indeed beyond my fears."

"Thank God, that you are thus sanguine of the final result," replied Neville. "I will not say a word to shake your confidence, and I fervently hope it is well placed. And now indeed good night, I will not detain you longer. All good angels guard you — you cannot guess how bitterly I feel the necessity that disjoins us in this hour of mutual suffering."

"Forgive me," said Elizabeth, "but my thoughts are with my father. You have conjured up a whole train of fearful anticipations; but I will quell them, and be patient again — for his, and all our sakes."

They separated, and at the moment of parting, a gush of tenderness smoothed the harsher feelings inspired by their grief — despite herself, Elizabeth felt comforted by her friend's faithful and earnest attachment; and a few minutes passed in self-communion restored her to those hopes for the best, which are the natural growth of youth and inexperience. Neville left the inn immediately on quitting her; and she, unable to sleep, occupied by various reveries, passed a few uneasy, and yet not wholly miserable, hours. A hallowed calm at last succeeded to her anxious fears; springing from a reliance on Heaven, and the natural delight at being loved by one so dear; it smoothed her wrinkled cares, and blunted her poignant regrets.

At earliest dawn she sprung from her bed, eager to pursue her journey — nor did she again take rest till she arrived at Carlisle.

CHAPTER IX.

In the best room that could be allotted to him, consistently with safe imprisonment, and with such comforts around, as money might obtain, Falkner passed the lingering days. What so forlorn as the comforts of a prison! the wigwam of the Indian is more pleasing to the imagination — that is in close contiguity with Nature, and partakes her charm — no barrier exists between it and freedom — and nature and freedom are the staunch friends of unsophisticated man. But a gaol's best room sickens the heart in its very show of accommodation. The strongly barred windows, looking out on the narrow court, surrounded by high frowning walls; the appalling sounds that reach the ear, in such close neighbourhood to crime and woe; — the squalid appearance given to each inhabitant by the confined air — the surly authoritative manners of the attendants — not dependent on the prisoner, but on the state — the knowledge that all may come in, while he cannot get out — and the conviction that the very unshackled state of his limbs depends upon his tame submission and apparent apathy; — there is no one circumstance that does not wound the free spirit of man, and make him envy the meanest animal that breathes the free air, and is at liberty.

Falkner, by that strange law of our nature, which makes us conceive the future, without being aware of our foreknowledge, had acquainted his imagination with these things — and, while writing his history amidst the farstretched mountains of Greece, had shrunk and trembled before such an aspect of slavery; and yet now that it had fallen on him, he felt in the first instance more satisfied, more truly free, than for many a long day before.

There is no tyranny so hard as fear; no prison so abhorrent as apprehension; Falkner was not a coward, yet he feared. He feared discovery — he feared ignominy, and had eagerly sought death to free him from the terror of such evils, with which, perhaps — so strangely are we formed — Osborne had infected him. It had come — it was here — it was his life, his daily bread; and he rose above the infliction calmly, and almost proudly. It is with pride that we say, that we endure the worst — there is a very freedom in the thought, that the animosity of all mankind is roused against us — and every engine set at work for our injury — no more can be done the gulf is passed — the claw of the wild beast is on our heart — but the spirit soars more freely still. To this was added the singular relief which confession brings to the human heart. Guilt hidden in the recesses of the conscience assumes gigantic and distorted dimensions. When the secret is shared by another, it falls back at once into its natural proportion.

Much had this man of woe endured — the feeling against him, throughout the part of the country where he now was, was vehement. The discovery of poor Alithea's remains — the inquest, and its verdict — the unhappy lady's funeral — had spread far and wide his accusation. It had been found necessary to take him into Carlisle by night; and even then, some few remained in waiting, and roused their fellows, and the hootings of execration were raised against him. "I end as I began," thought Falkner; "amidst revilings and injustice — I can surely suffer now, that which was often my lot in the first dawn of boyhood."

His examination before the magistrates was a more painful proceeding. There was no glaring injustice, no vindictive hatred here, and yet he was accused of the foulest crime in nature, and saw in many faces the belief that he was a murderer. The murderer of Alithea! He could have laughed in scorn, to think that such an idea had entered a man's mind. She, an angel whom he worshipped — whom to save he would have met ten thousand deaths — how mad a world — how insane a system must it be, where such a thought was not scouted as soon as conceived!

Falkner had no vulgar mind. In early youth he experienced those aspirations after excellence, which betokens the finely moulded among our fellow-creatures. There was a type of virtue engraved in his heart, after which he desired to model himself. Since the hour when the consequences of his guilt revealed its true form to him — he had striven, like an eagle in an iron-bound cage, to free himself from the trammels of conscience. He felt within how much better he might be than any thing he was. But all this was unacknowledged, and uncared for, in the present scene — it was not the heroism of his soul that was inquired into, but the facts of his whereabouts; not the sacred nature of his worship for Alithea, but whether he had had opportunity to perpetrate crime. When we are conscious of innocence, what so heart-sickening as to combat circumstances that accuse us of guilt which we abhor. His prison-room was a welcome refuge, after such an ordeal.

His spirit could not be cowed by misfortune, and he felt unnaturally glad to be where he was; he felt glad to be the victim of injustice, the mark of unspeakable adversity; but his body's strength failed to keep pace with the lofty disdain of his soul — and Elizabeth, where was she? He rejoiced that she was absent when torn from his home; he had directed the servants to say nothing to Miss Falkner — he would write; and he had meant to fulfil this promise, but each time he thought to do so, he shrunk repugnant. He would not for worlds call her to his side, to share the horrors of his lot; and feeling sure that she would be visited by some member of her father's family, he thought it best to let things take their course — unprotected and alone, she would gladly accept refuge there where it was offered — and the tie snapped between them — happiness and love would alike smile on her.

He had it deeply at heart that she should not be mingled in the frightful details of his present situation, and yet drearily he missed her, for he loved her with a feeling, which, though not paternal, was as warm as ever filled a father's breast. His passions were ardent, and all that could be spared from remorse, were centred in his adopted child. He had looked on her, as the prophet might on the angel, who ministered to his wants in the desert: in the abandonment of all mankind, in the desolation to which his crime had led him, she had brought love and cheer. She had been his sweet household companion, his familiar friend, his patient nurse — his soul had grown to her image, and when the place was vacant that she had filled, he was excited by eager longings for her presence, that even made his man's heart soft as a woman's with very desire.

By degrees, as he thought of her and the past, the heroism of his soul was undermined and weakened. To every eye he continued composed, and even cheerful, as before. None could read in his impassive countenance the misery that dwelt within. He spent his time in reading and writing, and in necessary communications with the lawyers who were to conduct his defence; and all this was done with a calm eye and unmoved voice. No token of complaint or impatience ever escaped; he seemed equal to the fortune that attacked him. He grew, indeed, paler and thinner — till his handsome features stood out in their own expressive beauty; he might have served for a model of Prometheus — the vulture at his heart producing pangs and spasms of physical suffering; but his will unconquered — his mind refusing to acknowledge the bondage to which his body was the prey.

It was an unnatural combat; for the tenderness which was blended with his fiercer passions, and made the charm of his character, sided with his enemies, and made him less able to bear, than one more roughly and hardly framed.

He loved Nature — he had spent his life among her scenes. Nothing of her visited him now, save a star or two that rose above the prison-wall into the slip of sky his window commanded; they were the faintest stars in heaven, and often were shrouded by clouds and mist. Thus doubly imprisoned, his body barred by physical impediments — his soul shut up in itself — he became, in the energetic language of genius, the cannibal of his own heart. Without a vent for any, thoughts revolved in his brain with the velocity and action of a thousand mill-wheels, and would not be stopped. Now a spasm of painful emotion covered his brow with a cold dew — now self-contempt made every portion of himself detestable in his own eyes — now he felt the curse of God upon him, weighing him down with heavy, relentless burthen; and then again he was assailed by images of freedom, and keen longings for the free air. "If even, like Mazeppa, I might seek the wilds, and career along, though death was the bourn in view, I were happy!" These wild thoughts crossed him, exaggerated into gasping desire to achieve such a fate, when the sights and sounds of a prison gathered thick around, and made the very thought of his fellow-creatures one of disgust and abhorrence.

Thus sunk in gloom, far deeper internally than in outward show — warring with remorse, and the sense of unmerited injury — vanquished by fate, yet refusing to yield, — nature had reached the acme of suffering. He grew to be careless of the result of his trial, and to neglect the means of safety. He pondered on self-destruction — though that were giving the victory to his enemies. He looked round him; his cell appeared a tomb. He felt as if he had passed out of life into death; strange thoughts and images flitted through his mind, and the mortal struggle drew to a close, — when, on a day, his prison-door opened, and Elizabeth stepped within the threshold.

To see the beloved being we long for inexpressibly, and believe to be so far — to hear the dear voice, whose sweet accent we imagined to be mute to us for ever — to feel the creature's very soul in real communion with us, and the person we doat on, visible to our eyes; — such are moments of bliss, which the very imperfections of our finite nature renders immeasurably dear. Falkner saw his child, and felt no longer imprisoned. She was freedom and security. Looking on her sweet face, he could not believe in the existence of evil. Wrongs and woe, and a torturing conscience, melted and fled away before her; while fresh springing happiness filled every portion of his being.

CHAPTER X.

Elizabeth arrived at the moment of the first painful crisis of Falkner's fate. The assizes came on — busy faces crowded into his cell, and various consultations took place as to the method of his defence; and here began a series of cares, mortifications, and worse anxieties, which brought home to the hearts of the sufferers the horrors of their position.

The details of crime and its punishment are so alien to the individuals placed in the upper classes of society, that they read them as tales of another and a distant land. And it is like being cast away on a strange and barbarous country to find such become a part of our own lives. The list of criminals — the quality of their offences — the position Falkner held among them, were all discussed by the men of law; and Falkner listened, impassive in seeming apathy — his eagle eye bent on vacancy — his noble brow showing no trace of the rush of agonizing thought that flowed through his brain; it was not till he saw his child's earnest searching eyes bent on him, that he smiled, so to soften the keenness of her lively sympathy. She listened, too, her cheek alternately flushed and pale, and her eyes brimming over with tears, as she drew nearer to her unfortunate friend's side, as if her innocence and love might stand between him and the worst.

The decision of the grand jury was the first point to be considered. There existed no doubt but that that would go against the accused. The lawyers averred this, but still Elizabeth hoped — men could not be so blind — or some unforeseen enlightenment might dawn on their understandings. The witnesses against him were Sir Boyvill and his son; the latter, she well knew, abhorred the course pursued; and if some touch could reach Sir Boyvill's heart, and show him the unworthiness and falsehood of his proceedings, through the mode in which their evidence might be given, all would alter — the scales would drop from men's eyes — the fetters from Falkner's limbs — and this strange and horrible entanglement be dissipated like morning mist. She brooded for ever on these thoughts — sometimes she pondered on writing to Neville — sometimes on seeing his father; but his assertion was recollected that nothing now could alter the course of events, and that drove her back upon despair.

For ever thinking on these things, and hearing them discussed, it was yet a severe blow to both, when, in the technical language of the craft, it was announced that a true bill was found against Rupert Falkner.

Such is the nature of the mind, that hitherto Falkner had never looked on the coming time in its true proportions or colours. The decision of the preliminary jury, which might be in his favour, had stood as a screen between him and the future. Knowing himself to be innocent, abhorring the very image of the crime of which he was accused, how could twelve impartial, educated men agree that any construction put upon his actions, should cast the accusation on him? The lawyers had told him that so it would be — he had read the fearful expectation in Elizabeth's eyes — but it could not! Justice was not a mere word — innocence bore a stamp not to be mistaken; the vulgar and senseless malice of Sir Boyvill would be scouted and reprobated; such was his intimate conviction, though he had never expressed it; but this was all changed now. The tale of horror was admitted, registered as a probability, and had become a rule for future acts. The ignominy of a public trial would assuredly be his. And going, as is usual, from one extreme to the other, the belief entered his soul that he should be found guilty and die the death. A dark veil fell over life and nature. Ofttimes he felt glad, even to escape thus from a hideous system of wrong and suffering; but the innate pride of the heart rebelled, and his soul struggled as in the toils.

Elizabeth heard the decision with even more dismay; her head swam, and she grew sick at heart — would his trial come on in a few days? would all soon, so soon, be decided? was the very moment near at hand to make or mar existence, and turn this earth from a scene of hope into a very hell of torture and despair? for such to her it must be, if the worst befell Falkner. The worst! oh, what a worst! how hideous, squalid, unredeemed! There was madness in the thought; and she hurried to his cell to see him and hear him speak, so to dissipate the horror of her thoughts; her presence of mind, her equanimity, all deserted her; she looked bewildered — her heart beat as if it would burst her bosom — her face grew ashy pale — her limbs unstrung of every strength — and her efforts to conceal her weakness from Falkner's eyes, but served the more to confuse.

She found him seated near his window, looking on so much of the autumnal sky as could be perceived through the bars of the high narrow opening. The clouds traversed the slender portion of heaven thus visible; they fled fast to other lands, and the spirit of liberty rode upon their outstretched wings; away they flew, far from him, and he had no power to reach their bourn, nor to leave the dingy walls that held him in. Oh, Nature! while we possess thee, thy changes ever lovely, thy vernal airs or majestic storms, thy vast creation spread at our feet, above, around us, how can we call ourselves unhappy? there is brotherhood in the growing, opening flowers, love in the soft winds, repose in the verdant expanse, and a quick spirit of happy life throughout, with which our souls hold glad communion; but the poor prisoner was barred out from these: how cumbrous the body felt, how alien to the inner spirit of man, the fleshy bars that allowed it to become the slave of his fellows.

The stunning effects of the first blow had passed away, and there was in Falkner's face that lofty expression that resembled coldness, though it was the triumph over sensibility; something of disdain curled his lip, and his whole air denoted the acquisition of a power superior to fate. Trembling, Elizabeth entered; never before had she lost self-command; even now she paused at the threshold to resume it, but in vain; she saw him, she flew to his arms, she dissolved in tears, and became all woman in her tender fears. He was touched — he would have soothed her; a choking sensation arose in his throat: "I never felt a prisoner till now," he cried: "can you still, still cling to one struck with infamy?"

"Dearer, more beloved than ever!" she murmured; "surely there is no tie so close and strong as misery?"

"Dear, generous girl," said Falkner, "how I hate myself for making such large demand on your sympathy. Let me suffer alone. This is not the place for you, Elizabeth. Your free step should be on the mountain's side; these silken tresses the playthings of the unconfined winds. While I thought that I should speedily be liberated, I was willing to enjoy the comfort of your society; but now I, the murderer, am not a fit mate for you. I am accursed, and pull disaster down on all near me. I was born to destroy the young and beautiful."

With such talk they tried to baffle this fierce visitation of adversity. Falkner told her that on that day it would be decided whether the trial should take place at once, or time be given to send for Osborne from America. The turn Neville had given to his evidence had been so favourable to the accused, as to shake the prejudice against him, and it was believed that the judges would at once admit the necessity of waiting for so material a witness; and yet their first and dearest hope had been destroyed, so they feared to give way to a new one.

As they conversed, the solicitor entered with good tidings. The trial was put off till the ensuing assizes, in March, to give time for the arrival of Osborne. The hard dealing of destiny and man relented a little, and despair receded from their hearts, leaving space to breathe — to pray — to hope. No time was to be lost in sending for Osborne. Would he come? It could not be doubted. A free pardon was to be extended to him; and he would save a fellow-creature, and his former benefactor, without any risk of injury to himself.

The day closed, therefore, more cheeringly than it had begun. Falkner conquered himself, even to a show of cheerfulness; and recalled the colour to his tremulous companion's cheeks; and half a smile to her lips, by his encouragement. He turned her thoughts from the immediate subject, narrating the events of his first acquaintance with Osborne, and describing the man: — a poltroon, but kindly hearted — fearful of his own skin, to a contemptible extent, but looking up with awe to his superiors, and easily led by one richer and of higher station to any line of conduct; an inborn slave, but with many of a slave's good qualities. Falkner did not doubt that he would put himself eagerly forward on the present occasion; and whatever his evidence were good for, it would readily be produced.

There was no reason then for despair. While the shock they had undergone took the sting from the present — fearing an immediate and horrible catastrophe — the wretchedness of their actual state was forgotten — it acquired comfort and security by the contrast — each tried to cheer the other, and they separated for the night with apparent composure. Yet that night Elizabeth's pillow, despite her earnest endeavours to place reliance on Providence, was watered by the bitterest tears that ever such young eyes shed; and Falkner told each hour of the live-long night, as his memory retraced past scenes, and his spirit writhed and bled to feel that, in the wantonness and rebellion of youth, he had been the author of so widespreading, so dark a web of misery.

From this time, their days were spent in that sort of monotony which has a peculiar charm to the children of adversity. The recurrence of one day after the other, none being marked by disaster, or indeed any event, imparted a satisfaction, gloomy indeed, and sad, but grateful to the heart wearied by many blows, and by the excitement of mortal hopes and fears. The mind adapted itself to the new state of things, and enjoyments sprung up in the very home of desolation — circumstances that, in happier days, were but the regular routine of life, grew into blessings from Heaven; and the thought, “Come what will, this hour is safe!” made precious the mere passage of time — months were placed between them and the dreaded crisis — and so are we made, that when once this is an established, acknowledged fact, we can play on the eve of danger, almost like the unconscious animal destined to bleed.

Their time was regularly divided, and occupations succeeded one to another. Elizabeth rented apartments not far from the prison. She gave the early morning hours to exercise, and the rest of the day was spent in Falkner’s prison. He read to her as she worked at the tapestry frame, or she took the book while he drew or sketched; nor was music wanting, such as suited the subdued tone of their minds, and elevated it to reverence and resignation; and sweet still hours were spent near their fire; for their hearth gleamed cheerfully, despite surrounding horrors — gaiety was absent, but neither was the voice of discontent heard; all repinings were hidden in the recesses of their hearts; their talk was calm, abstracted from matters of daily life, but gifted with the interest that talent can bestow on all it touches. Falkner exerted himself chiefly to vary their topics, and to enliven them by the keenness of his observations, the beauty of his descriptions, and the vividness of his narrations. He spoke of India, they read various travels, and compared the manners of different countries — they forgot the bars that chequered the sunlight on the floor of the cell — they forgot the cheerless gloom of each surrounding object. Did they also forget the bars and bolts between them and freedom? — the thoughtful tenderness which had become the habitual expression of Elizabeth’s face — the subdued manner and calm tones of Falkner were a demonstration that they did not. Something they were conscious of at each minute, that checked the free pulsations of their hearts; a word in a book, brought by some association home to her feelings, would cause Elizabeth’s eyes to fill with unbidden tears — and proud scorn would now and then dilate the breast of Falkner, as he read some story of oppression, and felt, “I also am persecuted, and must endure.”

In this position, they each grew unutterably dear to the other — every moment, every thought, was full to both of the image of either. There is something inexpressibly winning in beauty and grace — it is a sweet blessing when our household companion charms our senses by the loveliness of her person, and makes the eye gladly turn to her, to be gratified by such a form and look as we would travel miles to see depicted on canvas. It soothed many a spasm of pain, and turned many an hour of suffering into placid content, when Falkner watched the movements of his youthful friend. You might look in her face for days, and still read something new, something sublime in the holy calm of her brow, in her serious, yet intelligent eyes; while all a woman’s softness dwelt in the moulding of her cheeks and her dimpled mouth. Each word she said, and all she did, so became her, that it appeared the thing best to be said and done, — and was accompanied by a fascination, both for eye and heart, which emanated from her purity and truth. Falkner grew to worship the very thought of her. She had not the wild spirits and trembling sensibility of her he had destroyed, but in her kind, she was no way inferior.

Yet though each, as it were, enjoyed the respite given by fortune to their worst fears, yet this very sense of transitory security was in its essence morbid and unnatural. A fever preyed nightly on Falkner, and there were ghastly streaks upon his brow, that bespoke internal suffering and decay. Elizabeth grew paler and thinner — her step lost its elasticity, her voice became low-toned — her eyes were acquainted with frequent tears, and the lids grew heavy and dark. Both lived for ever in the presence of misery — they feared to move or speak, lest they should awaken the monster, then for a space torpid; but they spent their days under its shadow — the air they drew was chilled by its icy influence — no wholesome light-hearted mood of mind was ever theirs — they might pray and resign themselves, they might congratulate themselves on the safety of the passing moment; but each sand that flowed from the hour-glass was weighed — each thought that passed through the brain was examined — every word uttered was pondered over. They were exhausted by the very vividness of their unsleeping endeavours to blunt their sensations.

The hours were very sad that they spent apart. The door closed on Elizabeth, and love, and hope, and all the pride of life, vanished with her. Falkner was again a prisoner, an accused felon — a man over whom impended the most hideous fate — whom the dogs of law barked round, and looked on as their prey. His high heart often quailed. He laid his head on his pillow, desiring never again to raise it — despair kept his lids open the livelong nights, while nought but palpable darkness brooded over his eyeballs; — he rose languid — dispirited — revolving thoughts of death; till at last she came, who by degrees dispelled the gloom — and shed over his benighted soul the rays of her pure spirit.

She also was miserable in solitude; the silent evening hours spent apart from him were melancholy and drear. Nothing interrupted their stillness. She felt deserted by every human being, and was indeed reduced to the extremity of loneliness. In the town and neighbourhood many pitied — many admired her, and some offered their services; but none visited or tried to cheer the solitary hours of the devoted daughter. As the child of a man accused of murder, there was a barrier between her and the world. The English are generous to their friends, but they are never kind to strangers; the tie of brotherhood, which Christ taught as uniting all mankind, is unacknowledged by them. They so fear that their sullen fireside should be unduly invaded, and so expect to be illtreated, that each man makes a Martello tower of his home, and keeps watch against the gentler charities of life, as from an invading enemy. Hour after hour therefore Elizabeth spent — thought, her only companion.

From Falkner and his miserable fortunes, sometimes her reflections strayed to Gerard Neville, — the generous friend on whom she wholly relied, yet who could in no way aid or comfort her. They were divided. He thought of her, she knew; his constant and ardent disposition would cause her to be for ever the cherished object of his reveries; and now and then, as she took her morning ride, or looked from her casement at night upon the high stars, and pale, still moon, Nature spoke to her audibly of him, and her soul overflowed with tenderness. Still he was far — no word from him reached her — no token of living remembrance. Lady Cecil also — she neither wrote nor sent. The sense of abandonment is hard to bear, and many bitter tears did the young sufferer shed — and many a yearning had she to enter with her ill-starred father the silent abode of the tomb — scarcely more still or dark than the portion of life which was allotted to them, even while existence was warm in their hearts, and the natural impulse of their souls was to seek sympathy and receive consolation.

CHAPTER XI.

The varied train of hopes and fears which belonged to the situation of the prisoner and his faithful young companion, stood for some time suspended. In some sort they might be said neither to hope nor fear; for, reasoning calmly, they neither expected that the worst would befall; and the actual and impending evil was certain. Like shipwrecked sailors who have betaken themselves to a boat, and are tossed upon a tempestuous sea, they saw a ship nearing, they believed that their signal was seen, and that it was bearing down towards them. What if, with sudden tack, the disdainful vessel should turn its prow aside, and leave them to the mercy of the waves. They did not anticipate such a completion to their disasters.

Yet, as time passed, new anxieties occurred. Falkner's solicitor, Mr. Colville, had dispatched an agent to America to bring Osborne over. The pardon promised insured his coming; and yet it was impossible not to feel inquietude with regard to his arrival. Falkner experienced least of this. He felt sure of Osborne, his creature, the being whose life he had heretofore saved, whose fortunes he had created. He knew his weakness, and how easily he was dealt with. The mere people of business were not so secure. Osborne enjoyed a comfortable existence, far from danger — why should he come over to place himself in a disgraceful situation, to be branded as a pardoned felon? In a thousand ways he might evade the summons. Perhaps there was nothing to prove that the Osborne whom Hoskins named, was the Osborne who had been employed by Falkner, and was deemed an accessory in Mrs. Neville's death.

Hillary, who had been sent to Washington in September, had written immediately on his arrival. His passage had been tedious, as autumnal voyages to America usually are — he did not arrive till the last day of October; he announced that Osborne was in the town, and that on the morrow he should see him. This letter had arrived towards the end of November, and there was no reason wherefore Hillary and Osborne should not quickly follow it. But November passed away, and December had begun, and still the voyagers did not arrive; the south-west wind continued to reign with slight variation; except that as winter advanced, it became more violent: packets perpetually arrived in Liverpool from America, after passages of seventeen and twenty days; but Hillary did not return, nor did he write.

The woods were despoiled of their leaves; but still the air was warm and pleasant; and it cheered Elizabeth as favourable to her hopes; the sun shone at intervals, and the misty mornings were replaced by cheerful days. Elizabeth rode out each morning, and this one day, the sixteenth of December, she found a new pleasure in her solitary exercise. The weather was calm and cheerful; a brisk canter gave speed to the current of her blood; and her thoughts, though busy, had a charm in them that she was half angry with herself for feeling, but which glowed all warm and bright, despite every effort. On the preceding evening she had observed, on her return home, at nine o'clock, from the prison, the figure of a man, which passed her hastily, and then stood aloof, as if guarding and watching her at a distance. Once, as he stood under an archway, a flickering lamp threw his shadow across her path. It was a bright moonlight night, and as he stood in the midst of an open space near which her house was situated, she recognized, muffled as he was, the form of Gerard Neville. No wonder then that her heart was lightened of its burthen; he had not forgotten her — he could no longer command himself to absence; if he might not converse with her, at least he might look upon her as she passed.

On the same morning she entered her father's prison-room, — she found two visiters already there, Colville and his agent Hillary. The faces of both were long and serious. Elizabeth turned anxiously to Falkner, who looked stern and disdainful. He smiled when he saw her, and said, "You must not be shocked, my love, at the news which these gentlemen bring. I cannot tell how far it influences my fate; but it is impossible to believe that it is irrevocably sealed by it. But who can express the scorn that a man must feel, to know that so abject a poltroon wears the human form. Osborne refuses to come."

Such an announcement naturally filled her with dismay. At the request of Falkner, Hillary began again to relate the circumstances of his visit to America. He recounted, that finding that Osborne was in Washington, he lost no time in securing an interview. He delivered his letters to him, and said that he came from Mr. Falkner, on an affair of life and death. At the name, Osborne turned pale — he seemed afraid of opening the letters, and muttered something about there being a mistake. At length he broke the seals. Fear, in its most abject guise, blanched his cheek as he read, and his hand trembled so that he could scarcely hold the paper. Hillary, perceiving at last that he had finished reading, and was hesitating what to say, began himself to enter on the subject; when, faltering and stammering, Osborne threw the letter down, saying, “I said there was a mistake — I know nothing — all this affair is new to me — I never had concern with Mr. Falkner — I do not know who Mr. Falkner is.”

But for the pale, quivering lips of the man, and his tremulous voice, Hillary might have thought that he spoke truth; but he saw that cowardice was the occasion of the lie he told, and he endeavoured to set before him the perfect safety with which he might comply with the request he conveyed. But the more he said, Osborne, gathering assurance, the more obstinately denied all knowledge of the transactions in question, or their principal actor. He changed, warmed by his own words, from timid to impudent in his denials, till Hillary’s conviction began to be shaken a little; and at the same time he grew angry, and cross-questioned him with a lawyer’s art, about his arrival in America — questions which Osborne answered with evident trepidation. At last, he asked him, if he remembered such and such a house, and such a journey, and the name of his companion on the occasion; and if he recollected a person of the name of Hoskins? Osborne started at the word as if he had been shot. Pale he was before, but now his cheeks grew of a chalky white, his limbs refused to support him, and his voice died away; till, rousing himself, he pretended to fly into a violent passion at the insolence of the intrusion, and impertinence of the questions. As he spoke, he unwarily betrayed that he knew more of the transaction than he would willingly have allowed; at last, after running on angrily and incoherently for some time, he suddenly broke away, and (they were at a tavern) left the room, and also the house.

Hillary hoped that, on deliberation, he would come to his senses. He sent the letters after him to his house, and called the next day; but he was gone — he had left Washington the evening before by the steamer to Charlestown. Hillary knew not what to do. He applied to the government authorities; they could afford him no help. He also repaired to Charlestown. Some time he spent in searching for Osborne — vainly; it appeared plain that he travelled under another name. At length, by chance, he found a person who knew him personally, who said that he had departed a week before for New Orleans. It seemed useless to make this further journey, yet Hillary made it, and with like ill-success. Whether Osborne was concealed in that town — whether he had gone to Mexico, or lurked in the neighbouring country, could not be discovered. Time wore away in fruitless researches, and it became necessary to come to a decision. Hopeless of success, Hillary thought it best to return to England — with the account of his failure — so that no time might be lost in providing a remedy, if any could be found, to so fatal an injury to their cause.

While this tale was being told, Falkner had leisure to recover from that boiling of the blood which the first apprehension of unworthy conduct in one of our fellow-creatures is apt to excite, and now spoke with his usual composure. "I cannot believe," he said, "that this man's evidence is of the import which is supposed. No one, in fact, believes that I am a murderer; every one knows that I am innocent. All that we have to do, is to prove this in a sort of technical and legal manner; and yet hardly that — for we are not to address the deaf ear of law, but the common sense of twelve men, who will not be slow, I feel assured, in recognizing the truth. All that can be done to make my story plain, and to prove it by circumstances, of course must be done; and I do not fear but that, when it is ingenuously and simply told, it will suffice for my acquittal."

"It is right to hope for the best," said Mr. Colville; "but Osborne's refusal to come is, in itself, a bad fact; the prosecutor will insist much upon it — I would give a hundred pounds to have him here."

"I would not give a hundred pence," said Falkner, drily.

The other stared — the observation had an evil effect on his mind; he fancied that his client was even glad that a witness so material refused to appear, and this to him had the aspect of guilt. He continued, "I am so far of a different opinion, that I should advise sending a second time. Had you a friend sufficiently zealous to undertake a voyage across the Atlantic for the purpose of persuading Osborne" —

"I would not ask him to cross a ditch' for the purpose," — interrupted Falkner, with some asperity. "Let such men as would believe a dastard like Osborne in preference to a gentleman, and a soldier, take my life, if they will. It is not worth this pains in my own eyes — and thirsted for by my fellow men — it is a burthen I would willingly lay down."

The soft touch of Elizabeth’s hand placed on his recalled him — he looked on her tearful eyes, and became aware of his fault — he smiled to comfort her. “I ought to apologize to these gentlemen for my hastiness,” he said;—”and to you, my dear girl, for my apparent trifling — but there is a degradation in these details that might chafe a more placid temper. — I cannot — I will not descend to beg my life — I am innocent, this all men must know, or at least will know, when their passions are no longer in excitement against me — I can say no more — I cannot win an angel from heaven to avouch my guiltlessness of her blood — I cannot draw this miserable fellow from his cherished refuge. All must fall on my own shoulders — I must support the burthen of my fate; I shall appear before my judges; if they, seeing me, and hearing me speak, yet pronounce me guilty, let them look to it — I shall be satisfied to die, so to quit at once a blind, blood-thirsty world!”

The dignity of Falkner as he spoke these words, the high, disdainful, yet magnanimous expression of his features, the clear though impassioned tone of his voice, thrilled the hearts of all. “Thank God, I do love this man even as he deserves to be loved,” was the tender sentiment that lighted up Elizabeth’s eyes; while his male auditors could not help, both by countenance and voice, giving token that they were deeply moved. On taking their leave soon after, Mr. Colville grasped Falkner’s hand cordially, and bade him rest assured that his zeal, his utmost endeavours, should not be wanting to serve him. “And,” he added, in obedience rather to his newly awakened interest than his judgment, “I cannot doubt but that our endeavours will be crowned with complete success.”

A man of real courage always finds new strength unfold within him to meet a larger demand made upon it. Falkner was now, perhaps for the first time, thoroughly roused to meet the evils of his lot. He threw off every natural, every morbid sensibility, and strung himself at once to a higher and firmer tone of mind. He renounced the brittle hopes before held out to him — of this or that circumstance being in his favour — he intrusted unreservedly his whole cause to the mighty irresistible power who rules human affairs, and felt calm and free. If by disgrace and death he were to atone for the destruction of his victim — so let it be — the hour of suffering would come, and it would pass away — and leaving him a corpse, the vengeance of his fellow-creatures would end there. He felt that the decree for life or death having received already the irrefragable fiat — he was prepared for both; and he resolved from that hour to drive all weak emotions, all struggle, all hope or fear from his soul. “Let God’s will be done!” something of Christian resignation — something (derived from his eastern life) of belief in fatality — and something of philosophic fortitude, composed the feeling that engraved this sentiment in his heart, in ineffaceable characters.

He now spoke of Osborne to Elizabeth without acrimony. “My indignation against that man was all thrown away,” he said; “we do not rebuke the elements when they destroy us, and why should we spend our anger against men? — a word from Osborne, they say, would save me — the falling of the wind, or the allaying of the waves, would have saved Alithea — both are beyond our control. I imagined in those days that I could guide events — till suddenly the reins were torn from my hands. A few months ago I exulted, in expectation that the penalty demanded for my crime would be the falling by the hands of her son — and here I am an imprisoned felon! — and now we fancy that this thing or that might preserve me; while in truth all is decreed, all registered, and we must patiently await the appointed time. Come what may, I am prepared — from this hour I have taught my spirit to bend, and to be content to die. When all is over, men will do me justice, and that poor fellow will bitterly lament his cowardice. It will be agony to him to remember that one word would have preserved my life then, when no power on earth can recall me to existence. He is not a bad man — and could he now have represented to him his after remorse, he would cease to exhibit such lamentable cowardice — a cowardice, after all, that has its origin in the remnants of good feeling. The fear of shame; horror at having participated in so fearful a tragedy; and a desire to throw off the consequences of his actions which is the perpetual and stinging accompaniment of guilt, form his motives; but could he be told how immeasurably his sense of guilt will be increased, if his silence occasions my death, all these would become minor considerations, and vanish on the instant.”

“And would it be impossible,” said Elizabeth, “to awaken this feeling in him?”

“By no means,” replied Falkner; “though it is out of our power. We sent a mercenary, not indeed altogether lukewarm, but still not penetrated by that ardour, nor capable of that eloquence, which is necessary to move a weak man, like the one he had to deal with. Osborne is, in some sort, a villain; but he is too feeble-minded to follow out his vocation. He always desired to be honest. Now he has the reputation of being such; from being one of those miserable creatures, the refuse of civilization, preying upon the vices, while they are the outcasts of society, he has become respectable and trust-worthy in the eyes of others. He very naturally clings to advantages dearly earned — lately gained. He fancies to preserve them by deserting me. Could the veil be lifted — could the conviction be imparted of the wretch he will become in his own eyes, and of the universal execration that will be heaped on him after my death, his mind would entirely change, and he would be as eager, I had almost said, to come forward, as now he is set upon concealment and silence."

CHAPTER XII.

Elizabethlistened in silence. All that had passed made a deep impression — from the moment that the solicitor had expressed a wish, that Falkner had a zealous friend to cross the Atlantic — till now, that he himself dilated on the good that would result from representations being clearly and fervently made to Osborne, she was revolving an idea that absorbed her whole faculties.

This idea was no other than going to America herself. She had no doubt, that, seeing Osborne, she could persuade him, and the difficulties of the journey appeared slight to her who had travelled so much. She asked Falkner many questions, and his answers confirmed her more and more in her plan. No objection presented itself to her mind; already she felt sure of success. There was scarcely time, it was true, for the voyage; but she hoped that the trial might be again deferred, if reasonable hopes were held out of Osborne's ultimate arrival. It was painful to leave Falkner without a friend, but the object of her journey was paramount, even to this consideration; it must, it should, be undertaken. Still she said nothing of her scheme, and Falkner could not guess at what was passing in her mind.

Wrapped in the reverie suggested by such a plan, she returned home in the evening, without thinking of the apparition of Neville, which had so filled her mind in the morning. It was not till at her own door, that the thought glanced through her mind, and she remembered that she had seen nothing of him — she looked across the open space where he had stood the evening before. It was entirely vacant. She felt disappointed, and saddened; and she began to reflect on her total friendlessness — no one to aid her in-preparations for her voyage — none to advise — her sole resource was in hirelings. But her independent, firm spirit quickly threw off this weakness, and she began a note to Mr. Colville, asking him to call on her, as she wished to arrange every thing definitively before she spoke to Falkner. As she wrote, she heard a rapid, decided step in her quiet street, followed by a hurried, yet gentle knock at her door. She started up. “It is he!” the words were on her lips, when Gerard entered; she held out her hand, gladness thrilling through her whole frame, her heart throbbing wildly — her eyes lighted up with joy. “This is indeed kind,” she cried. “Oh, Mr. Neville, how happy your visit makes me!”

He did not look happy; he had grown paler and thinner, and the melancholy which had sat on his countenance before, banished for a time by her, had returned, with the addition of a look of wildness, that reminded her of the youth of Baden; Elizabeth was shocked to remark these traces of suffering; and her next impulse was to ask, “What has happened? I fear some new misfortune has occurred.”

“It is the property of misfortune to be ever new,” he replied, “to be always producing fresh and more miserable results. I have no right to press my feelings on you; your burthen is sufficient; but I could not refrain any longer from seeing in what way adversity had exerted its pernicious influence over you.”

His manner was gloomy and agitated; she, resigned, devoted to her duties, commanding herself day by day to fulfil her task of patience, and of acquiring cheerfulness for Falkner’s sake, imagined that some fresh disaster must be the occasion of these marks of emotion. She did not know that fruitless struggles to alleviate the evils of her situation, vain broodings over its horrors, and bitter regret at losing her, had robbed him of sleep, of appetite, of all repose. “I despise myself for my weakness,” he said, “when I see your fortitude. You are more than woman, more than human being ever was, and you must feel the utmost contempt for one, whom fortune bends and breaks as it does me. You are well, however, and half my dreams of misery have been false and vain. God guards and preserves you: I ought to have placed more faith in him.”

“But tell me, dear Mr. Neville, tell me what has happened?”

“Nothing!” he replied; “and does not that imply the worst? I cannot make up my mind to endure the visitation of ill fallen upon us; it drives me from place to place like an unlaid ghost. I am very selfish to speak in this manner. Yet it is your sufferings that fill my mind to bursting; were all the evil poured on my own head, while you were spared, welcome, most welcome, would be the bitterest infliction! but you, Elizabeth, you are my cruel father’s victim, and the future will be more hideous than the hideous present!”

Elizabeth was shocked and surprised; what could he mean? “The future,” she replied, “will bring my dear father’s liberation; how then can that be so bad?"

He looked earnestly and inquiringly on her. "Yes," she continued, "my sorrows, heavy as they are, have not that additional pang; I have no doubt of the ultimate justice that will be rendered my father. We have much to endure in the interim, much that undermines the fortitude, and visits the heart with sickening throes; there is no help but patience: let us have patience, and this adversity will pass away; the prison and the trial will be over, and freèdom and security again be ours."

"I see how it is," replied Neville; "we each live in a world of our own, and it is wicked in me to give you a glimpse of the scene as it is presented to me."

"Yet speak; explain!" said Elizabeth; "you have frightened me so much that any explanation must be better than the thoughts which your words, your manner, suggest."

"Nay," said Neville, "do not let my follies infect you. Your views, your hopes, are doubtless founded on reason. It is, if you will forgive the allusion that may seem too light for so sad a subject, but the old story of the silver and brazen shield. I see the dark, the fearful side of things; I live among your enemies — that is, the enemies of Mr. Falkner. I hear of nothing but his guilt, and the expiation prepared for it. I am maddened by all I hear.

"I have implored my father not to pursue his vengeance. Convinced as I am of the truth of Mr. Falkner's narration, the idea that one so gifted should be made over to the fate that awaits him is abhorrent, and when I think that you are involved in such a scene of wrong and horror, my blood freezes in my veins. I have implored my father, I have quarrelled with him, I have made Sophia advocate the cause of justice against malice; all in vain. Could you see the old man — my father I mean; pardon my irreverence — how he revels in the demoniacal hope of revenge, and with what hideous delight he gloats upon the detail of ignominy to be inflicted on one so much his superior in every noble quality, you would feel the loathing I do. He heaps sarcasm and contempt on my feeble spirit, as he names my pardon of my mother's destroyer, my esteem for him, and my sympathy for you; but that does not touch me. It is the knowledge that he will succeed, and you be lost and miserable for ever, that drives me to desperation.

"I fancied that these thoughts must pursue you, even more painfully than they do me. I saw you writhing beneath the tortures of despair, wasting away under the influence of intense misery. You haunted my dreams, accompanied by every image of horror — sometimes you were bleeding, ghastly, dying — sometimes you took my poor mother's form, as Falkner describes it, snatched cold and pale from the waves — other visions flitted by, still more frightful. Despairing of moving my father, abhorring the society of every human being, I have been living for the last month at Dromore. A few days ago my father arrived there. I wondered till I heard the cause. The time for expecting Osborne had arrived. As vultures have instinct for carrion, so he swooped down at the far off scent of evil fortune; he had an emissary at Liverpool, on the watch to hear of this man's arrival. Disgusted at this foul appetite for evil, I left him. I came here, — only to see you; to gaze on you afar, was to purify the world of the 'blasts from hell,' which the bad passions I have so long contemplated spread round me. My father learned whither I had gone, I had a letter from him this morning — you may guess at its contents."

"He triumphs in Osborne's refusal to appear," said Elizabeth, who was much moved by the picture of hatred and malice Neville had presented to her; and trembled from head to foot as she listened, from the violent emotions his account excited, and the vehemence of his manner as he spoke.

"He does, indeed, triumph," replied Neville; "and you — you and Mr. Falkner, do you not despair?"

"If you could see my dear father," said Elizabeth, her courage returning at the thought, "you would see how innocence, and a noble mind can sustain; at the worst, he does not despair. He bears the present with fortitude, he looks to the future with resignation. His soul is firm, his spirit inflexible."

"And you share these feelings?"

"Partly, I do, and partly I have other thoughts to support me. Osborne's cowardice is a grievous blow, but it must be remedied. The man we sent to bring him was too easily discouraged. Other means must be tried. I shall go to America, I shall see Osborne, and you cannot doubt of my success."

"You?" cried Neville; "you, to go to America? you to follow the traces of a man who hides himself? Impossible! This is worse madness than all. Does Falkner consent to so senseless an expedition?"

"You use strong expressions," interrupted Elizabeth.

“I do,” he replied; “and I have a right to do so — I beg your pardon. But my meaning is justifiable — you must not undertake this voyage. It is as useless as improper. Suppose yourself arrived on the shores of wide America. You seek a man who conceals himself, you know not where; can you perambulate large cities, cross wide extents of country, go from town to town in search of him? It is by personal exertion alone that he can be found; and your age and sex wholly prevent that.”

“Yet I shall go,” said Elizabeth thoughtfully; “so much is left undone, because we fancy it impossible to do; which, upon endeavour, is found plain and easy. If insurmountable obstacles oppose themselves, I must submit, but I see none yet; I have not the common fears of a person whose life has been spent in one spot; I have been a traveller, and know that, but for the fatigue, it is as easy to go a thousand miles as a hundred. If there are dangers and difficulties, they will appear light to me, encountered for my dear father’s sake.”

She looked beautiful as an angel, as she spoke; her independent spirit had nothing rough in its texture. It did not arise from a love of opposition, but from a belief, that in fulfilling a duty, she could not be opposed or injured. Her fearlessness was that of a generous heart, that could not believe in evil intentions. She explained more fully to her friend the reasons that induced her determination. She repeated Falkner’s account of Osborne’s character, the injury that it was believed would arise from his refusal to appear, and the probable facility of persuading him, were he addressed by one zealous in the cause.

Neville listened attentively. She paused — he was lost in thought, and made no reply — she continued to speak, but he continued mute, till at last she said, “You are conquered, I know — you yield, and agree that my journey is a duty, a necessity.”

“We are both apt, it would seem,” he replied, “to see our duties in a strong light, and to make sudden, or they may be called rash, resolutions. Perhaps we both go too far, and are in consequence reprehended by those about us: in each other, then, let us find approval — you must not go to America, for your going would be useless — with all your zeal you could not succeed. But I will go. Of course this act will be treated as madness, or worse, by Sir Boyvill and the rest — but my own mind assures me that I do right. For many years I devoted myself to discovering my mother’s fate. I have discovered it. Falkner's narrative tells all. But clear and satisfactory as that is to me, others choose to cast frightful doubts over its truth, and conjure up images the most revolting. Have they any foundation? I do not believe it — but many do — and all assert that the approaching trial alone can establish the truth. This trial is but a mockery, unless it is fair and complete — it cannot be that without Osborne. Surely, then, it neither misbecomes me as her son, nor as the son of Sir Boyvill, to undertake any action that will tend to clear up the mystery.

"I am resolved — I shall go — be assured that I shall not return without Osborne. You will allow me to take your place, to act for you — you do not distrust my zeal."

Elizabeth had regarded her own resolves as the simple dictates of reason and duty. But her heart was deeply touched by Neville's offer; tears rushed into her eyes, as she replied in a voice faltering from emotion. "I fear this cannot be, it will meet with too much opposition; but never, never can I repay your generosity in but imagining so great a service."

"It is a service to both," he said, "and as to the opposition I shall meet, that is my affair. You know that nothing will stop me when once resolved. And I am resolved. The inner voice that cannot be mistaken assures me that I do right — I ask no other approval. A sense of justice, perhaps of compassion, for the original author of all our wretchedness, ought probably to move me; but I will not pretend to be better than I am: were Falkner alone concerned, I fear I should be but lukewarm. But not one cloud — nor the shadow of a cloud — shall rest on my mother's fate. All shall be clear, all universally acknowledged; nor shall your life be blotted, and your heart broken, by the wretched fate of him to whom you cling with matchless fidelity. He is innocent, I know; but if the world thinks and acts by him as a murderer, how could you look up again? Through you I succeeded in my task, to you I owe unspeakable gratitude, which it is my duty to repay. Yet, away with such expressions. You know that my desire to serve you is boundless, that I love you beyond expression, that every injury you receive is trebled upon me — that vain were every effort of self-command; I must do that thing that would benefit you, though the whole world rose to forbid. You are of more worth in your innocence and nobleness, than a nation of men such as my father. Do you think I can hesitate in my determinations thus founded, thus impelled?"

More vehement, more impassioned than Elizabeth, Neville bore down her objections, while he awakened all her tenderness and gratitude: “Now I prove myself your friend,” he said proudly; “now Heaven affords me opportunity to serve you, and I thank it.”

He looked so happy, so wildly delighted, while a more still, but not less earnest sense of joy filled her heart. They were young, and they loved — this of itself was bliss; but the cruel circumstances around them added to their happiness, by drawing them closer together, and giving fervour and confidence to their attachment; and now that he saw a mode of serving her, and she felt entire reliance on his efforts, the last veil and barrier fell from between them, and their hearts became united by that perfect love which can result alone from entire confidence, and acknowledged unshackled sympathy.

Always actuated by generous impulses, but often rash in his determinations, and impetuous in their fulfilment; full of the warmest sensibility, hating that the meanest thing that breathed should endure pain, and feeling the most poignant sympathy for all suffering, Neville had been maddened by his own thoughts, while he brooded over the position in which Elizabeth was placed. Not one of those various circumstances that alleviate disaster to those who endure it, presented themselves to his imagination — he saw adversity in its most hideous form, without relief or disguise — names and images appending to Falkner’s frightful lot, which he and Elizabeth carefully banished from their thoughts, haunted him. The fate of the basest felon hung over the prisoner — Neville believed that it must inevitably fall on him; he often wondered that he did not contrive to escape, that Elizabeth, devoted and heroic, did not contrive some means of throwing open his dungeon’s doors. He had endeavoured to open his father’s eyes, to soften his heart, in vain. He had exerted himself to discover whether any trace of long past circumstances existed that might tend to acquit Falkner. He had gone to Treby, visited the graves of the hapless parents of Elizabeth, seen Mrs. Baker, and gathered there the account of his landing; but nothing helped to elucidate the mystery of his mother’s death; Falkner’s own account was the only trace left behind; that bore the stamp of truth in every line, and appeared to him so honourable a tribute to poor Alithea’s memory, that he looked with disgust on his father’s endeavours to cast upon it suspicions and interpretations, the most hideous and appalling.

In the first instance, he had been bewildered by Sir Boyvill's sophistry, and half conquered by his plausible arguments. But a short time, and the very circumstance of Elizabeth's fidelity to his cause, sufficed to show him the baseness of his motives, and the real injury he did his mother's fame.

Resolved to clear the minds of other men from the prejudice against the prisoner thus spread abroad, and at least to secure a fair trial, Neville made no secret of his belief that Falkner was innocent. He represented him everywhere as a gentleman — a man of humanity and honour — whose crime ought to receive its punishment from his own conscience, and at the hand of the husband or son of the victim in the field; and whom, to pursue as his father did, was at once futile and disgraceful. Sir Boyvill, irritated by Falkner's narrative; his vanity wounded to the quick by the avowed indifference of his wife, was enraged beyond all bounds by the opposition of his son. Unable to understand his generous nature, and relying on his previous zeal for his mother's cause, he had not doubted but that his revenge would find a ready ally in him. His present arguments, his esteem for their enemy, his desire that he should be treated with a forbearance which, between gentlemen, was but an adherence to the code of honour — appeared to Sir Boyvill insanity, and worse — a weakness the most despicable, a want of resentment the most low-minded. But he cared not — the game was in his hands — revelling in the idea of his enemy's ignominious sufferings, he more than half-persuaded himself that his accusation was true, and that the punishment of a convicted felon would at last satisfy his thirst for revenge. A feeble old man, tottering on the verge of the grave, he gloried to think that his grasp was still deadly, his power acknowledged in throes of agony, by him by whom he had been injured.

Returning to Dromore from Carlisle, Gerard sought his father. Osborne's refusal to appear crowned Sir Boyvill's utmost hopes; and his sarcastic congratulations, when he saw his son, expressed all the malice of his heart. Gerard replied with composure, that he did indeed fear that this circumstance would prove fatal to the course of justice; but that it must not tamely be submitted to, and that he himself was going to America to induce Osborne to come, that nothing might be wanting to elucidate the mystery of his mother's fate, and to render the coming trial full, fair, and satisfactory. Such an announcement rendered, for a moment, Sir Boyvill speechless with rage. A violent scene ensued. Gerard, resolved, and satisfied of the propriety of his resolution, was calm and firm. Sir Boyvill, habituated to the use of vituperative expressions, boiled over with angry denunciations, and epithets of abuse. He called his son the disgrace of his family — the opprobrium of mankind — the detractor of his mother's fame. Gerard smiled; yet at heart, he deeply felt the misery of thus for ever finding an opponent in his father, and it required all the enthusiasm and passion of his nature, to banish the humiliating and saddening influence of Sir Boyvill's indignation.

They parted worse friends than ever. Sir Boyvill set out for town; Gerard repaired to Liverpool. The wind was contrary — there was little hope of change. He thought that it would conduce to his success in America, if he spent the necessary interval in seeing Hoskins again; and also in consulting with his friend, the American minister; so, in all haste, having first secured his passage on board a vessel that was to sail in four or five days, he also set out for London.

CHAPTER XIII.

The philosophy of Falkner was not proof against the intelligence, that Gerard Neville was about to undertake the voyage to America for the sake of inducing Osborne to come over. Elizabeth acquainted him with her design, and her friend's determination to replace her, with sparkling eyes, and cheeks flushed by the agitation of pleasure — the pure pleasure of having such proof of the worth of him she loved. Falkner was even more deeply touched; even though he felt humiliated by the very generosity that filled him with admiration. His blood was stirred, and his feelings tortured him by a sense of his own demerits, and the excellence of one he had injured. "Better die without a word than purchase my life thus!" were the words hovering on his lips — yet it was no base cost that he paid — and he could only rejoice at the virtues of the son of her whom he had so passionately loved. There are moments when the past is remembered with intolerable agony; and when to alter events, which occurred at the distance of many years, becomes a passion and a thirst. His regret at Alithea's marriage seemed all renewed — his agony that thenceforth she was not to be the half of his existence, as he had hoped; that her child was not his child; that her daily life, her present pleasures, and future hopes were divorced from his — all these feelings were revived, together with a burning jealousy, as if, instead of being a buried corpse, she had still adorned her home with her loveliness and virtues.

Such thoughts lost their poignancy by degrees, and he could charm Elizabeth by dwelling on Gerard's praises; and he remarked with pleasure, that she resumed her vivacity, and recovered the colour and elasticity of motion, which she had lost. She did not feel less for Falkner: but her contemplations had lost their sombre hue — they were full of Neville — his voyage — his exertions — his success — his return; and the spirit of love that animated each of these acts, were gone over and over again in her waking dreams; unbidden smiles gleamed in her countenance; her ideas were gaily coloured, and her conversation gained a variety and cheerfulness, that lightened the burthen of their prison hours.

Meanwhile Neville arrived in London. He visited the American minister, and learned from him, that Osborne had given up the place he held, and had left Washington — no one knew whither he was gone — these events being still too recent to leave any trace behind. It was evident that to seek and find him would be a work of trouble and time, and Neville felt that not a moment must be lost — December was drawing to a close. The voyages to and from America might, if not favourable, consume the whole interval that still remained before the spring assizes. Hoskins, he learned, was gone to Liverpool.

He visited Lady Cecil before he left town. Though somewhat tainted by worldliness, yet this very feeling made her highly disapprove Sir Boyvill's conduct. A plausible, and she believed true, account was given of Mrs. Neville's death — exonerating her — redounding indeed to her honour. It was injurious to all to cast doubts upon this tale — it was vulgar and base to pursue revenge with such malicious and cruel pertinacity. Falkner was a gentleman, and deserved to be treated as such; and now he and Elizabeth were mixed up in loathsome scenes and details, that made Lady Cecil shudder even to think of.

That Gerard should go to America as the advocate, as it were, of Falkner, startled her; but he represented his voyage in a simpler light, as not being undertaken for his benefit, but for the sake of justice and truth. Sir Boyvill came in upon them while they were discussing this measure. He was absolutely frenzied by his son's conduct and views; his exasperation but tended to disgust, and did not operate to shake their opinions.

Neville hastened back to Liverpool; — a south-west wind reigned, whose violence prevented any vessel from sailing for America; it was evident that the passage would be long, and perhaps hazardous. Neville thought only of the delay; but this made him anxious. A portion of his time was spent in seeking for Hoskins; but he was not to be found. At last it was notified to him, that the wind had a little changed, and that the packet was about to sail. He hurried on board — soon they were tossing on a tempestuous sea — they lost sight of land — sky and ocean, each dusky, and the one rising at each moment into more tumultuous commotion, surrounded them. Neville, supporting himself by a rope, looked out over the horizon — a few months before he had anticipated the same voyage over a summer sea — now he went under far other auspices — the veil was raised — the mystery explained; but the wintry storms that had gathered round him, were but types of the tempestuous passions which the discoveries he had made, raised in the hearts of all.

For three days and nights the vessel beat about in the Irish Channel, unable to make any way — three days were thus lost to their voyage — and when were they to arrive? — Impatient — almost terrified by the delay which attended his endeavours, Neville began to despair of success. On the fourth night the gale rose to a hurricane — there was no choice but to run before it — by noon the following day the captain thought himself very lucky to make the harbour of Liverpool, and though the gale had much abated, and the wind had veered into a more favourable quarter, it was necessary to run in to refit. With bitter feelings of disappointment, Neville disembarked; several days must elapse before the packet would be able to put to sea, so he abandoned the idea of going by her — and finding a New York merchantman preparing to sail at an early hour, the following morning, he resolved to take his passage on board. He hastened to the American coffee-house to see the captain, and make the necessary arrangements for his voyage.

The captain had just left the tavern; but a waiter came up to Neville, and told him that the Mr. Hoskins, concerning whom he had before inquired, was in the house — in a private room. “Show me to him,” said Neville, and followed the man as he went to announce him.

Hoskins was not alone — he had a friend with him, and they were seated over their wine on each side of the fire. Neville could not help being struck with the confusion evinced by both as he entered. The person with Hoskins was a fair, light-haired, rather good-looking man, though past the prime of life — he had at once an expression of good-nature, and cunning in his face, and, added to this, a timid baffled look — which grew into something very like dismay when the waiter announced “Mr. Neville” —

“Good morning, sir,” said Hoskins, “I hear that you have been inquiring for me. I thought all our business was settled.”

“On your side, probably,” replied Neville; on mine I have reasons for wishing to see you. I have been seeking you in vain in London, and here.”

“Yes, I know,” said the other, “I went round by Ravenglass to take leave of the old woman before I crossed — and here I am, my passage taken, with not an hour to lose. I sail by the Owyhee, Captain Bateman.”

“Then we shall have time enough for all my inquiries,” observed Neville. “I came here for the very purpose of arranging my passage with Captain Bateman.”

“You, sir! are you going to America? I thought that was all at an end.”

“It is more necessary than ever. I must see Osborne — I must bring him over — his testimony is necessary to clear up the mystery that hangs over my mother’s fate.”

“You are nearer hanging Mr. Falkner without him than with him,” said Hoskins.

“I would bring him over for the very purpose of saving a man whom I believe to be innocent of the crime he is charged with; for that purpose I go to America. I wish the truth to be established — I have no desire for revenge.”

“And do you really go to America for that purpose?” repeated Hoskins.

“Certainly — I consider it my duty,” replied Neville. “Nay, it may be said that I went for this design, for I sailed by the John Adams — which has been driven back by contrary winds. I disembarked only half an hour ago.”

“That beats all!” cried Hoskins. “Why, do you know — I have more than half a mind to tell you — you had really sailed for America for the purpose of bringing Osborne over, and you now intend taking a passage on board the Owyhee?”

“Certainly; why not? — What is there so strange in all this? — I sought you for the sake of making inquiries that might guide me in my search for Osborne, who wishes to conceal himself.”

“You could not have addressed a better man — by the Lord! He’s a craven, and deserves no better; so I’ll just let out, Mr. Neville, that Osborne sneaked out of this room at the instant he saw you come into it.”

Neville had seen Hoskins’s companion disappear — he thought it but an act of civility — the strangeness of this coincidence, the course of events at once so contrary, and so propitious, staggered him for a moment. “They tell of the rattlesnake,” said Hoskins, “that fixing its eye on its prey, a bird becomes fascinated, and wheels round nearer and nearer till he falls into the jaws of the enemy — poor Osborne! He wishes himself on the shores of the Pacific, to be far enough off — and here he is, and turn and twist as he will, it will end by the law grasping him by the shoulder, and dragging him to the very noose he so fears to slip into; — not that he helped to murder the lady

— you do not believe that, Mr. Neville? — you do not think that the lady was murdered?”

“I would stake my existence that she was not,” said Neville; “were it otherwise, I should have no desire to see Osborne, or to interfere. Strange, most strange it is, that he should be here; and he is come, you think, with no design of offering his testimony to clear Mr. Falkner?” “He is come under a feigned name,” replied Hoskins; “under pretence that he was sent by Osborne — he has brought a quantity of attested declarations, and hopes to serve Mr. Falkner, without endangering his own neck.”

It was even so. Osborne was a weak man, good-hearted, as it is called, but a craven. No sooner did he hear that Hillary had sailed for Europe, and that he might consider himself safe, than he grew uneasy on another score. He had still possession, even while he had denied all knowledge of the writer, of Falkner’s letter, representing to him the necessity of coming over. It was simply but forcibly written; every word went to the heart of Osborne, now that he believed that his conduct would make over his generous benefactor to an ignominious end. This idea haunted him like an unlaid ghost; yet, if they hanged Falkner, what should prevent them from hanging him too? suspicion must fall equally on both.

When Hillary had urged the case, many other objections had presented themselves to Osborne’s mind. He thought of the new honest course he had pursued so long, the honourable station he had gained, the independence and respectability of his present life; and he shrunk from giving up these advantages, and becoming again, in all men’s eyes, the Osborne whose rascality he had left behind in England; it seemed hard that he should feel the weight of the chain that bound his former existence to his present one, when he fondly hoped that time had broken it. But these minor considerations vanished, as soon as the idea of Falkner’s danger fastened itself on his mind. It is always easy to fall back upon a state of being which once was ours. The uncertain, disreputable life Osborne had once led, he had gladly bidden adieu to, but the traces were still there, and he could fall into the way of it without any great shock. Besides this, he knew that Hillary had made his coming, and the cause of it, known to the legal authorities in Washington; and though he might persist in his denials, still he felt that he should be universally disbelieved.

A dislike at being questioned and looked askance upon by his American friends, made him already turn his eyes westward. A longing to see the old country arose unbidden in his heart. Above all, he could neither rest nor sleep, nor eat, nor perform any of the offices of life, for the haunting image of his benefactor, left by him to die a felon's death. Not that he felt tempted to alter his determination, and to come forward to save him: on the contrary, his blood grew chill, and his flesh shrunk at the thought; but still he might conceal himself in England; no one would suspect him of being there; he would be on the spot to watch the course of events; and if it was supposed that he could render any assistance, without compromising himself, he should at least be able to judge fairly how far he might concede: his vacillating mind could go no further in its conclusions. Hoskins had rightly compared him to the bird and the rattlesnake. He was fascinated; he could not avoid drawing nearer and nearer to the danger which he believed to be yawning to swallow him; ten days after Hillary left America, he was crossing the Atlantic. Hoskins was the first person he saw on landing, the second was Neville. His heart grew cold; he felt himself in the toils; how bitterly he repented his voyage. Coward as he was, he died a thousand deaths, from fear of that one which, in fact, there was no danger of his incurring.

That Osborne should of his own accord have come to England appeared to smooth every thing. Neville did not doubt that he should be able to persuade him to come forward at the right time. He instructed Hoskins to re-assure him, and to induce him to see him; and, if he objected, to contrive that they should meet. He promised to take no measures for securing his person, but to leave him in all liberty to act as he chose; he depended that the same uneasy conscience that brought him from America to Liverpool, would induce him at last, after various throes and struggles, to act as it was supposed he would have done at the beginning.

But day after day passed, and Osborne was not to be found; Hoskins had never seen him again, and it was impossible to say whither he was gone, or where he was hid. The Owyhee, whose voyage had again been delayed by contrary winds, now sailed. Hoskins went with her. It was possible that Osborne might be on board, returning to the land of refuge. Neville saw the captain, and he denied having such a passenger; but he might be bound to secrecy, or Osborne might have disguised himself. Neville went on board;

he carefully examined each person; he questioned both crew and passengers; he even bribed the sailors to inform him if any one were secreted. The Owyhee was not, however, the only vessel sailing; nearly thirty packets and merchantmen, who had been detained by foul winds, were but waiting for a tide to carry them out. Neville deliberated whether he should not apply to a magistrate for a search-warrant. He was averse to this — nay, repugnant. It was of the first importance to the utility of Osborne as a witness, that he should surrender himself voluntarily. The seizing him by force, as an accomplice in the murder, would only place him beside Falkner in the dock, and render his evidence of no avail; and his, Neville's, causing his arrest, could only be regarded as a piece of rancorous hostility against the accused; yet to suffer him to depart from the English shores was madness, and worse still, to be left in doubt of whether he had gone or remained. If the first were ascertained, Neville could take his passage also, and there might still be time to bring him back.

When we act for another, we are far more liable to hesitation than when our deeds regard ourselves only. We dread to appear lukewarm; we dread to mar all by officiousness. Ill-success always appears a fault, and yet we dare not make a bold venture — such as we should not hesitate upon were it our own cause. Neville felt certain that Falkner would not himself deliberate, but risk all to possess himself of the person of Osborne; still he dared not take so perilous, perhaps so fatal, a step.

The tide rose, and the various docks filled. One by one the American-bound vessels dropped out, and put to sea. It was a moment of agony to Neville to see their sails unfurl, swell to the wind, and make a speedy and distant offing. He now began to accuse himself bitterly of neglect — he believed that there was but one mode of redeeming his fault — to hurry on board one of the packets, and to arrive in America as soon as Osborne, whom he felt convinced was already on his way thither. Swift in his convictions, rash in execution, uncertainty was peculiarly hostile to his nature; and these moments of vacillation and doubt, and then of self-reproach at having lost all in consequence, were the most painful of his life. To determine to do something was some consolation, and now he resolved on his voyage. He hurried back to his hotel for a few necessaries and money. On his entrance, a letter was put into his hands — the contents changed the whole current of his ideas. His countenance cleared up — the tumult of his thoughts subsided into a happy calm. Changing all his plans, instead of undertaking a voyage to America, he the same evening set out for London.

CHAPTER XIV.

Theprisoner and his faithful companion knew nothing of these momentous changes. Day by day Elizabeth withdrew from the fire to the only window in her father's room; moving her embroidery table close to it, her eyes turned, however, to the sky, instead of to the flowers she was working; and leaning her cheek upon her hand, she perpetually watched the clouds. Gerard was already, she fancied, on the world of waters; yet the clouds did not change their direction — they all sped one way, and that contrary to his destination. Thus she passed her mornings; and when she returned to her own abode, where her heart could more entirely spend its thoughts on her lover and his voyage, her lonely room was no longer lonely; nor the gloomy season any longer gloomy. More than happy — a breathless rapture quickened the beatings of her heart, as she told over again and again Neville's virtues, and dearer than all, his claims on her gratitude.

Falkner saw with pleasure the natural effects of love and hope add to the cheerfulness of his beloved child, diffuse a soft charm over her person, her motions, and her voice, and impart a playful tenderness to her before rather serious manners. Youth, love, and happiness are so very beautiful in their conjunction. "God grant," he thought, "I do not mar this fair creature's life — may she be happier than Alithea; if man can be worthy of her, Gerard Neville surely is." As he turned his eyes silently from the book that apparently occupied him, and contemplated her pensive countenance, whose expression showed that she was wrapped in, yet enjoying her thoughts, retrospect made him sad. He went over his own life, its clouded morning, the glad beams that broke out to dissipate those clouds, and the final setting amidst tempests and wreck. Was all life like this, must all be disappointed hope, baffled desires, lofty imaginations engendering fatal acts, and bringing the proud thus low? would she at his age view life as he did — a weary wilderness — a tangled, endless labyrinth, leading by one rough path or another to a bitter end? He hoped not, her innocence must receive other reward from Heaven.

It was on a day as they were thus occupied — Falkner refrained from interrupting Elizabeth's reverie, which he felt was sweeter to her than any converse — and appeared absorbed in reading; suddenly she exclaimed, “The wind has changed, dear father; indeed it has changed, it is favourable now. Do you not feel how much colder it is? the wind has got to the north, there is a little east in it; his voyage will not be a long one, if this change only lasts!”

Falkner answered her by a smile; but it was humiliating to think of the object of that voyage, and her cheerful voice announcing that it was to be prosperous, struck, he knew not why, a saddening chord. At this moment he heard the bolts of the chamber-door pushed back, and the key turn in the lock — the turnkey entered, followed by another man, who hesitated as he came forward, and then as he glanced at the inhabitants of the room, drew back, saying, “There is some mistake; Mr. Falkner is not here.”

But for his habitual self-command, Falkner had started up, and made an exclamation — so surprised was he to behold the person who entered — for he recognized his visitant on the instant — he, himself, was far more changed by the course of years; time, sickness, and remorse had used other than Praxitilean art, and had defaced the lines of grace and power, which had marked him many years ago, before his hands had dug Alithea’s grave. He was indeed surprised to see who entered; but he showed no sign of wonder, only saying with a calm smile, “No, there is no mistake, I am the man you seek.”

The other now apparently recognized him, and advanced timidly, and in confusion — the turnkey left them, and Falkner then said, “Osborne, you deserve my thanks for this, but I did believe that it would come to this.”

“No,” said Osborne, “I do not deserve thanks — I—” and he looked confused, and glanced towards Elizabeth. Falkner followed his eye, and understanding his look, said, “You do not fear being betrayed by a lady, Osborne, you are safe here as in America. I see how it is, you are here under a false name; no one is aware that you are the man, who a few weeks ago refused to appear to save a fellow-creature from death.”

“I see no way to do that now,” replied Osborne, hesitating; “I do not come for that, I come — I could not stay away — I thought something might be done.”

“Elizabeth, my love,” said Falkner, “you, at least, will thank Mr. Osborne for his spontaneous services — you are watching the clouds which were to bear along the vessel towards him, and beyond our hopes he is already here."

Elizabeth listened breathlessly — she feared to utter a word lest it might prove a dream — now, gathering Falkner's meaning, she came forward, and with all a woman's grace addressed the trembling man, who already looked at the door as if he longed to be on the other side, fearful that he was caught in his own toils; for, as Hoskins said, the fascinated prey had wheeled yet nearer to his fate involuntarily — he had been unable to resist his desire to see Falkner, and learn how it was with him, but he still resolved not to risk any thing; he had represented himself to the magistrates as coming from Osborne, showing false papers, and a declaration drawn up by him at Washington, and attested before official men there, setting forth Falkner's innocence; he had brought this over to see if it would serve his benefactor, and had thus got access to him: such was his reliance on the honour of his patron that he had not hesitated in placing himself in his power, well aware that he should not be detained by him against his will; for still his heart quailed, and his soul shrunk from rendering him the service that would save his life.

His manner revealed his thoughts to the observant Falkner, but Elizabeth, less well read in men's hearts, younger and more sanguine, saw in his arrival the completion of her hopes, and she thanked him with so much warmth, and with such heartfelt praises of his kindness and generosity, that Osborne began to think that his greatest difficulty would be in resisting her fascination, and disappointing her wishes. He stammered out at last some lame excuses. All he could do consistently with safety, they might command; he had shown this by coming over — more could not be asked, could not be expected — he himself, God knew, was innocent, so was Mr. Falkner, of the crime he was charged with. But he had no hand whatever in the transaction, he was not in his confidence, he had not known even who the lady was; his testimony, after all, must be worth nothing, for he had nothing to tell, and for this he was to expose himself to disgrace and death.

Acquiring courage at the sound of his own voice, Osborne grew fluent. Elizabeth drew back — she looked anxiously at Falkner, and saw a cloud of displeasure and scorn gather over his countenance — she put her hand on his, as if to check the outbreak of his indignation; yet she herself, as Osborne went on, turned her eyes flashing with disdain upon him. The miserable fellow, cowed before the glances of both, he shifted from one foot to the other, he dared not look up, but he knew that their eyes were on him, and he felt the beams transfix him, and wither up his soul. There are weak men who yield to persuasion, there are weaker who are vanquished by reproaches and contempt; of such was Osborne. His fluency faded into broken accents; his voice died away — as a last effort, he moved towards the door.

“Enough, sir,” said Falkner, in a calm, contemptuous voice; “and now begone — hasten away — do not stop till you have gained the shore, the ship, the waves of the Atlantic: be assured I shall not send for you a second time, I have no desire to owe my life to you.”

“If I could save your life, Mr. Falkner,” he began; “but” —

“We will not argue that point,” interrupted Falkner; “it is enough that it is generally asserted that your testimony is necessary for my preservation. Were my crime as great as it is said to be, it would find its punishment in that humiliation. Go, sir, you are safe! I would not advise you to loiter here, return to America; walls have ears in abodes like these; you may be forced to save a fellow-creature against your will; hasten then away, go, eat, drink and be merry — whatever betides me, not even my ghost shall haunt you. Meanwhile, I would beg you no longer to insult me by your presence — begone at once.”

“You are angry, sir,” said Osborne timidly.

“I hope not,” replied Falkner, who had indeed felt his indignation rise, and checked himself; “I should be very sorry to feel anger against a coward; I pity you — you will repent this when too late.”

“Oh do not say so,” cried Elizabeth; “do not say he will repent when too late — but now, in time, I am sure that he repents; do you not, Mr. Osborne? You are told that your fears are vain; you know Mr. Falkner is far too noble to draw you into danger to save himself — you know even that he does not fear death, but ignominy, eternal horrible disgrace, and the end, the frightful end prepared, even he must recoil from that — and you — no, you cannot in cold blood, and with calm forethought, make him over to it — you cannot, I see that you cannot” —

“Forbear, Elizabeth!” interrupted Falkner in a tone of displeasure; “I will not have my life, nor even my honour, begged by you; let the worst come, the condemnation, the hangman — I can bear all, except the degradation of supplicating such a man as that."

"I see how it is," said Osborne. "Yes — you do with me as you will — I feared this, and yet I thought myself firm; do with me as you will — call the gaoler — I will surrender myself." He turned pale as death, and tottered to a chair.

Falkner turned his back on him—"Go, sir!" he repeated, "I reject your sacrifice."

"No, father, no," cried Elizabeth eagerly; "say not so — you accept it — and I also with thanks and gratitude: yet it is no sacrifice, Mr. Osborne — I assure you that is not, at least, the sacrifice you fear — all is far easier than you think — there is no prison for you — you arrival need not yet be known — your consent being obtained, a pardon will be at once granted — you are to appear as a witness — not as a—" her voice faltered — she turned to Falkner, her eyes brimming over with tears. Osborne caught the infection, he was touched — he was cheered also by Elizabeth's assurances, which he hoped that he might believe; hitherto he had been too frightened and bewildered to hear accurately even what he had been told — he fancied that he must be tried — the pardon might or might not come afterwards — the youth, earnestness, and winning beauty of Elizabeth moved him; and now that his fears were a little allayed, he could see more clearly, he was even more touched by, the appearance of his former benefactor. Dignity and yet endurance — suffering as well as fortitude — marked his traits; there was something so innately noble, and yet so broken by fortune, expressed in his commanding yet attenuated features and person — he was a wreck that spoke so plainly of the glorious being he had once been; there was so much majesty in his decay — such real innocence sat on his high and open brow, streaked though it was with disease — such lofty composure in his countenance, pale from confinement, and suffering — that Osborne felt a mixture of respect and pity that soon rose above every other feeling.

Reassured with regard to himself, and looking on his patron with eyes that caught the infection of Elizabeth's tears, he came forward—"I beg your pardon, Mr. Falkner," he said, "for my doubts — for my cowardice, if you please so to name it; I request you to forget it, and to permit me to come forward in your behalf. I trust you will not disdain my offer; though late, it comes, I assure you, from my heart."

There was no mock dignity about Falkner, a sunny smile broke over his features as he held out his hand to Osborne. “And from my heart, I thank you,” he replied, “and deeply regret that you are to suffer any pain through me — mine was the crime, you the instrument; it is hard, very hard, that you should be brought to this through your complaisance to me; real danger for you there is none — or I would die this worst death rather than expose you to it.”

Elizabeth now, in all gladness, wrote a hasty note; desiring Mr. Colville to come to them, that all might at once be arranged. “And Gerard, dear father,” she said, “we must write to Mr. Neville to recall him from his far and fruitless journey.”

“Mr. Neville is in Liverpool,” said Osborne; “I saw him the very day before I came away — he doubtless was on the look out for me, and I dare swear Hoskins betrayed me. We must be on our guard” —

“Fear nothing from Mr. Neville,” replied Elizabeth; “he is too good and generous not to advocate justice and truth. He is convinced of my father’s innocence.”

They were interrupted — the solicitor entered — Osborne’s appearance was beyond his hopes — he could not believe in so much good fortune. He had begun to doubt, suspect, and fear — he speedily carried off his godsend, as he named him, to talk over, and bring into form his evidence, and all that appertained to his surrender — thus leaving Falkner with his adopted child.

Such a moment repaid for much; for Elizabeth’s hopes were high, and she knelt before Falkner, embracing his knees, thanking Heaven in a rapture of gratitude. He also was thankful; yet mortification and wounded pride struggled in his heart with a sense of gratitude for unhoped-for preservation. His haughty spirit rebelled against the obligation he owed to so mean a man as Osborne. It required hours of meditation — of reawakened remorse for Alithea’s fate — of renewed wishes that she should be vindicated before all the world — of remembered love for the devoted girl at his feet, to bring him back from the tumult of contending passions, to the fortitude and humility which he at every moment strove to cultivate.

Elizabeth’s sweet voice dispelled such storms, and rewarded him for the serenity he at last regained. It was impossible not to feel sympathy in her happiness, and joy in possessing the affection of so gentle, yet so courageous and faithful a heart. Elizabeth’s happiness was even more complete when she left him, and sat in her solitary room — there, where Gerard had so lately visited her, and his image, and her gratitude towards him mingled more with her thoughts: her last act that night, was to write to him, to tell him what had happened: It was her note that he received at Liverpool on the eve of his second departure, and which had changed his purpose. He had immediately set out for London to communicate the good tidings to Lady Cecil.

CHAPTER XV.

Thesehad been hours of sunshine for the prisoner and his child, such as seldom visit the precincts of a gaol, and soon, too soon they changed, and the usual gloom returned to the abode of suffering. In misfortune various moods assail us. At first we are struck, stunned, and overwhelmed; then the elastic spirit rises, it tries to shape misery in its own way, it adapts itself to it; it finds unknown consolations arise out of circumstances which in moments of prosperity were unregarded. But this temper of mind is not formed for endurance. As a sick person finds comfort in a new posture at first, but after a time the posture becomes restrained and wearisome; thus after mustering fortitude, patience, the calm spirit of philosophy, and the tender one of piety, and finding relief; suddenly the heart rebels, its old desires and old habits recur, and we are the more dissatisfied from being disappointed in those modes of support in which we trusted.

There was perpetual struggle in Falkner's heart. Hatred of life, pride, a yearning for liberty, and a sore, quick spirit of impatience for all the bars and forms that stood between him and it, swelled like a tide in his soul. He hated himself for having brought himself thus low; he was angry that he had exposed Elizabeth to such a scene, he reviled his enemies in his heart, he accused destiny. Then again, if he but shut his eyes — the stormy river, the desolate sands, and the one fair being dead at his feet, presented themselves, and remorse, like a wind, drove back the flood. He felt that he had deserved it all, that he had himself woven the chain of circumstances which he called his fate, while his innocence of the crime brought against him imparted a lofty spirit of fortitude, and even of repose.

Elizabeth, with an angel's love, watched the changes of his temper. Her sensibility was often wounded by his sufferings; but her benign disposition was so fertile of compassion and forbearance, that her own mood was never irritated by finding her attempts to console fruitless. She listened meekly when his overladen heart spent itself in invectives against the whole system of life; or catching a favourable moment, she strove to raise his mind to nobler and purer thoughts — unobtrusive, but never weary — eagerly gathering all good tidings, banishing the ill; her smiles, her tears, her cheerfulness or calm sadness, by turns relieved and comforted him.

Winter came upon them. It was wild and drear. Their abode, far in the north of the island, was cold beyond their experience, the dark prison-walls were whitened by snow, the bars of their windows were laden, Falkner looked out, the snow drifted against his face, one peep at the dusky sky was all that was allowed him; he thought of the wide steppes of Russia, the swift sledges, and how he longed for freedom! Elizabeth, as she walked home through the frost and sleet, gave a sigh for the soft seasons of Greece, and felt that a double winter gathered round her steps.

Day by day, time passed on. Each evening returning to her solitary fireside, she thought, "Another is gone, the time draws near;" she shuddered, despite her conviction that the trial would be the signal for the liberation of Falkner; she saw the barriers time had placed between him and fate, fall off one by one with terror; January and February passed, March had come — the first of March, the very month when all was to be decided, arrived. Poor tempest-tost voyagers! would the wished-for port be gained — should they ever exchange the uncertain element of danger for the firm land of security!

It was on the first of March that, returning home in the evening, she found a letter on her table from Neville. Poor Elizabeth! she loved with tenderness and passion — and yet how few of the fairy thoughts and visions of love had been hers — love with her was mingled with so dire a tragedy, such real oppressive griefs, that its charms seemed crimes against her benefactor; yet now, as she looked on the letter, and thought, "from him," the rapture of love stole over her, her eyes were dimmed by the agitation of delight, and the knowledge that she was loved suspended every pain, filling her with soft triumph, and thrilling, though vague expectation.

She broke the seal — there was an inner envelope directed to Miss Raby — and she smiled at the mere thought of the pleasure Gerard must have felt in tracing that name — the seal, as he regarded it, of their future union; but when she unfolded the sheet, and glanced down the page, her attention was riveted by other emotions. Thus Neville wrote: —

"My own sweet Elizabeth, I write in haste, but doubt is so painful, and tidings fly so quickly, that I hope you will hear first by means of these lines, the new blow fate has prepared for us. My father lies dangerously ill. This, I fear, will again delay the trial — occasion prolonged imprisonment — and keep you still a martyr to those duties you so courageously fulfil. We must have patience. We are impotent to turn aside irrevocable decrees, yet when we think how much hangs on the present moment of time, the heart — my weak heart at least — is wrung by anguish.

"I cannot tell whether Sir Boyvill is aware of his situation — he is too much oppressed by illness for conversation; the sole desire he testifies is to have me near him. Once or twice he has pressed my hand, and looked on me with affection. I never remember to have received before, such testimonials of paternal love. Such is the force of the natural tie between us, that I am deeply moved, and would not leave him for the whole world. My poor father! — he has no friend, no relative but me; and now, after so much haughtiness and disdain, he, in his need, is like a little child, reduced to feel his only support in the natural affections. His unwonted gentleness subdues my soul. Oh, who would rule by power, when so much more absolute a tyranny is established through love!

"Sophia is very kind — but she is not his child. The hour approaches when we should be at Carlisle. What will be the result of our absence — what the event of this illness? — I am perplexed and agitated beyond measure; in a day or two all will be decided: if Sir Boyvill becomes convalescent, still it may be long before he can undertake so distant a journey.

"Do not fear that for a moment I shall neglect your interests, they are my own. For months I have lived only on the expectation of the hour when you should be liberated from the horrors of your present position; and the anticipation of another delay is torture. Even your courage must sink, your patience have an end. Yet a little longer, my Elizabeth, support yourself, let not your noble heart fail at this last hour, this last attack of adversity. Be all that you have ever been, firm, resigned, and generous; in your excellence I place all my trust. I will write again very speedily, and if you can imagine any service that I can do you, command me to the utmost. I write by my father's bedside; he does not sleep, but he is still. Farewell — I love you; in those words is summed a life of weal or woe for me and for you also, my Elizabeth? Do not call me selfish for feeling thus — even here."

"Yes, yes," thought Elizabeth; "busy fingers are weaving — the web of destiny is unrolling fast — we may not think, nor hope, nor scarcely breathe

— we must await the hour — death is doing his work — what victim will he select?”

The intelligence in this letter, communicated on the morrow to all concerned in the coming trial, filled each with anxiety. In a very few days the assizes would commence; Falkner’s name stood first on the list — delay was bitter, yet he must prepare for delay, and arm himself anew with resolution. Several anxious days passed — Elizabeth received no other letter — she felt that Sir Boyvill’s danger was protracted, that Gerard was still in uncertainty — the post hour now became a moment of hope and dread — it was a sort of harassing inquietude hard to endure: at length a few lines from Lady Cecil arrived — they brought no comfort — all remained in the same state.

The assizes began — on the morrow the judges were expected in Carlisle — and already all that bustle commenced that bore the semblance of gaiety in the rest of the town, but which was so mournful and fearful in the gaol. There were several capital cases; as Elizabeth heard them discussed, her blood ran cold — she hated life, and all its adjuncts: to know of misery she could not alleviate was always saddening; but to feel the squalid mortal misery of such a place and hour brought home to her own heart, was a wretchedness beyond all expression, poignant and hideous.

The day that the judges arrived, Elizabeth presented herself in Falkner’s cell — a letter in her hand — her first words announced good tidings; yet she was agitated, tearful — something strange and awful had surely betided. It was a letter from Neville that she held, and gave to Falkner to read.

“I shall soon be in Carlisle, my dearest friend, but this letter will outspeed me, and bring you the first intelligence of my poor father’s death. Thank God, I did my duty by him to the last — thank God, he died in peace — in peace with me and the whole world. The uneasiness of pain yielded at first to torpor, and thus we feared he would die; but before his death he recovered himself for an hour or two, and though languid and feeble, his mind was clear. How little, dear Elizabeth, do we know of our fellow-creatures — each shrouded in the cloak of manner — that cloak of various dyes — displays little of the naked man within. We thought my father vain, selfish, and cruel — he was all this, but he was something else that we knew not of — he was generous, humane, humble — these qualities he hid as if they had been vices — he struggled with them — pride prevented him from recognizing them as the redeeming points of a faulty nature; he despised himself for feeling them, until he was on his death-bed.

“Then, in broken accents, he asked me, his only son, to pardon his mistakes and cruelties — he asked me to forgive him, in my dear mother’s name — he acknowledged his injustices towards her. ‘Would that I might live,’ he said; ‘for my awakened conscience urges me to repair a portion of the evils I have caused — but it is too late. Strange that I should never have given ear to the whisperings of justice — though they were often audible — till now, when there is no help! — Yet is it so? cannot some reparation be made? There is one’ — and as he spoke he half raised himself, and some of the wonted fire flashed from his glazed eye — but he sunk back again, saying in a low but distinct voice, ‘Falkner — Rupert Falkner — he is innocent, I know and feel his innocence — yet I have striven to bring him to the death. Let me record my belief that his tale is true, and that Alithea died the victim of her own heroism, not by his hand. Gerard, remember, report these words — save him — his sufferings have been great — promise me — that I may feel that God and Alithea will forgive me, as I forgive him; I act now, as your mother would have had me act; I act to please her.’

“I speak it without shame, my eyes ran over with tears, and this softening of a proud heart before the remembered excellence of one so long dead, so long thought of with harshness and resentment, was the very triumph of the good spirit of the world; yet tears were all the thanks I could give for several minutes. He saw that I was moved — but his strength was fast leaving him, and pressing my hand and murmuring, ‘My last duty is now performed — I will sleep,’ he turned away his head; he never spoke more, except to articulate my name, and once or twice, as his lips moved, and I bent down to listen, I heard the name of my mother breathed at the latest hour.

“I cannot write more — the trial will take place, I am told, immediately — before the funeral. I shall be in Carlisle — all will go well, dear Elizabeth — and when we meet again, happier feelings will be ours. God bless you now and always, as you deserve.”

CHAPTER XVI.

All things now assumed an anxious aspect; all was hurrying to a conclusion. To-morrow the trial was to come on. “Security” is not a word for mortal man to use, more especially when the issue of an event depends on the opinions and actions of his fellow-creatures. Falkner’s acquittal was probable, but not certain; even if the impression went in general in his favour, a single juryman might hold out, and perverseness, added to obstinacy, would turn the scale against him. Sickening fears crept over Elizabeth’s heart; she endeavoured to conceal them; she endeavoured to smile and repeat, “This is our last day of bondage.”

Falkner cast no thought upon the worst — innocence shut out fear. He could not look forward to the ignominy of such a trial without acute suffering; yet there was an austere composure in his countenance, that spoke of fortitude and reliance on a power beyond the limit of human influence. His turn had come to encourage Elizabeth. There was a nobleness and simplicity of character, common to both, that made them very intelligible to each other. Falkner, however, had long been nourishing secret thoughts and plans, of which he had made no mention, till now, the crisis impending, he thought it best to lift a portion of the veil that covered the future.

“Yes,” he said, in reply to Elizabeth, “to-morrow will be the last day of slavery; I regain my human privileges after to-morrow, and I shall not be slow to avail myself of them. My first act will be to quit this country. I have never trod its soil but to find misery; after to-morrow I leave it for ever.”

Elizabeth started, and looked inquiringly: Were her wishes, her destiny to have no influence over his plans? he knew of the hope, the affection, that rendered England dear to her. Falkner took her hand. “You will join me hereafter, dearest; but you will, in the first instance, yield to my request, and consent to a separation for a time.”

“Never!” said Elizabeth; “you cannot deceive me; you act thus for my purposes, and not your own, and you misconceive everything. We will never part.”

"Daughters, when they marry," observed Falkner, "leave father, mother, all, and follow the fortunes of their husbands. You must submit to the common law of human society."

"Do not ask me to reason with you and refute your arguments," replied Elizabeth; "our position is different from that of any other parent and child. I will not say I owe you more than daughter ever owed father — perhaps the sacred tie of blood may stand in place of the obligations you have heaped on me; but I will not reason; I cannot leave you. Right or wrong in the eyes of others, my own heart would perpetually reproach me. I should image your solitary wanderings, your lonely hours of sickness and suffering, and my peace of mind would be destroyed."

"It is true," said Falkner, "that I am more friendless than most men; yet I am not so weak and womanish that I need perpetual support. Your society is dear to me, dearer, God, who reads my heart, knows, than liberty or life; I shall return to that society, and again enjoy it; but, for a time, do not fear but that I can form such transitory ties as will prevent solitary suffering. Men and women abound who will feel benevolently towards the lonely stranger: money purchases respect; blameless manners win kindness. I shall find friends in my need if I desire it, and I shall return at last to you."

"My dearest father," said Elizabeth, "you cannot deceive me. I penetrate your motives, but you wholly mistake. You would force me also to mistake your character, but I know you too well. You never form transitory friendships; you take no pleasure in the ordinary run of human intercourse. You inquire; you seek for instruction; you endeavour to confer benefits; but you have no happiness except such as you derive from your heart, and that is not easily impressed. Did you not for many long years continue faithful to one idea — adhere to one image — devote yourself to one, one only, despite all that separated you? Did not the impediment you found to the fulfilment of your visions, blight your whole life, and bring you here? Pardon me if I allude to these things. I cannot be to you what she was, but you can no more banish me from your heart and imagination than you could her. I know that you cannot. We are not parent and child," she continued playfully, "but we have a strong resemblance on one point — fidelity is our characteristic; we will not speak of this to others, they might think that we boasted. I am not quite sure that it is not a defect: at least in some cases, as with you, it proved a misfortune. To me it can never be such; it repays itself.

I cannot leave you, whatever befalls. If Gerard Neville is hereafter lost to me, I cannot help it; it would kill me to fall off from you. I must follow the natural, the irresistible bent of my character.

"To-morrow, the day after to-morrow, we will speak more of this. What is necessary for your happiness, be assured, I will fulfil without repining; but now, dearest father, let us not speak of the future now; my heart is too full of the present — the future appears to me a dream never to be arrived at. Oh, how more than blest I shall be when the future, the long future, shall grow into interest and importance!"

They were interrupted. One person came in, and then another, and the appalling details of the morrow effectually banished all thoughts of plans, the necessity of which Falkner wished to impress on his young companion. He also was obliged to give himself up to present cares. He received all, he talked to all, with a serious but unembarrassed air; while Elizabeth sat shuddering by, wiping away her tears unseen, and turning her dimmed eyes from one to the other, pale and miserable. We have fortitude and resignation for ourselves; but when those beloved are in peril we can only weep and pray. Sheltered in a dusky corner, a little retreated behind Falkner, she watched, she listened to all, and her heart almost broke. "Leave him! after this leave him!" she thought, "a prey to such memories? Oh, may all good angels desert me when I become so vile a wretch!"

The hour came when they must part. She was not to see him on the morrow, until the trial was over; for her presence during the preliminary scenes, was neither fitting nor practicable. Already great indulgences had been granted to the prisoner, arising from his peculiar position, the great length of time since the supposed crime had been committed, and the impression, now become general, that he was innocent. But this had limits — the morrow was to decide all, and send him forth free and guiltless, or doom him to all the horrors of condemnation and final suffering.

Their parting was solemn. Neither indulged in grief. Falkner felt composed — Elizabeth endeavoured to assume tranquillity; but her lips quivered, and she could not speak; it was like separating not to meet for years; a few short hours, and she would look again upon his face — but how much would happen in the interval! — how mighty a change have occurred! What agony would both have gone through! the one picturing, the other enduring, the scene of the morrow; the gaze of thousands — the accusation — the evidence — the defence — the verdict — each of these bearing with it to the well-born and refined, a barbed dart, pregnant with thrilling poison; ignominy added to danger. How Elizabeth longed to express to the assembled world the honour in which she held him, whom all looked on as overwhelmed with disgrace; how she yearned to declare the glory she took in the ties that bound them, and the affection that she bore! She must be mute — but she felt all this to bursting; and her last words, "Best of men! excellent, upright, noble, generous, God will preserve you and restore you to me!" expressed in some degree the swelling emotions of her soul.

They parted. Night and silence gathered round Falkner's pillow. With stoical firmness he banished retrospect — he banished care. He laid his hopes and fears at the feet of that Almighty Power, who holds earth and all it contains in the hollow of his hand, and he would trouble himself no more concerning the inevitable though unknown decree. His thoughts were at first solemn and calm; and then, as the human mind can never, even in torture, fix itself unalterably on one point, milder and more pleasing reveries presented themselves. He thought of himself as a wild yet not worthless schoolboy — he remembered the cottage porch clustered over with odoriferous parasites, under whose shadow sat the sick, pale lady, with her starry eyes and wise lessons, and her radiant daughter, whose soft hand he held as they both nestled close at her feet. He recalled his wanderings with that daughter over hill and dale, when their steps were light, and their hearts, unburthened with a care, soared to that heaven which her blessed spirit had already reached. Oh, what is life, that these dreams of youth and innocence should have conducted her to an untimely grave — him to a felon's cell! The thought came with a sharp pang; again he banished it, and the land of Greece, his perils, and his wanderings with Elizabeth on the shores of Zante, now replaced his other memories. He then bore a burthen on his heart, which veiled with dark crape the glories of a sunny climate, the heart-cheering tenderness of his adopted child — this was less bitter, this meeting of fate, this atonement. Sleep crept over him at last, and such is the force of innocence, that though a cloud of agony hung over his awakening, yet he slept peacefully on the eve of his trial.

Towards morning his sleep became less tranquil. He moved — he groaned — then opening his eyes he started up, struggling to attain full consciousness of where he was, and wherefore. He had been dreaming — and he asked himself what had been the subject of his dreams. Was it Greece — or the dreary waste shores of Cumberland? And why did that fair lingering shape beckon him? Was it Alithea or Elizabeth? Before these confused doubts could be solved, he recognized the walls of the cell — and saw the shadow of the bars of his windows on the curtain spread before it. It was morning — the morning — where would another sun find him?

He rose and drew aside the curtain — and there were the dark, high walls — weather-stained and huge; — clear, but sunless day-light was spread over each object — it penetrated every nook, and yet was devoid of cheer. There is indeed something inexpressibly desolate in the sight of the early, grey, chill dawn dissipating the shadows of night, when the day which it harbingers is to bring misery. Night is a cloak — a shelter — a defence — all men sleep at night — the law sleeps, and its dread ministrants are harmless in their beds, hushed like cradled children. “Even now they sleep,” thought Falkner, “pillowed and curtained in luxury — but day is come, and they will soon resume their offices — and drag me before them — and wherefore? — because it is day — because it is Wednesday — because names have been given to portions of time, which otherwise might be passed over and forgotten.”

To the surgeon’s eye, a human body sometimes presents itself merely as a mass of bones, muscles, and arteries — though that human body may contain a soul to emulate Shakespear — and thus there are moments when the wretched dissect the forms of life — and contemplating only the outward semblance of events, wonder how so much power of misery, or the reverse, resides in what is after all but sleeping or waking — walking here or walking there — seeing one fellow-creature instead of another. Such were the morbid sensations that absorbed Falkner as day grew clearer and clearer — the narrow court more gloomy as compared with the sky, and the objects in his cell assumed their natural colour and appearances. “All sleep,” he again thought, “except I, the sufferer; and does my own Elizabeth sleep? Heaven grant it, and guard her slumbers! May those dear eyes long remain closed in peace upon this miserable day!”

He dressed himself long before any one in the prison (and gaolers are early risers) was awake; at last there were steps in the passage — bolts were drawn and voices heard. These familiar sounds recalled him to actual life, and approaching, inevitable events. His haughty soul awoke again — a dogged pride steeled his heart — he remembered the accusation — the execration in which he believed himself to be held — and his innocence. "Retribution or atonement — I am ready to pay it as it is demanded of me for Alithea's sake — but the injustice of man is not lessened on this account; henceforth I am to be stamped with ignominy — and yet in what am I worse than my fellows? — at least they shall not see that my spirit bends before them."

He assumed cheerfulness, and bore all the preliminaries of preparation with apparent carelessness; sometimes his eagle eye flashed fire — sometimes, fixed on vacancy, a whole life of memories passed across his mental vision; but there was no haste, no trepidation, no faltering — he never thought of danger or of death — innocence sustained him. The ignominy of the present was all that he felt that he had to endure and master — that, and the desolation beyond, when branded through life as he believed he should be, even by acquittal, he was henceforth to be looked on as an outcast.

At length he was led forth to his trial — pride in his heart — resolution in his eye; he passed out of the gloomy portal of the prison, and entered the sun-lit street — houses were around; but through an opening he caught a glimpse of the country — uplands and lawny fields, and tree-crested hills — the work of God himself. Sunshine rested on the scene — one used to liberty had regarded with contempt the restricted view presented by the opening; but to the prisoner, who for months had only seen his prison-walls, it seemed as if the creation lay unrolled in its majesty before him. What was man in comparison with the power that upheld the earth, and bade the sun to shine? And man was to judge him? What mockery! Man and all his works were but a plaything in the hands of Omnipotence, and to that Falkner submitted his destiny. He rose above the degrading circumstances around him; he looked down upon his fate — a real, a lofty calm at last possessed his soul; he felt that nought said or done that day by his fellow-creatures could move him; his reliance was elsewhere — it rested on his own innocence, and his intimate sense that he was in no more danger now, than if sheltered in the farthest, darkest retreat, unknown to man; he walked as if surrounded by an atmosphere which no storms from without could penetrate.

He entered the court with a serene brow, and so much dignity added to a look that expressed such entire peace of conscience, that every one who beheld him became prepossessed in his favour. His distinct, calm voice declaring himself “Not Guilty;” the confidence, untinged by vaunting, with which he uttered the customary appeal to God and his Country, excited admiration at first, and then, when a second sentiment could be felt, the most heart-moving pity. Such a man, so unstained by vice, so raised above crime, had never stood there before; accustomed to the sight of vulgar rogues or hardened ruffians, wonder was mingled with a certain self-examination, which made each man feel that, if justice were done, he probably deserved more to be in that dock than the prisoner.

And then they remembered that he stood there to be consigned to life or death, as the jury should decide. A breathless interest was awakened, not only in the spectators, but even in those hardened by habit to scenes like this. Every customary act of the court was accompanied by a solemnity unfelt before. The feeling, indeed, that reigned was something more than solemn; thirsting curiosity and eager wonder gave way before thrilling awe, to think that that man might be condemned to an ignominious end.

When once the trial had begun, and his preliminary part had been played, Falkner sat down. He became, to all appearance, abstracted. He was, indeed, thinking of things more painful than even the present scene; the screams and struggles of the agonized Alithea — her last sad sleep in the hut upon the shore — the strangling, turbid waves — her wet, lifeless form — her low, unnamed grave dug by him: had these been atoned for by long years of remorse and misery, or was the present ignominy, and worse that might ensue, fitting punishment? Be it as it might, he was equal to the severest blows, and ready to lay down a life in compensation for that of which he, most unintentionally, and yet most cruelly, had deprived her. His thoughts were not recalled to the present scene, till a voice struck his ear, so like hers — did the dead speak? Knit up as he was to the endurance of all, he trembled from head to foot; he had been so far away from that place, till the echo, as it were, of Alithea’s voice, recalled him; in a moment he recovered himself, and found that it was her child, Gerard Neville, who was giving his evidence.

He heard the son of his victim speak of him as innocent, and a thrill of thankfulness entered his soul; he smiled, and hope and sympathy with his fellow-creatures, and natural softening feelings, replaced the gloomy bitterness and harshness of his past reflections. He felt that he should be acquitted, and that it became him to impress all present favourably; it became him to conduct himself so as to show his confidence in the justice of those on whom his fate depended, and at once to assert the dignity of innocence. From that time he gave himself entirely up to the details of the trial; he became attentive, and not the less calm and resolute, because he believed that his own exertions would crown the hour with success. The spectators saw the change in him, and were roused to double interest. The court clock, meanwhile, kept measure of the time that passed; the hands travelled silently on — another turn, and all would be over; — and what would then be?

CHAPTER XVII.

Elizabeth meanwhile might envy the resolution that bore him through these appalling scenes. On the night after leaving him, she had not even attempted to rest. Wrapped in a shawl, she threw herself on a sofa, and told each hour, during the livelong night; her reveries were wild, vague, and exquisitely painful. In the morning she tried to recall her faculties — she remembered her conviction that on that day Falkner would be liberated, and she dressed herself with care, that she might welcome him with the appearances of rejoicing. She expected, with unconquerable trepidation, the hour when the court would meet. Before that hour, there was a knock at her door, and a visiter was announced; it was Mrs. Raby.

It was indeed a solace to see a friendly face of her own sex — she had been so long deprived of this natural support. Lady Cecil had now and then written to her — her letters were always affectionate, but she seemed stunned by the magnitude of the blow that had fallen on her friend, and unable to proffer consolation. With kindness of heart, sweetness of temper, and much good sense, still Lady Cecil was common-place and worldly. Mrs. Raby was of a higher order of being. She saw things too exclusively through one medium — and thus the scope of her exertions was narrowed; but that medium was a pure and elevated one. In visiting Elizabeth, on this occasion, she soared beyond it.

Long and heavily had her desertion of the generous girl weighed on her conscience. She could sympathize in her heroism, and warmly approve — it was in her nature to praise and to reward merit, and she had withheld all tribute from her abandoned niece. The interests of her religion, blended with those of family, actuated her, and while resisting a natural impulse of generosity she fancied that she was doing right. She had spoken concerning her with no one but Lady Cecil; and she, while she praised her young friend, forgot to speak of Falkner, and there lay the stumbling-block to every motion in her favour.

When Elizabeth repaired to Carlisle, Mrs. Raby returned to Belleforest. She scarcely knew how to introduce the subject to her father-in-law, and when she did, he, verging into dotage, only said; “Act as you please, my dear, I rely on you; act for the honour and welfare of yourself and your children.” The old man day by day lost his powers of memory and reason; by the time of the trial he had become a mere cipher. Every responsibility fell on Mrs. Raby; and she, eager to do right and fearful to do wrong, struggled with her better nature — wavered, repented, and yet remained inactive.

Neville strongly reprobated the conduct of every one towards Elizabeth. He had never seen Mrs. Raby, but she in particular he regarded with the strongest disapprobation. It so happened, that the very day after his father’s death, he was at Lady Cecil’s when Mrs. Raby called, and by an exception in the general orders — made for Elizabeth’s sake, — she was let come up. Gerard was alone in the drawing-room when she was announced — he rose hastily, meaning to withdraw, when the lady’s appearance changed his entire mind. We ridicule the minutia of the science of physiognomy — but who is not open to first impressions? Neville was prepossessed favourably by Mrs. Raby’s countenance; her open thoughtful brow, her large dark melancholy eyes, her dignity of manner joined to evident marks of strong feeling, at once showed him that he saw a woman capable of generous sentiments and heroic sacrifice. He felt that there must have been some grievous error in Sophia’s proceedings not to have awakened more active interest in her mind. While he was forming these conclusions, Mrs. Raby was struck by him in an equally favourable manner. No one could see Gerard Neville without feeling that something angelic — something nobly disinterested — unearthly in its purity, yet, beyond the usual nature of man, sympathetic, animated a countenance that was all sensibility, genius, and love. In a minute they were intimate friends. Lady Cecil hearing that they were together, would not interrupt them; and their conversation was long. Neville related his first acquaintance with Elizabeth Raby — he sketched the history of Falkner — he described him — and the scene when he denounced himself as the destroyer of Alithea. He declared his conviction of his innocence — he narrated Sir Boyvill’s dying words. Then they both dwelt on his long imprisonment, Elizabeth’s faithful affection, and all that they must have undergone — enough to move the stoniest heart. Tears rushed into Gerard’s eyes while he spoke — while he described her innocence, her integrity, her total forgetfulness of self. “And I have deserted her,” exclaimed Mrs. Raby; “we have all deserted her — this must not continue. You go to Carlisle to-morrow for the trial; the moment it is over, and Mr. Falkner acquitted — when they have left that town, where all is so full of their name and story — I will see her, and try to make up for my past neglect.”

“It will be too late,” said Gerard; “you may then please yourself by admiring one so superior to every human being; but you will not benefit her — Falkner acquitted, she will have risen above all need of your support. Now is the hour to be of use. The very hour of the trial, when this unfortunate, heroic girl is thrown entirely on herself — wounded by her absolute friendlessness, yet disdaining to complain. I could almost wish that Sophia would disregard appearances, and hasten to her side; although her connexion with our family would render that too strange. But you, Mrs. Raby, what should stop you? she is your niece — how vain to attempt to conceal this from the world — it must be known — through me, I fondly trust, it will be known — who shall claim her as Miss Raby — when as Elizabeth Falkner, I could never see her more. And when it is known, will not your desertion be censured? Be wise, be generous — win that noblest and gentlest heart by your kindness now, and the very act will be your reward. Hasten to Carlisle; be with her in the saddest hour that ever one so young and innocent passed through.”

Mrs. Raby was moved, she was persuaded, she felt a veil fall from before her eyes, she saw her duty, and she keenly felt the littleness of her past desertion; she did not hesitate; and now that she perceived how gladly her niece welcomed her in this hour of affliction, and how gratefully she appreciated her kindness, she found in the approval of her own heart the sweetest recompense for her disinterestedness.

Elizabeth’s swollen eyes, and timid, hurried manner, betrayed how she had passed the night, and how she was possessed by the most agitating fears. Still she spoke of the acquittal of her father, as she took pride in calling him at this crisis, as certain; and Mrs. Raby taking advantage of this, endeavoured to draw her mind from the torture of representing to herself the progress of the scene then acting at so short a distance from them, by speaking of the future. Elizabeth mentioned Falkner’s determination to quit England, and her own to accompany him; the hinted dissuasion of Mrs. Raby she disregarded. “He has been a father to me — I am his child. What would you say to a daughter who deserted her father in adversity and sickness? And, dear Mrs. Raby, you must remember that my father is, in spite of all his courage, struck by disease; accustomed to my attentions, he would die if left to hirelings. Deserted by me, he would sink into apathy or despair."

Mrs. Raby listened — she admired the enthusiasm and yet the softness, the sensibility and firmness, of her young kinswoman; but she was pained; many ideas assailed her, but she would not entertain them, they were too wild and dangerous; and yet her heart, formed for generosity, was tempted to trample upon the suggestions of prudence and the qualms of bigotry. To give diversion to her thoughts she mentioned Gerard Neville. A blush of pleasure, a smile shown more in the eyes than on the lips, mantled over her niece's countenance. She spoke of him as of a being scarcely earthly in his excellence. His devotion to his mother first, and lately his generosity towards her, his resolution to go to America, to seek Osborne, for her sake and the sake of justice, were themes for eloquence; she spoke with warmth and truth—"Yet if you follow Mr. Falkner's fortunes," said Mrs. Raby, "you will see him no more."

"I cannot believe that," replied Elizabeth; "yet, if it must be so, I am resigned. He will never forget me, and I shall feel that I am worthy of him, though separated: — better that, than to remain at the sacrifice of all I hold honourable and good; he would despise me, and that were worse absence, an absence of the heart ten thousand times more galling than mere distance of place — one would be eternal and irremediable, the other easily obviated when our duties should no longer clash. I go with my father because he is suffering; Neville may join us because he is innocent — he will not, I feel and know, either forget me, or stay away for ever."

CHAPTER XVIII.

While they were conversing, quick footsteps were heard in the street below. Mrs. Raby had succeeded in making the time pass more lightly than could be hoped; it was three o'clock — there was a knock at the door of the house. Elizabeth, breaking off abruptly, turned ashy pale, and clasped her hands in the agony of expectation. Osborne rushed into the room. "It is all over!" he exclaimed, "all is well!" Tears streamed from his eyes as he spoke and ran up to shake hands with Elizabeth, and congratulate her, with an ardour and joy that contrasted strangely with the frightened-looking being he had always before shown himself.

"Mr. Falkner is acquitted — he is free — he will soon be here! No one could doubt his innocence that saw him — no one did doubt it — the jury did not even retire." Thus Osborne ran on, relating the events of the trial. Falkner's mere appearance had prepossessed every one. The frankness of his open brow, his dignified, unembarrassed manner, his voice, whose clear tones were the very echo of truth, vouched for him. The barrister who conducted the prosecution, narrated the facts rather as a mystery to be inquired into, than as a crime to be detected. Gerard Neville's testimony was entirely favourable to the prisoner: he showed how Falkner, wholly unsuspected, safe from the shadow of accusation, had spontaneously related the unhappy part he took in his unfortunate mother's death, for the sake of restoring her reputation, and relieving the minds of her relatives. The narrative written in Greece, and left as explanation in case of his death, was further proof of the truth of his account. Gerard declared himself satisfied of his innocence; and when he stated his father's dying words, his desire at the last hour on the bed of death, to record his belief in Falkner's being guiltless of the charge brought against him — words spoken as it were yesterday, for he who uttered them still lay unburied — the surprise seemed to be that he should have suffered a long imprisonment, and the degradation of a trial. Osborne's own evidence was clear and satisfactory. At last Falkner himself was asked what defence he had to make. As he rose every eye turned on him, every voice and breath were hushed — a solemn silence reigned. His words were few, spoken calmly and impressively; he rested his innocence on the very evidence brought against him. He had been the cause of the lady's death, and asked for no mercy; but for her sake, and the sake of that heroic feeling that led her to encounter death amidst the waves, he asked for justice, and he did not for a moment doubt that it would be rendered him.

"Nor could you doubt it as you heard him," continued Osborne. "Never were truth and innocence written so clearly on human countenance as on his, as he looked upon the jury with his eagle eyes, addressing them without pride, but with infinite majesty, as if he could rule their souls through the power of a clear conscience and a just cause; they did not hesitate — the jury did not hesitate a moment; I rushed here the moment I heard the words, and now — he is come."

Many steps were again heard in the street below, and one, which Elizabeth could not mistake, upon the stairs. Falkner entered — she flew to his arms, and he pressed her to his bosom, wrapping her in a fond, long embrace, while neither uttered a word.

A few moments of trembling almost to agony, a few agitated tears, and the natural gladness of the hour assumed its genuine aspect. Falkner, commanding himself, could shake hands with Osborne, and thank him, and Elizabeth presented him to Mrs. Raby. He at once comprehended the kindness of her visit, and acknowledged it with a heart-felt thankfulness, that showed how much he had suffered while picturing Elizabeth's abandonment. Soon various other persons poured into the room, and it was necessary to pass through many congratulations, and to thank, and, what was really painful, to listen to the out-pouring talk of those persons who had been present at the trial. Yet at such a moment, the heart, warmed and open, acknowledges few distinctions; among those whose evident joy in the result filled Elizabeth with gratitude, she and Falkner felt touched by none so much as the visit of a turnkey, who was ashamed to show himself, yet who, hearing they were immediately to quit Carlisle, begged permission to see them once again. The poor fellow, who looked on Elizabeth as an angel, and Falkner as a demigod, for, not forgetting others in their adversity, they had discovered and assisted his necessities; the poor fellow seemed out of his mind with joy — ecstasy was painted on his face — there was no mistaking the clear language of a full and grateful heart.

At length the hurry and tumult subsided — all departed. Falkner and his beloved companion were left alone, and for a few short hours enjoyed a satisfaction so perfect that angels might have envied them. Falkner was humbled, it is true, and looked to the past with the same remorse; but in vain did he think that his pride ought to feel deeply wounded by the scene of that day; in vain did he tell himself that after such a trial the purity of his honour was tarnished — his heart told another tale. Its emphatic emotions banished every conventional or sophisticated regret. He was honestly though calmly glad, and acknowledged the homely feeling, with the sincerity of a man who had never been nourished in false refinements or factitious woes.

In the evening, when it was dusk, said Falkner, “Let us, love, take a walk;” the words made Elizabeth both laugh and cry for joy — he put on his hat, and with her on his arm they got quickly out of the town, and strolled down a neighbouring lane. The wind that waved the heads of the still leafless trees, the aspect of the starry sky, the wide spread fields were felt as blessings from heaven by the liberated prisoner. “They all seem,” he said, “created purely for my enjoyment. How sweet is nature — how divine a thing is liberty! Oh my God! I dare not be so happy as I would, there is one thought to chill the genial glow; but for the image of lost, dead Alithea, I should enjoy a felicity too pure for frail humanity.”

As they returned into the town, a carriage with four posters passed them; Elizabeth recognized at once Gerard Neville within — a pang shot through her heart, to remember that they did not share their feelings, but were separated, perhaps for ever — at this very hour. On her return, worn out with fatigue, and oppressed with this reflection, she bade good night to Falkner; and he, happy in the idea that the same roof would cover them, kissed and embraced her. On entering her room, she found a letter on her toilette — and smiles again dimpled her face — it was a letter from Neville. It contained a few words, a very few of congratulation, reminding her that he must hurry back to town for the melancholy task of his father’s funeral; and imploring that neither she nor Falkner would determine on any immediate step. “I cannot penetrate the cloud in which we are enveloped,” he said, “but I know that I ought not, that I cannot, lose you. A little time, a little reflection may show us how to accord our various duties with the great necessity of our not being separated. Be not rash therefore, my own Elizabeth, nor let your friend be rash; surely the worst is over, and we may be permitted at last to hate no more, and to be happy.”

Elizabeth kissed the letter, and placed it beneath her pillow. That night she slept sweetly and well.

Early in the morning Mrs. Raby called on them. The same prepossession which Gerard had felt in her favour as soon as he saw her, had taken place in her on seeing Falkner. There is a sort of magnetism that draws like to like, and causes minds of fine and lofty tone to recognize each other when brought in contact. Mrs. Raby saw and acknowledged at once Falkner's superiority; whatever his faults had been, they were winnowed away by adversity, and he was become at once the noblest and gentlest of human beings. Mrs. Raby had that touch of generosity in her own character that never permitted her to see merit without openly acknowledging, and endeavouring to reward it. The first thought of the plan she now entertained, she had cast away as impracticable, but it returned; the desire to give and to benefit, a natural growth in her heart, made her look on it with complacency — by degrees she dismissed the objections that presented themselves, and resolved to act upon it. "We complain," she thought, "of the barrenness of life, and the tediousness and faults of our fellow-creatures, and when Providence brings before us two selected from the world as endowed with every admirable quality, we allow a thousand unworthy considerations, which assume the voice of prudence, to exile us from them. Where can I find a man like Falkner, full of honour, sensibility, and talent? where a girl like Elizabeth, who has proved herself to be the very type of virtuous fidelity? Such companions will teach my children better than volumes of moral treatises, the existence and loveliness of human goodness."

Mrs. Raby passed a sleepless night, revolving these thoughts. In the morning she called on her new friends; and then with all the grace that was her peculiar charm, she invited them to accompany her to Belleforest, and to take up their residence there for the next few months.

Elizabeth's eyes sparkled with delight. Falkner at once accepted the invitation for her, and declined it for himself. "You hear him, my dear aunt," cried Elizabeth; "but you will not accept his refusal — you will not permit this perversity."

"You forget many things when you speak thus," said Falkner; "but Mrs. Raby remembers them all. I thank her for her kindness; but I am sure she will admit of the propriety of my declining her invitation."

"You imagine then," replied Mrs. Raby, "that I made it for form's sake — intending it should be refused. You mistake. I know what you mean, and all you would covertly suggest — let us cast aside the ceremonies of mere acquaintanceship — let us be friends, and speak with the openness natural to us — do you consent to this?"

"You are good, very good," said Falkner; "except this dear girl, who will deign to be my friend?"

"If I thought," replied Mrs. Raby, "that your heart was so narrowed by the disasters and injustice you have suffered, that you must hereafter shut yourself up with the remembrance of them, I should feel inclined to retract my offer — for friendship is a mutual feeling; and he who feels only for himself can be no one's friend. But this is not the case with you. You have a heart true to every touch of sympathy, as Elizabeth can testify — since you determined to live for her sake, when driven to die by the agony of your sufferings. Let us then at once dismiss notions which I must consider as unworthy of us. When we turn to the page of history, and read of men visited by adversity — what do we say to those of their fellow-creatures who fall off from them on account of their misfortunes? Do we not call them little-minded, and visit them with our contempt? Do not class me with such. I might pass you carelessly by if you had always been prosperous. It is your misfortunes that inspire me with friendship — that render me eager to cultivate an intimacy with one who has risen above the most frightful calamity that could befall a man, and shown himself at once repentant and courageous.

"You will understand what I mean, without long explanation — we shall have time for that hereafter. I honour you. What my heart feels, my voice and actions will ever be ready to proclaim. For Elizabeth's sake you must not permit the world to think that he who adopted and brought her up is unworthy of regard and esteem. Come with us to Belleforest — you must not refuse; I long to introduce my girls to their matchless cousin — I long to win her heart by my affection, and kindness; and if you will permit me the enviable task, how proud and glad I shall be to repay a portion of what we owe you on her account, by endeavouring to compensate, by a few months of tranquillity and friendship, for the misery you have undergone."

Mrs. Raby spoke with sincerity and earnestness, and Elizabeth's eyes pleaded her cause yet more eloquently. "Where you go," she said to

Falkner, “there also I shall be — I shall not repine, however you decide — but we shall be very happy at Belleforest.”

It was real modesty — and no false pride that actuated Falkner. He felt happy, yet when he looked outward, he fancied that hereafter he must be shut out from society — a branded man. He intimately felt the injustice of this. He accepted it as a punishment for the past, but he did not the less proudly rise above it. It was a real pleasure to find one entertaining the generous sentiments which Mrs. Raby expressed, and capable of acting on them. He felt worthy of her regard, and acknowledged that none but conventional reasons placed any barrier to his accepting her kind offers. Why then should he reject them? He did not; frankly, and with sincere thanks, he suffered himself to be overruled; and on the following day they were on their road to Belleforest.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was one of those days which do sometimes occur in March — warm and balmy, and enlivening as spring always is. The birds were busy among the leafless boughs; and if the carriage stopped for a moment, the gushing song of the skylark attracted the eye to his blue ethereal bower; a joyous welcome was breathed by nature to every heart, and none answered it so fervently as Falkner. Sentiments of pleasure possessed all three travellers. Mrs. Raby experienced that exultation natural to all human beings when performing a generous action. Elizabeth felt that in going to Belleforest she drew nearer Neville — for there was no reason why he should not enter her grandfather's doors; but Falkner was happier than either. It was not the vulgar joy of having escaped danger, partly it was gladness to see Elizabeth restored to her family, where only, as things were, she could find happiness, and yet not divided from him. Partly it arose from the relief he felt, as the burthen of heavy, long-endured care was lifted from his soul. But there was something more, which was incomprehensible even to himself. "His bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne" — he no longer turned a saddened, reproachful eye on nature, nor any more banished soft emotions, nourishing remorse as a duty. He was reconciled to himself and the world; the very circumstances of his prison and his trial being over, took with them the more galling portion of his retrospections — health again filled his veins. At the moment when he had first accused himself, Neville saw in him a man about to die. It was evident now that the seeds of disease were destroyed — his person grew erect — his eye clear and animated. Elizabeth had never, since they left Greece, seen him so free from suffering; during all her intercourse with him, she never remembered him so bland and cheerful in his mood. It was the reward of much suffering — the gift of Heaven to one who had endured patiently — opening his heart to the affections, instead of cherishing pride and despair. It was the natural result of a noble disposition which could raise itself above even its own errors — throwing off former evil as alien to its nature — embracing good as its indefeasible right.

They entered the majestic avenues and embowered glades of Belleforest — where cedar, larch, and pine diversified the bare woods with a show of foliage — the turf was covered with early flowers — the buds were green and bursting on the boughs. Falkner remembered his visit the preceding summer. How little had he then foreseen impending events; and how far from his heart had then been the peace that at present so unaccountably possessed it. Then the wide demesne and stately mansion had appeared the abode of gloom and bigotry; now it was changed to a happy valley, where love and cheerfulness reigned.

Mrs. Raby was welcomed by her children — two elegant girls of fifteen and sixteen, and a spirited boy of twelve. They adored their mother; and saw in their new cousin an occasion for rejoicing. Their sparkling looks and gay voices dispelled the last remnant of melancholy from the venerable mansion. Old Oswi Rabi himself — too much sunk in dotage to understand what was going on — yet smiled and looked glad on the merry faces about him. He could not exactly make out who Elizabeth was — he was sure that it was a relation, and he treated her with an obsequious respect, which, considering his former impertinent tone, was exceedingly amusing.

What was wanting to complete the universal happiness? Elizabeth's spirits rose to unwonted gaiety in the society of her young relations — and her cousin Edwin in particular found her the most delightful companion in the world — for she was as fearless on horseback as himself, and was unwearied in amusing him by accounts of the foreign countries she had seen — and adventures, ridiculous or fearful, that she had encountered. In Mrs. Raby she found a beloved friend for serious hours; and Falkner's recovered health and spirits were a source of exhaustless congratulation.

Yet where was Gerard Neville? Where the looks of love — and rapturous sense of sympathy, before which all the other joys of life fade into dimness? — Love causes us to get more rid of our haunting identity, and to give ourselves more entirely away than any other emotion; it is the most complete — the most without veil or shadow to mar its beauty. Every other human passion occupies but a distinct portion of our being. This assimilates with all, and turns the whole into bliss or misery. Elizabeth did not fear that Gerard would forget her. He had remembered through the dark hours gone by — and now his shadow walked with her beneath the avenues of Belleforest, and the recollection of his love impregnated the balmy airs of spring with a sweetness unfelt before. Elizabeth had now leisure to love — and many an hour she spent in solitary yet blissful dreams — almost wondering that such happiness was to be found on earth. What a change — what a contrast between the deathgirt prison of Carlisle, and the love-adorned glades of her ancestral park! — Not long ago the sky appeared to bend over one universe of tears and woe — and now, in the midst, a piece of heaven had dropped down upon earth, and she had entered the enchanted ground.

Yet as weeks sped on, some thoughts troubled her repose. Gerard neither came nor wrote. At length she got a letter from Lady Cecil, congratulating her on Falkner's acquittal, and the kindness of her aunt; her letter was amiable, yet it was constrained; and Elizabeth, reading it again and again, and pondering on every expression, became aware that her friends felt less satisfaction than she did in the turn of fortune, that placed her and Falkner together under her paternal roof. She had believed that, as Elizabeth Raby, Neville would at once claim her; but she was forced to recollect that Falkner was still at her side; — and what intercourse could there be between him and his mother's destroyer?

Thus anxiety and sadness penetrated poor Elizabeth's new found paradise. She strove to appear the same, but she stole away when she could, to meditate alone on her strange lot. It doubled her regret, to think that Neville also was unhappy. She figured the g more I see and admire my dearest niece," she said, "the greater I feel our obligation to be to you, Mr. Falkner, for having made her what she is. Her natural disposition is full of excellence, but it is the care and the education you bestowed, which give her character so high a tone. Had she come to us in her childhood, it is more than probable she would have been placed in a convent, — and what nature, however perfect, but would be injured by the system that reigns in those places? To you we owe our fairest flower, and if gratitude could repay you, you would be repaid by mine; to prove it, and to serve you, must always be the most pleasing duty of my life."

"I should be much happier," said Falkner, "if I could regard my interference as you do; I fear I have injured irreparably my beloved girl, and that, through me, she is suffering pangs, which she is too good to acknowledge, but which, in the end, may destroy her. Had I restored her to you, had she been brought up here, she and Gerard Neville would not now be separated."

“But they might never have met,” replied Mrs. Raby. “It is indeed vain thus to regard the past — not only is it unalterable, but each link of the chain, producing the one that followed, seems in our instance, to have been formed and riveted by a superior power for peculiar purposes. The whole order of events is inscrutable — one little change, and none of us would be as we are now. Except as a lesson or a warning, we ought not to contemplate the past, but the future certainly demands our attention. It is impossible to see Gerard Neville, and not to feel an intense interest in him; he is worthy of our Elizabeth, and he is ardently attached to her, and has besides made a deep impression on her young heart, which I would not have erased or lessened; for I am sure that her happiness, as far as mortals can be happy, will be insured by their marriage.”

“I stand in the way of this union; of that I am well aware,” said Falkner; “but be assured I will not continue to be an obstacle to the welfare of my angel girl. It is for this that I would consult you: — how are contradictions to be reconciled, or rather, how can we contrive my absence so as to remove every impediment, and yet not to awaken Elizabeth’s suspicions?”

“I dislike contrivances,” replied Mrs. Raby; “and I hate all mystery — suffer me therefore to speak frankly to you — I have often conversed with Elizabeth, she is firm not to marry, so as to be wholly divided from you. She reasons calmly, but she never wavers: she will not, she says, commence new duties, by, in the first place, betraying her old ones; she should be for ever miserable if she did, and therefore those who love her must not ask it. Sir Gerard entertains similar sentiments with regard to himself, though less resolute, and, I believe, less just than hers. I received a letter from him this morning. I was pondering whether to show it to you or to my niece; it seems to me best that you should read it, if it will not annoy you.”

“Give it me,” said Falkner; “and permit me also to answer it — it is not in my nature to dally with evils — I shall meet those that now present themselves, and bring the best remedy I can, at whatever cost.”

Neville’s letter was that of a man, whose wishes were at war with his principles; and yet who was not convinced of the justice of the application of those principles. It began by deeply regretting the estrangement of Elizabeth from his family, by asking Mrs. Raby if she thought that she could not be induced to pay another visit to Lady Cecil. He said that that lady was eager to see her, and only delayed asking her, till she ascertained whether her friendship, which was warm and lively as ever, would prove as acceptable as formerly.

"I will at once be frank with you," the letter continued; "for your excellent understanding may direct us, and will suggest excuses for our doubts. You may easily divine the cause of our perplexities, though you can scarcely comprehend the extremely painful nature of mine. Permit me to treat you as a friend — be the judge of my cause — I have faith in the purity and uprightness of a woman's heart, when she is endowed with gifts, such as you possess. I had once thought to refer myself to Miss Raby herself, but I dread the generous devotedness of her disposition. Will you who love her, take therefore the task of decision on yourself?"

Neville went on to express in few, but forcible words his attachment to Elizabeth, his conviction that it could never change, and his persuasion that she returned it. "It is not therefore my cause merely, that I plead," he said, "but hers also. Do not call me presumptuous for thus expressing myself. A mutual attachment alone can justify extraordinary conduct, but where it is mutual, every minor consideration ought to give way before it; the happiness of both our lives depends upon our not trifling with feelings which I am sure can never change. They may be the source of perpetual felicity — if not, they will, they must be, pregnant with misery to the end of our lives. But why this sort of explanation, when the meaning that I desire to convey is, that if — that as — may I not say — we love each other — no earthly power shall deprive me of her — sooner or later she must, she shall be, mine; and meanwhile this continued separation is painful beyond my fortitude to bear.

"Can I take my mother's destroyer by the hand, and live with him on terms of intimacy and friendship? Such is the price I must pay for Elizabeth — can I — may I — so far forget the world's censure, and I may say the instigations of nature, as unreservedly to forgive?

"I will confess to you, dear Mrs. Raby, that when I saw Falkner in the most degrading situation in which a man can be placed, manacled, and as a felon, his dignity of mien, his majestic superiority to all the race of common mortals around, the grandeur of his calm yet piercing eye, and the sensibility of his voice — won my admiration: with such is peopled that heaven where the noble penitent is more welcome than the dull follower of a narrow code of morals, who never erred, because he never felt. I pardoned him, then, from my heart, in my mother's name. These sentiments, the entire forgiveness of the injury done me, and the sense of his merits still continue: but may I act on them? would not you despise me if I did? say but that you would, and my sentence is pronounced — I lose Elizabeth — I quit England for ever — it matters little where I go.

"Yet before you decide, consider that this man possesses virtues of the highest order. He honoured as much as he loved my mother, and if his act was criminal, dearly has he paid the result. I persuade myself that there is more real sympathy between me and my mother's childhood's friend — who loved her so long and truly — whose very crime was a mad excess of love — than one who knew nothing of her — to whom her name conjures up no memories, no regret.

"I feel that I could lament with Falkner the miserable catastrophe, and yet not curse him for bringing it about. Nay — as with such a man there can be no half sentiments — I feel that if we are thrown together, his noble qualities will win ardent sentiments of friendship; were not his victim my mother, there does not exist a man whose good opinion I should so eagerly seek and highly prize as that of Rupert Falkner. It is that fatal name which forms the barrier between me and charity — shutting me out, at the same time, from hope and love.

"Thus incoherently I put down my thoughts as they rise — a tangled maze which I ask you to unravel. I will endeavour to abide by your decision, whatever it may be; yet I again ask you to pause. Is Elizabeth's happiness as deeply implicated as mine? if it be, can I abide by any sentence that shall condemn her to a wretchedness similar to that which has so long been an inmate of my struggling heart? no; sooner than inflict one pang on her, I will fly from the world. We three will seek some far obscure retreat and be happy, despite the world's censure, and even your condemnation."

Falkner's heart swelled within him as he read. He could not but admire Neville's candour — and he was touched by the feelings he expressed towards himself; but pride was stronger than regret, and prompted an instant and decisive reply. He rebelled against the idea that Gerard and Elizabeth should suffer through him, and thus he wrote: —

"You have appealed to Mrs. Raby; will you suffer me to answer that appeal, and to decide? I have a better right; for kind as she is, I have

Elizabeth’s welfare yet more warmly at heart.

“The affection that she feels for you will endure to the end of her life — for her faithful heart is incapable of change; on you therefore depends her happiness, and you are called upon to make some sacrifice to insure it. Come here, take her at my hand — it is all I ask — from that hour you shall never see me more — the injured and the injurer will separate; my fortunes are of my own earning, and I can bear them. You must compensate to my dear child for my loss — you must be father as well as husband — and speak kindly of me to her, or her heart will break.

“We must be secret in our proceedings — mystery and deception are contrary to my nature — but I willingly adopt them for her sake. Mrs. Raby must not be trusted; but you and I love Elizabeth sufficiently even to sacrifice a portion of our integrity to secure her happiness. For her own sake we must blindfold her. She need never learn that we deceived her. She will naturally be separated from me for a short time — the period will be indefinitely prolonged — till new duties arise wholly to wean her from me — and I shall be forgotten.

“Come then at once — endure the sight of the guilty Falkner for a few short days — till you thus earn his dearest treasure — and do not fear that I shall intrude one moment longer than is absolutely necessary for our success; be assured that when once Elizabeth is irrevocably yours, wide seas shall roll between us. Nor will your condescension to my wish bring any stigma on yourself or your bride, for Miss Raby does not bear my tainted name. All I ask is, that you will not delay. It is difficult for me to cloke my feelings to one so dear — let my task of deception be abridged as much as possible.

“I shall give my Elizabeth to you with confidence and pleasure. You deserve her. Your generous disposition will enable you to endure her affection for me, and even her grief at my departure. Never speak unkindly of me to her. When you see me no more, you will find less difficulty in forgetting the injury I have done you; you must endeavour to remember only the benefit you receive in gaining Elizabeth.”

CHAPTER XX.

The beautiful month of May had arrived, with her light budding foliage, which seems to hang over the hoar branches of the trees like a green aerial mist — the nightingales sung through the moonlight night, and every other feathered chorister took up the note at early dawn. The sweetest flowers in the year embroidered the fields; and the verdant cornfields were spread like a lake, now glittering in the sun, now covered over by the shadows of the clouds. It appeared impossible not to hope — not to enjoy; yet a seriousness had again gathered over Falkner's countenance that denoted the return of care. He avoided the society even of Elizabeth — his rides were solitary — his evenings passed in the seclusion of his own room. Elizabeth, for the first time in her life, grew a little discontented. "I sacrifice all to him," she thought, "yet I cannot make him happy. Love alone possesses the sceptre and arbitrary power to rule; every other affection admits a parliament of thoughts — and debate and divisions ensue, which may make us wiser, but which sadly derogates from the throned state of what we fancy a master sentiment. I cannot make Falkner happy; yet Neville is miserable through my endeavours — and to such struggle there is no end — my promised faith is inviolable, nor do I even wish to break it."

One balmy, lovely day, Elizabeth rode out with her cousins; Mrs. Raby was driving her father-in-law through the grounds in the pony phaeton — Falkner had been out, and was returned. Several days had passed, and no answer arrived from Neville. He was uneasy and sad, and yet rejoiced at the respite afforded to the final parting with his child. Suddenly, from the glass doors of the saloon, he perceived a gentleman riding up the avenue; he recognized him, and exclaimed, "All is over!" At that moment he felt himself transported to a distant land — surrounded by strangers — cut off from all he held dear. Such must be the consequence of the arrival of Gerard Neville; and it was he, who, dismounting, in a few minutes after entered the room.

He came up to Falkner, and held out his hand, saying, "We must be friends, Mr. Falkner — from this moment I trust that we are friends. We join together for the happiness of the dearest and most perfect being in the world."

Falkner could not take his hand — his manner grew cold; but he readily replied, "I hope we do; and we must concert together to insure our success."

"Yet there is one other," continued Neville, "whom we must take into our consultations."

"Mrs. Raby?"

"No! Elizabeth herself. She alone can decide for us all, and teach us the right path to take. Do not mistake me, I know the road she will point out, and am ready to follow it. Do you think I could deceive her? Could I ask her to give me her dear self, and thus generously raise me to the very height of human happiness, with deception on my lips? I were indeed unworthy of her, if I were capable of such an act.

"Yet, but for the sake of honest truth, I would not even consult her — my own mind is made up, if you consent; I am come to you, Mr. Falkner, as a suppliant, to ask you to give me your adopted child, but not to separate you from her: I should detest myself if I were the cause of so much sorrow to either. If my conduct need explanation in the world, you are my excuse, I need go no further. We must both join in rendering Miss Raby happy, and both, I trust, remain friends to the end of our lives."

"You are generous," replied Falkner; "perhaps you are just. I am not unworthy of the friendship you offer, were you any other than you are."

"It is because I am such as I am, that I venture to make advances which would be impertinent from any other."

At this moment, a light step was heard on the lawn without, and Elizabeth stood before them. She paused in utter wonder on seeing Falkner and Neville together; soon surprise was replaced by undisguised delight — her expressive countenance became radiant with happiness. Falkner addressed her: "I present a friend to you, dear Elizabeth; I leave you with him — he will best explain his purposes and wishes. Meanwhile I must remark, that I consider him bound by nothing that has been said; you must take counsel together — you must act for your mutual happiness — that is all the condition I make — I yield to no other. Be happy; and, if it be necessary, forget me, as I am very willing to forget myself."

Falkner left them; and they instinctively, so to prevent interruption, took their way into a woody glade of the park; and as they walked beneath the shadows of some beautiful limetrees, on the crisp green turf, disclosed to each other every inner thought and feeling. Neville declared his resolve not to separate her from her benefactor. “If the world censure me,” he said, “I am content; I am accustomed to its judgments, and never found them sway or annoy me. I do right for my own heart. It is a godlike task to reward the penitent. In religion and morality I know that I am justified: whether I am in the code of worldly honour, I leave others to decide; and yet I believe that I am. I had once thought to have met Falkner in a duel, but my father’s vengeance prevented that. He is now acquitted before all the world, of being more than the accidental cause of my dear mother’s death. Knights of old, after they fought in right good earnest, became friends, each finding, in the bravery of the other, a cause for esteem. Such is the situation of Rupert Falkner and myself; and we will both join, dear Elizabeth, in making him forget the past, and rendering his future years calm and happy.”

Elizabeth could only look her gratitude. She felt, as was most true, that this was not a cause for words or reason. Falkner in himself offered, or did not offer, full excuse for the generosity of Neville. No one could see him, and not allow that the affectionate, duteous son in no way derogated from his reverence for his mother’s memory, by entirely forgiving him who honoured her as an earthly angel, and had deplored, through years of unutterable anguish, the mortal injury done her. Satisfied in his own mind that he acted rightly, Neville did not seek for any other approval; and yet he gladly accepted it from Elizabeth, whose heart, touched to its very core by his nobleness, felt an almost painful weight of gratitude and love; she tried to express it: fortunately, between lovers mere language is not necessary ineffectually to utter that which transcends all expression. Neville felt himself most sweetly thanked; a more happy pair never trod this lovely earth than the two that, closely linked hand in hand, and with hearts open and true as the sunlight about them, enjoyed the sweetest hour of love, the first of acknowledged perpetual union, beneath the majestic, deep shadowing thickets of Belleforest.

All that had seemed so difficult, now took its course easily. They did not any of them seek to account for, or to justify the course they took. They each knew that they could not do other than they did. Elizabeth could not break faith with Falkner — Neville could not renounce her; it might be strange — but it must be so: they three must remain together through life, despite all of tragic and miserable that seemed to separate them.

Even Lady Cecil admitted that there was no choice. Elizabeth must be won — she was too dear a treasure to be voluntarily renounced. In a few weeks, the wedding-day of Sir Gerard Neville and Miss Raby being fixed, she joined them at Belleforest, and saw, with genuine pleasure, the happiness of the two persons whom she esteemed and loved most in the world, secured. Mrs. Raby's warm heart reaped its own reward, in witnessing this felicitous conclusion of her interference.

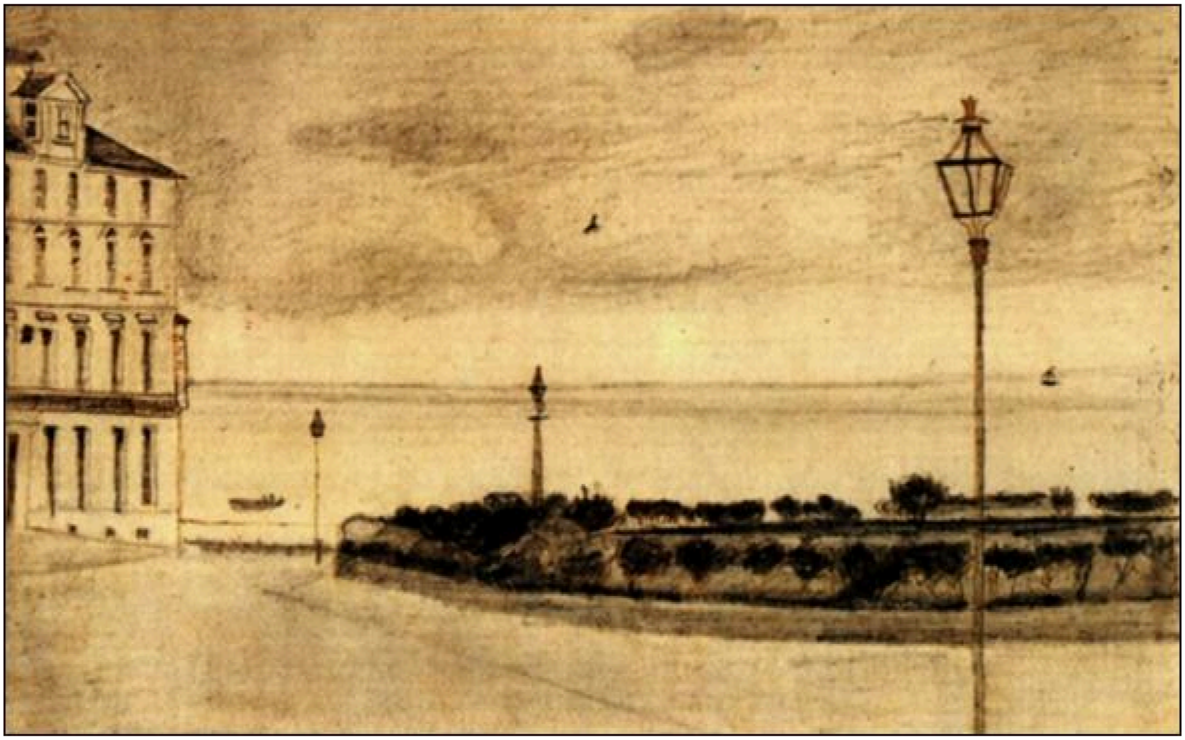
Whether the reader of this eventful tale will coincide with every other person, fully in the confidence of all, in the opinion that such was the necessary termination of a position full of difficulty, is hard to say — but so it was; and it is most certain that no woman who ever saw Rupert Falkner, but thought Neville just and judicious; and if any man disputed this point, when he saw Elizabeth, he was an immediate convert.

As much happiness as any one can enjoy, whose inner mind bears the unhealing wound of a culpable act, fell to the portion of Falkner. He had repented; and was forgiven, we may believe, in heaven, as well as on earth. He could not forgive himself — and this one shadow remained upon his lot — it could not be got rid of; yet perhaps in the gratitude he felt to those about him, in the softened tenderness inspired by the sense that he was dealt with more leniently than he believed that he deserved, he found full compensation for the memories that made him feel himself a perpetual mourner beside Alithea's grave.

Neville and Elizabeth had no drawback to their felicity. They cared not for the world, and when they did enter it, the merits of both commanded respect and liking; they were happy in each other, happy in a growing family, happy in Falkner; whom, as Neville had said, it was impossible to regard with lukewarm sentiments; and they derived a large store of happiness from his enlightened mind, from the elevated tone of moral feeling, which was the result of his sufferings, and from the deep affection with which he regarded them both. They were happy also in the wealth which gave scope to the benevolence of their dispositions, and in the talents that guided them rightly through the devious maze of life. They often visited Dromore, but their chief time was spent at their seat in Bucks, near which Falkner had purchased a villa. He lived in retirement: he grew a sage amidst his books and his own reflections. But his heart was true to itself to the end, and his pleasures were derived from the society of his beloved Elizabeth, of Neville, who was scarcely less dear, and their beautiful children. Surrounded by these, he felt no want of the nearest ties; they were to him as his own. Time passed lightly on, bringing no apparent change; thus they still live — and Neville has never for a moment repented the irresistible impulse that led him to become the friend of him, whose act had rendered his childhood miserable, but who completed the happiness of his maturer years.

THE END

The Short Stories



Ramsgate 1872 — Shelley went to a boarding school here for only six months. However, she studied from home for many years, with her father and his friends acting as her tutors. Her father did not like the idea of sending his children to school as he believed that his knowledge as a philosopher was enough to pass on to his children.

ON GHOSTS

I look for ghosts — but none will force
Their way to me; ‘tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead.
WORDSWORTH

What a different earth do we inhabit from that on which our forefathers dwelt! The antediluvian world, strode over by mammoths, preyed upon by the megatherion, and peopled by the offspring of the Sons of God, is a better type of the earth of Homer, Herodotus, and Plato, than the hedged-in cornfields and measured hills of the present day. The globe was then encircled by a wall which paled in the bodies of men, whilst their feathered thoughts soared over the boundary; it had a brink, and in the deep profound which it overhung, men’s imaginations, eagle-winged, dived and flew, and brought home strange tales to their believing auditors. Deep caverns harboured giants; cloud-like birds cast their shadows upon the plains; while far out at sea lay islands of bliss, the fair paradise of Atlantis or El Dorado sparkling with untold jewels. Where are they now? The Fortunate Isles have lost the glory that spread a halo round them; for who deems himself nearer to the golden age, because he touches at the Canaries on his voyage to India? Our only riddle is the rise of the Niger; the interior of New Holland, our only terra incognita; and our sole mare incognitum, the north-west passage. But these are tame wonders, lions in leash; we do not invest Mungo Park, or the Captain of the Hecla, with divine attributes; no one fancies that the waters of the unknown river bubble up from hell’s fountains, no strange and weird power is supposed to guide the ice-berg, nor do we fable that a stray pick-pocket from Botany Bay has found the gardens of the Hesperides within the circuit of the Blue Mountains. What have we left to dream about? The clouds are no longer the charioted servants of the sun, nor does he any more bathe his glowing brow in the bath of Thetis; the rainbow has ceased to be the messenger of the Gods, and thunder longer their awful voice, warning man of that which is to come. We have the sun which has been weighed and measured, but not understood; we have the assemblage of the planets, the congregation of the stars, and the yet unshackled ministration of the winds: — such is the list of our ignorance.

Nor is the empire of the imagination less bounded in its own proper creations, than in those which were bestowed on it by the poor blind eyes of our ancestors. What has become of enchantresses with their palaces of crystal and dungeons of palpable darkness? What of fairies and their wands? What of witches and their familiars? and, last, what of ghosts, with beckoning hands and fleeting shapes, which quelled the soldier's brave heart, and made the murderer disclose to the astonished noon the veiled work of midnight? These which were realities to our fore-fathers, in our wiser age —

— Characterless are grated
To dusty nothing.

Yet is it true that we do not believe in ghosts? There used to be several traditionary tales repeated, with their authorities, enough to stagger us when we consigned them to that place where that is which "is as though it had never been." But these are gone out of fashion. Brutus's dream has become a deception of his over-heated brain, Lord Lyttleton's vision is called a cheat; and one by one these inhabitants of deserted houses, moonlight glades, misty mountain tops, and midnight church-yards, have been ejected from their immemorial seats, and small thrill is felt when the dead majesty of Denmark blanches the cheek and unsettles the reason of his philosophic son.

But do none of us believe in ghosts? If this question be read at noon-day, when —

Every little corner, nook, and hole,
Is penetrated with the insolent light —

at such a time derision is seated on the features of my reader. But let it be twelve at night in a lone house; take up, I beseech you, the story of the Bleeding Nun; or of the Statue, to which the bridegroom gave the wedding ring, and she came in the dead of night to claim him, tall, and cold; or of the Grandsire, who with shadowy form and breathless lips stood over the couch and kissed the foreheads of his sleeping grandchildren, and thus doomed them to their fated death; and let all these details be assisted by solitude, flapping curtains, rushing wind, a long and dusky passage, an half open door — O, then truly, another answer may be given, and many will request leave to sleep upon it, before they decide whether there be such a thing as a ghost in the world, or out of the world, if that phraseology be more spiritual. What is the meaning of this feeling?

For my own part, I never saw a ghost except once in a dream. I feared it in my sleep; I awoke trembling, and lights and the speech of others could hardly dissipate my fear. Some years ago I lost a friend, and a few months afterwards visited the house where I had last seen him. It was deserted, and though in the midst of a city, its vast halls and spacious apartments occasioned the same sense of loneliness as if it had been situated on an uninhabited heath. I walked through the vacant chambers by twilight, and none save I awakened the echoes of their pavement. The far mountains (visible from the upper windows) had lost their tinge of sunset; the tranquil atmosphere grew leaden coloured as the golden stars appeared in the firmament; no wind ruffled the shrunk-up river which crawled lazily through the deepest channel of its wide and empty bed; the chimes of the Ave Maria had ceased, and the bell hung moveless in the open belfry: beauty invested a reposing world, and awe was inspired by beauty only. I walked through the rooms filled with sensations of the most poignant grief. He had been there; his living frame had been caged by those walls, his breath had mingled with that atmosphere, his step had been on those stones, I thought: — the earth is a tomb, the gaudy sky a vault, we but walking corpses. The wind rising in the east rushed through the open casements, making them shake; — methought, I heard, I felt — I know not what — but I trembled. To have seen him but for a moment, I would have knelt until the stones had been worn by the impress, so I told myself, and so I knew a moment after, but then I trembled, awe-struck and fearful. Wherefore? There is something beyond us of which we are ignorant. The sun drawing up the vaporous air makes a void, and the wind rushes in to fill it, — thus beyond our soul’s ken there is an empty space; and our hopes and fears, in gentle gales or terrific whirlwinds, occupy the vacuum; and if it does no more, it bestows on the feeling heart a belief that influences do exist to watch and guard us, though they be impalpable to the coarser faculties.

I have heard that when Coleridge was asked if he believed in ghosts, — he replied that he had seen too many to put any trust in their reality; and the person of the most lively imagination that I ever knew echoed this reply. But these were not real ghosts (pardon, unbelievers, my mode of speech) that they saw; they were shadows, phantoms unreal; that while they appalled the senses, yet carried no other feeling to the mind of others than delusion, and were viewed as we might view an optical deception which we see to be true with our eyes, and know to be false with our understandings. I speak of other shapes. The returning bride, who claims the fidelity of her betrothed; the murdered man who shakes to remorse the murderer's heart; ghosts that lift the curtains at the foot of your bed as the clock chimes one; who rise all pale and ghastly from the churchyard and haunt their ancient abodes; who, spoken to, reply; and whose cold unearthly touch makes the hair stand stark upon the head; the true old-fashioned, foretelling, flitting, gliding ghost, — who has seen such a one?

I have known two persons who at broad daylight have owned that they believed in ghosts, for that they had seen one. One of these was an Englishman, and the other an Italian. The former had lost a friend he dearly loved, who for awhile appeared to him nightly, gently stroking his cheek and spreading a serene calm over his mind. He did not fear the appearance, although he was somewhat awe-stricken as each night it glided into his chamber, and,

Ponsi del letto insula sponda manca.

[placed itself on the left side of the bed]

This visitation continued for several weeks, when by some accident he altered his residence, and then he saw it no more. Such a tale may easily be explained away; — but several years had passed, and he, a man of strong and virile intellect, said that "he had seen a ghost."

The Italian was a noble, a soldier, and by no means addicted to superstition: he had served in Napoleon's armies from early youth, and had been to Russia, had fought and bled, and been rewarded, and he unhesitatingly, and with deep relief, recounted his story.

This Chevalier, a young, and (somewhat a miraculous incident) a gallant Italian, was engaged in a duel with a brother officer, and wounded him in the arm. The subject of the duel was frivolous; and distressed therefore at its consequences he attended on his youthful adversary during his consequent illness, so that when the latter recovered they became firm and dear friends. They were quartered together at Milan, where the youth fell desperately in love with the wife of a musician, who disdained his passion, so that it preyed on his spirits and his health; he absented himself from all amusements, avoided all his brother officers, and his only consolation was to pour his love-sick plaints into the ear of the Chevalier, who strove in vain to inspire him either with indifference towards the fair disdainer, or to inculcate lessons of fortitude and heroism. As a last resource he urged him to ask leave of absence; and to seek, either in change of scene, or the amusement of hunting, some diversion to his passion. One evening the youth came to the Chevalier, and said, "Well, I have asked leave of absence, and am to have it early tomorrow morning, so lend me your fowling-piece and cartridges, for I shall go to hunt for a fortnight." The Chevalier gave him what he asked; among the shot there were a few bullets. "I will take these also," said the youth, "to secure myself against the attack of any wolf, for I mean to bury myself in the woods."

Although he had obtained that for which he came, the youth still lingered. He talked of the cruelty of his lady, lamented that she would not even permit him a hopeless attendance, but that she inexorably banished him from her sight, "so that," said he, "I have no hope but in oblivion." At length he rose to depart. He took the Chevalier's hand and said, "You will see her to-morrow, you will speak to her, and hear her speak; tell her, I entreat you, that our conversation tonight has been concerning her, and that her name was the last that I spoke." "Yes, yes," cried the Chevalier, "I will say any thing you please; but you must not talk of her any more, you must forget her." The youth embraced his friend with warmth, but the latter saw nothing more in it than the effects of his affection, combined with his melancholy at absenting himself from his mistress, whose name, joined to a tender farewell, was the last sound that he uttered.

When the Chevalier was on guard that night, he heard the report of a gun. He was at first troubled and agitated by it, but afterwards thought no more of it, and when relieved from guard went to bed, although he passed a restless, sleepless night. Early in the morning some one knocked at his door. It was a soldier, who said that he had got the young officer's leave of absence, and had taken it to his house; a servant had admitted him, and he had gone up stairs, but the room door of the officer was locked, and no one answered to his knocking, but something oozed through from under the door that looked like blood. The Chevalier, agitated and frightened at this account, hurried to his friend’s house, burst open the door, and found him stretched on the ground — he had blown out his brains, and the body lay a headless trunk, cold, and stiff.

The shock and grief which the Chevalier experienced in consequence of this catastrophe produced a fever which lasted for some days. When he got well, he obtained leave of absence, and went into the country to try to divert his mind. One evening at moonlight, he was returning home from a walk, and passed through a lane with a hedge on both sides, so high that he could not see over them. The night was balmy; the bushes gleamed with fireflies, brighter than the stars which the moon had veiled with her silver light. Suddenly he heard a rustling near him, and the figure of his friend issued from the hedge and stood before him, mutilated as he had seen him after his death. This figure he saw several times, always in the same place. It was impalpable to the touch, motionless, except in its advance, and made no sign when it was addressed. Once the Chevalier took a friend with him to the spot. The same rustling was heard, the same shadow slept forth, his companion fled in horror, but the Chevalier staid, vainly endeavouring to discover what called his friend from his quiet tomb, and if any act of his might give repose to the restless shade.

Such are my two stories, and I record them the more willingly, since they occurred to men, and to individuals distinguished the one for courage and the other for sagacity. I will conclude my “modern instances,” with a story told by M. G. Lewis, not probably so authentic as these, but perhaps more amusing. I relate it as nearly as possible in his own words.

“A gentleman journeying towards the house of a friend, who lived on the skirts of an extensive forest, in the east of Germany, lost his way. He wandered for some time among the trees, when he saw a light at a distance. On approaching it he was surprised to observe that it proceeded from the interior of a ruined monastery. Before he knocked at the gate he thought it proper to look through the window. He saw a number of cats assembled round a small grave, four of whom were at that moment letting down a coffin with a crown upon it. The gentleman startled at this unusual sight, and, imagining that he had arrived at the retreats of fiends or witches, mounted his horse and rode away with the utmost precipitation. He arrived at his friend’s house at a late hour, who sate up waiting for him. On his arrival his friend questioned him as to the cause of the traces of agitation visible in his face. He began to recount his adventures after much hesitation, knowing that it was scarcely possible that his friend should give faith to his relation. No sooner had he mentioned the coffin with the crown upon it, than his friend's cat, who seemed to have been lying asleep before the fire, leaped up, crying out, 'Then I am king of the cats;' and then scrambled up the chimney, and was never seen more."

THE END

A TALE OF THE PASSIONS

AFTER THE DEATH of Manfred, King of Naples, the Ghibellines lost their ascendency throughout Italy. The exiled Guelphs returned to their native cities; and not contented with resuming the reins of government, they prosecuted their triumph until the Ghibellines in their turn were obliged to fly, and to mourn in banishment over the violent party spirit which had before occasioned their bloody victories, and now their irretrievable defeat. After an obstinate contest the Florentine Ghibellines were forced to quit their native town; their estates were confiscated; their attempts to reinstate themselves frustrated; and receding from castle to castle, they at length took refuge in Lucca, and awaited with impatience the arrival of Corradino from Germany, through whose influence they hoped again to establish the Imperial supremacy.

The first of May was ever a day of rejoicing and festivity at Florence. The youth of both sexes, of the highest rank, paraded the streets, crowned with flowers, and singing the canzonets of the day. In the evening they assembled in the *Piazza del Duomo,* and spent the hours in dancing. The *Carroccio* was led through the principal streets, the ringing of its bell drowned in the peals that rang from every belfry in the city, and in the music of fifes and drums which made a part of the procession that followed it. The triumph of the reigning party in Florence caused them to celebrate the anniversary of the first of May, 1268, with peculiar splendour. They had indeed hoped that Charles dAnjou, King of Naples, the head of the Guelphs in Italy, and then *Vicare* of their republic, would have been there to adorn the festival by his presence. But the expectation of Corradino had caused the greater part of his newly conquered and oppressed kingdom to revolt, and he had hastily quitted Tuscany to secure by his presence those conquests of which his avarice and cruelty endangered the loss. But although Charles somewhat feared the approaching contest with Corradino, the Florentine Guelphs, newly reinstated in their city and possessions, did not permit a fear to cloud their triumph. The principal families vied with each other in the display of their magnificence during the festival. The knights followed the *Carroccio* on horseback, and the windows were filled with ladies who leant upon gold-inwoven carpets, while their own dresses, at once simple and elegant, their only ornaments flowers, contrasted with the glittering tapestry and the brilliant colours of the flags of the various communities. The whole population of Florence poured into the principal streets, and none were left at home, except the decrepid and sick, unless it were some discontented Ghibelline, whose fear, poverty, or avarice, had caused him to conceal his party, when it had been banished from the city.

It was not the feeling of discontent which prevented Monna Gegia de' Becari from being among the first of the revellers; and she looked angrily on what she called her "Ghibelline leg," which fixed her to her chair on such a day of triumph. The sun shone in all its glory in an unclouded sky, and caused the fair Florentines to draw their *fazioles* over their dark eyes, and to bereave the youth of those beams more vivifying than the sun's rays. The same sun poured its full light into the lonely apartment of Monna Gegia, and almost extinguished the fire which was lighted in the middle of the room, over which hung the pot of *minestra,* the dinner of the dame and her husband. But she had deserted the fire and was seated by her window, holding her beads in her hand, while every now and then she peeped from her lattice (five stories high) into the narrow lane below, — but no creature passed. She looked at the opposite window; a cat slept there beside a pot of heliotrope, but no human being was heard or seen; — they had all gone to the *Piazza del Duomo.*

Monna Gegia was an old woman, and her dress of green *coloratio* shewed that she belonged to one of the *Arti Minori.* Her head was covered by a red kerchief, which, folded triangularly, hung loosely over it; her grey hairs were combed back from her high and wrinkled brow. The quickness of her eye spoke the activity of her mind, and the slight irritability that lingered about the corners of her lips might be occasioned by the continual war maintained between her bodily and mental faculties.—"Now, by St. John!" she said, "I would give my gold cross to make one of them; though by giving that I should appear on a *festa* without that which no *festa* yet ever found me wanting." — And as she spoke she looked with great complacency on a large but thin gold cross which was tied round her withered neck by a ribbon, once black, now of a rusty brown.—"Methinks this leg of mine is bewitched; and it may well be that my Ghibelline husband has used the black art to hinder me from following the *Carroccio* with the best of them." — A slight sound as of footsteps in the street far below interrupted the good woman's soliloquy.—"Perhaps it is Monna Lisabetta, or Messer Giani dei Agli, the weaver, who mounted the breach first when the castle of Pagibonzi was taken." — She looked down, but could see no one, and was about to relapse into her old train of thoughts, when her attention was again attracted by the sound of steps ascending the stairs: they were slow and heavy, but she did not doubt who her visitant was when a key was applied to the hole of the door; the latch was lifted up, and a moment after, with an unassured mien and downcast eyes, her husband entered.

He was a short stunted man, more than sixty years of age; his shoulders were broad and high; his legs short; his lank hair, though it grew now only on the back of his head, was still coal-black; his brows were overhanging and bushy; his eyes black and quick; his complexion dark and weather-beaten; his lips as it were contradicted the sternness of the upper part of his face, for their gentle curve betokened even delicacy of sentiment, and his smile was inexpressibly sweet, although a short, bushy, grey beard somewhat spoiled the expression of his countenance. His dress consisted of leather trowsers and a kind of short, coarse, cloth tunic, confined at the waist by a leathern girdle. He had on a low-crowned, red, cloth cap, which he drew over his eyes, and seating himself on a low bench by the fire, he heaved a deep sigh. He appeared disinclined to enter into any conversation, but Monna Gegia, looking on him with a smile of ineffable contempt, was resolved that he should not enjoy his melancholy mood uninterrupted. —"Have you been to mass, Cincolo?" — she asked; beginning by a question sufficiently removed from the point she longed to approach. — He shrugged his shoulders uneasily, but did not reply.—"You are too early for your dinner," continued Gegia; "Do you not go out again?" — Cincolo answered, "No!" in an accent that denoted his disinclination to further questioning. But this very impatience only served to feed the spirit of contention that was fermenting in the bosom of Gegia.—"You are not used," she said, "to pass your May days under your chimney." — No answer.—"Well," she continued, "if you will not speak, I have done!" — meaning that she intended to begin—"but by that lengthened face of thine I see that some good news is stirring abroad, and I bless the Virgin for it, whatever it may be. Come, if thou be not too curst, tell me what happy tidings make thee so woe-begone." —

Cincolo remained silent for awhile, then turning half round but not looking at his wife, he replied,—"What if old Marzio the lion be dead?" — Gegia turned pale at the idea, but a smile that lurked in the good-natured mouth of her husband reassured her. "Nay, St. John defend us!" she began; —"but that is not true. Old Marzio's death would not drive you within these four walls, except it were to triumph over your old wife. By the blessing of St. John, not one of our lions has died since the eve of the battle of Monte Aperto; and I doubt not that they were poisoned; for Mari, who fed them that night, was more than half a Ghibelline in his heart. Besides, the bells are still ringing, and the drums still beating, and all would be silent enough if old Marzio were to die. On the first of May too! Santa Reparata is too good to us to allow such ill luck; — and she has more favour, I trust, in the seventh heaven than all the Ghibelline saints in your calendar. No, good Cincolo, Marzio is not dead, nor the Holy Father, nor Messer Carlo of Naples; but I would bet my gold cross against the wealth of your banished men, that Pisa is taken — or Corradino — or—"—"And I here! No, Gegia, old as I am, and much as you need my help (and that last is why I am here at all) Pisa would not be taken while this old body could stand in the breach; or Corradino die, till this lazy blood were colder on the ground than it is in my body. Ask no more questions, and do not rouse me: there is no news, no good or ill luck, that I know. But when I saw the Neri, the Pulci, the Buondelmonti, and the rest of them, ride like kings through the streets, whose very hands are hardly dry from the blood of my kindred; when I saw their daughter crowned with flowers, and thought how the daughter of Arrigo dei Elisei was mourning for her murdered father, with ashes on her head, by the hearth of a stranger — my spirit must be more dead than it is if such a sight did not make me wish to drive among them; and methought I could scatter their pomp with my awl for a sword. But I remembered thee, and am here unstained with blood."

"That thou wilt never be!" cried Monna Gegia, the colour rising in her wrinkled cheeks:—"Since the battle of Monte Aperto, thou hast never been well washed of that shed by thee and thy confederates; — and how could ye? for the Arno has never since run clear of the blood then spilt."—"And if the sea were red with that blood, still while there is any of the Guelphs' to spill, I am ready to spill it, were it not for thee. Thou dost well to mention Monte Aperto, and thou wouldst do better to remember over whom its grass now grows."—"Peace, Cincolo; a mother's heart has more memory in it than thou thinkest; and I well recollect who spurned me as I knelt, and dragged my only child, but sixteen years of age, to die in the cause of that misbeliever Manfred. Let us indeed speak no more. Woe was the day when I married thee! but those were happy times when there was neither Guelph nor Ghibelline; — they will never return."—"Never, — until, as thou sayest, the Arno run clear of the blood shed on its banks; — never while I can pierce the heart of a Guelph; — never till both parties are cold under one bier."—"And thou and I, Cincolo?—"

"Are two old fools, and shall be more at peace under ground than above it. Rank Guelph as thou art, I married thee before I was a Ghibelline; so now I must eat from the same platter with the enemy of Manfred, and make shoes for Guelphs, instead of following the fortunes of Corradino, and sending them, my battle-axe in my hand, to buy their shoes in Bologna."—"Hush! hush! good man, talk not so loud of thy party; hearest thou not that some one knocks?" —

Cincolo went to open the door with the air of a man who thinks himself ill used at being interrupted in his discourse, and is disposed to be angry with the intruder, however innocent he might be of any intention of breaking in upon his eloquent complaint. The appearance of his visitor calmed his indignant feelings. He was a youth whose countenance and person shewed that he could not be more than sixteen, but there was a self-possession in his demeanour and a dignity in his physiognomy that belonged to a more advanced age. His figure though not tall was slight; and his countenance though of wonderful beauty and regularity of feature, was pale as monumental marble; the thick and curling locks of his chestnut hair clustered over his brow and round his fair throat; his cap was drawn far down on his forehead. Cincolo was about to usher him with deference into his humble room, but the youth staid him with his hand, and uttered the words *"Swabia, Cavalieri!"* the words by which the Ghibellines were accustomed to recognize each other. He continued in a low and hurried tone: "Your wife is within?"—"She is."—"Enough; although I am a stranger to you, I come from an old friend. Harbour me until nightfall; we will then go out, and I will explain to you the motives of my intrusion. Call me Ricciardo de' Rossini of Milan, travelling to Rome. I leave Florence this evening."

Having said these words, without giving Cincolo time to reply, he motioned that they should enter the room. Monna Gegia had fixed her eyes on the door from the moment he had opened it with a look of impatient curiosity; when she saw the youth enter she could not refrain from exclaiming—"Gesu Maria!" — so different was he from any one she had expected to see.—"A friend from Milan," said Cincolo.—"More likely from Lucca," replied his wife, gazing on her visitant:—"You are doubtless one of the banished men, and you are more daring than wise to enter this town: however, if you be not a spy, you are safe with me." — Ricciardo smiled and thanked her in a low, sweet voice:—"If you do not turn me out," he said, "I shall remain under your roof nearly all the time I remain in Florence, and I leave it soon after dusk."

Gegia again gazed on her guest, nor did Cincolo scrutinize him with less curiosity. His black cloth tunic reached below his knees and was confined by a black leather girdle at the waist. He had on trowsers of coarse scarlet stuff, over which were drawn short boots, such as are now seen on the stage only: a cloak of common fox's fur, unlined, hung from his shoulder. But although his dress was thus simple, it was such as was then worn by the young Florentine nobility. At that time the Italians were simple in their private habits: the French army led by Charles d'Anjou into Italy first introduced luxury into the palaces of the Cisalpines. Manfred was a magnificent prince, but it was his saintly rival who was the author of that trifling foppery of dress and ornaments, which degrades a nation, and is a sure precursor of their downfall. But of Ricciardo — his countenance had all the regularity of a Grecian head; and his blue eyes, shaded by very long, dark eyelashes, were soft, yet full of expression: when he looked up, the heavy lids, as it were, unveiled the gentle light beneath, and then again closed over them, as shading what was too brilliant to behold. His lips expressed the deepest sensibility, and something perhaps of timidity, had not the placid confidence of his demeanour forbidden such an idea. His appearance was extraordinary, for he was young and delicate of frame, while the decision of his manner prevented the feeling of pity from arising in the spectator's mind: you might love him, but he rose above compassion.

His host and hostess were at first silent; but he asked some natural questions about the buildings of their city, and by degrees led them into discourse. When mid-day struck, Cincolo looked towards his pot of *minestra,* and Ricciardo following his look, asked if that was not the dinner. “You must entertain me,” he said, “for I have not eaten to-day.” A table was drawn near the window, and the *minestra* poured out into one plate was placed in the middle of it, a spoon was given to each, and a jug of wine filled from a barrel. Ricciardo looked at the two old people, and seemed somewhat to smile at the idea of eating from the same plate with them; he ate, however, though sparingly, and drank of the wine, though with still greater moderation. Cincolo, however, under pretence of serving his guest, filled his jug a second time, and was about to rise for the third measure, when Ricciardo, placing his small white hand on his arm, said, “Are you a German, my friend, that you cease not after so many draughts? I have heard that you Florentines were a sober people.”

Cincolo was not much pleased with this reproof; but he felt that it was timely; so, conceding the point, he sat down again, and somewhat heated with what he had already drank, he asked his guest the news from Germany, and what hopes for the good cause? Monna Gegia bridled at these words, and Ricciardo replied, “Many reports are abroad, and high hopes entertained, especially in the North of Italy, for the success of our expedition. Corradino is arrived at Genoa, and it is hoped that, although the ranks of his army were much thinned by the desertion of his German troops, that they will be quickly filled by Italians, braver and truer than those foreigners, who, strangers to our soil, could not fight for his cause with our ardour.”—”And how does he bear himself?”—”As beseems one of the house of Swabia, and the nephew of Manfred. He is inexperienced and young, even to childishness. He is not more than sixteen. His mother would hardly consent to this expedition, but wept with agony at the fear of all he might endure: for he has been bred in a palace, nursed in every luxury, and habituated to all the flattering attentions of courtiers, and the tender care of a woman, who, although she be a princess, has waited on him with the anxious solicitude of a cottager for her infant. But Corradino is of good heart; docile, but courageous; obedient to his wiser friends, gentle to his inferiors, but noble of soul. The spirit of Manfred seems to animate his unfolding mind; and surely, if that glorious prince now enjoys the reward of his surpassing virtues, he looks down with joy and approbation on him who is, I trust, destined to fill his throne.”

The enthusiasm with which Ricciardo spoke suffused his pale countenance with a slight blush, while his eyes swam in the lustre of the dew that filled them. Monna Gegia was little pleased with his harangue, but curiosity kept her silent, while her husband proceeded to question his guest. “You seem to be well acquainted with Corradino?”—”I saw him at Milan, and was closely connected with his most intimate friend there. As I have said, he has arrived at Genoa, and perhaps has even now landed at Pisa: he will find many friends in that town?”

“Every man there will be his friend. But during his journey southward he will have to contend with our Florentine army, commanded by the Marshals of the usurper Charles, and assisted by his troops. Charles himself has left us, and is gone to Naples to prepare for this war. But he is detested there, as a tyrant and a robber, and Corradino will be received in the Regno as a saviour: so that if he once surmount the obstacles which oppose his entrance, I do not doubt his success, and trust that he will be crowned within a month at Rome, and the week after sit on the throne of his ancestors in Naples.”

“And who will crown him?” cried Gegia, unable to contain herself: “Italy contains no heretic base enough to do such a deed, unless it be a Jew; or he send to Constantinople for a Greek, or to Egypt for a Mahometan. Cursed may the race of the Frederics ever be! Thrice cursed one who has affinity to that miscreant Manfred! And little do you please me, young man, by holding such discourse in my house.” Cincolo looked at Ricciardo, as if he feared that so violent a partisan for the house of Swabia would be irritated at his wife’s attack; but he was looking on the aged woman with a regard of the most serene benignity; no contempt even was mingled with the gentle smile that played round his lips. “I will restrain myself,” he said; and turning to Cincolo, he conversed on more general subjects, describing the various cities of Italy that he had visited; discussing their modes of government, and relating anecdotes concerning their inhabitants, with an air of experience that, contrasted with his youthful appearance, greatly impressed Cincolo, who looked on him at once with admiration and respect. Evening came on. The sound of bells died away after the *Ave Maria* had ceased to ring; but the distant sound of music was wafted to them by the night air, and its quick time indicated that the music was already begun. Ricciardo was about to address Cincolo, when a knocking at the gate interrupted him. It was Buzeccha, the Saracen, a famous chess-player, who was used to parade about under the colonnades of the Duomo, and challenge the young nobles to play; and sometimes much stress was laid on these games, and the gain and loss became the talk of Florence. Buzeccha was a tall ungainly man, with all that good-natured consequence of manner, which the fame he had acquired by his proficiency in so trifling a science, and the familiarity with which he was permitted to treat those superior to him in rank, who were pleased to measure their forces with him, might well bestow. He was beginning with, "Eh, Messere!" when perceiving Ricciardo, he cried, "Who have we here?"

"A friend to good men," replied Ricciardo, smiling. "Then, by Mahomet, thou art my friend, my stripling."

"Thou shouldst be a Saracen, by thy speech?" said Ricciardo. "And through the help of the Prophet, so am I. One who in Manfred's time — but no more of that. We won't talk of Manfred, eh, Monna Gegia? I am Buzeccha, the chess-player, at your service, Messer lo Forestiere."

The introduction thus made, they began to talk of the procession of the day. After a while, Buzeccha introduced his favourite subject of chess-playing; he recounted some wonderfully good strokes he had achieved, and related to Ricciardo how before the *Palagio del Popolo,* in the presence of Count Guido Novello de' Giudi, then *Vicare* of the city, he had played an hour at three chess-boards with three of the best chessplayers in Florence, playing two by memory, and one by sight; and out of three games which made the board, he had won two. This account was wound up by a proposal to play with his host. "Thou art a hard-headed fellow, Cincolo, and make better play than the nobles. I would swear that thou thinkest of chess only as thou cobblest thy shoes; every hole of your awl is a square of the board, every stitch a move, and a finished pair, paid for, check-mate to your adversary; eh! Cincolo? Bring out the field of battle, man." Ricciardo interposed, "I leave Florence in two hours, and before I go, Messer Cincolo promised to conduct me to the *Piazza del Duomo."*

"Plenty of time, good youth," cried Buzeccha, arranging his men; "I only claim one game, and my games never last more than a quarter of an hour; and then we will both escort you, and you shall dance a set into the bargain with a black-eyed Houri, all Nazarene as thou art. So stand out of my light, good youth, and shut the window, if you have heeding, that the torch flare not so."

Ricciardo seemed amused by the authoritative tone of the chess-player; he shut the window and trimmed the torch, which, stuck against the wall, was the only light they had, and stood by the table, over-looking the game. Monna Gegia had replaced the pot for supper, and sat somewhat uneasily, as if she were displeased that her guest did not talk with her. Cincolo and Buzeccha were deeply intent on their game, when a knock was heard at the door. Cincolo was about to rise and open it, but Ricciardo saying, "Do not disturb yourself," opened it himself, with the manner of one who does humble offices as if ennobling them, so that no one action can be more humble to them than another. The visitant was welcomed by Gegia alone, with "Ah! Messer Beppe, this is kind, on Mayday night." Ricciardo glanced slightly on him, and then resumed his stand by the players. There was little in Messer Beppe to attract a favourable regard. He was short, thin, and dry; his face long-drawn and liny; his eyes deep-set and scowling; his lips straight, his nose hooked, and his head covered by a close scull-cap, his hair cut close all round. He sat down near Gegia, and began to discourse in a whining, servile voice, complimenting her on her good looks, launching forth into praise of the magnificence of certain Guelph Florentines, and concluded by declaring that he was hungry and tired.—"Hungry, Beppe?" said Gegia, "that should have been your first word, friend. Cincolo, wilt thou give thy guest to eat? Cincolo, art thou deaf? Art thou blind? Dost thou not hear? Wilt thou not see? — Here is Messer Giuseppe de' Bosticchi."

Cincolo slowly, his eyes still fixed on the board, was about to rise. But the name of the visitant seemed to have the effect of magic on Ricciardo. "Bosticchi!" he cried—"Giuseppe Bosticchi! I did not expect to find that man beneath thy roof, Cincolo, all Guelph as thy wife is — for she also has eaten of the bread of the Elisei. Farewell! thou wilt find me in the street below; follow me quickly." He was about to go, but Bosticchi placed himself before the door, saying in a tone whose whine expressed mingled rage and servility, "In what have I offended this young gentleman? Will he not tell me my offence?"—"Dare not to stop my way," cried Ricciardo, passing his hand before his eyes, "nor force me again to look on thee — Begone!" Cincolo stopped him: "Thou art too hasty, and far too passionate, my noble guest," said he: "however this man may have offended thee, thou art too violent."

"Violent!" cried Ricciardo, almost suffocated by passionate emotion —"Aye, draw thy knife, and shew the blood of Arrigo dei Elisei with which it is still stained."

A dead silence followed. Bosticchi slunk out of the room; Ricciardo hid his face in his hands and wept. But soon he calmed his passion and said: —"This is indeed childish. Pardon me; that man is gone; excuse and forget my violence. Resume thy game, Cincolo, but conclude it quickly, for time gains on us — Hark! an hour of night sounds from the Campanile."

"The game is already concluded," said Buzeccha, sorrowfully, "thy cloak overthrew the best check-mate this head ever planned — so God forgive thee!"

"Check mate!" cried the indignant Cincolo, "Checkmate! and my queen mowing you down, rank and file!"—"Let us begone," exclaimed Ricciardo: "Messer Buzeccha, you will play out your game with Monna Gegia. Cincolo will return ere long." So taking his host by the arm, he drew him out of the room, and descended the narrow high stairs with the air of one to whom those stairs were not unknown.

When in the street he slackened his pace, and first looking round to assure himself that none overheard their conversation, he addressed Cincolo:—"Pardon me, my dear friend; I am hasty, and the sight of that man made every drop of my blood cry aloud in my veins. But I do not come here to indulge in private sorrows or private revenge, and my design ought alone to engross me. It is necessary for me to see, speedily and secretly, Messer Guielmo Lostendardo, the Neapolitan commander. I bear a message to him from the Countess Elizabeth, the mother of Corradino, and I have some hope that its import may induce him to take at least a neutral part during the impending conflict. I have chosen you, Cincolo, to aid me in this, for not only you are of that little note in your town that you may act for me without attracting observation, but you are brave and true, and I may confide to your known worth. Lostendardo resides at the *Palagio del Governo;* when I enter its doors I am in the hands of my enemies, and its dungeons may alone know the secret of my destiny. I hope better things. But if after two hours I do not appear or let you hear of my welfare, carry this packet to Corradino at Pisa: you will then learn who I am, and if you feel any indignation at my fate, let that feeling attach you still more strongly to the cause for which I live and die."

As Ricciardo spoke he still walked on; and Cincolo observed, that without his guidance he directed his steps towards the *Palagio del Governo.* "I do not understand this," said the old man;—"by what argument, unless you bring one from the other world, do you hope to induce Messer Guielmo to aid Corradino? He is so bitter an enemy of Manfred, that although that Prince is dead, yet when he mentions his name he grasps the air as it were a dagger. I have heard him with horrible imprecations curse the whole house of Swabia." A tremor shook the frame of Ricciardo, but he replied, "Lostendardo was once the firmest support of that house and the friend of Manfred. Strange circumstances gave birth in his mind to this unnatural hatred, and he became a traitor. But perhaps now that Manfred is in Paradise, the youth, the virtues, and the inexperience of Corradino may inspire him with more generous feelings and reawaken his ancient faith. At least I must make this last trial. This cause is too holy, too sacred, to admit of common forms of reasoning or action. The nephew of Manfred must sit upon the throne of his ancestors; and to achieve that I will endure what I am about to endure."

They entered the Palace of Government. Messer Guielmo was carousing in the great hall. "Bear this ring to him, good Cincolo, and say that I wait. Be speedy, that my courage, my life, do not desert me at the moment of trial." — Cincolo, casting one more inquisitive glance on his extraordinary companion, obeyed his orders, while the youth leant against one of the pillars of the court and passionately cast up his eyes to the clear firmament. "Oh, ye stars!" he cried in a smothered voice, "ye are eternal; let my purpose, my will, be as constant as ye!" Then, more calm, he folded his arms in his cloak, and with strong inward struggle endeavoured to repress his emotion. Several servants approached him and bade him follow them. Again he looked at the sky and said, "Manfred," and then he walked on with slow but firm steps. They led him through several halls and corridors to a large apartment hung with tapestry, and well lighted by numerous torches; the marble of the floor reflected their glare, and the arched roof echoed the footsteps of one who paced the apartment as Ricciardo entered. It was Lostendardo. He made a sign that the servants should retire; the heavy door closed behind them, and Ricciardo stood alone with Messer

Guielmo; his countenance pale but composed, his eyes cast down as in expectation, not in fear; and but for the convulsive motion of his lips, you would have guessed that every faculty was almost suspended by intense agitation.

Lostendardo approached. He was a man in the prime of life, tall and athletic; he seemed capable with a single exertion to crush the frail being of Ricciardo. Every feature of his countenance spoke of the struggle of passions, and the terrible egotism of one who would sacrifice even himself to the establishment of his will: his black eyebrows were scattered, his grey eyes deep set and scowling, his look at once stern and haggard. A smile seemed never to have disturbed the settled scorn which his lips expressed; his high forehead, already becoming bald, was marked by a thousand contradictory lines. His voice was studiously restrained as he said: "Wherefore do you bring that ring?" — Ricciardo looked up and met his eye, which glanced fire as he exclaimed—"Despina!" He seized her hand with a giant's grasp:—"I have prayed for this night and day, and thou art now here! Nay, do not struggle; you are mine; for by my salvation I swear that thou shalt never again escape me." Despina replied calmly—"Thou mayst well believe that in thus placing myself in thy power I do not dread any injury thou canst inflict upon me, — or I were not here. I do not fear thee, for I do not fear death. Loosen then thy hold, and listen to me. I come in the name of those virtues that were once thine; I come in the name of all noble sentiment, generosity, and ancient faith; and I trust that in listening to me your heroic nature will second my voice, and that Lostendardo will no longer rank with those whom the good and great never name but to condemn."

Lostendardo appeared to attend little to what she said. He gazed on her with triumph and malignant pride; and if he still held her, his motive appeared rather the delight he felt in displaying his power over her, than any fear that she would escape. You might read in her pale cheek and glazed eye, that if she feared, it was herself alone that she mistrusted; that her design lifted her above mortal dread, and that she was as impassive as the marble she resembled to any event that did not either advance or injure the object for which she came. They were both silent, until Lostendardo leading her to a seat, and then standing opposite to her, his arms folded, every feature dilated by triumph, and his voice sharpened by agitation, he said:

“Well, speak! What wouldst thou with me?”—”I come to request, that if you cannot be induced to assist Prince Corradino in the present struggle, you will at least stand neutral, and not oppose his advance to the kingdom of his ancestors.” Lostendardo laughed. The vaulted roof repeated the sound, but the harsh echo, though it resembled the sharp cry of an animal of prey whose paw is on the heart of its enemy, was not so discordant and dishuman as the laugh itself. “How,” he asked, “dost thou pretend to induce me to comply? This dagger,” and he touched the hilt of one, that was half concealed in his vesture, “is yet stained by the blood of Manfred; ere long it will be sheathed in the heart of that foolish boy.”

Despina conquered the feeling of horror these words inspired, and replied: “Will you give me a few minutes’ patient hearing?”—”I will give you a few minutes’ hearing, and if I be not so patient as in the Palagio Reale, fair Despina must excuse me. Forbearance is not a virtue to which I aspire.”—”Yes, it was in the Palagio Reale at Naples, the palace of Manfred, that you first saw me. You were then the bosom friend of Manfred, selected by that choice specimen of humanity as his confidant and counsellor. Why did you become a traitor? Start not at that word: if you could hear the united voice of Italy, and even of those who call themselves your friends, they would echo that name. Why did you thus degrade and belie yourself? You call me the cause, yet I am most innocent. You saw me at the court of your master, an attendant on Queen Sibilla, and one who unknown to herself had already parted with her heart, her soul, her will, her entire being, an involuntary sacrifice at the shrine of all that is noble and divine in human nature. My spirit worshipped Manfred as a saint, and my pulses ceased to beat when his eye fell upon me. I felt this, but I knew it not. You awoke me from my dream. You said that you loved me, and you reflected in too faithful a mirror my own emotions: I saw myself and shuddered. But the profound and eternal nature of my passion saved me. I loved Manfred. I loved the sun because it enlightened him; I loved the air that fed him; I deified myself for that my heart was the temple in which he resided. I devoted myself to Sibilla, for she was his wife, and never in thought or dream degraded the purity of my affection towards him. For this you hated him.

He was ignorant of my passion: my heart contained it as a treasure which you having discovered came to rifle. You could more easily deprive me of life than my devotion for your king, and therefore you were a traitor.

"Manfred died, and you thought that I had then forgotten him. But love would indeed be a mockery if death were not the most barefaced cheat. How can he die who is immortalized in my thoughts — my thoughts, that comprehend the universe, and contain eternity in their graspings? What though his earthly vesture is thrown as a despised weed beside the verde, he lives in my soul as lovely, as noble, as entire, as when his voice awoke the mute air: nay, his life is more entire, more true. For before, that small shrine that encased his spirit was all that existed of him; but now, he is a part of all things; his spirit surrounds me, interpenetrates; and divided from him during his life, his death has united me to him for ever."

The countenance of Lostendardo darkened fearfully. — When she paused, he looked black as the sea before the heavily charged thunderclouds that canopy it dissolve themselves in rain. The tempest of passion that arose in his heart seemed too mighty to admit of swift manifestation; it came slowly up from the profoundest depths of his soul, and emotion was piled upon emotion before the lightning of his anger sped to its destination. "Your arguments, eloquent Despina," he said, "are indeed unanswerable. They work well for your purpose. Corradino is I hear at Pisa: you have sharpened my dagger; and before the air of another night rust it, I may by deeds have repaid your insulting words."

"How far do you mistake me! And is praise and love of all heroic excellence insult to you? Lostendardo, when you first knew me, I was an inexperienced girl; I loved but knew not what love was, and circumscribing my passion in narrow bounds, I adored the being of Manfred as I might love an effigy of stone, which, when broken, has no longer an existence. I am now much altered. I might before have treated you with disdain or anger, but now these base feelings have expired in my heart. I am animated but by one feeling — an aspiration to another life, another state of being. All the good depart from this strange earth; and I doubt not that when I am sufficiently elevated above human weaknesses, it will also be my turn to leave this scene of woe. I prepare myself for that moment alone; and in endeavouring to fit myself for a union with all the brave, generous, and wise, that once adorned humanity, and have now passed from it, I consecrate myself to the service of this most righteous cause. You wrong me, therefore, if you think there is aught of disdain in what I say, or that any degrading feelings are mingled with my devotion of spirit when I come and voluntarily place myself in your power. You can imprison me for ever in the dungeons of this palace, as a returned Ghibelline and spy, and have me executed as a criminal. But before you do this, pause for your own sake; reflect on the choice of glory or ignominy that you are now about to make. Let your old sentiments of love for the house of Swabia have some sway in your heart; reflect that as you are the despised enemy, so you may become the chosen friend, of its last descendant, and receive from every heart the praise of having restored Corradino to the honours and power to which he was born.

"Compare this prince to the hypocritical, the bloody and mean-spirited Charles. When Manfred died, I went to Germany, and have resided at the court of the Countess Elizabeth; I have, therefore, been an hourly witness of the great and good qualities of Corradino. The bravery of his spirit makes him rise above the weakness of youth and inexperience: he possesses all the nobility of spirit that belongs to the family of Swabia, and, in addition, a purity and gentleness that attracts the respect and love of the old and wary courtiers of Frederic and Conrad. You are brave, and would be generous, did not the fury of your passions, like a consuming fire, destroy in their violence every generous sentiment: how then can you become the tool of Charles? His scowling eyes and sneering lips betoken the selfishness of his mind. Avarice, cruelty, meanness, and artifice, are the qualities that characterise him, and render him unworthy of the majesty he usurps. Let him return to Provence, and reign with paltry despotism over the luxurious and servile French; the free-born Italians require another Lord. They are not fit to bow to one whose palace is the change-house of money-lenders, whose generals are usurers, whose courtiers are milliners or monks, and who basely vows allegiance to the enemy of freedom and virtue, Clement, the murderer of Manfred. Their king, like them, should be clothed in the armour of valour and simplicity; his ornaments, his shield and spear; his treasury, the possessions of his subjects; his army, their unshaken loves. Charles will treat you as a tool; Corradino as a friend — Charles will make you the detested tyrant of a groaning province; Corradino the governor of a prosperous and happy people.

"I cannot tell by your manner if what I have said has in any degree altered your determination. I cannot forget the scenes that passed between us at Naples. I might then have been disdainful: I am not so now. Your execrations of Manfred excited every angry feeling in my mind; but, as I have said, all but the feeling of love expired in my heart when Manfred died, and methinks that where love is, excellence must be its companion. You said you loved me; and though, in other times, that love was twin-brother to hate, — though then, poor prisoner in your heart, jealousy, rage, contempt, and cruelty, were its handmaids, — yet if it were love, methinks that its divinity must have purified your heart from baser feelings; and now that I, the bride of Death, am removed from your sphere, gentler feelings may awaken in your bosom, and you may incline mildly to my voice.

“If indeed you loved me, will you not now be my friend? Shall we not hand in hand pursue the same career? Return to your ancient faith; and now that death and religion have placed the seal upon the past, let Manfred’s spirit, looking down, behold his repentant friend the firm ally of his successor, the best and last scion of the house of Swabia.”

She ceased; for the glare of savage triumph which, as a rising fire at night time, enlightened with growing and fearful radiance the face of Lostendardo, made her pause in her appeal. He did not reply; but when she was silent he quitted the attitude in which he had stood immoveably opposite to her, and pacing the hall with measured steps, his head declined, he seemed to ruminate on some project. Could it be that he weighed her reasonings? If he hesitated, the side of generosity and old fidelity would certainly prevail. Yet she dared not hope; her heart beat fast; she would have knelt, but she feared to move, lest any motion should disturb his thoughts, and curb the flow of good feeling which she fondly hoped had arisen within him: she looked up and prayed silently as she sat. Notwithstanding the glare of the torches, the beams of one small star struggled through the dark window pane; her eye resting on it, her thoughts were at once elevated to the eternity and space which that star symbolized: it seemed to her the spirit of Manfred, and she inwardly worshipped it, as she prayed that it would shed its benign influence on the soul of Lostendardo.

Some minutes elapsed in this fearful silence, and then he approached her. “Despina, allow me to reflect on your words; to-morrow I will answer you. You will remain in this palace until the morning, and then you shall see and judge of my repentance and returning faith.” — He spoke with studious gentleness. Despina could not see his face, for the lights shone behind him.

When she looked up to reply, the little star twinkled just above his head, and seemed with its gentle lustre to reassure her. Our minds, when highly wrought, are strangely given to superstition, and Despina lived in a superstitious age. She thought that the star bade her comply, and assured her of protection from heaven: — from where else could she expect it? She said therefore, “I consent. Only let me request that you acquaint the man who gave you my ring that I am safe, or he will fear for me.”—”I will do as you desire.”—”And I will confide myself to your care. I cannot, dare not, fear you. If you would betray me, still I trust in the heavenly saints that guard humanity.”

Her countenance was so calm, — it beamed with so angelic a self-devotion and a belief in good, that Lostendardo dared not look on her. For one moment — as she, having ceased to speak, gazed upon the star — he felt impelled to throw himself at her feet, to confess the diabolical scheme he had forged, and to commit himself body and soul to her guidance, to obey, to serve, to worship her. The impulse was momentary: the feeling of revenge returned on him. From the moment she had rejected him, the fire of rage had burned in his heart, consuming all healthy feeling, all human sympathies and gentleness of soul. He had sworn never to sleep on a bed, or to drink aught but water, until his first cup of wine was mingled with the blood of Manfred. He had fulfilled this vow. A strange alteration had worked within him from the moment he had drained that unholy cup. The spirit, not of a man, but of a devil, seemed to live within him, urging him to crime, from which his long protracted hope of more complete revenge had alone deterred him. But Despina was now in his power, and it seemed to him as if fate had preserved him so long only that he might now wreak his full rage upon her. When she spoke of love, he thought how from that he might extract pain. He formed his plan; and this slight human weakness now conquered, he bent his thoughts to its completion. Yet he feared to stay longer with her; so he quitted her, saying that he would send attendants who would shew her an apartment where she might repose. He left her, and several hours passed; but no one came. The torches burnt low, and the stars of heaven could now with twinkling beams conquer their feebler light. One by one these torches went out, and the shadows of the high windows of the hall, before invisible, were thrown upon its marble pavement. Despina looked upon the shade, at first unconsciously, until she found herself counting, one, two, three, the shapes of the iron bars that lay so placidly on the stone. “Those grates are thick,” she said: “this room would be a large but secure dungeon.” As by inspiration, she now felt that she was a prisoner. No change, no word, had intervened since she had walked fearlessly in the room, believing herself free. But now no doubt of her situation occurred to her mind; heavy chains seemed to fall around her; the air to feel thick and heavy as that of a prison; and the star-beams that had before cheered her, became the dreary messengers of fearful danger to herself, and of the utter defeat of all the hopes she had dared nourish of success to her beloved cause.

Cincolo waited, first with impatience, and then with anxiety, for the return of the youthful stranger. He paced up and down before the gates of the palace; hour after hour passed on; the stars arose and descended, and ever and anon meteors shot along the sky. They were not more frequent than they always are during a clear summer night in Italy; but they appeared strangely numerous to Cincolo, and portentous of change and calamity. Midnight struck, and at that moment a procession of monks passed, bearing a corpse and chaunting a solemn *De Profundis.* Cincolo felt a cold tremour shake his limbs when he reflected how ill an augury this was for the strange adventurer he had guided to that palace. The sombre cowls of the priests, their hollow voices, and the dark burthen they carried, augmented his agitation even to terror: without confessing the cowardice to himself, he was possessed with fear lest he should be included in the evil destiny that evidently awaited his companion. Cincolo was a brave man; he had often been foremost in a perilous assault: but the most courageous among us sometimes feel our hearts fail within us at the dread of unknown and fated danger. He was struck with panic; — he looked after the disappearing lights of the procession, and listened to their fading voices: his knees shook, a cold perspiration stood on his brow: until, unable to resist the impulse, he began slowly to withdraw himself from the Palace of Government, and to quit the circle of danger which seemed to hedge him in if he remained on that spot.

He had hardly quitted his post by the gate of the palace, when he saw lights issue from it, attendant on a company of men, some of whom were armed, as appeared from the reflection their lances’ heads cast; and some of them carried a litter hung with black and closely drawn. Cincolo was rooted to the spot. He could not render himself any reason for his belief, but he felt convinced that the stranger youth was there, about to be carried out to death. Impelled by curiosity and anxiety, he followed the party as they went towards the Porta Romana: they were challenged by the sentinels at the gate; they gave the word and passed. Cincolo dared not follow, but he was agitated by fear and compassion. He remembered the packet confided to his care; he dared not draw it from his bosom, lest any Guelph should be near to overlook and discover that it was addressed to Corradino; he could not read, but he wished to look at the arms of the seal, to see whether they bore the imperial ensigns. He returned back to the *Palagio del Governo:* all there was dark and silent; he walked up and down before the gates, looking up at the windows, but no sign of life appeared. He could not tell why he was thus agitated, but he felt as if all his future peace depended on the fate of this stranger youth. He thought of Gegia, her helplessness and age; but he could not resist the impulse that impelled him, and he resolved that very night to commence his journey to Pisa, to deliver the packet, to learn who the stranger was, and what hopes he might entertain for his safety.

He returned home, that he might inform Gegia of his journey. This was a painful task, but he could not leave her in doubt. He ascended his narrow stairs with trepidation. At the head of them a lamp twinkled before a picture of the Virgin. Evening after evening it burnt there, guarding through its influence his little household from all earthly or supernatural dangers. The sight of it inspired him with courage; he said an *Ave Maria* before it; and then looking around him to assure himself that no spy stood on the narrow landing place, he drew the packet from his bosom and examined the seal. All Italians in those days were conversant in heraldry, since from ensigns of the shields of the knights they learned, better than from their faces or persons, to what family and party they belonged. But it required no great knowledge for Cincolo to decypher these arms; he had known them from his childhood; they were those of the Elisei, the family to whom he had been attached as a partisan during all these civil contests. Arrigo dei Elisei had been his patron, and his wife had nursed his only daughter, in those happy days when there was neither Guelph nor Ghibelline. The sight of these arms reawakened all his anxiety. Could this youth belong to that house? The seal shewed that he really did; and this discovery confirmed his determination of making every exertion to save him, and inspired him with sufficient courage to encounter the remonstrances and fears of Monna Gegia.

He unlocked his door; the old dame was asleep in her chair, but awoke as he entered. She had slept only to refresh her curiosity, and she asked a thousand questions in a breath, to which Cincolo did not reply: he stood with his arms folded looking at the fire, irresolute how to break the subject of his departure. Monna Gegia continued to talk: “After you went, we held a consultation concerning this hot-brained youth of this morning; I, Buzeccha, Beppe de’ Bosticchi who returned, and Monna Lisa from the Mercato Nuovo. We all agreed that he must be one of two persons; and be it one or the other, if he have not quitted Florence, the *Stinchi* will be his habitation by sun-rise. Eh! Cincolo, man! you do not speak; where did you part with your Prince?”—”Prince, Gegia! Are you mad? — what Prince?”

“Nay, he is either a Prince or a baker; either Corradino himself, or Ricciardo the son of Messer Tommaso de’ Manelli; he that lived o’th’ Arno, and baked for all that Sesto, when Count Guido de’ Giudi was *Vicario.* By this token, that Messer Tommaso went to Milan with Ubaldo de’ Gargalandi, and Ricciardo, who went with his father, must now be sixteen. He had the fame of kneading with as light a hand as his father, but he liked better to follow arms with the Gargalandi: he was a fair, likely youth, they said; and so, to say the truth, was our youngster of this morning. But Monna Lisa will have it that it must be Corradino himself—”

Cincolo listened as if the gossip of two old women could unravel his riddle. He even began to doubt whether the last conjecture, extravagant as it was, had not hit the truth. Every circumstance forbade such an idea; but he thought of the youth and exceeding beauty of the stranger, and he began to doubt. There was none among the Elisei who answered to his appearance. The flower of their youth had fallen at Monte Aperto; the eldest of the new generation was but ten; the other males of that house were of a mature age. Gegia continued to talk of the anger that Beppe de’ Bosticchi evinced at being accused of the murder of Arrigo dei Elisei. “If he had done that deed,” she cried, “never more should he have stood on my hearth; but he swore his innocence; and truly, poor man, it would be a sin not to believe him.” Why, if the stranger were not an Elisei, should he have shewn such horror on viewing the supposed murderer of the head of that family? — Cincolo turned from the fire; he examined whether his knife hung safely in his girdle, and he exchanged his sandal-like shoes for stronger boots of common undressed fur. This last act attracted the attention of Gegia. “What are you about, good man?” she cried. “This is no hour to change your dress, but to come to bed. To-night you will not speak; but to-morrow I hope to get it all out from you. What are you about?”

“I am about to leave you, my dear Gegia; and heaven bless and take care of you! I am going to Pisa.” Gegia uttered a shriek, and was about to remonstrate with great volubility, while the tears rolled down her aged cheeks. Tears also filled the eyes of Cincolo, as he said, “I do not go for the cause you suspect. I do not go into the army of Corradino, though my heart will be with it. I go but to carry a letter, and will return without delay.”

“You will never return,” cried the old woman: “the Commune will never let you enter the gates of this town again, if you set foot in that traitorous Pisa. But you shall not go; I will raise the neighbours; I will declare you mad—”—”Gegia, no more of this! Here is all the money I have: before I go, I will send your cousin Nunziata to you. I must go. It is not the Ghibelline cause, or Corradino, that obliges me to risk your ease and comforts; but the life of one of the Elisei is at stake; and if I can save him, would you have me rest here, and afterwards curse you and the hour when I was born?”

“What! is he — ? But no; there is none among the Elisei so young as he; and none so lovely, except her whom these arms carried when an infant — but she is a female. No, no; this is a tale trumped up to deceive me and gain my consent; but you shall never have it. Mind that! you will never have it; and I prophecy that if you do go, your journey will be the death of both of us.” She wept bitterly. Cincolo kissed her aged cheek, and mingled his tears with hers; and then recommending her to the care of the Virgin and the saints, he quitted her, while grief choaked her utterance, and the name of the Elisei had deprived her of all energy to resist his purpose.

It was four in the morning before the gates of Florence were opened and Cincolo could leave the city. At first he availed himself of the carts of the *contadini* to advance on his journey; but as he drew near Pisa, all modes of conveyance ceased, and he was obliged to take by-roads, and act cautiously, not to fall into the hands of the Florentine out-posts, or of some fierce Ghibelline, who might suspect him, and have him carried before the Podesta of a village; for if once suspected and searched, the packet addressed to Corradino would convict him, and he would pay for his temerity with his life. Having arrived at Vico Pisano, he found a troop of Pisan horse there on guard: he was known to many of the soldiers, and he obtained a conveyance for Pisa; but it was night before he arrived. He gave the Ghibelline watch-word, and was admitted within the gates. He asked for Prince Corradino: he was in the city, at the palace of the Lanfranchi. He crossed the Arno, and was admitted into the palace by the soldiers who guarded the door. Corradino had just returned from a successful skirmish in the Lucchese states, and was reposing; but when Count Gherardo Doneratico, his principal attendant, saw the seal of the packet, he immediately ushered the bearer into a small room, where the Prince lay on a fox's skin thrown upon the pavement. The mind of Cincolo had been so bewildered by the rapidity of the events of the preceding night, by fatigue and want of sleep, that he had over-wrought himself to believe that the stranger youth was indeed Corradino; and when he had heard that that Prince was in Pisa, by a strange disorder of ideas, he still imagined that he and Ricciardo were the same; that the black litter was a phantom, and his fears ungrounded. The first sight of Corradino, his fair hair and round Saxon features, destroyed this idea: it was replaced by a feeling of deep anguish, when Count Gherardo, announcing him, said, "One who brings a letter from Madonna Despina dei Elisei, waits upon your Highness."

The old man sprang forward, uncontrolled by the respect he would otherwise have felt for one of so high lineage as Corradino. "From Despina! Did you say from her? Oh! unsay your words! Not from my beloved, lost, foster-child."

Tears rolled down his cheeks. Corradino, a youth of fascinating gentleness, but, as Despina had said, "young, even to childishness," attempted to reassure him. "Oh! my gracious Lord," cried Cincolo, "open that packet, and see if it be from my blessed child — if in the disguise of Ricciardo I led her to destruction." He wrung his hands. Corradino, pale as death with fear for the destiny of his lovely and adventurous friend, broke the seal. The packet contained an inner envelope without any direction, and a letter, which Corradino read, while horror convulsed every feature. He gave it to Gherardo. "It is indeed from her. She says, that the bearer can relate all that the world will probably know of her fate. And you, old man, who weep so bitterly, you to whom my best and lovely friend refers me, tell me what you know of her.” Cincolo told his story in broken accents. “May these eyes be for ever blinded!” he cried, when he had concluded, “that knew not Despina in those soft looks and heavenly smiles. Dotard that I am! When my wife railed at your family and princely self, and the sainted Manfred, why did I not read her secret in her forbearance? Would she have forgiven those words in any but her who had nursed her infancy, and been a mother to her when Madonna Pia died? And when she taxed Bosticchi with her father’s death, I, blind fool, did not see the spirit of the Elisei in her eyes. My Lord, I have but one favour to ask you. Let me hear her letter, that I may judge from that what hopes remain: — but there are none: — none.”

“Read it to him, my dear Count,” said the Prince; “I will not fear as he fears. I dare not fear that one so lovely and beloved is sacrificed for my worthless cause.” Gherardo read the letter.

“Cincolo de’ Becari, my foster-father, will deliver this letter into your hands, my respected and dear Corradino. The Countess Elizabeth has urged me to my present undertaking; I hope nothing from it — except to labour for your cause, and perhaps through its event to quit somewhat earlier a life which is but a grievous trial to my weak mind. I go to endeavour to arouse the feelings of fidelity and generosity in the soul of the traitor Lostendardo: I go to place myself in his hands, and I do not hope to escape from them again. Corradino, my last prayer will be for your success. Mourn not for one who goes home after a long and weary exile. Burn the enclosed packet, without opening it. The Mother of God protect thee! — Despina.”

Corradino had wept as this epistle was reading, but then starting up, he said—”To revenge or death! we may yet save her!” —

A blight had fallen on the house of Swabia, and all their enterprizes were blasted. Beloved by their subjects, noble, and with every advantage of right on their side, except those the church bestowed, they were defeated in every attempt to defend themselves against a foreigner and a tyrant, who ruled by force of arms, and those in the hands of a few only, over an extensive and warlike territory. The young and daring Corradino was also fated to perish in this contest. Having overcome the troops of his adversary in Tuscany, he advanced towards his kingdom with the highest hopes. His arch enemy, Pope Clement IV, had shut himself up in Viterbo, and was guarded by a numerous garrison. Corradino passed in triumph and hope before the town, and proudly drew out his troops before it, to display to the Holy Father his forces, and humiliate him by this show of success. The Cardinals, who beheld the lengthened line and good order of the army, hastened to the Papal palace. Clement was in his oratory, praying; the frightened monks, with pale looks, related how the excommunicated heretic dared to menace the town where the Holy Father himself resided; adding, that if the insult were carried to the pitch of an assault, it might prove dangerous warfare. The Pope smiled contemptuously. “Do not fear,” he said; “the projects of these men will dissipate in smoke.” He then went on the ramparts, and saw Corradino and Frederic of Austria, who defiled the line of knights in the plain below. He watched them for a time; then turning to his Cardinals, he said, “They are victims, who permit themselves to be led to sacrifice.”

His words were a prophecy. Notwithstanding the first successes of Corradino, and the superior numbers of his army, he was defeated by the artifice of Charles in a pitched battle. He escaped from the field, and, with a few friends, arrived at a tower called Astura, which belonged to the family of Frangipani, of Rome. Here he hired a vessel, embarked, and put out to sea, directing his course for Sicily, which, having rebelled against Charles, would, he hoped, receive him with joy. They were already under weigh, when one of the family of the Frangipani seeing a vessel filled with Germans making all sail from shore, suspected that they were fugitives from the battle of Tagliacozzo, he followed them in other vessels, and took them all prisoners. The person of Corradino was a rich prey for him; he delivered him into the hands of his rival, and was rewarded by the donation of a fief near Benevento.

The dastardly spirit of Charles instigated him to the basest revenge; and the same tragedy was acted on those shores which has been renewed in our days. A daring and illustrious Prince was sacrificed with the mock forms of justice, at the sanguinary altar of tyranny and hypocrisy. Corradino was tried. One of his Judges alone, a Provençal, dared condemn him, and he paid with his life the forfeit of his baseness. For scarcely had he, solitary among his fellows, pronounced the sentence of death against this Prince, than Robert of Flanders, the brother-in-law of Charles himself, struck him on the breast with a staff, crying, “It behoves not thee, wretch, to condemn to death so noble and worthy a knight.” The judge fell dead in the presence of the king, who dared not avenge his creature.

On the 26th of October, Corradino and his friends were led out to die in the Market-place of Naples, by the sea-side. Charles was present with all his court, and an immense multitude surrounded the triumphant king, and his more royal adversary, about to suffer an ignominious death. The funereal procession approached its destination. Corradino, agitated, but controlling his agitation, was drawn in an open car. After him came a close litter, hung with black, with no sign to tell who was within. The Duke of Austria and several other illustrious victims followed. The guard that conducted them to the scaffold was headed by Lostendardo; a malicious triumph laughed in his eyes, and he rode near the litter, looking from time to time, first at it and then at Corradino, with the dark look of a tormenting fiend. The procession stopped at the foot of the scaffold, and Corradino looked at the flashing light which every now and then arose from Vesuvius, and threw its reflection on the sea. The sun had not yet risen, but the halo if its approach illuminated the bay of Naples, its mountains, and its islands. The summits of the distant hills of Baiæ gleamed with its first beams. Corradino thought, “By the time those rays arrive here, and shadows are cast from the persons of these men, — princes and peasants, around me, my living spirit will be shadowless.” Then he turned his eyes on the companions of his fate, and for the first time he saw the silent and dark litter that accompanied them. At first he thought, “It is my coffin.” But then he recollected the disappearance of Despina, and would have sprung towards it: his guards stopped him; he looked up, and his glance met that of Lostendardo, who smiled — a smile of dread: but the feeling of religion which had before calmed him again descended on him; he thought that her sufferings, as well as his, would soon be over.

They were already over. And the silence of the grave is upon those events which had occurred since Cincolo beheld her carried out of Florence, until now that she was led by her fierce enemy to behold the death of the nephew of Manfred. She must have endured much; for when, as Corradino advanced to the front of the scaffold, the litter being placed opposite to it, Lostendardo ordered the curtains to be withdrawn, the white hand that hung inanimate from the side was thin as a winter leaf, and her fair face, pillowed by the thick knots of her dark hair, was sunken and ashy pale, while you could see the deep blue of her eyes struggle through the closed eyelids. She was still in the attire in which she had presented herself at the house of

Cincolo: perhaps her tormentor thought that her appearance as a youth would attract less compassion than if a lovely woman were thus dragged to so unnatural a scene.

Corradino was kneeling and praying when her form was thus exposed. He saw her, and saw that she was dead! About to die himself; about, pure and innocent, to die ignominiously, while his base conqueror, in pomp and glory, was spectator of his death, he did not pity those who were at peace; his compassion belonged to the living alone, and as he rose from his prayer he exclaimed, “My beloved mother, what profound sorrow will the news thou art about to hear cause thee!” He looked upon the living multitude around him, and saw that the hard-visaged partisans of the usurper wept; he heard the sobs of his oppressed and conquered subjects; so he drew his glove from his hand and threw it among the crowd, in token that he still held his cause good, and submitted his head to the axe.

During many years after those events, Lostendardo enjoyed wealth, rank, and honour. When suddenly, while at the summit of glory and prosperity, he withdrew from the world, took the vows of a severe order in a convent, in one of the desolate and unhealthy plains by the sea-shore in Calabria; and after having gained the character of a saint, through a life of self-inflicted torture, he died murmuring the names of Corradino, Manfred, and Despina.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ITALY

After three weeks of incessant rain, at Midsummer, the sun shone on the town of Henley upon Thames. At first the roads were deep with mud, the grass wet, and the trees dripping; but after two unclouded days, on the second afternoon, pastoral weather commenced; that is to say, weather when it is possible to sit under a tree or lie upon the grass, and feel neither cold nor wet. Such days are too rare not to be seized upon with avidity. We English often feel like a sick man escaping into the open air after a three months' confinement within the four walls of his chamber; and if "an ounce of sweet be worth a pound of sour," we are infinitely more fortunate than the children of the south, who bask a long summer life in his rays, and rarely feel the bliss of sitting by a brook's side under the rich foliage of some well-watered tree, after having been shut up week after week in our carpeted rooms, beneath our white ceilings.

The sun shone on the town of Henley upon Thames. The inhabitants, meeting one another, exclaimed: "What enchanting weather! It has not rained these two days; and, as the moon does not change till Monday, we shall perhaps enjoy a whole week of sunshine!" Thus they congratulated themselves, and thus also I thought as, with the Eclogues of Virgil in my pocket, I walked out to enjoy one of the best gifts of heaven, a rainless, windless, cloudless day. The country around Henley is well calculated to attune to gentlest modulations the rapturous emotions to which the balmy, ambient air, gave birth in my heart. The Thames glides through grassy slopes, and its banks are sometimes shaded by beechwood, and sometimes open to the full glare of the sun. Near the spot towards which I wandered several beautiful islands are formed in the river, covered with willows, poplars, and elms. The trees of these islands unite their branches with those of the firm land, and form a green archway which numerous birds delight to frequent. I entered a park belonging to a noble mansion; the grass was fresh and green; it had been mown a short time before; and, springing up again, was softer than the velvet on which the Princess Badroulboudour walked to Aladdin's palace. I sat down under a majestic oak by the river's side; I drew out my book and began to read the Eclogue of Silenus.

A sigh breathed near me caught my attention. How could an emotion of pain exist in a human breast at such a time. But when I looked up I perceived that it was a sigh of rapture, not of sorrow. It arose from a feeling that, finding no words by which it might express itself, clothed its burning spirit in a sigh. I well knew the person who stood beside me; it was Edmund Malville, a man young in soul, though he had passed through more than half the way allotted for man's journey. His countenance was pale; when in a quiescent state it appeared heavy; but let him smile, and Paradise seemed to open on his lips; let him talk, and his dark blue eyes brightened, the mellow tones of his voice trembled with the weight of feeling with which they were laden; and his slight, insignificant person seemed to take the aspect of an ethereal substance (if I may use the expression), and to have too little of clay about it to impede his speedy ascent to heaven. The curls of his dark hair rested upon his clear brow, yet unthinned.

Such was the appearance of Edmund Malville, a man whom I reverenced and loved beyond expression. He sat down beside me, and we entered into conversation on the weather, the river, Parry's voyage, and the Greek revolution. But our discourse dwindled into silence; the sun declined; the motion of the fleckered shadow of the oak tree, as it rose and fell, stirred by a gentle breeze; the passage of swallows, who dipt their wings into the stream as they flew over it; the spirit of love and life that seemed to pervade the atmosphere, and to cause the tall grass to tremble beneath its presence; all these objects formed the links of a chain that bound up our thoughts in silence.

Idea after idea passed through my brain; and at length I exclaimed, why or wherefore I do not remember,—"Well, at least this clear stream is better than the muddy Arno."

Malville smiled. I was sorry that I had spoken; for he loved Italy, its soil, and all that it contained, with a strange enthusiasm. But, having delivered my opinion, I was bound to support it, and I continued: "Well, my dear friend, I have also seen the Arno, so I have some right to judge. I certainly was never more disappointed with any place than with Italy — that is to say, taken all in all. The shabby villas; the yellow Arno; the bad taste of the gardens, with their cropped trees and deformed statues; the suffocating scirocco; the dusty roads; their ferries over their broad, uninteresting rivers, or their bridges crossing stones over which water never flows; that dirty

Brenta (the New River Cut is an Oronooko to it); and Venice, with its uncleaned canals and narrow lanes, where Scylla and Charybdis meet you at every turn; and you must endure the fish and roasted pumpkins at the stalls, or the smell—”

“Stop, blasphemer!” cried Malville, half angry, half laughing, “I give up the Brenta; but Venice, the Queen of the sea, the city of gondolas and romance—”

“Romance, Malville, on those ditches?—”

“Yes, indeed, romance! — genuine and soul-elevating romance! Do you not bear in mind the first view of the majestic city from Fusina, crowning the sea with Cybele’s diadem? How well do I remember my passage over, as with breathless eagerness I went on the self-same track which the gondolas of the fearless Desdemona, the loving Moor, the gentle Belvidera, and brave Pierre, had traced before me; they still seemed to inhabit the palaces that thronged on each side, and I figured them to myself gliding near, as each dark, mysterious gondola passed by me. How deeply implanted in my memory is every circumstance of my little voyage home from the opera each night along what you call ditches; when sitting in one of those luxurious barks, matched only by that which bore Cleopatra to her Antony, all combined to raise and nourish romantic feeling. The dark canal, shaded by the black houses; the melancholy splash of the oar; the call, or rather chaunt made by the boat-men, ‘Ca Stall!’ (the words themselves delightfully unintelligible) to challenge any other bark as we turned a corner; the passing of another gondola, black as night and silent as death — Is not this romantic? Then we emerged into the wide expanse before the Place of St. Mark; the cupolas of the church of Santa Maria de la Salute were silvered by the moonbeams; the dark tower rose in silent majesty; the waves rippled; and the dusty line of Lido afar off was the pledge of calm and safety. The Paladian palaces that rose from the Canale Grande; the simple beauty of the Rialto’s single arch—”

“Horrible place! I shall never forget crossing it—”

“Ay, that is the way with you of this world. But who among those who love romance ever thinks of going on the Rialto when they have once heard that the fish-market is held there? No place, trust an adept, equals Venice in giving a local habitation and a name,’ to the restless imaginations of those who pant to quit the ‘painted scene of this new world—’f for the old world, peopled by sages who have lived in material shape, and heroes whose existence is engendered in the mind of man alone. I have often repeated this to myself as I passed the long hours of the silent night watching the far lights of the distant gondolas, and listening to the chaunt of the boatmen as they glided under my window. How quiet is Venice! no horses; none of the hideous sounds and noises of a town. I grant that in lanes — but why talk of what belongs to every town; dirty alleys, troublesome market-women, and the mark of a maritime city, the luckless smell of fish? Why select defects, and cast from your account the peculiar excellencies of this wonderful city? The buildings rising from the waves; the silence of the watery pavement; the mysterious beauty of the black gondolas; and, not to be omitted, the dark eyes and finely-shaped brows of the women peeping from beneath their fazioles.

"You were three months in Italy?"

"Six, if you please, Malville."

"Well, six, twelve, twenty, are not sufficient to learn to appreciate Italy. We go with false notions of God knows what — of orange groves and fields of asphodel; we expect what we do not find, and are therefore disappointed with the reality; and yet to my mind the reality is not inferior to any scene of enchantment that the imagination ever conjured."

"Or rather say, my friend, that the imagination can paint objects of little worth in gaudy colours, and then become enamoured of its own work."

"Shall I tell you," continued Malville, with a smile, "how you passed your time in Italy? You traversed the country in your travelling chariot, cursing the postillions and the bad inns. You arrived at a town and went to the best hotel, at which you found many of your countrymen, mere acquaintances in England, but hailed as bosom friends in that strange land. You walked about the streets of a morning expecting to find gorgeous temples and Cyclopean ruins in every street in Florence; you came to some broken pillar, wondered what it could be, and laughed at the idea of this being one of the relics which your wise countrymen came so far to see; you lounged into a coffee-house and read Galignani; and then perhaps wandered with equal apathy into the gallery, where, if you were not transported to the seventh heaven, I can undertake your defence no further."

"My defence, Malville?"

"You dined; you went to a conversazione, where you were neither understood nor could understand; you went to the opera to hear probably the fifty-second repetition of a piece to which nobody listened; or you found yourself in Paradise at the drawing-room of the English ambassador, and fancied yourself in Grosvenor-square.

"I am a lover of nature. Towns, and the details of mixed society, are modes of life alien to my nature. I live to myself and to my affections, and nothing to that tedious routine which makes up the daily round of most men's lives. I went to Italy young, and visited with ardent curiosity and delight all of great and glorious which that country contains. I have already mentioned the charms which Venice has for me; and all Lombardy, whose aspect indeed is very different from that of the south of Italy, is beautiful in its kind. Among the lakes of the north we meet with alpine scenery mixed with the more luxuriant vegetation of the south. The Euganean hills in gentler beauty remind one of the hills of our own country, yet painted with warmer colours. Read Ugo Foscolo's description of them in the first part of his 'Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis,' and you will acknowledge the romantic and even sublime sentiments which they are capable of inspiring. But Naples is the real enchantress of Italy; the scenery there is so exquisitely lovely, the remains of antiquity so perfect, wondrous, and beautiful; the climate so genial, that a festive appearance seems for ever to invest it, mingled strangely with the feeling of insecurity with which one is inspired by the sight of Vesuvius, and the marks which are every where manifest of the violent changes that have taken place in that of which in other countries we feel most certain, good Mother Earth herself. With us this same dame is a domestic wife, keeping house, and providing with earnest care and yet penurious means for her family, expecting no pleasure, and finding no amusement. At Naples my fair lady tricks herself out in rich attire, she is kept in the best humour through the perpetual attentions of her constant cavaliere servente, the sun — and she smiles so sweetly on us that we forgive her if at times she plays the coquette with us and leaves us in the lurch. Rome is still the queen of the world, —

All that Athens ever brought forth wise,
All that Afric ever brought forth strange,
All that which Asia ever had of prize,

Was here to see; — O, marvellous great change!

Rome living was the world’s sole ornament,
And dead is now the world’s sole monument.

“If this be true, our forefathers have, in faith! a rare mausoleum for their decay, and Artemisia built a far less costly repository for her lord than widowed Time has bestowed on his dead companion, the Past; when I die may I sleep there and mingle with the glorious dust of Rome! May its radiant atmosphere enshroud these lifeless limbs, and my fading clay give birth to flowers that may inhale that brightest air.

“So I have made my voyage in that fair land, and now bring you to Tuscany. After all I have said of the delights of the south of Italy I would choose Tuscany for a residence. Its inhabitants are courteous and civilized. I confess that there is a charm for me in the manners of the common people and servants. Perhaps this is partly to be accounted for from the contrast which they form with those of my native country; and all that is unusual, by divesting common life of its familiar garb, gives an air of gala to everyday concerns. These good people are courteous, and there is much *piquance* in the shades of distinction which they make between respect and servility, ease of address and impertinence. Yet this is little seen and appreciated among their English visitors. I have seen a countrywoman of some rank much shocked at being cordially embraced in a parting scene from her cook-maid; and an Englishman think himself insulted because when, on ordering his coachman to wait a few minutes for orders, the man quietly sat down: yet neither of these actions were instigated by the slightest spirit of insolence. I know not why, but there was always something heartfelt and delightful to me in the salutation that passes each evening between master and servant. On bringing the lights the servant always says, ‘Felicissima sera, Signoria;’ and is answered by a similar benediction. These are nothings, you will say; but such nothings have conduced more to my pleasure than other events usually accounted of more moment.

“The country of Tuscany is cultivated and fertile, although it does not bear the same stamp of excessive luxury as in the south. To continue my half-forgotten simile, the earth is here like a young affectionate wife, who loves her home, yet dresses that home in smiles. In spring, nature arises in beauty from her prison, and rains sunbeams and life upon the land. Summer comes up in its green array, giving labour and reward to the peasants. Their plenteous harvests, their Virgilian threshing floors, and looks of busy happiness, are delightful to me. The balmy air of night, Hesperus in his glowing palace of sunlight, the flower-starred earth, the glittering waters, the ripening grapes, the chestnut copses, the cuckoo, and the nightingale, — such is the assemblage which is to me what balls and parties are to others. And if a storm come, rushing like an armed band over the country, filling the torrents, bending the proud heads of the trees, causing the clouds' deafening music to resound, and the lightning to fill the air with splendour; I am still enchanted by the spectacle which diversifies what I have heard named the monotonous blue skies of Italy.

"In Tuscany the streams are fresh and full, the plains decorated with waving corn, shadowed by trees and trellised vines, and the mountains arise in woody majesty behind to give dignity to the scene. What is a land without mountains? Heaven disdains a plain; but when the beauteous earth raises her proud head to seek its high communion, then it descends to meet her, it adorns her in clouds, and invests her in radiant hues.

"On the 15th of September, 18 — , I remember being one of a party of pleasure from the baths of Pisa to Vico Pisano, a little town formerly a frontier fortress between the Pisan and Florentine territories. The air inspired joy, and the pleasure I felt I saw reflected in the countenance of my beloved companions. Our course lay beneath hills hardly high enough for the name of mountains, but picturesquely shaped and covered with various wood. The cicale chirped, and the air was impregnated with the perfume of flowers. We passed the Rupe de Noce, and proceeding still at the foot of hills arrived at Vico Pisano, which is built at the extreme point of the range. The houses are old and surmounted with ancient towers; and at one end of the town there is a range of old wall, weed-grown; but never did eye behold hues more rich and strange than those with which time and the seasons have painted this relic. The lines of the cornice swept downwards, and made a shadow that served even to diversify more the colours we beheld. We returned along the same road; and not far from Vico Pisano ascended a gentle hill, at the top of which was a church dedicated to Madonna, with a grassy platform of earth before it. Here we spread and ate our rustic fare, and were waited upon by the peasant girls of the cottage attached to the church, one of whom was of extreme beauty, a beauty heightened by the grace of her motions and the simplicity of her manner. After our pic-nic we reposed under the shade of the church, on the brow of the hill. We gazed on the scene with rapture. ‘Look,’ cried my best, and now lost friend, ‘behold the mountains that sweep into the plain like waves that meet in a chasm; the olive woods are as green as a sea, and are waving in the wind; the shadows of the clouds are spotting the bosoms of the hills; a heron comes sailing over us; a butterfly flits near; at intervals the pines give forth their sweet and prolonged response to the wind, the myrtle bushes are in bud, and the soil beneath us is carpeted with odoriferous flowers.’ — My full heart could only sigh, he alone was eloquent enough to clothe his thoughts in language.”

Malville’s eyes glistened as he spoke, he sighed deeply; then turning away, he walked towards the avenue that led from the grounds on which we were. I followed him, but we neither of us spoke; and when at length he renewed the conversation, he did not mention Italy; he seemed to wish to turn the current of his thoughts, and by degrees he reassumed his composure.

When I took leave of him I said, smiling, “You have celebrated an Italian party of pleasure; may I propose an English one to you? Will you join some friends next Thursday in an excursion down the Thames? Perhaps the sight of its beautiful banks, and the stream itself, will inspire you with some of the delight you have felt in happier climes.”

Malville consented. But dare I tell the issue of my invitation? Thursday came, and the sky was covered with clouds; it looked like rain. However, we courageously embarked, and within an hour a gentle mizzling commenced. We made an awning of sails, and wrapt ourselves up in boat-cloaks and shawls. “It is not much,” cried one, with a sigh. “I do not think it will last,” remarked another, in a despairing voice. A silence ensued. “Can you contrive to shelter me at this corner?” said one; “my shoulder is getting wet.” In about five minutes another observed, that the water was trickling in his neck. Yet we went on. The rain ceased for a few minutes, and we tethered our boat in a small cove under dripping trees; we ate our collation, and raised our spirits with wine, so that we were able to endure with tolerable fortitude the heavy rain that accompanied us as we slowly proceeded homewards up the river.

THE BRIDE OF MODERN ITALY

My heart is fixt:
  This is the sixt. — ELIA

ON a serene winter morning two young ladies, Clorinda and Teresa, walked up and down the garden of the convent of St. S — , at Rome. If my reader has never seen a convent, or if he has only seen the better kind, let him dismiss from his mind all he may have heard or imagined of such abodes, or he can never transport himself into the garden of St. S — .

He must figure it to himself as bounded by a long, low, straggling, whitewashed, weather-stained building, with grated windows, the lower ones glassless. It is a kitchen garden, but the refuse of the summer stock alone remained, except a few cabbages, which perfumed the air with their rank exhalations. The walks were neglected, yet not overgrown, but strewed with broken earthen-ware, ashes, cabbage-stalks, orange-peel, bones, and all that marks the vicinity of a much frequented, but disorderly mansion. The beds were intersected by these paths, and the whole was surrounded by a high wall. This common scene was, however, unlike what it would have been in this country. You saw the decayed and straggling boughs of the passion-flower against the walls of the convent; here and there a geranium, its luxuriant foliage starred by scarlet flowers, grew unharmed by frost among the cabbages; the lemon plants had been removed to shelter, but orange trees were nailed against the wall, the golden fruit peeping out from amidst the dark leaves; the wall itself was variegated by a thousand rich hues; and thick and pointed aloes grew beneath it. Under the highest wall, opposite the back door of the convent, a corner of ground was enclosed; this was the burial place of the nuns; and in the path that led from the door to this enclosure Clorinda and Teresa walked up and down.

“He will never come!” exclaimed Clorinda.

“I fear the dinner bell will ring and interrupt us, if he does come,” observed Teresa.

“Some cruel obstacle doubtless prevents him,” continued Clorinda, sighing—”and I have prayed to St. Giacomo, and vowed to give him the best flowers and a candle a foot long next Easter.”

Teresa smiled: “I remember,” she said, “that at Christmas you fulfilled such a vow to San Francesco, — was not that for the sake of Cieco Magni? for you change your saint as your lover changes name; — tell me, sweet Clorinda, how many saints have been benefited by your piety?”

Clorinda looked angry, and then sorrowful; the large drops gathered in her dark eyes: “You are unkind to taunt me thus, Teresina; — when did I love truly until now? believe me, never; and if heaven bestows Giacomo upon me — oh! that is his bell! — naughty Teresa, you will cause me to meet him with tears in my eyes.”

Away they ran to the parlour of the convent, and were joined there by an old woman purblind and nearly deaf, who was to be present at the visit of Giacomo de’ Tolomei, the brother of Teresa. He kissed the hands of the young ladies, and then they commenced a conversation, which, by the lowness of their tones, and an occasional intermixture of French, was quite incomprehensible to their Argus, who was busily employed in knitting a large green worsted shawl.

“Well?” — said Clorinda, in a tone of inquiry.

“Well, dear Clorinda, I have executed our design, though I hope little from it. I have written a proposal of marriage; if you approve of it, I will send it to your parents. Here it is.”

“What is that paper?” cried the Argus.

Teresa bawled in her ear: “Only the history of the late miracle performed at Asisa” (Italians, male or female, are not great patronizers of truth), “look at it, dear Eusta.” (Eusta could not read.) “I will read it to you by and bye.” Eusta went on with her knitting.

The two girls looking over one another, read the proposal of marriage, which Giacomo de’ Tolomei made to the parents of Clorinda Saviani. The paper was divided into two columns, one headed: “The Proposal,” — the other “Observations to be made thereon” — and this latter column was left blank. The proposal itself was divided into several heads and numbered. It premised that a noble family of Sienna wishing to ally themselves to the family of the Saviani of Rome, in the persons of their eldest son and Clorinda, they presented the following considerations to the heads of that house first, that the young man was well-made, good-looking, healthy, studiously inclined, and of irreproachable morals. The circumstances of his fortune were then detailed, and the claims of dowry: it concluded by saying, that if the parents of Clorinda approved of the terms proposed, the young people might be introduced to each other, and if mutually pleased at their interview, the nuptials might be celebrated in the course of a few months. When Clorinda had finished reading, the tears that had gathered in her eyes fell drop after drop upon the paper.—”Wherefore do you weep?” asked Giacomo, “why do you distress me thus?”

“This proposal will never be accepted. You have asked twelve thousand crowns in dowry; my parents will not give more than six.”

“And yet,” replied Giacomo, “I have named a sum to which I am convinced my father will never agree; he will require twenty thousand at least; even if your parents accede I shall have to win his consent; but if prayers and tears can move him, I will not be chary of either.”

The bell rang for dinner, old Eusta arose, and Giacomo retired. Dinner! — what dainty feast of convent-like confectionaries does the reader picture? — Let him see, in truth, a long, brick-paved floor, with long deal tables, and benches ditto; the tables covered with not white cloths; cellars of black salt; bottles of sour wine, and small loaves of bitter bread. Then came the minestra, consisting (for it was fast day) of what we call macaroni, water, oil, and cheese; then a few vegetables swimming in oil; a concluding dish of eggs fried with garlic, and the repast of one of the most highborn and loveliest girls in Rome was finished. Clorinda Saviani was indeed handsome, and all her fine features expressed the *bisogna d’amare* which ruled her heart. She was just eighteen, and had been five years in this convent, waiting until her father should find a husband of noble birth, who would be content with a slender dowry. During this time she had formed several attachments for various youths, who, under different pretexts, had visited the convent. She had written letters, prayed and wept, and then yielding to insurmountable difficulties she had changed her idol, though she had never ceased to love. The fastidious English must not be disgusted with this picture. It is, perhaps, only a coarse representation of what takes place at every ball-room with us. And if it went beyond; — the nature of the Catholic religion, which crushes the innate conscience by giving a false one in its room; the system of artifice and heartlessness that subsists in a convent; the widely spread maxim in Italy, that dishonour attaches itself to the discovered not the concealed fault — all this forms the excuse why with a tender heart and much native talent, there was neither constancy in Clorinda’s love, nor dignity in her conduct.

After their repast the friends retired to Clorinda’s cell; a small, though high room, floored with brick, miserably furnished, and neither clean nor orderly. A prie-dieu was beside the little bed with a crucifix over it, together with two or three prints (like our penny children’s prints) of saints, among which St. Giacomo appeared with the freshest and cleanest face; beside these was a glass (resembling a bird’s drinking vessel) containing holy water, rather the worse for long standing; in a closet, with the door a-jar, among tattered books and female apparel, hung a glass-case enclosing a waxen Gesu Bambino, and some flowers, gathered for this holy dedication and drooping for want of light, were placed beneath him; some mignionette, basil, and heliotrope, weeds o’ergrown, flowered in a wooden trough at the window; a broken looking glass; a leaden ink stand — such was Clorinda’s boudoir.

“I despair,” she exclaimed—”I see no end to my evils — and but one road open — flight—”—”Which would ruin my brother.”—”How? — he is of another state.”—”And your honour?”—”Honour in this dungeon! — O, let me breathe the fresh air of heaven; let me no longer see this prison room; these high walls and all the circumstances of my convent life, and I care not for the rest.”

“But how? You may get people into the convent — but to get out yourself is a different affair.”

“I have many plans: — if this proposal of your brother fail, as it will, I will disclose them to him.”

A lay sister now came in to ask the young ladies if they would take coffee with the Superior. They found her alone; a little, squat, snuff-taking old woman; she was in high ill-humour: “Body of Bacchus!” she began, “you introduce strange laws in St. S — ! — This coffee is detestable — Your brother, Teresina, is here every day — I detest coffee without rum — Clorinda sees him, and it begins to be talked of — when he comes to-morrow, you only must receive him, and request him to discontinue his visits.”

Clorinda’s tears mingled with her coffee—”The old witch!” she said, when they had retired, “she is fishing for a present.”—”And must have one; what shall Giacomo bring her?”—”Let him send some rum. Did you not see the faces she made over her coffee? yet she is too niggardly to buy it herself.” A note was hastily dispatched to Giacomo by Teresa, to inform him of the necessary oblation. He came the next day well provided; for the waiter of a neighbouring inn accompanied him bearing six bottles of what bore the name of *Romme.* Teresa was called and dispatched to solicit the presence of the Superior. She came; Giacomo took off his hat: “Signora,” said he, “it is winter time, and I bring you a wintry gift. — Will you favour me by accepting this rum?”—”Signor, you are too courteous.”—”The courtesy is yours, Signora, in honouring me by receiving my present. I hope that you will find it good.” — He uncorked a bottle; Teresa ran for a glass; Giacomo filled it, and the Superior emptied it. Clorinda at the same moment tripped into the room. She started with a natural air, and after saluting Giacomo was going away, but he detained her, and they all sat down together, until the Superior was called away to give out bread for supper, and the three young people remained together.

The girls turned to Giacomo with inquiring looks: his were sorrowful. “My proposal has not been received. Your parents replied that they have proposed you to some one, and cannot break off the treaty.”—”And thus I am to be sacrificed!” cried Clorinda, casting up her beautiful eyes.—”Will you consent?” said Giacomo reproachfully.—”What means have I? I have talked of flight” (Giacomo’s countenance fell); “and that, although difficult, is not impossible.”—”How?”—”Why, my cell adjoins that of the Superior. She is fond of sweet things; on the next holiday I will make some cakes for her, filled with sugar and a little opium. I can then steal away the keys, make an impression on wax (I have a large piece ready), and you can easily get them counterfeited.”—”You would engage my brother in a dangerous enterprize,” said Teresa.—”My dear, dear Clorinda, my sweet friend,” said Giacomo, “you are ignorant of the world’s ways. I would sacrifice my life for you; but you would thus lose your honour, I should be imprisoned, and you would be sent to some dreary convent among the mountains, till forced to marry some boor who would render you miserable for life.”—”What is to be done then?” asked Clorinda, discontentedly.—”It requires thought. Something must, something shall, be done; do you be faithful to me, and refuse your parents’ offer, and I do not despair. In the mean time I will set out for Sienna tomorrow and see my father.”

Giacomo had formed an intimacy with a young English artist residing at Rome, and he left the cares of his love in the hands of this gentleman, while he by short days' journeys, and with a heavy heart, proceeded towards Sienna. The following day brought a letter of five pages, in a nearly illegible hand, to be delivered to Clorinda. Our Englishman had been a year in Rome, but he had never yet been within a convent. As he passed the prison-like building of St. S — , and measured with his eye the lofty walls of its garden, he had peopled it with nuns of all ages, states, and dispositions; — the solemn and demure, the ambitious, the bigoted, and those who, repenting of their vows, wetted their pallet with their midnight tears, and then, prostrate on the damp marble before the crucifix, prayed God to pardon them for being human. And then he thought of the novices fearful as brides, but not so hopeful; and of the boarders who dreamt of the world outside, as we of Paradise beyond the grave. He pictured echoing corridors, painted windows, the impenetrable grate, the religious cloister, and the garden, that most immaculate of asylums, with grassy walks, majestic trees, and veiled forms flitting under their shade. Well, thought he, I am now in for it; and if I do not lose my heart, I shall at least gain some excellent hints for my picture of the Profession of Eloisa.

He crossed the outer hall, rang at the bell, and the old tottering portress came towards the door. He asked for "the Signora Teresa de'

Tolomei." He was shown into the parlour — a vaulted room, the floor bricked, the furniture mean, without fire or chimney, though the cold east wind covered the ground with hoar frost. In a few minutes the two friends tripped into the room, followed by Eusta, who, instead of her knitting, carried a fire-pot filled with wood ashes, over which she held her withered hands and her blue nose, frost bitten. The girls were somewhat startled on seeing the stranger, who advanced, and announcing himself as Signor Marcott Alleyn, a friend of the brother of Teresa, delivered a little packet, together with a note which bade his sister confide implicitly in the Englishman.

The conversation became animated. No bashfulness intruded to prevent Clorinda from discoursing eloquently of her passion, especially when she observed the deep interest which her account excited. Alleyn was a man of infinitely pleasing manners; he had a soft tone of voice and eyes full of expression. Italian ladies are not accustomed to the English system of gallantry; since in that country either downright love is made, or the most distant coldness preserved between the sexes. Alleyn's compassion was excited in various ways. He heard that Clorinda had been imprisoned in that convent for five years; he saw the desolate garden, he felt the bitter cold, which was unalleviated by any thing except fire-pots; he had a glance at the blank corridors and squalid cells, and he saw in the victim an elegance of manners and a delicate sensitiveness that ill accorded with such dreary privations. Several visits ensued, and Alleyn became a favourite in the convent. He was only seventeen; his spirits were high; he diverted the friends, brought presents of rum and confectionary to the nuns, kissed some of the least ugly, made covert game of the Superior, and established himself with greater freedom in this seclusion in a week than Giacomo had done in a year. At first he sympathised with Clorinda, now he did more — he amused her. If she wept for the absence of Giacomo, he made her laugh at some story told *apropos,* which diverted her. If she complained of the petty tyranny of the nuns, he laid some plot of droll revenge, which she executed. He introduced a system of English jokes and hoaxes, at which the poor Italians were perfectly aghast, and to which no experience prevented their becoming victims; so utterly unable were they to comprehend the meaning of such machinations; and then, when their loud voices pealed through the arched passages in wonder and anger, they were appeased by soft words and well-timed gifts.

But this sunshine could not last for ever. Clorinda was at first more happy and gay than she had ever been. She in vain endeavoured to lament the absence of her lover. Alleyn prevented every emotion except gaiety from finding a place in her heart. She looked forward with delight for the hour of his visit, and the merriment that he excited left its traces on the rest of the day. Her step was light; and the cold of her cheerless cell was unfelt, since it had been adorned with caricatures of the Superior and nuns; their tyranny was either laid asleep or revenged, and Giacomo was, alas! forgotten. Her love-breathing letters lost their fire, and the writing them became an irksome task; her sighs were changed into smiles — but suddenly these again vanished, and Clorinda became more pensive and sad than ever. She avoided Teresa, and passed most of her time in lonely walks up and down the straight paths of the garden. She was fretful if Alleyn did not come; when he was announced, she would blush, sit silent in his presence, and, if any of his sallies provoked her laughter, it was quickly quenched by her tears. Her devotions even lost their accustomed warmth; Alleyn had no tutelar saint; no Marcott had ever been honoured with canonization, nor had any of the bones found in the catacombs been baptized with that transalpine name. “Marry, this is miching Mallecho; it means mischief,” — the brief mischief of inconstancy, new love, and all the evils attendant on such a change. Alleyn did not suspect this turn in the tide, till, left tête-à-tête one morning, some slight attentions on his part painted her cheeks with blushes; the confession was not far behind, he heard with mingled surprise and delight, and one kiss sealed their infidelity to the absent Giacomo just as Teresa and Eusta entered.

Alleyn was only seventeen. At that age men look on women as living Edens which they dare not imagine they can ever enjoy; they love, and dream not of being loved; they seek, and their wildest fancies do not picture themselves as sought: so it was small wonder that the heart of Alleyn beat with exultation, that his step was light and his eyes sparkling as he left the convent on that day. His visits were now more frequent; Teresa was confined to her room by illness, and the lovers (though that sacred name is prophaned by such an application) were left together unwatched. Clorinda’s thoughts turned wholly upon escape, and Alleyn heedlessly fostered such thoughts, until one day she said: “If I quit the convent this night, will you be under the walls to receive me?”—”My sweet Clorinda, are you serious?”—”Alas! no, I cannot. But in a few nights I trust that I shall be able to execute my project. Look, here is wax with an impression of the keys of the convent; you must get others made from it. The sisters shall sleep well that night, and before morning we will be far on our journey towards your happy country. Fear not; my disguise is ready — all will go well.”

“The devil it will!” thought Alleyn, as he quitted St. S — , and carefully placing the waxen impression he had received against a sunny wall, he paced up the Corso,—”and the devil take me if ever I go within those walls again! I have sown a pretty crop, but I am not mad enough to reap it; and, as the fates will have it, here is Tolomei returned to tax me with my false proceedings. I wish all convents and women —— — .”

Tolomei now accosted him. They walked together towards the Coliseum, talking of indifferent things. They climbed to the highest part of the ruin, and then, seated amid leafy shrubs and fragrant violets and wall flowers, looking over the desert lanes and violated Forum of Rome, Giacomo asked —”What news of Clorinda?” Alleyn wished himself hanged, and, with a look that almost indicated that his wish was about to be fulfilled, replied briefly to his friend’s questions, and then began a string himself, that he might escape his keen, lover-like looks — more painful than his words. Giacomo’s hopes were nearly dead. His father was inexorable; and he had learnt, besides, that the person selected by her parents as a husband for Clorinda had arrived in Rome, and this accomplished his misery. He shed abundance of tears as he related this, and ended by declaring that if he still found Clorinda faithful and affectionate, the contrariety of his destiny would urge him to some desperate measure. They separated at length, having appointed to go together to St. S —— — on the following day.

Alleyn broke this appointment. He sent an excuse to Giacomo, who accordingly went alone. In the evening he received a note from Clorinda. She lamented his absence; declared her utter aversion for Giacomo; bewailed her hard fate, and having acquainted him that she was to spend the following day with her parents, entreated him to call on the succeeding one. Alleyn passed the intermediate time at Tivoli, that he might avoid his injured friend, and at the appointed hour went to the convent. Teresa and Clorinda were together; they both looked disturbed and angry; when Alleyn appeared, Teresa arose, and casting a disdainful look on the conscious pair, left the parlour. Clorinda burst into tears. “Oh, my beloved friend,” she cried, “I have gone through heart-breaking scenes since I last saw you. This cruel Teresa is continually upbraiding me, and Giacomo’s silent looks of grief are a still greater reproach. Yet I am innocent. This heart has escaped from my control; its overwhelming sensations defy all the efforts of my reason, and I passionately love without hope, almost without a return — nor is this all.” She then related, that during her visit of the day before, she had been introduced to the person on whom her parents had resolved to bestow her. “At first,” she continued, “I was ignorant of the design on foot, and saw him with indifference. Presently my mother took me aside; she began with a torrent of reproaches; told me that all my artifices were discovered, and then showed me a letter of mine to Giacomo which had been intercepted by that artful monster the Superior, and concluded by telling me that I must agree instantly to marry the personage to whom I had been introduced.

‘Not that you shall be forced,’ she said; ‘beware therefore of spreading that report; but your conduct necessitates the strongest measures. If you refuse this match, which is in every way suitable to you, you must prepare to be sent to a convent of Carthusian Nuns at Benevento, where if you do not take the veil, you will be strictly guarded, and your plots, letters, and lovers, will be of no avail.’ Without permitting me to reply, this cruel mother led me back to the drawing room; this personage, whose name is Romani, came near me, and presently took an opportunity of asking whether I agreed to the arrangement of my parents. What could I say? I gave an ungracious assent, and they consider the matter settled. His estate is near Spoleto, and he is gone to prepare for my reception. The writings are drawing up; the time will soon arrive when I shall change my cage and be miserable for life. You alone, Alleyn, you, generous and brave Englishman, can aid me; take me hence; bear me away to freedom and love, and let me not be sacrificed to this unknown bridegroom, whose person I hardly know, and the idea of whom fills my heart with despair.” Alleyn replied as he best might, with expressions of real sorrow, but of small consolation, and the inexorable dinner-bell rang and separated them just as he concluded his reply.

The same evening Alleyn received a note from her. “My horror of this marriage,” she wrote, “increases in proportion as the period of its accomplishment approaches. I hear to-day that my parents have already given my *corrèdo* to Romani, which he is to expend in jewels and dresses for me, and thus my fate is nearly sealed. I shall be banished from Rome and my friends; I shall live with a stranger — I must be miserable. Giacomo is better than this. But as an union with him is impossible, and you refuse to aid me, and to liberate one whom you say you love, listen to a plan I have formed; some years ago I was addressed by one, who at that time gained my heart, and whom I still regard with tenderness. The smallness of my dowry caused his father to break off the treaty; this father is now dead. Go to this gentleman — find out whether he still loves me. Married to him, I should be united to one whose merits I know — I should live at Rome, and there would be some alleviation to my cruel fate. At least come to-morrow to the convent, and endeavour to console your miserable friend.”

Alleyn, as may easily be supposed, did not pay the required visit to the quondam lover of Clorinda. Perhaps she expected this; for the same night she wrote to him herself. Her letter was long and eloquent. Its expressions seemed to proceed from the over-flowings of a passionate and loving heart. She referred to Alleyn as a common friend, and urged expedition in every measure that was to be pursued. This letter was intercepted and carried to her parents. On the following day Alleyn received a despairing note, entreating him not to attempt to come to the convent. “Alas!” she wrote, “how truly miserable I am! What a fate! I suffer, and am the cause of a thousand griefs to others. Oh heaven! I were better dead; then I should cease to lament, or at least to occasion wretchedness to others. Now I am hated by others, and even by myself — Oh, my incomparable friend! Angel of my heart! Can I be the cause of misery even to you? See Giacomo, my beloved friend; tell him how deeply I pity him, but counsel him in my name to desist from all further pursuit. He must permit me to obey my parents, and they will never consent. My sole aim now is to escape from this prison.”

Another and another letter came; and she most earnestly begged him not to come to the convent. Thus nearly a month passed, when one morning early Alleyn was surprised by a visit from the Superior of the convent of St. S — . The old lady seemed very full of matter. She drank the rosoglio presented to her, took snuff, and opened her budget. She talked of the trouble she had ever had with poor Clorinda; inveighed against Giacomo; during her long discourse she praised her own sagacity, the tender affection of Clorinda’s parents, and related how she had always opposed the entrance of young men into the convent and their free communication with Clorinda, except his own; but that his politeness and known integrity had in this particular caused her to relax her discipline; and she concluded by inviting him to visit the convent whenever it should be agreeable to him. She then took her leave.

Alleyn was much disturbed. He wished not to go to St. S — ; he knew that he ought not to see Clorinda again. He resolved not to go out at all, and sat thinking of her beauty, love, and unaffected manners, until he resolved to walk that he might get rid of such thoughts. He hurried down the Corso, and before he was aware found himself before the door of the convent of St. S — . He paused, again he moved, and entered the outer hall — his hand was on the bell, when the door opened and Giacomo came out. Seeing Alleyn, he threw himself into his arms, shedding a torrent of tears. This exordium startled our Englishman; the conclusion was soon told: Clorinda had married Romani the day before, and on the same evening had quitted Rome for Spoleto.

This news sobered Alleyn at once; he shuddered almost to think of the folly he had been about to commit, feeling as one who is stayed by a friendly hand when about to place his foot beyond the brink of a high precipice. They turned from the convent door. “And yet,” said Alleyn as he walked on, “are you secure of the truth of your account? The Superior called on me yesterday and invited me to visit St. S — . Why should she do this if Clorinda were gone? I have half a mind to go and fathom this mystery.”

“Ay, go by all means,” replied Giacomo bitterly, “you will be welcome; fill your pockets with sugar plums; dose the old lady with rosoglio, and kiss the gentle nuns, the youngest of whom bears the weight of sixty years under the fillet on her brow. They miss your good cheer, and who knows, Clorinda gone, what other nets they may weave to secure so valuable a prize. True, you are an Englishman and a heretic; words which, interpreted into pure Tuscan, mean an untired prodigal, and one, pardon me, whose conscience will no more stickle at violating yon sanctuary than at eating flesh on Fridays. Go by all means, and make the best of your good fortune among these Houris.”

“Rather say, take post horses for Spoleto, friend Giacomo. And yet neither — it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I will go paint my Profession of Eloisa.”

ROGER DODSWORTH

THE REANIMATED ENGLISHMAN

IT may be remembered, that on the fourth of July last, a paragraph appeared in the papers importing that Dr. Hotham, of Northumberland, returning from Italy, over Mount St. Gothard, a score or two of years ago, had dug out from under an avalanche, in the neighbourhood of the mountain, a human being whose animation had been suspended by the action of the frost. Upon the application of the usual remedies, the patient was resuscitated, and discovered himself to be Mr. Dodsworth, the son of the antiquary Dodsworth, who perished in the reign of Charles I. He was thirty-seven years of age at the time of his inhumation, which had taken place as he was returning from Italy, in 1654. It was added that as soon as he was sufficiently recovered he would return to England, under the protection of his preserver. We have since heard no more of him, and various plans for public benefit, which have started in philanthropic minds on reading the statement, have already returned to their pristine nothingness. The antiquarian society had eaten their way to several votes for medals, and had already begun, in idea, to consider what prices it could afford to offer for Mr. Dodsworth's old clothes, and to conjecture what treasures in the way of pamphlet, old song, or autographic letter his pockets might contain. Poems from all quarters, of all kinds, elegiac, congratulatory, burlesque and allegoric, were half written. Mr. Godwin had suspended for the sake of such authentic information the history of the Commonwealth he had just begun. It is hard not only that the world should be baulked of these destined gifts from the talents of the country, but also that it should be promised and then deprived of a new subject of romantic wonder and scientific interest. A novel idea is worth much in the commonplace routine of life, but a new fact, an astonishment, a miracle, a palpable wandering from the course of things into apparent impossibilities, is a circumstance to which the imagination must cling with delight, and we say again that it is hard, very hard, that Mr. Dodsworth refuses to appear, and that the believers in his resuscitation are forced to undergo the sarcasms and triumphant arguments of those sceptics who always keep on the safe side of the hedge.

Now we do not believe that any contradiction or impossibility is attached to the adventures of this youthful antique. Animation (I believe physiologists agree) can as easily be suspended for an hundred or two years, as for as many seconds. A body hermetically sealed up by the frost, is of necessity preserved in its pristine entireness. That which is totally secluded from the action of external agency, can neither have any thing added to nor taken away from it: no decay can take place, for something can never become nothing; under the influence of that state of being which we call death, change but not annihilation removes from our sight the corporeal atoma; the earth receives sustenance from them, the air is fed by them, each element takes its own, thus seizing forcible repayment of what it had lent. But the elements that hovered round Mr. Dodsworth's icy shroud had no power to overcome the obstacle it presented. No zephyr could gather a hair from his head, nor could the influence of dewy night or genial morn penetrate his more than adamantine panoply. The story of the Seven Sleepers rests on a miraculous interposition — they slept. Mr. Dodsworth did not sleep; his breast never heaved, his pulses were stopped; death had his finger pressed on his lips which no breath might pass. He has removed it now, the grim shadow is vanquished, and stands wondering. His victim has cast from him the frosty spell, and arises as perfect a man as he had lain down an hundred and fifty years before. We have eagerly desired to be furnished with some particulars of his first conversations, and the mode in which he has learnt to adapt himself to his new scene of life. But since facts are denied to us, let us be permitted to indulge in conjecture. What his first words were may be guessed from the expressions used by people exposed to shorter accidents of the like nature. But as his powers return, the plot thickens. His dress had already excited Doctor Hotham's astonishment — the peaked beard — the love locks — the frill, which, until it was thawed, stood stiff under the mingled influence of starch and frost; his dress fashioned like that of one of Vandyke's portraits, or (a more familiar similitude) Mr. Sapio's costume in Winter's Opera of the Oracle, his pointed shoes — all spoke of other times. The curiosity of his preserver was keenly awake, that of Mr. Dodsworth was about to be roused. But to be enabled to conjecture with any degree of likelihood the tenor of his first inquiries, we must endeavour to make out what part he played in his former life. He lived at the most interesting period of English History — he was lost to the world when Oliver Cromwell had arrived at the summit of his ambition, and in the eyes of all Europe the commonwealth of England appeared so established as to endure for ever. Charles I. was dead; Charles II. was an outcast, a beggar, bankrupt even in hope. Mr. Dodsworth's father, the antiquary, received a salary from the republican general, Lord Fairfax, who was himself a great lover of antiquities, and died the very year that his son went to his long, but not unending sleep, a curious coincidence this, for it would seem that our frost-preserved friend was returning to England on his father's death, to claim probably his inheritance — how short lived are human views! Where now is Mr. Dodsworth's patrimony? Where his co-heirs, executors, and fellow legatees? His protracted absence has, we should suppose, given the present possessors to his estate — the world's chronology is an hundred and seventy years older since he seceded from the busy scene, hands after hands have tilled his acres, and then become clods beneath them; we may be permitted to doubt whether one single particle of their surface is individually the same as those which were to have been his — the youthful soil would of itself reject the antique clay of its claimant.

Mr. Dodsworth, if we may judge from the circumstance of his being abroad, was no zealous commonwealth's man, yet his having chosen Italy as the country in which to make his tour and his projected return to England on his father's death, renders it probable that he was no violent loyalist. One of those men he seems to be (or to have been) who did not follow Cato's advice as recorded in the Pharsalia; a party, if to be of no party admits of such a term, which Dante recommends us utterly to despise, and which not unseldom falls between the two stools, a seat on either of which is so carefully avoided. Still Mr. Dodsworth could hardly fail to feel anxious for the latest news from his native country at so critical a period; his absence might have put his own property in jeopardy; we may imagine therefore that after his limbs had felt the cheerful return of circulation, and after he had refreshed himself with such of earth's products as from all analogy he never could have hoped to live to eat, after he had been told from what peril he had been rescued, and said a prayer thereon which even appeared enormously long to Dr. Hotham — we may imagine, we say, that his first question would be: "If any news had arrived lately from England?"

"I had letters yesterday," Dr. Hotham may well be supposed to reply.

"Indeed," cries Mr. Dodsworth, "and pray, sir, has any change for better or worse occurred in that poor distracted country?"

Dr. Hotham suspects a Radical, and coldly replies: "Why, sir, it would be difficult to say in what its distraction consists. People talk of starving manufacturers, bankruptcies, and the fall of the Joint Stock Companies — excrescences these, excrescences which will attach themselves to a state of full health. England, in fact, was never in a more prosperous condition."

Mr. Dodsworth now more than suspects the Republican, and, with what we have supposed to be his accustomed caution, sinks for awhile his loyalty, and in a moderate tone asks: "Do our governors look with careless eyes upon the symptoms of over-health?"

"Our governors," answers his preserver, "if you mean our ministry, are only too alive to temporary embarrassment." (We beg Doctor Hotham's pardon if we wrong him in making him a high Tory; such a quality appertains to our pure anticipated cognition of a Doctor, and such is the only cognizance that we have of this gentleman.) "It were to be wished that they showed themselves more firm — the king, God bless him!"

"Sir!" exclaims Mr. Dodsworth.

Doctor Hotham continues, not aware of the excessive astonishment exhibited by his patient: "The king, God bless him, spares immense sums from his privy purse for the relief of his subjects, and his example has been imitated by all the aristocracy and wealth of England."

"The King!" ejaculates Mr. Dodsworth.

"Yes, sir," emphatically rejoins his preserver; "the king, and I am happy to say that the prejudices that so unhappily and unwarrantably possessed the English people with regard to his Majesty are now, with a few" (with added severity) "and I may say contemptible exceptions, exchanged for dutiful love and such reverence as his talents, virtues, and paternal care deserve."

"Dear sir, you delight me," replies Mr. Dodsworth, while his loyalty late a tiny bud suddenly expands into full flower; "yet I hardly understand; the change is so sudden; and the man — Charles Stuart, King Charles, I may now call him, his murder is I trust execrated as it deserves?"

Dr. Hotham put his hand on the pulse of his patient — he feared an access of delirium from such a wandering from the subject. The pulse was calm, and Mr. Dodsworth continued: "That unfortunate martyr looking down from heaven is, I trust, appeased by the reverence paid to his name and the prayers dedicated to his memory. No sentiment, I think I may venture to assert, is so general in England as the compassion and love in which the memory of that hapless monarch is held?"

"And his son, who now reigns?—"

"Surely, sir, you forget; no son; that of course is impossible. No descendant of his fills the English throne, now worthily occupied by the house of Hanover. The despicable race of the Stuarts, long outcast and wandering, is now extinct, and the last days of the last Pretender to the crown of that family justified in the eyes of the world the sentence which ejected it from the kingdom for ever."

Such must have been Mr. Dodsworth's first lesson in politics. Soon, to the wonder of the preserver and preserved, the real state of the case must have been revealed; for a time, the strange and tremendous circumstance of his long trance may have threatened the wits of Mr. Dodsworth with a total overthrow. He had, as he crossed Mount Saint Gothard, mourned a father — now every human being he had ever seen is "lapped in lead," is dust, each voice he had ever heard is mute. The very sound of the English tongue is changed, as his experience in conversation with Dr. Hotham assures him. Empires, religions, races of men, have probably sprung up or faded; his own patrimony (the thought is idle, yet, without it, how can he live?) is sunk into the thirsty gulph that gapes ever greedy to swallow the past; his learning, his acquirements, are probably obsolete; with a bitter smile he thinks to himself, I must take to my father's profession, and turn antiquary. The familiar objects, thoughts, and habits of my boyhood, are now antiquities. He wonders where the hundred and sixty folio volumes of MS. that his father had compiled, and which, as a lad, he had regarded with religious reverence, now are — where — ah, where? His favourite playmate, the friend of his later years, his destined and lovely bride; tears long frozen are uncongealed, and flow down his young old cheeks.

But we do not wish to be pathetic; surely since the days of the patriarchs, no fair lady had her death mourned by her lover so many years after it had taken place. Necessity, tyrant of the world, in some degree reconciled Mr. Dodsworth to his fate. At first he is persuaded that the later generation of man is much deteriorated from his contemporaries; they are neither so tall, so handsome, nor so intelligent. Then by degrees he begins to doubt his first impression. The ideas that had taken possession of his brain before his accident, and which had been frozen up for so many years, begin to thaw and dissolve away, making room for others. He dresses himself in the modern style, and does not object much to anything except the neck-cloth and hardboarded hat. He admires the texture of his shoes and stockings, and looks with admiration on a small Genevese watch, which he often consults, as if he were not yet assured that time had made progress in its accustomed manner, and as if he should find on its dial plate occular demonstration that he had exchanged his thirty-seventh year for his two hundredth and upwards, and had left A.D. 1654 far behind to find himself suddenly a beholder of the ways of men in this enlightened nineteenth century. His curiosity is insatiable; when he reads, his eyes cannot purvey fast enough to his mind, and every now and then he lights upon some inexplicable passage, some discovery and knowledge familiar to us, but undreamed of in his days, that throws him into wonder and interminable reverie. Indeed, he may be supposed to pass much of his time in that state, now and then interrupting himself with a royalist song against old Noll and the Roundheads, breaking off suddenly, and looking round fearfully to see who were his auditors, and on beholding the modern appearance of his friend the Doctor, sighing to think that it is no longer of import to any, whether he sing a cavalier catch or a puritanic psalm.

It were an endless task to develope all the philosophic ideas to which Mr. Dodsworth's resuscitation naturally gives birth. We should like much to converse with this gentleman, and still more to observe the progress of his mind, and the change of his ideas in his very novel situation. If he be a sprightly youth, fond of the shows of the world, careless of the higher human pursuits, he may proceed summarily to cast into the shade all trace of his former life, and endeavour to merge himself at once into the stream of humanity now flowing. It would be curious enough to observe the mistakes he would make, and the medley of manners which would thus be produced. He may think to enter into active life, become whig or tory as his inclinations lead, and get a seat in the, even to him, once called chapel of St. Stephens. He may content himself with turning contemplative philosopher, and find sufficient food for his mind in tracing the march of the human intellect, the changes which have been wrought in the dispositions, desires, and powers of mankind. Will he be an advocate for perfectibility or deterioration? He must admire our manufactures, the progress of science, the diffusion of knowledge, and the fresh spirit of enterprise characteristic of our countrymen. Will he find any individuals to be compared to the glorious spirits of his day? Moderate in his views as we have supposed him to be, he will probably fall at once into the temporising tone of mind now so much in vogue. He will be pleased to find a calm in politics; he will greatly admire the ministry who have succeeded in conciliating almost all parties — to find peace where he left feud. The same character which he bore a couple of hundred years ago, will influence him now; he will still be the moderate, peaceful, unenthusiastic Mr. Dodsworth that he was in 1647.

For notwithstanding education and circumstances may suffice to direct and form the rough material of the mind, it cannot create, nor give intellect, noble aspiration, and energetic constancy where dulness, wavering of purpose, and grovelling desires, are stamped by nature. Entertaining this belief we have (to forget Mr. Dodsworth for awhile) often made conjectures how such and such heroes of antiquity would act, if they were reborn in these times: and then awakened fancy has gone on to imagine that some of them are reborn; that according to the theory explained by Virgil in his sixth Æneid, every thousand years the dead return to life, and their souls endued with the same sensibilities and capacities as before, are turned naked of knowledge into this world, again to dress their skeleton powers in such habiliments as situation, education, and experience will furnish. Pythagoras, we are told, remembered many transmigrations of this sort, as having occurred to himself, though for a philosopher he made very little use of his anterior memories. It would prove an instructive school for kings and statesmen, and in fact for all human beings, called on as they are, to play their part on the stage of the world, could they remember what they had been. Thus we might obtain a glimpse of heaven and of hell, as, the secret of our former identity confined to our own bosoms, we winced or exulted in the blame or praise bestowed on our former selves. While the love of glory and posthumous reputation is as natural to man as his attachment to life itself, he must be, under such a state of things, tremblingly alive to the historic records of his honour or shame. The mild spirit of Fox would have been soothed by the recollection that he had played a worthy part as Marcus Antoninus — the former experiences of Alcibiades or even of the emasculated Steeny of James I. might have caused Sheridan to have refused to tread over again the same path of dazzling but fleeting brilliancy. The soul of our modern Corinna would have been purified and exalted by a consciousness that once it had given life to the form of Sappho. If at the present moment the witch, memory, were in a freak, to cause all the present generation to recollect that some ten centuries back they had been somebody else, would not several of our free thinking martyrs wonder to find that they had suffered as Christians under Domitian, while the judge as he passed sentence would suddenly become aware, that formerly he had condemned the saints of the early church to the torture, for not renouncing the religion he now upheld — nothing but benevolent actions and real goodness would come pure out of the ordeal. While it would be whimsical to perceive how some great men in parish affairs would strut under the consciousness that their hands had once held a sceptre, an honest artizan or pilfering domestic would find that he was little altered by being transformed into an idle noble or director of a joint stock company; in every way we may suppose that the humble would be exalted, and the noble and the proud would feel their stars and honours dwindle into baubles and child's play when they called to mind the lowly stations they had once occupied. If philosophical novels were in fashion, we conceive an excellent one might be written on the development of the same mind in various stations, in different periods of the world's history.

But to return to Mr. Dodsworth, and indeed with a few more words to bid him farewell. We entreat him no longer to bury himself in obscurity; or, if he modestly decline publicity, we beg him to make himself known personally to us. We have a thousand inquiries to make, doubts to clear up, facts to ascertain. If any fear that old habits and strangeness of appearance will make him ridiculous to those accustomed to associate with modern exquisites, we beg to assure him that we are not given to ridicule mere outward shows, and that worth and intrinsic excellence will always claim our respect.

This we say, if Mr. Dodsworth is alive. Perhaps he is again no more. Perhaps he opened his eyes only to shut them again more obstinately; perhaps his ancient clay could not thrive on the harvests of these latter days. After a little wonder; a little shuddering to find himself the dead alive — finding no affinity between himself and the present state of things — he has bidden once more an eternal farewell to the sun. Followed to his grave by his preserver and the wondering villagers, he may sleep the true death-sleep in the same valley where he so long reposed. Doctor Hotham may have erected a simple tablet over his twice-buried remains, inscribed —

To the Memory of R. Dodsworth,
An Englishman, Born April 1, 1617;
Died July 16, 1826; Aged 209.

An inscription which, if it were preserved during any terrible convulsion that caused the world to begin its life again, would occasion many learned disquisitions and ingenious theories concerning a race which authentic records showed to have secured the privilege of attaining so vast an age.

THE SISTERS OF ALBANO

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; — and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprang the Epic war,
"Arms and the Man," whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire; but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

IT was to see this beautiful lake that I made my last excursion before quitting Rome. The spring had nearly grown into summer, the trees were all in full but fresh green foliage, the vine dresser was singing, perched among them, training his vines; the cicala had not yet begun her song, the heats therefore had not commenced; but at evening the fireflies gleamed among the hills, and the cooing aziola assured us of what in that country needs no assurance, fine weather for the morrow. We set out early in the morning to avoid the heats, breakfasted at Albano, and till ten o'clock passed our time in visiting the Mosaic, the villa of Cicero, and other curiosities of the place. We reposed during the middle of the day in a tent elevated for us at the hill top, whence we looked on the hill-embosomed lake, and the distant eminence crowned by a town with its church. Other villages and cottages were scattered among the foldings of mountains, and beyond we saw the deep blue sea of the southern poets, which received the swift and immortal Tiber, rocking it to repose among its devouring waves. The Coliseum falls and the Pantheon decays — the very hills of Rome are perishing, but the Tiber lives for ever, flows for ever — and for ever feeds the land-encircling Mediterranean with fresh waters.

Our summer and pleasure-seeking party consisted of many: to me the most interesting person was the Countess Atanasia D — , who was as beautiful as an imagination of Raphael, and good as the ideal of a poet. Two of her children accompanied her, with animated looks and gentle manners, quiet, yet enjoying. I sat near her, watching the changing shadows of the landscape before us. As the sun descended, it poured a tide of light into the valley of the lake, deluging the deep bank formed by the mountain with liquid gold. The domes and turrets of the far town flashed and gleamed, the trees were dyed in splendour; two or three slight clouds, which had drunk the radiance till it became their essence, floated golden islets in the lustrous empyrean. The waters, reflecting the brilliancy of the sky and the fire-tinted banks, beamed a second heaven, a second irradiated earth, at our feet. The Mediterranean gazing on the sun — as the eyes of a mortal bride fail and are dimmed when reflecting her lover's glance — was lost, mixed in his light, till it had become one with him. — Long (our souls, like the sea, the hills, and lake, drinking in the supreme loveliness) we gazed, till the too full cup overflowed, and we turned away with a sigh.

At our feet there was a knoll of ground, that formed the foreground of our picture; two trees lay basking against the sky, glittering with the golden light, which like dew seemed to hang amid their branches — a rock closed the prospect on the other side, twined round by creepers, and redolent with blooming myrtle — a brook crossed by huge stones gushed through the turf, and on the fragments of rock that lay about, sat two or three persons, peasants, who attracted our attention. One was a hunter, as his gun, lying on a bank not far off, demonstrated, yet he was a tiller of the soil; his rough straw hat, and his picturesque but coarse dress, belonged to that class. The other was some contadina, in the costume of her country, returning, her basket on her arm, from the village to her cottage home. They were regarding the stores of a pedlar, who with doffed hat stood near: some of these consisted of pictures and prints — views of the country, and portraits of the Madonna. Our peasants regarded these with pleased attention.

"One might easily make out a story for that pair," I said: "his gun is a help to the imagination, and we may fancy him a bandit with his contadina love, the terror of all the neighbourhood, except of her, the most defenceless being in it."

"You speak lightly of such a combination," said the lovely countess at my side, "as if it must not in its nature be the cause of dreadful tragedies. The mingling of love with crime is a dread conjunction, and lawless pursuits are never followed without bringing on the criminal, and all allied to him, ineffable misery. I speak with emotion, for your observation reminds me of an unfortunate girl, now one of the Sisters of Charity in the convent of Santa Chiara at Rome, whose unhappy passion for a man, such as you mention, spread destruction and sorrow widely around her."

I entreated my lovely friend to relate the history of the nun: for a long time she resisted my entreaties, as not willing to depress the spirit of a party of pleasure by a tale of sorrow. But I urged her, and she yielded. Her sweet Italian phraseology now rings in my ears, and her beautiful countenance is before me. As she spoke, the sun set, and the moon bent her silver horn in the ebbing tide of glory he had left. The lake changed from purple to silver, and the trees, before so splendid, now in dark masses, just reflected from their tops the mild moonlight. The fireflies flashed among the rocks; the bats circled round us: meanwhile thus commenced the Countess Atanasia:

The nun of whom I speak had a sister older than herself; I can remember them when as children they brought eggs and fruit to my father's villa. Maria and Anina were constantly together. With their large straw hats to shield them from the scorching sun, they were at work in their father's *fodere* all day, and in the evening, when Maria, who was the elder by four years, went to the fountain for water, Anina ran at her side. Their cot — the folding of the hill conceals it — is at the lake side opposite; and about a quarter of a mile up the hill is the rustic fountain of which I speak. Maria was serious, gentle, and considerate; Anina was a laughing, merry little creature, with the face of a cherub. When Maria was fifteen, their mother fell ill, and was nursed at the convent of Santa Chiara at Rome. Maria attended her, never leaving her bedside day or night. The nuns thought her an angel, she deemed them saints; her mother died, and they persuaded her to make one of them; her father could not but acquiesce in her holy intention, and she became one of the Sisters of Charity, the nun-nurses of Santa Chiara. Once or twice a year she visited her home, gave sage and kind advice to Anina, and sometimes wept to part from her; but her piety and her active employments for the sick reconciled her to her fate. Anina was more sorry to lose her sister's society. The other girls of the village did not please her: she was a good child, and worked hard for her father, and her sweetest recompense was the report he made of her to Maria, and the fond praises and caresses the latter bestowed on her when they met.

It was not until she was fifteen that Anina showed any diminution of affection for her sister. Yet I cannot call it diminution, for she loved her perhaps more than ever, though her holy calling and sage lectures prevented her from reposing confidence, and made her tremble lest the nun, devoted to heaven and good works, should read in her eyes, and disapprove of the earthly passion that occupied her. Perhaps a part of her reluctance arose from the reports that were current against her lover's character, and certainly from the disapprobation and even hatred of him that her father frequently expressed. Ill-fated Anina! I know not if in the north your peasants love as ours; but the passion of Anina was entwined with the roots of her being, it was herself: she could die, but not cease to love. The dislike of her father for Domenico made their intercourse clandestine. He was always at the fountain to fill her pitcher, and lift it on her head. He attended the same mass; and when her father went to Albano, Velletri, or Rome, he seemed to learn by instinct the exact moment of his departure, and joined her in the p*odere,* labouring with her and for her, till the old man was seen descending the mountain-path on his return. He said he worked for a contadino near Nemi. Anina sometimes wondered that he could spare so much time for her; but his excuses were plausible, and the result too delightful not to blind the innocent girl to its obvious cause.

Poor Domenico! the reports spread against him were too well founded: his sole excuse was that his father had been a robber before him, and he had spent his early years among these lawless men. He had better things in his nature, and yearned for the peace of the guiltless. Yet he could hardly be called guilty, for no dread crime stained him; nevertheless, he was an outlaw and a bandit, and now that he loved Anina these names were the stings of an adder to pierce his soul. He would have fled from his comrades to a far country, but Anina dwelt amid their very haunts. At this period also, the police established by the French government, which then possessed Rome, made these bands more alive to the conduct of their members, and rumours of active measures to be taken against those who occupied the hills near Albano, Nemi, and Velletri, caused them to draw together in tighter bonds. Domenico would not, if he could, desert his friends in the hour of danger.

On a *festa* at this time — it was towards the end of October — Anina strolled with her father among the villagers, who all over Italy make holiday, by congregating and walking in one place. Their talk was entirely of the *ladri* and the French, and many terrible stories were related of the extirpation of banditti in the kingdom of Naples, and the mode by which the French succeeded in their undertaking was minutely described. The troops scoured the country, visiting one haunt of the robbers after the other, and dislodging them, tracked them, as in those countries they hunt the wild beasts of the forest, till drawing the circle narrower, they enclosed them in one spot. They then drew a cordon round the place, which they guarded with the utmost vigilance, forbidding any to enter it with provisions, on pain of instant death. And as this menace was rigorously executed, in a short time the besieged bandits were starved into a surrender. The French troops were now daily expected, for they had been seen at Velletri and Nemi; at the same time it was affirmed that several outlaws had taken up their abode at Rocca Giovane, a deserted village on the summit of one of these hills, and it was supposed that they would make that place the scene of their final retreat.

The next day, as Anina worked in the *podere,* a party of French horse passed by along the road that separated her garden from the lake. Curiosity made her look at them; and her beauty was too great not to attract: their observations and address soon drove her away — for a woman in love consecrates herself to her lover, and deems the admiration of others to be profanation. She spoke to her father of the impertinence of these men, and he answered by rejoicing at their arrival, and the destruction of the lawless bands that would ensue. When, in the evening, Anina went to the fountain, she looked timidly around, and hoped that Domenico would be at his accustomed post, for the arrival of the French destroyed her feeling of security. She went rather later than usual, and a cloudy evening made it seem already dark; the wind roared among the trees, bending hither and thither even the stately cypresses; the waters of the lake were agitated into high waves, and dark masses of thunder-cloud lowered over the hill tops, giving a lurid tinge to the landscape. Anina passed quickly up the mountain-path: when she came in sight of the fountain, which was rudely hewn in the living rock, she saw Domenico leaning against a projection of the hill, his hat drawn over his eyes, his *tabarro* fallen from his shoulders, his arms folded in an attitude of dejection. He started when he saw her; his voice and phrases were broken and unconnected; yet he never gazed on her with such ardent love, nor solicited her to delay her departure with such impassioned tenderness.

“How glad I am to find you here!” she said: “I was fearful of meeting one of the French soldiers: I dread them even more than the banditti.”

Domenico cast a look of eager inquiry on her, and then turned away, saying, “Sorry am I that I shall not be here to protect you. I am obliged to go to Rome for a week or two. You will be faithful, Anina mia; you will love me, though I never see you more?”

The interview, under these circumstances, was longer than usual: he led her down the path till they nearly came in sight of her cottage; still they lingered: a low whistle was heard among the myrtle underwood at the lake side; he started; it was repeated, and he answered it by a similar note: Anina, terrified, was about to ask what this meant, when, for the first time, he pressed her to his heart, kissed her roseate lips, and, with a muttered “Carissima addio,” left her, springing down the bank; and as she gazed in wonder, she thought she saw a boat cross a line of light made by the opening of a cloud. She stood long absorbed in reverie, wondering and remembering with thrilling pleasure the quick embrace and impassioned farewell of her lover. She delayed so long that her father came to seek her.

Each evening after this, Anina visited the fountain at the Ave Maria; he was not there; each day seemed an age; and incomprehensible fears occupied her heart. About a fortnight after, letters arrived from Maria.

They came to say that she had been ill of the mal’aria fever, that she was now convalescent, but that change of air was necessary for her recovery, and that she had obtained leave to spend a month at home at Albano. She asked her father to come the next day to fetch her. These were pleasant tidings for Anina; she resolved to disclose every thing to her sister, and during her long visit she doubted not but that she would contrive her happiness. Old Andrea departed the following morning, and the whole day was spent by the sweet girl in dreams of future bliss. In the evening Maria arrived, weak and wan, with all the marks of that dread illness about her; yet, as she assured her sister, feeling quite well.

As they sat at their frugal supper, several villagers came in to inquire for Maria; but all their talk was of the French soldiers and the robbers, of whom a band of at least twenty was collected in Rocca Giovane, strictly watched by the military.

“We may be grateful to the French,” said Andrea, “for this good deed: the country will be rid of these ruffians.”

"True, friend," said another; "but it is horrible to think what these men suffer: they have, it appears, exhausted all the food they brought with them to the village, and are literally starving. They have not an ounce of maccaroni among them; and a poor fellow, who was taken and executed yesterday, was a mere anatomy; you could tell every bone in his skin."

"There was a sad story the other day," said another, "of an old man from Nemi, whose son, they say, is among them at Rocca Giovane: he was found within the lines with some *baccalà* under his *pastra no,* and shot on the spot."

"There is not a more desperate gang," observed the first speaker, "in the states and the regno put together. They have sworn never to yield but upon good terms: to secure these, their plan is to way-lay passengers and make prisoners, whom they keep as hostages for mild treatment from the government. But the French are merciless; they are better pleased that the bandits wreak their vengeance on these poor creatures than spare one of their lives."

"They have captured two persons already," said another; "and there is old Betta Tossi half frantic, for she is sure her son is taken: he has not been at home these ten days."

"I should rather guess," said an old man, "that he went there with good will: the young scape-grace kept company with Domenico Baldi of Nemi."

"No worse company could he have kept in the whole country," said Andrea: "Domenico is the bad son of a bad race. Is he in the village with the rest?"

"My own eyes assured me of that," replied the other. "When I was up the hill with eggs and fowls to the piquette there, I saw the branches of an ilex move; the poor fellow was weak perhaps, and could not keep his hold; presently he dropt to the ground; every musket was levelled at him, but he started up and was away like a hare among the rocks. Once he turned, and then I saw Domenico as plainly, though thinner, poor lad, by much than he was, as plainly as I now see — Santa Virgine! what is the matter with Nina?"

She had fainted; the company broke up, and she was left to her sister's care. When the poor child came to herself she was fully aware of her situation, and said nothing, except expressing a wish to retire to rest. Maria was in high spirits at the prospect of her long holiday at home, but the illness of her sister made her refrain from talking that night, and blessing her, as she said good night, she soon slept. Domenico starving! — Domenico trying to escape and dying through hunger, was the vision of horror that wholly possessed poor Anina. At another time, the discovery that her lover was a robber might have inflicted pangs as keen as those which she now felt; but this, at present, made a faint impression, obscured by worse wretchedness. Maria was in a deep and tranquil sleep. Anina rose, dressed herself silently, and crept down stairs. She stored her market basket with what food there was in the house, and, unlatching the cottage-door, issued forth, resolved to reach Rocca Giovane, and to administer to her lover's dreadful wants. The night was dark, but this was favourable, for she knew every path and turn of the hills; every bush and knoll of ground between her home and the deserted village which occupies the summit of that hill: you may see the dark outline of some of its houses about two hours' walk from her cottage. The night was dark, but still; the libeccio brought the clouds below the mountain-tops, and veiled the horizon in mist; not a leaf stirred; her footsteps sounded loud in her ears, but resolution overcame fear. She had entered yon ilex grove, her spirits rose with her success, when suddenly she was challenged by a sentinel; no time for escape; fear chilled her blood; her basket dropped from her arm; its contents rolled out on the ground; the soldier fired his gun and brought several others round him; she was made prisoner.

In the morning, when Maria awoke, she missed her sister from her side. I have overslept myself, she thought, and Nina would not disturb me. But when she came down stairs and met her father, and Anina did not appear, they began to wonder. She was not in the *podere;* two hours passed, and then Andrea went to seek her. Entering the near village, he saw the contadini crowding together, and a stifled exclamation of "Ecco il padre!" told him that some evil had betided. His first impression was that his daughter was drowned; but the truth, that she had been taken by the French carrying provisions within the forbidden line, was still more terrible. He returned in frantic desperation to his cottage, first to acquaint

Maria with what had happened, and then to ascend the hill to save his child from her impending fate. Maria heard his tale with horror; but an hospital is a school in which to learn self-possession and presence of mind. "Do you remain, my father," she said: "I will go. My holy character will awe these men, my tears move them: trust me; I swear that I will save my sister.” Andrea yielded to her superior courage and energy.

The nuns of Santa Chiara when out of their convent do not usually wear their monastic habit, but dress simply in a black gown. Maria, however, had brought her nun’s habiliments with her, and thinking thus to impress the soldiers with respect, she now put it on. She received her father’s benediction, and asking that of the Virgin and the saints, she departed on her expedition. Ascending the hill, she was soon stopped by the sentinels. She asked to see their commanding officer, and being conducted to him, she announced herself as the sister of the unfortunate girl who had been captured the night before. The officer, who had received her with carelessness, now changed countenance: his serious look frightened Maria, who clasped her hands, exclaiming, “You have not injured the child! she is safe!”

“She is safe — now,” he replied with hesitation; “but there is no hope of pardon.”

“Holy Virgin, have mercy on her! what will be done to her?”

“I have received strict orders; in two hours she dies.”

“No! no!” exclaimed Maria impetuously, “that cannot be! you cannot be so wicked as to murder a child like her.”

“She is old enough, madame,” said the officer, “to know that she ought not to disobey orders; mine are so strict, that were she but nine years old, she dies.”

These terrible words stung Maria to fresh resolution: she entreated for mercy; she knelt; she vowed that she would not depart without her sister; she appealed to Heaven and the saints. The officer, though cold-hearted, was good-natured and courteous, and he assured her with the utmost gentleness that her supplications were of no avail; that were the criminal his own daughter he must enforce his orders. As a sole concession, he permitted her to see her sister. Despair inspired the nun with energy; she almost ran up the hill, out-speeding her guide: they crossed a folding of the hills to a little sheep-cot, where sentinels paraded before the door. There was no glass to the windows, so the shutters were shut, and when Maria first went in from the bright daylight she hardly saw the slight figure of her sister leaning against the wall, her dark hair fallen below her waist, her head sunk on her bosom, over which her arms were folded. She started wildly as the door opened, saw her sister, and sprung with a piercing shriek into her arms.

They were left alone together: Anina uttered a thousand frantic exclamations, beseeching her sister to save her, and shuddering at the near approach of her fate. Maria had felt herself, since their mother's death, the natural protectress and support of her sister, and she never deemed herself so called on to fulfil this character as now that the trembling girl clasped her neck; her tears falling on her cheeks, and her choked voice entreating her to save her. The thought — O could I suffer instead of you! was in her heart, and she was about to express it, when it suggested another idea, on which she was resolved to act. First she soothed Anina by her promises, then glanced round the cot; they were quite alone: she went to the window, and through a crevice saw the soldiers conversing at some distance. "Yes, dearest sister," she cried, "I will — I can save you — quick — we must change dresses — there is no time to be lost! — you must escape in my habit."

"And you remain to die?"

"They dare not murder the innocent, a nun! Fear not for me — I am safe."

Anina easily yielded to her sister, but her fingers trembled; every string she touched she entangled. Maria was perfectly self-possessed, pale, but calm. She tied up her sister's long hair, and adjusted her veil over it so as to conceal it; she unlaced her bodice, and arranged the folds of her own habit on her with the greatest care — then more hastily she assumed the dress of her sister, putting on, after a lapse of many years, her native contadina costume. Anina stood by, weeping and helpless, hardly hearing her sister's injunctions to return speedily to their father, and under his guidance to seek sanctuary. The guard now opened the door. Anina clung to her sister in terror, while she, in soothing tones, entreated her to calm herself.

The soldier said, they must delay no longer, for the priest had arrived to confess the prisoner.

To Anina the idea of confession associated with death was terrible; to Maria it brought hope. She whispered, in a smothered voice, "The priest will protect me — fear not — hasten to our father!"

Anina almost mechanically obeyed: weeping, with her handkerchief placed unaffectedly before her face, she passed the soldiers; they closed the door on the prisoner, who hastened to the window, and saw her sister descend the hill with tottering steps, till she was lost behind some rising ground. The nun fell on her knees — cold dew bathed her brow, instinctively she feared: the French had shown small respect for the monastic character; they destroyed the convents and desecrated the churches. Would they be merciful to her, and spare the innocent! Alas! was not Anina innocent also? Her sole crime had been disobeying an arbitrary command, and she had done the same.

“Courage!” cried Maria; “perhaps I am fitter to die than my sister is.

Gesu, pardon me my sins, but I do not believe that I shall out-live this day!”

In the meantime, Anina descended the hill slowly and tremblingly. She feared discovery — she feared for her sister — and above all at the present moment, she feared the reproaches and anger of her father. By dwelling on this last idea, it became exaggerated into excessive terror, and she determined, instead of returning to her home, to make a circuit among the hills, to find her way by herself to Albano, where she trusted to find protection from her pastor and confessor. She avoided the open paths, and following rather the direction she wished to pursue than any beaten road, she passed along nearer to Rocca Giovane than she anticipated. She looked up at its ruined houses and bell-less steeple, straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of him, the author of all her ills. A low but distinct whistle reached her ear, not far off; she started — she remembered that on the night when she last saw Domenico a note like that had called him from her side; the sound was echoed and re-echoed from other quarters; she stood aghast, her bosom heaving, her hands clasped. First she saw a dark and ragged head of hair, shadowing two fiercely gleaming eyes, rise from beneath a bush. She screamed, but before she could repeat her scream three men leapt from behind a rock, secured her arms, threw a cloth over her face, and hurried her up the acclivity. Their talk, as she went along, informed her of the horror and danger of her situation.

Pity, they said, that the holy father and some of his red stockings did not command the troops: with a nun in their hands, they might obtain any terms. Coarse jests passed as they dragged their victim towards their ruined village. The paving of the street told her when they arrived at Rocca Giovane, and the change of atmosphere that they entered a house. They unbandaged her eyes: the scene was squalid and miserable, the walls ragged and black with smoke, the floor strewn with offals and dirt; a rude table and broken bench was all the furniture; and the leaves of Indian corn, heaped high in one corner, served, it seemed, for a bed, for a man lay on it, his head buried in his folded arms. Anina looked round on her savage hosts: their countenances expressed every variety of brutal ferocity, now rendered more dreadful from gaunt famine and suffering.

"O there is none who will save me!" she cried. The voice startled the man who was lying on the floor; he leapt up — it was Domenico: Domenico, so changed, with sunk cheeks and eyes, matted hair, and looks whose wildness and desperation differed little from the dark countenances around him. Could this be her lover?

His recognition and surprise at her dress led to an explanation. When the robbers first heard that their prey was no prize, they were mortified and angry; but when she related the danger she had incurred by endeavouring to bring them food, they swore with horrid oaths that no harm should befall her, but that if she liked she might make one of them in all honour and equality. The innocent girl shuddered. "Let me go," she cried; "let me only escape and hide myself in a convent for ever!"

Domenico looked at her in agony. "Yes, poor child," he said; "go, save yourself: God grant no evil befall you; the ruin is too wide already." Then turning eagerly to his comrades, he continued—"You hear her story. She was to have been shot for bringing food to us: her sister has substituted herself in her place. We know the French; one victim is to them as good as another: Maria dies in their hands. Let us save her. Our time is up; we must fall like men, or starve like dogs: we have still ammunition, still some strength left. To arms! let us rush on the poltroons, free their prisoner, and escape or die!"

There needed but an impulse like this to urge the outlaws to desperate resolves. They prepared their arms with looks of ferocious determination. Domenico, meanwhile, led Anina out of the house, to the verge of the hill, inquiring whither she intended to go. On her saying, to Albano, he observed, "That were hardly safe; be guided by me, I entreat you: take these piastres, hire the first conveyance you find, hasten to Rome, to the convent of Santa Chiara: for pity's sake, do not linger in this neighbourhood."

"I will obey your injunctions, Domenico," she replied, "but I cannot take your money; it has cost you too dear: fear not, I shall arrive safely at Rome without that ill-fated silver."

Domenico's comrades now called loudly to him: he had no time to urge his request; he threw the despised dollars at her feet.

"Nina, adieu for ever," he said: "may you love again more happily!"

"Never!" she replied. "God has saved me in this dress; it were sacrilege to change it: I shall never quit Santa Chiara."

Domenico had led her a part of the way down the rock; his comrades appeared at the top, calling to him.

"Gesu save you!" cried he: "reach the convent — Maria shall join you there before night. Farewell!" He hastily kissed her hand, and sprang up the acclivity to rejoin his impatient friends.

The unfortunate Andrea had waited long for the return of his children. The leafless trees and bright clear atmosphere permitted every object to be visible, but he saw no trace of them on the hill side; the shadows of the dial showed noon to be passed, when, with uncontrollable impatience, he began to climb the hill, towards the spot where Anina had been taken. The path he pursued was in part the same that this unhappy girl had taken on her way to Rome. The father and daughter met: the old man saw the nun's dress, and saw her unaccompanied: she covered her face with her hands in a transport of fear and shame; but when, mistaking her for Maria, he asked in a tone of anguish for his youngest darling, her arms fell; she dared not raise her eyes, which streamed with tears.

"Unhappy girl!" exclaimed Andrea, "where is your sister?"

She pointed to the cottage prison, now discernible near the summit of a steep acclivity. "She is safe," she replied: "she saved me; but they dare not murder her."

"Heaven bless her for this good deed!" exclaimed the old man, fervently; "but you hasten on your way, and I will go in search of her."

Each proceeded on an opposite path. The old man wound up the hill, now in view, and now losing sight of the hut where his child was captive: he was aged, and the way was steep. Once, when the closing of the hill hid the point towards which he for ever strained his eyes, a single shot was fired in that direction: his staff fell from his hands, his knees trembled and failed him; several minutes of dead silence elapsed before he recovered himself sufficiently to proceed: full of fears he went on, and at the next turn saw the cot again. A party of soldiers were on the open space before it, drawn up in a line as if expecting an attack. In a few moments from above them shots were fired, which they returned, and the whole was enveloped and veiled in smoke. Still Andrea climbed the hill, eager to discover what had become of his child: the firing continued quick and hot. Now and then, in the pauses of musquetry and the answering echoes of the mountains, he heard a funereal chant; presently, before he was aware, at a turning of the hill, he met a company of priests and contadini, carrying a large cross and a bier. The miserable father rushed forward with frantic impatience; the awe-struck peasants set down their load — the face was uncovered, and the wretched man fell lifeless on the corpse of his murdered child.

The Countess Atanasia paused, overcome by the emotions inspired by the history she related. A long pause ensued: at length one of the party observed, “Maria, then, was the sacrifice to her goodness.”

“The French,” said the countess, “did not venerate her holy vocation; one peasant girl to them was the same as another. The immolation of any victim suited their purpose of awe-striking the peasantry. Scarcely, however, had the shot entered her heart, and her blameless spirit been received by the saints in Paradise, when Domenico and his followers rushed down the hill to avenge her and themselves. The contest was furious and bloody; twenty French soldiers fell, and not one of the banditti escaped; Domenico, the foremost of the assailants, being the first to fall.”

I asked, “And where are now Anina and her father?”

“You may see them, if you will,” said the countess, “on your return to Rome. She is a nun of Santa Chiara. Constant acts of benevolence and piety have inspired her with calm and resignation. Her prayers are daily put up for Domenico’s soul, and she hopes, through the intercession of the Virgin, to rejoin him in the other world.

“Andrea is very old; he has outlived the memory of his sufferings; but he derives comfort from the filial attentions of his surviving daughter. But when I look at his cottage on this lake, and remember the happy laughing face of Anina among the vines, I shudder at the recollection of the passion that has made her cheeks pale, her thoughts for ever conversant with death, her only wish to find repose in the grave.”

FERNINANDO EBOLI

A TALE

During this quiet time of peace, we are fast forgetting the excitements and astonishing events of the last war; and the very names of Europe's conquerors are becoming antiquated to the ears of our children. Those were more romantic days than these; for the revulsions occasioned by revolution or invasion were full of romance; and travellers in those countries in which these scenes had place hear strange and wonderful stories, whose truth so much resembles fiction, that, while interested in the narration, we never give implicit credence to the narrator. Of this kind is a tale I heard at Naples. The fortunes of war perhaps did not influence its actors; yet it appears improbable that any circumstances so out of the usual routine could have had place under the garish daylight that peace sheds upon the world.

When Murat, then called Gioacchino, king of Naples, raised his Italian regiments, several young nobles, who had before been scarcely more than vine-dressers on the soil, were inspired with a love of arms, and presented themselves as candidates for military honours. Among these was the young Count Eboli. The father of this youthful noble had followed Ferdinand to Sicily; but his estates lay principally near Salerno, and he was naturally desirous of preserving them; while the hopes that the French government held out of glory and prosperity to his country made him often regret that he had followed his legitimate but imbecil king to exile. When he died, therefore, he recommended his son to return to Naples, to present himself to his old and tried friend, the Marchese Spina, who held a high office in Murat's government, and through his means to reconcile himself to the new king. All this was easily achieved. The young and gallant Count was permitted to possess his patrimony; and, as a further pledge of good fortune, he was betrothed to the only child of the Marchese Spina. The nuptials were deferred till the end of the ensuing campaign.

Meanwhile the army was put in motion, and Count Eboli only obtained such short leave of absence as permitted him to visit for a few hours the villa of his future father-in-law, there to take leave of him and his affianced bride. The villa was situated on one of the Apennines to the north of

Salerno, and looked down, over the plain of Calabria, in which Pæstum is situated, on to the blue Mediterranean. A precipice on one side, a brawling mountain torrent, and a thick grove of ilex, added beauty to the sublimity of its site. Count Eboli ascended the mountain path in all the joy of youth and hope. His stay was brief. An exhortation and a blessing from the Marchese, a tender farewell, graced by gentle tears, from the fair Adalinda, were the recollections he was to bear with him, to inspire him with courage and hope in danger and absence. The sun had just sunk behind the distant isle of Istria, when, kissing his lady's hand, he said at last "Addio," and with slower steps, and more melancholy mien, rode down the mountain on his road to Naples.

That same night Adalinda retired early to her apartment, dismissing her attendants; and then, restless from mingled fear and hope, she threw open the glass door that led to a balcony looking over the edge of the hill upon the torrent, whose loud rushing often lulled her to sleep; but whose waters were concealed from sight by the ilex trees, which lifted their topmost branches above the guarding parapet of the balcony.

Leaning her cheek upon her hand, she thought of the dangers her lover would encounter, of her loneliness the while, of his letters, and of his return. A rustling sound now caught her ear: was it the breeze among the ilex trees? her own veil was unwaved by every wind, her tresses even, heavy in their own rich beauty only, were not lifted from her cheek. Again those sounds. Her blood retreated to her heart, and her limbs — trembled. What could it mean? Suddenly the upper branches of the nearest tree were disturbed; they opened, and the faint starlight showed a man's figure among them. He prepared to spring from his hold, on to the wall. It was a feat of peril. First the soft voice of her lover bade her "Fear not," and on the next instant he was at her side, calming her terrors, and recalling her spirits, that almost left her gentle frame, from mingled surprise, dread, and joy. He encircled her waist with his arm, and pouring forth a thousand passionate expressions of love, she leant on his shoulder, and wept from agitation; while he covered her hands with kisses, and gazed on her with ardent adoration.

Then in calmer mood they sat together; triumph and joy lighted up his eyes, and a modest blush glowed on her cheek; for never before had she sat alone with him, nor heard unrestrained his impassioned assurances of affection. It was indeed Love's own hour. The stars trembled on the roof of his eternal temple; the dashing of the torrent, the mild summer atmosphere, and the mysterious aspect of the darkened scenery, were all in unison, to inspire security and voluptuous hope. They talked of how their hearts, through the medium of divine nature, might hold commune during absence; of the joys of re-union, and of their prospect of perfect happiness.

The moment at last arrived when he must depart. “One tress of this silken hair,” said he, raising one of the many curls that clustered on her neck. “I will place it on my heart, a shield to protect me against the swords and balls of the enemy.” He drew his keen-edged dagger from its sheath. “Ill weapon for so gentle a deed,” he said, severing the lock, and at the same moment many drops of blood fell fast on the fair arm of the lady. He answered her fearful inquiries by showing a gash he had awkwardly inflicted on his left hand. First he insisted on securing his prize, and then he permitted her to bind his wound, which she did half laughing, half in sorrow, winding round his hand a riband loosened from her own arm. “Now farewell,” he cried; “I must ride twenty miles ere dawn, and the descending Bear shows that midnight is past.” His descent was difficult, but he achieved it happily, and the stave of a song, whose soft sounds rose like the smoke of incense from an altar, from the dell below, to her impatient ear, assured her of his safety.

As is always the case when an account is gathered from eye-witnesses, I never could ascertain the exact date of these events. They occurred however while Murat was king of Naples, and when he raised his Italian regiments, Count Eboli, as aforesaid, became a junior officer in them, and served with much distinction; though I cannot name either the country, or the battle in which he acted so conspicuous a part, that he was on the spot promoted to a troop.

Not long after this event, and while he was stationed in the north of Italy, Gioacchino, sending for him to head-quarters late one evening, intrusted him with a confidential mission, across a country occupied by the enemy’s troops, to a town possessed by the French. It was necessary to undertake the expedition during the night, and he was expected to return on that, succeeding the following, day. The king himself gave him his despatches and the word; and the noble youth, with modest firmness, protested that he would succeed, or die, in the fulfilment of his trust.

It was already night, and the crescent moon was low in the west, when Count Ferdinando Eboli mounting his favourite horse, at a quick gallop, cleared the streets of the town; and then, following the directions given him, crossed the country among the fields planted with vines, carefully avoiding the main road. It was a beauteous and still night; calm, and sleep, occupied the earth; war, the bloodhound, slumbered; the spirit of love alone had life at that silent hour. Exulting in the hope of glory, our young hero commenced his journey, and visions of aggrandizement and love formed his reveries. A distant sound roused him; he checked his horse and listened; voices approached; when recognising the speech of a German, he turned from the path he was following, to a still straighter way. But again the tone of an enemy was heard, and the trampling of horses. Eboli did not hesitate; he dismounted, tied his steed to a tree, and, skirting along the enclosure of the field, trusted to escape thus unobserved. He succeeded after an hour's painful progress, and arrived on the borders of a stream, which, as the boundary between two states, was the mark of his having finally escaped danger. Descending the steep bank of the river, which, with his horse, he might perhaps have forded, he now prepared to swim. He held his despatch in one hand, threw away his cloak, and was about to plunge into the water, when from under the dark shade of the *argine,* which had concealed them, he was suddenly arrested by unseen hands, cast on the ground, bound, gagged and blinded, and then placed in a little boat, which was sculled with infinite rapidity down the stream.

There seemed so much of premeditation in the act that it baffled conjecture, yet he must believe himself a prisoner to the Austrian. While, however, he still vainly reflected, the boat was moored, he was lifted out, and the change of atmosphere made him aware that they entered some house. With extreme care and celerity, yet in the utmost silence, he was stripped of his clothes, and two rings he wore, drawn from his fingers; other habiliments were thrown over him; and then no departing footstep was audible: but soon he heard the splash of a single oar, and he felt himself alone. He lay perfectly unable to move; the only relief his captor or captors had afforded him being the exchange of the gag for a tightly bound handkerchief. For hours he thus remained, with a tortured mind, bursting with rage, impatience, and disappointment; now writhing, as well as he could, in his endeavours to free himself, now still, in despair. His despatches were taken away, and the period was swiftly passing when he could by his presence have remedied in some degree this evil. The morning dawned; and though the full glare of the sun could not visit his eyes, he felt it play upon his limbs. As the day advanced, hunger preyed on him, and though amidst the visitation of mightier, he at first disdained this minor, evil; towards evening, it became, in spite of himself, the predominant sensation. Night approached, and the fear that he should remain, and even starve, in this unvisited solitude had more than once thrilled through his frame, when feminine voices and a child's gay laugh met his ear. He heard persons enter the apartment, and he was asked in his native language, while the ligature was taken from his mouth, the cause of his present situation. He attributed it to banditti: his bonds were quickly cut, and his banded eyes restored to sight. It was long before he recovered himself. Water brought from the stream, however, was some refreshment, and by degrees he resumed the use of his senses, and saw that he was in a dilapidated shepherd's cot; with no one near him save the peasant girl and a child who had liberated him. They rubbed his ankles and wrists, and the little fellow offered him some bread, and eggs; after which refreshment, and an hour's repose, Ferdinand felt himself sufficiently restored to revolve his adventure in his mind, and to determine on the conduct he was to pursue.

He looked at the dress which had been given him in exchange for that which he had worn. It was of the plainest and meanest description. Still no time was to be lost; and he felt assured that the only step he could take was to return with all speed to the head-quarters of the Neapolitan army, and inform the king of his disasters and his loss.

It were long to follow his backward steps, and to tell all of indignation and disappointment that swelled his heart. He walked painfully but resolutely all night, and by three in the morning entered the town where Gioacchino then was. He was challenged by the sentinels; he gave the word confided to him by Murat, and was instantly made prisoner by the soldiers. He declared to them his name and rank, and the necessity he was under of immediately seeing the king. He was taken to the guardhouse, and the officer on duty there listened with contempt to his representations, telling him that Count Ferdinando Eboli had returned three hours before, ordering him to be confined for further examination as a spy. Eboli loudly insisted that some impostor had taken his name; and while he related the story of his capture, another officer came in, who recognised his person; other individuals acquainted with him joined the party; and as the impostor had been seen by none but the officer of the night, his tale gained ground.

A young Frenchman of superior rank, who had orders to attend the king early in the morning, carried a report of what was going forward to Murat himself. The tale was so strange that the king sent for the young Count; and then, in spite of having seen and believed in his counterfeit a few hours before, and having received from him an account of his mission, which had been faithfully executed, the appearance of the youth staggered him, and he commanded the presence of him who, as Count Eboli, had appeared before him a few hours previously. As Ferdinand stood beside the king, his eye glanced at a large and splendid mirror. His matted hair, his blood-shot eyes, his haggard looks, and torn and mean dress, derogated from the nobility of his appearance; and still less did he appear like the magnificent Count Eboli, when, to his utter confusion and astonishment, his counterfeit stood beside him.

He was perfect in all the outward signs that denoted high birth; and so like him whom he represented, that it would have been impossible to discern one from the other apart. The same chestnut hair clustered on his brow; the sweet and animated hazel eyes were the same; the one voice was the echo of the other. The composure and dignity of the pretender gained the suffrages of those around. When he was told of the strange appearance of another Count Eboli, he laughed in a frank good humoured manner, and turned to Ferdinand, said, “You honour me much, in selecting me for your personation; but there are two or three things I like about myself so well, that you must excuse my unwillingness to exchange myself for you.” Ferdinand would have answered, but the false Count, with greater haughtiness, turned to the king, said, “Will your majesty decide between us? I cannot bandy words with a fellow of this sort.” Irritated by scorn, Ferdinand demanded leave to challenge the pretender; who said, that if the king and his brother officers did not think that he should degrade himself and disgrace the army by going out with a common vagabond, he was willing to chastise him, even at the peril of his own life. But the king, after a few more questions, feeling assured that the unhappy noble was an impostor, in severe and menacing terms reprehended him for his insolence, telling him that he owed it to his mercy alone that he was not executed as a spy, ordering him instantly to be conducted without the walls of the town, with threats of weighty punishment if he ever dared to subject his impostures to further trial.

It requires a strong imagination, and the experience of much misery, fully to enter into Ferdinand’s feelings. From high rank, glory, hope, and love, he was hurled to utter beggary and disgrace. The insulting words of his triumphant rival, and the degrading menaces of his so lately gracious sovereign, rang in his ears; every nerve in his frame writhed with agony. But, fortunately for the endurance of human life, the worst misery in early youth is often but a painful dream, which we cast off when slumber quits our eyes. After a struggle with intolerable anguish, hope and courage revived in his heart. His resolution was quickly made. He would return to Naples, relate his story to the Marchese Spina, and through his influence obtain at least an impartial hearing from the king. It was not, however, in his peculiar situation, an easy task to put his determination into effect. He was pennyless; his dress bespoke poverty; he had neither friend nor kinsman near, but such as would behold in him the most impudent of swindlers. Still his courage did not fail him. The kind Italian soil, in the autumnal season now advanced, furnished him with chestnuts, arbutus berries, and grapes. He took the most direct road over the hills, avoiding towns, and indeed every habitation; travelling principally in the night, when, except in cities, the officers of government had retired from their stations. How he succeeded in getting from one end of Italy to the other it is difficult to say; but certain it is, that, after the interval of a few weeks, he presented himself at the Villa Spina.

With considerable difficulty he obtained admission to the presence of the Marchese, who received him standing, with an inquiring look, not at all recognising the noble youth. Ferdinand requested a private interview, for there were several visitors present. His voice startled the Marchese, who complied, taking him into another apartment. Here Ferdinand disclosed himself, and, with rapid and agitated utterance, was relating the history of his misfortunes, when the tramp of horses was heard, the great bell rang, and a domestic announced “Count Ferdinando Eboli.”

“It is himself,” cried the youth, turning pale. The words were strange, and they appeared still more so, when the person announced entered; the perfect semblance of the young noble, whose name he assumed, as he had appeared, when last, at his departure, he trod the pavement of the hall. He inclined his head gracefully to the baron, turning with a glance of some surprise, but more disdain, towards Ferdinand, exclaiming, “Thou here!” Ferdinand drew himself up to his full height. In spite of fatigue, ill fare, and coarse garments, his manner was full of dignity. The Marchese looked at him fixedly, and started as he marked his proud mien, and saw in his expressive features the very face of Eboli. But again he was perplexed when he turned and discerned, as in a mirror, the same countenance reflected by the new comer, who underwent this scrutiny somewhat impatiently. In brief and scornful words, he told the Marchese that this was a second attempt in the intruder to impose himself as Count Eboli; that the trick had failed before, and would again; adding, laughing, that it was hard to be brought to prove himself to be himself, against the assertion of a *briccone,* whose likeness to him, and matchless impudence, were his Whole stock in trade.

“Why, my good fellow,” continued he, sneeringly, “you put me out of conceit with myself, to think that one, apparently so like me, should get on no better in the world.”

The blood mounted into Ferdinand’s cheeks on his enemy’s bitter taunts; with difficulty he restrained himself from closing with his foe, while the words “traitorous impostor!” burst from his lips. The baron commanded the fierce youth to be silent, and, moved by a look that he remembered to be Ferdinand’s, he said, gently, “By your respect for me, I adjure you to be patient; fear not but that I will deal impartially.” Then turning to the pretended Eboli, he added that he could not doubt but that he was the true Count, and asked excuse for his previous indecision. At first the latter appeared angry, but at length he burst into a laugh, and then, apologizing for his ill breeding, continued laughing heartily at the perplexity of the Marchese. It is certain, his gayety gained more credit with his auditor than the indignant glances of poor Ferdinand. The false Count then said that, after the king’s menaces, he had entertained no expectation that the farce was to be played over again. He had obtained leave of absence, of which he profited to visit his future father-in-law, after having spent a few days in his own palazzo at Naples. Until now, Ferdinand had listened silently with a feeling of curiosity, anxious to learn all he could of the actions and motives of his rival; but at these last words he could no longer contain himself. “What!” cried he, “hast thou usurped my place in my own father’s house, and dared assume my power in my ancestral halls?” A gush of tears overpowered the youth; he hid his face in his hands. Fierceness and pride lit up the countenance of the pretender. “By the eternal God and the sacred cross, I swear,” he exclaimed, “that palace is my father’s palace; those halls the halls of my ancestors!” Ferdinand looked up with surprise. “And the earth opens not,” he said, “to swallow the perjured man.” He then, at the call of the Marchese, related his adventures, while scorn mantled on the features of his rival. The Marchese, looking at both, could not free himself from doubt. He turned from one to the other: in spite of the wild and disordered appearance of poor Ferdinand, there was something in him that forbade his friend to condemn him as the impostor; but then it was utterly impossible to pronounce such the gallant and noble-looking youth, who could only be acknowledged as the real Count by the disbelief of the other’s tale. The Marchese, calling an attendant, sent for his fair daughter. “This decision,” said he, “shall be made over to the subtle judgment of a woman, and the keen penetration of one who loves.” Both the youths now smiled — the same smile; the same expression — that, of anticipated triumph. The baron was more perplexed than ever.

Adalinda had heard of the arrival of Count Eboli, and entered, resplendent in youth and happiness. She turned quickly towards him who resembled most the person she expected to see; when a well-known voice pronounced her name, and she gazed aghast on the double appearance of the lover. Her father, taking her hand, briefly explained the mystery, and bade her assure herself which was her affianced husband.

“Signorina,” said Ferdinand, “disdain me not because I appear before you thus in disgrace and misery. Your love, your goodness will restore me to prosperity and happiness.”

“I know not by what means,” said the wondering girl, “but surely you are Count Eboli.”

“Adalinda,” said the rival youth, “waste not your words on a villain. Lovely and deceived one, I trust, trembling I say it, that I can with one word assure you that I am Eboli.”

“Adalinda,” said Ferdinand, “I placed the nuptial ring on your finger; before God your vows were given to me.”

The false Count approached the lady, and bending one knee, took from his heart a locket, enclosing hair tied with a green riband, which she recognised to have worn, and pointed to a slight scar on his left hand.

Adalinda blushed deeply, and turning to her father, said, motioning towards the kneeling youth, “He is Ferdinand.”

All protestations now from the unhappy Eboli were vain. The Marchese would have cast him into a dungeon; but, at the earnest request of his rival, he was not detained, but thrust ignominiously from the villa. The rage of a wild beast newly chained was less than the tempest of indignation that now filled the heart of Ferdinand. Physical suffering, from fatigue and fasting, was added to his internal anguish; for some hours madness, if that were madness which never forgets its ill, possessed him. In a tumult of feelings there was one predominant idea: it was, to take possession of his father’s house, and to try, by ameliorating the fortuitous circumstances of his lot, to gain the upper hand of his adversary. He expended his remaining strength in reaching Naples, entered his family palace, and was received and acknowledged by his astonished domestics.

One of his first acts was to take from a cabinet a miniature of his father encircled with jewels, and to invoke the aid of the paternal spirit. Refreshment and a bath restored him to some of his usual strength; and he looked forward with almost childish delight to one night to be spent in peace under the roof of his father’s house. This was not permitted. Ere midnight the great bell sounded: his rival entered as master, with the Marchese Spina. The result may be divined. The Marchese appeared more indignant than the false Eboli. He insisted that the unfortunate youth should be imprisoned. The portrait, whose setting was costly, found on him, proved him guilty of robbery. He was given into the hands of the police, and thrown into a dungeon. I will not dwell on the subsequent scenes. He was tried by the tribunal, condemned as guilty, and sentenced to the galleys for life.

On the eve of the day when he was to be removed from the Neapolitan prison to work on the roads in Calabria, his rival visited him in his dungeon. For some moments both looked at the other in silence. The impostor gazed on the prisoner with mingled pride and compassion: there was evidently a struggle in his heart. The answering glance of Ferdinand was calm, free, and dignified. He was not resigned to his hard fate, but he disdained to make an exhibition of despair to his cruel and successful foe. A spasm of pain seemed to wrench the bosom of the false one; and he turned aside, striving to recover the hardness of heart which had hitherto supported him in the prosecution of his guilty enterprise. Ferdinand spoke first.

“What would the triumphant criminal with his innocent victim?”

His visitant replied haughtily, “Do not address such epithets to me, or I leave you to your fate: I am that which I say I am.”

“To me this boast,” cried Ferdinand, scornfully; “but perhaps these walls have ears.”

“Heaven, at least, is not deaf,” said the deceiver; “favouring Heaven, which knows and admits my claim. But a truce to this idle discussion. Compassion — a distaste to see one so very like myself in such ill condition — a foolish whim, perhaps, on which you may congratulate yourself — has led me hither. The bolts of your dungeon are drawn; here is a purse of gold; fulfil one easy condition, and you are free.”

“And that condition?”

“Sign this paper.”

He gave to Ferdinand a writing, containing a confession of his imputed crimes. The hand of the guilty youth trembled as he gave it; there was confusion in his mien, and a restless uneasy rolling of his eye. Ferdinand wished in one mighty word, potent as lightning, loud as thunder, to convey his burning disdain of this proposal: but expression is weak, and calm is more full of power than storm. Without a word, he tore the paper in two pieces, and threw them at the feet of his enemy.

With a sudden change of manner, his visitant conjured him, in voluble and impetuous terms, to comply. Ferdinand answered only by requesting to be left alone. Now and then a half word broke uncontrollably from his lips; but he curbed himself. Yet he could not hide his agitation when, as an argument to make him yield, the false Count assured him that he was already married to Adalinda. Bitter agony thrilled poor Ferdinand’s frame; but he preserved a calm mien, and an unaltered resolution. Having exhausted every menace and every persuasion, his rival left him, the purpose for which he came unaccomplished. On the morrow, with many others, the refuse of mankind, Count Ferdinando Eboli was led in chains to the unwholesome plains of Calabria, to work there at the roads.

I must hurry over some of the subsequent events; for a detailed account of them would fill volumes. The assertion of the usurper of Ferdinand’s right, that he was already married to Adalinda, was, like all else he said, false. The day was, however, fixed for their union, when the illness and the subsequent death of the Marchese Spina delayed its celebration. Adalinda retired, during the first months of mourning, to a castle belonging to her father not far from Arpino, a town of the kingdom of Naples, in the midst of the Apennines, about fifty miles from the capital. Before she went, the deceiver tried to persuade her to consent to a private marriage. He was probably afraid that, in the long interval that was about to ensue before he could secure her, she would discover his imposture. Besides, a rumour had gone abroad that one of the fellow-prisoners of Ferdinand, a noted bandit, had escaped, and that the young Count was his companion in flight. Adalinda, however, refused to comply with her lover's entreaties, and retired to her seclusion with an old aunt, who was blind and deaf, but an excellent duenna.

The false Eboli seldom visited his mistress; but he was a master in his art, and subsequent events showed that he must have spent all his time disguised in the vicinity of the castle. He contrived by various means, unsuspected at the moment, to have all Adalinda's servants changed for creatures of his own; so that, without her being aware of the restraint, she was, in fact, a prisoner in her own house. It is impossible to say what first awakened her suspicions concerning the deception put upon her. She was an Italian, with all the habitual quiescence and lassitude of her countrywomen in the ordinary routine of life, and with all their energy and passion when roused. The moment the doubt darted into her mind, she resolved to be assured; a few questions relative to scenes that had passed between poor Ferdinand and herself sufficed for this. They were asked so suddenly and pointedly that the pretender was thrown off his guard; he looked confused, and stammered in his replies. Their eyes met, he felt that he was detected, and she saw that he perceived her now confirmed suspicions. A look such as is peculiar to an impostor, a glance that deformed his beauty, and filled his usually noble countenance with the hideous lines of cunning and cruel triumph, completed her faith in her own discernment. "How," she thought, "could I have mistaken this man for my own gentle Eboli?" Again their eyes met: the peculiar expression of his terrified her, and she hastily quitted the apartment.

Her resolution was quickly formed. It was of no use to attempt to explain her situation to her old aunt. She determined to depart immediately for

Naples, throw herself at the feet of Gioacchino, and to relate and obtain credit for her strange history. But the time was already lost when she could have executed this design. The contrivances of the deceiver were complete — she found herself a prisoner. Excess of fear gave her boldness, if not courage. She sought her jailor. A few minutes before, she had been a young and thoughtless girl, docile as a child, and as unsuspecting. Now she felt as if she had suddenly grown old in wisdom, and that the experience of years had been gained in that of a few seconds.

During their interview, she was wary and firm; while the instinctive power of innocence over guilt gave majesty to her demeanour. The contriver of her ills for a moment cowered beneath her eye. At first he would by no means allow that he was not the person he pretended to be: but the energy and eloquence of truth bore down his artifice, so that, at length driven into a corner, he turned — a stag at bay. Then it was her turn to quail; for the superior energy of a man gave him the mastery. He declared the truth. He was the elder brother of Ferdinand, a natural son of the old Count Eboli. His mother, who had been wronged, never forgave her injuror, and bred her son in deadly hate for his parent, and a belief that the advantages enjoyed by his more fortunate brother were rightfully his own. His education was rude; but he had an Italian's subtle talents, swiftness of perception, and guileful arts.

"It would blanch your cheek," he said to his trembling auditress, "could I describe all that I have suffered to achieve my purpose. I would trust to none — I executed all myself. It was a glorious triumph, but due to my perseverance and my fortitude, when I and my usurping brother stood, I, the noble, he, the degraded outcast, before our sovereign."

Having rapidly detailed his history, he now sought to win the favourable ear of Adalinda, who stood with averted and angry looks. He tried by the varied shows of passion and tenderness to move her heart. Was he not, in truth, the object of her love? Was it not he who scaled her balcony at Villa Spina? He recalled scenes of mutual overflow of feeling to her mind, thus urging arguments the most potent with a delicate woman: pure blushes tinged her cheek, but horror of the deceiver predominated over every other sentiment. He swore that as soon as they should be united he would free Ferdinand, and bestow competency, nay, if so she willed it, half his possessions, on him. She coldly replied, that she would rather share the chains of the innocent and misery, than link herself with imposture and crime. She demanded her liberty, but the untamed and even ferocious nature that had borne the deceiver through his career of crime now broke forth, and he invoked fearful imprecations on his head, if she ever quitted the castle except as his wife. His look of conscious power and unbridled wickedness terrified her; her flashing eyes spoke abhorrence: it would have been far easier for her to have died than have yielded the smallest point to a man who made her feel for one moment his irresistible power, arising from her being an unprotected woman, wholly in his hands. She left him, feeling as if she had just escaped from the impending sword of an assassin.

One hour's deliberation suggested to her a method of escape from her terrible situation. In a wardrobe at the castle lay in their pristine gloss the habiliments of a page of her mother, who had died suddenly, leaving these unworn relics of his station. Dressing herself in these, she tied up her dark shining hair, and even, with a somewhat bitter feeling, girded on the slight sword that appertained to the costume. Then, through a private passage leading from her own apartment to the chapel of the castle, she glided with noiseless steps, long after the Ave Maria sounded at twenty-four o'clock, had, on a November night, given token that half an hour had passed since the setting of the sun. She possessed the key of the chapel door — it opened at her touch; she closed it behind her, and she was free. The pathless hills were around her, the starry heavens above, and a cold wintry breeze murmured around the castle walls; but fear of her enemy conquered every other fear, and she tripped lightly on, in a kind of ecstasy, for many a long hour over the stony mountain-path — she, who had never before walked more than a mile or two at any time in her life, — till her feet were blistered, her slight shoes cut through, her way utterly lost. At morning's dawn she found herself in the midst of the wild ilex-covered Apennines, and neither habitation nor human being apparent.

She was hungry and weary. She had brought gold and jewels with her, but here were no means of exchanging these for food. She remembered stories of banditti; but none could be so ruffian-like and cruel as him from whom she fled. This thought, a little rest, and a draught of water from a pure mountain-spring, restored her to some portion of courage, and she continued her journey. Noonday approached; and, in the south of Italy, the noonday sun, when unclouded, even in November, is oppressively warm, especially to an Italian woman, who never exposes herself to its beams. Faintness came over her. There appeared recesses in the mountain-side along which she was travelling, grown over with bay and arbutus: she entered one of these, there to repose. It was deep, and led to another that opened into a spacious cavern lighted from above: there were cates, grapes, and a flagon of wine, on a rough hewn table. She looked fearfully around, but no inhabitant appeared. She placed herself at the table, and, half in dread, ate of the food presented to her, and then sat, her elbow on the table, her head resting on her little snow-white hand; her dark hair shading her brow and clustering round her throat. An appearance of languor and fatigue diffused through her attitude, while her soft black eyes filled at intervals with large tears, as pitying herself, she recurred to the cruel circumstances of her lot. Her fanciful but elegant dress, her feminine form, her beauty and her grace, as she sat pensive and alone in the rough unhewn cavern, formed a picture a poet would describe with delight, an artist love to paint.

"She seemed a being of another world; a seraph, all light and beauty; a Ganymede, escaped from his thrall above to his natal Ida. It was long before I recognised, looking down on her from the opening hill, my lost Adalinda." Thus spoke the young Count Eboli, when he related this story; for its end was as romantic as its commencement.

When Ferdinand had arrived a galley-slave in Calabria, he found himself coupled with a bandit, a brave fellow, who abhorred his chains, from love of freedom, as much as his fellow-prisoner did, from all the combination of disgrace and misery they brought upon him. Together they devised a plan of escape, and succeeded in effecting it. On their road, Ferdinand related his story to the outlaw, who encouraged him to hope a favourable turn of fate; and meanwhile invited and persuaded the desperate man to share his fortunes as a robber among the wild hills of Calabria.

The cavern where Adalinda had taken refuge was one of their fastnesses, whither they betook themselves at periods of imminent danger for safety only, as no booty could be collected in that unpeopled solitude; and there, one afternoon, returning from the chase, they found the wandering, fearful, solitary, fugitive girl; and never was lighthouse more welcome to tempest-tost sailor than was her own Ferdinand to his lady-love.

Fortune, now tired of persecuting the young noble, favoured him still further. The story of the lovers interested the bandit chief, and promise of reward secured him. Ferdinand persuaded Adalinda to remain one night in the cave, and on the following morning they prepared to proceed to Naples; but at the moment of their departure they were surprised by an unexpected visitant: the robbers brought in a prisoner — it was the impostor. Missing on the morrow her who was the pledge of his safety and success, but assured that she could not have wandered far, he despatched emissaries in all directions to seek her; and himself, joining in the pursuit, followed the road she had taken, and was captured by these lawless men, who expected rich ransom from one whose appearance denoted rank and wealth. When they discovered who their prisoner was, they generously delivered him up into his brother's hands.

Ferdinand and Adalinda proceeded to Naples. On their arrival, she presented herself to Queen Caroline; and, through her, Murat heard with astonishment the device that had been practised on him. The young Count was restored to his honours and possessions, and within a few months afterwards was united to his betrothed bride.

The compassionate nature of the Count and Countess led them to interest themselves warmly in the fate of Ludovico, whose subsequent career was more honourable but less fortunate. At the intercession of his relative, Gioacchino permitted him to enter the army, where he distinguished himself, and obtained promotion. The brothers were at Moscow together, and mutually assisted each other during the horrors of the retreat. At one time overcome by drowsiness, the mortal symptom resulting from excessive cold, Ferdinand lingered behind his comrades; but Ludovico refusing to leave him, dragged him on in spite of himself, till, entering a village, food and fire restored him, and his life was saved. On another evening, when wind and sleet added to the horror of their situation, Ludovico, after many ineffective struggles, slid from his horse lifeless; Ferdinand was at his side, and, dismounting, endeavoured by every means in his power to bring back pulsation to his stagnant blood. His comrades went forward, and the young Count was left alone with his dying brother in the white boundless waste. Once Ludovico opened his eyes and recognised him; he pressed his hand, and his lips moved to utter a blessing as he died. At that moment the welcome sounds of the enemy's approach roused Ferdinand from the despair into which his dreadful situation plunged him. He was taken prisoner, and his life was thus saved. When Napoleon went to Elba, he, with many others of his countrymen, was liberated, and returned to Naples.

THE MOURNER

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes,
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
For which joy has no balm, and affliction no sting!
— MOORE.

A gorgeous scene of kingly pride is the prospect now before us! — the offspring of art, the nursling of nature — where can the eye rest on a landscape more deliciously lovely than the fair expanse of Virginia Water, now an open mirror to the sky, now shaded by umbrageous banks, which wind into dark recesses, or are rounded into soft promontories? Looking down on it, now that the sun is low in the west, the eye is dazzled, the soul oppressed, by excess of beauty. Earth, water, air, drink to overflowing, the radiance that streams from yonder well of light: the foliage of the trees seems dripping with the golden flood; while the lake, filled with no earthly dew, appears but an imbasining of the sun-tinctured atmosphere; and trees and gay pavilion float in its depth, more clear, more distinct, than their twins in the upper air. Nor is the scene silent: strains more sweet than those that lull Venus to her balmy rest, more inspiring than the song of Tiresias which awoke Alexander to the deed of ruin, more solemn than the chantings of St. Cecilia, float along the waves and mingle with the lagging breeze, which ruffles not the lake. Strange, that a few dark scores should be the key to this fountain of sound; the unconscious link between unregarded noise, and harmonies which unclose paradise to our entranced senses!

The sun touches the extreme boundary, and a softer, milder light mingles a roseate tinge with the fiery glow. Our boat has floated long on the broad expanse; now let it approach the umbrageous bank. The green tresses of the graceful willow dip into the waters, which are checked by them into a ripple. The startled teal dart from their recess, skimming the waves with splashing wing. The stately swans float onward; while innumerable water fowl cluster together out of the way of the oars. The twilight is blotted by no dark shades; it is one subdued, equal receding of the great tide of day, which leaves the shingles bare, but not deformed. We may disembark and wander yet amid the glades, long before the thickening shadows speak of night. The plantations are formed of every English tree, with an old oak or two standing out in the walks. There the glancing foliage obscures heaven, as the silken texture of a veil a woman's lovely features: beneath such fretwork we may indulge in light-hearted thoughts; or, if sadder meditations lead us to seek darker shades, we may pass the cascade towards the large groves of pine, with their vast undergrowth of laurel, reaching up to the Belvidere; or, on the opposite side of the water, sit under the shadow of the silver-stemmed birch, or beneath the leafy pavilions of those fine old beeches, whose high fantastic roots seem formed in nature's sport; and the near jungle of sweet-smelling myrica leaves no sense unvisited by pleasant ministration.

Now this splendid scene is reserved for the royal possessor; but in past years, while the lodge was called the Regent's Cottage, or before, when the under ranger inhabited it, the mazy paths of Chapel Wood were open, and the iron gates enclosing the plantations and Virginia Water were guarded by no Cerberus untamable by sops. It was here, on a summer's evening, that Horace Neville and his two fair cousins floated idly on the placid lake,

"In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind."

Neville had been eloquent in praise of English scenery. "In distant climes," he said, "we may find landscapes grand in barbaric wildness, or rich in the luxuriant vegetation of the south, or sublime in Alpine magnificence. We may lament, though it is ungrateful to say so on such a night as this, the want of a more genial sky; but where find scenery to be compared to the verdant, well-wooded, well-watered groves of our native land; the clustering cottages, shadowed by fine old elms; each garden blooming with early flowers, each lattice gay with geraniums and roses; the blue-eyed child devouring his white bread, while he drives a cow to graze; the hedge redolent with summer blooms; the enclosed cornfields, seas of golden grain, weltering in the breeze; the stile, the track across the meadow, leading through the copse, under which the path winds, and the meeting branches overhead, which give, by their dimming tracery, a cathedral-like solemnity to the scene; the river, winding 'with sweet inland murmur;' and, as additional graces, spots like these — Oases of taste — gardens of Eden

— the works of wealth, which evince at once the greatest power and the greatest will to create beauty?

“And yet,” continued Neville, “it was with difficulty that I persuaded myself to reap the best fruits of my uncle’s will, and to inhabit this spot, familiar to my boyhood, associated with unavailing regrets and recollected pain.”

Horace Neville was a man of birth — of wealth; but he could hardly be termed a man of the world. There was in his nature a gentleness, a sweetness, a winning sensibility, allied to talent and personal distinction, that gave weight to his simplest expressions, and excited sympathy for all his emotions. His younger cousin, his junior by several years, was attached to him by the tenderest sentiments — secret long — but they were now betrothed to each other — a lovely, happy pair. She looked inquiringly; but he turned away. “No more of this,” he said; and giving a swifter impulse to their boat, they speedily reached the shore, landed, and walked through the long extent of Chapel Wood. It was dark night before they met their carriage at Bishopsgate.

A week or two after, Horace received letters to call him to a distant part of the country: it even seemed possible that he might be obliged to visit an estate in the north of Ireland. A few days before his departure, he requested his cousin to walk with him. They bent their steps across several meadows to Old Windsor churchyard. At first he did not deviate from the usual path; and as they went they talked cheerfully — gaily: the beauteous sunny day might well exhilarate them; the dancing waves sped onwards at their feet, the country church lifted its rustic spire into the bright pure sky. There was nothing in their conversation that could induce his cousin to think that Neville had led her hither for any saddening purpose; but when they were about to quit the churchyard, Horace, as if he had suddenly recollected himself, turned from the path, crossed the greensward, and paused beside a grave near the river. No stone was there to commemorate the being who reposed beneath — it was thickly grown with rich grass, starred by a luxuriant growth of humble daisies: a few dead leaves, a broken bramble twig, defaced its neatness; Neville removed these, and then said, “Juliet, I commit this sacred spot to your keeping while I am away. —

“There is no monument,” he continued; “for her commands were implicitly obeyed by the two beings to whom she addressed them. One day another may lie near, and his name will be her epitaph. — I do not mean myself," he said, half smiling at the terror his cousin's countenance expressed; "but promise me, Juliet, to preserve this grave from every violation. I do not wish to sadden you by the story; yet, if I have excited your curiosity — your interest, I should say — I will satisfy it; but not now — not here."

Leaving the churchyard, they found their horses in attendance, and they prolonged their ride across Bishopsgate Heath. Neville's mind was full of the events to which he had alluded: he began the tale, and then abruptly broke off. It was not till the following day, when, in company with her sister, they again visited Virginia Water, that, seated under the shadow of its pines, whose melodious swinging in the wind breathed unearthly harmony, and looking down upon the water, association of place, and its extreme beauty, reviving, yet soothing, the recollections of the past, unasked by his companions, Neville at once commenced his story.

"I was sent to Eton at eleven years of age. I will not dwell upon my sufferings there; I would hardly refer to them, did they not make a part of my present narration. I was a fag to a hard taskmaster; every labour he could invent — and the youthful tyrant was ingenious — he devised for my annoyance; early and late, I was forced to be in attendance, to the neglect of my school duties, so incurring punishment. There were worse things to bear than these: it was his delight to put me to shame, and, — finding that I had too much of my mother in my blood, — to endeavour to compel me to acts of cruelty from which my nature revolted — I refused to obey. Speak of West Indian slavery! I hope things may be better now; in my days, the tender years of aristocratic childhood were yielded up to a capricious, unrelenting, cruel bondage, far beyond the measured despotism of Jamaica.

"One day — I had been two years at school, and was nearly thirteen — my tyrant, I will give him no other name, issued a command, in the wantonness of power, for me to destroy a poor little bullfinch I had tamed and caged. In a hapless hour he found it in my room, and was indignant that I should dare to appropriate a single pleasure. I refused, stubbornly, dauntlessly, though the consequence of my disobedience was immediate and terrible. At this moment a message came from my tormentor's tutor — his father had arrived. 'Well, old lad,' he cried, 'I shall pay you off some day!’ Seizing my pet at the same time, he wrung its neck, threw it at my feet, and, with a laugh of derision, quitted the room.

“Never before — never may I again feel the same swelling, boiling fury in my bursting heart; — the sight of my nursling expiring at my feet — my desire of vengeance — my impotence, created a Vesuvius within me, that no tears flowed to quench. Could I have uttered — acted — my passion, it would have been less torturous: it was so when I burst into a torrent of abuse and imprecation. My vocabulary — it must have been a choice collection — was supplied by him against whom it was levelled. But words were air — I desired to give more substantial proof of my resentment — I destroyed every thing in the room belonging to him; I tore them to pieces, I stamped on them, crushed them with more than childish strength. My last act was to seize a timepiece, on which my tyrant infinitely prided himself, and to dash it to the ground. The sight of this, as it lay shattered at my feet, recalled me to my senses, and something like an emotion of fear allayed the tumult in my heart. I began to meditate an escape: I got out of the house, ran down a lane, and across some meadows, far out of bounds, above Eton. I was seen by an elder boy, a friend of my tormentor. He called to me, thinking at first that I was performing some errand for him; but seeing that I *shirked,* he repeated his *‘Come up!’* in an authoritative voice. It put wings to my heels; he did not deem it necessary to pursue. — But I grow tedious, my dear Juliet; enough that fears the most intense, of punishment both from my masters and the upper boys, made me resolve to run away. I reached the banks of the Thames, tied my clothes over my head, swam across, and, traversing several fields, entered Windsor Forest, with a vague childish feeling of being able to hide myself for ever in the unexplored obscurity of its immeasurable wilds. It was early autumn; the weather was mild, even warm; the forest oaks yet showed no sign of winter change, though the fern beneath wore a yellowy tinge. I got within Chapel Wood; I fed upon chestnuts and beechnuts; I continued to hide myself from the gamekeepers and woodmen. I lived thus two days.

“But chestnuts and beechnuts were sorry fare to a growing lad of thirteen years old. A day’s rain occurred, and I began to think myself the most unfortunate boy on record. I had a distant, obscure idea of starvation: I thought of the Children in the Wood, of their leafy shroud, gift of the pious robin; this brought my poor bullfinch to my mind, and tears streamed in torrents down my cheeks. I thought of my father and mother; of you, then my little baby cousin and playmate; and I cried with renewed fervour, till, quite exhausted, I curled myself up under a huge oak among some dry leaves, the relics of a hundred summers, and fell asleep.

“I ramble on in my narration as if I had a story to tell; yet I have little except a portrait — a sketch — to present, for your amusement or interest. When I awoke, the first object that met my opening eyes was a little foot, delicately clad in silk and soft kid. I looked up in dismay, expecting to behold some gaily dressed appendage to this indication of high-bred elegance; but I saw a girl, perhaps seventeen, simply clad in a dark cotton dress, her face shaded by a large very coarse straw hat; she was pale even to marmoreal whiteness; her chestnut-coloured hair was parted in plain tresses across a brow which wore traces of extreme suffering; her eyes were blue, full, large, melancholy, often even suffused with tears; but her mouth had an infantine sweetness and innocence in its expression, that softened the otherwise sad expression of her countenance.

“She spoke to me. I was too hungry, too exhausted, too unhappy, to resist her kindness, and gladly permitted her to lead me to her home. We passed out of the wood by some broken palings on to Bishopsgate Heath, and after no long walk arrived at her habitation. It was a solitary, dreary-looking cottage; the palings were in disrepair, the garden waste, the lattices unadorned by flowers or creepers; within, all was neat, but sombre, and even mean. The diminutiveness of a cottage requires an appearance of cheerfulness and elegance to make it pleasing; the bare floor — clean, it is true — the rush chairs, deal table, checked curtains of this cot, were beneath even a peasant’s rusticity; yet it was the dwelling of my lovely guide, whose little white hand, delicately gloved, contrasted with her unadorned attire, as did her gentle self with the clumsy appurtenances of her too humble dwelling.

“Poor child! she had meant entirely to hide her origin, to degrade herself to a peasant’s state, and little thought that she for ever betrayed herself by the strangest incongruities. Thus, the arrangements of her table were mean, her fare meagre for a hermit; but the linen was matchlessly fine, and wax lights stood in candlesticks which a beggar would almost have disdained to own. But I talk of circumstances I observed afterwards; then I was chiefly aware of the plentiful breakfast she caused her single attendant, a young girl, to place before me, and of the sweet soothing voice of my hostess, which spoke a kindness with which lately I had been little conversant. When my hunger was appeased, she drew my story from me, encouraged me to write to my father, and kept me at her abode till, after a few days, I returned to school pardoned. No long time elapsed before I got into the upper forms, and my woeful slavery ended.

“Whenever I was able, I visited my disguised nymph. I no longer associated with my schoolfellows; their diversions, their pursuits, appeared vulgar and stupid to me; I had but one object in view — to accomplish my lessons, and to steal to the cottage of Ellen Burnet.

“Do not look grave, love! true, others as young as I then was have loved, and I might also; but not Ellen. Her profound, her intense melancholy, sister to despair — her serious, sad discourse — her mind, estranged from all worldly concerns, forbade that; but there was an enchantment in her sorrow, a fascination in her converse, that lifted me above commonplace existence; she created a magic circle, which I entered as holy ground: it was not akin to heaven, for grief was the presiding spirit; but there was an exaltation of sentiment, an enthusiasm, a view beyond the grave, which made it unearthly, singular, wild, enthralling. You have often observed that I strangely differ from all other men; I mingle with them, make one in their occupations and diversions, but I have a portion of my being sacred from them: — a living well, sealed up from their contamination, lies deep in my heart — it is of little use, but there it is; Ellen opened the spring, and it has flowed ever since.

“Of what did she talk? She recited no past adventures, alluded to no past intercourse with friend or relative; she spoke of the various woes that wait on humanity, on the intricate mazes of life, on the miseries of passion, of love, remorse, and death, and that which we may hope or fear beyond the tomb; she spoke of the sensation of wretchedness alive in her own broken heart, and then she grew fearfully eloquent, till, suddenly pausing, she reproached herself for making me familiar with such wordless misery. ‘I do you harm,’ she often said; ‘I unfit you for society; I have tried, seeing you thrown upon yonder distorted miniature of a bad world, to estrange you from its evil contagion; I fear that I shall be the cause of greater harm to you than could spring from association with your fellow-creatures in the ordinary course of things. This is not well — avoid the stricken deer.’

“There were darker shades in the picture than those which I have already developed. Ellen was more miserable than the imagination of one like you, dear girl, unacquainted with woe, can portray. Sometimes she gave words to her despair — it was so great as to confuse the boundary between physical and mental sensation — and every pulsation of her heart was a throb of pain. She has suddenly broken off in talking of her sorrows, with a cry of agony — bidding me leave her — hiding her face on her arms, shivering with the anguish some thought awoke. The idea that chiefly haunted her, though she earnestly endeavoured to put it aside, was self-destruction — to snap the silver cord that bound together so much grace, wisdom, and sweetness — to rob the world of a creation made to be its ornament. Sometimes her piety checked her; oftener a sense of unendurable suffering made her brood with pleasure over the dread resolve. She spoke of it to me as being wicked; yet I often fancied this was done rather to prevent her example from being of ill effect to me, than from any conviction that the Father of all, would regard angrily the last act of his miserable child. Once she had prepared the mortal beverage; it was on the table before her when I entered; she did not deny its nature, she did not attempt to justify herself; she only besought me not to hate her and to sooth by my kindness her last moments.—’I cannot live!’ was all her explanation, all her excuse; and it was spoken with such fervent wretchedness that it seemed wrong to attempt to persuade her to prolong the sense of pain. I did not act like a boy; I wonder I did not; I made one simple request, to which she instantly acceded, that she should walk with me to this Belvidere. It was a glorious sunset; beauty and the spirit of love breathed in the wind, and hovered over the softened hues of the landscape. ‘Look, Ellen,’ I cried, ‘if only such loveliness of nature existed, it were worth living for!’

“‘True, if a latent feeling did not blot this glorious scene with murky shadows. Beauty is as we see it — my eyes view all things deformed and evil.’ She closed them as she said this; but, young and sensitive, the visitings of the soft breeze already began to minister consolation. ‘Dearest Ellen,’ I continued, ‘what do I not owe to you? I am your boy, your pupil; I might have gone on blindly as others do, but you opened my eyes; you have given me a sense of the just, the good, the beautiful — and have you done this merely for my misfortune? If you leave me, what can become of me?’ The last words came from my heart, and tears gushed from my eyes. ‘Do not leave me, Ellen,’ I said; ‘I cannot live without you — and I cannot die, for I have a mother — a father.’ She turned quickly round, saying, ‘You are blessed sufficiently.’ Her voice struck me as unnatural; she grew deadly pale as she spoke, and was obliged to sit down. Still I clung to her, prayed, cried; till she — I had never seen her shed a tear before — burst into passionate weeping. After this she seemed to forget her resolve. We returned by moonlight, and our talk was even more calm and cheerful than usual. When in her cottage, I poured away the fatal draught. Her ‘good night’ bore with it no traces of her late agitation; and the next day she said, ‘I have thoughtlessly, even wickedly, created a new duty to myself, even at a time when I had forsworn all; but I will be true to it. Pardon me for making you familiar with emotions and scenes so dire; I will behave better — I will preserve myself, if I can, till the link between us is loosened, or broken, and I am free again.’

“One little incident alone occurred during our intercourse that appeared at all to connect her with the world. Sometimes I brought her a newspaper, for those were stirring times; and though, before I knew her, she had forgotten all except the world her own heart enclosed, yet, to please me, she would talk of Napoleon — Russia, from whence the emperor now returned overthrown — and the prospect of his final defeat. The paper lay one day on her table; some words caught her eye; she bent eagerly down to read them, and her bosom heaved with violent palpitation; but she subdued herself, and after a few moments told me to take the paper away. Then, indeed, I did feel an emotion of even impertinent inquisitiveness; I found nothing to satisfy it — though afterwards I became aware that it contained a singular advertisement, saying, ‘If these lines meet the eye of any one of the passengers who were on board the St. Mary, bound for Liverpool from Barbadoes, which sailed on the third of May last, and was destroyed by fire in the high seas, a part of the crew only having been saved by his majesty’s frigate the Bellerophon, they are entreated to communicate with the advertiser: and if any one be acquainted with the particulars of the Hon. Miss Eversham’s fate and present abode, they are earnestly requested to disclose them, directing to L. E., Stratton-street, Park-lane.’

“It was after this event, as winter came on, that symptoms of decided ill health declared themselves in the delicate frame of my poor Ellen. I have often suspected that, without positively attempting her life, she did many things that tended to abridge it and to produce mortal disease. Now, when really ill, she refused all medical attendance; but she got better again, and I thought her nearly well when I saw her for the last time, before going home for the Christmas holidays. Her manner was full of affection: she relied, she said, on the continuation of my friendship; she made me promise never to forget her, though she refused to write to me, and forbade any letters from me.

"Even now I see her standing at her humble door-way. If an appearance of illness and suffering can ever be termed lovely, it was in her. Still she was to be viewed as the wreck of beauty. What must she not have been in happier days, with her angel expression of face, her nymph-like figure, her voice, whose tones were music? 'So young — so lost!' was the sentiment that burst even from me, a young lad, as I waved my hand to her as a last adieu. She hardly looked more than fifteen, but none could doubt that her very soul was impressed by the sad lines of sorrow that rested so unceasingly on her fair brow. Away from her, her figure for ever floated before my eyes; — I put my hands before them, still she was there: my day, my night, dreams were filled by my recollections of her.

"During the winter holidays, on a fine soft day, I went out to hunt: you, dear Juliet, will remember the sad catastrophe; I fell and broke my leg. The only person who saw me fall was a young man who rode one of the most beautiful horses I ever saw, and I believe it was by watching him as he took a leap, that I incurred my disaster: he dismounted, and was at my side in a minute. My own animal had fled; he called his; it obeyed his voice; with ease he lifted my light figure on to the saddle, contriving to support my leg, and so conducted me a short distance to a lodge situated in the woody recesses of Elmore-park, the seat of the Earl of D — , whose second son my preserver was. He was my sole nurse for a day or two, and during the whole of my illness passed many hours of each day by my bedside. As I lay gazing on him, while he read to me, or talked, narrating a thousand strange adventures which had occurred during his service in the Peninsula, I thought — is it for ever to be my fate to fall in with the highly gifted and excessively unhappy?

"The immediate neighbour of Lewis' family was Lord Eversham. He had married in very early youth, and became a widower young. After this misfortune, which passed like a deadly blight over his prospects and possessions, leaving the gay view utterly sterile and bare, he left his surviving infant daughter under the care of Lewis' mother, and travelled for many years in far distant lands. He returned when Clarice was about ten, a lovely sweet child, the pride and delight of all connected with her. Lord Eversham, on his return — he was then hardly more than thirty — devoted himself to her education. They were never separate: he was a good musician, and she became a proficient under his tutoring. They rode — walked — read together. When a father is all that a father may be, the sentiments of filial piety, entire dependence, and perfect confidence being united, the love of a daughter is one of the deepest and strongest, as it is the purest passion of which our natures are capable. Clarice worshipped her parent, who came, during the transition from mere childhood to the period when reflection and observation awaken, to adorn a common-place existence with all the brilliant adjuncts which enlightened and devoted affection can bestow. He appeared to her like an especial gift of Providence, a guardian angel — but far dearer, as being akin to her own nature. She grew, under his eye, in loveliness and refinement both of intellect and heart. These feelings were not divided — almost strengthened, by the engagement that had place between her and Lewis: — Lewis was destined for the army, and, after a few years' service, they were to be united.

"It is hard, when all is fair and tranquil, when the world, opening before the ardent gaze of youth, looks like a well-kept demesne, unincumbered by let or hinderance for the annoyance of the young traveller, that we should voluntarily stray into desert wilds and tempest-visited districts. Lewis Elmore was ordered to Spain; and, at the same time, Lord Eversham found it necessary to visit some estates he possessed in Barbadoes. He was not sorry to revisit a scene, which had dwelt in his memory as an earthly paradise, nor to show to his daughter a new and strange world, so to form her understanding and enlarge her mind. They were to return in three months, and departed as on a summer tour. Clarice was glad that, while her lover gathered experience and knowledge in a distant land, she should not remain in idleness — she was glad that there would be some diversion for her anxiety during his perilous absence; and in every way she enjoyed the idea of travelling with her beloved father, who would fill every hour, and adorn every new scene, with pleasure and delight. They sailed. — Clarice wrote home, with enthusiastic expressions of rapture and delight, from

Madeira: — yet, without her father, she said, the fair scene had been blank to her. More than half her letter was filled by the expressions of her gratitude and affection for her adored and revered parent. While he, in his, with fewer words, perhaps, but with no less energy, spoke of his satisfaction in her improvement, his pride in her beauty, and his grateful sense of her love and kindness.

"Such were they, a matchless example of happiness in the dearest connexion in life, as resulting from the exercise of their reciprocal duties and affections. A father and daughter; the one all care, gentleness, and sympathy, consecrating his life for her happiness; the other, fond, duteous, grateful: — such had they been, — and where were they now — the noble, kind, respected parent, and the beloved and loving child? They had departed from England as on a pleasure voyage down an inland stream; but the ruthless car of destiny had overtaken them on their unsuspecting way, crushing them under its heavy wheels — scattering love, hope, and joy, as the bellowing avalanche overwhelms and grinds to mere spray the streamlet of the valley. They were gone: but whither? Mystery hung over the fate of the most helpless victim; and my friend's anxiety was, to penetrate the clouds that hid poor Clarice from his sight.

"After an absence of a few months, they had written, fixing their departure in the St. Mary, to sail from Barbadoes in a few days. Lewis, at the same time, returned from Spain: he was invalided, in his very first action, by a bad wound in his side. He arrived, and each day expected to hear of the landing of his friends; when that common messenger, the newspaper, brought him tidings to fill him with more than anxiety — with fear and agonizing doubt. The St. Mary had caught fire and had burned in the open sea. A frigate, the Bellerophon, had saved a part of the crew. In spite of illness and a physician's commands, Lewis set out the same day for London, to ascertain as speedily as possible the fate of her he loved. There he heard that the frigate was expected in the Downs. Without alighting from his travelling chaise, he posted thither, arriving in a burning fever. He went on board, saw the commander, and spoke with the crew. They could give him few particulars as to whom they had saved: they had touched at Liverpool, and left there most of the persons, including all the passengers rescued from the St. Mary. Physical suffering for awhile disabled Mr. Elmore; he was confined by his wound and consequent fever, and only recovered to give himself up to his exertions to discover the fate of his friends; — they did not appear nor write; and all Lewis' inquiries only tended to confirm his worst fears; yet still he hoped, and still continued indefatigable in his perquisitions. He visited Liverpool, and Ireland, whither some of the passengers had gone, and learnt only scattered, incongruous details of the fearful tragedy, that told nothing of Miss Eversham's present abode; though much, that confirmed his suspicion that she still lived.

"The fire on board the St. Mary had raged long and fearfully before the Bellerophon hove in sight, and boats came off for the rescue of the crew. The women were to be first embarked; but Clarice clung to her father, and refused to go till he should accompany her. Some fearful presentiment that, if she were saved, he would remain and die, gave such energy to her resolve, that not the entreaties of her father, nor the angry expostulations of the captain, could shake it. Lewis saw this man, after the lapse of two or three months, and he threw most light on the dark scene. He well remembered that, transported with anger by her woman's obstinacy, he had said to her, 'You will cause your father's death — and be as much a parricide as if you put poison into his cup — you are not the first girl who has murdered her father in her wilful mood.' Still Clarice passionately refused to go — there was no time for long parley — the point was yielded, and she remained pale, but firm, near her parent, whose arm was around her, supporting her during the awful interval. It was no period for regular action and calm order: a tempest was rising, the scorching flames blew this way and that, making a fearful day of the night which veiled all except the burning ship. The boats returned with difficulty, and one only could contrive to approach; it was nearly full: Lord Eversham and his daughter advanced to the deck's edge, to get in. 'We can only take one of you,' vociferated the sailors: 'keep back on your life! throw the girl to us — we will come back for you if we can.' Lord Eversham cast with a strong arm his daughter, who had now entirely lost her self-possession, into the boat; she was alive again in a minute, she called to her father, held out her arms to him, and would have thrown herself into the sea, but was held back by the sailors. Meanwhile Lord Eversham feeling that no boat could again approach the lost vessel, contrived to heave a spar overboard, and threw himself into the sea, clinging to it. The boat, tossed by the huge waves, with difficulty made its way to the frigate; and as it rose from the trough of the sea, Clarice saw her father struggling with his fate — battling with the death that at last became the victor — the spar floated by, his arms had fallen from it — were those his pallid features? She neither wept nor fainted, but her limbs grew rigid, her face colourless, and she was lifted as a log on to the deck of the frigate.

“The captain allowed that on her homeward voyage, the people had rather a horror of her, as having caused her father’s death; her own servants had perished, few people remembered who she was; but they talked together with no careful voices as they passed her, and a hundred times she must have heard herself accused of having destroyed her parent. She spoke to no one, or only in brief reply when addressed; to avoid the rough remonstrances of those around, she appeared at table, ate as well as she could; but there was a settled wretchedness in her face that never changed. When they landed at Liverpool, the captain conducted her to an hotel; he left her, meaning to return, but an opportunity of sailing that night for the Downs occurred, of which he availed himself, without again visiting her. He knew, he said, and truly, that she was in her native country, where she had but to write a letter to gather crowds of friends about her; and where can greater civility be found than at an English hotel, if it is known that you are perfectly able to pay your bill?

“This was all that Mr. Elmore could learn, and it took many months to gather together these few particulars. He went to the hotel at Liverpool. It seemed that as soon as there appeared some hope of rescue from the frigate, Lord Eversham had given his pocket-book to his daughter’s care, containing bills on a banking-house at Liverpool to the amount of a few hundred pounds. On the second day after Clarice’s arrival there, she had sent for the master of the hotel, and showed him these. He got the cash for her; and the next day, she quitted Liverpool in a little coasting vessel. In vain Lewis endeavoured to trace her. Apparently she had crossed to Ireland; but whatever she had done, wherever she had gone, she had taken infinite pains to conceal, and all clue was speedily lost.

“Lewis had not yet despaired; he was even now perpetually making journeys, sending emissaries, employing every possible means for her discovery. From the moment he told me this story, we talked of nothing else. I became deeply interested, and we ceaselessly discussed the probabilities of the case, and where she might be concealed: that she did not meditate suicide was evident from her having possessed herself of money; yet, unused to the world, young, lovely, and inexperienced; what could be her plan? What might not have been her fate?

"Meanwhile I continued for nearly three months confined by the fracture of my limb; before the lapse of that time, I had begun to crawl about the ground, and now I considered myself as nearly recovered. It had been settled that I should not return to Eton, but be entered at Oxford; and this leap from boyhood to man's estate elated me considerably. Yet still I thought of my poor Ellen, and was angry at her obstinate silence. Once or twice I had, disobeying her command, written to her, mentioning my accident, and the kind attentions of Mr. Elmore: still she wrote not; and I began to fear that her illness might have had a fatal termination. She had made me vow so solemnly never to mention her name, never to inquire about her during my absence, that, considering obedience the first duty of a young inexperienced boy to one older than himself, I resisted each suggestion of my affection or my fears, to transgress her orders.

"And now spring came; with its gift of opening buds, odoriferous flowers, and sunny genial days. I returned home, and found my family on the eve of their departure for London; my long confinement had weakened me — it was deemed inadvisable for me to encounter the bad air and fatigues of the metropolis, and I remained to rusticate. I rode and hunted, and thought of Ellen; missing the excitement of her conversation, and feeling a vacancy in my heart which she had filled. I began to think of riding across the country from Shropshire to Berks for the purpose of seeing her. The whole landscape haunted my imagination — the fields round Eton — the silver Thames — the majestic forest — this lovely scene of Virginia Water — the heath and her desolate cottage — she herself pale, slightly bending from weakness of health, awakening from dark abstraction to bestow on me a kind smile of welcome. It grew into a passionate desire of my heart to behold her, to cheer her as I might by my affectionate attentions, to hear her, and to hang upon her accents of inconsolable despair, as if it had been celestial harmony. As I meditated on these things, a voice seemed for ever to repeat, Now go, or it will be too late; while another yet more mournful tone responded, You can never see her more!

"I was occupied by these thoughts, as, on a summer moonlight night, I loitered in the shrubbery, unable to quit a scene of entrancing beauty, when

I was startled at hearing myself called by Mr. Elmore. He came on his way to the coast; he had received a letter from Ireland, which made him think that Miss Eversham was residing near Enniscorthy; a strange place for her to select, but as concealment was evidently her object, not an improbable one. Yet his hopes were not high; on the contrary, he performed this journey more from the resolve to leave nothing undone, than in expectation of a happy result. He asked me if I would accompany him; I was delighted with the offer, and we departed together on the following morning.

"We arrived at Milford Haven, where we were to take our passage. The packet was to sail early in the morning — we walked on the beach, and beguiled the time by talk. I had never mentioned Ellen to Lewis; I felt now strongly inclined to break my vow, and to relate my whole adventure with her; but restrained myself, and we spoke only of the unhappy Clarice — of the despair that must have been hers, of her remorse and unavailing regret.

"We retired to rest, and early in the morning I was called to prepare for going on board. I got ready, and then knocked at Lewis' door; he admitted me, for he was dressed, though a few of his things were still unpacked, and scattered about the room. The morocco case of a miniature was on his table; I took it up—'Did I never show you that?' said Elmore; 'poor dear Clarice! she was very happy when that was painted!'

"I opened it; — rich luxuriant curls clustered on her brow and the snow-white throat; there was a light zephyr appearance in the figure; an expression of unalloyed exuberant happiness in the countenance; but those large dove's eyes, the innocence that dwelt on her mouth, could not be mistaken, and the name of Ellen Burnet burst from my lips.

"There was no doubt: why had I ever doubted? the thing was so plain! who but the survivor of such a parent, and she the apparent cause of his death, could be so miserable as Ellen? A torrent of explanation followed, and a thousand minute circumstances, forgotten before, now assured us that my sad hermitess was the beloved of Elmore. No more sea voyage — not a second of delay — our chaise, the horses' heads turned to the east, rolled on with lightning rapidity, yet far too slowly to satisfy our impatience. It was not until we arrived at Worcester that the tide of expectation, flowing all one way, ebbed. Suddenly, even while I was telling Elmore some anecdote to prove that, in spite of all, she would be accessible to consolation, I remembered her ill health and my fears. Lewis saw the change my countenance underwent; for some time I could not command my voice; and when at last I spoke, my gloomy anticipations passed like an electric shock into my friend's soul.

"When we arrived at Oxford, we halted for an hour or two, unable to proceed; yet we did not converse on the subject so near our hearts, nor until we arrived in sight of Windsor did a word pass between us; then Elmore said, 'To-morrow morning, dear Neville, you shall visit Clarice; we must not be too precipitate.'

"The morrow came. I arose with that intolerable weight at my breast, which it is grief's worst heritage to feel. A sunny day it was; yet the atmosphere looked black to me; my heart was dead within me. We sat at the breakfast table, but neither ate, and after some restless indecision, we left our inn, and (to protract the interval) walked to Bishopsgate. Our conversation belied our feelings; we spoke as if we expected all to be well, we felt that there was no hope. We crossed the heath along the accustomed path. On one side was the luxuriant foliage of the forest; on the other, the wide-spread moor: her cottage was situated at one extremity, and could hardly be distinguished, until we should arrive close to it. When we drew near, Lewis bade me go on alone, he would wait my return; I obeyed, and reluctantly approached the confirmation of my fears. At length it stood before me, the lonely cot and desolate garden; the unfastened wicket swung in the breeze; every shutter was closed.

"To stand motionless and gaze on these symbols of my worst forebodings, was all that I could do. My heart seemed to me to call aloud for Ellen — for such was she to me — her other name might be a fiction — but silent as her own life-deserted lips were mine. Lewis grew impatient, and advanced — my stay had occasioned a transient ray of hope to enter his mind — it vanished when he saw me, and *her* deserted dwelling. Slowly we turned away, and were directing our steps back again, when my name was called by a child. A little girl came running across some fields towards us, whom at last I recognised as having seen before with Ellen. 'Mr. Neville, there is a letter for you!' cried the child. 'A letter — where? — who?'

'The lady left a letter for you. You must go to Old Windsor, to Mr. Cooke's; he has got it for you.'

"She had left a letter: — was she then departed on an earthly journey? 'I will go for it immediately. Mr. Cooke! Old Windsor! where shall I find him? who is he?’

“‘Oh, Sir, every body knows him,’ said the child; ‘he lives close to the churchyard, he is the sexton. After the burial, Nancy gave him the letter to take care of.’

“Had we hoped? had we for a moment indulged the expectation of ever again seeing our miserable friend? Never! O never! Our hearts had told us that the sufferer was at peace — the unhappy orphan with her father in the abode of spirits! Why then were we here? Why had a smile dwelt on our lips, now wreathed into the expression of anguish? Our full hearts demanded one consolation — to weep upon her grave; her sole link now with us, her mourners. There at last my boy’s grief found vent in tears, in lamentation. You saw the spot; the grassy mound rests lightly on the bosom of fair Clarice, of my own poor Ellen. Stretched upon this, kissing the scarcely springing turf; for many hours no thought visited me, but the wretched one — that she had lived — and was lost to me forever!

“If Lewis had ever doubted the identity of my friend with her he loved, the letter put into our hands undeceived him; the handwriting was Miss Eversham’s, it was directed to me, and contained words like these: —

“‘April 11.

“‘I have vowed never to mention certain beloved names, never to communicate with beings who cherished me once, to whom my deepest gratitude is due; and, as well as poor bankrupt can, is paid. Perhaps it is a mere prevarication to write to you, dear Horace, concerning them; but, Heaven pardon me! my disrobed spirit would not repose, I fear, if I did not thus imperfectly bid them a last farewell.

“‘You know him, Neville; and know that he for ever laments her whom he has lost. Describe your poor Ellen to him, and he will speedily see that *she* died on the waves of the murderous Atlantic. Ellen had nothing in common with *her,* save love for, and interest in him. Tell him, it had been well for him, perhaps, to have united himself to the child of prosperity, the nursling of deep love; but it had been destruction, even could he have meditated such an act, to wed the parrici — .

“‘I will not write that word. Sickness and near death have taken the sting from my despair. The agony of woe which you witnessed, is melted into tender affliction and pious hope. I am not miserable now. Now! When you read these words, the hand that writes, the eye that sees, will be a little dust, becoming one with the earth around it. You, perhaps he, will visit my quiet retreat, bestow a few tears on my fate, but let them be secret; they may make green my grave, but do not let a misplaced feeling adorn it with any other tribute. It is my last request; let no stone, no name, mark that spot.

"'Farewell, dear Horace! Farewell, to one other whom I may not name. May the God to whom I am about to resign my spirit in confidence and hope, bless your earthly career! Blindly, perhaps, you will regret me for your own sakes; but for mine, you will be grateful to the Providence which has snapt the heavy chain binding me to unutterable sorrow, and which permits me from my lowly grass-grown tomb to say to you, I am at peace.

"'ELLEN.'"

THE EVIL EYE

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head, and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroider'd garments, fair to see;
The crimson-scarfed man of Macedon. — Lord Byron.

The Moreot, Katusthius Ziani, travelled wearily, and in fear of its robber-inhabitants, through the pashalik of Yannina; yet he had no cause for dread. Did he arrive, tired and hungry, in a solitary village — did he find himself in the uninhabited wilds suddenly surrounded by a band of Klephts — or in the larger towns did he shrink at finding himself sole of his race among the savage mountaineers and despotic Turk — as soon as he announced himself the Pobratimo[*] of Dmitri of the Evil Eye, every hand was held out, every voice spoke welcome.

[* In Greece, especially in Illyria and Epirus, it is no uncommon thing for persons of the same sex to swear friendship; the church contains a ritual to consecrate this vow. Two men thus united are called pobratimi, the women posestrime.]

The Albanian, Dmitri, was a native of the village of Korvo. Among the savage mountains of the district between Yannina and Tepellen, the deep broad stream of Argyro-Castro flows; bastioned to the west by abrupt wood-covered precipices, shadowed to the east by elevated mountains. The highest among these is Mount Trebucci; and in a romantic folding of that hill, distinct with minarets, crowned by a dome rising from out a group of pyramidal cypresses, is the picturesque village of Korvo. Sheep and goats form the apparent treasure of its inhabitants; their guns and yataghans, their warlike habits, and, with them, the noble profession of robbery, are sources of still greater wealth. Among a race renowned for dauntless courage and sanguinary enterprise, Dmitri was distinguished.

It was said that in his youth, this Klepht was remarkable for a gentler disposition and more refined taste than is usual with his countrymen. He had been a wanderer, and had learned European arts, of which he was not a little proud. He could read and write Greek, and a book was often stowed beside his pistols in his girdle. He had spent several years in Scio, the most civilized of the Greek islands, and had married a Sciote girl. The Albanians are characterized as despisers of women; but Dmitri, in becoming the husband of Helena, inlisted under a more chivalrous rule, and became the proselyte of a better creed. Often he returned to his native hills, and fought under the banner of the renowned Ali, and then came back to his island home. The love of the tamed barbarian was concentrated, burning, and something beyond this — it was a portion of his living, beating heart — the nobler part of himself — the diviner mould in which his rugged nature had been recast.

On his return from one of his Albanian expeditions, he found his home ravaged by the Mainotes. Helena — they pointed to her tomb, nor dared tell him how she died; his only child, his lovely infant daughter, was stolen; his treasure-house of love and happiness was rifled; its gold-excelling wealth changed to blank desolation. Dmitri spent three years in endeavours to recover his lost offspring. He was exposed to a thousand dangers — underwent incredible hardships: he dared the wild beast in his lair, the Mainote in his port of refuge; he attacked, and was attacked by them. He wore the badge of his daring in a deep gash across his eyebrow and cheek. On this occasion he had died, but that Katusthius, seeing a scuffle on shore and a man left for dead, disembarked from a Moreot sacoleva, carried him away, tended and cured him. They exchanged vows of friendship, and for some time the Albanian shared his brother’s toils; but they were too pacific to suit his taste, and he returned to Korvo.

Who in the mutilated savage could recognise the handsomest amongst the Arnaoots? His habits kept pace with his change of physiognomy — he grew ferocious and hard-hearted — he only smiled when engaged in dangerous enterprise; he had arrived at that worst state of ruffian feeling, the taking delight in blood. He grew old in these occupations; his mind became reckless, his countenance more dark; men trembled before his glance, women and children exclaimed in terror, “The Evil Eye!” The opinion became prevalent — he shared it himself — he gloried in the dread privilege; and when his victim shivered and withered beneath the mortal influence, the fiendish laugh with which he hailed this demonstration of his power, struck with worse dismay the failing heart of the fascinated person. But Dmitri could command the arrows of his sight; and his comrades respected him the more for his supernatural attribute, since they did not fear the exercise of it on themselves.

Dmitri had just returned from an expedition beyond Prevesa. He and his comrades were laden with spoil. They killed and roasted a goat whole for their repast; they drank dry several wine skins; then, round the fire in the court, they abandoned themselves to the delights of the kerchief dance, roaring out the chorus, as they dropped upon and then rebounded from their knees, and whirled round and round with an activity all their own. The heart of Dmitri was heavy; he refused to dance, and sat apart, at first joining in the song with his voice and lute, till the air changed to one that reminded him of better days; his voice died away — his instrument dropped from his hands — and his head sank upon his breast.

At the sound of stranger footsteps he started up; in the form before him he surely recognised a friend — he was not mistaken. ‘With a joyful exclamation he welcomed Katusthius Ziani, clasping his hand, and kissing him on his cheek. The traveller was weary, so they retired to Dmitri’s own home a neatly plastered, white-washed cottage, whose earthen floor was perfectly dry and clean, and the walls hung with arms, some richly ornamented, and other trophies of his Klephtic triumphs. A fire was kindled by his aged female attendant; the friends reposed on mats of white rushes, while she prepared the pilaf and seethed flesh of kid. She placed a bright tin tray on a block of wood before them, and heaped upon it cakes of Indian corn, goat’s milk cheese, eggs, and olives: a jar of water from their purest spring, and skin of wine, served to refresh and cheer the thirsty traveller.

After supper, the guest spoke of the object of his visit. “I come to my Pobratimo,” he said, “to claim the performance of his vow. When I rescued you from the savage Kakovougnis of Boularias, you pledged to me your gratitude and faith; do you disclaim the debt?”

Dmitri’s brow darkened. “My brother,” he cried, “need not remind mc of what I owe. Command my life — in what can the mountain Klepht aid the son of the wealthy Ziani?”

“The son of Ziani is a beggar,” rejoined Katusthius, “and must perish, if his brother deny his assistance.”

The Moreot then told his tale. He had been brought up as the only son of a rich merchant of Corinth. He had often sailed as caravokeiri [*] of his father’s vessels to Stamboul, and even to Calabria. Some years before, he had been boarded and taken by a Barbary corsair. His life since then had been adventurous, he said; in truth, it had been a guilty one — he had become a renegade — and won regard from his new allies, not by his superior courage, for he was cowardly, but by the frauds that make men wealthy. In the midst of this career some superstition had influenced him, and he had returned to his ancient religion. He escaped from Africa, wandered through Syria, crossed to Europe, found occupation in Constantinople; and thus years passed. At last, as he was on the point of marriage with a Fanariote beauty, he fell again into poverty, and he returned to Corinth to see if his father's fortunes had prospered during his long wanderings. He found that while these had improved to a wonder, they were lost to him for ever. His father, during his protracted absence, acknowledged another son as his; and dying a year before, had left all to him. Katusthius found this unknown kinsman, with his wife and child, in possession of his expected inheritance. Cyril divided with him, it is true, their parent's property; but Katusthius grasped at all, and resolved to obtain it. He brooded over a thousand schemes of murder and revenge; yet the blood of a brother was sacred to him; and Cyril, beloved and respected at Corinth, could only be attacked with considerable risk. Then his child was a fresh obstacle. As the best plan that presented itself, he hastily embarked for Butrinto, and came to claim the advice and assistance of the Arnaoot whose life he had saved, whose Pobratimo he was. Not thus barely, did he tell his tale, but glossed it over; so that had Dmitri needed the incitement of justice, which was not at all a desideratum with him, he would have been satisfied that Cyril was a base interloper, and that the whole transaction was one of imposture and villany.

[* Master of a merchant ship]

All night these men discussed a variety of projects, whose aim was, that the deceased Ziani's wealth should pass undivided into his elder son's hands. At morning's dawn Katusthius departed, and two days afterwards Dmitri quitted his mountain-home. His first care had been to purchase a horse, long coveted by him on account of its beauty and fleetness; he provided cartridges, and replenished his powder-horn. His accoutrements were rich, his dress gay; his arms glittered in the sun. His long hair fell straight from under the shawl twisted round his cap, even to his waist; a shaggy white capote hung from his shoulder; his face wrinkled and puckered by exposure to the seasons; his brow furrowed with care; his mustachios long and jet black; his scarred face; his wild, savage eyes; his whole appearance, not deficient in barbaric grace, but stamped chiefly with ferocity and bandit pride, inspired, and we need not wonder, the superstitious Greek with a belief that a supernatural spirit of evil dwelt in his aspect, blasting and destroying. Now prepared for his journey, he departed from Korvo, crossing the woods of Acarnania, on his way to the Morea.

"Wherefore does Zella tremble, and press her boy to her bosom, as if fearful of evil?" Thus asked Cyril Ziani, returning from the city of Corinth to his own rural abode. It was a home of beauty. The abruptly broken hills covered with olives, or brighter plantations of orange-trees, overlooked the blue waves of the Gulf of Aegina. A myrtle underwood spread sweet scent around, and dipped its dark shining leaves into the sea itself. The low-roofed house was shaded by two enormous fig-trees: while vineyards and corn-land stretched along the gentle upland to the north. When Zella saw her husband, she smiled, though her cheek was still pale and her lips quivering—"Now you are near to guard us," she said, "I dismiss fear; but danger threatens our Constans, and I shudder to remember that an Evil Eve has been upon him."

Cyril caught up his child—"By my head!" he cried, "thou speakest of an ill thing. The Franks call this superstition; but let us beware. His cheek is still rosy; his tresses flowing gold — Speak, Constans, hail thy father, my brave fellow"

It was but a short-lived fear; no ill ensued, and they soon forgot an incident which had causelessly made their hearts to quail. A week afterwards Cyril returned, as he was wont, from shipping a cargo of currants, to his retreat on the coast. It was a beautiful summer evening; the creaking water-wheel, which produced the irrigation of the land, chimed in with the last song of the noisy cicala; the rippling waves spent themselves almost silently among the shingles. This was his home; but where its lovely flower? Zella did not come forth to welcome him. A domestic pointed to a chapel on a neighbouring acclivity, and there he found her; his child (nearly three years of age) was in his nurse's arms; his wife was praying fervently, while the tears streamed down her cheeks. Cyril demanded anxiously the meaning of this scene; but the nurse sobbed; Zella continued to pray and weep; and the boy, from sympathy, began to cry. This was too much for man to endure. Cyril left the chapel; he leant against a walnut-tree: his first exclamation was a customary Greek one — Welcome this misfortune, so that it come single!" But what was the ill that had occurred? Unapparent was it yet; but the spirit of evil is most fatal when unseen. He was happy — a lovely wife, a blooming child, a peaceful home, competence, and the prospect of wealth; these blessings were his: yet how often does Fortune use such as her decoys? He was a slave in an enslaved land, a mortal subject to the high destinies, and ten thousand were the envenomed darts which might be hurled at his devoted head. Now timid and trembling, Zella came from the chapel: her explanation did not calm his fears. Again the Evil Eye had been on his child, and deep malignity lurked surely under this second visitation. The same man, an Arnaoot, with glittering arms, gay attire, mounted on a black steed, came from the neighbouring ilex grove, and, riding furiously up to the door, suddenly checked and reined in his horse at the very threshold. The child ran towards him: the Arnaoot bent his sinister eyes upon him: —

"Lovely art thou, bright infant," he cried; "thy blue eyes arc beaming, thy golden tresses fair to see; but thou art a vision fleeting as beautiful; — look at me!" The innocent looked up, uttered a shriek, and fell gasping on the ground. The women rushed forward to seize him; the Albanian put spurs to his horse, and galloping swiftly across the little plain, up the wooded hill-side, he was soon lost to sight. Zella and the nurse bore the child to the chapel, they sprinkled him with holy water, and, as he revived, besought the Panagia with earnest prayers to save him from the menaced ill.

Several weeks elapsed; little Constans grew in intelligence and beauty; no blight had visited the flower of love, and its parents dismissed fear. Sometimes Cyril indulged in a joke at the expense of the Evil Eye; but Zella thought it unlucky to laugh, and crossed herself whenever the event was alluded to. At this time Katusthius visited their abode. "He was on his way," he said, "to Stamboul, and he came to know whether he could serve his brother in any of his transactions in the capital." Cyril and Zella received him with cordial affection: they rejoiced to perceive that fraternal love was beginning to warm his heart. He seemed full of ambition and hope: the brothers discussed his prospects, the politics of Europe, and the intrigues of the Fanar: the petty affairs of Corinth even were made subjects of discourse; and the probability that in a short time, young as he was, Cyril would be named Codja-Bashee of the province. On the morrow, Katusthius prepared to depart—"One favour does the voluntary exile ask; will my brother and sister accompany me some hours on my way to Napoli, whence I embark?"

Zella was unwilling to quit her home, even for a short interval; but she suffered herself to be persuaded, and they proceeded altogether for several miles towards the capital of the Morea. At noontide they made a repast under the shadow of a grove of oaks, and then separated. Returning homeward, the wedded pair congratulated themselves on their tranquil life and peaceful happiness, contrasted with the wanderer's lonely and homeless pleasures. These feelings increased in intensity as they drew nearer their dwelling, and anticipated the lisped welcome of their idolized child.

From an eminence they looked upon the fertile vale which was their home: it was situated on the southern side of the isthmus, and looked upon the Gulf of Aegina: all was verdant, tranquil, and beautiful. They descended into the plain; there a singular appearance attracted their attention. A plough with its yoke of oxen had been deserted midway in the furrow; the animals had dragged it to the side of the field, and endeavoured to repose as well as their conjunction permitted. The sun already touched its Western bourne, and the summits of the trees were gilded by its parting beams. All was silent; even the eternal water-wheel was still; no menials appeared at their usual rustic labours. From the house the voice of wailing was too plainly heard.—"My child!" Zella exclaimed. Cyril began to reassure her; but another lament arose, and he hurried on. She dismounted, and would have followed him, but sank on the road's side. Her husband returned—"Courage, my beloved," he cried; "I will not repose night or day until Constans is restored to us — trust to me — farewell!" With these words he rode swiftly on.

Her worst fears were thus confirmed; her maternal heart, late so joyous, became the abode of despair, while the nurse's narration of the sad occurrence tended but to add worse fear to fear.

Thus it was: the same stranger of the Evil Eye had appeared, not as before, bearing down on them with eagle speed, but as if from a long journey; his horse lame and with drooping head; the Arnaoot himself covered with dust, apparently scarcely able to keep his seat. "By the life of your child," he said, "give a cup of water to one who faints with thirst." The nurse, with Constans in her arms, got a bowl of the desired liquid, and presented it. Ere the parched lips of the stranger touched the wave, the vessel fell from his hands. The women started back, while he, at the same moment darting forward, tore with strong arm the child from her embrace. Already both were gone — with arrowy speed they traversed the plain, while her shrieks, and cries for assistance, called together all the domestics. They followed on the track of the ravisher, and none had yet returned. Now, as night closed in, one by one they came back; they had nothing to relate; they had scoured the woods, crossed the hills — they could not even discover the route which the Albanian had taken.

On the following day Cyril returned, jaded, haggard, miserable; he had obtained no tidings of his son. On the morrow he again departed on his quest, nor came back for several days. Zella passed her time wearily — now sitting in hopeless despondency, now climbing the near hill to see whether she could perceive the approach of her husband. She was not allowed to remain long thus tranquil; the trembling domestics, left in guard, warned her that the savage forms of several Arnaoots had been seen prowling about: she herself saw a tall figure, clad in a shaggy white capote, steal round the promontory, and on seeing her, shrink back: once at night the snorting and trampling of a horse roused her, not from slumber, but from her sense of security. Wretched as the bereft mother was, she felt personally almost reckless of danger; but she was not her own, she belonged to one beyond expression dear; and duty, as well as affection for him, enjoined self-preservation. He, Cyril, again returned: he was gloomier, sadder than before; but there was more resolution on his brow, more energy in his motions; he had obtained a clue, yet it might only lead him to the depths of despair.

He discovered that Katusthius had not embarked at Napoli. He had joined a band of Arnaoots lurking about Vasilico, and had proceeded to Patras vith the Protoklepht; thence they put off together in a monoxylon for the northern shores of the gulf of Lepanto: nor were they alone; they bore a child with them wrapt in a heavy torpid sleep. Poor Cyril's blood ran cold when he thought of the spells and witchcraft which had probably been put in practice on his boy. He would have followed close upon the robbers, but for the report that reached him, that the remainder of the Albanians had proceeded southward towards Corinth. He could not enter upon a long wandering search among the pathless wilds of Epirus, leaving Zella exposed to the attacks of these bandits. He returned to consult with her, to devise some plan of action which at once ensured her safety, and promised success to his endeavours.

After some hesitation and discussion, it was decided that he should first conduct her to her native home, consult with her father as to his present enterprise, and be guided by his warlike experience before he rushed into the very focus of danger. The seizure of his child might only be a lure, and it were not well for him, sole protector of that child and its mother, to rush unadvisedly into the toils.

Zella, strange to say, for her blue eyes and brilliant complexion belied her birth, was the daughter of a Mainote: yet dreaded and abhorred by the rest of the world as are the inhabitants of Cape Tanarus, they are celebrated for their domestic virtues and the strength of their private attachments. Zella loved her father, and the memory of her rugged rocky home, from which she had been torn in an adverse hour. Near neighbours of the Mainotes, dwelling in the ruder and most incult portion of Mama, are the Kakovougnis, a dark suspicious race, of squat and stunted form, strongly contrasted with the tranquil cast of countenance characteristic of the Mainote. The two tribes are embroiled in perpetual quarrels; the narrow sea-girt abode which they share affords at once a secure place of refuge from the foreign enemy, and all the facilities of internal mountain warfare. Cyril had once, during a coasting voyage, been driven by stress of weather into the little bay on whose shores is placed the small town of Kardamyla. The crew at first dreaded to be captured by the pirates; but they were reassured on finding them fully occupied by their domestic dissensions. A band of Kakovougnis were besieging the castellated rock overlooking Kardamyla, blockading the fortress in which the Mainote Capitano and his family had taken refuge. Two days passed thus, while furious contrary winds detained Cyril in the bay.

On the third evening the western gale subsided, and a land breeze promised to emancipate them from their perilous condition; when in the night, as they were about to put off in a boat from shore, they were hailed a party of Mainotes, and one, an old man of commanding figure, demanded a parley. He was the Capitano of Kardamyla, the chief of the fortress, now attacked by his implacable enemies: he saw no escape — he must fall — and his chief desire was to save his treasure and his family from the hands of his enemies. Cyril consented to receive them on board: the latter consisted of an old mother, a paramana, and a young and beautiful girl, his daughter.

Cyril conducted them in safety to Napoli. Soon after, the Capitano's mother and paramana returned to their native town, while, with her father's consent, fair Zella became the wife of her preserver. The fortunes of the Mainote had prospered since then, and he stood first in rank, the chief of a large tribe, the Capitano of Kardamyla.

Thither then the hapless parents repaired; they embarked on board a small sacoleva, which dropt down the Gulf of Aegina, weathered the islands of Skvllo and Cerigo, and the extreme point of Tarus: favoured by prosperous gales, they made the desired port, and arrived at the hospitable mansion of old Camaraz. He heard their tale with indignation; swore by his beard to dip his poniard in the best blood of Katusthius, and insisted upon accompanying his son-in-law on his expedition to Albania. No time was lost — the gray-headed mariner, still full of energy, hastened every preparation. Cyril and Zella parted; a thousand fears, a thousand hours of misery rose between the pair, late sharers in perfect happiness. The boisterous sea and distant lands were the smallest of the obstacles that divided them; they would not fear the worst; yet hope, a sickly plant, faded in their hearts as they tore themselves asunder after a last embrace.

Zella returned from the fertile district of Corinth to her barren native rocks. She felt all joy expire as she viewed from the rugged shore the lessening sails of the sacoleva. Days and weeks passed, and still she remained in solitary and sad expectation: she never joined in the dance, nor made one in the assemblies of her country-women, who met together at evening-tide to sing, tell stories, and wile away the time in dance and gaiety. She secluded herself in the most lonely part of her father's house, and gazed unceasingly from the lattice upon the sea beneath, or wandered on the rocky beach; and when tempest darkened the sky, and each precipitous promontory grew purple under the shadows of the wide-winged clouds, when the roar of the surges was on the shore, and the white crests of the waves, seen afar upon the ocean-plain, showed like flocks of new-shorn sheep scattered along wide-extended downs, she felt neither gale nor inclement cold, nor returned home till recalled by her attendants. In obedience to them she sought the shelter of her abode, not to remain long; for the wild winds spoke to her, and the stormy ocean reproached her tranquillity. Unable to control the impulse, she would rush from her habitation on the cliff, nor remember, till she reached the shore, that her papooshes were left midway on the mountain path, and that her forgotten veil and disordered dress were unmeet for such a scene. Often the unnumbered hours sped on, while this orphaned child of happiness leant on a cold dark rock; the low-browed crags beetled over her, the surges broke at her feet, her fair limbs were stained by spray, her tresses dishevelled by the gale. Hopelessly she wept until a sail appeared on the horizon; and then she dried her fast flowing tears, fixing her large eves upon the nearing hull or fading topsail. Meanwhile the storm tossed the clouds into a thousand gigantic shapes, and the tumultuous sea grew blacker and more wild; her natural gloom was heightened by superstitious horror; the Moirae, the old Fates of her native Grecian soil, howled in the breezes; apparitions, which told of her child pining under the influence of the Evil Eye, and of her husband, the prey of some Thracian witchcraft, such as still is practised in the dread neighbourhood of Larissa, haunted her broken slumbers, and stalked like dire shadows across her waking thoughts. Her bloom was gone, her eyes lost their lustre, her limbs their round full beauty; her strength failed her, as she tottered to the accustomed spot to watch — vainly, yet for ever to watch.

What is there so fearful as the expectation of evil tidings delayed? Sometimes in the midst of tears, or worse, amidst the convulsive gaspings of despair, we reproach ourselves for influencing the eternal fates by our gloomy anticipations: then, if a smile wreathe the mourner’s quivering lip, it is arrested by a throb of agony. Alas! are not the dark tresses of the young, painted gray; the full cheek of beauty, delved with sad lines by the spirits of such hours? Misery is a more welcome visitant, when she comes in her darkest guise, and wraps us in perpetual black, for then the heart no longer sickens with disappointed hope.

Cyril and old Camaraz had found great difficulty in doubling the many capes of the Morea as they made a coasting expedition from Kardamyla to the gulf of Arta, north of Cefalonia and St.

Mauro. During their voyage they had time to arrange their plans. As a number of Moreots travelling together might attract too much attention, they resolved to land their comrades at different points, and travel separately into the interior of Albania: Yannina was their first place of rendezvous. Cyril and his father-in-law disembarked in one of the most secluded of the many creeks which diversify the winding and precipitous shores of the gulf. Six others, chosen from the crew, would, by other routes, join them at the capital. They did not fear for themselves; alone, but well armed, and secure in the courage of despair, they penetrated the fastnesses of Epirus. No success cheered them: they arrived at Yannina without having made the slightest discovery. There they were joined by their comrades, whom they directed to remain three days in the town, and then separately to proceed to Tepellene, whither they immediately directed their steps. At the first village on their way thither, at "monastic Zitza," [*] they obtained some information, not to direct, but to encourage their endeavours. They sought refreshment and hospitality in the monastery which is situated on a green eminence, crowned by a grove of oak-trees, immediately behind the village. Perhaps there is not in the world a more beautiful or more romantic spot, sheltered itself by clustering trees, looking out on one wide-spread landscape of hill and dale, enriched by vineyards, dotted with frequent flocks; while the Calamas in the depth of the vale gives life to the scene, and the far blue mountains of Zoumerkas, Sagori, Sulli, and Acroceraunia, to the east, wrest, north, and south, close in the various prospects. Cyril half envied the Calovers their inert tranquillity. They received the travellers gladly, and were cordial though simple in their manners. When questioned concerning the object of their journey, they warmly sympathised with the father's anxiety, and eagerly told all they knew. Two wrecks before, an Arnaoot, vell known to them as Dmitri of the Evil Eye, a famous Klepht of Korvo, and a Moreot, arrived, bringing with them a child, a bold, spirited, beautiful boy, who, with firmness beyond his years, claimed the protection of the Caloyers, and accused his companions of having carried him off by force from his parents. —

[* Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage II. xlviii.]

"By my head!" cried the Albanian, "a brave Palikar: he keeps his word, brother; he swore by the Panagia, in spite of our threats of throwing him down a precipice, food for the vulture, to accuse us to the first good men he saw: he neither pines under the Evil Eve, nor quails beneath our menaces.” Katusthius frowned at these praises, and it became evident during their stay at the monastery, that the Albanian and the Moreot quarrelled as to the disposal of the child. The rugged mountaineer threw off all his sternness as he gazed upon the boy. When little Constans slept, he hung over him, fanning away, with woman’s care, the flies and gnats. When he spoke, he answered with expressions of fondness, winning him vith gifts, teaching him, all baby as he was, a mimicry of warlike exercises. When the boy knelt and besought the Panagia to restore him to his parents, his infant voice quivering, and tears running down his cheeks, the eyes of Dmitri overflowed; he cast his cloak over his face; his heart whispered to him —”Thus, perhaps, my child prayed. Heaven was deaf — alas! where is she now?” — Encouraged by such signs of compassion, which children are quick to perceive, Constans twined his arms round his neck, telling him that he loved him, and that he would fight for him when a man, if he would take him back to Corinth. At such words Dmitri would rush forth, seek Katusthius, remonstrate with him, till the unrelenting man checked him by reminding him of his vow. Still he swore that no hair of the child’s head should be injured; while the uncle, unvisited by compunction, meditated his destruction. The quarrels which thence arose vere frequent and violent, till Katusthius, weary of opposition, had recourse to craft to obtain his purpose. One night he secretly left the monastery, bearing the child with him. When Dmitri heard of his evasion, it was a fearful thing to the good Caloyers only to look upon him; they instinctively clutched hold of every bit of iron on which they could lay their hands, so to avert the Evil Eye which glared with native and untamed fierceness. In their panic a whole score of them had rushed to the iron-plated door which led out of their abode: with the strength of a lion, Dmitri tore them away, threw back the portal, and, with the swiftness of a torrent fed by the thawing of the snows in spring, he dashed down the steep hill: the flight of an eagle not more rapid; the course of a wild beast not more resolved.

Such was the clue afforded to Cyril. It were too long to follow him in his subsequent search; he, with old Camaraz, wandered through the vale of Argyro-Castro, and climbed Mount Trebucci to Korvo. Dmitri had returned; he had gathered together a score of faithful comrades, and sallied forth again; various were the reports of his destination, and the enterprise which he meditated.

One of these led our adventurers to Tepellene, and hence back towards Yannina: and now chance again favoured them. They rested one night in the habitation of a priest at the little village of Mosme, about three leagues to the north of Zitza; and here they found an Arnaoot who had been disabled by a fall from his horse; this man was to have made one of Dmitri's band: they learned from him that the Arnaoot had tracked Katusthius, following him close, and forcing him to take refuge in the monastery of the Prophet Elias, which stands on an elevated peak of the mountains of Sagori, eight leagues from Yannina. Dmitri had followed him, and demanded the child. The Caloyers refused to give it up, and the Klepht, roused to mad indignation, was now besieging and battering the monastery, to obtain by force this object of his newly-awakened affections.

At Yannina, Camaraz and Cyril collected their comrades, and departed to join their unconscious ally. He, more impetuous than a mountain-stream or ocean's fiercest waves, struck terror into the hearts of the recluses by his ceaseless and dauntless attacks. To encourage them to further resistance, Katusthius, leaving the child behind in the monastery, departed for the nearest town of Sagori, to entreat its Belouk-Bashee to come to their aid. The Sagorians are a mild, amiable, social people; they are gay, frank, clever; their bravery is universally acknowledged, even by the more uncivilized mountaineers of Zoumerkas; yet robbery, murder, and other acts of violence, are unknown among them. These good people were not a little indignant when they heard that a band of Arnaoots was besieging and battering the sacred retreat of their favourite Caloyers. They assembled in a gallant troop, and taking Katusthius with them, hastened to drive the insolent Klephts back to their ruder fastnesses. They came too late. At midnight, while the monks prayed fervently to be delivered from their enemies, Dmitri and his followers tore down their iron-plated door, and entered the holy precincts. The Protoklepht strode up to the gates of the sanctuary, and placing his hands upon it, swore that he came to save, not to destroy. Constans saw him. With a cry of delight he disengaged himself from the Caloyer who held him, and rushed into his arms: this was sufficient triumph. With assurances of sincere regret for having disturbed them, the Klepht quitted the chapel with his followers, taking his prize with him.

Katusthius returned some hours after, and so well did the traitor plead his cause with the kind Sagorians, bewailing the fate of his little nephew among these evil men, that they offered to follow, and, superior as their numbers were, to rescue the boy from their destructive hands.

Katusthius, delighted with the proposition, urged their immediate departure. At dawn they began to climb the mountain summits, already trodden by the Zoumerkians.

Delighted with repossessing his little favourite, Dmitri placed him before him on his horse, and, followed by his comrades, made his way over the elevated mountains, clothed with old Dodona's oaks, or, in higher summits, by dark gigantic pines. They proceeded for some hours, and at length dismounted to repose. The spot they chose was the depth of a dark ravine, whose gloom was increased by the broad shadows of dark ilexes; an entangled underwood, and a sprinkling of craggy isolated rocks, made it difficult for the horses to keep their footing. They dismounted, and sat by the little stream. Their simple fare was spread, and Dmitri enticed the boy to eat by a thousand caresses. Suddenly one of his men, set as a guard, brought intelligence that a troop of Sagorians, with Katusthius as their guide, was advancing from the monastery of St.

Elias; while another man gave the alarm of the approach of six or eight well-armed Moreots, who were advancing on the road from Yannina; in a moment every sign of encampment had disappeared. The Arnaoots began to climb the hills, getting under cover of the rocks, and behind the large trunks of the forest-trees, keeping concealed till their invaders should be in the very midst of them. Soon the Moreots appeared, turning round the defile, in a path that only allowed them to proceed two by two; they were unaware of danger, and walked carelessly, until a shot that whizzed over the head of one, striking the bough of a tree, recalled them from their security.

The Greeks, accustomed to the same mode of warfare, betook themselves also to the safeguards of the rocks, firing from behind them, striving with their adversaries which should get to the most elevated station; jumping from crag to crag, and dropping down and firing as quickly as they could load: one old man alone remained on the pathway. The mariner, Camaraz, had often encountered the enemy on the deck of his caick, and would still have rushed foremost at a boarding, but this warfare required too much activity. Cyril called on him to shelter himself beneath a low, broad stone: the Mainote waved his hand. “Fear not for me,” he cried; “I know how to die!” — The brave love the brave. Dmitri saw the old man stand, unflinching, a mark for all the balls, and he started from behind his rocky screen, calling on his men to cease. Then addressing his enemy, he cried, “Who art thou? wherefore art thou here? If ye come in peace, proceed on your way. Answer, and fear not!”

The old man drew himself up, saying, “I am a Mainote, and cannot fear. All Hellas trembles before the pirates of Cape Matapan, and I am one of these! I do not come in peace! Behold! you have in your arms the cause of our dissension! I am the grandsire of that child — give him to me!”

Dmitri, had he held a snake, which he felt awakening in his bosom, could not so suddenly have changed his cheer:—”the offspring of a Mainote!” — he relaxed his grasp; — Constans would have fallen had he not clung to his neck. Meanwhile each party had descended from their rocky station, and were grouped together in the pathway below. Dmitri tore the child from his neck; he felt as if he could, with savage delight, dash him down the precipice — when, as he paused and trembled from excess of passion, Katusthius, and the foremost Sagorians, came down upon them.

“Stand!” cried the infuriated Arnaoot. “Behold Katusthius! behold, friend, whom I, driven by the resistless fates, madly and wickedly forswore! I now perform thy wish — the Mainote child dies! the son of the accursed race shall be the victim of my just revenge!”

Cyril, in a transport of fear, rushed up the rock; he levelled his musket, but he feared to sacrifice his child. The old Mainote, less timid and more desperate, took a steady aim; Dmitri saw the act, and hurled the dagger, already raised against the child, at him — it entered his side — while Constans, feeling his late protector’s grasp relax, sprung from it into his father’s arms.

Camaraz had fallen, yet his wound was slight. He saw the Arnaoots and Sagorians close round him; he saw his own followers made prisoners. Dmitri and Katusthius had both thrown themselves upon Cyril, struggling to repossess themselves of the screaming boy. The Mainote raised himself — he was feeble of limb, but his heart was strong; he threw himself before the father and child; he caught the upraised arm of Dmitri. “On me,” he cried, "fall all thy vengeance! I of the evil race! for the child, he is innocent of such parentage! Maina cannot boast him for a son!"

"Man of lies!" commenced the infuriated Arnaoot, "this falsehood shall not stead thee!"

"Nay, by the souls of those you have loved, listen!" continued Camaraz. "and if I make not good my words, may I and my children die! The boy's father is a Corinthian, his mother, a Sciote girl!"

"Scio!" the very word made the blood recede to Dmitri's heart. "Villain!" he cried, dashing aside Katusthius's arm, which was raised against poor Constans, 'I guard this child — dare not to injure him! Speak, old man, and fear not, so that thou speakest the truth."

"Fifteen years ago," said Camaraz, "I hovered with my caick, in search of prey, on the coast of Scio. A cottage stood on the borders of a chestnut wood, it was the habitation of the widow of a wealthy islander — she dwelt in it with her only daughter, married to an Albanian, then absent; — the good woman was reported to have a concealed treasure in her house — the girl herself would be rich spoil — it was an adventure worth the risk. We ran our vessel up a shady creek, and, on the going down of the moon, landed; stealing under the covert of night towards the lonely abode of these women." — Dmitri grasped at his dagger's hilt — it was no longer there; he half drew a pistol from his girdle — little Constans, again confiding in his former friend, stretched out his infant hands and clung to his arm; the Klepht looked on him, half yielded to his desire to embrace him, half feared to be deceived; so he turned away, throwing his capote over his face, veiling his anguish, controlling his emotions, till all should be told. Camaraz continued:

"It became a worse tragedy than I had contemplated. The girl had a child — she feared for its life, and struggled with the men like a tigress defending her young. I was in another room seeking for the hidden store, when a piercing shriek rent the air — I never knew what compassion was before — this cry went to my heart — but it was too late, the poor girl had sunk to the ground, the life-tide oozing from her bosom. I know not why, but I turned woman in my regret for the slain beauty. I meant to have carried her and her child on board, to see if aught could be done to save her, but she died ere we left the shore. I thought she would like her island rave best, and truly feared that she might turn vampire to haunt me, did I carry her away; so we left her corse for the priests to bury, and carried off the child, then about two years old. She could say few words except her own name, that was Zella, and she is the mother of this boy!"

A succession of arrivals in the bay of Kardamyla had kept poor Zella watching for many nights. Her attendant had, in despair of ever seeing her sleep again, drugged with opium the few eates she persuaded her to eat, but the poor woman did not calculate on the power of mind over body, of love over every enemy, physical or moral, arrayed against it. Zella lay on her couch, her spirit somewhat subdued, but her heart alive, her eves unclosed. In the night, led by some unexplained impulse, she crawled to her lattice, and saw a little sacoleva enter the bay; it ran in swiftly, under favour of the wind, and was lost to her sight under a jutting crag. Lightly she trod the marble floor of her chamber; she drew a large shawl close round her; she descended the rocky pathway, and reached, with swift steps, the beach — still the vessel was invisible, and she was half inclined to think that it was the offspring of her excited imagination — yet she lingered.

She felt a sickness at her very heart whenever she attempted to move, and her eyelids weighed down in spite of herself. The desire of sleep at last became irresistible; she lay down on the shingles, reposed her head on the cold, hard pillow, folded her shawl still closer, and gave herself up to forgetfulness.

So profoundly did she slumber under the influence of the opiate, that for many hours she was insensible of any change in her situation. By degrees only she awoke, by degrees only became aware of the objects around her; the breeze felt fresh and free — so was it ever on the wave-beaten coast; the waters rippled near, their dash had been in her ears as she yielded to repose; but this was not her stony couch, that canopy, not the dark overhanging cliff. Suddenly she lifted up her head — she was on the deck of a small vessel, which was skimming swiftly over the ocean-waves — a cloak of sables pillowed her head; the shores of Cape Matapan were to her left, and they steered right towards the noonday sun. Wonder rather than fear possessed her: with a quick hand she drew aside the sail that veiled her from the crew — the dreaded Albanian was sitting close at her side, her Constans cradled in his arms — she uttered a cry — Cyril turned at the sound, and in a moment she was folded in his embrace.

THE END

THE FALSE RHYME

Come, tell me where the maid is found
Whose heart can love without deceit,
And I will range the world around
To sigh one moment at her feet. — THOMAS MOORE

ON a fine July day, the fair Margaret, Queen of Navarre, then on a visit to her royal brother, had arranged a rural feast for the morning following, which Francis declined attending. He was melancholy; and the cause was said to be some lover's quarrel with a favourite dame. The morrow came, and dark rain and murky clouds destroyed at once the schemes of the courtly throng. Margaret was angry, and she grew weary: her only hope for amusement was in Francis, and he had shut himself up — an excellent reason why she should the more desire to see him. She entered his apartment: he was standing at the casement, against which the noisy shower beat, writing with a diamond on the glass. Two beautiful dogs were his sole companions. As Queen Margaret entered, he hastily let down the silken curtain before the window, and looked a little confused.

"What treason is this, my liege," said the queen, "which crimsons your cheek? I must see the same."

"It is treason," replied the king, "and therefore, sweet sister, thou mayest not see it."

This the more excited Margaret's curiosity, and a playful contest ensued: Francis at last yielded: he threw himself on a huge high-backed settee; and as the lady drew back the curtain with an arch smile, he grew grave and sentimental, as he reflected on the cause which had inspired his libel against all womankind.

"What have we here?" cried Margaret: "nay, this is lèse majesté —

'Souvent femme varie, Bien fou qui s'y fie!'

Very little change would greatly amend your couplet: — would it not run better thus —

'Souvent homme varie,
Bien folle qui s'y fie'?

I could tell you twenty stories of man's inconstancy."

"I will be content with one true tale of woman's fidelity," said Francis, drily; "but do not provoke me. I would fain be at peace with the soft Mutabilities, for thy dear sake."

"I defy your grace," replied Margaret, rashly, "to instance the falsehood of one noble and well reputed dame."

"Not even Emilie de Lagny?" asked the king.

This was a sore subject for the queen. Emilie had been brought up in her own household, the most beautiful and the most virtuous of her maids of honour. She had long loved the Sire de Lagny, and their nuptials were celebrated with rejoicings but little ominous of the result. De Lagny was accused but a year after of traitorously yielding to the emperor a fortress under his command, and he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. For some time Emilie seemed inconsolable, often visiting the miserable dungeon of her husband, and suffering on her return, from witnessing his wretchedness, such paroxysms of grief as threatened her life. Suddenly, in the midst of her sorrow, she disappeared; and inquiry only divulged the disgraceful fact, that she had escaped from France, bearing her jewels with her, and accompanied by her page, Robinet Leroux. It was whispered that, during their journey, the lady and the stripling often occupied one chamber; and Margaret, enraged at these discoveries, commanded that no further quest should be made for her lost favourite.

Taunted now by her brother, she defended Emilie, declaring that she believed her to be guiltless, even going so far as to boast that within a month she would bring proof of her innocence.

"Robinet was a pretty boy," said Francis, laughing.

"Let us make a bet," cried Margaret: "if I lose, I will bear this vile rhyme of thine as a motto to my shame to my grave; if I win—"

"I will break my window, and grant thee whatever boon thou askest." The result of this bet was long sung by troubadour and minstrel. The queen employed a hundred emissaries — published rewards for any intelligence of Emilie — all in vain. The month was expiring, and Margaret would have given many bright jewels to redeem her word. On the eve of the fatal day, the jailor of the prison in which the Sire de Lagny was confined sought an audience of the queen; he brought her a message from the knight to say, that if the Lady Margaret would ask his pardon as her boon, and obtain from her royal brother that he might be brought before him, her bet was won. Fair Margaret was very joyful, and readily made the desired promise. Francis was unwilling to see his false servant, but he was in high good humour, for a cavalier had that morning brought intelligence of a victory over the Imperialists. The messenger himself was lauded in the despatches as the most fearless and bravest knight in France. The king loaded him with presents, only regretting that a vow prevented the soldier from raising his visor or declaring his name.

That same evening as the setting sun shone on the lattice on which the ungallant rhyme was traced, Francis reposed on the same settee, and the beautiful Queen of Navarre, with triumph in her bright eyes, sat beside him. Attended by guards, the prisoner was brought in: his frame was attenuated by privation, and he walked with tottering steps. He knelt at the feet of Francis, and uncovered his head; a quantity of rich golden hair then escaping, fell over the sunken cheeks and pallid brow of the suppliant. “We have treason here!” cried the king: “sir jailor, where is your prisoner?”

“Sire, blame him not,” said the soft faltering voice of Emilie; “wiser men than he have been deceived by woman. My dear lord was guiltless of the crime for which he suffered. There was but one mode to save him: — I assumed his chains — he escaped with poor Robinet Leroux in my attire — he joined your army: the young and gallant cavalier who delivered the despatches to your grace, whom you overwhelmed with honours and reward, is my own Enguerrard de Lagny. I waited but for his arrival with testimonials of his innocence, to declare myself to my lady, the queen. Has she not won her bet? And the boon she asks—”

“Is de Lagny’s pardon,” said Margaret, as she also knelt to the king: “spare your faithful vassal, sire, and reward this lady’s truth.”

Francis first broke the false-speaking window, then he raised the ladies from their supplicatory posture.

In the tournament given to celebrate this “Triumph of Ladies,” the Sire de Lagny bore off every prize; and surely there was more loveliness in Emilie’s faded cheek — more grace in her emaciated form, type as they were of truest affection — than in the prouder bearing and fresher complexion of the most brilliant beauty in attendance on the courtly festival.

TRANSFORMATION

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale,
And then it set me free.
Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told
This heart within me burns.
— COLERIDGE'S ANCIENT MARINER.

I have heard it said, that, when any strange, supernatural, and necromantic adventure has occurred to a human being, that being, however desirous he may be to conceal the same, feels at certain periods torn up as it were by an intellectual earthquake, and is forced to bare the inner depths of his spirit to another. I am a witness of the truth of this. I have dearly sworn to myself never to reveal to human ears the horrors to which I once, in excess of fiendly pride, delivered myself over. The holy man who heard my confession, and reconciled me to the church, is dead.

None knows that once —

Why should it not be thus? Why tell a tale of impious tempting of Providence, and soul-subduing humiliation? Why? answer me, ye who are wise in the secrets of human nature! I only know that so it is; and in spite of strong resolve — of a pride that too much masters me — of shame, and even of fear, so to render myself odious to my species — I must speak.

Genoa! my birth-place — proud city! looking upon the blue waves of the Mediterranean sea — dost thou remember me in my boyhood, when thy cliffs and promontories, thy bright sky and gay vineyards, were my world? Happy time! when to the young heart the narrow-bounded universe, which leaves, by its very limitation, free scope to the imagination, enchains our physical energies, and, sole period in our lives, innocence and enjoyment are united. Yet, who can look back to childhood, and not remember its sorrows and its harrowing fears? I was born with the most imperious, haughty, tameless spirit, with which ever mortal was gifted. I quailed before my father only; and he, generous and noble, but capricious and tyrannical, at once fostered and checked the wild impetuosity of my character, making obedience necessary, but inspiring no respect for the motives which guided his commands. To be a man, free, independent; or, in better words, insolent and domineering, was the hope and prayer of my rebel heart.

My father had one friend, a wealthy Genoese noble, who in a political tumult was suddenly sentenced to banishment, and his property confiscated. The Marchese Torella went into exile alone. Like my father, he was a widower: he had one child, the almost infant Juliet, who was left under my father's guardianship. I should certainly have been an unkind master to the lovely girl, but that I was forced by my position to become her protector. A variety of childish incidents all tended to one point, — to make Juliet see in me a rock of refuge; I in her, one, who must perish through the soft sensibility of her nature too rudely visited, but for my guardian care. We grew up together. The opening rose in May was not more sweet than this dear girl. An irradiation of beauty was spread over her face. Her form, her step, her voice — my heart weeps even now, to think of all of relying, gentle, loving, and pure, that was enshrined in that celestial tenement. When I was eleven and Juliet eight years of age, a cousin of mine, much older than either — he seemed to us a man — took great notice of my playmate; he called her his bride, and asked her to marry him. She refused, and he insisted, drawing her unwillingly towards him. With the countenance and emotions of a maniac I threw myself on him — I strove to draw his sword — I clung to his neck with the ferocious resolve to strangle him: he was obliged to call for assistance to disengage himself from me. On that night I led Juliet to the chapel of our house: I made her touch the sacred relics — I harrowed her child's heart, and profaned her child's lips with an oath, that she would be mine, and mine only.

Well, those days passed away. Torella returned in a few years, and became wealthier and more prosperous than ever. When I was seventeen, my father died; he had been magnificent to prodigality; Torella rejoiced that my minority would afford an opportunity for repairing my fortunes. Juliet and I had been affianced beside my father's deathbed — Torella was to be a second parent to me.

I desired to see the world, and I was indulged. I went to Florence, to Rome, to Naples; thence I passed to Toulon, and at length reached what had long been the bourne of my wishes, Paris. There was wild work in Paris then. The poor king, Charles the Sixth, now sane, now mad, now a monarch, now an abject slave, was the very mockery of humanity. The queen, the dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, alternately friends and foes — now meeting in prodigal feasts, now shedding blood in rivalry — were blind to the miserable state of their country, and the dangers that impended over it, and gave themselves wholly up to dissolute enjoyment or savage strife. My character still followed me. I was arrogant and self-willed; I loved display, and above all, I threw all control far from me. Who could control me in Paris? My young friends were eager to foster passions which furnished them with pleasures. I was deemed handsome — I was master of every knightly accomplishment. I was disconnected with any political party. I grew a favourite with all: my presumption and arrogance were pardoned in one so young: I became a spoiled child. Who could control me? not the letters and advice of Torella — only strong necessity visiting me in the abhorred shape of an empty purse. But there were means to refill this void. Acre after acre, estate after estate, I sold. My dress, my jewels, my horses and their caparisons, were almost unrivalled in gorgeous Paris, while the lands of my inheritance passed into possession of others.

The Duke of Orleans was waylaid and murdered by the Duke of Burgundy. Fear and terror possessed all Paris. The dauphin and the queen shut themselves up; every pleasure was suspended. I grew weary of this state of things, and my heart yearned for my boyhood’s haunts. I was nearly a beggar, yet still I would go there, claim my bride, and rebuild my fortunes. A few happy ventures as a merchant would make me rich again. Nevertheless, I would not return in humble guise. My last act was to dispose of my remaining estate near Albaro for half its worth, for ready money. Then I despatched all kinds of artificers, arras, furniture of regal splendour, to fit up the last relic of my inheritance, my palace in Genoa. I lingered a little longer yet, ashamed at the part of the prodigal returned, which I feared I should play. I sent my horses. One matchless Spanish jennet I despatched to my promised bride; its caparisons flamed with jewels and cloth of gold. In every part I caused to be entwined the initials of Juliet and her Guido. My present found favour in hers and in her father’s eyes.

Still to return a proclaimed spendthrift, the mark of impertinent wonder, perhaps of scorn, and to encounter singly the reproaches or taunts of my fellow-citizens, was no alluring prospect. As a shield between me and censure, I invited some few of the most reckless of my comrades to accompany me: thus I went armed against the world, hiding a rankling feeling, half fear and half penitence, by bravado and an insolent display of satisfied vanity.

I arrived in Genoa. I trod the pavement of my ancestral palace. My proud step was no interpreter of my heart, for I deeply felt that, though surrounded by every luxury, I was a beggar. The first step I took in claiming Juliet must widely declare me such. I read contempt or pity in the looks of all. I fancied, so apt is conscience to imagine what it deserves, that rich and poor, young and old, all regarded me with derision. Torella came not near me. No wonder that my second father should expect a son's deference from me in waiting first on him. But, galled and stung by a sense of my follies and demerit, I strove to throw the blame on others. We kept nightly orgies in Palazzo Carega. To sleepless, riotous nights, followed listless, supine mornings. At the Ave Maria we showed our dainty persons in the streets, scoffing at the sober citizens, casting insolent glances on the shrinking women. Juliet was not among them — no, no; if she had been there, shame would have driven me away, if love had not brought me to her feet.

I grew tired of this. Suddenly I paid the Marchese a visit. He was at his villa, one among the many which deck the suburb of San Pietro d'Arena. It was the month of May — a month of May in that garden of the world — the blossoms of the fruit trees were fading among thick, green foliage; the vines were shooting forth; the ground strewed with the fallen olive blooms; the fire-fly was in the myrtle hedge; heaven and earth wore a mantle of surpassing beauty. Torella welcomed me kindly, though seriously; and even his shade of displeasure soon wore away. Some resemblance to my father — some look and tone of youthful ingenuousness, lurking still in spite of my misdeeds, softened the good old man's heart. He sent for his daughter — he presented me to her as her betrothed. The chamber became hallowed by a holy light as she entered. Hers was that cherub look, those large, soft eyes, full dimpled cheeks, and mouth of infantine sweetness, that expresses the rare union of happiness and love. Admiration first possessed me; she is mine! was the second proud emotion, and my lips curled with haughty triumph. I had not been the *enfant gâté* of the beauties of France not to have learnt the art of pleasing the soft heart of woman. If towards men I was overbearing, the deference I paid to them was the more in contrast. I commenced my courtship by the display of a thousand gallantries to Juliet, who, vowed to me from infancy, had never admitted the devotion of others; and who, though accustomed to expressions of admiration, was uninitiated in the language of lovers.

For a few days all went well. Torella never alluded to my extravagance; he treated me as a favourite son. But the time came, as we discussed the preliminaries to my union with his daughter, when this fair face of things should be overcast. A contract had been drawn up in my father's lifetime. I had rendered this, in fact, void, by having squandered the whole of the wealth which was to have been shared by Juliet and myself. Torella, in consequence, chose to consider this bond as cancelled, and proposed another, in which, though the wealth he bestowed was immeasurably increased, there were so many restrictions as to the mode of spending it, that I, who saw independence only in free career being given to my own imperious will, taunted him as taking advantage of my situation, and refused utterly to subscribe to his conditions. The old man mildly strove to recall me to reason. Roused pride became the tyrant of my thought: I listened with indignation — I repelled him with disdain.

"Juliet, thou art mine! Did we not interchange vows in our innocent childhood? are we not one in the sight of God? and shall thy cold-hearted, cold-blooded father divide us? Be generous, my love, be just; take not away a gift, last treasure of thy Guido — retract not thy vows — let us defy the world, and setting at nought the calculations of age, find in our mutual affection a refuge from every ill."

Fiend I must have been, with such sophistry to endeavour to poison that sanctuary of holy thought and tender love. Juliet shrank from me affrighted. Her father was the best and kindest of men, and she strove to show me how, in obeying him, every good would follow. He would receive my tardy submission with warm affection; and generous pardon would follow my repentance. Profitless words for a young and gentle daughter to use to a man accustomed to make his will, law; and to feel in his own heart a despot so terrible and stern, that he could yield obedience to nought save his own imperious desires! My resentment grew with resistance; my wild companions were ready to add fuel to the flame. We laid a plan to carry off Juliet. At first it appeared to be crowned with success. Midway, on our return, we were overtaken by the agonized father and his attendants. A conflict ensued. Before the city guard came to decide the victory in favour of our antagonists, two of Torella's servitors were dangerously wounded.

This portion of my history weighs most heavily with me. Changed man as I am, I abhor myself in the recollection. May none who hear this tale ever have felt as I. A horse driven to fury by a rider armed with barbed spurs, was not more a slave than I, to the violent tyranny of my temper. A fiend possessed my soul, irritating it to madness. I felt the voice of conscience within me; but if I yielded to it for a brief interval, it was only to be a moment after torn, as by a whirlwind, away — borne along on the stream of desperate rage — the plaything of the storms engendered by pride. I was imprisoned, and, at the instance of Torella, set free. Again I returned to carry off both him and his child to France; which hapless country, then preyed on by freebooters and gangs of lawless soldiery, offered a grateful refuge to a criminal like me. Our plots were discovered. I was sentenced to banishment; and, as my debts were already enormous, my remaining property was put in the hands of commissioners for their payment. Torella again offered his mediation, requiring only my promise not to renew my abortive attempts on himself and his daughter. I spurned his offers, and fancied that I triumphed when I was thrust out from Genoa, a solitary and penniless exile. My companions were gone: they had been dismissed the city some weeks before, and were already in France. I was alone — friendless; with nor sword at my side, nor ducat in my purse.

I wandered along the sea-shore, a whirlwind of passion possessing and tearing my soul. It was as if a live coal had been set burning in my breast. At first I meditated on what *I should do.* I would join a band of freebooters. Revenge! — the word seemed balm to me: — I hugged it — caressed it — till, like a serpent, it stung me. Then again I would abjure and despise Genoa, that little corner of the world. I would return to Paris, where so many of my friends swarmed; where my services would be eagerly accepted; where I would carve out fortune with my sword, and might, through success, make my paltry birth-place, and the false Torella, rue the day when they drove me, a new Coriolanus, from her walls. I would return to Paris — thus, on foot — a beggar — and present myself in my poverty to those I had formerly entertained sumptuously? There was gall in the mere thought of it.

The reality of things began to dawn upon my mind, bringing despair in its train. For several months I had been a prisoner: the evils of my dungeon had whipped my soul to madness, but they had subdued my corporeal frame. I was weak and wan. Torella had used a thousand artifices to administer to my comfort; I had detected and scorned them all — and I reaped the harvest of my obduracy. What was to be done? — Should I crouch before my foe, and sue for forgiveness? — Die rather ten thousand deaths! — Never should they obtain that victory! Hate — I swore eternal hate! Hate from whom? — to whom? — From a wandering outcast — to a mighty noble. I and my feelings were nothing to them: already had they forgotten one so unworthy. And Juliet! — her angel-face and sylph-like form gleamed among the clouds of my despair with vain beauty; for I had lost her — the glory and flower of the world! Another will call her his! — that smile of paradise will bless another!

Even now my heart fails within me when I recur to this rout of grim-visaged ideas. Now subdued almost to tears, now raving in my agony, still I wandered along the rocky shore, which grew at each step wilder and more desolate. Hanging rocks and hoar precipices overlooked the tideless ocean; black caverns yawned; and for ever, among the seaworn recesses, murmured and dashed the unfruitful waters. Now my way was almost barred by an abrupt promontory, now rendered nearly impracticable by fragments fallen from the cliff. Evening was at hand, when, seaward, arose, as if on the waving of a wizard’s wand, a murky web of clouds, blotting the late azure sky, and darkening and disturbing the till now placid deep. The clouds had strange fantastic shapes; and they changed, and mingled, and seemed to be driven about by a mighty spell. The waves raised their white crests; the thunder first muttered, then roared from across the waste of waters, which took a deep purple dye, flecked with foam. The spot where I stood, looked, on one side, to the wide-spread ocean; on the other, it was barred by a rugged promontory. Round this cape suddenly came, driven by the wind, a vessel. In vain the mariners tried to force a path for her to the open sea — the gale drove her on the rocks. It will perish! — all on board will perish! — Would I were among them! And to my young heart the idea of death came for the first time blended with that of joy. It was an awful sight to behold that vessel struggling with her fate. Hardly could I discern the sailors, but I heard them. It was soon all over! — A rock, just covered by the tossing waves, and so unperceived, lay in wait for its prey. A crash of thunder broke over my head at the moment that, with a frightful shock, the skiff dashed upon her unseen enemy. In a brief space of time she went to pieces. There I stood in safety; and there were my fellow-creatures, battling, how hopelessly, with annihilation. Methought I saw them struggling — too truly did I hear their shrieks, conquering the barking surges in their shrill agony. The dark breakers threw hither and thither the fragments of the wreck: soon it disappeared. I had been fascinated to gaze till the end: at last I sank on my knees — I covered my face with my hands: I again looked up; something was floating on the billows towards the shore. It neared and neared. Was that a human form? — It grew more distinct; and at last a mighty wave, lifting the whole freight, lodged it upon a rock. A human being bestriding a sea-chest! — A human being! — Yet was it one? Surely never such had existed before — a misshapen dwarf, with squinting eyes, distorted features, and body deformed, till it became a horror to behold. My blood, lately warming towards a fellow-being so snatched from a watery tomb, froze in my heart. The dwarf got off his chest; he tossed his straight, straggling hair from his odious visage:

"By St. Beelzebub!" he exclaimed, "I have been well bested." He looked round and saw me. "Oh, by the fiend! here is another ally of the mighty one. To what saint did you offer prayers, friend — if not to mine? Yet I remember you not on board."

I shrank from the monster and his blasphemy. Again he questioned me, and I muttered some inaudible reply. He continued: —

"Your voice is drowned by this dissonant roar. What a noise the big ocean makes! Schoolboys bursting from their prison are not louder than these waves set free to play. They disturb me. I will no more of their ill-timed brawling. — Silence, hoary One! — Winds, avaunt! — to your homes! — Clouds, fly to the antipodes, and leave our heaven clear!"

As he spoke, he stretched out his two long lank arms, that looked like spider's claws, and seemed to embrace with them the expanse before him. Was it a miracle? The clouds became broken, and fled; the azure sky first peeped out, and then was spread a calm field of blue above us; the stormy gale was exchanged to the softly breathing west; the sea grew calm; the waves dwindled to riplets.

“I like obedience even in these stupid elements,” said the dwarf. “How much more in the tameless mind of man! It was a well got up storm, you must allow — and all of my own making.”

It was tempting Providence to interchange talk with this magician. But *Power,* in all its shapes, is venerable to man. Awe, curiosity, a clinging fascination, drew me towards him.

“Come, don’t be frightened, friend,” said the wretch: “I am good-humoured when pleased; and something does please me in your well-proportioned body and handsome face, though you look a little woebegone. You have suffered a land — I, a sea wreck. Perhaps I can allay the tempest of your fortunes as I did my own. Shall we be friends?” — And he held out his hand; I could not touch it. “Well, then, companions — that will do as well. And now, while I rest after the buffeting I underwent just now, tell me why, young and gallant as you seem, you wander thus alone and downcast on this wild sea-shore.”

The voice of the wretch was screeching and horrid, and his contortions as he spoke were frightful to behold. Yet he did gain a kind of influence over me, which I could not master, and I told him my tale. When it was ended, he laughed long and loud: the rocks echoed back the sound: hell seemed veiling around me.

“Oh, thou cousin of Lucifer!” said he; “so thou too hast fallen through thy pride; and, though bright as the son of Morning, thou art ready to give up thy good looks, thy bride, and thy well-being, rather than submit thee to the tyranny of good. I honour thy choice, by my soul! — So thou hast fled, and yield the day; and mean to starve on these rocks, and to let the birds peck out thy dead eyes, while thy enemy and thy betrothed rejoice in thy ruin. Thy pride is strangely akin to humility, methinks.”

As he spoke, a thousand fanged thoughts stung me to the heart.

“What would you that I should do?” I cried.

“I! — Oh, nothing, but lie down and say your prayers before you die. But, were I you, I know the deed that should be done.”

I drew near him. His supernatural powers made him an oracle in my eyes; yet a strange unearthly thrill quivered through my frame as I said —”Speak! — teach me — what act do you advise?”

“Revenge thyself, man! — humble thy enemies! — set thy foot on the old man’s neck, and possess thyself of his daughter!”

"To the east and west I turn," cried I, "and see no means! Had I gold, much could I achieve; but, poor and single, I am powerless."

The dwarf had been seated on his chest as he listened to my story. Now he got off; he touched a spring; it flew open! — What a mine of wealth — of blazing jewels, beaming gold, and pale silver — was displayed therein. A mad desire to possess this treasure was born within me.

"Doubtless," I said, "one so powerful as you could do all things."

"Nay," said the monster, humbly, "I am less omnipotent than I seem. Some things I possess which you may covet; but I would give them all for a small share, or even for a loan of what is yours."

"My possessions are at your service," I replied, bitterly—"my poverty, my exile, my disgrace — I make a free gift of them all."

"Good! I thank you. Add one other thing to your gift, and my treasure is yours."

"As nothing is my sole inheritance, what besides nothing would you have?"

"Your comely face and well-made limbs."

I shivered. Would this all-powerful monster murder me? I had no dagger. I forgot to pray — but I grew pale.

"I ask for a loan, not a gift," said the frightful thing: "lend me your body for three days — you shall have mine to cage your soul the while, and, in payment, my chest. What say you to the bargain? — Three short days."

We are told that it is dangerous to hold unlawful talk; and well do I prove the same. Tamely written down, it may seem incredible that I should lend any ear to this proposition; but, in spite of his unnatural ugliness, there was something fascinating in a being whose voice could govern earth, air, and sea. I felt a keen desire to comply; for with that chest I could command the world. My only hesitation resulted from a fear that he would not be true to his bargain. Then, I thought, I shall soon die here on these lonely sands, and the limbs he covets will be mine no more: — it is worth the chance. And, besides, I knew that, by all the rules of art-magic, there were formula and oaths which none of its practisers dared break. I hesitated to reply; and he went on, now displaying his wealth, now speaking of the petty price he demanded, till it seemed madness to refuse. Thus is it: place our bark in the current of the stream, and down, over fall and cataract it is hurried; give up our conduct to the wild torrent of passion, and we are away, we know not whither.

He swore many an oath, and I adjured him by many a sacred name; till I saw this wonder of power, this ruler of the elements, shiver like an autumn leaf before my words; and as if the spirit spake unwillingly and per force within him, at last, he, with broken voice, revealed the spell whereby he might be obliged, did he wish to play me false, to render up the unlawful spoil. Our warm life-blood must mingle to make and to mar the charm.

Enough of this unholy theme. I was persuaded — the thing was done. The morrow dawned upon me as I lay upon the shingles, and I knew not my own shadow as it fell from me. I felt myself changed to a shape of horror, and cursed my easy faith and blind credulity. The chest was there — there the gold and precious stones for which I had sold the frame of flesh which nature had given me. The sight a little stilled my emotions: three days would soon be gone.

They did pass. The dwarf had supplied me with a plenteous store of food. At first I could hardly walk, so strange and out of joint were all my limbs; and my voice — it was that of the fiend. But I kept silent, and turned my face to the sun, that I might not see my shadow, and counted the hours, and ruminated on my future conduct. To bring Torella to my feet — to possess my Juliet in spite of him — all this my wealth could easily achieve. During dark night I slept, and dreamt of the accomplishment of my desires. Two suns had set — the third dawned. I was agitated, fearful. Oh expectation, what a frightful thing art thou, when kindled more by fear than hope! How dost thou twist thyself round the heart, torturing its pulsations! How dost thou dart unknown pangs all through our feeble mechanism, now seeming to shiver us like broken glass, to nothingness — now giving us a fresh strength, which can *do* nothing, and so torments us by a sensation, such as the strong man must feel who cannot break his fetters, though they bend in his grasp. Slowly paced the bright, bright orb up the eastern sky; long it lingered in the zenith, and still more slowly wandered down the west: it touched the horizon's verge — it was lost! Its glories were on the summits of the cliff — they grew dun and gray. The evening star shone bright. He will soon be here.

He came not! — By the living heavens, he came not! — and night dragged out its weary length, and, in its decaying age, “day began to grizzle its dark hair;" and the sun rose again on the most miserable wretch that ever upbraided its light. Three days thus I passed. The jewels and the gold — oh, how I abhorred them!

Well, well — I will not blacken these pages with demoniac ravings. All too terrible were the thoughts, the raging tumult of ideas that filled my soul. At the end of that time I slept; I had not before since the third sunset; and I dreamt that I was at Juliet's feet, and she smiled, and then she shrieked — for she saw my transformation — and again she smiled, for still her beautiful lover knelt before her. But it was not I — it was he, the fiend, arrayed in my limbs, speaking with my voice, winning her with my looks of love. I strove to warn her, but my tongue refused its office; I strove to tear him from her, but I was rooted to the ground — I awoke with the agony. There were the solitary hoar precipices — there the plashing sea, the quiet strand, and the blue sky over all. What did it mean? was my dream but a mirror of the truth? was he wooing and winning my betrothed? I would on the instant back to Genoa — but I was banished. I laughed — the dwarf's yell burst from my lips — *I* banished! O, no! they had not exiled the foul limbs I wore; I might with these enter, without fear of incurring the threatened penalty of death, my own, my native city.

I began to walk towards Genoa. I was somewhat accustomed to my distorted limbs; none were ever so ill adapted for a straight-forward movement; it was with infinite difficulty that I proceeded. Then, too, I desired to avoid all the hamlets strewed here and there on the sea-beach, for I was unwilling to make a display of my hideousness. I was not quite sure that, if seen, the mere boys would not stone me to death as I passed, for a monster: some ungentle salutations I did receive from the few peasants or fishermen I chanced to meet. But it was dark night before I approached Genoa. The weather was so balmy and sweet that it struck me that the Marchese and his daughter would very probably have quitted the city for their country retreat. It was from Villa Torella that I had attempted to carry off Juliet; I had spent many an hour reconnoitring the spot, and knew each inch of ground in its vicinity. It was beautifully situated, embosomed in trees, on the margin of a stream. As I drew near, it became evident that my conjecture was right; nay, moreover, that the hours were being then devoted to feasting and merriment. For the house was lighted up; strains of soft and gay music were wafted towards me by the breeze. My heart sank within me.

Such was the generous kindness of Torella's heart that I felt sure that he would not have indulged in public manifestations of rejoicing just after my unfortunate banishment, but for a cause I dared not dwell upon.

The country people were all alive and flocking about; it became necessary that I should study to conceal myself; and yet I longed to address some one, or to hear others discourse, or in any way to gain intelligence of what was really going on. At length, entering the walks that were in immediate vicinity to the mansion, I found one dark enough to veil my excessive frightfulness; and yet others as well as I were loitering in its shade. I soon gathered all I wanted to know — all that first made my very heart die with horror, and then boil with indignation. To-morrow Juliet was to be given to the penitent, reformed, beloved Guido — to-morrow my bride was to pledge her vows to a fiend from hell! And I did this! — my accursed pride — my demoniac violence and wicked self-idolatry had caused this act. For if I had acted as the wretch who had stolen my form had acted — if, with a mien at once yielding and dignified, I had presented myself to Torella, saying, I have done wrong, forgive me; I am unworthy of your angel-child, but permit me to claim her hereafter, when my altered conduct shall manifest that I abjure my vices, and endeavour to become in some sort worthy of her. I go to serve against the infidels; and when my zeal for religion and my true penitence for the past shall appear to you to cancel my crimes, permit me again to call myself your son. Thus had he spoken; and the penitent was welcomed even as the prodigal son of scripture: the fatted calf was killed for him; and he, still pursuing the same path, displayed such open-hearted regret for his follies, so humble a concession of all his rights, and so ardent a resolve to reacquire them by a life of contrition and virtue, that he quickly conquered the kind, old man; and full pardon, and the gift of his lovely child, followed in swift succession.

O! had an angel from Paradise whispered to me to act thus! But now, what would be the innocent Juliet's fate? Would God permit the foul union — or, some prodigy destroying it, link the dishonoured name of Carega with the worst of crimes? To-morrow at dawn they were to be married: there was but one way to prevent this — to meet mine enemy, and to enforce the ratification of our agreement. I felt that this could only be done by a mortal struggle. I had no sword — if indeed my distorted arms could wield a soldier's weapon — but I had a dagger, and in that lay my every hope. There was no time for pondering or balancing nicely the question: I might die in the attempt; but besides the burning jealousy and despair of my own heart, honour, mere humanity, demanded that I should fall rather than not destroy the machinations of the fiend.

The guests departed — the lights began to disappear; it was evident that the inhabitants of the villa were seeking repose. I hid myself among the trees — the garden grew desert — the gates were closed — I wandered round and came under a window — ah! well did I know the same! — a soft twilight glimmered in the room — the curtains were half withdrawn. It was the temple of innocence and beauty. Its magnificence was tempered, as it were, by the slight disarrangements occasioned by its being dwelt in, and all the objects scattered around displayed the taste of her who hallowed it by her presence. I saw her enter with a quick light step — I saw her approach the window — she drew back the curtain yet further, and looked out into the night. Its breezy freshness played among her ringlets, and wafted them from the transparent marble of her brow. She clasped her hands, she raised her eyes to Heaven. I heard her voice. Guido! she softly murmured, Mine own Guido! and then, as if overcome by the fulness of her own heart, she sank on her knees: — her upraised eyes — her negligent but graceful attitude — the beaming thankfulness that lighted up her face — oh, these are tame words! Heart of mine, thou imagest ever, though thou canst not pourtray, the celestial beauty of that child of light and love.

I heard a step — a quick firm step along the shady avenue. Soon I saw a cavalier, richly dressed, young and, methought, graceful to look on, advance. — I hid myself yet closer. — The youth approached; he paused beneath the window. She arose, and again looking out she saw him, and said — I cannot, no, at this distant time I cannot record her terms of soft silver tenderness; to me they were spoken, but they were replied to by him.

"I will not go," he cried: "here where you have been, where your memory glides like some Heaven-visiting ghost, I will pass the long hours till we meet, never, my Juliet, again, day or night, to part. But do thou, my love, retire; the cold morn and fitful breeze will make thy cheek pale, and fill with languor thy love-lighted eyes. Ah, sweetest! could I press one kiss upon them, I could, methinks, repose."

And then he approached still nearer, and methought he was about to clamber into her chamber. I had hesitated, not to terrify her; now I was no longer master of myself. I rushed forward — I threw myself on him — I tore him away — I cried, "O loathsome and foul-shaped wretch!"

I need not repeat epithets, all tending, as it appeared, to rail at a person I at present feel some partiality for. A shriek rose from Juliet's lips. I neither heard nor saw — I *felt* only mine enemy, whose throat I grasped, and my dagger's hilt; he struggled, but could not escape: at length hoarsely he breathed these words: "Do! — strike home! destroy this body — you will still live: may your life be long and merry!"

The descending dagger was arrested at the word, and he, feeling my hold relax, extricated himself and drew his sword, while the uproar in the house, and flying of torches from one room to the other, showed that soon we should be separated — and I — oh! far better die: so that he did not survive, I cared not. In the midst of my frenzy there was much calculation: — fall I might, and so that he did not survive, I cared not for the death-blow I might deal against myself. While still, therefore, he thought I paused, and while I saw the villanous resolve to take advantage of my hesitation, in the sudden thrust he made at me, I threw myself on his sword, and at the same moment plunged my dagger, with a true desperate aim, in his side. We fell together, rolling over each other, and the tide of blood that flowed from the gaping wound of each mingled on the grass. More I know not — I fainted.

Again I returned to life: weak almost to death, I found myself stretched upon a bed — Juliet was kneeling beside it. Strange! my first broken request was for a mirror. I was so wan and ghastly, that my poor girl hesitated, as she told me afterwards; but, by the mass! I thought myself a right proper youth when I saw the dear reflection of my own well-known features. I confess it is a weakness, but I avow it, I do entertain a considerable affection for the countenance and limbs I behold, whenever I look at a glass; and have more mirrors in my house, and consult them oftener than any beauty in Venice. Before you too much condemn me, permit me to say that no one better knows than I the value of his own body; no one, probably, except myself, ever having had it stolen from him.

Incoherently I at first talked of the dwarf and his crimes, and reproached Juliet for her too easy admission of his love. She thought me raving, as well she might, and yet it was some time before I could prevail on myself to admit that the Guido whose penitence had won her back for me was myself; and while I cursed bitterly the monstrous dwarf, and blest the well-directed blow that had deprived him of life, I suddenly checked myself when I heard her say — Amen! knowing that him whom she reviled was my very self. A little reflection taught me silence — a little practice enabled me to speak of that frightful night without any very excessive blunder. The wound I had given myself was no mockery of one — it was long before I recovered — and as the benevolent and generous Torella sat beside me, talking such wisdom as might win friends to repentance, and mine own dear Juliet hovered near me, administering to my wants, and cheering me by her smiles, the work of my bodily cure and mental reform went on together. I have never, indeed, wholly recovered my strength — my cheek is paler since — my person a little bent. Juliet sometimes ventures to allude bitterly to the malice that caused this change, but I kiss her on the moment, and tell her all is for the best. I am a fonder and more faithful husband — and true is this — but for that wound, never had I called her mine.

I did not revisit the sea-shore, nor seek for the fiend's treasure; yet, while I ponder on the past, I often think, and my confessor was not backward in favouring the idea, that it might be a good rather than an evil spirit, sent by my guardian angel, to show me the folly and misery of pride. So well at least did I learn this lesson, roughly taught as I was, that I am known now by all my friends and fellow-citizens by the name of Guido il Cortese.

THE DREAM

The time of the occurrence of the little legend about to be narrated, was that of the commencement of the reign of Henry IV of France, whose accession and conversion, while they brought peace to the kingdom whose throne he ascended, were inadequate to heal the deep wounds mutually inflicted by the inimical parties. Private feuds, and the memory of mortal injuries, existed between those now apparently united; and often did the hands that had clasped each p other in seeming friendly greeting, involuntarily, as the grasp was released, clasp the dagger's hilt, as fitter spokesman to their passions than the words of courtesy that had just fallen from their lips. Many of the fiercer Catholics retreated to their distant provinces; and while they concealed in solitude their rankling discontent, not less keenly did they long for the day when they might show it openly. In a large and fortified château built on a rugged steep overlooking the Loire, not far from the town of Nantes, dwelt the last of her race, and the heiress of their fortunes, the young and beautiful Countess de Villeneuve. She had spent the preceding year in complete solitude in her secluded abode; and the mourning she wore for a father and two brothers, the victims of the civil wars, was a graceful and good reason why she did not appear at court, and mingle with its festivities. But the orphan countess inherited a high name and broad lands; and it was soon signified to her that the king, her guardian, desired that she should bestow them, together with her hand, upon some noble whose birth and accomplishments should entitle him to the gift. Constance, in reply, expressed her intention of taking vows, and retiring to a convent. The king earnestly and resolutely forbade this act, believing such an idea to be the result of sensibility overwrought by sorrow, and relying on the hope that, after a time, the genial spirit of youth would break through this cloud.

A year passed, and still the countess persisted; and at last Henry, unwilling, to exercise compulsion, — desirous, too, of judging for himself of the motives that led one so beautiful, young, and gifted with fortune's favours, to desire to bury herself in a cloister, — announced his intention, now that the period of her mourning was expired, of visiting her château;

and if he brought not with him, the monarch said, inducement sufficient to change her design, he would yield his consent to its fulfilment.

Many a sad hour had Constance passed — many a day of tears, and many a night of restless misery. She had closed her gates against every visitant; and, like the Lady Olivia in ‘Twelfth Night’, vowed herself to loneliness and weeping. Mistress of herself, she easily silenced the entreaties and remonstrances of underlings, and nursed her grief as it had been the thing she loved. Yet it was too keen, too bitter, too burning, to be a favoured guest. In fact, Constance, young, ardent, and vivacious, battled with it, struggled and longed to cast it off; but all that was joyful in itself, or fair in outward show, only served to renew it; and she could best support the burden of her sorrow with patience, when, yielding to it, it oppressed but did not torture her.

Constance had left the castle to wander in the neighbouring grounds. Lofty and extensive as were the apartments of her abode, she felt pent up within their walls, beneath their fretted roofs. The spreading uplands and the antique wood, associated to her with every dear recollection of her past life, enticed her to spend hours and days beneath their leafy coverts. The motion and change eternally working, as the wind stirred among the boughs, or the journeying sun rained its beams through them, soothed and called her out of that dull sorrow which clutched her heart with so unrelenting a pang beneath her castle roof.

There was one spot on the verge of the well-wooded park, one nook of ground, whence she could discern the country extended beyond, yet which was in itself thick set with tall umbrageous trees — a spot which she had forsworn, yet whither unconsciously her steps for ever tended, and where again for the twentieth time that day, she had unaware found herself. She sat upon a grassy mound, and looked wistfully on the flowers she had herself planted to adorn the verdurous recess — to her the temple of memory and love. She held the letter from the king which was the parent to her of so much despair. Dejection sat upon her features, and her gentle heart asked fate why, so young, unprotected, and forsaken, she should have to struggle with this new form of wretchedness.

‘I but ask,’ she thought, ‘to live in my father’s halls — in the spot familiar to my infancy — to water with my frequent tears the graves of those I loved; and here in these woods, where such a mad dream of happiness was mine, to celebrate for ever the obsequies of Hope!'

A rustling among the boughs now met her ear — her heart beat quick — all again was still.

'Foolish girl!' she half muttered; 'dupe of thine own passionate fancy: because here we met; because seated here I have expected, and sounds like these have announced, his dear approach; so now every coney as it stirs, and every bird as it awakens silence, speaks of him. O Gaspar! — mine once — never again will this beloved spot be made glad by thee — never more!'

Again the bushes were stirred, and footsteps were heard in the brake. She rose; her heart beat high; it must be that silly Manon, with her impertinent entreaties for her to return. But the steps were firmer and slower than would be those of her waiting-woman; and now emerging from the shade, she too plainly discerned the intruder. He first impulse was to fly: but once again to see him — to hear his voice: — once again before she placed eternal vows between them, to stand together, and find the wide chasm filled which absence had made, could not injure the dead, and would soften the fatal sorrow that made her cheek so pale.

And now he was before, her, the same beloved one with whom she had exchanged vows of constancy. He, like her, seemed sad; nor could she resist the imploring glance that entreated her for one moment to remain.

'I come, lady,' said the young knight, 'without a hope to bend your inflexible will. I come but once again to see you, and to bid you farewell before I depart for the Holy Land. I come to beseech you not to immure yourself in the dark cloister to avoid one as hateful as myself, — one you will never see more. Whether I die or live, France and I are parted for ever!'

'That were fearful, were it true,' said Constance; 'but King Henry will never so lose his favourite cavalier. The throne you helped to build, you still will guard. Nay, as I ever had power over thought of thine, go not to Palestine.'

'One word of yours could detain me — one smile — Constance' — and the youthful lover knelt before her; but her harsher purpose was recalled by the image once so dear and familiar, now so strange and so forbidden.

'Linger no longer here!' she cried. 'No smile, no word of mine will ever again be yours. Why are you here — here, where the spirits of the dead wander, and claiming these shades as their own, curse the false girl who permits their murderer to disturb their sacred repose?'

'When love was young and you were kind,' replied the knight, 'you taught me to thread the intricacies of these woods you welcomed me to this dear spot, where once you vowed to be my own — even beneath these ancient trees.'

'A wicked sin it was,' said Constance, 'to unbar my father's doors to the son of his enemy, and dearly is it punished!'

The young knight gained courage as she spoke; yet he dared not move, lest she, who, every instant, appeared ready to take flight, should be startled from her momentary tranquillity, but he slowly replied:—'Those were happy days, Constance, full of terror and deep joy, when evening brought me to your feet; and while hate and vengeance were as its atmosphere to yonder frowning castle, this leafy, starlit bower was the shrine of love.'

'Happy? — miserable days!' echoed Constance; 'when I imagined good could arise from failing in my duty, and that disobedience would be rewarded of God. Speak not of love, Gaspar! — a sea of blood divides us for ever! Approach me not! The dead and the beloved stand even now between us: their pale shadows warn me of my fault, and menace me for listening to their murderer.'

'That am not I!' exclaimed the youth. 'Behold, Constance, we are each the last of our race. Death has dealt cruelly with us, and we are alone. It was not so when first we loved — when parent, kinsman, brother, nay, my own mother breathed curses on the house of Villeneuve; and in spite of all I blessed it. I saw thee, my lovely one, and blessed it. The God of peace planted love in our hearts, and with mystery and secrecy we met during many a summer night in the moonlit dells; and when daylight was abroad, in this sweet recess we fled to avoid its scrutiny, and here, even here, where now I kneel in supplication, we both knelt and made our vows. Shall they be broken?'

Constance wept as her lover recalled the images of happy hours. 'Never,' she exclaimed, 'O never! Thou knowest, or wilt soon know, Gaspar, the faith and resolves of one who dare not be yours. Was it for us to talk of love and happiness, when war, and hate, and blood were raging around! The fleeting flowers our young hands strewed were trampled by the deadly encounter of mortal foes. By your father's hand mine died; and little boots it to know whether, as my brother swore, and you deny, your hand did or did not deal the blow that destroyed him. You fought among those by whom he died. Say no more — no other word: it is impiety towards the unreposing dead to hear you. Go, Gaspar; forget me. Under the chivalrous and gallant Henry your career may he glorious; and some fair girl will listen, as once I did, to your vows, and be made happy by them. Farewell! May the Virgin bless you! In my cell and cloister-home I will not forget the best Christian lesson — to pray for our enemies. Gaspar, farewell!'

She glided hastily from the bower: with swift steps she threaded the glade and sought the castle. Once within the seclusion of her own apartment she gave way to the burst of grief that tore her gentle bosom like a tempest; for hers was that worst sorrow, which taints past joys, making wait upon the memory of bliss, and linking love and fancied guilt in such fearful society as that of the tyrant when he bound a living body to a corpse. Suddenly a thought darted into her mind. At first she rejected it as puerile and superstitious; but it would not be driven away. She called hastily for her attendant. 'Manon,' she said, 'didst thou ever sleep on St Catherine's couch?'

Manon crossed herself. 'Heaven forefend! None ever did, since I was born, but two: one fell into the Loire and was drowned; the other only looked upon the narrow bed, and turned to her own home without a word. It is an awful place; and if the votary have not led a pious and good life, woe betide the hour when she rests her head on the holy stone!'

Constance crossed herself also. 'As for our lives, it is only through our Lord and the blessed saints that we can any of us hope for righteousness. I will sleep on that couch tomorrow night!'

'Dear, my lady! and the king arrives tomorrow.'

'The more need that I resolve. It cannot be that misery so intense should dwell in any heart, and no cure be found. I had hoped to be the bringer of peace to our houses; and if the good work to be for me a crown of thorns Heaven shall direct me. I will rest tomorrow night on St Catherine's bed: and if, as I have heard, the saint deigns to direct her votaries in dreams, I will be guided by her; and, believing that I act according to the dictates of Heaven, I shall feel resigned even to the worst.'

The king was on his way to Nantes from Paris, and he slept in this night at a castle but a few miles distant Before dawn a young cavalier was introduced into his chamber. The knight had a serious, nay, a sad aspect; and all beautiful as he was in feature and limb, looked wayworn and haggard. He stood silent in Henry's presence, who, alert and gay, turned his lively blue eyes upon his guest, saying gently, 'So thou foundest her obdurate, Gaspar?'

'I found her resolved on our mutual misery. Alas! my liege, it is not, credit me, the least of my grief, that Constance sacrifices her own happiness when she destroys mine.'

'And thou believest that she will say nay to the gaillard chevalier whom we ourselves present to her?'

'Oh, my liege, think not that thought! it cannot be. My heart deeply, most deeply, thanks you for your generous condescension. But she whom her lover's voice in solitude — whose entreaties, when memory and seclusion aided the spell — could not persuade, will resist even your majesty's commands. She is bent upon entering a cloister; and I, so please you, will now take my leave: — I am henceforth a soldier of the cross.'

'Gaspar,' said the monarch, 'I know woman better than thou. It is not by submission nor tearful plaints she is to be won. The death of her relatives naturally sits heavy at the young countess' heart; and nourishing in solitude her regret and her repentance, she fancies that Heaven itself forbids your union. Let the voice of the world reach her — the voice of earthly power and earthly kindness — the one commanding, the other pleading, and both finding response in her own heart — and by my say and the Holy Cross. she will be yours. Let our plan still hold. And now to horse: the morning wears, and the sun is risen.'

The king arrived at the bishop's palace, and proceeded forthwith to mass in the cathedral. A sumptuous dinner succeeded, and it was afternoon before the monarch proceeded through the town beside the Loire to where, a little above Nantes, the Chateau Villeneuve was situated. The, young countess received him at the gate. Henry looked in vain for the cheek blanched by misery, the aspect of downcast despair which he had been taught to expect. Her cheek was flushed, her manner animated, her voice scarce tremulous. 'She loves him not,' thought Henry, or already her heart has consented.'

A collation was prepared for the monarch; and after some little hesitation, arising from the cheerfulness of her mien, he mentioned the name of Gaspar. Constance blushed instead of turning pale, and replied very quickly, ‘Tomorrow, good my liege; I ask for a respite but until tomorrow; — all will then be decided; — tomorrow I am vowed to God — or’ —

She looked confused, and the king, at once surprised and pleased, said, ‘Then you hate not young De Vaudemont; — you forgive him for the inimical blood that warms his veins.’

‘We are taught that we should forgive, that we should love our enemies,’ the countess replied, with some trepidation.

‘Now, by Saint Denis, that is a right welcome answer for the novice,’ said the king, laughing. ‘What ho! my faithful servingman, Don Apollo in disguise! come forward, and thank your lady for her love.’

In such disguise as had concealed him from all, the cavalier had hung behind, and viewed with infinite surprise the demeanour and calm countenance of the lady. He could not hear her words: but was this even she whom he had seen trembling and weeping the evening before? this she whose very heart was torn by conflicting passion? — who saw the pale ghosts of parent and kinsman stand between her and the lover whom more than her life she adored? It was a riddle hard to solve. The king’s call was in unison with his impatience, and he sprang forward. He was at her feet; while she, still passion-driven overwrought by the very calmness she had assumed, uttered one cry as she recognized him and sank senseless on the floor.

All this was very unintelligible. Even when her attendants had brought her to life, another fit succeeded, and then passionate floods of tears; while the monarch, waiting in the hall, eyeing the half-eaten collation, and, humming some romance in commemoration of woman’s waywardness, knew not how to reply to Vaudemont’s look of bitter disappointment and anxiety. At length the countess’ chief attendant came with an apology. ‘Her lady was ill, very ill. The next day she would throw herself at the king’s feet, at once to solicit his excuse, and to disclose her purpose.’

‘Tomorrow — again tomorrow! Does tomorrow bear some charm, maiden?’ said the king. ‘Can you read us the riddle pretty one? What strange tale belongs to tomorrow, that all rests on its advent?

Manon coloured, looked down, and hesitated. But Henry was no tyro in the art of enticing ladies’ attendants to disclose their ladies’ council. Manon was besides, frightened by the countess’ scheme, on which she was still obstinately bent, so she was the more readily induced to betray it. To sleep in St Catherine’s bed, to rest on a narrow ledge overhanging the deep rapid Loire, and if, as was most probable, the luckless dreamer escaped from falling into it, to take the disturbed visions that, such uneasy slumber might produce for the dictate of Heaven, was a madness of which even Henry himself could scarcely deem any woman capable. But could Constance, her whose beauty was so highly intellectual, and whom he had heard perpetually praised for her strength of mind and talents, could she be so strangely infatuated! And can passion play such freaks with us? — like death, levelling even the aristocracy of the soul, and bringing noble and peasant, the wise and foolish, under one thraldom? It was strange — yes she must have her way. That she hesitated in her decision was much; and it was to be hoped that St Catherine would play no ill-natured part. Should it be otherwise, a purpose to be swayed by a dream might be influenced by other waking thoughts. To the more material kind of danger some safeguard should be brought.

There is no feeling more awful than that which invades a weak human heart bent upon gratifying its ungovernable impulses in contradiction to the dictates of conscience. Forbidden pleasures are said to be the most agreeable; — it may be so to rude natures, to those who love to struggle, combat, and contest; who find happiness in a fray, and joy in the conflict of passion. But softer and sweeter was the gentle spirit of Constance; and love and duty contending crushed and tortured her poor heart. To commit her conduct to the inspirations of religion, or, if it was so to be named, of superstition, was a blessed relief. The very perils that threatened her undertaking gave zest to it; — to dare for his sake was happiness; — the very difficulty of the way that led to the completion of her wishes at once gratified her love and distracted her thoughts from her despair. Or if it was decreed that she must sacrifice all, the risk of danger and of death were of trifling import in comparison with the anguish which would then be her portion for ever.

The night threatened to be stormy, the raging wind shook the casements, and the trees waved their huge shadowy arms, as giants might in fantastic dance and mortal broil. Constance and Manon, unattended, quitted the chateau by a postern, and began to descend the hillside. The moon had not yet risen; and though the way was familiar to both, Manon tottered and trembled; while the countess, drawing her silken cloak around her, walked with a firm step down the steep. They came to the river's side, where a small boat was moored, and one man was in waiting. Constance stepped lightly in, and then aided her fearful companion. In a few moments they were in the middle of the stream. The warm, tempestuous, animating, equinoctial wind swept over them. For the first time since her mourning, a thrill of pleasure swelled the bosom of Constance. She hailed the emotion with double joy. It cannot be, she thought, that Heaven will forbid me to love one so brave, so generous, and so good as the noble Gaspar. Another I can never love; I shall die if divided from him; and this heart, these limbs, so alive with glowing sensation, are they already predestined to an early grave? Oh no! life speaks aloud within them: I shall live to love. Do not all things love? — the winds as they whisper to the rushing waters? the waters as they kiss the flowery banks, and speed to mingle with the sea? Heaven and earth are sustained by, and live through, love; and shall Constance alone, whose heart has ever been a deep, gushing, overflowing well of true affection, be compelled to set a stone upon the fount to lock it up for ever?

These thoughts bade fair for pleasant dreams; and perhaps the countess, an adept in the blind god's lore, therefore indulged them the more readily. But as thus she was engrossed by soft emotions, Manon caught her arm: —'Lady, look,' she cried; 'it comes yet the oars have no sound. Now the Virgin shield us! Would we were at home!'

A dark boat glided by them. Four rowers, habited in black cloaks, pulled at oars which, as Manon said, gave no sound; another sat at the helm: like the rest, his person was veiled in a dark mantle, but he wore no cap; and though his face was turned from them, Constance recognized her lover. 'Gaspar,' she cried aloud, 'dost thou live?' — but the figure in the boat neither turned its head nor replied, and quickly it was lost. in the shadowy waters.

How changed now was the fair countess' reverie! Already Heaven had begun its spell, and unearthly forms were around, as she strained her eyes through the gloom. Now she saw and now she lost view of the bark that occasioned her terror; and now it seemed that another was there, which held the spirits of the dead; and her father waved to her from shore, and her brothers frowned on her.

Meanwhile they neared the landing. Her bark was moored in a little cove, and Constance stood upon the bank. Now she trembled, and half yielded to

Manon's entreaty to return; till the unwise suivante mentioned the king's and De Vaudemont's name, and spoke of the answer to be given tomorrow. What answer, if she turned back from her intent?

She now hurried forward up the broken ground of the bank, and then along its edge, till they came to a bill which abruptly hung over the tide. A small chapel stood near. With trembling fingers the countess drew forth the key and unlocked its door. They entered. It was dark — save that a little lamp, flickering in the wind, showed an uncertain light from before the figure of Saint Catherine. The two women knelt; they prayed; and then rising, with a cheerful accent the countess bade her attendant good-night. She unlocked a little low iron door. It opened on a narrow cavern. The roar of waters was heard beyond. 'Thou mayest not follow, my poor Manon,' said Constance,—'nor dost thou much desire: — this adventure is for me alone.'

It was hardly fair to leave the trembling servant in the chapel alone, who had neither hope nor fear, nor love, nor grief to beguile her; but, in those days, esquires and waiting-women often played the part of subalterns in the army, gaming knocks and no fame. Besides, Manon was safe in holy ground. The countess meanwhile pursued her way groping in the dark through the narrow tortuous passage. At length what seemed light to her long darkened sense gleamed on her. She reached an open cavern in the overhanging hill's side, looking over the rushing tide beneath. She looked out upon the night. The waters of the Loire were speeding, as since that day have they ever sped — changeful, yet the same; the heavens were thickly veiled with clouds, and the wind in the trees was as mournful and ill-omened as if it rushed round a murderer's tomb. Constance shuddered a little, and looked upon her, bed, — a narrow ledge of earth and a grown stone bordering on the very verge of the precipice. She doffed her mantle, — such was one of the conditions of the spell; — she bowed her head, and loosened the tresses of her dark hair; she bared her feet; and thus, fully prepared for suffering to the utmost the chill influence of the cold night, she stretched herself on the narrow couch that scarce afforded room for her repose, and whence, if she moved in sleep, she must he precipitated into the cold waters below.

At first it seemed to her as if she never should sleep again. No great wonder that exposure to the blast and her perilous position should forbid her eyelids to close. At length she fell into a reverie so soft and soothing that she wished even to watch; and then by degrees her senses became confused; and now she was on St Catherine's bed — the Loire rushing beneath, and the wild wind sweeping by — and now — oh whither? — and what dreams did the saint send, to drive her to despair, or to bid her be blest for ever?

Beneath the rugged hill, upon the dark tide, another watched, who feared a thousand things, and scarce dared hope. He had meant to precede the lady on her way, but when he found that he had outstayed his time, with muffled oars and breathless haste he had shot by the bark that contained his Constance, nor even turned at her voice, fearful to incur her blame, and her commands to return. He had seen her emerge from the passage, and shuddered as she leant over the cliff. He saw her step forth, clad as she was in white, and could mark her as she lay on the edge beetling above. What a vigil did the lovers keep! — she given up to visionary thoughts, he knowing — and the consciousness thrilled his bosom with strange emotion — that love, and love for him, had led her to that perilous couch; and that while angers surrounded her in every shape, she was alive only to a small still voice that whispered to her heart the dream which was to decide their destinies. She slept perhaps — but he waked rid watched; and night wore away, as now praying, now entranced by alternating hope and fear, he sat in his boat, his eyes fixed on the white garb of the slumberer above.

Morning — was it morning that struggled in the clouds? Would morning ever come to waken her? And had she slept? and what dreams of weal or woe had peopled her sleep? Gaspar grew impatient. He commanded his boatmen still to wait, and he sprang forward, intent on clambering the precipice. In vain they urged the danger, nay, the impossibility of the attempt; he clung to the rugged face of the hill, and found footing where it would seem no footing was. The acclivity, indeed, was not high; the dangers of St Catherine's bed arising from the likelihood that any one who slept on so narrow a couch would be precipitated into the waters beneath. Up the steep ascent Gaspar continued to toil, and at last reached the roots of a tree that grew near the summit. Aided by its branches, he made good his stand at the very extremity of the ledge, near the pillow on which lay the uncovered head of his beloved. Her hands were folded on her bosom; her dark hair fell round her throat and pillowed her cheek; her face was serene:

sleep was there in all its innocence and in all its helplessness; every wilder emotion was hushed, and her bosom heaved in regular breathing. He could see her heart beat as it lifted her fair hands crossed above. No statue hewn of marble in monumental effigy was ever half so fair; and within that surpassing form dwelt a soul true, tender, self-devoted, and affectionate as ever warmed a human breast.

With what deep passion did Gaspar gaze, gathering hope from the placidity of her angel countenance! A smile wreathed her lips, and he too involuntarily smiled, as he hailed the happy omen; when suddenly her cheek was flushed, her bosom heaved, a tear stole from her dark lashes, and then a whole shower fell, as starting up she cried, ‘No! — he shall not die! — I will unloose his chains! — I will save him!’ Gaspar’s hand was there. He caught her light form ready to fall from the perilous couch. She opened her eyes and beheld her lover, who had watched over her dream of fate, and who had saved her.

Manon also had slept well, dreaming or not, and was startled in the morning to find that she waked surrounded by a crowd. The little desolate chapel was hung with tapestry, the altar adorned with golden chalices — the priest was chanting mass to a goodly array of kneeling knights. Manon saw that King Henry was there; and she looked for another whom she found not, when the iron door of the cavern passage opened, and Gaspar de Vaudemont entered from it, leading the fair form of Constance; who, in her white robes and dark dishevelled hair, with a face in which smiles and blushes contended with deeper emotion, approached the altar, and, kneeling with her lover, pronounced the vows that united them for ever.

It was long before the happy Gaspar could win from his lady the secret of her dream. In spite of the happiness she now enjoyed, she had suffered too much not to look back even with terror to those days when she thought love a crime, and every event connected with them wore an awful aspect. ‘Many a vision,’ she said, ‘she had that fearful night. She had seen the spirits of her father and brothers in Paradise; she had beheld Gaspar victoriously combating among the infidels; she had beheld him in King Henry’s court, favoured and beloved; and she herself — now pining in a cloister, now a bride, now grateful to Heaven for the full measure of bliss presented to her, now weeping away her sad days — till suddenly she thought herself in Paynim land; and the saint herself, St Catherine, guiding her unseen through the city of the infidels. She entered a palace, and beheld the miscreants rejoicing in victory; and then, descending to the dungeons beneath, they groped their way through damp vaults, and low, mildewed passages, to one cell, darker more frightful than the rest. On the floor lay one with soiled tattered garments, with unkempt locks and wild, matted beard. His cheek was worn and thin; his eyes had lost their fire; his form was a mere skeleton; the chains hung loosely on the fleshless bones.'

'And was it my appearance in that attractive state and winning costume that softened the hard heart of Constance?' asked Gaspar, smiling at this painting of what would never be.

'Even so,' replied Constance; 'for my heart whispered me that this was my doing; and who could recall the life that waned in your pulses — who restore, save the destroyer? My heart never warmed to my living, happy knight as then it did to his wasted image as it lay, in the visions of night, at my feet. A veil fell from my eyes; a darkness was dispelled from before me. Methought I then knew for the first time what life and what death was. I was bid believe that to make the living happy was not to injure the dead; and I felt how wicked and how vain was that false philosophy which placed virtue and good in hatred, and unkindness. You should not die; I would loosen your chains and save you, and bid you live for love. I sprang forward, and the death I deprecated for you would, in my presumption, have been mine, — then, when first I felt the real value of life, — but that your arm was there to save me, your dear voice to bid me be blest for evermore.'

THE END

THE SWISS PEASANT

WHY IS THE MIND of man so apt to be swayed by contraries? why does the imagination for ever paint the impossible in glittering tints, and the hearts of wayward mortals cling, with the greatest tenacity, to what, eel-like, is bent on escaping from their grasp? Why — to bring the matter home — is solitude abhorrent to me, now that I enjoy it in perfection? I have apostrophised the coy nymph in ball-rooms, when the bright lamps of heaven were shamed by brighter earth-stars, and lamented her absence at a pic-nic party, where the nightingale was silenced by the fiddle, and the flowery turf was strewed with the impertinent finery of ugly old women, and the greenwood shade made redolent with the fumes of roasted fowls.

And now, O solitude! I abjure thee, in thy fitting temple — in Switzerland — among cloud-piercing mountains, by the resounding waves of the isle-surrounding lake. I am beside the waters of Uri — where Tell lived — in Brunnen, where the Swiss patriots swore to die for freedom. It rains — magic word to destroy the spell to which these words give rise — the clouds envelop the hills — the white mists veil the ravines — there is a roar and a splash in my ears — and now, and then, the vapours break and scatter themselves, and I see something dark between, which is the hoar side of a dark precipice, but which might as well be the turf stack or old wall that bounded Cumberland's view as he wrote the "Wheel of Fortune."

The sole book that I possess is the Prisoner of Chillon. I have read it through three times within an hour. — Its noble author composed it to beguile weary hours like these when he remained rain-bound for three days in a little inn on the shores of the Lake of Geneva; and cannot I, following with unequal steps, so cheat the minutes in this dim spot? I never, by the by, could invent the commonest incident. As a man of honour, of course I never lie; but, as a nursery child and schoolboy, I never did; simply, as I remember, because I never could concoct one — but a true tale was lately narrated to me by its very heroine, the incidents of which haunt my memory, adorned as they were, by her animated looks and soft silvery accent. Let me try to record them, stripped though they must be of their greatest charm.

I was, but a week ago, travelling with my friend Ashburn in a coupée, in the district of Subiaco, in the ecclesiastical territory. We were jolted along a rough ravine, through which the river Anio sped, and beetling mountains and shady trees, a distant convent and a picturesque cell on a hill, formed a view which so awoke the pictorial propensities of my friend, that he stopped the coupée (though we were assured that we should never reach our inn by nightfall, and that the road was dangerous in the dark), took out his portfolio, and began to sketch. As he drew I continued to speak in support of an argument we had entered upon before. I had been complaining of the commonplace and ennui of life. Ashburn insisted that our existence was only too full of variety and change — tragic variety and wondrous incredible change.—”Even,” said the painter, “as sky, and earth, and water seem for ever the same to the vulgar eye, and yet to the gifted one assume a thousand various guises and hues — now robed in purple — now shrouded in black — now resplendent with living gold — and anon sinking into sober and unobtrusive gray, so do our mortal lives change and vary. No living being among us but could tell a tale of soul-subduing joys and heart-consuming woes, worthy, had they their poet, of the imagination of Shakspeare or Goethe. The veriest weather-worn cabin is a study for colouring, and the meanest peasant will offer all the acts of a drama in the apparently dull routine of his humble life.”

“This is pure romance,” I replied; “put it to the test. Let us take, for example, yonder woman descending the mountain-path.”

“What a figure!” cried Ashburn; “oh that she would stay thus but one quarter of an hour! — she has come down to bathe her child — her upturned face — her dark hair — her picturesque costume — the little plump fellow bestriding her — the rude scenery around—”

“And the romantic tale she has to tell.”

“I would wager a louis that hers has been no common fate. She steps a goddess — her attitude — her looks, are all filled with majesty.”

I laughed at his enthusiasm, and accepted his bet. We hurried to join our fair peasantess, and thus formed acquaintance with Fanny Chaumont. A sudden storm, as we were engaged conversing with her, came, driven down from the tempest-bearing hills, and she gave us a cordial invitation to her cottage.

It was situated on a sunny slope, yet sheltered from the winds. There was a look of cheerfulness and *aisance* about it, beyond what is usually met in that part of Switzerland, reminding me of the cottages of the inhabitants of the free states. There, also, we found her husband. I always feel curious to know on whom a woman, who bears the stamp of superior intellect; who is beautiful and refined — for peasant as she was, Fanny was both — has been induced to bestow herself.

Louis Chaumont was considerably older than his wife; he was handsome, with brown lively eyes, curly chesnut hair, a visage embrowned by the sun, bearing every mark of having led an active, even an adventurous life; there was, besides, an expression which, if it were not ferocity, resembled it nearly, in his vivacious glances, and in the sternness of his deeply-lined forehead; while she, in spite of her finely-formed brow, her majestic person, and her large expressive eyes, looked softness and patience itself. There was something incongruous in the pair, and more strangely matched they seemed when we heard their story. It lost me my louis, but proved Fanny at once to be a fitting heroine for romance, and was a lesson, moreover, to teach the strange pranks love can play with us, mingling fire and water, blending in one harmonious concord the harsh base, and melodious tenor of two differently stringed instruments. Though their child was five years old, Fanny and her husband were attached to each other with the tenderness and passion of early love; they were happy — his faults were tempered by her angel disposition, and her too melancholy and feeling-fraught spirit was enlivened and made plastic to the purposes of this world by his energy and activity.

Fanny was a Bernese by birth: she was the child of humble cottagers, one among a large family. They lived on the brow of one summit and at the foot of another. The snowy mountains were piled about them; thaw-fed torrents brawled around; during the night a sound like thunder, a crash among the tempest-beaten pines would tell of an avalanche; or the snow-drift, whirring past the lattice, threatened to bury the little fabric. Winter was the season of peace in the deep vales, not so in the higher district. The peasant was often kept waking by the soft-falling snow which threatened insidiously to encroach on, and to overwhelm his habitation; or a straying cow would lead him far into the depths of the stormy hills, and his fearful family would count in agony the hours of his absence. Perpetual hardship and danger, however, rather brutify than exalt the soul of man; and those of the Swiss who are most deeply planted among the rocky wilds are often stultified and sullen.

Fanny opened her youthful eyes and observation on this scene. She was one of those lovely children only to be seen in Switzerland, whose beauty is heartfelt but indescribable: hers was the smooth candid brow, the large hazel eyes, half soft, half wild; the round dimpled cheek, the full sensitive mouth, the pointed chin, and (as framework to the picture) the luxuriant curly chesnut hair, and voice which is sweetest music. The exceeding beauty of little Fanny gained her the observation of the wife of the governor of the chateau which overlooked and commanded the district, and at ten years of age she became a frequent visitor there. Fanny's little soul was love, so she soon twined herself round the kind lady's heart, became a pet with the governor, and the favourite playmate of their only son.

One fête day Fanny had dined at the chateau. It had been fine warm spring weather, but wind and storm came on with the setting sun; the snow began to fall thickly, and it was decided that Fanny must pass the night in the chateau. She had been unusually eager to return home; and when the tempest came on, she crept near her protectress, and begged to be sent to her mother. *C'est impossible* — Fanny pressed no further, but she clambered to a window, and looked out wistfully to where, hidden by the hills, her parents' cottage stood. It was a fatal night for her: the thunders of frequent avalanches, the roaring of torrents, the crash of trees, spoke of devastation, and her home was its chief prey. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters, not one survived. Where, the day before, cottage and outhouse and flower-adorned garden had stood, the little lawn where she played, and the grove that sheltered her, there was now a monumental pile of snow, and the rocky path of a torrent; no trace remained, not one survivor to tell the tale. From that night Fanny became a constant inmate of the chateau.

It was Madame de Marville's project to give her a bourgeois education, which would raise her from the hardships of a peasant's life, and yet not elevate her above her natural position in society. She was brought up kindly, but humbly; it was the virtues of her disposition which raised her in the eyes of all around her, not any ill-judged favour of her benefactress. The night of the destruction of her family never passed away from her memory; it set a seal of untimely seriousness on her childish brow, awoke deep thoughts in her infant heart, and a strong resolve that while she lived, her beloved friends should find her, as far as her humble powers admitted, a source of good alone — a reason to rejoice that they had saved her from the destruction that had overwhelmed her family.

Thus Fanny grew up in beauty and in virtue. Her smiles were as the rainbows of her native torrents: her voice, her caresses, her light step, her unalterable sweetness and ceaseless devotion to the wishes of others, made her the idol of the family. Henry, the only child of her protectors, was of her own age, or but a few months her senior. Every time Henry returned from school to visit his parents, he found Fanny more beautiful, more kind, more attractive than before; and the first passion his youthful heart knew was for the lovely peasant girl, whose virtues sanctified his home. A look, a gesture betrayed his secret to his mother; she turned a hasty glance on Fanny, and saw on her countenance innocence and confidence alone. Half reassured, yet still fearful, Madame de Marville began to reflect on some cure for the threatened evil. She could not bear to send away Fanny; she was solicitous that her son should for the present reside in his home. The lovely girl was perfectly unconscious of the sentiments of the young seigneur; but would she always continue so? and was the burning heart that warmed her gentle bosom to be for ever insensible to the despotic and absorbing emotions of love?

It was with wonder, and a curious mixture of disappointed maternal pride and real gladness, that the lady, at length, discovered a passion dawning in fair Fanny’s heart for Louis Chaumont, a peasant some ten years older than herself. It was natural that one with such high wrought feelings as our heroine should love one to whom she could look up, and on whom to depend, rather than her childhood’s playmate — the gay thoughtless Henry. Louis’s family had been the victim of a moral ruin, as hers of a physical one. They had been oppressed, reduced to poverty, driven from their homes by some feudal tyrant, and had come poor and forlorn from a distant district. His mother, accustomed to a bourgeois’ life, died broken-hearted: his father, a man of violent passions, nourished in his own and in his son’s heart, sentiments of hatred and revenge against the “proud oppressors of the land.” They were obliged to labour hard, yet in the intervals of work, father and son would read or discourse concerning the ills attendant on humanity, and they traced all to the social system, which made the few, the tyrants of the many.

Louis was handsome, bold, and active; he excelled his compeers in every hardy exercise; his resolution, his eloquence, his daring, made him, in spite of his poverty, a kind of leader among them. He had many faults: he was too full of passion, of the spirit of resistance and revenge; but his heart was kind; his understanding, when not thwarted, strong; and the very depth of his feelings made him keenly susceptible to love. Fanny, in her simple but majestic beauty, in her soft kindness of manner, mingled with the profoundest sensibility, made a deep impression on the young man's heart. His converse, so different and so superior to those of his fellows, won her attention.

Hitherto Fanny had never given utterance to the secrets of her soul.

Habitual respect held her silent with Madame, and Henry, as spirited and as heedless as a chamois, could ill understand her; but Louis became the depositary of the many feelings which, piled up in secresy and silence, were half awful to herself; he brought reason, or what he deemed such, to direct her heart-born conclusions. To have heard them talk of life and death, and all its shows, you would have wondered by what freak, philosophy had dressed herself in youth and a peasant's garb, and wandered from the schools to these untaught wilds.

Madame de Marville saw and encouraged this attachment. Louis was not exactly the person she would have selected for Fanny; but he was the only being for whom she had ever evinced a predilection; and, besides, the danser of a misalliance which threatened her own son, rendered her eager to build an insurmountable wall between him and the object of his affections. Thus Fanny enjoyed the heart-gladdening pride of hearing her choice applauded and praised by the person she most respected and loved in the world. As yet, however, love had been covert; the soul but not the apparent body of their intercourse. Louis was kept in awe by this high-minded girl, and Fanny had not yet learned her own secret. It was Henry who made the discovery for them; — Henry, who, with all the impetuosity of his vivacious character, contrived a thousand ways to come between them; who, stung by jealousy to injustice, reviled Louis for his ruin, his poverty, his opinions, and brought the spirit of dissension to disquiet a mind entirely bent, as she imagined, on holy and pure thoughts.

Under this clash of passion, the action of the drama rapidly developed itself, and, for nearly a year, a variety of scenes were acted among these secluded mountains of no interest save to the parties themselves, but to them fateful and engrossing. Louis and Fanny exchanged vows; but that sufficed not. Fanny insisted on the right of treating with uniform kindness the son of her best friend, in spite of his injustice and insolence. The young men were often, during the rural festivals, brought into angry collision. Fanny was the peacemaker: but a woman is the worst possible mediator between her rival lovers. Henry was sometimes irritated to complain to his father of Louis's presumption. The spirit of the French revolution then awakening, rendered a peasant's assumptions peculiarly grating; and it required Madame de Marville's impartial gentleness to prevent Fanny's betrothed, as now he was almost considered, from being farther oppressed.

At length it was decided that Henry should absent himself for a time, and visit Paris. He was enraged in the extreme by what he called his banishment. Noble and generous as he naturally was, love was the tyrant of his soul, and drove him almost to crime. He entered into a fierce quarrel with his rival on the very eve of his departure: it ended in a scene of violence and bloodshed. No great real harm was done; but Monsieur de Marville, hitherto scarcely kept back from such a measure by his wife, suddenly obtained an order for Louis (his father had died a year before) to quit the territory within twelve hours. Fanny was commanded, as she valued the favour of her friends, to give him up. The young men were both gone before any intercession could avail; and that kind of peace which resembles desolation took possession of the chateau.

Aware of the part she had taken in encouraging Fanny's attachment to her peasant-lover, Madame de Marville did not make herself a party to the tyranny of her husband; she requested only of her protégée to defer any decisive step, and not to quit her guardianship until the return of her son, which was to take place the following year. Fanny consented to such a delay, although in doing so, she had to resist the angry representations of her lover, who exacted that she should quit the roof of his oppressors. It was galling to his proud spirit that she should continue to receive benefits from them, and injurious to his love that she should remain where his rival's name was the constant theme of discourse and the object of interest. Fanny in vain represented her debt of gratitude, the absence of Henry, the impossibility that she could feel any undue sentiment towards the young seigneur; not to hate him was a crime in Louis's eyes; yet how, in spite of his ill conduct, could Fanny hate her childhood's playmate — her brother? His violent passions excited to their utmost height — jealousy and the sense of impotent indignation raging in his heart — Louis swore to revenge himself on the Marvilles — to forget and to abhor his mistress! — his last words were a malediction on them, and a violent denunciation of scorn upon her.

"It will all be well yet," thought Fanny, as she strove to calm the tumultuous and painful emotions to which his intemperate passion gave rise. "Not only are storms the birth of the wild elements, but of the heart of man, and we can oppose patience and fortitude alone to their destructive violence. A year will pass — I shall quit the chateau; Louis will acknowledge my truth, and retract his frightful words."

She continued, therefore, to fulfil her duties cheerfully, not permitting her thoughts to dwell on the idea, that, in spite of her struggles, too painfully occupied her — the probability that Louis would in the end renounce or forget her; but committing her cause to the spirit of good, she trusted that its influence would in the end prevail.

She had, however, much to endure; four months passed, and no tidings reached her of Louis. Often she felt sick at heart; often she became the prey of the darkest despair; above all, her tender heart missed the fond attentions of love, the bliss of knowing that she bestowed happiness, and the unrestrained intercourse to which mutual affection had given rise. She cherished hope as a duty, and faith in love, rather than in her unjust and cruelly neglectful lover. It was a hard task, for she had nowhere to turn for consolation or encouragement. Madame de Marville marked with gladness the total separation between them. Now that the danger that threatened her son was averted, she repented having been influential in producing an attachment between Fanny and one whom she deemed unworthy of her. She redoubled her kindness, and, in the true continental fashion, tried to get up a match between her and some one among her many and more prosperous admirers. She failed, but did not despair, till she saw the poor girl's cheek grow pale and her vivacity desert her, as month after month passed away, and the very name of Louis appeared to be forgotten by all except herself.

The stirring and terrible events that took place at this time in France added to Fanny's distress of mind. She had been familiarized to the discussion of the theories, now attempted to be put in practice, by the conversations of Chaumont. As each fresh account brought information of the guilty and sanguinary acts of men whose opinions were the same as those of her lover, her fears on his account increased. In a few words I shall hurry over this part of her story. Switzerland became agitated by the same commotions as tore the near kingdom. The peasantry rose in tumult; acts of violence and blood were committed; at first at a distance from her retired valley, but gradually approaching its precincts, until at last the tree of liberty was set up in the neighbouring village. Monsieur de Marville was an aristocrat of the most bigoted species. In vain was the danger represented to him, and the unwarlike state of his retinue. He armed them — he hurried down — he came unawares on the crowd who were proclaiming the triumph of liberty, rather by feasting than force. On the first attack, they were dispersed, and one or two among them were wounded; the pole they had gathered round was uprooted, the emblematic cap trampled to the earth. The governor returned victorious to his chateau.

This act of violence on his part seemed the match to fire a train of organized resistance to his authority, of which none had dreamt before. Strangers from other cantons thronged into the valley; rustic labours were cast aside; popular assemblies were held, and the peasants exercised in the use of arms. One was coming to place himself at their head, it was said, who had been a party in the tumults at Geneva. Louis Chaumont was coming — the champion of liberty, the sworn enemy of M. de Marville. The influence of his presence soon became manifest. The inhabitants of the chateau were, as it were, besieged. If one ventured beyond a certain limit he was assailed by stones and knives. It was the resolve of Louis that all within its walls should surrender themselves to his mercy. What that might be, the proud curl of his lip and the fire that glanced from his dark eyes rendered scarcely problematic. Fanny would not believe the worst of her lover, but Monsieur and Madame de Marville, no longer restrained by any delicacy, spoke of the leveller in unmeasured terms of abhorrence, comparing him to the monsters who then reigned in France, while the danger they incurred through him added a bitter sting to their words. The peril grew each day; famine began to make its appearance in the chateau; while the intelligence which some of the more friendly peasants brought was indicative of preparations for a regular attack of the most formidable nature. A summons at last came from the insurgents. They were resolved to destroy the emblem of their slavery — the feudal halls of their tyrants. They declared their intention of firing the chateau the next day, and called on all within to deliver themselves up, if they would not be buried in its ruins. They offered their lives and free leave to depart to all, save the governor himself, who must place himself unconditionally at the mercy of their leader—”The wretch,” exclaimed his lady, “who thirsts for your blood! Fly! if there is yet time for flight; we, you see, are safe. Fly! nor suffer these cruel dastards to boast of having murdered you.”

M. de Marville yielded to these entreaties and representations. He had sent for a military force to aid him — it had been denied; he saw that he himself, as the detested person, was the cause of danger to his family. It was therefore agreed that he should seek a chalet situated on a mountain ten leagues distant, where he might lie concealed till his family joined him. Accordingly, in a base disguise, he quitted at midnight the walls he was unable to defend; a miserable night for the unfortunate beings left behind. The coming day was to witness the destruction of their home; and they, beggars in the world, were to wander through the inhospitable mountains, till, with caution and terror, they could unobserved reach the remote and miserable chalet, and learn the fate of the unhappy fugitive. It was a sleepless night for all. To add to Madame’s agony, she knew that her son’s life was in danger in Paris — that he had been denounced — and though yet untaken, his escape was still uncertain. From the turret of the castle, that, situated high on a rock, commanded the valley below, she sat the livelong night watching for every sound — fearful of some shout, some report of fire-arms, which would announce the capture of her husband. It was September; the nights were chill; pale and trembling, she saw day break over the hills. Fanny had busied herself during these anxious hours by preparing for their departure; the terrified domestics had already fled; she, the lady, and the old lame gardener were all that remained. At dawn she brought forth the mule, and harnessed him to the rude vehicle which was to convey them to their place of refuge. Whatever was most valuable in the chateau had already been sent away long before, or was secreted; a few necessaries alone she provided. And now she ascended the turret stairs, and stood before her protectress, announcing that all was ready, and that they must depart. At this last moment, Madame de Marville appeared deprived of strength; she strove to rise — she sank to the ground in a fit. Forgetful of her deserted state, Fanny called aloud for help, and then her heart beat wildly, as a quick, youthful step was heard on the stairs. Who could he be? would *he* come to insult their wretchedness — he, the author of their wo? The first glance changed the object of her terror. Henry flew to his mother's side, and, with broken exclamations and agitated questions, demanded an explanation of what he saw. He had fled for safety to the habitation of his parents — he found it deserted; the first voice he heard was that of Fanny crying for help — the first sight that presented itself was his mother, to all appearance dead, lying on the floor of the turret. Her recovery was followed by brief explanations, and a consultation of how his safety was to be provided for. The name of Chaumont excited his bitterest execrations. With a soldier's haughty resolve, he was darting from the castle, to meet and to wreak vengeance on his rival. His mother threw herself at his feet, clasping his knees, calling wildly on him not to desert her. Fanny's gentle, sweet voice was of more avail to calm his passion. "Chevalier," she said, "it is not thus that you must display your courage or protect the helpless. To encounter yonder infuriated mob would be to run on certain death; you must preserve yourself for your family — you must have pity on your mother, who cannot survive you. Be guided by me, I beseech you."

Henry yielded to her voice, and a more reasonable arrangement took place. The departure of Madame de Marville and Fanny was expected at the village, and a pledge had been given that they should proceed unmolested. But deeply had the insurgents sworn, that if the governor or his son (whose arrival in the chateau had been suspected) attempted to escape with them, they should be immediately sacrificed to *justice.* No disguise would suffice — the active observation of their enemies was known. Every inhabitant of the castle had been numbered — the fate of each ascertained, save that of the two most detested — the governor, whose flight had not been discovered, and his son, whose arrival was so unexpected and ill-timed. As still they consulted, a beat to arms was heard in the valley below: it was the signal that the attack on the empty castle walls would soon begin. There was no time for delay or hesitation; Henry placed himself at the bottom of the charrette; straw and a variety of articles were heaped upon him; the two women ascended in trepidation; and the old gardener sat in front and held the reins.

In consequence of the disturbed state of the districts through which they were to pass, — where the appearance of one of the upper classes excited the fiercest enmity, and frightful insult, if not death, was their sure welcome, — Madame and her friend assumed a peasant’s garb. And thus they wound their way down the steep; the unhappy lady weeping bitterly — Fanny, with tearless eyes, but with pale cheek and compressed lips, gazing for the last time on the abode which had been her refuge when, in helpless infancy, she was left an orphan — where kindness and benevolence had waited on her, and where her days had passed in innocence and peace. “And he drives us away! — him, whom I loved — whom I love! — O misery!”

They reached the foot of the eminence on which the chateau was placed, and proceeded along the road which led directly through the village. With the approach of danger, vain regrets were exchanged for a lively sense of fear in the bosom of the hapless mother, and for the exertion of her courage and forethought in Fanny’s more energetic mind.

They passed a peasant or two, who uttered a malediction or imprecation on them as they went; then groups of two or three, who were even more violent in gesture and menace; when suddenly the sound of many steps came on their ears, and, at a turn of the road, they met Chaumont with a band of about twenty disciplined men.

“Fear not,” he said to Madame de Marville; “I will protect you from danger till you are beyond the village.”

With a shriek, the lady, in answer, threw herself in Fanny’s arms, crying, “He is here! — save me! — he will murder us.”

“Fear not, Madame — he dares not injure you. Begone, Louis! insult us not by your presence. Begone! I say.”

Fanny spoke angrily. She had not adopted this tone, but that the lady’s terror, and the knowledge that even then the young soldier crouched at their feet, burnt to spring up and confront his enemy, made her use an authority which a woman always imagines that a lover dare not resist.

“I do not insult you,” repeated Chaumont—”I save you. I have no quarrel with the lady; tyrants alone need fear me. You are not safe without my escort. Do not you, false girl, irritate me. I have ensured her escape; but yours — you are in my power.”

A violent movement at the bottom of the charrette called forth all Fanny's terrors.

"Take me!" she cried; "do with me what you please; but you dare not, you cannot raise a finger against the innocent. Begone, I say! let me never see you more!"

"You are obeyed. On you fall the consequences."

Thus, after many months of separation, did Fanny and her lover meet. She had purposed when she should see him to make an appeal to his better nature — his reason; she had meant to use her all-persuasive voice to recall him from the dangerous path he was treading. Several times, indeed, since his arrival in the valley, she had endeavoured to obtain an interview with him, but he dreaded her influence: he had resolved on revenge, and he feared to be turned back. But now the unexpected presence of his rival robbed her of her self-possession, and forced her to change her plans. She saw frightful danger in their meeting, and all her endeavours were directed to the getting rid of her lover.

Louis and his companions proceeded towards the chateau, while the charrette of the fugitives moved on in the opposite direction. They met many a ferocious group, who were rushing forward to aid in the destruction of their home; and glad they were, in that awful hour, that any object had power to divert the minds of their enemies from attention to themselves. The road they pursued wound through the valley; the precipitous mountain on one side, a brawling stream on the other. Now they ascended higher and now again descended in their route, while the road, broken by the fall of rocks, intersected by torrents, which tore their way athwart it, made their progress slow. To get beyond the village was the aim of their desires; when, lo! just as they came upon it, and were in the very midst of its population, which was pouring towards the castle, suddenly the charrette sank in a deep rut; it half upset, and every spoke in the wheel giving way rendered the vehicle wholly useless.

"Mais, descendez donc, mesdames," said a peasant; "il faut bien marcher."

Fanny had indeed already sprung to the ground to examine what hope remained: there was none. "Grand Dieu! nous sommes perdues!" were the first words that escaped her, while her friend stood aghast, trembling, almost insensible, knowing that the hope of her life, the existence of her son, depended on these miserable moments.

A peasant who owed Fanny some kindness now advanced, and in a kind of cavalier way, as if to blemish as much as he could the matter of his offer by its manner, told them, that, for the pleasure of getting rid of the aristocrats, he would lend his car — there it was, let them quickly bestow their lading in it and pursue their way. As he spoke, he caught up a box, and began the transfer from one car to the other.

“No, no!” cried Madame de Marville, as, with a scream, she sprang forward and grasped the arm of the man as he was in the very act of discovering her son’s hiding-place. “We will accept nothing from our base enemies! — Begone with your offers! we will die here, rather than accept any thing from such *canaille.”*

The word was electric. The fierce passions of the mob, excited by the mischief they were about to perpetrate, now burst like a stream into this new channel. With violent execrations they rushed upon the unfortunate woman: they would have torn her from the car, but already her son had sprung from his hiding-place, and striking a violent blow at the foremost assailant, checked for a moment their brutal outrages. Then again, with a yell, such as the savage Indians alone could emulate, they rushed on their prey. Mother and son were torn asunder, and cries of “A bas les aristocrats!”—”A la lanterne!” declared too truly their sanguinary designs.

At this moment, Louis appeared — Louis, whose fears for Fanny had overcome his indignation, and who returned to guard her; while she, perceiving him, with a burst of joy, called on him to rescue her friends. His cry of “Arretez-vous!” was loud and distinct amidst the uproar. It was obeyed; and then first he beheld his rival, his oppressor, his enemy in his power. At first, rage inflamed every feature, to be replaced by an expression of triumph and implacable hatred. Fanny caught the fierce glance of his eye, and grew pale. She trembled as, trying to be calm, she said, “Yes, you behold he is here. — And you must save him — and your own soul. Rescue him from death, and be blest that your evil career enables you at least to perform this one good action.”

For a moment Louis seemed seeking for a word, as a man, meaning to stab, may fumble for his dagger’s hilt, unable in his agitation to grasp his weapon.

"My friends," at length he said, "let the women depart — we have promised it. Ye may deal with the young aristocrat according to his merits."

"A la lanterne!" burst in response from a hundred voices.

"Let his mother first depart!"

Could it be Louis that spoke these words, and had she loved this man? To appeal to him was to rouse a tiger from his lair. Another thought darted into Fanny's mind; she scarcely knew what she said or did: but already knives were drawn; already, with a thrill of horror, she thought she saw the blood of her childhood's playmate spilt like water on the earth. She rushed forward — she caught the upraised arm of one—"He is no aristocrat!" she cried; "he is my husband! — Will you murder one who, forgetting his birth, his duty, his honour, has married a peasant girl — one of yourselves?"

Even this appeal had little effect upon the mob; but it strangely affected her cruel lover. Grasping her arm with iron fingers, he cried, "Is this tale true? Art thou married to that man — his wife?"

"Even so!" — the words died on her lips as she strove to form them, terrified by their purport, and the effect they might produce. An inexplicable expression passed over Chaumont's face; the fierceness that jealousy had engendered for a moment was exalted almost to madness, and then faded wholly away. The stony heart within him softened at once. A tide of warm, human, and overpowering emotion flowed into his soul: he looked on her he had loved even to guilt and crime, on her whom he had lost for ever; and tears rushed into his eyes, as he saw her gasping, trembling before him — at his mercy.

"Fear not," at last he said; "fear neither for him nor yourself. — Poor girl! so young, you shall not lose all — so young, you shall not become a widow. — He shall be saved!"

Yet it was no easy task, even for him, to stem the awakened passions of the blood-thirsty mob. He had spent many an hour in exciting them against their seigneurs, and now at once to control the violence to which he had given rise seemed impossible. Yet his energy, his strong will overcame all opposition. They should pierce the chevalier's heart, he swore, through his alone. He prevailed — the fugitives were again seated in their car. He took the rein of their mule, and saying to his comrades "Attendez-moi," he led them out of the village. All were silent; Fanny knew not what to say, and surprise held the others mute. Louis went with them until a turn in the road hid them from the view of the village. What his thoughts were, none could guess: he looked calm, as resigning the rein into the chevalier's hands, he gently wished them "Bon voyage," touching his hat in reply to their salutations. They moved on, and Fanny looked back to catch a last view of her lover: he was standing where they left him, when suddenly, instead of returning on his steps into the village, she saw him with rapid strides ascend the mountain side, taking a well-known path that conducted him away from the scene of his late exploits. His pace was that of a man flying from pursuers — soon he was lost to sight.

Astonishment still kept the fugitives silent, as they pursued their way; and when at last joy broke forth, and Madame de Marville, rejoicing in their escape, embraced again and again her son, he with the softest tenderness thanked Fanny for his life: she answered not, but withdrawing to the furthest part of the charrette, wept bitterly.

Late that night, they reached the destined chalet, and found Monsieur de Marville arrived. It was a half-ruined miserable habitation perched among the snows, cold and bare; food was ill to be obtained, and danger breathed around them. Fanny attended on them with assiduous care, but she never spoke of the scene in the village; and though she strove to look the same, Henry never addressed her but her cheeks grew white, and her voice trembled. She could not divine her distant lover's thoughts, but she knew that he believed her married to another; and that other, earnestly though she strove to rule her feelings, became an object of abhorrence to her.

Three weeks they passed in this wretched abode; three weeks replete with alarm, for the district around was in arms, and the life of Monsieur de Marville loudly threatened. They never slept but they dreaded the approach of the murderers; food they had little, and the inclement season visited them roughly. Fanny seemed to feel no inconvenience; her voice was cheerful: to console, encourage, and assist her friends appeared to occupy her whole heart. At length one night they were roused by a violent knocking at the door of their hut: Monsieur de Marville and Henry were on their feet in a moment, seizing their weapons as they rose. It was a domestic of their own, come to communicate the intelligence that the troubles were over, that the legal government had reasserted its authority, and invited the governor to return to Berne.

They descended from their mountain refuge, and the name of Louis hovered on Fanny’s lips, but she spoke it not. He seemed everywhere forgotten. It was not until some time afterwards that she ascertained the fact, that he had never been seen or heard of, since he had parted from her on the morning of their escape. The villagers had waited for him in vain; they suspended their designs, for they all depended upon him; but he came not.

Monsieur and Madame de Marville returned to their chateau with their son, but Fanny remained behind. She would not inhabit the same roof as Henry; she recoiled even from receiving further benefits from his parents. What could she do? Louis would doubtless discover the falsehood of her marriage, but he dared not return; and even if he communicated with her, even though yet she loved him, could she unite herself with one accused too truly of the most frightful crimes? At first, these doubts agitated her, but by degrees they faded as oblivion closed over Chaumont’s name — and he came not and she heard not of him, and he was as dead to her. Then the memory of the past revived in her heart; her love awoke with her despair; his mysterious flight became the sole occupation of her thoughts: time rolled on and brought its changes. Madame de Marville died — Henry was united to another — Fanny remained, to her own thoughts, alone in the world. A relation, who lived at Subiaco, sent for her, and there she went to take up her abode. In vain she strove to wean herself from the memory of Louis — her love for him haunted her soul.

There was war in Europe, and every man was converted into a soldier; the country was thinned of its inhabitants, and each victory or defeat brought a new conscription. At length peace came again, and its return was celebrated with rejoicing. Many a soldier returned to his home — and one came back who had no home. A man, evidently suffering from recent wounds, way-worn, and sick, asked for hospitality at Fanny’s cottage; it was readily afforded, and he sat at her cottage fire, and removed his cap from his brows. His person was bent — his cheeks fallen in — yet those eyes of fire, that quick animated look, which almost brought the bright expression of youth back into his face, could never be forgotten. Fanny gazed almost in alarm, and then in joy, and at last, in her own sweet voice, she said, “Et toi, Louis — tu aussi es de retour.”

Louis had endured many a sorrow and many a hardship, and, most of all, he had been called on to wage battle with his own fierce spirit. The rage and hate which he had sedulously nourished suddenly became his tormentors and his tyrants — at the moment that love, before too closely allied to them, emancipated itself from their control. Love, which is the source of all that is most generous and noble in our nature, of self-devotion and of high intent, separated from the alloy he had blended with it, asserted its undivided power over him — strange that it should be so, at the moment that he believed that he had lost her he loved for ever!

All his plans had been built for revenge. He would destroy the family that oppressed him — unbuild, stone by stone, the proud abode of their inheritance — he would be the sole refuge and support of his mistress in exile and in poverty. He had entered upon his criminal career with this design alone, and with the anticipation of ending all by heaping benefits and the gifts of fortune upon Fanny. The very steps he had taken, he now believed to be those that occasioned his defeat. He had lost her — the lovely and the good — he had lost her by proving unworthy — yet not so unworthy was he as to make her the victim of his crimes. The family he had vowed to ruin was now hers, and every injury that befel them visited her; to save her he must unweave his pernicious webs — to keep her scatheless, his dearest designs must fall to the ground.

A veil seemed rent before his eyes — he had fled, for he would not assist in the destruction of her fortunes — he had not returned, for it was torture to him to know that she lived, the wife of another. He entered the French army — but in every change his altered feelings pursued him, and to prove himself worthy of her he had lost, was the constant aim of his ambition. His excellent conduct led to his promotion, and yet mishap still waited on him. He was wounded, even dangerously, and became so incapable of service as to be forced to solicit his dismission. This had occurred at the end of a hard campaign in Germany, and his intention was to pass into Italy, where a friend, with whom he had formed an intimacy in the army, promised to procure him some employment under government. He passed through Subiaco in his way, and, ignorant of its occupiers, had asked for hospitality in his mistress's cottage.

If guilt can be expiated by repentance and reform, as is the best lesson of religion, Louis had expiated his. If constancy in love deserve reward, these lovers deserved that, which they reaped, in the happiness consequent on their union. Her image, side by side with all that is good in our nature, had dwelt in his heart; which thus became a shrine at which he sacrificed every evil passion. It was a greater bliss than he had ever dared to anticipate, to find, that in so doing, he had at the same time been conducing to the welfare of her he loved, and that the lost and idolized being whom he worshipped founded the happiness of her life upon his return to virtue, and the constancy of his affection.

THE BROTHER AND SISTER

AN ITALIAN STORY

IT is well known that the hatred borne by one family against another, and the strife of parties, which often led to bloodshed in the Italian cities during the middle ages, so vividly described by Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet, was not confined to the Montecchi and Capelletti of Verona, but existed with equal animosity in almost every other town of that beautiful peninsula. The greatest men among them were the victims; and crowds of exiles — families who but the day before were in the full enjoyment of the luxuries of life and the endearing associations of home — were every now and then seen issuing from the gates of their native cities, deprived of every possession, and with melancholy and slow steps dragging their wearied limbs to the nearest asylum offered them, thence to commence a new career of dependence and poverty, to endure to the end of their lives, or until some lucky accident should enable them to change places with their enemies, making those the sufferers who were late the tyrants. In that country, where each town formed an independent state, to change one for the other was to depart from the spot cherished as a country and a home for distant banishment — or worse — for as each city entertained either hatred or contempt for its neighbour, it often happened that the mourning exile was obliged to take up his abode among a people whom he had injured or scoffed. Foreign service offered a resource to the young and bold among the men. But lovely Italy was to be left, the ties of young hearts severed, and all the endearing associations of kin and country broken and scattered for ever. The Italians were always peculiarly susceptible to these misfortunes. They loved their native walls, the abodes of their ancestors, the famliar scenes of youth, with all the passionate fervour characteristic of that clime.

It was therefore no uncommon thing for any one among them, like Foscari of Venice, to prefer destitution and danger in their own city, to a precarious subsistence among strangers in distant lands; or, if compelled to quit the beloved precincts of their native walls, still to hover near, ready to avail themselves of the first occasion that should present itself for reversing the decree that condemned them to misery.

For three days and nights there had been warfare in the streets of Sienna — blood flowed in torrents — yet the cries and groans of the fallen but excited their friends to avenge them — not their foes to spare. On the fourth morning, Ugo Mancini, with a scanty band of followers, was driven from the town: succours from Florence had arrived for his enemies, and he was forced to yield. Burning with rage, writhing with an impotent thirst for vengeance, Ugo went round to the neighbouring villages to rouse them, not against his native town, but the victorious Tolomei. Unsuccessful in these endeavours, he next took the more equivocal step of seeking warlike aid from the Pisans. But Florence kept Pisa in check, and Ugo found only an inglorious refuge where he had hoped to acquire active allies. He had been wounded in these struggles; but, animated by a superhuman spirit, he had forgotten his pain and surmounted his weakness; nor was it until a cold refusal was returned to his energetic representations that he sank beneath his physical sufferings. He was stretched on a bed of torture when he received intelligence that an edict of perpetual banishment and confiscation of property was passed against him. His two children, beggars now, were sent to him. His wife was dead, and these were all of near relations that he possessed. His bitter feelings were still too paramount for him to receive comfort from their presence; yet these agitated and burning emotions appeared in after-times a remnant of happiness compared to the total loss of every hope — the wasting inaction of sickness and of poverty.

For five years Ugo Mancini lay stretched on his couch, alternating between states of intense pain and overpowering weakness; and then he died. During this interval, the wreck of his fortunes, consisting of the rent of a small farm, and the use of some money lent, scantily supported him. His few relatives and followers were obliged to seek their subsistence elsewhere, and he remained alone to his pain, and to his two children, who yet clung to the paternal side.

Hatred to his foes, and love for his native town, were the sentiments that possessed his soul, and which he imparted in their full force to the plastic mind of his son, which received like molten metal the stamp he desired to impress. Lorenzo was scarcely twelve years old at the period of his father’s exile, and he naturally turned with fondness towards the spot where he had enjoyed every happiness, where each hour had been spent in light hearted hilarity, and the kindness and observance of many attended on his steps.

Now, how sad the contrast! — dim penury — a solitude cheered by no encouraging smiles or sunny flatteries — perpetual attendance on his father, and untimely cares, cast their dark shadows over his altered lot.

Lorenzo was many years older than his sister. Friendless and destitute as was the exile's family, it was he who overlooked its moderate disbursements, who was at once his father's nurse and his sister's guardian, and acted as the head of the family during the incapacity of his parent. But instead of being narrowed or broken in spirit by these burthens, his ardent soul rose to meet them, and grew enlarged and lofty from the very calls made upon it. His look was serious, not care-worn — his manner calm, not humble — his voice had all the tenderness of a woman — his eye all the pride and fire of a hero.

Still his unhappy father wasted away, and Lorenzo's hours were entirely spent beside his bed. He was indefatigable in his attentions — weariness never seemed to come near him. His limbs were always alert — his speech inspiriting and kind. His only pastime was during any interval in his parent's sufferings, to listen to his eulogiums on his native town, and to the history of the wrongs which, from time immemorial, the Mancini had endured from the Tolomei. Lorenzo, though replete with noble qualities, was still an Italian; and fervent love for his birthplace, and violent hatred towards the foes of his house, were the darling passions of his heart. Nursed in loneliness, they acquired vigour; and the nights he spent in watching his father were varied by musing on the career he should hereafter follow — his return to his beloved Sienna, and the vengeance he would take on his enemies.

Ugo often said, I die because I am an exile: — at length these words were fulfilled, and the unhappy man sank beneath the ills of fortune. Lorenzo saw his beloved father expire — his father, whom he loved as a mother loves a sickly infant which she has led from its birth to an early five years' old tomb. He seemed to deposit in his obscure grave all that best deserved reverence and honour in the world; and turning away his steps, he lamented the sad occupation of so many years, and regretted the exchange he made from his father's sick bed to a lonely and unprized freedom.

The first use he made of the liberty he had thus acquired was to return to Sienna with his little sister. He entered his native town as it if were a paradise, and he found it a desert in all save the hues of beauty and delight with which his imagination loved to invest it. There was no one to whom he could draw near in friendship within the whole circuit of its walls. According to the barbarous usage of the times, his father's palace had been razed, and the mournful ruins stood as a tomb to commemorate the fall of his fortunes. Not as such did Lorenzo view them — he often stole out at nightfall, when the stars alone beheld his enthusiasm, and, clambering to the highest part of the massy fragments, spent long hours in mentally rebuilding the desolate walls, and in consecrating once again the weed-grown hearth to family love and hospitable festivity. It seemed to him that the air was more balmy and light, breathed amidst these memorials of the past; and his heart warmed with rapture over the tale they told of what his progenitors had been — what he again would be.

Yet, had he viewed his position sanely, he would have found it full of mortification and pain; and he would have become aware that his native town was perhaps the only place in the world where his ambition would fail in the attainment of its aim. The Tolomei reigned over it. They had led its citizens to conquest, and enriched them with spoils. They were adored; and to flatter them, the populace were prone to revile and scoff at the name of Mancini. Lorenzo did not possess one friend within its walls: he heard the murmur of hatred as he passed along, and beheld his enemies raised to the pinnacle of power and honour; and yet, so strangely framed is the human heart, that he continued to love Sienna, and would not have exchanged his obscure and penurious abode within its walls to become the favoured follower of the German emperor. Such a place, through education and the natural prejudices of man, did Sienna hold in his imagination, that a lowly condition there, seemed a nobler destiny than to be great in any other spot.

To win back the friendship of its citizens and humble his enemies was the dream that shed so sweet an influence over his darkened hours. He dedicated his whole being to this work, and he did not doubt but that he should succeed. The house of Tolomei had for its chief, a youth but a year or two older than himself — with him, when an opportunity should present itself, he would enter the lists. It seemed the bounty of Providence that gave him one so nearly equal with whom to contend; and during the interval that must elapse before they could clash, he was busy in educating himself for the struggle. Count Fabian de' Tolomei bore the reputation of being a youth full of promise and talent; and Lorenzo was glad to anticipate a worthy antagonist. He occupied himself in the practice of arms, and applied with perseverance to the study of the few books that fell in his way. He appeared in the market-place on public occasions modestly attired; yet his height, his dignified carriage, and the thoughtful cast of his noble countenance, drew the observation of the bystanders; — though, such was the prejudice against his name, and the flattery of the triumphant party, that taunts and maledictions followed him. His nobility of appearance was called pride; his affability, meanness; his aspiring views, faction; — and it was declared that it would be a happy day when he should no longer blot their sunshine with his shadow. Lorenzo smiled — he disdained to resent, or even to feel, the mistaken insults of the crowd, who, if fortune changed, would the next day throw up their caps for him. It was only when loftier foes approached that his brow grew dark, that he drew himself up to his full height, repaying their scorn with glances of defiance and hate.

But although he was ready in his own person to encounter the contumely of his townsmen, and walked on with placid mien, regardless of their sneers, he carefully guarded his little sister from such scenes. She was led by him each morning, closely veiled, to hear mass in an obscure church. And when, on feast-days, the public walks were crowded with cavaliers and dames in splendid attire, and with citizens and peasants in their holiday garb, this gentle pair might be seen in some solitary and shady spot, he bending down and smiling on the lovely child, who looked up to him with eyes expressive of unutterable affection. In the whole world, Flora knew none to love except her brother — she was his junior by nearly seven years — she had grown under his eyes from infancy; and while he attended on the sick bed of their father, he was father, brother, tutor, guardian to Flora — the fondest mother could not have been more indulgent; and yet there was mingled a something beyond, pertaining to their difference of sex. Uniformly observant and kind, he treated her as if she had been a high-born damsel, nurtured in her gayest bower.

Her attire was simple — but thus, she was instructed, it befitted every damsel to dress; her needle-works were such as a princess might have emulated; and while she learnt under her brother’s tutelage to be reserved, studious of obscurity, and always occupied, she was taught that such were the virtues becoming her sex, and no idea of dependence or penury was raised in her mind. Had he been the sole human being that approached her, she might have believed herself to be on a level with the highest in the land; but coming in contact with dependants and various females in the humble class of life, Flora became acquainted with her true position; and learnt, at the same time, to understand and appreciate the unequalled kindness of her brother, and to regard his virtues as superhuman.

Two years passed while this brother and sister continued, in obscurity and poverty, to cherish the dearest blessings of life, hope, honour, and mutual love. If an anxious thought ever crossed Lorenzo, it was for the future destiny of Flora, whose beauty as a child gave promise of perfect loveliness hereafter. For her sake he was anxious to begin the career he had marked out for himself, and resolved no longer to delay his endeavours to revive his party in Sienna, and to seek rather than avoid any contest with the young Count Fabian, on whose overthrow he would rise — Count Fabian, the darling of the citizens, vaunted as a model for a youthful cavalier, overflowing with good qualities, and so adorned by gallantry, subtle wit, and gay, winning manners, that he stepped by right of nature, as well as birth, on the pedestal which exalted him the idol of all around.

It was on a day of public feasting that Lorenzo first presented himself in rivalship with Fabian. His person was unknown to the Count, who, in all the pride of rich dress and splendid accoutrements, looked down with a smile of patronage on the poorly mounted and plainly attired youth, who presented himself to a run a tilt with him. But before the challenge was accepted, the name of his antagonist was whispered to Fabian; then, all the bitterness engendered by family feuds; all the spirit of vengeance, which had been taught as a religion, arose at once in the young noble’s heart; he wheeled round his steed, and riding rudely up to his competitor, ordered him instantly to retire from the course, nor dare to disturb the revels of the citizens by the hated presence of a Mancini. Lorenzo answered with equal scorn; and Fabian, governed by uncontrollable passion, called together his followers to drive the youth with ignominy from the lists. A fearful array was mustered against the hateful intruder; but had their number been trebled, the towering spirit of Lorenzo had met them all. One fell — another was disabled by his weapon before he was disarmed and made prisoner; but his bravery did not avail to extract admiration from his prejudiced foes: they rather poured execrations on him for its disastrous effects, as they hurried him to a dungeon, and called loudly for his punishment and death.

Far from this scene of turmoil and bloodshed, in her poor but quiet chamber, in a remote and obscure part of the town, sat Flora, occupied by her embroidery, musing, as she worked, on her brother's project, and anticipating his success. Hours passed, and Lorenzo did not return, — the day declined, and still he tarried. Flora's busy fancy forged a thousand causes for the delay. Her brother's prowess had awaked the chilly zeal of the partisans of their family; — he was doubtless feasting among them, and the first stone was laid for the rebuilding of their house. At last, a rush of steps upon the staircase, and a confused clamour of female voices calling loudly for admittance, made her rise and open the door; — in rushed several of the women of the house — dismay was painted on their faces — their words flowed in torrents — their eager gestures helped them to a meaning, and, though not without difficulty, amidst the confusion, Flora heard of the disaster and imprisonment of her brother — of the blood shed by his hand, and the fatal issue that such a deed ensured. Flora grew pale as marble. Her young heart was filled with speechless terror; she could form no image of the thing she dreaded, but its indistinct idea was full of fear. Lorenzo was in prison — Count Fabian had placed him there — he was to die! Overwhelmed by such tidings, yet in a moment she rose above their benumbing power, and without proffering a word, or listening to the questions and remonstrances of the women, she rushed past them, down the high staircase, into the street; and then with swift pace to where the public prison was situated. She knew the spot she wished to reach, but she had so seldom quitted her home that she soon got entangled among the streets, and proceeded onwards at random. Breathless, at length, she paused before the lofty portal of a large palace — no one was near — the fast fading twilight of an Italian evening had deepened into absolute darkness. At this moment the glare of flambeaux was thrown upon the street, and a party of horsemen rode up; they were talking and laughing gaily. She heard one addressed as Count Fabian: she involuntarily drew back with instinctive hate; and then rushed forward and threw herself at his horse's feet, exclaiming, "Save my brother!" The young cavalier reined up shortly his prancing steed, angrily reproving her for her heedlessness, and, without deigning another word, entered the court-yard. He had not, perhaps, heard her prayer; — he could not see the suppliant, he spoke but in the impatience of the moment; — but the poor child, deeply wounded by what had the appearance of a personal insult, turned proudly from the door, repressing the bitter tears that filled her eyes. Still she walked on; but night took from her every chance of finding her way to the prison, and she resolved to return home, to engage one of the women of the house, of which she occupied a part, to accompany her. But even to find her way back became matter of difficulty; and she wandered on, discovering no clue to guide her, and far too timid to address any one she might chance to meet. Fatigue and personal fear were added to her other griefs, and tears streamed plentifully down her cheeks as she continued her hopeless journey. At length, at the corner of a street, she recognized an image of the Madonna in a niche, with a lamp burning over it, familiar to her recollection as being near her home. With characteristic piety she knelt before it in thankfulness, and was offering a prayer for Lorenzo, when the sound of steps made her start up, and her brother's voice hailed, and her brother's arms encircled her; it seemed a miracle, but he was there, and all her fears were ended.

Lorenzo anxiously asked whither she had been straying; her explanation was soon given; and he in return related the misfortunes of the morning — the fate that impended over him, averted by the generous intercession of young Fabian himself; and yet — he hesitated to unfold the bitter truth — he was not freely pardoned — he stood there a banished man, condemned to die if the morrow's sun found him within the walls of Sienna.

They had arrived, meanwhile, at their home; and with feminine care, Flora placed a simple repast before her brother, and then employed herself very busily in making various packages. Lorenzo paced the room, absorbed in thought; at length he stopped, and kissing the fair girl, said, "Where can I place thee in safety? how preserve thee, my flower of beauty, while we are divided?"

Flora looked up fearfully. "Do I not go with you?" she asked; "I was making preparations for our journey."

"Impossible, dearest; I go to privation and hardship."

"And I would share them with thee."

"It may not be, sweet sister," replied Lorenzo, "fate divides us, and we must submit. I go to camps — to the society of rude men; to struggle with such fortune as cannot harm me, but which for thee would be fraught with peril and despair. No, my Flora, I must provide safe and honourable guardianship for thee, even in this town." And again Lorenzo meditated deeply on the part he should take, till suddenly a lightning thought flashed on his mind. “It is hazardous,” he murmured, “and yet I do him wrong to call it so. Were our fates reversed, should I not think myself highly honoured by such a trust?” And then he told his sister to don hastily her best attire; to wrap her veil round her, and to come with him. She obeyed — for obedience to her brother was the first and dearest of her duties. But she wept bitterly while her trembling fingers braided her long hair, and she hastily changed her dress.

At length they walked forth again, and proceeded slowly, as Lorenzo employed the precious minutes in consoling and counselling his sister. He promised as speedy a return as he could accomplish; but if he failed to appear as soon as he could wish, yet he vowed solemnly that, if alive and free, she should see him within five years from the moment of parting. Should he not come before, he besought her earnestly to take patience, and to hope for the best till the expiration of that period; and made her promise not to bind herself by any vestal or matrimonial vow in the interim. They had arrived at their destination, and entered the court-yard of a spacious palace. They met no servants; so crossed the court, and ascended the ample stairs. Flora had endeavoured to listen to her brother. He had bade her be of good cheer, and he was about to leave her; he told her to hope; and he spoke of an absence to endure five years — an endless term to her childish anticipations. She promised obedience, but her voice was choked by sobs, and her tottering limbs would not have supported her without his aid. She now perceived that they were entering the light and inhabited rooms of a noble dwelling, and tried to restrain her tears, as she drew her veil closely around her. They passed from room to room, in which preparations for festivity were making; the servants ushered them on, as if they had been invited guests, and conducted them into a hall filled with all the nobility and beauty of Sienna. Each eye turned with curiosity and wonder on the pair. Lorenzo’s tall person, and the lofty yet sweet expression of his handsome countenance put the ladies in good-humour with him, while the cavaliers tried to peep under Flora’s veil.

“It is a mere child,” they said, “and a sorrowing one — what can this mean?

The youthful master of the house, however, instantly recognized his uninvited and unexpected guest; but before he could ask the meaning of his coming, Lorenzo had advanced with his sister to the spot where he stood, and addressed him.

"I never thought, Count Fabian, to stand beneath your roof, and much less to approach you as a suitor. But that Supreme Power, to whose decrees we must all bend, has reduced me to such adversity as, if it be his will, may also visit you, notwithstanding the many friends that now surround you, and the sunshine of prosperity in which you bask. I stand here a banished man and a beggar. Nor do I repine at this my fate. Most willing am I that my right arm alone should create my fortunes; and, with the blessing of God, I hope so to direct my course, that we may yet meet upon more equal terms. In this hope, I turn my steps, not unwillingly, from this city; dear as its name is to my heart — and dear the associations which link its proud towers with the memory of my forefathers. I leave it a soldier of fortune; how I may return is written in the page where your unread destiny is traced as well as mine. But my care ends not with myself. My dying father bequeathed to me this child, my orphan sister, whom I have, until now, watched over with a parent's love. I should ill perform the part intrusted to me, were I to drag this tender blossom from its native bower into the rude highways of life. Lord Fabian, I can count no man my friend; for it would seem that your smiles have won the hearts of my fellow-citizens from me; and death and exile have so dealt with my house, through the intervention of yours, that not one of my name exists within the walls of Sienna. To you alone can I intrust this precious charge. Will you accept it until called upon to render it back to me, her brother, or to the juster hands of our Creator, pure and untarnished as I now deliver her to you? I ask you to protect her helplessness, to guard her honour; will you — dare you accept a treasure, with the assurance of restoring it unsoiled, unhurt?"

The deep expressive voice of the noble youth and his earnest eloquence enchained the ears of the whole assembly; and when he ceased, Fabian, proud of the appeal, and nothing loth in the buoyant spirit of youth to undertake a charge which, thus proffered before his assembled kinsmen and friends, became an honour, answered readily—"I agree, and solemnly before Heaven accept your offer. I declare myself the guardian and protector of your sister; she shall dwell in safety beneath my kind mother's care, and if the saints permit your return, she shall be delivered back to you as spotless as she now is."

Lorenzo bowed his head; something choked his utterance as he thought that he was about to part for ever from his Flora; but he disdained to betray this weakness before his enemies. He took his sister’s hand and gazed upon her slight girlish form with a look of earnest fondness, then murmuring a blessing over her, and kissing her brow, he again saluted Count Fabian, and turning away with measured steps and lofty mien, left the hall. Flora, scarcely understanding what had passed, stood trembling and weeping under her veil. She yielded her passive hand to Fabian, who leading her to his mother, said: “Madam, I ask of your goodness, and the maternal indulgence you have ever shown, to assist me in fulfilling my promise to yonder stripling, by taking under your gracious charge this young orphan.”

“You command here, my son,” said the countess, “and your will shall be obeyed.” Then making a sign to one of her attendants, Flora was conducted from the hall, to where, in solitude and silence, she wept over her brother’s departure, and her own strange and humiliating position.

Flora thus became an inmate of the dwelling of her ancestral foes, and the ward of her most bitter enemy. Lorenzo was gone she knew not wither, and her only pleasure consisted in reflecting that she was obeying his behests. Her life was uniform and tranquil. Her occupation was working tapestry, in which she displayed taste and skill. Sometimes she had the more mortifying task imposed on her of waiting on the Countess de’ Tolomei, who having lost two brothers in the last contest with the Mancini, nourished a deep hatred towards the whole race, and never smiled on the luckless orphan. Flora submitted to every command imposed upon her. She was buoyed up by the reflection that her sufferings were imposed on her by Lorenzo; schooling herself in any moment of impatience by the idea that thus she shared his adversity. No murmur escaped her, though the pride and independence of her nature were often cruelly offended by the taunts and supercilious airs of her patroness or mistress, who was not a bad woman, but who thought it virtue to ill-treat a Mancini. Often, indeed, she neither heard nor heeded these things. Her thoughts were far away, and grief for the loss of her brother’s society weighed too heavily on her to allow her to spend more than a passing sigh on her personal injuries.

The countess was unkind and disdainful, but it was not thus with Flora’s companions. They were amiable and affectionate girls, either of the bourgeois class, or daughters of dependants of the house of Tolomei. The length of time which had elapsed since the overthrow of the Mancini, had erased from their young minds the bitter duty of hatred, and it was impossible for them to live on terms of daily intercourse with the orphan daughter of this ill-fated race, and not to become strongly attached to her. She was wholly devoid of selfishness, and content to perform her daily tasks in inoffensive silence. She had no envy, no wish to shine, no desire of pleasure. She was nevertheless ever ready to sympathise with her companions, and glad to have it in her power to administer to their happiness. To help them in the manufacture of some piece of finery; to assist them in their work; and, perfectly prudent and reserved herself, to listen to all their sentimental adventures; to give her best advice, and to aid them in any difficulty, were the simple means she used to win their unsophisticated hearts. They called her an angel; they looked up to her as to a saint, and in their hearts respected her more than the countess herself.

One only subject ever disturbed Flora's serene melancholy. The praises she perpetually heard lavished on Count Fabian, her brother's too successful rival and oppressor, was an unendurable addition to her many griefs. Content with her own obscurity, her ambition, her pride, her aspiring thoughts were spent upon her brother. She hated Count Fabian as Lorenzo's destroyer, and the cause of his unhappy and hazardous exile. His accomplishments she despised as painted vanities; his person she contemned as the opposite of his prototype. His blue eyes, clear and open as day; his fair complexion and light brown hair; his slight elegant person; his voice, whose tones in song won each listener's heart to tenderness and love; his wit, his perpetual flow of spirits, and unalterable good-humour, were impertinences and frivolities to her who cherished with such dear worship the recollection of her serious, ardent, noble-hearted brother, whose soul was ever set on high thoughts, and devoted to acts of virtue and self-sacrifice; whose fortitude and affectionate courtesy seemed to her the crown and glory of manhood; how different from the trifling flippancy of the butterfly, Fabian: "Name an eagle," she would say, "and we raise our eyes to Heaven, there to behold a creature fashioned in Nature's bounty; but it is a degradation to waste one thought on the insect of a day." Some speech similar to this had been kindly reported to the young count's lady mother, who idolised her son as the ornament and delight of his age and country. She severely reprimanded the incautious Flora, who, for the first time, listened proudly and unyieldingly. From this period her situation grew more irksome; all she could do was to endeavour to withdraw herself entirely from observation, and to brood in deeper secresy over the perfections, while she lamented yet more feelingly the absence, of her brother.

Two or three years thus flew away, and Flora grew from a childish-looking girl of twelve into the bewitching beauty of fifteen. She unclosed like a flower, whose fairest petals are yet shut, but whose half-veiled loveliness is yet more attractive. It was at this time that on occasion of doing honour to a prince of France, who was passing on to Naples, the Countess Tolomei and her son, with a bevy of friends and followers, went out to meet and to escort the royal traveller on his way. Assembled in the hall of the palace, and waiting for the arrival of some of their number, Count Fabian went round his mother's circle, saying agreeable and merry things to all. Wherever his cheerful blue eyes lighted, there smiles were awakened and each young heart beat with vanity at his harmless flatteries. After a gallant speech or two he espied Flora, retired behind her companions.

"What flower is this," he said, "playing at hide and seek with her beauty?" And then, struck by the modest sweetness of her aspect, her eyes cast down, and a rosy blush mantling over her cheek, he added, "What fair angel makes one of your company?"

"An angel indeed, my lord," exclaimed one of the younger girls, who dearly loved her best friend; "she is Flora Mancini."

"Mancini!" exclaimed Fabian, while his manner became at once respectful and kind: "are you the orphan daughter of Ugo — the sister of Lorenzo, committed by him to my care?" For since then, through her careful avoidance, Fabian had never even seen his fair ward. She bowed an assent to his questions, while her swelling heart denied her speech; and Fabian, going up to his mother, said, "Madam, I hope for our honour's sake that this has not before happened. The adverse fortune of this young lady may render retirement and obscurity befitting; but it is not for us to turn into a menial one sprung from the best blood in Italy. Let me entreat you not to permit this to occur again. How shall I redeem my pledged honour, or answer to her brother for this unworthy degradation?"

"Would you have me make a friend and a companion of a Mancini?" asked the countess, with raised colour.

"I ask you not, mother, to do aught displeasing to you," replied the young noble; "but Flora is my ward, not our servant: — permit her to retire; she will probably prefer the privacy of home, to making one among the festive crowd of her house's enemies. If not, let the choice be hers. — Say, gentle one, will you go with us or retire?"

She did not speak, but raising her soft eyes, curtsied to him and to his mother, and quitted the room; so tacitly making her selection.

From this time Flora never quitted the more secluded apartments of the palace, nor again saw Fabian. She was unaware that he had been profuse in his eulogium on her beauty; but that while frequently expressing his interest in his ward, he rather avoided the dangerous power of her loveliness. She led rather a prison life, walking only in the palace garden when it was else deserted, but otherwise her time was at her own disposal, and no commands interfered with her freedom. Her labours were all spontaneous. The countess seldom even saw her, and she lived among this lady's attendants like a free boarder in a convent, who cannot quit the walls, but who is not subservient to the rules of the asylum. She was more busy than ever at her tapestry frame, because the countess prized her work; and thus she could in some degree repay the protection afforded her. She never mentioned Fabian, and always imposed silence on her companions when they spoke of him. But she did this in no disrespectful terms. "He is a generous enemy, I acknowledge," she would say, "but still he is my enemy, and while through him my brother is an exile and a wanderer upon earth, it is painful to me to hear his name."

After the lapse of many months spent in entire seclusion and tranquillity, a change occurred in the tenor of her life. The countess suddenly resolved to pass the Easter festival at Rome. Flora's companions were wild with joy at the prospect of the journey, the novelty, and the entertainment they promised themselves from this visit, and pitied the dignity of their friend, which prevented her from making one in their mistress's train; for it was soon understood that Flora was to be left behind; and she was informed that the interval of the lady's absence was to be passed by her in a villa belonging to the family situated in a sequestered nook among the neighbouring Apennines.

The countess departed in pomp and pride on her so called pilgrimage to the sacred city, and at the same time Flora was conveyed to her rural retreat.

The villa was inhabited only by the peasant and his family who cultivated the farm, or podere, attached to it, and the old cassiere or housekeeper. The cheerfulness and freedom of the country were delightful, and the entire solitude consonant to the habits of the meditative girl, accustomed to the confinement of the city, and the intrusive prattle of her associates. Spring was opening with all the beauty which that season showers upon favoured Italy; while blights and chilling rain usually characterise it in these northern lands. The almond and peach-trees were in blossom; and the vine-dresser sang at his work, perched with his pruning-knife among the trees. Blossoms and flowers, in laughing plenty, graced the soil; and the trees, swelling with buds ready to expand into leaves, seemed to feel the life that animated their dark old boughs. Flora was enchanted; the country labours interested her, and the hoarded experience of old Sandra was a treasure-house of wisdom and amusement. Her attention had hitherto been directed to giving the most vivid hues and truest imitation to her transcript with her needle of some picture given her as a model; but here was a novel occupation. — She learned the history of the bees, watched the habits of the birds, and inquired into the culture of plants. Sandra was delighted with her new companion; and, though notorious for being cross, yet could wriggle her antique lips into smiles for Flora.

To repay the kindness of her guardian and his mother, she still devoted much time to her needle. This occupation but engaged half her attentions; and while she pursued it, she could give herself up to endless reverie on the subject of Lorenzo’s fortunes. Three years had flown since he had left her; and, except a little gold cross brought to her by a pilgrim from Milan, but one month after his departure, she had received no tidings of him. Whether from Milan he had proceeded to France, Germany, or the Holy Land, she did not know; by turns her fancy led him to either of these places, and fashioned the course of events that might have befallen him. She figured to herself his toilsome journeys — his life in the camp — his achievements, and the honours showered on him by kings and nobles: her cheek glowed at the praises he received, and her eye kindled with delight as it imaged him standing with modest pride and an erect but gentle mien before them. Then the fair enthusiast paused; it crossed her recollection like a shadow, that if all had gone prosperously, he had returned to share his prosperity with her, and her faltering heart turned to sadder scenes to account for his protracted absence.

Sometimes, while thus employed, she brought her work into the trellised arbour of the garden, or, when it was too warm for the open air, she had a favourite shady window, which looked down a deep ravine into a majestic wood, whence the sound of falling water met her ears. One day, while she employed her fingers upon the spirited likeness of a hound which made a part of the hunting-piece she was working for the countess, a sharp, wailing cry suddenly broke on her ear, followed by trampling of horses and the hurried steps and loud vociferations of men. They entered the villa on the opposite side from that which her window commanded; but the noise continuing, she rose to ask the reason, when Sandra burst into the room, crying, “O Madonna! he is dead! come and help him; — he has been thrown from his horse, and he will never speak more.” Flora, for an instant, could only think of her brother, as if expecting to see him stretched on his bier. She rushed past the old woman, down into the great hall, in which, lying on a rude litter of boughs, she beheld the inanimate body of Count Fabian. He was surrounded by servitors and peasants, who were all clasping their hands and tearing their hair as, with frightful shrieks, they pressed round their lord, not one of them endeavouring to restore him to life. Flora’s first impulse was to retire; but, casting a second glance on the livid brow of the young count, she saw his eyelids move, and the blood falling in quick drops from his hair on the pavement; she exclaimed, “He is not dead — he bleeds! hasten some of you for a leech!” And meanwhile she hurried to get some water, sprinkled it on his face, and, dispersing the group that hung over him and impeded the free air, the soft breeze playing on his forehead revived him, and he gave manifest tokens of life; so that when the physician arrived, he found that, though he was seriously and even dangerously hurt, every hope might be entertained of his recovery.

Flora undertook the office of his nurse, and fulfilled its duties with unwearied attention. She watched him by night and waited on him by day with that spirit of Christian humility and benevolence which animates a Sister of Charity as she tends the sick. For several days Fabian’s soul seemed on the wing to quit its earthly abode; and the state of weakness that followed his insensibility was scarcely less alarming. At length, he recognized and acknowledged the care of Flora, but she alone possessed any power to calm and guide him during the state of irritability and fever that then ensued. Nothing except her presence controlled his impatience; before her he was so lamb-like, that she could scarcely have credited the accounts that others gave her of his violence, but that, whenever she returned, after leaving him for any time, she heard his voice far off in anger, and found him with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, all which demonstrations subsided into meek acquiescence when she drew near.

In a few weeks he was able to quit his room; but the motion of his horse was forbidden him, and any noise or sudden sound drove him almost insane. So loud is an Italian's quietest movements, that Flora was obliged to prevent the approach of any except herself; and her soft voice and noiseless footfall were the sweetest medicine she could administer to her patient. It was painful to her to be in perpetual attendance on Lorenzo's rival and foe, but she subdued her heart to her duty, and custom helped to reconcile her. As he grew better, she could not help remarking the intelligence of his countenance, and the kindness and cordiality of his manners. There was an unobtrusive and delicate attention and care in his intercourse with her that won her to be pleased. When he conversed, his discourse was full of entertainment and variety. His memory was well-stored with numerous *fabliaux, novelle,* and romances, which he quickly discovered to be highly interesting to her, and so contrived to have one always ready from the exhaustless stock he possessed. These romantic stories reminded her of the imaginary adventures she had invented, in solitude and silence, for her brother; and each tale of foreign countries had a peculiar charm, which animated her face as she listened, so that Fabian could have gone on for ever, only to mark the varying expression of her countenance as he proceeded. Yet she acknowledged these attractions in him as a Catholic nun may the specious virtues of a heretic; and, while he contrived each day to increase the pleasure she derived from his society, she satisfied her conscience with regard to her brother by cherishing in secret a little quiet stock of family hate, and by throwing over her manners, whenever she could recollect so to do, a cold and ceremonious tone, which she had the pleasure of seeing vexed him heartily.

Nearly two months had passed, and he was so well recovered, that Flora began to wonder that he did not return to Sienna, and of course to fulfil her duty by wishing that he should; and yet, while his cheek was sunk through past sickness, and his elastic step grown slow, she, as a nurse desirous of completing her good work, felt averse to his entering too soon on the scene of the busy town and its noisy pleasures. At length, two or three of his friends having come over to see him, he agreed to return with them to the city. A significant glance which they cast on his young nurse probably determined him. He parted from her with a grave courtesy and a profusion of thanks, unlike his usual manner, and rode off without alluding to any probability of their meeting again.

She fancied that she was relieved from a burthen when he went, and was surprised to find the days grow tedious, and mortified to perceive that her thoughts no longer spent themselves so spontaneously on her brother, and to feel that the occupation of a few weeks could unhinge her mind and dissipate her cherished reveries; — thus, while she felt annoyance from the absence of Fabian, she hated him the more for having, in addition to his other misdeeds, invaded the sanctuary of her dearest thoughts. She was beginning to conquer this listlessness, and to return with renewed zest to her usual occupations, when, in about a week after his departure, Fabian suddenly returned. He came upon her as she was gathering flowers for the shrine of the Madonna; and, on seeing him, she blushed as rosy red as the roses she held. He looked infinitely worse in health than when he went: his wan cheeks and sunk eyes excited her concern; and her earnest and kind questions somewhat revived him. He kissed her hand, and continued to stand beside her as she finished her nosegay. Had any one seen the glad, fond look with which he regarded her as she busied herself among the flowers, even old Sandra might have prognosticated his entire recovery under her care.

Flora was totally unaware of the feelings that were excited in Fabian’s heart, and the struggle he made to overcome a passion too sweet and too seductive, when awakened by so lovely a being, ever to be subdued. He had been struck with her some time ago, and avoided her. It was through his suggestion that she passed the period of the countess’s pilgrimage in this secluded villa; nor had he thought of visiting her there; but, riding over one day to inquire concerning a foal rearing for him, his horse had thrown him, and caused him that injury which had made him so long the inmate of the same abode. Already prepared to admire her — her kindness, her gentleness, and her unwearied patience during his illness, easily conquered a heart most ready and yet most unwilling to yield. He had returned to Sienna resolved to forget her; but he came back assured that his life and death were in her hands.

At first Count Fabian had forgot that he had any but his own feelings and prejudices, and those of his mother and kindred, to overcome; but when the tyranny of love vanquished these, he began to fear a more insurmountable impediment in Flora. The first whisper of love fell like mortal sin upon her ear; and disturbed, and even angry, she replied:

“Methinks you wholly forget who I am, and what you are. I speak not of ancient feuds, though there were enough to divide us for ever. Know that I hate you as my brother’s murderer. Restore Lorenzo to me — recall him from banishment — erase the memory of all that he has suffered through you — win his love and approbation; and when all this is fulfilled, which never can be, speak a language which now it is as the bitterness of death for me to hear!”

And saying this, she hastily retired, to conceal the floods of tears which this, as she termed it, insult had caused to flow; to lament yet more deeply her brother’s absence and her own dependence.

Fabian was not so easily silenced; and Flora had no wish to renew scenes and expressions of violence so foreign to her nature. She imposed a rule on herself, never swerving from which she hoped to destroy the ill-omened love of her protector. She absented herself from him as much as possible; and when with him assumed such chilling indifference of manner, and made apparent in her silence so absolute and cold a rejection of all his persuasions, that had not love with its unvanquishable hopes reigned absolutely in young Fabian’s heart, he must have despaired. He ceased to speak of his affection, so to win back her ancient kindness. This was at first difficult; for she was timid as a young bird, whose feet have touched the limed twigs. But naturally credulous, and quite inexperienced, she soon began to believe that her alarm was exaggerated, and to resume those habits of intimacy which had heretofore subsisted between them. By degrees Fabian contrived to insinuate the existence of his attachment — he could not help it. He asked no return — he would wait for Lorenzo’s arrival, which he was sure could not be far distant. Her displeasure could not change, nor silence destroy, a sentiment which survived in spite of both. Intrenched in her coldness and her indifference, she could not quarrel with each word he spoke; and hoping to weary him out by her defensive warfare, she fancied that he would soon cease his pursuit in disgust.

The countess had been long away; she had proceeded on to view the feast of San Gennaro at Naples, and had not received tidings of her son's illness. She was now expected back; and Fabian, still lingering at the villa, resolved to return to Sienna in time to receive her. Both he and Flora were therefore surprised one day, when she suddenly entered the apartment where they both were. Flora had long peremptorily insisted that he should not intrude while she was employed on her embroidery frame; but this day he had made so good a pretext, that for the first time he was admitted, and then suffered to stay a few minutes — they now neither of them knew how long; she was busy at her work; and he sitting near, gazing unreproved on her unconscious face and graceful figure, felt himself happier than he had ever been before.

The countess was sufficiently surprised, and not a little angry; but before she could do more than utter one exclamation, Fabian interrupted, by entreating her not to spoil all. He drew her away — he made his own explanations, and urged his wishes with resistless persuasion. The countess had been used to indulge him in every wish; it was impossible for her to deny any strongly urged request; his pertinacity — his agitation — his entreaties half won her; and the account of his illness, and his assurances, seconded by those of all the family, that Flora had saved his life, completed the conquest, and she became in her turn a suitor for her son, to the orphan daughter of Mancini.

Flora, educated till the age of twelve by one who never consulted his own pleasures and gratifications, but went right on in the path of duty, regardless of pain or disappointment, had no idea of doing aught merely because she or others might wish it. Since that time she had been thrown on her own resources; and jealously cherishing her individuality in the midst of her enemies, every feeling of her heart had been strengthened by solitude and by a sense of mental independence. She was the least likely of any one to go with the stream, or to yield to the mere influence of circumstances. She felt, she knew, what it became her to do, and that must be done in spite of every argument.

The countess's expostulations and entreaties were of no avail. The promise she had made to her brother of engaging herself by no vow for five years must be observed under every event; it was asked her at the sad and solemn hour of their parting, and was thus rendered doubly sacred. So constituted, indeed, were her feelings, that the slightest wish ever remembered by her having been expressed by Lorenzo, had more weight with her than the most urgent prayers of another. He was a part of her religion; reverence and love for him had been moulded into the substance of her soul from infancy; their very separation had tended to render these impressions irradicable. She brooded over them for years; and when no sympathy or generous kindness was afforded her — when the countess treated her like an inferior and a dependant, and Fabian had forgotten her existence, she had lived from month to month, and from year to year, cherishing the image of her brother, and only able to tolerate the annoyances that beset her existence, by considering that her patience, her fortitude, and her obedience, were all offerings at the shrine of her beloved Lorenzo's desires.

It is true that the generous and kindly disposition of Fabian won her to regard him with a feeling nearly approaching tenderness, though this emotion was feeble, the mere ripple of the waves, compared to the mighty tide of affection that set her will all one way, and made her deem every thing trivial except Lorenzo's return — Lorenzo's existence — obedience to Lorenzo. She listened to her lover's persuasions so unyieldingly that the countess was provoked by her inflexibility; but she bore her reproaches with such mildness, and smiled so sweetly, that Fabian was the more charmed. She admitted that she owed him a certain submission as the guardian set over her by her brother; Fabian would have gladly exchanged this authority for the pleasure of being commanded by her; but this was an honour he could not attain, so in playful spite he enforced concessions from her. At his desire she appeared in society, dressed as became her rank, and filled in his house the station a sister of his own would have held. She preferred seclusion, but she was averse to contention, and it was little that she yielded, while the purpose of her soul was as fixed as ever.

The fifth year of Lorenzo's exile was now drawing to a close, but he did not return, nor had any intelligence been received of him. The decree of his banishment had been repealed, the fortunes of his house restored, and his palace, under Fabian's generous care, rebuilt. These were acts that demanded and excited Flora's gratitude; yet they were performed in an unpretending manner, as if the citizens of Sienna had suddenly become just and wise, without his interference. But these things dwindled into trifles while the continuation of Lorenzo's absence seemed the pledge of her eternal misery; and the tacit appeal made to her kindness, while she had no thought but for her brother, drove her to desperation. She could no longer tolerate the painful anomaly of her situation; — she could not endure her suspense for her brother's fate, nor the reproachful glances of Fabian's mother and his friends. He himself was more generous, — he read her heart, and, as the termination of the fifth year drew nigh, ceased to allude to his own feelings, and appeared as wrapt as herself in doubt concerning the fate of the noble youth, whom they could scarcely entertain a hope of ever seeing more. This was small comfort to Flora. She had resolved that when the completion of the fifth year assured her that her brother was for ever lost, she would never see Fabian again. At first she had resolved to take refuge in a convent, and in the sanctity of religious vows. But she remembered how averse Lorenzo had always shown himself to this vocation, and that he had preferred to place her beneath the roof of his foe, than within the walls of a nunnery. Besides, young as she was, and despite herself, full of hope, she recoiled from shutting the gates of life upon herself for ever. Notwithstanding her fears and sorrow, she clung to the belief that Lorenzo lived; and this led her to another plan. When she had received her little cross from Milan, it was accompanied by a message, that he believed he had found a good friend in the archbishop of that place. This prelate, therefore, would know whither Lorenzo had first bent his steps, and to him she resolved to apply. Her scheme was easily formed. She possessed herself of the garb of a pilgrim, and resolved on the day following the completion of the fifth year to depart from Sienna, and bend her steps towards Lombardy, buoyed up by the hope that she should gain some tidings of the object of all her care.

Meanwhile Fabian had formed a similar resolve. He had learnt the fact from Flora, of Lorenzo having first resorted to Milan, and he determined to visit that city, and not to return without certain information. He acquainted his mother with his plan, but begged her not to inform Flora, that she might not be tortured by double doubt during his absence.

The anniversary of the fifth year was come, and with it the eve of these several and separate journeys. Flora had retired to spend the day at the villa before mentioned. She had chosen to retire thither for various reasons. Her escape was more practicable thence than in the town; and she was anxious to avoid seeing both Fabian and his mother, now that she was on the point of inflicting severe pain on them. She spent the day at the villa and in its gardens, musing on her plans, regretting the quiet of her past life — saddened on Fabian's account — grieving bitterly for Lorenzo. She was not alone, for she had been obliged to confide in one of her former companions, and to obtain her assistance. Poor little Angeline was dreadfully frightened with the trust reposed in her, but did not dare expostulate with or betray her friend; and she continued near her during this last day, by turns trying to console and weeping with her. Towards evening they wandered together into the wood contiguous to the villa. Flora had taken her harp with her, but her trembling fingers refused to strike its chords; she left it, she left her companion, and strayed on alone to take leave of a spot consecrated by many a former visit. Here the umbrageous trees gathered about her, and shaded her with their thick and drooping foliage; — a torrent dashed down from a neighbouring rock, and fell from a height into a rustic basin, hollowed to receive it; then, overflowing the margin at one spot, it continued falling over successive declivities, till it reached the bottom of a little ravine, when it stole on in a placid and silent course. This had ever been a favourite resort of Flora. The twilight of the wood and the perpetual flow, the thunder, the hurry, and the turmoil of the waters, the varied sameness of the eternal elements, accorded with the melancholy of her ideas, and the endless succession of her reveries. She came to it now; she gazed on the limpid cascade — for the last time; a soft sadness glistened in her eyes, and her attitude denoted the tender regret that filled her bosom; — her long bright tresses streaming in elegant disorder, her light veil and simple, yet rich, attire, were fitfully mirrored in the smooth face of the rushing waters. At this moment the sound of steps more firm and manly than those of Angeline struck her ear, and Fabian himself stood before her; he was unable to bring himself to depart on his journey without seeing her once again. He had ridden over to the villa, and, finding that she had quitted it, sought and found her in the lone recess where they had often spent hours together which had been full of bliss to him. Flora was sorry to see him, for her secret was on her lips, and yet she resolved not to give it utterance. He was ruled by the same feeling. Their interview was therefore short, and neither alluded to what sat nearest the heart of each. They parted with a simple “Good night,” as if certain of meeting the following morning: each deceived the other, and each was in turn deceived. There was more of tenderness in Flora’s manner than there had ever been; it cheered his faltering soul, about to quit her, while the anticipation of the blow he was about to receive from her made her regard as venial this momentary softening towards her brother’s enemy.

Fabian passed the night at the villa, and early the next morning he departed for Milan. He was impatient to arrive at the end of his journey, and often he thrust his spurs into his horse’s sides, and put him to his speed, w’hich even then appeared slow. Yet he was aware that his arrival at Milan might advance him not a jot towards the ultimate object of his journey; and he called Flora cruel and unkind, until the recollection of her kind farewell came across to console and cheer him.

He stopped the first night at Empoli, and, crossing the Arno, began to ascend the Apennines on the northern side. Soon he penetrated their fastnesses, and entered deep into the ilex woods. He journeyed on perseveringly, and yet the obstructions he met with were many, and borne with impatience. At length, on the afternoon of the third day, he arrived at a little rustic inn, hid deep in a wood, which shewed signs of seldom being visited by travellers. The burning sun made it a welcome shelter for Fabian; and he deposited his steed in the stable, which he found already partly occupied by a handsome black horse, and then entered the inn to seek refreshment for himself. There seemed some difficulty in obtaining this. The landlady was the sole domestic, and it was long before she made her appearance, and then she was full of trouble and dismay; a sick traveller had arrived — a gentleman to all appearance dying of a malignant fever. His horse, his well-stored purse, and rich dress shewed that he was a cavalier of consequence: — the more the pity. There was no help, nor any means of carrying him forward; yet half his pain seemed to arise from his regret at being detained — he was so eager to proceed to Sienna. The name of his own town excited the interest of Count Fabian, and he went up to visit the stranger, while the hostess prepared his repast.

Meanwhile Flora awoke with the lark, and with the assistance of Angeline attired herself in her pilgrim’s garb. From the stir below, she was surprised to find that Count Fabian had passed the night at the villa, and she lingered till he should have departed, as she believed, on his return to

Sienna. Then she embraced her young friend, and taking leave of her with many blessings and thanks, alone, with heaven, as she trusted, for her guide, she quitted Fabian's sheltering roof, and with a heart that maintained its purpose in spite of her feminine timidity, began her pilgrimage.

Her journey performed on foot was slow, so that there was no likelihood that she could overtake her lover, already many miles in the advance. Now that she had begun it, her undertaking appeared to her gigantic, and her heart almost failed her. The burning sun scorched her; never having before found herself alone in a highway, a thousand fears assailed her, and she grew so weary, that soon she was unable to support herself. By the advice of a landlady at an inn, where she stopped, she purchased a mule to help her on in her long drawn way. Yet with this help, it was the third night before she arrived at Empoli, and then crossing the Arno, as her lover had done before, her disasters seemed to begin to unfold themselves, and to grow gigantic, as she entered the dark woods of the Apennines, and found herself amidst the solitude of its vast forests. Her pilgrim's garb inspired some respect, and she rested at convents by the way. The pious sisters held up their hands in admiration of her courage; while her heart beat faintly with the knowledge that she possessed absolutely none. Yet, again and again, she repeated to herself, that the Apennines once passed, the worst would be over. So she toiled on, now weary, now frightened — very slowly, and yet very anxious to get on with speed.

On the evening of the seventh day after her quitting Sienna, she was still entangled in the mazes of these savage hills. She was to sleep at a convent on their summit that night, and the next day arrive at Bologna. This hope had cheered her through the day; but evening approached, the way grew more intricate, and no convent appeared. The sun had set, and she listened anxiously for the bell of the Ave Maria, which would give her hope that the goal she sought was nigh; but all was silent, save the swinging boughs of the vast trees, and the timid beating of her own heart; darkness closed around her, and despair came with the increased obscurity, till a twinkling light, revealing itself among the trees, afforded her some relief. She followed this beamy guide till it led her to a little inn, where the sight of a kind-looking woman and the assurance of safe shelter, dispelled her terrors, and filled her with grateful pleasure.

Seeing her so weary, the considerate hostess hastened to place food before her, and then conducted her to a little low room where her bed was prepared. “I am sorry, lady,” said the landlady, in a whisper, “not to be able to accommodate you better; but a sick cavalier occupies my best room — it is next to this — and he sleeps now, and I would not disturb him. Poor gentleman! I never thought he would rise more; and under Heaven he owes his life to one who, whether he is related to him or not, I cannot tell, for he did not accompany him. Four days ago he stopped here, and I told him my sorrow — how I had a dying guest, and he charitably saw him, and has since then nursed him more like a twin brother than a stranger.”

The good woman whispered on. Flora heard but little of what she said; and overcome by weariness and sleep, paid no attention to her tale. But having performed her orisons, placed her head on the pillow, and was quickly lapped in the balmy slumber she so much needed.

Early in the morning she was awoke by a murmur of voices in the next room. She started up, and recalling her scattered thoughts, tried to remember the account the hostess had given her the preceding evening. The sick man spoke, but his accent was low, and the words did not reach her; — he was answered — could Flora believe her senses? did she not know the voice that spoke these words?—”Fear nothing, a sweet sleep has done you infinite good; and I rejoice in the belief that you will speedily recover. I have sent to Sienna for your sister, and do indeed expect that Flora will arrive this very day.”

More was said, but Flora heard no more: she had risen, and was hastily dressing herself; in a few minutes she was by her brother’s, her Lorenzo’s bedside, kissing his wan hand, and assuring him that she was indeed Flora.

“These are indeed wonders,” he at last said, “and if you are mine own Flora, you perhaps can tell me who this noble gentleman is, who day and night has watched beside me, as a mother may by her only child, giving no time to repose, but exhausting himself for me.”

“How, dearest brother,” said Flora, “can I truly answer your question? to mention the name of our benefactor were to speak of a mask and a disguise, not a true thing. He is my protector and guardian, who has watched over and preserved me, while you wandered far; his is the most generous heart in Italy, offering past enmity and family pride as sacrifices at the altar of nobleness and truth. He is the restorer of your fortunes in your native town —”

“And the lover of my sweet sister. — I have heard of these things, and was on my way to confirm his happiness and to find my own, when sickness laid me thus low, and would have destroyed us both for ever, but for Fabian Tolomei—”

“Who now exerts his expiring authority to put an end to this scene,” interrupted the young count: “not till this day has Lorenzo been sufficiently composed to hear any of these explanations, and we risk his returning health by too long a conversation. The history of these things and of his long wanderings, now so happily ended, must be reserved for a future hour; when assembled in our beloved Sienna, exiles and foes no longer, we shall long enjoy the happiness which Providence, after so many trials, has bounteously reserved for us.”

THE INVISIBLE GIRL

This slender narrative has no pretensions to the regularity of a story, or the development of situations and feelings; it is but a slight sketch, delivered nearly as it was narrated to me by one of the humblest of the actors concerned: nor will I spin out a circumstance interesting principally from its singularity and truth, but narrate, as concisely as I can, how I was surprised on visiting what seemed a ruined tower, crowning a bleak promontory overhanging the sea, that flows between Wales and Ireland, to find that though the exterior preserved all the savage rudeness that betokened many a war with the elements, the interior was fitted up somewhat in the guise of a summer-house, for it was too small to deserve any other name. It consisted but of the ground-floor, which served as an entrance, and one room above, which was reached by a staircase made out of the thickness of the wall. This chamber was floored and carpeted, decorated with elegant furniture; and, above all, to attract the attention and excite curiosity, there hung over the chimney-piece — for to preserve the apartment from damp a fire-place had been built evidently since it had assumed a guise so dissimilar to the object of its construction — a picture simply painted in water-colours, which seemed more than any part of the adornments of the room to be at war with the rudeness of the building, the solitude in which it was placed, and the desolation of the surrounding scenery. This drawing represented a lovely girl in the very pride and bloom of youth; her dress was simple, in the fashion of the day — (remember, reader, I write at the beginning of the eighteenth century), her countenance was embellished by a look of mingled innocence and intelligence, to which was added the imprint of serenity of soul and natural cheerfulness. She was reading one of those folio romances which have so long been the delight of the enthusiastic and young; her mandoline was at her feet — her parroquet perched on a huge mirror near her; the arrangement of furniture and hangings gave token of a luxurious dwelling, and her attire also evidently that of home and privacy, yet bore with it an appearance of ease and girlish ornament, as if she wished to please. Beneath this picture was inscribed in golden letters, “The Invisible Girl.”

Rambling about a country nearly uninhabited, having lost my way, and being overtaken by a shower, I had lighted on this dreary looking tenement, which seemed to rock in the blast, and to be hung up there as the very symbol of desolation. I was gazing wistfully and cursing inwardly my stars which led me to a ruin that could afford no shelter, though the storm began to pelt more seriously than before, when I saw an old woman's head popped out from a kind of loophole, and as suddenly withdrawn: — a minute after a feminine voice called to me from within, and penetrating a little brambly maze that skreened a door, which I had not before observed, so skilfully had the planter succeeded in concealing art with nature I found the good dame standing on the threshold and inviting me to take refuge within. "I had just come up from our cot hard by," she said, "to look after the things, as I do every day, when the rain came on — will ye walk up till it is over?" I was about to observe that the cot hard by, at the venture of a few rain drops, was better than a ruined tower, and to ask my kind hostess whether "the things" were pigeons or crows that she was come to look after, when the matting of the floor and the carpeting of the staircase struck my eye. I was still more surprised when I saw the room above; and beyond all, the picture and its singular inscription, naming her invisible, whom the painter had coloured forth into very agreeable visibility, awakened my most lively curiosity: the result of this, of my exceeding politeness towards the old woman, and her own natural garrulity, was a kind of garbled narrative which my imagination eked out, and future inquiries rectified, till it assumed the following form.

Some years before in the afternoon of a September day, which, though tolerably fair, gave many tokens of a tempestuous evening, a gentleman arrived at a little coast town about ten miles from this place; he expressed his desire to hire a boat to carry him to the town of about fifteen miles further on the coast. The menaces which the sky held forth made the fishermen loathe to venture, till at length two, one the father of a numerous family, bribed by the bountiful reward the stranger promised — the other, the son of my hostess, induced by youthful daring, agreed to undertake the voyage. The wind was fair, and they hoped to make good way before nightfall, and to get into port ere the rising of the storm. They pushed off with good cheer, at least the fishermen did; as for the stranger, the deep mourning which he wore was not half so black as the melancholy that wrapt his mind. He looked as if he had never smiled — as if some unutterable thought, dark as night and bitter as death, had built its nest within his bosom, and brooded therein eternally; he did not mention his name; but one of the villagers recognised him as Henry Vernon, the son of a baronet who possessed a mansion about three miles distant from the town for which he was bound. This mansion was almost abandoned by the family; but Henry had, in a romantic fit, visited it about three years before, and Sir Peter had been down there during the previous spring for about a couple of months.

The boat did not make so much way as was expected; the breeze failed them as they got out to sea, and they were fain with oar as well as sail, to try to weather the promontory that jutted out between them and the spot they desired to reach. They were yet far distant when the shifting wind began to exert its strength, and to blow with violent though unequal puffs. Night came on pitchy dark, and the howling waves rose and broke with frightful violence, menacing to overwhelm the tiny bark that dared resist their fury. They were forced to lower every sail, and take to their oars; one man was obliged to bale out the water, and Vernon himself took an oar, and rowing with desperate energy, equalled the force of the more practised boatmen. There had been much talk between the sailors before the tempest came on; now, except a brief command, all were silent. One thought of his wife and children, and silently cursed the caprice of the stranger that endangered in its effects, not only his life, but their welfare; the other feared less, for he was a daring lad, but he worked hard, and had no time for speech; while Vernon bitterly regretting the thoughtlessness which had made him cause others to share a peril, unimportant as far as he himself was concerned, now tried to cheer them with a voice full of animation and courage, and now pulled yet more strongly at the oar he held. The only person who did not seem wholly intent on the work he was about, was the man who baled; every now and then he gazed intently round, as if the sea held afar off, on its tumultuous waste, some object that he strained his eyes to discern. But all was blank, except as the crests of the high waves showed themselves, or far out on the verge of the horizon, a kind of lifting of the clouds betokened greater violence for the blast. At length he exclaimed —”Yes, I see it! — the larboard oar! — now! if we can make yonder light, we are saved!” Both the rowers instinctively turned their heads, — but cheerless darkness answered their gaze.

"You cannot see it," cried their companion, "but we are nearing it; and, please God, we shall outlive this night." Soon he took the oar from Vernon's hand, who, quite exhausted, was failing in his strokes. He rose and looked for the beacon which promised them safety; — it glimmered with so faint a ray, that now he said, "I see it;" and again, "it is nothing:" still, as they made way, it dawned upon his sight, growing more steady and distinct as it beamed across the lurid waters, which themselves be came smoother, so that safety seemed to arise from the bosom of the ocean under the influence of that flickering gleam.

"What beacon is it that helps us at our need?" asked Vernon, as the men, now able to manage their oars with greater ease, found breath to answer his question.

"A fairy one, I believe," replied the elder sailor, "yet no less a true: it burns in an old tumble-down tower, built on the top of a rock which looks over the sea. We never saw it before this summer; and now each night it is to be seen, — at least when it is looked for, for we cannot see it from our village; — and it is such an out of the way place that no one has need to go near it, except through a chance like this. Some say it is burnt by witches, some say by smugglers; but this I know, two parties have been to search, and found nothing but the bare walls of the tower.

All is deserted by day, and dark by night; for no light was to be seen while we were there, though it burned sprightly enough when we were out at sea.

"I have heard say," observed the younger sailor, "it is burnt by the ghost of a maiden who lost her sweetheart in these parts; he being wrecked, and his body found at the foot of the tower: she goes by the name among us of the 'Invisible Girl.'"

The voyagers had now reached the landing-place at the foot of the tower. Vernon cast a glance upward, — the light was still burning. With some difficulty, struggling with the breakers, and blinded by night, they contrived to get their little bark to shore, and to draw her up on the beach: they then scrambled up the precipitous pathway, overgrown by weeds and underwood, and, guided by the more experienced fishermen, they found the entrance to the tower, door or gate there was none, and all was dark as the tomb, and silent and almost as cold as death.

“This will never do,” said Vernon; “surely our hostess will show her light, if not herself, and guide our darkling steps by some sign of life and comfort.”

“We will get to the upper chamber,” said the sailor, “if I can but hit upon the broken down steps: but you will find no trace of the Invisible Girl nor her light either, I warrant.”

“Truly a romantic adventure of the most disagreeable kind,” muttered Vernon, as he stumbled over the unequal ground: “she of the beacon-light must be both ugly and old, or she would not be so peevish and inhospitable.”

With considerable difficulty, and, after divers knocks and bruises, the adventurers at length succeeded in reaching the upper story; but all was blank and bare, and they were fain to stretch themselves on the hard floor, when weariness, both of mind and body, conduced to steep their senses in sleep.

Long and sound were the slumbers of the mariners. Vernon but forgot himself for an hour; then, throwing off drowsiness, and finding his roughcouch uncongenial to repose, he got up and placed himself at the hole that served for a window, for glass there was none, and there being not even a rough bench, he leant his back against the embrasure, as the only rest he could find. He had forgotten his danger, the mysterious beacon, and its invisible guardian: his thoughts were occupied on the horrors of his own fate, and the unspeakable wretchedness that sat like a night-mare on his heart.

It would require a good-sized volume to relate the causes which had changed the once happy Vernon into the most woeful mourner that ever clung to the outer trappings of grief, as slight though cherished symbols of the wretchedness within. Henry was the only child of Sir Peter Vernon, and as much spoiled by his father’s idolatry as the old baronet’s violent and tyrannical temper would permit. A young orphan was educated in his father’s house, who in the same way was treated with generosity and kindness, and yet who lived in deep awe of Sir Peter’s authority, who was a widower; and these two children were all he had to exert his power over, or to whom to extend his affection. Rosina was a cheerful-tempered girl, a little timid, and careful to avoid displeasing her protector; but so docile, so kind-hearted, and so affectionate, that she felt even less than Henry the discordant spirit of his parent. It is a tale often told; they were playmates and companions in childhood, and lovers in after days. Rosina was frightened to imagine that this secret affection, and the vows they pledged, might be disapproved of by Sir Peter. But sometimes she consoled herself by thinking that perhaps she was in reality her Henry's destined bride, brought up with him under the design of their future union; and Henry, while he felt that this was not the case, resolved to wait only until he was of age to declare and accomplish his wishes in making the sweet Rosina his wife. Meanwhile he was careful to avoid premature discovery of his intentions, so to secure his beloved girl from persecution and insult. The old gentleman was very conveniently blind; he lived always in the country, and the lovers spent their lives together, unrebuked and uncontrolled. It was enough that Rosina played on her mandoline, and sang Sir Peter to sleep every day after dinner; she was the sole female in the house above the rank of a servant, and had her own way in the disposal of her time. Even when Sir Peter frowned, her innocent caresses and sweet voice were powerful to smooth the rough current of his temper. If ever human spirit lived in an earthly paradise, Rosina did at this time: her pure love was made happy by Henry's constant presence; and the confidence they felt in each other, and the security with which they looked forward to the future, rendered their path one of roses under a cloudless sky. Sir Peter was the slight drawback that only rendered their tete — a — tete more delightful, and gave value to the sympathy they each bestowed on the other. All at once an ominous personage made its appearance in Vernon-Place, in the shape of a widow sister of Sir Peter, who, having succeeded in killing her husband and children with the effects of her vile temper, came, like a harpy, greedy for new prey, under her brother's roof. She too soon detected the attachment of the unsuspicious pair. She made all speed to impart her discovery to her brother, and at once to restrain and inflame his rage. Through her contrivance Henry was suddenly despatched on his travels abroad, that the coast might be clear for the persecution of Rosina; and then the richest of the lovely girl's many admirers, whom, under Sir Peter's single reign, she was allowed, nay, almost commanded, to dismiss, so desirous was he of keeping her for his own comfort, was selected, and she was ordered to marry him. The scenes of violence to which she was now exposed, the bitter taunts of the odious Mrs. Bainbridge, and the reckless fury of Sir Peter, were the more frightful and overwhelming from their novelty. To all she could only oppose a silent, tearful, but immutable steadiness of purpose: no threats, no rage could extort from her more than a touching prayer that they would not hate her, because she could not obey.

"There must he something we don't see under all this," said Mrs. Bainbridge, "take my word for it, brother, — she corresponds secretly with Henry. Let us take her down to your seat in Wales, where she will have no pensioned beggars to assist her; and we shall see if her spirit be not bent to our purpose."

Sir Peter consented, and they all three posted down to , — shire, and took up their abode in the solitary and dreary looking house before alluded to as belonging to the family. Here poor Rosina's sufferings grew intolerable: — before, surrounded by well-known scenes, and in perpetual intercourse with kind and familiar faces, she had not despaired in the end of conquering by her patience the cruelty of her persecutors; — nor had she written to Henry, for his name had not been mentioned by his relatives, nor their attachment alluded to, and she felt an instinctive wish to escape the dangers about her without his being annoyed, or the sacred secret of her love being laid bare, and wronged by the vulgar abuse of his aunt or the bitter curses of his father. But when she was taken to Wales, and made a prisoner in her apartment, when the flinty mountains about her seemed feebly to imitate the stony hearts she had to deal with, her courage began to fail. The only attendant permitted to approach her was Mrs. Bainbridge's maid; and under the tutelage of her fiend-like mistress, this woman was used as a decoy to entice the poor prisoner into confidence, and then to be betrayed. The simple, kind-hearted Rosina was a facile dupe, and at last, in the excess of her despair, wrote to Henry, and gave the letter to this woman to be forwarded. The letter in itself would have softened marble; it did not speak of their mutual vows, it but asked him to intercede with his father, that he would restore her to the kind place she had formerly held in his affections, and cease from a cruelty that would destroy her. "For I may die," wrote the hapless girl, "but marry another — never!" That single word, indeed, had sufficed to betray her secret, had it not been already discovered; as it was, it gave increased fury to Sir Peter, as his sister triumphantly pointed it out to him, for it need hardly be said that while the ink of the address was yet wet, and the seal still warm, Rosina's letter was carried to this lady. The culprit was summoned before them; what ensued none could tell; for their own sakes the cruel pair tried to palliate their part. Voices were high, and the soft murmur of Rosina's tone was lost in the howling of Sir Peter and the snarling of his sister. "Out of doors you shall go," roared the old man; "under my roof you shall not spend another night." And the words "infamous seductress," and worse, such as had never met the poor girl's ear before, were caught by listening servants; and to each angry speech of the baronet, Mrs. Bainbridge added an envenomed point worse than all.

More dead than alive, Rosina was at last dismissed. Whether guided by despair, whether she took Sir Peter's threats literally, or whether his sister's orders were more decisive, none knew, but Rosina left the house; a servant saw her cross the park, weeping, and wringing her hands as she went. What became of her none could tell; her disappearance was not disclosed to Sir Peter till the following day, and then he showed by his anxiety to trace her steps and to find her, that his words had been but idle threats. The truth was, that though Sir Peter went to frightful lengths to prevent the marriage of the heir of his house with the portionless orphan, the object of his charity, yet in his heart he loved Rosina, and half his violence to her rose from anger at himself for treating her so ill. Now remorse began to sting him, as messenger after messenger came back without tidings of his victim; he dared not confess his worst fears to himself; and when his inhuman sister, trying to harden her conscience by angry words, cried, "The vile hussy has too surely made away with herself out of revenge to us;" an oath, the most tremendous, and a look sufficient to make even her tremble, commanded her silence. Her conjecture, however, appeared too true: a dark and rushing stream that flowed at the extremity of the park had doubtless received the lovely form, and quenched the life of this unfortunate girl. Sir Peter, when his endeavours to find her proved fruitless, returned to town, haunted by the image of his victim, and forced to acknowledge in his own heart that he would willingly lay down his life, could he see her again, even though it were as the bride of his son — his son, before whose questioning he quailed like the veriest coward; for when Henry was told of the death of Rosina, he suddenly returned from abroad to ask the cause — to visit her grave, and mourn her loss in the groves and valleys which had been the scenes of their mutual happiness. He made a thousand inquiries, and an ominous silence alone replied. Growing more earnest and more anxious, at length he drew from servants and dependants, and his odious aunt herself, the whole dreadful truth. From that moment despair struck his heart, and misery named him her own. He fled from his father’s presence; and the recollection that one whom he ought to revere was guilty of so dark a crime, haunted him, as of old the Eumenides tormented the souls of men given up to their torturings.

His first, his only wish, was to visit Wales, and to learn if any new discovery had been made, and whether it were possible to recover the mortal remains of the lost Rosina, so to satisfy the unquiet longings of his miserable heart. On this expedition was he bound, when he made his appearance at the village before named; and now in the deserted tower, his thoughts were busy with images of despair and death, and what his beloved one had suffered before her gentle nature had been goaded to such a deed of woe.

While immersed in gloomy reverie, to which the monotonous roaring of the sea made fit accompaniment, hours flew on, and Vernon was at last aware that the light of morning was creeping from out its eastern retreat, and dawning over the wild ocean, which still broke in furious tumult on the rocky beach. His companions now roused themselves, and prepared to depart. The food they had brought with them was damaged by sea water, and their hunger, after hard labour and many hours fasting, had become ravenous. It was impossible to put to sea in their shattered boat; but there stood a fisher’s cot about two miles off, in a recess in the bay, of which the promontory on which the tower stood formed one side, and to this they hastened to repair; they did not spend a second thought on the light which had saved them, nor its cause, but left the ruin in search of a more hospitable asylum. Vernon cast his eves round as he quitted it, but no vestige of an inhabitant met his eye, and he began to persuade himself that the beacon had been a creation of fancy merely. Arriving at the cottage in question, which was inhabited by a fisherman and his family, they made an homely breakfast, and then prepared to return to the tower, to refit their boat, and if possible bring her round. Vernon accompanied them, together with their host and his son. Several questions were asked concerning the Invisible Girl and her light, each agreeing that the apparition was novel, and not one being able to give even an explanation of how the name had become affixed to the unknown cause of this singular appearance; though both of the men of the cottage affirmed that once or twice they had seen a female figure in the adjacent wood, and that now and then a stranger girl made her appearance at another cot a mile off, on the other side of the promontory, and bought bread; they suspected both these to be the same, but could not tell. The inhabitants of the cot, indeed, appeared too stupid even to feel curiosity, and had never made any attempt at discovery. The whole day was spent by the sailors in repairing the boat; and the sound of hammers, and the voices of the men at work, resounded along the coast, mingled with the dashing of the waves. This was no time to explore the ruin for one who whether human or supernatural so evidently withdrew herself from intercourse with every living being. Vernon, however, went over the tower, and searched every nook in vain; the dingy bare walls bore no token of serving as a shelter; and even a little recess in the wall of the staircase, which he had not before observed, was equally empty and desolate.

Quitting the tower, he wandered in the pine wood that surrounded it, and giving up all thought of solving the mystery, was soon engrossed by thoughts that touched his heart more nearly, when suddenly there appeared on the ground at his feet the vision of a slipper. Since Cinderella so tiny a slipper had never been seen; as plain as shoe could speak, it told a tale of elegance, loveliness, and youth. Vernon picked it up; he had often admired Rosina’s singularly small foot, and his first thought was a question whether this little slipper would have fitted it. It was very strange! — it must belong to the Invisible Girl. Then there was a fairy form that kindled that light, a form of such material substance, that its foot needed to be shod; and yet how shod? — with kid so fine, and of shape so exquisite, that it exactly resembled such as Rosina wore! Again the recurrence of the image of the beloved dead came forcibly across him; and a thousand home-felt associations, childish yet sweet, and lover-like though trifling, so filled Vernon’s heart, that he threw himself his length on the ground, and wept more bitterly than ever the miserable fate of the sweet orphan.

In the evening the men quitted their work, and Vernon returned with them to the cot where they were to sleep, intending to pursue their voyage, weather permitting, the following morning.

Vernon said nothing of his slipper, but returned with his rough associates. Often he looked back; but the tower rose darkly over the dim waves, and no light appeared. Preparations had been made in the cot for their accommodation, and the only bed in it was offered Vernon; but he refused to deprive his hostess, and spreading his cloak on a heap of dry leaves, endeavoured to give himself up to repose. He slept for some hours; and when he awoke, all was still, save that the hard breathing of the sleepers in the same room with him interrupted the silence. He rose, and going to the window, — looked out over the now placid sea towards the mystic tower; the light burning there, sending its slender rays across the waves. Congratulating himself on a circumstance he had not anticipated, Vernon softly left the cottage, and, wrapping his cloak round him, walked with a swift pace round the bay towards the tower. He reached it; still the light was burning. To enter and restore the maiden her shoe, would be but an act of courtesy; and Vernon intended to do this with such caution, as to come unaware, before its wearer could, with her accustomed arts, withdraw herself from his eyes; but, unluckily, while yet making his way up the narrow pathway, his foot dislodged a loose fragment, that fell with crash and sound down the precipice. He sprung forward, on this, to retrieve by speed the advantage he had lost by this unlucky accident. He reached the door; he entered: all was silent, but also all was dark. He paused in the room below; he felt sure that a slight sound met his ear. He ascended the steps, and entered the upper chamber; but blank obscurity met his penetrating gaze, the starless night admitted not even a twilight glimmer through the only aperture. He closed his eyes, to try, on opening them again, to be able to catch some faint, wandering ray on the visual nerve; but it was in vain. He groped round the room: he stood still, and held his breath; and then, listening intently, he felt sure that another occupied the chamber with him, and that its atmosphere was slightly agitated by an-other's respiration. He remembered the recess in the staircase; but, before he approached it, he spoke: — he hesitated a moment what to say. "I must believe," he said, "that misfortune alone can cause your seclusion; and if the assistance of a man — of a gentleman—"

An exclamation interrupted him; a voice from the grave spoke his name — the accents of Rosina syllabled, "Henry! — is it indeed Henry whom I hear?"

He rushed forward, directed by the sound, and clasped in his arms the living form of his own lamented girl — his own Invisible Girl he called her; for even yet, as he felt her heart beat near his, and as he entwined her waist with his arm, supporting her as she almost sank to the ground with agitation, he could not see her; and, as her sobs prevented her speech, no sense, but the instinctive one that filled his heart with tumultuous gladness, told him that the slender, wasted form he pressed so fondly was the living shadow of the Hebe beauty he had adored.

The morning saw this pair thus strangely restored to each other on the tranquil sea, sailing with a fair wind for L — , whence they were to proceed to Sir Peter's seat, which, three months before, Rosina had quitted in such agony and terror. The morning light dispelled the shadows that had veiled her, and disclosed the fair person of the Invisible Girl. Altered indeed she was by suffering and woe, but still the same sweet smile played on her lips, and the tender light of her soft blue eyes were all her own. Vernon drew out the slipper, and shoved the cause that had occasioned him to resolve to discover the guardian of the mystic beacon; even now he dared not inquire how she had existed in that desolate spot, or wherefore she had so sedulously avoided observation, when the right thing to have been done was, to have sought him immediately, under whose care, protected by whose love, no danger need be feared. But Rosina shrunk from him as he spoke, and a death-like pallor came over her cheek, as she faintly whispered, "Your father's curse — your father's dreadful threats!" It appeared, indeed, that Sir Peter's violence, and the cruelty of Mrs. Bainbridge, had succeeded in impressing Rosina with wild and unvanquishable terror. She had fled from their house without plan or forethought — driven by frantic horror and overwhelming fear, she had left it with scarcely any money, and there seemed to her no possibility of either returning or proceeding onward. She had no friend except Henry in the wide world; whither could she go? — to have sought Henry would have sealed their fates to misery; for, with an oath, Sir Peter had declared he would rather see them both in their coffins than married. After wandering about, hiding by day, and only venturing forth at night, she had come to this deserted tower, which seemed a place of refuge. How she had lived since then she could hardly tell; — she had lingered in the woods by day, or slept in the vault of the tower, an asylum none were acquainted with or had discovered: by night she burned the pine-cones of the wood, and night was her dearest time; for it seemed to her as if security came with darkness. She was unaware that Sir Peter had left that part of the country, and was terrified lest her hiding-place should be revealed to him. Her only hope was that Henry would return — that Henry would never rest till he had found her. She confessed that the long interval and the approach of winter had visited her with dismay; she feared that, as her strength was failing, and her form wasting to a skeleton, that she might die, and never see her own Henry more.

An illness, indeed, in spite of all his care, followed her restoration to security and the comforts of civilized life; many months went by before the bloom revisiting her cheeks, and her limbs regaining their roundness, she resembled once more the picture drawn of her in her days of bliss, before any visitation of sorrow. It was a copy of this portrait that decorated the tower, the scene of her suffering, in which I had found shelter. Sir Peter, overjoyed to be relieved from the pangs of remorse, and delighted again to see his orphan-ward, whom he really loved, was now as eager as before he had been averse to bless her union with his son: Mrs. Bainbridge they never saw again. But each year they spent a few months in their Welch mansion, the scene of their early wedded happiness, and the spot where again poor Rosina had awoke to life and joy after her cruel persecutions. Henry's fond care had fitted up the tower, and decorated it as I saw; and often did he come over, with his "Invisible Girl," to renew, in the very scene of its occurrence, the remembrance of all the incidents which had led to their meeting again, during the shades of night, in that sequestered ruin.

THE END

THE SMUGGLER AND HIS FAMILY

Whose house is some lone bark, — whose toil the sea,
  Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
  Has chosen. — MOSCHUS

HOW SWIFTLY THE sweetest flowers fade when once expanded — they but too quickly droop upon the stalk! How do human beings pass from the brightness and bloom of hope and youth, into the dull fruition of life, with all its cares and woes! There is no sadder, nor more humiliating sight, than to contrast the shews of mid-life with the promise of its dawn, and to see the furrows and the pale hues with which the hours with busy fingers paint the smooth brow and glowing cheek. Our low-born but most sweet heroine was once the pride of her hamlet — the kindest, gentlest but gayest of the village maidens. If she ever sighed, a smile followed so swift behind, that the picture was only softened not tainted by the change. Jane sighed, alas! because she loved; — that leveller of rank, of intellect, and too often of moral feeling, bound her to one unworthy of her. Yet then the youthful sailor who had engaged her affections was not destitute of merit. If he was wild and reckless, he was generous and brave. Jane's father opposed this union, and she submitted to his control; but when his death left her alone in the world, and her poverty secured her few and cold friends, she gave herself without a fear to him, whose dearest wish was to protect, support, and render happy the sweet being who confided her existence to his care.

These occurrences were many years old, and we draw the veil from before her wedded life; — when the lapse of time had brought other persons, other interests on the scene. Beneath a rugged lonely crag, on the solitary wild sea-shore, at the extreme point of Cornwall — was a rude cot, which, somewhat sheltered from behind, was exposed to the whole fury of the southern gales. No flower could bloom in its scant waste garden, under the influence of the frequent spray; and the tree that rose in mockery above the roof, had withered at its summit, as the roots penetrating the ungenial soil found no nourishment for the leafless boughs. The cot was thatched, and weather-beaten as it was, the strange rich colouring with which the sea and wind had painted it, made it contrast picturesquely with the white cliff and pale sands. The interior of this humble dwelling was poverty-stricken yet clean, and with some attempt at neatness. The family within sat at their frugal supper; there was besides on the scantly-covered table, a dark case bottle, frequently clutched by the master of the hut. Jane it was who sat there; her eyes having lost their lustre — her hair its golden hue — her complexion all its brightness. She was thin, faded, care-worn: yet a sweet patient smile played upon her lips, and her subdued voice possessed the same melody which had made her laugh so cheering in her happier hour. On her knee lay asleep a little cherub, but a few months old; and another child, of about three years, was greedily devouring his supper. But Jane's eyes were fixed on one some years his senior, her eldest — her darling — the only one surviving out of several born in her better days. He was about fourteen — with his mother's eyes and smile, a ruddy complexion, and such frankness on his brow, such alacrity in all his motions, as bespoke his lightsome heart and kind disposition. With louring glance — weather-worn cheeks, and an expression of mixed ferocity and endurance — sat the husband and the father, who had so ill fulfilled his part in life.

He had been bred a sailor, and on his marriage turned fisherman. Untamed passions and evil courses brought on ruin; he was forced to quit the village where he was known, and fixing himself in this desolate spot, he soon became acquainted with a desperate gang of smugglers, who persuaded him to become one of them. A remnant of shame at first induced him to conceal this new misfortune from his wife; but a pack of goods to be concealed, and a search to be evaded, forced him to disclose his secret. Since then his better feelings seemed quite to desert him, and in talk and action he assimilated himself more and more to his lawless, fierce associates. Jane's too gentle temper was incapable of coping with his rough nature, whom in spite of all she loved, even when she feared him. But far more deeply seated than the duteous, but thankless attachment she cherished as a wife, was her adoration of her son. She had been a fond daughter, and her tenderness as a mother was equally zealous and devoted. The sole reward she desired to reap for her virtues, the sole compensation for her sufferings, was to be derived from the gallant and affectionate disposition of her boy.

That he should endure the blighting ills of poverty was bad enough; that out of hearing of "village chimes," he should receive none of the benefits of civilized life — attend no school — scarce ever enter a church, and pass his days beyond the reach of public opinion and the natural restraints of society, which exert so salutary an influence over both rich and poor, was sufficing evil. That he should depend upon his parents for guidance through the tortuous paths of life, and that from her lips alone he should learn how to merit the approbation of God and man and his own conscience, were circumstances that made her pass many hours of anxious solicitude. But the reality was fraught with far greater perils.

It is no uncommon thing to find men hardening their hearts against the sense of right as regards themselves; setting the world and moral dictates at defiance, and yet painfully alive to the good name and rectitude of their children. It was this feeling that Jane had endeavoured to awaken in her husband’s mind. She strove with all sweetness and gentleness to induce him to resolve that although he had been thrown by adversity on dangerous and (this she slurred over) criminal pursuits, yet that their offspring should be preserved from the hardships, the humiliations and the possible guilt attendant on a lawless mode of life. But she spoke to one formed of rugged and coarse materials — whose best virtue was a sturdy pride that made him glory in his shame. He listened with bitterness to his wife’s persuasions — he swore that his son should not be brought up to despise and condemn him — and he defended with vulgar and plausible arguments his right to cheat the revenue, and to defend himself against the aggressions of its administrators.

There is no system of illegal traffic more venial in most eyes than smuggling. The laws on this score are perpetually transgressed, even by the legislators themselves — the revenue officers are held by every one in detestation, and they take a coarse pride in making themselves obnoxious. The courage, the activity, and the resource — the hardships and the dangers attendant on his pursuit, paints a smuggler in Salvator hues, and imparts a kind of heroic elevation to our idea of him. But to the anxious mother all this wore a different appearance; the unmasked truth was replete with deformity. Habits of intemperance and vice — a savage readiness to inflict injury — which though somewhat redeemed by daring to meet the same, filled the heart with such hate and violence, as was at utter war with the charity and love which distinguishes a virtuous character: an aptitude for stratagem and falsehood — which might be called resource, but which, coming in contact with the ingenuous and upright disposition of her son, she deemed frightful pollution. These were the lessons he was to learn under his father's schooling; and she reflected with agony on practises which were to cloud his fearless brow with the scowl of brutal insolence and conscious falsehood, and accustom his dear hand, which now would handle a wounded nestling with tenderness, to grasp the instruments of death, and to use them resolutely and recklessly in the pursuit of his calling.

Jane's soul was bent on rescuing her boy; while her husband, plunging deeper in the practises of his dangerous associates, grew each day more evilly inclined, and resisted still more impatiently the soft persuasions of his wife. Thus far she had concealed the real state of things from her son; and conquering, even when seeming to yield, she had hitherto prevented his father from making the fatal disclosure. She used the time thus gained by endeavouring to implant, so that they might never be uprooted, simple moral truths in his ductile and ingenuous mind. Her cares had a singular effect. Had they lived as other fishermen, Charles would have associated with companions of his own age, and become initiated in worldly practises. But the loneliness of their position and Jane's watchfulness prevented this; so that he was brought up in guarded innocence, and preserved a respect for truth and a sense of duty seldom found among the lowly bred. Still she gained another day — week — month upon her husband — still Charles's partnership in his perilous career was unasked, and his help was only afforded in their pursuit as fishermen — their ostensible mode of existence. Yet, though delayed, the awful moment for ever hovered near; the mother's soul was in tumults — should she confide in, and warn her son, and beseech him to fly, and to seek to obtain his subsistence elsewhere, before he should be forced to enter on a course of crime? The instinct of her mild soul was not to give pain — and she shrunk from the necessity of parting with her boy, and the consequent anger of her husband. She could endure much, but she had no energy to act. She was woman in every fold and corner of her too soft nature. She had stood up against her husband only through the simplicity, the singleness and charity of her character — but she felt the coward in her heart, when she thought of quitting her defensive ground, for open and aggressive resistance.

Thus the boy attained his fifteenth year, never having joined his father in any of his perilous expeditions. He looked up to him with reverence, as youth does to experience, and regarded him with filial attachment, notwithstanding his habitual roughness and occasional severity. There was a buoyancy in the youth's spirit, a fearlessness and a fortitude which the father prided himself on, as rendering him doubly fit for tasks of danger. Yet (so contradictory is human nature) in spite of pride, in spite of the bitter scorn that gnawed at his heart, when it was represented to him that his was an example to be avoided by his son, he felt a secret satisfaction in yielding to his wife's entreaties, and an unacknowledged reluctance to meet the disapproving glance of integrity and innocence. Charles adored his mother. He stored up her moral and religious lessons with pious care. To assist, to console, to caress her filled his heart with gladness — and his bright smile, elastic step, and cheering voice did console her — and spread a sun-light over her darkened life, which it was agony to imagine might ever be eclipsed.

Another year had elapsed in this way, when on a morning — a fair morning, — a light breeze just rippling the blue plains of ocean — father and son launched their fishing-boat, as usual, and put out to sea. Jane watched them while in the offing they were preparing to throw their nets; when suddenly their sail was again set, and she saw them directing their course round the promontory that shut in the little bay. The poor woman knew that the rendezvous for the smugglers lay round that point. She uttered a cry, as if her feeble voice, calling "Stop!" would be heard across the dividing waves, and she rushed to the water's edge—"He does not hear me," she cried in anguish, "he will not hear — nor the sea, nor the winds — nor God — all are deaf, and my Charles is lost for ever! What — what can it mean?" —

Her husband had returned from an expedition of peculiar length and peril but the night before, and had, kissing his wife's wan cheek — bid her "not fret, for that soon, with God's blessing, he would give up the trade, and be well to do." In the morning he had told her emphatically that he should but cast his nets and return. Had he deceived her; — or did some signal direct his movements? — It was all one.

She saw, as from a tower, the end of all — her boy the associate of vicious lawless men, exposed to hardships which the human frame could scarcely endure — painful nightwatches — apprehensions wrought to agony — and combats which, end as they would, in triumph or defeat, were attended by two-fold crime and danger. With eyes streaming with tears, she gazed upon the departing sail — the sun shone, the breeze was balmy — the waves danced and glittered beneath the bright sky, while a dark tempest loured over her foreboding soul.

Her younger son seeing her cry, immediately began an accompaniment; while Charley's dog, who was lying asleep in the sun, got up and shook himself, and stood looking as with inquiring eyes, on the disappearance of the well-known skiff; and as it was lost behind the headland, turned to his mistress with a sorrowful whine: "True, poor fellow!" said Jane, "it is evil work they are going upon." The poor animal came up to her, and licked her hand, and returned to stretch himself on the beach.

Charley's dog was an especial favourite with his mother. During an inclement winter, when wrecks were but too frequent on the coast, the fisherman and his son had put off to give their adventurous aid to the crew of a small schooner, which had struck on a sunken reef. As they approached the vessel, each vast wave threatened to overwhelm them, and as they rose and fell in the trough of the sea, it seemed as if the deck of the vessel was absolutely deserted; yet a cry was borne to them, mingled with the roar of the surges — it seemed a human cry, and Charles, though then a child, strained every little nerve to hasten to the succour of his fellow-creature in distress: it was no human being — the deck was absolutely vacant; but a dog stood on the poop, whining fearfully. The fisherman was unwilling to endanger himself to save a dog, but Charles prayed hard, and the animal seeing them near leaped into the sea; the waves dashing over him deprived him of every power of swimming, but they bore him towards Charles; he caught him up, and the half-strangled thing slowly revived when out of the water. The poor fellow seemed quite aware of his mighty debt of gratitude, and strove to pay it in love and fidelity. The first time Charles had put to sea afterwards, the dog's terror and resistance were something beyond instinct — he wailed — he pulled his new master back by his coat; and when he saw that his endeavours were vain, that his preserver was embarked, and was pushing from shore, as if resolved to share his fate, with a short sharp bark he plunged into the water and swam after them.

He was grown old now, and was usually left at home, the guard of the cottage and the playmate of the children. Still he could seldom be enticed in doors when his master was at sea; his usual post was on the beach; during calm weather he stretched his lazy length on the sands, but when the day was stormy, he perpetually watched the tumult of the waves, and his bark gave the first token of the well-known skiff having hove in sight.

The sea was tranquil, and nothing now called forth his disquietude, while Jane unable to calm her agitation, or to turn her thoughts elsewhere, stood, her eyes fixed on the point of land round which the boat had disappeared. The unclouded sun reached the zenith — Jane was obliged to occupy herself with her children — yet at every moment she was at the door of the cot, in fearful, restless expectation. The sunny summer day melting into evening, — the flow and then the ebb of the mighty flood — the light surf left glittering on the shingles — the cliff glowing with sunset hues, and her own quiet home, seeming with every other object, to repose in peace beneath the placid eye of heaven — all of beauty and of good was so much misery to Jane. The hours passed so slowly — so slowly had high water mark been gained, and then more slowly deserted; a ship or two rose on the horizon, and sunk again — the sea birds sought their nests in the rocks, but no light sail skimmed the blue surface, nor tiny hull speckled the laughing deep. Jane ascended the cliff: with her glass she visited every nook of the watery circumference; the moon rose as daylight faded, and "wove her chain upon the deep" — her chain of light and beauty; the flickering beams sometimes presented deceptive visions to the anxious mother's eyes — her heart swelled, and then sunk within her, as hope and expectation failed.

Two endless wearying days passed thus, and a long wakeful night. She had retired to rest again on the third, when the dog's bark roused her — she heard the splashing of the waters and steps upon the strand; soon her husband and son entered the hut: she cast a hasty inquiring glance on the first, and then fixed a long look of scrutiny on the latter. They both seemed overworn — drooping with fatigue. But little was said, except that her husband demanded supper. She placed food before them: Charles endeavoured to eat, but after a few vain efforts, he suddenly left the room. Little Tommy, who had got up to see his brother, was sent after him, and brought back word that he was gone to bed. Jane looked wistfully at her husband, but he was gloomy, and only said, "The best thing for him! We have had a hard bout of it — I shall turn in too."

Deep sleep soon came over the weary seaman; but Jane remained up, and as she listened in the stillness of night, she heard a deep sigh in her son's room: she stole in softly, and kneeling at his bedside, as he turned his open eyes away from the light, she said, “Are you ill — can I help you?”

He did not answer; and she said again—”You have not asked my blessing, Charles, to-night.”

“Do not speak to me, Mother,” said the lad; “I cannot speak to you, nor pray — I don’t believe I ever shall again” — and then half starting from his bed as if terrified, he cried, “If I could only sleep — if I could only not see — do leave the light with me, Mother — I see something so terrible in the dark! I am afraid — I never was a coward before!”

His voice quivered; and Jane, in an agony of tears threw herself on his neck, crying—”Sinful woman that I am, I have brought you to this!”

“Then you know — Why, why did you not warn me?” Tears suffocated him as he spoke; he rested his head on her bosom, while his burthened spirit found relief in passionate weeping.

He had a direful tale to tell, which with some difficulty Jane extracted from him. She resolved to know the worst; and as he went on, her sympathy and consolation lightened the weight of his unhappiness.

It would seem that, during their last expedition, the smugglers had collected a booty of more than usual value, at less than the usual cost. This they had stowed in a cavern prepared and enlarged by them for that purpose, and had hastened to give notice of the cargo to the dealers with whom they were accustomed to traffic. They expected a golden harvest, and Jane’s husband, for the first time, solaced himself with the perspective of an honester livelihood and more peaceful days. That morning he had gone to sea with a blithe heart, and looking on his son, he felt a throb of pleasure to remember that he had been brought up innocently. At that moment glancing towards the point of cliff selected by his associates for their signals, he beheld one indicative of urgent danger and pressing need of his assistance. Such are our good intentions when resting neither on principle nor truth. This man’s short-lived sense of right vanished, and without another thought, save on what danger might threaten his friends, he bid Charles put the boat about, and, seizing the rudder, he steered for the place of rendezvous.

The men believed themselves to be either tracked or betrayed — at least they felt sure that they were discovered, and only not attacked on account of their numbers, and they knew that a reinforcing party had been sent for with all speed. Their immediate employment was to transfer their goods to other hiding places — to bury a part, and to hide the rest under the more desolate cliffs along the coast, — they were ready to throw it all into the sea, or destroy it in any way rather than it should fall into the hands of their enemies. Charles and his father landed, they scrambled up the rocks and entered the dark-browed cavern; its atmosphere was impregnated with the fumes of tobacco and spirits: the boy marked even in the gloom, the fierce hard faces of the men within — their garb set off by fire-arms; the bales of goods scattered about; and young, untaught, and unsuspecting as he was, the truth flashed on him at once, while the glad welcome given to “Jem Harding” revealed to him that his father was one of them.

This pen would utterly fail in its task were it to attempt to record the rough foul language of these men; their oaths, their imprecations, and their slang, in which fortunately poor Charles was no adept. His father replied in the same evil phrase, and equipped himself in all haste with arms, while one of his comrades handed a pistol to the boy, saying, “Stick this i’ thy belt, youngster.” Charles recoiled, and the man, with a yell of a laugh and an oath, asked if he was afraid it would bite him.

All hands now fell to work, and the day was passed almost uninterruptedly in the task of removing their goods. They knew that there were scouts about, and they adopted various expedients to mislead them. They transported a part of their ware inland, and such part as would not be injured by wet, they reserved to sink in a hole of the rocks covered at high water. Charles was obedient and worked hard among them, lending his ready aid without a murmur, so that he heard his father reproached several times for not bringing so handy a lad among them before.

Yet none of their labours was performed without danger and stratagem. At one time they discussed the eligibility of taking prisoner a man, who in the guise of a countryman was perpetually hovering about. The horrible mutterings and unintelligible language in which this discussion was carried on, hid much of their meaning from the tyro in their art; but their oaths, their dark looks, their hands frequently in gesticulation touching the weapons at their sides, awoke worse terrors in his imagination. He fancied that they meditated murder, and his blood curdled — the hair on his head seemed to stand on end, and his knees knocked together in horror. He drew a step or two nearer his father, but he was loudest in counselling the most desperate measures: the man, as if warned by instinct, appeared no more;

but each time they drew near the place where he had been seen, Charles's heart beat loud, and his limbs were paralysed by fear. At another time it was necessary to mislead a person who was bent on accompanying them. Charles, as the least suspicious looking of the groupe, was to perform this task. He who in the loneliness of his home and habits of frankness with his sweet mother, had never, during his life, said the thing that was not, was now, with brazen front, boldly to assert a lie. His brow flushed, shame sat on his cheek, and his tongue refused its office. Yet he felt the necessity of fulfilling the directions given him, even for the stranger's own sake — it was done, the falsehood uttered, which appeared to him to taint his whole future life, and to render heaven itself his enemy!

All this was playing idly on the threshold of horrors. Night came on — soft balmy night, and the tranquillity of the ocean and the fair beams of the gentle moon were dressed as betrayers of their work: they were now employed in transporting several casks across a creek to a dark cleft in the rocks; two or three times had they visited it in safety — one voyage only remained, when, on nearing their destination, suddenly the sea seemed alive with boats — a file of men appeared on the cliff above — in every way they were surrounded. They threw their freight into the sea; they took to their oars; shots were fired, and a yell of voices raised that filled the very air with terror. The smugglers sought only to make good their escape; their assailants were desirous of assuring the capture of their goods, so that the struggle, though fierce, was short; and in gaining the open sea, the smugglers found that they were not pursued. At one moment — one terrible moment — a revenue officer had thrust his pistol close to Charles's breast; his father dashed it away and fired his own; the man fell heavily into the water — the boy saw the body with its distorted death-struck face float past: in a minute more the sail which his associates had contrived to set was filled by the land breeze, and they were wafted beyond the cutters of their enemies: the shouts, the voices, late so loud and dread, died away, and they found themselves free and safe in the wide and misty waters. Still the woman-taught boy fancied that the dead man floated near — his face upturned on the weltering sea. He dared not lift his gaze to the moon-lit sky, for there dwelt the Eternal One, so grievously offended. Terror had been in his heart, remorse and despair succeeded; and meanwhile he sickened to hear the imprecation and the revilings of the crew — his father loudest and fiercest among them.

All that night and the next day they did not dare approach the shore.

They had but two or three biscuits with them, which had been greedily devoured on the first sensation of hunger, and a very small portion of one had fallen to Charles's share; nor had they any thing except spirits to allay their thirst. With these some stupified themselves; others grew noisy and unruly; one man fell overboard, but the calm was such that he was easily picked up, and the accident served but to augment the loud squabbling on board. Charles turned with disgust from the maddening draughts; — sickening with hunger, and exhausted with fatigue, he stretched himself at the bottom of the boat, believing he should surely die — now crying as he thought of his dear mother — now rocked into disturbed slumbers by the waves. Towards the close of the day they drew near shore; at night-fall they landed. Charles and his father found their own skiff in the sheltered cove where they had left it, and here too they found water: a little refreshed, and yet overworn, they piloted themselves back to their well-known beach and peaceful home.

It was a difficult task for Jane to soothe and comfort her son; but by degrees his troubled thoughts grew calmer — his heavy eyes closed, and slumber crept subduingly over him. Jane watched by him and wept the while, not daring to regard the future, and seeing in the present the realization of her worst fears. Grey morning dawned: Harding awoke; he rose, and, not speaking to his wife for very shame, he went down to the beach to prepare his boat for sea. In a short time his voice was heard calling for his son. Charles had already risen, he had eaten of the breakfast set before him by his mother, but he also was silent and thoughtful. Jane's heart beat fast when she heard her husband call him; but still the lad said nothing, and walked down to the water's edge.

Soon however the unhappy woman perceived that there was strife between the father and son. Charles stood on the sands, and, unmoved in gesture, seemed with firmness but respect to assert his resolves, while Harding, with loud voice and inflamed face, poured forth a torrent of abuse; his hand too was raised, and before Jane, rushing down to stay it, could reach him, he felled his son to the earth. Charles rose again and stood as before firm and collected. Harding, not wishing to encounter his wife's reproaches, leaped alone into the boat, heaping curses on his child's head — wishing that he had suffered him to be shot, and swearing that he would himself murder him, if he found him sneaking about the house on his return — the blood fall on his head if he ever saw him more! With these last words he pushed the boat from shore, while Charles, embracing his mother, said, "Do not grieve; it must be so — I must leave you for a little time: he will be kind to you when I am gone; and soon, when I have got into a good service, I will send for you, and he too will leave this wicked trade."

"He wanted you to join them again?" asked Jane.

"Do not speak of it, Mother," said the boy; "it could not be my duty to obey him, and I would not. I will go where I can earn an honest livelihood; and we shall meet again and be happy together."

Still Charles lingered with his mother all day; and it was not until when, in the evening, a little sail in the offing seemed to betoken his father's return, that with many tears and embraces he sought her blessing; and then, his little wardrobe tied up in a handkerchief, his dog as his companion, with no weakness of purpose, though weeping still, he ascended the cliff, and took his way to a near sea-port.

He was gone — and yet the skiff did not near, and no Harding returned. Jane at first could think only of her boy — of whither he had bent his steps, and where his dear head, poor and friendless as he was, would that night find a pillow. Still as night crept on, and her husband did not come back, new fears were awakened, and on every side disasters seemed to crowd about her. She waited long; but nature was exhausted: she had slept so little the preceding nights, that at last she went to rest; and taking her youngest darling to her bosom, and giving herself to dreamy hopes, which seemed sent from heaven to console her, she sunk into a deep refreshing sleep.

When she awoke, it was with an effort that she recalled her thoughts, and became aware of her situation. Day was far advanced, yet her children slept, and all was still except the waving sea. The wind had risen, and broken up the calm which had so long brooded on the deep. The waters were now in tumult, and the high tide brought the spray to her very door. She got up and looked out — all was desert. Hers was a life of loneliness; she was at the distance of four miles from a town, and not a cottage was to be found within a considerable distance of her abode. No one ever visited her, so that now, her son away, her husband not returning, she had no one with whom to exchange conjecture, or to whom to communicate her fears. She could only watch in terror, and sadly count the hours. The little occupation her children gave her was salutary; yet it could not divest her thoughts from a dearer object.

At first her husband's protracted absence was felt as a relief by her; she dreaded to hear her angel-boy reviled, and to encounter the bad passions of this guilty man. But when three days had passed, these feelings were exchanged for a mortal inquietude. Her little stock of food had almost vanished; she was nearly destitute of money; her two children required her constant attendance, while suspense almost deprived her of every faculty, save that of listening to each sound that broke upon her frightful solitude. Still the billows warred, and broke tumultuously on the beach; and the tide rose and fell, and day was exchanged for night; but it seemed as if never again was she to have communication with the outward world — as if on that lonely sea-shore she was to wear her life away, in ignorance of all nearest and dearest to her.

Unable to struggle any longer with her anxiety, she at length made up her mind to some exertion. She would walk at least to the nearest town — perhaps her son had written to her — perhaps she should obtain some intelligence of the party of smugglers of whom her husband was one. Early in the morning she arose to prepare for her walk: with heaviness of heart she endeavoured to swallow some food, but in vain — while her little son jumped about in delight at the expected visit to the town. On a sudden there was scratching at the door of her cot — a well-known bark; she rushed to open it; poor Sailor the dog leaped up about her with frantic delight — but he was alone! She ran to the beach; she called her son's name, and he coming from behind a rock which had concealed him, flew into her arms. At length he cried, "My Father! — is it true? I thought he might be within — but where — I need not ask; the story I heard is true: he is taken!"

"Taken!" exclaimed Jane.

"Dearest Mother," said Charles, terrified at what he had to reveal, "do you not know? They were attacked again, some are prisoners, some escaped, and some fell: I had hoped that my father might have got back safe here."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed the unhappy woman: "My poor babes!"

“Do not be afraid, Mother!” replied her son; “at the worst I am a man now, and can work for you: I will go to the old place; if the boat is there I can get to — in three or four hours, as the wind is fair, and so on to the assize town. If he is in jail I shall soon know. I shall be back again tomorrow, or next day at furthest.”

He was running off, when he returned again: “Take care of Sailor; he must not follow me. If you do not see me by Thursday night, go to the post office: I will write.”

He was gone; his coming had been a dream, but for the new fears he had left behind. Some of the smugglers had fallen in the fray — she embraced her children — her *orphans.* It seemed as if it required no new intelligence to assure her of her calamity — it was — it must be all over!

To wait — to wait! Life was one long dreary expectation. To attend to her children; to caress Charles’s dog, and to watch for his returning sail: the sea had become calmer, and a few hours might bring him again to her; yet he came not, and two days passed, and Thursday evening arrived, and still no Charles! Again she had to resolve on a visit to the post office with a yet more anxious heart. The morning came, and she was prepared for her expedition. She ascended the cliff, and gave one last look at the wide sea. The west wind that had reigned for many days was again rising into tempest, and lashing the ocean to fury: the clouds fled like living things across the sky; the waters turbid and foaming, kept up an incessant roar, and the beach was covered with surf. “God grant he do not put to sea!” sighed Jane, fearing little that he would. She held her youngest child in her arms, and Tommy carrying an empty basket ran at her side. A walk of four miles was before her, for the most part over a rough and hilly road. The wind seemed a little to subside as she proceeded. Tommy was delighted with his journey, and she talked cheerily to him in spite of her despair. Her spirit bore her up; so that notwithstanding her dear burthen, she reached the town without being greatly fatigued. Her first visit was to the post office; a letter was given her, rough-looking as it was, written on coarse paper, ill folded and clumsily indited, she pressed it with transport to her lips, and hurried away to get some spot where she might read it. While her children were devouring some bread in a baker’s shop, she tore it open: the words were few, and they put the seal on her worst anticipations: —

"Dearest Mother," wrote Charles—"Be comforted — it is all too late: Father is in a better place, and you must not take on. He was shot and taken, and carried to jail. I found him alive, and he gave me his blessing, which comforts me, and bid me follow good courses. Last night, dear Mother, he died, and had suffered great pain first. He will be buried tomorrow early. Dear Mother, Charles will work for you, and for Tommy and Jenny. They have been very good to me; and I have a kind friend. He has made me promise to bring you here, and given me money, and will give me work. Indeed, dear Mother, I have good news for you. You shall not live any longer in that lonesome place, but come to a pretty cottage where we shall all be together. I found the boat, and shall come back in it: expect me on Friday — so look out for me.

Your dutiful son, CHARLES HARDING."

In tears, yet trying to resign herself, drying her eyes, and then bursting afresh into a passion of weeping, Jane began to retrace her steps homeward. The sky was overcast, and both she and her little boy grew very tired. She walked forward about two miles, and then sat down to rest. After a short time, fearful that night might overtake her, she again proceeded on her way. She had now got among the wild downs nearer home, and the wind, which had seemed lulled, rose again, tore across the open country, and swept fearfully over the exposed heath. Vast, dense masses of cloud were borne in swift career; and in a pause of the gale, another sound was heard — was it the sea? — no; a flash of lightning changed her doubts to certainty, and again the pealing thunder reverberated over her head: the rain began to fall — for a moment she thought of shelter; but the image of her Charles upon the stormy ocean presented itself with such terror, that though she could hardly keep her feet, she hurried on. Poor Tommy could scarce keep up with her: still as the elemental voices mingled in horrid fray, and the sea joined its hoarse roar to the thunder and the wind, he also forgot his fatigue in his fears for his brother.

O, for a sight of the dangerous ocean, of which perhaps he was already the prey! To hear her enemy's loud menaces, and yet to be blinded to their effects, gave such a sting to the miserable variety of her sorrow, that at one moment she sank on her knees, unable to pray, yet repeating with passionate cries her dear son’s name. The terror of her children, who grew more and more frightened, recalled her to herself; she wiped her fast-falling tears, and went on: the way seemed endless — well did she know each turn, each change of object in her path; and yet as rain and wind, and the darkness of the storm beset her, it seemed as if each distance was doubled — as if never, never should she arrive! At length on a turn in the road, she could perceive the chimney of her cot — a few more steps, but first a strange sound was wafted to her on the blast: — was that prolonged plaintive cry human? Again it was renewed. “It is Sailor,” cried her little son; and now the curtain of distance and impeding objects was withdrawn, and all was before her: the tempest-tossed and evil-boding waters, the lurid sky, and where seaward, the clouds lifted by the winds, showed beneath, the red and glaring signal of the increasing storm. Sailor was howling on the sands, and a hat borne by the breakers to the beach, was at his feet, and on the dark foaming ocean, rising and falling with the mighty waves, struggling with wind and water, was the skiff she had so often watched — now so dearly and so dangerously freighted. What hope remained?

Often the little vessel, with its one torn sail, was tossed in the yawning deep — again it rose on the edge of the waves, and then engulphed by the breaking surge, it laboured heavily amidst its howling, devouring, remorseless pursuers! The deaf billows hear not; the gloomy storm is blind; wreck and tempest have no touch of human sympathy; the driving rain falls upon the waters; the dark waves leap and dance in murderous pastime, and the thunder laughs in mockery above — it is their carnival, the carnival and masque of Death. The heartfelt prayer of the lonely one, the gushing, agonizing tears of the miserable being, who from the shore views her last hope fail — what are they to the merciless destruction which rises from its repose only to destroy!

Still the little boat made its fearful way. The sail, sole hope of the helmsman, was at one moment torn from the shrouds, and cast, shivered to rags, upon the sea; but her brave boy spread yet another, and again the keel obeyed the rudder. On she came. Breakers were ahead; but well did Charles know each hidden rock and reef on the perilous coast. The lifting clouds rose yet higher, and athwart the veil of the driving rain the clear sky was to be seen; the thunder became more faint; clouds flew wildly inland, and then a lull came — another furious blast, and then a longer pause. The sun on the ocean’s verge peeped out yet more golden, and the waves seemed to obey the beaming wands of light that were stretched out over them. The boat laboured less, and there was some hope of its making a little inlet of the sea, sheltered by the cliff, where he could land. Hope now mastered fear; the tearful mother hastened to the spot: the sea here was more tranquil, and after a few moments of suspense, on going about once again, the boat got yet nearer to the wind, and entered calmer water. Yet a brief interval, and Charles, all sea-drenched and faint, yet bearing up with an unflinching spirit, was clasped in his mother’s arms!

THE MORTAL IMMORTAL

July 16, 1833. — This is a memorable anniversary for me; on it I complete my three hundred and twenty-third year!

The Wandering Jew? — certainly not. More than eighteen centuries have passed over his head. In comparison with him, I am a very young Immortal.

Am I, then, immortal? This is a question which I have asked myself, by day and night, for now three hundred and three years, and yet cannot answer it. I detected a grey hair amidst my brown locks this very day — that surely signifies decay. Yet it may have remained concealed there for three hundred years — for some persons have become entirely white-headed before twenty years of age.

I will tell my story, and my reader shall judge for me. I will tell my story, and so contrive to pass some few hours of a long eternity, become so wearisome to me. For ever! Can it be? to live for ever! I have heard of enchantments, in which the victims were plunged into a deep sleep, to wake, after a hundred years, as fresh as ever: I have heard of the Seven Sleepers — thus to be immortal would not be so burthensome: but, oh! the weight of never-ending time — the tedious passage of the still-succeeding hours! How happy was the fabled Nourjahad! — But to my task.

All the world has heard of Cornelius Agrippa. His memory is as immortal as his arts have made me. All the world has also heard of his scholar, who, unawares, raised the foul fiend during his master’s absence, and was destroyed by him. The report, true or false, of this accident, was attended with many inconveniences to the renowned philosopher. All his scholars at once deserted him — his servants disappeared. He had no one near him to put coals on his ever-burning fires while he slept, or to attend to the changeful colours of his medicines while he studied. Experiment after experiment failed, because one pair of hands was insufficient to complete them: the dark spirits laughed at him for not being able to retain a single mortal in his service.

I was then very young — very poor — and very much in love. I had been for about a year the pupil of Cornelius, though I was absent when this accident took place. On my return, my friends implored me not to return to the alchymist's abode. I trembled as I listened to the dire tale they told; I required no second warning; and when Cornelius came and offered me a purse of gold if I would remain under his roof, I felt as if Satan himself tempted me. My teeth chattered — my hair stood on end; — I ran off as fast as my trembling knees would permit.

My failing steps were directed whither for two years they had every evening been attracted, — a gently bubbling spring of pure living water, beside which lingered a dark-haired girl, whose beaming eyes were fixed on the path I was accustomed each night to tread. I cannot remember the hour when I did not love Bertha; we had been neighbours and playmates from infancy, — her parents, like mine were of humble life, yet respectable, — our attachment had been a source of pleasure to them. In an evil hour, a malignant fever carried off both her father and mother, and Bertha became an orphan. She would have found a home beneath my paternal roof, but, unfortunately, the old lady of the near castle, rich, childless, and solitary, declared her intention to adopt her. Henceforth Bertha was clad in silk — inhabited a marble palace — and was looked on as being highly favoured by fortune. But in her new situation among her new associates, Bertha remained true to the friend of her humbler days; she often visited the cottage of my father, and when forbidden to go thither, she would stray towards the neighbouring wood, and meet me beside its shady fountain.

She often declared that she owed no duty to her new protectress equal in sanctity to that which bound us. Yet still I was too poor to marry, and she grew weary of being tormented on my account. She had a haughty but an impatient spirit, and grew angry at the obstacle that prevented our union. We met now after an absence, and she had been sorely beset while I was away; she complained bitterly, and almost reproached me for being poor. I replied hastily, —

"I am honest, if I am poor! — were I not, I might soon become rich!"

This exclamation produced a thousand questions. I feared to shock her by owning the truth, but she drew it from me; and then, casting a look of disdain on me, she said, —

"You pretend to love, and you fear to face the Devil for my sake!"

I protested that I had only dreaded to offend her; — while she dwelt on the magnitude of the reward that I should receive. Thus encouraged — shamed by her — led on by love and hope, laughing at my later fears, with quick steps and a light heart, I returned to accept the offers of the alchymist, and was instantly installed in my office.

A year passed away. I became possessed of no insignificant sum of money. Custom had banished my fears. In spite of the most painful vigilance, I had never detected the trace of a cloven foot; nor was the studious silence of our abode ever disturbed by demoniac howls. I still continued my stolen interviews with Bertha, and Hope dawned on me — Hope — but not perfect joy: for Bertha fancied that love and security were enemies, and her pleasure was to divide them in my bosom. Though true of heart, she was something of a coquette in manner; I was jealous as a Turk. She slighted me in a thousand ways, yet would never acknowledge herself to be in the wrong. She would drive me mad with anger, and then force me to beg her pardon. Sometimes she fancied that I was not sufficiently submissive, and then she had some story of a rival, favoured by her protectress. She was surrounded by silk-clad youths — the rich and gay. What chance had the sad-robed scholar of Cornelius compared with these?

On one occasion, the philosopher made such large demands upon my time, that I was unable to meet her as I was wont. He was engaged in some mighty work, and I was forced to remain, day and night, feeding his furnaces and watching his chemical preparations. Bertha waited for me in vain at the fountain. Her haughty spirit fired at this neglect; and when at last I stole out during a few short minutes allotted to me for slumber, and hoped to be consoled by her, she received me with disdain, dismissed me in scorn, and vowed that any man should possess her hand rather than he who could not be in two places at once for her sake. She would be revenged! And truly she was. In my dingy retreat I heard that she had been hunting, attended by Albert Hoffer. Albert Hoffer was favoured by her protectress, and the three passed in cavalcade before my smoky window. Methought that they mentioned my name; it was followed by a laugh of derision, as her dark eyes glanced contemptuously towards my abode.

Jealousy, with all its venom and all its misery, entered my breast. Now I shed a torrent of tears, to think that I should never call her mine; and, anon, I imprecated a thousand curses on her inconstancy. Yet, still I must stir the fires of the alchymist, still attend on the changes of his unintelligible medicines.

Cornelius had watched for three days and nights, nor closed his eyes. The progress of his alembics was slower than he expected: in spite of his anxiety, sleep weighted upon his eyelids. Again and again he threw off drowsiness with more than human energy; again and again it stole away his senses. He eyed his crucibles wistfully. "Not ready yet," he murmured; "will another night pass before the work is accomplished? Winzy, you are vigilant — you are faithful — you have slept, my boy — you slept last night. Look at that glass vessel. The liquid it contains is of a soft rose-colour: the moment it begins to change hue, awaken me — till then I may close my eyes. First, it will turn white, and then emit golden flashes; but wait not till then; when the rose-colour fades, rouse me." I scarcely heard the last words, muttered, as they were, in sleep. Even then he did not quite yield to nature. "Winzy, my boy," he again said, "do not touch the vessel — do not put it to your lips; it is a philtre — a philtre to cure love; you would not cease to love your Bertha — beware to drink!"

And he slept. His venerable head sunk on his breast, and I scarce heard his regular breathing. For a few minutes I watched the vessel — the rosy hue of the liquid remained unchanged. Then my thoughts wandered — they visited the fountain, and dwelt on a thousand charming scenes never to be renewed — never! Serpents and adders were in my heart as the word "Never!" half formed itself on my lips. False girl! — false and cruel! Never more would she smile on me as that evening she smiled on Albert. Worthless, detested woman! I would not remain unrevenged — she should see Albert expire at her feet — she should die beneath my vengeance. She had smiled in disdain and triumph — she knew my wretchedness and her power. Yet what power had she? — the power of exciting my hate — my utter scorn — my — oh, all but indifference! Could I attain that — could I regard her with careless eyes, transferring my rejected love to one fairer and more true, that were indeed a victory!

A bright flash darted before my eyes. I had forgotten the medicine of the adept; I gazed on it with wonder: flashes of admirable beauty, more bright than those which the diamond emits when the sun's rays are on it, glanced from the surface of the liquid; and odour the most fragrant and grateful stole over my sense; the vessel seemed one globe of living radiance, lovely to the eye, and most inviting to the taste. The first thought, instinctively inspired by the grosser sense, was, I will — I must drink. I raised the vessel to my lips. “It will cure me of love — of torture!” Already I had quaffed half of the most delicious liquor ever tasted by the palate of man, when the philosopher stirred. I started — I dropped the glass — the fluid flamed and glanced along the floor, while I felt Cornelius’s gripe at my throat, as he shrieked aloud, “Wretch! you have destroyed the labour of my life!”

The philosopher was totally unaware that I had drunk any portion of his drug. His idea was, and I gave a tacit assent to it, that I had raised the vessel from curiosity, and that, frightened at its brightness, and the flashes of intense light it gave forth, I had let it fall. I never undeceived him. The fire of the medicine was quenched — the fragrance died away — he grew calm, as a philosopher should under the heaviest trials, and dismissed me to rest.

I will not attempt to describe the sleep of glory and bliss which bathed my soul in paradise during the remaining hours of that memorable night. Words would be faint and shallow types of my enjoyment, or of the gladness that possessed my bosom when I woke. I trod air — my thoughts were in heaven. Earth appeared heaven, and my inheritance upon it was to be one trance of delight. “This it is to be cured of love,” I thought; “I will see Bertha this day, and she will find her lover cold and regardless; too happy to be disdainful, yet how utterly indifferent to her!”

The hours danced away. The philosopher, secure that he had once succeeded, and believing that he might again, began to concoct the same medicine once more. He was shut up with his books and drugs, and I had a holiday. I dressed myself with care; I looked in an old but polished shield which served me for a mirror; methoughts my good looks had wonderfully improved. I hurried beyond the precincts of the town, joy in my soul, the beauty of heaven and earth around me. I turned my steps toward the castle — I could look on its lofty turrets with lightness of heart, for I was cured of love. My Bertha saw me afar off, as I came up the avenue. I know not what sudden impulse animated her bosom, but at the sight, she sprung with a light fawn-like bound down the marble steps, and was hastening towards me. But I had been perceived by another person. The old high-born hag, who called herself her protectress, and was her tyrant, had seen me also; she hobbled, panting, up the terrace; a page, as ugly as herself, held up her train, and fanned her as she hurried along, and stopped my fair girl with a “How, now, my bold mistress? whither so fast? Back to your cage — hawks are abroad!”

Bertha clasped her hands — her eyes were still bent on my approaching figure. I saw the contest. How I abhorred the old crone who checked the kind impulses of my Bertha's softening heart. Hitherto, respect for her rank had caused me to avoid the lady of the castle; now I disdained such trivial considerations. I was cured of love, and lifted above all human fears; I hastened forwards, and soon reached the terrace. How lovely Bertha looked! her eyes flashing fire, her cheeks glowing with impatience and anger, she was a thousand times more graceful and charming than ever. I no longer loved — oh no! I adored — worshipped — idolized her!

She had that morning been persecuted, with more than usual vehemence, to consent to an immediate marriage with my rival. She was reproached with the encouragement that she had shown him — she was threatened with being turned out of doors with disgrace and shame. Her proud spirit rose in arms at the threat; but when she remembered the scorn that she had heaped upon me, and how, perhaps, she had thus lost one whom she now regarded as her only friend, she wept with remorse and rage. At that moment I appeared. "Oh, Winzy!" she exclaimed, "take me to your mother's cot; swiftly let me leave the detested luxuries and wretchedness of this noble dwelling — take me to poverty and happiness."

I clasped her in my arms with transport. The old dame was speechless with fury, and broke forth into invective only when we were far on the road to my natal cottage. My mother received the fair fugitive, escaped from a gilt cage to nature and liberty, with tenderness and joy; my father, who loved her, welcomed her heartily; it was a day of rejoicing, which did not need the addition of the celestial potion of the alchymist to steep me in delight.

Soon after this eventful day, I became the husband of Bertha. I ceased to be the scholar of Cornelius, but I continued his friend. I always felt grateful to him for having, unaware, procured me that delicious draught of a divine elixir, which, instead of curing me of love (sad cure! solitary and joyless remedy for evils which seem blessings to the memory), had inspired me with courage and resolution, thus winning for me an inestimable treasure in my Bertha.

I often called to mind that period of trance-like inebriation with wonder. The drink of Cornelius had not fulfilled the task for which he affirmed that it had been prepared, but its effects were more potent and blissful than words can express. They had faded by degrees, yet they lingered long — and painted life in hues of splendour. Bertha often wondered at my lightness of heart and unaccustomed gaiety; for, before, I had been rather serious, or even sad, in my disposition. She loved me the better for my cheerful temper, and our days were winged by joy.

Five years afterwards I was suddenly summoned to the bedside of the dying Cornelius. He had sent for me in haste, conjuring my instant presence. I found him stretched on his pallet, enfeebled even to death; all of life that yet remained animated his piercing eyes, and they were fixed on a glass vessel, full of roseate liquid.

“Behold,” he said, in a broken and inward voice, “the vanity of human wishes! a second time my hopes are about to be crowned, a second time they are destroyed. Look at that liquor — you may remember five years ago I had prepared the same, with the same success; — then, as now, my thirsting lips expected to taste the immortal elixir — you dashed it from me! and at present it is too late.”

He spoke with difficulty, and fell back on his pillow. I could not help saying, —

“How, revered master, can a cure for love restore you to life?”

A faint smile gleamed across his face as I listened earnestly to his scarcely intelligible answer.

“A cure for love and for all things — the Elixir of Immortality. Ah! if now I might drink, I should live for ever!”

As he spoke, a golden flash gleamed from the fluid; a well-remembered fragrance stole over the air; he raised himself, all weak as he was — strength seemed miraculously to re-enter his frame — he stretched forth his hand — a loud explosion startled me — a ray of fire shot up from the elixir, and the glass vessel which contained it was shivered to atoms! I turned my eyes towards the philosopher; he had fallen back — his eyes were glassy — his features rigid — he was dead!

But I lived, and was to live for ever! So said the unfortunate alchymist, and for a few days I believed his words. I remembered the glorious intoxication that had followed my stolen draught. I reflected on the change I had felt in my frame — in my soul. The bounding elasticity of the one — the buoyant lightness of the other. I surveyed myself in a mirror, and could perceive no change in my features during the space of the five years which had elapsed. I remembered the radiant hues and grateful scent of that delicious beverage — worthy the gift it was capable of bestowing — I was, then, IMMORTAL!

A few days after I laughed at my credulity. The old proverb, that "a prophet is least regarded in his own country," was true with respect to me and my defunct master. I loved him as a man — I respected him as a sage — but I derided the notion that he could command the powers of darkness, and laughed at the superstitious fears with which he was regarded by the vulgar. He was a wise philosopher, but had no acquaintance with any spirits but those clad in flesh and blood. His science was simply human; and human science, I soon persuaded myself, could never conquer nature's laws so far as to imprison the soul for ever within its carnal habitation. Cornelius had brewed a soul-refreshing drink — more inebriating than wine — sweeter and more fragrant than any fruit: it possessed probably strong medicinal powers, imparting gladness to the heart and vigour to the limbs; but its effects would wear out; already they were diminished in my frame. I was a lucky fellow to have quaffed health and joyous spirits, and perhaps a long life, at my master's hands; but my good fortune ended there: longevity was far different from immortality.

I continued to entertain this belief for many years. Sometimes a thought stole across me — Was the alchymist indeed deceived? But my habitual credence was, that I should meet the fate of all the children of Adam at my appointed time — a little late, but still at a natural age. Yet it was certain that I retained a wonderfully youthful look. I was laughed at for my vanity in consulting the mirror so often, but I consulted it in vain — my brow was untrenched — my cheeks — my eyes — my whole person continued as untarnished as in my twentieth year.

I was troubled. I looked at the faded beauty of Bertha — I seemed more like her son. By degrees our neighbors began to make similar observations, and I found at last that I went by the name of the Scholar bewitched. Bertha herself grew uneasy. She became jealous and peevish, and at length she began to question me. We had no children; we were all in all to each other; and though, as she grew older, her vivacious spirit became a little allied to ill-temper, and her beauty sadly diminished, I cherished her in my heart as the mistress I idolized, the wife I had sought and won with such perfect love.

At last our situation became intolerable: Bertha was fifty — I twenty years of age. I had, in very shame, in some measure adopted the habits of advanced age; I no longer mingled in the dance among the young and gay, but my heart bounded along with them while I restrained my feet; and a sorry figure I cut among the Nestors of our village. But before the time I mention, things were altered — we were universally shunned; we were — at least, I was — reported to have kept up an iniquitous acquaintance with some of my former master's supposed friends. Poor Bertha was pitied, but deserted. I was regarded with horror and detestation.

What was to be done? we sat by our winter fire — poverty had made itself felt, for none would buy the produce of my farm; and often I had been forced to journey twenty miles to some place where I was not known, to dispose of our property. It is true, we had saved something for an evil day — that day was come.

We sat by our lone fireside — the old-hearted youth and his antiquated wife. Again Bertha insisted on knowing the truth; she recapitulated all she had ever heard said about me, and added her own observations. She conjured me to cast off the spell; she described how much more comely grey hairs were than my chestnut locks; she descanted on the reverence and respect due to age — how preferable to the slight regard paid to mere children: could I imagine that the despicable gifts of youth and good looks outweighed disgrace, hatred and scorn? Nay, in the end I should be burnt as a dealer in the black art, while she, to whom I had not deigned to communicate any portion of my good fortune, might be stoned as my accomplice. At length she insinuated that I must share my secret with her, and bestow on her like benefits to those I myself enjoyed, or she would denounce me — and then she burst into tears.

Thus beset, methought it was the best way to tell the truth. I reveled it as tenderly as I could, and spoke only of a *very long life*, not of immortality — which representation, indeed, coincided best with my own ideas. When I ended I rose and said, —

"And now, my Bertha, will you denounce the lover of your youth? — You will not, I know. But it is too hard, my poor wife, that you should suffer for my ill-luck and the accursed arts of Cornelius. I will leave you — you have wealth enough, and friends will return in my absence. I will go; young as I seem and strong as I am, I can work and gain my bread among strangers, unsuspected and unknown. I loved you in youth; God is my witness that I would not desert you in age, but that your safety and happiness require it.”

I took my cap and moved toward the door; in a moment Bertha’s arms were round my neck, and her lips were pressed to mine. “No, my husband, my Winzy,” she said, “you shall not go alone — take me with you; we will remove from this place, and, as you say, among strangers we shall be unsuspected and safe. I am not so old as quite to shame you, my Winzy; and I daresay the charm will soon wear off, and, with the blessing of God, you will become more elderly-looking, as is fitting; you shall not leave me.”

I returned the good soul’s embrace heartily. “I will not, my Bertha; but for your sake I had not thought of such a thing. I will be your true, faithful husband while you are spared to me, and do my duty by you to the last.”

The next day we prepared secretly for our emigration. We were obliged to make great pecuniary sacrifices — it could not be helped. We realized a sum sufficient, at least, to maintain us while Bertha lived; and, without saying adieu to any one, quitted our native country to take refuge in a remote part of western France.

It was a cruel thing to transport poor Bertha from her native village, and the friends of her youth, to a new country, new language, new customs. The strange secret of my destiny rendered this removal immaterial to me; but I compassionated her deeply, and was glad to perceive that she found compensation for her misfortunes in a variety of little ridiculous circumstances. Away from all tell-tale chroniclers, she sought to decrease the apparent disparity of our ages by a thousand feminine arts — rouge, youthful dress, and assumed juvenility of manner. I could not be angry. Did I not myself wear a mask? Why quarrel with hers, because it was less successful? I grieved deeply when I remembered that this was my Bertha, whom I had loved so fondly and won with such transport — the dark-eyed, dark-haired girl, with smiles of enchanting archness and a step like a fawn — this mincing, simpering, jealous old woman. I should have revered her grey locks and withered cheeks; but thus! — It was my work, I knew; but I did not the less deplore this type of human weakness.

Her jealously never slept. Her chief occupation was to discover that, in spite of outward appearances, I was myself growing old. I verily believe that the poor soul loved me truly in her heart, but never had woman so tormenting a mode of displaying fondness. She would discern wrinkles in my face and decrepitude in my walk, while I bounded along in youthful vigour, the youngest looking of twenty youths. I never dared address another woman. On one occasion, fancying that the belle of the village regarded me with favouring eyes, she brought me a grey wig. Her constant discourse among her acquaintances was, that though I looked so young, there was ruin at work within my frame; and she affirmed that the worst symptom about me was my apparent health. My youth was a disease, she said, and I ought at all times to prepare, if not for a sudden and awful death, at least to awake some morning white-headed and bowed down with all the marks of advanced years. I let her talk — I often joined in her conjectures. Her warnings chimed in with my never-ceasing speculations concerning my state, and I took an earnest, though painful, interest in listening to all that her quick wit and excited imagination could say on the subject.

Why dwell on these minute circumstances? We lived on for many long years. Bertha became bedrid and paralytic; I nursed her as a mother might a child. She grew peevish, and still harped upon one string — of how long I should survive her. It has ever been a source of consolation to me, that I performed my duty scrupulously towards her. She had been mine in youth, she was mine in age; and at last, when I heaped the sod over her corpse, I wept to feel that I had lost all that really bound me to humanity.

Since then how many have been my cares and woes, how few and empty my enjoyments! I pause here in my history — I will pursue it no further. A sailor without rudder or compass, tossed on a stormy sea — a traveller lost on a widespread heath, without landmark or stone to guide him — such I have been: more lost, more hopeless than either. A nearing ship, a gleam from some far cot, may save them; but I have no beacon except the hope of death.

Death! mysterious, ill-visaged friend of weak humanity! Why alone of all mortals have you cast me from your sheltering fold? Oh, for the peace of the grave! the deep silence of the iron-bound tomb! that thought would cease to work in my brain, and my heart beat no more with emotions varied only by new forms of sadness!

Am I immortal? I return to my first question. In the first place, is it not more probably that the beverage of the alchymist was fraught rather with longevity than eternal life? Such is my hope. And then be it remembered, that I only drank *half* of the potion prepared by him. Was not the whole necessary to complete the charm? To have drained half the Elixir of Immortality is but to be half-immortal — my For-ever is thus truncated and null.

But again, who shall number the years of the half of eternity? I often try to imagine by what rule the infinite may be divided. Sometimes I fancy age advancing upon me. One grey hair I have found. Fool! do I lament? Yes, the fear of age and death often creeps coldly into my heart; and the more I live, the more I dread death, even while I abhor life. Such an enigma is man — born to perish — when he wars, as I do, against the established laws of his nature.

But for this anomaly of feeling surely I might die: the medicine of the alchymist would not be proof against fire — sword — and the strangling waters. I have gazed upon the blue depths of many a placid lake, and the tumultuous rushing of many a mighty river, and have said, peace inhabits those waters; yet I have turned my steps away, to live yet another day. I have asked myself, whether suicide would be a crime in one to whom thus only the portals of the other world could be opened. I have done all, except presenting myself as a soldier or duelist, an objection of destruction to my — no, *not* my fellow mortals, and therefore I have shrunk away. They are not my fellows. The inextinguishable power of life in my frame, and their ephemeral existence, places us wide as the poles asunder. I could not raise a hand against the meanest or the most powerful among them.

Thus have I lived on for many a year — alone, and weary of myself — desirous of death, yet never dying — a mortal immortal. Neither ambition nor avarice can enter my mind, and the ardent love that gnaws at my heart, never to be returned — never to find an equal on which to expend itself — lives there only to torment me.

This very day I conceived a design by which I may end all — without self-slaughter, without making another man a Cain — an expedition, which mortal frame can never survive, even endued with the youth and strength that inhabits mine. Thus I shall put my immortality to the test, and rest for ever — or return, the wonder and benefactor of the human species.

Before I go, a miserable vanity has caused me to pen these pages. I would not die, and leave no name behind. Three centuries have passed since I quaffed the fatal beverage; another year shall not elapse before, encountering gigantic dangers — warring with the powers of frost in their home — beset by famine, toil, and tempest — I yield this body, too tenacious a cage for a soul which thirsts for freedom, to the destructive elements of air and water; or, if I survive, my name shall be recorded as one of the most famous among the sons of men; and, my task achieved, I shall adopt more resolute means, and, by scattering and annihilating the atoms that compose my frame, set at liberty the life imprisoned within, and so cruelly prevented from soaring from this dim earth to a sphere more congenial to its immortal essence.

THE END

THE TRIAL OF LOVE

HAVING OBTAINED leave from the Signora Priora to go out for a few hours, Angeline, who was a boarder at the convent of Sant' Anna, in the little town of Este, in Lombardy, set out on her visit. She was dressed with simplicity and taste; her faziola covered her head and shoulders; and from beneath, gleamed her large black eyes, which were singularly beautiful. And yet she was not, perhaps, strictly handsome; but, she had a brow smooth, open, and noble; a profusion of dark silken hair, and a clear, delicate, though brunette complexion. She had, too, an intelligent and thoughtful expression of countenance; her mind appeared often to commune with itself; and there was every token that she was deeply interested in, and often pleased with, the thoughts that filled it. She was of humble birth: her father had been steward to Count Moncenigo, a Venetian nobleman; her mother had been foster-mother to his only daughter. Both her parents were dead; they had left her comparatively rich; and she was a prize sought by all the young men of the class under nobility; but Angeline lived retired in her convent, and encouraged none of them.

She had not been outside its walls for many months; and she felt almost frightened as she found herself among the lanes that led beyond the town, and up the Euganean hills, to Villa Moncenigo, whither she was bending her steps. Every portion of the way was familiar to her. The Countess Moncenigo had died in childbirth of her second child, and from that time, Angeline's mother had lived at the villa. The family consisted of the Count, who was always, except during a few weeks in the autumn, at Venice, and the two children. Ludovico, the son, was early settled at Padua, for the sake of his education, and then Faustina only remained, who was five years younger than Angeline.

Faustina was the loveliest little thins in the world: unlike an Italian, she had laughing blue eyes, a brilliant complexion, and auburne hair; she had a sylph-like form, slender, round, and springy; she was very pretty, and vivacious, and self-willed, with a thousand winning ways, that rendered it delightful to yield to her. Angeline was like an elder sister: she waited on Faustina; she yielded to her in every thing; a word or smile of hers, was all-powerful. “I love her too much,” she would sometimes say; “but I would endure any misery rather than see a tear in her eye.” It was Angeline’s character to concentrate her feelings, and to nurse them till they became passions; while excellent principles, and the sincerest piety, prevented her from being led astray by them.

Three years before, Angeline had, by the death of her mother, been left quite an orphan, and she and Faustina went to live at the convent of Sant’ Anna, in the town of Este; but a year after, Faustina, then fifteen, was sent to complete her education at a very celebrated convent in Venice, whose aristocratic doors were closed against her ignoble companion. Now, at the age of seventeen, having finished her education, she returned home, and came to Villa Moncenigo with her father, to pass the months of September and October. They arrived this very night, and Angeline was on her way from her convent, to see and embrace her dearest companion.

There was something maternal in Angeline’s feelings — five years makes a considerable difference at the ages of ten to fifteen, and much, at seventeen and two-and-twenty. “The dear child,” thought Angeline, as she walked along, “she must be grown taller, and, I dare say, more beautiful than ever. How I long to see her, with her sweet arch smile! I wonder if she found any one at her Venetian convent to humour and spoil her, as I did here — to take the blame of her faults, and indulge her in her caprices. Ah! those days are gone! — she will be thinking now of becoming a sposa. I wonder if she has felt any thing of love.” Angeline sighed. “I shall hear all about it soon — she will tell me every thing, I am sure. — And I wish I might tell her — secrecy and mystery are so very hateful; but I must keep my vow, and in a month it will be all over — in a month I shall know my fate. In a month! — shall I see him then? — shall I ever see him again! But I will not think of that, I will only think of Faustina — sweet, beloved Faustina!”

And now Angeline was toiling up the hill side; she heard her name called; and on the terrace that overlooked the road, leaning over the balustrade, was the dear object of her thoughts — the pretty Faustina, the little fairy girl, blooming in youth, and smiling with happiness. Angeline’s heart warmed to her with redoubled fondness.

Soon they were in each other’s arms; and Faustina laughed, and her eyes sparkled, and she began to relate all the events of her two years’ life, and showed herself as self-willed, childish, and yet as engaging and caressing as ever. Angeline listened with delight, gazed on her dimpled cheeks, sparkling eyes, and graceful gestures, in a perfect, though silent, transport of admiration. She would have had no time to tell her own story, had she been so inclined, Faustina talked so fast.

"Do you know, Angelinetta mia," said she, "I am to become a sposa this winter?"

"And who is the Signor Sposino?"

"I don't know yet; but during next carnival he is to be found. He must be very rich and very noble, papa says; and I say he must be very young and very good-tempered, and give me my own way, as you have always done, Angelina carina."

At length Angeline rose to take leave. Faustina did not like her going — she wanted her to stay all night — she would send to the convent to get the Priora's leave; but Angeline knowing that this was not to be obtained, was resolved to go, and at last, persuaded her friend to consent to her departure. The next day, Faustina would come herself to the convent to pay her old friends a visit, and Angeline could return with her in the evening, if the Priora would allow it. When this plan had been discussed and arranged, with one more embrace, they separated; and, tripping down the road, Angeline looked up, and Faustina looked down from the terrace, and waved her hand to her and smiled. Angeline was delighted with her kindness, her loveliness, the animation and sprightliness of her manner and conversation. She thought of her, at first, to the exclusion of every other idea, till, at a turn in the road, some circumstance recalled her thoughts to herself. "O, how too happy I shall be," she thought, "if he prove true! — with Faustina and Ippolito, life will be Paradise!" And then she traced back in her faithful memory, all that had occurred during the last two years. In the briefest possible way, we must do the same.

Faustina had gone to Venice, and Angeline was left alone in her convent. Though she did not much attach herself to any one, she became intimate with Camilla della Toretta, a young lady from Bologna. Camilla's brother came to see her, and Angeline accompanied her in the parlour to receive his visit. Ippolito fell desperately in love, and Angeline was won to return his affection. All her feelings were earnest and passionate; and yet, she could regulate their effects, and her conduct was irreproachable. Ippolito, on the contrary, was fiery and impetuous: he loved ardently, and could brook no opposition to the fulfilment of his wishes. He resolved on marriage, but being noble, feared his father's disapprobation: still it was necessary to seek his consent; and the old aristocrat, full of alarm and indignation, came to Este, resolved to use every measure to separate the lovers for ever. The gentleness and goodness of Angeline softened his anger, and his son's despair moved his compassion. He disapproved of the marriage, yet he could not wonder that Ippolito desired to unite himself to so much beauty and sweetness: and then, again, he reflected, that his son was very young, and might change his mind, and reproach him for his too easy acquiescence. He therefore made a compromise; he would give his consent in one year from that time, provided the young pair would engage themselves, by the most solemn oath, not to hold any communication by speech or letter during that interval. It was understood that this was to be a year of trial; that no engagement was to be considered to subsist until its expiration; when, if they continued faithful, their constancy would meet its reward. No doubt the father supposed, and even hoped, that, during their absence, Ippolito would change his sentiments, and form a more suitable attachment.

Kneeling before the cross, the lovers engaged themselves to one year of silence and separation; Angeline, with her eyes lighted up by gratitude and hope; Ippolito, full of rage and despair at this interruption to his felicity, to which he never would have assented, had not Angeline used every persuasion, every command, to instigate him to compliance; declaring, that unless he obeyed his father, she would seclude herself in her cell, and spontaneously becomc a prisoner, until the termination of the prescribed period. Ippolito took the vow, therefore, and immediately after set out for Paris.

One month only was now wanting before the year should have expired; and it cannot be wondered that Angeline's thoughts wandered from her sweet Faustina, to dwell on her own fate. Joined to the vow of absence, had been a promise to keep their attachment, and all concerning it, a profound secret from every human being, during the same term. Angeline consented readily (for her friend was away) not to come back till the stipulated period; but the latter had returned, and now, the concealment weighed on Angeline's conscience: there was no help — she must keep her word.

With all these thoughts occupying her, she had reached the foot of the hill, and was ascending again the one on which the town of Este stands, when she heard a rustling in the vineyard that bordered one side of the road — footsteps — and a well-known voice speaking her name.

“Santa Vergine! Ippolito!” she exclaimed, “is this your promise?”

“And is this your reception of me?” he replied, reproachfully. “Unkind one! because I am not cold enough to stay away — because this last month was an intolerable eternity, you turn from me — you wish me gone. It is true, then, what I have heard — you love another! Ah! my journey will not be fruitless — I shall learn who he is, and revenge your falsehood.”

Angeline darted a glance full of wonder and reproach; but she was silent, and continued her way. It was in her heart not to break her vow, and so to draw down the curse of heaven on their attachment. She resolved not to be induced to say another word; and, by her steady adherence to her oath, to obtain forgiveness for his infringement. She walked very quickly, feeling happy and miserable at the same time — and yet not so — happiness was the genuine, engrossing sentiment; but she feared, partly her lover’s anger, and more, the dreadful consequences that might ensue from his breach of his solemn vow. Her eyes were radiant with love and joy, but her lips seemed glued together; and resolved not to speak, she drew her faziola close round her face, that he might not even see it, as she walked speedily on, her eyes fixed on the ground. Burning with rage, pouring forth torrents of reproaches, Ippolito kept close to her side — now reproaching her for infidelity — now swearing revenge — now describing and lauding his own constancy and immutable love. It was a pleasant, though a dangerous theme. Angeline was tempted a thousand times to reward him by declaring her own unaltered feelings; but she overcame the desire, and, taking her rosary in her hand, began to tell her beads. They drew near the town, and finding that she was not to be persuaded, Ippolito at length left her, with protestations that he would discover his rival, and take vengeance on him for her cruelty and indifference. Angeline entered her convent, hurried into her cell — threw herself on her knees — prayed God to forgive her lover for breaking his vow; and then, overcome with joy at the proof he had given of his constancy, and of the near prospect of their perfect happiness, her head sank on her arms, and she continued absorbed in a reverie which bore the very hues of heaven. It had been a bitter struggle to withstand his entreaties, but her doubts were dissipated, he was true, and at the appointed hour would claim her; and she who had loved through the long year with such fervent, though silent, devotion, would be rewarded! She felt secure — thankful to heaven — happy. — Poor Angeline!

The next day, Faustina came to the convent: the nuns all crowded round her. *“Quanto è hellina,”* cried one. *“E tanta carinal”* cried another. “S’ *è fatta la sposina?”*—”Are you betrothed yet?” asked a third. Faustina answered with smiles and caresses, and innocent jokes and laughter. The nuns idolized her; and Angeline stood by, admiring her lovely friend, and enjoying the praises lavished on her. At length, Faustina must return; and Angeline, as anticipated, was permitted to accompany her.

“She might go to the villa with her,” the Priora said, “but not stay all night — it was against the rules.”

Faustina entreated, scolded, coaxed, and at length succeeded in persuading the superior to allow her friend’s absence for a single night. They then commenced their return together, attended by a maid servant — a sort of old duenna. As they walked along, a cavalier passed them on horseback.

“How handsome he is!” cried Faustina: “who can he be?”

Angeline blushed deeply, for she saw that it was Ippolito. He passed on swiftly, and was soon out of sight. They were now ascending the hill, the villa almost in sight, when they were alarmed by a bellowing, a hallooing, a shrieking, and a bawling, as if a den of wild beasts, or a madhouse, or rather both together, had broken loose. Faustina turned pale; and soon her companion was equally frightened, for a buffalo, escaped from the yoke, was seen tearing down the hill, filling the air with roarings, and a whole troop of *contadini* after him, screaming and shrieking — he was exactly in the path of the friends. The old duenna cried out, “O, *Gesu Maria!”* and fell flat on the earth. Faustina uttered a piercing shriek, and caught Angeline round the waist; who threw herself before the terrified girl, resolved to suffer the danger herself, rather than it should meet her friend — the animal was close upon them. At that moment, the cavalier rode down the hill, passing the buffalo, and then, wheeling round, intrepidly confronted the wild animal. With a ferocious bellow he swerved aside, and turned down a lane that opened to the left; but the horse, frightened, reared, threw his rider, and then galloped down the hill. The cavalier lay motionless, stretched on the earth.

It was now Angeline's turn to scream; and she and Faustina both anxiously ran to their preserver. While the latter fanned him with her large green fan, which Italian ladies carry to make use of as a parasol, Angeline hurried to fetch some water. In a minute or two, colour revisited his cheeks, and he opened his eyes; he saw the beautiful Faustina, and tried to rise. Angeline at this moment arrived, and presenting the water in a bit of gourd, put it to his lips — he pressed her hand — she drew it away. By this time, old Caterina, finding all quiet, began to look about her, and seeing only the two girls hovering over a fallen man, rose and drew near.

"You are dying!" cried Faustina: "you have saved my life, and are killed yourself."

Ippolito tried to smile. "I am not dying," he said, "but I am hurt."

"Where? how?" cried Angeline. "Dear Faustina, let us send for a carriage for him, and take him to the villa."

"O! yes," said Faustina: "go, Caterina — run — tell papa what has happened — that a young cavalier has killed himself in saving my life."

"Not killed myself," interrupted Ippolito; "only broken my arm, and, I almost fear, my leg."

Angeline grew deadly pale, and sank on the ground.

"And you will die before we get help," said Faustina; "that stupid Caterina craws like a snail."

"I will go to the villa," cried Angeline, "Caterina shall stay with you and Ip — *Buon dio!* what am I saying?"

She rushed away, and left Faustina fanning her lover, who again grew very faint. The villa was soon alarmed, the Signor Conte sent off for a surgeon, and caused a mattress to be slung, with four men to carry it, and came to the assistance of Ippolito. Angeline remained in the house; she yielded at last to her agitation, and wept bitterly, from the effects of fright and grief. "O that he should break his vow thus to be punished — would that the atonement had fallen upon me!" Soon she roused herself, however, prepared the bed, sought what bandages she thought might be necessary, and by that time he had been brought in. Soon after the surgeon came; he found that the left arm was certainly broken, but the leg was only bruised: he then set the limb, bled him, and giving him a composing draught, ordered that he should be kept very quiet. Angeline watched by him all night, but he slept soundly, and was not aware of her presence. Never had she loved so much. His misfortune, which was accidental, she took as a tribute of his affection, and gazed on his handsome countenance, composed in sleep, thinking, "Heaven preserve the truest lover that ever blessed a maiden's vows!"

The next morning Ippolito woke without fever and in good spirits. The contusion on his leg was almost nothing; he wanted to rise: the surgeon visited him, and implored him to remain quiet only a day or two to prevent fever, and promised a speedy cure if he would implicitly obey his mandates. Angeline spent the day at the villa, but would not see him again. Faustina talked incessantly of his courage, his gallantry, his engaging manners. She was the heroine of the story. It was for her that the cavalier had risked his life; her he had saved. Angeline smiled a little at her egotism. "It would mortify her if I told her the truth," she thought: so she remained silent. In the evening it was necessary to return to the convent; should she go in and say adieu to Ippolito? Was it right? Was it not breaking her vow? Still how could she resist? She entered and approached him softly; he heard her step, and looked up eagerly, and then seemed a little disappointed.

"Adieu! Ippolito," said Angeline, "I must go back to my convent. If you should become worse, which heaven forbid, I will return to wait on you, nurse you, die with you; if you get well, as with God's blessing there seems every hope, in one short month, I will thank you as you deserve. Adieu! dear Ippolito."

"Adieu! dear Angeline; you mean all that is right, and your conscience approves you: do not fear for me. I feel health and strength in my frame, and I bless the inconvenience and pain I suffer since you and your sweet friend are safe. Adieu! Yet, Angeline, one word: — my father, I hear, took Camilla back to Bologna with him last year — perhaps you correspond?"

"You mistake; by the Marchese's desire, no letters have passed."

"And you have obeyed in friendship as in love — you are very good. Now I ask a promise also — will you keep one to me as well as to my father?"

"If it be nothing against our vow."

"Our vow! you little nun — are our vows so mighty? — No, nothing against our vow; only that you will not write to Camilla nor my father, nor let this accident be known to them; it would occasion anxiety to no purpose: — will you promise?"

"I will promise not to write without your permission."

"And I rely on your keeping your word as you have your vow. Adieu, Angeline. What! go without one kiss?"

She ran out of the room, not to be tempted; for compliance with this request would have been a worse infringement of her engagement than any she had yet perpetrated.

She returned to Este, anxious, yet happy; secure in her lover's faith, and praying fervently that he might speedily recover. For several days after, she regularly went to Villa Moncenigo to ask after him, and heard that he was getting progressively well, and at last she was informed that he was permitted to leave his room. Faustina told her this, her eyes sparkling with delight. She talked a great deal of her cavalier, as she called him, and her gratitude and admiration. Each day, accompanied by her father, she had visited him, and she had always some new tale to repeat of his wit, his elegance, and his agreeable compliments. Now he was able to join them in the saloon, she was doubly happy. Angeline, after receiving this information, abstained from her daily visit, since it could no longer be paid without subjecting her to the risk of encountering her lover. She sent each day, and heard of his recovery; and each day she received messages from her friend, inviting her to come. But she was firm — she felt that she was doing right; and though she feared that he was angry, she knew that in less than a fortnight, to such had the month decreased since she first saw him, she could display her real sentiments, and as he loved her, he would readily forgive. Her heart was light, or full only of gratitude and happiness.

Each day, Faustina entreated her to come, and her entreaties became more urgent, while still Angeline excused herself. One morning her young friend rushed into her cell to reproach, and question, and wonder at her absence. Angeline was obliged to promise to go; and then she asked about the cavalier, to discover how she might so time her visit, as to avoid seeing him. Faustina blushed — a charming confusion overspread her face as she cried, "O, Angeline! it is for his sake I wish you to come."

Angeline blushed now in her turn, fearing that her secret was betrayed, and asked hastily, "What has he said?"

“Nothing,” replied her vivacious friend; “and that is why I need you. O, Angeline, yesterday, papa asked me how I liked him, and added that if his father consented, he saw no reason why we should not marry — Nor do I — and yet, does he love me? O, if he does not love me, I would not have a word said, nor his father asked — I would not marry him for the world!” and tears sprung into the sensitive girl’s eyes, and she threw herself into Angeline’s arms.

“Poor Faustina,” thought Angeline, “are you to suffer through me?” and she caressed and kissed her with soothing fondness. Faustina continued. She felt sure, she said, that Ippolito did love her. The name fell startlingly on Angeline’s ear, thus pronounced by another; and she turned pale and trembled, while she struggled not to betray herself. The tokens of love he gave were not much, yet he looked so happy when she came in, and pressed her so often to remain — and then his eyes —

“Does he ever ask anything about me?” said Angeline.

“No — why should he?” replied Faustina.

“He saved my life,” the other answered, blushing.

“Did he — when? — O, I remember; I only thought of mine; to be sure, your danger was as great — nay, greater, for you threw yourself before me. My own dearest friend, I am not ungrateful, though Ippolito renders me forgetful.”

All this surprised, nay, stunned Angeline. She did not doubt her lover’s fidelity, but she feared for her friend’s happiness, and every idea gave way to that — She promised to pay her visit, that very evening.

And now, see her again walking slowly up the hill, with a heavy heart on Faustina’s account, and hoping that her love, sudden and unreturned, would not involve her future happiness. At the turn of the road near the villa, her name was called, and she looked up, and again bending from the balustrade, she saw the smiling face of her pretty friend; and Ippolito beside her. He started and drew back as he met her eyes. Angeline had come with a resolve to put him on his guard, and was reflecting how she could speak so as not to compromise her friend. It was labour lost; Ippolito was gone when she entered the saloon, and did not appear again. “He would keep his vow,” thought Angeline; but she was cruelly disturbed on her friend’s account, and she knew not what to do. Faustina could only talk of her cavalier. Angeline felt conscience-stricken; and totally at loss how to act. Should she reveal her situation to her friend? That, perhaps, were best, and yet she felt it most difficult of all; besides, sometimes she almost suspected that Ippolito had become unfaithful. The thought came with a spasm of agony, and went again; still it unhinged her, and she was unable to command her voice. She returned to her convent, more unquiet, more distressed than ever.

Twice she visited the villa, and still Ippolito avoided her, and Faustina's account of his behaviour to her, grew more inexplicable. Again and again, the fear that she had lost him, made her sick at heart; and again she reassured herself that his avoidance and silence towards her resulted from his vow, and that his mysterious conduct towards Faustina existed only in the lively girl's imagination. She meditated continually on the part she ought to take, while appetite and sleep failed her; at length she grew too ill to visit the villa, and for two days, was confined to her bed. During the feverish hours that now passed, unable to move, and miserable at the thought of Faustina's fate, she came to a resolve to write to Ippolito. He would not see her, so she had no other means of communication. Her vow forbade the act; but that was already broken in so many ways; and now she acted without a thought of self; for her dear friend's sake only. But, then, if her letter should get into the hands of others; if Ippolito meant to desert her for Faustina? — then her secret should be buried for ever in her own heart. She therefore resolved to write so that her letter would not betray her to a third person. It was a task of difficulty. At last it was accomplished.

"The signor cavaliere would excuse her, she hoped. She was — she had ever been as a mother to the Signorina Faustina — she loved her more than her life. The signor cavaliere was acting, perhaps, a thoughtless part. — Did he understand? — and though he meant nothing, the world would conjecture. All she asked was, for his permission to write to his father, that this state of mystery and uncertainty might end as speedily as possible."

She tore ten notes — was dissatisfied with this, yet sealed it, and crawling out of her bed, immediately despatched it by the post.

This decisive act calmed her mind, and her health felt the benefit. The next» day, she was so well that she resolved to go up to the villa, to discover what effect her letter had created. With a beating heart she ascended the lane, and at the accustomed turn looked up. No Faustina was watching. That was not strange, since she was not expected; and yet, she knew not why, she felt miserable: tears started into her eyes. "If I could only see Ippolito for one minute — obtain the slightest explanation, all would be well!"

Thinking thus, she arrived at the villa, and entered the saloon. She heard quick steps, as of some one retreating as she came in. Faustina was seated at a table reading a letter — her cheeks flushed, her bosom heaving with agitation. Ippolito's hat and cloak were near her, and betrayed that he had just left the room in haste. She turned — she saw Angeline — her eyes flashed fire — she threw the letter she had been reading at her friend's feet; Angeline saw that it was her own.

"Take it!" said Faustina: "it is yours. Why you wrote it — what it means — I do not ask: it was at least indelicate, and, I assure you, useless — I am not one to give my heart unasked, nor to be refused when proposed by my father. Take up your letter, Angeline. O, I could not believe that you would have acted thus by me!"

Angeline stood as if listening, but she heard not a word; she was motionless — her hands clasped, her eyes swimming with tears, fixed on her letter.

"Take it up, I say," said Faustina, impatiently stamping with her little foot; "it came too late, whatever your meaning was. Ippolito has written to his father for his consent to marry me; my father has written also." Angeline now started and gazed wildly on her friend.

"It is true! Do you doubt — shall I call Ippolito to confirm my words?" Faustina spoke exultingly. Angeline struck — terrified — hastily took up the letter, and without a word turned away, left the saloon — the house, descended the hill, and returned to her convent. Her heart bursting, on fire, she felt as if her frame was possessed of a spirit not her own: she shed no tears, but her eyes were starting from her head — convulsive spasms shook her limbs; she rushed into her cell — threw herself on the floor, and then she could weep — and after torrents of tears, she could pray, and then — think again her dream of happiness was ended for ever, and wish for death.

The next morning, she opened her unwilling eyes to the light, and rose. It was day; and all must rise to live through the day, and she among the rest, though the sun shone not for her as before, and misery converted life into torture. Soon she was startled by the intelligence that a cavalier was in the parlour desirous of seeing her. She shrunk gloomily within herself, and refused to go down. The portress returned a quarter of an hour after. He was gone, but had written to her; and she delivered the letter. It lay on the table before Angeline — she cared not to open it — all was over, and needed not this confirmation. At length, slowly, and with an effort, she broke the seal. The date was the anniversary of the expiration of the year. Her tears burst forth; and then a cruel hope was born in her heart that all was a dream, and that now, the Trial of Love being at an end, he had written to claim her. Instigated by this deceitful suggestion, she wiped her eyes, and read these words:

"I am come to excuse myself from an act of baseness. You refuse to see me, and I write; for, unworthy as I must ever be in your eyes, I would not appear worse than I am. I received your letter in Faustina's presence — she recognized your handwriting. You know her wilfulness, her impetuosity; she took it from me, and I could not prevent her. I will say no more. You must hate me; yet rather afford me your pity, for I am miserable. My honour is now engaged; it was all done almost before I knew the danger — but there is no help — I shall know no peace till you forgive me, and yet I deserve your curse. Faustina is ignorant of our secret. Farewell." The paper dropped from Angeline's hand.

It were vain to describe the variety of grief that the poor girl endured. Her piety, her resignation, her noble, generous nature came to her assistance, and supported her when she felt that without them, she must have died. Faustina wrote to say that she would have seen her, but that Ippolito was averse from her doing so. The answer had come from the Marchese della Toretta — a glad consent; but he was ill, and they were all going to Bologna: on their return they would meet.

This departure was some comfort to the unfortunate girl. And soon another came in the shape of a letter from Ippolito's father, full of praises for her conduct. His son had confessed all to him, he said; she was an angel — heaven would reward her, and still greater would be her recompence, if she would deign to forgive her faithless lover. Angeline found relief in answering this letter, and pouring forth a part of the weight of grief and thought that burthened her. She forgave him freely, and prayed that he and his lovely bride might enjoy every blessing.

Ippolito and Faustina were married, and spent two or three years in Paris and the south of Italy. She had been ecstatically happy at first; but soon the rough world, and her husband's light, inconstant nature inflicted a thousand wounds in her young bosom. She longed for the friendship, the kind sympathy of Angeline; to repose her head on her soft heart, and to be comforted. She proposed a visit to Venice — Ippolito consented — and they visited Este in their way. Angeline had taken the veil in the convent of Sant' Anna. She was cheerful, if not happy; she listened in astonishment to Faustina's sorrows, and strove to console her. Ippolito, also, she saw with calm and altered feelings; he was not the being her soul had loved; and if she had married him, with her deep feelings, and exalted ideas of honour, she felt that she should have been even more dissatisfied than Faustina.

The couple lived the usual life of Italian husband and wife. He was gay, inconstant, careless; she consoled herself with a cavaliere servente. Angeline, dedicated to heaven, wondered at all these things; and how any could so easily make transfer of affections, which with her, were sacred and immutable.

THE ELDER SON

MY father was the second son of a wealthy baronet. As he and his elder brother formed all the family of my grandfather, he inherited the whole of his mother's fortune, which was considerable, and settled on the younger children. He married a lady whom he tenderly loved; and having taken orders, and procured preferment, retired to his deanery in the north of Ireland, and there took up his abode. When I was about ten years old he lost my mother: I was their only child.

My father was something of an ascetic, if such name can be given to a rigid adherence to the precepts of morality, which arose from the excess, and not the absence of feeling. He adored my mother; he mourned for her to the verge of insanity; but his grief was silent, devouring, and gloomy. He never formed another matrimonial engagement: secluding himself entirely from society, and given up to the duties of his sacred calling, he passed his days in solitude, or in works of charity among the poor.

Even now I cannot remember him without awe. He was a tall and, I thought, a venerable-looking man; for he was thin and pale, and he was partly bald. His manners were cold and reserved; he seldom spoke, and when he did it was in such measured phrase, in so calm and solemn a voice, and on such serious topics, as resembled rather oracular enunciation than familiar conversation. He never caressed me; if ever he stroked my head or drew me on his knee, I felt a mingled alarm and delight difficult to describe. Yet, strange to say, my father loved me almost to idolatry; and I knew this and repaid his affection with enthusiastic fondness, notwithstanding his reserve and my awe. He was something greater, and wiser, and better, in my eyes, than any other human being. I was the sole creature he loved; the object of all his thoughts by day and his dreams by night. Abstracted and even severe as he seemed, he has visited my bedside at night, subdued by womanly fears, and hung over me for hours, to assure himself of my life and well-being. He has watched by me in sickness night after night with unwearied assiduity. He never spoke harshly to me, and treated me at once with a distance and gentleness hard to be understood.

When I was eighteen he died. During his last illness the seal was taken from his lips, and his heart threw off that husk within which he had hitherto concealed its true nature. He died of a rapid consumption, which terminated his existence within six months of his being first taken ill. His body wasted under the effects of mortal disease; but his soul assumed new life and energy, and his temper became as soft and demonstrative as it had hitherto been repulsive and concentrated. He became my father, friend, and brother, all in one; a thousand dear relationships combined in one stronger than any. This sudden melting, this divine sensibility, which expanded at once, having been so long shut up and hid, was like a miracle. It fascinated and entranced me. I could not believe that I was about to lose him at the moment when we discovered each other's worth: I mean by that expression, as regards myself, all the happiness that he derived from the truth and vivacity of my filial affection.

It were vain to attempt to refer even to our conversations: the sublime morality he inculcated; the tenderness and charity of his expressions; the overflowing and melting eloquence with which he talked of the affections of this world, and his aspirations after a better. He died suddenly at last, as I was playing to him a simple air my mother loved. It was a moment of horror, yet of solemn and pious resignation: his soul had sought its native heaven and congenial companion — might it be blest! Yet I had lost him, and grief immeasurable was the result. The impression of the misery I suffered can never be entirely worn from my mind: I often wonder my heart did not break with the violence of my sorrow.

I had been brought up at the deanery, apart from all acquaintances. I had had a governess, a most worthy woman, who married just before my father was taken ill, and who kindly came to me when all was over, to endeavour to console the inconsolable. One of my father's objects in life had been to accumulate a fortune for me; not for the sake of placing me in the dangerous situation of an heiress, but to render me independent. It thus happened, that by his ever-lamented death I inherited considerable wealth. His own fortune, my mother's, and his savings, formed the sum of fifty thousand pounds. He left me under the guardianship of his elder brother, Sir Richard Gray, with only one restriction, that I was not to marry, even with my uncle's consent, till I was twenty-one. He wished thus to secure me freedom of choice, and time for deliberation. To this sagacious clause I owe the happiness of my life.

As soon as my health and the first agony of my grief would permit, I left the deanery. My kind governess accompanied me to Dublin, and Sir Richard Gray came hither himself to fetch me, and to carry me to his seat in England. I was beyond measure surprised when I saw my uncle. He was a year older than my father — my venerable father — and he looked in comparison a boy. He was indeed under fifty, and had at first sight a juvenility of aspect quite astonishing. On examination, the traces of years and care became perceptible; and there was an haggardness in his face which contrasted strangely with its expression of thoughtlessness. No one could be kinder than he was to me, and yet his very kindness was revolting, from the contrast he formed with my lost parent. The world, society, and pleasure, occupied his time and thoughts. Solitude and misery were synonymous terms with him; and he called every thing solitude that did not include the idea of a crowd. He rattled away during our journey, thinking his anecdotes and good stories would enliven me. He was so sorry that it was not the season that I could go to London — he would have invited his daughter, Lady Hythe, to his seat, that he might arrange a party to enliven it for me; but she was on the continent, and his other married daughter was resident in Scotland. What was to be done? He had engagements himself during the shooting season at various gentlemen's houses; and I should be moped to death at Beech Grove. This account of the seclusion of my retreat was all my comfort. I declared that nothing should induce me to go into society for several years. He stared, and then smiled, and in his usual caressing gallant manner said, I should do as I liked; he would never contradict me in any thing: he only hoped that he should be always able to please and gratify me.

My uncle's story is soon told. He married, very early in life, a girl of inferior rank. His relations were exceedingly enraged, and discarded him. His father died; and his grandfather, fearing that he would sell his expectations and squander the whole property, offered him a large immediate income, upon condition that he would entail the estate upon his eldest son. He consented. A few years after, his grandfather died, and he came into the titles and estate. The new Lady Gray made herself many friends from the extreme propriety of her conduct. They had a large family, but lost many children; and she died in childbed of her youngest. Five only survived. The eldest son was abroad: two daughters were well married, and the youngest, a girl of only twelve years of age, lived with her governess at the family seat in Hampshire. Sir Richard talked kindly of his children, but chiefly of his eldest son, against whom therefore I conceived a prejudice; because, from his father's description, I considered him dissipated and worthless. Such, indeed, was my uncle; but I did not dislike him, for by the charm of manner he vanquished aversion, and I transferred to his favourite son the disapprobation he had at first excited. I was glad to hear that my cousin was at Vienna, and that I was not likely to see him.

We arrived at Beech Grove on the 29th August. It was a fine summer day, and the country in all its glory. The house was spacious and elegant, and situated in an extensive park, laid out with infinite taste, and kept up with extreme care. All looked so gay and smiling, so unlike the sombre scenes I had left on the shores of the dark northern ocean, that I contemplated my new abode with distaste: such is the force of habit. My uncle had expected that I should be enchanted with the novel beauty of an English park and mansion, and was disappointed at my languid praise. There were no rocks, no sea, no extensive moors. Groves of beech, a river threading verdant wooded banks, a variety of upland and valley, glade and copse, did not command my admiration; so true it is that we seldom admire that which is absolutely new. A few months totally altered this first impression. The cheerfulness of the scene imperceptibly acted on my spirits. I became reconciled to its (to a certain degree) tameness, and learnt at last to love its refined and elegant beauty.

Sir Richard talked of visiting and company. He would have called his neighbours round us, and forced me to accept invitations at the various houses where, in the shooting season, were assembled large parties of the rich and gay. I earnestly assured him that my depressed spirits and deep-rooted Sorrow needed tranquillity — that the seclusion which his house promised was its principal attraction — that I was most happy to be alone. He could not believe my assertions — it hurt his feelings to leave me in this desert: he actually delayed his departure for two days, not liking to quit me. At last he went; and speedily, in the pursuit of pleasure, forgot my existence.

I was not absolutely alone in his house; my cousin Marianne inhabited it with me. She was a pretty, agreeable girl, of twelve years of age; and we got on very well together. I had recourse to her society when over-weary of thought; and she was so young that I could leave her, and betake myself to my mournful, lonely reveries, whenever I liked, without ceremony.

I had not been at Beech Grove more than a week, when late one afternoon, on returning from a drive, we distinguished lights in the diningroom. “Can it be my brother?” cried Marianne; “can Clinton have arrived!”

“I hope not,” I said.

“O, do not say so,” replied the little girl; “you would love Clinton; he is so lively and dear — every body loves him.”

She scarce waited for the steps to be let down, but jumped from the carriage: she returned to me in a minute with an air of disappointment, “It is only my brother Vernon,” she said.

“And you do not care about him?”

“O, yes,” she replied, “Vernon is very good, and all that; but he is quite different from Clinton; he may stay a month in the house and I not see him twice.”

The habit of solitude had rendered me a little bashful. I had dined early with my cousin, and the new-comer was at dinner. I went into the drawing-room therefore, and made her stay with me, and awaited his entrance with some alarm. He soon joined us. As he entered, I was struck with his being the handsomest man I had ever seen. His complexion was a clear olive; his eyes a dark blue; his head small and well-shaped; his figure scarcely above the middle size, but slender and elegant. I expected the courteous manners of my uncle to correspond with the grace of his appearance; but Vernon had no vivacity, no softness. His words were pregnant with meaning, and his eyes flashed fire as he spoke; but his address was abrupt, his conversation pointed and sarcastic, and a disagreeable ironical smile, in which he indulged, deteriorated greatly from his good looks. Still, he was very handsome, very clever, and very entertaining.

One part of Marianne’s description at least was erroneous. He spent every day and all day with us. He rode or walked with us in the morning; read to us in the evening; conversed as we worked or painted; and did all that a person most sedulous to please could do, except turning over the leaves of our music-books. He did not like music — of which my father was so passionately fond — in all else his tastes seemed mine. He gave me Italian lessons; and, except when I drove him away, was never absent from our side. Marianne declared that her brother Vernon was an altered man. I thought that I knew whence the alteration sprung.

What girl of eighteen, just emerged from solitude, could perceive the birth of love in the heart of a young, accomplished, and handsome man, and not feel her vanity gratified? My peculiar education had prevented my having any of the coquettishness of beauty or the insolence of wealth. I own I felt elated. I became of consequence in my own eyes; and my silly heart swelled with conscious triumph. Vernon grew each day more openly devoted to me, more solicitous to please, more flattering and attentive. He advanced with imperceptible steps to the desired bourne, and no impatience of temper disturbed for a moment his progress. Stealthy as a serpent, and as wily, he became necessary to my comfort; and I had compromised myself by displaying my vain triumph in my conquest, before he betrayed himself by a word.

When I found that he sought a return for his love, I was frightened. I discovered that with all his talents and agreeable qualities I scarcely liked him; and certainly could never feel a sentiment more tender than friendship. I reproached myself for my ingratitude — I felt ashamed of my vacillation. He saw my struggles — he was all humility — he did not deserve better — he was satisfied if I would only be a sister to him — pity him — endure his presence. I agreed, and reassumed my familiarity and good humour.

It is impossible to describe his refined artifice, or the wonderful assiduity with which he watched by his concealed net till I was completely immeshed. He contrived first that I should consent to listen to him talking of his passion; — then he excited my pity for his sufferings — he was eloquent in describing them and in exalting my merits. He asked for so little, he seemed so humble — but he was importunate, and never gave up the smallest advantage he had once gained. Forgotten by my uncle, unknown and unregarded by the rest of the world, I was delivered over to his machinations. Day after day he renewed them. He discerned and worked upon every weakness of my character. My fear to do wrong; my alarm at the idea of being the occasion of pain; my desire to preserve my integrity without a flaw — these might be termed virtues; but, distorted and exaggerated by natural conceit and youthful inexperience, they rendered me a too easy prey. At last he extracted from me a promise to marry him when I should be of age. This pledge seemed the only method left me to prove my delicacy and truth. I gave it the more readily because I admired his talents, and believed that he deserved a better wife than I, and that my want of love was a fault in me for which I ought to compensate to him. With all the rashness and inexperience of my age, I confess that I even tried to conceal my latent aversion; so that when, after having obtained my promise, he went away for a week, I willingly assented to his request that I should correspond with him, and my letters were full of affection. I found it easier to write than speak what I did not really feel, and was glad to shew my gratitude and my sense of his attachment at an easy rate. At the same time, I consented to keep our engagement secret, that thus I might have an excuse for preserving the reserve of my conduct. I took advantage of this wish on his part to insist on his leaving me for a time. I was glad when he went, yet mortified at the readiness of his obedience.

I must not be unjust. Vernon had many faults, but coldness of feeling was not among them. Vehemence and passion were his characteristics, though he could unite them to a deliberation in design, and a wiliness in execution, without example. He had determined before he saw me to win me and my fortune; but such was the violence of his disposition, that he was unavoidably caught in his own toils; and the project that was founded on self-interest ended in making him the slave of love — of a girl whom he despised. He went when I bade him eagerly; but he fulfilled his aim better by so doing. My letters were to be confirmations strong against me — in case that hereafter, as he too justly feared, I should wish to retract my vows. I heedlessly accomplished his ends, beyond his most sanguine expectations. My letters were those of a betrothed bride; and what they might want in tenderness was made up by their uncompromising acknowledgment of our relative position. Having obtained these testimonies, he returned. I was not sorry. I was too little pleased with myself to be in love with solitude. His presence kept alive the feeling of irresistible fate to which I had yielded; and his society enlivened the monotonous quiet of Beech Grove.

At length Christmas came, and my uncle returned and filled his house with visitors. Then the darker shades of Vernon’s character became apparent. He was as jealous as an Italian. His disposition was sombre and averse to sociable pleasures. God knows grief sat too heavy at my heart to allow me to be very vivacious; still, I wished to please my uncle, and thought that I had no right to cloud the good humour of the company; and added to this was the elastic spirit of youth, which sprung eagerly and spontaneously from the gloom and mystery of Vernon's artifices into the more congenial atmosphere of friendly intercourse. He saw me unlike any thing he had ever seen in me before — sprightly, and ready to share the amusement of the hour. He groaned in bitterness of spirit. He reproached — reprehended — and became a very task-master. I was naturally timid and docile — in vain did my spirit revolt from his injustice: he gained and kept complete ascendency over me. Yet my soul was in arms against him even while I submitted to his control, and dislike began to develope itself in my bosom. I tasked myself severely for my ingratitude. I became in appearance kinder than ever; but every internal struggle and every outward demonstration had unfortunately one result — to alienate my affections more and more from my lover-cousin.

Our guests left us. My uncle went up to town. He told me he hoped I would accompany him there as soon as Lady Hythe returned to chaperon me. But I was more averse than ever to visiting London. Bound to Vernon by my promises, and wishing to keep my faith with him, I did not like to expose myself to the temptation of seeing others I should like better. Besides, the memory of my father was still unfaded, and I resolved not to appear in public till the year of mourning was expired. Vernon accompanied his father to town, but returned again to us almost immediately. We appeared to revert to our former mode of life; but the essence of it was changed. He was moody. — I anxious. I almost ventured to accuse him of ill-temper and tyranny, till, reading in my own heart its indifference, I was inclined to consider myself the cause of his discontent. I tried to restore his complacency by kindness, and in some degree succeeded.

One day Sir Richard suddenly appeared at Beech Grove. He seemed surprised to find Vernon, and care and even anxiety clouded his usual hilarity. He told us that he expected Clinton daily, and should, immediately on his arrival, bring him down to Hampshire.

"To celebrate my birth-day?" asked Vernon, with a sardonic smile; "I am of age on Friday."

"No," said his father; "he will not be here so soon."

"Nor I so honoured," said Vernon; "Clinton's coming of age was celebrated by tumultuous rejoicings; but he is the Elder Son."

Sir Richard gave Vernon, who spoke sneeringly, a quick glance — an indescribable expression of pain crossed his countenance.

"Have you been staying here since Christmas?" he asked at last. Vernon would have replied evasively, but Marianne said:

"O yes! he is always here now."

"You appear to have become very fond of Beech Grove of a sudden," continued his father. I felt that Sir Richard's eye was fixed on me as he spoke, and I was conscious that not only my cheeks, but my temples and neck were crimsoned with blushes. Some time after I saw my uncle in the shrubbery; he was alone, and the want of society was always so painful to him, that I thought it but a mark of duteous kindness to join him. I wondered, as I approached, to see every token of haggard care on a face usually so smiling. He saw me, and smoothed his brow; he began talking of London, of my elder cousin, of his desire that I should conquer my timidity, and consent to be presented this spring. At length he suddenly stopped short, and scrutinising me as he spoke, said:

"Pardon me, dear Ellen, if I annoy you; but I am your guardian, your second father — am I not? Do not be angry, therefore, if I ask you, are you attached to my son Vernon?"

My natural frankness prompted one reply, but a thousand feelings, inexplicable but powerful, hung on my tongue. I answered, stammering: "No — I believe so — I like him."

"But you do not love him?"

"What a question, dear uncle!" I replied, covered with confusion.

"Is it even so?" cried Sir Richard; "and is he to succeed in all?"

"You mistake," I said; for I had an horror of confessing an attachment which, after all, I did not feel, and so of making our engagement more binding. But I blushed deeply as I spoke, and my uncle looked incredulous and said:

"Yet it would make you very unhappy if he married another."

"O, no!" I cried, "he has my free leave. I should wish him joy with all my heart."

The idea — the hope that he was playing me false, and might release me from my trammels, darted through my mind with a quick thrill of delight.

Sir Richard saw that I was in earnest, and his countenance cleared.

"What a strange thing is maiden coyness," he observed; "you blushed so prettily, Ellen, that I could have sworn you had given your heart to Vernon. But I see I was mistaken; I am glad of it, for he would not suit you.

No more was said, but I felt conscience-stricken and miserable. I had deceived my uncle, and yet I had not. I had declared that I did not love him to whom I had pledged my hand; and the whole was a mystery and an entanglement that degraded me in my own eyes. I longed to make a full confession; yet then all would be over — we should both be inextricably bound. As it was, some caprice might cause Vernon to transfer his affection to another, and I could give him entire freedom, without any human being knowing how foolishly I had acted.

We had no guests at dinner; Sir Richard was to leave us early the next morning. After dinner I speedily retired to the drawing-room, leaving father and son together; they remained two hours. I was on the point of withdrawing to my own room, to avoid a meeting which alarmed me, I knew not why, when they entered. It seemed as if, in the interval of my absence, they had received sudden intelligence of a dear friend's death; and yet not quite so, for though Vernon looked absorbed in thought, his gloom was strangely interspersed with glances of swelling triumph; his smiles were no longer sneers — yet they did not betray a sunshine of the heart, but rather joy on a bad victory. He looked on me askance, with a kind of greedy satisfaction, and at his father with scorn. I trembled, and turned to my uncle; but sadness and confusion marked his features — he was stamped as with disgrace, and quailed beneath my eye; though presently he rallied, drew a chair near, and was kinder than ever. He told me that he was going up to town on the morrow, and that Vernon was to accompany him; he asked me if there was any thing he could do for me, and testified his affection by a thousand little attentions. Vernon said nothing, and took leave of me so coldly, that I thought his manner implied that he expected to see me in the morning. Thinking it right to indulge him, I rose early; but he did not come down till long after Sir Richard, who thanked me for my kindness in disturbing myself on his account. They went away immediately after breakfast, and Vernon's formal adieu again struck me with wonder. Was it possible that he was indeed going to marry another? This doubt was all my comfort, for I was painfully agitated by the false position in which I had entangled myself, by the mystery that enveloped my actions, and the falsehood which my lips perpetually implied, if they did not utter.

I was habitually an early riser. On the third morning after the departure of my relations, before I rose, and while I was dressing, I thought that pebbles were thrown at my window; but my mind was too engrossed to pay attention, till at last, after my toilette had been leisurely completed, I looked from my window, and saw Vernon below, in the secluded part of the park which it overlooked. I hurried down, my heart palpitating with anxiety.

"I have been waiting for you these two hours," he said, angrily: "did you not hear my signal?"

"I know of no signal," I replied; "I am not accustomed to clandestine appointments."

"And yet you can carry on a clandestine engagement excellently well! You told Sir Richard that you did not love me — that you should be glad if I married another."

An indignant reply was bursting from my lips, but he saw the rising storm and hastened to allay it. He changed his tone at once from reproach to tender protestations.

"It broke my heart to leave you as I did," he said, "but I could do no less. Sir Richard insisted on my accompanying him — I was obliged to comply. Even now he believes me to be in town. I have travelled all night. He half suspected me, because I refused to dine with him to-day; and I was forced to promise to join him at a ball to-night. I need not be there till twelve or one, and so can stay two hours with you."

"But why this hurried journey?" I asked. "Why do you come?"

He answered by pleading the vehemence of his affection, and spoke of the risk he ran of losing me for ever. "Do you not know," he said, "that my father has set his heart upon your marrying my brother?"

"He is very good," I replied, disdainfully. "But I am not a slave, to be bought and sold. My cousin Clinton is the last person in the world whom you need fear."

"Oh, Ellen, how much do you comfort — transport me, by this generous contempt for wealth and rank! You ask why I am here — it were worth the fatigue, twice ten thousand times told, to have these assurances. I have trembled — I have feared — but you will not love this favoured of fortune — this elder son!"

I cannot describe Vernon’s look as he said this. Methought envy, malice, and demoniac exultation were all mingled. He laughed aloud — I shrunk from him dismayed. He became calmer a moment after.

“My life is in your hands, Ellen,” he said; — but why repeat his glossing speeches, in which deceit and truth were so kneaded into one mass, that the poison took the guise of the wholesome substance, while the whole was impregnated with destruction. I felt that I liked him less than ever; yet I yielded to his violence. I believed myself the victim of a venial but irreparable mistake of my own. I confirmed my promises, and pledged my faith most solemnly. It is true that I undeceived him as much as I could with regard to the extent of my attachment; at first he was furious at my coldness, then overwhelmed me with entreaties for forgiveness — tears even streamed from his eyes — and then again he haughtily reminded me that I forfeited every virtue of my sex, and became a monument of falsehood, if I failed him. We separated at last — I promised to write every day, and saw him ride away with a sensation as if relieved from the infliction of the torture.

A week after this scene — my spirits still depressed, and often weeping my dear father’s death, which I considered the root of every evil — I was reading, or rather trying to read, in my dressing-room, but in reality brooding over my sorrows, when I heard Marianne’s cheerful laugh in the shrubbery, and her voice calling me to join her. I roused myself from my sad reverie, and resolved to cast aside care and misery, while Vernon’s absence afforded me a shadow of freedom; and, in fulfilment of this determination, went down to join my young light-hearted cousin. She was not alone. Clinton was with her. There was no resemblance between him and Vernon. His countenance was all sunshine; his light-blue eyes laughed in their own gladness and purity; his beaming smile, his silver-toned voice, his tall manly figure, and, above all, his open-hearted engaging manners, were all the reverse of his dark mysterious brother. I saw him, and felt that my prejudices had been ridiculous; we became intimate in a moment. I know not how it was, but we seemed like brother and sister — each feeling, each thought, being laid bare to the other. I was naturally frank, but rendered timid by education; so that it charmed me doubly when the unreserve of another invited me to indulge in the unguarded confidence of my disposition. How speedily the days now flew! they contained but one drawback, my correspondence with my cousin — not that I felt myself unfaithful towards him; my affection for my newfound relation did not disturb my conscience — that was pure, undisguised, sisterly. We had met from across the ocean of life — two beings who formed an harmonised whole; but the sympathy was too perfect, too untinged by earthly dross, to be compared with the selfish love given and exacted by Vernon. Yet I feared that his jealousy might be awakened, while I felt less inclined than ever to belie my own heart; and with aversion and hesitation penned letters containing the formula of affection and engaged vows.

Sir Richard came down to Beech Grove. He was highly pleased to see the cordial friendship that subsisted between his son and me.

“Did I not tell you that you would like him?” he said. “Every one must,” I replied, “he is formed to win all hearts.”

“And suits you much better than Vernon?”

I did not know what to answer; it was a tender string that he touched; but I resolved not to feel or think. Sir Richard’s were all flying visits; he was to leave us in the evening. He had, during the morning, a long conversation with Clinton; and immediately after, he sought for an opportunity to talk to me.

“Ellen,” he said, “I have not been a wise but I am a fond father. I have done Clinton many injuries, of which he, poor fellow, is wholly unconscious; and I have wished to compensate for all in giving him a wife worthy of him. His temper is generous; his spirit clear and noble. By my soul, I think he has every virtue under heaven; and you alone deserve him. Do not interrupt me, I beseech you; hear me this once. I confess that ever since you became my ward this has been my favourite project. There have been several obstacles; but the most serious ones seem to vanish. You have seen each other, and I flatter myself have each discovered and appreciated the good qualities of the other. Is it so, Ellen? I know not whence my fears arise, and yet they intrude themselves. I fear, while I have been endeavouring to secure my boy’s happiness, I may have been adding to the ruin already heaped on his head by my means. I have talked with him to-day. He has no disguise in his nature, and he avows that he loves you. I know that this confession would come better from himself; but your fortune, your beauty, make him fear to be misinterpreted. Do not mistake — he is wholly unaware of my intention of speaking to you. I see your distress, dear Ellen; have patience but for one word more — do not trifle with Clinton's feelings, as sometimes — forgive me — it has appeared to me that you have trifled with Vernon's — do not foster hopes not to be fulfilled. Be frank, be honest, despite the bashfulness and coquetry of your sex."

After these words, fearful of having offended — overcome by more agitation than I could have imagined him capable of feeling — my uncle drew me towards him, pressed me convulsively to his bosom, and then rushed from the room.

I cannot describe the state in which he left me — a spasm of pain passed through my frame; I became sick and faint, till a flood of tears relieved my bursting heart. I wept long — I sobbed in agony — I felt the veriest wretch that ever trod the earth.

My uncle had rent the veil that concealed me from myself. I loved Clinton — he was the whole world to me — all the world of light and joy, and I had shut myself out from him for ever. And he also was my victim. I beheld his dear face beaming with hope; I heard his thrilling voice harmonised by love; and saw the fearless cordiality of his manners, which bespoke his confidence in my sympathy; while I knew that I held a poisoned dagger which I was about to plunge into his heart. Sometimes I thought to treat him coldly; sometimes — oh! I cannot tell the various imaginations that haunted me — some self-sacrificing, others wicked and false — all ended in one way. My uncle departed; we were left together, our full hearts beating to respond to each other without any division or reserve. I felt that every moment might cause Clinton to open his soul to me, and to seek in mine for a feeling too truly and too fondly alive there, but which was sinful and fatal to both. To prevent his confession, my own preceded it. I revealed to him my engagement to Vernon, and declared my resolve not to swerve from my faith. He commended me. I saw despair at losing me painted in his countenance, mingled with horror at supplanting his brother; and alarm that he, the elder born, gifted by fortune with every blessing, should be suspected of the intention of stealing the sole remaining good, which Vernon had won by his diligence, perhaps by his deserts. Forbid it, Heaven! I saw in the clear mirror of his expressive countenance the struggle of passion and principle, and the triumph of honour and virtue exalted over the truest love that ever warmed man's breast.

Our gaiety was flown; our laughter stilled. We talked sadly and seriously together, neither lamenting our fate nor acknowledging our sufferings; tamed to endurance, and consoling each other by such demonstrations of affection as were permitted to our near relationship. We read clearly in each other's hearts, and supported each other in the joint sacrifice; and this without any direct acknowledgment. Clinton talked of returning to the continent; I of my seclusion and tranquillity at Beech Grove. The time was distant — two years was an eternity at our age — before Vernon could claim my hand; and we did not advert to that fatal consummation. We gave up each other; and that single misery sufficed without a more cruel addition. I was calm, pale, and tearless. I had brought it all on myself, and must submit. I could not cast aside the younger son to select the elder; and if in my secret thoughts I cherished a hope to induce Vernon to forego his claims, that very circumstance would the more entirely divide me from Clinton. As my brother-in-law, I might see him — in some sort, our fortunes were shared; but as a rival to Vernon, a stream of blood separated us for ever.

The hours of sad sympathy which we passed were very dear to us. We knew that they were brief. Clinton had fixed the day and hour of his departure — each moment it drew nearer. We should never meet again till after my marriage; but till the hour of separation, for two short days, we were all in all to each other, despite the wall of adamant which was raised between us. We tried each to pretend to think and talk of indifferent subjects; and we *never* spoke of that nearest our hearts; — but how superfluous are words as interpreters between lovers! As we walked or rode, and spent hours in each other's society, we exchanged thoughts more intimately during long periods of absolute silence, than Vernon with his vehemence and eloquence could have conceived. Had we spoken folio volumes, we could have said no more. Our looks — the very casting down of our eyes and mutual tacit avoidance, told our resolve to fulfil our duties and to conquer our love; and yet how, by a glance or a faltering word, when the future was alluded to, did we promise never to forget, but to cherish mutual esteem and tenderness as all that was left of the paradise from which we were so ruthlessly driven! Now and then a playful expression on his part, or a blush on mine, betrayed more feeling than we considered right; the one was checked by a sigh, the other by an assumption of indifference.

It was at this time that Clinton made the sketch copied in the portrait accompanying this tale. I had been spending many hours in tears and anguish, when, resolved to overcome my weakness, and to recover an appearance of serenity before my cousin returned from his ride, I went into Marianne's school-room, and took up a book. The exhaustion of weeping had calmed me; and I thought of my kinsman — his endearing qualities, and of the tie between us, with softened feelings. As I indulged in reverie, my head resting on my hand, my book falling from my fingers, my eyes closed; and I passed from the agitated sense of life and sorrow into the balmy forgetfulness of sleep. Clinton had wished to make a portrait of me, yet had not ventured to ask me to sit — he came in at this moment; Marianne, whispering, told him not to disturb me. He took her drawing materials, and made a hasty sketch, which genius and love united to render a perfect likeness. I awoke and saw his work; it was beyond our contract; I asked him for it; he felt that I was right, and gave it. This sacrifice on his part proved that he did not palter with his sense of right. On the morrow we were to part; and he would preserve no memorial beyond a remembrance which he could not destroy.

That morrow came. Clinton asked me and his sister to walk through the park with him, to join his chariot at the further lodge. We consented; but, at the moment of going, Marianne, who knew nothing certainly, but who darkly guessed that all was not right, excused herself. I joined him alone. There was something in his person and manner that so promised protection and tenderness, that I felt it doubly hard to be torn from him. A dignified reserve, foreign to his usual nature, founded on a resolve to play only the brother's part, checked me somewhat; yet I loved him the more for it; while I would have laid down my existence so that it had only been permitted us to throw aside the mask but for one short hour, and to use the language of nature and truth. It could not be; and our conversation was upon indifferent subjects. When we approached the lodge, we found that the chariot had not come, and we retreated a little, and sat down on a turfy bank; then Clinton said a few words, the only ones that at all revealed the agitation he was enduring: —

"I have a little more experience than you, Ellen," he said; "and, besides, I am haunted by strange presentiments; we seem to know what we ought to do, and what we are to do, and act accordingly — yet life is a strange, wild thing. I wish to insure for you a friend more willing and active than Sir Richard. I have a sister to whom I am fondly attached; she is now on the continent, but I shall hasten to her, and entreat her to afford you a friendship you so richly deserve. You will love Lady Hythe for her own sake as well as for mine."

I was desirous of thanking him for this mark of kindness, but my voice failed me, and I burst into tears, overcome by the excess of anguish that deluged my heart. I tried to conceal my tears — I could not.

"Do not, Ellen, dear Ellen, I beseech you — command yourself."

Clinton spoke in a voice so broken, so full of misery, that he inspired me at once with fear and courage. The tread of a horse roused us — a horse at swift gallop. I raised my eyes, and uttered a shriek; for, reining in the animal with a sudden strong pull, Vernon halted close to us. The most violent passions convulsed his countenance. He threw himself from the horse, and, casting the bridle from him, came up. What he meant to say or do I cannot tell; perhaps to conceal the workings of his heart — and the quick departure of Clinton would have smoothed all; but I saw the barrel of a pistol peep from the pocket of his coat. I was seized with terror — I shrieked aloud. Clinton, terrified at my alarm, would have supported me, but Vernon pushed him rudely away.

"Dare not to approach or touch her, as you value your life!" he cried. "My life! you talk idly, Vernon. I value her security — one moment of peace to her — far more."

"You confess it!" exclaimed Vernon; "and you, too, false and treacherous girl! Ha! did you think to betray me, and be unpunished? Do you think, if I so chose it, that I would not force you to look on till the blood of one of the brothers flowed at your feet? But there are other punishments in store for you."

The expressions of menace used towards myself restored my courage, and I exclaimed—"Beware that you do not break the tie that binds us — at least that bound us a moment ago — perhaps it is already broken."

"Doubtless," he cried, grinding his teeth with rage, "it is broken, and a new one created to bind you to the elder son. O, yes! you would fain cast aside the poor miserable beggar, who has vainly fawned on you, and madly loved — you would take the rich, the honourable, and honoured Sir Clinton! Base, hollow-hearted fool!"

“Vernon,” said Clinton, “whatever your claims are on our cousin, I cannot stand by and see her insulted. You forget yourself.”

“The forgetfulness, sir, is on your part; proud in your seniority, to rival your brother, to drive him from his all, has been a May-game for you; but know, proud fool, or villain — take which name you will — your hour is passed by — your reign at an end! Your station is a fiction, your very existence a disgrace!”

Clinton and I both began to think that Vernon was really mad — a suspicion confirmed by his violent gestures. We looked at each other in alarm.

“Stay!” exclaimed the infuriated man, seizing my arm with a fierce grasp; while, fearful to induce Clinton’s interference, I yielded. “Stay, and listen to what your lover is — or shall I wound your delicate ears? There are soft phrases and silken words to adorn that refuse of the world — a bastard!”

“Vernon, dare not! — beware, sir, and begone!”

Clinton’s face crimsoned; his voice, his majestic indignation almost forced the ruffian to quail; he threw my arm from him.

“Take him, fair Ellen! it is true you take what I say — a natural son. Do you think that my information is not correct? Ask our father, for he is yours, Clinton, and our mother is the same; you are the first-born of Richard Gray and Matilda Towers; but I am the eldest son of Mr and Mrs. Gray.”

It could not have been that Vernon would have acted this cowardly and foolish part had he not been driven by a kind of madness. In truth, Sir Richard had, to quench his hopes for ever, with that carelessness of truth — his fatal propensity — affirmed that Clinton and I were acknowledged lovers; and he came goaded by worse than jealousy — by a spirit of hatred and revenge. Seeing us together, obviously engaged by the most engrossing feelings, his temper, which had been worked into fury during his journey, burst forth beyond the bounds he had prescribed for himself. I have called him a serpent, and such he was in every respect; he could crawl and coil, and hide his wily advance; but he could erect his crest, dart out his forked tongue, and infix the deadly venom, when roused as he now was. Clinton turned alternately pale and red.

“Be it as you will,” he said: “my fortunes and yours are of slight moment in comparison to Ellen’s safety. If there is any truth in this tale of yours, there will be time enough to discover it and to act upon it. Meanwhile, dear cousin, I see they have brought my chariot to the lodge. You cannot walk home — get into it; it will drive you to the house, and come back for me.”

I looked at him inquiringly.

“Do not fear to be deserted by me,” he said, “or that I shall do any thing rashly. Vernon must accompany me to town — to our father’s presence, there to expiate his foul calumny, or to prove it. Be assured he shall not approach you without your leave. I will watch over him, and guard you.

Clinton spoke aloud, and Vernon became aware that he must yield to this arrangement, and satisfied that he had divided us. Clinton led me to his carriage.

“You will hear soon from some one of us, Ellen,” he said; “and let me implore you to be patient — to take care of yourself — to fear nothing. I can make no remark — affirm, deny nothing now; but you shall not be kept in suspense. Promise me to be patient and calm.”

“And do you,” I said at last, commanding my trembling voice, “promise not to be rash; and promise not to leave England without seeing me again.”

“I promise not to leave England for any time without your leave. Oh, trust me, my dear cousin, it is not in such storms as these that you shall be ashamed of me; one sentiment may subdue me, but poverty, disgrace, and every angry passion, I can master.”

Vernon did not dare interrupt us. He felt that he had destroyed his carefully woven web, through his own rashness, and gnawed his lips in silent rage. I looked at him once, and turned away my eyes in contempt. I got into the chariot; it drove me to the house, and went back to take Clinton up to town. Thus we were separated, as we intended; and yet, how differently! Hope was reborn in my heart, out of the very ashes of its despair.

Two mortal days passed, and I was still in my solitude, receiving no intelligence, except, indeed, such as was contained in a letter from Vernon. In this he demanded me as a right, and fiercely insisted that I should keep my faith with him; but he did not allude to the scene in the park, nor to his strange assertions there. I threw the letter from me as unworthy of notice or thought. The third morning brought me one from my uncle. I tore it open with uncontrollable impatience: these were the contents: —

"Clinton, my dear Ellen, insists that I should join you at Beech Grove; but I cannot persuade myself to do so till I have your leave — till I have confessed my villany, and besought your forgiveness, in addition to that of my noble-hearted boy, whom I devoted to ruin before his birth, and who has pardoned me. It is a hateful subject — unfit for your ears, my gentle, virtuous girl, and I must hurry it over. When I first knew Miss Towers, I had no idea of marrying her; for she was poor and of humble birth. We loved each other, and she was willing to become mine on my own terms. Our intercourse was betrayed to her parents; and to appease them, and please Matilda, I declared that we were married. My assertion was credited; Matilda assumed my name, and all the world, all her little world, was deceived; while at the same time I declared to my father that she was merely my mistress: he did not believe me. Thus I became entangled. A little before the birth of our second boy my father died, and my grandfather offered me two thousand a-year on condition, that I would secure the whole estate to my eldest son. I loved Matilda; my fears were dissipated by my father's death, and by this acknowledgment of my union by my grandfather. I married her; and three days after Vernon s birth signed the settlement of entail. Such is my story. Lady Gray's character necessitated the concealment from every human being of the period when the marriage was celebrated. My noble, beloved Clinton assumed the elder son's place. I dared not reveal the truth; nay, I fancied that I benefited him by allowing him to fill this false position till my death. He has undeceived me; but he has not cursed me. From the moment I saw you, I designed that you should repair my faults towards him, as you alone could. I believed that you were formed for each other; I was not mistaken there. I meant to acknowledge all before your marriage, but I believed that if once your affections were engaged, you would not reject my son from base and worldly-minded considerations. Am I not right also in this? Meanwhile, Clinton was abroad, and I became uneasy at observing the pains which Vernon took to ingratiate himself with you, and the intimacy which you encouraged. I forbade him to remain with you at Beech Grove — he defied me. Then I tried to entice him away from you; and, as a last bribe, disclosed the secret of his birth: he, in return, promised to leave the field open to Clinton. You know the rest. He never meant to give you up; he was my heir, and he grasped at your fortune besides — shall he succeed? Clinton is all kindness, and soothing angelic goodness — but he insists on no longer filling a situation to which he has no claim, and — is gone abroad. He fears to leave you exposed to Vernon's violence, and has made me promise to go down to Beech Grove, and to prevent his brother from seeing you without your free and entire consent. As I have said, I cannot prevail on myself to visit you till you are in full possession of all the facts. Now they are in your hands. You may expect me to-morrow. Do not fear Vernon; I will take care that he shall not commit further outrage on you, nor injure the interest which I fondly trust that you preserve for my godlike, my beloved Clinton."

I read and re-read this letter a thousand times; my soul was in tumults. At first I could only think of the facts that it contained, and proudly and joyfully determined to compensate to Clinton, as I believed I could, for every evil; and then again I read the letter, and many parts of it filled me with wonder and dismay. Clinton was gone abroad — against his promise — without a word: and there was something so indelicate in the way in which my uncle espoused his cause. It was strange — unlike any conduct I had expected on my dear cousin's part. Of course he would write — and yet he was gone, and no letter came! And then I dreaded to see Sir Richard, the wrongful, penitent father: the total indifference which he displayed to moral principle — not founded, like Vernon's, on selfishness, but on weakness of character and natural callousness to truth, revolted me. Where was my own dear father? He had thrown me from the sacred shelter of his virtue into a system of dissimulation and guilt, which even Clinton, I thought, deserting me as he did, did not redeem. I struggled with these feelings, but their justice confounded and overcame me. Yet, even in the midst of these disquieting reflections, a deep sense of happiness pervaded my soul. The mystery, the tyranny, which had enveloped me, was brushed away like a spider's web. I was free — I might follow the dictates of my feelings, and it was no longer sin to love him to whom my heart was irrevocably given. The hours of the day flew on, while I lived as in a dream, absorbed by wonder, hope, doubt, and joy. At length, at six in the evening, a carriage drove up the avenue; a kind of terror at the expectation of seeing my uncle seized me, and I retreated hastily to my own room, gasping for breath. In a few minutes my servant tapped at my door; she told me that it was Lady Hythe who had arrived, and delivered me a letter. The letter was from Clinton; it was dated the same day, in London. I pressed it passionately to my lips and heart, and devoured its contents with eagerness. “At length, dear Ellen,” he wrote, “I am satisfied; I was long uneasy on your account. I besought my father to go down to you, yet even that did not content me — for you did not so much need protection as sympathy and true disinterested friendship. My thoughts turned towards my earliest and dearest friend, my sister Caroline. She was on the continent — I set out immediately to meet her, to tell every thing, and to ask her advice and assistance. Fortune befriended me — I found her at Calais — she is now with you. She is my better self. Her delicacy of character, her accurate judgment and warm heart, joined to her position as a woman, married to the best and most generous fellow breathing, render her the very person to whom I can intrust your happiness. I do not speak of myself — fortune cannot overcome my spirits, and my way is clear before me. I pity my father and family; but Caroline will explain to you better than I can my views and hopes. Adeiu, dear cousin! Heaven bless you as you deserve! Your fortitude, I am sure, has not deserted you; yet I am very anxious to hear that your health has not suffered by my brother’s violence. Caroline will write to me, and rejoice me by telling me of your well-being.”

I hurried down immediately to welcome Clinton’s sister; and from that moment my perplexities and sorrows vanished. Lady Hythe was a feminine likeness of Clinton; the same active kindness of heart, gentleness of temper, and adorable frankness. We were friends and sisters on the instant, and her true affection repaid me for every suffering; none of which I should have experienced had she been in England on my arrival. Clinton had told her of his love, but left me to reveal my own sentiments, detailing only the artifices and jealousy of Vernon. I was without disguise, for we were all one family, with the same objects, hopes, and pleasures. We went up to town immediately, and there I saw Clinton, and we exchanged our reserved, sad intercourse for a full acknowledgment of every thought and feeling.

The only piece of prudence that Sir Richard had practised was placing Clinton in the army, and purchasing promotion for him. He was so beloved by his fellow-officers, that on the discovery of his unfortunate birth, they all united in giving him the support of their friendship and good opinion. Clinton resolved, therefore, to enter at once on active service, and to follow up his profession with energy. Two years were to elapse before I could marry, and he expressed a wish that we should neither of us consider ourselves under any engagement. How vain are such words! Heaven designed us for each other, and the mere phrase of engagement or freedom could not affect a tie founded on affection, esteem, or, beyond this, the passion that caused us to find happiness in each other only. He went with his regiment to Ireland, and we were a good deal divided during the two years that elapsed before I was twenty-one. I continued to reside with Lady Hythe, and enjoyed with her that peace of mind which true friendship affords.

At length the day came when I completed my twenty-first year. Sir Richard had wished to be present at our nuptials, but was unable from ill health. I went to him, and saw him for the first time since the fatal discovery; for, on finding that I was happily placed with his daughter, he had carefully avoided seeing me. His character, indeed, was wholly changed. While carrying on a system of dissimulation, he had appeared gay; he was extravagant; giving up to pleasure, and spending even beyond his large income, despite the ruin in which he knew that his son would be involved on his death. He made him indeed a princely allowance, as if that was to compensate to him; while, in fact, Clinton was only thus habituated to expense. As soon as the discovery was made, Sir Richard, by one of those inconceivable changes which sometimes occur in the history of human nature, set his heart on saving a fortune for his beloved boy. He thought that I might be fickle; he feared his own death and the loss of power to benefit him. He gave up his establishment in town — he let Beech Grove — he saved every farthing that he could, and was enabled to settle twenty thousand pounds on Clinton on the day of our marriage.

I went to see him in a little lodging at Camberwell, whither he had retreated: he was emaciated and ill; his eyes brightened a little on seeing Clinton and me together.

“I would fain live a little longer,” he said, “to increase my son’s fortune; but God’s will be done — you will make him happy, Ellen.”

We were inexpressibly shocked. He had concealed his penurious style of life and declining health all this time; and nothing but his illness, and our insisting upon seeing him, caused him to betray it now. Our first care after our marriage was to oblige him to take up his abode with us; and we devoted ourselves to calming his remorse and smoothing his path to the grave. He survived only four months; but he had the comfort of knowing that Clinton was satisfied and happy; and that we both from our hearts forgave the errors which he at last expiated so dearly.

We never saw Vernon again; nor can I tell what has happened to him, except that he lives the life of the rich in England, apparently attended by prosperity. Lady Hythe stood between me and him, and screened me from his violence and reproaches. He has never married. I have never seen him since the day when, in the park at Beech Grove, he unawares conferred on me every blessing of life, by releasing me from the ties that bound me to him.

The happiness of Clinton and myself has been unclouded. I at last persuaded him to give up his profession, and we live principally abroad. Lord and Lady Hythe frequently visit us; and every event of our lives — the unimportant events of domestic life — tends to increase our prosperity, and the entire affection we cherish for each other.

THE PARVENUE

WHY DO! WRITE my melancholy story? Is it as a lesson, to prevent any other from wishing to rise to rank superior to that in which they are born? No! miserable as I am, others might have been happy, I doubt not, in my position: the chalice has been poisoned for me alone! Am I evil-minded — am I wicked? What have been my errors, that I am now an outcast and a wretch? I will tell my story — let others judge me; my mind is bewildered, I cannot judge myself.

My father was a land steward to a wealthy nobleman. He married young, and had several children. He then lost his wife, and remained fifteen years a widower, when he married again a young girl, the daughter of a clergyman, who died, leaving a numerous offspring in extreme poverty. My maternal grandfather had been a man of sensibility and genius; my mother inherited many of his endowments. She was an earthly angel; all her works were charity, all her thoughts were love.

Within a year after her marriage, she gave birth to twins — I and my sister; soon after she fell into ill health, and from that time was always weakly. She could endure no fatigue, and seldom moved from her chair. I see her now; her white, delicate hands employed in needlework, her soft, love-lighted eyes fixed on me. I was still a child when my father fell into trouble, and we removed from the part of the country where we had hitherto lived, and went to a distant village, where we rented a cottage, with a little land adjoining. We were poor, and all the family assisted each other. My elder half-sisters were strong, industrious, rustic young women, and submitted to a life of labour with great cheerfulness. My father held the plough, my half-brothers worked in the barns; all was toil, yet all seemed enjoyment.

How happy my childhood was! Hand in hand with my dear twin sister, I plucked the spring flowers in the hedges, turned the hay in the summer meadows, shook the apples from the trees in the autumn, and at all seasons, gambolled in delicious liberty beneath the free air of Heaven; or at my mother's feet, caressed by her, I was taught the sweetest lessons of charity and love. My elder sisters were kind; we were all linked by strong affection.

The delicate, fragile existence of my mother gave an interest to our monotony, while her virtues and her refinement threw a grace over our homely household.

I and my sister did not seem twins, we were so unlike. She was robust, chubby, full of life and spirits; I, tall, slim, fair, and even pale. I loved to play with her, but soon grew tired, and then I crept to my mother's side, and she sang me to sleep, and nursed me in her bosom, and looked on me with her own angelic smile. She took pains to instruct me, not in accomplishments, but in all real knowledge. She unfolded to me the wonders of the visible creation, and to each tale of bird and beast, of fiery mountain or vast river, was appended some moral, derived from her warm heart and ardent imagination. Above all, she impressed upon me the precepts of the gospel, charity to every fellow-creature, the brotherhood of mankind, the rights that every sentient creature possesses to our services alone. I was her almoner; for, poor as she was, she was the benefactress of those who were poorer. Being delicate, I helped her in her task of needlework, while my sister aided the rest in their household or rustic labours.

When I was seventeen, a miserable accident happened. A hayrick caught fire; it communicated to our outhouses, and at last to the cottage. We were roused from our beds at midnight, and escaped barely with our lives. My father bore out my mother in his arms, and then tried to save a portion of his property. The roof of the cottage fell in on him. He was dug out after an hour, scorched, maimed, crippled for life.

We were all saved, but by a miracle only was I preserved. I and my sister were awoke by cries of fire. The cottage was already enveloped in flames. Susan, with her accustomed intrepidity, rushed through the flames, and escaped; I thought only of my mother, and hurried to her room. The fire raged around me; it encircled — hemmed me in. I believed that I must die, when suddenly I felt myself seized upon and borne away. I looked on my preserver — it was Lord Reginald Desborough.

For many Sundays past, when at church, I knew that Lord Reginald's eyes were fixed on me. He had met me and Susan in our walks; he had called at our cottage. There was fascination in his eye, in his soft voice and earnest gaze, and my heart throbbed with gladness, as I thought that he surely loved me. To have been saved by him, was to make the boon of life doubly precious.

There is to me much obscurity in this part of my story. Lord Reginald loved me, it is true; why he loved me, so far as to forget pride of rank and ambition for my sake, he who afterwards showed no tendency to disregard the prejudices and habits of rank and wealth, I cannot tell; it seems strange. He had loved me before, but from the hour that he saved my life, love grew into an overpowering passion. He offered us a lodge on his estate to take refuge in; and while there, he sent us presents of game, and still more kindly, fruits and flowers to my mother, and came himself, especially when all were out except my mother and myself, and sat by us and conversed. Soon I learnt to expect the soft asking look of his eyes, and almost dared answer it. My mother once perceived these glances, and took an opportunity to appeal to Lord Reginald's good feelings, not to make me miserable for life, by implanting an attachment that could only be productive of unhappiness. His answer was to ask me in marriage.

I need not say that my mother gratefully consented — that my father, confined to his bed since the fire, thanked God with rapture; that my sisters were transported by delight: I was the least surprised then, though the most happy. Now, I wonder much, what could he see in me? So many girls of rank and fortune were prettier. I was an untaught, low-born, portionless girl. It was very strange.

Then I only thought of the happiness of marrying him, of being loved, of passing my life with him. My wedding day was fixed. Lord Reginald had neither father nor mother to interfere with his arrangements. He told no relation; he became one of our family during the interval. He saw no deficiencies in our mode of life — in my dress; he was satisfied with all; he was tender, assiduous, and kind, even to my elder sisters; he seemed to adore my mother, and became a brother to my sister Susan. She was in love, and asked him to intercede to gain her parents' consent for her choice. He did so; and though before, Lawrence Cooper, the carpenter of the place, had been disdained, supported by him, he was accepted. Lawrence Cooper was young, well-looking, well-disposed, and fondly attached to Susan.

My wedding day came. My mother kissed me fondly, my father blessed me with pride and joy, my sisters stood round, radiant with delight. There was but one drawback to the universal happiness — that immediately on my marriage, I was to go abroad.

From the church door I stepped into the carriage. Having once and again been folded in my dear mother's embrace, the wheels were in motion, and we were away. I looked out from the window; there was the dear groupe; my old father, white-headed and aged, in his large chair, my mother, smiling through her tears, with folded hands and upraised looks of gratitude, anticipating long years of happiness for her grateful Fanny; Susan and Lawrence standing side by side, unenvious of my greatness, happy in themselves; my sisters conning over with pride and joy the presents made to them, and the prosperity that flowed in from my husband's generosity. All looked happy, and it seemed as if I were the cause of all this happiness. We had been indeed saved from dreadful evils; ruin had ensued from the fire, and we had been sunk in adversity through that very event from which our good fortune took its rise. I felt proud and glad. I loved them all. I thought, I make them happy — they are prosperous through me! And my heart warmed with gratitude towards my husband at the idea.

We spent two years abroad. It was rather lonely for me, who had always been surrounded, as it were, by a populous world of my own, to find myself cast upon foreigners and strangers; the habits of the different sexes in the higher ranks so separate them from each other, that after a few months, I spent much of my time in solitude. I did not repine; I had been brought up to look upon the hard visage of life, if not unflinchingly, at least with resignation. I did not expect perfect happiness. Marriages in humble life are attended with so much care. I had none of this: my husband loved me; and though I often longed to see the dear familiar faces that thronged my childhood's home, and above all I pined for my mother's caresses and her wise maternal lessons, yet for a time I was content to think of them, and hope for a reunion, and to acquiesce in the present separation.

Still many things pained me: I had, poor myself, been brought up among the poor, and nothing, since I can remember forming an idea, so much astonished and jarred with my feelings, as the thought of how the rich could spend so much on themselves, while any one of their fellow-creatures were in destitution. I had none of the patrician charity (though such is praiseworthy), which consists in distributing thin soup and coarse flannel petticoats — a sort of instinct or sentiment of justice, the offspring of my lowly paternal hearth and my mother's enlightened piety, was deeply implanted in my mind, that all had as good a right to the comforts of life as myself, or even as my husband. My charities, they were called — they seemed to me the payment of my debts to my fellow-creatures — were abundant. Lord Reginald peremptorily checked them; but as I had a large allowance for my own expenses, I denied myself a thousand luxuries to which it appeared to me I had no right, for the sake of feeding the hungry. Nor was it only that charity impelled me, but that I could not acquire a taste for spending money on myself — I disliked the apparatus of wealth. My husband called my ideas sordid, and reproved me severely, when, instead of outshining all competitors at a fête, I appeared dowdily dressed, and declared warmly that I could not, I would not, spend twenty guineas on a gown, while I could dress so many sad faces in smiles, and bring so much joy to so many drooping hearts, by the same sum.

Was I right? I firmly believe that there is not one among the rich who will not affrm that I did wrong; that to please my husband and do honour to his rank, was my first duty. Yet, shall I confess it? even now, rendered miserable by this fault — I cannot give it that name — I can call it a misfortune — it is such to be consumed at the stake a martyr for one's faith. Do not think me presumptuous in this simile; for many years I have wasted at the slow fire of knowing that I lost my husband's affections because I performed what I believed to be a duty.

But I am not come to that yet. It was not till my return to England that the full disaster crushed me. We had often been applied to for money by my family, and Lord Reginald had acceded to nearly all their requests. When we reached London after two years' absence, my first wish was to see my dear mother. She was at Margate for her health. It was agreed that I should go there alone, and pay a short visit. Before I went, Lord Reginald told me what I did not know before, that my family had often made exorbitant demands on him, with which he was resolved not to comply. He told me that he had no wish to raise my relatives from their station in society; and that, indeed, there were only two among them whom he conceived had any claims upon me — my mother and my twin sister: that the former was incapable of any improper request, and the latter, by marrying Cooper, had fixed her own position, and could in no way be raised from the rank of her chosen husband. I agreed to much that he said. I replied that he well knew that my own taste led me to consider mediocrity the best and happiest situation; that I had no wish, and would never consent, to supply any extravagant demands on the part of persons, however dear to me, whose circumstances he had rendered easy.

Satisfied with my reply, we parted most affectionately, and I went on my way to Margate with a light and glad heart; and the cordial reception I received from my whole family collected together to receive me, was calculated to add to my satisfaction. The only drawback to my content was my mother's state; she was wasted to a shadow. They all talked and laughed around her, but it was evident to me that she had not long to live.

There was no room for me in the small furnished house in which they were all crowded, so I remained at the hotel. Early in the morning before I was up, my father visited me. He begged me to intercede with my husband; that on the strength of his support he had embarked in a speculation which required a large capital; that many families would be ruined, and himself dishonoured, if a few hundreds were not advanced. I promised to do what I could, resolving to ask my mother's advice, and make her my guide. My father kissed me with an effusion of gratitude, and left me.

I cannot enter into the whole of these sad details; all my half-brothers and sisters had married, and trusted to their success in life to Lord Reginald's assistance. Each evidently thought that they asked little in not demanding an equal share of my luxuries and fortune; but they were all in difficulty — all needed large assistance — all depended on me.

Lastly, my own sister Susan appealed to me — but hers was the most moderate request of all — she only wished for twenty pounds. I gave it her at once from my own purse.

As soon as I saw my mother I explained to her my difficulties. She told me that she expected this, and that it broke her heart: I must summon courage and resist these demands. That my father's imprudence had ruined him, and that he must encounter the evil he had brought on himself; that my numerous relatives were absolutely mad with the notion of what I ought to do for them. I listened with grief — I saw the torments in store for me — I felt my own weakness, and knew that I could not meet the rapacity of those about me with any courage or firmness. That same night my mother fell into convulsions; her life was saved with difficulty. From Susan I learned the cause of her attack. She had had a violent altercation with my father: she insisted that I should not be appealed to; while he reproached her for rendering me undutiful, and bringing ruin and disgrace on his grey hairs. When I saw my pale mother trembling, fainting, dying — when I was again and again assured that she must be my father's victim unless I yielded, what wonder that, in the agony of my distress, I wrote to my husband to implore his assistance.

O! what thick clouds now obscured my destiny! how do I remember, with a sort of thrilling horror, the boundless sea, white cliffs, and wide sands of Margate. The summer day that had welcomed my arrival changed to bleak wintry weather during this interval — while I waited with anguish for my husband's answer. Well do I remember the evening on which it came: the waves of the sea showed their white crests, no vessel ventured to meet the gale with any canvas except a topsail, the sky was bared clear by the wind, the sun was going down fiery red. I looked upon the troubled waters — I longed to be borne away upon them, away from care and misery. At this moment a servant followed me to the sands with my husband's answer, it contained a refusal. I dared not communicate it. The menaces of bankruptcy; the knowledge that he had instilled false hopes into so many; the fears of disgrace, rendered my father, always rough, absolutely ferocious. Life flickered in my dear mother's frame, it seemed on the point of expiring when she heard my father's step; if he came in with a smooth brow, her pale lips wreathed into her own sweet smile, and a delicate pink tinged her fallen cheeks; if he scowled, and his voice was high, every limb shivered, she turned her face to her pillow, while convulsive tears shook her frame, and threatened instant dissolution. My father sought me alone one day, as I was walking in melancholy guise upon the sands; he swore that he would not survive his disgrace. "And do you think, Fanny," he added, "that your mother will survive the knowledge of my miserable end?" I saw the resolution of despair in his face as he spoke. — I asked the sum needed, the time when it must be given. — A thousand pounds in two days was all that was asked. I set off to London to implore my husband to give this sum.

No! no! I cannot step by step record my wretchedness — the money was given — I extorted it from Lord Reginald, though I saw his very heart closed on me as he wrote the cheque. Worse had happened since I had left him. Susan had used the twenty pounds I gave her to reach town, to throw herself at my husband's feet, and implore his compassion. Rendered absolutely insane by the idea of having a lord for a brother-in-law, Cooper had launched into a system of extravagance, incredible as it was wicked. He was many thousand pounds in debt, and when at last Lord Reginald wrote to refuse all further supply, the miserable man committed forgery. Two hundred pounds prevented exposure, and preserved him from an ignominious end. Five hundred more were advanced to send him and his wife to America, to settle there, out of the way of temptation. I parted from my dear sister. I loved her fondly; she had no part in her husband's guilt, yet she was still attached to him, and her child bound them together; they went into solitary, miserable exile. "Ah! had we remained in virtuous poverty," cried my broken-hearted sister, "I had not been forced to leave my dying mother."

The thousand pounds given to my father was but a drop of water in the ocean. Again I was appealed to; again I felt the slender thread of my mother's life depended on my getting a supply. Again, trembling and miserable, I implored the charity of my husband.

"I am content," he said, "to do what you ask, to do more than you ask; but remember the price you pay — either give up your parents and your family, whose rapacity and crimes deserve no mercy, or we part for ever. You shall have a proper allowance; you can maintain all your family on it if you please; but their names must never be mentioned to me again. Choose between us, Fanny — you never see them more, or we part for ever."

Did I do right — I cannot tell — misery is the result — misery frightful, endless, unredeemed. My mother was dearer to me than all the world — my heart revolted from my husband's selfishness. I did not reply — I rushed to my room, and that night in a sort of delirium of grief and horror, at my being asked never again to see my mother, I set out for Margate — such was my reply to my husband.

Three years have passed since then; for these three I preserved my mother, and during all this time I was grateful to Heaven for being permitted to do my duty by her, and though I wept over the alienation of my cruel husband, I did not repent. But she, my angelic support, is no more. My father survived my mother but two months; remorse for all he had done, and made me suffer, cut short his life. His family by his first wife are gathered round me, they importune, they rob, they destroy me. Last week I wrote to Lord Reginald. I communicated the death of my parents; I represented that my position was altered; that my duties did not now clash; and that if he still cared for his unhappy wife all might be well. Yesterday his answer came. — It was too late, he said; — I had myself torn asunder the ties that united us, they never could be knit together again.

By the same post came a letter from Susan. She is happy. Cooper, profiting by the frightful lesson he incurred, awakened to a manly sense of the duties of life, is thoroughly reformed. He is industrious, prosperous, and respectable. Susan asks me to join her. I am resolved to go. O! my native village, and recollections of my youth, to which I sacrificed so much, where are ye now? tainted by pestilence, envenomed by serpents' stings, I long to close my eyes on every scene I have ever viewed. Let me seek a strange land, a land where a grave will soon be opened for me. I feel that I cannot live long — I desire to die. I am told that Lord Reginald loves another, a highborn girl; that he openly curses our union as the obstacle to his happiness. The memory of this will poison the oblivion I go to seek in a distant land. — He will be free. Soon will the hand he once so fondly took in his and made his own, which, now flung away, trembles with misery as it traces these lines, moulder in its last decay.

THE PILGRIMS

THE TWILIGHT of one of those burning days of summer whose unclouded sky seems to speak to man of happier realms, had already flung its broad shadows over the valley of Unspunnen; whilst the departing rays of a gorgeous sunset continued to glitter on the summits of the surrounding hills. Gradually, however, the glowing tints deepened; then grew darker and darker; until they finally yielded to the still more sober hues of night.

Beneath an avenue of lime trees, which, from their size and luxuriance, appeared almost coeval with the soil in which they grew, Burkhardt of Unspunnen wandered to and fro with uneasy step, as if some recent sorrow occupied his troubled mind. At times, he stood with his eyes steadfastly fixed on the earth, as if he expected to see the object of his contemplation start forth from its bosom; at other times, he would raise his eyes to the summits of the trees, whose branches, now gently agitated by the night breeze, seemed to breathe sighs of compassion in remembrance of those happy hours which had once been passed beneath their welcome shade. When, however, advancing from beneath them, he beheld the deep blue heavens with the bright host of stars, hope sprang up within him at the thoughts of that glory to which those heavens and those stars, all lovely and beauteous as they seem, are but the faint heralds; and for a time dissipated the grief which had so long weighed heavily upon his heart.

From these reflections, which, from the intensity of his feelings, shut him out, as it were, from the busy world and its many paths, he was suddenly aroused by the tones of a manly voice addressing him.

Burkhardt advancing, beheld, standing in the light of the moon, two Pilgrims, clothed in the usual coarse and sombre garb, with their broad hats drawn over their brows.

“Praise be to God!” said the Pilgrim who had just before awakened Burkhardt’s attention, and who, from his height and manner appeared to be the elder of the two. His words were echoed by a voice whose gentle and faultering accents showed the speaker to be still but of tender years.

“Whither are you going, friends? what seek you here, at this late hour?” said Burkhardt. “If you wish to rest you after your journey enter, and with

God's blessing, and my hearty welcome, recruit yourselves."

"Noble sir, you have more than anticipated our petition," replied the elder Pilgrim, "our duty has led us far from our native land, being bound on a pilgrimage to fulfil the vow of a beloved parent. We have been forced during the heat of the day to climb the steep mountain paths; and the strength of my brother, whose youth but ill befits him for such fatigues, began to fail, when the sight of your castle's towers, which the moon's clear beams discovered to us, revived our hopes. We resolved to beg a night's lodging under your hospitable roof, that we might be enabled, on to-morrow's dawn, to pursue our weary way."

"Follow me, my friends," said Burkhardt, as he, with quickened step, preceded them, that he might give some orders for their entertainment. The Pilgrims rejoicing in so kind a reception, followed the knight in silence, into a high vaulted saloon; over which, the tapers, that were placed in branches against the walls, cast a solemn but pleasing light, well in accordance with the present feelings of the parties.

The knight then discerned two countenances of great beauty, the pleasing impression of which was considerably heightened by the modest yet easy manner with which the youthful pair received their host's kind attentions. Much struck with their appearance, and demeanour, Burkhardt was involuntarily led back into the train of thoughts from which their approach had aroused him; and the scenes of former days flitted before him as he recollected, that in this hall, his beloved child was ever wont to greet him with her welcome smile on his return from the battle or the chace; brief scenes of happiness, which had been followed by events that had cankered his heart, and rendered memory but an instrument of bitterness and chastisement.

Supper was soon after served, and the Pilgrims were supplied with the greatest attention, yet conversation wholly languished; for his melancholy reflections occupied Burkhardt, and respect, or perhaps a more kindly feeling, towards their host and benefactor, seemed to have sealed the lips of his youthful guests. After supper, however, a flask of the baron's old wine cheered his flagging spirits; and emboldened the elder Pilgrim to break through the spell which had chained them.

"Pardon me, noble sir," said he, "for I feel that it must seem intrusive in me to presume to seek the cause of that sorrow which thus severely oppresses you, and renders you so sad a spectator of the bounty and happiness which you liberally bestow upon others. Believe me, it is not the impulse of a mere idle curiosity that makes me express my wonder that you can thus dwell alone in this spacious and noble mansion, the prey to so deeply rooted a sorrow. Would that it were in our power, even in the slightest degree, to alleviate the cares of one who with such bounteous hand relieves the wants of his poorer brethren!"

"I thank you for your sympathy, good Pilgrim," said the old noble, "but what can it avail you to know the story of those griefs which have made this earth a desert? and which are, with rapid pace, conducting me where alone I can expect to find rest. Spare me, then, the pain of recalling scenes which I would fain bury in oblivion. As yet, you are in the spring of life, when no sad remembrance gives a discordant echo of past follies, or of joys irrecoverably lost. Seek not to darken the sunshine of your, I trust, unsullied youth, with a knowledge of those fierce, guilty beings who, in listening to the fiend-like suggestions of their passions, are led astray from the paths of rectitude; and tear asunder ties which nature, by the holiest bonds, had seemed to unite to their very souls."

Burkhardt thus sought to avoid the entreaty of the Pilgrim. But the request was still urged with such earnest though delicate persuasion, and the rich tones of the stranger's voice awoke within him so many thoughts of days long, long past, that the knight felt himself almost irresistibly impelled to unburden his long closed heart to one who seemed to enter into its feelings with a sincere cordiality.

"Your artless sympathy has won my confidence, my young friends," said he, "and you shall learn the cause of that sorrow which gnaws my heart.

"You see me now, indeed, here, lonely and forsaken, like a tree shaken by the tempest's violence. But fortune once looked upon me with her blandest smiles; and I felt myself rich in the consciousness of my prosperity, and the gifts which bounteous Heaven had bestowed. My powerful vassals made me a terror to those enemies which the protection, that I was ever ready to afford to the oppressed and helpless, brought against me. My rich and fertile possessions not only supplied my family with profusion, but enabled me, with liberal hand, to relieve the wants of the poor; and to exercise the rights of hospitality in a manner justly becoming my state and my name. But of all the gifts which Heaven had showered upon me, that which I most prized was a wife, whose virtues had made her the idol of both the rich and the poor. But she who was already an angel, and unfitted for this grosser world, was too soon, alas! claimed by her kindred spirits. One brief year alone had beheld our happiness.

"My grief and anguish were most bitter; and would soon have laid me in the same grave with her, but that she had left me a daughter, for whose dear sake I struggled earnestly against my affliction. In her were now centered all my cares, all my hopes, all my happiness. As she grew in years, so did her likeness to her sainted mother increase; and every look and gesture reminded me of my Agnes. With her mother's beauty I had, with fond presumption, dared to cherish the hope that Ida would inherit her mother's virtues.

"Greatly did I feel the sad void that my irreparable loss had occasioned me; but the very thought of marrying again would have seemed to me a profanation to the memory of my Agnes. If, however, even for a single instant I had entertained this disposition, one look at her child would have crushed it; and made me cling with still fonder hope to her, in the fond confidence that she would reward me for every sacrifice that I could make. Alas! my friends, this hope was built on an unsure foundation! and my heart is even now tortured when I think on those delusive dreams.

"Ida, with the fondest caresses, would dispel each care from my brow; in sickness and in health she watched me with the tenderest solicitude; her whole endeavour seemed to be to anticipate my wishes. But, alas! like the serpent, which only fascinates to destroy, she lavished these caresses and attentions to blind me, and wrap me in a fatal security.

"Many and deep were the affronts, revenged indeed, but not forgotten, which had long since caused (with shame, I avow it) a deadly hatred between myself and Rupert, Lord of Wàdischwyl, which the slightest occasion seemed to increase to a degree of madness. As he dared no longer throw down the gauntlet, I having always in single combat come off the victor, he found means, much harder than steel or iron, to glut his revenge upon me.

"Duke Berchtold of Zàhringen, one of those wealthy and powerful tyrants who are the very pests of that society of whose rights they ought to be the ready guardians, had made a sudden irruption on the peaceful inhabitants of the mountains, seizing their herds and flocks, and insulting their wives and daughters. Though possessed of great courage, yet being not much used to warfare, these unhappy men found it impossible to resist the tyrant; and hastened to intreat my instant succour. Without a moment's delay, I assembled my brave vassals, and marched against the spoiler. After a long and severe struggle, God blessed our cause; and our victory was complete.

"On the morning, that I was about to depart, on my return to my castle, one of my followers announced to me that the Duke had arrived in my camp, and wished an immediate interview with me. I instantly went forth to meet him; and Berchtold hastening towards me, with a smile, offered me his hand in token of reconciliation. I frankly accepted it; not suspecting that falsehood could lurk beneath so open and friendly an aspect.

"'My friend,' said he, 'for such I must call you; your valour in this contest having won my esteem, although I could at once convince you that I have just cause of quarrel with the insolent mountaineers. But, in spite of your victory in this unjust strife, into which doubtless you were induced to enter by the misrepresentations of those villains, yet as my nature abhors to prolong dissensions, I would willingly cease to think that we are enemies; and commence a friendship which, on my part, at least, shall not be broken. In token, therefore, that you do not mistrust a fellow soldier, return with me to my castle, that we may there drown all remembrance of our past disunion.'

"During a long time, I resisted his importunity, for I had now been more than a year absent from my home; and was doubly impatient to return, as I fondly imagined that my delay would occasion much anxiety to my daughter. But the Duke, with such apparent kindness and in such a courteous manner renewed and urged his solicitations, that I could resist no longer.

"His Highness entertained me with the greatest hospitality and unremitted attention. But I soon perceived that an *honest* man is more in his element amidst the toils of the battle, than amongst the blandishments of a court; where the lip and the gesture carry welcome, but where the heart, to which the tongue is never the herald, is corroded by the unceasing strifes of jealousy and envy. I soon too saw that my rough and undisguised manners were an occasion of much mirth to the perfumed and essenced nothings who crowded the halls of the Duke. I however stifled my resentment, when

I considered that these creatures lived but in his favour; like those swarms of insects which are warmed into existence from the dunghill, by the sun's rays.

"I had remained the unwilling guest of the Duke during some days; when the arrival of a stranger of distinction was announced with much ceremony; this stranger I found to be my bitterest foe, Rupert of Wàdischwyl. The Duke received him with the most marked politeness and attention; and more than once I fancied that I perceived the precedence of me was studiously given to my enemy. My frank yet haughty nature could ill brook this system of disparagement; and, besides, it seemed to me that I should but play the hypocrite if I partook of the same cup with the man for whom I entertained a deadly hatred.

"I resolved therefore to depart; and sought his Highness to bid him farewell. He appeared much distressed at my resolution; and earnestly pressed me to avow the cause of my abrupt departure. I candidly confessed that the undue favour which I thought he showed to my rival was the cause.

"'I am hurt, deeply hurt,' said the Duke, affecting an air of great sorrow, 'that my friend, and that friend the valiant Unspunnen, should think thus unjustly, dare I add, thus meanly of me. No, I have not even in thought wronged you; and to prove my sincerity and my regard for your welfare, know that it was not chance which conducted your adversary to my court. He comes in consequence of my eager wish to reconcile two men whom I so much esteem; and whose worth and excellence place them amongst the brightest ornaments of our favoured land. Let me, therefore,' said he, taking my hand and the hand of Rupert, who had entered during our discourse, 'let me have the enviable satisfaction of reconciling two such men, and of terminating your ancient discord. You cannot refuse a request so congenial to that holy faith which we all profess. Suffer me, therefore, to be the minister of peace; and to suggest that, in token and in confirmation of an act which will draw down Heaven's blessing on us all, you will permit our holy church to unite in one, your far-famed lovely daughter, with Lord Rupert's only son; whose virtues, if reports speak truly, render him no undeserving object of her love.'

"A rage, which seemed in an instant to turn my blood into fire, and which almost choked my utterance, took possession of me.

"'What!' exclaimed I, 'what, think you that I would thus sacrifice, *thus* cast away my precious jewel! thus debase my beloved Ida? No, by her sainted mother, I swear that rather than see her married to *his* son, I would devote her to the cloister! Nay, I would rather see her dead at my feet, than suffer her purity to be sullied by such contamination!'

"'But for the presence of his Highness,' cried Rupert wrathfully, 'your life should instantly answer for this insult! Nathless, I will well mark you, and watch you, too, my lord; and if you escape my revenge, you are more than man.'

"'Indeed, indeed, my Lord of Unspunnen,' said the Duke, 'you are much too rash. Your passion has clouded your reason; and, believe me, you will live to repent having so scornfully refused my friendly proposal.'

"'You may judge me rash, my Lord Duke, and perhaps think me somewhat too bold, because I dare assert the truth, in the courts of princes. But since my tongue cannot frame itself to speak that which my heart does not dictate, and my plain but honest manner seems to displease you, I will, with your Highness' permission, withdraw to my own domain; whence I have been but too long absent.'

"'Undoubtedly, my lord, you have my permission,' said the Duke haughtily; and at the same time turning coldly from me.

"My horse was brought, I mounted him with as much composure as I could command; and I breathed more freely as I left the castle far behind.

"During the second day's journey I arrived within a near view of my own native mountains; and I felt doubly invigorated, as their pure breezes were wafted towards me. Still the fond anxiety of a father for his beloved child, and that child his only treasure, made the way seem doubly long. But as I approached the turn of the road which is immediately in front of my castle, I almost then wished the way lengthened; for my joy, my hopes, and my apprehensions crowded upon me almost to suffocation. 'A few short minutes, however,' I thought, and then the truth, ill or good, will be known to me.'

"When I came in full sight of my dwelling, all seemed in peace; nought exhibited any change since I had left it. I spurred my horse on to the gate; but as I advanced, the utter stillness and desertion of all around surprised me. Not a domestic, not a peasant was to be seen in the courts; it appeared as if the inhabitants of the castle were still asleep.

"'Merciful Heaven!' I thought, 'what can this stillness forbode! Is she, is my beloved child dead?'

"I could not summon courage to pull the bell. Thrice I attempted, yet thrice the dread of learning the awful truth prevented me. One moment, one word, even one sign, and I might be a forlorn, childless, wretched man, for ever! None but a father can feel or fully sympathize in the agony of those moments! none but a father can ever fitly describe them! My existence seemed even to depend upon the breath of the first passer by; and my eye shrank from observation lest it should encounter me.

"I was aroused from this inactive state, by my faithful dog springing towards me to welcome my return with his boisterous caresses, and deep and loud toned expressions of his joy. Then, the old porter, attracted by the noise, came to the gate which he instantly opened; but, as he was hurrying forward to meet me, I readily perceived that some sudden and painful recollection checked his eagerness. I leaped from my horse quickly, and entered the hall. All the other domestics now came forward; except my faithful steward Wilfred, he who had been always the foremost to greet his master.

"'Where is my daughter? where is your mistress?' I eagerly exclaimed; 'let me know but that she lives. Yet stop, stop; one moment, one short moment, ere you tell me I am lost for ever!'

"The faithful Wilfred, who had now entered the hall, threw himself at my feet; and with the tears rolling down his furrowed cheeks, earnestly pressed my hand, and hesitatingly informed me that my daughter *lived:* was well, he believed, but — had quitted the castle.

"'Now, speak more quickly, old man,' said I hastily, and passionately interrupting him: 'What is it you can mean? my daughter lives; my Ida is well, but she is *not here.* Now, have you and my vassals proved recreants, and suffered my castle in my absence to be robbed of its greatest treasure? Speak! speak plainly, I command ye!'

"'It is with anguish, as great almost as your own can be, my beloved master, that I make known to you, the sad truth, that your daughter has quitted her father's roof to become the wife of Conrad, the son of the Lord of Wàdischwyl.'

"'The wife of Lord Rupert's son! my Ida the wife of the son of him whose very name my soul loathes!'

“My wrath now knew no bounds; the torments of hell seemed to have changed the current of my blood. In the madness of my passion I even cursed my own dear daughter! Yes, Pilgrim, I even cursed her on whom I had so fondly doted; for whose sake alone life for me had any charms. Oh! how often since have I attempted to recall that curse! and these bitter tears, which even now I cannot control, witness how severe has been my repentance of that awful and unnatural act!

“Dreadful were the imprecations which I heaped upon my enemy; and deep was the revenge I swore. I know not to what fearful length my unbridled passion would have hurried me; had I not, from its very excess, sunk senseless into the arms of my domestics. When I recovered, I found myself in my own chamber, and Wilfred seated near me. Sometime, however, elapsed before I came to a clear recollection of the past events; and when I did, it seemed as if an age of crime and misery had weighed me down, and chained my tongue. My eye involuntarily wandered to that part of the chamber where hung my daughter’s portrait. But this, the faithful old man, — who had not removed it, no doubt thinking that to do so would have offended me, — had contrived to hide, by placing before it a piece of armour, which seemed as though it had accidentally fallen into that position.

“Many more days elapsed ere I was enabled to listen to the particulars of my daughter’s flight; which I will, not to detain you longer with my griefs, now briefly relate. — It appeared, that urged by the fame of her beauty, and by a curiosity most natural, I confess to youth, Conrad of Wàdischwyl had, for a long time sought, but sought in vain, to see my Ida. Chance, at length, however, favoured him. On her way to hear mass at our neighbouring monastery, he beheld her; and beheld her but to love. Her holy errand did not prevent him from addressing her; and well the smooth-tongued villain knew how to gain the ear of one so innocent, so unsuspicious as my Ida! Too soon, alas, did his accursed flatteries win their way to her guiltless heart.

“My child’s affection for her father was unbounded; and readily would she have sacrificed her life for mine. But when love has once taken possession of the female heart, too quickly drives he thence those sterner guests, reason and duty. Suffice it therefore to say she was won; and induced to unite herself to Wàdischwyl, before my return, by his crafty and insidious argument that I should be more easily persuaded to give them my pardon and my blessing, when I found that the step that she had taken was irrevocable. With almost equal art, he pleaded too that their union would doubtless heal the breach between the families of Wâdischwvl and Unspunnen; and thus terminate that deadly hatred which my gentle Ida, ever the intercessor for peace, had always condemned. By this specious sophistry, my poor misguided child was prevailed upon to tear herself from the heart of a fond parent, to unite herself with an unprincipled deceiver, the son of that parent's most bitter enemy."

The pain of these recollections so overcame Burkhardt, that some time elapsed ere he could master his feelings: at length he proceeded.

"My soul seemed now to have but one feeling, *revenge.* All other passions were annihilated by this master one; and I instantly prepared myself and my vassals to chastise this worse than robber. But such satisfaction was (I now thank God) denied me; for the Duke of Zàhringen soon gave me memorable cause to recollect his parting words. Having attached himself with his numerous followers to my rival's party, these powerful chiefs suddenly invaded my domain. A severe struggle against most unequal numbers ensued. But, at length, though my brave retainers would fain have prolonged the hopeless strife, resolved to stop a needless waste of blood, I left the field to my foes; and, with the remnant of my faithful soldiers, hastened, in deep mortification, to bury myself within these walls. This galling repulse prevented all possibility of reconciliation with my daughter, whom I now regarded as the cause of my disgrace: and consequently, I forbad her name even to be mentioned in my presence.

"Years rolled on: and I had no intelligence of her until I learned by a mere chance that she had with her husband quitted her native land. Altogether, more than twenty, to me long, long years, have now passed since her flight; and though, when time brought repentance, and my anger and revenge yielded to better feelings, I made every effort to gain tidings of my poor child, I have not yet been able to discover any further traces of her. The chance of so doing was indeed rendered more difficult, by the death of my faithful Wilfred, shortly after my defeat, and by the character of his successor; an individual of strict integrity, but of an austere temper and forbidding manners. Here, therefore, have I lived a widowed, childless, heart-broken old man. But I have at least learned to bow to the dispensations of an All-Wise Providence, which has in its justice stricken me, for thus remorselessly cherishing that baneful passion which Holy Law so expressly forbids. Oh! how I have yearned to see my beloved child! how I have longed to clasp her to this withered, blighted heart! With scalding tears of the bitterest repentance have I revoked those deadly curses, which, in the plenitude of my unnatural wrath, I dared to utter daily. Ceaselessly do I now weary Heaven with my prayers to obliterate all memory of those fatal imprecations; or to let them fall on my own head, and shower down only its choicest blessings on that of my beloved child! But a fear, which freezes my veins with horror, constantly haunts me lest the maledictions which I dared to utter in my moments of demoniac vindictiveness, should, in punishment for my impiety, have been fulfilled.

“Often, in my dreams, do I behold my beloved child; but her looks are always in sadness, and she ever seems mildly but most sorrowfully to upbraid me, for having so inhumanly cast her from me. Yet she must, I fear, have died long ere now; for, were she living, she would not, I think, have ceased to endeavour to regain the affections of a father who once loved her so tenderly. It is true that at first she made many efforts to obtain my forgiveness. Nay, I have subsequently learned that she even knelt at the threshold of my door, and piteously supplicated to be allowed to see me. But my commands had been so peremptory, and, as I before observed, the steward who had replaced Wilfred, was of so stern and unbending a disposition, that, just and righteous as was this her last request, it was unfeelingly denied to her. Eternal Heaven! she whom I had loved as perhaps never father loved before — she whom I had fondly watched almost hourly lest the rude breeze of winter should chill her, or the summer’s heat should scorch her — she whom I had cherished in sickness through many a livelong night, with a mother’s devotion, and more than a mother’s solicitude, even *she,* the only child of my beloved Agnes, and the anxious object of the last moments of her life, was spurned from my door! from this door whence no want goes unrelieved, and where the very beggar finds rest! And now, when I would bless the lips that even could say to me, ‘she lives,’ I can no where gather the slightest tidings of my child. Ah, had I listened to the voice of reason, had I not suffered my better feelings to be mastered by the wildest, and fellest passions, I might have seen herself, and perhaps her children, happy around me, cheering the evening of my life. And when my last hour shall come, they would have closed my eyes in peace, and, in unfeigned sorrow have daily addressed to Heaven their innocent prayers for my soul's eternal rest; instead of the hirelings who will now execute the mummery of mourning, and impatiently hurry me to an unlamented, a lonely, and an unhonoured grave. To those children also, would have descended that inheritance which must at my decease fall to an utter stranger, who bears not even my name.

"You now know, Pilgrims, the cause of my grief; and I see by the tears which you have so abundantly shed, that you truly pity the forlorn being before you. Remember him and his sorrows therefore ever in your prayers; and when you kneel at the shrine to which you are bound, let not those sorrows be forgotten."

The elder Pilgrim in vain attempted to answer; the excess of his feelings overpowered his utterance. At length, throwing himself at the feet of Burkhardt, and casting off his Pilgrim's habits, he, with difficulty exclaimed, "See here, thine Ida's son! and behold in my youthful companion, thine Ida's daughter! Yes, before you kneel the children of her whom you so much lament. We came to sue for that pardon, for that love, which we had feared would have been denied us. But, thanks be to God, who has mollified your heart, we have only to implore that you will suffer us to use our poor efforts to alleviate your sorrows; and render more bright and cheerful your declining years."

In wild and agitated surprise, Burkhardt gazed intently upon them. It seemed to him as if a beautiful vision were before him, which he feared even a breath might dispel. When, however, he became assured that he was under the influence of no delusion, the tumult of his feelings overpowered him, and he sank senselessly on the neck of the elder Pilgrim; who, with his sister's assistance, quickly raised the old man, and by their united efforts restored him, ere long, to his senses. But when Burkhardt beheld the younger Pilgrim, the very image of his lost Ida, bending over him with the most anxious and tender solicitude, he thought that death had ended all his worldly sufferings, and that Heaven had already opened to his view.

"Great God!" at length he exclaimed, "I am unworthy of these thy mercies! Grant me to receive them as I ought! I need not ask," added he, after a pause, and pressing the Pilgrims to his bosom, "for a confirmation of your statement, or of my own sensations of joy. All, all tells me that you are the children of my beloved Ida. Say, therefore, is your mother dead? or dare I hope once more to clasp her to my heart?"

The elder Pilgrim, whose name was Hermann, then stated to him, that two years had passed since his parent had breathed her last in his arms. Her latest prayer was, that Heaven would forgive her the sorrow she had caused her father, and forbear to visit her own error on her children's heads. He then added that his father had been dead many years.

"My mother," continued Hermann, drawing from his bosom a small sealed packet, "commanded me, on her death-bed, to deliver this into your own hands. 'My son,' she said, 'when I am dead, if my father still lives, cast yourself at his feet, and desist not your supplications until you have obtained from him a promise that he will read this prayer. It will acquaint him with a repentance that may incite him to recall his curse; and thus cause the earth to lie lightly on all that will shortly remain of his once loved Ida. Paint to him the hours of anguish which even your tender years have witnessed. Weary him, my son, with your entreaties; cease them not until you have wrung from him his forgiveness.'

"As you may suppose, I solemnly engaged to perform my mother's request; and as soon as our grief for the loss of so dear, so fond a parent, would permit us, my sister and myself resolved, in these pilgrim's habits, to visit your castle; and, by gradual means, to have attempted to win your affections, if we should have found you still relentless, and unwilling to listen to our mother's prayer."

"Praise be to that God, my son," said Burkhardt, "at whose command the waters spring from the barren rock, that he has bidden the streams of love and repentance to flow once more from my once barren and flinty heart. But let me not delay, to open this sad memorial of your mother's griefs. I wish you, my children, to listen to it, that you may hear both her exculpation and her wrongs."

Burkhardt hid his face in his hands, and remained for some moments earnestly struggling with his feelings. At length, he broke the seal; and, with a voice which at times was almost overpowered, read aloud the contents.

"My beloved father, — if by that fond title your daughter may still address you, — feeling that my sad days are now numbered, I make this last effort, ere my strength shall fail me, to obtain at least your pity for her you once so much loved; and to beseech you to recall that curse which has weighed too heavily upon her heart. Indeed, my father, I am not quite that guilty wretch you think me. Do not imagine, that, neglecting every tie of duty and gratitude, I could have left the tenderest of parents to his widowed lonely home, and have united myself with the son of his sworn foe, had I not fondly, most ardently, hoped, nay, had cherished the idea almost to certainty, that you would, when you found that I was a wife, have quickly pardoned a fault, which the fears of your refusal to our union had alone tempted me to commit. I firmly believed that my husband would then have shared with me my father's love, and have, with his child, the pleasing task of watching over his happiness and comfort. But never did I for an instant imagine that I was permanently wounding the heart of that father. My youth, and the ardour of my husband's persuasions, must plead some extenuation of my fault.

"The day that I learnt the news of your having pronounced against me that fatal curse, and your fixed determination never more to admit me to your presence, has been marked in characters indelible on my memory. At that moment, it appeared as if Heaven had abandoned me, had marked me for its reprobation as a parricide! My brain and my heart seemed on fire, whilst my blood froze in my veins. The chillness of death crept over every limb, and my tongue refused all utterance. I would have wept, but the source of my tears was dried within me.

"How long I remained in this state I know not, as I at length became insensible, and remained so for some days. On returning to a full consciousness of my wretchedness, I would instantly have rushed to your abode, and cast myself at your feet, to wring from you, if possible, your forgiveness of my crime; but my limbs were incapable of all motion. Soon, too, I learned that the letters, which I dictated, were returned unopened; and my husband at last informed me, that all his efforts to see you had been utterly fruitless.

"Yet the moment I had gained sufficient strength, I went to the castle, but, unfortunately for me, even as I entered, I encountered a stern wretch, to whom my person was not unknown; and he instantly told me that my efforts to see his master would be useless. I used prayers and entreaties; I even knelt upon the bare ground to him. But so far from listening to me, he led me to the gate, and, in my presence, dismissed the old porter who had admitted me, and who afterwards followed my fortunes until the hour of his death. Finding that all my attempts were without hope, and that several of the old servants had been discarded on my account, with a heart completely broken, I succumbed to my fate, and abandoned all farther attempt.

"After the birth of my son (to whose fidelity and love I trust this sad memorial) my husband, who, with the tenderest solicitude, employed every means in his power to divert my melancholy, having had a valuable property in Italy bequeathed to him, prevailed upon me to repair to that favoured and beauteous country. But neither the fond attentions of my beloved Conrad, nor the bright sunshine and luxurious breezes of that region of wonders, could overcome a grief so deeply rooted as mine; and I soon found that the gay garden of Europe had less charms for me, than my own dear native land, with its dark, pine-clad mountains.

"Shortly after we had arrived at Rome, I gave birth to a daughter; an event which was only too soon followed by the death of my affectionate husband. The necessity of ceaseless attention to my infant, in some measure alleviated the intense anguish which I suffered from that most severe loss. Nevertheless, in the very depth of this sorrow which almost overcharged my heart, Heaven only knows how often, and how remorsefully, while bending over my own dear children in sickness, have I called to mind the anxious fondness with which the tenderest and best of fathers used to watch over me!

"I struggled long and painfully with my feelings, and often did I beseech God to spare my life, that I might be enabled to instruct my children in His holy love and fear, and teach them to atone for the error of their parent. My prayer has in mercy been heard; the boon I supplicated has been granted; and I trust, my beloved father, that if these children should be admitted to your affections, you will find that I have trained up two blessed intercessors for your forgiveness, when it shall have pleased Heaven to have called your daughter to her account before that dread tribunal where a sire's curse will plead so awfully against her. Recall then, oh, beloved parent! recall your dreadful malediction from your poor repentant Ida! and send your blessing as an angel of mercy to plead for her eternal rest. Farewell, my father, for ever! for ever, farewell! By the cross, whose emblem her fevered lips now press; by Him, who in his boundless mercy hung upon that cross, your daughter, your once much loved Ida, implores you, supplicates you, not to let her plead in vain!

“My child, my child!” sobbed Burkhardt, as the letter dropped from his hand, “may the Father of All forgive me as freely as I from the depths of my wrung heart forgive you! Would that your remorseful father could have pressed you to his heart; with his own lips have assured you of his affection; and wiped away the tears of sorrow from your eyes! But he will cherish these beloved remembrances of you; and will more jealously guard them than his own life.”

Burkhardt passed the whole of the following day in his chamber, to which the good Father Jerome alone was admitted; as the events of the preceding day rendered a long repose absolutely necessary. The following morning, however, he entered the hall, where Hermann and Ida were impatiently waiting for him. His pale countenance still exhibited deep traces of the agitation he had experienced; but having kissed his children most affectionately, he smilingly flung round Ida’s neck a massive gold chain, richly wrought, with a bunch of keys appended to it.

“We must duly instal our Lady of the Castle,” said he, “and invest her with her appropriate authorities. — But, hark! from the sound of the porter’s horn, it seems as if our hostess would have early calls upon her hospitality. Whom have we here?” continued he, looking out up the avenue; “By St. Hubert, a gay and gallant knight is approaching, who shall be right welcome — that is, if my lady approve. Well, Willibald, what bring you? a letter from our good friend the abbot of St. Anselm. What savs he?”

“I am sure that you will not refuse your welcome to a young knight, who is returning by your castle to his home, from the emperor’s wars. He is well known to me, and I can vouch for his being a guest worthy of your hospitality, which will not be the less freely granted to him, because he does not bask in the *golden* smiles of fortune.”

“No, no, that it shall not, my good friend; and if fortune frown upon him, he shall be doubly welcome. Conduct him hither, instantly, good Willibald.”

The steward hastened to usher in the stranger, who advanced into the hall, with a modest but manly air. He was apparently about twenty-five years of age; his person was such as might well, in the dreams of a young maiden, occupy no unconspicuous place.

“Sir Knight,” said Burkhardt, taking him cordially by the hand, “you are right welcome to my castle, and such poor entertainment as it can afford. We must make you forget your wounds, and the rough usage of a soldier’s life. But, soft, I already neglect my duty, in not first introducing our hostess,” added the aged knight, presenting Ida. “By my faith,” he continued, “judging from my lady’s blushing smile, you seem not to have met for the first time. Am I right in my conjecture?”

“We *have* met, sir,” replied Ida, with such confusion as pleasantly implied that the meeting was not indifferently recollected, “in the parlour of the Abbess of the Ursulines, at Munich, where I have sometimes been to visit a much valued friend.”

“The abbess,” said the young knight, “was my cousin; and my good fortune more than once gave me the happiness of seeing in her convent this lady. But little did I expect that amongst these mountains the fickle goddess would again have so favoured a homeless wanderer.”

“Well, Sir Knight,” replied Burkhardt, “we trust that fortune has been equally favourable to us. And now we will make bold to ask your name; and then, without useless and tedious ceremony, on the part of ourselves and our hostess, bid you again a hearty welcome.”

“My name,” said the stranger, “is Walter de Blumfeldt; though humble, it has never been disgraced; and with the blessing of Heaven, I hope to hand it down as honoured as I have received it.”

Weeks, months, rolled on, and Walter de Blumfeldt was still the guest of the Lord of Unspunnen; till, by his virtues, and the many excellent qualities which daily more and more developed themselves, he wound himself around Burkhardt’s heart; which the chastened life of the old knight had rendered particularly susceptible of the kindlier feelings. Frequently would he now, with tears in his eyes, declare that he wished he could convince each and all with whom his former habits had caused any difference, how truly he forgave them, and desired their forgiveness.

“Would,” said he one day, in allusion to this subject, “that I could have met my old enemy, the Duke of Zahringen, and with a truly heartfelt pleasure and joy have embraced him, and numbered him amongst my friends. But he is gathered to his fathers, and I know not whether he has left any one to bear his honours.”

Each time that Walter had offered to depart, Burkhardt had found some excuse to detain him; for it seemed to him that in separating from his young guest, he should lose a link of that chain which good fortune had so lately woven for him. Hermann, too, loved Walter as a brother; and Ida fain would have imagined that she loved him as a sister: but her heart more plainly told her what her colder reasoning sought to hide. Unspunnen, who had for some time perceived the growing attachment between Walter and Ida, was not displeased at the discovery, as he had long ceased to covet riches; and had learnt to prize the sterling worth of the young knight, who fully answered the high terms in which the Prior of St. Anselm always spoke of him. Walking one evening under the shade of that very avenue where he had first encountered Hermann and Ida, he perceived the latter, at some little distance, in conversation with Walter. It was evident to Burkhardt that the young knight was not addressing himself to a very unwilling ear, as Ida was totally regardless of the loud cough with which Burkhardt chose to be seized at that moment; nor did she perceive him, until he exclaimed, or rather vociferated, "Do you know, Walter, that, under this very avenue, two pilgrims, bound to some holy shrine, once accosted me; but that, in pity to my sins and forlorn condition, they exchanged their penitential journey for an act of greater charity; and have ever since remained to extend their kind cares to an aged and helpless relative but too little worthy of their love. One, however, of these affectionate beings is now about to quit my abode, and to pass through the rest of this life's pilgrimage with a helpmate in his toilsome journey, in the person of the fair daughter of the Baron de Leichtfeldt; and thus leave his poor companion to battle the storms of the world, with only the tedious society of an old man. Say, Sir Knight, will thy valour suffer that such wrong be done; or wilt *thou* undertake to conduct this forsaken pilgrim on her way, and guide her through the chequered paths of this variable life? I see by the lowliness with which you bend, and the colour which mantles in your cheek, that I speak not to one insensible to an old man's appeal. But soft, soft, Sir Knight, my Ida is not yet canonized, and therefore cannot afford to lose a hand, which inevitably must occur, if you continue to press it with such very ardent devotion. But what says our pilgrim, does she accept of thy conduct and service, Sir Knight?"

Ida, scarcely able to support herself, threw herself on Burkhardt's neck. We will not raise the veil which covers the awful moment that renders a man, as he supposes, happy or miserable for ever. Suffice it to say, that the day which made Hermann the husband of the daughter of the Baron de Leichtfeldt, saw Ida the wife of Walter de Blumfeldt.

Six months had passed rapidly away to the happy inhabitants of Unspunnen; and Burkhardt seemed almost to have grown young again; such wonders did the tranquillity which now reigned within him perform. He was therefore one of the most active and foremost in the preparations, which were necessary, in consequence of Walter suggesting that they should spend Ida's birthday in a favorite retreat of his and hers. This chosen spot was a beautiful meadow, in front of which meandered a small limpid river, or rather stream; at the back was a gorgeous amphitheatre of trees, the wide spreading branches of which cast a refreshing shade over the richly enameled grass.

In this beauteous retreat, were Burkhardt, Walter, and his Ida, passing the sultry hours of noon, with all that flow of mirth which careless hearts can alone experience; when Walter, who had been relating some of his adventures at the Court of the Emperor, and recounting the magnificence of the tournaments, turning to his bride, said; "But what avails all that pomp, my Ida. How happy are we in this peaceful vale! we envy neither princes nor dukes their palaces, or their states. These woods, these glades, are worth all the stiffly trimmed gardens of the Emperor, and the great Monarch of France, to boot. What say you, my Ida, could you brook the ceremony of a court, and the pride of royalty? Methinks even the coronet of a duchess would but ill replace the wreath of blushing roses on your head."

"Gently, my good husband," replied Ida, laughing, "they say, you know, that a woman loves these vanities too dearly in her heart, ever to despise them. Then how can you expect so frail a mortal as your poor wife to hold them in contempt? Indeed, I think," added she, assuming an air of burlesque dignity, "that I should make a lofty duchess, and wear my coronet with most becoming grace. And now, by my faith, Walter, I recollect that you have this day, like a true and gallant knight, promised to grant whatever boon I shall ask. On my bended knee, therefore, I humbly sue that if you know any spell or magic wile, to make a princess or a duchess for only a single day, that you will forthwith exercise your art upon me; just in order to enable me to ascertain with how much or how little dignity I could sustain such honours. It is no very difficult matter, Sir Knight: you have only to call in the aid of

Number Nip, or some such handy workman of the woods. Answer, most chivalrous husband, for thy disconsolate wife rises not until her prayer is granted.”

“Why, Ida, you have indeed craved a rare boon,” replied Walter, “and how to grant it may well puzzle my brain, till it becomes crazed with the effort. But, let me see, let me see,” continued he, musingly; “I have it! — Come hither, love, here is your throne,” said he, placing her on a gentle eminence richly covered with the fragrant wild thyme and the delicate harebell; “kings might now envy you the incense which is offered to you. And you, noble sir,” added he, addressing Burkhardt, “must stand beside her Highness, in quality of chief counsellor. There are your attendants around you: behold that tall oak, he must be your Highness’ poursuivant; and yonder slender mountain ashes, your trusty pages.”

“This is but a poor fulfilment of the task you have undertaken, Sir mummer,” said Ida, with a playful, and arch affectation of disappointment.

“Have patience for a brief while, fair dame,” replied Walter, laughing; “for now must I awaken your Highness’ men at arms.”

Then, taking from his side, a silver horn, he loudly sounded the melodious reveillée. As he withdrew the instrument from his lips, a trumpet thrillingly answered to the call; and scarcely had its last notes died away, when, from the midst of the woods, as if the very trees were gifted with life, came forth a troop of horsemen, followed by a body of archers on foot. They had but just entirely emerged, when numerous peasants, both male and female, appeared in their gayest attire; and, together with the horsemen and the archers, rapidly and picturesquely ranged themselves in front of the astonished Ida, who had already abdicated her throne, and clung to the arm of Walter. They then suddenly divided; and twelve pages in richly emblazoned dresses advanced. After them followed six young girls, whose forms and features the Graces might have envied, bearing two coronets placed on embroidered cushions. In the rear of these, supporting his steps with his abbatial staff, walked the venerable Abbot of St. Anselm; who, with his white beard flowing almost to his girdle, and his benign looks, that showed the pure commerce of the soul which gave life to an eye, the brightness of which seventy years had scarcely diminished, seemed to Ida a being of another world. The young girls then advancing, and kneeling before Walter, and his wife, presented the coronets.

Ida, who had remained almost breathless with wonder, could now scarcely articulate, “Dear, dear Walter, what is all this pomp — what does — what *can* it mean?”

“Mean! my beloved,” replied her husband, “did you not bid me make you a Duchess? I have but obeyed your high commands, and I now salute you, *Duchess* of Zâhringen!”

The whole multitude then made the woods resound with the acclamation, *“Long live the Duke, and Duchess of Zâhringen!”*

Walter, having for some moments, enjoyed the unutterable amazement of the now breathless Ida, and the less evident but perhaps equally intense surprise of Burkhardt, turning to the latter, said, “My more than father, you see in me the son of your once implacable enemy, the Duke of Zâhringen. He has been many years gathered to his fathers; and I, as his only son, have succeeded to his title, and his large possessions. My heart, my liberty, were entirely lost in the parlour of the Abbess of the Ursulines. But when I learnt whose child my Ida was, and your sad story, I resolved ere I would make her mine, to win not only her love, but also your favour and esteem. How well I have succeeded, this little magic circle on my Ida’s finger is my witness. It will add no small measure to your happiness, to know that my father had for many years repented of the wrongs which he had done you; and, as much as possible to atone for them, entrusted the education of his son to the care of this my best of friends, the Abbot of St. Anselm, that he might learn to shun the errors into which his sire had unhappily fallen. And now,” continued he, advancing, and leading Ida towards the Abbot, “I have only to beg your blessing, and that this lady, whom through Heaven’s goodness I glory to call my wife, be invested with those insignia of the rank which she is so fit to adorn.”

Walter, or as we must now call him, the Duke of Zâhringen, with Ida, then lowly knelt before the venerable Abbot; whilst the holy man, with tears in his eyes, invoked upon them the blessings of Heaven. His Highness then rising, took one of the coronets, and placing it on Ida’s head, said, “Mayst thou be as happy under this glittering coronet, as thou wert under the russet hood, in which I first beheld thee.”

“God and our Lady aid me!” replied the agitated Ida; “and may He grant that I may wear it with as much humility. Yet thorns, they say, spring up beneath a crown.”

“True, my beloved,” said the Duke, “and they also grow beneath the peasant’s homely cap. But the rich alchemy of my Ida’s virtues will ever convert all thorns into the brightest jewels of her diadem.”

EUPHRASIA

TWO YEARS AGO, that is at Christmas, 1836, four friends left Brighton on their way to the seat of an acquaintance, about thirty miles distant, where they intended to pass this season of festivity. Any one who was in Sussex at that time, must remember the fall of snow on Christmas eve, which transformed Brighton into a town of Siberia, and held all its sojourners prisoners. The king’s courier was stopt by the drift on his way to London; no letters were sent or received for three days; the Pavilion had no guests; the horses and carriages could not make their way through the blocked-up streets; it was a strange wild sight. Still, as this party was resolved to pursue its way, four horses were harnessed to their carriage, and they set out. They arrived half way to Lewes, when the carriage became blocked up; the postilions blinded by the drift; the horses unable to move. Night was drawing in, and they saw naught but one wide expanse of snow, which was scattered in thick showers by the winds. They looked from the windows; the horses were above their knees in drift, as the postilions urged them to wade on. What made it worse was, that one of the party was a woman; a being ill suited to encounter the rude elements; whose father was overwhelmed with terror lest she should be chilled by the night air, or forced to alight and wet her feet. Her spirit was high; she had insisted on accompanying him, and wrapt in fur, had braved the season; but now he wondered at his folly in bringing her, and looked at her little foot in its satin slipper, with a sort of feeling, that if she moved from the carriage, she would be but a mouthful for the tempest, and disappear on the instant. Meanwhile darkness gathered thick around; there was no hope of moving. The father of the lady had alighted to view the scene, and then was afraid of getting into the carriage again, with a coating of snow round him, lest its thawing should give his daughter cold. She was not afraid; she was afraid of nothing; but he feared for her more than words can express. At length it was agreed that the father of the young lady and the postilions should mount the horses and make their way to Lewes, whence some sort of litter could be sent for her, and horses for the rest of the party, who remained to guard her.

They went, and those left behind continued looking wistfully on the scene, visible by its transcendent whiteness, even now that night had closed round. For a few minutes they were silent; they thought on the road the travellers had to pass; they longed for their return — a few moments seemed an age. One of the gentlemen struck his repeater; the same sound was given, as when he had struck it at the departure of his friend — a quarter past six.

"The hours will never pass!" exclaimed the anxious girl.

"O yes, they will," said the other, "I once passed a night more anxious than this promises to be, yet it had an end. It is strange that the scene I refer to should be vividly present now, being so different in scenery, in season, in personages, and in country from this."

Anxious to divert the mind of the daughter, and to lighten the slow pace of the hour, the third of this anxious party asked his young friend, Harry Valency, by name, what the events were that marked that long unforgotten night, and made him understand that he would do well to relate them, if the task were not a painful one. He understood the hint, and began. His tale was afterwards repeated to me, and, as I heard it, I wish to recount it now; yet, hearing it only at second-hand, I shall tell it lamely, and spoil the lively earnest interest he spread over every detail; while he who told it to me had but a vague recollection of dates and names of places, and even some of those of persons had entirely escaped him. However, such portion as reached me of the story, I will set down.

It was not long after the breaking out of the Greek revolution, that Harry Valency visited Greece. Many an Englishman was led thither at that time by the spirit of adventure, and many perished. Valency was not nineteen; his spirit was wild and reckless; — thought or care had never touched his brow; his heart was too light for love. Restless and energetic, he longed to try his powers, with the instinct that leads the young deer to butt against trees, or to wrestle with each other in the forest-dells. He was the only son of a widowed mother, whose life was wrapt in his, and he loved her fondly; yet left her, guided by a desire for adventure, unable to understand what anxiety and fear meant; and in his own person eager to meet even misfortune, so that it came in a guise to call forth manly and active struggles. He longed to have the pages of his young life written over by deeds that would hereafter be memories, to which he could turn with delight. The cause of Greece warmed his soul. He was in a transport of ecstacy when he touched the shores of that antique land, and looked around on mountain and mountain-stream, whose names were associated with the most heroic acts, and the most sublime poetry man ever achieved or wrote. Yes, he was now in Greece. He was about to fight in her cause against the usurping Turk. He had prepared himself by a sedulous study of Romaic; he was on his way to the seat of government, to offer his services. To proceed thither from the spot where he had disembarked, was a matter of some difficulty; the troops of the Pasha being then in possession of many of the passes. At length he heard that a band of about fifty Greek soldiers, headed by a young but brave and renowned chief, was about to pursue the same road; he asked and obtained leave to accompany them.

How delightful was the commencement of the journey! How beautiful the country! — defile and steep hill side, by which they proceeded; where the grey olive clothed the upland, or vines, embracing elms, red now with late summer tints, varied the scene. The mountain tops were bare or crowned with pines, and torrents ran down the sides and fed a stream in the dell. The air was balmy, the cicala loud and merry — to live was to be happy. Valency was mounted on a spirited horse; he made it leap and caracole. He threw a spear against a tree, and dashed after to recover it. He fired at a mark as he hurried on at full gallop; every feat was insufficient to tame his exhaustless spirits.

The Chief marked him with eyes, whose deep melancholy expression darkened as he gazed. He was known as bravest among the brave; yet gentle and kindly as a woman. He was very young, singularly handsome; his countenance was stamped with traces of intellectual refinement, while his person was tall, muscular, and strong, but so gracefully formed that every attitude reminded you of some Praxitilean shape of his own native land. Once he had been more beautiful; joy, as well as tenderness, and a soldier’s ardour had lighted up his dark eye; his lip had been the home of smiles, and the thoughts, which presided in his brow, had been as clear and soft, and gladsome as that godlike brow itself. Now this was changed. Grief had become a master passion: his cheeks were sunken; his eye seemed to brood eternally over melancholy regrets; his measured harmonious voice was attuned to the utterance of no light fancy or gay sallies; he spoke only the necessary words of direction to his followers, and then silence and gloom gathered over his face. His sorrow was respected; for it was known to be well-founded, and to spring from a recent disaster. If any of his troop desired to indulge in merriment, they withdrew from his vicinity. It was strange to them to hear the light laugh of the English youth ring through the grove, and to catch the tones of his merry voice, as he sang some of their own gayest songs. The Chief gazed with interest. There was a winning frankness in the boy; he was so very young, and all he did was in graceful accordance with his age. We are alike mere youths, thought the Chief, and how different. Yet soon he may become like me. He soars like an eagle; but the eagle may be wounded, and stoop to earth; because earth contains its secret and its regret.

Suddenly Valency, who was some hundred yards in advance, was encountered by a Greek, riding at full speed towards the advancing troop.

“Back! back! silence!” the man cried. He was a scout, who had been sent on before, and now brought tidings that a troop of three or four hundred of the Turkish army was entering the defile, and would soon advance on the handful of men which Valency accompanied. The scout rode directly up to the leader, and made his report, adding, “We have yet time. If we fall back but a quarter of a mile, there is a path I know, by which I can guide you across the mountain — on the other side we shall be safe.”

A smile of scorn for a moment wreathed the lip of the Chief, at the word safety, but his face soon reassumed its usual sad composure. The troop had halted; each man bent his eye on the leader. Valency, in particular, marked the look of scorn, and felt that he would never retreat before danger.

“Comrades!” the Chief thus addressed his men, “it shall never be said that Greeks fell back to make way for the destroyers; we will betake ourselves to our old warfare. Before we entered this olive wood, we passed a thick cover; where the dark jutting mountain-side threw a deep shadow across our path; and the torrent drowned all sound of voice or hoof. There we shall find ambush; there the enemy will meet death.”

He turned his horse’s head, and in a few minutes reached the spot he named; the men were mostly eager for the fray — while one or two eyed the mountain side — and then the path that led to the village, which they had quitted that morning. The Chief saw their look, and he glanced also at the English youth, who had thrown himself from his horse, and was busy loading and priming his arms. The Chief rode up to him —

"You are our guest and fellow-traveller," he said, "but not our comrade in the fight. We are about to meet danger — it may be that not one of us shall escape. You have no injuries to avenge, no liberty to gain; you have friends — probably a mother — in your native land. You must not fall with us. I am going to send a message to warn the village we last passed through — do you accompany my messengers."

Valency had listened attentively at first; but as the Chief continued, his attention reverted to his task of loading his pistols. The last words called a blush into his cheek.

"You treat me as a boy," he cried; "I may be one in aspect, but you shall find me a man in heart this day. You also young, I have not deserved your scorn!"

The Chief caught the youth's flashing eye. He held out his hand to him, saying—"Forgive me."

"I will," said Valency, "on one condition; give me a post of danger — of honour. You owe it to me in reparation of the insult you offered."

"Be it so," said the Chief, "your place shall be at my side."

A few minutes more and his dispositions were made; — two of the most down-hearted of the troop were despatched to alarm the village, the rest were placed behind the rocks; beneath the bushes, wherever broken ground, or tuft of underwood, or fragment from the cliff, afforded shelter and concealment, a man was placed; while the Chief himself took his stand on an elevated platform, and, sheltered by a tree, gazed upon the road. Soon the tramp of horses, the busy sound of feet and voices were heard, overpowering the rushing of the stream; and turban and musket could be distinguished as the enemy's troop threaded the defile.

The shout of battle — the firing — the clash of weapons were over. Above the crest of the hill, whose side had afforded ambush to the Greeks, the crescent moon hung, just about to dip behind; the stars in her train burnt bright as lamps floating in the firmament; while the fire-flies flashed among the myrtle underwood and up the mountain side; and sometimes the steel of the arms strewn around, dropt from the hands of the dead, caught and reflected the flashes of the celestial or earthly stars. The ground was strewn with the slain. Such of the enemy as had cut their way through, were already far — the sound of their horses' hoofs had died away. The Greeks who had fled across the mountain had reached a spot of safety — none lay there but the silent dead — cold as the moon-beam that rested on their pale faces for a moment, and then passed off, leaving them in shadow and death. All were still and motionless — some lay on the hill side, among the underwood — some on the open road — horses and men had fallen, pell mell — none moved — none breathed.

Yet there was a sigh — it was lost in the murmur of the stream; a groan succeeded, and then a voice feeble and broken—”My mother, my poor mother!” — the pale lips that spoke these words could form no other, a gush of tears followed. The cry seemed to awake another form from among the dead. One of the prostrate bodies raised itself slowly and painfully on its arm, the eyes were filmy, the countenance white from approaching death, the voice was hollow, yet firm, that said—”Who speaks? — who lives? — who weeps?”

The question struck shame to the wounded man; he checked his overflow of passionate sobbings. The other spoke again—”It was not the voice of a Greek — yet I thought I had saved that gallant boy — the ball meant for him is now in my side. — Speak again, young Englishman — on whom do you call?”

“On her who will weep my death too bitterly — on my mother,” replied Valency, and tears would follow the loved name.

“Art thou wounded to death?” asked the Chief.

“Thus unaided I must die,” he replied, “the blood gushes in torrents from a deep sabre cut — yet, could I reach those waters, I might live — I must try.” And Valency rose; he staggered a few steps, and fell heavily at the feet of the Chief. He had fainted. The Greek looked on the ghastly pallor of his face; he half rose — his own wound did not bleed, but it was mortal, and a deadly sickness had gathered round his heart, and chilled his brow, which he strove to master, that he might save the English boy. The struggle brought cold drops on his brow, as he rose on his knees and stooped to raise the head of Valency; he shuddered to feel the warm moisture his hand encountered. It is his blood; his life blood he thought; and again he placed his head on the earth, and continued a moment still, summoning what vitality remained to him to animate his limbs. Then with a determined effort he rose, and staggered to the banks of the stream. He held a steel cap in his hand — and now he stooped down to fill it; but with the effort the ground slid from under him, and he fell. There was a ringing in his ears — a cold dew on his brow — his breath came thick — the cap had fallen from his hand — he was dying. The bough of a tree, shot off in the morning's mêlée, lay near; — the mind, even of a dying man, can form swift unerring combinations of thought; — it was his last chance — the bough was plunged in the waters, and he scattered the grateful reviving drops over his face — vigor returned with the act, and he could stoop and fill the cap, and drink a deep draught, which for a moment restored the vital powers. And now he carried water to Valency; he dipt the unfolded turban of a Turk in the stream, and bound the youth's wound, which was a deep sabre cut in the shoulder, that had bled copiously. Valency revived — life gathered warm in his heart — his cheeks, though still pale, lost the ashy hue of death — his limbs again seemed willing to obey his will — he sat up, but he was too weak, and his head drooped. As a mother tending her sick first-born, the Greek chief hovered over him; he brought a cloak to pillow his head; as he picked up this, he found that some careful soldier had brought a small bag at his saddle bow, in which was a loaf and a bunch or two of grapes; he gave them to the youth, who ate. Valency now recognized his saviour; at first he wondered to see him there, tending on him, apparently unhurt; but soon the Chief sank to the ground, and Valency could mark the rigidity of feature, and ghastliness of aspect, that portended death. In his turn he would have assisted his friend; but the Chief stopt him—"You die if you move," he said, "your wound will bleed afresh, and you will die, while you cannot aid me. My weakness does not arise from mere loss of blood. The messenger of death has reached a vital part — yet a little while and the soul will obey the summons. It is slow, slow is the deliverance; yet the long creeping hour will come at last, and I shall be free."

"Do not speak thus," cried Valency, "I am strong now — I will go for help."

"There is no help for me," replied the Chief, "save the death I desire. I command you, move not."

Valency had risen, but the effort was vain: his knees bent under him, his head spun round; before he could save himself, he had sunk to the ground.

"Why torture yourself," said the Chief, "a few hours and help will come: it will not injure you to pass this interval beneath this calm sky. The cowards who fled will alarm the country, by dawn succour will be here: you must wait for it. I too must wait; not for help, but for death. It is soothing, even to me, to die here beneath this sky, with the murmurs of yonder stream in my ear, the shadows of my native mountains thrown athwart. Could aught save me, it would be the balmy airs of this most blessed night; my soul feels the bliss, though my body is sick and fast stiffening in death. Such was not the hour when she died, whom soon I shall meet, my Euphrasia, my own sweet sister, in Heaven!"

It was strange, Valency said, that at such an hour, but half saved from death, and his preserver in the grim destroyer's clutches, that he should feel curiosity to know the Greek Chief's story. His youth, his surpassing beauty of person — his valour — the act, which Valency well remembered, of his springing forward so as to shield him with his own person — his last words and thoughts devoted to the soft recollection of a beloved sister, — awakened an interest beyond even the present hour, fraught as it was with the chances of life and death. He questioned the Chief; probably fever had succeeded to his previous state of weakness, imparted a deceitful strength, and even inclined him to talk; for thus dying, unaided and unsheltered, except by the starry sky, he willingly reverted to the years of his youth, and to the miserable event which a few months before had eclipsed the sun of his life, and rendered death welcome.

They — brother and sister, Constantine and Euphrasia — were the last of their race. They were orphans; their youth was passed under the guardianship of the brother by adoption of their father, whom they named father, and who loved them as his own soul. He was a glorious old man, nursed in classic lore, and more familiar with the deeds of men who had glorified his country several thousand years before, than with any more modern names. Yet all who had ever done and suffered for Greece, were embalmed in his memory and honored as martyrs in the best of causes. He had been educated in Paris, and travelled in Europe and America, and was aware of the progress made in the science of politics all over the civilized world. He felt that Greece would soon share the benefits to arise from the changes then operating, and he looked forward at no distant day to its liberation from bondage. He educated his young ward for that day. Had he believed that Greece would have continued hopelessly enslaved, he had brought him up as a scholar and a recluse: but assured of the impending struggle, he made him a warrior; he implanted a detestation of the oppressor; a yearning love for the sacred blessings of freedom, a noble desire to have his name enrolled among the deliverers of his country. The education he bestowed on Euphrasia was yet more singular. He knew that though liberty must be bought and maintained by the sword, yet that its dearest blessings must be derived from civilization and knowledge, and he believed women to be the proper fosterers of these. They cannot handle a sword nor endure bodily labor for their country, but they could refine the manners, exalt the souls — impart honor, and truth, and wisdom, to their relatives and their children. Euphrasia therefore he made a scholar. By nature she was an enthusiast, and a poet. The study of the classic literature of her country corrected her taste and exalted her love of the beautiful. While a child she improvised passionate songs of liberty; and as she grew in years and loveliness, and her heart opened to tenderness, and she became aware of all the honor and happiness that a woman must derive from being held the friend of man, not his slave, she thanked God that she was a Greek and a Christian; and holding fast by the advantages which these names conferred, she looked forward eagerly to the day when Mahometanism should no longer contaminate her native land, and when her countrywomen should be awakened from ignorance and sloth in which they were plunged, and learn that their proper vocation in the creation, was that of mothers of heros and teachers of sages.

Her brother was her idol — her hope — her joy. And he who had been taught that his career must be that of deeds not words, yet was fired by her poetry and eloquence to desire glory yet more eagerly, and to devote himself yet more entirely, and with purer ardour, to the hope of one day living and dying for his country. The first sorrow the orphans knew was the death of their father of adoption. He descended to the grave, full of years and honor. Constantine was then eighteen; his fair sister had just entered her fifteenth year. Often they spent the night beside the revered tomb of their lost friend, talking of the hopes and aspirations he had implanted. The young can form such sublime, such beautiful dreams. No disappointment, no evil, no bad passion shadows their glorious visions; to dare and do greatly for Greece was the ambition of Constantine. To cheer and watch over her brother, to regulate his wilder and more untaught soul, to paint in celestial colors the bourne he tended towards by action, were Euphrasia’s tasks.

"There is a heaven," said the dying man, as he told his tale; "there is a paradise for those who die in the just cause. I know not what joys are there prepared for the blest; but they cannot transcend those that were mine, as I listened to my own sweet sister, and felt my heart swell with patriotism and fond warm affection."

At length there was a stir through the land, and Constantine made a journey of some distance, to confer with the capitani of the mountains, and to prepare for the outbreak of the revolution. The moment came, sooner even than he expected. As an eagle chained when the iron links drop from him, and with clang of wing and bright undazzled eye he soars to heaven, so did Constantine feel when freedom to Greece became the war cry. He was still among the mountains, when first the echoes of his native valleys repeated that animating — that sacred word; instead of returning as he intended to his Athenian home, he was hurried off to Western Greece, and became involved in a series of warlike movements, the promised success of which filled him with transport.

Suddenly a pause came in the delirium of joy which possessed his soul. He received not the accustomed letters from his sister — missives which had been to him angelic messengers, teaching him patience with the unworthy — hope in disappointment — security in final triumph. Those dear letters ceased; and he thought he saw in the countenances of his friends around a concealed knowledge of evil. He questioned them: their answers were evasive. At the same time, they endeavoured to fill his mind with the details of some anticipated exploit, in which his presence and cooperation was necessary. Day after day passed; he could not leave his post without injury to his cause, without even the taint of dishonor. He belonged to a band of Albanians, by whom he had been received as a brother, and he could not desert them in the hour of danger. But the suspense grew too terrible; and at length, finding that there was an interval of a few days which he might call his own, he left the camp, resting neither day nor night; dismounting from one horse only to bestride another, in forty-eight hours he was in Athens, before his vacant desecrated home. The tale of horror was soon told. Athens was still in the hands of the Turks; the sister of a rebel had become the prey of the oppressor. She had none to guard her. Her matchless beauty had been seen and marked by the son of the Pasha; she had for the last two months inhabited his harem.

“Despair is a cold dark feeling,” said the dying warrior; “if I may name that despair which had a hope — a certainty — an aim. Had Euphrasia died I had wept. Now my eyes were horn — my heart stone. I was silent. I neither expressed resentment nor revenge. I concealed myself by day; at night, I wandered round the tyrant’s dwelling. It was a pleasure-palace, one of the most luxurious that adorned the enemies of our beloved Athens. At this time it was carefully guarded; my character was known and Euphrasia’s worth, and the oppressor feared the result of his deed. Still, under shadow of darkness I drew near. I marked the position of the women’s apartments — I learned the number — the length of the watch — the orders they received, and then I returned to the camp. I revealed my project to a few select spirits. They were fired by my wrongs, and eager to deliver my Euphrasia.” —

Constantine broke off — a spasm of pain shook his body. After this had passed he lay motionless for a few minutes; then, starting up, as fever and delirium, excited by the exertion of speaking, increased by the agonies of recollection, at last fully possessed him. “What is this,” he cried; “fire! Yes, the palace burns. Do you not hear the roaring of the flames, and thunder too — the artillery of heaven levelled against the unblest. Ha! a shot — he falls — they are driven back — now fling the torches — the wood crackles — there, there are the women’s rooms — ha! poor victims, lo! you shudder and fly! Fear not; give me only my Euphrasia! — my own Euphrasia! No disguise can hide thee, dressed as a Turkish bride crowned with flowers, thy lovely face, the seat of unutterable woe, still, my sweet sister, even in this smoke and tumult of this house, thou art the angel of my life. Spring into my arms, poor frightened bird, cling to me — it is herself — her voice — her fair arms are round my neck — what ruin — what flame — what choking smoke — what driving storm, can stay me. Soft! the burning breach is passed — there are steps — gently — dear one, I am firm — fear not! — what eye glares? — fear not, Euphrasia, he is dead — the miserable retainers of the tyrant fell beneath our onset — ha! a shot — gracious Panagia, is this thy protection!” Thus did he continue to rave — the onset — the burning of the palace — the deliverance of his sister, all seemed to pass again vividly as if in present action. His eyes glared — he tossed up his arms — he shouted as if calling his followers around him — and then, in tones of heartfelt tenderness, he addressed the fair burthen he fancied that he bore — till, with a shriek, he cried again, “A shot!” and sank to the ground as if his heartstrings had broken.

An interval of calm succeeded; he was exhausted; his voice was broken.

“What have I told thee,” he continued, feebly; “I have said how a mere handful of men attacked the palace, and drove back the guards — how we strove in vain to make good our entrance — fresh troops were on their way — there was no alternative; we fired the palace. Deep in the seclusion of the harem the women had retreated, a herd of frightened deer. One alone stood erect. Her eyes bent on the intruders — a dagger in her hand — majestic and fearless, her face was marked with traces of passed suffering, but at the moment, the stern resolution her soft features expressed, was more than human. The moment she saw me, all was changed; the angel alone beamed in her countenance. Her dagger fell from her hand — she was in my arms — I bore her from the burning roof — the rest you know; have I not said it? Some miscreant, who survived the slaughter, and yet lay as dead on the earth, aimed a deadly shot. She did not shriek.

At first she clung closer to my neck, and then I felt her frame shiver in my arms and her hold relax. I trusted that fear alone moved her; but she knew not fear — it was death. Horses had been prepared, and were waiting; a few hours more and I hoped to be on our way to the west, to that portion of Greece that was free. But I felt her head fall on my shoulder. I heard her whisper, ‘I die, my brother! carry me to our father’s tomb.’

“My soul yearned to comply with her request; but it was impossible. The city was alarmed; troops gathering from all quarters. Our safety lay in flight, for still I thought that her wound was not mortal. I bore her to the spot where we had left our horses. Here two or three of my comrades speedily joined me; they had rescued the women of the harem from the flames; but the various sounds denoting the advance of the Turkish soldiery, caused them to hurry from the scene. I leapt on my horse, and placed my sweet sister before me, and we fled amain through desert streets, I well knew how to choose, and along the lanes of the suburbs into the open country, where deviating from the high road, along which I directed my companions to proceed in all haste — alone with my beloved burthen, I sought a solitary unsuspected spot among the neighbouring hills. The storm which had ceased for a time, now broke afresh; the deafening thunder drowned every other sound, while the frequent glare of the lightning showed us our path; my horse did not quail before it. Euphrasia still lay clinging to me; no complaint escaped her; a few words of fondness, of encouragement, of pious resignation, she now and then breathed forth. I knew not she was dying; till at last entering a retired valley, where an olive wood afforded shelter, and still better the portico of a fallen ancient temple, I dismounted and bore her to the marble steps, on which I placed her. Then indeed I felt how near the beloved one was to death, from which I could not save her. The lightning showed me her face; pale as the marble which pillowed it. Her dress was dabbled in warm blood, which soon stained the stones on which she lay. I took her hand, it was deathly cold. I raised her from the marble; I pillowed her cheek upon my heart. I repressed my despair, or rather my despair in that hour was mild and soft as herself. There was no help — no hope. The life blood oozed fast from her side; scarce could she raise her heavy eye-lids to look on me; her voice could no longer articulate my name. The burthen of her fair limbs grew heavier and more chill; soon it was a corse only that I held. When I knew that her sufferings were over, I raised her once more in my arms, and once more I placed her before me on my horse, and betook me to my journey, alone, though still I bore her form in my arms. The storm was over now, and the moon bright above. Earth glittered under the rays, and a soft breeze swept by, as if heaven itself became clear and peaceful to receive her stainless soul, and present it to its Maker. By morning's dawn, I stopt at a convent gate, and rang. To the holy maidens within I consigned my own fair Euphrasia. I kissed but once again her dear brow, which spoke of peace in death; and then saw her placed upon a bier, and was away, back to my camp, to live and die for Greece."

He grew more silent, as he became weaker. Now and then he spoke a few words to record some other of Euphrasia's perfections, or to repeat some of her dying words; to speak of her magnanimity, her genius, her love, and his own wish to die.

"I might have lived," he said, "till her image had faded in my mind, or been mingled with less holy memories. I die young, all her own. Those whom the gods favor, all die young."

His voice grew more feeble after this; he complained of cold. Valency continued, "I contrived to rise, and crawl about, and to collect a capote or two, and a pelisse from among the slain, with some of which I covered him;

and then I drew one over myself, for the air grew chill, as midnight had passed away and the morning hour drew near. The warmth which the coverings imparted, calmed the aching of my wound, and, strange to say, I felt slumber creep over me. I tried to watch and wake. At first the stars above, and the dark forms of the mountains mingled with my dreamy feelings; but soon I lost all sense of where I was, and what I had suffered, and slept peacefully and long.

"The morning sun-beams, as creeping down the hill side, they at last fell upon my face, awoke me. At first I had forgotten all thought of the events of the passed night, and my first impulse was to spring up, crying aloud, where am I? but the stiffness of my limbs and their weakness, soon revealed the truth. Gladly I now welcomed the sound of voices, and marked the approach of a number of peasants along the ravine. Hitherto, strange to say, I had thought only of myself; but with the ideas of succour, came the recollection of my companion, and the tale of the previous night. I glanced eagerly to where he lay; his posture disclosed his state; he was still, and stiff, and dead. Yet his countenance was calm and beautiful. He had died in the dear hope of meeting his sister, and her image had shed peace over the last moment of life.

"I am ashamed to revert to myself. The death of Constantine is the true end of my tale. My wound was a severe one. I was forced to leave Greece, and for some months remained between life and death in Cefalonia, till a good constitution saved me, when at once I returned to England."

THE HEIR OF MONDOLFO

In the beautiful and wild country near Sorrento, in the Kingdom of Naples, at the time it was governed by monarchs of the house of Anjou, there lived a territorial noble, whose wealth and power overbalanced that of the neighboring nobles. His castle, itself a stronghold, was built on a rocky eminence, toppling over the blue and lovely Mediterranean. The hills around were covered with ilex-forests, or subdued to the culture of the olive and vine. Under the sun no spot could be found more favored by nature.

If at eventide you had passed on the placid wave beneath the castellated rock that bore the name of Mondolfo, you would have imagined that all happiness and bliss must reside within its walls, which, thus nestled in beauty, overlooked a scene of such surpassing loveliness; yet if by chance you saw its lord issue from the portal, you shrunk from his frowning brow, you wondered what could impress on his worn cheek the combat of passions. More piteous sight was it to behold his gentle lady, who, the slave of his unbridled temper, the patient sufferer of many wrongs, seemed on the point of entering upon that only repose "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."1 The Prince Mondolfo had been united early in life to a princess of the regal family of Sicily. She died in giving birth to a son. Many years subsequently, after a journey to the northern Italian states, he returned to his castle, married. The speech of his bride declared her to be a Florentine. The current tale was that he married her for love, and then hated her as the hindrance of his ambitious views. She bore all for the sake of her only child — a child born to its father's hate; a boy of gallant spirit, brave even to wildness. As he grew up, he saw with anger the treatment his mother received from the haughty Prince. He dared come forward as her defender; he dared oppose his boyish courage to his father's rage: the result was natural — he became the object of his father's dislike. Indignity was heaped on him; the vassals were taught to disobey him, the menials to scorn him, his very brother to despise him as of inferior blood and birth. Yet the blood of Mondolfo was his; and, though tempered by the gentle Isabel's more kindly tide, it boiled at the injustice to which he was a victim. A thousand times he poured forth the overflowings of his injured spirit in eloquent complaints to his mother. As her health decayed, he nurtured the project, in case of her death, of flying his paternal castle, and becoming a wanderer, a soldier of fortune. He was now thirteen. The Lady Isabel soon, with a mother's penetration, discovered his secret, and on her death-bed made him swear not to quit his father's protection until he should have attained the age of twenty. Her heart bled for the wretchedness that she foresaw would be his lot; but she looked forward with still greater horror to the picture her active fancy drew of her son at an early age wandering forth in despair, alone and helpless, suffering all the extremities of famine and wretchedness; or, almost worse, yielding to the temptations that in such a situation would be held out to him. She extracted this vow, and died satisfied that he would keep it. Of all the world, she alone knew the worth of her Ludovico — had penetrated beneath the rough surface, and become acquainted with the rich store of virtue and affectionate feeling that lay like unsunned ore in his sensitive heart.

Fernando hated his son. From his earliest boyhood he had felt the sentiment of aversion, which, far from endeavoring to quell, he allowed to take deep root, until Ludovico's most innocent action became a crime, and a system of denial and resistance was introduced that called forth all of sinister that there was in the youth's character, and engendered an active spirit of detestation in his father's mind. Thus Ludovico grew, hated and hating. Brought together through their common situation, the father and son, lord and vassal, oppressor and oppressed, the one was continually ready to exert his power of inflicting evil, the other perpetually on the alert to resist even the shadow of tyranny. After the death of his mother, Ludovico's character greatly changed.

The smile that, as the sun, had then often irradiated his countenance, now never shone; suspicion, irritability, and dogged resolution, seemed his master-feelings. He dared his father to the worst, endured that worst, and prevented from flying by his sacred observance of his vow, nurtured all angry and even revengeful feelings till the cup of wrath seemed ready to overflow. He was loved by none, and loving none his good qualities expired, or slept as if they would never more awaken.

His father had intended him for the Church; and Ludovico, until he was sixteen, wore the priestly garb. That period past, be cast it aside, and appeared habited as a cavalier of those days, and in short words told his parent that he refused to comply with his wishes; that he should dedicate himself to arms and enterprise. All that followed this dedaration — menace, imprisonment, and even ignominy — he bore, but he continued firm; and the haughty Fernando was obliged to submit his towering will to the firmer will of a stripling. And now, for the first time, while rage seemed to burst his heart, he felt to its highest degree the sentiment of hatred; he expressed this passion — words of contempt and boundless detestation replied; and the bystanders feared that a personal encounter would ensue. Once Fernando put his hand on his sword, and the unarmed Ludovico drew in and collected himself, as if ready to spring and seize the arm that might be uplifted against him.

Fernando saw and dreaded the mad ferocity his son’s eye expressed. In all personal encounters of this kind the victory rests not with the strong, but the most fearless. Fernando was not ready to stake his own life, or even with his own hand to shed his son’s blood; Ludovico, not as aggressor, but in self-defense, was careless of the consequences of an attack — he would resist to the death; and this dauntless feeling gave him an ascendency his father felt and could not forgive.

From this time Fernando’s conduct toward his son changed. He no longer punished, imprisoned, or menaced him. This was usage for a boy, but the Prince felt that they were man to man, and acted accordingly. He was the gainer by the change; for he soon acquired all the ascendency that experience, craft, and a court education, must naturally give him over a hot-headed youth, who, nerved to resist all personal violence, neither saw nor understood a more covert mode of proceeding. Fernando hoped to drive his son to desperation. He set spies over him, paid the tempters that were to lead him to crime, and by a continued system of restraint and miserable thwarting hoped to reduce him to such despair that he would take refuge in any line of conduct that promised freedom from so irksome and degrading a slavery. His observance of his vow saved the youth; and this steadiness of purpose gave him time to read and understand the motives of the tempters. He saw his father’s master-hand in all, and his heart sickened at the discovery.

He had reached his eighteenth year. The treatment he had endured and the constant exertion of fortitude and resolution had already given him the appearance of manhood, He was tall, well made, and athletic. His person and demeanor were more energetic than graceful, and his manners were haughty and reserved. He had few accomplishments, for his father had been at no pains for his education; feats of horsemanship and arms made up the whole catalogue. He hated books, as being a part of a priest's insignia; he was averse to all occupation that brought bodily repose with it. His complexion was dark — hardship had even rendered it sallow; his eyes, once soft, now glared with fierceness; his lips, formed to express tenderness, were now habitually curled in contempt; his dark hair, clustering in thick curls round his throat, completed the wild but grand and interesting appearance of his person.

It was winter, and the pleasures of the chase began. Every morning the huntsmen assembled to attack the wild-boars or stags which the dogs might arouse in the fastnesses of the Apennines.

This was the only pleasure that Ludovico ever enjoyed. During these pursuits he felt himself free. Mounted on a noble horse, which he urged to its full speed, his blood danced in his veins, and his eyes shone with rapture as he cast his eagle glance to Heaven; with a smile of ineffable disdain, he passed his false friends or open tormentors, and gained a solitary precedence in the pursuit.

The plain at the foot of Vesuvius and its neighboring hills was stripped bare by winter; the full stream rushed impetuously from the hills; and there was mingled with it the baying of the dogs and the cries of the hunters; the sea, dark under a lowering sky, made a melancholy dirge as its waves broke on the shore; Vesuvius groaned heavily, and the birds answered it by wailing shrieks; a heavy sirocco hung upon the atmosphere, rendering it damp and cold. This wind seems at once to excite and depress the human mind: it excites it to thought, but colors those thoughts, as it does the sky, with black. Ludovico felt this; but he tried to surmount the natural feelings with which the ungenial air filled him.

The temperature of the air changed as the day advanced. The clouded sky spent itself in snow, which fell in abundance; it then became clear, and sharp frost succeeded. The aspect of earth was changed. Snow covered the ground and lay on the leafless trees, sparkling, white, and untrod.

Early in the morning a stag had been roused, and, as he was coursed along the plain skirting the hills, the hunters went at speed. All day the chase endured. At length the stag, who from the beginning had directed his course toward the hills, began to ascend them, and, with various winclings and evolutions, almost put the hounds to fault. Day was near its close when Ludovico alone followed the stag, as it made for the edge of a kind of platform of the mountain, which, isthmus-like, was connected with the hill by a small tongue of land, and on three sides was precipitous to the plain below. Ludovico balanced his spear, and his dogs drew in, expecting that the despairing animal would there turn to bay. He made one bound, which conducted him to the very brow of the precipice — another, and he was seen no more. He sprang downward, expecting more pity from the rocks beneath than from his human adversary. Ludovico was fatigued by the chase and angry at the escape of his prey. He sprang from his horse, tied him to a tree, and sought a path by which he might safely descend to the plain. Snow covered and hid the ground, obliterating the usual traces that the flocks or herds might have left as they descended from their pastures on the hills to the hamlets beneath; but Ludovico had passed his boyhood among mountains: while his hunting-spear found sure rest on the ground, he did not fear, or while a twig afforded him sufficient support as he held it, he did not doubt to secure his passage; but the descent was precipitous, and necessary caution obliged him to be long. The sun approached the horizon, and the glow of its departure was veiled by swift-rising clouds which the wind blew upward from the sea — a cold wind, which whirled the snow from its resting-place and shook it from the trees. Ludovico at length arrived at the foot of the precipice. The snow reflected and enhanced the twilight, and he saw four deep marks that must have been made by the deer. The precipice was high above, and its escape appeared a miracle. It must have escaped; but those were the only marks it had left. Around lay a forest of ilex, beset by thick, entangled underwood, and it seemed impossible that any animal so large as the stag in pursuit could have broken its way through the apparently impenetrable barrier it opposed. The desire to find his quarry became almost a passion in the heart of Ludovico. He walked round to seek for an opening, and at last found a narrow pathway through the forest, and some few marks seemed to indicate that the stag must have sought for refuge up the glen. With a swiftness characteristic even of his prey, Ludovico rushed up the pathway, and thought not of how far he ran, until, breathless, he stopped before a cottage that opposed itself to his further progress. He stopped and looked around. There was something singularly mournful in the scene. It was not dark, but the shades of evening seemed to descend from the vast woof of cloud that climbed the sky from the West. The black and shining leaves of the ilex and those of the laurel and myrtle underwood were strongly contrasted with the white snow that lay upon them. A breeze passed among the boughs, and scattered the drift that fell in flakes, and disturbed by fits the silence around; or, again, a bird twittered, or flew with melancholy flap of wing, beneath the trees to its nest in some hollow trunk. The house seemed desolate; its windows were glassless, and small heaps of snow lay upon the sills. There was no print of footing on the equal surface of the path that led right up to the door, yet a little smoke now and then struggled upward from its chimney, and, on paying fixed attention, Prince Ludovico thought he heard a voice. He called, but received no answer. He put his hand on the latch; it yielded, and he entered. On the floor, strewed with leaves, lay a person sick and dying; for, though there was a slight motion in the eyes that showed that life had not yet deserted his throne, the paleness of the visage was that of death only. It was an aged woman, and her white hair showed that she descended to no untimely grave. But a figure knelt beside her which might have been mistaken for the angel of heaven waiting to receive and guide the departing soul to eternal rest, but for the sharp agony that was stamped on the features, and the glazed but earnest gaze of her eye. She was very young, and beautiful as the star of evening. She had apparently despoiled herself to bestow warmth on her dying friend, for her arms and neck were bare but for the quantity of dark and flowing hair that clustered on her shoulders. She was absorbed in one feeling, that of watching the change in the sick person. Her cheeks, even her lips, were pale; her eyes seemed to gaze as if her whole life reigned in their single perception.

She did not hear Ludovico enter, or, at least, she made no sign that indicated that she was conscious of it. The sick person murmured; as she bent her head down to catch the sound, she replied, in an accent of despair:

“I can get no more leaves, for the snow is on the ground; nor have I any other earthly thing to place over you.”

“Is she cold?” said Ludovico, creeping near, and bending down beside the afflicted girl.

“Oh, very cold!” she replied, “and there is no help.”

Ludovico had gone to the chase in a silken mantle lined with the choicest furs: he had thrown it off, and left it with his horse that it might not impede his descent. He hastened from the cottage, he ran down the lane, and, following the marks of his footsteps, he arrived where his steed awaited him. He did not again descend by the same path, reflecting that it might be necessary for him to seek assistance for the dying woman. He led his horse down the bill by a circuitous path, and, although he did this with all possible speed, night closed in, and the glare of the snow alone permitted him to see the path that he desired to follow. When he arrived at the lane he saw that the cottage, before so dark, was illuminated, and, as he approached, he heard the solemn hymn of death as it was chanted by the priests who filled it. The change had taken place, the soul had left its mortal mansion, and the deserted ruin was attended with more of solemnity than had been paid to the mortal struggle. Amid the crowd of priests Ludovico entered unperceived, and he looked around for the lovely female he had left She sat, retired from the priests, on a heap of leaves in a corner of the cottage. Her clasped hands lay on her knees, her head was bent downward, and every now and then she wiped away her fast-falling tears with her hair. Ludovico threw his cloak over her. She looked up, and drew the covering round her, more to hide her person than for the sake of warmth, and then, again turning away, was absorbed in her melancholy thoughts.

Ludovico gazed on her in pity. For the first time since his mother’s death, tears filled his eyes, and his softened countenance beamed with tender sympathy. He said nothing, but he continued to look on as a wish arose in his mind that he might wipe the tears that one by one fell from the shrouded eyes of the unfortunate girl. As he was thus engaged, he heard his name called by one of the attendants of the castle, and, throwing the few pieces of gold he possessed into the lap of the sufferer, he suddenly left the cottage, and, joining the servant who had been in search of him, rode rapidly toward his home.

As Ludovico rode along, and the first emotions of pity having, as it were, ceased to throb in his mind, these feelings merged into the strain of thought in which he habitually indulged, and turned its course to something new.

“I call myself wretched,” he cried—”I, the well-clad and fed, and this lovely peasant-girl, half famished, parts with her necessary clothing to cover the dying limbs of her only friend. I also have lost my only friend, and that is my true misfortune, the cause of all my real misery — sycophants would assume that name — spies and traitors usurp that office. I have cast these aside — shaken them from me as yon bough shakes to earth its incumbrance of snow, not as cold as their iced hearts, but I am alone — solitude gnaws my heart and makes me savage — miserable — worthless.”

Yet, although he thought in this manner, the heart of Ludovico was softened by what he had seen, and milder feelings pressed upon him. He had felt sympathy for one who needed it; he had conferred a benefit on the necessitous; tenderness molded his lips to a smile, and the pride of utility gave dignity to the fire of his eye. The people about him saw the change, and, not meeting with the usual disdain of his manner, they also became softened, and the alteration apparent in his character seemed ready to effect as great a metamorphosis in his external situation. But the time was not come when this change would become permanent.

On the day that succeeded to this hunt, Prince Fernando removed to Naples, and commanded his son to accompany him. The residence at Naples was peculiarly irksome to Ludovico. In the country he enjoyed comparative freedom. Satisfied that he was in the castle, his father sometimes forgot him for days together; but it was otherwise here. Fearful that he should form friends and connections, and knowing that his commanding figure and peculiar manners excited attention and often curiosity, he kept him ever in sight; or, if he left him for a moment, he first made himself sure of the people around him, and left such of his own confidants whose very presence was venom to the eye of Ludovico. Add to which, Prince Mondolfo delighted to insult and browbeat his son in public, and, aware of his deficiencies in the more elegant accomplishments, he exposed him even to the derision of his friends. They remained two months at Naples, and then returned to Mondolfo.

It was spring; the air was genial and spirit-stirring. The white blossoms of the almond-trees and the pink ones of the peach just began to be contrasted with the green leaves that shot forth among them. Ludovico felt little of the exhilarating effects of spring. Wounded in his heart’s core, he asked nature why she painted a sepulcher; he asked the airs why they fanned the sorrowful and the dead. He wandered forth to solitude. He rambled down the path that led to the sea; he sat on the beach, watching the monotonous flow of the waves; they danced and sparkled; his gloomy thoughts refused to imbibe cheerfulness from wave or sun.

A form passed near him — a peasant-girl, who balanced a pitcher, urn-shaped, upon her head; she was meanly clad, but she attracted Ludovico's regard, and when, having approached the fountain, she took her pitcher and turned to fill it, he recognized the cottager of the foregoing winter. She knew him also, and, leaving her occupation, she approached him and kissed his hand with that irresistible grace that southern climes seem to instill into the meanest of their children.

At first she hesitated, and began to thank him in broken accents, but words came as she spoke, and Ludovico listened to her eloquent thanks — the first he had heard addressed to him by any human being. A smile of pleasure stole over his face — a smile whose beauty sank deep into the gazer's heart. In a minute they were seated on the bank beside the fountain, and Viola told the story of her poverty-stricken youth — her orphan lot — the death of her best friend — and it was now only the benign climate which, in diminishing human wants, made her appear less wretched than then. She was alone in the world — living in that desolate cottage — providing for her daily fare with difficulty. Her pale cheek, the sickly languor that pervaded her manner, gave evidence of the truth of her words; but she did not weep, she spoke words of good heart, and it was only when she alluded to the benefaction of Ludovico that her soft dark eyes swam with tears.

The youth visited her cottage the next day. He rode up the lane, now grass-grown and scented by violets, which Viola was gathering from the banks. She presented her nosegay to him. They entered the cottage together. It was dilapidated and miserable. A few flowers placed in a broken vase was a type only of poor Viola herself — a lovely blossom in the midst of utter poverty; and the rose-tree that shaded the window could only tell that sweet Italy, even in the midst of wretchedness, spares her natural wealth to adorn her children.

Ludovico made Viola sit down on a bench by the window, and stood opposite to her, her flowers in his hand, listening. She did not talk of her poverty, and it would be difficult to recount what was said. She seemed happy and smiled and spoke with a gleeful voice, which softened the heart of her friend, so that he almost wept with pity and admiration. After this, day by day, Ludovico visited the cottage and bestowed all his time on Viola. He came and talked with her, gathered violets with her, consoled and advised her, and became happy. The idea that he was of use to a single human being instilled joy into his heart; and yet he was wholly unconscious how entirely he was necessary to the happiness of his protégée. He felt happy beside her, he was delighted to bestow benefits on her, and to see her profit by them; but he did not think of love, and his mind, unawakened to passion, reposed from its long pain without a thought for the future. It was not so with the peasant-girl. She could not see his eyes bent in gentleness on her, his mouth lighted by its tender smile, or listen to his voice as he bade her trust in him, for that he would be father, brother, all to her, without deeply, passionately loving him. He became the sun of her day, the breath of her life — her hope, joy, and sole possession. She watched for his coming, she watched him as he went, and for a long time she was happy. She would not repine that he replied to her earnest love with calm affection only — she was a peasant, he a noble — and she could claim and expect no more; he was a god — she might adore him; and it were blasphemy to hope for more than a benign acceptation of her worship.

Prince Mondolfo was soon made aware of Ludovico’s visits to the cottage of the forest, and he did not doubt that Viola had become the mistress of his son. He did not endeavor to interrupt the connection, or put any bar to his visits. Ludovico, indeed, enjoyed more liberty than ever, and his cruel father confined himself alone to the restricting of him more than ever in money. His policy was apparent: Ludovico had resisted every temptation of gambling and other modes of expense thrown in his way. Fernando had long wished to bring his son to a painful sense of his poverty and dependence, and to oblige him to seek the necessary funds in such a career as would necessitate his desertion of the paternal roof. He had wound many snares around the boy, and all were snapped by his firm but almost unconscious resistance; but now, without seeking, without expectation, the occasion came of itself which would lead him to require far more than his father had at any time allowed him, and now that allowance was restricted, yet Ludovico did not murmur — and until now he had had enough.

A long time Fernando abstained from all allusion to the connection of his son; but one evening, at a banquet, gayety overcame his caution — a gayety which ever led him to sport with his son’s feelings, and to excite a pain which might repress the smile that his new state of mind ceased to make frequent visits to his countenance.

“Here,” cried Fernando, as he filled a goblet—”here, Ludovico, is to the health of your violet-girl!”

and he concluded his speech with some indecorous allusion that suffused Ludovico’s cheek with red. Without replying he arose to depart.

“And whither are you going, sir?” cried his father. “Take yon cup to answer my pledge, for, by Bacchus! none that sit at my table shall pass it uncourteously by.”

Ludovico, still standing, filled his cup and raised it as he was about to speak and retort to his father’s speech, but the memory of his words and the innocence of Viola pressed upon him and filled his heart almost to bursting. He put down his cup, pushed aside the people who sought to detain him, and left the castle, and soon the laughter of the revelers was no more heard by him, though it had loudly rung and was echoed through the lofty halls. The words of Fernando had awakened a strange spirit in Ludovico. “Viola! Can she love me? Do I love her?” The last question was quickly answered. Passion, suddenly awake, made every artery tingle by its thrill-ing presence. His cheeks burned and his heart danced with strange exultation as he hastened toward the cottage, unheeding all but the universe of sensation that dwelt within him. He reached its door. Blank and dark the walls rose before him, and the boughs of the wood waved and sighed over him. Until now he had felt impatience alone — the sickness of fear — fear of finding a cold return to his passion’s feeling now entered his heart; and, retreating a little from the cottage, he sat on a bank, and hid his face in his hands, while passionate tears gushed from his eyes and trickled from between his fingers. Viola opened the door of her cottage; Ludovico had failed in his daily visit, and she was unhappy. She looked on the sky — the sun had set, and Hesperus glowed in the West; the dark ilex-trees made a deep shade, which was broken by innumerable fire-flies, which flashed now low on the ground, discovering the flowers as they slept hushed and closed in night, now high among the branches, and their light was reflected by the shining leaves of ilex and laurel. Viola’s wandering eye unconsciously selected one and followed it as it flew, and ever and anon cast aside its veil of darkness and shed a wide pallor around its own form. At length it nestled itself in a bower of green leaves formed by a clump of united laurels and myrtles; and there it stayed, flashing its beautiful light, which, coming from among the boughs, seemed as if the brightest star of the heavens had wandered from its course, and, trembling at its temerity, sat panting on its earthly perch. Ludovico sat near the laurel — Viola saw him — her breath came quick — she spoke not — but stepped lightly to him — and looked with such mazed ecstasy of thought that she felt, nay, almost heard, her heart beat with her emotion. At length she spoke — she uttered his name, and he looked up on her gentle face, her beaming eyes and her sylph-like form bent over him. He forgot his fears, and his hopes were soon confirmed. For the first time he pressed the trembling lips of Viola, and then tore himself away to think with rapture and wonder on all that had taken place.

Ludovico ever acted with energy and promptness. He returned only to plan with Viola when they might be united. A small chapel in the Apennines, sequestered and unknown, was selected; a priest was easily procured from a neighboring convent and easily bribed to silence. Ludovico led back his bride to the cottage in the forest. There she continued to reside; for worlds he would not have had her change her habitation; all his wealth was expended in decorating it; yet his all only sufliced to render it tolerable. But they were happy. The small circlet of earth's expanse that held in his Viola was the universe to her husband. His heart and imagination widened and filled it until it encompassed all of beautiful, and was inhabited by all of excellent, this world contains.

She sang to him; he listened, and the notes built around him a magic bower of delight. He trod the soil of paradise, and its winds fed his mind to intoxication. The inhabitants of Mondolfo could not recognize the haughty, resentful Ludovico in the benign and gentle husband of Viola.

His father's taunts were unheeded, for he did not hear them. He no longer trod the earth, but, angel-like, sustained by the wings of love, skimmed over it, so that he felt not its inequalities nor was touched by its rude obstacles. And Viola, with deep gratitude and passionate tenderness, repaid his love. She thought of him only, lived for him, and with unwearied attention kept alive in his mind the first dream of passion.

Thus nearly two years passed, and a lovely child appeared to bind the lovers with closer ties, and to fill their humble roof with smiles and joy.

Ludovico seldom went to Mondolfo; and his father, continuing his ancient policy, and glad that in his attachment to a peasant-girl he had relieved his mind from the fear of brilliant connections and able friends, even dispensed with his attendance when he visited Naples. Fernando did not suspect that his son had married his low-born favorite; if he had, his aversion for him would not have withheld him from resisting so degrading an alliance; and, while his blood flowed in Ludovico's veins, he would never have avowed offspring who were contaminated by a peasant's less highly-sprung tide.

Ludovico had nearly completely his twentieth year when his elder brother died. Prince Mondolfo at that time spent four months at Naples, endeavoring to bring to a conclusion a treaty of marriage he had entered into between his heir and the daughter of a noble Neapolitan house, when this death overthrew his hopes, and he retired in grief and mourning to his castle. A few weeks of sorrow and reason restored him to himself. He had loved even this favored eldest son more as the heir of his name and fortune than as his child; and the web destroyed that he had woven for him, he quickly began another.

Ludovico was summoned to his father's presence. Old habit yet rendered such a summons momentous; but the youth, with a proud smile, threw off these boyish cares, and stood with a gentle dignity before his altered parent.

"Ludovico," said the Prince, "four years ago you refused to take a priest's vows, and then you excited my utmost resentment; now I thank you for that resistance."

A slight feeling of suspicion crossed Ludovico's mind that his father was about to cajole him for some evil purpose. Two years before he would have acted on such a thought, but the habit of happiness made him unsuspicious. He bent his head gently.

"Ludovico," continued his father, while pride and a wish to conciliate disturbed his mind and even his countenance, "my son, I have used you hardly; but that time is now past."

Ludovico gently replied:

"My father, I did not deserve your ill-treatment; I hope I shall merit your kindness when I know—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Fernando, uneasily, "you do not understand — you desire to know why — in short, you, Ludovico, are now all my hope — Olympio is dead — the house of Mondolfo has no support but you—"

"Pardon me," replied the youth. "Mondolfo is in no danger; you, my lord, are fully able to support and even to augment its present dignity."

"You do not understand. Mondolfo has no support but you. I am old, I feel my age, and these gray hairs announce it to me too glaringly. There is no collateral branch, and my hope must rest in your children—"

"My children, my lord!" replied Ludovico. "I have only one; and if the poor little boy—"

"What folly is this?" cried Fernando, impatiently. "I speak of your marriage and not—"

"My lord, my wife is ever ready to pay her dutious respects to you—"

"Your wife, Ludovico! But you speak without thought. How? Who?"

"The violet-girl, my lord."

A tempest had crossed the countenance of Fernando. That his son, unknown to him, should have made an unworthy alliance, convulsed every fiber of his frame, and the lowering of his brows and his impatient gesture told the intolerable anguish of such a thought. The last words of Ludovico restored him. It was not his wife that he thus named — he felt assured that it was not.

He smiled somewhat gloomily, still it was a smile of satisfaction.

"Yes," he replied, "I understand; but you task my patience — you should not trifle with such a subject or with me. I talk of your marriage. Now that Olympio is dead, and you are, in his place, heir of Mondolfo, you may, in his stead, conclude the advantageous, nay, even princely, alliance I was forming for him."

Ludovico replied with earnestness:

"You are pleased to misunderstand me. I am already married. Two years ago, while I was still the despised, insulted Ludovico, I formed this connection, and it will be my pride to show the world how, in all but birth, my peasant-wife is able to follow the duties of her distinguished situation."

Fernando was accustomed to command himself. He felt as if stabbed by a poniard; but he paused till calm and voice returned, and then he said:

"You have a child?"

"An heir, my lord," replied Ludovico, smiling — for his father's mildness deceived him—"a lovely, healthy boy."

"They live near here?"

"I can bring them to Mondolfo in an hour's space. Their cottage is in the forest, about a quarter of a mile east of the convent of Santa Chiara."

"Enough, Ludovico; you have communicated strange tidings, and I must consider of them. I will see you again this evening."

Ludovico bowed and disappeared. He hastened to his cottage, and related all that he remembered or understood of this scene, and bade Viola prepare to come to the castle at an instant's notice. Viola trembled; it struck her that all was not so fair as Ludovico represented; but she hid her fears, and even smiled as her husband with a kiss hailed his boy as heir of Mondolfo.

Fernando had commanded both look and voice while his son was within hearing. He had gone to the window of his chamber, and stood steadily gazing on the drawbridge until Ludovico crossed it and disappeared. Then, unrestrained, he strode up and down the apartment, while the roof rang with his impetuous tread. He uttered cries and curses, and struck his head with his clenched fist. It was long ere he could think — he felt only, and feeling was torture. The tempest at length subsided, and he threw himself in his chair. His contracted brows and frequently-convulsed lips showed how entirely he was absorbed in consideration. All at first was one frightful whirl; by degrees, the motion was appeased; his thoughts flowed with greater calmness; they subsided into one channel whose course he warily traced until he thought that he saw the result, Hours passed during this contemplation. When he arose from his chair, as one who had slept and dreamed uneasily, his brows became by degrees smooth; he stretched out his arm, and, spreading his hand, cried:

"So it is! and I have vanquished him!"

Evening came, and Ludovico was announced. Fernando feared his son. He had ever dreaded his determined and fearless mode of action. He dreaded to encounter the boy's passions with his own, and felt in the clash that his was not the master-passion. So, subduing all of hate, revenge, and wrath, he received him with a smile. Ludovico smiled also; yet there was no similarity in their look: one was a smile of frankness, joy, and affection — the other the veiled grimace of smothered malice. Fernando said:

"My son, you have entered lightly into a marriage as if it were a child's game, but, where principalities and noble blood are at stake, the loss or gain is too momentous to be trifled with. Silence, Ludovico! Listen to me, I entreat. You have made a strange marriage with a peasant, which, though I may acknowledge, I cannot approve, which must be displeasing to your sovereign, and derogatory to all who claim alliance with the house of Mondolfo."

Cold dew stood on the forehead of Fernando as he spoke; he paused, recovered his self-command, and continued:

"It will be difficult to reconcile these discordant interests, and a moment of rashness might cause us to lose our station, fortune, everything! Your interests are in my hands. I will be careful of them. I trust, before the expiration of a very few months, the future Princess Mondolfo will be received at the court of Naples with due honor and respect. But you must leave it to me. You must not move in the affair. You must promise that you will not, until I permit, mention your marriage to any one, or acknowledge it if you are taxed with it."

Ludovico, after a moment's hesitation, replied:

"I promise that, for the space of six months, I will not mention my marriage to any one. I will not be guilty of falsehood, but for that time I will not affirm it or bring it forward in any manner so as to annoy you."

Fernando again paused; but prudence conquered, and he said no more. He entered on other topics with his son; they supped together, and the mind of Ludovico, now attuned to affection, received all the marks of his father's awakening love with gratitude and joy. His father thought that he held him in his toils, and was ready to sweeten the bitterness of his intended draft by previous kindness.

A week passed thus in calm. Ludovico and Viola were perfectly happy. Ludovico only wished to withdraw his wife from obscurity from that sensation of honest pride which makes us desire to declare to the whole world the excellence of a beloved object. Viola shrank from such an exhibition; she loved her humble cottage — humble still though adorned with all that taste and love could bestow on it. The trees bent over Its low roof and shaded its windows, which were filled with flowering shrubs; its floor shone with marble, and vases of antique shape and exquisite beauty stood in the niches of the room.

Every part was consecrated by the memory of their first meeting and their loves — the walks in snow and violets; the forest of ilex with its underwood of myrtle and its population of fire-flies; the birds; the wild and shy animals that sometimes came in sight, and, seen, retreated; the changes of the seasons, of the hues of nature influenced by them; the alterations of the sky; the walk of the moon; and the moving of the stars — all were dear, known, and commented on by this pair, who saw the love their own hearts felt reflected in the whole scene around, and in their child, their noisy but speechless companion, whose smiles won hopes, and whose bright form seemed as if sent from Heaven to reward their constant affection.

A week passed, and Fernando and Ludovico were riding together, when the Prince said:

"Tomorrow, early, my son, you must go to Naples. It is time that you should show yourself there as my heir, and the best representative of a princely house. The sooner you do this the quicker will arrive the period for which, no doubt, you long, when the unknown Princess Mondolfo will be acknowledged by all. I cannot accompany you. In fact, circumstances which you may guess make me desire that you should appear at first without me. You will be distinguished by your sovereign, courted by all, and you will remember your promise as the best means of accomplishing your object. In a very few days I will join you."

Ludovico readily assented to this arrangement, and went the same evening to take leave of Viola. She was seated beneath the laurel tree where first they had made their mutual vows; her child was in her arms, gazing with wonder and laughter on the light of the flies. Two years had passed. It was summer again, and as the beams from their eyes met and mingled each drank in the joyous certainty that they were still as dear to one another as when he, weeping from intense emotion, sat under that tree. He told her of his visit to Naples which his father had settled for him, and a cloud passed over her countenance, but she dismissed it. She would not fear; yet again and again a thrilling sense of coming evil made her heart beat, and each time was resisted with greater difficulty. As night came on, she carried the sleeping child into the cottage, and placed him on his bed, and then walked up and down the pathway of the forest with Ludovico until the moment of his departure should arrive, for the heat of the weather rendered it necessary that he should travel by night. Again the fear of danger crossed her, and again she with a smile shook off the thought; but, when he turned to give her his parting embrace, it returned with full force on her. Weeping bitterly, she clung to him, and entreated him not to go. Startled by her earnestness, he eagerly sought an explanation, but the only explanation she could give excited a gentle smile as he caressed and bade her to be calm; and then, pointing to the crescent moon that gleamed through the trees and checkered the ground with their moving shades, he told her he would be with her ere its full, and with one more embrace left her weeping. And thus it is a strange prophecy often creeps about, and the spirit of Cassandra inhabits many a hapless human heart, and utters from many lips unheeded forebodings of evils that are to be: the hearers heed them not — the speaker hardly gives them credit — the evil comes which, if it could have been avoided, no Cassandra could have foretold, for if that spirit were not a sure harbinger so would it not exist; nor would these half revealings have place if the to come did not fulfill and make out the sketch.

Viola beheld him depart with hopeless sorrow, and then turned to console herself beside the couch of her child. Yet, gazing on him, her fears came thicker; and in a transport of terror she rushed from the cottage, ran along the pathway, calling on Ludovico's name, and sometimes listening if she might hear the tread of his horse, and then again shrieking aloud for him to return.

But he was far out of hearing, and she returned again to her cot, and, lying down beside her child, clasping his little hand in hers, at length slept peacefully.

Her sleep was light and short. She arose before the sun, and hardly had he begun to cast long shadows on the ground when, attiring herself in her veil, she was about to go with the infant to the neighboring chapel of Santa Chiara, when she heard the trampling of horses come up the pathway; her heart beat quick, and still quicker when she saw a stranger enter the cottage. His form was commanding, and age, which had grizzled his hair, had not tempered the fire of his eye nor marred the majesty of his carriage; but every lineament was impressed by pride and even cruelty. Self-will and scorn were even more apparent. He was somewhat like what Ludovico had been, and so like what he then was that Viola did not doubt that his father stood before her. She tried to collect her courage, but the surprise, his haughty mien, and, above all, the sound of many horses, and the voices of men who had remained outside the cottage, so disturbed and distracted her that her heart for a moment failed her, and she leaned trembling and ashy white against the wall, straining her child to her heart with convulsive energy. Fernando spoke:

"You are Viola Amaldi, and you call yourself, I believe, the wife of Ludovico Mandolfo?"

"I am so" — her lips formed themselves to these words, but the sound died away.

Fernando continued:

"I am Prince Mondolfo, father of the rash boy who has entered into this illegal and foolish contract. When I heard of it my plan was easily formed, and I am now about to put it into execution. I could easily have done so without coming to you, without enduring the scene which, I suppose, I shall endure; but benevolence has prompted me to the line of conduct I adopt, and I hope that I shall not repent it."

Fernando paused; Viola had heard little of what he had said. She was employed in collecting her scattered spirits, in bidding her heart be still, and arming herself with the pride and courage of innocence and helplessness. Every word he spoke was thus of use to her, as it gave her time to recollect herself. She only bowed her head as he paused, and he continued:

"While Ludovico was a younger son, and did not seek to obtrude his misalliance into notice, I was content that he should enjoy what he termed happiness unmolested; but circumstances have changed. He has become the heir of Mondolfo, and must support that family and title by a suitable marriage. Your dream has passed. I mean you no ill. You will be conducted hence with your child, placed on board a vessel, and taken to a town in Spain. You will receive a yearly stipend, and, as long as you seek no communication with Ludovico, or endeavor to leave the asylum provided for you, you are safe; but the slightest movement, the merest yearning for a station you may never fill, shall draw upon you and that boy the vengeance of one whose menaces are but the uplifted arm — the blow quickly follows!"

The excess of danger that threatened the unprotected Viola gave her courage. She replied:

"I am alone and feeble, you are strong, and have ruffians waiting on you to execute such crimes as your imagination suggests. I care not for Mondolfo, nor the title, nor the possession, but I will never, oh! never, never! renounce my Ludovico — never do aught to derogate from our plighted faith. Torn from him, I will seek him, though it be barefoot and a-hungered, through the wide world. He is mine by that love be has been pleased to conceive for me; I am his by the sentiment of devotion and eternal attachment that now animates my voice. Tear us asunder, yet we shall meet again, and, unless you put the grave between us, you cannot separate us."

Fernando smiled in scorn.

"And that boy," he said, pointing to die infant, "will you lead him, innocent lamb, a sacrifice to the altar of your love, and plant the knife yourself in the victim's heart?"

Again the lips of Viola became pale as she clasped her boy and exclaimed, in almost inarticulate accents:

"There is a God in Heaven!".Fernando left the cottage, and it was soon filled by men, one of whom threw a cloak over Viola and her boy, and, dragging them from the cottage, placed them in a kind of litter, and the cavalcade proceeded silently. Viola had uttered one shriek when she beheld her enemies, but, knowing their power and her own impotence, she stifled all further cries. When in the litter she strove in vain to disengage herself from the cloak that enveloped her, and then tried to hush her child, who, frightened at his strange situation, uttered piercing cries. At length he slept; and Viola, darkling and fearful, with nothing to sustain her spirits or hopes, felt her courage vanish.

She wept long with despair and misery. She thought of Ludovico and what his grief would be, and her tears were redoubled. There was no hope, for her enemy was relentless, her child torn from her, a cloister her prison. Such were the images constantly before her. They subdued her courage, and filled her with terror and dismay.

The cavalcade entered the town of Salerno, and the roar of the sea announced to poor Viola that they were on its shores.

"O bitter waves!" she cried. "My tears are as bitter as ye, and they will soon mingle!"

Her conductors now entered a building. It was a watch-tower at some distance from the town, on the sea-beach. They lifted Viola from the litter and led her to one of the dreary apartments of the tower. The window, which was not far from the ground, was grated with iron; it bore the appearance of a guardroom. The chief of her conductors addressed her, courteously asked her to excuse the rough lodging; the wind was contrary, he said, but change was expected, and the next day he hoped they would be able to embark. He pointed to the destined vessel in the offing.

Viola, excited to hope by his mildness, began to entreat his compassion, but he immediately left her. Soon after another man brought in food, with a flask of wine and a jug of water. He also retired; her massive door was locked, the sound of retreating footsteps died away.

Viola did not despair; she felt, however, that it would need all her courage to extricate herself from her prison. She ate a part of the food which had been provided, drank some water, and then, a little refreshed, she spread the cloak her conductors had left on the floor, placed her child on it to play, and then stationed herself at the window to see if any one might pass whom she might address, and, if he were not able to assist her in any other way, he might at least bear a message to Ludovico, that her fate might not be veiled in the fearful mystery that threatened it; but probably the way past her window was guarded, for no one drew near. As she looked, however, and once advanced her head to gaze more earnestly, it struck her that her person would pass between the iron grates of her window, which was not high from the ground. The cloak, fastened to one of the stanchions, promised a safe descent. She did not dare make the essay; nay, she was so fearful that she might be watched, and that, if she were seen near the window, her jailers might be struck with the same idea, that she retreated to the farther end of the room, and sat looking at the bars with fluctuating hope and fear, that now dyed her cheeks with crimson, and again made them pale as when Ludovico had first seen her.

Her boy passed his time in alternate play and sleep. The ocean still roared, and the dark clouds brought up by the sirocco blackened the sky and hastened the coming evening. Hour after hour passed; she, heard no clock; there was no sun to mark the time, but by degrees the room grew dark, and at last the Ave Maria tolled, heard by fits between the howling of the winds and the dashing of the waves. She knelt, and put up a fervent prayer to the Madonna, protector of innocence — prayer for herself and her boy — no less innocent than the Mother and Divine Child, to whom she made her orisons. Still she paused. Drawing near to the window, she listened for the sound of any human being: that sound, faint and intermittent, died away, and with darkness came rain that poured in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning that drove every creature to shelter. Viola shuddered.

Could she expose her child during such a night? Yet again she gathered courage. It only made her meditate on some plan by which she might get the cloak as a shelter for her boy after it had served for their descent. She tried the bars, and found that, with some difficulty, she could pass, and, gazing downward from the outside, a flash of lightning revealed the ground not far below. Again she commended herself to divine protection; again she called upon and blessed her Ludovico; and then, not fearless but determined, she began her operations.

She fastened the cloak by means of her long veil, which, hanging to the ground, was tied by a slip-knot, and gave way when pulled. She took her child in her arms, and, having got without the bars, bound him with the sash to her waist, and then, without accident, she reached the ground.

Having then secured the cloak, and enveloped herself and her child in its dark and ample folds, she paused breathlessly to listen. Nature was awake with its loudest voice — the sea roared — and the incessant flashes of lightning that discovered that solitude around her were followed by such deafening peals as almost made her fear. She crossed the field, and kept the sight of the white sea-foam to her right hand, knowing that she thus proceeded in an opposite direction from Mondolfo. She walked as fast as her burden permitted her, keeping the beaten road, for the darkness made her fear to deviate. The rain ceased, and she walked on, until, her limbs falling under her, she was fain to rest, and refresh herself with the bread she had brought with her from the prison. Action and success had inspired her with unusual energy. She would not fear — she believed herself free and secure. She wept, but it was the overflowing emotion that found no other expression. She doubted not that she should rejoin Ludovico. Seated thus in the dark night — having for hours been the sport of the elements, which now for an instant paused in their fury — seated on a stone by the roadside — a wide, dreary, unknown country about her — her helpless child in her arms — herself having just finished eating the only food she possessed — she felt triumph, and joy, and love, descend into her heart, prophetic of future reunion with her beloved.

It was summer, and the air consequently warm. Her cloak had protected her from the wet, so her limbs were free and unnumbed. At the first ray of dawn she arose, and at the nearest pathway she struck out of the road, and took her course nearer the bordering Apennines. From Salerno as far south as the eye could reach, a low plain stretched itself along the seaside, and the hills at about the distance of ten miles bound it in. These mountains are high and singularly beautiful in their shape; their crags point to Heaven and streams flow down their sides and water the plain below. After several hours' walking, Viola reached a pine forest, which descended from the heights and stretched itself in the plain. She sought its friendly shelter with joy, and, penetrating its depths until she saw trees only on all sides of her, she again reposed. The sirocco had been dissipated by the thunderstorm, and the sun, vanquishing the clouds that at first veiled its splendor, glowed forth in the clear majesty of noon. Southern born, Viola did not fear the heat.

She collected pine nuts, she contrived to make a fire, and ate them with appetite; and then, seeking a covert, she lay down and slept, her boy in her arms, thanking Heaven and the Virgin for her escape. When she awoke, the triumph of her heart somewhat died away. She felt the solitude, she felt her helplessness, she feared pursuers, yet she dashed away the tears, and then reflecting that she was too near Salerno — the sun being now at the sea's verge — she arose and pursued her way through the intricacies of the wood. She got to the edge of it so far as to be able to direct her steps by the neighboring sea. Torrents intercepted her path, and one rapid river threatened to impede it altogether; but, going somewhat lower down, she found a bridge; and then, approaching still nearer to the sea, she passed through a wide and desolate kind of pasture-country, which seemed to afford neither shelter nor sustenance to any human being. Night closed in, and she was fearful to pursue her way, but, seeing some buildings dimly in the distance, she directed her steps thither, hoping to discover a hamlet where she might get shelter and such assistance as would enable her to retrace her steps and reach Naples without being discovered by her powerful enemy. She kept these high buildings before her, which appeared like vast cathedrals, but that they were untopped by any dome or spire; and she wondered much what they could be, when suddenly they disappeared. She would have thought some rising ground had intercepted them, but all before her was plain. She paused, and at length resolved to wait for dawn. All day she had seen no human being; twice or thrice she had heard the bark of a dog, and once the whistle of a shepherd, but she saw no one. Desolation was around her; this, indeed, had lulled her into security at first.

Where no men were, there was no danger for her. But at length the strange solitude became painful-she longed to see a cottage, or to find some peasant, however uncouth, who might answer her inquiries and provide for her wants. She had viewed with surprise the buildings which had been as beacons to her. She did not wish to enter a large town, and she wondered how one could exist in such a desert; but she had left the wood far behind her, and required food. Night passed — balmy and sweet night — the breezes fanned her, the glowing atmosphere encompassed her, the fire-flies flitted round her, bats wheeled about in the air, and the heavy-winged owl hooped anigh, while the beetle's constant hum filled the air. She lay on the ground, her babe pillowed on her arm, looking upon the starry heavens. Many thoughts crowded upon her: the thought of Ludovico, of her reunion with him, of joy after sorrow; and she forgot that she was alone, half-famished, encompassed by enemies in a desert plain of Calabria 2 — she slept.

She awoke not until the sun had risen high — it had risen above the temples of Pastum,3 and the columns threw short shadows on the ground. They were near her, unseen during night, and were now revealed as the edifices that had attracted her the evening before. They stood on a rugged plain, despoiled of all roof, their columns and cornices encompassing a space of high and weed-grown grass; the deep-blue sky canopied them and filled them with light and cheerfulness. Viola looked on them with wonder and reverence; they were temples to some god who still seemed to deify them with his presence; he clothed them still with beauty, and what was called their ruin might, in its picturesque wildness and sublime loneliness, be more adapted to his nature than when, roofed and gilded, they stood in pristine strength; and the silent worship of air and happy animals might be more suited to him than the concourse of the busy and heartless. The most benevolent of spirit-gods seemed to inhabit that desert, weed-grown area; the spirit of beauty flitted between those columns embrowned by time, painted with strange color, and raised a genial atmosphere on the deserted altar. Awe and devotion filled the heart of lonely Viola; she raised her eyes and heart to Heaven in thanksgiving and prayer — not that her lips formed words, or her thoughts suggested connected sentences, but the feeling of worship and gratitude animated her; and, as the sunlight streamed through the succession of columns, so — did joy, dove-shaped, fall on and illumine her soul.

With such devotion as seldom before she had visited a saint-dedicated church, she ascended the broken and rude steps of the larger temple, and entered the plot that it in-closed. An inner circuit of smaller columns formed a smaller area, which she entered, and, sitting on a huge fragment of the broken cornice that had fallen to the ground, she silently waited as if for some oracle to visit her sense and guide her.

Thus sitting, she heard the near bark of a dog, followed by the bleating of sheep, and she saw a little flock spread itself in the field adjoining the farther temple. They were shepherded by a girl clothed in rags, but the season required little covering; and these poor people, moneyless, possessing only what their soil gives them, are in the articles of clothing poor even to nakedness.

In inclement weather they wrap rudely-formed clothes of undressed sheepskin around them — during the heats of summer they do little more than throw aside these useless garments. The shepherd-girl was probably about fifteen years of age; a large black straw hat shaded her head from the intense rays of the sun; her feet and legs were bare; and her petticoat, tucked up, Diana-like, above one knee, gave a picturesque appearance to her rags, which, bound at her waist by a girdle, bore some resemblance to the costume of a Greek maiden. Rags have a costume of their own, as fine in their way, in their contrast of rich colors and the uncouth boldness of their drapery, as kingly robes. Viola approached the shepherdess and quietly entered into conversation with her; without making any appeal to her charity or feelings, she asked the name of the place where she was, and her boy, awake and joyous, soon attracted attention. The shepherd-girl was pretty, and, above all, good-natured; she caressed the child, seemed delighted to have found a companion for her solitude, and, when Viola said that she was hungry, unloaded her scrip of roasted pine nuts, boiled chestnuts, and coarse bread. Viola ate with joy and gratitude. They remained together all day; the sun went down, the glowing light of its setting faded, and the shepherdess would have taken Viola home with her. But she dreaded a human dwelling, still fearing that, wherever there appeared a possibility of shelter, there her pursuers would seek her.

She gave a few small silver-pieces, part of what she had about her when seized, to her new friend, and, bidding her bring sufficient food for the next day, entreated her not to mention her adventure to any one. The girl promised, and, with the assistance of her dog, drove the flock toward their fold. Viola passed the night within the area of the larger temple.

Not doubting the success of his plan, on the very evening that followed its execution, Prince Mondolfo had gone to Naples. He found his son at the Mondolfo Palace. Despising the state of a court, and careless of the gaieties around him, Ludovico longed to return to the cottage of Viola.

So, after the expiration of two days, he told his father that he should ride over to Mondolfo, and return the following morning. Fernando did not oppose him, but, two hours after his departure, followed him, and arrived at the castle just after Ludovico, leaving his attendants there, quitted it to proceed alone to his cottage. The first person Prince Mondolfo saw was the chief of the company who had had the charge of Viola. His story was soon told: the unfavorable wind, the imprisonment in a room barricaded with the utmost strength, her incomprehensible escape, and the vain efforts that had subsequently been made to find her. Fernando listened as if in a dream; convinced of the truth, he saw no clue to guide him — no hope of recovering possession of his prisoner. He foamed with rage, then endeavored to suppress as useless his towering passion. He overwhelmed the bearer of the news with execrations; sent out parties of men in pursuit in all directions, promising every reward, and urging the utmost secrecy, and then, left alone, paced his chamber in fury and dismay. His solitude was of no long duration. Ludovico burst into his room, his countenance lighted up with rage.

“Murderer!” he cried. “Where is my Viola?”

Fernando remained speechless.

“Answer!” said Ludovico. “Speak with those lips that pronounced her death-sentence — or raise against me that hand from which her blood is scarcely washed — Oh, my Viola! thou and my angel-child, descend with all thy sweetness into my heart, that this hand write not parricide on my brow!”

Fernando attempted to speak.

“No!” shrieked the miserable Ludovico; “I will not listen to her murderer. Yet — is she dead? I kneel — I call you father — I appeal to that savage heart — I take in peace that hand that often struck me, and now has dealt the death-blow — oh, tell me, does she yet live?”

Fernando seized on this interval of calm to relate his story. He told the simple truth; but could such a tale gain belief? It awakened the wildest rage in poor Ludovico’s heart. He doubted not that Viola had been murdered; and, after every expression of despair and hatred, he bade his father seek his heir among the clods of the earth, for that such he should soon become, and rushed from his presence.

He wandered to the cottage, he searched the country round, he heard the tale of those who had witnessed any part of the carrying off of his Viola. He went to Salerno. He heard the tale there told with the most determined incredulity. It was the tale, he doubted not, that his father forged to free himself from accusation, and to throw an impenetrable veil over the destruction of Viola.

His quick imagination made out for itself the scene of her death. The very house in which she had been confined had at the extremity of it a tower jutting out over the sea; a river flowed at its base, making its confluence with the ocean deep and dark. He was convinced that the fatal scene had been acted there. He mounted the tower; the higher room was windowless, the iron grates of the windows had for some cause been recently taken out. He was persuaded that Viola and her child had been thrown from that window into the deep and gurgling waters below.

He resolved to die! In those days of simple Catholic faith, suicide was contemplated with horror. But there were other means almost as sure. He would go a pilgrim to the Holy Land, and fight and die beneath the walls of Jerusalem. Rash and energetic, his purpose was no sooner formed than he hastened to put it in execution. He procured a pilgrim’s weeds at Salerno, and at midnight, advising none of his intentions, he left that city, and proceeded southward. Alternate rage and grief swelled his heart. Rage at length died away. She whose murderer he execrated was an angel in Heaven, looking down on him, and he in the Holy Land would win his right to join her. Tender grief dimmed his eyes. The world’s great theater closed before him-of all its trappings his pilgrim’s cloak was alone gorgeous, his pilgrim’s staff the only scepter — they were the symbols and signs of the power he possessed beyond the earth, and the pledges of his union with Viola. He bent his steps toward Brundusium.4 He walked on fast, as if he grudged all space and time that lay between him and his goal. Dawn awakened the earth and he proceeded on his way. The sun of noon darted its ray upon him, but his march was uninterrupted. He entered a pine wood, and, following the track of flocks, he heard the murmurs of a fountain. Oppressed with thirst, he hastened toward it. The water welled up from the ground and filled a natural basin; flowers grew on its banks and looked on the waters unreflected, for the stream paused not, but whirled round and round, spending its superabundance in a small rivulet that, dancing over stones and glancing in the sun, went on its way to its eternity — the sea. The trees had retreated from the mountain, and formed a circle about it; the grass was green and fresh, starred with summer flowers. At one extremity was a silent pool that formed a strange contrast with the fountain that, ever in motion, showed no shape, and reflected only the color of the objects around it. The pool reflected the scene with greater distinctness and beauty than its real existence. The trees stood distinct, the ambient air between, all grouped and pictured by the hand of a divine artist. Ludovico drank from the fount, and then approached the pool. He looked with half wonder on the scene depicted there. A bird now flitted across in the air, and its form, feathers, and motion, were shown in the waters. An ass emerged from among the trees, where in vain it sought herb-age, and came to grass near these waters; Ludovico saw it depicted therein, and then looked on the living animal, almost appearing less real, less living, than its semblance in the stream.

Under the trees from which the ass had come lay someone on the ground, enveloped in a mantle, sleeping. Ludovico looked carelessly — he hardly at first knew why his curiosity was roused; then an eager thought, which he deemed madness, yet resolved to gratify, carried him forward.

Rapidly he approached the sleeper, knelt down, and drew aside the cloak, and saw Viola, her child within her arms, the warm breath issued from her parted lips, her lovebeaming eyes hardly veiled by the transparent lids, which soon were lifted up.

Ludovico and Viola, each too happy to feel the earth they trod, returned to their cottage-their cottage dearer than any palace — yet only half believing the excess of their own joy. By turns they wept, and gazed on each other and their child, holding each other’s hands as if grasping reality and fearful it would vanish.

Prince Mondolfo heard of their arrival. He had long suffered keenly from the fear of losing his son. The dread of finding himself childless, heirless, had tamed him. He feared the world's censure, his sovereign's displeasure — perhaps worse accusation and punishment. He yielded to fate. Not daring to appear before his intended victim, he sent his confessor to mediate for their forgiveness, and to entreat them to take up their abode at Mondolfo. At first, little credit was given to these offers. They loved their cottage, and had small inclination to risk happiness, liberty, and life, for worthless luxury. The Prince, by patience and perseverance, at length convinced them. Time softened painful recollections; they paid him the duty of children, and cherished and honored him in his old age; while he caressed his lovely grandchild, he did not re-pine that the violet-girl should be the mother of the heir of Mondolfo.

THE END

VALERIUS

THE REANIMATED ROMAN

ABOUT ELEVEN O’CLOCK before noon in the month of September, two strangers landed in the little bay formed by the extreme point of Cape Miseno and the promontory of Bauli. The sky was of a deep serene blue, and the sea reflected its depth back with a darker tint. Through the clear water you saw the seaweed of various and beautiful colours as it grew on the remnants of the palaces of the Romans now buried under the waters. The sun shone bright causing an intolerable heat. The strangers on landing immediately sought a shady place where they might refresh themselves and remain until the sun should begin to descend towards the horizon. They sought the Elysian fields, and, winding among the poplars and mulberry trees festooned by the grapes which hung in rich and ripe clusters, they seated themselves under the shade of the tombs beside the Mare Morto.

One of these strangers was an Englishman of rank, as could easily be perceived by his noble carriage and manners full of dignity and freedom. His companion — I can compare him to nothing that now exists — his appearance resembled that of the statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Square of the Capitol at Rome. Placid and commanding, his features were Roman; except for his dress you would have imagined him to be a statue of one of the Romans animated with life. He wore the dress now common all over Europe, but it appeared unsuited to him and even as if he were unused to it. As soon as they were seated he began to speak thus: —

“I have promised to relate to you, my friend, what were my sensations on my revival, and how the appearance of this world — fallen from what it once was — struck me when the light of the sun revisited my eyes after it had deserted them many hundred years. And how can I choose a better place for this relation. This is the spot which was chosen by our antient and venerable religion, as that which best represented the idea oracles had given or diviners received of the seats of the happy after death. These are the tombs of Romans. This place is much changed by the sacriligious hand of man since those times, but still it bears the name of the Elysian fields. Avernus is but a short distance from us, and this sea which we perceive is the blue Mediterranean, unchanged while all else bears the marks of servitude and degradation.

"Pardon me — you are an Englishman, and they say you are free in your country — a country unknown when I lived — but the wretched Italians, who usurp the soil once trod by heroes, fill me with bitter disdain. Dare they usurp the name of Romans — dare they imagine that they descend from the Lords and Governors of the world? They forget that, when the republic died, every antient Roman family became by degrees extinct and that their followers might usurp the name, but were not and are not Romans.

"When I lived before, it was in the time of Cicero and of Cato. My rank was neither the highest nor the lowest in Rome: I was a Roman knight. I did not live to see my country enslaved by Caesar, who during my life was distinguished only by the debauchery of his manners. I died when I was nearly forty-five, defending my country against Catiline. At that time, the good men of Rome lamented bitterly the decline of morals in the city — Marius and Sulla had already taught us some of the miseries of tyranny, and I was accustomed to lament the day when the Senate appeared an assembly of demigods. But what men lived at that time? — The republic set gloriously as the sun of a bright and summer day. How could I despair of my country while such men as Cicero, Cato, Lucullus, and many others whom I knew as full of virtue and wisdom — who were my intimate and dearest friends — still existed.

"I need not trouble you with the history of my life — in modern times, domestic circumstances appear to be that part of a man's history most worth enquiring into. In Rome, the history of an individual was that of his country. We lived in the Forum and in the Senate House. My family had suffered by the civil wars: my father had been slain by Marius; and my uncle, who took care of me during my infancy, was proscribed by Sulla and murdered by his emissaries. My fortune was considerably diminished by these domestic misfortunes, but I lived frugally and filled with honour some of the highest offices of state — I was once consul.

"Nor will I now relate what would greatly interest you — all that I know concerning those great men with whose actions, even at this distance of time, you are intimately acquainted. These topics have formed and will form an inexhaustible source of conversation during the time we remain together, but at present I have promised to relate what I felt and saw when I revisited, now three years ago, this fallen Italy.

"As I approached Rome, I became agitated by a thousand emotions. I refused to see any thing or to speak to any body. Mute in a corner of the carriage, I hoarded my thoughts: sometimes thinking my companion unworthy my attention; at others still obstinately clinging, as a mother would to the memory of her lost child, to my loved country and doubting all that I had heard, all that these priests had told me. I believed in a conspiracy formed against me. I refused to speak to those we met on the road, lest their altered dialect should crush my last hope. I would visit no scenery. The eternal city survived in all its glory. It could not die — yet, still if it were dead, I would be silent till among the ruins of its Forum I should pour forth my last lament — and my words should awaken the dead to listen to me. 'Cicero — Cato — Pompey — were ye indeed dead — all trace of your path worn out. Still do ye haunt the Forum — awake — arise — welcome me!'

"The priest in vain endeavoured to draw me from my reverie. My countenance was impressed by sorrow, but I answered not. At length he exclaimed, 'Behold the Tiber!' Lovely river! Still and for ever dost thou roll on thy eternal waters; thy waves glitter in the sun or are shadowed by the thunder cloud; thy name acted as a spell. Tears gushed from my eyes. I alighted from the carriage. I hastened to the banks and kneeling down I offered up to thee, sacred names of Jupiter and Pallas, vows which made my lips quiver and the light almost pass from my eyes: 'O Jupiter — Jupiter of the Capitol — thou who has beheld so many triumphs, still may thy temples exist, still may the victims be led to thy altars! — Minerva protect thy Rome.' In that moment of agonized prayer, the fate of my country seemed yet undecided — the sword was still suspended. Alas, I could not believe that all that is great and good had departed.

"In vain, my companion tried to tear me away from the banks of the divine river. I remained seated immovably by it; my eyes did not wander on the surrounding scenery that had changed, but they were fixed on the waters or raised to the blue bright sky above. 'These — these, at least are the same — ever, ever the same!' were the only words I uttered when, from time to time, the fall of my country with the fierce agony of fire rushed across my mind. The priest tried to soothe me — I was silent. At length, the strength of passion overcame me, and after many hours of insane contest I suffered myself to be led to the carriage and, drawing up the blinds, abandoned myself to a reverie whose bitterness was only diminished by my lost strength.

"It was night when we entered Rome. 'Tomorrow,' said my companion, 'we will visit the Forum.' I assented. I did not wish him to accompany me, and therefore retired early without disclosing my intentions. But as soon as I found myself free from importunity, I demanded a guide and hastened to visit the scene of all human greatness. The moon had risen and cast a bright light over the city of Rome — if I may call that Rome which in no way resembled the Queen of Nations as I remembered her. We passed along the Corso, and I saw several magnificent obelisks, which seemed to tell me that the glory of my country had not passed away. I paused beside the Column of Antoninus, which sunk deep in the ground and, surrounded by the remains of forty columns, impressed the idea of decay upon my mind. My heart beat with fear and indignation as I approached the Forum by ways unknown to me. And the spell broke as I beheld the shattered columns and ruined temples of the Campo Vaccino — by that disgraceful name must now be designated the Roman Forum. I gazed round, but nothing there is as it was — I saw ruins of temples built after my time. The Coliseum was a stranger to me, and it appeared as if the altered state of these magnificent ruins suddenly quenched the enthusiasm of indignation which had before possessed my heart. I had never dared present to myself the image of the Roman Forum, degraded and debased; but a vague idea floated in my mind of broken columns, such as I remembered of the fallen images of the gods still left to decay in a spot where I had formerly worshipped them; but all was changed, and even the columns that remain of the temple erected by Camillus lost their identity surrounded by new candidates for immortality. I turned calmly to my guide and enquired, These are the ruins of the Roman Forum, and what is that immense building, whose shadow in the moonshine seems to bespeak something wonderful and magnificent, which I see at the end of the avenue of trees?'—'This is the Coliseum.'—'And what is Coliseum?'—'Do you not know? It is the renowned Circus built by Vespasian, Emperor of Rome.'—'Emperor of Rome, was he? Well, let us visit it.' We entered the Coliseum, that noble relict of imperial greatness — imperial it is true, but Roman. And that enthusiasm, which the broken columns of the Forum had extinguished, this wonderful pile again awakened. The moon shone through the broken arches and shed a glory around the fallen walls, crowned as they are by weeds and brambles. I looked around, and a holy awe seized me. I felt as if having deserted the Campo Vaccino, this had become the haunt of my noble compatriots. The seal of Eternity was on this building, and my heart heaved with the overpowering sensations under which it laboured. I said not a word.

"Alas! Alas! Such is the image of Rome fallen, torn, degraded by a hateful superstition; yet still commanding love — honour; and still awakening in the imaginations of men all that can purify and ennoble the mind. The Coliseum is the Type of Rome. Its arches — its marbles — its noble aspect which must inspire all with awe, which, in the mind of man, is akin to adoration — its wonderful, its inexpressible beauty — all tell of its greatness. Its fallen walls — its weed-covered buttresses — and more than all, the insulting images with which it is filled tell its fall.

"I dismissed my guide. I would never quit the Coliseum; this should be my abode during my second residence on earth. I visited every part of it. From its height, I beheld Rome sleeping under the cold rays of the moon: the dome of St. Peter's and the various other domes and spires which make a second city, the habitations of gods above the habitations of men; the arch of Constantine at my feet; the Tiber and the great change in the situation of the city of modern times; all caught my attention, but they only awakened a vague and transitory interest. The Coliseum was to me henceforth the world, my eternal habitation. It is true that curiosity and importunity have dragged me from it now — but my absence will be short, and my heart is still there. I shall return. And in those hallowed precincts, I shall pour forth, before I die, my last awakening call to Romans and to Liberty.

"It is true that I was now convinced that Rome had fallen, that her consuls and triumphs were at an end, the temples of her Capitol destroyed. But the Coliseum had softened those sentiments whose energy must otherwise have destroyed me. Anger, despair, all human passion died within me. I devoted myself, a pilgrim for some years, to a world in whose shews I am a careless spectator. If Rome be dead, I fly from her remains, loathsome as those of human life. It is in the Coliseum alone that I recognise the grandeur of my country — that is the only worthy asylum for an antient Roman.

“Yet suddenly, the feeling so dreadful to the human mind, the feeling of utter solitude, operated a new change on my heart. I remembered as it were but of yesterday all the shews which antient Rome had presented. Seated under one of the arches of the building and hiding my face in my hands, I revived in my imagination the memory of what I had left, when I last lost the light of day. I had left the consuls in the full enjoyment of power. Some years before, the empire, tom by Marius and Sulla and unsupported by the virtue of any, seemed tottering on the edge of subjection. But during my life, a new spirit had arisen: men were again vivified by the sacred flame that burnt in the souls of Camillus and Fabricius, and I gloried with an excessive joy to be the friend of Cicero, Cato, and Lucullus; the younger men, the sons of my friends, Brutus, Cassius, were rising with the promise of equal virtue. When I died, I was possessed by the strong persuasion that, since philosophy and letters were now joined to a virtue unparalleled upon earth, Rome was approaching that perfection from which there was no fall; and that, although men still feared, it was a wholesome fear which awoke them to action and the better secured the triumph of Good.

“When I awoke, Rome was no longer. That light, which I had hailed as the forerunner of perfection, became the torches that added splendour to her funeral — and those men, whose souls were as the temples of perfection, were the victims sacrificed at her funeral pyre. Oh, never had a nation such a death, and her murderers celebrated such games round her tomb, as destroyed nearly half the world. They were not the combats of gladiators and beasts — but the fierce strife of contending passions, the war of millions.

“But that is now all over. The exultation of the tyrant has faded. The monument of Rome, so splendid through the course of ages and adorned by the spoils of kingdoms, is now degraded in the dust. Some scattered columns and arches live to tell her site, but her people are dead. The strangers that possess her have lost all the characteristics of Romans; they have fallen off from her holy religion. Modern Rome is the Capital of Christianity, and that title is that which is crown and top of my despair.

“But human language sinks under the endeavour to describe the tremendous change operated in the world, it is true, by the slow flow of many ages, but which appeared to me in my singular situation as the work of a few days. I cannot recollect the agony of those moments — without shuddering. It was not a train of bitter thought; it was not a despair that ate into the nerves but shewed no outward sign; it was not the first pang of grief for the loss of those we love. It was a fierce fire that enveloped forests and cities in its flame; it was a tremendous avalanche that bore down with it trees and rocks and turned the course of rivers; it was an earthquake that shakes the sea and overturns mountains and threatens to shew to the eyes of man the mysteries of the internal earth. Oh, it was more than all these! More than any words can express or any image pourtray!"

The Stranger paused in his narration, and a long silence ensued. His eyes were fixed on the dead waters before him, and his companion gazed on him with wonder and emotion. A breeze slightly passed over the sea and rippled it; its rustling was heard among the trees. The smallest change awakened the Roman from his reverie, and he continued.

"A year has passed since I stood for the first time within the Coliseum. The rich dark weeds seemed blacker under the moon's rays, and the fallen arches reared themselves in stillness and beauty. The air was silent: it was the dead of night, and no sound reached me from the city — but by degrees the moon sunk, and daylight dawned. The sounds of human life began, and my own thoughts, which during the night were conversant only with memories, now turned their courses to the mean and debased reality. I considered my present situation, for I wished to form some plan for my future life. I greatly disliked the priest, my companion. During my very short residence since my return to earth, I had conceived a great aversion to the class of men to which he belonged. I disliked the Catholic superstition and wished to have no commerce with its ministers and servants. The jewels and money which I had were sufficient for my maintenance, and I wished to cast off the subjection which his presence seemed to put me under. But although in my native Rome, I was in a strange city with unknown customs. I hardly understood their language, and the recollections of my former life would only cast me into ridiculous mistakes. It was then that a kind deity interfered and, sending my good genius to watch over me, extricated me from my difficulties.

"The old priest, when the next morning he found I had disappeared, sent the guide, who had conducted me the preceding night, to bring me back and himself commenced a round of visits to publish the curiosity which he had under his keeping. Among others, he visited Lord Harley who had long been resident at Rome and to whom he was perfectly well known. You know Lord Harley and his family. I need not, therefore, describe them to you — and you who know her character can easily imagine the interest and curiosity with which the old priest's account inspired his young wife. She ordered her carriage and, taking the priest with her, hastened to his hotel to see me. I had not returned — the guide who had been to seek me informed her that I refused to quit the Coliseum. She left the priest at the inn and, accompanied only by her little son, came to my retreat.

"I was seated under the ruined arches of the south side when I saw her approach, leading her child by the hand. She sat down beside me, and after a pause of a few seconds she addressed me in Italian. 'Forgive me if I interrupt you. I have seen Padre Giuseppe and know who you are. You are unhappy and are cast upon our modern world without friends or connections. Will you allow me to offer you my friendship?' — I was thrown into confusion by this speech, addressed to me by a beautiful girl perfectly a stranger to me, and paused before I could answer so kind but so uncommon an offer; she continued—'Consider me, I entreat you, as an old acquaintance — not a modern Italian, for indeed I am not one, but as one of those many strangers which your antient city drew to gaze on her. I come from a distant country and am, therefore, unknowing in your language and laws. You shall teach me to know all that was great and worthy in your days, and I will teach you the manners and customs of ours.'

"She talked to me thus and won me over by her sweet smiles and soft eloquence to confide myself entirely to her. 'You shall consider me as your daughter,' said she, 'if a Scotch girl may pretend to that honour. I come from that *Ultima Thule* discovered by Caesar, but unknown in your days. I am married to an Englishman a good deal older than I am, but who takes a pleasure in cultivating my mind. Come with me to our house; you will be cherished and honoured there, and we will try to soften the pangs which the fallen state of your country must inflict upon you.'

"I followed her to her house and from that day began that friendship which is the only hope and comfort of my life. If on my return to earth my affections had never been awakened, I should not have lived long. But Isabell has softened my despair and nursed with angelic affection every wound of my heart. I cannot tell you how much I love her — how dear the sound of her voice is to me. Cicero did not love his Tullia as I do this divine creature. You cannot know half her virtues or half her wisdom. She is so frank-hearted, and yet so tender, that she wins my soul and binds it up in hers in a manner that I never experienced in my former life. She is Country, Friends — all, all, that I had lost is she to me.

"And now I have performed my promise in relating to you my first sensations upon awakening into life. I need not make a formal narration of what I have learnt since. In our proposed journey we shall have frequent opportunities of conversing and arguing. You have won me to a wish to see your country, and tomorrow we embark. I quit Rome — the Coliseum and Isabell — such is my restless nature. I want before I again die to examine the boasted improvements of modern times and to judge if, after the great fluctuation in human affairs, man is nearer perfection than in my days."

The sun had far descended when these friends rose and returned to the boat. As they rowed back to Naples, the sun set, leaving a rich orange tint in the sky which burned upon the waters, while Cape Miseno and the islands were marked by a black outline in the horizon. The moon rose on the other side of the bay and contrasted her silver light with the glowing colours of the Italian sunset. Night advanced, and the lights of the fisher boats glimmered across the sea, while one or two large ships seemed to pass like enormous shadows between the gazers and the moon. The brilliant spectacle of sunset and the soft light of the moon invited to reverie and forbade words to disturb the magic of the scene. The old Roman perhaps thought of the days he had formerly spent at Baiae, when the eternal sun had set as it now did, and he lived in other days with other men.

[The story ends at this point, but another and fragmentary version, told from Isabell Harley's point of view, follows in the manuscript.]

When I had drawn my singular friend from his solitude at the Coliseum, I, with the consent of Lord Harley, installed him in a room of our house. At first, he shunned all society and laboured under so great a depression of spirits that his health became affected. I found that I must make it my task to interest his feelings and to endeavour by what ever means to draw him from the apathy under which he was sunk. He appeared to regard every thing around him as a spectacle in which he had no concern. He was indeed a being cut off from our world; the links that had bound him to it had been snapped many ages before; and, unless I could succeed in joining at least one of them again, he would soon perish. I wished to engage him to visit some of those mighty ruins which tell of the antient greatness of Rome. I hesitated some time in my choice; the most majestic buildings had been built after his time, but I thought that their being situated in places familiar to his memory would give them that interest which otherwise, as unknown to him, they would want. I myself delighted to visit the baths of Antoninus, whose vast heaps of shattered walls and towers, clothed with ivy and the loveliest weeds, appear more like the natural scenery of a mountain than any thing formed of human hands. To these noble ruins I determined to conduct him.

I visited him, therefore, one day; and leading the conversation to his former life and death, I said to him: "You were happy in dying before the fall of your country and in not witnessing its degradation under the Emperors. These Emperors, who succeeded to the power and glory of the republic, enjoyed an extent of dominion and a revenue unknown in times before or after. Wild and tremendous were the deeds and errors of the omnipotent men. Their enemy could not fly from them. They trampled at will on the necks of millions. Few used their dominion for uses of beneficence, but many, even of the most wicked, spent it for the purposes of magnificence. They have left wonderful monuments behind, and I cannot regard these wonders as the acts of imperial greatness. They are the effects, although executed by unmeet hands, of republican virtue and power. When I visit them, I admire them as planned and modified by Camillus, by Fabricius, by the Scipios; and I regard Caracalla and Nero and even the more virtuous of the tribe, Titus and Adrian, as the mere workmen. When I visit the Coliseum, I do not think of Vespasian who built it or of the blood of gladiators and beasts which contaminated it, but I worship the spirit of antient Rome and of those noble heroes, who delivered their country from barbarians and who have enlightened the whole world by their miraculous virtue. I have heard you express a dislike of viewing the works of the oppressors of Rome, but visit them with me in this spirit, and you will find them strike you with that awe and reverence which power, acquired and accompanied by vice, can never give."

He suffered himself to be persuaded, and we passed under the Capitol and at the back of Mount Palatine on our way to the baths. The principal site of antient Rome is deserted, and we visit the Forum and the most populous of the hills of Rome through grassy lanes and across fields where few people ever come. This is fortunate; the ruins would lose half their beauty if surrounded by modern buildings, and we have only to regret that the Capitol has not been neglected as Mount Palatine and Mount Caelius are. I cannot tell what the feelings of Valerius were: his emotions were strong, but he was silent, but for ever cast his eyes up to the sky; and once he said, "I like to look at the heavens, and only at them, for they are not changed." We entered the baths, and after visiting all the apartments, we ascended the shattered staircase and passed over the immense arches and the walls, which, when you are on them, appear like fields and glens and sloping hills. We were surrounded by fragrant weeds, and their height on each side of the path deceives you and adds still greater apparent extent to the ruins on which we walked. Sometimes, the top of some buttress is spread out into a field enamelled by the most beautiful flowers. And now winding about a difficult path, we reached the top of a turret and saw all Rome with the windings of the Tiber at but a short distance from us. This is of all others the place I delight most in Rome to visit: it joins the beauty and fragrance of Nature to the sublimest idea of human power; and when so united, they have an interest and feeling that sinks deep into my heart.

We seated ourselves on this pinnacle, and I sought in the eyes of my companion for an expression of wonder and delight with which mine were glistening. His were filled with tears. "You bring me here," he said, "to view the works of the Romans, and I behold nothing but destruction. What crowds of beautiful temples are fallen to the dust. My eyes wander over the seven hills, and all their glories are faded. When the columns of its Forum were broken, what could survive in Rome. The Capitol, less happy than most of the other hills who have returned to the solitude of Nature, is defiled by modern buildings. And these ruins — they are grand, but how miserable a tale do they tell. These baths did not exist in my time. They existed in all their magnificence some hundred years after I had forgotten the world. But now their roofs have fallen; their pavements have disappeared; they are grass-grown, weed-grown, shattered yet still standing; and such is the immortality of Rome. The walls of Rome still stand, and they describe an immense circuit; the modern city is filled with the ruins of the antient. Strangers flock to it and wonder at the immensity of the remains. But to me it all appears void. The antient temples where I worshipped Quirinus and the protectors of what I then called the immortal city — alas, why do I wake to be undeceived.”

“You dwell,” I replied, “on the most mournful ideas. Rome is fallen, but she is still venerated. It is to me a singular and even a beautiful sight to see the care and pains with which her degenerate children preserve her reliques. Every one visits her with enthusiasm and quits her with bitter regret. All appears consecrated within her walls. When a stranger resides within their bounds, he feels as if he inhabitated a sacred temple — sacred although defiled; and indignation and pity mingling with his admiration, he feels such sensations that soften his heart and can never even in age and affliction be forgotten. It seems to me that, if I were overtaken by the greatest misfortunes, I should be half consoled by the recollection of having dwelt in Rome. If a man of the age of Pericles were to revive in Athens, how much more reason would he have to lament over her fall, than you over the age and decay of Rome.”

As I wished to interest the feelings of Valerius and not so much to shew him all the remains of his country as to awaken in him by their sight a sentiment that he was still in some degree linked to the world, I chose as much as I could the most perfect and the most picturesque. He had not yet seen the Pantheon. I would not take him to it in the day, for I knew that its conversion to a Catholic Church, although it had probably preserved it, would be highly disgusting to him. I chose the time when the moon was yet in her encrease and when in her height she would shine over the open roof of the temple. One evening about seven o’clock, without telling him where we were going, I took him out with me. We passed round the building to a back door — it was opened, and a man lighted us down a pair of narrow dirty stairs: as we descended I said to him, “You are now going to see a temple built shortly after your time and dedicated to all the gods.” He probably expected to see a ruin, but lo! we entered the most beautiful temple yet existing in the world. The bright moon shone directly over the aperture at top and lighted up the dome and the pavement — some bright stars twinkled by her side. The columns shone dimly around. The spirit of beauty seemed to shed her rays over her favoured offspring and to penetrate every thing — even the human mind — with a soft, still yet bright glory. In contemplating this scene, human admiration was unmingled with the deep feeling that it inspired — one seemed to enjoy the present god. If the work was human, the glory came from Nature; and Nature poured forth all her loveliness above this divine temple. The deep sky, the bright moon, and the twinkling stars were spread over it, and their light and beauty penetrated it. Why cannot human language express human thoughts? And how is it that there is a feeling inspired by the excess of beauty, which laps the heart in a gentle but eager flame, which may inspire virtue and love, but the feeling is far too intense for expression? We were both silent. We walked round the temple, and then we seated ourselves on the steps of an altar and remained a long time in contemplation. It is at such a time when one feels the existence of that Pantheic Love with which Nature is penetrated — and when a strong sympathy with beauty, if such an expression may be allowed, is the only feeling which animates the soul. At length, as we rose to depart, Valerius said, “Why do they tell me that all is changed; does not this temple to our gods exist?” I know not why — I ought not to have done it, for by the action I poisoned a moment of pure happiness — but I carelessly pointed to a cross that stood on the altar before which a solitary lamp burned. The cross did not alter my feelings, but those of my companion were embittered. The apple so fair to look at had turned to brackish dust. The cross told to him of change so great, so intolerable, that that one circumstance destroyed all that had arisen of love and pleasure in his heart. I tried in vain to bring him back to the deep feeling of beauty and of sacred awe with which he had been lately inspired. The spell was snapped. The moon-enlightened dome, the glittering pavement, the dim rows of lovely columns, the deep sky had lost to him their holiness. He hastened to quit the temple.

It was my first care to awaken in him a desire to know what of great and good had existed in his country after his death. He knew nothing of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, or Lucan — of Livy, Tacitus, or Seneca. You will have frequent opportunities of conversing with him, and he can tell you, much better than I can do, what the feelings were which this lecture excited in his mind. We used to visit an obscure nook of the Coliseum, where we scrambled with difficulty, and few would be inclined to follow us; or, on the walls of the baths of Caracalla or more frequently at the foot of the tomb of Cestius, that lovely spot where death appears to enjoy sunshine and the blue depth of the deep sky from which it is every where else shut out, we read together, and we discussed on what we read — our discussions were eternal. The brilliant sun of Rome shone upon us, and the air and all the scene were invested by happiness and beauty. My heart was cheerful, and it was my constant endeavour to awaken similar feelings in the bosom of my companion. We read the Georgics here, and I felt a degree of happiness in reading them that I could not have believed that words had it in their power to bestow. It was an intoxicating pleasure, which this fine climate and the sunny beautiful poetry which it inspires can give and which in a clouded atmosphere I am convinced I never should have felt. After reading, we visited some one of the galleries of Rome — Lord Harley's studious hours were then over, and he always accompanied us. The sight of the exquisite statues and paintings in Rome continued and often heightened this feeling of enjoyment. Did Valerius sympathize with me? Alas! no. There was a melancholy tint cast over all his thoughts; there was a sadness of demeanour, which the sun of Rome and the verses of Virgil could not dissipate. He felt deeply, but little joy mingled with his sentiments. With my other feelings towards him, I had joined to them an inexplicable one that my companion was not a being of the earth. I often paused anxiously to know whether he respired the air, as I did, or if his form cast a shadow at his feet. His semblance was that of life, yet he belonged to the dead. I did not feel fear or terror; I loved and revered him. I was warmly interested in his happiness, but there was mingled with these commoner sensations an awe — I cannot call it dread, yet it had something slightly allied to that repulsive feeling — a sentiment for which I can find no name, which mingled with all my thoughts and strangely characterised all my intercourse with him. Often when home on in discourse by my thoughts, I encountered the glance of his bright yet placid eye; although it beamed only in sympathy, yet it checked me. If he put his hand upon mine, I did not shudder, but, as it were, my thoughts paused in their course and my heart heaved with something of an involuntary uneasiness until it was removed. Yet this was all very slight; I hardly noticed it, and it could not diminish my love and interest for him; perhaps if I would own all the truth, my affection was encreased by it; and not by endeavour but spontaneously I strove to repay by interest and intellectual sympathy the earthly barrier there seemed placed between us.

AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TALE

A FRAGMENT

IN the summer of the year 17-, a lady who resided in a delightful house in Buckinghamshire assembled together a party whose sole object was to amuse themselves and to enjoy the short season of heat as pleasantly as they could. The house of this lady was situated on the river Thames, half way between Marlow and Henley. The country surrounding it was delightful: the river glided among grassy slopes, and its banks were sometimes shaded by beech woods and sometimes open to the full glare of the sun whose heat is seldom felt intolerable in England. Near her house, several beautiful islands were formed in the river, covered with willows, poplars, and elms. The trees of these islands united their branches with those of the firm land and formed a green archway which numerous birds delighted to frequent. The visitors found a thousand delightful ways of passing their time; they walked or rowed about the river; their conversation seldom languished. Many of them had been travellers, and they compared the scenes of their native country to those which they had visited; and if the latter did not gain in the comparison, it ought at least to have been satisfied by the preference it always obtained over all others when the merits of each came to be discussed as a perpetual residence.

One day, after passing the morning on the water and after having refreshed themselves under the shade of a great oak which grew on the banks of the river, the conversation fell on the strange events that had occurred in the life of a lady, one of their company; and they all entreated her — if the remembrance would not distress her — to relate those events which, although a part of them was known to almost all the company, none were fully and distinctly acquainted with. “I consent to what you ask,” replied the lady, “if in return you will each relate what has passed particularly worthy of notice in each of your lives.”

“Indeed,” replied another, “your proposition is a fair one, but it requires consideration. Let each individual examine for a moment his past life and determine how he chooses to make us all his confessors.”—”You misunderstand me,” replied the first lady; “I do not demand that you should make any confessions, but merely relate those events which have taken place that have reference to yourselves — not telling all the truth if you have any thing you wish to conceal (and who has not), but promising not to falsify any thing.”—”And what are those to do who have nothing to tell?”—”Their history may be short, but every one can say something; and many who may at first think that they have nothing to relate will find, when they have once begun, that the subject is a richer one than they expected.” The party soon consented and begged the lady who was to speak first to take upon herself the arrangement of her plan. She said—”I will commence that I may set a good example, and then you may each follow in order as you sit — and if today is not long enough, which I believe it will not be for us all to speak, we can choose a grassy spot like this tomorrow and the next day, and I think that you will find that my plan will give a zest to our little excursions. I will begin: so sit round me in a half circle, and give me your attention until I weary you; and then bid me break off, and another shall speak who will try to have better success.

“That my story may have a suitable commencement, I will inform you, what perhaps you know already, that my name is Maria Graham. My maiden name was Langley. My father and mother died before I was ten years old, so that I only remember the latter and that I wept when I lost her. I was left to the care of an aunt who had a tender affection for me — she had never been married, and as she has passed her thirtieth year it appeared unlikely that she ever would. I was brought up by her with the greatest care — we lived in the country, but she had herself been very well educated, and she spared no pains in teaching me the rudiments of all the fashionable...”

THE POLE

IT WAS IN the early part of the month of February of the year 1831, near the close of day, that a travelling caleche, coming from Rome, was seen approaching, at full gallop, towards Mola di Gaeta. The road leading to the inn is rocky and narrow; on one side is an orange grove, extending to the sea; on the other an old Roman wall, overgrown by blossoming shrubs, enormous aloes, floating tangles of vines, and a thousand species of parasite plants peculiar to the South. Scarcely had the caleche entered this defile, when the careless postilion drove one of the wheels over a protruding ledge of rock, and overturned it; and in the next moment, a crowd of people came running to the spot. Not one of them, however, thought of relieving the traveller within the fallen vehicle; but, with violent gestures and loud outcries, began to examine what damage the caleche had sustained, and what profit they might derive from it. The wheelwright declared every wheel was shattered; the carpenter that the shafts were splintered; whilst the blacksmith, passing and repassing under the carriage, tugged at every clamp and screw and nail, with all the violence necessary to ensure himself a handsome job. The traveller it contained having quietly disengaged himself from various cloaks, books, and maps, now slowly descended, and for a moment the busy crowd forgot their restlessness, to gaze with admiration upon the noble figure of the stranger. He seemed to be scarcely two-and-twenty. In stature he was sufficiently tall to give an idea of superiority to his fellow mortals; and his form was moulded in such perfect proportions, that it presented a rare combination of youthful lightness and manly strength. His countenance, had you taken from it its deep thoughtfulness and its expression of calm intrepid bravery, might have belonged to the most lovely woman, so transparently blooming was his complexion, so regular his features, so blond and luxuriant his hair. Of all those present, he seemed the least concerned at the accident; he neither looked at the caleche, nor paid any attention to the offers of service that were screamed from a dozen mouths; but, drawing out his watch, asked his servant if the carriage was broken.

“Pann, the shafts are snapt, two of the springs are injured, and the linchpin has flown.”

“How long will it take to repair them?”

“Twenty-four hours.”

“It is now four o’clock. See that every thing be in order again by tomorrow’s daybreak.”

“Pann, with these lazy Italians, I fear it will be impossible—”

“Ja pozwalam,”t replied the traveller, coldly, but decidedly. “Pay double — triple — what you will, but let all be ready for the hour I have mentioned.”

Without another word, he walked towards the inn, followed by the crowd, teazing for alms. A few seconds ago they had all been active and healthy beings, so full of employment they could not afford to mend his caleche unless tempted by some extraordinary reward: now the men declared themselves cripples and invalids, the children were orphans, the women helpless widows, and they would all die of hunger if his Eccellenza did not bestow a few *grani.* “What a tedious race!” exclaimed the traveller, casting a handful of coins upon the ground, which caused a general scramble, and enabled him to proceed unmolested. At the inn new torments awaited him; a fresh crowd, composed of the landlord, the landlady, and their waiters and hostlers, gathered round, and assailed him with innumerable questions. The landlord hoped none of his limbs were broken, and begged him to consider himself master of the house; the waiters desired to know at what hour he would sup, what fare he chose, how long he intended to stay, where he came from, whither he was going; and the landlady led him, ostentatiously, through all the rooms of the inn, expatiating endlessly upon the peculiar and indescribable advantages of each. Ineffably weary of their officiousness, the traveller at last traversed a long and spacious hall, and took refuge in a balcony that looked upon the bay of Gaeta.

The inn is built upon the site of Cicero’s Villa. Beneath the balcony, and on each side, along the whole curve of the bay, stretched a thick grove of orange-trees, which sloped down to the very verge of the Mediterranean. Balls of golden fruit, and blossoms faint with odour, and fair as stars, studded this amphitheatre of dark foliage; and at its extremity the liquid light of the waves pierced the glossy leaves, mingling their blue splendour with earth's green paradise. Every rock and mountain glowed with a purple hue, so intense and soft, they resembled violet vapours dissolving into the pale radiance of the evening sky. Far away in the deep broad flood of the ocean, rose the two mountain islands of Ischia and Procida, between which Vesuvius thrust in his jagged form, and his floating banner of snow-white smoke. The solitary heaven was without sun or moon, without a star or cloud, but smiled in that tender vestal light which speaks of eternal, immutable peace.

It would be difficult to define the feelings of the traveller as he gazed on this scene: his countenance, uplifted to heaven, was animated with a profound and impassioned melancholy, with an expression of an earnest and fervid pleading against some vast and inevitable wrong. He was thinking probably of his country; and whilst he contrasted its ruined villages and devastated fields with the splendour and glow of the fair land before him, was breathing inwardly a passionate appeal against that blind and cruel destiny which had consigned Poland to the desolating influence of Russian despotism. His reverie was interrupted by the sound of a female voice singing in Polish among the orange-trees at his feet. The singer was invisible; but the sweetness of her voice, and the singular reference of the words (the following prose translation conveys their meaning) to the thoughts of his own mind, filled the traveller with surprise: —

"When thou gazest upon the azure heaven, so mighty in its calm, do not say, O bright enchantment, hast thou no pity, that thou dawnest thus in unattainable loveliness upon my world-wearied eyes.

"When the southern wind softly breathes, do not say reproachfully, thy cradle is the ether of the morning sun, thou drinkest the odorous essence of myrtle and lemon blossoms; thou should'st bear upon thy wings all sweet emotions, all soft desires; why bringest thou then no healing to the anguish I endure?

"Neither in the dark hour, when thou thinkest upon thy country and thy friends, say not with grief, They are lost! They are not! Say rather with joy, They were illustrious! and it is bliss to know that they have been!"

It were wise in me to obey thy lesson, sweet songstress, thought the traveller; and, revolving in his mind the singularity of the serenade, he continued to gaze upon the trees below: there was no rustling amid their branches, no sound which told a human being was concealed beneath their foliage; nothing was heard beyond the almost imperceptible breathings of the evening air. Did such things exist any where but in the imagination of the poet? He could almost have believed that the spirit of that divine scene had assumed a human voice and human words, to soothe his melancholy, so floating and airy had been the strain, so deep the silence that succeeded it. One moment more, and there arose from the same spot cries for help uttered in Italian, and shrieks of distress so piercing, they made the traveller fly with the speed of lightning through the great hall, down the staircase into the garden. The first object that met his eyes was the figure of a girl about sixteen, her one arm tightly embracing the stem of a tree, her other angrily repelling a young man who was endeavouring to drag her away. "I will not go with you — I love you no longer, Giorgio — and go with you, I will not," shrieked the girl, in tones of mingled violence and fear. "You must — you shall," retorted her aggressor, in a voice of thunder. "I have found you again, and I won't be duped by your fooleries, Marietta — And who are you, and who begged you to interfere?" added he, turning fiercely upon the traveller, whose strong grasp had torn him from Marietta. "An officer, as it should seem by your dress; — be pleased to know that I am also an officer, and risk my displeasure no further."

"No officer would ill-treat a defenceless girl," the Pole replied, with quiet contempt.

At this taunt Giorgio quivered with rage. His features, handsome and regular as those of Italians generally are, became quite distorted. His hands with convulsive movements sought about his breast for the dagger that was concealed there, his dark flashing eyes fixed intently at the same time upon his adversary, as if he hoped the fiendish spirit that burned within them might previously annihilate him.

"Be on your guard — he is a perfect wretch," cried Marietta, rushing towards her protector.

The arrival of several servants from the inn dispelled all idea of present danger: they dragged off Giorgio, telling him that, although the girl was his sister, he had no right to separate her from the *corps d'opéra,* with whom she was travelling through Gaeta.

"E *vero, è verissimo,"* cried Marietta with joyful triumph. "What is it to him if I like my liberty, and prefer wandering about, singing here and there, to being his unhappy par—"

"Marietta! beware! dare not to speak ill of me!" screamed the retiring Giorgio, looking back over his shoulder, and accompanying his words with a look of such frightful menace, as completely subdued his sister.

She watched in anxious silence till he had disappeared, and then, with affectionate humility and a graceful quickness that allowed not of its prevention, knelt lightly down, and pressed the stranger's hand to her lips. "You have more than repaid me for the song I sang to you," she said, rising and leading the way to the inn, "and, if you like it, I will sing others to you whilst you sup."

"Are you a Pole?" enquired the traveller. "A fine demand! how can I be a Pole? Did you not say yourself there was no longer any such country as Poland?"

"If you did not say it, confess at least that you thought it. The Poles are all become Russians, and for nothing in the world, Signor, would I be a Russian. Why in all their language they have no word that expresses *honour*. No! rather than be a Russian, much as I hate it, I would go with Giorgio."

"Are you an Italian?"

"No — not exactly."

"What are you, then?"

"Um! I am what I am, who can be more? But, Signor, one thing I must beg of you, do not ask me any questions about myself, nor any about Giorgio. I will sing to you, talk to you, wait upon you — any thing of that kind you please, but I will not answer questions on those subjects."

Seating herself upon a stool, in a dark corner of the traveller's apartment, as far removed as possible from him, and all other interruptions, Marietta passed the evening in playing on her guitar and singing. She was a most accomplished singer, possessing and managing all the intricacies of the art, with perfect ease, but this scarcely excited admiration in comparison with the natural beauty of her voice. There was a profound melancholy in its intense sweetness, that dissolved the soul of the traveller in grief. All that was dear to him in the memory of the past, the joys of home, and childhood, the tenderness and truth of his first friendships, the glow of patriotism; every cherished hour, every endeared spot, all that he had loved, and all that he had lost upon earth, seemed again to live and again to fade, as he listened to her strains. Without paying any attention to him, and apparently without any effort to herself, she breathed forth melody after melody for her own pleasure, like some lone nightingale, that, in a home of green leaves, sings to cheer its solitude with sweet sounds. Her countenance and figure would have been beautiful, had they been more fully developed. They resembled those sketches of a great artist in which there are only a few lightly-traced lines, but those are so full of spirit and meaning, that you easily imagine what a masterpiece it would have been when finished.

The first visit of our traveller, on arriving, next day, at Naples, was to the Princess Dashkhoff. She was a Russian lady, whose high birth, immense wealth, and talents for intrigue, had procured for her the intimacy of half the crowned heads of Europe, and had made her all powerful at the Court of St. Petersburgh. Detesting the cold barbarism of her native country, she had established herself at Naples, in a splendid mansion, near the Strada Nuova; and affecting an extravagant admiration for Italy, by her munificent patronage of the arts and artists, and by perpetual exhibitions of her own skill, in drawing and singing, dancing and acting, had obtained the name of the Corinna of the North. Her *salon* was the evening resort of the wise, the idle, the witty, and the dissipated. Not to know Corinna, was to be yourself unknown; and not to frequent her *conversazioni* was, as far as society was concerned, to be banished from all that was fashionable or delightful in Naples.

It was the hour of evening reception. The Pole burned with impatience to speak to the Princess, for on her influence, at Petersburgh, depended the fate of a brother, the only being in existence he now cared for. A splendid suite of apartments, blazing with lights, crowded with company, and furnished with the munificence of an Eastern haram, lay open before him; without allowing himself to be announced he entered them. When an highly imaginative mind is absorbed by some master feeling, all opposing contrasts, all glowing extremes, serve but to add depth and intensity to that feeling. The festal scene of marble columns garlanded by roses, the walls of Venetian mirror, reflecting the light of innumerable tapers, and the forms of lovely women and gay youths floating in the mazy dance, seemed to him deceitful shows that veiled some frightful sorrow; and with eager rapid steps, as if borne along by the impulse of his own thoughts, he hurried past them. Scarcely knowing how he had arrived there, he at length found himself standing beside the Princess, in a marble colonnade, open above to the moonlight and the stars of heaven, and admitting at its sides the odorous air and blossoming almond-trees of the adjacent garden.

"Ladislas!" exclaimed the lady, starting, "is it possible — to see you here almost exceeds belief."

After remaining some moments in deep silence, collecting and arranging his thoughts, the Pole replied. A conversation ensued, in so low a voice as to be only audible to themselves; from their attitudes and gestures it might be inferred that Ladislas was relating some tale of deep anguish, mixed with solemn and impressive adjurations to which the Princess listened with a consenting tranquillizing sympathy.

They issued from the recess, walked up the colonnade, and entered a small temple that terminated it. From the centre of its airy dome hung a lighted alabaster lamp of a boat-like shape, beneath which a youthful female was seated alone sketching a range of moonlight hills that appeared between the columns. "Idalie," said the Princess, "I have brought you a new subject for your pencil, — and such a subject, my love — one whose fame has already made him dear to your imagination; no less a person than the hero of Ostralenka, the Vistula, and the Belvedere, So call up one of those brightest, happiest moods of your genius, in which all succeeds to you, and enrich my album with his likeness," spreading it before her.

It is difficult to refuse any request to a person who has just granted us an important favour. Ladislas suffered himself to be seated, and as soon as the Princess had quitted them, the gloom which had shadowed his brow at the names of Ostralenka, the Vistula, and the Belvedere, vanished. The surpassing beauty of the young artist would have changed the heaviest penance into a pleasure. She was lovely as one of Raphael's Madonnas; and, like them, there was a silent beauty in her presence that struck the most superficial beholder with astonishment and satisfaction. Her hair, of a golden and burnished brown (the colour of the autumnal foliage illuminated by the setting sun), fell in gauzy wavings round her face, throat and shoulders. Her small clear forehead, gleaming with gentle thought; her curved, soft, and rosy lips; the delicate moulding of the lower part of the face, expressing purity and integrity of nature, were all perfectly Grecian. Her hazel eyes, with their arched lids and dark arrowy lashes, pierced the soul with their full and thrilling softness. She was clad in long and graceful drapery, white as snow; but, pure as this garment was, it seemed a rude disguise to the resplendent softness of the limbs it enfolded. The delicate light that gleamed from the alabaster lamp above them, was a faint simile of the ineffable spirit of love that burned within Idalie's fair transparent frame; and the one trembling shining star of evening that palpitates responsively to happy lovers, never seemed more divine or more beloved than she did to Ladislas, as she sat there, now fixing a timid but attentive gaze upon his countenance, and then dropping it upon the paper before her. And not alone for Ladislas, was this hour the dawn of passionate love. The same spell was felt in the heart of Idalie, veiling the world and lifting her spirit into vast and immeasurable regions of unexplored delight. One moment their eyes met and glanced upon each other, the look of exalted, of eternal love, mute, blessed, and inexpressible. Their lids fell and were raised no more. Rapture thrilled their breasts and swelled their full hearts, a rapture felt but not seen; for feet order. In this emergency, three hundred students from the University of Warsaw drew hastily up in a body, and, devoting themselves willingly to death, marched forward to meet the onset of the enemy. They were headed by a young man who distinguished himself by the most exalted courage, and was the only one of their numbers who escaped. He stationed his band in a small wood that lay directly in the path of the Russians, and checked their progress for the space of three hours. Every tree of that wood now waves above a patriot's grave. In the meantime the Polish army formed, bore down, and gained a most brilliant victory. f The palace at Warsaw, in which the attempt to assassinate the Grand Duke Constantine was made by a party of young men. motionless, and in deep silence, as if every outward faculty were absorbed in reverence, they continued, each inwardly knowing, hearing, seeing nothing but the divine influence and attraction of the other.

I know not if the portrait was finished. I believe it was not. Noiselessly Idalie arose and departed to seek the Princess, and Ladislas followed. "Who is that lovely being?" enquired an English traveller sometime afterward, pointing out Idalie from a group of ladies. "A Polish girl — a protégée of mine," was the reply of the Princess; "a daughter of one of Kosciusko's unfortunate followers, who died here poor and unkown. She has a great genius for drawing and painting, but she is so different in her nature from the generality of people, that I am afraid she will never get on in the world. All the family are wild and strange. There is a brother, who they say is a complete ruffian; brave as a Pole and unprincipled as an Italian; a villain quite varnished in picturesque, like one of your Lord Byron's corsairs and giaours. Then there is a younger sister; the most uncontrollable little creature, who chose to pretend my house was insupportable, and ran away into Calabria or Campagna, and set up as a *prima donna.* But these, to be sure, are the children of a second wife, an Italian; and Idalie, I must confess, has none of their lawlessness, but is remarkably gentle and steady."

Disgusted with this heartless conversation, which disturbed his mood of ecstacy, Ladislas hastily quitted the Dashkhoff palace, and entered the Villa Reale, whose embowering trees promised solitude. Not one straggler of the many gay crowds that frequent this luxurious garden from morning till midnight was now to be seen. With its straight walks buried in gloom and shadow; its stone fonts of sleeping water; its marble statues, its heaven-pointing obelisks, and the tingling silence of its midnight air, it was holy and calm as a deserted oratory, when the last strain of the vesper hymn has died away, the last taper has ceased to burn, the last censer has been flung, and both priests and worshippers have departed. Ladislas cast himself upon a stone-seat in the ilex-grove that skirts the margin of the bay. "I dreamt not of love," he exclaimed, "I sought her not! I had renounced life and all its train of raptures, hopes, and joys. Cold, and void of every wish, the shadow of death lay upon my heart; suddenly she stood before me, lovely as an angel that heralds departed spirits to the kingdom of eternal bliss. Fearless, but mild, she poured the magic of her gaze upon my soul. I speak the word of the hour. She shall be mine — or I will die!"

Reclining in the ilex-grove, Ladislas passed the remaining hours of that too-short night, entranced in bliss, as if the bright form of his beloved were still shining beside him. Gradually, every beauty of the wondrous and far-famed Bay of Naples impressed itself upon his attention. The broad and beamless moon sinking behind the tall elms of Posillipo — the broken star-light on the surface of the waves — their rippling sound as they broke at his feet — Sorrento's purple promontory, and the gentle wind that blew from it — the solitary grandeur of Capri's mountain-island, rising out of the middle of the bay, a colossal sphinx guarding two baths of azure light — Vesuvius breathing its smoke, and flame, and sparks, into the cloudless ether — all became mingled in inexplicable harmony with his new-born passion, and were indelibly associated with his recollection of that night.

The next morning Idalie was sketching in the Villa Reale. She had seated herself on the outside of a shady alley. Two persons passed behind her, and the childish, petulant voice of one of them drew her attention. That voice, so sweet even in its impatience, certainly belonged to her fugitive sister. "It is she!" exclaimed Idalie, gliding swift as thought between the trees, and folding the speaker to her bosom. "Marietta, — my dear little Marietta! at last you are come back again. *Cattivella!* now promise to stay with me. You know not how miserable I have been about you.

"No! I cannot promise any thing of the kind," replied Marietta, playing with the ribbons of her guitar. "I choose to have my liberty."

Idalie's arms sunk, and her eyes were cast upon the ground when she heard the cold and decided tone in which this refusal was pronounced. On raising the latter, they glanced upon the companion of her sister, and were filled with unconquerable emotion at discovering Ladislas, the elected of her heart.

"I met your sister here a few minutes ago," explained he, partaking her feelings; "and having been so fortunate the other day as to render her a slight service—"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Marietta; "I sung for him a whole evening at Gaeta. It was a curious adventure. His carriage was overturned close to the inn. I had arrived there half an hour before, and was walking in an orange-grove near the spot, and saw the accident happen, and heard him speak in Polish to his servant. My heart beat with joy to behold one belonging to that heroic nation. He looked wondrous melancholy: I thought it must be about his country, so I crept as softly as a mouse among the trees under his balcony, and sung him a salve-song in Polish. I *improvised,* it on the spur of the moment. I do not very well recollect it, but it was about azure heavens, southern winds, myrtle and lemon blossoms, and the illustrious unfortunate; and it ought to have pleased him. Just as I had finished, out starts our blessed brother, Giorgio, from the inn, and began one of his most terrific bothers. Imagine how frightened I was, for I thought he was gone to Sicily with his regiment. However, they got him away, and I followed this stranger into his room, and sang to him the rest of the evening. All my best songs, the *Mio ben quando verrà, Nina pazza per Amore,* the *All' armi* of Generali, the *Dolce cara patria,* from Tancredi, the *Deh calma* from Otello, — all my whole stock, I assure you." Thus rattled on Marietta; and then, as if her quick eye had already discovered the secret of their attachment, she added, with an arch smile, "but don't be frightened, Idalie, though his eyes filled with tears whilst I sung, as yours often do, not a word of praise did the Sarmatian bestow on me."

"Then return and live with me, dear Marietta, and I will praise you as much, and more than you desire."

"Santa Maria del Piè di Grottal What a tiresome person you are, Idalie. When you have got an idea into your head, an earthquake would not get it out again. Have I not told you that I will not. If you knew the motive, you would approve my resolution. I said I liked my liberty, and so forth, but that was not the reason of my flight. I do not choose to have any thing to do with Giorgio and the Princess; for, believe me, dearest Idalie, disgraceful as my present mode of life seems to you, it is innocence itself compared with the crimes they were leading me into."

"Some suspicion of this did once cross my mind," her sister replied with a sigh, "but I rejected it as too horrible. Dear child, think no more about them. Do you not know that I have left the Princess's house, and am living by myself in a little pavilion far up on the Strada Nuova. There you need not fear their molestations."

"Is not Giorgio, then, with you?"

"No, I have not seen him for some time. I doubt if he be in Naples."

"So, Messer Giorgio, you have deceived me again. But I might have known that, for he never speaks a word of truth. Be assured, however, he is in Naples, for I caught a glimpse of him this morning, mounting the hill that leads to the barracks at Pizzofalcone, and he is as intimate with the Princess as ever, though she pretends to disown him. As for me, I am engaged at San Carlos; the writing is signed and sealed, and cannot be broken without forfeiting a heavy sum of money; otherwise I should be happy to live peacefully with you; for you know not, Idalie, all I have had to suffer; how sad and ill-treated I have been! how often pinched with want and hunger; and worse than that, when Giorgio takes it into his head to pursue me, and plants himself in the pit, fixing his horrible looks upon me as I sing! how many times I have rushed out of the theatre, and spent the nights in the great wide Maremma, beset by robbers, buffaloes, and wild boars, till I was almost mad with fear and bewilderment. There is a curse upon our family, I think. Did not our father once live in a splendid castle of his own, with an hundred retainers to wait upon him; and do you remember the miserable garret in which he died? But I cannot stay any longer. I am wanted at the rehearsal: so, farewell, dearest Idalie. Be you at least happy, and leave me to fulfil the evil destiny that hangs over our race."

"No! No!" exclaimed Ladislas, "that must not be — the writing must be cancelled," — and then, with the affection and unreserve of a brother, he entered into their sentiments; with sweet and persuasive arguments overcame their scruples of receiving a pecuniary obligation from him, and finally, taking Marietta by the hand, led her away to San Carlos, in order to cancel her engagement.

And in another hour it was cancelled. Marietta was once more free and joyful; and, affectionate as old friends, the three met again in the little pavilion, which was Idalie's home. It stood alone in a myrtle wood on the last of the green promontories, which form the Strada Nuova, and separate the Bay of Naples from the Bay of Baia, — a lonely hermitage secluded from the noise and turmoil of the city, whose only visitors were the faint winds of morning and evening, the smiles of the fair Italian heaven, its wandering clouds, and, perchance, a solitary bird. From every part of the building you could see the Baian Ocean sparkling breathlessly beneath the sun; through the windows and the columns of the portico you beheld the mountains of the distant coast shining on, hour after hour, like amethysts in a thrilling vapour of purple transparent light, so ardent yet halcyon, so bright and unreal, a poet would have chosen it to emblem the radiant atmosphere that glows around Elysian isles of eternal peace and joy. Marietta soon left the building to join some fisher boys who were dancing the tarantella upon the beach below. Idalie took her drawing, which was her daily employment, and furnished her the means of subsistence, and Ladislas sat by her side. There was no sound of rolling carriages, no tramp of men and horse, no distant singing, no one speaking near; the wind awoke no rustling amid the leaves of the myrtle wood, and the wave died without a murmur on the shore. Ladislas' deep but melodious voice alone broke the crystal silence of the noon-day air. Italy was around him, robed in two splendours of blue and green; but he was an exile, and the recollections of his native land thronged into his memory, and oppressed him with their numbers and their life. During the three months it had taken him to effect his escape from Warsaw to Naples, his lips had been closed in silence, whilst his mind had been wrapt in the gloom of the dreadful images that haunted it. In Idalie’s countenance there was that expression of innocence and sublimity of soul, of purity and strength, that excited the warmest admiration, and inspired sudden and deep confidence. She looked like some supernatural being that walks through the world, untouched by its corruptions; like one that unconsciously, yet with delight, confers pleasure and peace; and Ladislas felt that, in speaking to her of the dark sorrows of his country, they would lose their mortal weight and be resolved into beauty, by her sympathy. In glowing terms he described the heroic struggle of Poland for liberty; the triumph and exultation that had filled every bosom during the few months they were free; the hardships and privations they had endured, the deeds of daring bravery of the men, the heroism it had awakened in the women; and then its fall — the return of the Russians; the horrible character of Russian despotism, its sternness and deceit, its pride and selfish ignorance: the loss of public and private integrity, the disbelief of good, the blighted, hopeless, joyless life endured by those whom it crushes beneath its servitude.

Thus passed the hours of the forenoon. Then Ladislas fixing his eyes upon the coast of Baia, and expressing at the same time his impatience to visit that ancient resort of heroes and of emperors, Idalie led the way by a small path down the hill to the beach. There they found a skiff dancing idly to and fro upon the waves, and, unmooring it from its rocky haven, embarked in it. It had been sweet to mark the passage of that light bark freighted with these happy lovers, when borne by its sails it swept through the little ocean-channel that lies between the beaked promontories of the mainland and the closing cliffs of the island of Nisida; and when with gentler motion it glided into the open expanse of the bay of Baia, and cut its way through the translucent water, above the ruins of temples and palaces overgrown by sea-weed, on which the rays of the sun were playing, creating a thousand rainbow hues, that varied with every wave that flowed over them. In all that plane of blue light it was the only moving thing; and as if it had been the child of the ocean that bore it, and the sun that looked down on it, it sped gaily along in their smiles past the fortress where Brutus and Cassius sought shelter after the death of Cæsar; past the temples of Jupiter and Neptune; by the ruins of that castle in which three Romans once portioned out the world between them, to the Cumaean hill that enshadows the beloved Linternum of Scipio Africanus, and in which he died. The whole of this coast is a paradise of natural beauty, investing with its own loveliness the time-eaten wrecks with which it is strewn; the mouldering past is mingled with the vivid present; ruin and grey annihilation are decked in eternal spring. The woody windings of the shore reveal, in their deep recesses, the gleaming marble fragments of the abodes of ancient heroes: the verdurous hues of the promontories mingle with the upright columns of shattered temples, or clothe, with nature's voluptuous bloom, the pale funereal urns of departed gods; whilst the foliage and the inland fountains, and the breaking waves upon the shore, were murmuring around their woven minstrelsy of love and joy. Earth, sea, and sky, blazed like three gods, with tranquil but animated loveliness; with a splendour that did not dazzle — with a richness that could not satiate. The air on that beautiful warm coast was as a field of fragrance; the refreshing sea-breeze seemed to blow from Paradise, quickening their senses, and bringing to them the odour of a thousand unknown blossoms. "What world is this?" exclaimed Ladislas, in a tone of rapture that nearly answered its own question. "I could imagine I had entered an enchanted garden; four heavens surround me; the one above; the pure element beneath me with its waves that shine and tremble as stars; the adorned earth that hangs over it; and the heaven of delight they create within my breast. Morning is here a rose, day a tulip, night a lily; evening is, like morning, again a rose, and life seems a choral-hymn of beautiful and glowing sentiments, that I go singing to myself as I wander along this perpetual path of flowers."

It was night ere they again reached the pavilion. It stood dark and deserted in the clear moonshine; the door was locked; the windows and their outer shutters had been closed from within, so securely as to deny all admittance, unless by breaking them open, which the solid nature of the shutters rendered almost impossible. After calling and knocking repeatedly without obtaining any answer, it became evident that Marietta had quitted the dwelling. In the first moment of surprise which this occurrence occasioned, they had not observed a written sheet of paper, of a large size, which lay unfolded and placed directly before the door, as if to attract attention. Idalie took it up and read the following lines, traced by Marietta.

"Oh, Idalie! what a fiendish thing is life. But a few hours ago, how calm and secure we were in happiness — now danger and perhaps destruction is our portion. One chance yet remains, the moment you get this, persuade — not only persuade — but compel that adorable stranger to fly instantly from Naples. He is not safe here an instant longer. Do not doubt what I say, or his life may be the forfeit. How can I impress this on your mind. I would not willingly betray any one, but how else can I save him? Giorgio has been here. Oh! the frightful violence of that man. He raved like an insane person, and let fall such dark and bloody hints as opened worlds of horror to me. I am gone to discover what I can. I know his haunts, and his associates, and shall soon find out if there be any truth in what he threatens. I could not await your return, neither dare I leave the pavilion open. Who knows if, in the interval between my departure and your return, an assassin might not conceal himself within; and your first welcome be, to see the stranger fall lifeless at your feet. His every step is watched by spies armed for his destruction. I know not what to do — and yet it seems to me that my going may possibly avert the catastrophe. — MARIETTA."

Ladislas listened to these lines unmoved; but the effect they produced on Idalie was dreadful. She gave implicit credence to them, and every word sounded as a knell. She lost all presence of mind; every reflection that might have taught her to avert the stroke she so much dreaded, was swallowed up in anguish, as if the deed that was to be consummated were already done. What task can be more difficult than to describe the overwhelming agony which heavy and unexpected misery produces. To have lived the day that Idalie had just lived — a day in which all the beauty of existence had been unveiled to its very depths; to have dreamt as she had done, a dream of love that steeped her soul in divine, and almost uncommunicable joy; and now to sink from this pinnacle of happiness into a black and lampless cavern, the habitation of death, whose spectral form and chilling spirit was felt through all the air! This is but a feeble metaphor of the sudden transition from rapture to misery, which Idalie experienced. She looked upon Ladislas, and beheld him bright and full of life; the roseate hues of health upon his cheek, his eyes beaming with peaceful joy, his noble countenance varying not in the least from that imperturbable and godlike self-possession which was its habitual expression. And as her imagination made present to her the fatal moment, when beneath the dagger of the assassin this adored being should sink bleeding, wounded, and then be ever lost in death, her blood rushed to her heart, a deadly pause ensued, from which she awoke in a bewildering mist of horror. The still air and quite moonshine to her seemed brooding mischief; a thousand shadows that proceeded from no one, but were the creatures of her distressed brain, flitted around, and filled the empty space of the portico. Poor Idalie! an eternity of bliss would have been dearly bought at the price of that moment's overwhelming anguish! Ladislas beheld her excess of emotion with pain, in which, however, all was not pain, for it was blended with that triumphant exultation, that a lover ever feels when he for the first time becomes assured that he is beloved by the object of his love with an affection tender and intense as his own.

As soon as Idalie recovered some presence of mind, with passionate supplications she entreated Ladislas to leave her, to fly this solitary spot, and to seek safety amid the crowded streets of Naples. He would not hear of this; he gently remonstrated with her upon the unreasonableness of her terrors, urging how little probable it was that his passing *rencontre* with Giorgio at Gaeta could have awakened in him such a deadly spirit of revenge as Marietta represented. He viewed the whole thing lightly, attributing it either to the vivacity of Marietta's imagination, which had made her attach a monstrous import to some angry expressions of her brother, or looking upon it as some merry device which she had contrived, in order to frighten them; and tranquillized Idalie, by assurances that they would shortly see her wild sister return laughing, and full of glee at the success of her plot. In this expectation two hours passed away, but still no Marietta appeared, and it had grown too late to seek another shelter, without exposing Idalie to the slander of evil-minded people.

They passed the rest of the night therefore in the portico, Idalie sometimes pale and breathless, with recurring fears, and sometimes calm and happy, as Ladislas poured forth his tale of passionate love. His feelings on the contrary were pure and unalloyed. Where Idalie was, there was the whole universe to him; where she was not, there was only a formless void. He had an insatiable thirst for her presence, which only grew intenser with the enjoyment of its own desire; and he blessed the fortunate occurrence that prolonged his bliss during hours which otherwise would have been spent pining in absence from her. No other considerations intruded. Blessings kindled within his eyes as he gazed upon that lovely countenance and faultless form, and angels might have envied the happiness he felt.

Morning came, bright and serene; the sun arose, the ocean and the mountains again resumed their magic splendour; the myrtle-woods and every minuter bloom of the garden shone out beneath the sun, and the whole earth was a happy form made perfect by the power of light. They recollected that they had promised to join the Princess Dashkhoff, and a large party of her friends, at eight o'clock, in an excursion to Pæstum. The point of meeting was the shore of the Villa Reale, where the numerous guests were to embark in a steamer which had been engaged for the occasion. In Idalie's present homeless and uncertain condition, this plan offered some advantages. It would enable them to pass the day in each other's society under the auspices of the Princess, and it was to be hoped that on their return the mystery of Marietta's disappearance would be unravelled, and Idalie find her home once more open to her. They had scarcely settled to go, ere one of those horse calessini which ply in the streets of Naples, was seen coming towards them. Its driver, a ragged boy, sat on the shaft, singing as he drove; another urchin, all in tatters, stood as lacquey behind, and between them sat Marietta; the paleness of fear was on her cheeks, and her eyes had the staggered affrighted look of one who has gazed upon some appalling horror. She hastily descended, and bade the calessino retire to some distance, and await further orders. "Why is he yet here?" said she to her sister. "You foolish blind Idalie, why did you not mind my letter — too proud I suppose to obey any but yourself; but mark, you would not hear my warnings — we shall lose him, and you will feel them in your heart's core." She then, with all the violent gesticulation of an Italian, threw herself at the feet of Ladislas, and with a countenance that expressed her own full conviction in what she said, besought him to fly instantly, not only from Naples, but from Italy, for his life would never be safe in that land of assassins and traitors. With entreaties almost as violent as her own, Ladislas and Idalie urged her to explain, but this only threw her into a new frenzy; she wept and tore her hair; she declared the peril was too urgent to admit of explanation, — every moment was precious — another's hour's stay in Naples would be his death.

The situation of Ladislas was a curious one. He had served in the Russian campaigns against Persia and Turkey, and had been there daily exposed to the chances of destruction; in the late struggle between Poland and Russia, he had performed actions of such determined and daring bravery as had made his name a glory to his countrymen, and a terror to their enemies. In all these exploits he had devoted himself so unreservedly to death, that his escape was considered as a miraculous interposition of heaven. It was not to be expected that this Mars in a human form, this Achilles who had braved death in a thousand shapes, should now consent to fly before the uplifted finger and visionary warnings of a dream-sick girl, for such Marietta appeared to him to be. He pitied her sufferings, endeavoured to soothe her, but asserted he had seen no reason that could induce him to quit Naples.

A full quarter of an hour elapsed before an explanation could be wrung from Marietta. The chaos that reigned in her mind may easily be imagined. She had become possessed of a secret which involved the life of two persons. Ladislas refused to save himself unless she revealed what might place her brother's life in jeopardy. Whichever way she looked, destruction closed the view. Nature had bestowed on her a heart exquisitely alive to the sufferings of others; a mind quick in perceiving the nicest lines of moral rectitude, and strenuous in endeavouring to act up to its perceptions. Any deviations in her conduct from these principles had been the work of a fate that, strong and fierce as a tempest, had bent down her weak youth like a reed beneath its force. She had once loved Giorgio; he had played with and caressed her in infancy — with the fond patronage of an elder brother had procured her the only indulgences her orphaned childhood had ever known. Fraternal love called loudly on her not to endanger his life; gratitude as loudly called on her not to allow her benefactor to become his victim. This last idea was too horrible to be endured. The present moment is ever all-powerful with the young, and Marietta related what she knew.

Well might the poor child be wild and disordered. She had passed the night in the catacombs of San Gennaro, under Capo di Monte. In these subterranean galleries were held the nightly meetings of the band of desperate *bravi* of whom Giorgio was in secret the chief. The entrance to the catacombs is in a deserted vineyard, and is overgrown by huge aloes: rooted in stones and sharp rocks, they lift their thorny leaves above the opening, and conceal it effectually. A solitary fig-tree that grows near renders the spot easily recognisable by those already acquainted with the secret. The catacombs themselves are wide winding caves, the burial-place of the dead of past ages. Piles of human bones, white and bleached by time, are heaped along the rocky sides of these caverns. In one of these walks, whilst they were friends, Giorgio had shown the place to Marietta. In those days he feared not to entrust his mysterious way of life to her; for although in all common concerns she was wild and untractable, yet in all that touched the interests of those few whom she loved, Marietta was silent and reserved as Epicharis herself. The menaces Giorgio let fall in his visit on the preceding forenoon had excited her highest alarm, and she determined, at any risk, to learn the extent of the danger that hung over the stranger. After waiting in vain for Idalie's return till the close of evening, she had hastened to Capo di Monte, entered the catacombs alone, and, concealed behind a pile of bones, had awaited the arrival of the confederates. They assembled at midnight. Their first subject of consultation was the stranger. Giorgio acquainted them with his history, which he told them had been communicated to him that very morning, by a Russian lady of high consequence, who had likewise charged him with the business he had to unfold to them. He described Ladislas as a fugitive, unprotected by any government; he bore about his person certain papers which had been found in the palace of Warsaw, and were the confidential communications of the Russian Autocrat to his brother the Viceroy of Poland, and were of such a nature as to rouse all Europe in arms against their writer. These papers had been entrusted to Ladislas, whose intention was to proceed to Paris, and publish them there. Private business, however, of the greatest importance, had forced him to visit Naples before going to Paris. The Russian government had traced him to Naples, and had empowered a certain Russian lady to take any step, or go any lengths, in order to obtain these papers from Ladislas. This lady had made Giorgio her emissary; her name he carefully concealed, but Marietta averred, from his description, that it could be no other than the Princess Dashkhoff. After much consulting among the band, the assassination of the Pole had been decided upon. This seemed to be the only sure method, for he carried the papers ever about his person, was distinguished for his bravery, and if openly attacked would resist to the last. Giorgio was no stickler in the means he employed, and told his companions he had the less reason to be so in this case, as he had received assurances from the highest quarter, that his crime should go unpunished, and the reward be enormous. Ladislas was almost unknown in Naples; the government would not interest itself for a fugitive, without passport, country or name; and what friends had he here, to inquire into the circumstances of his destruction, or to interest themselves to avenge it?

Such was Marietta's tale, and Ladislas instantly acknowledged the necessity of flight. He was too well acquainted with the perfidy and barbarism of the Russians, to doubt that even a lady of a rank so distinguished as the Princess Dashkhoff, might be induced to undertake as foul a task as that attributed to her by Marietta. The worldly and artificial manners of this lady, in an Italian or a French-woman, would only have resulted from habits of intrigue; but a Russian, unaccustomed to look on human life as sacred, taught by the government of her own country that cruelty and treachery are venial offences, wholly destitute of a sense of honour, concealed, under such an exterior, vices the most odious, and a callousness to guilt unknown in more civilised lands. Ladislas knew this; and he knew that the badness of the Neapolitan government afforded scope for crime, which could not exist elsewhere; and he felt that on every account it were better to withdraw himself immediately from the scene of danger.

While musing on these things, Idalie's beseeching eyes were eloquent in imploring him to fly. He consented; but a condition was annexed to his consent, that Idalie should share his flight. He urged his suit with fervour. It were easy for them on a very brief notice to seek the young lady's confessor, induce him to bestow on them the nuptial benediction, and thus to sanctify their departure together. Marietta seconded the young lover's entreaties, and Idalie, blushing and confused, could only reply,—"My accompanying you could only increase your danger, and facilitate the bravo's means of tracing you. How could I get a passport? How leave this place?"

"I have a plan for all," replied Ladislas; and he then related that the Sully steam-packet lay in the harbour of Naples, ready to sail on the shortest notice; he would engage that for their conveyance, and so speedily bid adieu to the shores of Naples, and all its perils. "But that boat," exclaimed Idalie, "that steam-packet is the very one engaged by the Princess for our excursion to Pæstum, this morning." This, for a time, seemed to disarrange their schemes, but they considered that no danger could happen to Ladislas while one of a party of pleasure with the Princess, who from this act of his would be quite unsuspicious of his intended departure. At night, upon their return from Pæstum, when the rest of the party should have disembarked at Naples, Ladislas and Idalie would remain on board, and the vessel immediately commence its voyage for France. This plan thus assumed a very feasible appearance, while Ladislas, in accents of fond reproach, asked Idalie wherefore she refused to share his fortunes, and accompany him in his journey; and Marietta, clapping her hands exclaimed, "She consents! she consents! Do not ask any more, she has already yielded. We will all return to Naples. Ladislas shall proceed immediately to seek out the captain of the Sully, and arrange all with him; while, without loss of time, we will proceed to the convent of Father Basil, and get every thing ready by the time Ladislas shall join us, which must be with as much speed as he can contrive." Idalie silently acquiesced in this arrangement, and Ladislas kissed her hand with warm and overflowing gratitude. They now contrived to stow themselves in the little calessino, and as they proceeded on their way, Ladislas said: "We seem to have forgotten the future destiny of our dear Marietta, all this time. The friendless condition in which we shall leave her fills me with anxiety. She is the preserver of my life, and we are both under the deepest obligations to her. What shall you do, Marietta, when we are gone?"

"Fear not for me," exclaimed the wild girl, "it is necessary I should remain behind to arrange those things which Idalie's sudden departure will leave in sad disorder; but you will see me soon in Paris, for how can I exist apart from my sister?"

When near to Naples, Ladislas alighted from the calessino, and directed his steps towards the port, while the fair girls proceeded on their way to the convent. What the bashful conscious Idalie would have done without her sister's help, it is difficult to guess. Marietta busied herself about all; won over the priest to the sudden marriage, contrived to put up articles of dress for the fair bride's journey, and thinking of every thing, with far more watchfulness and care than if her own fate had depended on the passing hour, seemed the guardian angel of the lovers. Ladislas arrived at the convent; he had been successful with the master of the steam-packet, and all was prepared. Marietta heard this from his own lips, and carried the happy news to Idalie. He did not see her till they met at the altar, where, kneeling before the venerable priest, they were united for ever. And now time, as it sped on, gave them no moment to indulge their various and overpowering feelings. Idalie embraced her sister again and again, and entreating her to join them speedily in Paris, made her promise to write, and then, escorted by her husband, proceeded to the Sully, on board of which most of the party were already assembled.

The smoke lifted its stream of dishevelled tresses to the wind, which was right aft; the engine began to work, and the wheels to run their round. The blue wave was disturbed in its tranquil water, and cast back again in sheeted spray on its brother wave. Farewell to Naples! That Elysian city, as the poet justly calls it; that favourite of sea, and land, and sky. The hills that surround it smooth their rugged summits, and descend into gentle slopes, and opening defiles, to receive its buildings and habitations. Temples, domes, and marble palaces, are ranged round the crescent form of the bay, and above them arise dark masses, and wooded clefts, and fair gardens, whose trees are ever vernal. Before it the mighty sea binds its wild streams, and smoothes them into gentlest waves, as they kiss the silver, pebbly shore, and linger with dulcet murmur around the deep-based promontories. The heaven — who has not heard of an Italian heaven? — one intense diffusion, one serene omnipresence, for ever smiling in inextinguishable beauty above the boundless sea, and for ever bending in azure mirth over the flowing outlines of the distant mountains.

The steam-boat proceeded on its equal and swift course along the shores, each varying in beauty, and redolent with sweets. They first passed Castel-a-Mare, and then the abrupt promontories on which Sorrento and ancient Amalfi are situated. The sublimity and intense loveliness of the scene wrapt in delight each bosom, not inaccessible to pure and lofty emotions. The hills, covered with ilex, dark laurel, and bright-leaved myrtle, were mirrored in the pellucid waves, which the lower branches caressed and kissed as the winds waved them. Behind arose other hills, also covered with wood; and, more distant, forming the grand back-ground, was sketched the huge ridge of lofty Apennines, which extends even to the foot of Italy. Still proceeding on their way to Pæstum, they exchanged the rocky beach for a low and dreary shore. The dusky mountains retired inland, and leaving a waste, the abode of mal’aria, and the haunt of robbers, the landscape assumed a gloomy magnificence, in place of the romantic and picturesque loveliness which had before charmed their eyes. Ladislas leaned from the side of the vessel, and gazed upon the beauty of nature with sentiments too disturbed for happiness. He was annoyed by the unpropitious presence of the idle and the gay. He saw Idalie in the midst of them, and did not even wish to join her while thus situated. He shrank into himself, and tried, forgetting the immediate discomforts of his position, to think only of that paradise into which love had led him, to compensate for his patriotic sorrows. He strove patiently to endure the tedious hours of this never-ending day, during which he must play a false part, and see his bride engaged by others. While his attention was thus occupied, the voice of the Princess Dashkhoff startled him, and looking up, he wondered how a face that seemed so bland, and a voice that spoke so fair, could hide so much wickedness and deceit. As the hours passed on, his situation became irksome in the extreme. Once or twice he drew near Idalie, and tried to disengage her from the crowd; but each time he saw the Princess watching him stealthily, while his young bride, with feminine prudence, avoided every opportunity of conversing apart with him. Ladislas could ill endure this. He began to fancy that he had a thousand things to say, and that their mutual safety depended on his being able to communicate them to her. He wrote a few lines hastily on the back of a letter, with a pencil, conjuring her to find some means of affording him a few minutes' conversation, and telling her that if this could not be done before, he should take occasion, while the rest of the company were otherwise occupied, to steal from them that evening to the larger temple, and there to await her joining him, for that every thing depended on his being able to speak to her. He scarcely knew what he meant as he wrote this; but driven by contradiction and impatience, and desirous of learning exactly how she meant to conduct herself on the Princess's disembarking at Naples, it seemed to him of the last importance that his request should be complied with. He was folding the paper, when the Princess was at his side, and addressed him. "A sonnet, Count Ladislas; surely a poetic imagination inspires you; may I not see it?" And she held out her hand. Taken unaware, Ladislas darted at her a look of indignation and horror, which made her step back trembling and in surprise. Was she discovered? The idea was fraught with terror. His revenge would surely be as fierce as the wrongs he suffered might well inspire. But Ladislas, perceiving the indiscretion of his conduct, masked his sensations with a smile, and replied,—"They are words of a Polish song, which I wish Idalie to translate for the amusement of your friends;" and stepping forward he gave Idalie the paper, and made his request. All pressed to know what the song was. Idalie glanced at the writing, and changing colour, was scarcely able to command her voice to make such an excuse as the imprudence of her husband rendered necessary. She said that it required time and thought, and that she could not at the moment comply; then crushing the paper between her trembling fingers, began confusedly to talk of something else. The company interchanged smiles, but even the Princess only suspected some loverlike compliment to her protégée. “Nay,” she said, “we must at least know the subject of these verses: what is it? tell us, I entreat you.”

“Treachery,” said Ladislas, unable to control his feelings. The Princess became ashy-pale; all her self-possession fled, and she turned from the searching glance of the Pole with a sickness of heart which almost punished her for her crimes.

They were now drawing near their destination. Idalie, grasping the paper, longed to read it before they should reach the shore. She tried to recede from the party, and Ladislas, watching her movements, in order to facilitate her designs entered into conversation with the Princess. He had effectually roused her fears and her curiosity, and she eagerly seized the opportunity which he offered her of conversing with him, endeavouring to find out whether he indeed suspected any thing, or whether her own guilty conscience suggested the alarm with which his strange expression had filled her. Ladislas thus contrived to engross her entire attention, and led her insensibly towards the stern of the vessel; and as they leant over its side, and gazed on the waters beneath, Idalie was effectually relieved from all observation. She now disengaged herself from the rest of the party, and walking forward, read the lines pencilled by Ladislas. Then terrified by the secret they contained, and unaccustomed to bear the weight of concealment — she tore the paper, as if fearful that its contents might be guessed, and was about to throw the fragments into the sea, when gazing cautiously round, she perceived the position of the Princess and Ladislas, and was aware that the lady’s quick eye would soon discern the floating scraps, as the boat passed on. Idalie feared the least shadow of danger, so she retreated from the vessel’s side, but still anxious to get rid of the perilous papers, she determined to throw them into the hold. She approached it, and looked down. Had the form of a serpent met her eye, she had not been more horror-struck; a shriek hovered on her lips, but with a strong effort she repressed it, and, staggering on, leant against the mast, trembling and aghast. She could not be deceived; it was Giorgio's dark and scowling eye that she had encountered; his sinister countenance, upturned, could not be mistaken. Was danger, then, so near, so pressing, or so inevitable? How could she convey the fatal intelligence to her husband, and put him on his guard? She remembered his written request, with which she had previously determined in prudence not to comply. But it would now afford her an opportunity, should no other offer, of informing him of the unexpected messmate which the crew had on board.

Thus perfidy, dark hate, and trembling fear, possessed the hearts of these human beings, who, had a cursory observer seen them as they glided over that sea of beauty, beneath the azure heaven, along that enchanted shore, attended by every luxury, waited on by every obvious blessing of life — he would have imagined that they had been selected from the world for the enjoyment of perfect happiness. But sunny sky and laughing ocean appeared to Idalie only as the haunt and resort of tigers and serpents; a dark mist seemed to blot the splendour of the sky, as the guilty souls of her fellow-creatures cast their deforming shadows over its brightness.

They had now arrived close on the low shore, and horses and two or three light open carriages were at the water's edge to convey them to the temples. They landed. Ladislas presented himself to hand Idalie across the plank from the vessel to the beach. "Yes?" — he asked her, in a voice of entreaty, as he pressed her hand. She softly returned the pressure, and the word "Beware," trembled on her lips, when the young Englishman who had before admired her, and had endeavoured to engross her attention the whole day, was again at her side, to tell her that the Princess was waiting for her in her carriage, and entreated her not to delay.

The party proceeded to where those glorious relics stand, between the mountains and the sea, rising like exhalations from the waste and barren soil, alone on the wide and dusky shore. A few sheep grazed at the base of the columns, and two or three wild-eyed men, clothed in garments of undressed sheep-skin, loitered about. Exclamations of wonder and delight burst from all, while Ladislas, stealing away to the more distant one, gladly escaped from the impertinent intrusion of the crowd, to indulge in lonely reverie among these ruins. "What is man in his highest glory?" he thought. "Had we burst the bonds of Poland; and had she, in her freedom, emulated the magical achievements of Greece; nevertheless, when time, with insidious serpent windings, had dragged its length through a few more centuries, the monuments we had erected would have fallen like these, and our monuments, a new Pæstum, have existed merely to excite the idiot wonder and frivolous curiosity of fools!”

Ladislas was certainly in no good humour while he thus vented his spleen; but was annoyed by two circumstances, sufficient to irritate a young philosopher: he beheld a scene, whose majestic beauty filled his soul with sensibility and awe, in the midst of a crowd of pretenders, more intent on the prospect of their pic-nic dinner, than on regarding the glories of art; and he saw his bride, surrounded by strangers, engrossed by their conversation and flattery, and unable to interchange one word or look of confidence with him. He sighed for the hours passed under the portico of Idalie’s solitary pavilion, and the near prospect of their voyage did not reconcile him to the present; for his soul was disturbed by the necessity of interchanging courtesies with his enemy, and haunted by images of treacherous attempts, from which his valour could not protect him.

It had been arranged that the party should dine at the archbishop’s palace, and not embark again until ten o’clock, when the moon would rise. After a couple of hours spent among the ruins, the servants informed them that their repast was ready; it was now nearly six o’clock, and after they had dined, more than two hours must elapse before they could depart. Night had gathered round the landscape, and its darkness did not invite even the most romantic to wander again among the ruins: the Princess, eager to provide for the amusement of her guests, contrived to discover a violin, a flute, and a pipe, and with the assistance of this music, which in the hands of Italian rustics was as true to time and expression as if Wieprecht himself had presided, they commenced dancing. Idalie’s hand was sought by the Englishman; she looked round the room, Ladislas was not there; he had doubtless repaired to the temples to wait for her, and ignorant of the presence of Giorgio, wholly unsuspicious, and off his guard, to what dangers might he not be exposed? Her blood ran cold at the thought; she decidedly refused to dance, and perceiving the Princess whirling round in a waltz at a distant part of the room, she dispatched her officious admirer on some feigned errand for refreshment, and hastily quitting the house, hurried along over the grass towards the temples. When she had first emerged into the night, the scene seemed wrapped in impenetrable darkness, but the stars shed their faint rays, and in a few moments she began to distinguish objects, and as she drew near the temple, she saw a man's form moving slowly among the columns: she did not doubt that it was her husband, wrapped in his cloak, awaiting her. She was hurrying towards him, when, leaning against one of the pillars, she saw Ladislas himself, and the other, at the same moment, exchanging his stealthy pace for a tiger-like spring. She saw a dagger flashing in his hand; she darted forward to arrest his arm, and the blow descended on her; with a faint shriek, she fell on the earth, when Ladislas turned and closed with the assassin; a mortal struggle ensued; already had Ladislas wrested the poignard from his grasp, when the villain drew another knife. Ladislas warded off the unexpected blow aimed at him with this, and plunged his own stiletto in the bravo's breast; he fell to earth with a heavy groan, and then the silence of the tomb rested on the scene; the white robe of Idalie, who lay fainting on the ground, directed Ladislas to her side. He raised her up in speechless agony — as he beheld the blood which stained her dress; but by this time she had recovered from her swoon; she assured him her wound was slight, that it was nothing; but again sank into his arms insensible. In a moment his plan was formed; ever eager and impetuous, he executed it ere any second thought could change it. He had before resolved not to rejoin the party in the archbishop's palace, but after his interview with Idalie, to hasten on board the steam-boat; he had therefore ordered his horse to be saddled, had led it to the temple, and fastened it to one of the columns. He lifted the senseless Idalie carefully in his arms, mounted his horse, and turning his steps from the lighted and noisy palace, wound his way to the lonely shore, where he found the captain and his crew already preparing for their homeward voyage. With their help Idalie was taken on board, and Ladislas gave orders for the instant heaving of the anchor, and their immediate departure. The captain asked for the rest of the company. "They return by land," said Ladislas. As he spoke the words he felt a slight sensation of remorse, remembering the difficulty they would have to get there; and how, during the darkness of night, they might fear to proceed on their journey on a tract of country haunted by banditti; but the senseless and pale form of Idalie dissipated these thoughts: to arrive at Naples, to procure assistance for her, and then if, as he hoped, her wound was slight, to continue their voyage before the Princess Dashkhoff's return, were motives too paramount to allow him to hesitate. The captain of the Sully asked no more questions; the anchor was weighed, the wheels set in motion, and a silver light in the east announced the rising of the moon, as they stood off from the shore, and made their swift way back to Naples. They had not gone far, before the care of Ladislas revived his fair bride. Her wound was in her arm, and had merely grazed the skin. Terror for her husband, horror for the mortal strife which had endangered his life, had caused her to faint, more than pain or loss of blood. She bound up her own arm; and then, as there appeared no necessity for medical aid, Ladislas revoked his orders for returning to Naples, but stretching out at once to sea, they began their voyage to Marseilles.

Meanwhile, during a pause in the dance, the absence of Ladislas and Idalie was observed by the feasters in the archbishop's palace. It excited some few sarcasms, which as it continued, grew more bitter. The Princess Dashkhoff joined in these, and yet she could not repress the disquietude of her heart. Had Ladislas alone been absent, her knowledge of the presence of Giorgio, and his designs, had sufficiently explained its cause and its duration, to her; but that Idalie also should not be found might bring a witness to the crime committed, and discover her own guilty share in the deed of blood perpetrated at her instigation. At length the rising of the moon announced the hour when they were to repair to the shore. The horses and carriages were brought to the door, and then it was found that the steed of Ladislas was missing. "But the Signora Idalie, has she not provided herself with a palfry?" asked the Englishman, sneering. They were now about to mount, when it was proposed to take a last look of the temples by moonlight. The Princess opposed this, but vainly; her conscience made her voice faint, and took from her the usual decision of her manner; so she walked on silently, half fearful that her foot might strike against some object of terror, and at every word spoken by the party, anticipating an exclamation of horror; the fitful moonbeams seemed to disclose here and there ghastly countenances and mangled limbs, and the dew of night appeared to her excited imagination as the slippery moisture of the life-blood of her victim.

They had scarcely entered the temple, when a peasant rushed in with the news that the steam-boat was gone: — he brought back Ladislas' horse, who had put the bridle into the man's hands on embarking; and the fellow declared that the fainting Idalie was his companion. Terror at the prospect of their dark ride, indignation at the selfish proceeding of the lovers, raised every voice against them; and the Princess, whom conscience had before made the most silent, hearing that the Pole was alive and safe, was now loudest and most bitter in her remarks. As they were thus all gathered together in dismay, debating what was to be done, and the Princess Dashkhoff in no gentle terms railing at the impropriety and ingratitude of Idalie's behaviour, and declaring that Poles alone could conduct themselves with such mingled deceit and baseness, a figure all bloody arose from the ground at her feet, and as the moon cast its pale rays on his yet paler countenance, she recognised Giorgio: the ladies shrieked, the men rushed towards him, while the Princess, desiring the earth to open and swallow her, stood transfixed as by a spell, gazing on the dying man in terror and despair. "He has escaped, Lady," said Giorgio, "Ladislas has escaped your plots, and I am become their victim:" he fell as he spoke these words, and when the Englishman drew near to raise, and if possible assist him, he found that life had entirely flown.

Thus ended the adventures of the Pole at Naples. The Countess returned in her caleche alone, for none would bear her company; the next day she left Naples, and was on her way to Russia, where her crime was unknown, except to those who had been accomplices in it. Marietta spread the intelligence of her sister's marriage, and thus entirely cleared Idalie's fair fame; and quitting Italy soon after, joined the happy Ladislas and his bride at Paris.

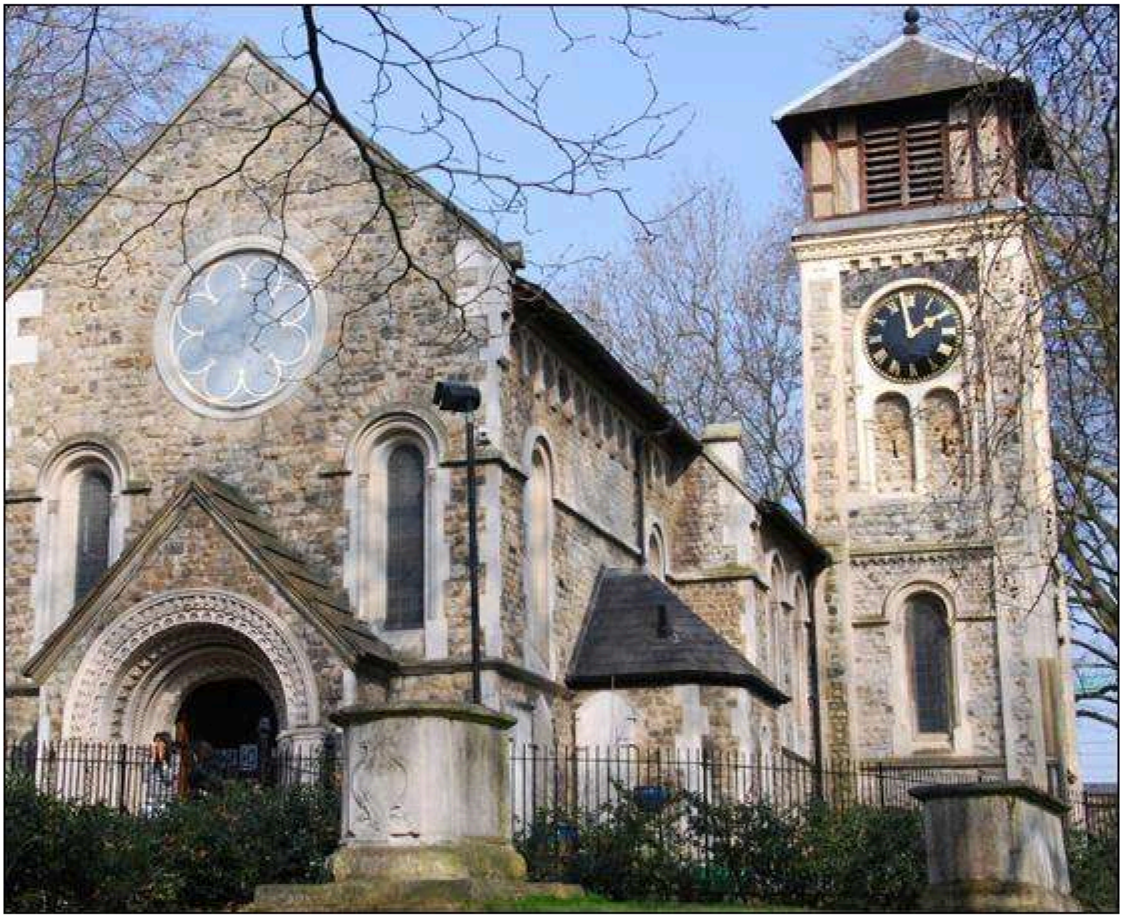
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

ON GHOSTS
A TALE OF THE PASSIONS
RECOLLECTIONS OF ITALY
THE BRIDE OF MODERN ITALY
ROGER DODSWORTH
THE SISTERS OF ALBANO
FERNINANDO EBOLI
THE MOURNER
THE EVIL EYE
THE FALSE RHYME
TRANSFORMATION
THE DREAM
THE SWISS PEASANT
THE BROTHER AND SISTER
THE INVISIBLE GIRL
THE SMUGGLER AND HIS FAMILY
THE MORTAL IMMORTAL
THE TRIAL OF LOVE
THE ELDER SON
THE PARVENUE
THE PILGRIMS
EUPHRASIA
THE HEIR OF MONDOLFO
VALERIUS
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TALE
THE POLE

LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

ON GHOSTS
A TALE OF THE PASSIONS
RECOLLECTIONS OF ITALY
THE BRIDE OF MODERN ITALY
ROGER DODSWORTH
THE SISTERS OF ALBANO
FERNINANDO EBOLI
THE MOURNER
THE EVIL EYE
THE FALSE RHYME
TRANSFORMATION
THE DREAM
THE SWISS PEASANT
THE BROTHER AND SISTER
THE INVISIBLE GIRL
THE SMUGGLER AND HIS FAMILY
THE MORTAL IMMORTAL
THE TRIAL OF LOVE
THE ELDER SON
THE PARVENUE
THE PILGRIMS
EUPHRASIA
THE HEIR OF MONDOLFO
VALERIUS
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TALE
THE POLE

The Children's Fiction

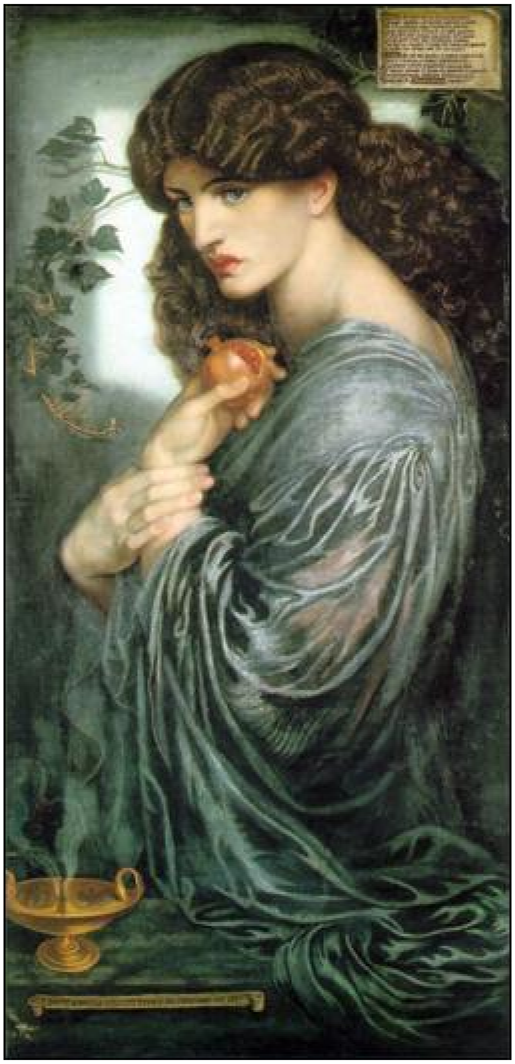


On 26 June 1814, Mary Godwin declared her love for Percy Shelley at Mary Wollstonecraft's graveside in the cemetery of St Pancras Old Church

PROSERPINE

Percy Shelley contributed two lyric poems, *Arethusa* and *Song of Proserpine While Gathering Flowers on the Plain of Enna* to Mary Shelley's *Proserpine*; a verse drama for children. The text was published in the 1832 periodical *The Winter's Wreath* although it had been composed twelve years earlier in 1820. *Arethusa* was removed by Mary Shelley in the 1832 version but it was restored in later editions. *Proserpine* is based on Ovid's tale of Pluto's abduction of Proserpine to the underworld. Ovid adapted the Greek myth of Persephone, Hades and Demeter; Ceres is the Roman counter-part to Demeter, who is Persephone's mother and the goddess of agriculture. Shelley's play is related from Ceres' perspective and concentrates on the relationship between, and separation of, the mother and daughter.

Between 1818 and 1820 Shelley studied and read a wide array of dramas, philosophical texts, children's books and works which focused on gender discourse, including her mother's book *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787). According to her journal Shelley concluded *Proserpine* on April 3rd 1820 and in 1824 she submitted her work to *The Browning Bear*. However, the drama was rejected and Shelley had to wait another six years for her work to appear in a periodical. The plot centres on Ceres' misery and her desperate search for her daughter alongside Proserpine's unhappiness at her capture and her desire to escape becoming of the Queen of the Underworld. The drama rewrites Ovid's tale from a feminist perspective with Shelley focusing almost exclusively on the female characters, revealing the importance of female solidarity in attempting to achieve desirable ends. Ovid's story concentrates on Proserpine's abduction and rape which highlights and even celebrates the victory of male violence. In contrast Shelley juxtaposes the fierce love and connection between mother and daughter who are 'forever joined' with the tyrannical, violent and brutality of Pluto's domination of Proserpine.



Proserpine by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1877

CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE.
INTRODUCTION.
DRAMATIS PERSONAE
ACT I.
ACT II

PREFATORY NOTE.

The editor came across the unpublished texts included in this volume as early as 1905. Perhaps he ought to apologize for delaying their appearance in print. The fact is he has long been afraid of overrating their intrinsic value. But as the great Shelley centenary year has come, perhaps this little monument of his wife's collaboration may take its modest place among the tributes which will be paid to his memory. For Mary Shelley's mythological dramas can at least claim to be the proper setting for some of the most beautiful lyrics of the poet, which so far have been read in undue isolation. And even as a literary sign of those times, as an example of that classical renaissance which the romantic period fostered, they may not be altogether negligible.

These biographical and literary points have been dealt with in an introduction for which the kindest help was long ago received from the late Dr. Garnett and the late Lord Abinger. Sir Walter Raleigh was also among the first to give both encouragement and guidance. My friends M. Emile Pons and Mr. Roger Ingpen have read the book in manuscript. The authorities of the Bodleian Library and of the Clarendon Press have been as generously helpful as is their well-known wont. To all the editor wishes to record his acknowledgements and thanks.

STRASBOURG.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

‘The compositions published in Mrs. Shelley’s lifetime afford but an inadequate conception of the intense sensibility and mental vigour of this extraordinary woman.’

Thus wrote Dr. Garnett, in 1862 (Preface to his Relics of Shelley). The words of praise may have sounded unexpectedly warm at that date. Perhaps the present volume will make the reader more willing to subscribe, or less inclined to demur.

Mary Godwin in her younger days certainly possessed a fair share of that nimbleness of invention which generally characterizes women of letters. Her favourite pastime as a child, she herself testifies,1 had been to write stories. And a dearer pleasure had been — to use her own characteristic abstract and elongated way of putting it—’the following up trains of thought which had for their subject the formation of a succession of imaginary incidents’. All readers of Shelley’s life remember how later on, as a girl of nineteen — and a two years’ wife — she was present, ‘a devout but nearly silent listener’, at the long symposia held by her husband and Byron in Switzerland (June 1816), and how the pondering over ‘German horrors’, and a common resolve to perpetrate ghost stories of their own, led her to imagine that most unwomanly of all feminine romances, Frankenstein. The paradoxical effort was paradoxically successful, and, as publishers’ lists aver to this day, Frankenstein’s monster has turned out to be the hardest-lived specimen of the ‘raw-head-and-bloody-bones’ school of romantic tales. So much, no doubt, to the credit of Mary Shelley. But more creditable, surely, is the fact that she was not tempted, as ‘Monk’ Lewis had been, to persevere in those lugubrious themes.

Although her publishers — et pour cause — insisted on styling her ‘the author of Frankenstein’, an entirely different vein appears in her later productions. Indeed, a quiet reserve of tone, a slow, sober, and sedate bearing, are henceforth characteristic of all her literary attitudes. It is almost a case of running from one to the other extreme. The force of style which even adverse critics acknowledged in Frankenstein was sometimes perilously akin to the most disputable kinds of romantic rant. But in the historical or society novels which followed, in the contributions which graced the ‘Keepsakes’ of the thirties, and even — alas — in the various prefaces and commentaries which accompanied the publication of so many poems of Shelley, his wife succumbed to an increasing habit of almost Victorian reticence and dignity. And those later novels and tales, though they sold well in their days and were kindly reviewed, can hardly boast of any reputation now. Most of them are pervaded by a brooding spirit of melancholy of the ‘moping’ rather than the ‘musical’ sort, and consequently rather ineffective as an artistic motive. Students of Shelley occasionally scan those pages with a view to pick some obscure ‘hints and indirections’, some veiled reminiscences, in the stories of the adventures and misfortunes of The Last Man or Lodore. And the books may be good biography at times — they are never life.

Altogether there is a curious contrast between the two aspects, hitherto revealed, of Mary Shelley’s literary activities. It is as if the pulse which had been beating so wildly, so frantically, in Frankenstein (1818), had lapsed, with Valperga (1823) and the rest, into an increasingly sluggish flow.

The following pages may be held to bridge the gap between those two extremes in a felicitous way. A more purely artistic mood, instinct with the serene joy and clear warmth of Italian skies, combining a good deal of youthful buoyancy with a sort of quiet and unpretending philosophy, is here represented. And it is submitted that the little classical fancies which Mrs. Shelley never ventured to publish are quite as worthy of consideration as her more ambitious prose works.

For one thing they give us the longest poetical effort of the writer. The moon of Epipsychidion never seems to have been thrilled with the music of the highest spheres. Yet there were times when Shelley’s inspiration and example fired her into something more than her usual calm and cold brilliancy.

One of those periods — perhaps the happiest period in Mary’s life — was during the early months in Italy of the English ‘exiles’. ‘She never was more strongly impelled to write than at this time; she felt her powers fresh and strong within her; all she wanted was some motive, some suggestion to guide her in the choice of a subject.’[2]

Shelley then expected her to try her hand at a drama, perhaps on the terrible story of the Cenci, or again on the catastrophes of Charles the First. Her Frankenstein was attracting more attention than had ever been granted to his own works. And Shelley, with that touching simplicity which characterized his loving moments, showed the greatest confidence in the literary career of his wife. He helped her and encouraged her in every way. He then translated for her Plato's Symposium. He led her on in her Latin and Italian studies. He wanted her — probably as a sort of preliminary exercise before her flight into tragedy — to translate Alfieri's Myrrha. 'Remember Charles the First, and do you be prepared to bring at least some of Myrrha translated,' he wrote; 'remember, remember Charles the First and Myrrha,' he insisted; and he quoted, for her benefit, the presumptuous aphorism of Godwin, in St. Leon, 'There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute'.3

But in the year that followed these auspicious days, the strain and stress of her life proved more powerful on Mary Shelley than the inspiration of literature. The loss of her little girl Clara, at Venice, on the 24th of September 1818, was cruel enough. However, she tried hard not to show the 'pusillanimous disposition' which, Godwin assured his daughter, characterizes the persons 'that sink long under a calamity of this nature'.4 But the death of her boy, William, at Rome, on the 4th of June 1819, reduced her to a 'kind of despair'. Whatever it could be to her husband, Italy no longer was for her a 'paradise of exiles'. The flush and excitement of the early months, the 'first fine careless rapture', were for ever gone. 'I shall never recover that blow,' Mary wrote on the 27th of June 1819; 'the thought never leaves me for a single moment; everything on earth has lost its interest for me,' This time her imperturbable father 'philosophized' in vain. With a more sympathetic and acuter intelligence of her case, Leigh Hunt insisted (July 1819) that she should try and give her paralysing sorrow some literary expression, 'strike her pen into some... genial subject... and bring up a fountain of gentle tears for us'. But the poor childless mother could only rehearse her complaint—'to have won, and thus cruelly to have lost' (4 August 1819). In fact she had, on William's death, discontinued her diary.

Yet on the date just mentioned, as Shelley reached his twenty-seven years, she plucked up courage and resumed the task. Shelley, however absorbed by the creative ardour of his Annus mirabilis, could not but observe that his wife's 'spirits continued wretchedly depressed' (5 August 1819); and though masculine enough to resent the fact at times more than pity it, he was human enough to persevere in that habit of co-operative reading and writing which is one of the finest traits of his married life. 'I write in the morning,' his wife testifies, 'read Latin till 2, when we dine; then I read some English book, and two cantos of Dante with Shelley'5 — a fair average, no doubt, of the homely aspect of the great days which produced The Cenci and Prometheus.

On the 12th November, in Florence, the birth of a second son, Percy Florence Shelley, helped Mary out of her sense of bereavement. Subsequent letters still occasionally admit 'low spirits'. But the entries in the Journal make it clear that the year 1819-20 was one of the most pleasantly industrious of her life. Not Dante only, but a motley series of books, great and small, ancient and modern, English and foreign, bespoke her attention. Not content with Latin, and the extemporized translations which Shelley could give her of Plato's Republic, she started Greek in 1820, and soon came to delight in it. And again she thought of original composition. 'Write', 'work,' — the words now occur daily in her Journal. These must mainly refer to the long historical novel, which she had planned, as early as 1819,6 under the title of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca, and which was not published until 1823, as Valperga. It was indeed a laborious task. The novel 'illustrative of the manners of the Middle Ages in Italy' had to be 'raked out of fifty old books', as Shelley said. 7

But heavy as the undertaking must have been, it certainly did not engross all the activities of Shelley's wife in this period. And it seems highly probable that the two little mythological dramas which we here publish belong to this same year 1820.

The evidence for this date is as follows. Shelley's lyrics, which these dramas include, were published by his wife (Posthumous Poems, 1824) among the 'poems written in 1820'. Another composition, in blank verse, curiously similar to Mary's own work, entitled Orpheus, has been allotted by Dr. Garnett (Relics of Shelley, 1862) to the same category. 8 Again, it may well be more than a coincidence, that the Proserpine motive occurs in that passage from Dante's Purgatorio, canto 28, on 'Matilda gathering flowers', which Shelley is known to have translated shortly before Medwin's visit in the late autumn of 1820.

O come, that I may hear
Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna's glen,
Thou seemest to my fancy, — singing here,
And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden, when
She lost the spring and Ceres her more dear.9

But we have a far more important, because a direct, testimony in a manuscript addition made by Thomas Medwin in the margin of a copy of his Life of Shelley (1847). 10 The passage is clearly intended — though chronology is no more than any other exact science the 'forte' of that most tantalizing of biographers — to refer to the year 1820.

'Mrs. Shelley had at this time been writing some little Dramas on classical subjects, one of which was the Rape of Proserpine, a very graceful composition which she has never published. Shelley contributed to this the exquisite fable of Arethusa and the Invocation to Ceres. — Among the Nymphs gathering flowers on Enna were two whom she called Ino and Uno, names which I remember in the Dialogue were irresistibly ludicrous. She also wrote one on Midas, into which were introduced by Shelley, in the Contest between Pan and Apollo, the Sublime Effusion of the latter, and Pan's characterised Ode.'

This statement of Medwin finally settles the question. The 'friend' at whose request, Mrs. Shelley says, 11 the lyrics were written by her husband, was herself. And she was the author of the dramas.12

The manuscript (Bodleian Library, MS. Shelley, d. 2) looks like a cheap exercise-book, originally of 40, now of 36 leaves, 8 1/4 x 6 inches, in boards. The contents are the dramas here presented, written in a clear legible hand — the equable hand of Mrs. Shelley. 13 There are very few words corrected or cancelled. It is obviously a fair copy. Mr. C. D. Locock, in his Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1903, pp. 24-25), has already pointed out the valuable emendations of the 'received' text of Shelley's lyrics which are found here. In fact the only mystery is why neither Shelley, nor Mary in the course of her long widowed years, should have published these curious, and surely not contemptible, by-products of their co-operation in the fruitful year 1820.

II.

For indeed there is more than a personal interest attached to these writings of Mrs. Shelley's. The fact that the same mind which had revelled, a few years earlier, in the fantastical horrors of Frankenstein's abortive creation, could now dwell on the melancholy fate of Proserpine or the humorous disappointment of Midas, and delight in their subtle poetical or moral symbolism — this fact has its significance. It is one of the earliest indications of the revival, in the heart of Romanticism, of the old love of classical myths and classical beauty.

The subject is a wide one, and cannot be adequately dealt with in this place. But a few words may not be superfluous for a correct historical appreciation of Mrs. Shelley's attempt.

How deficient had been the sense of classical beauty in the so-called classical age of English literature, is a trite consideration of criticism. The treatment of mythology is particularly conclusive on this point. Throughout the 'Augustan' era, mythology was approached as a mere treasure-house of pleasant fancies, artificial decorations, 'motives', whether sumptuous or meretricious. Allusions to Jove and Venus, Mercury, Apollo, or Bacchus, are of course found in every other page of Dryden, Pope, Prior, Swift, Gay, and Parnell. But no fresh presentation, no loving interpretation, of the old myths occur anywhere. The immortal stories were then part and parcel of a sort of poetical curriculum through which the whole school must be taken by the stern masters Tradition and Propriety. There is little to be wondered at, if this matter of curriculum was treated by the more passive scholars as a matter of course, and by the sharper and less reverent disciples as a matter of fun. Indeed, if any personality is then evinced in the adaptation of these old world themes, it is generally connected with a more or less emphatic disparagement or grotesque distortion of their real meaning.

When Dryden, for example, makes use of the legend of Midas, in his Wife of Bath's Tale, he makes, not Midas's minister, but his queen, tell the mighty secret — and thus secures another hit at woman's loquacity.

Prior’s Female Phaëton is a younger sister, who, jealous of her elder’s success, thus pleads with her ‘mamma’:

I’ll have my earl as well as she
  Or know the reason why.

And she wants to flaunt it accordingly.

Finally,

Fondness prevailed; mamma gave way;
  Kitty, at heart’s desire,
Obtained the chariot for a day,
  And set the world on fire.

Pandora, in Parnell’s Hesiod or the Rise of Woman, is only a

    ’shining vengeance...
A pleasing bosom-cheat, a specious ill’

sent by the gods upon earth to punish the race of Prometheus.

The most poetical fables of Greece are desecrated by Gay into mere miniatures for the decoration of his Fan.

Similar instances abound later on. When Armstrong brings in an apostrophe to the Naiads, it is in the course of a Poetical Essay on the Art of Preserving Health. And again, when Cowper stirs himself to intone an Ode to Apollo, it is in the same mock-heroic vein:

Patron of all those luckless brains,
  That to the wrong side leaning
Indite much metre with much pains
  And little or no meaning...

Even in Gray’s—’Pindaric Gray’s’ — treatment of classical themes, there is a sort of pervading ennui, or the forced appreciativeness of a gouty, disappointed man. The daughter of Jove to whom he dedicates his hymns too often is ‘Adversity’. And classical reminiscences have, even with him, a dull musty tinge which recalls the antiquarian in his Cambridge college-rooms rather than the visitor to Florence and Rome. For one thing, his allusions are too many, and too transitory, to appear anything but artistic tricks and verse-making tools. The 'Aegean deep', and 'Delphi's steep', and 'Meander's amber waves', and the 'rosy-crowned Loves', are too cursorily summoned, and dismissed, to suggest that they have been brought in for their own sweet sakes.

It was thus with all the fine quintessences of ancient lore, with all the pearl-like accretions of the faiths and fancies of the old world: they were handled about freely as a kind of curious but not so very rare coins, which found no currency in the deeper thoughts of our modern humanity, and could therefore be used as a mere badge of the learning and taste of a literary 'coterie'.

The very names of the ancient gods and heroes were in fact assuming that abstract anaemic look which common nouns have in everyday language. Thus, when Garrick, in his verses Upon a Lady's Embroidery, mentions 'Arachne', it is obvious that he does not expect the reader to think of the daring challenger of Minerva's art, or the Princess of Lydia, but just of a plain spider. And again, when Falconer, in his early Monody on the death of the Prince of Wales, expresses a rhetorical wish

'to aid hoarse howling Boreas with his sighs,'

that particular son of Astræus, whose love for the nymph Orithyia was long unsuccessful, because he could not 'sigh', is surely far from the poet's mind; and 'to swell the wind', or 'the gale', would have served his turn quite as well, though less 'elegantly'.

Even Gibbon, with all his partiality for whatever was pre- or post-Christian, had indeed no better word than 'elegant' for the ancient mythologies of Greece and Rome, and he surely reflected no particularly advanced opinion when he praised and damned, in one breath, 'the pleasant and absurd system of Paganism.'1 No wonder if in his days, and for a long time after, the passionate giants of the Ages of Fable had dwindled down to the pretty puppets with which the daughters of the gentry had to while away many a school hour.

But the days of this rhetorical — or satirical, didactic — or perfunctory, treatment of classical themes were doomed. It is the glory of Romanticism to have opened 'magic casements' not only on 'the foam of perilous seas' in the West, but also on

the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
From ancient melody had ceased.[2]

Romanticism, as a freshening up of all the sources of life, a general rejuvenescence of the soul, a ubiquitous visiting of the spirit of delight and wonder, could not confine itself to the fields of mediaeval romance. Even the records of the Greek and Roman thought assumed a new beauty; the classical sense was let free from its antiquarian trammels, and the perennial fanes resounded to the songs of a more impassioned worship.

The change, however, took some time. And it must be admitted that in England, especially, the Romantic movement was slow to go back to classical themes. Winckelmann and Goethe, and Chénier — the last, indeed, practically all unknown to his contemporaries — had long rediscovered Antiquity, and felt its pulse anew, and praised its enduring power, when English poetry had little, if anything, to show in answer to the plaintive invocation of Blake to the Ancient Muses.

The first generation of English Romantics either shunned the subject altogether, or simply echoed Blake's isolated lines in isolated passages as regretful and almost as despondent. From Persia to Paraguay Southey could wander and seek after exotic themes; his days could be 'passed among the dead' — but neither the classic lands nor the classic heroes ever seem to have detained him. Walter Scott's 'sphere of sensation may be almost exactly limited by the growth of heather', as Ruskin says;[3] and when he came to Rome, his last illness prevented him from any attempt he might have wished to make to enlarge his field of vision. Wordsworth was even less far-travelled, and his home-made poetry never thought of the 'Pagan' and his 'creed outworn', but as a distinct pis-aller in the way of inspiration.[4] And again, though Coleridge has a few magnificent lines about them, he seems to have even less willingly than Wordsworth hearkened after

The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion.[5]

It was to be otherwise with the later English Romantic poets. They lived and worked at a time when the whole atmosphere and even the paraphernalia of literary composition had just undergone a considerable change. After a period of comparative seclusion and self-concentration, England at the Peace of Amiens once more found its way to Europe — and vice versa. And from our point of view this widening of prospects is especially noticeable. For the classical revival in Romanticism appears to be closely connected with it.

It is an alluring subject to investigate. How the progress of scholarship, the recent ‘finds’ of archaeology, the extension of travelling along Mediterranean shores, the political enthusiasms evoked by the stirrings of young Italy and young Greece, all combined to reawaken in the poetical imagination of the times the dormant memories of antiquity has not yet been told by the historians of literature.6

But — and this is sufficient for our purpose — every one knows what the Elgin Marbles have done for Keats and Shelley; and what inspirations were derived from their pilgrimages in classic lands by all the poets of this and the following generation, from Byron to Landor. Such experiences could not but react on the common conception of mythology. A knowledge of the great classical sculpture of Greece could not but invest with a new dignity and chastity the notions which so far had been nurtured on the Venus de’ Medici and the Belvedere Apollo — even Shelley lived and possibly died under their spell. And ‘returning to the nature which had inspired the ancient myths’, the Romantic poets must have felt with a keener sense ‘their exquisite vitality’.7 The whole tenor of English Romanticism may be said to have been affected thereby.

For English Romanticism — and this is one of its most distinctive merits — had no exclusiveness about it. It was too spontaneous, one would almost say, too unconscious, ever to be clannish. It grew, untrammelled by codes, uncrystallized into formulas, a living thing always, not a subject-matter for grandiloquent manifestoes and more or less dignified squabbles. It could therefore absorb and turn to account elements which seemed antagonistic to it in the more sophisticated forms it assumed in other literatures. Thus, whilst French Romanticism — in spite of what it may or may not have owed to Chénier — became often distinctly, deliberately, wilfully anti-classical, whilst for example8 Victor Hugo in that all-comprehending

Légende des Siècles could find room for the Hegira and for Zim-Zizimi, but did not consecrate a single line to the departed glories of mythical Greece, the Romantic poets of England may claim to have restored in freshness and purity the religion of antiquity. Indeed their voice was so convincing that even the great Christian chorus that broke out afresh in the Victorian era could not entirely drown it, and Elizabeth Barrett had an apologetic way of dismissing ‘the dead Pan’, and all the ‘vain false gods of Hellas’, with an acknowledgement of

your beauty which confesses
Some chief Beauty conquering you.

This may be taken to have been the average attitude, in the forties, towards classical mythology. That twenty years before, at least in the Shelley circle, it was far less grudging, we now have definite proof.

Not only was Shelley prepared to admit, with the liberal opinion of the time, that ancient mythology ‘was a system of nature concealed under the veil of allegory’, a system in which ‘a thousand fanciful fables contained a secret and mystic meaning’:9 he was prepared to go a considerable step farther, and claim that there was no essential difference between ancient mythology and the theology of the Christians, that both were interpretations, in more or less figurative language, of the great mysteries of being, and indeed that the earlier interpretation, precisely because it was more frankly figurative and poetical than the later one, was better fitted to stimulate and to allay the sense of wonder which ought to accompany a reverent and high-souled man throughout his life-career.

In the earlier phase of Shelley’s thought, this identification of the ancient and the modern faiths was derogatory to both. The letter which he had written in 1812 for ihe edification of Lord Ellenborough revelled in the contemplation of a time ‘when the Christian religion shall have faded from the earth, when its memory like that of Polytheism now shall remain, but remain only as the subject of ridicule and wonder’. But as time went on, Shelley’s views became less purely negative. Instead of ruling the adversaries back to back out of court, he bethought himself of venturing a plea in favour of the older and weaker one. It may have been in 1817 that he contemplated an ‘Essay in favour of polytheism’.10 He was then living on the fringe of a charmed circle of amateur and adventurous Hellenists who could have furthered the scheme. His great friend, Thomas Love Peacock, ‘Greeky Peaky’, was a personal acquaintance of Thomas Taylor ‘the Platonist’, alias ‘Pagan Taylor’. And Taylor’s translations and commentaries of Plato had been favourites of Shelley in his college days. Something at least of Taylor’s queer mixture of flaming enthusiasm and tortuous ingenuity may be said to appear in the unexpected document we have now to examine.

It is a little draft of an Essay, which occurs, in Mrs. Shelley’s handwriting, as an insertion in her Journal for the Italian period. The fragment — for it is no more — must be quoted in full.[11]

The necessity of a Belief in the
Heathen Mythology
to a Christian

If two facts are related not contradictory of equal probability & with equal evidence, if we believe one we must believe the other.

1st. There is as good proof of the Heathen Mythology as of the Christian Religion.

2ly. that they [do] not contradict one another.

Con[clusion]. If a man believes in one he must believe in both.

Examination of the proofs of the Xtian religion — the Bible & its authors. The twelve stones that existed in the time of the writer prove the miraculous passage of the river Jordan.[12] The immoveability of the Island of Delos proves the accouchement of Latona[13] — the Bible of the Greek religion consists in Homer, Hesiod & the Fragments of Orpheus &c. — All that came afterwards to be considered apocryphal — Ovid = Josephus — of each of these writers we may believe just what we cho[o]se.

To seek in these Poets for the creed & proofs of mythology which are as follows — Examination of these — 1st with regard to proof — 2 in contradiction or conformity to the Bible — various apparitions of God in that Book [—] Jupiter considered by himself — his attributes — disposition [—] acts — whether as God revealed himself as the Almighty to the Patriarchs & as Jehovah to the Jews he did not reveal himself as

Jupiter to the Greeks — the possibility of various revelations — that he revealed himself to Cyrus.14

The inferior deities — the sons of God & the Angels — the difficulty of Jupiter's children explained away — the imagination of the poets — of the prophets — whether the circumstance of the sons of God living with women15 being related in one sentence makes it more probable than the details of Greek — Various messages of the Angels — of the deities — Abraham, Lot or Tobit. Raphael [—]Mercury to Priam16 — Calypso & Ulysses — the angel w^d^ then play the better part of the two whereas he now plays the worse. The ass of Balaam — Oracles — Prophets. The revelation of God as Jupiter to the Greeks — a more successful revelation than that as Jehovah to the Jews — Power, wisdom, beauty, & obedience of the Greeks — greater & of longer continuance — than those of the Jews. Jehovah's promises worse kept than Jupiter's — the Jews or Prophets had not a more consistent or decided notion concerning after life & the Judgements of God than the Greeks [—] Angels disappear at one time in the Bible & afterwards appear again. The revelation to the Greeks more complete than to the Jews — prophesies of Christ by the heathens more incontrovertible than those of the Jews. The coming of X. a confirmation of both religions. The cessation of oracles a proof of this. The Xtians better off than any but the Jews as blind as the Heathens — Much more conformable to an idea of [the] goodness of God that he should have revealed himself to the Greeks than that he left them in ignorance. Vergil & Ovid not truth of the heathen Mythology, but the interpretation of a heathen — as Milton's Paradise Lost is the interpretation of a Christian religion of the Bible. The interpretation of the mythology of Vergil & the interpretation of the Bible by Milton compared — whether one is more inconsistent than the other — In what they are contradictory. Prometheus desmotes quoted by Paul17 [—] all religion false except that which is revealed — revelation depends upon a certain degree of civilization — writing necessary — no oral tradition to be a part of faith — the worship of the Sun no revelation — Having lost the books [of] the Egyptians we have no knowledge of their peculiar revelations. If the revelation of God to the Jews on Mt Sinai had been more peculiar & impressive than some of those to the Greeks they w^{d} not immediately after have worshiped a calf — A latitude in revelation — How to judge of prophets — the proof [of] the Jewish Prophets being prophets.

The only public revelation that Jehovah ever made of himself was on Mt Sinai — Every other depended upon the testimony of a very few & usually of a single individual — We will first therefore consider the revelation of Mount Sinai. Taking the fact plainly it happened thus. The Jews were told by a man whom they believed to have supernatural powers that they were to prepare for that God w^{d} reveal himself in three days on the mountain at the sound of a trumpet. On the 3rd day there was a cloud & lightning on the mountain & the voice of a trumpet extremely loud. The people were ordered to stand round the foot of the mountain & not on pain of death to infringe upon the bounds — The man in whom they confided went up the mountain & came down again bringing them word

The draft unfortunately leaves off here, and we are unable to know for certain whether this Shelleyan paradox, greatly daring, meant to minimize the importance of the ‘only public revelation’ granted to the chosen people. But we have enough to understand the general trend of the argument. It did not actually intend to sap the foundations of Scriptural authority. But it was bold enough to risk a little shaking in order to prove that the Sacred Books of the Greeks and Romans did not, after all, present us with a much more rickety structure. This was a task of conciliation rather than destruction. And yet even this conservative view of the Shelleys’ exegesis cannot — and will not — detract from the value of the above document. Surely, this curious theory of the equal ‘inspiration’ of Polytheism and the Jewish or Christian religions, whether it was invented or simply espoused by Mrs. Shelley, evinces in her — for the time being at least — a very considerable share of that adventurous if somewhat uncritical alacrity of mind which carried the poet through so many religious and political problems. It certainly vindicates her, more completely perhaps than anything hitherto published, against the strictures of those who knew her chiefly or exclusively in later years, and could speak of her as a ‘most conventional slave’, who ‘even affected the pious dodge’, and ‘was not a suitable companion for the poet’.18 Mrs. Shelley — at twenty-three years of age — had not yet run the full ‘career of her humour’; and her enthusiasm for classical mythology may well have, later on, gone the way of her admiration for Spinoza, whom she read with Shelley that winter (1820-1), as Medwin notes,19 and 'whose arguments she then thought irrefutable — tempora mutantur!'

However that may be, the two little mythological dramas on Proserpine and Midas assume, in the light of that enthusiasm, a special interest. They stand — or fall — both as a literary, and to a certain extent as an intellectual effort. They are more than an attitude, and not much less than an avowal. Not only do they claim our attention as the single poetical work of any length which seems to have been undertaken by Mrs. Shelley; they are a unique and touching monument of that intimate co-operation which at times, especially in the early years in Italy, could make the union of 'the May' and 'the Elf' almost unreservedly delightful. It would undoubtedly be fatuous exaggeration to ascribe a very high place in literature to these little Ovidian fancies of Mrs. Shelley. The scenes, after all, are little better than adaptations — fairly close adaptations — of the Latin poet's well-known tales.

Even Proserpine, though clearly the more successful of the two, both more strongly knit as drama, and less uneven in style and versification, cannot for a moment compare with the far more original interpretations of Tennyson, Swinburne, or Meredith.20 But it is hardly fair to draw in the great names of the latter part of the century. The parallel would be more illuminating — and the final award passed on Mrs. Shelley's attempt more favourable — if we were to think of a contemporary production like 'Barry Cornwall's' Rape of Proserpine, which, being published in 1820, it is just possible that the Shelleys should have known. B. W. Procter's poem is also a dramatic 'scene', written 'in imitation of the mode originated by the Greek Tragic Writers'. In fact those hallowed models seem to have left far fewer traces in Barry Cornwall's verse than the Alexandrian — or pseudo-Alexandrian — tradition of meretricious graces and coquettish fancies, which the eighteenth century had already run to death.21 And, more damnable still, the poetical essence of the legend, the identification of Proserpine's twofold existence with the grand alternation of nature's seasons, has been entirely neglected by the author. Surely his work, though published, is quite as deservedly obscure as Mrs. Shelley's derelict manuscript. Midas has the privilege, if it be one, of not challenging any obvious comparison. The subject, since Lyly's and Dryden's days, has hardly attracted the attention of the poets. It was so eminently fit for the lighter kinds of presentation that the agile bibliographer who aimed at completeness would have to go through a fairly long list of masques,22 comic operas, or ‘burlettas’, all dealing with the ludicrous misfortunes of the Phrygian king. But an examination of these would be sheer pedantry in this place. Here again Mrs. Shelley has stuck to her Latin source as closely as she could.23 She has made a gallant attempt to connect the two stories with which Midas has ever since Ovid’s days been associated, and a distinct — indeed a too perceptible — effort to press out a moral meaning in this, as she had easily extricated a cosmological meaning in the other tale.

Perhaps we have said too much to introduce these two little unpretending poetical dramas. They might indeed have been allowed to speak for themselves. A new frame often makes a new face; and some of the best known and most exquisite of Shelley’s lyrics, when restored to the surroundings for which the poet intended them, needed no other set-off to appeal to the reader with a fresh charm of quiet classical grace and beauty. But the charm will operate all the more unfailingly, if we remember that this clear classical mood was by no means such a common element in the literary atmosphere of the times — not even a permanent element in the authors’ lives. We have here none of the feverish ecstasy that lifts Prometheus and Hellas far above the ordinary range of philosophical or political poetry. But Shelley’s encouragement, probably his guidance and supervision, have raised his wife’s inspiration to a place considerably higher than that of Frankenstein or Valperga. With all their faults these pages reflect some of that irradiation which Shelley cast around his own life — the irradiation of a dream beauteous and generous, beauteous in its theology (or its substitute for theology) and generous even in its satire of human weaknesses.

MYTHOLOGICAL DRAMAS.

Unless otherwise pointed out — by brackets, or in the notes — the text, spelling, and punctuation of the MS. have been strictly adhered to.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Ceres.
Proserpine.
Ino, Eunoe Nymphs attendant upon Proserpine.
Iris.
Arethusa, Naiad of a Spring.

Shades from Hell, among which Ascalaphus.

Scene; the plain of Enna, in Sicily.

ACT I.

Scene; a beautiful plain, shadowed on one side by an overhanging rock, on the other a chesnut wood. Etna at a distance.
Enter Ceres, Proserpine, Ino and Eunoe.

Pros. Dear Mother, leave me not! I love to rest
Under the shadow of that hanging cave
And listen to your tales. Your Proserpine
Entreats you stay; sit on this shady bank,
And as I twine a wreathe tell once again
The combat of the Titans and the Gods;
Or how the Python fell beneath the dart
Of dread Apollo; or of Daphne's change, —
That coyest Grecian maid, whose pointed leaves
Now shade her lover's brow. And I the while
Gathering the starry flowers of this fair plain
Will weave a chaplet, Mother, for thy hair.
But without thee, the plain I think is vacant,
Its blossoms fade, — its tall fresh grasses droop,
Nodding their heads like dull things half asleep; —
Go not, dear Mother, from your Proserpine.

Cer. My lovely child, it is high Jove's command: —
The golden self-moved seats surround his throne,
The nectar is poured out by Ganymede,
And the ambrosia fills the golden baskets;
They drink, for Bacchus is already there,
But none will eat till I dispense the food.
I must away — dear Proserpine, farewel! —
Eunoe can tell thee how the giants fell;
Or dark-eyed Ino sing the saddest change
Of Syrinx or of Daphne, or the doom
Of impious Prometheus, and the boy

Of fair Pandora, Mother of mankind.
This only charge I leave thee and thy nymphs, —
Depart not from each other; be thou circled
By that fair guard, and then no earth-born Power
Would tempt my wrath, and steal thee from their sight[.]
But wandering alone, by feint or force,
You might be lost, and I might never know
Thy hapless fate. Farewel, sweet daughter mine,
Remember my commands.

Pros. — Mother, farewel!
Climb the bright sky with rapid wings; and swift
As a beam shot from great Apollo's bow
Rebounds from the calm mirror of the sea
Back to his quiver in the Sun, do thou
Return again to thy loved Proserpine.

(Exit Ceres.)

And now, dear Nymphs, while the hot sun is high
Darting his influence right upon the plain,
Let us all sit beneath the narrow shade
That noontide Etna casts. — And, Ino, sweet,
Come hither; and while idling thus we rest,
Repeat in verses sweet the tale which says
How great Prometheus from Apollo's car
Stole heaven's fire — a God-like gift for Man!
Or the more pleasing tale of Aphrodite;
How she arose from the salt Ocean's foam,
And sailing in her pearly shell, arrived
On Cyprus sunny shore, where myrtles bloomed
And sweetest flowers, to welcome Beauty's Queen;
And ready harnessed on the golden sands
Stood milk-white doves linked to a sea-shell car,

With which she scaled the heavens, and took her seat
Among the admiring Gods.

Eun.   Proserpine's tale
Is sweeter far than Ino's sweetest aong.

Pros. Ino, you knew erewhile a River-God,
Who loved you well and did you oft entice
To his transparent waves and flower-strewn banks.
He loved high poesy and wove sweet sounds,
And would sing to you as you sat reclined
On the fresh grass beside his shady cave,
From which clear waters bubbled, dancing forth,

And spreading freshness in the noontide air.
When you returned you would enchant our ears
With tales and songs which did entice the fauns,
With Pan their King from their green haunts, to hear.
Tell me one now, for like the God himself,
Tender they were and fanciful, and wrapt
The hearer in sweet dreams of shady groves,
Blue skies, and clearest, pebble-paved streams.

Ino. I will repeat the tale which most I loved;
Which tells how lily-crowned Arethusa,
Your favourite Nymph, quitted her native Greece,
Flying the liquid God Alpheus, who followed,
Cleaving the desarts of the pathless deep,
And rose in Sicily, where now she flows
The clearest spring of Enna's gifted plain.

(By Shelley)

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows,
In the Acroceraunian mountains, —
From cloud, and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks
With her rainbow locks,
Streaming among the streams, —

Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine,
Which slopes to the Western gleams: —
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
And opened a chasm
In the rocks; — with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It unsealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below: —
And the beard and the hair

Of the river God were
Seen through the torrent's sweep

As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

Oh, save me! oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!
The loud ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer[,]
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam,
Behind her descended
Her billows unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream: —
Like a gloomy stain
On the Emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,
As an eagle pursueing
A dove to its ruin,
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearled thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams,
Which amid the streams

Weave a network of coloured light,
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night: —
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword fish dark,
Under the Ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts,
They passed to their Dorian Home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted,
Grown single hearted
They ply their watery tasks.

At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill[, —]
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of asphodel, —
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore; —
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky,
When they love, but live no more.

Pros. Thanks, Ino dear, you have beguiled an hour
With poesy that might make pause to list
The nightingale in her sweet evening song.

But now no more of ease and idleness,
The sun stoops to the west, and Enna’s plain
Is overshadowed by the growing form
Of giant Etna: — Nymphs, let us arise,
And cull the sweetest flowers of the field,
And with swift fingers twine a blooming wreathe
For my dear Mother’s rich and waving hair.

Eunoe. Violets blue and white anemonies

Bloom on the plain, — but I will climb the brow
Of that o’erhanging hill, to gather thence
That loveliest rose, it will adorn thy crown;
Ino, guard Proserpine till my return.

(Exit.)

Ino. How lovely is this plain! — Nor Grecian vale,
Nor bright Ausonia’s ilex bearing shores,
The myrtle bowers of Aphrodite’s sweet isle,
Or Naxos burthened with the luscious vine,
Can boast such fertile or such verdant fields
As these, which young Spring sprinkles with her stars; —
Nor Crete which boasts fair Amalthea’s horn
Can be compared with the bright golden fields
Of Ceres, Queen of plenteous Sicily.

Pros. Sweet Ino, well I know the love you bear
My dearest Mother prompts your partial voice,
And that love makes you doubly dear to me.
But you are idling, — look[,] my lap is full
Of sweetest flowers; — haste to gather more,
That before sunset we may make our crown.
Last night as we strayed through that glade, methought
The wind that swept my cheek bore on its wings
The scent of fragrant violets, hid

Beneath the straggling underwood; Haste, sweet,
To gather them; fear not — I will not stray.

Ino. Nor fear that I shall loiter in my task.
(Exit.)
(By Shelley.)

Pros. *(sings as she gathers her flowers.)*
    Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth,
        Thou from whose immortal bosom
    Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
        Leaf, and blade, and bud, and blossom,
  Breathe thine influence most divine
  On thine own child Proserpine.

   If with mists of evening dew
        Thou dost nourish these young flowers
    Till they grow in scent and hue
        Fairest children of the hours[,]
  Breathe thine influence most divine
  On thine own child Proserpine.

(she looks around.)

My nymphs have left me, neglecting the commands
Of my dear Mother. Where can they have strayed?
Her caution makes me fear to be alone; —
I'll pass that yawning cave and seek the spring
Of Arethuse, where water-lilies bloom
Perhaps the nymph now wakes tending her waves,
She loves me well and oft desires my stay, —

The lilies shall adorn my mother's crown.
(Exit.)
(After a pause enter Eunoe.)

Eun. I’ve won my prize! look at this fragrant rose!
But where is Proserpine? Ino has strayed
Too far I fear, and she will be fatigued,
As I am now, by my long toilsome search.

Enter Ino.
Oh! you here, Wanderer! Where is Proserpine?

Ino. My lap’s heaped up with sweets; dear Proserpine,
You will not chide me now for idleness; —
Look here are all the treasures of the field, —
First these fresh violets, which crouched beneath
A mossy rock, playing at hide and seek
With both the sight and sense through the high fern;
Star-eyed narcissi & the drooping bells
Of hyacinths; and purple polianthus,
Delightful flowers are these; but where is she,
The loveliest of them all, our Mistress dear?

Eun. I know not, even now I left her here,
Guarded by you, oh Ino, while I climbed
Up yonder steep for this most worthless rose: —
Know you not where she is? Did you forget
Ceres’ behest, and thus forsake her child?

Ino. Chide not, unkind Eunoe, I but went

Down that dark glade, where underneath the shade
Of those high trees the sweetest violets grow, —
I went at her command. Alas! Alas!
My heart sinks down; I dread she may be lost; —
Eunoe, climb the hill, search that ravine,
Whose close, dark sides may hide her from our view: —
Oh, dearest, haste! Is that her snow-white robe?

Eun. No;—’tis a faun beside its sleeping Mother,
Browsing the grass; — what will thy Mother say,
Dear Proserpine, what will bright Ceres feel,
If her return be welcomed not by thee?

Ino. These are wild thoughts, — & we are wrong to fear
That any ill can touch the child of heaven;
She is not lost, — trust me, she has but strayed
Up some steep mountain path, or in yon dell,
Or to the rock where yellow wall-flowers grow,
Scaling with venturous step the narrow path
Which the goats fear to tread; — she will return
And mock our fears.

Eun. The sun now dips his beams
In the bright sea; Ceres descends at eve
From Jove’s high conclave; if her much-loved child
Should meet her not in yonder golden field,
Where to the evening wind the ripe grain waves

Its yellow head, how will her heart misgive.
Let us adjure the Naiad of yon brook[,]
She may perchance have seen our Proserpine,
And tell us to what distant field she’s strayed: —
Wait thou, dear Ino, here, while I repair
To the tree-shaded source of her swift stream.

(Exit Eunoe.)

Ino. Why does my heart misgive? & scalding tears,
That should but mourn, now prophecy her loss?
Oh, Proserpine! Where’er your luckless fate
Has hurried you, — to wastes of desart sand,
Or black Cymmerian cave, or dread Hell,

Yet Ino still will follow! Look where Eunoe
Comes, with down cast eyes and faltering steps,
I fear the worst; —

Re-enter Eunoe.
Has she not then been seen?

Eun. Alas, all hope is vanished! Hymera says
She slept the livelong day while the hot beams
Of Phoebus drank her waves; — nor did she wake
Until her reed-crowned head was wet with dew; —
If she had passed her grot she slept the while.

Ino. Alas! Alas! I see the golden car,
And hear the flapping of the dragons wings,
Ceres descends to Earth. I dare not stay,
I dare not meet the sorrow of her look[,]

The angry glance of her severest eyes.

Eun. Quick up the mountain! I will search the dell,
She must return, or I will never more.

(Exit.)

Ino. And yet I will not fly, though I fear much
Her angry frown and just reproach, yet shame
Shall quell this childish fear, all hope of safety
For her lost child rests but in her high power,
And yet I tremble as I see her come.

Enter Ceres.

Cer. Where is my daughter? have I aught to dread?
Where does she stray? Ino, you answer not; —

She was aye wont to meet me in yon field, —
Your looks bode ill; — I fear my child is lost.

Ino. Eunoe now seeks her track among the woods;
Fear not, great Ceres, she has only strayed.

Cer. Alas! My boding heart, — I dread the worst.
Oh, careless nymphs! oh, heedless Proserpine!
And did you leave her wandering by herself?
She is immortal, — yet unusual fear
Runs through my veins. Let all the woods be sought,
Let every dryad, every gamesome faun
Tell where they last beheld her snowy feet
Tread the soft, mossy paths of the wild wood.
But that I see the base of Etna firm
I well might fear that she had fallen a prey

To Earth-born Typheus, who might have arisen
And seized her as the fairest child of heaven,
That in his dreary caverns she lies bound;
It is not so: all is as safe and calm
As when I left my child. Oh, fatal day!
Eunoe does not return: in vain she seeks
Through the black woods and down the darksome glades,
And night is hiding all things from our view.
I will away, and on the highest top
Of snowy Etna, kindle two clear flames.
Night shall not hide her from my anxious search,
No moment will I rest, or sleep, or pause
Till she returns, until I clasp again
My only loved one, my lost Proserpine.

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II

Scene.
The Plain of Enna as before.
Enter Ino & Eunoe.

Eun. How weary am I! and the hot sun flushes
My cheeks that else were white with fear and grief[.]
E'er since that fatal day, dear sister nymph,
On which we lost our lovely Proserpine,
I have but wept and watched the livelong night
And all the day have wandered through the woods[.]

Ino. How all is changed since that unhappy eve!
Ceres forever weeps, seeking her child,
And in her rage has struck the land with blight;
Trinacria mourns with her; — its fertile fields
Are dry and barren, and all little brooks
Struggling scarce creep within their altered banks;
The flowers that erst were wont with bended heads,
To gaze within the clear and glassy wave,
Have died, unwatered by the failing stream. —
And yet their hue but mocks the deeper grief
Which is the fountain of these bitter tears.
But who is this, that with such eager looks

Hastens this way? —

Eun. 'Tis fairest Arethuse,
A stranger naiad, yet you know her well.

Ino. My eyes were blind with tears.
Enter Arethusa.

Dear Arethuse,
Methinks I read glad tidings in your eyes,
Your smiles are the swift messengers that bear
A tale of coming joy, which we, alas!
Can answer but with tears, unless you bring
To our grief solace, Hope to our Despair.
Have you found Proserpine? or know you where
The loved nymph wanders, hidden from our search?

Areth. Where is corn-crowned Ceres? I have hastened
To ease her anxious heart.

Eun. Oh! dearest Naiad,
Herald of joy! Now will great Ceres bless
Thy welcome coming & more welcome tale.

Ino. Since that unhappy day when Ceres lost
Her much-loved child, she wanders through the isle;
Dark blight is showered from her looks of sorrow; —
And where tall corn and all seed-bearing grass
Rose from beneath her step, they wither now

Fading under the frown of her bent brows:
The springs decrease; — the fields whose delicate green
Was late her chief delight, now please alone,
Because they, withered, seem to share her grief.

Areth. Unhappy Goddess! how I pity thee!

Ino. At night upon high Etna’s topmost peak
She lights two flames, that shining through the isle
Leave dark no wood, or cave, or mountain path,
Their sunlike splendour makes the moon-beams dim,

And the bright stars are lost within their day.
She’s in yon field, — she comes towards this plain,
Her loosened hair has fallen on her neck,
Uncircled by the coronal of grain: —
Her cheeks are wan, — her step is faint & slow.

Enter Ceres.

Cer. I faint with weariness: a dreadful thirst
Possesses me! Must I give up the search?
Oh! never, dearest Proserpine, until
I once more clasp thee in my vacant arms!
Help me, dear Arethuse! fill some deep shell
With the clear waters of thine ice-cold spring,
And bring it me; — I faint with heat and thirst.

Areth. My words are better than my freshest waves[:]
I saw your Proserpine —

Cer. Arethusa, where?
Tell me! my heart beats quick, & hope and fear
Cause my weak limbs to fail me. —

Areth. Sit, Goddess,
Upon this mossy bank, beneath the shade
Of this tall rock, and I will tell my tale.
The day you lost your child, I left my source.
With my Alpheus I had wandered down
The sloping shore into the sunbright sea;
And at the coast we paused, watching the waves
Of our mixed waters dance into the main: —
When suddenly I heard the thundering tread
Of iron hoofed steeds trampling the ground,
And a faint shriek that made my blood run cold.
I saw the King of Hell in his black car,
And in his arms he bore your fairest child,

Fair as the moon encircled by the night, —
But that she strove, and cast her arms aloft,
And cried, “My Mother!” — When she saw me near
She would have sprung from his detested arms,
And with a tone of deepest grief, she cried,
“Oh, Arethuse!” I hastened at her call —
But Pluto when he saw that aid was nigh,
Struck furiously the green earth with his spear,

Which yawned, — and down the deep Tartarian gulph
His black car rolled — the green earth closed above.

Cer. (*starting up*)
Is this thy doom, great Jove? & shall Hell’s king
Quitting dark Tartarus, spread grief and tears
Among the dwellers of your bright abodes?
Then let him seize the earth itself, the stars, —
And all your wide dominion be his prey! —
Your sister calls upon your love, great King!
As you are God I do demand your help! —
Restore my child, or let all heaven sink,
And the fair world be chaos once again!

Ino. Look[!] in the East that loveliest bow is formed[;]
Heaven’s single-arched bridge, it touches now
The Earth, and ‘mid the pathless wastes of heaven
It paves a way for Jove’s fair Messenger; —
Iris descends, and towards this field she comes.

Areth. Sovereign of Harvests, ‘tis the Messenger
That will bring joy to thee. Thine eyes light up
With sparkling hope, thy cheeks are pale with dread.

Enter Iris.

Cer. Speak, heavenly Iris! let thy words be poured
Into my drooping soul, like dews of eve
On a too long parched field. — Where is my Proserpine?

Iris. Sister of Heaven, as by Joves throne I stood
The voice of thy deep prayer arose, — it filled
The heavenly courts with sorrow and dismay:
The Thunderer frowned, & heaven shook with dread
I bear his will to thee, ‘tis fixed by fate,
Nor prayer nor murmur e’er can alter it.
If Proserpine while she has lived in hell
Has not polluted by Tartarian food
Her heavenly essence, then she may return,
And wander without fear on Enna’s plain,
Or take her seat among the Gods above.
If she has touched the fruits of Erebus,
She never may return to upper air,
But doomed to dwell amidst the shades of death,
The wife of Pluto and the Queen of Hell.

Cer. Joy treads upon the sluggish heels of care!
The child of heaven disdains Tartarian food.
Pluto[,] give up thy prey! restore my child!

Iris. Soon she will see again the sun of Heaven,
By gloomy shapes, inhabitants of Hell,
Attended, and again behold the field
Of Enna, the fair flowers & the streams,
Her late delight, — & more than all, her Mother.

Ino. Our much-loved, long-lost Mistress, do you come?

And shall once more your nymphs attend your steps?
Will you again irradiate this isle —
That drooped when you were lost? & once again
Trinacria smile beneath your Mother's eye?

(Ceres and her companions are ranged on one side in eager expectation; from, the cave on the other, enter Proserpine, attended by various dark & gloomy shapes bearing torches; among which Ascalaphus. Ceres & Proserpine embrace; — her nymphs surround her.)

Cer. Welcome, dear Proserpine! Welcome to light,
To this green earth and to your Mother's arms.
You are too beautiful for Pluto's Queen;
In the dark Stygian air your blooming cheeks
Have lost their roseate tint, and your bright form
Has faded in that night unfit for thee.

Pros. Then I again behold thee, Mother dear: —
Again I tread the flowery plain of Enna,
And clasp thee, Arethuse, & you, my nymphs;
I have escaped from hateful Tartarus,
The abode of furies and all loathed shapes
That thronged around me, making hell more black.
Oh! I could worship thee, light giving Sun,
Who spreadest warmth and radiance o'er the world.
Look at the branches of those chesnut trees,
That wave to the soft breezes, while their stems

Are tinged with red by the sun's slanting rays.
And the soft clouds that float 'twixt earth and sky.
How sweet are all these sights! There all is night!
No God like that (*pointing to the sun*)

smiles on the Elysian plains,
The air [is] windless, and all shapes are still.

Iris. And must I interpose in this deep joy,
And sternly cloud your hopes? Oh! answer me,
Art thou still, Proserpine, a child of light?
Or hast thou dimmed thy attributes of Heaven
By such Tartarian food as must for ever
Condemn thee to be Queen of Hell & Night?

Pros. No, Iris, no, — I still am pure as thee:
Offspring of light and air, I have no stain
Of Hell. I am for ever thine, oh, Mother!

Cer. (*to the shades from Hell*)
Begone, foul visitants to upper air!
Back to your dens! nor stain the sunny earth
By shadows thrown from forms so foul — Crouch in!
Proserpine, child of light, is not your Queen!

(to the nymphs)

Quick bring my car, — we will ascend to heaven,
Deserting Earth, till by decree of Jove,
Eternal laws shall bind the King of Hell
To leave in peace the offspring of the sky.

Ascal. Stay, Ceres! By the dread decree of Jove

Your child is doomed to be eternal Queen
Of Tartarus, — nor may she dare ascend
The sunbright regions of Olympian Jove,
Or tread the green Earth ‘mid attendant nymphs.
Proserpine, call to mind your walk last eve,

When as you wandered in Elysian groves,
Through bowers for ever green, and mossy walks,
Where flowers never die, nor wind disturbs
The sacred calm, whose silence soothes the dead,
Nor interposing clouds, with dun wings, dim
Its mild and silver light, you plucked its fruit,
You ate of a pomegranate's seeds —

Cer. Be silent,
Prophet of evil, hateful to the Gods!
Sweet Proserpine, my child, look upon me.
You shrink; your trembling form & pallid cheeks
Would make his words seem true which are most false[.]
Thou didst not taste the food of Erebus; —
Offspring of Gods art thou, — nor Hell, nor Jove
Shall tear thee from thy Mother's clasping arms.

Pros. If fate decrees, can we resist? farewel!
Oh! Mother, dearer to your child than light,

Than all the forms of this sweet earth & sky,
Though dear are these, and dear are my poor nymphs,
Whom I must leave; — oh! can immortals weep?
And can a Goddess die as mortals do,
Or live & reign where it is death to be?
Ino, dear Arethuse, again you lose
Your hapless Proserpine, lost to herself
When she quits you for gloomy Tartarus.

Cer. Is there no help, great Jove? If she depart
I will descend with her — the Earth shall lose
Its proud fertility, and Erebus
Shall bear my gifts throughout th' unchanging year.

Valued till now by thee, tyrant of Gods!
My harvests ripening by Tartarian fires
Shall feed the dead with Heaven’s ambrosial food.
Wilt thou not then repent, brother unkind,
Viewing the barren earth with vain regret,
Thou didst not shew more mercy to my child?

Ino. We will all leave the light and go with thee,
In Hell thou shalt be girt by Heaven-born nymphs,
Elysium shall be Enna, — thou’lt not mourn
Thy natal plain, which will have lost its worth
Having lost thee, its nursling and its Queen.

Areth. I will sink down with thee; — my lily crown

Shall bloom in Erebus, portentous loss
To Earth, which by degrees will fade & fall
In envy of our happier lot in Hell; —
And the bright sun and the fresh winds of heaven
Shall light its depths and fan its stagnant air.

(They cling round Proserpine; the Shades of Hell seperate
and stand between them.)

Ascal. Depart! She is our Queen! Ye may not come!
Hark to Jove’s thunder! shrink away in fear
From unknown forms, whose tyranny ye’ll feel
In groans and tears if ye insult their power.

Iris. Behold Jove’s balance hung in upper sky;
There are ye weighed, — to that ye must submit.

Cer. Oh! Jove, have mercy on a Mother’s prayer!
Shall it be nought to be akin to thee?
And shall thy sister, Queen of fertile Earth,
Derided be by these foul shapes of Hell?
Look at the scales, they’re poized with equal weights!
What can this mean? Leave me not[,] Proserpine[,]
Cling to thy Mother’s side! He shall not dare
Divide the sucker from the parent stem.

(embraces her)

Ascal. He is almighty! who shall set the bounds
To his high will? let him decide our plea!
Fate is with us, & Proserpine is ours!

(He endeavours to part Ceres & Proserpine, the nymphs prevent him.)

Cer. Peace, ominous bird of Hell & Night! Depart!
Nor with thy skriech disturb a Mother’s grief,
Avaunt! It is to Jove we pray, not thee.

Iris. Thy fate, sweet Proserpine, is sealed by Jove,
When Enna is starred by flowers, and the sun
Shoots his hot rays strait on the gladsome land,
When Summer reigns, then thou shalt live on Earth,
And tread these plains, or sporting with your nymphs,
Or at your Mother’s side, in peaceful joy.
But when hard frost congeals the bare, black ground,
The trees have lost their leaves, & painted birds
Wailing for food sail through the piercing air;
Then you descend to deepest night and reign
Great Queen of Tartarus, ‘mid shadows dire,
Offspring of Hell, — or in the silent groves

Of, fair Elysium through which Lethe runs,
The sleepy river; where the windless air
Is never struck by flight or song of bird, —

But all is calm and clear, bestowing rest,
After the toil of life, to wretched men,
Whom thus the Gods reward for sufferings
Gods cannot know; a throng of empty shades!
The endless circle of the year will bring
Joy in its turn, and seperation sad;
Six months to light and Earth, — six months to Hell.

Pros. Dear Mother, let me kiss that tear which steals
Down your pale cheek altered by care and grief.
This is not misery; ‘tis but a slight change
Prom our late happy lot. Six months with thee,
Each moment freighted with an age of love:
And the six short months in saddest Tartarus
Shall pass in dreams of swift returning joy.
Six months together we shall dwell on earth,
Six months in dreams we shall companions be,
Jove’s doom is void; we are forever joined.

Cer. Oh, fairest child! sweet summer visitor!
Thy looks cheer me, so shall they cheer this land
Which I will fly, thou gone. Nor seed of grass,
Or corn shall grow, thou absent from the earth;
But all shall lie beneath in hateful night

Until at thy return, the fresh green springs,
The fields are covered o’er with summer plants.
And when thou goest the heavy grain will droop
And die under my frown, scattering the seeds,

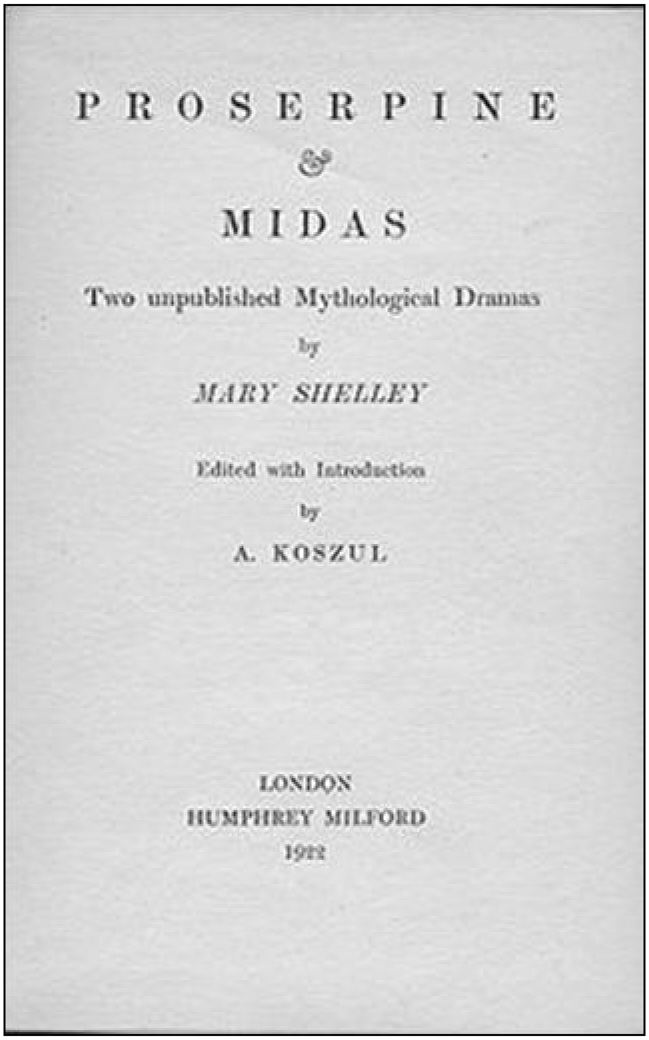
That will not reappear till your return.
Farewel, sweet child, Queen of the nether world,
There shine as chaste Diana’s silver car
Islanded in the deep circumfluous night.
Giver of fruits! for such thou shalt be styled,
Sweet Prophetess of Summer, coming forth
From the slant shadow of the wintry earth,
In thy car drawn by snowy-breasted swallows!
Another kiss, & then again farewel!
Winter in losing thee has lost its all,
And will be doubly bare, & hoar, & drear,
Its bleak winds whistling o’er the cold pinched ground
Which neither flower or grass will decorate.
And as my tears fall first, so shall the trees
Shed their changed leaves upon your six months tomb:
The clouded air will hide from Phoebus’ eye
The dreadful change your absence operates.
Thus has black Pluto changed the reign of Jove,
He seizes half the Earth when he takes thee.

THE END

MIDAS

Midas is often viewed as the companion drama to *Proserpine,* with Shelley writing the tale and Percy Shelley contributing two lyric poems once again. *Midas* was written in 1820 but unlike *Proserpine* Shelley was entirely unsuccessful in managing to get the play published in any children's magazines during the 1830's. The drama was never published in her lifetime and it was not until Koszul's 1922 edition that the play saw the light of day. Ultimately Koszul was more interested in Percy Shelley's poems that Mary Shelley's drama, an interest which was continued by many scholars throughout much of the 20th century until feminists began to focus on more than *Frankenstein* when considering Shelley's literary output. The issue of gender is raised by the very nature of the drama's composition; lyric poetry was the domain of male artists while the everyday dramas were associated with female writers. The husband and wife duo divide the labour along these traditional lines, but Mary Shelley simultaneously offers a critique of certain masculine drives and values.

Midas is a contrast to *Proserpine* as it concentrates on a male dominated world of egoism and competition and not the communal, sharing solidarity between women. The drama begins with a contest between Apollo and Pan over who is the best musician and Tmolus is appointed as the judge. Apollo is granted victory, but this is contested by Pan, who asks that King Midas adjudicate instead, leading Apollo to seek revenge upon the mortal King. Apollo is associated with the masculine qualities of science 'all medicine is mine', reason 'wisdom...and power divine' and metaphysics: 'I am the eye with which the Universe/Beholds itself and knows it is divine'; in contrast Pan possesses feminine attributes such as an affiliation with nature 'From the forests and highlands/We come, we come' and affection. Midas's one wish serves to demonstrate the noxious consequences of a desire for abundant wealth and riches which Shelley considered to be particularly masculine attributes as they function as a symbol of acquisition and power. Shelley was interested in retelling these Greek myths and challenging the often male dominated and not infrequent misogynist slants of the narratives. This glorification of the masculine and demonization of the feminine was especially prominent in interpretations of the myths by authors such as Chaucer who cast women in an unfavourable light.



PROSERPINE
&
MIDAS

Two unpublished Mythological Dramas
by
MARY SHELLEY

Edited with Introduction
by
A. KOSZUL

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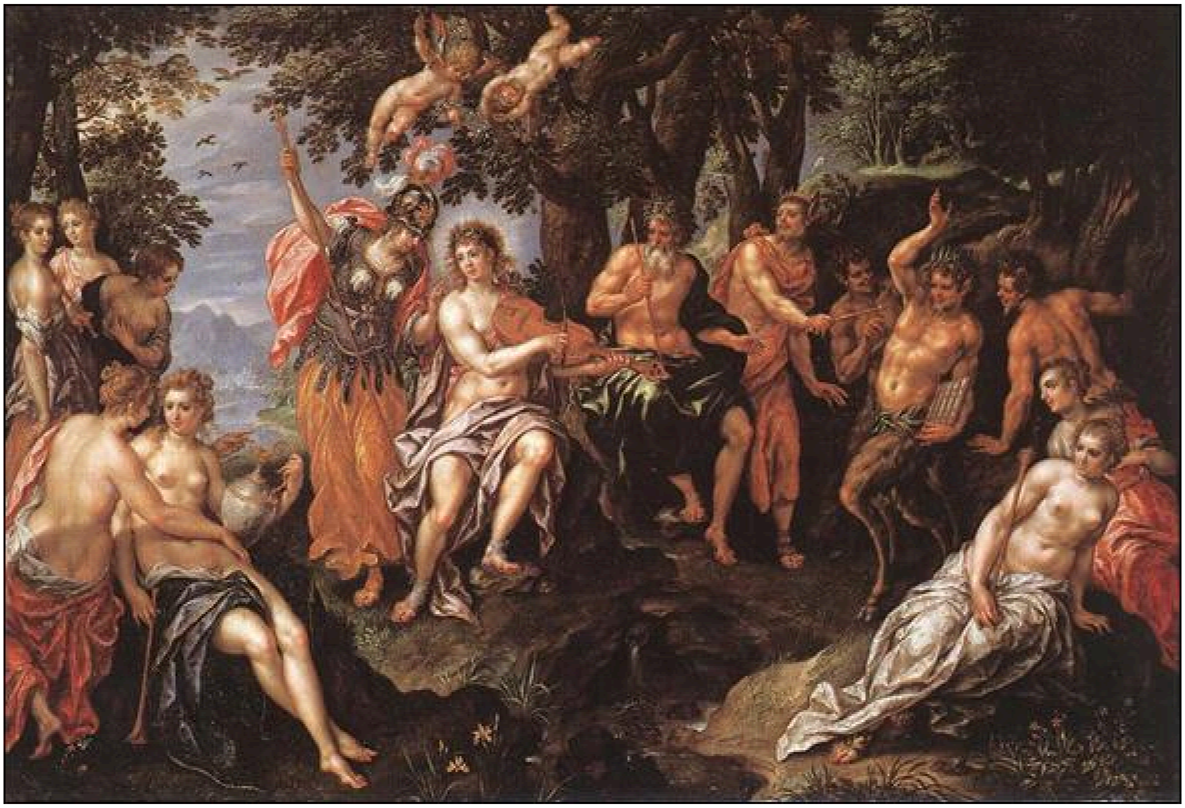
The first edition's title page

CONTENTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE
ACT I.
ACT II



'The Contest between Apollo and Pan' by Hendrick de Clerck, 1620

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Immortals.
Apollo.
Bacchus.
Pan.
Silenus.
Tmolus, God of a Hill.
Fauns, &c.

Mortals.
Midas, King of Phrygia.
Zopyrion, his Prime-Minister.
Asphalion, Lacon, Courtiers.
Courtiers, Attendants, Priests, &c.

Scene, Phrygia.

ACT I.

Scene; a rural spot; on one side, a bare Hill, on the other an Ilex wood; a stream with reeds on its banks.

The Curtain rises and discovers Tmolus seated on a throne of turf, on his right hand Apollo with his lyre, attended by the Muses; on the left, Pan, fauns, &c.

Enter Midas and Zopyrion.

Midas. The Hours have oped the palace of the dawn
And through the Eastern gates of Heaven, Aurora
Comes charioted on light, her wind-swift steeds,
Winged with roseate clouds, strain up the steep.
She loosely holds the reins, her golden hair,
Its strings outspread by the sweet morning breeze[,]
Blinds the pale stars. Our rural tasks begin;
The young lambs bleat pent up within the fold,
The herds low in their stalls, & the blithe cock
Halloos most loudly to his distant mates.
But who are these we see? these are not men,
Divine of form & sple[n]didly arrayed,

They sit in solemn conclave. Is that Pan,
Our Country God, surrounded by his Fauns?
And who is he whose crown of gold & harp
Are attributes of high Apollo?

Zopyr. Best
Your majesty retire; we may offend.

Midas. Aye, and at the base thought the coward blood
Deserts your trembling lips; but follow me.
Oh Gods! for such your bearing is, & sure
No mortal ever yet possessed the gold
That glitters on your silken robes; may one,
Who, though a king, can boast of no descent
More noble than Deucalion's stone-formed men[,]
May I demand the cause for which you deign
To print upon this worthless Phrygian earth
The vestige of your gold-inwoven sandals,
Or why that old white-headed man sits there
Upon that grassy throne, & looks as he
Were stationed umpire to some weighty cause[?]

Tmolus. God Pan with his blithe pipe which the Fauns love
Has challenged Phoebus of the golden lyre[,]
Saying his Syrinx can give sweeter notes
Than the stringed instrument Apollo boasts.
I judge between the parties. Welcome, King,

I am old Tmolus, God of that bare Hill,
You may remain and hear th' Immortals sing.

Mid. [*aside*] My judgement is made up before I hear;
Pan is my guardian God, old-horned Pan,
The Phrygian's God who watches o'er our flocks;
No harmony can equal his blithe pipe.

(Shelley.)

Apollo (sings).

The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
  Curtained with star-enwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
  Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams & that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
  I walk over the mountains & the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the Ocean foam, —
  My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence & the air
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts with which I kill
  Deceit, that loves the night & fears the day;
All men who do, or even imagine ill
  Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might
Until diminished by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows & the flowers
  With their etherial colours; the moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
  Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of heaven,
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even —
For grief that I depart they weep & frown [;]
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle [?]

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself & knows it is divine.
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medecine is mine;
All light of art or nature; — to my song
Victory and praise, in its own right, belong.

(Shelley.)

Pan (sings).

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands
W[h]ere loud waves are dumb,
Listening my sweet pipings;

The wind in the reeds & the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes[,]
The cicale above in the lime[,]
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was
Listening my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, & Sylvans, & Fauns
And the nymphs of the woods & the waves
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves[,]
And all that did then attend & follow
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo!
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the daedal Earth —
And of heaven — & the giant wars —
And Love, & death, [&] birth,

And then I changed my pipings,
Singing how down the vale of Menalus,
I pursued a maiden & clasped a reed,
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
It breaks in our bosom & then we bleed!
All wept, as I think both ye now would
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

Tmol. Phoebus, the palm is thine. The Fauns may dance
To the blithe tune of ever merry Pan;
But wisdom, beauty, & the power divine
Of highest poesy lives within thy strain.
Named by the Gods the King of melody,
Receive from my weak hands a second crown.

Pan. Old Grey-beard, you say false! you think by this
To win Apollo with his sultry beams
To thaw your snowy head, & to renew
The worn out soil of your bare, ugly hill.
I do appeal to Phrygian Midas here;
Let him decide, he is no partial judge.

Mid. Immortal Pan, to my poor, mortal ears
Your sprightly song in melody outweighs
His drowsy tune; he put me fast asleep,
As my prime minister, Zopyrion, knows;

But your gay notes awoke me, & to you,
If I were Tmolus, would I give the prize.

Apol. And who art thou who dar'st among the Gods
Mingle thy mortal voice? Insensate fool!
Does not the doom of Marsyas fill with dread
Thy impious soul? or would'st thou also be
Another victim to my justest wrath?
But fear no more; — thy punishment shall be
But as a symbol of thy blunted sense.
Have asses' ears! and thus to the whole world
Wear thou the marks of what thou art,
Let Pan himself blush at such a judge.

(Exeunt all except Midas & Zopyrion.)

Mid. What said he? is it true, Zopyrion?
Yet if it be; you must not look on me,
But shut your eyes, nor dare behold my shame.

Ah! here they are! two long, smooth asses[‘] ears!
They stick upright! Ah, I am sick with shame!

Zopyr. I cannot tell your Majesty my grief,
Or how my soul’s oppressed with the sad change
That has, alas! befallen your royal ears.

Mid. A truce to your fine speeches now, Zopyrion;
To you it appertains to find some mode
Of hiding my sad chance, if not you die.

Zopyr. Great King, alas! my thoughts are dull & slow[;]

Pardon my folly, might they not be cut,
Rounded off handsomely, like human ears [?]

Mid. (*feeling his ears*)
They’re long & thick; I fear ‘twould give me pain;
And then if vengeful Phoebus should command
Another pair to grow — that will not do.

Zopyr. You wear a little crown of carved gold,
Which just appears to tell you are a king;
If that were large and had a cowl of silk,
Studded with gems, which none would dare gainsay,
Then might you —

Mid. Now you have it! friend,
I will reward you with some princely gift.
But, hark! Zopyrion, not a word of this;
If to a single soul you tell my shame

You die. I’ll to the palace the back way
And manufacture my new diadem,
The which all other kings shall imitate
As if they also had my asses[‘] ears.

(Exit.)

Zopyr. (*watching Midas off*)
He cannot hear me now, and I may laugh!
I should have burst had he staid longer here.
Two long, smooth asses’ ears that stick upright;
Oh, that Apollo had but made him bray!
I’ll to the palace; there I’ll laugh my fill

With — hold! What were the last words that Midas said?
I may not speak — not to my friends disclose
The strangest tale? ha! ha! and when I laugh
I must not tell the cause? none know the truth?
None know King Midas has — but who comes here?
It is Asphalion: he knows not this change;
I must look grave & sad; for now a smile
If Midas knows it may prove capital.
Yet when I think of those — oh! I shall die,
In either way, by silence or by speech.

Enter Asphalion.

Asphal. Know you, Zopyrion? —

Zopyr. What[!] you know it too?
Then I may laugh; — oh, what relief is this!
How does he look, the courtiers gathering round?

Does he hang down his head, & his ears too?
Oh, I shall die! (*laughs.*)

Asph. He is a queer old dog,
Yet not so laughable. 'Tis true, he's drunk,
And sings and reels under the broad, green leaves,
And hanging clusters of his crown of grapes. —

Zopyr. A crown of grapes! but can that hide his ears[?]

Asph. His ears! — Oh, no! they stick upright between.
When Midas saw him —

Zopyr. Whom then do you mean?

Did you not say —

Asph. I spoke of old Silenus;
Who having missed his way in these wild woods,
And lost his tipsey company — was found
Sucking the juicy clusters of the vines
That sprung where'er he trod: — and reeling on
Some shepherds found him in yon ilex wood.
They brought him to the king, who honouring him
For Bacchus' sake, has gladly welcomed him,
And will conduct him with solemnity
To the disconsolate Fauns from whom he's strayed.
But have you seen the new-fashioned diadem
That Midas wears? —

Zopyr. Ha! he has got it on! —
Know you the secret cause why with such care
He hides his royal head? you have not seen —

Asph. Seen what?

Zopyr. Ah! then, no matter: — (*turns away agitated.*)
I dare not sneak or stay[;]
If I remain I shall discover all.

Asp. I see the king has trusted to your care
Some great state secret which you fain would hide.
I am your friend, trust my fidelity,

If you're in doubt I'll be your counsellor.

Zopyr. (*with great importance.*)
Secret, Asphalion! How came you to know?
If my great master (which I do not say)
Should think me a fit friend in whom to pour
The weighty secrets of his royal heart,
Shall I betray his trust? It is not so; —
I am a poor despised slave. — No more!
Join we the festal band which will conduct
Silenus to his woods again?

Asph. My friend,
Wherefore mistrust a faithful heart? Confide
The whole to me; — I will be still as death.

Zopyr. As death! you know not what you say; farewell[!]
A little will I commune with my soul,
And then I'll join you at the palace-gate.

Asph. Will you then tell me? —

Zopyr. Cease to vex, my friend,
Your soul and mine with false suspicion, (*aside*) Oh!
I am choked! I'd give full ten years of my life
To tell, to laugh — & yet I dare not speak.

Asph. Zopyrion, remember that you hurt
The trusting bosom of a faithful friend
By your unjust concealment.

(Exit.)

Zopyr. Oh, he's gone!
To him I dare not speak, nor yet to Lacon;
No human ears may hear what must be told.
I cannot keep it in, assuredly;
I shall some night discuss it in my sleep.
It will not keep! Oh! greenest reeds that sway
And nod your feathered heads beneath the sun,
Be you depositaries of my soul,
Be you my friends in this extremity[:]
I shall not risk my head when I tell you
The fatal truth, the heart oppressing fact,

(stooping down & whispering)

(Enter Midas, Silenus & others, who fall back during the scene; Midas is always anxious about his crown, & Zopyrion gets behind him & tries to smother his laughter.)

Silen. (*very drunk*) Again I find you, Bacchus, runaway!
Welcome, my glorious boy! Another time
Stray not; or leave your poor old foster-father
In the wild mazes of a wood, in which
I might have wandered many hundred years,
Had not some merry fellows helped me out,
And had not this king kindly welcomed me,
I might have fared more ill than you erewhile
In Pentheus' prisons, that death fated rogue.

Bac. (*to Midas.*) To you I owe great thanks & will reward
Your hospitality. Tell me your name
And what this country is.

Midas. My name is Midas —

The Reeds (*nodding their heads*).

Midas, the king, has the ears of an ass.

Midas. (*turning round & seizing Zopyrion*).
Villain, you lie! he dies who shall repeat
Those traitrous words. Seize on Zopyrion!

The Reeds. Midas, the king, has the ears of an ass.

Mid. Search through the crowd; it is a woman's voice
That dares belie her king, & makes her life
A forfeit to his fury.

Asph. There is no woman here.

Bac. Calm yourself, Midas; none believe the tale,
Some impious man or gamesome faun dares feign
In vile contempt of your most royal ears.
Off with your crown, & shew the world the lie!

Mid. (*holding his crown tight*)
Never! What[!] shall a vile calumnious slave
Dictate the actions of a crowned king?
Zopyrion, this lie springs from you — you perish!

Zopy. I, say that Midas has got asses' ears?
May great Apollo strike me with his shaft
If to a single soul I ever told
So false, so foul a calumny!

Bac. Midas!

The Reeds. Midas, the king, has the ears of an ass.

Bac. Silence! or by my Godhead I strike dead
Who shall again insult the noble king.
Midas, you are my friend, for you have saved
And hospitably welcomed my old faun;
Choose your reward, for here I swear your wish,
Whatever it may be, shall be fulfilled.

Zopyr. (*aside*) Sure he will wish his asses' ears in Styx.

Midas. What[!] may I choose from out the deep, rich mine
Of human fancy, & the wildest thoughts
That passed till now unheeded through my brain,
A wish, a hope, to be fulfilled by you?
Nature shall bend her laws at my command,
And I possess as my reward one thing
That I have longed for with unceasing care.

Bac. Pause, noble king, ere you express this wish[.]
Let not an error or rash folly spoil
My benefaction; pause and then declare,
For what you ask shall be, as I have sworn.

Mid. Let all I touch be gold, most glorious gold!

Let me be rich! and where I stretch my hands,
(That like Orion I could touch the stars!)
Be radiant gold! God Bacchus, you have sworn,
I claim your word, — my ears are quite forgot!

The Reeds. Midas, the king, has the ears of an ass.

Mid. You lie, & yet I care not —

Zopyr. (*aside to Midas*) Yet might I
But have advised your Majesty, I would
Have made one God undo the other's work —

Midas. (*aside to Zopyr*).
Advise yourself, my friend, or you may grow
Shorter by a head ere night. — I am blessed,
Happier than ever earthly man could boast.
Do you fulfil your words?

Bac. Yes, thoughtless man!
And much I fear if you have not the ears
You have the judgement of an ass. Farewel!
I found you rich & happy; & I leave you,
Though you know it not, miserably poor.
Your boon is granted, — touch! make gold! Some here
Help carry old Silenus off, who sleeps
The divine sleep of heavy wine. Farewel!

Mid. Bacchus, divine, how shall I pay my thanks[?]

(Exeunt.)

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II

Scene; a splendid apartment in the Palace of Midas.

Enter Midas
(with a golden rose in his hand).

Mid. Gold! glorious gold! I am made up of gold!
I pluck a rose, a silly, fading rose,
Its soft, pink petals change to yellow gold;
Its stem, its leaves are gold — and what before
Was fit for a poor peasant's festal dress
May now adorn a Queen. I lift a stone,
A heavy, useless mass, a slave would spurn,
What is more valueless? 'Tis solid gold!
A king might war on me to win the same.
And as I pass my hand thus through the air,
A little shower of sightless dust falls down
A shower of gold. O, now I am a king!
I've spread my hands against my palace walls,
I've set high ladders up, that I may touch
Each crevice and each cornice with my hands,
And it will all be gold: — a golden palace,
Surrounded by a wood of golden trees,
Which will bear golden fruits. — The very ground
My naked foot treads on is yellow gold,

Invaluable gold! my dress is gold!
Now I am great! Innumerable armies
Wait till my gold collects them round my throne;
I see my standard made of woven gold.
Waving o'er Asia's utmost Citadels,

Guarded by myriads invincible.
Or if the toil of war grows wearisome,
I can buy Empires: — India shall be mine,
Its blooming beauties, gold-encrusted baths,
Its aromatic groves and palaces,
All will be mine! Oh, Midas, ass-eared king!
I love thee more than any words can tell,
That thus thy touch, thou man akin to Gods,
Can change all earth to heaven, — Olympian gold!
For what makes heaven different from earth!
Look how my courtiers come! Magnificent!
None shall dare wait on me but those who bear
An empire on their backs in sheets of gold.
Oh, what a slave I was! my flocks & kine,
My vineyards & my corn were all my wealth
And men esteemed me rich; but now Great Jove
Transcends me but by lightning, and who knows
If my gold win not the Cyclopean Powers,
And Vulcan, who must hate his father's rule,

To forge me bolts? — and then — but hush! they come.

Enter Zopyrion, Asphalion, & Lacon.

Lac. Pardon us, mighty king —

Mid. What would ye, slaves?
Oh! I could buy you all with one slight touch
Of my gold-making hand!

Asph. Royal Midas,
We humbly would petition for relief.

Mid. Relief I Bring me your copper coin, your brass,
Or what ye will — ye'll speedily be rich.

Zopyr. 'Tis not for gold, but to be rid of gold,
That we intrude upon your Majesty.
I fear that you will suffer by this gift,
As we do now. Look at our backs bent down
With the huge weight of the great cloaks of gold.
Permit us to put on our shabby dress,
Our poor despised garments of light wool: —
We walk as porters underneath a load.
Pity, great king, our human weaknesses,
Nor force us to expire —

Mid. Begone, ye slaves!
Go clothe your wretched limbs in ragged skins!
Take an old carpet to wrap round your legs,

A broad leaf for your feet — ye shall not wear
That dress — those golden sandals — monarch like.

Asph. If you would have us walk a mile a day
We cannot thus — already we are tired
With the huge weight of soles of solid gold.

Mid. Pitiful wretches! Earth-born, groveling dolts!
Begone! nor dare reply to my just wrath!
Never behold me more! or if you stay
Let not a sigh, a shrug, a stoop betray
What poor, weak, miserable men you are.

Not as I — I am a God! Look, dunce!
I tread or leap beneath this load of gold!

(Jumps & stops suddenly.)

I’ve hurt my back: — this cloak is wondrous hard!
No more of this! my appetite would say
The hour is come for my noon-day repast.

Lac. It comes borne in by twenty lusty slaves,
Who scarce can lift the mass of solid gold,
That lately was a table of light wood.
Here is the heavy golden ewer & bowl,
In which, before you eat, you wash your hands.

Mid. (*lifting up the ewer*)
This is to be a king! to touch pure gold!

Would that by touching thee, Zopyrion,
I could transmute thee to a golden man;
A crowd of golden slaves to wait on me!

(Pours the water on his hands.)

But how is this? the water that I touch
Falls down a stream of yellow liquid gold,
And hardens as it falls. I cannot wash —
Pray Bacchus, I may drink! and the soft towel
With which I’d wipe my hands transmutes itself
Into a sheet of heavy gold. — No more!
I’ll sit and eat: — I have not tasted food

For many hours, I have been so wrapt
In golden dreams of all that I possess,
I had not time to eat; now hunger calls
And makes me feel, though not remote in power
From the immortal Gods, that I need food,
The only remnant of mortality!

(In vain attempts to eat of several dishes.)

Alas! my fate! ‘tis gold! this peach is gold!
This bread, these grapes & all I touch! this meat
Which by its scent quickened my appetite
Has lost its scent, its taste,—’tis useless gold.

Zopyr. (*aside*) He’d better now have followed my advice.

He starves by gold yet keeps his asses’ ears.

Mid. Asphalion, put that apple to my mouth;
If my hands touch it not perhaps I eat.
Alas! I cannot bite! as it approached
I felt its fragrance, thought it would be mine,
But by the touch of my life-killing lips
‘Tis changed from a sweet fruit to tasteless gold,
Bacchus will not refresh me by his gifts,
The liquid wine congeals and flies my taste.
Go, miserable slaves! Oh, wretched king!
Away with food! Its sight now makes me sick.
Bring in my couch! I will sleep off my care,
And when I wake I’ll coin some remedy.
I dare not bathe this sultry day, for fear

I be enclosed in gold. Begone!
I will to rest: — oh, miserable king!

(Exeunt all but Midas. He lies down, turns restlessly for some time & then rises.)

Oh! fool! to wish to change all things to gold!
Blind Ideot that I was! This bed is gold;
And this hard, weighty pillow, late so soft,
That of itself invited me to rest,
Is a hard lump, that if I sleep and turn

I may beat out my brains against its sides.
Oh! what a wretched thing I am! how blind!
I cannot eat, for all my food is gold;
Drink flies my parched lips, and my hard couch
Is worse than rock to my poor bruised sides.
I cannot walk; the weight of my gold soles
Pulls me to earth: — my back is broke beneath
These gorgeous garments — (*throws off his cloak*)
Lie there, golden cloak!
There on thy kindred earth, lie there and rot!
I dare not touch my forehead with my palm
For fear my very flesh should turn to gold.
Oh! let me curse thee, vilest, yellow dirt!
Here, on my knees, thy martyr lifts his voice,
A poor, starved wretch who can touch nought but thee[,]
Wilt thou refresh me in the heat of noon?
Canst thou be kindled for me when I'm cold?
May all men, & the immortal Gods,
Hate & spurn thee as wretched I do now.

(Kicks the couch, & tries to throw down the pillow but cannot lift it.)

I’d dash, thee to the earth, but that thy weight

Preserves thee, abhorred, Tartarian Gold!
Bacchus, O pity, pardon, and restore me!
Who waits?

Enter Lacon.

Go bid the priests that they prepare
Most solemn song and richest sacrifise; —
Which I may not dare touch, lest it should turn
To most unholy gold.

Lacon. Pardon me, oh King,
But perhaps the God may give that you may eat,
And yet your touch be magic.

Mid. No more, thou slave!
Gold is my fear, my bane, my death! I hate
Its yellow glare, its aspect hard and cold.
I would be rid of all. — Go bid them haste.

(Exit Lacon.)

Oh, Bacchus I be propitious to their prayer!
Make me a hind, clothe me in ragged skins —
And let my food be bread, unsavoury roots,
But take from me the frightful curse of gold.
Am I not poor? Alas! how I am changed!

Poorer than meanest slaves, my piles of wealth
Cannot buy for me one poor, wretched dish: —
In summer heat I cannot bathe, nor wear
A linen dress; the heavy, dull, hard metal
Clings to me till I pray for poverty.

Enter Zopyrion, Asphalion & Lacon.

Zopyr. The sacrifice is made, & the great God,
Pitying your ills, oh King, accepted it,
Whilst his great oracle gave forth these words.
"Let poor king Midas bathe in the clear stream
"Of swift Pactolus, & to those waves tran[s]fer
"The gold-transmuting power, which he repents."

Mid. Oh joy! Oh Bacchus, thanks for this to thee
Will I each year offer three sucking lambs —
Games will I institute — nor Pan himself
Shall have more honour than thy deity.
Haste to the stream, — I long to feel the cool
And liquid touch of its divinest waves.

(Exeunt all except Zopyrion and Asphalion.)

Asph. Off with our golden sandals and our cloaks!
Oh, I shall ever hate the sight of gold!
Poor, wealthy Midas runs as if from death
To rid him quick of this meta[l]lic curse.

Zopyr. (*aside*) I wonder if his asses[‘] ears are gold;
What would I give to let the secret out?
Gold! that is trash, we have too much of it, —

But I would give ten new born lambs to tell
This most portentous truth — but I must choke.

Asph. Now we shall tend our flocks and reap our corn
As we were wont, and not be killed by gold.

Golden fleeces threatened our poor sheep,
The very showers as they fell from heaven
Could not refresh the earth; the wind blew gold,
And as we walked the thick sharp-pointed atoms
Wounded our faces — the navies would have sunk —

Zopyr. All strangers would have fled our gold-cursed shore,
Till we had bound our wealthy king, that he
Might leave the green and fertile earth unchanged; —
Then in deep misery he would have shook
His golden chains & starved.

Enter Lacon.

Lacon. Sluggards, how now I
Have you not been to gaze upon the sight?
To see the noble king cast off the gift
Which he erewhile so earnestly did crave[?]

Asph. I am so tired with the weight of gold
I bore to-day I could not budge a foot
To see the finest sight Jove could display.
But tell us, Lacon, what he did and said.

Lac. Although he'd fain have run[,] his golden dress
And heavy sandals made the poor king limp
As leaning upon mine and the high priest's arm,
He hastened to Pactolus. When he saw
The stream—"Thanks to the Gods!" he cried aloud
In joy; then having cast aside his robes
He leaped into the waves, and with his palm

Throwing the waters high—"This is not gold,"
He cried, "I'm free, I have got rid of gold."
And then he drank, and seizing with delight
A little leaf that floated down the stream,
"Thou art not gold," he said —

Zopyr. But all this time —
Did you behold? — Did he take off his crown? —

Lacon. No: — It was strange to see him as he plunged
Hold tight his crown with his left hand the while.

Zopyr. (*aside*) Alas, my fate! I thought they had been seen.

Lac. He ordered garments to the river side
Of coarsest texture; — those that erst he wore
He would not touch, for they were trimmed with gold.

Zopyr. And yet he did not throw away his crown?

Lac. He ever held it tight as if he thought
Some charm attached to its remaining there.

Perhaps he is right; — know you, Zopyrion,
If that strange voice this morning spoke the truth?

Zopyr. Nay guess; — think of what passed & you can judge.
I dare not — I know nothing of his ears.

Lac. I am resolved some night when he sleeps sound
To get a peep. — No more,'tis he that comes.
He has now lost the boon that Bacchus gave,
Having bestowed it on the limpid waves.

Now over golden sands Pactolus runs,
And as it flows creates a mine of wealth.

Enter Midas, (with grapes in his hand).

Mid. I see again the trees and smell the flowers
With colours lovelier than the rainbow's self;
I see the gifts of rich-haired Ceres piled
And eat. (*holding up the grapes*)
This is not yellow, dirty gold,
But blooms with precious tints, purple and green.
I hate this palace and its golden floor,
Its cornices and rafters all of gold: —
I'll build a little bower of freshest green,
Canopied o'er with leaves & floored with moss: —
I'll dress in skins; — I'll drink from wooden cups
And eat on wooden platters — sleep on flock;
None but poor men shall dare attend on me.
All that is gold I'll banish from my court,
Gilding shall be high treason to my state,
The very name of gold shall be crime capital[.]

Zopyr. May we not keep our coin?

Mid. No, Zopyrion,
None but the meanest peasants shall have gold.
It is a sordid, base and dirty thing: —
Look at the grass, the sky, the trees, the flowers,

These are Joves treasures & they are not gold: —
Now they are mine, I am no longer cursed. —
The hapless river hates its golden sands,
As it rolls over them, having my gift; —
Poor harmless shores! they now are dirty gold.
How I detest it! Do not the Gods hate gold?
Nature displays the treasures that she loves,
She hides gold deep in the earth & piles above
Mountains & rocks to keep the monster down.

Asph. They say Apollo's sunny car is gold.

Mid. Aye, so it is for Gold belongs to him: —
But Phoebus is my bitterest enemy,
And what pertains to him he makes my bane.

Zopyr. What [!] will your Majesty tell the world? —

Mid. Peace, vile gossip! Asphalion, come you here.
Look at those golden columns; those inlaid walls;
The ground, the trees, the flowers & precious food
That in my madness I did turn to gold: —
Pull it all down, I hate its sight and touch;

Heap up my cars & waggons with the load
And yoke my kine to drag it to the sea:
Then crowned with flowers, ivy & Bacchic vine,
And singing hymns to the immortal Gods,

We will ascend ships freighted with the gold,
And where no plummet’s line can sound the depth
Of greedy Ocean, we will throw it in,
All, all this frightful heap of yellow dirt.
Down through the dark, blue waters it will sink,
Frightening the green-haired Nereids from their sport
And the strange Tritons — the waves will close above
And I, thank Bacchus, ne’er shall see it more!
And we will make all echoing heaven ring
With our loud hymns of thanks, & joyous pour
Libations in the deep, and reach the land,
Rich, happy, free & great, that we have lost
Man’s curse, heart-bartering, soul-enchaining gold.

FINIS.

The Poems

Shelley's Cottage in West Street, Marlow, where she finished writing 'Frankenstein' and her husband wrote the epic poem 'Laon and Cyntheia', while also arranging relief for the poor people of Marlow.

Absence

Ah! he is gone — and I alone! —
How dark and dreary seems the time!
‘Tis thus, when the glad sun is flown,
Night rushes o’er the Indian clime.

Is there no star to cheer this night?
No soothing twilight for the breast?
Yes, Memory sheds her fairy light,
Pleasing as sunset’s golden west —

And hope of dawn — oh! brighter far
Than clouds that in the orient burn;
More welcome than the morning star
Is the dear thought — he will return!

The Keepsake, 1830.

A Dirge

This morn, thy gallant bark, love,
Sail'd on the sunny sea ;
'Tis noon, and tempests dark, love,
Have wreck'd it on the lee.

Ah, woe ! ah, woe ! ah, woe !
By spirits of the deep
He's cradled on the billow,
To his unwaking sleep !

Thou liest upon the shore, love,
Beside the swelling surge ;
But sea-nymphs ever more, love,
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.

O come ! O come ! O come
Ye spirits of the deep !
While near his sea- weed pillow,
My lonely watch I keep.
From far across the sea, love,
I hear a wild lament,
By Echo's voice, for thee, love,
From ocean's caverns sent :
O list ! O list ! O list !
The spirits of the deep
Loud sounds their wail of sorrow,
While I for ever weep !

The Keepsake, 1830.

A Night Scene

I see thee not, my gentlest Isabel;
Ambrosial night, with her mysterious spell,
Has woven shadows thick before thy face,
Drawing impervious veils athwart the space
That does divide us; thy bright eyes alone
A lucid beam into the dark have thrown,
Till the long lashes and the downcast lid
Quench it again, and the bright orbs are hid.
I see thee not: the touch of they soft hand,
And thy deep sighs, fraught with emotion bland,
Are to my sense the only outward signs
That on that couch my Isabel reclines.
I see yon brilliant star and waving tree,
Through which its beams rain down inconstantly;
I see ten thousand of those radiant flowers
Which shed light on us in dim silver showers,
High in the glorious heavens; I see full well
All other forms - not thine, my Isabel.
Sweet Mystery! I know that thou art there —
I scent the fragrance of thy silken hair;
The lines that do encircle thee I trace;
That spot is hallow’d by thy lovely face;
Thy woman’s form, in soft voluptuousness,
Enriches vacant air in yon recess;
Yet to my eyes no sign of thee appears,
And the drear blank suggests a thousand fears.
Speak, Isabel! - And yet not thus were broken
The cruel spell - for have not spirits spoken?
Are then thine eyes no nearer than that star,
Which unattainably doth shine afar?
Thy voice as immaterial as the wind
That murmurs past, yet leaves no form behind?

And is the visiting of this soft gale,
Rich with the odours of the flow’rets pale,
Which sweeps my bosom with delicious fanning,
My thrilling limbs with arms aerial spanning,
Is it as truly real, as warmly glowing
As thy dear form, rich with the life-tide flowing?
Ah, darling, quick thine arms around me throw,
Press thy warm lips upon my night-cool brow,
In thy dark eyes thy fair soul I must read -
One kiss, sweet heaven, ‘tis Isabel indeed!

The Keepsake, 1830.

When I’m no more, this harp that rings

When I’m no more, this harp that rings
  With passion’s tones profound,
Shall hang with rent and tuneless strings
  O’er my sepulchral mound;
Then, as the breeze of night steals o’er
  Its lone and ruined frame,
‘Twill seek the music that of yore
  To greet its murmurs came.

But vainly shall the night winds breathe
  O’er every mouldering wire,
Mute as the form that sleeps beneath
  Shall rest that broken lyre.
O Memory! be thy unction blest,
  Poured then around my bed,
Like balm that haunts the rose’s breast
  When all her bloom hath fled long.

The Keepsake, 1830.

To love in solitude and mystery

To love in solitude and mystery;
To prize one only who can ne’er be mine;
To see a dark gulf yawn all fearfully
Between myself and my selected shrine,
And prodigal to one — myself a slave —
What harvest reap I from the seed I gave?

Love answers with a dear and subtle wile;
For he incarnate comes in such sweet guise,
That, using but the weapon of a smile,
And gazing on me with love-kindling eyes,
I can no more resist the strong control,
But to his worship dedicate my soul.

The Keepsake, 1832.

I must forget thy dark eyes’ love-fraught gaze

I must forget thy dark eyes’ love-fraught gaze,
  Thy voice, that fill’d me with emotion bland,
Thy vows, which lost me in this ‘wild’ring maze,
  The thrilling pressure of thy gentle hand;
And, dearer yet, that interchange of thought,
  That drew us nearer still to one another,
Till in two hearts one sole idea wrought,
  And neither hoped nor fear’d but for the other.

I must forget to deck myself with flowers:
  Are not those wither’d which I gave to thee?
I must forget to count the day-bright hours,
  Their sun is set — thou com’st no more to me!
I must forget thy love! — Then let me close
  My tearful eyes upon unwelcome day,
And let my tortured thoughts seek that repose
  Which corpses find within the tomb alway.

Oh! for the fate of her who, changed to leaves,
  No more can weep, nor any longer moan;
Or the lorn queen, who, chilling as she grieves,
  Finds her warm beating heart grow calm in stone.
Oh! for a draught of that Lethean wave,
  Mortal alike to joy and to regret! —
It may not be! not even that would save!
  Love, hope, and thee, I never can forget!

Ode to Ignorance.

Monstrum horrtndum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum

HAIL, Ignorance! majestic queen!
Mysterious, mighty, dark, profound, in mien!
Sprung from no upstart brood of Light,
But of the ancient house of Night!
Daughter of that stupendous line,
Which ere the base-born Sun did shine,
Or one plebeian star appear'd,
Their awful throne in chaos rear'd —
The old nobility of Hell,
Who through the realms of darkness wide,
With lordly morgue and feudal pride
Did reign, and when imperial Satan fell,
By rebel cherubim cast down
And robb'd of his ancestral crown,
Received him like a Bourbon there,
With fond aristocratic care.

Hail! bounteous mother of each royal race;
Corruption, Bigotry and Fraud,
Reflect thy dim patrician face;
They many a kingdom fair and broad,
Great Ignorance, receive from thee —
Thou who didst take the World in fee! —
Ay! thou dost call the total earth thy own;
And every tyrant for his throne
Doth homage at thy knee!
Thou dost for kings, in dungeons bind
The anarch Truth, the rebel Mind,

Who never slip their iron bolts
But some fair realm revolts,
All hail! Legitimacy's star!
Protectress of the despot Czar!
Thee Czars invoke, and, gorged with Polish blood,
Hallow thy name, and style thee great and good!
  Night of the Mind, how long, how long,
  Thy praise hath blazoned been in song!

Hail! mighty, mighty queen!
      August! serene!
Peers are thy children — noble peers! —
  Thou sucklest them upon thy breasts;
Thine is their youth, and thine their years.
Transfus'd on them thy ample spirit rests:
Night of the Mind! all hail!
      Gloomy and grand,
      Through every land,
Great queen! dost thou prevail!

  And conquerors too are of thy brood!
By thee, they cheat the gibbet of their bones,
  By thee, they run their race of blood,
And mount by steps of villainy to thrones.
Lo! how they raven, ramp and roar;
  The world's fixed barriers scarcely bind them;
An Eden, is the land before —
  A wilderness, the land behind them.
Who stamps their locust-deeds with glory?
Who binds their brows with laurels gory?
Who magnifies their names in story?
Night of the Mind! again, again to thee
  We give the praise, for thou art she!

But whither now? —
Whither, dismounting from the thundering car,
Fliest thou the crimson fields of war?
What dust is that upon thy brow?
That’s not the dust of the battle-field: —
Dost thou too haunt the schools; dost thou
The pen as well as faulchion wield?
Dost thou with pale and plodding looks,
Bow down thy stubborn head to books?
Dost thou too mope with owlish eves
In garrets, and through libraries?
Ay! thou art there,
As every where:
Where more than in the Schools hast thou thy reign;
Where oft’ner than in Colleges a fane?

Thou too, in Cabinets, where meet
Grave councillors, the pilots of the realm,
Hast ever thy conspicuous, lofty seat;
And commonly the helm.
Faction, thy fav’rite son, then sound his horn;
Corruption too, thy eldest born;
Holds universal sway:
Then is the day,
Or rather, night,
Of lords and churchmen, all who trust in thee,
And hate with heart and soul, and strength, the light,
Then Politicians sing with joy;
Then hath their gold of office no alloy
Of vile plebeian industry:
Tax’d to the earth, the people moil and mourn —
It is their vulgar lot, and must be borne.
Thou too art found,
And dost abound,

Where bauble sceptred fashion sweeps the ground
With tinsel spangled train;
And Vice and Folly, sisters twain,
Together in meet discord reign.
    Of aristocracy the best,
    Thou stand'st confest,
Wherever flutters fop, or flirts a belle,
The park, the ball, the club, the turf, the hell.

But, hah! — what hideous change is this?
What damn'd magician interrupts thy bliss?
    The eye-ball aches,
And flashes on the sight a horrid gleam
    Alas, His Day that breaks!
'Tis orient knowledge darts that baleful beam-
    Knowledge, thy dauntless foe!
Where wilt thou fly, how shun the blow?
What work, what palisade behind?
    Night of the mind!
Thy sons are stricken with dismay;
    They cannot bear
    The hateful glare,
But curse the name of Day.
Prelates wake who long have slumber'd,
Peers believe their days are number'd,
Priests before their altars tremble,
Courtiers shudder, kings dissemble,
Pensioners and place-men quake,
All the sons of rapine shake;
Guillotines are lordly themes,
Barricades haunt royal dreams,
Bigots frighted to their souls,
Shrink into their narrow holes,
To den of filth corruption steals,
Reform fierce-barking at his heels, —

All expect disastrous doom,
All the things that love the gloom,
All that crouch, and skulk, and prowl,
Wolf and tiger, bat and owl:
Yet still to thee, their bounteous patroness,
      They lift adoring eyes;
      And none apostatize,
      Nor aught the less
      Thy name they bless,
Because thy kingdom hath been rudely torn,
And of a mist or two thy stupid skull been shorn.
      Oh! for thy loyal sons
Hast thou no guerdon fair, no just reward?
      No new resource,
      No untried force,
To save them from their foe abhorr'd?
Come with a host of Huns!
Unlock once more thy garners of the North:
Unleash the Goth and send the Vandal forth;
      Exert thy waning might;
      Rally the powers of Night;
      Renew the desp'rate fight!
That tyrants may rebuild thy mouldering fanes:
      So may'st thou hope,
Loading thy foes with slavery's ponderous chains,
With holy, heavenly light, triumphantly to cope!
M. W. S.

January 1834.

Fame

“What boots the laurel, if the throbbing brow
  Burn with the agony of thought o’erstrained?
All thou hadst hoped — nay, more, is won; and now
  Say, dearest Edward! what has ardour gained?

Pallid thy cheek, and blear the fringeless lids
  That o’er thy faded eyes all sadly droop;
And ah! what Power Omnipotent thus bids
  Thy shoulders bend in everlasting stoop?

Pelham it was not that could do this wrong;
Nor *Falkland, Clifford, Aram,* the *Disowned;*
Or any which, when youth and hope were strong,
Revealed thy energies, whilst Envy groaned.

It was, it was th’ old *Monthly Magazine,*
  By Granny Colborn madly christened ‘New;’
This lured thy spirit to Contention’s scene.
  And taught thee Mischiefs muddy drink to brew.

Why, Edward dear! defy that press, whose doom
  Did in thy time of trial favour thee?
You see they’re far too strong for reckless Brougham,
  And — *although great* — thou’rt not *so great* as he!

Then lay thy pen and paper calmly down
  Beside the long-adored Castalian brink;

Twine no more wreaths in thine abundant crown,
  But list to me, and learn to *eat and drink!”*

The Drawing-Room Scrap-Book. 1835.

Stanzas: How like a star you rose upon my life

How like a star you rose upon my life,
  Shedding fair radiance o’er my darkened hour!
At your uprise swift fled the turbid strife
  Of grief and fear, — so mighty was your power!
And I must weep that you now disappear,
  Casting eclipse upon my cheerless night —
My heaven deserting for another sphere,
  Shedding elsewhere your aye-regretted light.

An Hesperus no more to gild my eve,
  You glad the morning of another heart;
And my fond soul must mutely learn to grieve,
  While thus from every joy it swells apart
  Yet I may worship still those gentle beams,
Though not on me they shed their silver rain;
And thought of you may linger in my dreams,
  And Memory pour balm upon my pain.

Oh listen while I sing to thee

Oh listen while I sing to thee,
  My song is meant for thee alone;
My thought imparts its melody.
  And gives the soft impassioned tone.

I sing of joy, and see thy smile
  That to the swelling note replies;
I sing of love, and feel the while
  The gaze of thy love-beaming eyes.

If thou wert far, my voice would die
  In murmurs faint and sorrowing;
If thou wert fake in agony
  My heart would break, I could not sing.

Then listen while I sing to thee,
  My song is meant for thee alone;
And now that thou art near to me
  I pour a full impassioned tone.

12 March 1838

Stanzas: Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!

Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!
I will not ask a dearer bliss;
Come with the starry beams, my love,
And press mine eyelids with thy kiss.

‘Twas thus, as ancient fables tell,
Love visited a Grecian maid,
Till she disturbed the sacred spell,
And woke to find her hopes betrayed.

But gentle sleep shall veil my sight,
And Psyche’s lamp shall darkling be,
When, in the visions of the night,
Thou dost renew thy vows to me.

Then come to me in dreams, my love,
I will not ask a dearer bliss;
Come with the starry beams, my love,
And press mine eyelids with thy kiss.

The Choice

.My choice! My choice - alas was had & gone
With the red gleam of the last summer's sun-
Lost in the deep in which he bathed his head,
My choice, my life, my hope together fled:-
A wanderer - here, no more I seek a home
The sky a vault - & Italy a tomb!
Yet as some days a pilgrim I remain
Linked to my orphan child by duty's chain;
And since I have a faith that I must earn
By suffering & by patience, a return
Of that companionship & love, which first
upon my young life's cloud, like sunlight burst,
And now has left me dark as when it beams
Quenched by the might of dreadful ocean stream,
Leave that one cloud, a gloomy speck on high,
Beside one star in the else darkened sky;-
Since I must live, how would I pass the day,
How meet with fewest tear's the morning's ray
How sleep with calmest dreams, how find delights,
As fireflies gleam through interlunar nights?

First let me call on thee, lost as thou art
Thy name aye fills my sense, the love my heart-
Oh! Gentle spirit, thou hast often sung
How fall'n on evil days thy heart was wrung;
Now fierce remorse and unreplying death
Wakend a chord within my heart, whose breath,
Thrilling and keen, in accents audible,
A tale of unrequited love doth tell.
It was not anger - while thy earthly dress
Encompassed still thy soul's rare loveliness,

All anger was atoned by many a kind
Caress or tear that spoke the softened mind:-
It speaks of cold neglect, averted eyes
That blindly crushed thy heart’s fond sacrifice:-
Mine heart was all thy own - but yet a shell
Closed in it’s core, which seemed impenetrable,
Till sharp-toothed misery tore the husk in twain
Which gaping lies nor may unite again-
Forgive me! let thy love descend in dew
Of soft repentance and regret most true;-

In a strange guise dost thou descend - or how
Could love soothe fell remorse? - as it does now! -
By this remorse and love - and by the years
Through which we shared our common hopes & fears,
By all our best companionship, I dare
Call on thy sacred name without a fear
And thus I pray to thee, my Friend, my Heart,
That in thy new abode thou’lt bear a part
In soothing the poor Mary’s lonely pain,
As link by link she wears her heavy chain!
And thou, strange Star! ascendent at my birth
Which rained, they said, kind influence on earth,
So from great parents sprung I dared to boast
Fortune my friend, till set, thy beams were lost!
And thou - Inscrutable! by whose decree
Has burst this hideous storm of misery!
here let me cling, here to these solitudes,
These myrtle shaded streams and chestnut woods;
Tear me not hence - here let me live & die,
In my adopted land, my country, Italy!

A happy Mother first I saw its sun-
Beneath er sky my race of joy was run-

First my sweet girl - whose face resembled His,
Slept on bleak Lido, near Venetian seas.-
Yet still my eldest born, my loveliest, dearest-
Clung to my side - most joyful when nearest -
An English home had given this angel birth-
Near those royal towers - where the grass-clad earth
Is shadowed o'er my England's loftiest trees:-
Then our companion o'er the swift-passed seas
Had dwelt beside the Alps - or gently slept,
Rocked by the waves, o'ver which our vessel swept,
Beside his father - nurst upon my breast,
While Leman's waters shook with fierce unrest
His fairest limbs had bathed in Serchio's stream;
His eyes had watched Italian lightnings gleam;
His childish voice had with it's loudest call,
The echoes waked of Este's Castle wall;
Had paced Pompeii's roman market Place
Had gazed with infant wonder on the grace

Of stone wrought deities and pictured saints
In Rome's high palaces - there were no taints
Of ruin on his cheek - all shadowless
Grim death approached - the boy met his caress-
And while his glowing limbs with life's warmth shone,
Around those limbs his icy arms were thrown-
His spoils were strewed beneath the land of Rome
Whose flowers now star the dark earth near his tomb-
Its airs & plants received the mortal part,
His spirit beats within his Mother's heart!
Infant immortal! Chosen of the Sky!
No grief upon grief upon thy brows young purity
Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might
The sunshine of the smile's celestial light -
The image scattered - thy bright spirit fled,
Thou shin'st the evening star among the dead.

And thou his playmate - whose deep lucid eyes,
Were a reflection of these bluest skies;
Child of our hearts, divided in ill hour,
We could not watch the bud’s expanding flower,
Now thou art gone, one lovely victim more
To the black death which rules this sunny shore.

Companion of my griefs! thy sinking frame
Has often drooped - & then erect again
With shews of health had mocked forbodings dark;
Watching the changes of that quivering spark
I feared and hoped - and dared to trust at length
Thy very weakness was my tower of strength-
Methought thou wert a spirit from the sky,
Which struggled within it’s chains, yet could not die,
And that destruction had no power to win,
From out those limbs the soul that burnt within.
Tell me, ye ancient walls, and weed-grown towers,
Ye Roman aires, and brightly painted flowers,
Does not this spirit visit that recess
Which built by love, enshrined his earthly dress?
No more! No more! What tho’ that form be fled
My trembling hands shall never write thee - dead -
Thou liv’st in Nature - love - my Memory,
With frathless faith for aye adoring thee-
The wife of time no more - I wed Eternity

‘Tis thus the past on which my spirit leans,
Makes dearest to my soul Italian scenes.-
In Tuscan fields, the winds in odours steeped
From flowers and cypresses - when skies have wept,
Shall like the notes of music - once most dear,
Which brings the unstrung voice upon my ear
Of one beloved, to memory display

Past scenes - past joys - past hopes, in long array.
The Serchio’s stream upon which whose banks he stood-
The pools reflecting Pisa’s old pine wood,
The fire-flies beam - the aziolo’s cry-
All breath his spirit, which shall never die.-
Such memories have linked these hills and caves,
These woodland paths, & streams - & knelling waves
Fast to each sad pulsation of my breast
And made their melancholy arms the haven of my rest

Here will I live within a little dell,
Which but a month ago I saw full well;
A dream then pictured forth the solitude
Deep in the shelter of a lovely wood;
A voice then whispered a strange prophecy,
My dearest widowed friend, that thou and I
Should there together pass the livelong day,
As we have done before in Spezia’s bay,
As through long hours we watched the sails that neared
O’er the far sea, their vessel ne’er appeared;
One pang of agony, one dying gleam
Of hope led us along, beside the ocean stream,
But keen-eyes fear, the while all hope departs,
Stabbed with a million sting our heart of hearts.
The sad revolving year has not allayed
The poison of these bleeding wounds, or made
The anguish less of that corroding thought
Which had with grief each single moment fraught,
Edward, thy voice was hushed - thy noble heart
With aspiration heaves no more - a part
Of heaven resumèd past thou art become,
The spirit waits with this in our far home.

On Reading Wordsworth's Lines on Peele Castle

It is with me, as erst with you,
  Oh poet, nature's chronicler,
The summer seas have lost their hue
  And storm sits brooding everywhere.

The gentlest rustling of the deep
  Is but the dirge of him I lost,
And when waves raise their furrows steep,
  And bring foam in which is tossed

A voice I hear upon the wind
  Which bids me haste to join him there,
And woo the tempest's breath unkind
  Which gives to me a kindred bier.

And when all smooth are ocean's plains
  And sails afar are glittering,
The fairest skiff his form contains
  To my poor heart's fond picturing.

Then wildly to the beach I rush,
  And fain would seize the frailest boat,
And from dull earth the slight hull push,
  On dancing waves towards him to float.

Nor may I e'er again behold
  The sea, and be as I have been;

My bitter grief will ne’er grow old,
  Nor say I this with mind serene.

For oft I weep in solitude
  And shed so many bitter tears,
While on past joys I vainly brood
  And shrink in fear from coming years.
1822.

Tribute for thee dear solace of my life

Tribute for thee dear solace of my life
    Reject not thou thy Mary’s offering,
A tale of woe, with many sorrows rife,
    Tribute unmeet, with cypress bound, I bring —
It is the echo, sweet

Sadly borne across the waves

Tempo e' piu di Morire
Io ho tardato piu ch' i' non vorrei

Sadly borne across the waves
Hark! a voice from many graves,
Whispers — Come!
We for thee too long have waited,
Haste, before thou art belated,
To our home!
And the voice of my life's Lord,
Voice heard soon & aye adored,
 Cries still — Come!
Canst thou stay, my gentle Bride,
I no longer at thy side, In our home?
Dark was this wild world to thee,
Till I, in youthful extasy,
Cried — Come! Come!
Gladly we together fled
And across the sea we sped
To our home. Tender love & constancy
Formed our nuptial revelry
And welcome.
Ah! those days too quickly flew,
Till, enforced, I bade adieu
To our home.
Storm & Ocean bore me here,
Thou remainest, Mary dear,
Yet. Ah! Come!
Life is but a sickly dream,
Swiftly cross the turbid stream
To my home.

Never more will human love
Woes requite which thou must prove,
Why not come?
Never more in forest sweet
Will be built a fair retreat
For thy home.

La Vida es sueno

The tide of Time was at my feet
Flowing with calm & equal motion;
With gladdened heart my eyes might greet
The coming of the sunlit ocean,
Till at its full, a fatal storm
Wrapt in grim shade the mighty form.

Then backward rolled the ebb of Time
While I with eager steps pursue,
And though the hour had lost its prime,
Still as the dim beach wider grew,
I passed along the utmost verge
Of the inconstant fleeting surge.

Back & more back the waters rolled
And, faster yet the waves receding,
Made now, alas! my hopes grow cold,
As I, the vacant prospect heeding,
Gaze on the bleak and desert strand,
As sad I pace the barren sand.

Fair Italy! Still shines thy sun as bright

Fair Italy! Still shines thy sun as bright
As when it shed love, hope, & joy on me!
But thy fair fields enfold the sacred clay.
The mortal part of the too early dead:
Beside his lowly bed I long to rest.

LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Absence
A Dirge
A Night Scene
When I’m no more, this harp that rings
To love in solitude and mystery
I must forget thy dark eyes’ love-fraught gaze
Ode to Ignorance.
Fame
Stanzas: How like a star you rose upon my life
Oh listen while I sing to thee
Stanzas: Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!
The Choice
On Reading Wordsworth’s Lines on Peele Castle
Tribute for thee dear solace of my life
Sadly borne across the waves
La Vida es sueno
Fair Italy! Still shines thy sun as bright

LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Absence
A Dirge
A Night Scene
Fair Italy! Still shines thy sun as bright
Fame
I must forget thy dark eyes’ love-fraught gaze
La Vida es sueno
Ode to Ignorance.
Oh listen while I sing to thee
On Reading Wordsworth’s Lines on Peele Castle
Sadly borne across the waves
Stanzas: How like a star you rose upon my life
Stanzas: Oh, come to me in dreams, my love!
The Choice
To love in solitude and mystery
Tribute for thee dear solace of my life
When I’m no more, this harp that rings

The Travel Writing

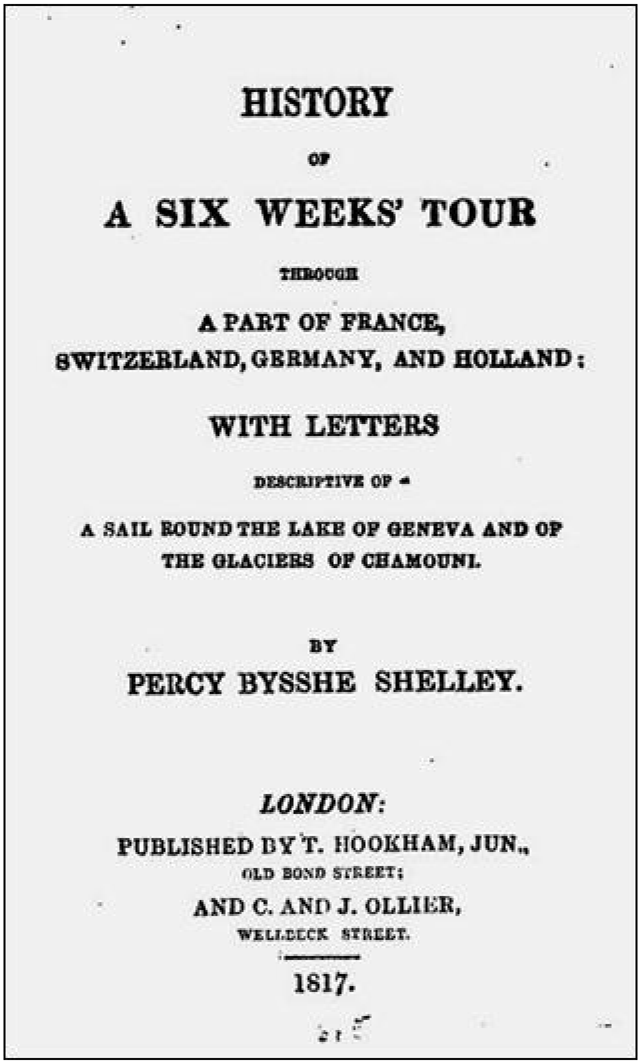
Shelley and her husband went to Switzerland in 1816, spending time with Byron at his rented Villa Diodati. Their Swiss sojourn took place during "the year without a summer" and poor weather forced them to spend a lot of time indoors reading and telling stories.

HISTORY OF A SIX WEEKS' TOUR THROUGH A PART OF FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, AND HOLLAND

Prior to writing her most famous novel Shelley had a *History of a Six Weeks' Tour through part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, with Letters descriptive of a Sail round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni* published by Thomas Hookham, Jr and Charles and James Ollier in 1817, which was based on her journal entries and letters she wrote to her half-sister Fanny. The travel book describes two trips that were taken by Shelley, her husband and Mary's step-sister Claire Clairmont. One was a trip across Europe in 1814 and the other was travelling to Lake Geneva in 1816, where Shelley would also find the inspiration for *Frankenstein*. Percy Shelley provided the preface to the work and a poem 'Mont Blanc' along with about a fifth of the journal entries taken from a joint diary that he and Mary kept during their travels. The letters contained in the second section of the travel narrative are a mixture of Shelley's correspondence with her half-sister and Percy's own letters to friends. In 1840 a revised version was published which involved Shelley including notable biographical information of her husband and increasing Percy Shelley's writings to this addition of the *Six Weeks' Tour.*

The journal section of the travel narrative is divided into countries, France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland. The narrative begins with them entering a new town in France every day. The journal entries comment on the people they encounter and the environment surrounding them. During their travels in Switzerland they begin to run out of money and are forced to work their way back to England. The letters section describes Lake Geneva, the Alps, glaciers and Mont Blanc and also includes trips around areas of Switzerland related to the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Percy Shelley's poem 'Mont Blanc' emphasises the common Romantic theme of imagination as a source of truth but one which is only available to the select and chosen few. The narrative focuses not on acquisition, but on developing 'tastes' and underlined a form of travel based on enthusiasm and spontaneity.

An important source of inspiration for the work was Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1786) a travel narrative which encompassed politics, aesthetics, environment and personal comment. This text helped provide a template for Shelley's work and challenged the notion that female writers should not engage in the masculine domain of political commentary. The political stance in *Six Weeks Tour* is a liberal position and Shelley records the devastation of the Napoleonic Wars on towns and cities. The text reveals a belief in Rousseau's principles and despite the horrors that forced him into exile Shelley believed in attempting to restore the democratic zeal that preceded the descent into the savagery of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era.



HISTORY

OF

A SIX WEEKS' TOUR

THROUGH

A PART OF FRANCE,
SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, AND HOLLAND:

WITH LETTERS

DESCRIPTIVE OF

A SAIL ROUND THE LAKE OF GENEVA AND OF
THE GLACIERS OF CHAMOUNI.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY T. HOOKHAM, JUN.,
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1817.

The original title page

Shelley, close to the time of publication

CONTENTS

Preface.
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND.
GERMANY.
HOLLAND.
LETTER I.
LETTER II. COLIGNY — GENEVA — PLAINPALAIS.
LETTER III. To T. P. Esq. MEILLERIE — CLAREN — CHILLON — VEVAI — LAUSANNE.
LETTER IV. To T. P. Esq. ST. MARTIN — SERVOZ — CHAMOUNI — MONTANVERT — MONT BLANC.
MONT BLANC. LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

Mont Blanc and the Mer de Glace glacier were significant parts of the Shelleys' 1816 journey. The author's husband wrote a poem on the mountain to accompany the travelogue.

Preface.

Nothing can be more unpresuming than this little volume. It contains the account of some desultory visits by a party of young people to scenes which are now so familiar to our countrymen, that few facts relating to them can be expected to have escaped the many more experienced and exact observers, who have sent their journals to the press. In fact, they have done little else than arrange the few materials which an imperfect journal, and two or three letters to their friends in England afforded. They regret, since their little History is to be offered to the public, that these materials were not more copious and complete. This is a just topic of censure to those who are less inclined to be amused than to condemn. Those whose youth has been past as their's (with what success it imports not) in pursuing, like the swallow, the inconstant summer of delight and beauty which invests this visible world, will perhaps find some entertainment in following the author, with her husband and sister, on foot, through part of France and Switzerland, and in sailing with her down the castled Rhine, through scenes beautiful in themselves, but which, since she visited them, a great Poet has clothed with the freshness of a diviner nature. They will be interested to hear of one who has visited Mellerie, and Clarens, and Chillon, and Vevai — classic ground, peopled with tender and glorious imaginations of the present and the past.

They have perhaps never talked with one who has beheld in the enthusiasm of youth the glaciers, and the lakes, and the forests, and the fountains of the mighty Alps. Such will perhaps forgive the imperfections of their narrative for the sympathy which the adventures and feelings which it recounts, and a curiosity respecting scenes already rendered interesting and illustrious, may excite.

The Poem, entitled “Mont Blanc,” is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.

It is now nearly three years since this Journey took place, and the journal I then kept was not very copious; but I have so often talked over the incidents that befel us, and attempted to describe the scenery through which we passed, that I think few occurrences of any interest will be omitted.

We left London July 28th, 1814, on a hotter day than has been known in this climate for many years. I am not a good traveller, and this heat agreed very ill with me, till, on arriving at Dover, I was refreshed by a sea-bath. As we very much wished to cross the channel with all possible speed, we would not wait for the packet of the following day (it being then about four in the afternoon) but hiring a small boat, resolved to make the passage the same evening, the seamen promising us a voyage of two hours.

The evening was most beautiful; there was but little wind, and the sails flapped in the flagging breeze: the moon rose, and night came on, and with the night a slow, heavy swell, and a fresh breeze, which soon produced a sea so violent as to toss the boat very much. I was dreadfully seasick, and as is usually my custom when thus affected, I slept during the greater part of the night, awaking only from time to time to ask where we were, and to receive the dismal answer each time—”Not quite half way.”

The wind was violent and contrary; if we could not reach Calais, the sailors proposed making for Boulogne. They promised only two hours’ sail from shore, yet hour after hour passed, and we were still far distant, when the moon sunk in the red and stormy horizon, and the fast-flashing lightning became pale in the breaking day.

We were proceeding slowly against the wind, when suddenly a thunder squall struck the sail, and the waves rushed into the boat: even the sailors acknowledged that our situation was perilous; but they succeeded in reefing the sail; — the wind was now changed, and we drove before the gale directly to Calais. As we entered the harbour I awoke from a comfortless sleep, and saw the sun rise broad, red, and cloudless over the pier.

FRANCE

Exhausted with sickness and fatigue, I walked over the sands with my companions to the hotel. I heard for the first time the confused buzz of voices speaking a different language from that to which I had been accustomed; and saw a costume very unlike that worn on the opposite side of the channel; the women with high caps and short jackets; the men with earrings; ladies walking about with high bonnets or *coiffures* lodged on the top of the head, the hair dragged up underneath, without any stray curls to decorate the temples or cheeks. There is, however, something very pleasing in the manners and appearance of the people of Calais, that prepossesses you in their favour. A national reflection might occur, that when Edward III. took Calais, he turned out the old inhabitants, and peopled it almost entirely with our own countrymen; but unfortunately the manners are not English.

We remained during that day and the greater part of the next at Calais: we had been obliged to leave our boxes the night before at the English custom-house, and it was arranged that they should go by the packet of the following day, which, detained by contrary wind, did not arrive until night. S*** and I walked among the fortifications on the outside of the town; they consisted of fields where the hay was making. The aspect of the country was rural and pleasant.

On the 30th of July, about three in the afternoon, we left Calais, in a cabriolet drawn by three horses. To persons who had never before seen any thing but a spruce English chaise and post-boy, there was something irresistibly ludicrous in our equipage. A cabriolet is shaped somewhat like a post-chaise, except that it has only two wheels, and consequently there are no doors at the sides; the front is let down to admit the passengers. The three horses were placed abreast, the tallest in the middle, who was rendered more formidable by the addition of an unintelligible article of harness, resembling a pair of wooden wings fastened to his shoulders; the harnesses were of rope; and the postillion, a queer, upright little fellow with a long pigtail, *craquéed* his whip, and clattered on, while an old forlorn shepherd with a cocked hat gazed on us as we passed.

The roads are excellent, but the heat was intense, and I suffered greatly from it. We slept at Boulogne the first night, where there was an ugly but remarkably good-tempered femme de chambre. This made us for the first time remark the difference which exists between this class of persons in France and in England. In the latter country they are prudish, and if they become in the least degree familiar they are impudent. The lower orders in France have the easiness and politeness of the most well-bred English; they treat you unaffectedly as their equal, and consequently there is no scope for insolence.

We had ordered horses to be ready during the night, but we were too fatigued to make use of them. The man insisted on being paid for the whole post. *Ah! Madame*, said the femme-de-chambre, *pensez-y; ç'est pour de dommager les pauvres chevaux d'avoir perdues leur douce sommeil*. A joke from an English chamber-maid would have been quite another thing.

The first appearance that struck our English eyes was the want of enclosures; but the fields were flourishing with a plentiful harvest. We observed no vines on this side Paris.

The weather still continued very hot, and travelling produced a very bad effect upon my health; my companions were induced by this circumstance to hasten the journey as much as possible; and accordingly we did not rest the following night, and the next day, about two, arrived in Paris.

In this city there are no hotels where you can reside as long or as short a time as you please, and we were obliged to engage apartments at an hotel for a week. They were dear, and not very pleasant. As usual in France, the principal apartment was a bedchamber; there was another closet with a bed, and an anti-chamber, which we used as a sitting-room.

The heat of the weather was excessive, so that we were unable to walk except in the afternoon. On the first evening we walked to the gardens of the Thuilleries; they are formal and uninteresting, in the French fashion, the trees cut into shapes, and without any grass. I think the Boulevards infinitely more pleasant. This street nearly surrounds Paris, and is eight miles in extent; it is very wide, and planted on either side with trees. At one end is a superb cascade which refreshes the senses by its continual splashing: near this stands the gate of St. Denis, a beautiful piece of sculpture. I do not know how it may at present be disfigured by the Gothic barbarism of the conquerors of France, who were not contented with retaking the spoils of Napoleon, but with impotent malice, destroyed the monuments of their own defeat. When I saw this gate, it was in its splendour, and made you imagine that the days of Roman greatness were transported to Paris.

After remaining a week in Paris, we received a small remittance that set us free from a kind of imprisonment there which we found very irksome. But how should we proceed? After talking over and rejecting many plans, we fixed on one eccentric enough, but which, from its romance, was very pleasing to us. In England we could not have put it in execution without sustaining continual insult and impertinence: the French are far more tolerant of the vagaries of their neighbours. We resolved to walk through France; but as I was too weak for any considerable distance, and my sister could not be supposed to be able to walk as far as S*** each day, we determined to purchase an ass, to carry our portmanteau and one of us by turns.

Early, therefore, on Monday, August 8th, S*** and C*** went to the ass market, and purchased an ass, and the rest of the day, until four in the afternoon, was spent in preparations for our departure; during which, Madame L'Hôte paid us a visit, and attempted to dissuade us from our design. She represented to us that a large army had been recently disbanded, that the soldiers and officers wandered idle about the country, and that *les Dames seroient certainement enlevèes*. But we were proof against her arguments, and packing up a few necessaries, leaving the rest to go by the diligence, we departed in a fiacre from the door of the hotel, our little ass following.

We dismissed the coach at the barrier. It was dusk, and the ass seemed totally unable to bear one of us, appearing to sink under the portmanteau, although it was small and light. We were, however, merry enough, and thought the leagues short. We arrived at Charenton about ten.

Charenton is prettily situated in a valley, through which the Seine flows, winding among banks variegated with trees. On looking at this scene, C*** exclaimed, "Oh! this is beautiful enough; let us live here." This was her exclamation on every new scene, and as each surpassed the one before, she cried, "I am glad we did not stay at Charenton, but let us live here."

Finding our ass useless, we sold it before we proceeded on our journey, and bought a mule, for ten Napoleons. About nine o'clock we departed. We were clad in black silk. I rode on the mule, which carried also our portmanteau; S*** and C*** followed, bringing a small basket of provisions. At about one we arrived at Gros Bois, where, under the shade of trees, we ate our bread and fruit, and drank our wine, thinking of Don Quixote and Sancho.

The country through which we passed was highly cultivated, but uninteresting; the horizon scarcely ever extended beyond the circumference of a few fields, bright and waving with the golden harvest. We met several travellers; but our mode, although novel, did not appear to excite any curiosity or remark. This night we slept at Guignes, in the same room and beds in which Napoleon and some of his Generals had rested during the late war. The little old woman of the place was highly gratified in having this little story to tell, and spoke in warm praise of the Empress Josephine and Marie Louise, who had at different times passed on that road.

As we continued our route, Provins was the first place that struck us with interest. It was our stage of rest for the night; we approached it at sunset. After having gained the summit of a hill, the prospect of the town opened upon us as it lay in the valley below; a rocky hill rose abruptly on one side, on the top of which stood a ruined citadel with extensive walls and towers; lower down, but beyond, was the cathedral, and the whole formed a scene for painting. After having travelled for two days through a country perfectly without interest, it was a delicious relief for the eye to dwell again on some irregularities and beauty of country. Our fare at Provins was coarse, and our beds uncomfortable, but the remembrance of this prospect made us contented and happy.

We now approached scenes that reminded us of what we had nearly forgotten, that France had lately been the country in which great and extraordinary events had taken place. Nogent, a town we entered about noon the following day, had been entirely desolated by the Cossacs. Nothing could be more entire than the ruin which these barbarians had spread as they advanced; perhaps they remembered Moscow and the destruction of the Russian villages; but we were now in France, and the distress of the inhabitants, whose houses had been burned, their cattle killed, and all their wealth destroyed, has given a sting to my detestation of war, which none can feel who have not travelled through a country pillaged and wasted by this plague, which, in his pride, man inflicts upon his fellow.

We quitted the great route soon after we had left Nogent, to strike across the country to Troyes. About six in the evening we arrived at St. Aubin, a lovely village embosomed in trees; but on a nearer view we found the cottages roofless, the rafters black, and the walls dilapidated; — a few inhabitants remained. We asked for milk — they had none to give; all their cows had been taken by the Cossacs. We had still some leagues to travel that night, but we found that they were not post leagues, but the measurement of the inhabitants, and nearly double the distance. The road lay over a desart plain, and as night advanced we were often in danger of losing the track of wheels, which was our only guide. Night closed in, and we suddenly lost all trace of the road; but a few trees, indistinctly seen, seemed to indicate the position of a village. About ten we arrived at Trois Maisons, where, after a supper on milk and sour bread, we retired to rest on wretched beds: but sleep is seldom denied, except to the indolent, and after the day's fatigue, although my bed was nothing more than a sheet spread upon straw, I slept soundly until the morning was considerably advanced.

S*** had hurt his ancle so considerably the preceding evening, that he was obliged, during the whole of the following day's journey, to ride on our mule. Nothing could be more barren and wretched than the track through which we now passed; the ground was chalky and uncovered even by grass, and where there had been any attempts made towards cultivation, the straggling ears of corn discovered more plainly the barren nature of the soil. Thousands of insects, which were of the same white colour as the road, infested our path; the sky was cloudless, and the sun darted its rays upon us, reflected back by the earth, until I nearly fainted under the heat. A village appeared at a distance, cheering us with a prospect of rest. It gave us new strength to proceed; but it was a wretched place, and afforded us but little relief. It had been once large and populous, but now the houses were roofless, and the ruins that lay scattered about, the gardens covered with the white dust of the torn cottages, the black burnt beams, and squalid looks of the inhabitants, presented in every direction the melancholy aspect of devastation. One house, a *cabarêt*, alone remained; we were here offered plenty of milk, stinking bacon, sour bread, and a few vegetables, which we were to dress for ourselves.

As we prepared our dinner in a place, so filthy that the sight of it alone was sufficient to destroy our appetite, the people of the village collected around us, squalid with dirt, their countenances expressing every thing that is disgusting and brutal. They seemed indeed entirely detached from the rest of the world, and ignorant of all that was passing in it. There is much less communication between the various towns of France than in England. The use of passports may easily account for this: these people did not know that Napoleon was deposed, and when we asked why they did not rebuild their cottages, they replied, that they were afraid that the Cossacs would destroy them again upon their return. Echemine (the name of this village) is in every respect the most disgusting place I ever met with.

Two leagues beyond, on the same road, we came to the village of Pavillon, so unlike Echemine, that we might have fancied ourselves in another quarter of the globe; here every thing denoted cleanliness and hospitality; many of the cottages were destroyed, but the inhabitants were employed in repairing them. What could occasion so great a difference?

Still our road lay over this track of uncultivated country, and our eyes were fatigued by observing nothing but a white expanse of ground, where no bramble or stunted shrub adorned its barrenness. Towards evening we reached a small plantation of vines, it appeared like one of those islands of verdure that are met with in the midst of the sands of Lybia, but the grapes were not yet ripe. S*** was totally incapable of walking, and C*** and I were very tired before we arrived at Troyes.

We rested here for the night, and devoted the following day to a consideration of the manner in which we should proceed. S***'s sprain rendered our pedestrianism impossible. We accordingly sold our mule, and bought an open *voiture* that went on four wheels, for five Napoleons, and hired a man with a mule for eight more, to convey us to Neufchâtel in six days.

The suburbs of Troyes were destroyed, and the town itself dirty and uninviting. I remained at the inn writing, while S*** and C*** arranged this bargain and visited the cathedral of the town; and the next morning we departed in our *voiture* for Neufchâtel. A curious instance of French vanity occurred on leaving this town. Our *voiturier* pointed to the plain around, and mentioned, that it had been the scene of a battle between the Russians and the French. "In which the Russians gained the victory?"—"Ah no, Madame," replied the man, "the French are never beaten." "But how was it then," we asked, "that the Russians had entered Troyes soon after?"—"Oh, after having been defeated, they took a circuitous route, and thus entered the town."

Vandeuvres is a pleasant town, at which we rested during the hours of noon. We walked in the grounds of a nobleman, laid out in the English taste, and terminated in a pretty wood; it was a scene that reminded us of our native country. As we left Vandeuvres the aspect of the country suddenly changed; abrupt hills, covered with vineyards, intermixed with trees, enclosed a narrow valley, the channel of the Aube. The view was interspersed by green meadows, groves of poplar and white willow, and spires of village churches, which the Cossacs had yet spared. Many villages, ruined by the war, occupied the most romantic spots.

In the evening we arrived at Bar-sur-Aube, a beautiful town, placed at the opening of the vale where the hills terminate abruptly. We climbed the highest of these, but scarce had we reached the top, when a mist descended upon every thing, and the rain began to fall: we were wet through before we could reach our inn. It was evening, and the laden clouds made the darkness almost as deep as that of midnight; but in the west an unusually brilliant and fiery redness occupied an opening in the vapours, and added to the interest of our little expedition: the cottage lights were reflected in the tranquil river, and the dark hills behind, dimly seen, resembled vast and frowning mountains.

As we quitted Bar-sur-Aube, we at the same time bade a short farewel to hills. Passing through the towns of Chaumont, Langres (which was situated on a hill, and surrounded by ancient fortifications), Champlitte, and Gray, we travelled for nearly three days through plains, where the country gently undulated, and relieved the eye from a perpetual flat, without exciting any peculiar interest. Gentle rivers, their banks ornamented by a few trees, stole through these plains, and a thousand beautiful summer insects skimmed over the streams. The third day was a day of rain, and the first that had taken place during our journey. We were soon wet through, and were glad to stop at a little inn to dry ourselves. The reception we received here was very unprepossessing, the people still kept their seats round the fire, and seemed very unwilling to make way for the dripping guests. In the afternoon, however, the weather became fine, and at about six in the evening we entered Besançon.

Hills had appeared in the distance during the whole day, and we had advanced gradually towards them, but were unprepared for the scene that broke upon us as we passed the gate of this city. On quitting the walls, the road wound underneath a high precipice; on the other side the hills rose more gradually, and the green valley that intervened between them was watered by a pleasant river; before us arose an amphitheatre of hills covered with vines, but irregular and rocky. The last gate of the town was cut through the precipitous rock that arose on one side, and in that place jutted into the road.

This approach to mountain scenery filled us with delight; it was otherwise with our *voiturier*: he came from the plains of Troyes, and these hills so utterly scared him, that he in some degree lost his reason. After winding through the valley, we began to ascend the mountains which were its boundary: we left our *voiture*, and walked on, delighted with every new view that broke upon us.

When we had ascended the hills for about a mile and a half, we found our *voiturier* at the door of a wretched inn, having taken the mule from the *voiture*, and obstinately determined to remain for the night at this miserable village of Mort. We could only submit, for he was deaf to all we could urge, and to our remonstrances only replied, *Je ne puis plus*.

Our beds were too uncomfortable to allow a thought of sleeping in them: we could only procure one room, and our hostess gave us to understand that our *voiturier* was to occupy the same apartment. It was of little consequence, as we had previously resolved not to enter the beds. The evening was fine, and after the rain the air was perfumed by many delicious scents. We climbed to a rocky seat on the hill that overlooked the village, where we remained until sunset. The night was passed by the kitchen fire in a wretched manner, striving to catch a few moments of sleep, which were denied to us. At three in the morning we pursued our journey.

Our road led to the summit of the hills that environ Besançon. From the top of one of these we saw the whole expanse of the valley filled with a white undulating mist, which was pierced like islands by the piny mountains. The sun had just risen, and a ray of red light lay upon the waves of this fluctuating vapour. To the west, opposite the sun, it seemed driven by the light against the rocks in immense masses of foaming cloud, until it became lost in the distance, mixing its tints with the fleecy sky.

Our *voiturier* insisted on remaining two hours at the village of Noè, although we were unable to procure any dinner, and wished to go on to the next stage. I have already said, that the hills scared his senses, and he had become disobliging, sullen, and stupid. While he waited we walked to the neighbouring wood: it was a fine forest, carpeted beautifully with moss, and in various places overhung by rocks, in whose crevices young pines had taken root, and spread their branches for shade to those below; the noon heat was intense, and we were glad to shelter ourselves from it in the shady retreats of this lovely forest.

On our return to the village we found, to our extreme surprise, that the *voiturier* had departed nearly an hour before, leaving word that he expected to meet us on the road. S***'s sprain rendered him incapable of much exertion; but there was no remedy, and we proceeded on foot to Maison Neuve, an *auberge*, four miles and a half distant.

At Maison Neuve the man had left word that he should proceed to Pontalier, the frontier town of France, six leagues distant, and that if we did not arrive that night, he should the next morning leave the *voiture* at an inn, and return with the mule to Troyes. We were astonished at the impudence of this message, but the boy of the inn comforted us by saying, that by going on a horse by a cross road, where the *voiture* could not venture, he could easily overtake and intercept the *voiturier*, and accordingly we dispatched him, walking slowly after. We waited at the next inn for dinner, and in about two ours the boy returned. The man promised to wait for us at an *auberge* two leagues further on. S***'s ancle had become very painful, but we could procure no conveyance, and as the sun was nearly setting, we were obliged to hasten on. The evening was most beautiful, and the scenery lovely enough to beguile us of our fatigue: the horned moon hung in the light of sunset, that threw a glow of unusual depth of redness over the piny mountains and the dark deep vallies they enclosed; at intervals in the woods were beautiful lawns interspersed with picturesque clumps of trees, and dark pines overshadowed our road.

In about two hours we arrived at the promised termination of our journey, but the *voiturier* was not there: after the boy had left him, he again pursued his journey towards Pontalier. We were enabled, however, to procure here a rude kind of cart, and in this manner arrived late at Pontalier, where we found our conductor, who blundered out many falsehoods for excuses; and thus ended the adventures of that day.

SWITZERLAND.

On passing the French barrier, a surprising difference may be observed between the opposite nations that inhabit either side. The Swiss cottages are much cleaner and neater, and the inhabitants exhibit the same contrast. The Swiss women wear a great deal of white linen, and their whole dress is always perfectly clean. This superior cleanliness is chiefly produced by the difference of religion: travellers in Germany remark the same contrast between the protestant and catholic towns, although they be but a few leagues separate.

The scenery of this day's journey was divine, exhibiting piny mountains, barren rocks, and spots of verdure surpassing imagination. After descending for nearly a league between lofty rocks, covered with pines, and interspersed with green glades, where the grass is short, and soft, and beautifully verdant, we arrived at the village of St. Sulpice.

The mule had latterly become very lame, and the man so disobliging, that we determined to engage a horse for the remainder of the way. Our *voiturier* had anticipated us, without in the least intimating his intention to us: he had determined to leave us at this village, and taken measures to that effect. The man we now engaged was a Swiss, a cottager of the better class, who was proud of his mountains and his country. Pointing to the glades that were interspersed among the woods, he informed us that they were very beautiful, and were excellent pasture; that the cows thrived there, and consequently produced excellent milk, from which the best cheese and butter in the world were made.

The mountains after St. Sulpice became loftier and more beautiful. We passed through a narrow valley between two ranges of mountains, clothed with forests, at the bottom of which flowed a river, from whose narrow bed on either side the boundaries of the vale arose precipitously. The road lay about half way up the mountain, which formed one of the sides, and we saw the overhanging rocks above us and below, enormous pines, and the river, not to be perceived but from its reflection of the light of heaven, far beneath. The mountains of this beautiful ravine are so little asunder, that in time of war with France an iron chain is thrown across it. Two leagues from

Neufchâtel we saw the Alps: range after range of black mountains are seen extending one before the other, and far behind all, towering above every feature of the scene, the snowy Alps. They were an hundred miles distant, but reach so high in the heavens, that they look like those accumulated clouds of dazzling white that arrange themselves on the horizon during summer. Their immensity staggers the imagination, and so far surpasses all conception, that it requires an effort of the understanding to believe that they indeed form a part of the earth.

From this point we descended to Neufchâtel, which is situated in a narrow plain, between the mountains and its immense lake, and presents no additional aspect of peculiar interest.

We remained the following day at this town, occupied in a consideration of the step it would now be advisable for us to take. The money we had brought with us from Paris was nearly exhausted, but we obtained about L38. in silver upon discount from one of the bankers of the city, and with this we resolved to journey towards the lake of Uri, and seek in that romantic and interesting country some cottage where we might dwell in peace and solitude. Such were our dreams, which we should probably have realized, had it not been for the deficiency of that indispensible article money, which obliged us to return to England.

A Swiss, whom S*** met at the post-office, kindly interested himself in our affairs, and assisted us to hire a *voiture* to convey us to Lucerne, the principal town of the lake of that name, which is connected with the lake of Uri. This man was imbued with the spirit of true politeness, and endeavoured to perform real services, and seemed to regard the mere ceremonies of the affair as things of very little value. The journey to Lucerne occupied rather more than two days. The country was flat and dull, and, excepting that we now and then caught a glimpse of the divine Alps, there was nothing in it to interest us. Lucerne promised better things, and as soon as we arrived (August 23d) we hired a boat, with which we proposed to coast the lake until we should meet with some suitable habitation, or perhaps, even going to Altorf, cross Mont St. Gothard, and seek in the warm climate of the country to the south of the Alps an air more salubrious, and a temperature better fitted for the precarious state of S***'s health, than the bleak region to the north. The lake of Lucerne is encompassed on all sides by high mountains that rise abruptly from the water; — sometimes their bare fronts descend perpendicularly and cast a black shade upon the waves; — sometimes they are covered with thick wood, whose dark foliage is interspersed by the brown bare crags on which the trees have taken root. In every part where a glade shews itself in the forest it appears cultivated, and cottages peep from among the woods. The most luxuriant islands, rocky and covered with moss, and bending trees, are sprinkled over the lake. Most of these are decorated by the figure of a saint in wretched waxwork.

The direction of this lake extends at first from east to west, then turning a right angle, it lies from north to south; this latter part is distinguished in name from the other, and is called the lake of Uri. The former part is also nearly divided midway, where the jutting land almost meets, and its craggy sides cast a deep shadow on the little strait through which you pass. The summits of several of the mountains that enclose the lake to the south are covered by eternal glaciers; of one of these, opposite Brunen, they tell the story of a priest and his mistress, who, flying from persecution, inhabited a cottage at the foot of the snows. One winter night an avalanche overwhelmed them, but their plaintive voices are still heard in stormy nights, calling for succour from the peasant.

Brunen is situated on the northern side of the angle which the lake makes, forming the extremity of the lake of Lucerne. Here we rested for the night, and dismissed our boatmen. Nothing could be more magnificent than the view from this spot. The high mountains encompassed us, darkening the waters; at a distance on the shores of Uri we could perceive the chapel of Tell, and this was the village where he matured the conspiracy which was to overthrow the tyrant of his country; and indeed this lovely lake, these sublime mountains, and wild forests, seemed a fit cradle for a mind aspiring to high adventure and heroic deeds. Yet we saw no glimpse of his spirit in his present countrymen. The Swiss appeared to us then, and experience has confirmed our opinion, a people slow of comprehension and of action; but habit has made them unfit for slavery, and they would, I have little doubt, make a brave defence against any invader of their freedom.

Such were our reflections, and we remained until late in the evening on the shores of the lake conversing, enjoying the rising breeze, and contemplating with feelings of exquisite delight the divine objects that surrounded us.

The following day was spent in a consideration of our circumstances, and in contemplation of the scene around us. A furious *vent d'Italie* (south wind) tore up the lake, making immense waves, and carrying the water in a whirlwind high in the air, when it fell like heavy rain into the lake. The waves broke with a tremendous noise on the rocky shores. This conflict continued during the whole day, but it became calmer towards the evening. S*** and I walked on the banks, and sitting on a rude pier, S*** read aloud the account of the Siege of Jerusalem from Tacitus.

In the mean time we endeavoured to find an habitation, but could only procure two unfurnished rooms in an ugly big house, called the Chateau. These we hired at a guinea a month, had beds moved into them, and the next day took possession. But it was a wretched place, with no comfort or convenience. It was with difficulty that we could get any food prepared: as it was cold and rainy, we ordered a fire — they lighted an immense stove which occupied a corner of the room; it was long before it heated, and when hot, the warmth was so unwholesome, that we were obliged to throw open our windows to prevent a kind of suffocation; added to this, there was but one person in Brunen who could speak French, a barbarous kind of German being the language of this part of Switzerland. It was with difficulty, therefore, that we could get our most ordinary wants supplied.

These immediate inconveniences led us to a more serious consideration of our situation. The L28. which we possessed, was all the money that we could count upon with any certainty, until the following December. S***'s presence in London was absolutely necessary for the procuring any further supply. What were we to do? we should soon be reduced to absolute want. Thus, after balancing the various topics that offered themselves for discussion, we resolved to return to England.

Having formed this resolution, we had not a moment for delay: our little store was sensibly decreasing, and L28. could hardly appear sufficient for so long a journey. It had cost us sixty to cross France from Paris to Neufchâtel; but we now resolved on a more economical mode of travelling. Water conveyances are always the cheapest, and fortunately we were so situated, that by taking advantage of the rivers of the Reuss and Rhine, we could reach England without travelling a league on land. This was our plan; we should travel eight hundred miles, and was this possible for so small a sum? but there was no other alternative, and indeed S*** only knew how very little we had to depend upon.

We departed the next morning for the town of Lucerne. It rained violently during the first part of our voyage, but towards its conclusion the sky became clear, and the sun-beams dried and cheered us. We saw again, and for the last time, the rocky shores of this beautiful lake, its verdant isles, and snow-capt mountains.

We landed at Lucerne, and remained in that town the following night, and the next morning (August 28th) departed in the *diligence par-eau* for Loffenburgh, a town on the Rhine, where the falls of that river prevented the same vessel from proceeding any further. Our companions in this voyage were of the meanest class, smoked prodigiously, and were exceedingly disgusting. After having landed for refreshment in the middle of the day, we found, on our return to the boat, that our former seats were occupied; we took others, when the original possessors angrily, and almost with violence, insisted upon our leaving them. Their brutal rudeness to us, who did not understand their language, provoked S*** to knock one of the foremost down: he did not return the blow, but continued his vociferations until the boatmen interfered, and provided us with other seats.

The Reuss is exceedingly rapid, and we descended several falls, one of more than eight feet. There is something very delicious in the sensation, when at one moment you are at the top of a fall of water, and before the second has expired you are at the bottom, still rushing on with the impulse which the descent has given. The waters of the Rhone are blue, those of the Reuss are of a deep green. I should think that there must be something in the beds of these rivers, and that the accidents of the banks and sky cannot alone cause this difference.

Sleeping at Dettingen, we arrived the next morning at Loffenburgh, where we engaged a small canoe to convey us to Mumph. I give these boats this Indian appellation, as they were of the rudest construction — long, narrow, and flat-bottomed: they consisted merely of straight pieces of deal board, unpainted, and nailed together with so little care, that the water constantly poured in at the crevices, and the boat perpetually required emptying. The river was rapid, and sped swiftly, breaking as it passed on innumerable rocks just covered by the water: it was a sight of some dread to see our frail boat winding among the eddies of the rocks, which it was death to touch, and when the slightest inclination on one side would instantly have overset it.

We could not procure a boat at Mumph, and we thought ourselves lucky in meeting with a return *cabriolet* to Rheinfelden; but our good fortune was of short duration: about a league from Mumph the *cabriolet* broke down, and we were obliged to proceed on foot. Fortunately we were overtaken by some Swiss soldiers, who were discharged and returning home, who carried our box for us as far as Rheinfelden, when we were directed to proceed a league farther to a village, where boats were commonly hired. Here, although not without some difficulty, we procured a boat for Basle, and proceeded down a swift river, while evening came on, and the air was bleak and comfortless. Our voyage was, however, short, and we arrived at the place of our destination by six in the evening.

GERMANY.

Before we slept, S*** had made a bargain for a boat to carry us to Mayence, and the next morning, bidding adieu to Switzerland, we embarked in a boat laden with merchandize, but where we had no fellow-passengers to disturb our tranquillity by their vulgarity and rudeness. The wind was violently against us, but the stream, aided by a slight exertion from the rowers, carried us on; the sun shone pleasantly, S*** read aloud to us Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters from Norway, and we passed our time delightfully.

The evening was such as to find few parallels in beauty; as it approached, the banks which had hitherto been flat and uninteresting, became exceedingly beautiful. Suddenly the river grew narrow, and the boat dashed with inconceivable rapidity round the base of a rocky hill covered with pines; a ruined tower, with its desolated windows, stood on the summit of another hill that jutted into the river; beyond, the sunset was illuminating the distant mountains and clouds, casting the reflection of its rich and purple hues on the agitated river. The brilliance and contrasts of the colours on the circling whirlpools of the stream, was an appearance entirely new and most beautiful; the shades grew darker as the sun descended below the horizon, and after we had landed, as we walked to our inn round a beautiful bay, the full moon arose with divine splendour, casting its silver light on the before-purpled waves.

The following morning we pursued our journey in a slight canoe, in which every motion was accompanied with danger; but the stream had lost much of its rapidity, and was no longer impeded by rocks, the banks were low, and covered with willows. We passed Strasburgh, and the next morning it was proposed to us that we should proceed in the *diligence par-eau*, as the navigation would become dangerous for our small boat.

There were only four passengers besides ourselves, three of these were students of the Strasburgh university: Schwitz, a rather handsome, good tempered young man; Hoff, a kind of shapeless animal, with a heavy, ugly, German face; and Schneider, who was nearly an ideot, and on whom his companions were always playing a thousand tricks: the remaining passengers were a woman, and an infant.

The country was uninteresting, but we enjoyed fine weather, and slept in the boat in the open air without any inconvenience. We saw on the shores few objects that called forth our attention, if I except the town of Manheim, which was strikingly neat and clean. It was situated at about a mile from the river, and the road to it was planted on each side with beautiful acacias. The last part of this voyage was performed close under land, as the wind was so violently against us, that even with all the force of a rapid current in our favour, we were hardly permitted to proceed. We were told (and not without reason) that we ought to congratulate ourselves on having exchanged our canoe for this boat, as the river was now of considerable width, and tossed by the wind into large waves. The same morning a boat, containing fifteen persons, in attempting to cross the water, had upset in the middle of the river, and every one in it perished. We saw the boat turned over, floating down the stream. This was a melancholy sight, yet ludicrously commented on by the *batalier*; almost the whole stock of whose French consisted in the word *seulement*. When we asked him what had happened, he answered, laying particular emphasis on this favourite dissyllable, *C'est seulement un bateau, qui etoit seulement renversée, et tous les peuples sont seulement noyès.*

Mayence is one of the best fortified towns in Germany. The river, which is broad and rapid, guards it to the east, and the hills for three leagues around exhibit signs of fortifications. The town itself is old, the streets narrow, and the houses high: the cathedral and towers of the town still bear marks of the bombardment which took place in the revolutionary war.

We took our place in the *diligence par-eau* for Cologne, and the next morning (September 4th) departed. This conveyance appeared much more like a mercantile English affair than any we had before seen; it was shaped like a steam-boat, with a cabin and a high deck. Most of our companions chose to remain in the cabin; this was fortunate for us, since nothing could be more horribly disgusting than the lower order of smoking, drinking Germans who travelled with us; they swaggered and talked, and what was hideous to English eyes, kissed one another: there were, however, two or three merchants of a better class, who appeared well-informed and polite.

The part of the Rhine down which we now glided, is that so beautifully described by Lord Byron in his third canto of *Childe Harold*. We read these verses with delight, as they conjured before us these lovely scenes with the truth and vividness of painting, and with the exquisite addition of glowing language and a warm imagination. We were carried down by a dangerously rapid current, and saw on either side of us hills covered with vines and trees, craggy cliffs crowned by desolate towers, and wooded islands, where picturesque ruins peeped from behind the foliage, and cast the shadows of their forms on the troubled waters, which distorted without deforming them. We heard the songs of the vintagers, and if surrounded by disgusting Germans, the sight was not so replete with enjoyment as I now fancy it to have been; yet memory, taking all the dark shades from the picture, presents this part of the Rhine to my remembrance as the loveliest paradise on earth.

We had sufficient leisure for the enjoyment of these scenes, for the boatmen, neither rowing nor steering, suffered us to be carried down by the stream, and the boat turned round and round as it descended.

While I speak with disgust of the Germans who travelled with us, I should in justice to these borderers record, that at one of the inns here we saw the only pretty woman we met with in the course of our travels. She is what I should conceive to be a truly German beauty; grey eyes, slightly tinged with brown, and expressive of uncommon sweetness and frankness. She had lately recovered from a fever, and this added to the interest of her countenance, by adorning it with an appearance of extreme delicacy.

On the following day we left the hills of the Rhine, and found that, for the remainder of our journey, we should move sluggishly through the flats of Holland: the river also winds extremely, so that, after calculating our resources, we resolved to finish our journey in a land diligence. Our water conveyance remained that night at Bonn, and that we might lose no time, we proceeded post the same night to Cologne, where we arrived late; for the rate of travelling in Germany seldom exceeds a mile and a half an hour.

Cologne appeared an immense town, as we drove through street after street to arrive at our inn. Before we slept, we secured places in the diligence, which was to depart next morning for Clêves.

Nothing in the world can be more wretched than travelling in this German diligence: the coach is clumsy and comfortless, and we proceeded so slowly, stopping so often, that it appeared as if we should never arrive at our journey’s end. We were allowed two hours for dinner, and two more were wasted in the evening while the coach was being changed. We were then requested, as the diligence had a greater demand for places than it could supply, to proceed in a *cabriolet* which was provided for us. We readily consented, as we hoped to travel faster than in the heavy diligence; but this was not permitted, and we jogged on all night behind this cumbrous machine. In the morning when we stopped, we for a moment indulged a hope that we had arrived at Clêves, which was at the distance of five leagues from our last night’s stage; but we had only advanced three leagues in seven or eight hours, and had yet eight miles to perform. However, we first rested about three hours at this stage, where we could not obtain breakfast or any convenience, and at about eight o’clock we again departed, and with slow, although far from easy travelling, faint with hunger and fatigue, we arrived by noon at Clêves.

HOLLAND.

Tired by the slow pace of the diligence, we resolved to post the remainder of the way. We had now, however, left Germany, and travelled at about the same rate as an English post-chaise. The country was entirely flat, and the roads so sandy, that the horses proceeded with difficulty. The only ornaments of this country are the turf fortifications that surround the towns. At Nimeguen we passed the flying bridge, mentioned in the letters of Lady Mary Montague. We had intended to travel all night, but at Triel where we arrived at about ten o'clock, we were assured that no post-boy was to be found who would proceed at so late an hour, on account of the robbers who infested the roads. This was an obvious imposition; but as we could procure neither horses nor driver, we were obliged to sleep here.

During the whole of the following day the road lay between canals, which intersect this country in every direction. The roads were excellent, but the Dutch have contrived as many inconveniences as possible. In our journey of the day before, we had passed by a windmill, which was so situated with regard to the road, that it was only by keeping close to the opposite side, and passing quickly, that we could avoid the sweep of its sails.

The roads between the canals were only wide enough to admit of one carriage, so that when we encountered another we were obliged sometimes to back for half a mile, until we should come to one of the drawbridges which led to the fields, on which one of the *cabriolets* was rolled, while the other passed. But they have another practice, which is still more annoying: the flax when cut is put to soak under the mud of the canals, and then placed to dry against the trees which are planted on either side of the road; the stench that it exhales, when the beams of the sun draw out the moisture, is scarcely endurable. We saw many enormous frogs and toads in the canals; and the only sight which refreshed the eye by its beauty was the delicious verdure of the fields, where the grass was as rich and green as that of England, an appearance not common on the continent.

Rotterdam is remarkably clean: the Dutch even wash the outside brickwork of their houses. We remained here one day, and met with a man in a very unfortunate condition: he had been born in Holland, and had spent so much of his life between England, France, and Germany, that he had acquired a slight knowledge of the language of each country, and spoke all very imperfectly. He said that he understood English best, but he was nearly unable to express himself in that.

On the evening of the 8th of September we sailed from Rotterdam, but contrary winds obliged us to remain nearly two days at Marsluys, a town about two leagues from Rotterdam. Here our last guinea was expended, and we reflected with wonder that we had travelled eight hundred miles for less than thirty pounds, passing through lovely scenes, and enjoying the beauteous Rhine, and all the brilliant shews of earth and sky, perhaps more, travelling as we did, in an open boat, than if we had been shut up in a carriage, and passed on the road under the hills.

The captain of our vessel was an Englishman, and had been a king's pilot. The bar of the Rhine a little below Marsluys is so dangerous, that without a very favourable breeze none of the Dutch vessels dare attempt its passage; but although the wind was a very few points in our favour, our captain resolved to sail, and although half repentant before he had accomplished his undertaking, he was glad and proud when, triumphing over the timorous Dutchmen, the bar was crossed, and the vessel safe in the open sea. It was in truth an enterprise of some peril; a heavy gale had prevailed during the night, and although it had abated since the morning, the breakers at the bar were still exceedingly high. Through some delay, which had arisen from the ship having got a-ground in the harbour, we arrived half an hour after the appointed time. The breakers were tremendous, and we were informed that there was the space of only two feet between the bottom of the vessel and the sands. The waves, which broke against the sides of the ship with a terrible shock, were quite perpendicular, and even sometimes overhanging in the abrupt smoothness of their sides. Shoals of enormous porpoises were sporting with the utmost composure amidst the troubled waters.

We safely past this danger, and after a navigation unexpectedly short, arrived at Gravesend on the morning of the 13th of September, the third day after our departure from Marsluys.

LETTER I.

Hôtel de Sécheron, Geneva,
May 17, 1816.

We arrived at Paris on the 8th of this month, and were detained two days for the purpose of obtaining the various signatures necessary to our passports, the French government having become much more circumspect since the escape of Lavalette. We had no letters of introduction, or any friend in that city, and were therefore confined to our hotel, where we were obliged to hire apartments for the week, although when we first arrived we expected to be detained one night only; for in Paris there are no houses where you can be accommodated with apartments by the day.

The manners of the French are interesting, although less attractive, at least to Englishmen, than before the last invasion of the Allies: the discontent and sullenness of their minds perpetually betrays itself. Nor is it wonderful that they should regard the subjects of a government which fills their country with hostile garrisons, and sustains a detested dynasty on the throne, with an acrimony and indignation of which that government alone is the proper object. This feeling is honourable to the French, and encouraging to all those of every nation in Europe who have a fellow feeling with the oppressed, and who cherish an unconquerable hope that the cause of liberty must at length prevail.

Our route after Paris, as far as Troyes, lay through the same uninteresting tract of country which we had traversed on foot nearly two years before, but on quitting Troyes we left the road leading to Neufchâtel, to follow that which was to conduct us to Geneva. We entered Dijon on the third evening after our departure from Paris, and passing through Dôle, arrived at Poligny. This town is built at the foot of Jur, which rises abruptly from a plain of vast extent. The rocks of the mountain overhang the houses. Some difficulty in procuring horses detained us here until the evening closed in, when we proceeded, by the light of a stormy moon, to Champagnolles, a little village situated in the depth of the mountains. The road was serpentine and exceedingly steep, and was overhung on one side by half distinguished precipices, whilst the other was a gulph, filled by the darkness of the driving clouds. The dashing of the invisible mountain streams announced to us that we had quitted the plains of France, as we slowly ascended, amidst a violent storm of wind and rain, to Champagnolles, where we arrived at twelve o'clock, the fourth night after our departure from Paris.

The next morning we proceeded, still ascending among the ravines and vallies of the mountain. The scenery perpetually grows more wonderful and sublime: pine forests of impenetrable thickness, and untrodden, nay, inaccessible expanse spread on every side. Sometimes the dark woods descending, follow the route into the vallies, the distorted trees struggling with knotted roots between the most barren clefts; sometimes the road winds high into the regions of frost, and then the forests become scattered, and the branches of the trees are loaded with snow, and half of the enormous pines themselves buried in the wavy drifts. The spring, as the inhabitants informed us, was unusually late, and indeed the cold was excessive; as we ascended the mountains, the same clouds which so rained on us in the vallies poured forth large flakes of snow thick and fast. The sun occasionally shone through these showers, and illuminated the magnificent ravines of the mountains, whose gigantic pines were some laden with snow, some wreathed round by the lines of scattered and lingering vapour; others darting their dark spires into the sunny sky, brilliantly clear and azure.

As the evening advanced, and we ascended higher, the snow, which we had beheld whitening the overhanging rocks, now encroached upon our road, and it snowed fast as we entered the village of Les Rousses here we were threatened by the apparent necessity of passing the night in a bad inn and dirty beds. For from that place there are two roads to Geneva; one by Nion, in the Swiss territory, where the mountain route is shorter, and comparatively easy at that time of the year, when the road is for several leagues covered with snow of an enormous depth; the other road lay through Gex, and was too circuitous and dangerous to be attempted at so late an hour in the day. Our passport, however, was for Gex, and we were told that we could not change its destination; but all these police laws, so severe in themselves, are to be softened by bribery, and this difficulty was at length overcome. We hired four horses, and ten men to support the carriage, and departed from Les Rousses at six in the evening, when the sun had already far descended, and the snow pelting against the windows of our carriage, assisted the coming darkness to deprive us of the view of the lake of Geneva and the far distant Alps.

The prospect around, however, was sufficiently sublime to command our attention — never was scene more awfully desolate. The trees in these regions are incredibly large, and stand in scattered clumps over the white wilderness; the vast expanse of snow was chequered only by these gigantic pines, and the poles that marked our road: no river or rock-encircled lawn relieved the eye, by adding the picturesque to the sublime. The natural silence of that uninhabited desert contrasted strangely with the voices of the men who conducted us, who, with animated tones and gestures, called to one another in a *patois* composed of French and Italian, creating disturbance, where but for them, there was none.

To what a different scene are we now arrived! To the warm sunshine and to the humming of sun-loving insects. From the windows of our hotel we see the lovely lake, blue as the heavens which it reflects, and sparkling with golden beams. The opposite shore is sloping, and covered with vines, which however do not so early in the season add to the beauty of the prospect. Gentlemens' seats are scattered over these banks, behind which rise the various ridges of black mountains, and towering far above, in the midst of its snowy Alps, the majestic Mont Blanc, highest and queen of all. Such is the view reflected by the lake; it is a bright summer scene without any of that sacred solitude and deep seclusion that delighted us at Lucerne.

We have not yet found out any very agreeable walks, but you know our attachment to water excursions. We have hired a boat, and every evening at about six o'clock we sail on the lake, which is delightful, whether we glide over a glassy surface or are speeded along by a strong wind. The waves of this lake never afflict me with that sickness that deprives me of all enjoyment in a sea voyage; on the contrary, the tossing of our boat raises my spirits and inspires me with unusual hilarity. Twilight here is of short duration, but we at present enjoy the benefit of an increasing moon, and seldom return until ten o'clock, when, as we approach the shore, we are saluted by the delightful scent of flowers and new mown grass, and the chirp of the grasshoppers, and the song of the evening birds.

We do not enter into society here, yet our time passes swiftly and delightfully. We read Latin and Italian during the heats of noon, and when the sun declines we walk in the garden of the hotel, looking at the rabbits, relieving fallen cockchaffers, and watching the motions of a myriad of lizards, who inhabit a southern wall of the garden. You know that we have just escaped from the gloom of winter and of London; and coming to this delightful spot during this divine weather, I feel as happy as a new-fledged bird, and hardly care what twig I fly to, so that I may try my new-found wings. A more experienced bird may be more difficult in its choice of a bower; but in my present temper of mind, the budding flowers, the fresh grass of spring, and the happy creatures about me that live and enjoy these pleasures, are quite enough to afford me exquisite delight, even though clouds should shut out Mont Blanc from my sight. Adieu!

LETTER II.
COLIGNY — GENEVA — PLAINPALAIS.

Campagne C******, near Coligny,
1st June.

You will perceive from my date that we have changed our residence since my last letter. We now inhabit a little cottage on the opposite shore of the lake, and have exchanged the view of Mont Blanc and her snowy *aiguilles* for the dark frowning Jura, behind whose range we every evening see the sun sink, and darkness approaches our valley from behind the Alps, which are then tinged by that glowing rose-like hue which is observed in England to attend on the clouds of an autumnal sky when day-light is almost gone. The lake is at our feet, and a little harbour contains our boat, in which we still enjoy our evening excursions on the water. Unfortunately we do not now enjoy those brilliant skies that hailed us on our first arrival to this country. An almost perpetual rain confines us principally to the house; but when the sun bursts forth it is with a splendour and heat unknown in England. The thunder storms that visit us are grander and more terrific than I have ever seen before. We watch them as they approach from the opposite side of the lake, observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged figures upon the piny heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging cloud, while perhaps the sun is shining cheerily upon us. One night we *enjoyed* a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up — the pines on Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful bursts over our heads amid the darkness.

But while I still dwell on the country around Geneva, you will expect me to say something of the town itself: there is nothing, however, in it that can repay you for the trouble of walking over its rough stones. The houses are high, the streets narrow, many of them on the ascent, and no public building of any beauty to attract your eye, or any architecture to gratify your taste.

The town is surrounded by a wall, the three gates of which are shut exactly at ten o'clock, when no bribery (as in France) can open them. To the south of the town is the promenade of the Genevese, a grassy plain planted with a few trees, and called Plainpalais. Here a small obelisk is erected to the glory of Rousseau, and here (such is the mutability of human life) the magistrates, the successors of those who exiled him from his native country, were shot by the populace during that revolution, which his writings mainly contributed to mature, and which, notwithstanding the temporary bloodshed and injustice with which it was polluted, has produced enduring benefits to mankind, which all the chicanery of statesmen, nor even the great conspiracy of kings, can entirely render vain. From respect to the memory of their predecessors, none of the present magistrates ever walk in Plainpalais. Another Sunday recreation for the citizens is an excursion to the top of Mont Salêve. This hill is within a league of the town, and rises perpendicularly from the cultivated plain. It is ascended on the other side, and I should judge from its situation that your toil is rewarded by a delightful view of the course of the Rhone and Arve, and of the shores of the lake. We have not yet visited it.

There is more equality of classes here than in England. This occasions a greater freedom and refinement of manners among the lower orders than we meet with in our own country. I fancy the haughty English ladies are greatly disgusted with this consequence of republican institutions, for the Genevese servants complain very much of their *scolding*, an exercise of the tongue, I believe, perfectly unknown here. The peasants of Switzerland may not however emulate the vivacity and grace of the French. They are more cleanly, but they are slow and inapt. I know a girl of twenty, who although she had lived all her life among vineyards, could not inform me during what month the vintage took place, and I discovered she was utterly ignorant of the order in which the months succeed one to another. She would not have been surprised if I had talked of the burning sun and delicious fruits of December, or of the frosts of July. Yet she is by no means deficient in understanding.

The Genevese are also much inclined to puritanism. It is true that from habit they dance on a Sunday, but as soon as the French government was abolished in the town, the magistrates ordered the theatre to be closed, and measures were taken to pull down the building.

We have latterly enjoyed fine weather, and nothing is more pleasant than to listen to the evening song of the vine-dressers. They are all women, and most of them have harmonious although masculine voices. The theme of their ballads consists of shepherds, love, flocks, and the sons of kings who fall in love with beautiful shepherdesses. Their tunes are monotonous, but it is sweet to hear them in the stillness of evening, while we are enjoying the sight of the setting sun, either from the hill behind our house or from the lake.

Such are our pleasures here, which would be greatly increased if the season had been more favourable, for they chiefly consist in such enjoyments as sunshine and gentle breezes bestow. We have not yet made any excursion in the environs of the town, but we have planned several(; and) when you shall again hear of us, we will endeavour, by the magic of words, to transport the ethereal part of you to the neighbourhood of the Alps, and mountain streams, and forests, which, while they clothe the former, darken the latter with their vast shadows. Adieu!

M.

LETTER III.
To T. P. Esq.
MEILLERIE — CLAREN — CHILLON — VEVAI — LAUSANNE.

Montalègre, near Coligni, Geneva,
July 12th.

It is nearly a fortnight since I have returned from Vevai. This journey has been on every account delightful, but most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in Julie. It is inconceivable what an enchantment the scene itself lends to those delineations, from which its own most touching charm arises. But I will give you an abstract of our voyage, which lasted eight days, and if you have a map of Switzerland, you can follow me.

We left Montalègre at half past two on the 23d of June. The lake was calm, and after three hours of rowing we arrived at Hermance, a beautiful little village, containing a ruined tower, built, the villagers say, by Julius Cæsar. There were three other towers similar to it, which the Genevese destroyed for their own fortifications in 1560. We got into the tower by a kind of window. The walls are immensely solid, and the stone of which it is built so hard, that it yet retained the mark of chisels. The boatmen said, that this tower was once three times higher than it is now. There are two staircases in the thickness of the walls, one of which is entirely demolished, and the other half ruined, and only accessible by a ladder. The town itself, now an inconsiderable village inhabited by a few fishermen, was built by a Queen of Burgundy, and reduced to its present state by the inhabitants of Berne, who burnt and ravaged every thing they could find.

Leaving Hermance, we arrived at sunset at the village of Nerni. After looking at our lodgings, which were gloomy and dirty, we walked out by the side of the lake. It was beautiful to see the vast expanse of these purple and misty waters broken by the craggy islets near to its slant and "beached margin." There were many fish sporting in the lake, and multitudes were collected close to the rocks to catch the flies which inhabited them.

On returning to the village, we sat on a wall beside the lake, looking at some children who were playing at a game like ninepins. The children here appeared in an extraordinary way deformed and diseased. Most of them were crooked, and with enlarged throats; but one little boy had such exquisite grace in his mien and motions, as I never before saw equalled in a child. His countenance was beautiful for the expression with which it overflowed. There was a mixture of pride and gentleness in his eyes and lips, the indications of sensibility, which his education will probably pervert to misery or seduce to crime; but there was more of gentleness than of pride, and it seemed that the pride was tamed from its original wildness by the habitual exercise of milder feelings. My companion gave him a piece of money, which he took without speaking, with a sweet smile of easy thankfulness, and then with an unembarrassed air turned to his play. All this might scarcely be; but the imagination surely could not forbear to breathe into the most inanimate forms some likeness of its own visions, on such a serene and glowing evening, in this remote and romantic village, beside the calm lake that bore us hither.

On returning to our inn, we found that the servant had arranged so our rooms, and deprived them of the greater portion of their former disconsolate appearance. They reminded my companion of Greece: it was five years, he said, since he had slept in such beds. The influence of the recollections excited by this circumstance on our conversation gradually faded, and I retired to rest with no unpleasant sensations, thinking of our journey tomorrow, and of the pleasure of recounting the little adventures of it when we return.

The next morning we passed Yvoire, a scattered village with an ancient castle, whose houses are interspersed with trees, and which stands at a little distance from Nerni, on the promontory which bounds a deep bay, some miles in extent. So soon as we arrived at this promontory, the lake began to assume an aspect of wilder magnificence. The mountains of Savoy, whose summits were bright with snow, descended in broken slopes to the lake: on high, the rocks were dark with pine forests, which become deeper and more immense, until the ice and snow mingle with the points of naked rock that pierce the blue air; but below, groves of walnut, chesnut, and oak, with openings of lawny fields, attested the milder climate.

As soon as we had passed the opposite promontory, we saw the river Drance, which descends from between a chasm in the mountains, and makes a plain near the lake, intersected by its divided streams. Thousands of *besolets*, beautiful water-birds, like sea-gulls, but smaller, with purple on their backs, take their station on the shallows, where its waters mingle with the lake. As we approached Evian, the mountains descended more precipitously to the lake, and masses of intermingled wood and rock overhung its shining spire.

We arrived at this town about seven o'clock, after a day which involved more rapid changes of atmosphere than I ever recollect to have observed before. The morning was cold and wet; then an easterly wind, and the clouds hard and high; then thunder showers, and wind shifting to every quarter; then a warm blast from the south, and summer clouds hanging over the peaks, with bright blue sky between. About half an hour after we had arrived at Evian, a few flashes of lightning came from a dark cloud, directly over head, and continued after the cloud had dispersed. "Diespiter, per pura tonantes egit equos:" a phenomenon which certainly had no influence on me, corresponding with that which it produced on Horace.

The appearance of the inhabitants of Evian is more wretched, diseased and poor, than I ever recollect to have seen. The contrast indeed between the subjects of the King of Sardinia and the citizens of the independent republics of Switzerland, affords a powerful illustration of the blighting mischiefs of despotism, within the space of a few miles. They have mineral waters here, *eaux savonneuses*, they call them. In the evening we had some difficulty about our passports, but so soon as the syndic heard my companion's rank and name, he apologized for the circumstance. The inn was good. During our voyage, on the distant height of a hill, covered with pine-forests, we saw a ruined castle, which reminded me of those on the Rhine.

We left Evian on the following morning, with a wind of such violence as to permit but one sail to be carried. The waves also were exceedingly high, and our boat so heavily laden, that there appeared to be some danger. We arrived however safe at Mellerie, after passing with great speed mighty forests which overhung the lake, and lawns of exquisite verdure, and mountains with bare and icy points, which rose immediately from the summit of the rocks, whose bases were echoing to the waves.

We here heard that the Empress Maria Louisa had slept at Mellerie, before the present inn was built, and when the accommodations were those of the most wretched village, in remembrance of St. Preux. How beautiful it is to find that the common sentiments of human nature can attach themselves to those who are the most removed from its duties and its enjoyments, when Genius pleads for their admission at the gate of Power. To own them was becoming in the Empress, and confirms the affectionate praise contained in the regret of a great and enlightened nation. A Bourbon dared not even to have remembered Rousseau. She owed this power to that democracy which her husband's dynasty outraged, and of which it was however in some sort the representative among the nations of the earth. This little incident shews at once how unfit and how impossible it is for the ancient system of opinions, or for any power built upon a conspiracy to revive them, permanently to subsist among mankind. We dined there, and had some honey, the best I have ever tasted, the very essence of the mountain flowers, and as fragrant. Probably the village derives its name from this production. Mellerie is the well known scene of St. Preux's visionary exile; but Mellerie is indeed inchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician. Groves of pine, chesnut, and walnut over-shadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these woods are dells of lawny expanse, inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers and odourous with thyme.

The lake appeared somewhat calmer as we left Mellerie, sailing close to the banks, whose magnificence augmented with the turn of every promontory. But we congratulated ourselves too soon: the wind gradually increased in violence, until it blew tremendously; and as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail at a time when the boat was on the point of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error, he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult; one wave fell in, and then another. My companion, an excellent swimmer, took off his coat, I did the same, and we sat with our arms crossed, every instant expecting to be swamped. The sail was however again held, the boat I so obeyed the helm, and still in imminent peril from the immensity of the waves, we arrived in a few minutes at a sheltered port, in the village of St. Gingoux.

I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I know that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine. When we arrived at St. Gingoux, the inhabitants, who stood on the shore, unaccustomed to see a vessel as frail as our's, and fearing to venture at all on such a sea, exchanged looks of wonder and congratulation with our boatmen, who, as well as ourselves, were well pleased to set foot on shore.

St. Gingoux is even more beautiful than Mellerie; the mountains are higher, and their loftiest points of elevation descend more abruptly to the lake. On high, the aerial summits still cherish great depths of snow in their ravines, and in the paths of their unseen torrents. One of the highest of these is called Roche de St. Julien, beneath whose pinnacles the forests become deeper and more extensive; the chesnut gives a peculiarity to the scene, which is most beautiful, and will make a picture in my memory, distinct from all other mountain scenes which I have ever before visited.

As we arrived here early, we took a *voiture* to visit the mouth of the Rhône. We went between the mountains and the lake, under groves of mighty chesnut trees, beside perpetual streams, which are nourished by the snows above, and form stalactites on the rocks, over which they fall. We saw an immense chesnut tree, which had been overthrown by the hurricane of the morning. The place where the Rhône joins the lake was marked by a line of tremendous breakers; the river is as rapid as when it leaves the lake, but is muddy and dark. We went about a league farther on the road to La Valais, and stopped at a castle called La Tour de Bouverie, which seems to be the frontier of Switzerland and Savoy, as we were asked for our passports, on the supposition of our proceeding to Italy.

On one side of the road was the immense Roche de St. Julien, which overhung it; through the gateway of the castle we saw the snowy mountains of La Valais, clothed in clouds, and on the other side was the willowy plain of the Rhône, in a character of striking contrast with the rest of the scene, bounded by the dark mountains that overhang Clarens, Vevai, and the lake that rolls between. In the midst of the plain rises a little isolated hill, on which the white spire of a church peeps from among the tufted chesnut woods. We returned to St. Gingoux before sun-set, and I passed the evening in reading Julie.

As my companion rises late, I had time before breakfast, on the ensuing morning, to hunt the waterfalls of the river that fall into the lake at St. Gingoux. The stream is indeed, from the declivity over which it falls, only a succession of waterfalls, which roar over the rocks with a perpetual sound, and suspend their unceasing spray on the leaves and flowers that overhang and adorn its savage banks. The path that conducted along this river sometimes avoided the precipices of its shores, by leading through meadows; sometimes threaded the base of the perpendicular and caverned rocks. I gathered in these meadows a nosegay of such flowers as I never saw in England, and which I thought more beautiful for that rarity.

On my return, after breakfast, we sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhône, and then the castle of Chillon; the day was fine, and the water calm. We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwilllingly. (*See Nouvelle Hélöise, Lettre 17, Part 4*.) I read Julie all day; an overflowing, as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled, of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. Mellerie, the Castle of Chillon, Clarens, the mountains of La Valais and Savoy, present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it. They were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality.

We passed on to the Castle of Chillon, and visited its dungeons and towers. These prisons are excavated below the lake; the principal dungeon is supported by seven columns, whose branching capitals support the roof. Close to the very walls, the lake is 800 feet deep; iron rings are fastened to these columns, and on them were engraven a multitude of names, partly those of visitors, and partly doubtless of the prisoners, of whom now no memory remains, and who thus beguiled a solitude which they have long ceased to feel. One date was as ancient as 1670. At the commencement of the Reformation, and indeed long after that period, this dungeon was the receptacle of those who shook, or who denied the system of idolatry, from the effects of which mankind is even now slowly emerging.

Close to this long and lofty dungeon was a narrow cell, and beyond it one larger and far more lofty and dark, supported upon two unornamented arches. Across one of these arches was a beam, now black and rotten, on which prisoners were hung in secret. I never saw a monument more terrible of that cold and inhuman tyranny, which it has been the delight of man to exercise over man. It was indeed one of those many tremendous fulfilments which render the "pernicies humani generis" of the great Tacitus, so solemn and irrefragable a prophecy. The gendarme, who conducted us over this castle, told us that there was an opening to the lake, by means of a secret spring, connected with which the whole dungeon might be filled with water before the prisoners could possibly escape!

We proceeded with a contrary wind to Clarens, against a heavy swell. I never felt more strongly than on landing at Clarens, that the spirit of old times had deserted its once cherished habitation. A thousand times, thought I, have Julia and St. Preux walked on this terrassed road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread. From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out "le bosquet de Julie." At least the inhabitants of this village are impressed with an idea, that the persons of that romance had actual existence. In the evening we walked thither. It is indeed Julia's wood. The hay was making under the trees; the trees themselves were aged, but vigorous, and interspersed with younger ones, which are destined to be their successors, and in future years, when we are dead, to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature, who love the memory of that tenderness and peace of which this was the imaginary abode. We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them?

I forgot to remark, what indeed my companion remarked to me, that our danger from the storm took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St. Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake.

On the following day we went to see the castle of Clarens, a square strong house, with very few windows, surrounded by a double terrace that overlooks the valley, or rather the plain of Clarens. The road which conducted to it wound up the steep ascent through woods of walnut and chesnut. We gathered roses on the terrace, in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julia’s hand. We sent their dead and withered leaves to the absent.

We went again to the “bosquet de Julie,” and found that the precise spot was now utterly obliterated, and a heap of stones marked the place where the little chapel had once stood. Whilst we were execrating the author of this brutal folly, our guide informed us that the land belonged to the convent of St. Bernard, and that this outrage had been committed by their orders. I knew before, that if avarice could harden the hearts of men, a system of prescriptive religion has an influence far more inimical to natural sensibility. I know that an isolated man is sometimes restrained by shame from outraging the venerable feelings arising out of the memory of genius, which once made nature even lovelier than itself; but associated man holds it as the very sacrament of his union to forswear all delicacy, all benevolence, all remorse, all that is true, or tender, or sublime.

We sailed from Clarens to Vevai. Vevai is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen. Its market-place, a spacious square interspersed with trees, looks directly upon the mountains of Savoy and La Valais, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone. It was at Vevai that Rousseau conceived the design of Julie.

From Vevai we came to Ouchy, a village near Lausanne. The coasts of the Pays de Vaud, though full of villages and vineyards, present an aspect of tranquillity and peculiar beauty which well compensates for the solitude which I am accustomed to admire. The hills are very high and rocky, crowned and interspersed with woods. Water-falls echo from the cliffs, and shine afar. In one place we saw the traces of two rocks of immense size, which had fallen from the mountain behind. One of these lodged in a room where a young woman was sleeping, without injuring her. The vineyards were utterly destroyed in its path, and the earth torn up.

The rain detained us two days at Ouchy. We however visited Lausanne, and saw Gibbon’s house. We were shewn the decayed summer-house where he finished his History, and the old acacias on the terrace, from which he saw Mont Blanc, after having written the last sentence. There is something grand and even touching in the regret which he expresses at the completion of his task. It was conceived amid the ruins of the Capitol. The sudden departure of his cherished and accustomed toil must have left him, like the death of a dear friend, sad and solitary.

My companion gathered some acacia leaves to preserve in remembrance of him. I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the Roman Empire, compelled me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.

When we returned, in the only interval of sunshine during the day, I walked on the pier which the lake was lashing with its waves. A rainbow spanned the lake, or rather rested one extremity of its arch upon the water, and the other at the foot of the mountains of Savoy. Some white houses, I know not if they were those of Mellerie, shone through the yellow fire.

On Saturday the 30th of June we quitted Ouchy, and after two days of pleasant sailing arrived on Sunday evening at Montalègre.

S.

LETTER IV.
To T. P. Esq.
ST. MARTIN — SERVOZ — CHAMOUNI — MONTANVERT — MONT BLANC.

Hôtel de Londres, Chamouni,
July 22d, 1816.

Whilst you, my friend, are engaged in securing a home for us, we are wandering in search of recollections to embellish it. I do not err in conceiving that you are interested in details of all that is majestic or beautiful in nature; but how shall I describe to you the scenes by which I am now surrounded? To exhaust the epithets which express the astonishment and the admiration — the very excess of satisfied astonishment, where expectation scarcely acknowledged any boundary, is this, to impress upon your mind the images which fill mine now even till it overflow? I too have read the raptures of travellers; I will be warned by their example; I will simply detail to you all that I can relate, or all that, if related, would enable you to conceive of what we have done or seen since the morning of the 20th, when we left Geneva.

We commenced our intended journey to Chamouni at half-past eight in the morning. We passed through the champain country, which extends from Mont Saleve to the base of the higher Alps. The country is sufficiently fertile, covered with corn fields and orchards, and intersected by sudden acclivities with flat summits. The day was cloudless and excessively hot, the Alps were perpetually in sight, and as we advanced, the mountains, which form their outskirts, closed in around us. We passed a bridge over a stream, which discharges itself into the Arve. The Arve itself, much swollen by the rains, flows constantly to the right of the road.

As we approached Bonneville through an avenue composed of a beautiful species of drooping poplar, we observed that the corn fields on each side were covered with inundation. Bonneville is a neat little town, with no conspicuous peculiarity, except the white towers of the prison, an extensive building overlooking the town. At Bonneville the Alps commence, one of which, clothed by forests, rises almost immediately from the opposite bank of the Arve.

From Bonneville to Cluses the road conducts through a spacious and fertile plain, surrounded on all sides by mountains, covered like those of Mellerie with forests of intermingled pine and chesnut. At Cluses the road turns suddenly to the right, following the Arve along the chasm, which it seems to have hollowed for itself among the perpendicular mountains. The scene assumes here a more savage and colossal character: the valley becomes narrow, affording no more space than is sufficient for the river and the road. The pines descend to the banks, imitating with their irregular spires, the pyramidal crags which lift themselves far above the regions of forest into the deep azure of the sky, and among the white dazzling clouds. The scene, at the distance of half a mile from Cluses, differs from that of Matlock in little else than in the immensity of its proportions, and in its untameable, inaccessible solitude, inhabited only by the goats which we saw browsing on the rocks.

Near Maglans, within a league of each other, we saw two waterfalls. They were no more than mountain rivulets, but the height from which they fell, at least of *twelve* hundred feet, made them assume a character inconsistent with the smallness of their stream. The first fell from the overhanging brow of a black precipice on an enormous rock, precisely resembling some colossal Egyptian statue of a female deity. It struck the head of the visionary image, and gracefully dividing there, fell from it in folds of foam more like to cloud than water, imitating a veil of the most exquisite woof. It then united, concealing the lower part of the statue, and hiding itself in a winding of its channel, burst into a deeper fall, and crossed our route in its path towards the Arve.

The other waterfall was more continuous and larger. The violence with which it fell made it look more like some shape which an exhalation had assumed, than like water, for it streamed beyond the mountain, which appeared dark behind it, as it might have appeared behind an evanescent cloud.

The character of the scenery continued the same until we arrived at St. Martin (called in the maps Sallanches) the mountains perpetually becoming more elevated, exhibiting at every turn of the road more craggy summits, loftier and wider extent of forests, darker and more deep recesses.

The following morning we proceeded from St. Martin on mules to Chamouni, accompanied by two guides. We proceeded, as we had done the preceding day, along the valley of the Arve, a valley surrounded on all sides by immense mountains, whose rugged precipices are intermixed on high with dazzling snow. Their bases were still covered with the eternal forests, which perpetually grew darker and more profound as we approached the inner regions of the mountains.

On arriving at a small village, at the distance of a league from St. Martin, we dismounted from our mules, and were conducted by our guides to view a cascade. We beheld an immense body of water fall two hundred and fifty feet, dashing from rock to rock, and casting a spray which formed a mist around it, in the midst of which hung a multitude of sunbows, which faded or became unspeakably vivid, as the inconstant sun shone through the clouds. When we approached near to it, the rain of the spray reached us, and our clothes were wetted by the quick-falling but minute particles of water. The cataract fell from above into a deep craggy chasm at our feet, where, changing its character to that of a mountain stream, it pursued its course towards the Arve, roaring over the rocks that impeded its progress.

As we proceeded, our route still lay through the valley, or rather, as it had now become, the vast ravine, which is at once the couch and the creation of the terrible Arve. We ascended, winding between mountains whose immensity staggers the imagination. We crossed the path of a torrent, which three days since had descended from the thawing snow, and torn the road away.

We dined at Servoz, a little village, where there are lead and copper mines, and where we saw a cabinet of natural curiosities, like those of Keswick and Bethgelert. We saw in this cabinet some chamois' horns, and the horns of an exceedingly rare animal called the bouquetin, which inhabits the desarts of snow to the south of Mont Blanc: it is an animal of the stag kind; its horns weigh at least twenty-seven English pounds. It is inconceivable how so small an animal could support so inordinate a weight. The horns are of a very peculiar conformation, being broad, massy, and pointed at the ends, and surrounded with a number of rings, which are supposed to afford an indication of its age: there were seventeen rings on the largest of these horns.

From Servoz three leagues remain to Chamouni. — Mont Blanc was before us — the Alps, with their innumerable glaciers on high all around, closing in the complicated windings of the single vale — forests inexpressibly beautiful, but majestic in their beauty — intermingled beech and pine, and oak, overshadowed our road, or receded, whilst lawns of such verdure as I have never seen before occupied these openings, and gradually became darker in their recesses. Mont Blanc was before us, but it was covered with cloud; its base, furrowed with dreadful gaps, was seen above. Pinnacles of snow intolerably bright, part of the chain connected with Mont Blanc, shone through the clouds at intervals on high. I never knew — I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic wonder, not unallied to madness. And remember this was all one scene, it all pressed home to our regard and our imagination. Though it embraced a vast extent of space, the snowy pyramids which shot into the bright blue sky seemed to overhang our path; the ravine, clothed with gigantic pines, and black with its depth below, so deep that the very roaring of the untameable Arve, which rolled through it, could not be heard above — all was as much our own, as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others as now occupied our own. Nature was the poet, whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest.

As we entered the valley of Chamouni (which in fact may be considered as a continuation of those which we have followed from Bonneville and Cluses) clouds hung upon the mountains at the distance perhaps of 6000 feet from the earth, but so as effectually to conceal not only Mont Blanc, but the other *aiguilles*, as they call them here, attached and subordinate to it. We were travelling along the valley, when suddenly we heard a sound as of the burst of smothered thunder rolling above; yet there was something earthly in the sound, that told us it could not be thunder. Our guide hastily pointed out to us a part of the mountain opposite, from whence the sound came. It was an avalanche. We saw the smoke of its path among the rocks, and continued to hear at intervals the bursting of its fall. It fell on the bed of a torrent, which it displaced, and presently we saw its tawny-coloured waters also spread themselves over the ravine, which was their couch.

We did not, as we intended, visit the *Glacier de Bossons* to-day, although it descends within a few minutes' walk of the road, wishing to survey it at least when unfatigued. We saw this glacier which comes close to the fertile plain, as we passed, its surface was broken into a thousand unaccountable figures: conical and pyramidical crystalizations, more than fifty feet in height, rise from its surface, and precipices of ice, of dazzling splendour, overhang the woods and meadows of the vale. This glacier winds upwards from the valley, until it joins the masses of frost from which it was produced above, winding through its own ravine like a bright belt flung over the black region of pines. There is more in all these scenes than mere magnitude of proportion: there is a majesty of outline; there is an awful grace in the very colours which invest these wonderful shapes — a charm which is peculiar to them, quite distinct even from the reality of their unutterable greatness.

July 24.

Yesterday morning we went to the source of the Arveiron. It is about a league from this village; the river rolls forth impetuously from an arch of ice, and spreads itself in many streams over a vast space of the valley, ravaged and laid bare by its inundations. The glacier by which its waters are nourished, overhangs this cavern and the plain, and the forests of pine which surround it, with terrible precipices of solid ice. On the other side rises the immense glacier of Montanvert, fifty miles in extent, occupying a chasm among mountains of inconceivable height, and of forms so pointed and abrupt, that they seem to pierce the sky. From this glacier we saw as we sat on a rock, close to one of the streams of the Arveiron, masses of ice detach themselves from on high, and rush with a loud dull noise into the vale. The violence of their fall turned them into powder, which flowed over the rocks in imitation of waterfalls, whose ravines they usurped and filled.

In the evening I went with Ducrée, my guide, the only tolerable person I have seen in this country, to visit the glacier of Bossons. This glacier, like that of Montanvert, comes close to the vale, overhanging the green meadows and the dark woods with the dazzling whiteness of its precipices and pinnacles, which are like spires of radiant crystal, covered with a net-work of frosted silver. These glaciers flow perpetually into the valley, ravaging in their slow but irresistible progress the pastures and the forests which surround them, performing a work of desolation in ages, which a river of lava might accomplish in an hour, but far more irretrievably; for where the ice has once descended, the hardiest plant refuses to grow; if even, as in some extraordinary instances, it should recede after its progress has once commenced. The glaciers perpetually move onward, at the rate of a foot each day, with a motion that commences at the spot where, on the boundaries of perpetual congelation, they are produced by the freezing of the waters which arise from the partial melting of the eternal snows. They drag with them from the regions whence they derive their origin, all the ruins of the mountain, enormous rocks, and immense accumulations of sand and stones. These are driven onwards by the irresistible stream of solid ice; and when they arrive at a declivity of the mountain, sufficiently rapid, roll down, scattering ruin. I saw one of these rocks which had descended in the spring, (winter here is the season of silence and safety) which measured forty feet in every direction.

The verge of a glacier, like that of Bossons, presents the most vivid image of desolation that it is possible to conceive. No one dares to approach it; for the enormous pinnacles of ice which perpetually fall, are perpetually reproduced. The pines of the forest, which bound it at one extremity, are overthrown and shattered to a wide extent at its base. There is something inexpressibly dreadful in the aspect of the few branchless trunks, which, nearest to the ice rifts, still stand in the uprooted soil. The meadows perish, overwhelmed with sand and stones. Within this last year, these glaciers have advanced three hundred feet into the valley. Saussure, the naturalist, says, that they have their periods of increase and decay: the people of the country hold an opinion entirely different; but as I judge, more probable. It is agreed by all, that the snow on the summit of Mont Blanc and the neighbouring mountains perpetually augments, and that ice, in the form of glaciers, subsists without melting in the valley of Chamouni during its transient and variable summer. If the snow which produces this glacier must augment, and the heat of the valley is no obstacle to the perpetual existence of such masses of ice as have already descended into it, the consequence is obvious; the glaciers must augment and will subsist, at least until they have overflowed this vale.

I will not pursue Buffon's sublime but gloomy theory — that this globe which we inhabit will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost by the encroachments of the polar ice, and of that produced on the most elevated points of the earth. Do you, who assert the supremacy of Ahriman, imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity, and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, avalanches, torrents, rocks, and thunders, and above all these deadly glaciers, at once the proof and symbols of his reign; — add to this, the degradation of the human species — who in these regions are half deformed or idiotic, and most of whom are deprived of any thing that can excite interest or admiration. This is a part of the subject more mournful and less sublime; but such as neither the poet nor the philosopher should disdain to regard.

This morning we departed, on the promise of a fine day, to visit the glacier of Montanvert. In that part where it fills a slanting valley, it is called the Sea of Ice. This valley is 950 toises, or 7600 feet above the level of the sea. We had not proceeded far before the rain began to fall, but we persisted until we had accomplished more than half of our journey, when we returned, wet through.

Chamouni, July 25th.

We have returned from visiting the glacier of Montanvert, or as it is called, the Sea of Ice, a scene in truth of dizzying wonder. The path that winds to it along the side of a mountain, now clothed with pines, now intersected with snowy hollows, is wide and steep. The cabin of Montanvert is three leagues from Chamouni, half of which distance is performed on mules, not so sure footed, but that on the first day the one which I rode fell in what the guides call a *mauvais pas*, so that I narrowly escaped being precipitated down the mountain. We passed over a hollow covered with snow, down which vast stones are accustomed to roll. One had fallen the preceding day, a little time after we had returned: our guides desired us to pass quickly, for it is said that sometimes the least sound will accelerate their descent. We arrived at Montanvert, however, safe.

On all sides precipitous mountains, the abodes of unrelenting frost, surround this vale: their sides are banked up with ice and snow, broken, heaped high, and exhibiting terrific chasms. The summits are sharp and naked pinnacles, whose overhanging steepness will not even permit snow to rest upon them. Lines of dazzling ice occupy here and there their perpendicular rifts, and shine through the driving vapours with inexpressible brilliance: they pierce the clouds like things not belonging to this earth. The vale itself is filled with a mass of undulating ice, and has an ascent sufficiently gradual even to the remotest abysses of these horrible desarts. It is only half a league (about two miles) in breadth, and seems much less. It exhibits an appearance as if frost had suddenly bound up the waves and whirlpools of a mighty torrent. We walked some distance upon its surface. The waves are elevated about 12 or 15 feet from the surface of the mass, which is intersected by long gaps of unfathomable depth, the ice of whose sides is more beautifully azure than the sky. In these regions every thing changes, and is in motion. This vast mass of ice has one general progress, which ceases neither day nor night; it breaks and bursts for ever: some undulations sink while others rise; it is never the same. The echo of rocks, or of the ice and snow which fall from their overhanging precipices, or roll from their aerial summits, scarcely ceases for one moment. One would think that Mont Blanc, like the god of the Stoics, was a vast animal, and that the frozen blood for ever circulated through his stony veins.

We dined (M***, C***, and I) on the grass, in the open air, surrounded by this scene. The air is piercing and clear. We returned down the mountain, sometimes encompassed by the driving vapours, sometimes cheered by the sunbeams, and arrived at our inn by seven o’clock.

Montalègre, July 28th.

The next morning we returned through the rain to St. Martin. The scenery had lost something of its immensity, thick clouds hanging over the highest mountains; but visitings of sunset intervened between the showers, and the blue sky shone between the accumulated clouds of snowy whiteness which brought them; the dazzling mountains sometimes glittered through a chasm of the clouds above our heads, and all the charm of its grandeur remained. We repassed *Pont Pellisier*, a wooden bridge over the Arve, and the ravine of the Arve. We repassed the pine forests which overhang the defile, the chateau of St. Michel, a haunted ruin, built on the edge of a precipice, and shadowed over by the eternal forest. We repassed the vale of Servoz, a vale more beautiful, because more luxuriant, than that of Chamouni. Mont Blanc forms one of the sides of this vale also, and the other is inclosed by an irregular amphitheatre of enormous mountains, one of which is in ruins, and fell fifty years ago into the higher part of the valley: the smoke of its fall was seen in Piedmont, and people went from Turin to investigate whether a volcano had not burst forth among the Alps. It continued falling many days, spreading, with the shock and thunder of its ruin, consternation into the neighbouring vales. In the evening we arrived at St. Martin. The next day we wound through the valley, which I have described before, and arrived in the evening at our home.

We have bought some specimens of minerals and plants, and two or three crystal seals, at Mont Blanc, to preserve the remembrance of having approached it. There is a cabinet of *Histoire Naturelle* at Chamouni, just as at Keswick, Matlock, and Clifton; the proprietor of which is the very vilest specimen of that vile species of quack that, together with the whole army of aubergistes and guides, and indeed the entire mass of the population, subsist on the weakness and credulity of travellers as leaches subsist on the sick. The most interesting of my purchases is a large collection of all the seeds of rare alpine plants, with their names written upon the outside of the papers that contain them. These I mean to colonize in my garden in England, and to permit you to make what choice you please from them. They are companions which the Celandine — the classic Celandine, need not despise; they are as wild and more daring than he, and will tell him tales of things even as touching and sublime as the gaze of a vernal poet.

Did I tell you that there are troops of wolves among these mountains? In the winter they descend into the vallies, which the snow occupies six months of the year, and devour every thing that they can find out of doors. A wolf is more powerful than the fiercest and strongest dog. There are no bears in these regions. We heard, when we were at Lucerne, that they were occasionally found in the forests which surround that lake. Adieu.

MONT BLANC. LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

1
The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark — now glittering — now reflecting gloom —
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters — with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume,
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

2
Thus thou, Ravine of Arve — dark, deep Ravine —
Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest; — thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear — an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the etherial waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep

Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity; —
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound —
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

3

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep, — that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live. — I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,

Mont Blanc appears — still, snowy, and serene;
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter’s bone,
And the wolf tracks her there — how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven. — Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelop once this silent snow?
None can reply — all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with Nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

4

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the dædal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower; the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;

All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And this, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

5

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high: — the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them. — Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind’s imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY, IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843

Rambles in Germany and Italy is Shelley's last published work in her lifetime and is concentrated on two trips Shelley took, to Germany and Italy with her son Percy and some of his friends. The work was first published in 1844 but was not reprinted until the 20th century feminist movement revived interest in Shelley's texts. She had spent much of her marriage to Percy Shelley in Italy and the country held many happy memories for her but it was also associated with her grief at the loss of her children and husband. The trip to Germany and Italy began in the summer of 1840 and lasted three months during which time Shelley began to show signs of the illness that would kill her eleven years later. In 1842 Shelley embarked on a fourteen month tour with her son and some friends again, visiting Germany before travelling to Italy. After time spent on the peninsula Percy returned to England while Shelley went to Paris.

Shelley's work was explicitly political and her interest was to gain support for Italian revolutionaries in their struggle against imperial powers. Shelley became particularly interested in the 'Young Italy' theme due to a personal attachment to one young revolutionary she encountered in Paris; Gatteschi, an Italian in exile for whom she decided to attempt to publish *Rambles*. Her publisher agreed to give her an advance for her proposed work and Shelley's final text which mainly consisted of her correspondences with her step- sister Claire Clairmont was published in the summer of 1844. Shelley's relationship with Gatteschi quickly soured and he attempted to blackmail her with supposedly embarrassing and indiscreet letters she had sent him. The matter was only resolved when Paris police seized the letters from Gatteschi's possession as part of an operation that was partly financed by Shelley.

The travel narrative consists of three parts, the 1st detailing the 1840 trip and the 2nd and 3rd focusing her 1842 travels and experiences. The topics discussed include her health, the scenery, the art and literature and also the history and national character of the Germans and Italians. Similarly to a

Six Weeks' Tour this work defies the standard practice of travel narratives by virtue of being political and is particularly unusual because politics were deemed to be an inappropriate subject for female writers. Shelley praises the national character of the Italians and believes that they have great untapped potential which could lead to revolt and a progressive future. Shelley did not rate her text highly but the work was received favourably by critics who praised aspects on Shelley's political commentary on Italy and the wit of the writing. Unsurprisingly it also drew criticism from reviewers who did not believe that political thought was a correct topic for women and the scholarly Jeanne Moskal cites a review in *The Observer* that proposes that unlike logical men, Shelley approached the subject from a perspective of feeling rather than reason.

One of the chief sights mentioned in the travelogue, the Simplon Pass is located between the Pennine Alps and the Lepontine Alps in Switzerland.

CONTENTS

PREFACE.

PART I. — 1840.

LETTER I.
LETTER II
LETTER III.
LETTER IV.
LETTER V.
LETTER VI.
LETTER VII.
LETTER VIII.
LETTER IX.
LETTER X.
LETTER XI.
LETTER XII.

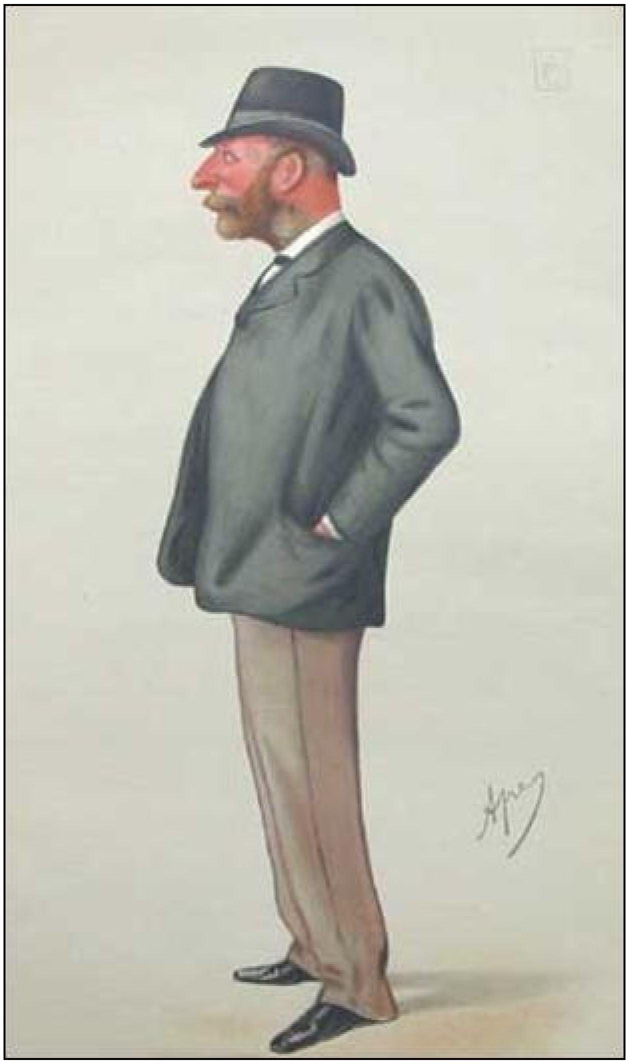
PART II — 1842-1843. IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

LETTER I.
LETTER II.
LETTER III.
LETTER IV.
LETTER V.
LETTER VI.
LETTER VII.
LETTER VIII.
LETTER IX.
LETTER X.
LETTER XI.

PART III. — 1842.

LETTER I.

LETTER II.
LETTER III.
LETTER IV.
LETTER V.
LETTER VI.
LETTER VII.
LETTER VIII.
LETTER IX.
LETTER X.
LETTER XI.
LETTER XII.
LETTER XIII.
LETTER XIV.
LETTER XV.
LETTER XVI.
LETTER XVII.
LETTER XVIII.
LETTER XIX.
LETTER XX.
LETTER XXI.
LETTER XXII.
LETTER XXIII.



Sir Percy Florence Shelley, 3rd Baronet was the son and only surviving child of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Shelley. This is a later caricature of Percy Florence Shelley, who accompanied his mother on her German travels

RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS,
AUTHOR OF “THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY,”
“ITALY,” ETC.
THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED,
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF
RESPECT, GRATITUDE, AND AFFECTION,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE found it a pleasant thing while travelling to have in the carriage the works of those who have passed through the same country. Sometimes they inform, sometimes they excite curiosity. If alone, they serve as society; if with others, they suggest matter for conversation.

These Volumes were thus originated. Visiting spots often described, pursuing a route such as form for the most part the common range of the tourist — I could tell nothing new, except as each individual's experience possesses novelty. While I passed in haste from city to city; as I travelled through mountain-passes or over vast extents of country, I put down the daily occurrences — a guide, a pioneer, or simply a fellow-traveller, for those who came after me.

When I reached Italy, however, and came south, I found that I could say little of Florence and Rome, as far as regarded the cities themselves, that had not been said so often and so well before, that I was satisfied to select from my letters such portions merely as touched upon subjects that I had not found mentioned elsewhere. It was otherwise as regarded the people, especially in a political point of view; and in treating of them my scope grew more serious.

I believe that no one can mingle much with the Italians without becoming attached to them. Their faults injure each other; their good qualities make them agreeable to strangers. Their courtesy, their simplicity of manner, their evident desire to serve, their rare and exceeding intelligence, give to the better specimens among the higher classes, and to many among the lower, a charm all their own. In addition, therefore, to being a mere gossiping companion to a traveller, I would fain say something that may incite others to regard them favourably; something explanatory of their real character. But to speak of the state of Italy and the Italians —

Non è poléggîo da picciola barca
Quel, che fendendo va l'ardita prora,
Nè da nocchier, ch'a se medesmo parca.

When I began to put together what I knew, I found it too scant of circumstance and experience to form a whole. I could only sketch facts, guess at causes, hope for results. I have said little, therefore; but what I have said, I believe that I may safely declare, may be depended, upon.

Time was, when travels in Italy were filled with contemptuous censures of the effeminacy of the Italians — diatribes against the vice and cowardice of the nobles — sneers at the courtly verses of the poets, who were content to celebrate a marriage or a birth among the great: — their learned men fared better, for there were always writers in Italy whose names adorned European letters — yet still contempt was the general tone; and of late years travellers (with the exception of Lady Morgan, whose book is dear to the Italians), parrot the same, not because these things still exist, but because they know no better.

Italy is, indeed, much changed. Their historians no longer limit themselves to disputing dates, but bum with enthusiasm for liberty; their poets, Manzoni and Niccolini at their head, direct their efforts to elevating and invigorating the public mind. The country itself wears a new aspect; it is struggling with its fetters, — not only with the material ones that weigh on it so heavily, and which they endure with a keen sense of shame, but with those that have entered into and bind the soul — superstition, luxury, servility, indolence, violence, vice.

Since the date of these letters Italy has been much disturbed, — but the risings and their unfortunate consequences to individuals, are regarded by us with contempt, or excite only a desire of putting an end to them as detrimental to the sufferers, without being of any utility to the cause of civilisation and moral improvement. Yet it ought not to be forgotten, that the oppression suffered in that portion of the country which has been recently convulsed, is such as to justify Dr. Johnson’s proposition, that “if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.”

Englishmen, in particular, ought to sympathise in their struggles; for the aspiration for free institutions all over the world has its source in England. Our example first taught the French nobility to seek to raise themselves from courtiers into legislators. The American war of independence, it is true, quickened this impulse, by showing the; way to a successful resistance to the undue exercise of authority; but the seed was all sown by us. The swarms of English that overrun Italy keep the feeling alive. An Italian gentleman naturally envies an Englishman, hereditary or elective legislator. He envies him his pride of country, in which he himself can in no way indulge. He knows, at best, that his sovereign is a weak tool in the hands of a foreign potentate; and that all that is aimed at by the governments that rule him, is to benefit Austria — not Italy. But this forms but a small portion of his wrongs. He sees that we enjoy the privilege of doing and saying whatever we please, so that we infringe no law. If he write a book, it is submitted to the censor, and if it be marked by any boldness of opinion, it is suppressed. If he attempt any plan for the improvement of his countrymen, he is checked; if a tardy permission be given him to proceed, it is clogged with such conditions as nullify the effect. If he limit his endeavours to self-improvement, he is suspected — Surrounded by spies; while his friends share in the odium that attaches to him. The result of such persecution is to irritate or discourage. He either sinks into the Circean Stye, in which so many drag out a degraded existence, or he is irresistibly impelled to resist. No way to mitigate the ills he groans under, or to serve his countrymen, is open, except secret societies. The mischievous effects of such to those who are implicated in them, are unspeakably great. They fear a spy in the man who shares their oath; their acts are dark, and treachery hovers close. The result is inevitable; their own moral sense is tampered with, and becomes vitiated; or, if they escape this evil, and preserve the ingenuousness of a free and noble nature, they are victims.

While thus every passion, bad and good, ferments — a touch is given, and up springs armed revolt. This must be put down or the peace of Europe will be disturbed. Peace is a lovely thing. It is horrible to image the desolation of war; the cottage burnt, the labour of the husbandman destroyed — outrage and death there, where security of late spread smiles and joy: — and the fertility and beauty of Italy exaggerate still more the hideousness of the contrast. Cannot it be that peaceful mediation and a strong universal sense of justice may interpose, instead of the cannon and bayonet?

There is another view to be taken. We have lately been accustomed to look on Italy as a discontented province of Austria, forgetful that her supremacy dates only from the downfall of Napoleon. From the invasion of Charles VIII. till 1815, Italy has been a battle-field, where the Spaniard, the

French, and the German, have fought for mastery; and we are blind indeed, if we do not see that such will occur again, at least among the two last. Supposing a war to arise between them, one of the first acts of aggression on the part of France would be to try to drive the Germans from Italy. Even if peace continue, it is felt that the papal power is tottering to its fall — it is only supported, because the French will not allow Austria to extend her dominions, and the Austrian is eager to prevent any change that may afford pretence for the French to interfere. Did the present pope act with any degree of prudence, his power thus propped might last some time longer; but as it is, who can say, how soon, for the sake of peace in the rest of Italy, it may not be necessary to curtail his territories.

The French feel this and begin to dream of dominion across the Alps — the occupation of Ancona was a feeler put out — it gained no positive object except to check Austria — for the rest its best effect was to reiterate the lesson they have often taught, that no faith should be given to their promises of liberation.

The Italians consider that the hour will arrive sooner or later when the stranger will again dispute for dominion over them; when the peace of their wealthy towns and smiling villages will be disturbed by nations meeting in hostility on their soil. The efforts of their patriots consequently tend to make preparation, that such an hour may find them, from the Alps to Brundusium, united. They feel the necessity also of numbering military leaders among themselves. The most enlightened Italians instead of relying on the mystery of oaths, the terror of assassination, the perpetual conspiracy of secret associations, are anxious that their young men should exercise themselves in some school of warfare — they wish that the new generation may be emancipated by their courage, their knowledge, their virtues; which should oppose an insurmountable barrier to foreign invasion and awe their rulers into concession.

Niccolini, in his latest work, Arnaldo da Brescia, has put these sentiments in the mouth of his hero. That poem, replete with passionate eloquence and striking incident, presents a lively picture of the actual state of Italy. The insolence of the German, the arrogance of the popes, the degraded state of the people, and the aspirations of the patriots, each find a voice. It is impossible not to hope well for a country, whose poets, whose men of reflection and talent, without one exception, all use the gifts of genius or knowledge, to teach the noblest lessons of devotion to their country; and whose youth receive the same with devoted enthusiasm.

When we visit Italy, we become what the Italians were censured for being, — enjoyers of the beauties of nature, the elegance of art, the delights of climate, the recollections of the past, and the pleasures of society, without a thought beyond. Such to a great degree was I while there, and my book does not pretend to be a political history or dissertation. I give fragments — not a whole. Such as they are, I shall be repaid for the labour and anxiety of putting them together, if they induce some among my countrymen to regard with greater attention, and to sympathise in the struggles of a country, the most illustrious and the most unfortunate in the world.

PART I. — 1840.

LETTER I.

Project for spending the Summer on the Banks of the Lake of Como. — Fine Spring-Stormy Weather — Passage from Dover to Calais. — The Diligence. — Paris. — Plan of our Route.

BRIGHTON, JUNE 13,1840.

I AM glad to say that our frequent discussions of this spring have terminated in a manner very agreeable to every one concerned in them. My son and his two friends have decided on spending their summer vacation on the shores of the lake of Como — there to study for the degree, which they are to take next winter. They wish me to accompany them, and I gladly consent.

Can it, indeed, be true, that I am about to revisit Italy? How many years are gone since I quitted that country! There I left the mortal remains of those beloved — my husband and my children, whose loss changed my whole existence, substituting, for happy peace and the interchange of deep-rooted affections, years of deep-rooted solitude, and a hard struggle with the world; which only now, as my son is growing up, is brightening into a better day The name of Italy has magic in its very syllables. The hope of seeing it again recalls vividly to my memory that time, when misfortune seemed an empty word, and my habitation on earth a secure abode, which no evil could shake. Graves have opened in my path since then; and instead of the cheerfulness of the living, I have dwelt among the early tombs of those I loved. Now a new generation has sprung up; and at the name of Italy, I grow young again in their enjoyments, and gladly prepare to share them.

What a divine spring we have had! during the month of April not a drop of rain fell — the sun shone perpetually — the foliage, rich and bright, lent, before its time, thick shadows to the woods. No place is more suited than Richmond where to enjoy the smiles of so extraordinary a season. I spent many hours of every day on the Thames — days as balmy as midsummer, and animated with the young life which makes fine weather in spring more delicious than that to be enjoyed in any other season of the year: then the earth is an altar, from which fresh perfumes are for ever rising — not the rank odours of the autumnal fall, but those attendant on the first bursting of life, on the tendency of nature in spring-tide to multiply and enjoy. I visited Hampton Court, and saw the Cartoons — those most noble works of the Prince of Painters. All was delightful; and ten times more so, that I was about to break a chain that had long held me — cross the Channel — and wander far towards a country which memory painted as a paradise.

We are to leave England at the conclusion of the Cambridge term, and have agreed to rendezvous at Paris in the middle of June. Towards the end of May I come here, intending at the appointed time to cross to Dieppe. The weather, at first, continued delightful; but after a time a change has come, and June is set in cold, misty, and stormy. A morbid horror of my sea-voyage comes over me which I cannot control. On the day on which we were to cross, I had an attack of illness which prevented my going on board. It becomes a question whether we shall remain for the next packet in the middle of next week, with the chance of a long, tempestuous passage, or proceed along the coast to Dover. I prefer the latter.

Paris,June 22.

WE left Brighton for Hastings, and arrived on a fine evening; the sea was calm and glorious beneath the setting sun. On our way we drove through St. Leonard’s-on-Sea. Some years ago I had visited Hastings, when a brig, drawn high and dry on the shore near William the Conqueror’s stone, unloading building materials, was all that told of the future existence of this new town. It has risen “like an exhalation,” and seems particularly clean, bright, and cheerful.

The next day blew a fierce tempest; our drive to Dover was singularly inclement and disagreeable. We arrived in the evening, very tired and uncomfortable; a gale from the north-west raged, and the sea, wild and drear, broke in vast surges on the shore; the following morning it rained in torrents, as well as blew. The day after, however, the sun shone bright, and the waves sparkled and danced beneath its early rays. We were on the beach by seven, and reached the steamer in a small boat, one of the annoyances attendant on embarking at Dover. We had a rough passage — for some half way over the wind grew into a gale; I lay down on deck, and by keeping very still, escaped sickness: in two hours and a half we were on the French coast. Why we left Dover so early I cannot tell, since the tide did not serve to admit us into Calais harbour for an hour after our arrival — an hour of disagreeable tossing; at last, happy sight, the fishing boats were seen coming out from the port, giving token that there was water enough for us to enter. We landed. I was quite well immediately, and laughed at my panic.

We went to Roberts's Hotel, a very good one, and the charges moderate, I made my first experiment at a *table d'hôte,* and disliked its noise and numbers very much. We were to proceed to Paris by the *diligence*, a disagreeable style of travelling, but the only one we could manage. We have forgotten night-travelling in England — thanks to the railroads, to which, whatever their faults may be, I feel eternally grateful; for many a new scene have they enabled me to visit, and much of the honey of delightful recollections have I, by their means, brought back to my hive: a pleasant day it will be when there is one from Calais to Paris. We left Calais at about ten in the forenoon. P. chose the *banquette*, as young Englishmen are apt to do; it resembles, more than any other part of this ponderous vehicle, the outside of a stage-coach. There were some merry Irish students there also, who could not speak a word of French: they leapt down from the top at every possible opportunity, so to tease the *conducteur,* who, to his flock of travellers, acts as shepherd and dog in one — gathering them together with the bark of, *"En route*, *Messieurs!"* most authoritatively. I and my maid were in the *interieur,* with two Frenchwomen from England: one was a governess at a school, coming for a holiday; she was young, and her eyes were accustomed to the English style; she found fault with the *diligence.* The elder one would not allow any fault; and, if there were any deficiency, it was because things were not first-rate on this road. The road to Bordeaux was the grand one: the *diligences* there were Lord Mayors' carriages for splendour. The longest day has an end, and our hours of penance came to a close. We arrived in Paris, and found pleasant apartments taken for us at Hotel Chatham. Travelling by *diligence* had been an experiment for me. I was delighted to find that, with all my nervous suffering, whenever my mind was intensely or disagreeably occupied, I could bear the fatigues of a journey far better than I had ever done. Several years before I had been a bad traveller; and, even in a comfortable English travelling chariot, suffered great fatigue, and even illness. When I returned from Italy I had tried the *diligence*, and been knocked up, and obliged to abandon it after the first night; yet then I enjoyed perfect health. Now I complained, and with reason, of most painful sensations; yet the fatigue I endured seemed to take away weariness instead of occasioning it. I felt light of limb and in good spirits. On the shores of France I shook the dust of accumulated cares from off me; I forgot disappointments, and banished sorrow: weariness of body replaced beneficially weariness of soul — so much heavier, so much harder to bear.

There is a cheerfulness in the aspect of Paris, that at once enlivens the visitor. True, the want of *trottoirs* is intolerable. From the absence of drains, the state of the streets is filthy; the danger of being run over by hack-cabs, which turn short round the corners, and accelerate their pace on purpose so to do, is imminent. The gravel of the Tuilleries and the Champs Elysées is not half so inviting as the sward of Hyde Park; yet there is an air of cheerfulness and lightsomeness about Paris, which seems to take the burthen from your spirits, which w*ill* weigh so heavily on the other side of the Channel. Nor, perhaps, in any city in the world is there a scene more *magnifique* — to use their own word in their own sense — than the view at high noon or sunset from the terrace of the Tuilleries, near the river, overlooking the Seine and its bridges; the Place de la Concorde, with its wide asphaltic pavements, sparkling fountains, and fantastic lanterns, looking on to the Barrière de l'Etoile one way, or down upon the horse-chesnut avenues of the gardens on the other. There is gaiety, animation, life; you cannot find the same in London. Why? One cause, of course, is the smoke of the sea-coal fires; another results from the absence of fountains. When will London have these ornaments, which could be so readily constructed from our great supply of water? Truly in France the water is all used ornamentally, and there is a sad deficiency for utility; but the *coup-d'oeil* of a fountain is more pleasing than the consciousness of a pipe underground — at least, to the passing traveller.

We have spent a week agreeably in Paris, as we have several friends here. Our two companions are arrived. We are seriously preparing to set out on our travels. The lake of Como is our destination, and we have put the general guidance of our route into the hands of one of the party. I was a little startled when I was told that I was to reach Como *viâ* Franckfôrt; this is something like going to the Line by the North Pole; but I am assured that the journey will be the more delightful and novel. I was shown our way on the map — Metz to Trêves; then down the Moselle — unhacknied ground, or rather water — to Coblentz; up the Rhine to Mayence; Franckfort, and the line south through Heidelberg, Baden Baden, Freyburg, Schaffhausen, Zurich, the Splugen, Chiavenna, to the lake of Como, These are nearly all new scenes to me. The portion of the Rhine we were to navigate I longed to revisit after an interval of many years. So this route being agreed upon, we have taken our places in the *diligence* for Metz.

I feel a good deal of the gipsy coming upon me, now that I am leaving Paris. I bid adieu to all acquaintance, and set out to wander in new lands, surrounded by companions fresh to the world, unacquainted with its sorrows, and who enjoy with zest every passing amusement. I myself, apt to be too serious, but easily awakened to sympathy, forget the past and the future, and am ready to be amused by all I see as much or even more than they. Among acquaintance, in the every-day scenes of life, want of means brings with it mortification, to embitter still more the perpetual necessity of self-denial. In society you are weighed with others according to your extrinsic possessions; your income, your connexions, your position, make all the weight — you yourself are a mere feather in the scale. But what are these to me now? My home is the readiest means of conveyance I can command, or the inn at which I shall remain at night — my only acquaintance the companions of my wanderings — the single business of my life to enjoy the passing scene.

LETTER II

Journey to Metz. — A Day spent at Metz. — Proceed to Trêves. — Enter Prussia. — Trêves. — Voyage down the Moselle. — Slow Steam-boat up the Rhine to Mayence. — Railroad to Franckfort.

THURSDAY, 25TH JUNE.

WE left Paris on the 25th of June, at six in the evening, and were thirty-seven hours reaching Metz, a distance of about two hundred miles, stopping only for half an hour at a time, and that only twice during the one day we were on the road. I suffered excessive fatigue during the two nights of this journey, partly on account of a cough I caught at Paris; but my health was not in the slightest degree hurt. The weather was very fine; the country we passed through was beautiful, abundant in com and vines, then in midsummer luxuriance. There was a portion of those dull vast plains, so usual in France; but for the most part the country was varied into hill and dale, arable and forest land. The season setting in so genially in early spring, joined to the refreshing rains which have since succeeded, have caused rich promise of abundance to appear everywhere. I never remember feeling so intimately how bounteous a mother is this fair earth, yielding such plenteous store of food to her children, and this food in its growth so beautiful to look on. How full of gratitude and love for the Creator does the beauty of the creation make us! By a sort of slovenly reasoning, we tell ourselves that, since we are born, sustenance is our due; but that all beyond — the beauty of the world, and the sensations of transport it imparts, springs from the immeasurable goodness of our Maker. True we were also created to experience those emotions. God has not reduced our dwelling-place — as Puritans would his — to a bare meeting-house; all there is radiant in glorious colours; all imparts supreme felicity to the senses and the heart. Next to the consciousness of right and honour, God has shown that he loves best beauty and the sense of beauty, since he has endowed the visible universe so richly with the one, and made the other so keen and deep-seated an enjoyment in the hearts of his creatures.

We passed through Chalons-sur-Marne, Clermont, and Verdun. The corn-fields, the vineyards clothing the uplands, the woods that varied the landscape, and the meandering river that gave it light and life, were all in their fairest summer dress. Plenty and peace brooded over a happy land. From a traveller in a *diligence* no more detailed description of city, village, or scenery, can be expected. I will only add, that this was by far the most agreeable part of France I had ever traversed.

SATURDAY, 27th.

WE had been told at Paris that we should arrive at Metz in time for the *diligence* to Trêves. Out of England one does not expect exactness; still it was provoking, as we wanted to get on, to find, when arriving at seven in the morning, that the *diligence* had started at six. We needed rest, certainly; and so made up our minds to endure with equanimity the necessity we were under of not fatiguing ourselves to death from a principle of economy. The inn was tolerable, and the *table (d'hôte* sufficiently good; and, best praise, quietly served, Metz is a clean, pleasant town, a little dull or so; but from the gardens on the ramparts we commanded a view of the hill-surrounded plain in which it is built, with the Moselle flowing peaceably at our feet. We hired a boat, and loitered several hours delightfully on the river; but being without a boatman, found difficulty in discovering the main stream amidst a labyrinth of canals and mill-dams. Afterwards, we walked in the public gardens, which would have been pleasant, but for the foreign style of gravel, which is not gravel, but shingle; smooth turf and a velvet sward are never found out of England: they don't know what grass means abroad, except to feed horses and cows. The weather meanwhile was fine, the air balmy; it was a day of agreeable idleness.

SUNDAY, 28TH.

AT six in the morning we left Metz for Trêves, the distance fifty-five miles, which occupied us fourteen hours. We had now entered the true region of German expedition. The *diligence* was a sort of *char-à-banc,* with a heavy roof. We had the front seats; but the people behind had ingress and egress only by passing ours, which was done by raising the middle seat, in the style of the public boxes at our theatres. The horses went well enough (I have an idea we only changed them once, half-way); but the peculiarity of German travelling consists in its frequent and long stoppages. During each of these the people behind got out, and refreshed themselves by eating and drinking. Another inconvenience resulted from our stopping so often; our left-hand leader went well enough when once off, but it was very difficult to persuade him to move; and he was never urged by any but the gentlest means. Every time we stopped he refused to set off; on which our driver got down to pat and coax him, and feed him with slices of bread — horses eat a great deal of bread in Germany. When he thought he had succeeded, he mounted again; but the horse being still obstinate, he had to get down and renew his caresses and bits of bread. Sometimes he repeated these manœuvres half a dozen times before he succeeded. Once, just as the horse, after showing himself particularly self-willed, had deigned to yield, a passenger behind, a simple-looking bumpkin, started forward, exclaiming in accents of distress—" *Oh, mon gâteau!"* He had bought a cake; but by some accident had left it behind, and he entreated the driver to stop, that he might recover it:, this was too much; a full quarter of an hour's coaxing and much bread could not thus be wasted, all to be begun over again.

The fields on the roadside were planted with cherry-trees, which, for the purpose of distilling kirchen-wasser, abound all over Germany; the fruit was ripe, and the heavily-laden branches hung over the road; our outside passengers helped themselves plentifully, so that in a short time we were pursued by a hue and cry of peasants. There is a heavy fine for robbing cherry-trees; and these people wanted to be paid: fierce objurgations passed, and a frequent use of the word *schwein* — the most opprobrious name a German can give or receive. The peasants had the worst and got nothing. We stopped nearly two hours at Thionville for dinner. In the same room, at the other end of the same table, a civic feast was prepared, delayed only by the non-arrival of the *sous-préfet:* he came at last and was joyously welcomed. But here German was the usual language; and we became worse than deaf, for we heard but could not understand.

Thionville is pleasantly situated in the valley of the Moselle, close to the river. It was the eve of some great feast in honour of the Virgin; and all the girls around were erecting altars and triumphal arches, and adorning them with waxen figures in full dress, and quantities of flowers and ribbons. They were enjoying themselves greatly and very proud of their handy-work.

Soon after leaving Thionville we arrived at the Prussian frontier; there was but one passenger besides ourselves, and he only had any taxable goods — sugar-plums from Nancy. Our luggage was taken down and some portion of it slightly inspected; the necessary ceremony was soon over; but two hours were loitered away, one knew not wherefore. The people were civil and the day fine, so we did not feel inclined to be discontented. The country after this grew more varied and pleasant, but the villages deteriorated dismally. They were indescribably squalid. The dung before the doors — the filth of the people — the wretched appearance of the cottages, formed a painful contrast, which too often presents itself to the traveller, between the repulsive dwellings of man and the inviting aspect of free beautiful nature, all elegant in its forms, delicious in its odours, and peaceful in its influence over the mind.

As we slowly proceeded, and were entering a village, a violent thunder-storm came on; the driver drew up the *diligence* to the road-side, and he and the *conducteur,* and all the outside passengers took shelter in an inn, where they remained drinking beer while the storm lasted. After we had proceeded thence about three miles, our fellow-passenger, who had appeared a mild quiet German, and had been conversing good-humouredly with us, discovered that he had been taken beyond his place of destination, which was indeed the village where we had stopped during the storm. This he considered the fault of the *conducteur,* and flew into the most violent rage. We escaped the benefit of his angry language since we did not understand him; — he and his portmanteau were left under a tree, looking helpless enough; and we went on.

The disagreeable part of a slow style of travelling is, that although at the outset we take it patiently, and may find it even amusing, yet, when we are to reach a definite bourne, and the hours pass, and apparently we are still as far off as ever, we become excessively weary. The country was pretty, and after the shower, the evening wore a garb of sober gray not unpleasing. But our fatigue increased rapidly; and mile after mile we proceeded, not interspersed with the capricious and ludicrous stoppages that had marked our outset, but in a sort of determined jogtrot, that showed that the men and horses had lost the gay spirit which had led them to play with their work, and were seriously set upon finishing it with all the slow haste of which they were capable. We arrived at Trêves at ten o’clock last night.

The inn (l’Hôtel de Trêves) is the best we have yet met with; the civility, and alacrity with which we are served is quite comforting, — as well as the cleanliness of the house, and the ultimate moderation of the charges. Our first care on arriving has been to arrange for descending the Moselle. There is no steamer; one is promised for next year; but, for the present, there is only a passage-boat twice a-week, Thursday and Saturday, and this is Monday. Upon inquiry, we learn that we can hire a tolerably commodious boat, with three men to work her, at no extravagant price. We have found also at the hotel two young Cantabs, friends of one of our party, bent. on the same voyage, on their way to a tour in Switzerland. They have agreed to join us. By early rising and late arriving, we might accomplish the descent in two days; we prefer a more easy style of proceeding. We are to sleep two nights on shore, and occupy the better part of three days going down the river.

Trêves, or, as the Germans call it, Trier, is a very interesting town, as being one of the oldest in the northern part of Europe. It was a metropolis, we are told, before the time of Julius Cæsar. After the Roman Conquest, and during the decay of the empire, it was the centre of northern civilisation. During the middle ages, and till the time of the French Revolution of 1789, it flourished as the capital of an archbishopric, such as existed in Germany, where the mitre was united rather to the sword and sceptre, than to the crosier. It is now in a state of decay, but venerable in its fall. The old Roman ruins give token of that magnificent spirit which causes the steps of the masters of the world to be made evident everywhere, through the solidity, grandeur, and utility of their works.

My friends have been rambling about the town and are returned highly delighted. I did not go, for I felt very much fatigued; I repent me now — but it is too late.

June 29th.

WE left Treves soon after noon; our boat was rude enough, but tolerably large. A queer-looking old man steered her, and the oars were held by two young fellows, one with an aspect of intelligence and good humour, the son of the old man; the other, belonging to a grade beneath him in the human scale. Our luggage was piled aft, and we had an awning. Thus, on a fine, but not hot, June day, we pushed off from Treves; and, full of curiosity and expectation of pleasure, dropped down the swift stream between verdant banks that rose into hills — not striking in their outline, but agreeable to the eye, while frequent villages, each with its church and pointed spire, either nestled in the foldings of the hills, or graced some promontory that formed a bend in this much-winding river. Peace seemed to brood over and lull us — a deeper peace, as at evening the green shadows of the mountains gathered on the quiet river; and now and then a ruined castle crowned a height, and with that peculiar impression of stately tranquillity which a time-honoured ruin imparts, added the touch of romantic dignity, which otherwise had been wanting, to the scene.

We arrived at Piesport at seven, and our boatmen counselled us to remain here for the night. One of the gentlemen, who had joined us, had studied German for this tour, and a very necessary accomplishment we found it. Nothing can be more futile than the idea that French will carry a traveller through Germany or Italy, At some of the best inns on the most frequented routes, waiters are provided who can talk both French and English; but, go ever so little off the high-road, or address a person not especially put there for the benefit of your ignorance, and you are instantly at fault; and wanderers, like ourselves, if they cannot speak the language of the country, nine times out of ten, run every risk of not obtaining the necessaries of life. We had been told on this occasion, that one of our boatmen spoke French, but *oui,* and *non,* and *honour* was the extent of his vocabulary, and we could never make him understand a word we said. We took great interest, therefore, in our friend's first experiment in German, and his success was a common triumph. Piesport is a miserable village, with a miserable inn, and it was matter of difficulty to procure beds for so large a party; the rooms looked dirty and disconsolate — but there was no help; we ordered supper, coffee and eggs, and, our great staple of consumption throughout Germany, fried potatoes; and with the agreeable promise of the excellent wine of the country, we hoped to restore our fatigues. While all this was preparing, we walked up a hill and looked down on the windings of the river, and the green hills that closed around to guard and shelter it. We encountered a poor stray fire-fly on our road, flashing a pale sickly light: how it came there who can tell? it looked lost and out of place.

TUESDAY, 30TH.

WE left Piesport at five in the morning; the mists gathered chill, white, and dank around us. We met many barges towed up the stream by horses up to their middles in the cold foggy river. The hills grew higher and steeper — broken into precipice and peak — crowned by ruined towers and castles. To a certain degree, it might be called a miniature Rhine; yet it had a peculiar character of its own, more still, more secluded than the nobler river. There were no country seats; no large towns nor cities; but the villages, each with its spire, and overlooked by a ruined tower on a neighbouring height, succeeded to each other frequently. At eight o'clock we arrived at Bemcastel; by the windings of the river, it was fifteen miles to Trarbach; across the hills, it was but three. Our boatmen advised us to cross the hill, as the boat thus lightened would make speedier way; accordingly, with the morning before us, we left the boat at Bemcastel, and ordered breakfast. My companions scrambled up a steep hill to a ruined castle that overhung the village. We had a good breakfast, and then began our walk. The hill was very steep; the day very warm; I never remember finding the crossing of a mountain so fatiguing. The path was good, not broken into zigzags, but for that reason steeper; and after the fatigue of the ascent, the descent became absolutely painful. At length we reached Trarbach. It was market-day, and the high-street was thronged. One plenteous article of merchandise was cherries: we gave a few groschen, and in return bore off many pounds; the woman who sold them seemed never tired of heaping up our basket. The boat arrived soon after, and repose was delightful after our laborious walk.

The finest scenery of the Moselle occurs after leaving Trarbach; but words are vain; and in description there must ever be at once a vagueness and a sameness that conveys no distinct ideas, unless it should awaken the imagination: unless you can be placed beside us in our rough-hewn boat, and glide down between the vine-covered hills, with bare craggy heights towering above; now catching with glad curiosity the first glimpse of a more beautiful bend of the river, a higher mountain peak, a more romantic ruin; now looking back to gaze as long as -possible on some picturesque point of view, of which, as the boat floated down but slightly assisted by the rowers, we lost sight for ever — unless you can imagine and sympathise in the cheerful elasticity of the setting out at morning, sharpened into hunger at noon, and the pleasure that attended the rustic fare we could command, especially accompanied as it was by bright pure Moselle wine; then, the quiet enjoyment of golden evening, succeeded by still and gray twilight; and last, the lassitude, the fatigue, which made us look eagerly out for the place where we were to stop and repose; — there is a zest in all this, especially on a voyage unhacknied by others, and therefore accompanied by a dash of uncertainty and a great sense of novelty, which is lost in mere words: — you must do your part, and feel and imagine, or all description proves tame and useless.

We arrived at Kochheim at ten, and found a comfortable inn. In the *salle-à-manger* was a respectable-looking man, apparently some sort of merchant; — he could talk English, and we entered into conversation with him. I observed that it was sad to see the wretched villages and the destitution of the inhabitants, and this in a land which yielded such lucrative produce as Moselle wine, the sale of which must render the landed proprietors rich, while the mere cultivators languished in penury.

The man replied, that it was not so — the villagers were well off, having all they desired, all they wanted. During the French revolution, he said, the nobles forfeited their estates, which were mostly bought up by the peasants, and consequently these rich vineyards belonged to the cultivators. It was true that the trade was carried on by wine merchants, who made large profits; but the peasants might do better if they chose. They were, however, cut off from the rest of the world; they lived as their fathers had done before them; and had no ideas or wishes beyond their present style of life. They had enough, and were content.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1.

We left Kochheim at eight. The day grew warm; but a breeze sprung up, which helped us on our way. The vine-clad hills still sheltered the river; still villages with their spires occurred frequently; and still the landscape was distinguished and ennobled by the ruins of feudal towers and castles. At about four o'clock, we reached the mouth of the Moselle as it joins the Rhine. Our boatman wished to land us on the bank of the Moselle itself. We naturally desired to enter the Rhine and land close to an hotel. They declared it was impossible, — the stream was too swift. But they spoke to incredulous ears — some of my companions had before this relieved the men in their work, being accustomed to pulling at Cambridge. Two now took the oars; the old man continued to steer. The rowers did not find the stream very difficult to stem, working as they did with a will. The old boatman steered us near the banks, among the numerous barges, apparently with some malice, to bring us into difficulty. On one occasion, indeed, it appeared as if we should be inevitably run down by a large barge, and my maid screamed and wanted to jump overboard to save herself: a stroke of the oar saved us. We had not far to go. We landed at the bridge, and betook ourselves to the Hôtel Bellevue, close at hand.

The German hotels are all conducted with great order and regularity, and are very clean, quiet, and good. The head-waiter is the responsible person — he is paid for all the other servants; and the usual sum, a franc a day for every master, is reasonable enough, as it includes every one; and the traveller is not laid in wait for by sighing chambermaid or imploring boots. The only fault is, that the eating is carried on in the common room, where Germans smoke, and consider fresh air unhealthy. The Bellevue is one of three first-rate hotels at Coblentz. The Géant, however, is the largest, and enjoys the best reputation. There is a good one, I believe, on the other side of the river.

THURSDAY, JULY 2.

THIS day was passed on board the steamer, going to Mayence. We embarked at ten in the morning. Years had elapsed since I had passed down this river, before steamers were in use — in an ungainly boat, managed in a still more ungainly manner. Memory had painted the Rhine as a scene of enchantment; and the reality came up to what I remembered. The inferior beauty of the banks of the Moselle enhanced still more the prouder and more romantic glories of the Rhine. The promontories stood in bolder relief — the ruined castles and their ramparts were more extensive and more majestic — the antique spires and Gothic abbeys spoke of a princely clergy — and the extent of mouldering walls marked cities belonging to a more powerful population. Each tower-crowned hill — each picturesque ruin — each shadowy ravine and beetling precipice — was passed, and gazed upon with eager curiosity and delight. The very names are the titles of volumes of romance: all the spirits of Old Germany haunt the place. Even the events of modem days have added an interesting tale: — When the German soldiers, led by Blucher, and driving the proud fallen victor before them, beheld the river honoured by them, so late occupied by the enemy they hated, now open and free, the name of “The Rhine!” burst from many c 2 thousand voices, accompanied by tears of ecstacy. Some day I should like much to establish myself for a summer on the banks of this river, and explore its recesses. As we glide by, we obtain but a cursory and unsatisfactory survey. One longs to make a familiar friend of such sublime scenery, and refer, in after years, to one's intimate acquaintance with it, as one of the most valued among the treasures of recollection which time may have bestowed.

We were a large party in ourselves, and enjoyed our voyage greatly; but, as evening came on, we left the more picturesque part of the river, and grew weary as still we did not arrive. When it became dark, we saw, looming up the river, a shadowy bark, with bright lanterns at its mast-head. What boat was that? The steamer that had left Coblentz at two — four hours later than ourselves. It neared — it passed us. *"Oui, ça marche plus vite que nous"* replied the phlegmatic German captain, to our accents of surprise and discontent. *To go a-head,* never entered his mind as desirable. One boat went quick, the other slow — that was all the difference — their day's work was the same. To us, however, the difference involved, besides great unnecessary weariness, our comfort for the night.

We did not arrive at Mayence till near midnight; and we were preceded by our rival, which, together with another steamer, had reached the pier, and disgorged their passengers. We had first to seize on porters, to carry our luggage; which, for our large party, was multifarious; and without the aid of our friend who spoke German, I know not how we should have managed it. We went to the best inn: it was quite full. The next — there appeared some hope; but it failed us. We were driven, at last, to a very mediocre one; but, though we were Godsends to these people, they were neither rude nor exorbitant: on the contrary, they received us with a sort of cordiality; their accommodation was bad, but they made up for it by civility. We were very tired, and very glad to go to bed.

FRIDAY, JULY 3.

WE left Mayence early. Our plan had been to go by the last train of the previous night to Frankfort. Balked of this, we arranged to go by the earliest of this morning. Here we separated from our chance-companions; as they stopped to view the lions at Mayence, and were destined for Strasburg, with which city we meant to have nothing to do.

The railroad from Mayence to Frankfort is not a very good one; but the carriages were comfortable, and the way short — twenty-one miles, which we did in little more than an hour. We went (guide-directed by the inestimable Murray) to the Hôtel de Russie — a most excellent one. Frankfort looks a clean, airy, but dull town. We have walked about it a good deal, but seen nothing worthy of remark. We missed, by stupidly not making proper inquiries, viewing the Ariadne of Dannecker, which is held in high estimation, as among the best modem sculpture. I am not well all this time, and tormented by a cough that fatigues me greatly. We have dined at the *table d'hôte,* which is thronged by English; and at the hotel the waiters all speak English, and are cross if you speak French, as they want to practise.

A bargain has been made this evening with a *voiturier* to take us to Schaffhausen for eleven napoleons. We were to stop a whole day at Baden-Baden, and reach our destination on the seventh day after leaving Frankfort.

LETTER III.

Darmstadt. — Heidelberg. — Carbruhe. — Baden-Baden.

4TH JULY.

WE set off from Frankfort, feeling as if we were making a fresh start, and were about to traverse districts new and strange. The road we pursued was perfectly flat, and presents an easy task for the construction of the projected railway. To the right, a fertile plain stretches for several miles to the Rhine; to the left, high hills hemmed us in — by turns receding from, and advancing close to, the road. As usual in this frontier part of Germany, the foldings of the uplands were sprinkled by villages, with their spires; and the neighbouring heights were crowned by ruined castles and towers, which ever add so much to the interest of the scene. What lives did the ancient inhabitants of those crumbling ruins lead! The occupation of the men was war; that of the women, to hope, to fear, to pray, and to embroider. Very often, not having enough of the first in the usual course of their existence, they contrived a little more, which led to an extra quantity of the second and third ingredients of their lives, and, in the end, to many a grievous tragedy. Wayward human nature will rebel against mental sloth. We must act, suffer, or enjoy; or the worst of all torments is ours — such restless agony as old poets figured as befalling a living soul imprisoned in the bark of a tree. We are not born to be cabbages. The lady, waiting at home for her husband, either quaked for fear, or relieved the tedium of protracted absence as she best might, too happy if death or a dungeon were not the result. The young looked down from the hills, and fancied that joy would meet them if ever they could escape to countries beyond. Meanwhile, the peasant in the plain below toiled, and had been far happier than his lord, but for the desolation brought on him by the fierce wars, of which this region was perpetually the theatre.

The peasant, at least, has gained by the change. Hard-worked, he doubtless is; and, probably, poorly fed; but he is secure. We look round for the mansions, which we expect should replace fortified castles, as the abodes of the rich; but find none. It is strange; but, except in Italy and England (and I am told, in parts of France, but in none I ever traversed), the wealthy never seek to enjoy the delights which nature affords; and country-houses, and parks, and gardens, are nowhere else to be found.

We were somewhat annoyed, and much amused, at Darmstadt, where we stopped for luncheon. The inn was good; but they were expecting the Grand Duke of Baden: the whole of the private rooms were prepared for him, and we were shut out from all, except the common eating-room — of course, redolent of smoke. It was impossible not to laugh, however, at the tokens every waiter gave that his head was turned by the expected arrival — I use this expression literally, as well as figuratively; for, as they unwillingly served us, still their heads were averted towards the window, and frequently they rushed madly to gaze; and whatever question we might ask, still their answer was—”The Grand Duke of Baden is coming.”

Darmstadt looked, like most of the towns we traversed in this part of Germany, clean and airy, with wide streets, and a large undecorated building — the palace of the reigning prince; but all rather dull. The road continued pleasant, and the mountainous district to our left became more picturesque. Agreeable excursions might be made among the hills; but we were bound right on, and could not indulge in extraneous rambles. We turned in among the inclosing hills, as we approached Heidelberg. The road lay on the right bank of the Neckar, and at every step the scenery acquired new beauty. Heidelberg is on the left bank; to our right, that is, as we advanced up the stream; and is situated on a sort of narrow platform between the river and the hill on which the castle stands. The town itself has a wholly different appearance from those we had recently passed. It has an ancient, picturesque, inartificial look, more consonant with our ideas of German romance. The best hotel was full; we were transferred to the second, which was very tolerable. We went out to walk by the river-side: the scene was tranquil and beautiful: the river gave it life. The castellated hill crowned it with aristocratic dignity, and the picturesque mountains around closed all in, giving an air of repose, and yet of liberty; for mountains ever speak of the free step and unshackled will of their inhabitants, and, at the same time, of their limited desires and local attachments. Parties of students passed down the streets; but all were quiet.

There were numerous shops for painted German pipes: these my companions visited, and made purchases.

SUNDAY, 5TH.

BEFORE eight in the morning we were on the alert, that we might visit the Castle before our departure. We walked up the hill: the way was not long. The first aspect from the outer terraces, commanding a beautiful view of the country around, and the ruined towers and walls of the castle itself, all verdurous with ivy and other parasites, was exceedingly pleasing. The woman, who showed us over the Castle, was, without being pretty, very agreeable; with gentle, courteous, and yet vivacious manners: she spoke English with a very pretty accent, and her laugh was soft and joyous. It is always pleasant to meet, among the uneducated classes, individuals with whom you lose all sense of *caste* — who are instantly on a level with those deemed their superiors, from mere force of engaging manners, intelligence, and apparent kindness of heart. She took us to the ruins of the wing of the Castle built for the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of our James I. She ought to have been happy in so beautiful a place. From her castle windows, she looked on her fertile and rich domains. Her habitation, whose situation was so much favoured by nature, had been adorned by the hands of fond affection; for her husband had not only built this wing for her comfort, but, to welcome her on her arrival, had laid out a flower-garden in the English style, the remains of which still bloom. But she wished to be a queen; and, to gain the shadowy crown of Bohemia, she devoted the beautiful Palatinate to desolation. Again, in Louis XIV.'s time, this unfortunate province was laid waste by his orders, with a barbarity that has cast an indelible stain on the reputation of that monarch, who was, perhaps, the most heartless and destructive among modern kings. These circumstances, and, in later times, an accidental fire, after which it was never repaired, has reduced the castle to a mere ruin; but it is thus one of the most beautiful, both in itself and for situation, in the world. And now, on this summer day, we felt how happily we could spend months at Heidelberg, to enjoy the pleasure of loitering, day after day, beneath these weed-grown walls, and in the surrounding grounds. The *façade* of the Hall of Knights, which was built by an Italian architect, charms the eye by its exquisite finish and perfect proportions. We saw also, of course, the famous tun, and the wax figure of the celebrated dwarf.

On we went from Heidelberg. Our route was altogether pleasant, The road preserved the same characteristics. I should say, that this part of Germany was peculiarly agreeable to the mere passing traveller. The towns have the appearance of health, comfort, and cleanliness. The manners of the people with whom we had to deal, was courteous and pleasing: many of the women we thought pretty. The custom of smoking is a drawback; but some annoyance is necessary, for the culture of toleration and patience in a traveller.

Carlsruhe, where we slept on the night after leaving Heidelberg, has spacious streets, and some good-looking public buildings. However, we saw them only from the windows of the inn, for it rained hard all the evening.

MONDAY, 6TH.

ABOUT noon, we turned off from the main road, and bending in among the green hills, without ascending any, reached Baden-Baden, which lies picturesquely yet snugly in the valley, on the banks of the Oes — a mere mountain torrent, it is true, but the “sweet inland murmur” of such is ever grateful to the ear. It looked a cheerful, and even a gay place; yet I feel that I could steal away from the throng, and find solitude at will on the mountain tops or amidst their woody ravines. A wish has come over me to remain here: this sounds strangely, considering my yearning after Italy. How seldom do human wishes flow smoothly towards their object; for a while they may steal imperceptibly on, unstopped, though often checked; winding round, or perseveringly surmounting impediments. Or obstacles still more mighty present themselves, and then our wishes gather power; — they swell, and dash down all impediments, and take an impetuous course. But when all is smooth and free for their accomplishment, then they shrink and are frightened, as (to make a grand similitude) the Gauls did when the open gates and silent walls of Borne offered no opposition to their entrance. We fear treachery on the part of fate; and objections, overlooked in the hurry of desire, present themselves during the peace of easy attainment. With regard to the feelings that hold my wishes in check when I think of Italy, — these are all founded on fear. Those I loved had died there — would it again prove fatal, and do I only please my fancy to destroy my last hope? We are bound for the lake of Como, a place of sad renown for wreck and danger; and my son’s passion for the water is the inducement that leads him to fix on it for his visit. What wonder that I, of all people, looking on the peaceful valley of Baden-Baden, with its mountain torrent that would not sail a paper boat, wistfully incline to stay here and be safe. But that which forms, in this sort of back-current manner, its attraction to me, renders it devoid of any to my companions: besides, study and solitude is their aim.

We dined at the *table d'hôte;* and a most tiresome and even disgusting mode of satisfying the appetite we found it. The company was disagreeably numerous; the noise stunning; and the food, to our un-Germanised tastes, very uninviting. We were amused, however, by our neighbours — three persons — a German, his sister, and his affianced bride, whom he is to marry to-morrow. She was pretty — he was ugly; but she saw him with the eyes of love, and very much in love they were, which they took no trouble to conceal, looking at each other as Adam and Eve might have done when no other human creature existed to observe them. Meanwhile, a number of little sins against the rules of well-bred behaviour at a dinner-table gave a very ludicrous turn to their overflowing sentiment.

In the evening we visited the *salon,* and looked in on the gamblers — often a dangerous spectacle. The *Rouge-et-Noir* table was densely surrounded; and gold or silver was perpetually staked, but never, as far as I could observe, to any great amount — four napoleons at a time being the most I saw placed on a colour, and that but once or twice — generally one gold piece or five francs. I believe serious play is reserved for a later hour of the night. I saw no signs of despair; but all looked serious, — some anxious. The floor was strewed with cards, pricked for numbers. One man I stood near, calculated very carefully, and generally won. Once, when he felt very sure, he staked four napoleons and was successful. He stowed his gains in a purse, which looked gradually but surely filling. The *Rouge-et-Noir* table was open all day; the roulette table, in another room, only in the evening — it was thinly attended. The multiplication of your stake at this game, if you are lucky, is attractive; but the chances are known to be so much in favour of the bank, that people are shy of it. *Rouge-et-Noir,* they say, is the fairest game of any; though, in that, the bank has advantages, which, unless under very excessive failure of luck, secures its being largely a gainer, and the players, of course in a mass, certain losers: thus, the players, in fact, play against each other, and the bank has a large premium on their stakes, which renders it for its holders a lucrative investment of money.

TUESDAY, 7TH.

WE spent this day at Baden-Baden. In the morning I took a bath; the water was exceedingly refreshing and pleasant, but the bathing rooms and baths themselves are small, without accommodation, altogether got up in an inferior and dirty-looking style. We have rambled among the hills; looked on the gamblers: the *Rouge-et-Noir* went on all day. I now betake myself to writing letters. There is to be a dance in the evening and a concert; the place seemed quietly gay, and there are some well-dressed people. I should think, with the aid of ponies to explore the surrounding country, one might spend a few months here, pleasantly. But the circumstance that always strikes me as strange is the manner in which the visitors always seem tied to the spot where they roost, as if they were fowls with a trellis before their feeding yard. It is true that they visit the *lions* of the place now and then; but, really, to wander, and ramble, and discover new scenes does not form a portion of their amusements; and yet this is the only real one to be found in such a place.

LETTER IV.

Offenberg. — Ettenheim — Freyberg. — The Hôllenthal — The Black Forest. — Arrive at Scbaffhausen.

WEDNESDAY, 8TH.

WE left Baden-Baden a little before seven. The scenery had exactly the same character — level to the right, to which indeed was now added a view of distant high mountains; on the left, wooded hills; often picturesque with peak or precipice crowned by ruined castles. We dined at Offenberg, at the inn, "La Fortune," — a very excellent one — where we had a good dinner; the host had lived in England, and now frequently exported wine thither. He showed us a book containing the names of his English customers, and took my companions into his cellars, to taste his vintage. He was a jovial, good-humoured man.

Before dinner at Offenberg, we had walked towards a ruin on the hills, but had not time to reach it; it was picturesque, and continued long to grace the landscape as we proceeded along the plain; for the peculiarity of this route from Franckfort to Freyberg is, that you never ascend in the least, though the hills, wild and romantic, are so near at hand. For several miles from the Rhine, there is a plain flat as the Maremma of Italy, and in that country might be as unhealthy.

I have not yet spoken of our carriage and *voiturier.* The former was roomy and commodious enough, a sort of covered *caliche;* it could have been thrown quite open but that the roof was encumbered by our luggage. During all this time, the weather, though dry, was by no means hot: it was, in fact, very agreeable weather for travelling. Our driver was quiet, civil enough, and the horses went well; our want of German prevented our knowing much about him. This evening we had expected to reach Freyberg, but he stopped at a road-side inn of bad pronuse, and no better execution. He could not be persuaded to go on; the evening was fine, the hour early; it was very provoking. I forget the Wine of the place; indeed, the inn was a solitary house: however, it was near Ettenheim, whither we walked, and which looked a cheerful small town, and has the sad celebrity of being the place at which the Duke d’Enghien was seized, whose fate was one of three crimes which cast a dark stain on Napoleon’s name. The others were — first, the miserable death of Toussaint l’Ouverture; second, the execution of Hoffer. The sun set cheerfully on a pleasant landscape; we returned to our dreary inn; — it was the first bad accommodation we had encountered on our way.

THURSDAY, 9TH.

PROCEEDING along the same style of country, we arrived in the middle of the day at Freyberg, where we dined. This was not one of the regular, formal, white-looking, modern German towns; it was antique, irregular, picturesque. We visited its Cathedral; it is celebrated for its great beauty: it is Gothic, and the tower, and spire that surmounts it, are of the most exquisite tracery and finish. We were accompanied by a *valet de place*, who had lived in a nobleman’s family in England, and spoke English tolerably. His claims were high to the knowledge of our language; he had not only written an English description of the Cathedral of Freyberg in prose, but an English poem descriptive of the route we were about to pursue through the Hôllenthal and Swartzwald, *anglicè* Valley of Hell, and Black Forest. The poem is in heroic measure, rhymed, meant to be in the style of Pope’s didactic poems. It is a curious specimen of the sort of mistakes a foreigner may make in a language which he otherwise understands very tolerably: the accents on the syllables are nearly all misplaced, and the words used with erroneous significations; but, make allowance for these defects, and it reads smoothly enough.

The name of the Black Forest alone awakens the imagination. I own I like to give myself up to the ideas excited by antique names, and by the associations that give it vitality. Through the Swartzwald poured the multitudinous Germans on their way to Helvetia — and the Roman legions penetrated its depths by dint of intense labour and perseverance. The Black Forest of the middle ages is peopled by shadows, still more grim and fearful; the charcoal burners were a race, savage, solitary, and to be feared: and, till quite lately, the name conjured up robbers, cut-throat inns, and the worst ills to which travellers are liable. We were to reach this wide track of evil renown through the pass of the Hollenthal, or Valley of Hell. The Germans know how to give the glory of spirit-stirring names to their valleys and their forests, very different from the Little Woman, or Muddy Creek, of America. The pass itself perhaps deserved its title better in times gone by: — as we passed through it on this calm and sunny summer evening, there was nothing frightful or tremendous, but all that is verdant and lovely. The Hollenthal is indeed a narrow ravine shut in by hills, not very high, but rocky and abrupt, and clothed in the rich foliage of majestic trees. In parts the ravine closes in so as to leave only room for the road between the precipice and the mountain-river, the Treisam, which now steals murmuring between its turf-clad banks, and now roars and dashes in a rocky bed. Jagged pinnacles and bare crags overhang the road; around it are strewn gigantic masses of fallen rock, but all are clothed with luxuriant vegetation, and adorned by noble woods. We caught points of view to charm a painter, and others almost beyond the reach of imitative art, that might well entice the traveller to linger on his way. The pass opened as we ascended it, and became wilder in its character. We remained the night at the Stem, a tolerable inn, placed amidst abrupt crags, a brawling torrent, and dark forest land.

FRIDAY, 10TH.

WE ascended out of the Hollenthal into the wilder region of the Swartzwald. The tract, so named, extends over several hundred miles; but is no longer the dark, impervious forest of olden time. Nearly half of it is cleared, and the clearings have become farms, and pretty villages are scattered here and there in the open uplands. There is nothing gloomy, nor what is commonly deemed romantic, in the scenery, but it is peculiar. The clearings have been made in patches, and the road alternates between cultivated fields, with a view of dark pines stretching away in the distance; and, amidst these straight high trees of the forest, where the axe of the woodcutter frequently breaks upon the ear. On the highest part of this mountainous district is a tarn or lake, named Titi-See, which our poet celebrates; and informs us, in a note, that from this spot, on a fine morning, we might catch a glimpse of the distant Alps, and see “the mountains unroll themselves in a convulsive manner.” Our morning was cloudy, and we were balked of this curious spectacle. We breakfasted at Lenzkirch, in great comfort; and heard the while some fine German music played by a self-acting instrument, for the manufacture of which this part of the country is celebrated. We were told that the women of the Swartzwald were famous for their beauty, so I wandered about the pleasant looking village in search of pretty girls; for beauty, in the human form, is a divine gift, and to see it is delightful: it increases our respect for our species, and also our love — but I saw none. The peasantry, we are told, are a hardworking, independent, manly race; but they are dirty in their appearance, and by no means attractive.

We dined at Stuhlingen in a new-built inn, kept by a man of high pretensions, and had the nastiest dinner, and the most uncomfortably served, we had encountered in our travels. However, young lady's fare of good bread and butter is always to be found in Germany; and with that, and our stock-dish of fried potatoes and German wine, we always did very well. We have had a long day's journey, and evening was advanced when we descended on the valley of the Rhine, a blue mountain river, brawling and foaming among rocks. We entered Schaffhausen at last; and the horses, with much ado, ascended its steep streets. Here we bade adieu to our *voiturier*, a quiet fellow, not over-sullen for a German of that class, who performed his engagement very faithfully, and from whom we parted without any regret; a little glad, indeed, as foolish human beings always are when they get rid of a king Log; being prone, in the hope of doing better, to forget that they may do worse.

LETTER V.

The Rhine. — Zurich. — Journey to Coire. — Via Mala. — The Splugen. — Chiavenna. — Colico. — The Steamboat on the Lake of Como to Cadenabbia.

CADENABBIA, ON THE LAKE OF COMO.

OUR journey has reached its termination; but this letter will tell nothing of our present prospects and intentions, for truly they are as yet obscure and unformed: it will but conclude the history of our journey.

The inn at Schaffhausen is large and good, without being first-rate. We engaged a *voiturier* to take us the next day to Zurich, and bargained to visit the Falls of the Rhine on our way. We wished to reach them by water, as the best approach; but Murray had by a misprint in his Hand-book put seventeen francs instead of seventeen batz, as the price asked for a boat; and as we, as you well know, are perforce economical travellers, we demurred. This misapprehension being set right by the very civil master of the hotel, we engaged a boat, and the carriage was to meet us at the Falls. We embarked in a rough canoe; a man held an oar at the stem, and a woman one at the prow. We sped speedily down the rapid river, and at one point a little apprehension of danger, just enough to make the heart beat, was excited. We approached the Falls, we were hurrying towards the ledge of rocks; it seemed as if we must go right on, when, by a dexterous use of the oars, we found ourselves with one stroke in the calm water of a little cove; the moment was just agreeably fearful; and at the crisis, an eagle had soared majestically above our heads. It is always satisfactory to get a picturesque adjunct or two to add interest when, with toil and time, one has reached a picturesque spot.

The cottage built to let out the Falls as a show is the contrary of all this; but it has some advantages. You see the sight from various points of view, being first on a level with the upper portion of the river, and by degrees, as you descend to other windows and balconies, reach the level of the lower part. The falls of Terni is the finest cataract I have seen: I believe it to be the grandest in Europe; but it is altogether of a different character from the falls of the Rhine. The waters of the Velino are contracted into a narrow channel, and fall in one stream down a deep precipice. The falls of the Rhine are broken into many, and are spread wide across the whole breadth of the river; their descent is never so great, but they are varied by many rocks, which they clothe fantastically with transparent waves, or airy spray.

What words can express — for indeed, for many ideas and emotions there are no words — the feelings excited by the tumult, the uproar and matchless beauty of a cataract, with its eternal, ever-changing veil of misty spray? The knowledge of its ceaseless flow; there, before we were born; there, to be after countless generations have passed away; the sense of its power, that would dash us to atoms without altering the tenor of its way, which gives a shiver to the frame even while we gaze in security from its verge; the radiance of its colouring, the melody of its thunder — can these words convey the impression which the mind receives, while the eye and ear seem all too limited in their powers of perception? No! for as painting cannot picture forth motion, so words are incapable of expressing commotion in the soul. It stirs, like passion, the very depths of our being; like love allied to ruin, yet happy in possession, it fills the soul with mingled agitation and calm. A portion of the cataract arches over the lowest platform, and the spray fell thickly on us, as standing on it and looking up, we saw wave, and rock, and cloud, and the clear heavens through its glittering ever-moving veil. This was a new sight, exceeding anything I had ever before seen; however, not to be wet through, I was obliged quickly to tear myself away.

We crossed the river in a boat, and saw the Falls from the other side — the spot best adapted to painting — and whence the views are generally taken. Hie carriage met us here, and we rolled along towards Zurich. At first our road was the same as that which we had taken to arrive at Schaffhausen: “We are going back,” cried one; “ this won’t do — we must not go back to Hollenthal,” which might be taken as a pun, at least we laughed at it as such. But we soon turned aside. We dined at a pleasant country sort of inn; the scenery was varied and agreeable, though without any approach to magnificence; our pace was very slow, and we became very tired, but at last arrived at Zurich.

Some very good hotels had been lately built and opened at Zurich. I believe the Hôtel des Bergues, at Geneva, is the model, as it is the best of these Swiss hotels, where every thing is arranged with cleanliness, order, and comfort, surpassing most English inns. To the door of each room was affixed a tariff of prices, moderate for such good hotel accommodation, though not cheap as lodgings for any length of time; but the certainty of the prices, the fixed one franc a-day, per head, for attendance, the extreme cleanliness and order, makes them very agreeable.

We went to the Hôtel du Lac. Prom our balcony we looked out on the lake of Zurich. This lake is not so extensive nor majestic as that of Geneva, with its background of the highest Alps; nor as picturesque and sublime as Lucerne, with its dark lofty precipices and verdant isles; but it is a beautiful lake, with a view of high mountains not very distant, and its immediate banks are well cultivated, and graced by many country-houses. After dinner, I went out in a boat with P — , by ourselves; he rowed in the style of the natives, pushing forward, and crossing the oars as they were pulled back; — we crossed the lake, which is not wide at this point, and returned again by moonlight.

We had become tired of our slow *voiturier* style of proceeding, and were seized by a desire to get on. So we took our places in the *diligence* for Coire, determined to arrive at the end of our journey as soon as might be.

SUNDAY, 12TH.

THE *diligence* was neither clean nor comfortable; we ought to have gone to the end of the lake by the steam-boat. The carriage-road runs at a very little distance from the water's edge. Half way on the lake is the longest bridge in the world. A bridge across a lake is less liable to be carried away, I suppose, by storms and the swelling of the waters, than over a river, but it ceases to be the picturesque spanning arch that adds such beauty to a landscape; it becomes a mere long low pier. At the end of the lake we took into the *diligence* a number of passengers, who had come so far by the steamboat. Our road lay through a valley surrounded by immense mountains, which became higher, closer, and more predpitous as we advanced through the plain at their foot. At one time it seemed as if we must be quite shut in, and then, just as we reached the very extremity of the valley, another lake opened on us — the lake of Wallenstadt, so surrounded by predpitous mountains, that it had been impossible to construct a road round it; but blessings on steam — a traveller's blessing, who loves to roam far and free, we embarked in a steam-boat, and in an hour arrived at the other end of the lake. The lake of Wallenstadt, surrounded by its high predpitous mountains, is gloomy; indeed, all the region we now travelled was marked by a vastness allied to dreariness, rather than to the majesty of picturesque beauty. Leaving the lake we proceeded along the valley of the Rhine; vast mountain barriers arose on each side, and in the midst was a flat valley, frequently overflowed, with the Rhine in the midst, struggling through a marshy bed. There was something dreary in it; but if the traveller approaches those mountains, and turns aside into their ravines, they instantly disclose scenes graced by all the beauty of Alpine magnificence. I much regretted not visiting the baths of Pfeflers, which I heard to be particularly worth seeing, and only a few miles distant.

At about nine o'clock in the evening we arrived very much fatigued at Coire. Before leaving the diligence-office we secured our places for the following day to Chiavenna. To my great delight I found Italian spoken here. French does not penetrate into these parts; English, if ever found, is a mere exotic, nurtured in particular spots; German, we had none; so now to be able to inquire, and learn, and arrange with facility, was very agreeble. "You *do* speak Italian!" exclaimed one of my companions in accents of surprise and pleasure; — so many difficulties in the future disappeared under this conviction. I certainly did speak Italian: it had been strange if I did not; not that I could boast of any extraordinary facility of conversation or elegance of diction, but mine was a peculiarly useful Italian; from having lived long in the country, all its household terms were familiar to me; and I remembered the time when it was more natural to me to speak to common people in that language than in my own. I now easily settled for our places; and we repaired to the inn to supper and to bed — we were to set out early in the morning.

MONDAY, 13TH.

AT five in the morning we were in the yard of the diligence-office. We were in high spirits — for that night we should sleep in Italy. The *diligence* was a very comfortable one; there were few other passengers, and those were of a respectable class. We still continued along the valley of the Rhine, and at length entered the pass of the Via Mala, where we alighted to walk. It is here that the giant wall of the Alps shuts out the Swiss from Italy. Before the Alp itself (the Splugen) is reached, another huge mountain rises to divide the countries. A few years ago, there was no path except across this mountain, which being very exposed, and difficult even to danger, the Splugen was only traversed by shepherds and travellers of the country on mules or on foot. But now, a new and most marvellous road has been constructed — the mountain in question is, to the extent of several miles, cleft from the summit to the base, and a sheer precipice of 4000 feet rises on either side. The Rhine, swift and strong, but in width a span, flows in the narrow depth below. The road has been constructed on the face of the precipice, now cut into the side, now perforated through the living rock into galleries: it passes, at intervals, from one side of the ravine to the other; and bridges of a single arch span the chasm. The precipices, indeed, approach so near, in parts, that a fallen tree could not reach the river below, but lay wedged in mid-way. It may be imagined how singular and sublime this pass is, in its naked simplicity, After proceeding about a mile, you look back and see the country you had left, through the narrow opening of the gigantic crags, set like a painting in this cloud-reaching frame. It is giddy work to look down over the parapet that protects the road, and mark the arrowy rushing of the imprisoned river. Mid-way in the pass, the precipices approach so near that you might fancy that a strong man could leap across. This was the region visited by storm, flood, and desolation in 1834. The Rhine had risen several hundred feet, and, aided by the torrents from the mountains, had torn up the road, swept away a bridge, and laid waste the whole region. An English traveller, then on his road to Chiavenna, relates that he traversed the chasm on a rotten uneven plank, and found but few inches remaining of the road overhanging the river. It was an awful invasion of one element on another. The whole road to Chiavenna was broken up, and the face of the mountain so changed that, when reconstructed, the direction of the route was in many places entirely altered. The region of these changes was pointed out to us; but no discernible traces remained of where the road had been. All here was devastation — the giant ruins of a primaeval world; and the puny remnants of man’s handiwork were utterly obliterated. Puny, however, as our operations are, when Nature decrees by one effort that they should cease to exist, while she reposes they may be regarded proudly, and commodiously traversed by the ant-like insects that make it their path.

We dined at the village of Splugen. It was cold, and we had a fire. Here we dropped all our fellow-travellers, — some were going over the St. Bernardin, — and proceeded very comfortably alone. It was a dreary-looking mountain that we had to cross, by zigzags, at first long, and diminishing as we ascended; the day, too, was drear; and we were immersed in a snow-storm towards the summit. Naked and sublime, the mountain stretched out around; and dim mists, chilling blasts, and driving snow added to its grandeur. We reached the dogana at the top; and here our things were examined.

The custom-house officer was very civil — complained of his station, where it always rained — at that moment it was raining — and, having caused the lids of one or two trunks to be lifted, they were closed again, and the ceremony was over. More time, however, was consumed in signing passports and papers; and then we set off down hill, swiftly and merrily, with two horses — the leaders being unharnessed and trotting down gravely after us, without any one to lead or drive them.

All Italian travellers know what it is, after toiling up the bleak, bare, northern, Swiss side of an Alp, to descend towards ever-vernal Italy. The rhododendron, in thick bushes, in full bloom, first adorned the mountain sides; then, pine forests; then, chesnut groves; the mountain was cleft into woody ravines; the waterfalls scattered their spray and their gracious melody; flowery and green, and clothed in radiance, and gifted with plenty, Italy opened upon us. Thus, — and be not shocked at the illustration, for it is all God's creation, — after dreary old age and the sickening pass of death, does the saint open his eyes on Paradise. Chiavenna is situated in a fertile valley at the foot of the Splugen — it is glowing in rich and sunny vegetation. The inn is good; but the rooms were large and somewhat dreary. So near our bourne, low spirits crept over some of us, I know not why. To me, indeed, there was something even thrilling and affecting in the aspect of the commonest objects around. Every traveller can tell you how each country bears a distinctive mark in the mere setting out of the room of an inn, which would enable a man who had visited it before, if, transported by magic, he opened his eyes in the morning in a strange bed, to know to what country he had been removed. Window-curtains, the very wash-hand stands, they were all such as had been familiar to me in Italy long, long ago. I had not seen them since those young and happy days. Strange and indescribable emotions invaded me; recollections, long forgotten, arose fresh and strong by mere force of association, produced by those objects being presented to my eye, inspiring a mixture of pleasure and pain, almost amounting to agony.

Tuesday, 14TH.

This morning, we were to proceed to Colico, at the head of the lake of Como, there to embark on board the steamer. We engaged a *voiture*, which cost more than we had hoped or expected. We drove through a desolate region, — huge, precipitous, bare Alps on either side, — in the midst, a marshy plain. The road is good, but difficult to keep up. The Adda flows into the lake, over a wide rock-strewn bed, broken into many channels. It is a mountain torrent, perpetually swollen by rain and snow into a cataract that breaks down all obstacles, and tears away the road.

We arrived at Colico two hours too early. The inn was uninviting: we did not enter it. We tried to amuse ourselves by strolling about on the shore of the lake. The air was bleak and cold; now and then it threatened rain. At length, welcome signal of release, the steamer, appeared; another hour had yet to pass while it crossed over to us, and we were on board.

Our plan, formed from the experience of others, had been to take up our quarters at Bellaggio — look at a map, and you will see the situation. The Lake of Como is long, and, in proportion, narrow. About midway between Colico and the town of Como, in its widest part, it is divided into two lakes — one taking a more eastern course to Lecco; the other, to Como. On the narrow, rocky promontory that divides these two branches, looking towards the north, Bellaggio is situated. The steamer, however, did not stop there, but on the opposite shore, Cadenabbia, which looked southward, and commanded a view of Bellaggio and the mountains beyond, surmounting Varenna. We were landed at the Grande Albergo di Cadenabbia. A tall, slight, rather good-looking, fair-moustached master of the inn, welcomed us with a flourish. And here we are.

Strange to say, there is discontent among us. The weather is dreary, the lake tempest-tossed; and, stranger still, we are tired of mountains. I, who think a flat country insupportable, yet wish for lower hills, and a view of a wider expanse of sky: the eye longs for space. I remembered once how the sense of sight had felt relieved when I exchanged the narrow ravine, in which the Baths of Lucca are placed, for the view over the plains of Lombardy, commanded from our villa among the Euganean hills. But it was not this alone that made us sad and discontented. This feeling frequently assails travellers when their journey has come to a temporary close; and that close is not *home*. It will disappear to-morrow. Meanwhile, to relieve my thoughts from painful impressions, I have written this letter. And now, it is night; the sky is dark; the waves still lash the shore. I pray that no ruin, arising from that fatal element, may befal me here; and I say good night to you — to myself — to the world. — Farewell.

LETTER VI.

Albergo Grande della Cadenabbia. — The Brothers Brantani — The view from our windows. — The Madman — Arrival of the boat

Cadenabbia, July 17TH.

THE morning after our arrival we began to consider where and how we should live for the next two months. Two of my companions went by the steamer to Como, for money; and I remained with the other, to arrange our future plans. We at once decided not to remove to Bellaggio, but to remain on this side of the Lake. One chief motive is, that the steamer stops each day at Cadenabbia; and our communication with the world is, therefore, regular and facile. We looked for lodgings in the neighbouring village of Tremezzo, and found several, not bad, nor very dear; though rather more so than we expected. But this was not our difficulty. There were five of us, including my maid, to be provided for. We must have food: we must have a cook. I knew that, in a strange place, it requires at least a month, and even more, to get into its ways, and to obviate a little the liabilities to being cheated. But we are only going to stay six weeks or two months; and the annoyance attendant on my initiation into housekeeping will scarcely be ended before my acquired knowledge will have become useless. The host of the inn declared we must have everything from his house, or, by steamboat, from Como: he insinuated we should be better off at his hotel. At first, we turned a deaf ear; then we listened; then we discussed: in brief, we finally settled to remain at the Albergo Grande. We have one large *salon;* four small bedrooms contiguous, for three of us and my maid, and one up stairs: we are provided with breakfast, dinner, and tea; the whole (rooms included) for seven francs a-head for the masters, four for the servant. This was reasonable enough; and we agreed for a month, on these terms. Thus I am delivered from all household cares; which otherwise, in our position, might prove harassing enough.

These arrangements being quickly made, our manner of life has fallen at once into a regular train. All the morning, our students are at work. I have selected a nook of the *salon,* where I have established my embroidery-frame, books, and desk. I mean to read a great deal of Italian; as I have ever found it pleasant to embue oneself with the language and literature of the country in which one is residing. Reading much Italian, one learns almost to think in that language, and to converse more freely. At twelve, the steamer arrives from Como; which is the great event of our day. At two, we dine; but it is five, usually, before the sun permits us to go out.

During his visit to Como, P — went over to the neighbouring village of Caratte, where lives a boat-builder, who studied his trade at Venice. All the boats of the country are flat-bottomed. P — has selected one with a keel, which he is now impatiently expecting.

Descriptions with difficulty convey definite impressions, and any picture or print of our part of the lake will better than my words describe the scenery around us. The Albergo Grande della Cadenabbia is built at the foot of mountains, close to the water. In front of the house there is a good bridle-road, which extends to each extremity of the lake. One door of the house opens on an avenue of acacias, which skirts the water, and leads to the side-gate of the Villa Sommariva.

Continuing the road towards Como, we come to the villages of Tremezzo and Bolvedro, with frequent villas interspersed, their terraced gardens climbing the mountain's side. In the opposite direction towards Colico, we have the village of Cadenabbia itself, with a silk-mill: but after that, the road, until we reach the town of Menaggio, is more solitary. In parts, the path runs close upon the lake, with only a sort of beach intervening, sprinkled with fragments of rock and shadowed by olive-trees. Menaggio is three miles distant; it is the largest town in our vicinity, and properly our post-town, though our letters are usually directed to Como, and a boatman fetches them and posts ours, three times a-week, with great fidelity.

High mountains rise behind, their lower terraces bearing olives, vines, and Indian corn; midway clothed by chesnut woods; bare, rugged, sublime, at their summits. The waters of the lake are spread before; the villa-studded promontory of Bellaggio being immediately opposite, and further off the shores of the other branch of the lake, with the town of Varenna, sheltered by gigantic mountains. Highest among them is the Resegone, so frequently mentioned by Manzoni in the Promessi Sposi, with its summit jagged like a saw. Indeed, all these Alps are in shape more abrupt and fantastic than any I ever saw.

I wish I could by my imperfect words bring before you not only the grander features, but every minute peculiarity, every varying hue, of this matchless scene. The progress of each day brings with it its appropriate change. When I rise in the morning and look out, our own side is bathed in sunshine, and we see the opposite mountains raising their blade masses in sharp relief against the eastern sky, while dark shadows are flung by the abrupt precipices on the fair lake beneath. This very scene glows in sunshine later in the day, till at evening the shadows climb up, first darkening the banks, and slowly ascending till they leave exposed the naked summits alone, which are long gladdened by the golden radiance of the sinking sun, till the bright rays disappear, and, cold and gray, the granite peaks stand pointing to the stars, which one by one gather above.

Here then we are in peace, with a feeling of being settled for a year, instead of two months. The inn is kept by the brothers Brentani, who form a sort of patriarchal family. There is, in the first place, an old mother, who evidently possesses great sway in the family, and a loud voice, but with whom we have nothing to do, except to return her salutation when we meet. The eldest brother, Giovanni, a tall stout man, attends to the accounts. He is married. Peppina, his wife, is of good parentage, but being left an orphan in childhood, lost her all through the rascality of guardians during the troubled times of Napoleon’s wars and downfall. She waits on us; she is hard-working, good-humoured, and endowed with all the innate courtesy which forms, together with their simplicity of manner, the charm of the Italians. Luigi, the next brother, who welcomed us from the steamboat, is put forward to do the honours, as the beau of the establishment. He has all the airs of one, when each day he goes to receive guests from the steamer, with his white, low-crowned hat, and velvet jacket, his slim figure, and light mustachios; he waits on us also. Then there is Battista, who acts as cook: Bernardo, who seems as a sort of under-waiter: and Paolo, or Piccol, as he is usually called, to his great disdain, a handsome lad, who runs about, and does everything: these are all brothers. There is a woman besides, to clean rooms, and a scullion or two: all the family work hard. Poor Battista says his only ambition is to get a good night’s sleep; he is up early and down late, has grown infinitely thin upon it. Bernardo nourishes the ambition of going to England — the frequent resort of the natives of the lake of Como — and try, as others of the villages about had done, to make a fortune. My young companions are great pets in the house. You can be on excellent terms with this class of people in Italy without their ever forgetting themselves: there is no intrusiveness, no improper familiarity, but perfect ease joined to respect and ready service. For the rest, they of course are not particularly addicted to truth, and may perhaps cheat if strongly tempted, and, I dare say, their morals are not quite correct. But in all their doings, as yet, they keep their compact with us faithfully, taking extreme pains to serve us to our liking; far from having the slightest cause of complaint, we have every reason to praise.

SUNDAY, 19TH.

WE begin to feel settled, but to-day a strange and disagreeable incident occurred. Peppina came in with wild looks, to say that a madman — an Englishman — had arrived by the steamer, and was frightening everybody with a pistol.

It seems that two gentlemen had landed from the steamer, and had proceeded, as was the wont of visitors, to the Villa Sommariva, to look over it. One was an Italian, the other an Englishman, who spoke Italian perfectly. Suddenly, as they reached the gate of the Villa which opened on the road, the Englishman said to the Italian, “Are you not afraid of being set upon? Are you not afraid of being assassinated?” The other, who had come from Milan with him, and was not otherwise acquainted, and had no idea of his malady, replied, “No, why should he?”

“Do you not know that we are watched, and there is treachery everywhere about us?”

“No,” said the other, “and if there were, you have as much cause to be frightened as I.”

“But I am armed,” said the madman, “this is loaded,” and he drew a pistol from his pocket, and still more excited by the sight of the weapon, began to shriek “Tradimento! Tradimento! Alla Villa Sommariva! Tradimento! “ His companion, frightened enough, ran off and alarmed the inn and village, and as Englishmen, my companions were summoned to see if they could do anything with their countryman.

There he stood on the steps before the gate of the villa leading down to the lake, shrieking “Tradimento he kept every one at bay with his pistol, which was cocked, capped, and ready. Some people from across the lake tried to land at the steps to visit the villa, but he soon made them row away; the inhabitants around all flocked, hiding behind trees and peeping from coverts. He was well content to talk or to be spoken to in Italian or English, but no one must approach; and his position, standing on a semicircular flight of steps leading down to the lake, was sufficiently impregnable: it gave him the whole command of the road in front, and no one could outflank, or come behind him. After three or four hours, however, he grew less watchful. As the people talked to him, he allowed them insensibly to approach nearer, till one fellow getting behind, threw up his arm with the pistol, and then throwing his arms round him, took him prisoner. His pistol was double-loaded. But with all his madness he was aware, that if he had fired it, his power was at an end; and this latent sanity saved, perhaps, a life.

He was brought to the hotel, and a dismal day my friends have passed watching over him. Poor fellowt he is quite mad. He had given English lessons at Milan for some years, and earned a sufficient livelihood. His insanity has taken the turn of believing, that the Austrian police want to poison him. He said he never went to the theatre but a police officer was behind, who scattered a poisonous powder over him. He will not take any food in consequence; neither touch bread nor water. My maid took him a cup of tea made by herself, and, to her great indignation, he refused it, as poisoned. He tried to escape several times. First, he made friends with his countrymen; but when he found that they watched him, he turned to the Italians, calling us, according to the phrase of the country, “ non Cristiani,” and begging them to save him. He had sixteen napoleons with him. It seems that the doctor who attended him (he was without relations or English friends) had advised him to go to England, had put him into the *diligence* for Como, introducing him to a Milanese in the vehicle, without mentioning his malady, and thus he was delivered over to the miserable wanderings of his mind. A doctor had been sent for from Menaggio at the first moment; of course, he could do nothing. With difficulty he was induced to go to bed; he was thoroughly persuaded be should be murdered in the night, and his expostulations on the subject were shocking and ghastly, enough. The next morning, having taken an aversion to all those with whom he had been friendly the preceding day, he consented to go back to Milan, under the escort of a police officer. I saw him as he got into the boat; he was a spare man, with an adust, withered face and unquiet eye; but not otherwise remarkable. We heard that at Como he selected a pear from the bottom of a basket in the market place, and ate it; it was the first food that had passed his lips since he left Milan, two days before.

TUESDAY, 21ST.

IN our hotel are an English gentleman and lady, with whom the adventure of the madman brought us acquainted. Mr and Mrs. F —— — had been spending the last two years in Italy; they are passed middle life: he is a scholar and a gentlemanly man; he has printed a volume of poetry, and aims at connoisseurship in pictures. She appears one of those dear, gentle, sensible, warm-hearted women, the salt of the earth. Her acquaintance, alone as I am with my son, and his youthful friends, promises to be a great resource to me.

This evening P —— —'s little boat has come; small, indeed, it is. In shape it is something of a sea boat, and it has a keel, and a tiny sail; but it is too small to convey a feeling of safety. I look at it and shudder. I can bring no help, except constant watchfulness; and many an anxious hour it will cause me to pass. Do not call me a grumbler. A tragedy has darkened my life: I endeavour, in vain, to cast aside the fears which are its offspring; they haunt me perpetually, and make too large and too sad a portion of my daily life.

The arrival of the boat, you see, has dashed my spirits, so I break off. — Adieu.

LETTER VII.

Excursions on the Lake. — Manzoni's Ode of "Cinque Maggio." Cadenabbia, Monday, 27th July.

YESTER evening there was a thunder storm, and this morning the loftier Alps to the north are covered with snow, a sign that we shall have a boisterous wind from Colico until the snow disappears; this is the wind that brings heavy waves, and renders the navigation of the lake dangerous. P —— — desired to sail; I walked round to the bay of Bolvedro, and watched while he tacked in and out, I afterwards got into the boat to return; but it seemed to me that the little craft must run into the depths of the crested waves which met her. For the first time in my life I took thorough fright, and insisted on our landing at the steps of the villa Sommariva. The most dangerous thing we could do: for the waves might dash us against them, and the lake is fathomless deep in that spot; it is said who went down there, was never seen again. We landed, however, in safety.

TUESDAY, 28TH.

THE arrival of the steamer at noon is the event of our day. Several times acquaintance have come by it, chance visitants to the lake of Como. When we hear the bell, my companions leave their books to run down to see the disembarkation: to-day I heard one of them exclaim, "Ah, here's D — !" This announced the arrival of a fellow-collegian, who joined our party for two or three weeks, to the great satisfaction of his Mends.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3.

THE snow is gone from the mountain tops; warm, really warm weather has commenced, and we begin to enjoy one of the most delicious pleasures of life, *in its way*. The repose necessitated by heat during the day, the revival in the evening, the enjoyment of the cooler hours, the enchantment of the nights — to stroll beside or linger upon the divine lake, to see the sun's declining rays gild the mountain peaks, to watch the stars gather bright over the craggy summits, to view the vast shadows darken the waters, and hear the soft tinkling bells, put by the fishermen to mark the spot where the nets are set, come with softened sound across the water: this has been our lot each evening. Each evening, too, at dusk, the girls from the silk mill close by, pass our inn on their way from work to their own village; they sing as they go, and look happy: some of them are very beautiful. They are all well conducted, I am told, keeping sharp watch on one another. The unmarried in Italy are usually of good conduct, while marriage is the prelude to a fearful liberty.

MONDAY, 5TH.

WE have crossed to Bellaggio several times, without visiting the villas on that shore. To-day has been excessively hot; at five a breeze sprung tip: we crossed the lake, and, landing at the port of Bellaggio, went up the hill to visit the villa Serbelloni.

The extreme and narrow shoot of the promontory that divides the lake into two, is covered by the gardens of this villa. To the north, towards Cadenabbia, the descent is somewhat gradual to the water, and the hill is cut into terraces, planted with vines and olives. To the south, looking Over the lake of Lecco, it is abrupt; dark, precipitous rocks, rise at once from the deep waters, broken into crags and pinnacles, crowned with rich vegetation, and adorned by majestic trees. Paths have been formed along the outmost brink of these picturesque precipices and ravines; and it is impossible to imagine anything more beautiful than the sight, looking down on the clear deép lake, and its high rocky barriers, broken into gorges And watercourses, tree-grown and verdant. A tower in olden time had been built on the height of the promontory — it is now in ruin — and through this there is an entrance to a summer-house that overlooks the deepest and most beautiful of the ravines, with its graceful wood. On the other side of the lake are the huge mountains surmounting Varenna, and, softened by distance, the roaring of a torrent falls on the ear; the sound of a mysterious fountain, called, from its milky colour, *fiume latte*, whose bed is full and noisy in summer, and empty and still in winter. The grounds of the Villa Serbelloni are peculiarly Italian. One path is cut through a cavern; and at a particular point a view is caught of the opposite bank and of the Villa Sommariva — a picture, as it were, set in a frame; descending terraces lead from the summer-house to the water’s edge. The gardens are not kept in English order; but Art has done much in laying them out to advantage, and the exuberant richness of Nature stands in place of *trimness,* which is not an apposite epithet for gardens in this country. There is a great deal of ground; the demesne is princely in its extent, and in the grandeur of the natural beauties it contains. Its great defect is the absence of a suitable residence.

In times gone by this estate belonged to the ducal family of Sfondrati, whose escutcheons, adorn the walls. The Sfondrati were a family of Cremona, and the name appears in the pages of Italian history. In Charles V.'s time, a Sfondrati was employed in various negotiations by Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and was among the most distinguished of the followers of the Emperor himself. Unfortunately, in those days the Italians of Lombardy were patriots no more, for they had no longer a country. Francesco Sfondrati was named by Charles Y. Governor of Siena, and restored order to that distracted town; so that the Sienese named him Father of their country. As Siena had always been a Ghibelline city, it may be supposed that the majority of her citizen? looked favourably on the acts of a governor appointed by the German Emperor. Sfondrati had married a lady of the illustrious house of Visconti, and was thus connected with the reigning family of Milan. When he lost his wife, he entered the Church. He became, first, Bishop of Cremona, and afterwards Cardinal. The youngest of his sons was also an ecclesiastic, and became Pope, under the name of Gregory XIV.; he Was known as an author of some works on jurisprudence; and besides, there exists a poem of his, entitled "De Raptu Helenæ, Poema heroicum, libro tres," published in Venice, in 1559. Another member of the same family, also a churchman, made himself conspicuous by defending the pretensions of the court of Rome in answer to the declaration of the French clergy, in 1682; and was, as a reward, made cardinal.

Nor is the name Serbelloni much less illustrious. This family was originally Burgundian; and three brothers of the name left France during the anarchy of the reign of Charles VI., when the factions of Burgundy and Orleans, and the English invasion, distracted that unfortunate country. One brother established himself in Spain, another at Naples; the third in Lombardy.

Oné of the descendants, Gabriel Serbelloni, was particularly famous. Had he supported a good cause, he had been a hero. But the Italians had ceased to be a nation, and fought for France or Spain, as circumstances might direct. Gabriel was a Knight of Malta, and fought against the Turks with reputation and success in Hungary. His military skill and prowess introduced him to the notice of Charles V.; and he invited him to enter his service. He fought in Germany and Brabant, and acquired a high reputation. The most honourable circumstance attending his career occurred when Don John of Austria undertook his famous expedition against the Turks. This prince refused to sail till Serbelloni was added to the number of his Generals. Everything that was most illustrious in Italy and Spain made a part of his expedition. The inimical fleets encountered each other near Lepanto. The greater number of the Generals, both Spanish and Italian, were for avoiding the conflict, the Turkish fleet having greatly the advantage in numbers. Serbelloni alone supported the opposite opinion. Don John yielded to his arguments; and Serbelloni, by his subsequent bravery, as well as by his counsels, was a chief cause of the victory. It was in this battle that Cervantes fought and lost his hand: it is one of the most famous naval combats in modern history. Serbelloni was rewarded by the Vice-Royalty of Sicily. He was employed on other occasions of difficulty and peril against the Turks, and was made prisoner at one time and exchanged for thirty-six Turkish officers of rank, taken in the battle of Lepanto.

He reaped a better glory when named Lieutenant by the Governor of Milan. The plague broke out in the city, and the Governor abandoned his post; Serbelloni remained, and exerted himself, by wise and humane measures, to alleviate the horrors of the time. He was again chosen by Don John ta accompany him in his last campaign in Flanders; he was with him when he died, nor did he long survive him.

A more recent Serbelloni — probably grandfather of the present representatives of the family — served under the Emperor Charles VI., and distinguished himself in the wars of Italy, and more particularly during the Seven Years’ War. He was afterwards appointed Governor of Lombardy.

I can scarcely explain why I send you these details. These grounds are so attractive — their site so romantic — the name of the Sfondrati sounded so dignified to our ears, that we have been hunting for information with regard to them and their successors. I send you a portion of the result.

Two brothers now remain of the Serbelloni family — one a general, who served during the wars of the French Empire; the other, a church dignitary. Both are childless, and the estates will, on their death, be inherited by their sister.

Probably, in ancient days, all the habitation that existed was the ruined tower on the summit of the promontory. The escutcheons on the walls show, however, that the present villa was built by the Sfondrati; but it is much out of repair and quite unworthy of the grounds, being little better than the house of a *fattore* or steward. The plan of a new residence on a splendid scale is under consideration, -as well as the completion and ornamenting the grounds. But the brothers discuss, and can never come to one mind; so things remain as they are.

TUESDAY, 6TH.

THIS evening we crossed again to visit other seats on the opposite bank. Villa Melzi is a very pleasant country house; its marble halls and stuccoed drawing-rooms are the picture of Italian comfort — cool, shady, and airy. The garden has had pains taken with it; there are some superb magnolias and other flowering trees, but one longs for English gardening here. What would not some friends of mine make of a flower-garden in Italy; how it would abound and run over with sweets — no potting and greenhouses to check, no frost to decimate. The Italians here know not what flowers and a flower-garden are.

After loitering awhile, we ascended the bank by a convenient and wide flight of some eighty steps, and reached the villa Giulia, whose grounds look upon the lake of Lecco. It was all shut up, as we were late. We found out way however, across the promontory to a little harbour on the water’s edge. Surely on earth there is no pleasure (excepting that derived from moral good) so great as lingering, during the soft shades of an Italian evening, surrounded by all the beauty of an Italian landscape, sheltered by the pure radiance of an Italian sky — and then to skim the calm water towards one’s home; while the stars gather bright overhead, and the lake glimmers beneath. These delights are, indeed, the divinest imparted by the visible creation; but they come to us so naturally as our due birthright, that we do not feel their full value till returned to a northern clime; when, all at once, we wonder at the change come* over the earth, and feel disinherited of, and exiled from its fairest gifts.

THURSDAY, 6TH.

THE weather is now delicious; yet at times a cloud is spread over the sky; and wind and rain threaten us. This evening I had the pleasure of finding that I had not become quite a coward, and that I feared for P — more than for myself.

I crossed the lake with Mr. —— ; the wind rose, and our little sail was hoisted; but the waves rose with the wind, and our craft is so small that a little breeze seems much. However, I had been scolded, and had scolded myself for my timidity, and would not now display even prudence, but went on; and though twenty times I was on the point of proposing to return, I did not, for I was not aware that my companion silently shared my alarm. At length We had nearly reached the opposite side of the lake; the wind and waves had both risen, and if they increased, danger was at hand. I did not feel fear, but I felt the risk. At length Mr. — said, “I think we might as well return;” and at the word we tacked. It was a side wind, and our skiff was apt to make great leeway, which would take us below Cadenabbia, and heaven knows where we could land. Just then the wind fell, and danger passed away; but the waves continued high, and the sail grew useless, while sculling became fatiguing. It was hard work: at last we reached the port of Tremezzo; and getting a boy to row the boat back to Cadenabbia, we gladly walked home.

MONDAY 10TH.

THE moonlight nights are most inviting. I spent several hours on the water this evening. We put out just at sunset: when we reached Menaggio the full moon had risen above the mountain tops, and strewed a silver path upon the waves; instead of returning, we rowed along the shining track, towards the lake of Lecco. We hunted for the tinkling fisher-bells, and loitered delicious hours away. This evening I heard for the first time Manzoni’s Ode on Napoleon — strange, I had never before met with it. It was now repeated to me. It is a glorious poem; the opening calls at once the attention; its rapid sketching of events is fall of fire; the recurrence to the poet’s self noble and appropriate; and the last stanza instinct with charity and pious hope. The hero, with all his faults, was fitly praised in verse as majestic as ever yet a poet wrote. It is a double pleasure to find poetry worthy of its better days spring up in modem Italy, showing that the genius of the Italians survives the blighting influence of misrule and oppression.

The more I see of the inhabitants of this country, the more I feel convinced that they are highly gifted with intellectual powers, and possess all the elements of greatness. They are made to be a free, active, inquiring people. But they must cast away their *dolce far niente.* They must learn to practise the severer virtues; their youth must be brought up in more hardy and manly habits; they must tread to earth the vices that cling to them as the ivy around their ruins. They must do this to be free; yet without freedom how can they? for the governments of Italy know that to hold their own they must debase their subjects; they jealously bar their doors against all improvement; and every art and power is used to crush any who would rise above the vices and indolence of the day.

I love the Italians. It is impossible to live among them and not love them. Their faults are many — the faults of the oppressed — love of pleasure, disregard of truth, indolence, and violence of temper. But their falsehood is on the surface — it is not deceit. Under free institutions, and where the acquirement of knowledge is not as now a mark inviting oppression and wrong, their love of pleasure were readily ennobled into intellectual activity. They are affectionate, simple, and earnestly desirous to please. There is life, energy, and talent in every look and word; grace and refinement in every act and gesture. They are a noble race of men — a beautiful race of women; the time must come when again they will take a high place among nations. Their habits, fostered by their governments, alone are degraded and degrading; alter these, and the country of Dante and Michael Angelo and Raphael still exists.

LETTER VIII.

Voyage to Como. — The Opera. — Walk towards Menaggio.

CADENABBIA, AUGUST 15.

TIME speeds on; yet every hour being occupied, it appears to move slowly. How often do a few weeks — such as we have spent here — seem a mere shred of life, hardly counted in the passage of a year! But these weeks "drag a slow length along," day succeeding day, each gifted with the calmest yet most living enjoyment. Calm; for no event disturbs us: instinct with glowing life, inspired by the beauty of the scenery and the delicious influence of the climate.

We hear from the boatmen on the lake snatches of the "Lucia " — the *Bell' Alma innamorata*, especially. The Opera-house at Como is open; and, now and then, to vary their day, my companions have visited it, going by the steamer at four in the afternoon, and returning the next morning. I have been tempted thither once. The steamer, the *Lario* (a better is promised for next year), is a very primitive and slow boat, I now made a voyage I had made years before, when putting off from Como in a skiff we had visited Tremezzo. How vividly I remembered and recognised each spot. I longed inexpressibly to land at the Pliniana, which remained in my recollection as a place adorned by magical beauty. The abrupt precipices, the gay-looking villas, the richly-wooded banks, the spire-like cypresses — a thousand times scarcely less vividly had they recurred to my memory, than now they appeared again before my eyes. Sometimes these thoughts and these revisitings were full of inexpressible sadness; a yearning after the past — a contempt for all that has occurred since, that throws dark and chilling shadows over the soul. Just now, my mind was differently attuned; the young and gay were around; and in them I lived and enjoyed Madame Pasta has a villa on the lake, some miles distant from Como. She has an excessive fear of the water, and never goes to Como by the steamer. Unluckily there is no road on her side of the lake; and she has a house on the opposite shore, in which to remain, if the weather is stormy, to wait for the smoothing of the waters. Methinks the elements are rude indeed not to obey her voice —

never did any so move, so penetrate the human heart. In "Giulietta," in "Medea," and, above all, in the melting and pathetic tenderness of the opening air of the " Nina Pazza per Amore" of the divine Paesiello, she has in truth taken from the heart its last touch of hardness, and melted it into sweetest tears. Pasta and Paganini alone have had this power over me, but yet different in its kind. By Pasta, the tenderest sympathy was awakened, joined to that soft return ta one's own past afflictions, which subdued the soul and opened the fountain of tears. Paganini excited and agitated violently — it was rather nervous hysterics than gentle sorrowing — it was irresistible — as a friend said, it realised the fables of Orpheus — it had the power of an enchantment. We heard him in a garish theatre, seeing him on a stage, playing simply to attract admiration and gain money. The violent emotions he excited, rose and faded in the bosom without any visible sign. But could we have listened in the wooded solitudes of Greece or Italy, and known that he himself was animated by some noble purpose, surely he might have inspired passion, animated to glorious action, and caused obstacles seemingly irresistible to give way — no fabled power of music ever transcended his.

It is bathos to return to the opera of Como — but it was very creditable. The house was clean and pretty. Teresa Brambilla sang the part of "Lucia" very tolerably, and it was an agreeable change. In the hotel at Como were staying some Italians, whose singing, however, far transcended that of the theatre.

Prince B — , in the days of his exile and poverty, often said jestingly, that were his fortunes at their last ebb, the stage would be a sure resource. Perhaps no finer voice than his has been heard in a theatre for many years.

AUGUST 30TH.

IT is not always calm upon the lake. Sometimes a mighty storm comes down from the Alps, bringing with it driving rain, which resembles the mist of a cataract, and wind that lashes the water into waves and foam, — and then, in half an hour, all is sunny, sparkling — and calm is spread again upon the waters. Several times we had music on the lake: once we got the musicians over from Bellaggio — they were artisans of the place, who had formed themselves into a musical society — to the number of twenty-one, and they played a variety of airs of modern composers. Often we have visited our favourite Villa Serbelloni, and each visit discovered some new beauty. Once, in P.'s little boat, we doubled the promontory, and rowed beneath the crags we had looked down upon from the terraced walks above. Black, abrupt, and broken into islet, pinnacle, and cliff, but all crowned by greenest vegetation, they rose high around us. Sometimes we visited the high terraced gardens of Villa Giulia, that overlooked the same branch of the lake.

Nor, nearer home, must I forget the Villa Sommariva. The grounds are not extensive, and, of course, broken into terraces, from the nature of the site; with overarching trees, forming shady alcoves and covered walks. It is a cool and pleasant retreat at noon: the house is a very good one, large and cheerful. It possesses a renowned work of Canova, the Cupid and Psyche. The expression of their faces is tender and sweet; but — I like not to confess it — I am not an admirer of Canova's women. He is said to have had singular opportunities of studying the female form; but place his Venus, or any other of his female statues, beside those of Grecian sculpture, and his defects must strike the most untaught eye. There was a little antique of a sleeping nymph in the halls of the Villa Sommariva, which formed a contrast with the modern Psyche. It looked as the finger could impress the marble, as the imitated flesh had yielded to the posture of the figure. Canova's seemed as if it moved only at the joints, and as if no other portion of the frame was influenced by attitude.

When alone in an evening, I often walk towards Menaggio. I have selected a haunt among rocks close to the water's edge, shaded by an olive-wood.

I always feel renewed and extreme delight as I watch the shadows of evening climb the huge mountains, till the granite peaks alone shine forth glad and bright, and a holy stillness gathers over the landscape. With what serious yet quick joy do such sights fill me; and dearer still is the aspiring thought that seeks the Creator in his works, as the soul yearns to throw off the chains of flesh that hold it in, and to dissolve and become a part of that which surrounds it.

This evening my friends are gone to Como, and I sat long on my favourite seat, listening to the ripplet of the calm lake splashing at my feet; to the murmur of running streams, and to the hollow roar of the mysterious torrent — the *Fiume Latte* — which is borne, softened by distance, from the opposite shore; viewing the magnificent mountain scene, varied by the lights and shadows caused by the setting sun. My heart was elevated, purified, subdued. I prayed for peace to all; and still the supreme Beauty brooded over me, and promised peace; at least there where change is not, and love and enjoyment unite and are one. From such rapt moods the soul returns to earth, bearing with it the calm of Paradise:

Quaie è colni, che sognando vede,
E dopo ‘l sogno la passione impressa
Rimane, e l’altro alla mente non riede;
Cotal son io, che quasi tutta cessa
Mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla
Nel cor il dolce, che nacque da casa.

Cori la neve al sol si dissigilla;
Cosi al vento nelle foglie lievi
Si perdea la sentenzia di Sibilla.

It has seemed to me — and on such an evening, I have felt it, — that this world, endowed as it is outwardly with endless shapes and influences of beauty and enjoyment, is peopled also in its spiritual life by myriads of loving spirits; from whom, unawares, we catch impressions, which mould our thoughts to good, and thus they guide beneficially the course of events, and minister to the destiny of man. Whether the beloved dead make a portion of this holy company, I dare not guess; but that such exists, I feel. They keep far off while we are worldly, evil, selfish; but draw near, imparting the reward of heaven-born joy, when we are animated by noble thoughts, and capable of disinterested actions. Surely such gather round me this night, and make a part of that atmosphere of peace and love which it is paradise to breathe.

I had thought such ecstacy as that in which I now was lapped dead to me for ever; but the sun of Italy has thawed the frozen stream — the cup of life again sparkles to the brim. Will it be removed as I turn northward? I fear it will. I grieve to think that we shall very soon leave Cadenabbia — the first sad step towards quitting Italy.

LETTER IX.

Italian Poetry. — Italian Master. — The Country People. — The Fulcino. — Grand Festa. — Adieu to Cadenabbia.

CADENABBIA, 7TH SEPT.

WE leave Cadenabbia in a day or two. I go unwillingly; the calm weather invites my stay, by dispelling my fears. (P.'s boat has left us. I bade it a grateful adieu, glad that it went leaving me scatheless; sorry to see it go, as a token of our too speedy departure.) The heat is great in the middle of the day, and I read a great deal to beguile the time, chiefly in Italian; for it is pleasant to imbue one's mind with the language and literature of the country in which one is living: and poetry — Italian poetry — is in harmony with these scenes. The elements of its inspiration are around me. I breathe the air; I am sheltered by the hills and woods which give its balmy breath, which lend their glorious colouring to their various and sunny verse. There are stanzas in Tasso that make themselves peculiarly felt here. One, when Rinaldo is setting out by starlight on the adventure of the enchanted forest, full of the religion that wells up instinctively in the heart amidst these scenes, beneath this sky. But I have chiefly been occupied by Dante, who, so to speak, is an elemental poet; one who clothes in the magic of poetry the passions of the heart, enlightened and ennobled by piety, and who regards the objects of the visible creation with a sympathy, a veneration, otherwise only to be found in the old Greek poets. I have read the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso,* with ever new delight. There are finer passages in the *Inferno* than can be found in the two subsequent parts; but the subject is so painful and odious, that I always feel obliged to shut the book after a page or two. The pathetic tenderness of the *Purgatorio,* on the contrary, wins its way to the heart; and again, the soul is elevated and rapt by the sublime hymns to heavenly love, contained in the *Paradiso*. Nothing can be more beautiful than the closing lines, which I quoted in a late letter, which speak of his return to earth, his mind still penetrated by the ecstacy he had lately felt.

My companions wanted a master for Italian. I asked Peppina if there was one to be found near. She recommended a friend of her's at Menaggio: he was not accustomed to give lessons, but would for her sake. This did not sound hopeful. I tried to understand his charges; but though I put the question fifty times, she, with true Italian subtlety, slid out of the embarrassment, and left me uninformed: while I, for the hundredth time, did that which a hundred times I had determined not to do — engaged a person's services at no fixed sum. The whole thing turned out ill. The man belonged to the dogana at Menaggio; his Italian was no better than Peppina's own — who could talk it very tolerably for a short time; but in longer conversations soon slid into Comasque, or something like it. The man had no idea of teaching; and came so redolent of garlic, that the lessons were speedily discontinued. Of course, his charges were double those of a regular master.

I have spoken in praise of the Italians; but you must not imagine that I would exalt them to an unreal height — that were to show that misrule and a misguiding religion were no evils. It is when I see what these people are, — and from their intelligence, their sensitive organisation and native grace, I gather what they might be, — that I mourn over man's lost state in this country.

The country people, I have already told you, hereabouts are a fine handsome race; many of the young women are beautiful, but their good looks soon go off. There are silk mills at Cadenabbia and Bolvedro, which employ a great many girls, who laugh and sing at their work, and, leaving it in troops at the Ave Maria, pass under our window ringing in chorus with loud, well-tuned voices. Their dress is picturesque; they wear their hair bound up at the back of the head in knotted tresses, to which are fixed large silver bodkins, which stand out like rays, and form a becoming head-dress; but, unfortunately, as they seldom take these bodkins out, and even sleep in them, they wear away the hair. You may guess, from this fact, that neatness and cleanliness are not, I grieve to say, among their good qualities.

It is strange that, though the men and women here are mostly handsome, the children are very plain. The contrary of this occurs in parts of Switzerland. Here, it a good deal arises from the diet: all the children look diseased — as well they may be, considering their food — and the wonder is, so many arrive at maturity. The deaths, however, are in a much larger proportion than with us. I hear of no schools in this part of the country, and the people are entirely ignorant: neither are the priests held in esteem. Thus thoroughly untaught, the wonder is that they are as good as they are. The church indeed is respected, though its ministers are not; but the enactments of the church are most rigorous with regard to fastings and ritual observances. If toil be virtue, however, these poor people deserve its praise. They work hard, and draw subsistence, wherever it can be by any toil abstracted, even from the narrow shelving of the mountains on which rich grass grows. The young men go to cut it each year; and it is so dangerous a task, that each year lives are lost, through the foot of the labourer slipping on the short grass, and his falling down the precipice. Fishing, of course, affords employment; and there is a good deal of traffic on the lake, which is carried on by flat-bottomed barges, impelled by large heavy sails, or by long oars, which they work by pushing forward. Unfortunately, in this part of Italy, they are not as sober as in the south, and drunken brawls frequently occur. The drunkenness of these men is not stupifying, as usually among us, but fierce and choleric. Great care is taken by government to prevent their carrying arms of any kind, even knives. They have, however, an implement called a *fulcino,* in shape like a small sickle, which is used for weeding, and cutting grass on the mountains; this they are apt to employ as a weapon of offence. It is, consequently, forbidden to carry it polished and sharpened, but simply in the tarnished worn state incident to its proper uses. This enactment is, of course, constantly evaded. They are drawn in every brawl; and the wound they inflict — a long ugly gash — is less dangerous, but more frightful than a stab. One evening, there was great excitement on a man being fulcin*ato* at a drinking bout, at a neighbouring inn. One of my companions went to see him, and came back, horror-struck; he had a large, deep gash in the thigh, and was nearly dead from loss of blood. When a surgeon came, however, it was found that the wound was not dangerous. He was carried home in a boat; but it was two or three weeks before he could get about again. When these outrages occur, the police carry the aggressors to prison, where they are kept, we are told, ill off enough, till they consent to enlist. The life of a soldier in the Austrian service is so hard, ill-fed, and worse paid, that these poor wretches often hold out long; but they are forced, at last, to yield: nor is the punishment ill imagined, that he who sheds blood should be sent to deal in blood in the legal way. But the root of the evil still rests in the absence of education and civilisation; and one must pity the poor fellows, taken from their glorious mountains and sunny lake, and sent to herd among the sullen Austrians, far in the north, where the sound of their musical Italian shall never reach them more.

SEPTEMBER 8TH.

THIS is our last day. We are leaving the Lake of Como just when its *season* is beginning; for the Italians always make their *villeggiatura* in the months of September and October, when the fruit is ripe, and the vintage — the last gathering in of the year — takes place. The nobles, therefore, are now beginning to visit their villas. English visitants have built a few keeled boats, which, on going away, they either sold or made presents of to their Italian friends. There are two or three pretty English-built skiffs on the lake, which render it more gay and busy than before.

Numbers of the middling classes also, shopkeepers from Milan, congregate at Como and the villages, at this season. In some respects, however, this is not so pleasant, as there are many more visitors at the Albergo Grande. Each day crowds come by the steamer; tables are spread for them in the avenue of acacias, where they eat, drink, and are merry. We live at the other end of the house; and as these chance-comers all leave by the steamer, at four o'clock, they do not inconvenience us. But an English lady, who had taken rooms overlooking the avenue, grew very angry at the disturbance, called the Albergo Grande a pot-house, scolded Luigi, mulcted his bill, and crowned her revenge by writing in his disfavour in the traveller's book of the Hotel at Como. For my own part, I love Cadenabbia more and more every day: every day it grows in beauty, and I regret exceedingly leaving it. My dearest wish had been to visit Venice before I turned my steps homewards, as there is a friend there whom I greatly desired to see; but I cannot go, and must resign myself.

I write these few last words from an alcove in the gardens of the Villa Sommariva, whither I have fled for refuge from the noise and turmoil of our hotel.

This is a very grand *festa,* named of the *Madonna del Soccorso*, and relates to the progress of the plague being stopped on one occasion through the intercession of the Virgin. The church is on a hill, about two miles from Cadenabbia, and twelve chapels are built, as stations, on the road leading to it. The whole of the inhabitants of the mountains around were concerned in the vow, and flocked in multitudes to celebrate the feast. In one village in particular, far away among the mountains to the north, the inhabitants had vowed always to wear woollen clothes cut in a peculiar fashion, and of a certain colour, if the remnants of their population — for nearly all had perished — were saved. These people walked all night, to arrive about noon at Cadenabbia. Their dress was ungainly enough, and must have been very burthensome to the walkers this hot day. It was made of heavy dark-blue cloth, with a stripe of red at the bottom of the petticoat — I speak of the dress of the women. I forget in what that of the men differs from that of the peasants of Cadenabbia. The crowd is immense; and the Albergo Grande is the focus where, going to, or coming from paying their devotions on the hill, they all collect. I grew tired of watching them from my window, and have retired to a shady bower of the gardens of the Villa Sommariva, where the hum of many thousand voices falls softened and harmless on my ear. " Eyes, look your last!" Soon the curtain of absence will be drawn before this surpassing scene. You are very hard-hearted, if you do not pity me.

MIDNIGHT.

AND now the moon is up, and I sit at my window to say a last good-night to the lake. The bells, so peculiar a circumstance in this night-scene, "salute mine ear," across the waters. Many a calm day, many a delicious evening, have I here spent. It is over now, lost in the ocean of time past. It is always painful to leave a room for ever in which one has slept calmly at night, and by day nurtured pleasant thoughts. I grieve to leave my little cell.

But enough — I will add a few words, the history of our last evening, and say good-night.

Very noisy and uproarious was our last evening; so that till now, when all is hushed, it seemed as if instead of quitting a lonely retreat among mountains, we were escaping from the confusion and crowd of a metropolis. The peasants drank tod much wine; they quarrelled with Luigi, and the *fulcini* were drawn. Care had been taken, however, to have police-officers near; on their appearance, all who could threw their weapons into the lake; two were taken with the arms in their hands, and hurried off to prison, which they will only leave as soldiers.

Late in the evening we paid our bill, and gave presents to the servants, usually a disagreeable and thankless proceeding. But here, all was so fair, the people so pleased and apparently attached, that no feelings of annoyance were excited. Poor people! I hope to see them one day again —

they all gathered round us with such shows of regret that it was impossible not to feel very kindly towards them in return.

Good-night!

LETTER X.

Voyage to Lecco, — Bergamo. — The Opera of "Mose." — Milan.

BERGAMO, 10TH SEPT.

FOB the sake of visiting scenes unknown to us, we arranged not to go by the steamer from Como to Milan, but hired one of the large boats of the place to take us to Lecco. We quitted Cadenabbia yesterday at five in the morning. Sadly I bade adieu to its romantic shores and the calm retirement I had there enjoyed. The mountains reared their majestic sides in the clear morning air, and their summits grew bright, visited by the sun's rays. We doubled the promontory of Bellaggio, and quickly passing the picturesque rocks beneath the gardens of the Villa Serbelloni, we found that the lake soon lost much of its picturesque beauty. Manzoni and Grossi have both chosen this branch of the lake for the scene of their romances; but it is certainly far, very far, inferior to the branch leading to Como, especially as at the end of the lake you approach the fiat lands of Lombardy and the bed of the Adda. We break? fasted comfortably at Lecco, and hired a *caliche* for Bergamo. It was a pleasant but warm drive. Oh, how loth will the Austrian ever be to loosen his gripe of this fair province, fertile and abounding in its produce, — its hills adorned with many villages, and sparkling with villas. These numerous country-houses are the peculiarity and beauty of the region: as is the neighbourhood of Florence, so are all these hills, which form steps between the Alps and the Plains of Lombardy, rendered gay by numerous villas, each surrounded by its grounds planted with trees, among which the spires of the cypress rise in dark majesty. The fields were in their best dress; the grapes ripening in the sun; the Indian com — the second crop of this land of plenty — full-grown, but not quite ripe.

Variety of scene is so congenial, that the first effect of changing the mountain-surrounded, solitary lake for the view of plain and village, and widespread landscape, raised my spirits to a very springtide of enjoyment. We were very merry as we drove along.

There is a fair at Bergamo; it has lasted three weeks, and the great bustle is over. We had been told that the inns are bad; I do not know whether we have found admission into the best, but I know we could scarcely anywhere find a worse. The look of the whole house is neglected and squalid; the bedrooms are bare and desolate, and a loathly reptile has been found on their walls. The waiters are unwashed, uncouth animals, reminding one of a sort of human being to be met in the streets of London or Paris — looking as if they never washed nor ever took off their clothes; as if even the knowledge of such blessings were strangers to them. The dinner is uneatable from garlic. Of course, the bill to-morrow morning will be unconscionably high.

We have come to Bergamo chiefly for the sake of the opera, and to hear Marini, a basso — boasted of as next to Lablache — but, though fine, the distance is wide between. Being fatigued, I did not go to the upper town to see the view, which is extensive, and at the setting of the sun peculiarly grand. But to the opera we went. The house is large and handsome; but the draperies and ornaments of the boxes were heavy and cumbersome; they carried, too, the usual Italian custom of having little light in their theatres, except on the stage, to such an excess, that we were nearly in the dark, and could not read our libretto. The opera was the *Mosè.* That which is pious to a Catholic is blasphemous to a Protestant, and the *Mosé* is changed, when represented in England, to *Pietro l'Eremita.* None of the singers were good except Marini; but the music is the best of Rossini, and we appreciated this admirable master the more for having been of late confined to Donizetti. The quartetto of *Mi manca la voce* is perhaps his *chef-d'oeuvre*. The way in which the voices fall in, one after the other, attracts, then fixes the attention. I listen breathlessly; a sort of holy awe thrills through the notes; the soul absorbs the sounds, till the theatre disappears; and the imagination, deeply moved, builds up a fitter scene — the fear, the darkness, the tremor, become real. The whole opera is rich in impressive and even sublime vocal effects. In the ballet we had Cerito — her first appearance at Bergamo — and she was received most warmly. She danced three *pas,* and after each she was called on seven times. I had not seen her before; and, though not comparable to Taglioni for an inexpressible something which renders her single in the poetry of the art, Cerito is light, graceful, sylphlike, and very pretty.

MILAN, 11TH.

THIS day has taken us to Milan, a long and rather dreary drive. We turned our backs on the hills, and proceeded through the low country round the capital of Lombardy, which is indeed the centre of a plain, whose shortest radius is twenty-five miles.

The road is shut in by deep trenches, which serve as drains, and is lined by vines, trellised to pollard trees. We felt shut in by them, and unable to gain a glimpse of the mountains we had left; to the north. Our drive was uninteresting, and grew very tiresome, till at last we arrive, and find rest and comfort, at the Hôtel de la Ville, an extensive hotel, kept by a Swiss, with a pretty English wife, and very comfortable in all its arrangements.

We expected letters here, on the receipt of which We instantly turn our steps northward. For in vain I have debated and struggled, wishing to visit Florence or Venice. My son must return to England; and, though I shall not myself cross the Channel immediately, I do not like being separated by so great a distance. Our letters, however, have not come, and we shall employ a day or two in sightseeing.

Sept. 14TH.

FIRST we visited the fading inimitable fresco of Leonardo da Vinci. How vain are copies! not in one, nor in any print, did I ever see the slightest approach to the expression in our Saviour's face, such as it is in the original. Majesty and love — these are the words that would describe it — joined to an absence of all guile that expresses the divine nature more visibly than I ever saw it in any other picture. But if the art of the copyist cannot convey, how much less can words, that which only Leonardo da Vinci could imagine and pourtray? There is another fragment of his in the gallery — an unfinished Virgin and Child — in the same manner quite inimitable: the attitude is peculiar; with a *common* artist it had degenerated into affectation: with him it is simplicity and grace, — a gentle harmony of look and gesture, which reveals the nature of the being pourtrayed, — the chaste and fond mother, lovely in youth and innocence, thoughtful from mingled awe and love, with a touch of fear, springing from a presentiment of the tragical destiny of the divine infant, whose days of childhood she watched over and made glad. In the gallery is Raphael's picture of the Marriage of the Virgin, in his first and most chaste style; where beauty of expression and grace of design are more apparent, than when, in later days, his colouring grew more rich, his grouping more artificial. A catalogue of pictures is stupid enough, except that I naturally put down those that attract my attention, and I try in some degree to convey the impression they made, so as to induce you to sympathise in my feelings with regard to them. The galleries are rich in Luinis — ever a pleasing artist. The Ambrosian library we, of course, visited; but they keep things now rigidly under lock and key: for some one, whose folly ought to have met with severe punishment, had endeavoured to purloin, and so mutilated, some of the relics of Petrarch.

Among other lions we went to a silk manufacture, where many looms were at work on rich silks and velvets. We saw here specimens of cloth of glass, which, hereafter, I should think, will be much used for hangings. It is dear now — as dear as silk, because the supply of the material is slight; but spun glass must, in itself, be much cheaper than silk. The fault of this cloth is, that it is apt to chip as it were, and get injured; it will, therefore, never serve any of the purposes of dress, but it is admirably fitted for curtains and hangings. What I saw was all bright yellow and white, resembling gold and silver tissue; of course, the glass would take other colours: it would not fade as soon as silk, and would dean without losing its gloss or the texture being deteriorated.

At the Opera they were giving the *Templario.* Unfortunately, as is well known, the theatre of La Scala serves, not only as the universal drawing-room for all the society of Milan, but every sort of trading transaction, from horse-dealing to stock-jobbing, is carried on in the pit; so that brief and far between are the snatches of melody one can catch. Besides this, they have the uncomfortable habit of giving the *ballet* between the two acts of the opera. The only good singer was Salvi — a bad actor, but with a tenor voice of good quality and great sweetness. He had some agreeable airs in the first act: but that over, came a *ballet d'action.* In this theatre I had seen Othello acted in *ballet, with* such mastery of pantomime, that words seemed superfluous for the expression of passion or incident; but no such good actors as were celebrated then, exist now. The *ballet,* founded on the last fortunes of Ali Pasha, was splendidly got up, but full of tumult, noise, and violence, till it ended in a grand blowing-up of Ali, his palace, and treasures. Amidst the din and dust the audience mostly departed, and I went also, thoroughly fatigued; but there was another act of the opera, and on a subsequent night I staid to hear it, though paying for the pleasure by a headache. Some of the best airs are in this; and the *finale,* an air of Salvi, is exquisitely tender and touching, and sung so sweetly by him, that I would rather have heard it than any other part of the opera.

On Sunday I went to the cathedral, and heard mass. There was a sermon — the text, the good Samaritan — the gloss, love your neighbour — an admirable lesson; the preacher, however, had but this one idea: and it was curious, during his sermon of half an hour, to hear the various and abundant words in which he contrived to clothe it. To a passing stranger, the Duomo comprises so much of Milan. It is chiefly the outside, with its multitudinous and snow-white pinnacles, that arrests the attention and charms the eye; a moonlight hour passed in the Piazza del Duomo — now beneath the black shadow of the building, then emerging into the clear white light — and looking up to see the marble spires point glittering to the sky, is a pleasure never to be forgotten.

LETTER XI.

Non-arrival of a Letter. — Departure of my Friends. — Solitude. — The Duomo. — Table d'Hôte. — Austrian Government.

MILAN, 23rd SEPTEMBER.

A MOST disagreeable circumstance has occurred. I told you that we expected letters at Milan; one especially, that was to contain the remittance for our homeward journey: it did not — has not come. Perplexed and annoyed, we held council; our friends were all departing; and it seemed best that P — should go with them, and that I should remain to await the arrival of my letter. I did not like the idea of the solitary journey; but in every point of view this seemed the best course. I gave what money I had to P — , barely sufficient to take him to England: he went, and here I am, feeling much like a hostage for a compact about to be violated. I left England with a merry party of light-hearted youngsters; they are gone, and I alone: this, the end of my pleasant wanderings. Such, you know, is the picture of life: thus every poet sings — thus every moralist preaches. I am more dispirited than I ought to be; but I cannot help it. It rained and blew for several days after the travellers left me, — inclement weather for them; but would I had been with them!

Each day I go to the post-office, and look over the huge packet of English letters; but there are none for me. I did not even ask P — to write to me; for on any day I may get the expected letter, and at once leave Milan. This excessive uncertainty is the worst part of my troubles. To a rich person, such an accident were scarcely felt; and, indeed, with me, though if protracted it may entail on me a good deal of embarrassment, still it is only annoyance — while I, most unreasonably, feel it as a misfortune. I am miserable. Returning each day from the post-office I cannot rally my spirits; my imagination conjures up a thousand evils; yet, in truth, none as consequent on this accident, sufficient to justify the dismay that invades me. Feeling this, my fancy dreams of other ills — of which this shadow over my mind may be the forerunner; for often, as you know, "in to-day already walks to-morrow;” and yet the evil that comes is not the evil we fear — for, as another poet truly sings —

> “Fears! what are they? voices airy
> Whispering harm, where barm is not;
> And deluding the unwary,
> Till the fatal bolt be shot.”

The uncertainty is the worst part, as I have said; for, as I never contemplated staying more than a day or two here, I did not provide myself with any letters of introduction, and it is useless asking for any now, as I shall, I trust, be gone before they could arrive. Besides that, most of the Milanese are at their country-houses; and it is with them that I should have liked to form some acquaintance. By chance, I had a letter to the French consul; but his family is away, and he, meanwhile, dines at the *table d’hote* of this same hotel; but he is also a good deal absent, visiting, and is no resource to me.

I spend my time, therefore, as I best may, in alternate walks and reading, or working. Each morning I pass a considerable time in the aisles of the cathedral. The interior is not of course to be compared to Westminster Abbey. The ceiling, for instance, is painted, not carved in fretwork; nor are there the solemn shadows, nor the antique venerable tombs; but, on the other hand, it is unencumbered by the hideous modem monuments which deform our venerable cathedral; nor is it kept in the same dirty state. My favourite haunt is behind the choir, where there is a magnificent painted window, which throws rich and solemn shadows all around. The influence of this spot soothes my mind, and chases away a thousand grim shadows, prognosticating falsehood, desolation, and hopeless sorrow. I throw off the strange clinging presentiments still more entirely when I have on fine days mounted to the outside of the Duomo. You know, by pictures and descriptions, how the exterior is covered by pinnacles and statues; many put up but yesterday, are snow-white and glitter in the sun. The city and the plain of Lombardy, are at my feet; to the north, my beloved mountains — magnificent shapes, which the heavens stoop to visit, and which, speaking of power and inspiring adoration, excite and delight the imagination, made lethargic by mere plain country. The Resegone is there, reminding me of the ecstasies I felt on the Lake of Como, which I remember as dreams sent from heaven, vanished for ever. I turn my eyes southward, and try to trace the route to Florence, I am much tempted, when I do get my expected letter, to go thither to see the friend whom I wished to visit at Venice, but who is now at Florence. Much of my desire in visiting Italy was derived from the hope of seeing her and her sister, whom I left gay blooming children; — but I must defer this pleasure.

Milan is not a pleasant town for one so strangely placed as I am, who would fain leave streets and houses to take refuge in solitary walks and country rambles. The country immediately round is low and uninviting, especially now that the autumnal rains seem to have set in; and the roads are dirty — indeed, to all appearance, impassable. Still, you may be sure I walk when I can; and when, on leaving the hotel, I do not turn to the left, towards the cathedral, I turn to the right, along a wide street, with the best shops, and where the shops cease there are some fine large palaces. The French have a laudable passion for public gardens; though their notion of what is agreeable in that respect does not coincide with ours; and grass and turf is, as I have before said, unknown out of England. They have laid out gardens in the outskirts of Milan, into which I turn; and then, ascending some steps, I enter on the Boulevard, a wide drive on the walls of the town, planted with trees. This is the *Corso,* where every evening the Milanese resort in their carriages — not now, however, as all of any rank are out of town. From this *boulevard,* which is elevated on the walls, one looks down on the vine-planted low lands beneath. A more agreeable spot — but it is too far for a walk — is the triumphal arch, begun by Napoleon, that forms the entrance to the city from the road of the Simplon. It is surrounded by a grassy plain. As a barrier, at the distance of some twenty miles, rise the Alps, the resting-places of the wandering clouds, the aspiration of earth to reach the heavens. When I see these majestic ranges, I always feel happier: those know not why who have never felt the love of mountains, which is a real passion in the hearts of mountaineers; and, though I am truly English-born, and bred in plains, yet in my girlhood I visited Scotland, and saw from my window the snow-clad Grampians, and I then imbibed this love for the “ palaces of nature,” which, when far off, haunts me still, with a keen desire to be among them, and a sense of extreme content when in their vicinity.

At four o'clock, is the *table d'hôte.* I have been tempted to dine in my own rooms. I feel so cast away, going down alone; but I have resisted this feeling, for it is here only I can mingle at all with my fellow-creatures; and though the mode is tolerably disagreeable, yet I am the better for it afterwards. When we came, our party was at the foot of the table. I have mounted gradually, till now I am next my acquaintance, the French Consul, at top. All the guests are changed, and are always changing. They form a curious assemblage — mostly English, and some whom I cannot make out: they talk English as their native language, but there is something unlike ourselves about them. I have been told that where one encounters these Anglicans, who are not English, Scotch, or Irish — they are Americans; and so it may be. Sometimes I amuse myself by classifying the party. There is a round, good-humoured clergyman, with his family, who is the Curious Traveller, He is very earnest in search of knowledge, but gentlemanly and unintrusive, There is the Knowing Traveller: he pounced upon a poor little man sitting next him, to-day. "So you have been shopping, — making purchases; been horridly cheated, I'm sure. Those Italians are such rogues! What did you buy? What did you give for those gloves? Four *swanzigers* — you *have* been done! A *swanziger* and a-half — that's the price anywhere. Two *swanzigers* for the best gloves to be found in Milan — and those are not the best." This gratuitous piece of misinformation made the poor purchaser blush up to the eyes with shame at his own folly.

I wish I could see a few Carbonari; but I have no opening for making acquaintance — I should like to know how the Milanese feel towards their present Government. Since the death of one of the most treacherous and wicked tyrants that ever disgraced humanity — the Emperor Francis, — the Austrian Government has made show of greater moderation As the price of the restoration of Ancona by the the French, the exiles were permitted to return. While we were at Como, we had seen the honoured and noble Gonfalonieri, returned from Spielberg, the shadow of a man; his wife no more — his life withered, as a glorious exotic transported to the North, nipped by frosts it was never born to feel. In commerce, also, the Austrian is trying to improve, A railroad is projected to Venice — a portion of it is already constructed. They are endeavouring to revive trade, as much as it can be revived in a country where two-thirds of the produce of taxation is sent out of it; and it may be guessed what a drooping, inert revival it is. But the curious thing about the policy of present arbitrary governments is the encouragement they give to the education of the poor. Even the Emperor Nicholas, we are told, desires to educate the serfs. From whatever motive this springs, we must cling to it as a real blessing, for the most extensive advantages must result to the cause of civilisation from the enlightenment, however partial and slight, of the multitude. Knowledge must, from its nature, grow, and rooting it out can alone prevent its tendency to spread.

We ought, however, to consider one thing in the establishment of the normal schools by Austria. To our shame be it spoken, the education of the poor is far more attended to in Germany than with us.

In Prussia, Wurtemberg, and, above all, in Saxony, the normal schools are admirable. Austria was forced to appear to do the like; and they do so in a way which they hope will increase and consolidate their power. Government allows no schools but its own; and selects teachers, not as being qualified for the task, but as servile tools in their hands. The books they allow can scarcely be guessed at in this country, so totally void are they of instruction or true religion. The Austrian hopes to bring up the new generation in the lights he gives, and to know no more than he teaches. He has succeeded, and will probably long continue to succeed in Austria, but in Italy he will not. If the physical state of the poor in Lombardy is ameliorated, they will be tranquil; but hatred of the stranger must ever be a portion of the air he breathes.

It is against the rich and high-born, however, that the Austrian wages war. A hatred of the German is rooted in the nobility of Milan; they are watched with unsleeping vigilance: above all, the greatest care is taken that their youth should not receive an enlightened education. From the moment a young man is known to hold himself free from the prevalent vices of the times, to be studious and high-minded, he becomes marked; he is not allowed to travel; he is jealously watched; no career is open to him; he is hemmed in to a narrow and still narrower circle; till at last the moss of years and hopelessness gathers oyer and deadens his mind. For the present governments of Italy know that there is a spirit abroad in that country, which forces every Italian that thinks and feels, to hate them and rebel in his heart.

26th SEPT.

STILL no letter: the mystery of its non-appearance grows darker. I have been better off these last few days, from the arrival of the Mends who accompanied us down the Moselle. With them I have revisited the Brera, and their society has cheered me. They are gone, and I am fallen again into solitude and perplexity.

27th.

AT last there is change; my letter is come, or rather I have found it, for it has been here almost ever since our arrival — long before I was left alone. I had as usual visited the post-office, and looked over the letters arrived this day — in vain. I then asked for yesterday's letters; yesterday was not post-day from England, and I had not visited the office; but letters might have come to me from Venice or Florence. The huge packet of all the English letters was handed me; I looked it over listlessly, when — a bright light illumined my darkness — my letter — lost amidst the crowd — yet I had often looked over this same heap of letters, and it had not been there. I mentioned this to the clerk, who replied, " O, then it must have been out at the time." It seems that they send the uncalled-for English letters round the town to the different hotels, to be claimed; but by ill luck mine did not reach me. By mistake it had been directed in the first place to Como; but it had arrived in Milan on the 17th, and this is the 27th.

All is changed now — all is hurry and bustle — I am making inquiries for my journey to Geneva. I sit down to close this letter, and to say that I quit Milan the day after to-morrow. My next letter will reach you from Paris. Adieu.

LETTER XII.

Departure from Milan. — Journey across the Simplon. — Lake of Geneva. — Lyons. — Steamboat to Châlons. — Diligence to Paris. — History of the eventful Journey across Mont St. Gothard.

MILAN, 28TH SEPT.

I HAVE made a compact with a *veturino,* to take me and my maid to Geneva for ten napoleons, in six days. He is to provide us with sleeping-rooms, a dinner, and coffee in the morning. This is very reasonable; but we are not to have the carriage to ourselves: he is already engaged to take three English ladies, and I am to join the party. I sent M —— —— to their hotel to look at our companions; she brings back word that they are certainly ladies — three sisters they are; but, from their accent, she thinks them Irish. Three Irish ladies out on their travel without any attendant, seems odd; but I trust to my maid's tact as to their being, as she phrased it, really ladies. The whole day has been occupied in getting a passport. P — had taken mine; and there is always a good deal of trouble in getting a fresh one *visé* in Austrian Italy.

The weather is beautiful: it seems, on looking back, that unwillingly as I had remained behind, yet thus I have secured for myself a pleasant journey in fine weather, while my Mends encountered inclement skies, and perhaps disasters thereon attendant. It had been agreed that they were not to write, as I should probably leave Milan before a letter could arrive. I cannot, therefore, hear how it has fared with them in their passage across Mont St. Gothard till I reach Paris.

I have taken leave of the Cathedral. I have said adieu to the gardens and walks, which I have paced with a heavy heart the last fortnight. I do not think I should like to live at Milan. The Milanese nobility live much among themselves, keeping their palaces sacred from the Austrian; they do not entertain; and their chief assembly-room is the Opera-house — at least this is the account that strangers give. Probably, if the veil were lifted, and the truth known, we should find something very pleasant hidden behind.

ARONA, TUESDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER.

I QUITTED Milan at five in the morning. The ladies I was to accompany had desired to spend a day at Como: they had gone the day before, and we were to join at Sesto Callende, at the southern extremity of the Lago Maggiore. The drive thither had nothing greatly to recommend it: but Sesto itself is agreeably situated on the borders of the Ticino, just as it leaves the lake, with, to the north, the amphitheatre of the Alps we were about to cross. Here I met the companions of my journey. The first word they spoke discovered their country; they are Scotch, with as rich a Doric accent as the Lowlands can produce. I cannot well explain the reason, but the enigma vanishes on the discovery of their native land; for there is something in Scotchwomen more independent than in English and Irish; above all, one expects a better style of person on smaller outward means. They are three sisters, who have been seeing sights all over Italy, and are now returning home. The elder one has mingled something with the world; and besides being acquainted with good Edinburgh society, she has visited our poets of the Lakes. She is well informed, and with a full, unebbing flow of conversation, which, though much, is always sensible and anecdotic; and, when I am not overtired, I find it agreeable. I have no wish to describe or designate further ladies, who, though chance companions, have a right to enjoy the shelter of privacy, undragged into public by one, who has only to congratulate herself that she is for a few days thrown in their way.

Crossing the Ticino from Sesto, we left Austrian Lombardy for the territories of the King of Sardinia, and were, of course, detained a considerable time at the Dogana. The road lay along the margin of the Lago Maggiore. This lake differs considerably from that of Como: it is wider; higher mountains form its barriers, but they are much farther off, and the immediate banks are less precipitous, more cultivated, and diversified with many villages and some considerable towns. The culture, vines and Indian com, have arrived at maturity, and the fields are alive with labourers, gathering in the last harvest and busied with the vintage. These gay varied fields on one hand, the picturesque and placid lake on the other; the majestic Alps before, and blue sky to dress all in cheerful and summer hues, impart every delight which this journey can have, but one — I cannot help repining that the horses' heads are not turned the other way, and that I am not entering Italy instead of leaving it. We reached Arona, where we are to sleep, early in the glowing sunny evening, and have walked up a neighbouring height to see the bronze statue of San Carlo Borromeo. It is very striking, of gigantic stature, the attitude commanding and simple; standing as it does on a grassy plot of ground on a hill-side, with huge mountains all around, the beautiful lake at its feet, — there is something in it that inspires awe, A colossal figure in a building cannot have the same effect; one is accustomed to it, one knows what it means, and no unexpected emotion, is excited. But placed thus, amidst a sublime and majestic scene, the first impression is, not that it is one's petty self on a larger scale, but a being of a higher order and of grander proportions, better fitted than we pigmies are, to tread the huge round earth and scale the Alps, There is a church adjoining, containing the room where the saint died, and a waxen mask, taken after death; it looks ghastly, but the features are good; it was from this that the face of the statue was modelled.

30TH SEPT.

We still wound along the margin of the lake, which opened wider, and its Alpine boundaries grew higher and nearer. At the usual spot we received the usual invitation from boatmen to visit the islands, which I accepted. My companions were tired out by sight-seeing, and declined. I do not minutely describe; these islands are well known. Islands in a lake have a peculiar charm; they are rare too. Three only exist on this lake: Isola Madré; Isola Bella, on which stands the mansion of the Borromeo family, with its terraced grounds; and one other, covered by a town inhabited by fishermen. They are at some little distance from shore. An island all to one's self is ever flattering to the imagination. No one to intrude unknown; the whole rule of the demesne in one's sovereign hands; and to look from this natural throne amidst the clear waters on the populous shores and glorious mountains that surround the Lago Maggiore, affords a picture of dignified seclusion one covets to realise. Fault has been found with the artificial structure of the gardens of Isola Bella; but it must be remembered that its shape is so conical, that without the assistance of these terraces the soil would be washed into the lake. It is acknowledged that Italian taste in gardening is not our taste; but with the wild mountain paths so near, and scenery impending over on such a scale, that man's art vanishes among it, as the path of a boat on the sea, one the less objects to a little nook of ground — one's immediate habitation — being adorned with artificial embellishments. English culture and taste would, indeed, turn these islands into a wilderness of sweets. The palace itself could not be mended. Taken all in all, I should like to live here; here to enjoy the aspect of grand scenery, the pleasures of elegant seclusion, and the advantages of civilisation, joined to the independent delights of a solitude which we would hope to people, were it ours, with a few chosen spirits.

Such reveries possessed me, as I fancied life spent here, and pictured English friends arriving down from the mighty Simplon, and Italians taking refuge in my halls from persecution and oppression — a little world of my own — a focus whence would emanate some light for the country around — a school for civilisation, a refuge for the unhappy, a support for merit in adversity: from such a gorgeous dream I was awakened when my foot touched shore, and I was transformed from the Queen of Isola Bella into a poor traveller, humbly pursuing her route in an unpretending *vettura*. Such, for the most part, has been my life. Dreams of joy and good, which have lent me wings to leave the poverty and desolation of reality. How without such dreams I could have past long sad years, I know not.

We stopped at a pleasant inn at Baveno. A party of English were staying there — sketching, and making excursions in the neighbourhood. They were enjoying themselves, apparently, very much. At Baveno begins the ascent of the Simplon. What it must be, I continually said to myself, to descend this road into Italy, and on the first entrance, to meet this glorious lake, with its luxuriant vegetation; its rich chesnut woods; its thoroughly Italian aspect, so indescribably different from Switzerland! With a heavy heart I gazed, till a turn in the road shut out Lago Maggiore and Italy from my sight.

The weather was beautiful. As I have mentioned, two days before there had been rain and storm, the effects of which were very visible. Among them, at different inn-books, were dolorous complaints of travellers detained for days at wretched huts among the mountains. The road was broken up in many places — a circumstance we made light of, for it was no annoyance to alight, and cross the subsiding torrent on a plank. Had it rained, our difficulties had been great. And here we find one of thç great evils of the division of Italy. The southern side of the Simplon belongs to the King of Sardinia, but its road leads at once into Lombardy. This sovereign, therefore, purposely neglects the most magnificent Alpine pass that exists, and devotes it as well as he can to ruin, that travellers may be induced to prefer Cenis. If there were no choice except between Cenis and the Simplon, there might be a selfish policy in this; but there are now so many passes, that no one desirous of visiting the northeast of Italy, need be forced to cross Cenis, even if the road of the Simplon were destroyed, However, so it is. A bridge had been carried away five years before. It is rebuilding, but very slowly; and the river, when swollen by the melting of the snows or by rains, is a formidable obstacle; besides that, broken by floods and torrents, the Piedmontese portion of the road is in a very rough and inconvenient state, So much for what Pope calls —

"The low ambition and the pride of kings;"

which here shows itself in destroying a work, which if pride, only less pernicious, achieved, yet is a monument of the best and most useful powers of man.

1ST OCTOBER.

WE slept at Duomo d'Ossola, at the Post, a very comfortable inn, and the next morning we commenced early the passage of the mountain. The carriage was light and comfortable; three sat inside and two in a sort of *coupée* outside, so we had plenty of room. Our *veturino* was of Turin; and if any one going to that city see a carriage with the name of Amadeo on it, and he is in search of a *veturino*, let him engage him at once — a more civil, obliging fellow I never met. He was engaged to provide us with rooms; and every evening he came to me to ask if I was content, or wished for another. We crossed the mountain with the speed of post; indeed, from Duomo d'Ossola to the village of the Simplon, he rode forward with his own horses to spare them, and we had four posters; and afterwards two posters, in addition to his own, till the summit of the mountain was passed.

The weather was admirable; not a cloud. I walked a great deal of the way. I desired to enjoy to the full the sublime scenery of this grand pass: two circumstances occurred to prevent my seeing it in all its sublimity. One, that our horses' heads were not turned the other way; and I do not repeat this from the sentiment of the thing, but as the simple fact, that to have the best point of view of the mighty features of the scene, you must look towards Italy; and thus as I walked, I stopped continually and turned to catch those views which I had studied with such longing to really see them, in Brockedon's prints. But the scene was indeed different. He speaks of Alpine horrors; the cascade of icicles; the ice-bound torrent; the snow which, with fantastic shapes covered all, and spreading wide and desolate around, gave a wild and awful appearance to the bare rocks and mighty pines, speaking of storm and avelanche, of danger and death. The snow had fled. We caught glimpses of where it lay eternally on the far summits of the impassable Alps; but we had none. Still the scene in its summer appearance was sublime; abrupt precipices, majestic crags, and naked pinnacles, reared themselves on each side of the ravine formed by the torrent, along which the road is constructed: waterfalls roared around; the pines spread abroad their vast weatherbeaten arms, distorted by storms into strange shapes. The road also, now free from snow, gains rather than loses, as we can judge better of the torrents its bridges span, the living granite crags its grottoes perforate, the tumultuous cascades it almost seems to bridle and direct, as their living waters were led by various channels away from our path. There was no horror; but there was grandeur. There was a majestic simplicity that inspired awe; the naked bones of a gigantic world were here: the elemental substance of fair mother Earth, an abode for mighty spirits who need not the ministrations of food and shelter that keep man alive, but whose vast shapes could only find, in these giant crags, a home proportionate to their power. As we approached the village of Simplon, the features of the scene became softer; the summit of the mountain was spread into a grassy meadow, with a lake: villages and cottages peeped out; cattle were grazing; flowers decked the fields; afar off we saw the Alpine ranges towering above, clad in perpetual snow. This sight alone reminded us, that the almost rural scene we viewed, was removed far above the usual resorts of man; and, for at least eight months in the year, was bound in frost and hidden by snow — the resort of tempests, where it becomes labour and pain to exist.

We breakfasted at the Simplon. We found there an English traveller, who told us of the failure of Hammersley's bank: this was a bathos from sublimity which, yet to many, would have been pathetic; a great blow was given also to many English tourists, his notes being in wide circulation. Fortunately, neither I nor my companions were troubled by it. A few miles after leaving Simplon the descent began. I still walked, for the weather was fine, the air elastic, and I desired greatly to gaze my fill on the mighty and glorious shapes around, so that I could not endure remaining in the carriage. The descent is pretty steep: I believe the greatest difficulties for the construction of the road, presented themselves on the Swiss side. On the Italian, the road is cut for the greater part on the face of the precipices beside the Vedro, and follows the windings of the ravine; but northward, the mountain falls more abruptly. It was necessary to follow the sinuosities of its shape along its shoulder, as it were, and so to reach a neighbouring mountain, divided only by a torrent; this is crossed by a bridge, and then the road turns at an acute angle. I looked long, to study with untaught eyes, why this exact route had been chosen by the engineer; and could judge, by the large circuit he took, of the immense difficulties of his task. This portion of the road belonging to the Swiss, is kept in admirable order, forming a striking contrast with its ruinous condition on the Italian side. We reached Brigg at sunset, and had the satisfaction of knowing that the post could not have taken us quicker; and, for my peculiar instruction, I found that had I left Milan when I intended, I might have joined my grumblings to those of many travellers, who recorded their impatient annoyance of being detained three or four days at the miserable village of Isella, or in a wretched hovel at Divedro, weather-bound by the storms that raged from the 20th to the 24th of September; while for me, all unworthy, the heavens were cloudless and serene.

3RD OCTOBER.

OUR road now lay along the valley of the Rhone, more picturesque far than the valley of the Rhine near Coire. Some of the finest waterfalls in Switzerland precipitate themselves from the cliffs of rock that border the road, or can be reached by a short walk. After the rains, we saw them in great perfection. As I looked on some of these, my imagination was hurried on to endow with life and will these elemental energies. It seemed Love — the love of burning youth, forcing through all obstacles, and with hurry, and dash, and fury making its way; yet beauteous from its nature, sublime from its uncontrollable determination, and thus proceeding right onward to its object, in spite of every let and hindrance, till, having accomplished it, it steals away, almost hidden, almost still, gently murmuring its happiness.

My guide to one of these waterfalls was a deaf and dumb child. She was interesting from the intelligence as well as the beauty of her countenance, and a certain grace of gesture, whose vivacity and distinctness became as intelligible as words.

The valley we threaded is diversified by towns. At Martigny, there are many tablets let into the walls of the houses to say where the waters had reached during the memorable inundation, caused by the tremendous overflow of the Dranse, in 1818. In some parts, conical rocky hills rise in the midst of the valley, crowned by castles. The scenery wants the southern sunny glow which I prefer, but is grand and full of variety.

GENEVA, 4TH OCT.

ON Friday night, we slept at Sion. The next day, at noon, we reached Saint Maurice, where I left my companions. I had a whim, instead of coasting along the side of the lake by Saint Gingoux, to go to Vevay, and make the voyage in the steamer. I was in the wrong, I afterwards found; for, being alone, I had no heart to walk about and see sights at Vevay, and the day for my voyage proved cloudy and cold, so that I could not gain sight of Mont Blanc, for the sake of which I had undertaken it. However, on this account, I bade adieu to my companions at Saint Maurice, and jumped into the *coupée* of a *diligence,* which took me to Vevay. And the next morning, bleak and cloudy, as I have said, I embarked on board the steamer.

I felt now that I had passed a boundary-line, and was in another country, meeting people with a totally different set of ideas and associations. The subject of the war with Mehemet Ali, and of the dissensions with France, was raging at its height; and several persons thought me very rash to venture into that country. The fate of English travellers at the time of the peace of Amiens can never be forgotten. It was not a pleasant day for my voyage, as I have said. The far Alps were hid; the wide lake looked drear. At length, I caught a glimpse of the scenes among which I had lived, when first I stepped out from childhood into life. There, on the shores of Bellerive, stood Diodati; and our humble dwelling, Maison Chapuis, nestled close to the lake below. There were the terraces, the vineyards, the upward path threading them, the little port where our boat lay moored; I could mark and recognise a thousand slight peculiarities, familiar objects then — forgotten since — now replete with recollections and associations. Was I the same person who had lived there, the companion of the dead? For all were gone: even my young child, whom I had looked upon as the joy of future years, had died in infancy — not one hope, then in fair bud, had opened into maturity; storm, and blight, and death, had passed over, and destroyed all. While yet very young, I had reached the position of an aged person, driven back on memory for companionship with the beloved; and now I looked on the inanimate objects that had surrounded me, which survived, the same in aspect as then, to feel that all my life since was but an unreal phantasmagoria — the shades that gathered round that scene were the realities — the substance and truth of the soul's life, which I shall, I trust, hereafter rejoin.

Disappointed in my voyage, for it was dreary, I arrived at Geneva, and took refuge in the Hôtel de Bergues — the model and perfection of these Swiss hotels, where all is conducted on a system that no number of guests can disturb, and a certainty of expense, always convenient, I dined at the *table d'hôte.* The tables lined three sides of a large *salle-à-manger*, and were crowded by a happy flock of travellers, all turning their steps towards Italy. The talk was Hammersley's failure, the consequence of which had been very disastrous to the poorer race of travellers. It was a fine evening; and I walked a little about the town, and took my place in the *diligence* for Lyons.

10TH OCT.

I LEFT Geneva in the *coupée* of the *diligence*, and found myself alone in it. Our fine weather returned, and the drive was pleasant; but still, from the height of Jura, Mont Blanc was veiled from my sight.

Here we fell into the hands of the French *douane*, a long and troublesome operation. One is always impatient of stoppages in travelling. At length we were allowed to proceed. The way, amidst the vast range of the Jura, was interesting. I remembered it as dreary; but summer dressed all in smiles and cheerfulness. We continued near the Rhone; and the aspect of the river lent life and variety to the scene. I enjoyed it in a melancholy grumbling way, losing myself, as I best might, in fantastic dreams and endlesss reveries. In some things, the travelling in the *coupée* of a *diligence* is not so bad. Your limbs are not confined and manacled as in an English stage-coach. I never travelled all night in the latter, and cannot imagine how it can be endured: it is bad enough for a few hours. The meals are the worst part of French public travelling — turned out all together to feed at one table, loaded with badly-dressed French dishes, with difficulty persuading a servant to allow you to make yourself comfortable with cold water and a towel, being perpetually reminded in consequence you must go without your dinner.

By this time I became aware of a truth which had dawned on me before, that the French common people have lost much of that grace of maimer which once distinguished them above all other people. More courteous than the Italians they could not be; but, while their manners were more artificial, they were more playful and winning. All this has changed. I did not remark the alteration so much with regard to myself, as in their mode of speaking to one another. The *“Madame”* and *“Monsieur”* with which stable-boys and old beggar-women used to address each other, with the deference of courtiers, has vanished. No trace is to be found of it in France. A shadow faintly exists among Parisian shopkeepers, when speaking to their customers; but only there is the traditional phraseology still used: the courteous accent, the soft manner, erst so charming, exists no longer. I speak of a thing known and acknowledged by the French themselves. They want to be powerful; they believe money must obtain power; they wish to imitate the English, whose influence they attribute to their money-making propensities: but now and then they go a step beyond, and remind one of Mrs. Trollope’s description of the Americans. Their phraseology, once so delicately, and even to us more straight-forward people, amusingly deferential (not to superiors only, but toward one another), is become blunt, and almost rude. The French allege several causes for this change, which they date from the revolution of 1830. Some say it arises from every citizen turning out as one of the National Guard in his turn, so that they all get a *ton de garnison:* others attribute it to their imitation of the English. Of course, in the times of the *ancien régime,* the courtly tone found an echo and reflection from the royal ante-chambers down to the very ends of the kingdom. This had faded by degrees, till the revolution of ‘30 gave it the *coup de-grâce.* I grieved very much. Perhaps more than any people, as I see them now, the French require the restraint of good manners. They are desirous of pleasing, it is true; but their *amour propre* is so sensitive, and their tempers so quick, that they are easily betrayed into anger and vehemence. I am more sorry, on another score. The blessing which the world now needs is the steady progress of civilisation: freedom, by degrees, it will have, I believe. Meanwhile, as the fruits of liberty, we wish to perceive the tendency of the low to rise to the level of the high — not the high to be dragged down to the low. This, we are told by many, is the inevitable tendency of equality of means and privileges. I will hope not: for on that hope is built every endeavour to banish ignorance, and hard labour and penury, from political society.

This is a long digression: but I have not much more to say. We arrived in Lyons at half-past three in the morning, and with difficulty got admitted into an hotel. The system of French hotels has no resemblance to that of the Swiss; and you must conclude from this, that they do not emulate them in activity, order, and comfort. I was bound for Paris; and proceeded by the steamer, up the Seine, to Chalons. On board these long, narrow, river steamers, I found the same defects — the air, most agreeable to a traveller, of neatness, and civility, was absent. There is, however, no real fault to be found, and I should not mention this were it not a change; and I sincerely wish the French would return to what they once were, and give us all lessons of pleasing manners, instead of imitating and exaggerating our faults, and adding to them an impress all their own — a sort of fierceness when displeased, which is more startling than our sullenness. As I said, this has no reference to any act towards myself; but the winning tone and maimer that had pleased me of old no longer appeared, and it was in the phraseology used among each other that the change was most remarkable.

SATURDAY, 10th.

THE worst bit of the journey is from Chalons to Paris. The road is much frequented. I was obliged to wait a day for places in the *diligence*, and then could only get bad ones, in the *intérieur,* with three little boys going to school in Paris from Marseilles, and a sort of tutor conveying them; for boys are never trusted, as with us, to go about alone; such a proceeding would be looked upon as flagrantly improper. Nothing can equal the care with which French youth are guarded from contact with the world; girls in our boarding-schools are less shut up. They rise early, work hard — (a boy once said to me, “We are always at work; but we do it very slow”) — little or no exercise, and poor fare. Such is the fate of the noblest French youths, as well as those of an inferior class, at the highest public schools.

It had been pleasant travelling under different circumstances, in a picturesque country, for the weather continued serene and warm; but the drear extent of this part of France is uninteresting; and besides, two days and two nights in a *diligence* was, if nothing else, extremely fatiguing. We came to an end at last — the dreary, comfortless moment of arriving in a metropolis by a public conveyance, especially in Paris, where the luggage must be examined before it leaves the *diligence* office — this moment was also over, and in a short time I found myself comfortably lodged in Hotel Chatham — a quiet hotel — not more expensive, I fancy, than any other, and *Madame l'Hôte* herself is an agreeable person to deal with.

PARIS, 12TH OCT.

I — SEND you the following graphic account of the perilous journey of my friends, after they parted from me at Milan, sent me by P—'s fellow-traveller. I had let them go without anticipation of evil, and felt not a pang of fear on their account, while lingering so disconsolately behind; so blind are we poor mortals to events near at hand, while we tremble at unseen ills! Imagine what the difficulties of the journey had been, if I, as we intended, had accompanied them. I *could not* have crossed the mountain as they did. Compare, I entreat you, my easy pleasant drive, with their perilous exposure to the elements.

"WE started from Milan at four o'clock, P.M., on the 20th of September — raining cats and dogs — alone inside the *diligence* as far as Como — recognised by the good folks *del' Angelo* (what a fuss they made, landlord and all!), though we only stayed in the town five minutes, waiting for the mail letters. Went on to a little dirty pothouse, a post from Como, to supper, as they called it — all garlic (the cost, one franc and a half) — quite uneatable. About a quarter past ten arrived at Bissone, on the borders of the Lake of Lugano.

"At Como we picked up a very agreeable priest, who, observing on the continued rain for many days past, and pouring doubly down at the time, said that he feared we should not be able to get across the lake, as they had been unable to make the passage the day before for many hours.

"After waiting at Bissone for an hour, and after many misgivings as to the result of the quarrel going on outside between the Austrian mail-guard and the deputation of boatmen, we learned gladly, and yet with some alarm, that we were about to embark. The wind was howling, shrieking, roaring, and, more than all, it was blowing, pulling, tearing, and tugging. It had ceased to rain, and the clouds were driving, as if they were behind their time, and afraid of being overtaken by the fellow behind. We were ushered on to a raft, about twelve yards long and six broad, whereon the *diligence, horses and all*, were quietly standing. There were no sides to the raft, but a parapet of about a foot high, so that the water rushed every now and then over our feet. When we got full into the wind, we expected to be upset every moment. The priest prayed, evidently sincerely, for he was quite calm and engrossed. P — and I pulled and pushed alternately at the *diligence,* to moderate the alarming vibrations, which threatened to topple the whole thing over, assisted by the whole number of boatmen, incapacitated, by the breaking of their oars, for anything active in the propelling way, but oaths. (We had had double the usual number of men, at double the usual price per man.) I asked P — what we had better do? — we were dreadfully hot with our exercise. He said, 'Jump over and swim till the horses are drowned, and then swim back to the raft.' This would have been the best plan if, as seemed inevitable, we had gone over. So we took off our coats and boots, and put them inside the *diligence*. But we *did* get safe over, though very far from the proper landing-place, and after a very unusually long passage.

"We, after some delay, at about one o'clock, got under weigh for Lugano (by coach and horses). Lovely ride, by this far the loveliest of the lakes; quite fine, barring the clouds — full moon — the road lay close by the lake, but very high above it — no parapets. Arrived at Lugano about two. Shivered and smoked for an hour, and started again. Got to Bellinzona about nine in the morning, and over a road much impaired by the rain as far as Giornico. Here the road became so bad, that the horses did little else than walk, the alternative being a standstill. At last, at Faido, a man opened the door, and, with a perfectly uninterested air, gave us *some,* we did not know what, information, and then joined a group of silent staring idlers like himself. We paid no attention for some time, till it struck us they were long in changing horses. We then learned that the road towards Airolo was utterly broken up and carried away; and if the rain ceased, and the torrents consented to shrink *au plus vite,* the road could not be restored in much less than a month. After long consultations — we were seven: an Italian of

Genoa, in bright blue trousers; an Uri grazier, about seven feet high; P — , myself, two other passengers, and the mail-guard — the two nameless travellers and myself were for sleeping where we were, and off in the morning. The guard said he *must* be off if he could get a guide. There *was* found to be a track, avoiding the Dazio Grande, over the mountains; but only one guide could be found who had ever gone the road, and he only once, in the great floods of 1834.

"Well, after dining, we started off. I was lame, but P — promised he would stick by me; it still rained boa-constrictors, its constant practice of an afternoon, forenoon, and early morning. We had about 30 guides, variously laden with our lighter *impediments;* the *obstacles* were escorted by a larger detachment, at a slower pace. The guides squabbled, and it was dark, with rain and clouds; it was about 3 o'clock. The guides divided; P —— — was involved in a mist of guides, so that I could not discover him. They and he set off on the higher road. I waited till I was nearly left alone, and then followed the only guide who knew the route. I should have been lost, no doubt, but for that man, who came back for me once when I had been standing a quarter of an hour alone — scarcely able to keep my footing on the slanting sides of the mountain, and by my obstruction creating quite a shallow or rapid in the stream in which I stood. No road, nor track, nor print of a footstep to be seen, before or behind, and no one in sight for a quarter of an hour. The torrent 100 yards below, sheer below, roaring till I was deaf; and its foam rising higher than my position, nearly blinded me, together with the incessant rain. This was just over the worst part of the Dazio Grande; where the road, at least what was left of it, was 60 feet under the torrent in its present state. The Ticino had carried away about 150 yards of road here, and about 30 yards further on. The pass is called Dazio Grande, on account of the tolls exacted to pay the great expense occasioned by the casualties to which its dangerous position subjects it. We saved the toll, at any rate. Well, *the* guide came back for me, and made holes for my feet, and rescued me; it was a *rescue*, and no mistake. The blue Italian here joined us, crying like a child. In another place we had to wait a quarter of an hour, to improvise a bridge over an extempore torrent, which, on this its first public appearance, was rolling rocks the size of a cow about like marbles. It carried its antidote, however, with it in the shape of a tottering pine, over which we crossed. The danger was probably not less than being principal in an ordinary duel; but to this we had become indifferent by this time; also perfectly indifferent (I at least) to the want of either shoes or stockings — the soles of each had utterly disappeared. Our pace during the greater part of this road (to which the tops of the houses in a London street would be a royal road) was a fast run.

"After about three hours we rejoined the road, and arrived at an inn, at Piota; here we waited, and then P — and his twenty fellow-travellers rejoined us, with certainly an equally momentous account of their road; theirs was the *wrong* one, and they were really providentially saved. After two hours quick walking, re-inspirited by a tumbler of *kirch-wasser* per man, we got to Airolo — a nice clean but cold inn, jolly English-loving fat landlord, and pretty daughters. The next day up St. Gothard — very cold — the snow falling so fast, that, looking back, the tracks of the wheels and horses were filled up and imperceptible before we were out of sight of the place where they had been. This pass, though, perhaps, not equal to the Splugen, as a work of engineering (*je n'en sais rien),* is, I swear, infinitely more terrific in bad, and, I should think, more beautiful in fine weather.

"At Hospital we dined, and got into a car alone, which drove for a league through a lake, somewhere in which was the road: we might have been *near* it. Through Andermatt, thence by a shocking, most perilous road — no parapets — over the Devil's Bridge before we were aware of it: it is very fine on looking back; but there is another by it, quite as grand in position, though something safer. Thence at last to Amstag; whence, indifferent at last to broken roads and torrents dashing across our path, half carrying the horse away into the Reuss, we got to Altorf and Fluelen; good inn. To our joy and surprise the honourable Austrians took all additional expenses on themselves, and our payment at Milan covered all. We here embarked on board the steamer on the lake of Lucerne, which you know as well as I. Excuse this incoherent scrawl, if you read it; and excuse the extreme personality of my narrative."

PART II — 1842-1843.

LETTER I.

Steam Voyage to Amsterdam. — Rubens' Picture of the Descent from the Cross. — Various Misadventures. — Liege. — Cologne. — Coblentz. — Mayence. — Francfort.

FRANCFORT, June, 1842.

I HAVE delayed writing hitherto — for this is our first *stazion.* I know not of what clay those persons are made who write on board steamers, or before going to bed, when they reach an inn, after a long day's journey. I rather disbelieve in such achievements. A date or reference may be put down; but during a voyage, I am at first too interested, and then too tired; and at night, on arriving, I confess, supper and the ceremonial of retiring to rest, are exertions almost too much for me: I cannot do more. And then we have travelled amidst a hurricane of misfortunes — money and other property disappearing under the malignant influence of the Belgian railroad and some rogue at the Hotel at Liege. Our missing luggage has been restored, but we have found no remedy for the loss of our money. Sixteen pounds were seized upon at one fell swoop. Imagine such an accident happening when we were abroad, two years ago! At present, it is not pleasant; but it is not fatal, as it would then have been.

Our last week in England was most delightfully spent at the seat of a friend near Southampton, on the skirts of the New Forest. A little quiet sailing in a yacht; drives in a beautiful neighbourhood, strolling about the grounds; the rites of good old English hospitality — varied the day. Our host was all kindness, and added the crowning grace of being really sorry when we departed; his saddened countenance, as the engine whistled and we were whirled towards London, gave us the flattering assurance that we were regretted; and we sincerely returned the compliment.

We spent a day or two in London, taking leave of a few old friends; and on Sunday, 12th of June, we embarked on board the " Wilberforce," for Antwerp. I hate and dread the sea; having suffered — oh, what suffering it is! — how absorbing! — how degrading! — how without remedy! And then to wish for *terra firma* — only so much as the feet will stand upon:

thus no longer to be the abject victim of the antipathetic element — a speck of rock, one-foot-by-one, would not that suffice to stand upon, and be *still?* I speak of times past. The mighty Power had, when trusting to its awful mutability, shewn itself merciful as great, as I crossed and re-crossed from and to Dover, in 1840. But this was a longer voyage; and as we steamed down the river, the wind was directly adverse, and felt strong. The sea looked dreary; and the evening set in gray, cold, and unpleasant. I was the last passenger that kept on deck. About ten o'clock, the increasing spray drove me down. However, I escaped the doleful extremity of seasickness, and slept till morning, when the slow waters of the Scheldt received us. The sun was bright; but nothing can adorn with beauty the low, nearly invisible banks of an almost Dutch river; and there was no busy craft to enliven the scene. It is strange to think how a scene, in itself uninteresting, becomes agreeable to look at in a picture, from the truth with which it is depicted, and a perfection of colouring which at once contrasts and harmonises the hues of sky and water.

Though it may be done a thousand times, still English people must always experience a strange sensation when they disembark on a foreign strand, and find every familiar object startlingly changed: but, if strange, it is very pleasing. I have a passionate love of travelling. Add to this, I suffer in my health, and can no longer apply to my ordinary employments. Travelling is occupation as well as amusement, and I firmly believe that renewed health will be the result of frequent change of place.

Besides, what can be so delightful as the perpetual novelty — the exhaustless current of new ideas suggested by travelling? We read, to gather thought and knowledge; travelling is a book of the Creator's own writing, and imparts sublimer wisdom than the printed words of man. Were I exiled perforce, I might repine, for the heart naturally yearns for *home.* But to adorn that home with recollections; to fly abroad from the hive, like the bee, and return laden with the sweets of travel — scenes, which haunt the eye — wild adventures, that enliven the imagination — knowledge, to enlighten and free the mind from clinging, deadening prejudices — a wider circle of sympathy with our fellow-creatures; — these are the uses of travel, for which I am convinced every one is the better and the happier.

June 13th.

WE landed on the quay at Antwerp, and walked to the hotel — a long walk, under a hot sun. After refreshing ourselves by a *toilette,* we hastened to the Cathedral — for we had no time to spare — to view the Descent from the Cross, the *chef d'œuvre* of Rubens. Several people were being admitted as we arrived; but, with a rudeness of gesture and tone that far surpassed Westminster, the door was pushed to, and held jealously ajar, till we had paid a few *sous,* the price of entrance. The interior is spacious and lofty, and remarkable for its simplicity and its being totally unencumbered by screens of wood or stone. The Descent from the Cross is a very fine picture. You may remember that Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his Lectures, mentions the boldness of the artist in enveloping the dead body with a white cloth. A painter, less sure of his powers, would have relieved the livid hues of death by a dark background: the white sheet, under the pencil of Rubens, contrasts yet more fearfully with the livid tints of the corpse.

This is all we saw of Antwerp — this half-hour spent in the lofty nave and the dim aisles of the Cathedral. Do not despise us! Some day, I mean to make a tour of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Holland. But we found it quite impossible to combine sight-seeing at the commencement of our journey with our intention of proceeding as far as Italy. You know what it is that enables the tourist to loiter on his way; and you know how slenderly we are provided with the same. I have read, somewhere, the remark of a French lady, expressive of her astonishment at the English mania for travelling. She understood, she said, rich people, with comfortable carriages, amusing themselves thus; but how women, who can command the comforts of an ordinary English house, could leave the same, and by *diligence* and *voiturier,* harassed and fatigued, should find pleasure in exposing themselves to a thousand annoyances and privations, surprised her beyond measure. I have travelled in both ways. To undertake the last, requires a good deal of energy and an indefatigable love of seeing yet more and more of the surface of this fair globe, which, like all other passions or inclinations, must spring naturally from the heart, and cannot be understood except by those who share it. After having been confined many a long year in our island, I broke from my chains in 1840, and encountered very rough travelling. I did not find it more fatiguing than the more luxurious species, and enjoyed as much as I had ever done its pleasures. Now I have set out again, my choice being between staying at home and travelling as I could. I preferred, very far, the latter: I should prefer it to-morrow. Still, I do not deny that I did repine much, on various occasions, that I could not linger longer on my way, and visit a thousand places left unvisited. I hope to go to them another time. What I did see is all gain; and I ought rather to rejoice in the spirit of enterprise that enabled me to see so much, than to grumble at the smallness of the means that forced me to see so little.

We returned to dine at the *table d'hôte,* and were then hurried into the omnibus, waiting to take us to the railway. I have always avoided this mode of reaching the terminus in England, as too full of confusion; and I cannot tell why I changed my notion on the subject here abroad. I repented heartily afterwards, and renewed my resolve always to reach the station in a private conveyance. Just as we left the hotel, our three passports were put into our hands, one a-piece: in the hurry I dropped mine — the first loss of a day, rendered memorable by many. On our arrival, everybody in the various omnibuses that arrived at the same time, at once went mad from hurry and confusion. Loss the second occurred here. M —— — forgot her hand-basket, containing a lady's-maid's treasures for a journey: many things of English birth were gone irreparably. A noisy crowd surrounded one window of the station at the terminus, eager for tickets, as if the train would set off without them. Before another door was piled all the luggage brought by all the omnibuses. It was only admitted piecemeal; and the selection of the articles belonging to each traveller was a scene of indescribable confusion. We none of us understood German — confession of shame! I had taken lessons in the winter; but my health prevented my making any progress. French was of little avail. We had divided our forces, to master the difficulties we encountered. K — went for the tickets; P — with the luggage, and I remained to wonder and expect. After a time, the noise ceased, the crowd disappeared, a bell rung, I had got my ticket, and, the gates being open, I walked into the yard. I found the carriages nearly full, and ready to start — it seemed very odd. My companions had left me, and had gone to look after the luggage. I saw nobody, so I took my seat in a carriage, and in a few seconds, we started.

The carriages are inconvenient, bearing no similitude, indeed, to carriages, but are small rooms or cells, boxed off into eight seats, and placed on a sort of platform. One merit they possessed — we were not locked in; there was no door, and the egress from the front was easy to the platform, and that was scarcely raised from the ground. The carriages were very full, the heat excessive; and several unruly children did not add to our comfort. At Malines (I think it was), we were to be transferred to another train: the one in which we commenced our journey going on to Brussels. Changing carriages is always a tiresome operation. I alighted in the middle of a large square, and was glad to find my companions safely assembled. Our luggage was turned out here; and, as we waited some time before we were taken up again, we amused ourselves with examining our property. With dismay, we discovered that two cloaks and a carpet-bag were missing. Certainly, for travellers somewhat experienced, our conduct appeared disgraceful. P — , who had passed the luggage, had witnessed that all was weighed; but he had not been allowed to remain in the weighing-room to see the things off, and his want of German had rendered the task difficult.

On our arrival at Liege, another scene of confusion at the unloading ensued. It must be said, however, that their method was good, and the noise arose from the numbers of travellers, and their exceeding vociferations. On weighing the luggage, they paste a piece of paper on each article, inscribed with a number — the same number for all the goods belonging to one name; and to this is added the number of articles. Thus all our things were marked *“21,”* and we had a paper given us that gave us a claim to nine articles marked “2!” The men, as they unload, cry out the number pasted on the articles; and the passengers, with their papers in their hands, claim their own. Seven only, however, appeared for us; the cloaks and the carpet-bag were missing. Waiting, in hopes that these might at last be forthcoming, detained us among the last. The omnibuses were nearly full; no carriages, nor post-horses for the carriages on the train, nor any other means of getting to Liege, were to be found. We got places, and we heard afterwards, that the confusion in some of the omnibuses had arisen to a scuffle. This we escaped.

Murray’s Hand-book was our guide: usually an admirable one. Among other useful information, none is more satisfactory to the traveller than to know the best hotel in a town. Murray directed us to the Aigle Noire, which we found large, clean, and pleasant.

June 14TH.

MORNING brought with it the discovery of another loss*:—"Encore un objét de perdu*!" — and this *objét* was more serious and irreparable than our former. We had changed what English bank notes we had at Antwerp, for German gold. My companions counted the contents of their purses — *£8* in each. It so happened that they could not get lodged separately, and they occupied a double-bedded room. After counting their money, they left their purses on a large table in the middle of the room: they did not lock their door. In the morning, the door was ajar, and the purses gone. Fortunately, they had placed their watches nearer to them. Perhaps it was the boots of the hotel, who, coming in for their clothes, was tempted by the sight of their glittering purses so easily to be taken. However it may be, they were gone. The master of the hotel behaved excessively ill; talked of sending for the *Maire,* to *constater* our loss, but professed his disbelief in our story; travellers, he declared, never leave their purses on a table, and always lock their door. We did nothing. We should probably have been tempted to do something; but we had to record our missing articles, and to arrange for their being sent after us. I, too, had dropped my passport, "*Mais*, *Madame, vous êtes vraiment en malheur,"* said the daughter of the hotel-keeper, who was as civil as her father was rude. We were; so we could only say — or rather, I said — in the Greek fashion: "Welcome this evil, so that it be the only one!" I said it from my heart; for, alas! I ever live with a dark shadow hovering near me. One whose life has been stained by tragedy can never regain a healthy tone of mind — if it be healthy — that is consonant to the laws of human life, not to fear for those we love. I am haunted by terror. It stalks beside me by day, and whispers to me, in dreams, at night. But this is being very tragical, *apropos* of our stolen money.

We hired a carriage to take us to Aix-la-Chapelle. It was a pleasant drive: the country is varied into hill and dale, and is very pretty. About five in the evening we arrived at the railway station, without entering the town of Aix-la-Chapelle, which looked agreeably placed in a valley encircled by hills. The works for the railroad are in full progress, and the mounds are on a vast scale. They spoil rather the beauty of a landscape; yet a railroad gives such promise of change and novelty to the traveller — transporting us at once from the known to the unknown — that, in spite of all that can be said against them, I delight to see or hear of them.

Everything connected with travelling in Prussia is in the hands of Government, and admirably managed. The carriages on this railroad were of the usual construction, and very comfortable. We could not see much of the country as we were whisked through it: the little we could glance at appeared to deserve visiting at leisure. In a very short time we arrived at Cologne, and drove at once to an hotel, near the river. We arrived too late — we departed too early — to see anything of Cologne. Do not despise us: I intend to go there again.

JUNE 15TH.

DURING my last journey, I had not seen the portion of the Rhine between Cologne and Coblentz, and one of my companions had never visited these scenes. We gazed, therefore, with eager curiosity, as at each succeeding mile the river became more majestic, its shores more picturesque; and every hour of the day brought its store of delight to the eye. One or two chance acquaintance on board the steamer were agreeable; and a few incidents of travel, such as are familiar to wanderers, and form the history of their days, amused us. The man who acted as steward on the steamer, a thin, pale, short, insignificant-looking fellow, had taken his bill to him of our party whom, I suppose, long experience in such matters had led him to divine was the most *insouciant*. The bill was paid without a remark, and then brought to me. I was startled at its amount, and examined it. First I cast it up, and found an overcharge in the addition. This was pointed out to the man. He acknowledged it very *debonairely. " Ah, oui*, *je le vois, c'est juste;"* and he refunded. Still the bill was large; and I showed it to a lady on board, who bad paid hers, and had mentioned the moderation of the charges, I found that the man had charged us each half a florin too much for dinner. Again the bill was taken to him. This time he was longer in being convinced; but when our authority was mentioned, with a look of sudden enlightenment, he exclaimed:—"*Madame, vous avez "parfaitement raison"* and refunded. But this was not all: my maid came to me, to say she hoped I had not paid for her, as she had paid for herself. True enough, she was charged for in our bill. We were almost ashamed to apply again; but a sense of public justice prevailed, and again we asked for our money back. In this instance, the man yielded at once. Clasping his forehead, he exclaimed:—" *Mon Dieu! que je suis bête!"* and repaid us.

In the evening of this day, as K — was gazing on the splendour of the setting sun, the false steward stood beside him, sharing the rapture, and exclaimed;—" *N'est ce pas*, *Monsieur, que c'est magnifiqueI"* We passed the junction of the Moselle with the Rhine, and under the rock of Ehrenbreitstein; and, landing, proceeded to the Hotel of Bellevue, where we had lodged for a night, very comfortably, two years before.

You know the fair town of Coblentz — its wide, white, clean, rather dull-looking streets: you know the monument erected by French vanity at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, to commemorate with pompous vauntings an expedition that caused his downfal. Even before the carving of the empty boast had been overspread by a little dust, the Commandant of the Russian army, pursuing the flying invader, had the power, but disdained to erase it; adding only in the style of the Emperor's passports—" *Vu et approuve par nous*, *Commandant Russe, de la ville de Coblence, Janvier* 1er, 1814." You know the lofty rock and impregnable fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, which rises majestically on the opposite bank of the river, and looks proudly down on old Father Rhine and its picturesque assemblage of guardian hills.

JUNE 16TH.

WE left Coblentz at eight in the morning, and embarked in a larger and more convenient boat. We left here our accidental acquaintance who had made the voyage in the " Wilberforce " with us, and kept on the same way ever since — they were bound for Wiesbaden, and meant to linger awhile on the banks of the Rhine. By some chance few travellers, seemed to be making the voyage just now. The only English were a family, who had frequently been this route, and so despised it that the lady remained in a close carriage on deck, with the blinds drawn down, all day.

I believe I am nearly the first English person, who many years ago made a wild, venturous voyage, since called hacknied; — when in an open fiat-bottomed sort of barge we were borne down the rapid stream, sleeping at night under the starry canopy, the boat tethered to a willow on the banks; and when we changed for a more commodious bark, how rude it was, and how ill-conducted, as it drifted, frequently turning round and round, and was carried down by the sheer force of the stream; and what uncouth animals were with us, forming a fearful contrast between their drunken brutalities and the scene of enchantment around. Two years ago I renewed my acquaintance with the Rhine, and emerging on it from the Moselle, it gained in dignity by contrast with the banks of a river only less beautiful. Then the diorama, as it were, of tower-crowned crag and vine-clad hills — of ruined castle, fallen abbey, and time-honoured battlements, sufficed to enchain the attention and satisfy the imagination; and now — was I really *blasée,* and did my fancy no longer warm as I looked around? No; but I wanted more: I had seen enough of the Rhine, as a *picture,* all that the steam-voyager sees; — I desired to penetrate the ravines, to scale the heights, to linger among the ruins, to hear still more of its legends, and visit every romantic spot. I shall be very glad some summer of my future life to familiarise myself with the treasure of delight easily gathered by a wanderer on these banks; but as it is — on, on, the Castle of Stolzenfels, restored by the present King of Prussia when Crown Prince, is passed, — but I will not make a list of names, to be found in a guide-book: on we went rapidly, now catching sight of, passing, and losing in distance the "castled crags," — the romantic hills of the glorious Rhine.

I looked with pleasure also on the lower uplands, with their vineyards. Surely, the inhabitants of this region worship the sun. On one side, that of shadow, forest-trees clothe the ravines, and pine woods crown the mountains — a beautiful but poor growth. On the other, the open, sun-visited banks are rich in vines, whose vintage is almost the best in the world. What a store of merry hours clusters together with the grapes on those old snake-like roots; and how much glittering coin is pressed out from those clusters of fruit into the pockets of their owners. We had a specimen of the first part of its power; some young Germans on board got gloriously tipsy, and called for another, and yet another bottle — becoming with every glass more affectionate and happy.

On this occasion we arrived at Mayence in time to proceed to Francfort the same evening; more than in time; when we reached the station we found the train would not start for three hours. My companions passed the interval in viewing the Cathedral and other sights at Mayence. Most unfortunately, I was so indisposed as to be obliged to remain at the waiting-room of the station. O Life! O Time! — how dear and valuable are ye in the aggregate; how still more dear and valuable are certain gem-like portions that at intervals fall to our lot — treasures in themselves, dearly prized and hoarded; but how contemptible seems a shred torn off and unusable; such as these three hours spent on a horse-hair incommodious chair, in the bare dull waiting-room, incapable from illness of putting to use the avenues to perception; and uneasy and wearied, in no humour to exercise the jaded powers of the soul. Such three hours slowly dragged themselves along; at last we took our places, and were whirled to Francfort.

We have betaken ourselves as before to the Hotel de Russie. We have better rooms, for then the hotel was full, and now it is empty; it was about the same season of the year; but there appears a capricious reflux in the tide of travellers, and we have encountered few. You know the peculiar physiognomy of these German hotels; more comfortable than perhaps any others in the world; characterised by order, comfort, and civility; also at this one in particular, by an excellent table; the cook is renowned; people come to the *table d'hôte,* for the sake of the dinner; the price whereof is a thaler, or three shillings.

Good-night. I will tell you more to-morrow of our plans and future proceedings. I cannot now, for I have not the slightest idea at present what they will be.

18TH JUNE.

MADAME DE SEVIGNE sagely remarks, that "nothing seems to impede the exercise of our free will so much as not having a paramount motive to urge us one way or the other." Here lies, in a great measure, our difficulty: we intend spending this next winter at Florence, but we have no fixed idea as to how to pass the summer. I incline to some German Bath, as I think it would benefit my health. I should like the Tyrol — any part of the world where the scenery is beautiful; but then I want a few months of peace, and not to be near a lake, so to live in one ecstasy of fear. We find it very difficult to decide, and have determined meanwhile to visit Kissingen. I have heard that it is a pleasant place, very prettily situated. I have an idea that the waters will benefit me; at least it is something new: we penetrate at once into Germany. It is true, we do not understand German; but where better learn a language than in its native country?

"What's in a name!" — You know the quotation: it applies to things known; to things unknown, a name is often everything: on me it has a powerful effect; and many hours of extreme pleasure have derived their zest simply from a name; and now a name is drawing me on — Germany — vast, unseen Germany! whence has poured forth nearly the whole population of the present civilised world, — a world not gifted, like the ancient, with a subtle organisation which enabled them to create the beauty, which we do little more than admire — nor endowed with that instinctive grace that moulded even every stone which the Greeks touched into imperishable types of loveliness — nor with that vivacious imagination that peopled the unseen universe with an endless variety of beautiful creations, — but the parent of a race in which women are respected — a race that loves justice and truth — whose powers of thought are, if slow, yet profound, and, in their way, creative. Tacitus's Germany — a land of forests and heroes. Luther's Germany, in which sprung up the Reformation, giving freedom to the souls of men. The land of Schiller and Goëthe. Do you remember La Motte Fouquè's Magic Ring — and the old Baron, sitting in his ancestral hall, where banners waved and armour clashed, and the wild winds whispered prophecies, and Power brooded ready to fly abroad and possess the world? Such a mysterious shape is Germany to me. And this, too, is the stage on which Napoleon's imperial drama drew to a close. What oceans of human blood have drenched the soil of Germany even since my birth. Since I love the mysterious, the unknown, the wild, the renowned, you will not wonder that I feel drawn on step by step into the heart of Germany. It will doubtless continue a mysterious and unknown region, since we cannot speak its language; but its cities and its villages will no longer be dim shadows merely; substance and reality will replace misty imaginings; my rambles will be something novel; of the people whom I cannot understand, I shall have so little to say. A mighty outline is all I can present, if, indeed, I do penetrate at all into its recesses. But our plans are so vague, that really, till something is done, I scarcely can conjecture what we may do.

There is nothing very amusing at Francfort for a passing visitor. This time, however, we did see Dannecker's Ariadne. It is among the best modern statues representing a woman. She is sitting on, and being carried along by, a panther. Her attitude is of repose, of enjoyment: there is something harsh in the face, which I do not like; but there is softness and roundness in the limbs; nothing angular; nor anything narrow or pared away like Canova's female figures. This statue is one in the collection of Mr.

Bethman; being the gem of his Gallery, it has a room to itself, and by shutting shutters and drawing down a crimson blind, the statue is seen clad in roseate light, beaming amidst darkness. Such arts for showing off marbles have been termed meretricious; but the finest statues of the Romans were found in chambers where the light of day never entered, and were therefore illuminated artificially.

Goethe was born at Francfort, and we saw the outside of the house with the three prophetic lyres over the door.

My companions have just returned from the opera; they say that "they found a good orchestra, and singers with very tolerable voices, but mortally ugly, and their action totally devoid of grace; so that it would be much better if they did not ape it, as their abortive attempts make the deficiency more glaring."

So it was, you may remember, with the company we had in London, with the exception of Staudigl, whose voice and style is full of elegance as well as power. In spite of the enchantment of the *Zauberflaüte,* how happy and at home I felt at the Italian Opera, after several visits to that of their rivals in the art.

We have engaged a *voiturier* to take us to Kissingen in two days, a distance of about eighty miles. With a thrill of pleasure I feel I am going to scenes entirely new. I am not sure that I am rich enough for such an enterprise: yet I suspect much of the half eager, half timid feeling that urges me on, arises from our being comparatively poor, — all is so easy and same to the wealthy. As it is, there is the dangerous attraction of forbidden fruit in our wanderings. — Adieu.

LETTER II.

Journey to Kissingen. — Taking Lodgings. — The Public Gardena.

KISSINGEN, JUNE 21ST.

THE country immediately round Francfort is flat and uninteresting; but as soon as we entered Bavaria, we came upon very agreeable scenery. The valley of the Main, which we thridded during our first day's journey, is quite beautiful. Magnificent forests of oak and beech cover the hills; and the little rural plain at their foot, bordering the river, is rich in pasture and ripe grain. There is a steamboat from Francfort to Wurzburg, of which I am half sorry we did not avail ourselves; for I like following the course of a river as it meanders through a country. But Wurzburg is at some distance from Kissingen, and the intervening country by no means so pretty as that we have just traversed. For several miles our route ran close to the river; then, quitting the low valley, we wound along the ridges of the hills, entering the forests, which gathered round us with their pleasant shade. We slept at Lohr. This town is delightfully situated on the Main; the inn, good; the only drawback was, that they had no bread — an extraordinary circumstance, it appeared to me, in Germany, as I have always enjoyed and vaunted its peculiar blessing of excellent bread, even when all else was repulsive. There was some very black bread I could not touch, and some sort of cakes, stale, and even mouldy. We showed them complainingly to our dirty-handed waiter, who caught them up. "These not good," he cried, turning them about and tossing them from one hand to the other — from bad to worse—"they were new yesterday — they are excellent." This manipulation succeeded in rendering them absolutely uneatable. We did not like even to look at them.

Our next day's journey was hilly, as we crossed a height and passed from the valley of the Main to the valley of the Saale. The hills are lower, but the country bears the same characteristics — a clear stream, bordered by a grassy plain — wooded hills, forming amphitheatres, closing around. The villages are miserable enough.

With eager eyes we caught a view of Kissingen, as we descended the hill from Hammelburg. It looked a small village interspersed with a few large houses on the banks of the Saale. The river meanders through green meadows from east to west, and wooded hills close in the vale. It was a scene of great tranquillity, without any striking beauties; verdant, peaceful, and secluded.

We alighted at the hotel of the Kurhaus, a spacious and good inn. They were expecting the Queen of Wurtemburg and her suite in a few days, but were tolerably empty; and we easily procured rooms. Our next care was to look for a lodging. My companions went on this task, I was so very tired. There is a *Commissaire des Voyageurs* appointed by Government, to whom strangers can apply, who keeps lists of lodgings and mediates with regard to the price. He pretended to speak French and English; but, as Dangle says in "The Critic,"

"Egad, I think the interpreter is the hardest to be understood of the two!" He said he should spend the winter in England, and really learn English for the next season. He seemed straightforward in his dealings, and went with my friends to various houses. They selected one across the bridge, out of the town. I went to look at it. The terms were tolerably moderate. The rooms had a southern aspect; they were large; and the floors, of white new deal, only wanted a little scouring: in short, though of course somewhat bare of furniture, the lodging, in this summer season, looked cheerful, and even pleasant. We agreed for it and instantly took possession.

I despair of describing the scene of our entrance. Madame Fries, the landlady, was an invalid, and did not appear. Herr Fries, a tall, fair German, is an *employé* in the police, and was absent. No one spoke a word of anything but German in the house. We were at our wit's end. Dictionary in hand, we tried to impart our wants; there was an ugly good-humoured looking maid, and a rather pretty girl to wait on us, in addition to an uncouth sort of lad. These people gathered round us very earnest to please; but how were we to be pleased? We wanted the floors washed, for they looked unhealthy. We wanted our beds arranged in our own way (German beds are so strangely uncomfortable from the queer odds and ends of mattresses with which they are garnished); and above all, we wanted something besides a pie-dish and water-bottle for our washing apparatus. The way to secure this was to insist on a *fuss-bad* in each room; so small tubs were at last provided. Then we wished for tea: by dint of gesture and dictionary we tried to make ourselves understood. The women stood by laughing; the lad looked all eagerness to catch our meaning. At length he gave an exulting hop, snapt his fingers and rushed out, and brought back a tea-pot. Happy apparition! but it was more difficult to procure boiling water.

After about two hours order was established, and hopes of cleanliness for the morrow brightened round us. We sat down to tea, when lo! Herr Fries entered with another German, whom he introduced as a German Master. We did not like his appearance, and his attempts at English less, so we declined engaging him. This, however, was not the real object of Herr Fries's visit. It was to inform us, by means of his interpreter, for he himself spoke German only, that we had taken his rooms for four months. This startled us; as our bargain was really for four weeks. Our compact, however, had been made by the Commissaire, and we referred to him. Reluctantly, and still arguing the point, Herr Fries at last withdrew.

I shall see a physician to-morrow and begin the waters; the place is rather empty as yet. We walked in the public gardens, in which the medicinal springs flow. Crossing the bridge we entered the gardens at one extremity; they are oblong, occupying about a couple of acres, of course gravelled, or rather shingled, and planted with avenues of trees. To the left they are bordered by the high-road, on the other side of which are all the large hotels. On the right is the *Conversation Haus*, consisting of a very large and well-built assembly-room with various appendages. At the other end are the springs; they are in a sort of paved court, about twenty feet below the soil; a low iron railing runs round the court; and they are covered with a light open-worked wire canopy. Two springs are here — the Pandur and Ragozzi: there is another, the Max Brunnen, resembling Seidlitz water, but without iron, which is in another part of the garden. A band plays under the trees from six till eight in the morning, and from six till eight in the evening; at which hour the visitors walk and drink the waters.

LETTER III.

Kissingen. — The Cur. — The Table d'Hôte. — The Walks. — German Master. — Bathing.

KISSINGEN, July 4.

I AM in the midst of my *cur,* and we are all in the midst of a general cure of a regiment of sick people. It is odd enough to seek amusement by being surrounded by the rheumatic, the gouty, the afflicted of all sorts. I do not think I shall be tempted to a German bath again, unless I am seriously ill.

Kissingen, until lately, was not much visited, even by the Germans, and was quite unknown to the English. The Bubbles of the Brunnens brought the baths of Nassau into fashion with us. Doctor Granville's book extended our acquaintance with the spas of Germany; and, in particular, gave reputation to those situated in Bavaria. Kissingen has thus rapidly acquired notoriety; and soon the English, who are flocking hither, will effect a change in the homely habits we have found. A throng of our country people soon effects a revolution, increasing both comforts and prices in a very high degree.

All the Germans get up at four, and parade the gardens to drink the waters till nearly eight; I contrive to get there soon after five. These waters are not mere salts, like Carlsbad, nor mere iron, but a very diluted mixture of both. I believe them to be very conducive to the restoration of health; but they must only be taken under a physician's superintendence, as it is dangerous to play with them. The morning walk I find pleasant: I leave the gardens after each glass, and stroll beyond into the meadows bordering the Saale, away from the garish spectacle of the smart toilettes, and the saddening sight of the sick. I return to breakfast at eight, if that may be called breakfast, which is not one. So many things are supposed to disagree with the waters, that not only everything substantial, but also butter, fruit, tea, coffee, and milk are prohibited. We dine at one at the *table d'hôte* of the Kurhaus; the ceremony is, to the last degree, unsatisfactory and disgusting. The King of Bavaria is so afraid that his medicinal waters may fall into disrepute if the drinkers should eat what disagrees with them, that we only eat what he, in conjunction with a triumvirate of doctors, is pleased to allow us. Every now and then a new article is struck out from our bill of fare, notice being sent from this council, which is stuck up for our benefit at the door of the *salle-à-manger,* to the effect that, whoever in Kissingen should serve at any table pork, veal, salad, fruit, &c. &c. &c., should be fined so many florins. Our pleasures of the palate are thus circumscribed, not to say annihilated; for the food they give us is so uninviting, that we only take enough barely to sustain life: for, strangely enough, though butter is prohibited, their dishes overflow with grease. Oh! the disgust of sitting down with two hundred people in one hall, served slowly with uneatable food: each day we resolve to try to get a dinner at home; but there is a little knot of English about us, and we agree to endure together; but it is sad.

Our evening walks are pleasant. We desert the public gardens, as you may believe: sometimes we walk in the meadows bordering the Saale to the Soolen Sprudel, where the salt works are established, and where there is a spring of water strongly impregnated with gas, which boils up furiously at intervals. People have gas baths here — they ought to be carefully conducted; for though I believe efficacious cures, they sometimes kill. A Russian nobleman since our arrival, died under the operation of bathing in one.

Sometimes we cross the valley, and ascend the hills to the ruined castle of Bodenlauben, which commands a view of this rural vale; but our favourite walk is in the wood that clothes the hill on our side of the valley. They have the practice in Germany, in the neighbourhood of Baths, of laying out innumerable paths all through the woods, and across the hills, for the convenience of the visitors — long walks entering into the course of treatment. The woods, oak and elm, varied by magnificent silver birch, with their graceful tresses, are very fine. We find here a few fire-flies: like unfortunate Italian exiles, they gleam with subdued brightness in an ungenial clime, and one wonders how they can endure so northern a temperature.

We have tried to get a German master. Our first attempt was infelicitous, being an "unwashed" metaphysician, who fairly beat our faculties of enduring disagreeable odours. We have now another, who assures us that he is first-rate; and that it is much better to learn German of the rough Bœotian (Bavarian) sort, than the effeminate softness of Saxony and Hanover. I am afraid I shall not make much progress. We *malades* are forbidden to exert our intellects; and, to make this prohibition more stringent, the gas one imbibes with the water produces a weakness in the eyes, which has rendered this letter the work of many days.

The progress of the *cur*, or treatment, indeed, is not pleasant; I find the waters have a very agitating effect on the nerves. I drink the Ragozzi, which contains more iron than the Pandur. It is not disagreeable; that is, the first glass seemed so; bnt after that one forgot that it had any taste, and the effervescence of the gas makes it rather agreeable. Those to whom iron is hurtful put the glass in warm water, when the gas quickly flies off. We bathe in the water of the Pandur, brought boiling in casks to the house; the baths are mere wooden coffins, and on first entering them their shape rather shocks the feelings. The water made hot has the colour of iron rust, and is opaque. The bathing-rooms in our house are badly managed and very dirty; but it is soothing to sit for an hour in hot water, which does not, like a common warm bath, weaken afterwards.

I trust to receive benefit in the end; but it is rather an infliction upon my companions to be dieted by the King of Bavaria, and to live, as they say, surrounded by *lepers*. We are still undecided as to our ulterior movements.

LETTER IV.

Medical Treatment. — Amusements. — German Master. — Broklet. — Preparations for Departure.

Kissingen, 10th July.

As I was sitting at breakfast this morning I had a visit from my physician. He looked with consternation on the table. “Butter!” he exclaimed; “strawberries! tea! milk!” There was a crescendo of horror in his voice. One by one, these slender luxuries were withdrawn, and I was left with a *little* bread, and water (the staple of the place) *ad libitum*.

Though the *cur* of these waters is not an agreeable process, I have great faith in the advantages that accrue. There is a day or two called the crisis, which I have just passed — about the fifteenth or sixteenth after beginning the waters — which, indeed, resembles the crisis of a serious illness. The body becomes inert and languid, with a sense of illness pervading the frame; the mind is haunted by apprehension of evil, and is disturbed by a nervous restlessness and irritability of the most distressing kind. After a day or two these symptoms disappear. I experienced it most painfully, and am now quite well, but rather eager to get away: I am heartily tired of the waters, the promenade, the dinners, the sick; and the surrounding scenery is by no means interesting enough to compensate for our disagreeable style of life.

Generally, the assembling at a. German bath is a signal for gaiety; but the physicians here discountenance every sort of excitement, and their *malades* are very obedient. The Queen of Wurtemburg is here *incog,* as Frau Grafinn von Teck, with two Grafinnin her daughters — fine girls, with all the beauty of youth and health The artificers of Kissingen celebrated her arrival by walking in procession, with torches, into the court-yard of her hotel, where the band played, and the torches flared and smoked, till everybody was blinded and begrimed. The Queen walks in the morning early to drink the waters, and the centre allée of the gardens is left free for her. Such persons as have been presented, she has asked to dinner, but gives no further sign of life. Once a week there takes place what they call a *reunion,* when everybody meets in the *Conversation-haus* built by the King of Bavaria for the benefit of the baths. It is as good a ball-room as that of Almack, or in the palace of the King of Holland at the Hague; but the miserable use they made of it shocked us. At half-past eight the room is crowded; but the company do not dance, although there is a good band playing quadrilles, waltzes, and galoppes, the whole evening; sometimes two couples may be seen turning in the midst of the crowd; sometimes these may augment to six — but it is rare — and this in a room where several hundred people are assembled. The cause is the despotic decree of the triumvirate of doctors above-mentioned, who maintain dancing to be absolutely incompatible with drinking the waters.

They tried to get up the appearance of a *fête* on the birthday of the Queen of Bavaria. They dressed the *salle a manger* at the Kurhaus with boughs of trees; the Governor dined at our table, and gave a toast, "the Queenwhile the band (we always have music at dinner) played our National Air, which the Bavarians claim for their own. The ceremony of dining was thus longer and more tiresome than usual. There was an illumination in the evening; and the canopy to the mineral springs looked pretty, picked out in lamps.

JULY 13TH.

THE King of Bavaria came over this morning. He is popular as a good king and a clever man, fond of the arts; but is esteemed to have "a bee in his bonnet," which "bee" appears to have degenerated into a wasp with his son Otho. The Crown Prince of Bavaria is much respected, and has the reputation of being gifted with his father's talents, with judgment superadded. The appearance of the King is droll enough; tall, with long legs and arms, he walks furiously fast, talks earnestly and loud, and gesticulates violently; he dresses shabbily, and his thin, adust face is inconceivably wrinkled.

The baths which he particularly patronises are those of Brukenau, about twenty miles distant, where he has a palace: these are steel-waters, and most people go to strengthen themselves there, after being diluted by the Kissingen springs. The King has perceived the flow of money brought into other States by the resort of strangers to the baths, and is very anxious that his should be celebrated. For this reason, he decorated Dr. Granville's button-hole with a bit of ribbon, much to the disgust of the native physicians, who are provoked to remark, "Our King is sometimes one fool.” Dr. Granville is practising here, also to the discontent of the native medical people, who see the rich current of English guineas turn away from themselves. However, as he is the cause of many coming here, he has certainly a right to profit by their visits. The King is very fond of receiving the English; he understands our language, and asks, in royal style, a thousand rapid questions; being somewhat deaf, he does not always hear the reply, and droll equivoques have taken place.

Now that the Queen of Wurtemburg, who changes her dress three times a day, and never wears the same gown twice, promenades the gardens, the ladies pay more attention to their *toilettes;* but there is a great absence of beauty among us. There are no good-looking Germans, — and the handsomest women are one or two Russians. The English do not shine as much as usual. As yet, few persons of rank are arrived; the season for touring with us is not yet commenced, and the good people of Kissingen will hail a second harvest when we hurry across the channel at the end of the London season. Most of the men here are really ill, and come to take care of their health. Accordingly, they obey the physicians, who forbid gambling. It is only on Sunday, when it is the fashion for all our neighbours, from many miles round, to come over to dine at Kissingen, and that gaming-tables are opened in some rooms of the Kurhaus, but they are thinly attended. No gaiety goes on in the Conversation House, with the exception of the *réunions;* but it is always open — a retreat and a lounge from the promenade in the gardens. There is a piano in it; and it is a specimen of German manners, that ladies go in all simplicity to practise, and even exercise their voices in a public room, without any of the false shame, or vanity, or modesty that an Englishwoman would experience, and also without exciting any observation.

I am ashamed to say I make no progress in German; my eyes and health have both held me back, and our master does not lead me on. Yet, though it is the fashion of his pupils to rebel, he has a practice which I am sure is a good one for any person desirous to speak the language quickly. With perseverance, and a haughty sense of our duty towards him, he gathers us together (about six or eight) in the rooms of some one of us, to read aloud a play of Schiller — we each having a copy of the play with a literal translation on the other side. It is strange how quickly the eye can turn from the original to the translation, and the ear get habituated to remember the words and phrases; it is a royal road to a smattering of the language to which I shall certainly have recourse again, so to try to acquire a better knowledge of this crabbed, and to my memory, antipathetic German.

JULY 17th.

THIS evening we drove over to Brocklet, about four miles off, described by Murray as “another watering-place, possessing four strong chalybeate springs, in which the salts and soda are largely mixed with iron. The action of the water is powerfully tonic and exciting.” They taste like ink, but I liked them much, and drank several glasses, with a great sense of deriving benefit from them. I really believe I ought to take a course of steel waters after those of Kissingen; but we are so tired of living at a watering-place that I shall not.

Brocklet is situated in a little wooded dell, quite shut in; it is as secluded, shadowy and still, as the abode of Morpheus, described by Ovid. A few convalescent sick wandered silently under the trees, and a band tried to play, but only produced a lulling murmur, in accordance with a trickling rill and the gentle rustling of the leaves of the trees. In this dim limbo you can live as well and cheaper than at Kissingen. The expense here is not large, but for a family it is not small; our household (three of us and my maid) cost us about eight or nine pounds a week — house-rent and everything included. We could easily spend more, but it is impossible, from the system of things, to spend less. The most agreeable luxury, indeed the only one that there is any opportunity of enjoying, are horses to visit the surrounding country. I wish we had our little Welsh ponies to scamper over the hills away from the *malades.*

The incidents of our day are few. Now and then Herr Fries, sometimes accompanied by his *soi-disant* English master, sometimes in all the desolating impotence of his unintelligible German, presses on our attention our pretended compact for four months; we have but one answer — the *Commissaire* through whose mediation we made the bargain. I do not think Herr Fries has even applied to him, and when we mention the subject he treats it with lofty contempt. Meanwhile our month is nearly concluded, and we shall soon leave Kissingen. I assure myself that I have benefited by the waters, though I gain no belief from my companions who do not drink them, and find the place and its dinners very intolerable. In the midst of our balancing whither to go, a few circumstances have turned the scale. Letters have arrived from a college friend of P. and K., begging us to come to Dresden. There is a railroad we find from Leipsig to Berlin, and from Leipsig to Dresden. My mind has for years been set upon seeing the galleries of pictures in these towns. We have had no warm weather; at the end of July the summer may be considered as well-nigh oyer. We shall quit this place in a day or two, and penetrate still deeper into Germany, visit cities renowned in history, and pass over ground — the fields of ten thousand battles.

LETTER V.

Leave Kissingen. — Baths of Brukenau. — Fulda. — Eisenach. — Castle of Wartburg. — Gotha — Erfurt — Weimar. — The Elater. — Leipeig.

LEIPSIG.

AT length we have left Kissingen; and though, while there, we made the best of it, we find, on looking back, that it was very intolerable, and that it is a great blessing to escape from the saddening spectacle of a crowd of invalids assembled *en masse*. Enormously fat men trying to thin down — delicate women hoping to grow into better case — no children. This is another decree of the physicians: children are prohibited, because the mind must enjoy perfect repose, and children are apt to create disturbance in the hearts of tender parents. It is surprising that, to forward the cure, all letters are not opened first by the doctors, and not delivered if they contain any disagreeable news. As yet, they only exhort the friends of the sick to spare them every painful emotion in their correspondence; but Kissingen will not be perfect, until the post is put under medical *surveillance*. Do not misunderstand me. I believe the waters of Kissingen to be highly medicinal, and the hours and walks and everything, but the dinners, exceedingly conducive to the restoration of health; but during this season it has not offered any attraction to those who come to a watering-place in search of amusement.

By the help of our German master, Mr. Wertheim, of Munich, who showed himself most zealous and kind, we engaged a *voiture* to take us to Leipsig in six days. The only error we have found in Murray is, that the price he mentions for the hire of carriages and horses is less than we find it. He may retort, and say we are cheated: but we apply to natives, and, if it be possible, I am sure it would be difficult, to make a better bargain than we have done.

JULY 19.

THE town of Brukenau lay in our route; the Baths, two miles beyond, were out of it: however, we bargained to visit them. The road lay along the level close under the hills, and we wound for twenty miles through the wooded ravine. The characteristic of Franconia, on the edges of which we still were, appears to be gentle valleys, thridded by small clear streams; the immediate banks either meadow or arable, and closed in by hills, covered with forests of beech, interspersed by the weeping birch. Brukenau itself is beyond this circle, and entered into the territories of the Bishops of Fulda: but in the new distribution of kingdoms, Brukenau fell to the share of Bavaria, and the town of Fulda to the Duke of Hesse-Cassel. At Brukenau, leaving the high road, we entered the valley of the Sinn, and penetrated into the very sheltered bosom of the hills towards the Baths. There is a sense of extreme tranquillity in these secluded spots in Bavaria, where you seem cast on an unknown, unvisited region, and yet, on reaching the watering-place itself, find all the comforts of life "rise like an exhalation" around.

The hills round Brukenau are much higher and more romantic than at Kissingen. They are covered with fine beech forests, and traversed in every part by paths, interspersed with seats, constructed for the convenience of the visitors; and so extensive, that you may wander for ten or twenty miles in their depths. The public gardens, instead of being a melancholy strip of ground, planted with dry and dusty-looking trees, are extensive, and resemble an English pleasure-ground; a brawling stream, the Sinn, adorns them; everything invites the wanderer to stroll on, and to enjoy in fine weather Nature's dearest gifts, shady woods, open lawns, and views of beautiful country; loitering beside a murmuring stream, or toiling on awhile, and then resting as you gaze on a wider prospect. The waters here are chaly beate and tonic; they taste of ink, but sparkle in the glass, and I found them pleasant. We arrived at the dinner hour, and sat down in the large and well-built Kursaal, where the tables were spread, to a dinner somewhat better than that allowed us at Kissingen, and we enjoyed the novelty of salad, fruits, and ice. We found several familiar faces from Kissingen come here to strengthen themselves with steel waters. Altogether the place looked at once more sociable and more retired; and, above all, the country around was, without being striking from crag and precipice, far more picturesque than at Kissingen. The whole establishment is in the hands of government, and the houses where the visitors lodge are placed in the midst of the garden. Things are managed both more cheaply and more agreeably than at Kissingen. The visitors, however, are never so numerous, and the style of the place is more quiet. The king has a palace, where he spends the season, and is very courteous to the English, We wished to sleep at the Baths, but unfortunately no beds were to be had, though great exertion was made by several good-natured visitors to procure them for us. Oddly enough, persons we had been accustomed to meet, without speaking, day after day at Kissingen, here had the air of familiar acquaintance. We were sorry to go away, and loitered several hours in the gardens, and visited the old kursaal, a rather dilapidated room. The walls were hung with portraits of the ancient Prince-Bishops of Fulda — the discoverers, and erst the possessors, of these medicinal springs. I should have been glad to stay at least a week in this agreeable retirement, and drink the waters; but we could not now alter our arrangements.

We were obliged to return to the town of Brukenau to sleep; as the golden hues of evening increased at once the beauty and the stillness of the happy valley, with regret we tore ourselves away. Murray bids us go to the Hotel of the Post at Brukenau, and we learned afterwards that this is really a good and comfortable inn. I fancy the master has had some quarrel with the authorities at the Baths, for we were bidden go to another inn; in an evil hour we obeyed. It was very dirty and comfortless.

JULY 20TH.

LEAVING Brukenau the following morning early, we by degrees quitted the wooded hills and grassy valleys of Franconia, and entered the domains of the Prince of Hesse Cassel.

It was in these territories that a scene was enacted during the last century, so overlooked by history, that I believe by-and-bye it will only be remembered (how is it even now?) by the commentators on Schiller. When we read of the *Hessians* in the American war, we have a vague idea that our government called in the aid of foreign mercenaries to subdue the revolted colonies; an act which roused Lord Chatham to exclaim in the House of Peers, “If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I never would lay down my arms, never — never — never!” We censure the policy of government, we lament the obstinacy of George III., who, exhausting the English levies, had recourse to “ the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder;" and "devoted the Americans and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty." But our imagination does not transport itself to the homes of the unfortunate Germans; nor is our abhorrence of the tyranny that sent them to die in another hemisphere awakened. Lord Chatham does indeed in the same speech, from which the above quotations are made, cast a half-pitying glance on the victims of their native sovereign, when he talks of " traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign sovereign." Schiller, in his tragedy of "Cabal and Love," describes the misery brought on his own countrymen more graphically. "A petty German prince," namely, the Duke of Hesse Cassel, or perhaps the Margrave of Anspach, who also dealt in this unholy traffic, sends a present of jewels to his mistress — she is astonished at their magnificence, and asks the bringer of them, how the Duke could pay for such immeasurably costly jewels? The servant replies—"They cost him nothing. Seven thousand children of the soil started yesterday for America; they pay for all."

"But not compelled?" the lady demands; the poor man, who has two sons among the recruits, replies—"O God, no I perfect volunteers. True, some forward lads stepped out of the ranks and asked the colonel, how dear the prince sold his yoke of men? But our gracious lord caused all the regiments to be marched to the parade ground, to shoot down the jackanapes. We heard the report of the firelocks, saw their brains scattered on the ground, and the whole army shouted 'Hurrah for America!' Then the loud drums told us it was time. On one side shrieking orphans followed their living father; on the other a distracted mother ran to cast her sucking child on the bayonets; here a pair of betrothed lovers were parted by sabre blows; and there grey beards stood struck by despair, and at last flung their crutches after the young fellows who were off to the New World. Oh! and with all that the deafening roll of the drum mingled, for fear the Almighty should hear us praying!" We were told that the facts were worse even than this picture; since when first the order was given out for the enlisting of the soldiers, hundreds deserted their homes and betook themselves to the neighbouring mountains of Franconia, and were hunted down like wild animals, and starved into surrender.

History fails fearfully in its duty when it makes over to the poet the record and memory of such an event. One, it is to be hoped, that can never be renewed. And yet what act of cruelty and tyranny may not be reacted on the stage of the world, which we boast of as civilised, if one man has uncontrolled power over the lives of many, the unwritten story of Russia may hereafter tell.

The country, as we went on, became uninteresting — a sandy soil, and few trees. We dined at Fulda, an agreeable, quiet-looking, old German town, once the capital of the prince-bishops of that diocese. We visited the Cathedral, a fine old building, containing some holy relics, which are preserved in little painted wooden boxes kept behind the altar. They had not the air of sanctity about them, and the man who shewed the chancel handled them with great indifference. Afterwards, we went to the Church of St. Michael, where we were taken to some subterranean vaults, in which Aniaschiadus, a saint and confessor, lived, I think, they said, for seven years, hid from the persecution of the Arians. Do not wonder that I speak in doubt, for our guide was German, and we could only guess at his meaning. Enough to learn that one persecuted for his religious faith did pass a number of years in this dark vault, in fear, want, and suffering; and came out, probably, to persecute in his turn — such is the usual result of this sort of controversy. Ministers of religion have been in all ages too easily led to destroy the bodies of those whose souls they believe to be lost. There is a palace here, standing on the highest part of the town; and a show of military. The city has, indeed, an individual appearance, that stamps it on the memory, without being sufficiently striking for description.

This evening we slept at Buttlar, at a quiet, comfortable, country inn. Buttlar is a small village; this the only good house; but it had all the charm of an English way-side inn in a retired spot, where they are accustomed to receive visitors in search of the picturesque. The charges in this part of the journey were very moderate. We paid highest, of course, at the bad inn, at Brukenau; and the charges at *all* appear quite arbitrary. Fancy prices put on by the landlord, according to the appearance of his guests. As we pass also, without knowing it, from one State to another, the coins vary. The money is easy enough when not confounded: a Bavarian florin is reckoned as two francs; a thaler, as three shillings. Sometimes we pay in one money; sometimes in another. On the whole, the Prussian thaler, divided into three coins of ten groschen each, equivalent to a shilling, is the most intelligible; but the Bavarian florin denotes greater cheapness in price.

JULY 21ST.

WE now entered the depths of the Thuringerwald; and, stopping at Eisenach for dinner, hired a carriage — the distance was not much more than a mile, but the day was wet — to take us to theCastle of Wartburg. Luther, on his return from the Diet of Worms, was waylaid by his friend, the Elector of Saxony, and carried thither as to a place of safety. He remained ten months, passing for a young nobleman; and busily employed in translating the Bible, and composing other works. The Castle of Wartburg is situated on a steep wooded eminence, ascended by a winding road, thickly shaded by trees. The chamber that Luther inhabited has one large window, overlooking a wide extent of hill and dale, stretching far away over the Thuringian Forest — a noble prospect; and the very site, high-raised and commanding, was well suited to the lofty and unbending soul of the recluse. This chamber is preserved in the same state as when it harboured its illustrious guest; and, except his bed, his furniture remains: his table, his stool, his chair, and ink-stand, are there; and if not the stain on the wall, marking his exploit of throwing his inkstand at the Arch Tempter's head, there is at least the place where the ink *was* — some tourist has carried off the memorable plaster. We saw, also, several suits of armour belonging to various heroes of olden time here preserved. Hearing the names of prince, heroine, or even of illustrious robber (names honoured in history), who once endued these iron vestments — looking round on the armoury, or out of the window on the Thuringerwald — I felt happy in the sense of satisfied curiosity; or rather, of another sentiment to which I cannot give a precise name, but which swells the heart and makes the bosom glow, as one views, and touches, and feels surrounded by the remains of illustrious antiquity. The honoured name of Luther had more than any other right and power to awaken this: those of warrior or king only influence the imagination, as associated with poetry and romance; his is rendered sacred by his struggle the most fearful human life presents, with antique mis-beliefs and errors upheld by authority.

We saw nothing of Gotha, where we slept; though, for Prince Albert's sake, I would willingly have become better acquainted with his native place. There is something pleasing in the mere outward aspect of these Protestant German towns: they look clean, orderly, and well-built. Hail to the good fight, the heart says everywhere; hail to the soil whence intellectual liberty gained, with toil and suffering, the victory — not complete yet — but which, thanks to the men of those time, can never suffer entire defeat! In time, it will spread to those countries which are still subject to Papacy.

July 22

WE breakfasted this morning at Erfurt, and made duteous pilgrimage to the Augustine convent which Luther inhabited as a monk. In the church, he said his first mass; and it remains in the same state, with a rude old pulpit, in which Luther preached, and carved wooden galleries. His cell is preserved as when he lived in it. It is, like conventual cells all over the world, a small, square, high chamber. Here is the Bible that he first found in the library of the Convent; studying which his powerful mind began to perceive the errors of the Church to which he belonged. The convent is now used as an Orphan-house. There is a gallery in it, with a strange series of pictures. Death is represented as coining upon men and women at all moments, during every occupation — the Beauty at her toilette — the Miser counting his money — the Hero in the hour of victory — the King on his throne — the Mother fostering her first-born — the Bride, proud in her husband. It is a strange idea; the pictures are badly executed enough, yet some are striking.

The country lost, as we proceeded, all its beauty — vast uninclosed tracts of arable land spread out round. From a height, we looked down on Weimar. The trees of its park were the only verdure visible; for the harvest being over, the land was all stubble: no hedge, no meadow, no shady covert. I pitied the poets who had been destined to live there; for however agreeable royal parks and gardens may be, they are a poor compensation for the free and noble beauty of nature.

Dining at Weimar, we spent two or three hours in running about to visit the lions. It is a pleasant looking town. I do not know exactly how to present to your imagination the appearance of these German towns. The streets are wide; and thus, though the houses are high, they look airy, and, though badly paved, clean: the houses are white, and have not the air of antiquity. As I have said once or twice before, an appearance of order and tranquillity is their characteristic. We visited the abodes of Wieland, Schiller, and Gothe, who are the great people here: that is, we saw the outside of the houses in which they had dwelt; for, being inhabited by a fresh generation, the insides are not show-places. The palace is a handsome building; and three apartments are being decorated in honour of those chosen poets. The larger one for Gothe; a smaller for Schiller; a sort of octagon closet for Wieland. The walls are adorned with frescoes of subjects taken from their works. I am not sure that I should give this superiority to Gothe: Schiller has always appeared to me the greater man: he is more complete. The startling quality of Gothe is his insight into the secret depths of the human mind; his power of dissecting motives — of holding up the mirror to our most inmost sensations; and also in dramatic scenes of touching pathos, and passages of overflowing eloquence: but he wants completeness, and never achieves a whole. “Faust” is a fragment —”Wilhelm Meister” is a fragment. It is true, this has a closer resemblance to life which seldom affords an artistic beginning, middle, and end to its strange enchainment of events. Still, the conception of a perfect whole has ever held the highest place in our standard of a poet’s power of imagination. But I will spare you further criticism from an ignorant person.

We saw the coffins of the poets in the dark tomb, placed not side by side, princely etiquette forbad, but in the same narrow chamber with those of the princes who honoured them. These coffins suggest a wonderful contempt for the material of life; Camoëns exclaimed, when dying in an hospital, *“*Lo! the vast scene of my fortunes is contracted to this narrow bed I “ This tomb told us that princely protection and the aspirations of genius were shut up in those dust-containing coffers; yet not so, while the works of the one endure, and the memory of the acts of the others survive in the minds of posterity. This friendship after death, this desire to share even in the grave the poet’s renown, after having sheltered and honoured him during life, makes one love these good German sovereigns. Mr. Landor says the Germans possess nine-tenths of the thought that exists in the world. There is in even larger proportion honour for thought. The gardens of the palace are agreeably laid out; and except that turf is wanting, resemble an English park, with fine old trees and a river running through. This spot was a favourite resort, and there is a pretty shady summer-house overlooking the river, where the sovereigns held *reunions,* and entertained their poet friends;

many a June evening was there spent in refined intercourse. There is also a pavilion in the garden which Gothe inhabited in the summer months.

The park of Weimar was an oasis in the desert. We found for many miles after leaving it, the same dreary landscape; fiat and unmarked as the sea; not as barren, for the country is all corn-fields but as no hedge intersects them, nor any bush shows its tufted top, nor any trees appear except the ill-looking poplars mixed with cherry-trees that line the road, nothing can be more unvaried or uninteresting than these vast plains; uninteresting indeed, in outward aspect, yet claiming our attention and exciting our curiosity as the scene of a thousand battles, above all, of that last struggle, when yielding the ground inch by inch, mile by mile, Napoleon was driven from Dresden to the Rhine.

Some slight interruption occurs in the uniform aspect of these bare plains, when they are intersected by the course of the Saale, a common name for a river in Germany, which winds through a pleasing village. On the heights that surround, stand old castles renowned in story. We soon left this pleasant change behind, and came again on the naked country, sweeping over miles and miles; our guide-books speak of this as the scenes of battles and victories of Gustavus Adolphus, and Frederic the Great. The first name claims our admiration, and we looked with respect on the stone that marks the spot where he fell. Frederic was a very clever man, and except for the evils which, as a conqueror, he brought on his subjects, he did them good as far as his limited views permitted him. But there is no sovereign whose acts fill so many pages in history, for whom one cares so little as Frederic. Cold-hearted, if not false, the dogged determination and invincible purpose that form his best characteristic, yet centred so narrowly in self that he excites no jot of interest. It was otherwise in his own day. He was a king, a man of talent, a warrior who encountered difficulties that had overwhelmed a weaker mind, and surmounted them. He had the charm of manners, which, though cruelly capricious to his dependents, were, when he chose, irresistibly fascinating; such qualities awoke, while he lived, the admiration of the world; but with the Prince de Ligne died the last of his enthusiastic admirers.

Another name, greater and newer than his, has thrust him from his place, and occupies our attention — in one respect his entire opposite; for Napoleon was great in success, Frederic in defeat. Perhaps the absence of heaven-born legitimacy took from the latest hero of the world who has joined the dead, the unflinching, stubborn will of Frederic in adversity; besides, it would seem that Napoleon disdained to fight, except when he could gain a world by victory. Here he lost one; and a struggle that lasted many days in the environs of Leipsig, drove him from Germany. When reduced to what he seemed to look upon as the paltry kingdom of France, he played double or quits with that and lost all.

We looked out for the Elster, where the bridge was blown up which cost Poniatowski his life, and lost to Napoleon twenty-five thousand French soldiers taken prisoners. I am told that I now look upon the very spot; that at the end of the garden of the Hôtel de Saxe this tragic scene was enacted: it seems as if a good hunter might leap the narrow stream which decided the fate of an empire.

Here ends a very fatiguing journey. The carriage we hired was to appearance roomy and comfortable; but being badly hung, it was inconceivably uneasy; and partly, I believe, the effect of the Kissingen waters still hanging about me, (I *ought* to have spent a week at least at Brukenau,) I never suffered more fatigue and even distress on a journey. Bight glad I am to be here. To-morrow we commit ourselves to a rail-road — blessings on the man who invented them. Every traveller must especially bless him in these naked, monotonous plains.

The Hôtel de Saxe is very good, and not much dearer than any other. They are expecting the King of Prussia to-morrow, and the staircases are carpeted and decorated with evergreens. The Oberkellner, or upper waiter — a very important personage in these German hotels — is an intelligent little fellow, and speaks English perfectly.

Congratulate me that so far I am advanced in the heart of this mighty country. Though I skim its surface without having any communication with its inhabitants, still the eye is gratified, the imagination excited, and curiosity satisfied.

LETTER VI.

Railroad to Berlin. — Unter-den-Linden. — Gallery. — Palace. — Museum. — Opera. — Iron Foundry.

BERLIN, 27th JULY.

THE distance from Leipsig to Berlin is 105 miles; the greater part an arid sandy plain. Earlier in the season it had not been so bad, for the land is arable; but now the stubble remaining after harvest was the only sign left of cultivation. The sense the eye received of nakedness was in no way relieved — no hedge, no tree, no meadow, no bush. One break there was when we crossed the Elbe, and a line of verdure and wood follows the course of the river. I read "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" during the journey, which occupied six or seven hours, and the time passed rapidly.

There are three classes of carriages, and the price is not dear: — 1st class, five and a half thalers (a thaler is three shillings); 2d class, three and a half thalers; 3d class, two and a half. A few miles beyond Leipsig we entered the Prussian territory, and changed carriages. The Prussian carriages are very much more roomy and comfortable. The pace we went, when going, was very great, so that I heard passengers call out from the windows imploring that the speed might be lessened. Much time was lost, however, at every one of the numerous stations, where the carriage-doors were thrown open with the announcement of stopping for *funfzehn minuten,* or *funf minuten*, or even *drei minuten,* (fifteen, five and three minutes,) when the passengers poured out, and comforted themselves with all sorts of slight refreshments — light wine, light beer, light cakes and cherries, nothing much in themselves, but a good deal of it — offered by a whole crowd of dealers in such wares. On arriving at Berlin we went to the hotel Stadt Rom, Unterden-Linden, which we find very comfortable, the host attentive, and the *table d'hôte* good.

We are here in the best street, which has a double avenue of lime-trees in the middle, running its whole length. One way it leads to the Brandenburg gate, the other to a spot that forms the beauty of Berlin as a capital — a wide open space, graced by a beautiful fountain, and an immense basin of polished granite, made from one of those remarkable boulders found on the sandy plain, fifty miles from Berlin; adorned also by the colonnade of the New Museum, opposite to which stands the Guard-house, the Italian Opera, and the University. The building of the Arsenal is near, and the whole forms a splendid assemblage of buildings. After dinner, we have walked under the lime-trees to the Brandenburg gate — a most beautiful portal, built on the model of the Propylæum at Athens, on a larger scale. Napoleon carried off the car of Victory which decorates the top; it was brought back after the battle of Waterloo. Before its capture it was placed as if leaving the city behind, to rush forward on the world; on its return, it was placed returning to and facing the city. The square before this gate is chiefly inhabited by foreign Ministers: Lord Burghersh has his house here. Outside are extensive public gardens, in the usual foreign style — that is, numerous avenues of trees, in a herbless sandy soil.

28TH JULY.

Our first visit in the morning was to the Museum. It is at some little distance from the hotel, and the walk led us through the best part of Berlin. The building itself is beautiful; the grand circular hall by which you reach the statue-gallery, and which again you look down upon from the open gallery that leads to the pictures, surpasses in elegance and space anything I have ever seen, except in the Vatican. At once we rushed among the pictures — our only inducement, except curiosity to see a renowned capital city, to visit Berlin. The gallery is admirably arranged in schools, and the pictures have an excellent light on them; and in each room is hung up a list of pictures and their painters contained in it. First we saw the Io, of Correggio, a most lovely picture, and near it Leda and the Swan, by the same artist; and then our eyes were attracted to one still lovelier in its chaste and divine beauty — a Virgin and Child by Raphael. The Mother is holding a book in one hand, the other arm encircles her infant. It bears the impress of the first style of the divinest of painters, when his warm heart was animated by pious enthusiasm, and his imagination inspired by a celestial revelation of pure beauty. It was once the gem of the Colonna Gallery at Rome, and was sold by the Duke of Lanti to the King of Prussia.

Next to these I was most struck by a picture by Francia, the Virgin in glory, worshipped by six saints. There is a remarkable picture by Rembrandt, a portrait of the Duke Adolph of Gueldres, shaking his fist at his father. The countenance bears the liveliest impress of angry passion: the impious madness of the parricide mantles in the face, and gives wild energy to the furious gesture. The gallery is rich in portraits by Van Dyck — some of his finest: but I must not send you a mere catalogue. From room to room we wandered; sometimes desirous of seeing all, and so penetrating into every nook — sometimes satisfied to sit for hours before a masterpiece.

Yes, I dedicated hours this morning, — I know not how many, — to a painting that has given me more delight than any I ever saw. I had often heard the first style of Raphael preferred to his third, and thought it a superstition; but I am a convert — entirely a convert. Apart, locked up in a room with some of the gold-grounded deformed productions of the Byzantine artists, stands, except one, the largest painting of Raphael's in the world; the subject is the adoration of the Magi. It is in his first style — it is half destroyed — the outline of some of the figures only remains; no sacrilegious hand has ever touched to restore it, and in its ruin it is divine. The Baby Jesus is lying on the ground, and Mary, with an angel at each hand, kneels before the lowly couch of her child; on the other side are the kings bearing their gifts; and far in the back-ground are the shepherds visited by angels, announcing peace and good-will to man. I never saw such perfect grace and ideal beauty as in the kneeling figures of the Virgin and her attendant angels. Composed majesty and deep humility are combined in the attitudes. The countenances show their souls abstracted from all earthly thought, and absorbed by pure and humble adoration. Adoration from the adorable: this is what only an artist of the highest class can portray. You perceive that the painter imagined perfect beings, who deserve a portion of the worship which they pay unreservedly to the Creator, and such are saints and angels in the mind of a Catholic. You who so much admire the unfinished ideas of Leonardo da Vinci, would delight in this relic of a greater man: will you receive any from this attempt to convey what I felt? I read somewhere the other day, that speech is one mode of communicating our thoughts — painting another — music another — neither can, with any success, go beyond its own department to that of the other — thus, words can never show forth the beauty of which painting presents the living image to the eyes.

It may be a defect, that I take more pleasure in graceful lines, and attitudes, and expression, than in colouring. Sir Thomas Lawrence told me that it was one, and that an uncultivated eye was, therefore, often better pleased by statuary than painting; and he said this, because I looked with more delight on some inimitable bronze-statues standing on his mantel-piece, preferring them to a richly-coloured painting on which he was accustomed to rest his eye while at work; so to familiarise it to the fullest and most glowing hues — I am not sure that he is right.

Let us take, for instance, two pictures by the prince of painters — the Adoration of the Magi among his first; — The Transfiguration his last work. In artistic power, this picture is said to surpass every other in the world. The genius of its author is shown in its admirable composition, in the spirit of the attitudes, in the life that animates each figure, without alluding to technical merits, which, of course, are felt even by those who cannot define, nor even point them out. Yet, this picture does not afford me great pleasure — no face is inspired by holy and absorbing passion; and the woman, the most prominent figure, is a portrait of the Fornarina, whose hard countenance is peculiarly odious. Turn from this to the half-effaced picture at Berlin — the radiant beauty here expressed, strikes a chord in my soul — all harmony, all love. It is not the art of the painter I admire; it is his pure, exalted soul, which he incarnated in these lovely forms. I remember Wordsworth’s theory, that we enter this world bringing with us “airs from heaven,” memories of a divine abode and angelic fellowship which we have just left, that flake by flake fall from our souls as they degenerate and are enfeebled by earthly passions. Raphael seems to confirm this theory; for, in his early pictures, there is a celestial something absent from his latter, a beauty not found on earth — inspiring as we look, a deep joy, only felt in such brief moments when some act of self-sacrifice exalts the soul, when love softens the heart, or nature draws us out of ourselves, and our spirits are rapt in ecstacy, and enabled to understand and mingle with the universal love.

The gallery is open from ten till three. Unfortunately, the fatigue of the journey made me very ill able to endure much toil; and you know, — who knows not? — that visiting galleries produces extreme weariness. I went back to the hotel several times to repose, and then returned to the gallery. I desired to learn by heart — to imbibe — to make all I saw a part of myself, so that never more I may forget it. In some sort I shall succeed. Some of the forms of beauty on which I gazed, must last in my memory as long as it endures; but this will be at the expense of others, which even now are fading and about to disappear from my mind. I feel, though usually I prefer statuary to painting, and there are some statues — and particularly an ancient bronze of a boy praying, that I have regarded with delight; still my mind was full before, the rest can but overflow. The gallery of Berlin will, I fear, become a vague, though glorious dream, for the most part, leaving distinct only a few images that can never be effaced.

July 29TH.

YESTERDAY evening we went to the opera — the house is small, but pretty. The piece was Massaniello, at which I grieved. I want German music in Germany. There was no remarkable singer. There was no ballet; and all was over, according to the good German custom, by ten o'clock.

To-day, we have been doing our duty in sightseeing; though I grudged every minute spent away from the gallery. There are some, good pictures, however, in the palace, especially the portraits of our Charles I. and his Queen, by Van Dyck. The apartments are very handsome. They have an ungainly custom here, as in Holland, of providing the visiter with list-shoes, to preserve their shining *parquets.* I rebelled against putting on slippers other people had worn, and forced the *Custode,* grumblingly, to acknowledge that my shoes could not hurt the floor. The rooms of the palace are chiefly associated with the name of Napoleon, and are decorated by vases of Sèvre china and by portraits of himself and Josephine, presents from the conqueror to the conquered, which were impertinent enough at the time; but the spirit is changed now, and they remain as trophies of Prussian victories. I looked with great interest on the various portraits of the celebrated Queen of Prussia. In all, she is inexpressibly beautiful. Her face is thoroughly individual; — animation — independence — a truly feminine, yet, (for want of a better word I must say,) a wild loveliness gives it a peculiar charm. There is a portrait of her at twelve years of age — dignity, true nobility, artless innocence, and evident strength of character, adorn a countenance in the first bloom of untainted girlhood.

We visited the Museum. I did not much care for what I saw. There are many relics of Frederic the Great, and a wax figure, dressed up in his old clothes, is placed on a faded throne beneath a shabby canopy — all such as he used in life. There is nothing to excite respect in this sort of spectacle. It is the misfortune of those who live to be old that they are always handed down to posterity as decrepid and feeble. If I were a queen, I would never suffer myself to be painted after thirty; or, if well preserved, five-and-thirty at the latest. Queens and beauties — kings and heroes — all must pay our nature's sad tribute, and lose even individuality and charm, as the moss of age creeps over the frame, which, becoming weak and shattered, loses proportion and grace; but it is foolish to leave behind these emblems of decay. Frederic the Great, as he first met Voltaire at the castle of Meuse, near Cleves, or as he wrote his dispatch on a drum after one of his first battles, would indeed be the Frederic, whose deeds, if evil, at least were instinct with power and life. This doll, dressed up to represent a decrepid, feeble old man, is the most dreary sarcasm that can be imagined.

The prospect from the palace windows is really grand: the Platz in front — the Museum — the Fountain — the whole range of buildings — form a *coup-d'œil* that transcends that of the Place de la Concorde, at Paris.

I desired to visit some of the manufactures of Berlin steel, and expected to see beautiful specimens. It is a curious fact, how difficult it is to find out where you ought to go, and how to see any sight, unless it be a regular lion, or you have an exact address. We took a drosky, and drove to a shop; it was closed: to another; there was no such thing. We returned to our hotel, and learnt that we had been spending many useless groschen by not taking the drosky by the hour instead of the course. Having reformed this oversight, we set off again in search of the manufactory. You know the history of the building of Berlin. Frederic the Great, desirous that his capital should rival that of other kingdoms, inclosed a large space within its walls, and ordered the vacancy to be filled up with houses. This occasions a great difference between Berlin and most foreign cities. In the latter, the aim is to save land, and to encroach on heaven. Here, the builders endeavoured to cover as much space as possible, and many of the finest houses are only two stories high. Wide and grass-grown, the streets, all straight and at right angles, stretch far away, with scarce a solitary passenger or drosky here and there, making the solitude even more felt. There is another peculiarity in this wide-spread city. It is built on the flattest plain in the world. The Spree stagnates beneath its bridges, and the drains, just covered by planks, stagnate in the streets, and are by no means agreeable during the present heat and drought.

At length, after driving about from one place to another, asking our way as well as we could, resolved not to give in, but much puzzled, we reached the Eisengieserei, or iron-foundry, just outside the Oranienburg gate. We alighted from the drosky and walked into a large court-yard, and into the sort of immense shed in which is the foundry. We asked every one we met where the works in steel were sold; no one could tell us. We wandered about a long time. The men were at work making moulds in sand. At length a vast cauldron of molten metal was brought from the furnace, and poured into a mould. There is something singular in boiling metal, the sight of which gives a new idea to the mind, a new sensation to the soul. Boiling water, or other liquid, presents only an inanimate element, changed to the touch, not to the eye; but molten metal, red and fiery, takes a new appearance, and seems to have life, — the heat appears to give it voluntary action, and the sense of its power of injury adds to the emotion with which it is regarded; as well as the fact that it takes and preserves the form into which it flows. In this every-day world a new sensation is a new delight. I have read somewhere of a French lady, who went to Rome to kiss the Pope’s toe, because it made her heart beat quicker so to do. Certainly, seeing the diminutive Cyclops pour the glowing living liquid from their cauldron, viewing it run fiercely into the various portions of the mould, and then grow tranquil and dark as its task was fulfilled, imparted, I know not why or how, a thrill to the frame.

After this we were taken to an outhouse, in which there were articles for sale — no bracelets, nor chains, nor necklaces; chiefly small statuettes of Napoleon and Frederic the Great.

I would willingly remain here some days longer; and, above all, I should like to visit Potzdam and the Peacock Island. It is impossible; and we shall proceed to-morrow by railroad to Dresden.

LETTER VII.

Arrival at Dresden. — Rabenau. — Gallery of Dresden. — Madonna di San Sisto. — Pictures of Correggio.

JULY 30TH.

À DIRECT railroad from Berlin to Dresden is talked of: as it is, we were obliged to go round by Leipsig. On this account those travellers who have carriages prefer posting; the conveyance of a carriage by a railroad being always expensive. In no part of the world, however, is the speed of steam more acceptable; a drearier prospect of level desert cannot be imagined. I felt this the less, for being very much fatigued, and not well, I slept nearly all the way. We arrived at about two at Leipsig, dined at the Hôtel de Saxe, and embarked on the Dresden railroad. The carriages are small and uncomfortable. As we drew near Dresden, the country assumed a different aspect; hills appeared, and we beheld again some of the charms of earth. The station is in the New Town, and a drosky took us to the Hôtel de Pologne, which Murray mentions as the best; but in this he is mistaken. It is an hotel a good deal frequented by Englishmen, travelling tutors, and their pupils; but the hotels to which all families go are in the Neu Markt. There are several on a scale as extensive and complete as the Hôtel de Saxe, at Leipsig.

We expected to find a friend here conversant with the town to give us information and advice. We learn that he, as well as everybody else, is away; but instead of going to some fashionable baths, he is rusticating at Rabenau, a village some seven miles off. We at once resolved to visit him there; and hiring one of the hack carriages, we the next morning set out on this expedition.

AUGUST 1ST.

AT first we followed the course of the Elbe, beneath picturesque cliffs, and then turning off we got among some cross-roads of the most impracticable description, up a steep slope; when we reached the top we found a chasm, in the depth of which the village we sought is situated. The road was far too precipitous for the carriage to descend, so we walked down. The country has a singular aspect. In other mountainous lands, we live in the valleys, and look up to the hills as they lift themselves towards the sky. Here, however, we descend from the plain into the ravine. These words require further explanation. I have mentioned that we ascended a hill: this was composed of arable land, the fields, unbroken by tree or rock, spread round in smooth upland; but in the midst we found the chasm, the fissure, the rent I mentioned, and we descended, as it were, down into the bosom of the earth — and deeper, deeper, till the wooded hills close round and almost shut out the sky, and a brawling stream, which turns a mill, frets its way between rocks clothed by trees, that nearly meet on either side. Nothing can be more peaceful, more secluded, more shut in; and if not wildly sublime, yet rock and wood and torrent combined to render it picturesque; a rustic bridge crossed the stream, and there, abutting against the hill side, stood the mill, and before the mill a large pleasant room for the reception of guests, for many come, especially on feast days, to dine here. Here our friend had betaken him to compose his opera. Beside the dashing waterfalls, beneath the music-giving pines; and in grassy nooks shaded by mossy rocks and tree-grown precipices, he found a spot whose breath was melody, whose aspect imparted peace. Earth had opened, and this little ravine was a very nest adorned by nature’s hand with her choicest gifts. When we arrived he was absent; he had gone with his note-book to study among the pines. You know and admire his compositions. Thanks to them, Shelley’s Poems have found an echo of sweet sounds worthy of them. The fanciful wildness, the tender melancholy, the holy calm of the poet, have met a similar inspiration on the part of the musician. They have as much melody as the Italian, as much science as the German school — they appertain most, indeed, to the last; but the airs themselves are original. The song of “Arethusa,” and that entitled “Spirit of Night,” are perhaps the best. The one, light and fanciful; the other, solemn and impassioned; both, beautiful. The rest are second only to these.

We wandered about rather disconsolate and hungry till our friend appeared, who joyously welcomed us; and dinner was ordered, and ready in a trice. The fare was not very choice, nor delicately served; but very characteristic of what one has read of middle life in Germany. To this secluded bower families came — or students — or a fond pair stole hither from the crowd, to drink beer and smoke on the rustic seats beneath the trees. It was easy, however, to escape from these groups deeper into the ravine, or into other fissures of earth of a similar nature, which branched off; or, clambering up the cliffs, to find freer air on the hill-top. The daughter of the miller, not particularly pretty, but willing and good-humoured, waited on us. Snow-white table-cloths, and sparkling, inviting dinner apparatus, unfortunately, were not among the comforts; but the meats were eatable — the trout more than that; the whole not good enough to invite lingering over the meal; and again we sauntered beside the torrent, and reposed under the trees, and talked over our plans and a thousand other subjects, with the zest of people who found a new and willing listener after long seclusion.

Our eager love of Italy has struck a spark and lighted a similar flame in the breast of our friend. He intended repairing to Vienna in the winter. He now proposes taking Venice in his way; so that, if we will remain a month at Dresden, he will accompany us at least so far on our southern journey. It is thus arranged; not, perhaps, for the best — for, if the heats continue, any town must be disagreeable — still we have come so far into the heart of Germany, that there can be no harm, though it be not the town season, in lingering a few weeks in one of its most celebrated cities. We have accordingly taken convenient lodgings in the Alt Markt; and here we are.

Already, you may be sure, we have visited the Gallery — a labyrinth of lofty halls, adorned by a very mine of painted canvas, which thoroughly to explore would indeed be difficult. Some, of its chief gems are in one room. Entering this, we are at once commanded and awed by the “Madonna di San Sisto,” the Virgin bearing the Infant God in her arms, by Raphael. As a painting, technically speaking, I believe there are faults found with it: worst of all, it has been retouched and restored; but no criticism can check the solemn impression it inspires. The Madonna is not the lowly wife of Joseph the carpenter: she is the Queen of Heaven; she advances surrounded by celestial rays, all formed of innumerable cherubim, from whose countenances beam the glory that surrounds her. The majesty of her countenance, “severe in youthful beauty,” demands worship for her as the mother of the Infant Saviour, whom she holds in her arms. And he, the Godhead (as well as feeble mortals can conceive the inconceivable, and yet which once it is believed was visible) sits enthroned on his brow, and looks out from eyes full of lofty command and conscious power. With one hand, he makes the sign of blessing, as in Catholic countries this is bestowed. Below are two angels — both lovely; one inexpressibly so — who are looking up. I have seen copies and engravings from this picture; I have seen these angels well imitated, but never the mother and child. In some, the angelic beauty is sacrificed in the endeavour to portray the majestic glance, which thus becomes stern; or the dignity fades, that the beauty, which thus becomes inexpressive, may be preserved. In truth, copies are very inefficient things; prints are often better; but if you look at the originals, such weak types fade into insignificance.

There are four large Correggios in this room; all among his earlier pictures. As paintings, I am told that they rank higher than the Raphael. They gain by being looked at and studied; the art of painting has never, nor can ever be carried further than the Chiaro Oscuro of this admirable artist; and the attitudes of the figures — the expression of some of the faces — especially of St. Sebastian, in one of them, thrills the frame. Now, the sense of adoration is cold in men’s breasts, and painters can neither see in others, nor conceive within their own breasts, a passion as absorbing as love, while it elevates and purifies those who feel it till their features shadow forth an angelic nature. A fifth Correggio is also here — the Magdalen, a small cabinet picture. It is well-known. I am told that Correggio only painted it once; but Allori, a good painter, but whose conceptions, whose types (to use the word of the author of “La Poésie Chrétienne”) are not noble, has made many most admirable copies; it has thus been multiplied; some of the copies are generally said to be by the hand of Correggio himself; yet, in the most celebrated of them, I have not seen the mixed expression which is so wonderful in the face of the original. She is lying on the earth, in a cavern, supporting her head with her hand, reading the blessed promises of the Gospel. Her eyes are red with recent and much weeping; her face expresses earnest hope — or rather scarcely hope yet, but a yearning which will soon warm into satisfied faith; and she is eagerly drinking in the sublime consolations that speak peace to her heart. Her face is not clouded by grief, though you see that she has grieved with bitterness; nor does it express joy, though you see that she anticipates happiness. Is not this the triumph of art? You must add to this inimitable delicacy in shadowing forth expression, an execution quite unrivalled. The word Chiaro Oscuro, as applied to Correggio's paintings, is familiar to every one. This picture teaches more than any other what it means. With other artists, the flesh in shade, is the flesh darkened — blackened: here — look at the arms, the throat of the Magdalen; they are fair as alabaster — or rather, as the fair skin of woman, and the shadow that obscures them, conceals it in the painting not more than it would do in reality.

The heat is very great; the hours of the gallery excessively inconvenient — from nine to one, when it is inexorably closed, that the attendants may dine at the universal German hour; and they do not open again. I am convinced that one of the reasons that there is heaviness in the Germans, is this early hour for their principal, their interminable meal. Who can be fit for anything, after sitting for two or three hours at mid-day to a plentiful dinner? After such an act, life must be extinct in all the nobler functions for some hours; but, as they go to bed at ten, they do not give scope for the mind to recover itself. To be sure, they rise at five, and therefore their great men have been able to achieve so much.

With regard to the gallery, special permission may be obtained, if sought and paid for, to visit it at other hours. If we were only here for a day or two, it would be worth while to obtain this; but then an attendant would accompany us all the time; now we are free to roam at will. So we shall content ourselves with the public hours.

We are to remain the whole of this month at Dresden; before the end of it, I hope the heat will diminish. It is so excessive that I mean to escape for a few days to Rabenau.

LETTER VIII.

Rabenau. — The Gallery. — The Terrace of Bruhl. — The Grosse Garten. — The great Heat.

DRESDEN, AUGUST 12.

THY mountain tonnent and thy narrow vale,
With every pine and fir that grow thereby;
The air that passes thee with gentle wail,
That it may not amidst thy thickets die;
Thine evening's quiet, and thy morning's gale,
And thy hot noon-day's mossy luxury;
Thy crags, whose legend says, "Each rugged rock
An altar is to Him who framed the block."

IN such and other verse has the "valley of beauty, sunny Rabenau," been celebrated by one of my friends, who visited it with us, and whose ardent and poetic imagination was warmed by inspiration in this lonely spot. I am sorry to say, that, secluded and beautiful as is the narrow dell, I did not quite share his transports; I obtained no refuge from the heat, from which I had endeavoured to escape. Truly we enjoyed the shade of woods and cliffs, and the refreshing murmur of the stream; but deep down and shut in as is the ravine, we found it close and breezeless. Besides, to my misfortune, I am more fastidious than a traveller ought to be. During the day I sought for a cool spot, and even though I found it not, yet as I loitered among the woods, every object charmed the eye; and evening came at last, bringing relief and enjoyment. But at night it was otherwise. The mill is a very rustic cot; and the Germans are not, as far as I can judge, a cleanly people. At Kissingen we were obliged to exert ourselves vehemently to get the floors (which, being of white smooth deal, to use a servant's phrase, *show dirt)* washed. Water had never touched the boards of my room at Rabenau, and in vain I pleaded for a little scouring. Then German beds, especially in the north of Germany, are uncomfortable. Feather-beds everywhere are disagreeable; but here they are constructed on the most odious principle.

They are a quarter filled with feathers: so when you He down, they inclose you on all sides, as a half-empty bladder does your finger if you press it. Usually there are mattresses besides, and one can discard the annoying softness; but at Rabenau there was only a loose straw palliasse, and one of these disastrous beds, which threw me into a state of nervous agitation, that turned the night into a period of pain.

In short, after enduring the annoyance for three nights, P — and I quitted it, leaving our poet and musician behind, to indulge, for a few more days, in the inspirations of the rocky dell. An old woman stowed carpet-bag, cloaks, and books, into a basket, and putting a weight I could scarcely lift on her back, walked briskly on before. Like gnomes, we emerged from the inner recesses of the earth, and ascended to its outer edge; and again descending the hill side, we reached the high road, where we hoped to find a carriage sent to meet us. We were disappointed; but after a perplexing half hour, during which we expected to have to walk to Dresden, we secured a return britska, and gladly took our way to our temporary home. Could I have foreseen the heat, I had not fixed to remain at Dresden so long, but have gone on to wait for our friend at Toplitz. There is no help now, and I console myself by recollecting that I am in a city I have long desired to see, and can store my mind with the memory of a thousand objects, which hereafter I shall look back on as my choicest treasures.

I ramble in the morning in the Gallery: the heat, indeed, is almost insupportable; but still I cannot tear myself away. There is a lovely picture of Rebecca at the well, by Giorgione. There is a fine one, by Annibal Caracci, of the Angel of Fame. He is springing upwards; wreaths of laurel hang from his arm; one hand bears a crown, the other holds a trumpet, and a halo of flame plays round his head. There is something living and spirit-stirring in this picture, though its colouring is not pleasing. There are the portraits of his three daughters by Palma Vecchio: one of them in particular is very beautiful. The women of this painter resemble those of Titian — the same full feminine form, the same voluptuous repose, joined to queen-like dignity.

One of the gems of the gallery is the Cristo della Moneta, of Titian, which Mrs. Jamieson eulogizes with much taste and judgment. It is among the earliest, and is one of the best of the works of this artist. It is but a small half-length, containing two figures. The Jew shows a coin to our Saviour, and asks to whom tribute should be paid. The questioner looks full of cunning — Jesus, suffering, patient, dignified. As with all these great painters, the countenance expresses many mingled feelings, and you read the thoughts of the martyr, revealed by his searching eye and the sad composure of his mien. “This is a snare. You think to entrap me. You will not succeed. With a word, I brush away the flimsy web of evil. But it will not always be thus; the time will come when I shall be your victim; yet I bear the present insult and future death with resignation for your sake — for the sake of all mankind.

My path is before me; I tread it patiently and resolutely, though you strew it with thorns.” All this you read in that face; all gentleness, resignation, love, and suffering. A connoisseur here objects, that the countenance of Christ wants dignity; perhaps it does; yet, methinks, it has as much as the human face, in sorrow, can express. I told you that the gallery shuts at one. I linger to the last. At a quarter before this hour, the men come round, and draw down the blinds, leaving the gallery nearly in darkness. I was in the room containing the Correggios when they did this. The Notte of that painter is among them: The Shepherds visiting Jesus in the manger by night, and the only light emanates from the cradle of the divine child, spreading its halo over the Virgin’s face, which is bent over the babe, while the shepherds veil their eyes with their hands from the dazzling effulgence. When, by the drawing down of the blinds, we were left nearly in darkness, the effect on this picture was miraculous. The child lay in living beams, which seemed to emanate from a focus, and spread rays of light around. I could not have believed that any coloured canvas could have shown such glowing radiance. The intention of the master becomes more clear, and his wonderful art more admirable. No doubt the picture was painted for some niche that favoured the peculiar distribution of light and shadow.

There are some very beautiful specimens of the Dutch school in the gallery; but I do not, of course, send you a mere catalogue; and in mentioning those that gave me most pleasure, you know my preference for Italian pictures.

One day, while wandering about the gallery, I saw a well-known face. It was more than a pleasure; it was indeed a gain to meet the accomplished Author of “La Poésie Chrétienne” in the very spot where his knowledge and taste would inform my ignorance and correct my judgment; still more agreeable it is to learn that he is also bound for Italy. His animated conversation and refined society will add more than I can express of interest and pleasure to our rambles, I drag myself painfully home from the gallery! but find no shade, and short repose.

We have here only a woman who " does for us," preparing our breakfast and attending to our rooms. Our dinner is another affair. Not far from us there is a Tratoria, kept by a Milanese, well known in Dresden as a good cook, and where we can obtain food not germanized in its preparation. We either go and dine there, or have our dinner sent to us; his prices are exceedingly reasonable. The ceremony of our dinner over, I repose as well as the son will let me, which has by this time left one part of our house and invaded another, making every portion, beyond conception, sultry. I never found any heat so oppressive. This arises from Dresden being so inland; and no rain having fallen for six months, the dryness of the atmosphere renders its high temperature penetrating, subtle, burning, intolerable.

Evening comes, and though it does not bring with it sufficient coolness to banish lassitude and even pain, still the heat is diminished, and I go out to walk or drive. If on foot, we go usually to the Terrace of Brühl, to which you ascend by a wide flight of steps from the foot of the bridge. The view here is beautiful. I can imagine circumstances which would render it sublime. It overlooks the Elbe; and were that river in "its pride of place" — full — rushing — stormy — it would add movement and grandeur to the scene. But the waters have ebbed even as the Arno does, till the bathers almost walk across without any chance of getting out of their depth; the bed, as a river's bed always does when the shrunken stream leaves it exposed, is a deformity to the landscape; and the extreme dryness of the season has caused the fields on the other side to resemble those seen by Charles Lamb from his retreat at Dalston. "Talk of green fields," he said, " every one has green fields; I have drab-coloured fields." I look over the parapet and try to imagine the river full to the brim; the lower piles of the beautiful bridge bathed and hidden by tumultuous waves; the domes and spires of the city rising silent above a turbid, tempestuous, sea-like river: that would be the scene which is the glory and boast of Dresden; now all is slothful and stagnant. The same is to be predicated of the company assembled; all the *beau monde* of all the towns of Germany is assembled at various baths, and so I must not wonder that I not only saw no beauty, but nothing either well-dressed or elegant in the promenades. We have driven to the Grosse Garten, a large park, filled with fine trees, and were the lawns laid out in verdant sward, instead of being an incult growth of the coarsest grass, very uninviting, especially in its present arid state, the shady walks and glades would be pleasant. I may say the same of all the other gardens of which this capital boasts. They would be very delightful, only just now they are deficient in freshness and verdure. Do not think I say this as a fault-finder, except that they ought to learn from us what grass when cultivated for ornamental uses ought to be. I consider the gardens and terraces and pleasure-grounds that adorn Dresden more beautiful than those of almost any other capital.

The fault is ours, not theirs. The pleasure-grounds of a city ought to be, and in this case are, adapted to the seasons during which the inhabitants make use of them. But in the height of summer, Nature only in her free fresh beauty can afford enjoyment. We have no business to come here now in search of wood and stream and field, which alone can content our souls, athirst and wearied by the heat. The fault, as I have said, is ours; not that of Dresden, which really may be said in some degree to rival Florence in its pretensions to beauty, and which has of course an individual character of its own.

P — goes almost every night to the Opera, The heat is so very great, that I have only seldom ventured. The house is very pretty; and I had hoped, as there are some good singers, to hear some of the *chef-d'œuvre* of German composers. I am disappointed. At Berlin, we had *Masaniello:* here we have *La Dame Blanche — Die weise Frau* — instead of the *Huguenots,* which our musical friend considers the finest composition of modem times — inferior only to Mozart; superior to him, inasmuch as orchestral accompaniment is so wonderfully improved and extended since the day when *Figaro* and the *Zauberjlaüte* were brought out. I am much disappointed in not hearing this opera. The tenor is a young! good-looking man, with a very pleasing voice and good style. It is strange, indeed, how well German *sings.* Look at the language, with its accumulation of consonants, and it appears worse even than our own for singing; but in reality it is far better; ours being, from its peculiar accent, the worst, I believe, in the world; while the German is smoothed and vocalised and flowing in a manner which, till I heard it sung by natives, I could not have imagined. This same *sdruccioli* enunciation does not, however, make it pleasing to the ear when spoken.

Night comes at last. At ten o'clock, all Dresden goes to bed. If you stay out after, you must pay your porter four groschen. Night comes, but no cool breeze to calm and refresh. We live in a *troisième,* in the Alt Markt, and look upon its large square, our windows being turned to the east. Till a late hour, the people are employed removing the booths in which they expose their wares during the day, and the clatter they make prevents repose. Near us is a church tower, with a loud clock; and as I lie, courting sleep, with my windows of necessity wide open, the sound of the clock seems to enter my room. We are told, sounds are produced by vibrations of air, which beginning where the sound is born, spread themselves further and further; and thus I hear — I feel it. I believe that I am aware of the moment when the clock strikes; on comes the sound, louder and louder, till my room is filled as with thunder — and the wounded sense of hearing would fain fly and escape — but cannot. You can form no idea what it is to have twelve o'clock thus walk up bodily to your pillow, in the otherwise deep silence of night.

We have, as yet, seen few of the lions. I am trying to summon courage and strength for sight-seeing; which will indeed be a task of labour, with the thermometer above ninety in the shade — in the shade of night, remember, as well as in that of day.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

The Green Vaults. — Collection of Porcelain. — Der Freischütz. — The great Drought. — Preparations for Departure.

DRESDEN, 18TH JULY.

WE spent this morning in the Grüne Gewolbe, or Green Vaults, a suite of apartments containing the treasures of the Kings of Saxony. These sovereigns were much richer once than they are now; and we are told, that, in addition to the dazzling piles of jewels and other valuables here collected, they had amassed large sums of money — all deposited in a secret strong room under their palace. The money is gone, but treasure to the amount of several millions remains, and is spread out for view in eight apartments on the ground floor of the palace, called the Green Vaults — it is said from the hangings with which these rooms were once hung. But why vaults? I cannot help thinking the name comes from some peculiarity appertaining to the former resting-place of the treasures — underground. These rooms display, indeed, incalculable riches. The diamonds alone are worth a kingdom. Their immense size and surpassing lustre must dazzle the eyes when worn. Placed on shelves behind glass frames, of course their exceeding beauty is not enhanced by the movement and sparkle which causes diamonds to transcend all other precious stones. In addition to this almost magical wealth in gems, are a quantity of beautiful works of art, various and magnificent; they are some of exquisite carving, some elegant, some strange and fantastic. We wandered from room to room, wondering at the wealth, amazed by the profusion of treasure; but you must not expect enthusiasm from pae on these points. There is something in this sort of treasure, when arranged for show, which takes from their beauty. Pictures are made to be looked at for themselves. The view of them excites the passions or calms the heart; or if even only gratifying to the taste, yet they please for themselves, and require no extraneous interest. It is a bathos indeed to turn from them to stones from the mine; but diamonds and jewellery, and even delicately-carved cups, elegant statuettes and fantastic toys, are agreeable to look at only as objects of personal ornament or use. Show me a beautiful woman, or an illustrious sovereign, adorned in jewels — served in cups that cost a province — and the imagination fills up a picture pleasing to itself — exalting a human being above his fellows — and glorifying weak humanity in his image. Show me a room in which a fellow-creature is accustomed to live, where all he or she touches might ransom a king, and a thousand feelings and sympathies are awakened. Thus if we read in the "Arabian Nights," of apartments supported by columns encrusted in jewels; then also we find some enchanted prince, who inhabits the wondrous chamber; or if we read of basins of diamonds and cups of a single pearl, they are tributes to beauty from love. With regard to these gems, indeed, we need not go so far afield as the "Arabian Nights" to imagine regal splendour. When Napoleon held his court in the North, to which "thrones, dominations, princedoms" thronged — proud hearts swelled beneath these stones, lifted up with a sense of greatness, and the lovely adorned by them were made glad by the consciousness of admiration.

I am afraid my lion-hunting at Dresden is over. After the Grüne Gewolbe I went to see the collection of porcelain, in an underground suite of rooms at the Japanese palace. I own I was disappointed. I expected to find a quantity of curious and exquisite Dresden china. The collection consists in specimens of porcelain, fabricated from the earliest times in all parts of the world. I confess a very slight inspection would have satisfied my curiosity. But I was with a party, and I dare say we spent two hours in these rooms, which were really vaults. At first their cool atmosphere, after the excessive heats from which we are suffering, was agreeable; but I got chilled, and caught a cold. I have been confined to the house for some days, and feel myself quite incapacitated from undergoing the fatigue of further sightseeing.

JULY 20TH.

IN spite of indisposition, I have contrived to go to the theatre, to hear *Der Freischütz* in its native country. Shroeder Devrient is the *prima donna;* and a pretty young *débutante,* a great favourite here, was the Bridesmaid. The orchestra and singing were, of course, perfect; and the music of this opera is indeed enchanting. It is much to be regretted that the talking part is not arranged for recitative: we are no longer accustomed to the mixture of singing and speaking, and it grates on the ear. The imagination easily lends itself at first, and is soon carried away by the music to admit as natural and proper discourses in melody and singing; but the change from one to the other jars the ear, and unhinges the fancy. We had been told that nearly a year had been devoted to the getting up of the scenery and *diablerie*. They were very shabby and meagre. When Linda throws open her window in her first exquisite *scena,* some unlucky urchin had drawn an actual face on the very oily-looking moon — a laugh through the house was inevitable.

There is an Italian company here, with a handsome *prima donna*. There is something very antagonistic in the German and Italian operatic schools. They despise each other mutually. Professors mostly side with the Germans, but I am not sure that they are right.

The Opera begins at six; it is over by nine; and everybody is in bed by ten. If you come home after that hour, the porter has a right to a fee for being disturbed from his bed at untimely hours: as in Paris, you pay him if you come home after twelve. If early rising conduces to health, how very healthy the Germans ought to be! But they have other habits by no means so consonant to our notions of what is good for the preservation of life. Their dislike of fresh air amounts almost to frenzy; this, joined to their smoking, and, in winter, to the close stoves, must make their domestic hearth (only they have no hearth) very incompatible with our tastes.

JULY 25TH.

THE heat continues. Most of the wells and springs of the town are dried up: that in our house yet affords a small supply. It is said that Government is about to issue an order that no water, except that of the Elbe, is to be used, except for culinary purposes. People must send to the river (and that runs shallow) for supplies to wash their clothes and keep their rooms clean, I do not think they use much water at any time for the latter purpose.

The drought indeed becomes alarming. News came, the other day, that a village was burnt to the ground, and the calamity was attributed to some trees taking fire from the extreme dryness of the atmosphere.

Our month is at an end. We are about to undertake a long, long journey to Venice. The dry season has defeated our hopes of ascending the Elbe in a steamer as far as Prague. Professor Hughes, an Englishman long established at Dresden, who receives gentlemen in his house for the purposes of education, and whose kindness has been of the greatest use to us, has bargained with a *Lohnkutscher,* or *voiturier,* to take us to Prague, by way of the Saxon Switzerland; as we intend to make the tour of that singular district. From Prague we shall make a fresh start, and be guided by circumstances as to the manner. We hope to find some sort of railroad after Budweis, which will abbreviate a part of our journey.

I leave several sights unseen. I fear that sightseeing will renew my attack of illness, and delay our leaving Dresden, and our journey towards mountain, forest, and stream, for which this heat and drought inspire an ardent longing. My imagination takes refuge at times in shady spots beside murmuring rills, and I look out on the dusty Alt Markt in despair.

When I returned from Babenau a week or two ago, I found a grasshopper nestled in my muslin dress, and thoughtlessly I shook it off, out of window. That night the act weighed on my conscience. It was a stroke of adversity for the insect, to be transported from the fresh grass and cool streamlets of wooded Rabenau, and cast out to die in the arid, herbless market-place of a big town. In the morning, when I opened my eyes, to my great satisfaction, I found that my grasshopper had rebelled against my cruelty, and had leapt back into the room; it lay evidently in great distress on the floor. I gave it water, which it drank greedily, and put it in a *cornet* of paper; — that evening, M — , in her walk, on the other side of the Elbe, took it with her, and set it free on the grassy banks of the river. It was not its native glen of Rabenau — but it was all I could do.

In olden times, this insect might have returned to thank me in the form of a fairy, but the days of wonders are passed. However, pining as I am, to repose *"*in close covert, by some brook," thirsting to betake myself to "some wide-watered shore," I hope to be even kinder to myself than to my victim, and in a few more days to be far, far from the dusty Alt Markt, amid more congenial scenes.

LETTER X.

The Saxon Switzerland.

Dresden, 26th August.

ADIEU to Dresden — I shall probably never see it more. I cannot say that I visited it (as far as regards the outside, for I saw no more,) under unfavourable circumstances — for the great cold that often prevails, were worse than the heat. Still, every act, every step is a painful exertion. Besides, I dislike all towns; I would never willingly live in one, summer or winter. To be near a metropolis usually — within a drive, and visit it, is pleasant — ? but I never feel happy except when I live in the palaces or secret coverts of Nature — mountain — forest — stream — or the shores of ocean: these are my true home.

Adieu to Dresden. A long, long journey is before us. We are in a charming ignorance of how we shall proceed, and of how much time the way will occupy: all we know is, that we must make our way as economically as we can to Venice, whither we are bound.

Our first destination is, as I told you, the Saxon Switzerland. We have only time to make a limited tour in this singular region. Professor Hughes, who has been settled for many years in Dresden, has given us instructions how to guide our steps, so that we may see some of the most striking points. I transcribe them, as it may be useful to yon if ever you visit these parts. I must premise that we have bargained with a *Lohnkutscher* to take us to Prague. We sent him and his carriage on with my maid and our luggage, and we are to rejoin them at Arbesau, he having provided us with another vehicle and driver for our excursion: —

“Start at five o’clock.

“Pilnitz.

“Lohmen.

“Uttervalde — walk through the valley to the Bastei, where the carriage must again meet you.

“Leave the Bastei at latest at 3 o’clock; drive to Hockstein and Shandau.

“Leave Shandau the same evening, at latest at 5 o’clock, for the Wasserfall. Order a mule to meet you at the foot of the Kuhstall; walk to the Kuhstall; descend; take the mule to the Kleine and Grosse Winterberg.

“Leave the next morning at nine o’clock for the Prebischthor and Hernitskretschen on a mule; take a boat for Tätchen; stop at the Bad; order a carriage for Arbesau,”

August 27th.

WE left Dresden more than an hour later than the time appointed — a disaster, as we were to crowd so much into one day. We took the road on the left of the Elbe, to Pilnitz and Lohmen. The road grew more varied as we advanced, but I looked out in vain for traces of the mountainous region which we were to visit. The landscape was pretty, but tame, and when we reached the little village of Uttervalde, I wondered why it was necessary to leave the carriage; what road could be here that would not admit a dozen waggons abreast if need were? However, in obedience to our instructions, we did alight, and ordering the carriage to meet us at the Bastei, we hired a sort of open sedan, a comfortable arm-chair placed on poles carried by two men, for me; my companions were to walk, and we set out, as it seemed, to look for wonders where none could be.

But immediately on quitting the village the portals of the mountains opened before us, and we plunged into their recesses. It is difficult to describe the peculiarity of this region; it differs so much from every other. Rabenau shared in some degree in its characteristics. Generally, when you see mountains, they seem (as they are) upraised above the plains which are the abodes of men; lifting their mighty heads towards heaven. In Saxony, the impression is as if the tops of the hills were the outer circumference of the globe, strangely fissured and worn away by the action of water. We plunge into depths of the earth; we might fancy some sprite of upper air had forced a passage so to reach the abode of subterranean spirits. The mystic imagination of the Germans has indeed peopled this region with gnome and kobold, who watch over hidden treasure. A thousand romantic legends are associated with scenes whose aspect awakens the fancy. In uncivilized and disturbed times the persecuted and houseless found refuge in these secret recesses from lawless freebooters or religious bigots.

As we proceeded through the narrow ravine, the rocks rose perpendicularly on each hand, and shut us in as with walls, but not walls as at Via Mala, abrupt and bare. The precipices are broken into a thousand fantastic shapes, and formed into rough columns, pillars, and peaks numberless; with huge caverns, mighty portals, and towering archways; the whole clothed with pines, verdant with a luxuriant growth of various shrubs; and, but that for the most part the long drought has silenced them, resonant with waterfalls, The stream that makes its way in the depth has thus lost all energy and variety — it ripples murmuring in its rocky channel.

The path, ascending and descending over the rocks, winds at its side. Sometimes the fissure nearly meets overhead, and the sun can never shine on the stream below. There is a charm of novelty in the scene quite inexpressible. We penetrate Nature’s secret chambers, which she has adorned with the wildest caprice. Various ravines branch off from the main one, and become numerous and intricate, varied by huge caverns of strange shapes; some open to the sky, some dark and deep; there are little verdant spots in the midst, too, where the turf was green and velvetty, and invited us to rest. We were taken to the particular spots selected as most remarkable for the formation or grandeur of the rocks, or where cascades, reduced unhappily to a thread of water, were accustomed to scatter their spray abroad. The whole way, I must tell you, was one continued ascent, and this explains the wondrous view we gain when we emerge again into outer air.

At length we left the ravine, and entered a forest of firs. After traversing this we found ourselves, as if by magic, at a high elevation, and stood upon the Bastei or Bastion. This is a vast mass of rock, that rises 800 feet above the Elbe, in the depths and centre of which the rent was made which we had thridded. The uttermost edge projects far beyond the face of the precipice, and here we stood looking on a scene so utterly different from every other, that it is difficult to describe it. A caprice of nature is the name usually bestowed on this district; while geologists explain how the action of water on a peculiar species of rock has caused the appearance before us. It is still the same, though on a gigantic and sublime scale. The earth has been broken, and fissured, and worn away. The Elbe sweeps majestically at the foot of the Bastei; a plain is spread beneath, closed in by an amphitheatre of huge columnar hills, which do not, as is usually the case, begin with gradual upland, but rise at once in shape fantastic, — isolated one from the other. Some of the highest and most abrupt have been used as fortresses. The sides of the precipices of the Bastei are clothed in a forest of firs and other wood.

The whole scene was bathed in dazzling sunshine. The heat was so great, that it was painful to stand on the giddy verge, which is protected by wooden rails (for the whole district is prepared for show); yet it was almost impossible to tear oneself away.

There is an inn at the Bastei, where we dined. German cooking is very bad, and we had to wait long, and were served slowly. A young Englishman dined at the same table. In a classification of travellers, what name is to be given to those who travel only for the sake of saying that they have travelled? He was *doing* his Saxon Switzerland; he had *done* his Italy, his Sicily; he had *done* his sunrise on Mount Etna; and when he should have *done* his Germany, he would return to England to show how destitute a traveller may be of all impression and knowledge, when they are unable to knit themselves in soul to nature, nor are capacitated by talents or acquirements to gain knowledge from what they see. We must become a part of the scenes around us, and they must mingle and become a portion of us, or we see without seeing and study without learning. There is no good, no knowledge, unless we can go out from, and take some of the external into, ourselves: this is the secret of mathematics as well as of poetry.

We indulged, as well we might, in gazing delightedly from this battlement of nature on the magnificent scene around; and then we turned to the prosaic part of travelling, the necessity of getting on. Our driver (provided by the master *voiturier* who was to take us to Prague) had been told to meet us at the Bastei; he pretended that this was impossible; that no carriage ever came up, and we must walk some three or four miles to join him. We found all this to be utterly false, and that the usual custom, was for the carriages to come up to the Bastei. With a burning sun above, and a good deal of labour before us, we were not willing to encounter any unnecessary fatigue: so we sent a man to order the carriage tocome to us. It came; but the *kutscher* refused to take us unless we paid him something extra. This was an obvious piece of rascality, and we begged our friend, who was absolute master of German, to remonstrate with him. But he had, during his long stay in this country, acquired too much *laisser-aller* for our impatient English natures. Nothing can equal the slow style in which a German makes a bargain, or discusses a disputed point. He never thinks that he can argue with any success, unless he puts one hand on the other’s shoulder, and brings his face dose to him. Indeed, this habit of coming so very near in conversation is, as far as I remarked, usual in Germany. I have often edged off till I got into a corner, and then there was no help but, if possible, to run away. To return to our kutscher. With ignorant and deaf ears we saw him and our friend argue and re-argue the point while time flew. Our instructions were, to leave the Bastei at three at latest; it was now long past four. Why not yield to the demand? I believe travellers alone know the swelling indignation and obstinate resistance with which, at the worst of times, they meet extortion. We *would* not yield; and finding our friend still vainly discussing, another among us took our books and cloaks from the carriage, and, pumping up the only German words he could command, said to the fellow:—”*Kannen sie nach Dresden gehen”* If he had been master, he might have taken us at our word; but he knew we should meet his master at Arbesau, so he took fright and consented, without extra pay, to take us to Schandau. He had been engaged to take us some four miles beyond; but we (foolishly enough) consented to be satisfied with being driven so far.

Descending from the Bastei, the road wound round hills, with a stream on the other hand. Schandau is thus placed, and it is a very pretty country inn; the stream in front, with a bridge, and before a garden, secluded and peaceful, reminded one of the inn at Burford Bridge, near Boxhill. It would have been as well to remain here could we have given three instead of two days to our excursion. But this was impossible; and we were anxious, as evening was advancing, to get on. We asked if we could have a *calèche* to take us to the foot of the Kuhstall, which is the last point where a carriage is n 2 serviceable; the rest of the excursion must be performed on foot, in chairs, or on mules.

Our instructions bid us leave Schandau by five at latest; it was now nearly six: so we begged them to hasten with the carriage. Fair promises were given, and we loitered away half an hour in the garden of the inn, and then we grew impatient. After a time it became apparent that the people were playing the very usual trick of delaying bringing a carriage, till too late, so to force us to sleep at their inn. We were rather slow at arriving at this conviction, and not the less resolute to resist the imposition; indeed, yielding would put us to great inconvenience. After answering our expostulations for some time with false promises, they at last impudently declared that we could not have a carriage. Our only resource was the fellow who brought us from Dresden, and who by compact ought at once to have taken us to the place whither we wished to go. Two thalers bribed him, and he agreed to proceed. We asked for a guide, and engaged him; but, at setting off from Schandau, he said it was impossible for a lady to reach the Grosse Winterberg that night, and he refused to go.

On the whole, with evening closing in, the guide deserting, and several miles before us, to sleep at Schandau seemed our best resource; but we would not; the cool evening air was pleasant. I did not object to a little adventure. We should, it is true, miss some points usually visited, but we should gain a great object with the tourist — that of viewing the Grosse Winterberg by moonlight and at sunrise; — we went on, therefore, the road winding at the base of wooded hills, till we reached the foot of the Kuhstall. The mules were all gone, and so were the guides. A countryman who was doing work at the inn of the Grosse Winterberg, offered to show us the way thither, and leaving the carriage, and loading the man with books and carpet-bag, we set out.

We had been obliged to give up the idea of viewing Kuhstall and the Kleine Winterberg, and aimed only at reaching the Grosse, which is situated at the top of a very high hill. It was now past eight o'clock, and evening had closed in. The hill we climbed was clothed with pines, and it was impossible to conceive a more fatiguing ascent. The soil was sand, into which we sank to our ankles, as we toiled up. No breath of air stirred the trees. After the first chill which followed sunset, the night became excessively warm; shut in as we were by trees, we were oppressed by heat and toil. To add to our troubles, it soon grew pitch-dark — not a star-beam penetrated the trees — bur guide went on before, and we provided him with a cigar, the light of which alone showed us where he was; and now and then my companions struck sparks from a flint to throw transient radiance on the path, which bordered (I believe, but we could see nothing) a steep precipice on one hand; on the other, we had the broken surface of the mountain, and the boughs of the pines overhead. The way seemed endless — but as we had conquered the people at Schandau, and got our own way, we would not be dispirited — and laughed at our difficulties — and toiled up the steep, plunging as we went deep into the sand. At last we reached the top of the hill, and another half hour brought us to the inn. It was eleven o'clock — so you may imagine that the way had been long, and that we were not a little fatigued.

Late as it was, we determined to reward ourselves with a little amusement. Supper was ordered — and we ordered also three Bohemian girls with their harps. Here, as in Wales, harps form a part of the entertainment given to travellers at the inns; but in Bohemia, they are played by girls instead of men. The harpists were gone, it was so late; but at our call they came, and played and sang several wild national airs. We were now on the frontiers of Bohemia, whence the race of Gipsies was said in old times to have emigrated. I do not know whether there was any Gipsy blood in these girls — their eyes had not the peculiar cast of the race. One of the three was very handsome, and looked proud — as indeed she was — and listened with an air of haughty disdain to every compliment. They had on their faces, that which too often rests on the countenances of the lower order of Germans — an expression of sullenness. I soon grew too tired to listen, and left them playing. The waning moon rose over the sea of hills on which I looked from my window; I was almost too fatigued to see. At sunrise I started up to gaze; — the glory of awakening day was on the mountain-tops, which looked more like a stormy ocean than a scene of earth. I scarcely know what I saw; my eyes were drooping with sleep; I knew my companions would not rise, so I went again to bed, and when I awoke, it seemed as if I had dreamed of a glorious sunrise in fairy-land. I looked from the tiny casement of my room — we were on the highest of many hundred hills, nearly two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and commanded a wide horizon, inclosing a district strangely convulsed, wildly heaped up with mountains and rocks of various and fantastic shapes, clothed with wood.

Murray speaks of the inn at the Grosse Winterberg as two or three separate huts, where sorry accommodation may be obtained. This state of things is reformed. On the highest pinnacle of the mountain is a very good country inn, such as may remind the traveller of those found in North Wales. The host was very civil, and we had to put his civility to the test. I had put a quantity of thaler notes in my writing-desk, and this had gone with our luggage; by a miscalculation, I had not brought enough of the dirty paper for our excursion, and the less that I had expected to pay for our carriage at Prague. But the fellow who drove us insisted on the money, twelve thalers, before he left us at Schandau; two more we had to give him to take us to the foot of the hill of the Grosse Winterberg; and this had entirely drained us. The master of the inn readily agreed to pass us on to the host at Tatchen, who again would trust us till we reached Arbesau, and were possessed of our dear thalers. It is impossible to express the sense of littleness that comes over one when, in travelling, one has no money at all. Gulliver, in the palm of the hand of the Brobdignagian reaper, could not have felt smaller, till we received our host's ready consent to trust us.

We ought to have left this eagle's nest on a rock at seven, or, at latest, at nine o'clock. But loitering was the order of the day; and I resolved to give way — to make no remonstrance — and see how long we should linger. We went up to a terrace on the roof of the house, to see a yet wider prospect; we looked at the different specimens of Bohemian glass; we listened to the harpists. My mule was brought; but when three of the party were assembled, a fourth was missing; and when he came, another had gone. We got away, at last, at one o'clock.

Immediately on leaving this elevated spot, we plunged down a ravine clothed with firs, just such a one, I suppose, as we had climbed, only it led in an opposite direction. We were soon told that we had crossed the frontier line, and were in Bohemia. The toil was considerable; the descent so steep, that to walk had been less fatiguing; but, as I was about to get off my mule, another ascent began; and very high and steep it proved till we reached a pinnacle abutting over the side of the mountain, which might almost rival the Bastei. The view was different: the absence of the river rendered it less beautiful. From the side of this rock springs the Presbichthor — a natural arch of vast size, that spans a ravine. The face of the rock from which it springs is cut into terraces; and you climb higher and higher, from one to the other, and reach the summit of the arch. The scene is inconceivably wild. Earth looks rent, convulsed, shattered — isolated, disjointed mountains, rising abruptly from the plain, their sides clothed by firs, are spread around. The majestic arch forms an object of great beauty in the midst. There is an inn here for the refreshment of travellers. We only obtained, however, some bad bread and cheese.

The descent was very abrupt and fatiguing. I walked most part of the way till we reached the Kamnitz, a large stream, or rather river. This added softness, yet movement, to the scene, but took from its singularity. The way was long, but we reached at last Himiskretschen, where there is a very dirty inn, crowded by travellers — traders, they seemed to be. No rustic holiday inn was this; nor one kept for the accommodation of tourists, but one for the use of the lower order of country people.

Where extortion is not manifest, we ought not to quarrel with the higher prices of hotels in show places, since they are there — oases of civilisation amidst the desert of native dirt and discomfort — for our sole use; and they must be maintained by what they gain during seasons of tours. The singular filth and squalid appearance of this wretched place made us regard even the misdeeds of Schandau leniently.

This village is on the Elbe; and gladly we hired a boat, and exchanged the fatiguing descent of mountain paths for the repose of being carried swiftly and smoothly down the river. In truth, we did not see the Elbe to advantage. On account of the long drought, it had shrunk in its bed: but still a majestic river, sweeping between mountainous banks, always presents varied and agreeable prospects, which seem all peace and enjoyment; and, after our two days of toil, we were right glad of the repose.

Midway on our voyage, we came to the Austrian frontier. The Austrian Government has not joined the league which unites the rest of Germany, and has put an end to the annoyance a traveller suffered, passing in one day the frontiers of several States, and stopped, and his luggage examined at each. However, though the Austrian preserves his right to annoy, he amiably abstained. I had given my passport to my maid, but was not even obliged to get out of the boat to shew myself, the explanation given by my companions being received even with deference. A custom-house officer stepped into the boat: eight gute-groschen (a piece of money similar in value to a shilling) caused him at once to exchange an appearance of extreme official severity to the excess of considerate courtesy. We were detained but a few minutes, and found ourselves admitted in the much-feared Austria with less trouble than we ever before passed a frontier.

Towards sunset we arrived at Tatchen; our boatmen and the bill at the Grosse Winterberg were defrayed by the master of the hotel here. We ordered dinner, and my friends went to bathe in the Elbe. We passed an hoar or two pleasantly, but after this, grew uneasy. It was our wish to get on beyond Arbesan that same night, that we might reach Prague on the following day. But the Germans never hurry. It was past six before we got a very bad dinner, with black bread, which nothing but long habit would render edible; and then we had to wait for the carriage, or rather cart, which was to take us on. The first hour or two after sunset was very chilly: that passed, the usual heat returned. I was excessively fatigued, and the jolting of our vehicle was distressing. It seemed as if we should never arrive; and it was past midnight before we entered the open court-yard of the inn, where all slept silently beneath the moon except the dog left by our *voiturier* to guard the carriage. In our earnestness to get on we were unreasonable enough to call our coachman up and beg him to set off. He was very angry at being disturbed by our outrageous design; and returned grumbling to his straw: for these people never undress, but turn in among straw in the stables, close to their horses. I confess I was not sorry for the ill success of our magnanimous design. We got some tea and some tubs of water, and these were much more suited to us.

LETTER XI.

Baths of Toplitz. — Lobositz. — Arrival at Prague.

AUGUST 30th.

IF we annoyed our kutscher by rousing him and desiring to set out at twelve at night, he was much more annoyed at our dilatoriness in the morning. We paid our accumulated account here, and became again independent of the world.

The country round Arbesau is the scene of one of the most fatal of the battles, the defeat of Vandamme, which caused the overthrow of Napoleon. The landscape is otherwise devoid of interest. Bare, sandy uplands are spread around without tree or inclosure. I dare say if we looked about, we should discover some rift in the earth, as at Rabenau, and descend amidst shady woods, and murmuring streams, and strange romantic rocks. A subterranean habitation, a gnome may be supposed to have formed; to lure a sylphid to his deep abode, which is all but incommunicable with upper air.

And this idea was almost realised, as descending the steep from Arbesau we reached Toplitz, which is situated in a valley on the banks of the Saubach. I hear that the country around is beautiful: of this we could see little. Our first achievement, after ordering dinner, was to visit the Baths. Anything more delicious you cannot imagine. Instead of entering a dirty coffin, as at Kissingen, or the sort of sarcophagus usually used for such purpose, one corner of the lofty and comparatively spacious room in which you bathe is lowered, and you go down a few marble steps into a basin of the same material, filled with water of delightful temperature and pellucid clearness. I never experienced a more agreeable bath. After dinner we wandered about the public gardens, which are very pretty, and diversified with sheets of water, and ate ices. Here we had the first specimen of a currency which is very odd, and puts strangers off their guard. We had left thalers, which are three shillings, and Bavarian florins, which are two francs, for Austrian florins, which value two shillings. We were surprised to receive our bill for our dinner, at Toplitz, nearly thirteen florins. We expostulated, and it was explained: Murray also gave us the key to this mystery — all pecuniary transactions are carried on in a nominal currency, called *schein,* two and a half in name larger than the *müntz,* which is the real currency. After a complicated sum in arithmetic — multiplying our bill by two, and then dividing it by five — we found our dinner (for four) cost us five florins twelve kreutzers. The annoyance of receiving a bill double what it ought to be, thus agreeably relieved by finding it reduced to less than half, pacifies the traveller, and takes away his power of discovering whether it is much or little in its mitigated state. We slept this night at a dirty inn at Lobositz.

31st AUGUST.

WE reached Prague this evening, stopping on our way at Doxan. The country is fertile and pleasant, but not striking. In the afternoon we saw Prague as we thought close, and expected to reach it in five minutes: — I think we were about two hours. Prague lies on the banks of the Moldau, and a part of the city climbs the height by which we descended; but the entrance is on the other side of the river, at the other extremity of the town; and the road makes a long circuit, sweeping round the hill and crossing the river at some distance from the gate. Looking down on Prague from the height, and with it thus in view so long, as we descended, it wore a most picturesque and almost eastern aspect, crowned as it is with minarets, domes, and spires.

The portion of Prague that lies on the banks of the river, is divided into an old and new town. The Neustadt, built by the Emperor Charles IV. in 1348 (the date of this novelty gives a delightful air of venerableness to the older portions of the city), was at first separated from the rest of the city by a ditch. This is now filled up, and gives the name to the handsomest street of the new town — the Graben — in which the best hotels are situated. There was no room at the Schwarzes Ross, which is considered the best; so we went to the Drei Linden, which we find comfortable.

We had intended proceeding immediately; but one of my companions is indisposed, and accordingly we remain a day at Prague. I write this letter, and now I am told the carriage is ready, and I am going out to see some of the lions. I shall have time for few, for many hours have been wasted this morning, and but short space of daylight remains. — Adieu.

PART III. — 1842.

LETTER I.

PRAGUE.
THURSDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1842.

STRANGE and wild legends appertain to Prague, and people the heights that overhang the city. The Bohemians are of Sclavonian race; they were in early times fire-worshippers, and offered victims to their divinity on the Laurenzi Berg, which rises behind the town. On the Hradschin, an eminence that frowns above the Moldau, was built the palace of the old Bohemian kings; and the metropolitan church of Prague stands in the palace-yard, on the highest point of the imperial hill.

The most prosperous period for Prague was the reign of the Emperor Charles IV. He appears in no favourable light in the pages of Italian history; but he won immortal and deserved renown as King of Bohemia, by his acts of magnificence, and the liberality and sagacity of his government. He caused the Neustadt to be built, marking the width and termination of the streets, and leaving the spaces to be filled up by private individuals, on whom great privileges were bestowed: the size of the streets and open areas interspersed, give it a noble distinction among the ill-built towns of the middle ages. Churches and convents rose around. He built also the grand old Bridge, which spans the broad and curved stream of the Moldau, and he founded the University, which long vied with Paris and Oxford in celebrity.

The earliest Reformers sprung up in Prague. John Huss was rector of the University: his tenets were the source of that independent and Protestant spirit which then first began to undermine the Roman Catholic faith. In early times, the Church of Bohemia obtained from the Council of Basle, that the sacramental cup should be administered to the laity; and this of itself was a broad distinction between Catholic Bohemia and the rest of the Papal world.

Although John Huss died at the stake, his influence continued high in his country, where he was reverenced as a saint. The Bohemians, loving their own language and their own customs — a sagacious and intelligent race — were well pleased with any state of things that should conduce to separate them more widely from the surrounding German nations.

The time came when they were to fall. When the rest of Europe was in darkness and enslaved, Bohemia had a pure religion and free institutions: now it is but a province of Austria, and there are not one hundred Protestants in the country. The Emperor Mathias first endeavoured to uproot its liberty, and the Jesuits had been established, to counterbalance, by their insidious system of encroachment, the influence openly possessed by the Protestants. This state of things could not last. The Emperor supported Catholicism, and wished to assimilate Bohemia to his Austrian provinces in language, laws and religion: the national Diet endeavoured to preserve their country as a distinct kingdom. The Emperor insisted on naming his successor, in the person of his brother Ferdinand: the crown had hitherto been elective, and the nobles resolved to preserve their rights. On the death of Mathias, they called to the throne the Elector Palatine, a Calvinist: the Emperor Ferdinand claimed the country as his own, and invaded it.

For one year, Elizabeth of England held a gay and chivalrous court in Prague. Had her husband been a statesman and a soldier, he might have disciplined his brave, enthusiastic subjects, and have repulsed the invasion of Austria. He was vanquished ingloriously, and, forced to fly from the city, he became a wanderer and an exile. Ferdinand triumphed; but a collision between his pretensions and the free institutions of Bohemia was inevitable. The nobles resisted the Emperor’s edicts, and tossed his commissioners out of the windows of the Green Chamber of the palace. This act was the first deed of violence of the thirty years’ war, which hence began, nor ended till all Germany was devastated, and Bohemia enslaved.

We set out on a brief drive round the town, to view the spots where these scenes had taken place. Leaving our hotel, we passed through the crowded and trading Alstadt, and crossed the bridge which connects the Klein Seite with the city. On this stands the statue of St. John Nepomuk, who, the legend says, was thrown from that spot into the Moldau below, for refusing to betray to Wenceslaus IV. secrets confided to him by his Queen in the confessional. A constellation of five stars was observed to hover over the water, exciting the curiosity and terror of the pious; so that at last the river was dragged; the body of the saint was found, and received honourable interment — though not canonization until some centuries after. Such is the legend; but the true history of this saint, as Mr. Reeve relates it, differs materially, and is curious. He tells us, he perished a martyr to church reform:—” During the contests between Wenceslaus IV. and the then Archbishop of Prague (John of Genzstein, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria), with regard to certain matters of church property, the prelate was vigorously supported by his Vicar-General, Johanko von Pomuk, upon whom the King wreaked his vengeance; and the spot is still shewn where he was thrown into the river. This event took place in 1381, and was soon forgotten by the people. Time, however, rolled on; John Huss perished in the flames at Constance, and, as his schism was followed by the larger portion of the Bohemian nation, St. John Huss became an object of popular reverence. I have seen hymns in his honour, which were sung in churches even towards the close of the sixteenth century. But when the Jesuits were installed at Prague, to extirpate the Bohemian heresies, they found it useful to have a St, John of their own. The legend of St. John Nepomuk was invented; his relics were shewn; an epic poem, the Nepomuceidon, was composed by the Jesuit Percicus in his honour in 1729; he was canonized, and his fame spread with amazing rapidity throughout the Catholic Church. These honours are now so intimately connected with the system in which they originated, that I once heard a distinguished Bohemian declare that no good could befal his country till St. John Nepomuk was once more thrown into the Moldau.” Meanwhile, he has become the guardian saint of bridges; his statue, surmounted by the image of the five miraculous stars, in a more or less rude form, finds a place on almost every bridge of Catholic Germany, as it does here on the Bridge of Prague — on the very spot whence he was thrown.

In the Klein Seite the nobles had their palaces, and we saw that of the princely Wallenstein: “coiled as it were round the foot of the imperial rock,” to make room for which a hundred humbler houses were rased. Wallenstein, who had arrived at mid life in comparative obscurity, first came forward in a conspicuous manner in the Bohemian war. His immense riches were principally derived from the confiscations of the expelled and exiled Hussites. When some years after his command was taken from him, he built this palace, where he lived in princely grandeur, feeding his imagination with dreams of yet higher glory, ministered to him by Seni the astrologer. It was in early life, during his residence at the University of Padua, that Wallenstein first heard from the Professor Argoli that the stars above echoed the cherished dreams of his own heart. There is no trace, we are told, that Wallenstein ever followed any particular directions emanating from the stars; but the knowledge that they predicted greatness biased his imagination, strengthened his resolutions, and made him boldly enter on a career from which a man of lowlier hopes had shrunk.

The stars foretold greatness to Wallenstein; did they foretell, obscurely, so that he could not decipher their true meaning, that he should obtain that, the want of which made Alexander weep — a poet to illustrate his deeds? This greatness was perhaps written in the starry scroll, whose real meaning he could not decipher, and so aimed at a success that ended in defeat, but which, by means of Schiller, has become immortal glory. Such lights as well as shadows lure us on under the form of regarded or despised presentiments.

“I would not call them
Voices of warning that announce to us
Only the inevitable.”

Wallenstein has been peculiarly fortunate in having two poets; for Coleridge’s translation of Schiller’s tragedy, giving the German poetry an English poetic form, causes him to belong to both countries.

Dark shadows for centuries have obscured the name of Wallenstein; amidst the uncertain there is enough of certain to form a hero both in good and ill; but the chief good, which places him side by side with his illustrious rival, Gustavus Adolphus, was his religious toleration, in an age of bitter, cruel, unrelenting religious persecution.

Passing this extensive palace, we ascended the height on which the Hradschin is situated; old princely Prague, the native city of the savage Ziska, of the martyred Huss, and of generations of resolute, free, and noble citizens, lay beneath in sleepy decay. It is impossible not to ponder upon the world’s fate. Had the Prince Palatine been a hero; had Wallenstein, by birth a Bohemian, not fallen in his youth into the hands of the Jesuits; had he grown up as he was baptized, a Lutheran, would not Bohemia have been able to maintain its political and religious liberty? Would not the thirty years’ war have been crushed in the egg? would not Germany, which has never recovered the devastation and massacres of that period, have continued flourishing and become free? and might the Huguenots, so supported, not have been quite crushed in France.

But Frederick was an empty coward, Wallenstein a pupil of the Jesuits, and the world is as it is.

Our coachman went a little out of his way up the river, to shew us where a suspension bridge is hung across the Moldau; but disdaining the modern invention, we caused the horses' heads to be turned, and recrossed the bridge of St. John Nepomuk, that we might view the traces of the bombardment of the gate by the Swedes; the defaced ornaments and battered appearance still recall that time. I was very sorry to see no more, but though thus an outside view was all I caught of this picturesque and ancient city, — its mosque-like churches, the dark pile of the old royal palace, its deserted mansions, and noble river, form a living scene in my memory never to be effaced. " The day we come to a place which we have long heard and read of, is an era in our lives; from that moment the very name calls up a picture." The stilly evening shed golden rays over dome, tower, and minaret, and brightened the wide waters of the river. I returned with regret to our hotel.

LETTER II.

Miilchen. — Budweis. — Linz.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 2.

WE hired a *lohn-kutscher* to take us to Budweis — about sixty miles — which was to occupy two days: for this we are to pay, including *drink-gelt,* forty-four florins. I ought to mention, that the coachman who took us from Dresden to Prague, refunded the overcharge of two thalers made by the fellow employed by him to take us through the Saxon Switzerland.

I must tell you that the Germans look down on the *voituriers* as people of the lowest grade of society. One German master at Kissingen, who made the bargain with the man who took us to Leipsic, actually spoke to him with the *er* — the third person singular — than which no greater insult can be imagined. These distinctions are droll, varying as they do in different countries. The Germans do not address each other with the plural *you,* as is our custom: *thou* denotes affection and familiarity. The common mode of speaking to friends, acquaintances, servants, shopkeepers — to everybody indeed — is the third person plural, *sie,* they: your own dog you treat with the *du,* thou; the dog of your enemy with *er,* or he. The Germans have a habit of staring quite inconceivable — I speak, of course, of the people one chances to meet travelling as we do. For instance, in the common room of an hotel, if a man or woman there have nothing else to do, they will fix their eyes on you, and never take them off for an hour or more. There is nothing rude in their gaze, nothing particularly inquiring, though you suppose it must result from curiosity: perhaps it does; but their eyes follow you with pertinacity, without any change of expression. At Rabenau, and other country places, the little urchins would congregate from the neighbouring cottages, follow us about, up the hills, and beside the waterfall, form a ring and stare. A magic word to get rid of them is very desirable: here it is — ask one of them, *"Was will er?"*

"What does *he* want?" The *er* is irresistible — the little wretches feel the insult to their very backbone, and make off at once. That the *kutchers* endure the *er* is astonishing. I could not address them so: for surely it is the excess of inhumanity as well as insolence to use a form of speech that denotes contempt to persons who have never offended you. With the starers it is otherwise; they do offend grievously, and one has a full right to get rid of them at almost any cost. I will just add, that except the under-driver who had charge of us during our tour through the Saxon Switzerland, we have not had reason to complain of our German *kutchers* — nor any reason to be pleased: they are quiet to sullenness; never gave up a point; and never seemed to care whether we were pleased or not. However, under this sort of sulky apathy there lurked an aptitude for getting into the most violent rage, if their pockets are touched, which was very startling, as compared with the absence of all expression of kindly feeling.

We set out from Prague in the morning, not quite as early as we ought, which disturbed the order of our travelling — a fact difficult to instil into the minds of some travellers, — but in *voiturier* travelling the whole comfort depends on an early departure. It seems that if a certain portion of work, with certain rests, are to occupy the day, it does not much matter how these are portioned out. It is not so; and experience shows an early departure in the morning and an early arrival in the evening to be the only arrangement that makes this method of travelling at all comfortable. We set out late, and we had a carriage provided, uncomfortable from its extreme smallness: it was, indeed, a mere hack drosky, taken from the streets; one person only could sit outside, and four were exceedingly confined for room inside.

The weather continued fine and warm; and now in the heart of Bohemia, we looked inquiringly abroad to see how a portion of earth, with a name sounding to our western ears strange and even mysterious, differed from any other. We saw few distinctions — the villages were low-built and dirty; the towns rather pleasing in their appearance, looking airy, with a large square or market-place in the midst, surrounded by low white houses. Hill and dale surrounded us, consisting of a good deal of pasture; but the circumstance that chiefly struck us was, that we saw not a trace of the residence of any landed proprietor, no château, no country seat, no park, nor garden. We saw no house which any but a peasant, or in the infrequent towns, that any but one in an under grade of life, could inhabit. I cannot in my ignorance explain either the meaning or results of this state of things.

Perhaps it arises from the circumstance, that the domains of the Bohemian nobility are so large that they are rather small tributary states. The nobles possess ample privileges; and some among them, who belong to the old native families, are truly patriotic, and devote themselves to the good of their tenants, who are almost their subjects; but Prince Swarzenberg and Prince Mettemich, who are among the richest landed proprietors of the province, are certainly absentees; and probably the list of such is considerable. However this may be, and whatever may be the cause, we looked out eagerly, as we crawled slowly along, for traces of the habitations of gentry — a race more important often to the prosperity of a country than the nobility — but we saw none.

We expected to sleep at Tabor — our kutcher had so designed, but our late setting out changed his views. This annoyed us; and one of our party, familiar with German — of no great use, since the man was a Bohemian — sat by him and gave him k*irch-wasser* and cigars, and used what verbal eloquence he could, to persuade him that we might get on to Tabor. The man drank the *kirch-wasser,* smoked the cigars, and said nothing; while we hoped, in accordance to the old saying, that silence gave consent. At about ten o'clock we arrived at a miserable-looking village, with a worse-looking inn — such as carters and waggoners might frequent. With difficulty, for the entrance was encumbered and tortuous, we entered the court-yard. We sat in silent despair; but it was necessary to yield. I was taken up a broken staircase to a barn-looking room, with a number of beds in it — it was the only sleeping-room. A handsome, proud-looking girl, the daughter of the house, with a hand-maiden under her, began to arrange my bed. The people in the south of Germany are not disinclined, when generous, to give you a clean under sheet; but the upper one is double and encases the quilt, and this they do not think it necessary to change. I summoned all my German, consisting but of single words; *schmuzig*, or dirty, applied to the sheet, made the girl angry; but, on my insisting on having another, she complied with the air of an offended empress. My maid slept in the same room. I never dared ask how my companions passed the night — the beds were taken for them out of my room. However, they got an excellent rapper (of which I was too tired to partake) of venison — not a common thing in Bohemia; for usually we only got a disastrous *huhn* (a fowl), rather drier and tougher than deal chips. The name of this village was Mülchen. Our bill was six florins and a half. I mention these prices; for they show, as they vary from one end of Germany to another, sometimes the value of money, sometimes the inclination to extort. Th*e schein* money still continues; so you will understand that a bill was brought in for more than sixteen florins, which, multiplying by two and dividing by five, we reduced to the real demand in florins Münz. This sort of currency probably springs from the Austrian money introduced by conquest being of too high value for the poverty of Bohemia, who adhered to their own inferior coin, with a new name.

The people of Bohemia, such as we saw them, are better-looking than the peasantry of those parts *of* Germany which we had visited; but there is nothing particularly attractive about them. It is impossible, however, to judge fairly even of the surface of a people whose language one does not understand. The Bohemians do not expect to be understood by strangers, unless they can themselves speak Germany and they are too little conversant with foreigners to take any sort of interest in them. Their manner was abrupt and decided, with a mixture of sullen disdain; dirty enough they are, and very poor. The Bohemians are, indeed, singularly cut off from the rest of the earth. Their language is exclusively their own — not understood beyond the boundary. Except to visit Prague, and one or two of their Baths, no strangers enter their country, From what I can gather, they bear the marks of a conquered people, adhering to the customs and practices of their forefathers, forgotten everywhere else — satisfied with themselves — averse to improvement, which, indeed; has no avenue by which to reach them — they remember that they were once free, though they have forgotten that they were Protestants.

3RD SEPTEMBER.

We still proceeded, not a little weary — the *drosky* was so very uncomfortable — over hill and dale, and through miserable villages, or now and then a larger town, with its wide square and long range of low houses. We stopped at a better-looking inn than that of Müchen for our mid-day meal, but fared worse; the only thing they could give us was the unfortunate *huhn,* against which we had made many violent resolutions, and now entered many vain protests; this, and the absence of bread — for I cannot give that name to the sour, black, damp, uneatable substance they brought as such — made our meals very like a Barmecide feast. Nor was the table graced with clean linen; but to this we had become painfully accustomed.

We rolled on. The weather was beautiful; the country was pleasing without being striking.

The day's journey was long; we entered Budweis late, by moonlight. This is a large town; and by this light, there was something singular in the appearance of its extensive market-place, surrounded by arcades. The Goldene Sonne is marked by Murray as good, and we had no reason to alter this decision. The hostess was a tall, large woman, of resolute and abrupt manners; she spoke German readily, and, uncommon in Germany, served us with expedition, but with an authoritative and condescending manner, which amused us very much.

We inquired, and found that there was no locomotive on the railroad, that it was drawn by horses; that it set out at three in the morning, and that we should reach Linz the next day. We sent to take our places, and made a great mistake in not securing an "exclusive extra" as the Americans call it — a coach and horse all to ourselves, which we might have obtained at a slight extra expense, and we should have been perfectly comfortable. Our five places cost fifteen florins, and we had to pay seven extra for luggage; which, considering the quantity we had, was dear. Our bill at Budweis for supper and beds, and a cup of coffee in the morning, was eleven florins — nearly double the bill at Mülchen, and, compared even with Prague, dear.

SEPTEMBER 4TH.

We did not go to bed till nearly twelve. We were to rise at two; and at the blast of a trumpet we were awakened. You must know, besides its glass, Prague is famous for the manufacture of brass wind instruments, and P — bought a trumpet for sixteen florins (thirty-two shillings): to prevent all possibility of any of the party not shaking off slumber at the right moment, he blew a blast which must have astonished all the sleepers in the inn.

We again traversed the ghostly-looking white market-place of Budweis by the light of the unset moon, and took our places in one of the carriages on the railroad. Day soon struggled through the shades of night, quenched the moonbeams, and disclosed the face of earth. I never recollect a more delightful drive than the hundred miles between Budweis and Linz: each hour the scene gains in beauty — from fertile and agreeable, it becomes interesting, then picturesque; and at last it presents a combination of beauty which I never saw equalled. I hurry over the miles, as our carriages were hurried along the railroad, which having an inclination down toward Linz, went very fast — I hurry on, and speak briefly of the ever-varying panorama of distant mountain, wood-clothed upland and fertile plain, all gay in sunshine, which we commanded as we were whirled along the brink of a chain of hills. I never can forget the glorious sunset of that evening. We were on the height of a mountain,

"At whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant." —

As we descended towards Linz, the sun dropped low in the heavens. The prospect was extensive; varied by the lines of wooded hills and majestic mountains, and towering above, on the horizon, was stretched the range of the Salzburg and Styrian Alps. The Danube wound through the varied plain below; the town of Linz was upon the banks, and a bridge spanned the river; above, it swept under high precipices — below, it flowed majestically on: its glittering waves were seen afar giving that life and sublimity to the landscape which it never acquires without the addition of ocean, lake, or river — water, in short, in some magnificent form. Golden and crimson, the clouds waited on the sun, now dazzling in brightness; and now, as that sunk behind the far horizon, stretching away in fainter and fainter hues, reflected by the broad river below. The town of Linz was a point or resting place for the eye, which added much to the harmony and perfection of the landscape. I held my breath to look. My heart had filled to the brim with delight, as, sitting on a rock by the lake of Como, I had watched the sunlight climb the craggy mountains opposite. The effect of this evening — when instead of *up,* I looked *down* on a widespread scene of glorious beauty, was different; yet so poor is language, that I know not how to paint the difference in words. I had never before been aware of all the awe the spirit feels when we are taken to a mountain top, and behold the earth spread out fair at our feet: nor of the delight a traveller receives when, at the close of a day's travel, he —

"Obtains the brow of tome high-climbing hill,
Which, to his eye, discovers unawares

The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen; or some renowned metropolis,
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the *setting* sun gilds with his beams."

It was dark when we descended into the town: as we crossed the bridge, the waters of the Danube gleamed beneath the hills.

We repaired to the hotel of the Goldener Löwe, which we find comfortable and good.

LETTER III.

The Traun. — The Gmunden-see. — Ishl. — St. Wolfgang Lake. — Salzburg.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH.

THE train of the railroad started at two in the afternoon for Gmunden: we thus had a few hours to spare. One of our party climbed the heights above Linz, to feast his eyes on the view which had enchanted me the preceding evening. There is no circumstance in travelling, consequent on my narrow means, that I regret so much, as my being obliged to deny myself hiring a carriage when I arrive at a strange town, and the not being able to drive about everywhere, and see everything. I wandered about the town, and stood long on the bridge, drinking in the beauty of the scene, till the soul became full to the brim with the sense of delight. The river is indeed magnificent; with speed, yet with a vastness that renders speed majestic, it hurries on the course assigned to it by the Creator. Never, never had I so much enjoyed the glory of earth. The Danube gives Linz a superiority over a thousand scenes otherwise of equal beauty. Standing on the bridge, above is a narrow pass, hedged in by high sombre rocks, and the river sweeps, darkening as it goes, beneath the gloomy shadows of the precipices; below, it flows in a mighty stream through a valley of wide expanse, till you lose sight of it at the base of distant mountains. I should liked to have stayed some days at Linz: I grieved also not to be going by steam to Vienna.

Our drive by the railroad to Gmunden was delightful. We had a little carriage to ourselves. Our road lay through a valley watered by a stream, and adorned by woods; it was a sequestered home-felt scene; while the high distant mountains redeemed it from tameness. After the sandy deserts of Prussia, and the burnt-up country round Dresden, the freshness and green of a pastoral valley, the murmur of streams and rivulets, the delightful umbrage of the trees, imparted a sense of peace and amenity that lapped me in Elysium. We changed the train at Lambach, a quiet shady village. We had bargained that we should be allowed to visit the falls of the Traun on our way. It was evening before we reached the spot, and the falls are nearly a mile from the road; we had no guide, but were told we could not miss the way. Our path lay through a wood, and as twilight deepened we sometimes doubted whether we had not gone astray through the gloom of the thicket. You know that a mile of unknown road, with some suspicion hovering in the mind as to whether you are in the right path, becomes at least three, or rather one feels as if it would never end. We came at last to the brink of the precipice above the river, and descended by steps cut in the rock. We thus reached the lower part of the fall. With some difficulty, it being so late, the Miller was found, and meanwhile we clambered to the points of rock from which the cascade is viewed. It was dim twilight, with the moon quietly moving among the summer clouds, and shedding its silver on the waters. The river winding above through a wooded ravine comes to an abrupt rocky descent, over which it falls with foam and spray. The drought had reduced the supply of water; a portion also is carried off for the purpose of traffic — a wooden canal being constructed to allow the salt barges to ascend and descend the Traun without interruption from the cascade. This canal is on an inclined plain, and it would be very delightful to rush down: we could not, as there was no boat; but for six swanzikers (six eightpences) the sluices were shut and the water, blocked up, turned to feed and augment the fall. The evening hour took from the accuracy of our view, but added immeasurably to its charm; the mysterious glittering of the spray beneath the moon; the deep shadows of the rocks and trees; the soft air and dashing waters — here was the reward for infinite fatigue and inconvenience; here we grasped an hour which, when the memory of every discomfort has become almost a pleasure, will endure as one of the sweetest in life. Our carriage all the time was waiting for us by the road-side, so we tore ourselves away. We procured a boy with a lantern to guide us on our return through the wood; and, reaching the road, away we sped along the rails. Our moonlit view, as we went, was pregnant with a sense of placid enjoyment, being picturesque but gentle in its features of wood, village, and glimmering stream; while the dark and gloomy Traunstein rose frowning before our path. We reached Gmunden late, and found a very comfortable inn; it had a court in the middle and an open balcony on the different floors, into which a number of cell-like rooms opened. We had a good supper of fish from the lake, and the comfortable promise of a steam-boat at eleven the next morning; so there was no need for anxiety with regard to early rising.

SEPTEMBER 6TH.

We fared sumptuously this morning on fish and game; our bill was therefore comparatively high — thirteen florins; it had been the same at Linz. The cost of the railroad to Gmunden, for which we had a carriage for four to ourselves and a place in one of the *diligences* of the train for my maid, was thirteen florins; we had to pay three extra for our luggage.

But enough of these matters. Now for another scene, which will ever dwell in my memory, coloured by the softest tints, yet sublime — the lake of Gmunden. As the steamer carried us away from the town, which appeared noisy and busy after Bohemia, we might believe that we broke our link with vulgar earth — the waters spread out before us so solitary, so tranquil. The lofty crags of the Traunstein rose on our left — bare, abrupt, and dark — while the sunlight varied its shadows as we moved on; opposite, the lake was bounded by grassy hills, speckled with villages and spires, with here and there a cove, half shut in by precipitous rocks, half accessible through shady thickets, with green sloping sward down to the water's edge. These bays had a sequestered appearance, as if the foot of man had never desecrated their loneliness. By one of those unexplainable impulses of the mind, which spring up spontaneously and unlooked for, a sense of the beauty of the Greek mythology was awakened in me, more vivid, more real than I had ever before experienced. As the poet says, I could, while looking

"On that pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;"

of dryad hiding among the trees; of nymph gazing at her own beauty in the lucid wave; of an immortal race — in short, the innocent offspring of nature, whose existence was love and enjoyment; who, freed from the primæval curse, might haunt this solitary spot. Why should not such be? If the earthly scales fell from our eyes, should we not perceive that "all the regions of nature swarm with spirits," and affirm, with Milton, that —

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.”

It is easier for the imagination to conjure such up in spots untrod by man, so to people with love and gratitude what would otherwise be an unsentient desert. Not that I would throw contempt on the pleasures of the animal creation, nor even on those of tree, or herb, or flower, which merely enjoys a conscious life, and in its pride of beauty feels happy, and, as it decays, peacefully resigns existence. But this does not satisfy us, who are born to look beyond the grave, and yearn to acquire knowledge of spiritual essences.

I cannot tell you the sacred pleasure with which I brooded over these fancies, which were rather sensations than thoughts, so heartfelt and intimate were they. I scarce dared breathe, and longed to linger on our way, so not so quickly to put from my lips the draughts of happiness which I imbibed.

You may remember that this was the spot that poor Sir Humphry Davy visited during his last painful illness: many hours he beguiled fishing in the streams that fall into the lake. Happy, or in sorrow, I hope to return, and spend a summer in this neighbourhood: joy would be more than doubled, and grief softened into resignation, amidst scenes which, among many beautiful, exercised a power over my imagination I never felt before. How deeply I regret not having spent the season here instead of at Kissingen and Dresden; but last summer in Wales so blended the idea of deluges of rain with mountain scenery, that the search of health, a wish to see some friends, and a longing to behold strange cities, made us prefer the North. Regret is useless now. Shall I ever have a sunny summer, when I may choose at will a retreat? If I have, it will be spent here.

The scenery round the lake increased in wildness and sublimity as we lost sight of Gmunden. I was very sorry when our one-hour’s voyage was over, and we landed at Ebensee. Here a sort of large car waited for the passengers, and we drove up a wooded glen, through which the Traun flowed — a mountain torrent, broken by rocks — to Ishl. This is a fashionable bathing-place: it is situated in a deep valley, surrounded by hills; though beautiful, it had not the charm of the scenes we had just left; indeed, a lake amidst mountains must always exceed a grassy valley: there is a magic charm in the notion of a *tot* on the verdant, wooded banks of a lonely lake — the boat drawn up in a neighbouring cove — the sheltering mountains gathering around. However, Ishl presents excellent head-quarters for excursions in this neighbourhood.

We here seriously discussed our future progress* A desire to visit an Italian lake, as yet unknown, made us select the Brenner pass and the Lago di Garda for our entrance into the Peninsula. The extreme beauty of the country in which we are, makes us desire to see as much of it as possible; and various names, the lake of Hallstadt and Bad Gastein, hung before, to lure us towards them. But we cannot linger; and, on making inquiries, it seems that, unless we make excursions perfectly independent of our ultimate bourne, we cannot visit these spots, — in short, that to do so we ought to spend a summer, choosing some head-quarters, from which to diverge in different radii; but that to go to Venice, we must abide by a known and frequented road.

I gave up the idea of a prolonged stay in this neighbourhood with exceeding regret; but when resolved to proceed, many difficulties presented themselves. The people of the hotel at Ishl, which was large, new, clean, and good, but at the moment nearly empty, were resolved that we should spend at least one night there; and neither post-horses with carriage, nor *voituriers*, could be procured, — being a fine day, they declared that every horse had been taken out by various parties of visitors for picnics and excursions. This was a renewal of the scene at Schandau. We ought to have yielded at once, and been satisfied to make an agreement for setting out the following morning; but we were stubborn, and much time was very disagreeably taken up by the struggle; and the dogged obstinacy and rude sullenness of the people exasperated some among us very much. They had the best of it however, and we were forced to resign ourselves to remain the night: a change then came, almost magical; the people, late so rude, were all courtesy; and sullenness turned into obligingness. Nor were they bent on extortion: our bill altogether was seventeen florins.

Being now at peace in our minds, we wandered for some time beside the Ishl. If we had been transported suddenly to this spot, we had been enchanted; but we had passed through more beautiful scenery to reach it. There were a good many visitors: among them, Maria Louisa, a woman who might have been respected among women; but she forfeited her privilege.

SEPTEMBER 27.

The drive from Ishl to Salzburg was delightful. The road, for a considerable space, bordered the St. Wolfgang Lake. At the head of the lake, the horses rested for an hour; and my friends took a boat, and went on it to bathe. I joined them afterwards. There was not the same charm in this lake as in the Gmunden-see. I cannot tell you why; for I find no language to express differences which are immense to Our perceptions, and yet vary little in the description. Both present a wide expanse of water, surrounded by precipitous mountains or grassy banks. This, too, was grand, and solitary, and beautiful, but less softly inviting — less, as it were, holy in its calm, and, at the same time, less cheerful in its aspect — than the Gmunden-see.

What will you say to me when I say that Salzburg surpassed all? It has indeed been pronounced to be the most beautiful spot in Germany. Wherefore? It has not the majestic Danube, as at Linz, sweeping under dark, overhanging cliffs, and winding through a spacious valley, till lost to sight beneath distant mountains: it has not a lake sheltered by hills, with bay and inlet sacred to the sprites. It is observed that one of the most admirable features of a scene is where lofty mountains and an extensive plain unite. This is rare: usually mountains inclose a ravine, or valley, or lake; and the scenery around Salzburg is a specimen on the grandest scale in the world of this mixture.

Imagine a vast, fertile, various plain, half-encircled by mighty mountains — those near the town are abrupt cliffs, which tower above, crowned by castle and convent — with a river sweeping round their base; others, high and picturesque, but of softer forms, and wooded; and then, high above all, craggy, gigantic Alps — not the highest, for at this summer season scarcely a north-turned peak has preserved its snow, but still stupendous — some showing their dark, beetling sides, like Cader Idris, but on a larger scale; others, with what in Switzerland are called *aiguilles*, their spire-like peaks seeking the upper skies. Remember, we saw all this beneath a bright sun, the air so dry and pure that every crag and cleft was distinct on the face of the hills at an immense distance. The plain itself has a richer and more cheerful and rural appearance than any I have seen since I left England. The beauty of its meadows and gardens, the frequency of its country-houses, the indescribable variety of the landscape, enchant the eye. What a summer might here be spent! — what a life, I would say, had not society and home a claim; — were it not a dream that we can be happy only in the contemplation of nature, removed from all intercourse with our equals. But you see the magic circle: Linz, Gmunden, Ishl — these are in Styria — then the district called the Salzkammergut. Such is the region in which I design, if I am ever able, to pass some long months, and to enjoy even more than I have ever yet done, the delight of exploring scenery unrivalled in the world. Yes; though the thought of Italy reproaches, and for *life,* I should not hesitate to choose between the two; yet there is something more sublime, more grand, more mysterious, in this Alpine region; which, as far as I have seen, I infinitely prefer to Switzerland.

As we approached Salzburg, we found the fields and green uplands near the town alive with people. Horse-racing was going on; and the whole population had poured out to see it, reproaching our dusty carriage and our fatigue by the gaiety of the equipages and the holiday trim of the spectators. I do not know anything more humbling to one's self-conceit than arriving travel-tired and soiled amidst a crowd of well-dressed people; so we looked another way, and went right on to the inn. We found that the inauguration of the statue of Mozart and the anniversary of the century after his birth had been celebrated by three days of holiday at Salzburg — this, the last. It was a great pity we had not arrived the day before to hear one of his Operas; but we were too late. As a token of veneration for this greatest of all composers, Mr. P—— —— — endeavoured to gain admission to the organ on which Mozart had played for years; but the absence of the person in authority prevented his success.

The inn of the Erzherzog Carl is very good; but our duties pressed on us. We could not linger, and we must make arrangements for our further progress. We ascertained here a fact, which we suspected before, that the addition which our party had received at Dresden, however delightful in other respects, spoiled the financial economy of our journey. Persons travelling in Austria without a carriage can, if four in number, secure a *separat wagen,* and obtain a clean carriage to convey them post the whole way, at a slight advance on the price of the *eilwagen*; but we were five —

we must, therefore, have two carriages, and the expense was doubled. We did not find a *voiturier* much cheaper. Had we gone post, we should have gone by Villach, and reached Venice in four or five days. But we had set our hearts on the Lago di Garda, and that decided us. We made a bargain for two *calèches,* with a pair of horses to each, to take us over the Brenner to Trent, in five days and a half, for a hundred and forty florins. We have now left the Münz and schein money, and have passed from the Austrian to the Bavarian florin: this is a gain — the former is two shillings, the latter two francs; and they are worth the same in expenditure. Settling this affair occupied us, at intervals, during the whole evening. We rambled a little about the town, which is remarkable for a large handsome square, with a fountain, built of white marble, and said to be the finest in Europe: it would be finer had it more water. The statue of Mozart is placed in another part of the square: it is of a large size, and striking. On account of the festival, there was no possibility of visiting the *lions* — every body was out, and all things closed. We wandered beyond the town, on the margin of the Salzer — an impetuous torrent, rushing at the foot of romantic crags. It is a region of enchanting beauty, which I shall leave with great regret. Still, it is much to have had this sort of fl*ash-of-lightning* view of the lovely scenes we have lately passed through; and I hope, some day, to visit them again at leisure.

LETTER IV.

Entrance to the Tyrol. — Village Fête. — Pass Strub. — Swartz. — Iuspruck.

MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER.

We left Salzburg at ten o'clock, on a fine sunny morning. We were about to penetrate the most celebrated passes of the Tyrol, — and the name has magic in it. We wound through the plain of the Salzkammergut, hedged in by lofty mountains, that rise sheer and abrupt from the plain, without any apparent opening by which their recesses may be penetrated. The Tyrol is the most continuously mountainous district in Europe. Switzerland contains plains and lakes — the Tyrol has only defiles and ravines, hedged in closely on all sides by precipice and mountain; while, in the depths, the torrents from the hills unite and form rivers, which turn many a mill-wheel destined for domestic use, besides carrying the riches of the country (salt) down various canals, fed by them, till it reaches the Danube. Once, these streams were laden with the hopes — the fate — of the Tyrolese, and watched with beating hearts by the heroes about to combat for their country — by the women and children who sympathised with and aided the stronger sex in their glorious struggle. The night of the 8th April, 1809, was fixed on for the general rising of the peasantry against the French and Bavarians: the signal agreed upon was throwing sawdust into the Inn, which floated down, and was seen and understood by the peasants. In addition to this, a plank with a little pennon was launched on the river and borne down the stream, and hailed with enthusiasm, as it carried the tidings that all were about to rise to liberate their country.

It is by these defiles — that of the Saal — and afterwards of the Inn — that travellers reach the Brenner. We approached the mighty crags, and by degrees they closed around us, and we found ourselves in a ravine, with the Saal — a common name of a river in Germany — flowing through its depth. This sort of route is familiar to all who have travelled among mountains. Thus are these districts traversed. The chains of mountains are intersected by ravines, and torrents work their way in the depth; the road is carried along the margin — now ascending, now descending, now turning the huge shoulder of a hill, now penetrating into its recesses, according as the formation of the pass requires.

Soon after leaving Salzburg, we came upon a strip of Bavarian territory; and it was necessary to stop at the last Austrian Custom-house, to have our luggage loaded. While this was being done, the sounds of a fiddle caused us to peep into the public room of a little; inn. A marriage, was being celebrated, and dancing going on. A curious sight it was. The men are a handsome race, dressed as we are accustomed to see them represented — the jacket, tight breeches fastened at the knee, the sash round the waist, stockings and shoes, and high hat and feather, form a very becoming costume for a good figure. But, alas! for the women: their waists are placed up between their shoulders; their petticoats, short; a peaked man's hat, like a Welchwoman's, completes their ungainly appearance. Nor did I see any beauty: the youngest were weather-beaten and clumsy: they were destitute of all soft feminine grace, and seemed a cross between a boy and an old woman. The dancing is infinitely strange. They *walz* with impetuosity — with frenzy — interspersing their dance with certain capers, twists, hugs and leaps, which evidently excited great admiration: a Highland fling was nothing to it. We found Murray's description true to the letter, and were much amused; Remember, too, that amidst all the twirlings, springs, And kickings, in which they indulged, the dance was performed with a gravity worthy of a Parisian ball-room, and with, infinite precision; no jostling; no romping; their capers were executed by rule, and with perfect decorum.

The pass we continued to penetrate — *Pass Strub,* which forms the portal of the Tyrol — is one of the most beautiful in the world. We left the Saal; and now crossing the huge shoulders of mighty hills, now thridding other deep gorges, we wound our tortuous way, till we should reach the Unter Innthal, or valley of the lower Inn. This night we slept at Waidringen, a very rustic place, b*ut* we were comfortable enough. Our fare was wild food: we had supper, our rooms, and coffee in the morning; and our bill amounted to four Bavarian florins, for five persons.

SEPTEMBER 9.

THE Tyrol was ever celebrated for the beauty of its scenery, and the integrity and simplicity of its inhabitants. In 1780, Mr. Beckford travelled here, and celebrates, in various of his inimitable Letters, "the Tyrol, a country of picturesque wonders." "Here," he says, "those lofty peaks, those steeps of wood I delight in, lay before us. Innumerable clear springs gushed out on every side, overhung by luxuriant shrubs in blossom; soft blue vapours rest upon the hills, above which rise mountains that bear plains of snow into the clouds."

The Tyrol is now endowed with a higher interest: it is hallowed by a glorious struggle, which gifts every rock, and precipice, and mountain-stream, with a tale of wonder.

The Tyrol became by inheritance a possession of the house of Hapsburgh as far back as the fourteenth century. The princes of Austria showed themselves worthy sovereigns of this province. The internal government of the country was the object of wise legislation; and, in spite of the opposition of Pope and noble, and imperial city, the Tyrolese received the gift of a free constitution, and governed and taxed themselves. These blessings are guarded by the fact that the soil of the mountains is their own. There are no noble landlords to carry off the wealth of the country in the shape of rents, forcing the labourers to waste their lives in penury and toil, that they may squander in vice and luxury. The peasant possesses the land he cultivates. He is independent, pious, and honest. No mercenary troops have ever been hired among these mountains; but the Tyrolesé are not unwarlike. They are devotedly attached to the House of Austria, which conferred their privileges, protected them, exacted few taxes, and in no way displayed the cloven foot of despotism, in this happy region. Their domestic government is carried on by themselves. They furnish a slight contingent to the imperial armies, which is looked upon as an opening to active life, and operates rather beneficially on the population. They are accustomed to the use of arms, for the militia is called out and exercised each year. They are a happy, brave, religious, free, and virtuous people.

But what is all this to ambition? It suited the views of Napoleon that the Tyrol should belong to Bavaria, when he raised it from an electorate to a kingdom; and by the treaty of Presburg in 1805, Austria ceded, with reluctance it is true, but still it ceded, the best jewel of its crown. The Tyrolese had lately, under the command of the Austrians, defended their passes against the Bavarians with heroic bravery — now they were to become subjects of the inimical power.

Their very hearts revolted against their change of masters. But they had far worse to suffer. Their *new* sovereign promised solemnly to govern them by their old laws, and to respect their institutions; but no sooner were the Bavarian authorities established in the country, than these stipulations were basely violated. The constitution was at once overthrown by a royal edict, Hitherto they had taxed themselves; now eight new and oppressive taxes were imposed and levied with rigour. Convents and monasteries were confiscated, their estates sold, and their? chalices and other sacred treasures seized, melted down, carried off. Not content with inflicting these wrongs and insults, Bavaria attempted to obliterate the very name of the Tyrol from the map of Europe. The district was divided into provinces, called after the various rivers which flowed through them. The inhabitants were ordered to change their language, and only permitted to use that of their forefathers for four more years.

Napoleon, when the country rose against this misrule, dedared “the Bavarians did not know how to govern the Tyrolese, and were unworthy to reign over that noble country.” But these words only add greater heinousness to his crimes against them; for his exactions on Bavaria were the primal cause of the heavy taxes — his example had taught that the best way to tame a people was to give them new names, and change their local demarcations; and when they revolted against the tyranny which he himself declared unworthy, he punished without mercy the oppressed, wronged, and insulted insurgents.

What wonder that the Tyrolese detested their new rulers; or that, fondly attached to their old ones, they should hear and answer with enthusiasm the call of one of their ancient princes. When war again broke out between France and Austria) the Archduke John called on the Tyrolese, in a spirited and exciting proclamation to expel the French and Bavarians. With transport they prepared to obey. The country rose to a man: women and children assisted; carrying to the scattered peasantry the watchword, *“s’ist zeit.”*

“it is time,” which bade them at once assemble and prepare for action. Slightly aided by the Austrian regular troops, at the cost of many victories and some defeats, they drove the enemy from their country.

But peace was again to prove fatal to them. By the treaty that was signed after the battle of Wagram, they were ceded anew to Bavaria. What wonder that they shrunk from the hated yoke, whose weight they had before experienced, and almost without hope, yet resolved not to yield. They continued the heroic struggle; and in this last contest, their combats and their victories were even more wonderful than in the first instance.

Every portion of the route we traversed had been the scene of victory or defeat, and rendered illustrious by the struggle for liberty. Our road lay through Unter Innthal, which presented mountain scenery, infinitely various in aspect; — glen, wood, and stream; — sunrise, noon, and sunset — shine and shadow added perpetual changes to the ravines and their skreens of precipices. I confess there was none of the charm of Styria or the Salzkammergut. It was beautiful and sublime to pass through, to look upon, but the wish to take up my abode in any of these solitudes never presented itself to my mind. I have even seen passes I have admired more; it bears some resemblance to that of Saint Jean le Maurienne, for instance, on the way from Chablais to Mont Cenis; but that is more beautiful from its walnut-trees and loftier Alps.

We slept at Swartz — a town of sad celebrity in the wars of 1809. The Bavarians took it by storm, and were guilty of cruelties which the historian refuses to depict, as too horrible and too sickening for his pages. A new race has sprung up; but the town has not recovered its former prosperity.

The inn here is excellent; it is kept by Rainer, known in England as one of the Tyrolese minstrels. His rooms are clean and comfortable; we fared sumptuously, indulging in Rhenish wine. Our bill, with all this, was only ten florins, or thirteen shillings and fourpence, for all; by which you may judge for how small a sum a man alone, bent on economy, might make a tour of the Tyrol.

Leaving Swartz, by degrees the pass widened, and from a height we saw Inspruck, white and nest-like, basking in the valley beneath. All this portion of the country was the theatre of many mortal combats between the Tyrolese and Bavarians and French, in 1809. The town was taken and retaken several times; the bridge of Hall, the Brenner, and Berg Isel, were the scenes of gallant exploits; and the rustic chiefs of these hardy mountaineers were often victorious over officers, who, commanding disciplined troops, disdained the ill-armed and tumultuous peasantry with whom they had to contend. Dietfurth, a Bavarian colonel, had boasted at Munich that, “with his regiment and two squadrons of horse, he would disperse the ragged mob.” He was wounded to death in one of the assaults, when Inspruck was taken; and while lying in the guard-house of that city, singularly added to the enthusiasm of the pious, not to say superstitious, peasantry. He asked, Who had been their leader? “No one,” was the reply; “we fought equally for God, the Emperor, and our native country.”

“That is surprising,” said Dietfurth; “for I saw him frequently pass me on a white horse.” These words caused the report to spread that their patron saint, St. James, frequently celebrated in Spanish annals of Moorish wars for his white charger, had appeared in person to guard the city, placed under his especial protection.

Besides this more modern source of interest, we were told to look with curiosity at an old castle, from a high window of which Wallenstein, then a page of the Margraf of Burgau, fell to the ground without hurting himself — an accident which was said to have sown in his mind the seeds of that superstitious reverence for his own fortune which followed him through life, and was the instigator of many of his exploits. Unfortunately for the fame of the castle, Wallenstein’s biographers tell us that this story is a fiction; that he was never page to the said nobleman; never inhabited this castle.

Inspruck, lying in the centre of a little plain, surrounded by Alps, with its tall steeple and white walls, has a thousand times been painted, and is a sort of ideal of what these Alpine cities are. It is clean and fair; one wide well-paved street, which midway enlarges into a square, runs the whole length. There is an immense hotel, usually thronged with travellers, as the road into Italy by Munich, and by the passes of the Tyrol or the Stelvio, is much frequented. We had a very good breakfast here, for which we paid as much its for supper, rooms, and breakfast the night before; the numerous English have taught them high charges. Here we found some letters from England, and wrote answers, and rambled about, but saw not half of what we ought to have seen in this capital of a free country.

LETTER V.

The Pan of the Brenner. — Hofer. — Bressanone. — Egra. — Trent. — Riva. — Lago di Garda. — Promontory of Sirmio.

IMMEDIATELY on leaving Inspruck we began the ascent of the Brenner. The road is being greatly improved; as long as we continued along the new portion, it was admirable, but we were forced to turn off very soon into the old road, now in a neglected state. The northern side of the Brenner is very dreary. For awhile we commanded a view of the plain of Inspruck, and its gem-like town; but when a turn of the road hid this, we found ourselves winding along beside a tiny rill, and spread around was a wild and dreary mountain side: a drizzling rain fell, which shut out the view of the surrounding country. The people we met looked poor, and the villages through which we passed seemed wretched enough. In one of them we passed the night. The name of the village is not even mentioned in Murray, and the inn was very bad; so you may think we were disgusted — especially as we had entertained hopes of getting on as far as Brenner: but the elder *voiturier,* who was captain of our movements, was silent, sulky, and obstinate. Endeavours to move him, only added to his sullenness.

The road in the morning presented the same disconsolate appearance: the town of Brenner is on a level, shut in by heights. We were still on the banks of the Sill, which joins the Inn, and pursues its course to the Black Sea; but with delight I saw, and with ecstacy my two companions, who had never visited Italy, hailed, a little rivulet and tiny waterfall, the Eisach, which flows south and joins the Adige; it was grasping Italy, to behold a stream that mingled its mountain-born waters with the rivers and lakes of that divine country.

We descended rapidly; and, passing across the Sterzinger Moss, a marshy flat, we again entered the mountain defiles. After passing through Mittenwald, the ravine closes still more narrowly. This was the scene of a most tremendous conflict during the Tyrolese struggle. Every stone and every crag, indeed, has its tale of victory and defeat.

I have mentioned, that after the battle of Aspern, the Tyrolese had delivered their country from the Bavarian yoke. The desire to be free caught the neighbouring provinces of Bavaria, Vorarlberg, and the northern Italian mountains, and in every part the native peasantry, joined to their Austrian allies, were victorious. The Tyrolese believed that they had regained their liberty, when the battle of Wagram, followed by the armistice of Znaym, crushed all their hopes. The Tyrol was re-demanded by Napoleon for Bavaria — and ceded again by Austria. The Emperor, after vowing never to desert them, wrote to the Tyrolese to announce, with expressions of paternal regret, the necessity he was under of yielding to Napoleon, and to order his troops to evacuate their country.

The mountaineers received these tidings with indignation, but without despair. They had struggled, bled, and been victorious; but battles in which they had no share, fought at a distance from their territory, were to decide their fate; and they were to be made over like a flock of sheep, bought and paid for, to a master who had oppressed them and endeavoured to destroy all they held dear — constitution, name, language, all! They refused to submit to so inglorious a destiny. At first they deliberated on forcing the Austrian troops to remain; but deserted by them, and by many of their own leaders, who accompanied the retiring army, they turned to Hofer, who accepted the command. The whole of the Tyrol again rose, and many of the Austrian soldiers deserted their banners to join the peasantry. The hopes of the patriots were now high, and they resolved to close their passes against the French and the Bavarians.

Hofer is no silken hero. Many portions of his character militate against the laws of romance; he had the German defects joined to their nobler qualities. He was born in the station of an innkeeper, a position rather of distinction in the Tyrol, since bringing the publican into contact with travellers, he acquires knowledge and civilisation. He is said to have been indolent, as well as convivial, even to intemperance, in his habits. He was often to be found carousing in a way-side inn, while his companions in arms were in the field. With all this, his countrymen idolised him, and he was esteemed and distinguished by the Emperor and the Archduke John, who was the chief instigator of the first rising of the Tyrol. He was possessed of unblemished integrity — honest, brave, open-hearted, resolute, and pious, he had all the virtues of the hardy, untaught mountaineer.

It is an interesting circumstance in his career, that when called upon to lead his countrymen against the Bavarians, he underwent a violent struggle of feeling. When General Hormayr withdrew from the Tyrol, he persuaded several of the chiefs to accompany him in his retreat. Hofer refused to go, and exerted his eloquence to prevail on his friends to remain, imploring them to make “one more effort in behalf of their beloved country.” Yet his own resolution was not entire. He felt that he was about to lead his countrymen against forces which held the whole of Europe in awe, which had humbled that Emperor, under the protection of whose sceptre he desired to remain. Could anything but ultimate defeat ensue? On the other hand, he could not contemplate with any sense of resignation a renewal of the tyranny of Bavaria: and, doubtless, he entertained a hope that their continued resistance would cause Austria to make another, and probably a successful attempt to claim its own. He passed several days in his native valley of Passeyr, a prey to irresolution, striving to seek a decision by the force of prayer.

Meanwhile, General Lefevre, at the head of a force composed of French, Saxons, and Bavarians, penetrated to Inspruck, took possession of the city, and advanced southward across the Brenner. The peasantry assembled in arms, and Hofer not appearing, Haspinger came forward to lead them, Father Haspinger was a Capuchin friar; he was young and athletic. In his student days, in 1805, he had fought the French; since then he had lived secluded in his monastery; but the cause of his country called him out. He had been present at all the previous battles, and was always seen in the thickest of the fight, bearing no arms except a large ebony crucifix, with which he dealt tremendous blows on the heads of his adversaries, and did great execution. In the absence of Hofer, this singular man came forward to direct the exertions of the peasantry. It was in the narrow pass below Mittenvald, that he prepared a fearful ambush. He caused enormous larch-trees to be felled, upon which were piled huge masses of rock and heaps of rubbish; the whole being held together by strong cords, and thus suspended over the edge of the precipice.

“We had penetrated to Inspruck,” writes a Saxon officer, belonging to Lefevre’s army, “ without great resistance; and, although much was reported about the Tyrolese stationed upon and round the Brenner, we gave little credit to it, thinking the rebels might be dispersed by a short cannonade, and already looking on ourselves as conquerors. Our entrance into the passes of the Brenner was only opposed by small corps, which continued to fall back after an obstinate but short resistance: among others, I perceived a man, full eighty years of age, posted against the side of a rock, and sending death among our ranks at every shot. Upon the Bavarians descending from behind to make him prisoner, he shouted aloud, *'Hurrah!'* struck the first man to the ground with a ball, seized the second, and, with the cry, ' *In God's name!'* precipitated himself with him into the abyss below. Marching onward; we heard from the summit of a high rock, *'Stephen, shall I chop it off yet?'* to which a loud, '*Nay!'* reverberated from the other side. This was told to the Duke of Dantzig, who, notwithstanding, ordered us to advance. The van, consisting of 4000 Bavarians, had just stormed a deep ravine, when we again heard over our heads, *'Hans! for the Most Holy Trinity!'* The reply that immediately followed completed our terror. ' *In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, cut all loose above!'* and ere a minute had elapsed, thousands of my comrades in arms were crushed, buried, and overwhelmed by an incredible heap of broken rock, crags, and trees, hurled down upon us." Mr Alison, in his "History of Europe," tells us that in 1816 he visited this spot, and says "the long black furrow, produced by the falling masses, like the track of an avalanche, was, even then, after the lapse of seven years, imperfectly obliterated by the bursting vegetation which the warmth of the Italian sun had awakened on these beautiful steeps." Now, thirty-three years, with their various seasons, snow, rain, and sunshine, have drawn a green veil over the ruins; and there is nothing left to tell the tale of defeat and death.

To return to Hofer — for these valleys are filled with his name, and it were sacrilege to traverse them without commemorating his glory and lamenting his downfall.

On hearing of this success, Hofer, joined by many thousand peasants, descended from the valley of Passeyr; through the whole region the hardy inhabitants rose *en masse*. Count Wittgenstein succeeded, however, in clearing the northern slope of the Brenner, and General Lefevre once more advanced, intending to cross and enter the Italian Tyrol, He was attacked on all sides by innumerable and determined foes. After an obstinate conflict he was defeated, forced back down the mountain; he lost his ammunition and cannon, and, hotly pursued, had only time to take refuge in Inspruck, disguised like a common trooper.

The peasantry collected in thousands, and another battle ensued. The disciplined troops of the invader were unable to cope with the enthusiastic numbers that assailed them; their mercenary courage quailed before the noble ardour of the free mountaineers. Mount Isel was again the scene of the conflict; it ended in the total defeat of the French and Bavarians. Inspruck was evacuated, and General Lefevre retreated to Salzburg, Hofer became commander-in-chief of the Tyrol. The simplicity, the almost childish earnestness to act with justice that characterised his rule, in no way deteriorates from the real elevation of his character. He was an ignorant peasant, and his eyes did not look beyond the well-being of his native province and of his countrymen, who were also his personal friends. To this he was devoted, and no act of arbitrary power or of insolence, no shadow of such a thing, clouded his short-lived prosperity.

It was indeed brief. New armies poured into the devoted country, and the mountain passes were invaded at all points. For three months the peasants kept up their resistance, but the coming of winter forced them from their mountain fastnesses into the valleys below; food became scarce; their power of resisting the foe dwindled, faded, and became extinct — the Tyrol again became a province of Bavaria.

Napoleon, in his haughty contempt and insolent indignation at any opposition to his will, chose to regard the struggle of the Tyrolese for liberty as the lawless tumult of freebooters; he magnified the very few acts of barbarity of which the peasantry had been guilty (not to be compared in number to the atrocities perpetrated by their opponents) and had the baseness to set a price on the head of the peasant chiefs.

Hofer wavered several times. Now, conceiving that further resistance could only injure his country, he issued a proclamation inviting his countrymen to lay down their arms; but finding they would not yield, he resolved not to desert his post, and told the peasantry that “he would fight with them and for them, as a father for his children.” Various feats of arms ensued, and the Tyrolese were often victorious — even while ultimate and absolute defeat could only be deferred a few days by their heroism. At last all was lost; the chiefs for the most part fled; some fell into the hands of the enemy; others, with more or less of peril and hardship, escaped to Austria.

Hofer refused to fly; he refused to surrender. He retired to his native valley of Passeyr. He concealed himself in an Alpine hut four leagues distant from his home, and almost inacessible amidst the snows. His wife and child accompanied him, and his friends supplied him as they could with food, and brought him messages even from the Emperor of Austria, entreating him to escape. He refused. A stubborn patriotism held him to his native mountains, and he declared he would never leave them. Nor would he disguise himself, nor cut off his beard, which, flowing to his waist, rendered him conspicuous. At the same time he probably believed, now the country was subdued and tranquil, that the French would soon cease to desire to possess themselves of him.

He was deceived. A cunning intriguing priest, of the name of Donay, had insinuated himself into his confidence, and now, for the sake of the price set upon his head, betrayed him to the French general. An officer was sent with sixteen hundred men to take him prisoner; two thousand more were ordered up the pass to be at hand — so fearful were they that the peasants would rise to the rescue.

The column began their march at midnight, on the 20th January, over ice and snow. At five in the morning they reached the hut in which Hofer and his family harboured. He heard the French officer inquire for him, and came to the door and at once delivered himself up. He was bound, and amidst the shouts of the French and the tears of the peasants, he was marched to Botzen. Here he was received by the French commandant, Baraguay d’Hilliers, who treated him with courtesy, and even with such kindness as may be afforded a prisoner. Hofer was greatly altered by his long retreat amidst the snows, and by frequent want of food. His hair had grown gray, but his spirit was untamed, and his countenance beamed with cheerfulness and serenity. He was separated from his family, and carried to the shores of the Lago di Garda. He was put in a boat at the little village of Simone, and on disembarking again was carried on to Mantua.

A court-martial was immediately summoned: but even the laws of war were dispensed with; for the sentence of death was not passed by this court; the telegraph declared it from Milan, ordering his execution within twenty-four hours. Until this moment he had apprehended no danger to his life; yet he received the sentence with unshaken firmness, and only requested the attendance of a confessor; this was complied with. On the following morning, he was taken from the prison. He passed by the barracks of the Porta Molina, where the Tyrolese prisoners were confined, who all wept, and implored his blessing. This Hofer gave them, entreating their pardon for being the cause of their misfortunes, and declaring his conviction that they would soon be delivered from the sway of Bavaria. On the broad bastion at a little distance from the Porta Ceresa, a halt was commanded. Hofer refused to be blindfolded — he refused to kneel. He said, "He was accustomed to stand upright before his Creator, and in that posture he would deliver his spirit up to Him." He said a few words of farewell, expressing his undying love for his country; and pronounced the word " Fire! " with a firm voice.

The spot on which he fell is still considered sacred by his countrymen.

His funeral was conducted with solemnity by the French. But this was only an act of hypocrisy; such as instigated Berthier, then at Vienna, to declare that Hofer's death would cause great pain to Napoleon, and that he would never have permitted it, had he been aware. Had Hofer suffered by sentence of the court martial by which he was tried, there had been some colour to this assertion; but the telegraphic dispatch that commanded and hurried his execution, in spite of the milder dealings of the military tribunal, in fear lest the intercession of the Emperor of Austria would prevent it, could only emanate from an authority intimately conversant with, and blindly obedient to, Napoleon's will.

When, after landing from Elba, and losing the battle of Waterloo, Bonaparte was taken prisoner, was he less an outlaw than Hofer, who defended his country against invasion? His want of magnanimity does not excuse that of others, but it takes from the respect, the compassion, and the indignation, with which he demanded that his imprisonment should be regarded. It has been justly pronounced, that Napoleon was not guilty of any acts of wanton cruelty; but the pages of his history are also destitute of any record of his magnanimity.

The Emperor of Austria invited the wife of Hofer to Vienna. She refused to quit her native mountains; and resided, till her death, under her husband's roof, in the Valley of Passeyr.

Such are the deeds, such the name, that shed glory over the rugged and romantic passes of the Tyrol. We continued to thread them; and the interest with which we regarded the scene of these patriotic exploits became exchanged for a more personal feeling of joy as we felt the climate alter, in token that we were advancing nearer and nearer to Italy.

The valley we traversed was met here by another; the scenery was huge, *craggy,* and picturesque. Through this second valley is carried the road called the pass of the Ampezzo, the shortest road from Inspruck to Venice. We had several times debated -whether we should not go by it; but the wish to see the Lago di Garda decided our negative.

We slept at Brixen — Bressanone is its musical Italian name; but we heard no Italian yet, nor saw a trace of Italy. Murray calls Brixen *"*a dirty, inanimate town, of 3200 inhabitants." We saw nothing of it. The inn — the Elephant, is a pleasant, country-looking hostelry, on the road-side; trees grow in front, and it resembles the best specimen of a rustic inn in England. Everything was clean and comfortable, and the waiter spoke English, I bought a tiny figure of Hofer, carved in wood, to do honour to the " Tyrolean Champion," who, as Wordsworth well expresses it, was

"Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck Cast,
Murdered without relief."

We found here the moderate charge of a good inn among these mountains: including what we gave to servants, it was nine florins.

Monday, September 12TH.

OUR journey continues through a most beautiful part of the Tyrol. The road first lay through a narrow, gloomy pass, closed in by dark majestic cliffs, till we crossed the Eisach, when the valley of the Adige opened on us, with the town of Bolzanostill lingering in Germany we called it Botzen — surmounted by the Castle of Eppan; again, I repeat, differing as these valleys and mountains do one from another, delightedly as the eye dwells on the unimaginable variety of grouping which this picturesque and majestic region presents, words cannot describe it. Our road was cut in the side of a mountain, and wound beneath lofty crags; a narrow plain, with a dashing torrent, the Eisach in the depth, and lofty mountains closing in the valley on either side. I have used such words before: mark the difference here. Fair Earth scents the gales of Italy, and already begins to assume for herself the loveliness which is the inheritance of that country. The slopes of the lower hills are covered by vines. We stopped to bait the horses at what, in England, would be called an ale-house, a very humble inn, which we did not enter; but there was a sort of rustic summer-house and terrace overlooking the Eisach. The terrace was shaded by what, in Italy, is called a pergola, or trellissed walk of vines; the vegetation was luxuriant; the sun shone bright, and dressed the whole scene in gaiety. My companions felt that they were approaching scenes dreamt of — ardently desired, never seen. The days of my youth hovered near. I stole away among the vines by the margin of the river, to think of Italy, and to rejoice that I was about to tread again its beloved soil; to find myself surrounded by my dear, courteous, kind Italians, instead of the Germans, who, honest-hearted as they doubtless are, under the repulsive mask that invests them, have yet no grace of planners, no show of that intuitive desire to please — none of that cordial courtesy, which renders the lowliest-born Italian gentle in his bearding, and eager to render service.

We slept at Neumarkt, called in Italian, Egna, We had left our beautiful valley here; and, as is too often the case, in a region of transition from mountain to plain, the soil is marshy and the district unhealthy. There was a large, new-built, clean hotel at Neumarkt; but though the rooms were good, the living was intolerably bad, so that we went nearly supperless to bed.

Tuesday, September 13TH.

STILL we approached Italy; the hills were covered with vines, the road shut in by the walls of vineyards. Various valleys branch off at intervals, all affording the scenery peculiar to the Tyrol. I own I had no desire to linger longer in this land: we had continued for so many days among ravines, defiles, and narrow valleys, peering up at the sky from the depths between mountains, that the eye grew eager for a view of heaven, and yearned to behold a more extensive horizon. When the bourne of a journey lies beyond, the desire to linger, even in beautiful scenery, is weak. Since I had left Gmunden and Salzburg I had experienced no desire to stop short.

Some names of cities are so familiar, that one forms an idea of them in one's mind as one does of a celebrated, but personally unknown, individual. The Council of Trent is associated with cardinals and bishops — shepherds of the church, legislators of religion: there was something princely, yet holy, in its idea. What we saw of it looked miserably dirty; grand at a distance and beautifully situated, on entering it, it was common-place; but, after all, nothing can be more deceptive than the impression a way-worn traveller receives, driven, perhaps, through the meanest streets to an hotel where, fatigued, body and mind, he reposes, and then is off again. Mr. P — sought out the cathedral and the organ, but the organist declared that the instrument was out of tune, whether from laziness or not, I cannot say. The hotel was good; we dined at the *table d'hôte.* Again I was restored to the privilege of speech, as Italian here is as common as German.

Our compact with our *lohn kutschers* ceased at Trent. We paid them 140 Bavarian florins, and gave them 30 swanzigers as drink-gelt; a swanziger is the third of an Austrian florin, its worth is eightpence English, and is a very intelligible and convenient coin. The men were satisfied and we had no reason to be otherwise: their conduct had been, on the whole, negative — sullen and silent; and yet with a latent violence and insolence which peeped out as a rank weed on a grassless plain, strangely, unexpectedly, and by no means welcome; I believe they thought of nothing but their drink-gelt the whole way. I was much more interested in the horses, who had done their duty rather better.

We had now to look out for a conveyance to Riva, the town at the head of the Lago di Garda, where we are to find the steam-boat, which is to convey us to its southern shores. We engaged a *calèche* and a *caratella* for twenty-two Austrian florins, and were soon on our way. We were in high spirits on having parted with our Germans, and on finding ourselves on the very verge of Italy. I do not pretend to say that this is a correct feeling; but it was natural, considering our ignorance of German. The valley of the Adige is very grand; and the stream, broad and swift, was more of a river than we had seen since the Danube. Several valleys branch off here; and there is another route to Venice. We were sorry not to see the famous Slovino di San Marco, or avalanche of stone, near Serravalle, celebrated by Dante, who was for some time a guest at the Castello Lizzana; where, exiled from Florence, he was entertained by the lord of Castelbarco.

At Roveredo we changed horses: our road, always on the descent, now became exceedingly precipitous, and ran on the very edge of the steep bank of the Adige. Our drivers were strange fellows. He who drove the *calèche* in which I sat, was a rough, uncouth animal; but he of the *caratella* was the most singular — neither Italian nor German in his ways, wild as an untamed animal — coarse and vulgar as a metropolitan vagrant. He was civil enough, indeed; but seemed half-mad with high spirits. You might have thought him half-drunk, but he was not — roaring and singing, and whipping his horses, and turning round to talk to the gentlemen in the *caratella* with a dare-devil air, I saw him whip his horses into a gallop, and heard him laughing and singing as he dashed down a road, which, in truth, required the drag. It was quite dusk — or rather, but for the stars, dark; which added not a little to the apparent danger. Our driver, a little more tame, yet disdained the drag — and we went down at a rattling pace: I was not sorry, for I was eager to assure myself that our friends in advance were not upset and rolled in the Adige, which rushed at the foot of the rock which our road bounded; — not they, — we reached the bottom, and saw the *caratella* dashing madly on *in* the advance. Before or since I never met such fellows; if my friends thought that Italians re r sembled them, they were indeed mistaken; they had none of their innate refinement, but they had their good humour: they were more like what one reads of as the wanderers of the far west — except, we are told, the Americans appear always to calculate, and so perhaps did these fellows; but they had the outward guise of nearly being insane.

We got to Riva safe. It stands exactly at the head of the Lago di Garda;
Suso in Italia bella giace un laco,
Appiè dell’ alpe, che serra Lamagna,
Sovra Tiralli, ed ha nome Benaco.

Per mille fonti credo, e più si bagna,
Tra Garda, e Val Camonica e Apennino
Dell’ acqua, che nel detto lago stagna.

The coast, with the exception of the spot on which the town stands, is iron-bound; dark precipices rise abruptly from the water; a bend in the coast limits the view of the lake to a mile or two merely: behind is the chasm of the Adige, beside which Monte Baldo rises, lofty and dark — and mountains somewhat lower — but even they, sublime in altitude, darken the prospect immediately behind Riva. The town is mean and dirty; the inn — not bad to look at, is dirty and uncomfortable. It is kept by a large family; but how different are they from our Cadenabbia people! There are seven sisters — some dress smartly, and sit and receive company, and act the

Padrona; others are the Cinderellas of the establishment; but all are lazy and negligent. The beds were not bad, it is true; but the fare was uneatable.

We had congratulated ourselves that the steam boat, which plies every other day, would leave Riva on the morrow of our arrival; but we found it had not arrived as it ought, and doubts of course hung, as it had not arrived, over the date of its departure.

WEDNESDAY, 14TH.

THE morning has come, but no steam-boat. It is detained, we are told, at the other end of the lake by the wind. This assertion seems fabulous; we have no breeze, the waters are glassy: but thus is it with lake Benacus. The wind, coming down the chasms of the mountains, is not felt in the sheltered nook in which Riva is situated; but drives with violence on the southern portion of this vast inland sea, and lashes it into tempest.

We walked out: there is a path for a short distance on one side under the rock, but the road soon ends; the coast, as I have said, is iron-bound. One of my friends began a sketch of the castle La Rocca, built by the Scaligers, and which forms a picturesque object: then I loitered in the town, delighting my eyes with Italian names and words over the shop-doors. We went out for a short time on the lake, but a shower came on — a drizzle first, which ended in pouring rain. We were truly uncomfortable — forced into the dirty, uncomfortable inn, unprovided with books; and, worst of all, quite uncertain as to the arrival of the steamer. The house is full of travellers similarly situated, and others continually arriving; this does not comfort us. Our madcap drivers of the night before are still here; we have canvassed with them the expense of going by land to Venice, but their demands are exorbitant. We have talked with the boatman, of making the voyage in a large open boat; but the time that this would occupy is evidently uncertain: besides, a lingering remnant of reason assures us that, if the steamer be detained by adverse winds at the other end of the lake, this wind, however favourable, must have raised a sea to endanger our navigation. Our projects, therefore, have only served to cheat time a little, and are given up. Dinner has proved no occupation or relief; it was so singularly and uncomfortably bad, that it was difficult to eat any portion of it. Now evening has come, and still it rains hard; the many travellers are dispersed about the house in a state of listless anxiety. Another day like this is too fearful a vision: we have ceased even to speak of the chances of release, for we grow hopeless. The people of the inn finding the boat does not arrive, begin to talk of some accident in the machinery; conversation languishes among all the groupes. I sit writing at a window till twilight is thickening into darkness. Hush! a sound — distant — increasing; can it be the splash of paddles? The bend of the lake prevents the boat being seen till quite close at hand; my soul is in my ears, listening: at length the sound draws the attention of others; one by one they congregate near the windows, but there is silence among all, broken only by hurried interjections swiftly silenced, that each may listen more intently. At last — there can be no doubt — there is a burst of joy as we behold the smoky, but most amiable monster, double the headland and bear down on the town. O, how good-humoured and communicative we are all become; what a clatter of voices, what joyful mutual congratulations! One sight we have just witnessed, is ridiculous to us who have the best of it — very disagreeable to the actors in the scene: on arriving at the quay the travellers poured out from the steamer, the porters shouldered the luggage, and all came in one stream to our hotel. There was no room; the voyagers expectant occupied every apartment. Travellers and porters went their way out again — the world was before them; but their choice was limited to some most wretched holes.

SEPTEMBER 15TH.

We thought ourselves in all things fortunate, when the morrow dawned bright and sunny. We had a heavenly voyage, which repaid us for yesterday’s *ennui,* and satisfied us that we had done the wisest thing in the world in entering Italy by the Lago di Garda. We left the abrupt, gloomy, sublime north, and gently dropped down to truly Italian scenes. The waters of the lake are celebrated for their azure tint; no waves could be so brightly blue, so clear, so that we saw the bottom of the lake, fathoms below. The mountains sank to hills, with banks cut into terraces, and covered with olives and vines, decorated by orange and lemon-trees; the country-houses sparkled in the sun. One of my friends quoted the lines that celebrate Benacus. Strangely enough, though weather-bound at Riva by one of those storms for which this lake is famous, we saw not a wave upon its surface; not even a curled ripplet, reminded us that it was teque,

Fluctibus et fremitur assurgens,

Benace marino.

We landed at Lasise, a town distant fifteen miles from Verona, and while I employed myself in engaging a *veturino* for that place, and wandered about the town, my companions went to bathe in the clear waters of the azure lake. The promontory of Sirmio was in sight; an Italian landscape all around, an Italian sky, bright above: it was an hour of delicious joy — set, like a priceless diamond in the lead of common life — never to be forgotten.

O, best of all the scattered spots that lie
In sea or lake, apple of landscape's eye, —

How gladly do I drop within thy nest,
With what a sigh of full, contented rest,
Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,
And that these eyes behold thee safe once more!
Oh, where 's the luxury, like the smile at heart,
When the mind, breathing, lays its load apart, —

When we come home again, tired out, and spread
The loosen'd limbs o'er all the wished-for bed!
This, this alone, is worth an age of toil.
Hail, lovely Sirmio! hail, paternal soil!
Joy, my bright waters, joy; your master's come!
Laugh, every dimple on the cheek of home!

AD SIRMIONEM PENINSULAM.

Peninsularum, Sirmio, insularumque
Ocelle, quascunque in liquentibus stagnis,
Manque vasto fert uterque Neptunus;
Quam te libenter, quamque aetus inviso,

Vix mi ipse credens Thyniam, atque Bithynos
Liquisse campos, et videre te in tuto.
O quid solutis est beatius curis
Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
Lahore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto?
Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.
Salve, O venusta Sirmio, atque hero gaude;
Gaudete, vosque Lariae lacus undae:
Ride te quidquid est domi cachinnorum.

LETTER VI.

Verona. — Journey to Venice. — Leone Bianco. — Hotel d'ltalia.

SEPTEMBER 18TH.

I AM again in Italy. The earth is teeming with the wealth of September, the richest month of the year. The harvest of the Indian corn has begun; the grapes are hanging in rich ripening clusters from the vines, festooned from tree to tree: a genial atmosphere mantles the earth, and quickens a sense of delight in our hearts. The road lies through a richly cultivated country: the immense plain around us is bounded to the north by the mountains of the Tyrol, amongst which we seemed to have lost ourselves for an age, so refreshing, so new, so enchanting, is the wide expanse of fertile Lombardy, opening before our eyes.

A sad disaster happened on our arrival at Verona. We had each our passport, and the whole was consigned to the pocket-book of one of the party; and when they were asked for at the gates of Verona, the pocket-book was not to be found. Except our passports, and Coutts' *lettre d'indication*, it contained no papers of importance; but still, after all the annoyance the Austrians give about passports, it was rather appalling. Nothing could be done. It was remembered that when bathing, the pocket-book was safe; it must have been lost since. We were allowed to go on to the inn, and time would shew the result.

The Gran Parigi is one of the most comfortable hotels I was ever at; it has the air of a palace, as doubtless it once was. The same evening, by the light of the clear full moon, my companions rambled about the town and entered the amphitheatre, which is used as a circus, and horsemanship was going on, and music filled the air. There was something startling in finding the building of ancient days used for its original purpose — the seats occupied by numerous spectators; the partial moonlight veiled with some mystery what the garish sun had disclosed as below Roman dignity in the assemblage.

You know the charm of these Lombard cities. Built by a prosperous people, they have a princely and magnificent appearance: their grandeur is what grandeur ought to be — not gloomy and menacing, but cheerful and inspiriting. The cities look built by a happy people in which to be happy — by a noble and rich people, whose tastes were dignified, and whose habits of life were generous.

We were promised a paper that would give us free course to Venice — for our Consul was at that city — and we were to be transferred to him, and meanwhile, our loss was made known in the country about. But, though the paper was promised, one or another of my friends was employed the whole morning in getting it properly signed. These delays were vexatious, more from the uncertainty that hung about the whole transaction, which kept us in attendance and perplexity. There was no help. We rambled to the garden, or walled *podere*, in which there is an *fosse,* and an old sort of sarcophagus, which they show as Juliet's tomb. That Juliet lived and died, as Baldelli recounts, there can be little doubt; but it is not likely that this was "the tomb of the Capulets." Still such a scene — a garden, with its high antique walls, its Italian vegetation, and the blue sky, cloudless above — was a scene familiar to Juliet; and her spirit might hover here, even if her fair form was sèpulchred elsewhere. It was a long walk thence to the tombs of the Scaligers. The most fairy architecture — not dark and Gothic, nor immured within the walls of a church; — a small open court encloses these elegant sepulchres.

At length w*e* obtained the paper, and set out.

We had engaged a *veturino* for Venice. Some hope had we that the railroad might be open from Padua to Mestri; if not, we were to be taken to Fusina, sleeping at Vicenza in our way. The charm of autumnal vegetation, in a rich vine country, adorned the road, and a distant view of the Alps bounded the scene. We arrived at Vicenza at eleven o'clock, by a bright moonlight. I was sorry to see no more of these Palladian palaces than the glimpses we caught from our carriage-windows. Architecture shows to peculiar advantage by the silver radiance of a full moon: its partial white light throws portions into strong relief, and the polished marble reflects its, so to speak, icy radiance.

September 19TH.

WE found, on our arrival at Padua, that the railroad was not open; so we proceeded along the banks of the Brenta to Venice. Many a scene, which I have since visited and admired, has faded in my mind, as a painting in the Diorama melts away, and another struggles into the changing canvass; but this road was as distinct in my mind as if traversed yesterday. I will not here dwell on the sad circumstances that clouded my first visit to Venice. Death hovered over the scene. Gathered into myself, with my "mind's eye" I saw those before me long departed; and I was agitated again by emotions — by passions — and those the deepest a woman's heart can harbour — a dread to see her child even at that instant expire — which then occupied me. It is a strange, but to any person who has suffered, a familiar circumstance, that those who are enduring mental or corporeal agony are strangely alive to immediate external objects, and their imagination even exercises its wild power over them. Shakspeare knew this, and the passionate grief of Queen Constance thence is endued with fearful reality. Wordsworth, as many years ago I remember hearing Coleridge remark, illustrates the same fact, when he makes an insane and afflicted mother exclaim, —

"The breeze I see it in the tree;
It comes to cool my babe and me."

Holcroft, who was a martyr to intense physical suffering, alludes to the notice the soul takes of the objects presented to the eye in its hour of agony, as a relief afforded by nature to permit the nerves to endure pain. In both states I have experienced it; and the particular shape of a room — the progress of shadows on a wall — the peculiar flickering of trees — the exact succession of objects on a journey — have been indelibly engraved in my memory, as marked in, and associated with, hours and minutes when the nerves were strung to their utmost tension by the endurance of pain, or the far severer infliction of mental anguish. Thus the banks of the Brenta presented to me a moving scene; not a palace, not a tree of which I did not recognise, as marked and recorded, at a moment when life and death hung upon our speedy arrival at Venice.

And at Fusina, as then, I now beheld the domes and towers of the queen of Ocean arise from the waves with a majesty unrivalled upon earth. We were hailed by a storm of *gondolieri;* their vociferations were something indescribable, so loud, so vehement, so reiterated; till we had chosen our boat, and then all subsided into instant calm.

I confess that on this, my second entrance into Venice, the dilapidated appearance of the palaces, their weather-worn and neglected appearance, struck me forcibly, and diminished the beauty of the city in my eyes. We proceeded at once to the Leone Bianco, on the Canale Grande; they asked a very high price for their rooms, which rendered us eager, as we intended to remain here a month, to make immediate arrangements for removing elsewhere.

Our first act was to send our letters of introduction; the second, for two of us to go out to look for lodgings. The account brought back by our second dove from the ark was rather discouraging; but our first brought better things. Count — and Signor — loved and respected too sincerely the writer of our letters not to hasten on the instant to acknowledge them. Signor — at once perceived and entered into our difficulty. I never saw such friendly zeal; nor was Count — behind in kindness, though, as a younger man, and not so conversant with the perplexities of travellers, he could not be so efficient in his help.

The thing was soon settled. Signor — remarked that if we took lodgings we should want a cook, and that housekeeping in an unknown town, for a short space of time, was fraught with annoyance. There was a new hotel just established, which desired to be made known to the English, and which therefore would be moderate in its charges. We went to see the rooms. The Hotel d’ Italia is situated in a canal, three oar-strokes from the Canale Grande; so far we lost what is most to be coveted at Venice — the view from our window of this ocean stream, with its bordering palaces, — but we were within three minutes’ walk of the Place of Saint Mark. Our rooms were on the second floor, a bed-room a-piece, and a *salon,* spacious, turned to the sun, and being but just furnished, clean in the excess of newness. Many a palace had been spoiled of its marble architraves and ornaments to decorate this new hotel. We made our bargain; we calculated that, everything included, each of our party would pay nine pounds a month for lodging and board.

This done, we returned with our kind friends to the Leone Bianco, as we are not to remove till tomorrow. Evening has come, and the moon, so often friendly to me, now at its full, rises over the city. Often, when here before, I looked on this scene, at this hour, or later, for often I expected S.'s return from Palazzo Mocenigo, till two or three in the morning; I watched the glancing of the oars of the gondolas, and heard the far song, and saw the palaces sleeping in the light of the moon, which veils by its deep shadows all that grieved the eye and heart in the decaying palaces of Venice. Then I saw, as now I see, the bridge of the Rialto spanning the canal. All, all is the same; but as the Poet says —

“The difference to me!”

LETTER VII.

The Ducal Palace. — The Accademia delle Belle Arti.

VENICE, SEPTEMBER.

I MISS greatly the view of the Canale Grande from my window; however, the result, probably, of our being in a narrow canal will be, that I shall see much more of Venice: for were we among its most noble palaces, it would suffice and amply fill the hours, merely to loiter away the day gazing on the scene before us. As it is, though singularly Venetian — the wave-paved streets beneath, the bridge close at hand — the peep we get at wider waters at the opening, — it is but a promise of what we may find beyond, and tempts us to wander.

There is something so different in Venice from any other place in the world, that you leave at once all accustomed habits and everyday sights to enter enchanted ground. We live in a palace; though an inn, such it is: and other palaces have been robbed of delicately-carved mouldings and elegant marbles, to decorate the staircase and doorways. You know the composition with which they floor the rooms here, resembling marble, and called everywhere in Italy Terrazi Veneziani: this polished uniform surface, whose colouring is agreeable to the eye, gives an air of elegance to the rooms; then, when we go out, we descend a marble staircase to a circular hall of splendid dimensions; and at the steps, laved by the sea, the most luxurious carriage — a boat, invented by the goddess of ease and mystery, receives us. Our gondolier, never mind his worn-out jacket and ragged locks, has the gentleness and courtesy of an attendant spirit, and his very dialect is a shred of romance; or, if you like it better, of classic history: bringing home to us the language and accents, they tell us, of old Rome. For Venice

“Has floated down, amid a thousand wrecks
Uninjured, from the Old World to the New.”

With the world of Venice before us, whither shall we go? I would not make my letter a catalogue of sights; yet I must speak of the objects that occupy and delight me.

First, then, to the Ducal palace. A few strokes of the oar took us to the noble quay, from whose pavement rises the Lion-crowned column, and the tower of St. Mark. The piazzetta is, as it were, the vestibule to the larger piazza.

But I spare description of a spot, of which there are so many thousand — besides numerous pictures by Cannaletti and his imitators, which tell all that can be told — show all that can be shown: to know Venice, to feel the influence of its beauty and strangeness, is quite another thing; perhaps the vignettes to Mr. Rogers's Italy, by Turner, better than any other description or representation, can impart this.

From the piazzetta we entered a grass-grown court, once the focus of Venetian magnificence — for, at the top of that majestic flight of steps which rises from it, the Doges were crowned. The *cortile* is surrounded by arcades, decorated by two magnificent bronze reservoirs, and adorned by statues. The effect is light and elegant, even now that neglect haa drawn a veil over its splendour. Yet Nature here is not neglectful; her ministrations may be said even to aid the work of the chisel and the brush, so beautiful are they in their effects.

The Scala de' Giganti was before us, guarded by two almost colossal figures of Mars and Neptune, the size of whose statues gives the name to the steps: ascending them, we found ourselves in the open gallery that runs round three sides of the court, supported by the arcades. Yawning before us was the fatal lion's mouth, receiver of those anonymous accusations, the terror of all, and destroyer of many of the citizens. Ringing a bell, we were admitted into the palace.

We do not visit it once only; day after day we wander about these magnificent, empty halls — sometimes going in by the hall of audience, sometimes ascending the Scala d'Oro, we enter in by the library. Sometimes we give ourselves up to minute view of the many frescoes, which record the history, the glories, and even the legends of Venice. At the dawn of the art, the more than royal government caused the walls to be thus adorned by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and subsequently by Titian: a fire unfortunately destroyed their work in 1577; and the present paintings are by Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and others. On an easel in the library, is a picture in oil by Paul Veronese, — the Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, a daughter of Venice, resigning her crown to the Doge — an iniquitous act enough on the part of the republic; as others, heirs of Cyprus, with claims more legitimate than Catherine's, existed. There is the grace and dignity, characteristic of this painter, in the various personages of the group. It is to be raffled for, and the proceeds of the lottery are to be given to the infant schools; but the tickets are sold slowly, and the time when they are to be drawn is yet unfixed. There are marbles also, in this room, that deserve attention, — some among them are relics of antiquity; for the Rape of Ganymede is attributed to Phidias, and worthy of him; Sometimes we wander about, content only with the recollections called up by the spot; and we step out on the balconies which now command a view of the piazzetta, now of the inner courts, with a liberty and leisure quite delightful: and then again we pass on, from the more public rooms to the chambers, sacred to a tyranny the most awful, the most silent of which there is record in the world. The mystery and terror that once reigned, seems still to linger on the walls; the chamber of the Council of Ten, paved with black and white marble, is peculiarly impressive in its aspect and decorations: near at hand was the chamber of torture, and a door led to a dark staircase and the state dungeons.

The man who showed us the prisons was a character — he wanted at once to prove that they were not so cruel as they were represented, and yet he was proud of the sombre region over whose now stingless horrors he reigned. A narrow corridor, with small double-grated windows that barely admit light, but which the sound of the plashing waters beneath penetrates, encloses a series of dungeons, whose only respiratories come from this corridor, and in which the glimmering dubious day dies away in "darkness visible." Here the prisoners were confined who had still to be examined by the Council. A door leads to the Ponte de' Sospiri — now walled up — for the prisons on the other side are in fall use for criminals: years ago I had traversed the narrow arch, through the open work of whose stone covering the prisoners caught one last hasty glimpse of the wide lagunes, crowded with busy life. Many, however, never passed that bridge — never emerged again to light. One of the doors in the corridor I have mentioned leads to a dark cell, in which is a small door that opens on narrow winding stairs; below is the lagune; here the prisoners were embarked on board the gondola, which took them to the Canal Orfano, the drowning-place, where, summer or winter, it was forbidden to the fishermen, on pain of death, to cast their nets. Our guide, whom one might easily have mistaken for a gaoler, so did he enter into the spirit of the place, and take pleasure in pointing out the various power it once possessed of inspiring despair; this guide insisted that the Pozzi and Piombi were fictions, and that these were the only prisons. Of course, this ignorant assertion has no foundation whatever in truth. From the court, as we left the palace, he pointed to a large window at the top of the building, giving token that the room within was airy and lightsome, and said with an air of triumph, *Ecco la Prigione di Silvio Pellico!* — Was he to be pitied when, he was promoted to such a very enviable apartment, with such a very fine view? Turn to the pages of Pellico, and you will find that, complaining of the cold of his first dark cell, he was at midsummer transferred to this airy height, where multitudinous gnats and dazzling unmitigated sunshine nearly drove him mad. Truly he might regret even these annoyances when immured in the dungeons of Spielburg, and placed under the immediate and *paternal* care of the Emperor — whose endeavour was to break the spirit of his *rebel children* by destroying the flesh; whose sedulous study how to discover means to torment and attenuate — to blight with disease and subdue to despair — puts to shame the fly-killing pastime of Dioclesian. Thanks to the noble hearts of the men who were his victims, he did not succeed. Silvio Pellico bowed with resignation to the will of God — but he still kept his foot upon the power of the tyrant.

Having visited every corner of the palace, and heard the name given for every apartment, we asked for the private rooms in which the Doge slept and ate, which his family occupied. There were none. A private covered way led from these rooms to an adjoining palace, assigned for the private residence of the Doge. The council were too jealous to allow him to occupy the palace of the republic, except for the purposes of the state.

At other times, turning to the right, when we leave our canal, we are rowed up the Canale Grande to the Accademia delle Belle Arti, to feast our eyes on the finest works of Titian. The picture usually considered the *chef-d'œuvre* of this artist, the Martyrdom of St. Peter the Hermit, has, for the purpose of being copied, been removed from the dark niche in which it is almost lost in the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo, and is here. The subject is painful, but conceived with great power. A deep forest, in which the holy man is overtaken by his pursuers, sheds its gloom over the picture; his attendant flies, the most living horror depicted on his face; the saint has fallen, cut down by the sword of the soldier; an angel is descending from above, and, opening heaven, sheds the only light that irradiates the scene. It is very fine; but in spite of the celestial messenger, there is wanting that connecting link with Heaven, — the rapture of faith in the sufferer’s countenance, which alone makes pictures of martyrdom tolerable.

I was struck by the last picture painted by the venerable artist — Mary visiting the Tomb of Jesus. I was told that I ought not to admire it; yet I could not help doing so: there was something impressive in the mingled awe and terror in Mary’s face, when she found the body of Jesus gone.

The Marriage at Cana, by Paul Veronese, adorns these walls, removed from the refectory of the suppressed Convent of San Giorgio Maggiore, It is the finest specimen of the feasts which this artist delighted to paint; bringing together, on a large scale, groups of high-born personages, accompanied by attendants, and surrounded by a prodigality of objects of architecture, dress, ornaments, and all the apparatus of Patrician luxury. It is filled, Lanzi tells us, with portraits of princes and illustrious men then living.

We turned from the splendour of the feast to the more noble beauty of Titian’s Presentation of the Virgin — a picture I look at much oftener, and with far greater pleasure, than at the more celebrated Martyrdom. The Virgin, in her simplicity and youth; in the mingled dignity and meekness of her mien, as she is about to ascend the steps towards the High Priest, is quite lovely; the group of women looking at her, are inimitably graceful: there is an old woman sitting at the foot of the steps, marvellous from the vivacity and truth of her look and attitude. In another large apartment is the Assumption of Titian. The upper part is indeed glorious. The Virgin is rapt in a paradisiacal ecstacy as she ascends, surrounded by a galaxy of radiant beings, whose faces are beaming with love and joy, to live among whom were in itself Elysium. Such a picture, and the “Paradiso” of Dante as a commentary is the sublimest achievement of Catholicism. Not, indeed, as a commentary did Dante write, but as the originator of much we see. The Italian painters drank deep at the inspiration of his verses when they sought to give a visible image of Heaven and the beatitude of the saints, on their canvass.

There are other and other rooms, all filled with paintings of merit. One hall contains the earlier productions of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. The genius and the elevated piety of these painters give expression to the countenances; but the dry colouring, the want of fore-shortening, the absence of grace everywhere except in the faces — which are often touchingly beautiful — all exhibit the infancy of the art.

The Academy contains also a hall for statues; in which the glossy marble of Canova's Hebe looks, I am sorry to say, shrunk and artificial, beside the mere plaster casts of the nobler works of the Ancients.

LETTER VIII.

Chiesa de' Frari. — San Giorgio Maggiore. — Santa Maria della Salute. — Lido. — The Giudecca. — The Fondamenti Nuovi. — The Islands. — The Armenian Convent.

VENICE, SEPTEMBER.

There are three churches here in particular, which we have visited several times, with interest; the most venerable, the Westminster Abbey of Venice, is the church of Santa Maria de' Frari, built in the middle of the thirteenth century. Every portion of this vast and noble edifice is filled with tombs and pictures, exciting respect and admiration. Many a Doge is here buried; and many monuments, some mausoleums in size and magnificence, some equestrian, some mere urns, Gothic or of the middle ages, crowd the walls. With more veneration we looked on the unadorned stone, inscribed with the honoured name of Titian. He died on the 9th September, 1575, at the age of ninety-nine, of the plague, and the visitation of this calamity caused the citizens to consign him hastily to the grave, without thought of marking it by any monument or inscription, so that the spot was almost forgotten. The mortuary registers of the church of S. Tommaso prove that he then died, and was here buried, and his name with a few words conjoined have been chiselled in the pavement. The republic of Venice projected a monument, which the troubled times and invasion of Napoleon prevented their accomplishing. Canova made a model subsequently; but, dying before he could execute it, the marble was entrusted to various sculptors, and is erected in his own honour in this church on the side opposite to the spot where Titian lies. There is something very impressive in the idea of this monument — a procession of figures entering the half-opened door of a dark tomb.

There are several pleasing pictures in the church, chiefly by Salviati; but its pride in painting is an altar-piece of Giovanni Bellini. He had lived long and painted much in fresco, when, at more than sixty years of age, he was initiated in oil painting by Antonello of Messina, and executed his *chefs-d'œuvre*, — a picture in the church of San Pietro, on the island of Murano, and that which we have looked at with interest and delight in the sacristy of this church. "It presents," says Mr. Rio, "the imposing seriousness of a religious composition, in the figure of the Virgin, and in that of the saints which surround the throne on which she sits; in the faces of the angels it equals the most charming miniatures for freshness of colour and ingenuousness of expression. A foretaste of beatitude seems to have warmed the old man's soul as he worked — he has removed the cloud of melancholy with which he formerly loved to cover the Virgin's countenance; he no longer paints the Mother of the seven sorrows, but rather the cause of our joy."

Exactly opposite our canal, at the entrance from the Quay to the Canale Grande, is the church of San Giorgio Maggiore; it is built chiefly from a model of Palladio, and is the noblest in Venice. Our gondola landed us at the spacious marble platform before the church. Its situation is most happy. Looked at from the Piazzetta, it is the most stately ornament of Venice. Looking from it, a view is commanded of the towers, and domes, and palaces, that illustrate the opposite shore. The church is immense, and adorned by several pictures of Titian. A convent adjoined, now destroyed; but as we rambled about, we found that they had kindly retained, and left open for the visits of strangers, the celebrated cloister, surrounded by an elegant colonnade of Ionic pillars, and the staircase, which is one of the boasts of Venice.

Somewhat above, within the Canale Grande, is the church of Santa Maria della Salute; this was built in 1631, a time when architecture had degenerated, and a multiplicity of ornaments was preferred to that simple harmonious style, whose perfection has to my eye the effect of one of Handel's airs on the ear — filling it with a sense of exalted pleasure. Here was beauty, but it existed even in spite of the defects of the building; it sprang from its situation, its steps laved by the sea, its marble walls reflecting the prismatic colour of the waves, its commanding a view of great architectural beauty; within also it contains pictures of eminent merit.

The roof of the Sacristy possesses three Titians, which overpaid you for twisting your neck to look at them. Methinks they ought to convert the exclusive admirer of the mystic school, who would confine painting to the expression of one, it is true, of the most exalted among the passions — adoration, love, and contemplation of Divine perfection. These paintings are, what surely pictures ought to be allowed to be, dramatic in the highest sense; they tell a story; they represent scenes with unsurpassed truth and vigour. The killing of Goliath by David, is admirable. The countenance of the youthful hero, as he stands unarmed, "with native honour clad," is instinct with the glow of victory, purified by his artless reliance on the God of his fathers. The Sacrifice of Isaac, is the only representation of that tremendous act that ever pleased me: generally it inspires pain — often disgust; a father, unimpassioned and pitiless, about to cut the throat of his innocent and frightened child. But Titian's imagination allowed him to conceive the feelings that must have actuated and supported both father and son — that of unquestioning certainty that what God ordered was to be obeyed, not only without a murmur, but with alacrity and a serene conviction that good alone could be the result. In particular, the countenance of Isaac is the most touching commentary on this story; it displays awe of approaching death, without terror; it is solemn, and yet lit up by that glance into eternity, and unquestioned resignation to a will higher and better than his own, which alone could sanctify the horror of the moment.

But, perhaps, surpassing these in power, is the Death of Abel. Usually, you see a man striking his brother the death-blow, as it seems, with coldblooded brutality: here, you behold the wild frenzy that transported the fratricide out of himself. I have seen the passion of violent and terrible anger well expressed in two pictures only — this one, and that at Berlin, where the Duke of Gueldres clenches his fist at his father.

One day, in one of our many rambles, we tried to get into a church, but it was at the worst hour for such a visit — between one and four — when the churches are closed. We tried to find the sacristan, when a workman came to us—" You cannot get in there," he said; "but I will show you something." He took us to the building at which he was at work — a convent for Dominicans. The French, during their rule, suppressed all the convents; they are being revived, even in Lombardy, where, till lately, there were none. There was nothing attractive in a modem house divided off into narrow cells, two of which were windowless, and pointed out as *luoghi di castigo,* by our guide; but it was curious (whether satisfactory or not, I leave to others to decide,) to see this building, narrow of dimensions, mean in its proportions, altogether insignificant in size and aspect, replace the stately edifices in which monks of olden time passed their lives.

The church of the Jesuits is in the ornate style dear to this order, and is even in worse taste than usual. Before the high altar is spread the imitation of a carpet, formed of party-coloured marbles. Even the pictures — many of which are by Palma — that hang around, are robbed of their beauty by their juxtaposition to heavy, inelegant ornaments.

We were glad to leave it, and to turn our steps to the church of the Saints Giovanni and Paolo, a very large and majestic edifice; it is more venerable than any other in Venice, and belongs to the middle ages; the name of the architect is lost: an inscription under the organ only tells us, that it was begun in 1246, and consecrated in 1430. It is filled with magnificent tombs of the old Doges, and rich in pictures by Bonifazio, Bassano, Bellini — the famous Martyrdom of Titian is taken hence. We often wander about its vast and stately nave, reading, with pleasure, the historical names on the tombs — taking delight in the many remains of the middle ages — and filled more and more with veneration for the energy, magnificence, and taste of the Venetians.

I cannot tell you of all we see, or it would take you as long to read my letter as we shall be at Venice. As we remain a month, we do not crowd our day with sights; our gondoliers come in the morning, and we pass our time variously. Sometimes, after visiting a single church, we are rowed over to Lido; and, crossing a narrow strip of sand, scattered with Hebrew tombstones, find ourselves on the borders of the ocean; we look out over the sea on vessels bound to the East, or watch the fishing-boats return with a favourable wind, and glide, one after the other, into port, their graceful lateen sails filled by the breeze. We thus loiter hours away, especially on cold days, when we have been chilled at home; but Lido has a heat of its own — its sands receiving and retaining the sun’s rays — which we do not enjoy among the marbles and pavements of Venice.

As the sun sinks behind the Euganean hills, we recross the lagune. Every Monday of this month is a holiday for the Venetian shopkeepers and common people; they repair in a multitude of gondolas to Lido, to refresh themselves at the little inn — to meet in holiday trim, and make merry on the sea-sands. We pass them in crowds as we return on that day. Our way is, sometimes (according as the tide serves,) under the walls of the madhouse, celebrated in Shelley’s poem of Julian and Maddalo —

“A windowless, deformed, and dreary pile.”

Yet not quite windowless; for there are grated, unglazed apertures — against which the madmen cling — and gaze sullenly, or shout, or laugh, or sing, as their wild mood dictates.

We often allow our gondolier to take us where he will; and we see a church, and we say, what is that? and make him seek the sacristan, and get out to look at something strange and unexpected. Thus we viewed the church of St. Sebastian, which contains the *chef-d’œuvre* of Paul Veronese, the Martyrdom of St. Mark. There is something in the works of this artist, which, without being ideal or sublime, is graceful and dignified — according to the dignity of this world; — his groups are formed of the high-born and high-bred, and all the concomitants of his pictures are conceived in the same style of mundane but elegant magnificence. Sometimes we walk: passing through the busy Merceria, we get entangled, and lose ourselves in the *calle* of Venice; — we see an open door and peep in, and ask where we are from a passer by; and hear a name of historic renown, and find ourselves viewing, by chance, one of the wonders of the place. A favourite walk is straight across towards the north, till we reach the Fondamenti Nuovi, a handsome quay, from which we command a view of many of the smaller islands; and far distant, the Julian Alps and the mountains of Friuli. It is to me a most exalted pleasure to look on these heaven-climbing shapes.

Sometimes, if the morning be “kerchiefed in a comely cloud,” and it feels chilly, we cross merely to the Canale della Giudecca, which is almost a lagune, and being very much wider than the Canal Grande, is not so convenient for common traffic; a handsome street or quay, turned to the south, borders the water — which, receiving the noonday sun, forms a pleasant and warm promenade.

Madame de Genlis exclaims, “Quelle triste ville que Venise!” For those who love the confusion and clatter of carriages, the garish look of smart shops, and a constant flux and reflux of passers-by, it is indeed *dull.* There is no noise (except the church bells, of which there is too much) — no dust;

the waters sparkle silently at your feet; the marble palaces catch their radiance and are dressed in prismatic colours, reflected from the waves. It is a place where you may dream away your life, quite forgetful of the rubs, thorns, and hard knocks of more bustling cities.

But if Venice be tranquil, come with me beyond Venice, and tell me what name to give to the superlative stillness that reigns when we cross the lagunes to the islands — Murano, Mazzorbo, Burano Torcello. Little remains on them, except the churches, built in the younger days of Venice; several of these are magnificent in marbles, and interesting from their pictures, painted in the infancy of the art. We rambled about, and our very footsteps seemed unnaturally to invade the stillness that dwells on these desert shores, beside the waveless lagune. For a time we might fancy ourselves —

“The first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.”

We were pleased; but quiet became lethargy; and the dank grass and marshy ground looked unhealthy. We were glad to be rowed back to Venice.

It was much pleasanter to visit the Armenian convent. This is the *beau idéal* of gentlemanly and clerical seclusion. Its peaceful library; its cultivated and shady garden; the travelled tastes of its inmates, who all come from the East, and are not imprisoned by their vows, but travel on various missions, even as far as that *Ultima Thule* which we consider the centre of all busy life — the view of the domes and towers of Venice; and further still, of the Euganean hills to the west, and of the Alps to the north; the sight you caught of some white sails on the far ocean; — all this gave promise of peace without ennui — a retreat — but not a tomb.

Thus I dwell on the beauty, the majesty, the dreamy enjoyments of Venice. I will now endeavour, though the time I stay is too short to enable me to observe much, to tell you something of the Venetians.

LETTER IX.

Free Port. — Venetian Society. — Titles of the Nobility. — The Dotti. — Infant School.

OCTOBER.

When I was here last, the duties on all imports to Venice were high, living became expensive, and the city languished; — it is now a free port; everything enters without paying the slightest toll, with the exception of tobacco. The Emperor of Austria grows a wretched plant, to which he gives this name, on his paternal acres, and will not allow his subjects to smoke anything else. If that were the only misdeed of his government, I should not quarrel with him, but only with the people, who do not thereon forego the idle habit of cigars altogether.

The free port gives a far greater appearance of life and activity to the city than it formerly had; and some luxuries — such as Turkish coffee, and, indeed, all things from the East, are much better and cheaper than with us. To the Venetians, coffee stands in lieu of wine, beer, spirits, every exciting drink, and they obtain it in perfection at a very low price. The Austrian is doing what he can to revive trade, so to increase his store; for two thirds of the taxes of the Regno Lombardo-Veneto go to Vienna. He desires that railroads should be made, and one is being constructed from Milan to Venice. Nay, they are in the act of building a bridge for the railroad carriages from Mestre to the centre of the city; however convenient, it is impossible not to repine at this innovation; the power, the commerce, the arts of Venice are gone, the bridge will rob it of its romance.

With scarcely any exception, all the Venetians of the higher ranks are at Villeggiatura at this season, so we have seen but very few of them. The manner in which the upper class live is, I fancy, monotonous enough. In the winter, the Viceroy comes from Milan to inhabit his palace, and gives a few balls. Some ladies open their houses for *conversazioni* in the evening; but the usual style is for each lady to have her circle, and the general drawing-room is the Opera-house; or they assemble in the Piazza of San Marco. There is a plentiful supply of chairs before the doors of the principal *caffès,* and they sit and converse. It is not etiquette for a lady to enter a *caffé*, and they are shocked at the English women, who do not perceive the difference between eating their ice, or sipping their coffee, in the open Piazza, and entering the shop itself. To sit or to walk, listening to the band, and exchanging visits in this glorious drawing-room, lighted up by the mighty lamps of heaven, is, especially to an unhacknied stranger, a very pleasant way of passing a summer evening. The *caffé* to which the noble Venetians resort, is that of Suttil. Foreigners go next door to Florian, where Galignani is taken in, which is an attraction to the English.

That reading does not flourish here, may be gathered from the fact that there is no circulating library, nor any literary society, such as are frequent in country towns in France and England, where people subscribe among one another for the supply of books. The French Consul tried to establish one, but did not succeed. I think it is Doctor Gregory who says, reading novels is better than a total incapacity to take an interest in books, since it enlarges the mind more than no reading at all. It is sometimes alleged, that in a state of society where there is no thought nor desire for the acquisition of knowledge, it is better not to read, than to imbibe the opium or exciting cordials of the usual run of novels. The question is, whether these works are not a step towards awakening a desire for nobler and more useful mental culture. Meanwhile, to live among a people who do not read — do not desire to learn — presents to us a singular phasis of society. What can they do? Many things, it may be said, remain for women in the discharge of their duties, without becoming *blue;* but the fact is, that a desire for improvement is the salt of the human intellect; that a wish to acquire knowledge is natural to a well-conditioned mind, and ought especially to exist among individuals of that class of society which enjoys uninterrupted leisure. The Italians are delicately organised, and have intuitive taste in music and most of the fine arts; but accomplishments, as they are called, cannot be cultivated to any extent, nor can even a love of duty subsist among the idle, which the Italians proverbially are.

Still, among the Venetians, as all over Italy, you must not suppose because they are ignorant — because they live in a confined routine — because to make love in their youth, and take care of their money in later years, be the occupation of the greater number, that you find the provincial tone of a French or English country town. Graceful manners — accents modulated by the kindest courtesy — suavity that is all gentleness, and a desire to do more than please, to be useful, is innate among them — it reigns in every class of society, and wins irresistibly.

When I was last at Venice, many many years ago, I knew no Venetians, and it so happened that the English whom I saw chose to erect themselves into censors of this people, and to speak of them in unmeasured terms of censure. New to Italy, we believed those who had lived there long. Shelley, in his letters and poems, echoes these impressions. I cannot pretend to say with what justice such opinions were formed: I do not know whether the Venetians are improved. If a foreigner came to England, and chose to associate with the most vicious of our country people, both nobles and that worst race who live by the vices of the rich, he might find as much to abhor as Lord B — represented as detestable at Venice. But then there is another class among us, — and he declared there was no other here. We know, indeed, generally speaking, that Italian morality is not ours; but if it falls short in some things, perhaps in others, if we knew them well, we should be obliged to confess its superiority.

The duties of husband and wife are in England observed with even more sanctity than they obtain credit for. But in how many instances do our affections and duties begin and end there — with the exception of those exercised by the parents towards their *very young* children. We all know that when a son or daughter marries, they literally fulfil the dictum of Adam, "therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife," Our family affections centre in the small focus of the married pair, and few and ineffectual are the radii that escape and go beyond.

Now, it must be acknowledged that, however endearing at the outset, however necessary and proper, to a certain extent, such a state of things may be, it often degenerates after a little time into the most sordid selfishness. The Italians are deficient in this self-dedication to one, but they have wider extended family attachments, of a very warm and faithful description. We who consider it a necessity of life to have a *menage* to ourselves — each couple in its nest — cannot understand the harmony and affection nourished in a little republic, often consisting of grandfather and grandmother, who may be said to have abdicated power, and live in revered retirement — their days not counted and grudged, as with us is too frequently the case: then comes father and mother, respected and loved —

and then brothers and sisters. If a sister marries, she becomes a part of another family, and goes away. The son brings his wife under his father's roof; but the size of their houses renders them independent in their daily life. The younger sons are not apt to marry, because, in addition to their want of fortune, too many women, essentially strangers, would thus be brought under one roof, and would be the occasion of discord. We know how readily the human heart yields to a law which it looks on as irrefragable; submitting to single life, uncles learn to love their nephews and nieces as if they were their own offspring, and a strong family chain is thus formed. A question may arise as to how much of family tyranny turns these links into heavy fetters. In the first place, their families are seldom as numerous as with us. The necessities of their position fell lightly on the males. All over the world younger sons seldom marry; or only do so to exchange luxury for straitened circumstances; and younger sons who continue to grow old under the paternal roof, sharing *by right* the luxuries to which they were born, and in which they were educated, are better off than our younger sons, who are often thrust forth from the luxurious home of their youth, to live on a bare pittance in a wretched lodging.

Unmarried women all over the Continent have so much the worst of it, that few remain single. How they contrive to dispose of their girls, now convents are in disuse, I cannot tell; but, as I have said, there are not so many as with us, and they usually contrive to marry. At times you may find a maiden aunt, given up to devotion, who sheds a gentle and kindly influence over the house. It does not strike me that, as regards daughters who survive their parents, things are much better managed with us.

This family affection nurtures many virtues, and renders the manners more malleable, more courteous, and deferential. For the rest, though I cannot pretend to be behind the scenes — and though, as I have said, their morality is confessedly not ours — I am sure there is much both to respect as well as love among the Italians.

The great misfortune which the nobles labour under is, in the first place, a bad education, and afterwards the want of a career. The schools for children are as bad as they can be; — at their universities there is a perpetual check at work, to prevent the students imbibing liberal opinions; for as the governments of Italy consider that those who dedicate themselves to study and reflection are sure to be inimical to them, so do they look on such with jealousy and distrust, while sharp watch is kept on the professors, to prevent their ranging beyond the bounds of science, into the demesnes of philosophy. Young men at college, however, are all liberal, all ardent for the freedom of their country, all full of the noblest, though too often the most impracticable views for her regeneration. They leave college, — and what is to become of them? If they have already distinguished themselves for boldness of opinions, or even for great capacity and love of knowledge, they are marked men; they are not permitted to travel; — in any case they have no career, unless they give in at once their adherence to Austria; and, certainly, however hopelessness or misfortune may tame and induce them to do this in after times, at their first outset in life, an Italian would feel as if, in so doing, he were a traitor to his country. Some few there are — as many perhaps as with us — chosen spirits, who can pursue their course, devoted to study, or the service of their fellow creatures — abstracted from the frivolity or vices of society. But the majority have either never felt the true touch of patriotism and a desire for improvement, or find such incompatible with worldly pleasure. There is little or no public employment; the marine is but a name; the army, no true Italian would enter; if they did, they would be quartered far away from their native country, in Hungary or Bohemia; they have nothing to occupy their minds, and of course plunge into dissipation. *Play* is the whirlpool that engulphs most of them. As with us during the middle of the last century — as among a certain set of our present aristocracy — play is their amusement, their occupation, their ruin; — many of the noblest Italian families are passing away, never more to be heard of, the heirs of their wealth having lost all in play. — New men, mostly of Jewish extraction, who have gained by banking, stock jobbing, and money lending, what the others have lost by their extravagance, are rising on their downfall.

A curious anomaly exists among the nobility of the north of Italy. It is well known that titles in England are on a different footing from those on the Continent, and hence are far more respected. In England, a peer is an hereditary legislator, he is certain to possess a comparatively large fortune; so that, to be a noble with us, is to be in the possession of power and influence. His sons, except the eldest, enjoy little of all this, and in the next generation they sink into untitled gentry. In Italy, indeed every where abroad, the descendants of a noble are also noble to the end of time. The individuals of this order, in consequence, intermarry only among one another, and flourish as a numerous class, wholly apart; but of course the respect in which titles are held is greatly diminished, as power and fortune by no means constantly attend them.

At present many of the most illustrious families of Venice and Lombardy have lost their titles. Thus it happened. On Napoleon's downfall, when Venice and her territories and other parts of Northern Italy were ceded to Austria, the kingdom Lombardo-Veneto was formed, and all those persons who wished to become nobles of the new state, were ordered to prove their titles by producing the diplomas and documents establishing the same. The Venetians could easily have complied, since the names of the nobility were, under the republic, inscribed in the *libro d'oro;* for, although the original of this book was burnt by the republicans in 1797, several copies existed; and the Venetian nobles were informed, that on presenting a petition to request leave, and paying the tax or fees, they might retain the titles of their forefathers. Many who were descended from families which had given doges to the state, refused to petition.—" What is the house of Hapsberg," they said, "that it should pretend to ennoble the offspring of old Borne?" Nor would they deign to request honours from the invaders of their country, who carried their insolence so far as to demand proof of noble origin from those who, for centuries, had illustrated the pages of history with their names.

The nobility of Lombardy were also called upon to ask for the confirmation of the titles which they already possessed, by producing the documents that proved them. Very few were able to comply, as the Jacobins had destroyed their papers when they seized on all public and private archives, and burned them. Thus many of the most ancient and illustrious families are deprived of the titles which, for centuries, they enjoyed. These regulations concern that portion of Lombardy lately incorporated in the Austrian kingdom. With regard to the Milanese nobility, and that belonging to the states which Austria possessed before the French Revolution, the edicts touched only the new nobility, for which the Austrian government entertained an antipathy, and was desirous of finding a pretence for depriving of rank; it was often enabled to succeed by taking advantage of some flaw in their diplomas, or in the manner in which they had fulfilled the conditions contained in the article of the constitution which treats of feudal tenures. It also forced the nobles of Lombardy, who had received additional rank, to choose whether they would belong to the ancient nobility by their old titles, or to the modern by their new. Litta and Visconti, who had been made dukes, as well as others who had been advanced in rank, chose the former, and thus, though of ancient race, belong to the new nobility.

But to return to the more important topic of the state of knowledge in Italy — for this matter of titles is held by themselves in great contempt, and only thought of as marking the desire of Austria to arrogate power and to annoy. The Italians care very little for titles; and I have often heard them say, that until they visited France or England, they scarcely knew or cared whether they possessed any.

You must not suppose, from what I say, that Italy in no way shares in the enlightenment of the present times. Moreover, the Emperor of Austria admits the diffusion of *science* in his dominions. Happy Italians, to whom is conceded one path, on which their minds may proceed in the journey *onwards* for which God created man. The Austrian government is aware that their own native subjects can go pottering on with theories and science, without one aspiration to become men, in the free and noble sense of self-government, stirring in their hearts: it supposes that it will be the same in Italy; but the people of this country are made of different clay; and it seems to me, that as Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh for his own destruction, so does he soften the heart of Prince Metternich, thus to admit a system of improvement into Lombardy, which will hereafter prove the instrument of the overthrow of his power. Science is generally pursued by clever Italians as a mode of employing their understandings, which does not excite the suspicion of government; and scientific meetings, such as assemble with us at stated times in the great provincial towns, take place yearly in Italy. This season the learned met in Padua; and at the inn where we refreshed ourselves in that city, we found tables spread for three hundred *Dotti,* as they are called. A ridiculous story came to us the other day from across the lagune. A student of the university looking over the bridge, and seeing come up the river a barge full of pumpkins, cried out, "Vengono i dotti — see, they have sent their heads before them!" *Testa di zucca*, or pumpkin-head, answers to our phrase of blockhead. This, however, was regarded as a serious insult, and the offender has been put under arrest, and is to be imprisoned till the great men leave Padua.

There is another point for which the government shews toleration, on condition that its own political catechism is taught — infant schools. I visited one, and was much interested. It belongs to our district of Venice, and is one among many. It was for both boys and girls under the age of nine. I saw the girls' room first. They learn according to the system now prevalent everywhere for teaching the poor — Bell's and Lancaster's, as it used to be called. There were some thirty or forty girls; and I am sorry to say they did not shew so well as the boys; the cause, *I trust*, being that the head-teacher, a priest, attended only to the latter. I do not mean to detract from the governesses who presided over both schools: they seemed sensible and zealous, and in every way the whole thing was respectable. But the priest, a young man, has a passion for arithmetic; he teaches it with ardour to his pupils, who have a happy knack for the same; and the sums we witnessed brought to a happy conclusion by these little fellows, all under nine years of age, and one between seven and eight being the cleverest, were to me quite prodigious. Once the master disputed a point; the boys insisted they were right, and so it proved. We gave the sums. As to the correctness of the computation, we trusted a good deal to the honour of the governesses and master; but in truth, to see the eager and intelligent way in which the boys answered, was quite sufficient, for no one could be so ready and glad unless he felt himself in the right. These children were not pretty. I have often remarked, that handsome as the Italian common people are, their children (probably from bad food) are seldom good-looking.

Unfortunately, when the children leave the infant schools, their education ends; they fall back on the habits of indolence and ignorance indigenous here. How far their arithmetical studies may conduce to their honesty, I cannot guess. I am not one of those who say,

"Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

A little light is better than total darkness; especially in Italy, where the cleverness of the people prevents their ever becoming stupid. They must learn something; and a little good is better than all bad.

LETTER X.

Venetian Palaces. — Gondolieri. — Basilica of St. Mark. — Opera. — Illumination of the Fenice.

VENICE, OCTOBER.

MANY of the palaces of Venice still preserve their pictures, and shew, in their numbers and beauty, the wealth and taste of the families in old time. The Palazzo Manfrin contains, I think, the largest and most choice collection. It has some incomparable pictures by Giorgione, the contemporary, and rival, of Titian. He also was a pupil of Gian Bellini, but invented a style of his own, and first painted with that richness and grandeur of colouring which is the pride of the Venetian school. His pictures in the Palazzo Manfrin are wonderfully beautiful. The Deposition from the Cross, by Titian, is here: indeed, the collection is in every respect magnificent, and deserves many visits. In the Palazzo Mocenigo (which Lord Byron inhabited — there are two palaces Mocenigo: it is one of the most illustrious families of Venice), there is the design for the Paradiso of Tintoretto. In the Palazzo Pisani is an admirable picture by Paul Veronese — the Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander. It rises above his usual style of mere portraiture into the ideal. There is the true chivalrous expression in the mien and countenance of the youthful victor — the grandeur of habitual command, the dignity resulting from noble ambition; at the same time, you see that his very soul is touched by compassion for the fallen princesses, and the ingenuous shame which a generous mind feels on beholding those lately placed so high humiliate themselves before him, mantles in his face.

In the Barberigo Palace is the Maddalena Scapigliata of Titian. Her eyes, swollen and red, are raised to heaven, and her face is disfigured by much weeping. Her remorse, her vehemence of grief, differs wholly from the tender sorrow, chastened and supported by faith, of Correggio’s Magdalen. At first sight, the deformity of her features produced by violent weeping, is almost repulsive; but the picture gains on you; the real beauty of the countenance — a something of noble and soft, in spite of passionate sorrow and self-abasement — is perceptible through her tears.

We were taken to-day to see a modern picture painting for the Emperor. It is on a large scale — Foscari taking leave of his Father; his mother is fainting; the Doge, struggling with contending emotions, turns half away. The best figure is that of the son: the feebleness arising from physical suffering — veneration for his seemingly severe parent — grief, tenderness, and resignation — are well expressed in his kneeling figure and downcast face.

The Venetians are much interested at this moment by the restoration of the Pala of the high altar of St. Mark's. It required an order to view it and the other precious objects preserved in the Treasury.

The Basilica of San Marco is the most singular among the edifices of Venice. Its strange Arab architecture denotes its great antiquity. The ancient chapel of St. Theodore (who, before the transfer of the body of St. Mark, was the patron saint of the city), built in 552, was incorporated in 828 in the ancient church of St. Mark, at the time when the bones of the Saint arrived. These edifices being consumed by fire, the foundations of the present were laid in 976, and completed in 1071; but even until the middle of the last century its internal decorations were not completed.

Every portion glistens with precious stones. Its walls are covered with pictures in Mosaic: its pavement, and the five hundred columns that adorn it, are composed of verde antique, jasper, porphyry, agate, and the most precious marbles. Usually, one cares little for such things; but here the barbaric magnificence — the Eastern aspect — the tombs of heroes it contains, and its association with the glories of the republic — combine to render the tribute of Mammon to Heaven interesting.

The high altar has two Pale: one covers the other. The internal one, a curiosity from its richness, has been taken down to be repaired. It is called the Pala d'oro, and is formed of enamel paintings on silver and gold, encrusted with a profusion of gems; it was executed at Constantinople by order of the Doge Piero Orseolo, under whose reign the Basilica was finished. It now forms the delight of Venice, and many noble ladies have contributed a quantity of gems, to replace those that have been lost. It is a curious specimen of the state of the arts in the middle ages, before it revived and received a soul from the great painters of Tuscany and Umbria. It is all glitter and richness, and a sort of barbaric elegance, without real taste.

The treasure of St. Mark once overflowed with wealth, in gems, pearls, and worked gold, chiefly transferred from Constantinople; these have all disappeared; the only objects that attract attention are an antique porphyry vase, with letters carved on it, such as are found in Persepolis — and a golden rose, one of those which it was the practice of the popes to present on certain occasions to catholic sovereigns.

This had been presented to a doge of Venice; it was no meagre gift, being a very large bough, bearing many roses, all formed of the precious metal.

Each day we grow more familiar with this delightful city — favourite of Amphitrite and the Nereids; the little roots, generated by sympathy and enjoyment, begin to strike out, and I shall feel the violence of transplanting when forced to go. I look wistfully on some of the palaces, thinking that here I might find a pleasant, peaceful home; nor is the idea, though impracticable for me, wholly visionary. Several of the palaces, bereft of their old possessors, are used for public offices, or are let at a low rent. It is easy to obtain a house, whose marble staircase, lofty halls, and elegant architecture, surpass anything to be found in France or England. Several English gentlemen have taken apartments, and fitted them up with old furniture, and find themselves, at slight cost, surrounded by Venetian grandeur. No one can spend much money in Venice: — a gondola is a very inexpensive carriage; hiring one, as we do, costs four swanzikers a day — about four pounds a month, with a *buona mano* of half a swanziker a day to the gondolier, on going away.

Of course, if settled, you must build your own gondola; and to be *respectable* you must have two *gondolieri* in livery. The appearance of the boat-men dressed like footmen is, to my eye, the only inharmonious sight in Venice. These men used to be reserved only for the use of the gondola and carrying messages; but in these poorer days, they serve as domestics in the house; they are still, however, a race apart, thoroughly acquainted with every nook and corner of the city; intelligent, alert, zealous; ready (as we were told of old) to do any bad errand; but with such having nothing to do, we know nothing. We have two gondolas in our pay. One of the *gondolieri* is a favourite, Beppo, No. 303; the other, Marco, 307. We have no fault to find with either; and they join intelligence to exactness. At first, we would not engage Marco, because, accustomed to foreigners, he was proud of his scraps of bad French. We made a bargain with him that he should always speak Italian — Venetian we would not insist upon, for we should not understand him. I am almost sorry to know nothing of Venetian; it was the first dialect formed from Latin that was written. At the time when, in the other cities of Italy, the annals were drawn up in barbarous Latin, the Venetians made their records in their vernacular tongue, which remain to this day in multitudinous volumes in the Library of St. Mark. It has been averred that the first colonists from Padua brought this dialect of the Latin with them, and that it is a remnant of the vernacular of Roman Italy. Nine centuries later, the *lingua Toscana* could scarcely be said to exist; the language of Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, being very scant and inefficient. I am told that Dante himself hesitated whether to write his "Divina Comedia" in Latin or Venetian, till fortunately he became aware that the talk of the common people of Tuscany possessed all the elements of expression; and he, collecting them with that life-giving power proper to genius, "created a language, in itself heroic and persuasive, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms." There is, I believe, even at this day, greater scope for wit and airy grace in Venetian than in Tuscan.

The *gondolieri* often sing at their oars; nor are the verses of Tasso quite forgotten. One delicious calm moonlight evening, as we were walking on the Piazzetta, an old *gondoliere* challenged a younger one to alternate with him the stanzas of the "Gerusalemme." I have often wished to hear them. It was a double pleasure that I did not do so by command, but in the true old Venetian way, two challenging each other voluntarily, and taking up alternate stanzas, till one can remember no more, and the other comes off conqueror. We are told that the air to which they sing is monotonous: so it is; yet well adapted to recitation. The antagonists stood on the Piazzetta, at the verge of the laguna, surrounded by other *gondolieri* — the whole scene lighted up by the moon. They chanted the favourite passage, the death of Clorinda. I could only follow the general sense, as they recite in Venetian; but the subject of the verse, high and heroic, the associations called up — the beauty of the spot — a sort of dignity in the gestures of the elder boatman, and nothing harsh, though it might be monotonous, in their chaunt — the whole thing gave me inexpressible pleasure — it was a Venetian scene, dressed in its best; and the imagination was wrapped in perfect enjoyment.

The weeks pass away, and we are soon, I am sorry to say, about to leave Venice. We have taken our sight-seeing quietly, and each day has had a novel pleasure. It is one of our amusements to visit the piazza of San Marco at two in the afternoon, when, on the striking of the hour on the great clock, the pigeons come down to be fed. These birds are sacred to Saint Mark, and it is penal to kill any. They lead a happy life, petted by all the citizens. Now and then they may be served up at the dinner of a poor man; but they are too many not to spare, without grudging, an individual or two for the good of their maintained.

We have visited the arsenal, a monument of the glory and commerce of Venice; silent, empty, useless. One poor brig lies in the harbour; it served during the late war in the East; and the young officer, who kindly acted as cicerone, had captured a Turkish flag, which showed fresh among ancient Venetian trophies. It seemed only a pretty compliment when I told him, that it gave me more pleasure than all the curiosities he was showing us; but I spoke the simple truth. Anything that demonstrates the valour and spirit of the present race of Italians, is more satisfactory to behold, than all the cobwebbed glories of old times.

No good opera is going on here. The Fenice, the large theatre, is only open during carnival. The most popular amusement is the *famiglia Vianesi,* about half a dozen children, who sing the *Barbiere di Seviglia* and the *Elisir d'Amore,* It was very wonderful, but not pleasing. There is a young and pretty prima donna — a mezzo soprano — Gazzaniga, who takes the part of Romeo in the *Montecchi e Capuletti,* and sings it very nicely; and there is an amusing buffo.

A grand opera was got up at Padua during the visit of the *Dotti,* and even Taglioni was engaged.

There was a talk of her coming to Venice, but it fell to the ground. However, after the learned had dispersed, the operatic company crossed the lagune, bringing the decorations of *Robert le Diable.* The Italians do not understand German music. They bring it out because it has been praised; but they do not like it; and alter it, and try to make it coincide with their taste, and spoil it completely.

The Emperor Ferdinand’s uncle, and the heir presumptive of the imperial crown, is come to spend a day here, and it is thought proper to mark his visit by a festival. The Piazza di San Marco has been illuminated — only with a mezza illuminazione, but still it was very beautiful; nor can anything be otherwise in the magnificent theatre of this stately square.

In addition they opened the opera-house of the Fenice, and lighted it up. An illuminara in one of the great opera-houses is almost a national event in an Italian town: I never witnessed one before, and now could understand the excitement that it occasions. The price of boxes was very high, some sixty swanzikers and more. Signor — kindly brought me the keys of a very good box, opposite that occupied by the royal party. We went early; the whole house was full; the passages and corridors, all brilliantly lighted, were filled with the common people — admitted without paying. Nothing could be more animated, more gay. Our gondolier, one of whose offices this is, paid for us, and showed us the way to our box. When the door opened we were dazzled: it was like a scene in fairy land. Accustomed to our few wax candles, and the deforming, sombre light of gas, the innumerable lights that shed more than day over the whole house, produced an effect of brilliancy and elegance quite indescribable.

There had been much debating as to the opera, Gazzaniga wished to have the *Montecchi e Capuletti*, as she shone in the part of Romeo; but the primo buffo did not like to be excluded from singing before H. R. I. H. Accordingly, the opera of *Chi dura Vince* was fixed on, in which Gazzaniga had a prominent serio-comic part. The story of the play is similar to that of our *Honeymoon;* and the way in which she acted the angry, deluded bride was very amusing. This opera is by Ricci, and has a few agreeable airs in it — though nothing rising above mediocrity. The Archduke went away before the opera was over. Royal personages labour so very hard; and the Archduke was to leave Venice at four the following morning. He went in a steamer to view the sea-wall building at Malamocco, and thence is to proceed by steam to Trieste. Another steamer accompanied him; and the first people of Venice, and all strangers, were invited, as for a party of pleasure. I had a sort of fore-feeling I should not like it; for though I was assured the steamer would make the voyage in the lagune on this side Lido, I did not quite believe that to be possible. So it proved — the steamers took to the open sea, which was rather rough; and though plenty was provided to refresh and entertain the guests, very little was eaten.

LETTER XI.

Journey to Florence. — Cold and rainy Season. — Excursion to Vallombrosa.

OCTOBER 30th.

WE have taken flight, over plain, river, and mountain, and are arrived in the beautiful city of Italy — Firenze la Bella. We parted excellent friends with the host of l'Hôtel d'Italie, who had shown himself anxious to please, and fair in his dealings. A *vetturino* journey is always somewhat tedious, and the deep roads neighbouring the Po, having been damaged by rain and flood, our progress was more than usually slow. We were drawn by two admirable little horses, and their avaricious master taxed their strength to the utmost. He had demanded more from us, alleging the necessity of extra horses, but grudged the price asked, and went on merely with his own. The stinginess of this fellow had its reward in riches, for he told us he was called Il Miliorino. This it is that makes avarice an incurable vice. It can never be satiated, for it ever wants more; and it is seldom disappointed, for it gains its ends more passively than actively, and its success depends on self, not on others; but this it is also that renders it so despicable. "Tell him his soul lives in an alley," said Ben Jonson, when Charles I. sent him a niggard gift. The souls of the avaricious live in the narrowest of all alleys; they are shut up in the dreariest solitary confinement, from which they have not the spirit to escape.

We contrived to peep at a few pictures. At Padua, we paid a hurried visit to one or two churches adorned by frescoes by some of the earlier masters, admirable for the artless gesture — the earnest, rapt expression — the power of shewing the soul breathing in the face. Every painter who aims at the ideal — at expressing the purer and higher emotions of the soul, ought to make a particular study of these early Christian paintings; they must not imitate them — true genius, indeed, cannot imitate. He can catch the light which the labours of his predecessors throw over his path; but he will proceed on one shaped out by himself. To imitate Perugino would be to write poetry in the obsolete language of Chaucer. Yet every English writer ought to be familiar with the pathos, sweetness, and delicate truth of one of our greatest poets.

I was sorry not to spend more time at Ferrara; and in particular not to revisit the galleries, and palaces, and churches of Bologna. To have seen these once was no excuse for not seeing them again; but I could not.

I cannot say why, but the impression left on my mind of the passage of the Appenines had been unfavourable, and I was agreeably surprised to find the scenery far more varied — richer in wood, and more picturesque than I expected. The mountain inns are all much improved since I last crossed. Evening closed as the valley in which Florence is situated opened before us; the descent is rapid, ending almost at the gate of the city itself. We traversed it at its greatest length, from the Porta San Gallo to Schneiderff's Hotel, where very uncomfortable rooms were assigned to us.

This, and the expense of the hotel, made us eager to take apartments. I was instantly employed in the wearisome task of finding them. There are a great many, but still it was difficult to find such as we wanted. There were several numerous and handsome suites of rooms at a high price, and a great number of narrow and uncomfortable ones tolerably cheap. Neither suited us. We at last fixed on a second floor, on the Lungo I' Arno. The rooms are nearly all turned to the south, and look over the river: they are not large, but they are clean and neat. We are sure of the sun whenever he shines; which is a great desideratum, especially in an Italian winter, when the presence of sunshine often admits of an absence of fire. We have engaged our rooms for four months. It is very cold — as cold as it can be in England.

NOVEMBER.

To cold has succeeded rain, with a few sunny days to break the dreariness of the season; but I believe you in England are enjoying fine weather, and, strange to say, we hear that in Rome and Naples the rain is still more continuous and chill. Walking is out of the question; and driving, — how I at once envy and despise the happy rich who have carriages, and who use them only to drive every afternoon in the Cascine — the Hyde Park of Florence. If I could, I would visit every spot mentioned in Florentine history — Visit its towns of old renown; and ramble amid scenes familiar to Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Macchiavelli.

The fault of Florence is, that it is built in a basin, too entirely and too closely shut in by mountains, which collect the clouds, and render the air stagnant; so that it is hot in summer; and in winter, when there is snow on the Appenines, sharply cold. Now that there is no snow, the season being mild, we have the other alternative of rain and mist. Sometimes the Arno rises so high that it threatens a flood: on these occasions, it is watched and guarded like a wild beast, and every inch, as it rises, is proclaimed. I like to hear it, roaring and rushing in its course —

“Per aver pace co’ seguaci sui,”

as Dante says of the Po; and any one witnessing the turbulence of these tideless Italian rivers when swollen by rains; who views their precipitate speed, and listens to their thunder, as the mountain torrents, named by the poet their pursuers, come dashing after, to augment their fury — whoso sees this, is conscious that in this passage Dante displays his peculiar and high power of putting a sentient soul into nature, and representing it to our minds by images suggested by a quick and poetic feeling of her vitality.

During the intervals between the rainy days, the mists hang as dense and low over the city as they used to rest over the valley of Dolgelly during last year’s wintry summer. But when the sun does shine, and when the smiles of Nature call me forth, I cross the Ponte alle Grazie — I leave the town by the gate of San Miniato, and ascend the steep hill to the platform before the little elegant church (San Miniato fuore delle mura) on which Michael Angelo delighted to fix his eyes, calling it *“La bella villanella”* From the height, you command a view of the city, crowned by dome and tower, of the Appenine that slopes down to cradle it in its green lap; and of the Amo, that, having forced its way among the mountains, now hurries on towards the marine plain. This view, and the climate also of Florence, was injured not many years ago, when the forests, that clothed the mountain sides, were cut down, to be replaced by the olive — a more profitable growth. But the removal of the forests opened the gullies of the hills; took away the check formerly opposed to the violent tramontana; which collects its strength on the snowy peaks, and rushes down the bared sides with mightier power.

I look on those glorious hills, and turn to a map of Italy, and long to lose myself in their depths, and to visit every portion of Tuscany; every smaller town and secluded nook of which, is illustrious through historical association. It is my dream to set out some day on this ramble, and see places untrod by the usual tourist; but now I cannot.

However, we could not resist the temptation of visiting Vallombrosa. It is true this is not the season for excursions, autumn being too far advanced; but a fine day gave us promise, we hoped, for the same on the morrow: so we hired a *vettura* and set out.

The road skirts the river, and winds up the Valdarno, the slopes of whose inclosing hills are thickly studded with country seats. It was a showery day; but the sun shone at intervals, and brightened the stream and mountain sides. The road is new and good. At about one o'clock we reached a small town where a cattle fair was going on. After some little delay, however, we got ponies and a guide, and proceeded. We now fell upon a true mountain path, winding up the hill beside a brawling torrent; the crags rose high above, and the branches of noble forest-trees were spread over our path — truly they were in the sear and yellow leaf; but the place was the more consonant with Milton's verse —

"Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower."

As we climbed higher, a shower of sleet came on, and we arrived wet through at the Convent. No women are admitted within these sacred walls, but a *forestiera* is built adjoining for our accommodation.

The grassy plain, or platform, before the Convent is at the head of a huge gully or ravine, which slopes down towards the valley of the Arno. A mist hung over the scene; but in summer-time it must be — what it is named — Paradise.

Vallombrosa is situated on the verge of the mountainous region of the Casentino. This district is little known; it vies with Switzerland or the Tyrol in beauty; covered by forests, resonant with streams, the valleys that intervene are green and fertile. Cortona is its capital. Its nobility is of high antiquity, and the peasantry are attached to it with a sort of feudal sense of vassalage.

We arrived wet through. The lay-brother made a good fire, and asked us what refreshment we would have. We had already dined, so he brought us some excellent coffee, and a *chasse* of *rosolio,* such as is only to be found distilled by the Monks of this Convent.

The rain made the scene dreary; but it ceased at last, and we mounted our ponies. The sun broke out as we descended; and the sparkling torrent murmured softly as it danced along. I hailed it with delight, as one of —

“Li ruscelletti, che de’ verdi colli
Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
Facendo i lor canali e freddi e molli? —

Verses are these that might refresh a thirsty wanderer in a hot sandy desert. There is scarcely a spot in Tuscany, and those parts of the North of Italy, which he visited, that Dante has not described in poetry that brings the very spot before your eyes, adorned with graces missed by the prosaic eye, and yet which are exact and in perfect harmony with the scene.

There are three convents, Vallombrosa, Calmaldoli, and Laverna, situated in the depths of the district of the Casentino, of which visitors make the tour. Monks of old were wise to choose spots of extreme beauty, however solitary, for their life of seclusion, peace, and praise.

LETTER XII.

Art at Florence. — Cosimo Rosselli. — Ghirlandajo. — Beato Fra Angelico. — Poccetti. — Later Florentine School.

January, 1843.

FLORENCE contains a multitude of various paintings, which to describe, or even to classify, would demand a volume, and would require a knowledge of the art, the elements even of which I do not possess. I have not the remotest pretension to being a connoisseur; nor do I say, as some have done, "I do not know what is called good, but I know what pleases me" — giving it to be understood, by these words, that they have an untaught instinct, transcending culture of the student. I believe, in all matters of art, good taste results from natural powers joined to familiarity with the best productions. To read sublime poetry, to hear excellent music, to view the finest pictures, the most admirable statues, and harmonious and stately architecture, is the best school in which to learn to appreciate what approaches nearest to perfection in each.

M. Rio satisfactorily proves that the modem art of painting resulted from the piety of the age in which it had birth. The adoration of images — or, if that expression be too strong, the having recourse to images for the purpose of concentrating, vivifying, and exalting the faith of the worshippers — created a demand (to use a phrase of the day) for pictures on religious subjects. At first this was satisfied by paintings of the Byzantine school, to which custom gave sanctity. But when men of eminent piety, gifted with pictorial powers, turned their talents to representing bodily to the eye, the Saviour of the world, the chaste sinless mother of God, or saints, who through their faith form a portion of the hierarchy of heaven, and are admitted by the Judge to mediate for their fellow-creatures, they depicted all that their souls could conceive of sublime and holy in the face of man, seeking to present

"Of good, "wise, just, the perfect shape."

It is with extreme delight that I have viewed some of the works of the elder Florentine painters, who excelled in pourtraying the human countenance lighted up by the nobler passions. Simplicity and innocence; rapt enthusiasm, or dignified repose, characterise their various productions. It has been remarked that Shakspeare's personages speak the very words which we may imagine that *our noble selves* would say under the suggestions of certain passions, dispositions, and circumstances. So it may be said that every figure painted by these higher artists looks an individual chosen among our species for nobility of bearing and beauty of countenance, and that their attitude and look strictly belong to them. There is nothing theatrical nor affected, which is the Charybdis — nor anything constrained or inane, which may be termed the Scylla of the art.

Among the compositions eminent for the conjunction of the truth of nature and ideal beauty, is the fresco of Cosimo Rosselli, in the church of Saint Ambrosio. The subject is the translation of the miraculous chalice to the episcopal palace. It is replete with figures of various aspect, but all expressive of the sentiment of worship and admiration proper to the occasion. There is a group of women in particular, which, if such lived and assembled in the churches of Florence, show that personal beauty and graceful dignity then existed among the sex in a degree unparalleled elsewhere. But these evidently are not mere portraits; and the painter, though accustomed to associate with a race occupied by nobler thoughts and desires than now for the most part harbour in the brain and heart of women, yet idealised his actual experiences.

There is another picture of this age, which to see, is to feel the happiness which the soul receives from objects presented to the eye, that kindle and elevate the imagination. It represents the Adoration of the Magi, by Ghirlandajo, in the chapel of an hospital in the Piazza della Annunziata. There is one of the Kings standing on one side of the Virgin, which might (as the Apollo Belvidere is said to have done), create a passion in a woman's heart. Where on earth find a man so fall of majesty, gentleness, and feeling? There is a charming accessory to this picture. In the background is represented the Murder of the Innocents, in all its terror; but immediately in the fore-ground, on each side of the Virgin, kneel two children — the souls of the Innocents who died for Christ, and are redeemed by him. The attitude of these babes, especially of one, has that inexpressible charm of innocence which words cannot convey, and which since the creation of man, the pencil has seldom been able to depict.

Led by the admiration which this picture excited, I visited every other in Florence by Ghirlandajo; they mostly bear the stamp of the power I have mentioned. Vasari, albeit of a different school, praises him highly, but chiefly for the naturalness and truth with which he pourtrayed the feelings; and speaks of the wonder excited by those effects, and the pleasure they produced in the beholders. Describing one of the paintings in a chapel of the Church of the Santa Trinità, at Florence, representing the Death of St. Francis, and the grief of the monks, he says, "there is one friar who kisses his hand; and it is not possible, in painting, better to pourtray the expression; and there is besides a bishop, with spectacles on, who is singing vespers, not hearing whom is the only testimony that it is a mere painting."

Lanzi speaks of his perfection of outline, grace of attitude, truth of ideas, and of his facility and rare diligence. He was the master of Michael Angelo; and, it is said, envying the talents his pupil displayed, contrived that he should quit painting for sculpture. But this, I have no doubt, is a calumny. He is one of the most prolific among the early Florentine painters; but, among his many pictures, I liked none so well as the Adoration of the Magi I before mentioned, and the Life of St. Francis, in a chapel dedicated to this Saint, in the Church of the Santa Trinità.

The Beato Fra Angelico surpasses all his contemporaries in the celestial sweetness he infuses into the countenances of his saints and angels. We may believe ourselves regarding the blessed in the kingdom of heaven, as we look at these creations of a mind cradled in love, charity, and devotion. Fra Giovanni, of Fiesole, known as the blessed Fra Angelico, presents in his life the very type of a Christian ecclesiastic. He gave himself wholly up to piety and good works. His humility was such, that when Pope Nicholas V. desired to make him Archbishop of Florence, he represented to his Holiness that he did not feel himself formed to govern the many, and implored him to name another more worthy in his stead. "It appears, from this holy man," says Vasari, "that the monks of his time did not desire to obtain those burthensome honours which they did not think that they could worthily fulfil, and were ready to yield them to others whom they judged more capable — as did this truly angelic father, who spent his life in the service of God, and in benefiting the world and his neighbour; and what more can be desired by man than by living holily to attain the kingdom of heaven, and acting worthily to acquire eternal fame on earth.” Fra Angelico was no lazy priest — besides his works elsewhere, Florence abounds with lovely images whose serene and blessed faces breathe the virtues of their author. The delicacy and softness for which he is remarkable never degenerates into insipidity. His pure taste made him conceive the highest beauty, his faith gave him a foretaste of beatitude, and he adorned with these attributes the beings whom alone he consented to represent, the saints and angels of Paradise.

We had a curious scene in the sacristy of the church of Santa Maria Novella, whither we went to hunt for one of the works of this angelic artist; the reliquaries mentioned by M. Rio; consisting of two tablets painted with a series of miniatures, representing the Life of Jesus Christ; the Last Judgment, in which the beatitude of the elect appears in all its living ecstasy, and St. Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, surrounded by their disciples. For a long time the keys could not be found of the closet in which these reliquaries were deposited; and a most active hunt after them was made. At length they came to light, and the tablets were brought out. The Dominican, who took every pains to find them for us, had lately arrived from Rome, and had never seen them. His almost childish delight, as he regarded the inexpressible loveliness of these exquisite miniatures, was highly amusing. Whenever you have to do with an Italian, you do not encounter the doltish ignorance of an English clown, nor the dogged sullenness of a German. He takes pleasure in your pleasure, and interests himself in the objects which are exciting your interest, in a manner at once gratifying to us and honourable to himself.

Of a later age is Poccetti, unnamed by Vasari, because, when he wrote, he had not painted the pictures which render him one of the most admirable fresco painters in the world: Florence is fall of his works, and every one may be visited with pleasure and profit, for he depicts Nature in her truth and yet in her elegance; — if that word denotes the power of displaying in the demeanour and attitude, and countenances of men, their souls defecated of every meaner quality — dignified through unaffected self-forgetfulness — animated by charity — beaming with faith. — One of his most renowned works is a series of frescos in the cloister of the convent of the Santissima Annunziata: they represent the conversion, holy life, and death, of seven Florentine gentlemen, who dedicated themselves to religion under the name of Servi di Maria. The aspect and bearing of these holy men mark them as gentlemen in the best sense of the word. Men, “generous, brave, and gentle and, in addition, animated by earnest benevolence towards their fellow-creatures, and lively faith towards the divinity. Perhaps, however, the most admirable of his works is the cupola of a chapel, belonging to the church and convent of Santa Maria degli Angioli. It is painted in fresco, and represents the Saints of the Old and New Testament; the more beautiful portion is the congregation of female saints — Saint Cecilia, the musician; Saint Clara, the nun; Saint Catherine, the bride of Christ, &c. The foreshortening is admirable, the spirit and grace of the attitudes worthy of the highest masters of the art.

Such is the spirit that animates the earlier school of Florence. But as painting became more of an art, and grew to represent domestic scenes and portraits, artists broke from the confinement of mere religious subjects, or treated them in a mundane manner. Then it was that their imagination so degenerated, that they had recourse to portraits to represent Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints; some of them even fell so far from the ideal of sinless chastity, as to paint their mistresses and women of unworthy life; offering to the worship of the pious, the image of mere physical beauty, without the superior grandeur of moral excellence.

I must confess, that any rules (except the immutable laws of moral rectitude) that tend to limit the objects on which man is to exercise his faculty of the imagination, appear to me contrary to the scope of our creation. We are so far from being all born possessed of equal powers of mind, that since the world began there has been scarcely a hundred among us capable of the higher flights of the intellect. How few possess, in any degree, the capacity of becoming painters, and far fewer are those who are able to rise to an exalted order of art. We ought to know what the highest is, — that those who feel the power should endeavour to elevate themselves to it; but beauty may be found elsewhere, and must not be rejected. Bigotry is ever to be eschewed in all that pertains to man; to confine painters to one class of pictures, is to turn some who would be great, if allowed to originate subjects of a lower grade, into tame copyists, and humble, lifeless imitators of the thoughts of others. As well insist that all poets should write hymns and heroic poetry, as that painters should confine the pencil to the delineation of the conceptions of religious mysticism.

The genuine school of Christian idealism is, for the present, come to an end. And I confess, as far as I may be allowed to judge, that it strikes me that the Germans of the present day, who are endeavouring to revive it, fall into the same mistake as our sculptors, who employ themselves in imitating the ancients; — they are good copyists, but are never original. And what appears to prove this is, that the Germans are not content with endeavouring to reproduce that composed and severe expression which the earlier painters yet knew how to ally to vitality in its highest sense, but they return to the dry colouring and meagre composition, which is the chief defect of the infancy of painting.

Still, there can be no question that in poetry, music, or the plastic arts, the ideal must rank above the merely imitative. Those painters who can embody ideas conceived in their purest and most elevated contemplations, far removed from vulgar and trivial reality, are the greatest. Artists, however, are men formed by nature with the peculiar eye to see and represent form and colour; and it is not strange that the majority among them should turn to the study of these, and view in the perfection of representing the one or the other, the aim of their labours. Thus the study of nature succeeded to the ideal; art fell lower afterwards, and became the copyist of art; and ancient statues grew to be the models from which modern painters strove to gain inspiration, till the uniformity, stiffness, and even deformity thus produced, induced others, who perceived these faults and their cause, to have again recourse to nature.

But these remarks tend beyond the limits of my knowledge, or even powers of observation. I have mentioned pictures not much visited except by the curious, just to shew the way towards, not to guide you (for I cannot), in your search after pictorial excellence: nor will I long detain you in the more beaten road of the public galleries.

LETTER XIII.

The Gallery. — Palazzo Pitti. — Le Belle Arti. — Portrait of Dante. — The Churches.

With slow steps my feet almost unwillingly first moved to the collection in the Reali Uffizi. As I entered the Tribune I felt a crowd of associations rise up around me, gifted with painful vitality. I was long lost in tears. But novelty seems all in all to us weak mortals; and when I revisited these rooms, these saddest ghosts were laid; the affliction calmed, and my mind was free to receive new impressions.

The Tribune is adorned with the selected *chefs-d'œuvre* of the best artists of every school, in addition to some of the finest ancient sculpture in the world. The matchless statue of the Queen of Beauty reigns over the whole — Venus, majestic in her bending softness, which once to see does not reveal its perfection. There is here one of the most beautiful of Raphael's Madonnas — one of the eight which M. Rio mentions as among the *chefs-d'œuvre* that Raphael executed in the short interval of two years, during which he especially dedicated himself to multiplying representations of the Virgin, for whom from childhood he had felt an especial devotion.

Here is the master-piece of Andrea del Sarto, a painter of very high, though not the highest, merit. He wants warmth of colouring, fire of expression, and variety of invention; while he has been named *Andrea senza Errori*, from the purity of his outlines, the graceful decorum of his personages, and the faultless completeness of every portion of his pictures.

Perfection in drawing, of which Michael Angelo was the great master, is the leading merit of the subsequent Florentine school. It has not the glowing colouring of the Venetian, nor possesses artists to compare with Raphael, Correggio, or Leonardo da Vinci. Michael Angelo was its most glorious example — a man whom I do not dare criticize; whom I will wait to mention till I have seen the Sistine Chapel, at Rome; to whose majestic powers of conception every connoisseur bears testimony, while still there is something of extravagant — something which is not absolute beauty — in most of his works at Florence. The glorious Medicean monuments, —

“Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
Turned into stone, rest everlastingly;
Yet still are breathing.”

— in spite of the magic art which makes them for ever sit and sleep, yet jar with the sense of harmony in form. His love of the naked was carried to a curious excess. In the Tribune, is a Holy Family, into which he has introduced a variety of naked figures in different attitudes, that have not the smallest connection with the subject of the picture, but intrude impertinently to mar its effect.

A charming Madonna of Correggio, kneeling beside the divine infant, adorns the Tribune; there is also the portrait termed the Fornarina of Raphael; certainly it is not the Fomarina, for it does not at all resemble her undoubted portraits, and it has been doubted whether the picture be by Raphael. From the Tribune, which, as a focus, collects the rarest and brightest rays of art, branch off several rooms, divided into schools. One of the most interesting is that containing the portraits of painters, by themselves.

There is a stately chamber, dedicated to the Niobe and her children, whose maternal, remediless grief sheds a solemn sadness around. The Florentine school possesses specimens of its worst style, the inane, expressionless nudities of Vasari and his imitators. In the room of bronzes is the model of the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini, and there is something more spirited and graceful in his attitude than in the larger bronze in the Piazza. There is the model of the glorious statue of John of Bologna, which Shakspeare we might think had seen when he spoke of the “herald Mercury;” and a David of Donatello, neither imitated from ancient sculpture, nor conceived under their inspiration. There is all the verve of an original idea; the youthful hero is neither Mars nor Hercules; he is the inspired Hebrew shepherd boy, who derived his victory from his faith. The galleries which run round three sides of the square, from which open the various rooms, are hung with many pictures, and adorned by a series of the busts of the Roman Emperors, and by a number of statues. Just below the cornice is a range of highly interesting portraits. Paul Jovius had made a vast collection of original portraits of all the illustrious personages of his time, and placed them in the palace of the Conte Giovio at Como. Cosimo I.

sent a painter, celebrated for his portraits, Cristofaro dell' Altissimo, to make copies, and these are here hung up.

With the exception of the Tribune, the collection in the Pitti Palace exceeds that of the gallery. There are here pictures from every school; and by going often, and selecting beforehand the master whose works I wished to see, I have spent many a morning with delight. Once or twice I have gone merely to refresh my eyes with a marine view — a sunset by Salvator Rosa; it is a picture all calm, all softness, all glowing beauty; and, during the misty and darker days of this *unsouthern* winter, I have gone — as I would in England — to warm my heart and imagination by the golden hues of a sunnier and purer atmosphere.

The gallery of the Belle Arti is rich in paintings of the olden times, when the soul worked more than the hand; when the artist sought, in the first place, to conceive the sublime, and the glorious endeavour bore him aloft among the angels and saints, whose blissful ecstasies he was enabled to represent. Why did not some among these great artists portray the other passions that ennoble our nature? We have portraits of great men, worthy of them, it is true; but the ideal of the warrior who would die for his country — nay, I may say, of the lover who loves unto the death — the representation of such men and women as Milton and Shakspeare have embodied in verse, is not to be found in the works of these painters; or only found, because among their groups of worshippers at some miracle, we see the power of great actions sit upon the brow, and add majesty to the gesture of some among them. When they portrayed earthly love, they betook themselves to mythology, and depicted passion, without the touch of tender fear which must ever mingle with, and chasten the affection we feel one for another. As far as I remember, there is no picture such as would idealise Ferruccio Ferruccini or Bayard — nor can I recollect the representation of mutual and tender love in any picture by a great artist, with one exception — that called the Three Ages of Man, by Titian — the original of which is in the Bridgwater collection; and there is a fine copy in Palazzo Manfrin, at Venice. The expression of the lover's face seems to say, "I love a creature who is mortal, and for whose safety I fear; yet in her life I live — without her I die;" and she catches the light of tenderness from his eyes, and the two souls seem fused in one commingling glance; but there is nothing to shock the most bashful mind — love is evidently hallowed by that enduring affection which is proof against adversity, and looks beyond the grave.

One of the most interesting paintings in the world has been lately discovered at Florence; the portrait of Dante, by his friend Giotto. Vasari mentions that Giotto was employed to paint the walls of the chapel of the Palace of the Podesta at Florence, and that he introduced into his picture a portrait of his contemporary and dear friend, Dante Alighieri, in addition to other renowned citizens of the time. This palace has been turned to the unworthy use of a public prison, and the desecrated chapel was whitewashed, and divided into cells. These have now been demolished, and the whitewash is in process of being removed. Almost at the first the portrait of Dante was discovered: he makes one in a solemn procession, and holds a flower in his hand. Before it vanishes all the preconceived notions of the crabbed severity of his physiognomy, which have originated in portraits taken later in his life. We see here the lover of Beatrice. His lip is proud — for proud, every contemporary asserts that he was — and he himself confesses it in the *Purgatorio;* but there is sensibility, gentleness and love; the countenance breathes the spirit of the Vita Nuova.

I often visit the various churches of Florence. The old paintings to be found in them attract me; but you must not imagine that the interior of these Florentine cathedrals and churches is to be compared to our Gothic edifices. The space within a large building of this sort often defies the talent of the architect: the Greek temples had but small interior shrines. Their rows of columns may be said to bear resemblance to the trunks of trees; while the capital, and architrave, and roof, does not imitate the shadowy boughs, though their purpose is the same. Gothic architecture, on the contrary, resembles the overarching branches, and imparts the same solemn tranquillity as the aspect of a venerable avenue or darksome glade. The Italian architects seem not to have known well what to do with the vast space enclosed by the majestic walls of their edifices. They afforded glorious room for the painter; but where not adorned by him, they are bare, presenting no image of beauty, and inspiring no solemn feeling. The pictures and sculpture we find are, however, sources of ever new delight; it is here that we may study the infancy and progress of the art — here also, alas! we may perceive its degeneracy — till, last and worst of all, we see raising to the walls, on which inimitable frescoes are fading away, daubs that — I am not fond of ill-natured criticism, so will say no more.

Let us turn, rather, to the gates of the Batistero, worthy of Paradise. Here we view all that man can achieve of beautiful in sculpture, when his conceptions rise to the height of grace, majesty, and simplicity. Look at these, and a certain feeling of exalted delight will enter at your eyes and penetrate your heart, which is the praise to which a painter or a sculptor aspires. Nor forget when you visit the church of Santa Croce, to look at some fast-fading frescoes, on the loggie of a palace, on the right hand of the piazza. The perfect taste exhibited in the ease and dignity of attitude and gesture of the figures will well reward you for careful examination.

LETTER XIV.

The Carbonari.

OF late years there has been a spirit in Italy tending towards improvement; this, perhaps, is less outwardly developed in Florence than elsewhere, yet here also it exists. Politically and materially considered, Tuscany is looked upon as the best governed and happiest Italian state, but in some respects this very circumstance has kept back its inhabitants. The foreign power that rules Lombardy exciting undisguised hatred, and the misrule of the Popes being beyond all question quite intolerable — the people of those states are in avowed opposition to government, while in Tuscany there is little to complain of, beyond the torpedo influence of a system of things that undeviatingly tends towards the deterioration.

The reign of Leopold I. was the golden age of Florence. He was grandduke at a time when a good sovereign was the dearest wish of a people, and the notion of governing themselves was not looked upon even as desirable. The French came next, and the tendency of their government was always to destroy the nationality of any people subdued by them. But this had a certain good effect in Italy. The curse of that country is its divisions, — while the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages, became divided into feudal tenures, and possessed by nobles, who, unable to maintain their independence, at last became mere courtiers of an absolute monarch, — Italy was divided into municipal republics, or small states, — the mutual rivalry and quarrels of which were the fatal causes that France and Spain disputed alternately, making Italy their field of battle, and Italian met Italian in opposing fight; and Fisa was willing to abase Florence; and Bologna gloried in the misfortunes of Ferrara: — the union of the whole of northern Italy under the French was the first circumstance that checked a spirit so inimical to all prosperity, — all improvement.

When the French were driven from Italy the peninsula became politically Austrian. The Austrian cabinet directed all the councils, and guided every act of the various states. If Ferdinand contrived to maintain a more beneficent internal government, it was only because the Tuscans shewed no inclination to join in the revolutionary movement. But while Austria substantially ruled the whole, it was well aware of the benefit to be derived from disunion, and it stirred up the spirit of discord by a curious contrivance; — a tub was thrown to the whale; — the government ordered the institute of Milan to occupy itself in the reform of the National Dictionary, and hence arose a fierce battle between the Della Crusca Academy and the authors of the "Proposta" on the score of language. Did the Italians speak Tuscan, or Italian? such was the mighty question that engrossed the learned of Italy; it was never started among two or three men without exciting the most violent party feeling, and for many years it set Tuscan against Lombard. Monti, by no means a pure political character, is accused of undertaking this war to please the Austrians, with his eyes open to the end in view. His son-in-law, Perticari, who shewed himself very earnest in the discussion, was too much honoured and loved, his memory is too entirely reverenced, for him to be open to the same accusation. For seven years the battle raged, exciting a virulence of party and municipal feeling, quite inexplicable out of Italy. It ended at last, as the question of big-endians and small-endians terminated in Liliput, by every one breaking his egg at whichever end he pleased; — the Lombards came to the conclusion that the Tuscans might like their language best if they chose — and they must choose, for it is not only the purest and the most idiomatic, but it is the only language at once spoken and written, except, indeed, the Roman; but that is very inferior in strength and vivacity.

Other influences were at work in Italy to turn the Italians from such puerile contests. The sect of the Carbonari had spread throughout the peninsula, and the hope of throwing off a foreign yoke and achieving more liberal institutions animated every Italian heart.

Colletta, in speaking of the Carbonari, considers this sect to be derived from the Freemasons of Germany — transported into their country by the Neapolitan exiles of 1799, on their return. I have heard Italians well versed in the secrets of Carbonarism deny this. They say that the deeply religious and mystic spirit of the sect at its commencement, proves its Neapolitan origin, and that it was founded by men, Neapolitans themselves, who knew how to adapt their doctrines and their rites to the temperament of a people, at once superstitious and lovers of the marvellous.

The hopes of political liberty which all nations entertained when the armies of the allies quailed before those of republican France, found an echo in Naples; while Ferdinand and his queen, who before the French Revolution had shown an inclination to imitate Joseph and Leopold of Austria, in reforming the laws of their kingdom, taking sudden fright, indulged in such acts of arbitrary power as incited rather than repressed the desire for change. Many Neapolitans, therefore, welcomed the French with enthusiasm, and rejoiced in the flight of their sovereign. The liberators, as they delighted to call themselves, soon, however, showed the cloven foot, and appeared in their true light, of invaders and spoilers. The hearts of all real lovers of their country were alienated from them; and if Ferdinand, on his return, during Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, when the French were driven from Italy, had shewn himself moderate and forgiving, he had acquired the affection of all his subjects. But both he and his queen seemed to be driven mad by hatred and terror of the new doctrine of a people's *right* to be well governed. Executions — the most barbarous imprisonments — persecutions that, blinded by fury, rather attacked a friend than forgave an enemy, followed their restoration. All the constitutionalists or republicans fled — some to France, Germany, or Switzerland, some to the wild and pathless mountains of the Abruzzi and the Calabrias.

When the French returned, the situation of the exiles was not mended; and many among them continued to dwell in unknown and savage retreats, among the inaccessible mountains and solitary valleys of those regions. They lived without any bond to unite them together, yet not so isolated but that they frequently met, and communicated to each other their hopes and projects. More than the Bourbon who had persecuted them, they hated the usurpation of the stranger. The most earnest desire of their hearts was to drive the French from their country, while some among them, looking beyond that time, revolved the means of strengthening their party, so that a republic might be instituted; or, at any rate, if Ferdinand returned, that he should be forced to concede just and free institutions to his people.

Among the refugees of Calabria, who were not to be subdued by persecution and adversity, was a young man of high courage, strong understanding, and gifted with wonderful powers of persuasion. Capo Bianco had first appeared as the bold leader of the militia of his native place (in Calabria), and had won the love, respect, and blind obedience of his followers. He possessed all the qualities belonging to the head and founder of a sect. I am told that he was handsome in person, and courteous in manners, but of a stem and inflexible disposition; severe towards delinquents, gentle and kind to the inoffensive, and to his friends. He added enthusiasm to these qualities, or he would never have erected himself into the founder of a sect. He abhorred the name of king — not because he had been persecuted by his sovereign, but because the power of royalty was detestable in his eyes — so that not one among his followers ever dared name before him Napoleon or Ferdinand; Austrian or French. He would consent only to republican institutions for his country; he desired the same government to prevail all over Italy, and argued warmly in favour of Italian union and independence. Such was Capo Bianco, as he is represented by the friends who survived him: he was the founder of the most celebrated sect of modern times, and died on the scaffold, a martyr to the cause he advocated.

Capo Bianco had taken shelter in a spot, to which he gave the strength of a rocky fortress, among the most rugged fastnesses of the hither Calabria; he there defied the power of his enemies. Nor did he remain shut up: he frequently called together and appeared among his faithful adherents; and, communicating his bold projects, and wanning them by his persuasive eloquence, he induced them to believe that the hour was come when they might unite with the population of their country, to throw off the detested yoke of the French usurpation.

The Carbonari, who have survived a time now almost forgotten, relate how, in the silence of a dark night, Capo Bianco assembled his most attached friends near a poor hut, situated in the depth of a thick forest, and there laid the first stone of the edifice of his sect. He explained its principles and its spirit, and caused them to swear a fearful secrecy on the cross. Prom this focus the new association spread, guarded by tremendous oaths, and by menaces of a dreadful vengeance to be taken upon traitors; by all the precaution, resolution and terror, that its originator could devise. He gave his adherents the name of Carbonari, because the society was founded in a district principally inhabited by charcoal burners; and men who followed that trade were among the first, appertaining to the lower classes, who were initiated into the secrets of the sect. They, descending from the mountains for the purposes of traffic, carried with them and propagated, wherever they went, the tenets of their founder.

Capo Bianco understood the disposition of his countrymen, and gave a religious and mystic colouring to his society. Striking rites were established; the initiation was terrible; the lessons taught often apparently abstruse; the end was single — to overturn monarchy in all its forms, and erect republics on the ruin of thrones. To attain this among a people pious to superstition, it was necessary to mingle mystic tenets with political opinions; in short, to erect and disseminate a *political religion*; and thus, not long ago, Carbonarism was professed, and found proselytes among the mountains of Corsica and Sardinia. The laws of the Carbonari were, they declared, founded on the equality of the gospel, and on the traditions of Freemasonry. The initiated swore to take terrible vengeance for the Lamb, sacrificed by the Wolves, The religion of Christ was the lamb; kings were typified in the wolves. They said that Jesus, who was the Word of God, had been the first who proclaimed upon earth the abolition of ancient servitude, and taught brotherhood and equality among men. He was therefore crucified by the wolves of his age, and died an illustrious victim of tyranny. The Carbonari swore to vindicate the death of Christ, and to exterminate the race of wolves, that is of kings, who inherited the guilt and infamy of the assassins of the Son of God. To strike the vulgar eye, fearful representations were made in their ceremonies, apt to excite the imaginations of a southern people of a highly religious temperament, and the proselytes pronounced tremendous oaths upon the cross and the dagger. The initiation was accompanied by various circumstances calculated to test the moral and physical courage of the novices; and the slightest sign of shrinking, caused them to be irrevocably rejected.

The Carbonari had, like the Freemasons, distinctive grades in their society; they recognised each other by mysterious signs, and called themselves by a secret name — that of “Buoni Cugin,” or good cousins. They took an oath to succour, at their need, every other Carbonaro, and to defend the honour of their women. They swore, if ever they themselves became traitors, to consent that their bodies should be torn to pieces, burnt, and the ashes cast to the winds; that their name should be cursed, and become a warning to all the Carbonari scattered over the face of the earth.

Carbonarism took deep root and spread rapidly. At one time, Murat was induced to look upon it as a means for civilising the wild Calabrians, and to regard it with favour. But the sect hated the French too much for this to continue. Ferdinand, meanwhile, in his retreat at Naples, spared no endeavour to disturb the government of the invader, and, if possible, to drive him from the kingdom. Banditti were enrolled; a crusade preached by the churchmen among the ignorant peasantry; and a civil war ensued, at the horrors of which the heart sickens. He heard of the growing power of the Carbonari, and had recourse to them.

Already, indeed, led by Capo Bianco, the Carbonari had assembled in arms in the neighbourhood of Catanzaro; they scoured the country, attacked the towns, drove out the partisans of the French, and, raising a cry that the reign of Joachim had come to an end, they hoisted the tri-coloured flag of the sect, and set up wherever they could republican institutions. Become strong in the places of which they had possessed themselves, they sent letters and emissaries to every *vendita*, inciting the sectaries to raise the standard of liberty and come to their aid. Capo Bianco was the soul of all, and inflamed their zeal by his eloquence. “My Italian brothers,” he cried, “you are the slaves of the French. You have changed masters, but not your state. Your new rulers, — prouder, more insolent, and more rapacious than those of old, — give you no repose, and you lavish without advantage your possessions, your own and your children’s lives! Will you remain slaves — the scorn and mock of the stranger, who heaps wrongs upon you — the victims of the insolence and rapine of a lawless soldiery?” It were long to recount all the arguments of the chief. He concluded by telling them that if they joined his forces, they would command victory, and Italy, liberated, would acquire greater splendour and power than she had ever before enjoyed. “The destiny of our unfortunate country,” he concluded, “is in your hands; and posterity will either bless or curse you for your deeds.”

While this was going on at one place, Ferdinand had given it in charge to Prince Moliterno, who was at the head of the royal forces in Calabria, to treat with other leaders of the sect, and invite them to espouse his cause. The Prince had ever professed republican principles; and even then, while heading an army in the name of Ferdinand, liberty and the union and independence of Italy were the watchwords he adopted. He endeavoured to persuade the chiefs of the sect that, by using their influence to drive out Murat, they would acquire such power as would force Ferdinand on his restoration to give his people a constitution, as, indeed, he had passed his royal word to do. Many of the Carbonari, although at that time the society was the mark of persecution of the French Government, shrunk from alliance with a sovereign, whom they knew to be in his heart a despot; while others among them gave ear to his promises, and joined the royalists. Both parties, royalists and Carbonari, while they thought it necessary to unite to drive out the French, fostered the secret hope that the victory once gained over the stranger, they could easily get rid of their confederate. Capo Bianco, however, never yielded, nor gave ear to the emissaries of the King. "You mistake," he said to those of his partisans who took the other course; "and whether the royalists are victorious or defeated, you sharpen the sword that will destroy you; and build the scaffold on which I and my partisans will inevitably perish."

Calabria was convulsed by these various parties; every portion of it was in arms; and its rivers ran red with blood. Then, as is usually the case in countries which are the prey of civil war, the evil was increased by the crimes of ferocious and lawless men, who collected in bands and ravaged the country, intent only on booty, and ever ready to destroy. For two years Calabria could be said to belong neither to the French, nor to Ferdinand, nor to the Carbonari: each had the upper hand by turns, and were, therefore, unable to clear the country of the brigands that infested it. This state of things could not continue, and the French Government resolved by extraordinary and terrible measures to root out the banditti, and to include the widespread and powerful sect of the Carbonari in the destruction. The atrocious and sanguinary methods by which General Manhes succeeded in extirpating the brigands is matter of history. Colletta recounts it in his usual graphic and vigorous manner. In his pages you will find related also how Capo Bianco was deceived, betrayed, and executed, to the shame of the French General, Iannelli, who laid the snare by which he was entrapped. He died with heroic firmness; intrepid and calm, he willingly gave his life for the country and cause which he devotedly loved. Colletta, though no friend to the Carbonari, and accused of being a partisan of the French, yet reprobates the conduct of Murat towards the sect. "The violence and severity exercised towards the brigands," he says, "ought not to have been turned against the Carbonari, for the bandits were guilty of crimes — the sect demanded laws; the brigands were the refuse of society — the Carbonari were honourable and honest men. Carbonarism degenerated afterwards — but was then innocent; it had been invited and approved by

Government, and its rites and tenets were civilised and beneficent. Many friends of Joachim begged him to disarm Carbonarism by mild and judicious measures; but anger, which was powerful in him, prevailed, and kept him firm in his evil counsels."

During and after the fall of Murat and the return of the Bourbon dynasty, Carbonarism, which had never been destroyed, spread; and while the restored king assumed at once despotic power, the sect, finding every promise of freedom for Italy broken, were the more zealous to acquire partisans, and to labour for the union and independence of their unfortunate country.

Do not think that I advocate any secret society: the principle is bad. The crown of every virtuous act and feeling is, not to fear the light of day. But it must be remembered with what fearful odds the Italians have to contend; they have not only openly against them the whole fabric of their various governments, backed by an overpowering foreign army; but a secret society is spread throughout the country, the friend of existing institutions; — the confessional is an engine of mighty power, diffused through every portion of every city, the most populous; entering every hut, the most retired; acting on the fears of the timid and the credulity of the superstitious; pandering to the bad passions of the wicked and awakening the scruples of the pious. Every priest bids his penitents confess, not only their participation in any act or thought inimical to the church or to the government — not only to denounce father, husband, or child, who might trust to them the secret of their lives — but to reveal every little circumstance that may tend to discover the lovers of liberty. Can it be wondered that men who wished to regenerate their country in the face of so penetrating, so almost omnipotent a power, should cloak themselves in impenetrable secrecy, and strive to check the influence by counter-terrors, — equally awful?

Fearful deeds were the result of the laws of the society; the individuals that composed it, knowing themselves to be supported by numerous companions, and sheltered from detection by the secrecy that veiled their name, lost their moral sense. The act, commanded by a power to which they had sworn obedience, ceased to be a crime, and assassination was no longer looked on as a murder, but as an execution; numbers of Carbonari, suspected or really guilty of treason to their oaths, were assassinated all over Italy, especially during the latter days of the society; and volumes might be filled with the history of these tragedies. If any man to whom the lot fell to execute the sentence of the rest, shrunk from his task, he was considered a traitor, and condemned to death. Such was Carbonarism, at the time when it shook kings on their thrones, and made the sovereigns of Italy tremble, Calabria and the Abruzzi swarmed with sectarians; the society was rapidly propagated throughout the kingdom of Naples, whence it spread to Romagna, Piedmont, and Lombardy; *Vendite* were even established in fair and tranquil Tuscany. Every *Vendita* was a permanent conspiracy, — every Carbonaro an enemy to the reigning authority; — yet even sovereigns were their accomplices, since they had made use of the society to overthrow the dominion of the French in Italy.

The early Carbonari were men who were actuated by deep-rooted love of their country, and detestation of the vice, ignorance, and slavery into which Italy had fallen; they entertained the belief that means terrible and unflinching could alone regenerate a people sunk in superstition and slavery. The triumph of the Carbonari was the proclamation of the constitutional government at Naples. But even then the sect was no longer the same. It had transgressed against the great and permanent moral laws by which society ought to be governed; it had been guilty of crimes — now it sunk into feebleness. Its results fell miserably short of its proud promise; for its work had been undertaken by men who were not sufficiently prepared, — who did not look to the future; — who were often swayed by violent and capricious passions, and whose principles were rooted in scepticism. The pure patriotism of its originators became tainted by the personal ambition of their followers. At the very height of its success it was ignominiously vanquished. Unable, from whatever cause, to resist the Austrian invasion of Naples, in 1820 — 21, the constitution they had erected was overthrown, despotism reestablished, and the chiefs of the Carbonari either fled, or died on the scaffold; — the name became the mark for persecution.

Still the spirit of the sect is not conquered; all the outbreaks in the Peninsula may be traced to its influence; and the different governments of Italy have vainly had recourse to every means for its extermination. They were unsparing in bribes to traitors; they suborned spies; they sowed dissension in its councils, and became possessed of all its secrets. On this account, not long ago, the society was reformed, and became merged in other secret associations, among which that named *La Giovane Italia*, is principal. The heads of this sect are, for the most part, exiled beyond the Alps; but, even in banishment, they maintain their influence, and machinate risings: above all, they sedulously keep awake the spirit of national union. These new societies can never be as powerful as the Carbonari were — they are but a shadow of that mighty influence; but, if they have less power, they have committed no crimes; and work by spreading knowledge and civilisation, instead of striking terror.

It is to be regretted, that the patriots of Italy have recourse to darkness and secrecy to carry on the regeneration of their country: for falsehood is the offspring of mystery, and integrity is destroyed by a system that hides itself from the light of day. The Italians must do away with oaths that cannot bind the traitor; and the dagger, which makes a murderer of him whose intent is virtuous. They must sacrifice the formula of union, and be content with disseminating its spirit. Could they teach inflexible truth, could they inspire military courage, did veneration for just and equal laws spring from their lessons, Italy were nearer the goal it pants to attain.

Meanwhile a certain good has arisen from a sect which, however founded in love for their country, has been polluted by many crimes. Carbonarism cannot be denied the praise of having co-operated to destroy the anti-social municipal prejudices, and the narrow spirit of local attachment, which was long a serious obstacle to the union of a country, divided as Italy is into many states, and subject to the stranger. The Carbonari first taught the Italians to consider themselves as forming a nation. It is to be hoped they will never forget the lesson. When the Roman considers himself, in his heart, the countryman of the Milanese — when the Tuscan looks upon Naples as also his country — then the power of the Austrian will receive a blow, which it has hitherto warded off, from which it will never recover.

LETTER XV.

Tuscany.

FEBRUARY, 1843.

Nothing is more difficult than for a foreigner to give a correct account of the state of a country — its laws, manners, and customs; — the first often so different in their operation from what outwardly appears; the latter, never fully understood, Proteus-like, assume a thousand contradictory appearances, and elude investigation. A stranger can only glance at the surface of things — often deceptive — and put down the results of conversations, which, after all, if carefully examined, by no means convey the whole truth, even if they are free from some bias, however imperceptible, either in speaker or hearer, the result of which is a false impression — a false view.

An English person, accustomed to the gigantic fortunes and well-ordered luxury, — to the squalid penury, hard labour and famine, — which mark the opposite orders of society in his own country, is struck by the appearance of ease and equality that reigns in Tuscany, and especially at Florence. There is poverty of course — but penury cannot be said to exist; there is work — but there is also rest: nay, there is no lack of enjoyment for the poor — while the nobility, for the most part, scarcely rise above the middling orders; bankers and foreigners being those who make most figure in society, and that, except on particular and infrequent occasions, on no magnificent scale.

Many reasons may be assigned for this equality. During the flourishing days of the republic of Florence, a blow was given to the nobility of the city and surrounding country, from which it never recovered. Those nobles who still preserved their titles and fortunes, were obliged to conceal all pride in the former, in order to preserve the influence naturally resulting from the latter. The Medici were merchants; and when an Austrian prince succeeded to the extinct family, no change was operated. On the contrary, it was, I believe, one of them, Leopold I., who abolished the law of primogeniture in Tuscany. It is true, that the usual result of the prohibition against entails in subdividing estates, is frequently eluded. A father possesses absolute power over his property, with the exception of a tenth or twelfth, which is called the *quota legitima,* which must descend to his children, and be divided among them in equal portions. The same law appertains even to the mother's dowry — which becomes her husband's property. A man may, therefore, accumulate and leave the whole of his possessions to his eldest, son, with the exception of the above-named *quota;* and, when this has been done for some generations, large fortunes are preserved. But it seldom is: and as a man has absolute propriety in his estates, a spendthrift can alienate the whole for ever. The nobles of Tuscany being for the most part without pride of order, have readily yielded to the spirit of their country, which absorbs them in the democracy. At the same time, the feeling of accumulation being extinct, no barrier exists to prevent the dissipation of property: in the hands of a young heir, extravagance and play (the bane of Italy), soon bring to an end the fortunes of an ancient name. Thus, I am assured, many of the noblest families in Tuscany are reduced to poverty: the capital of the country has fallen into the hands of bankers, the majority of whom are of Jewish origin. A number of illustrious names, consecrated in the pages of history, have almost disappeared. They only mark the walls of palaces, empty of the impoverished descendants of their former possessors. This absence of accumulated riches, of course, checks the arts of luxury, mechanical improvements, and all progress in the framework of society; it multiplies the numbers of those who are just raised above poverty; while the benignant nature of the climate, and the abstemious habits of the Italians, prevent the poor from suffering want. The country is, for the most part, divided into small farms (*podere*), cultivated by the family of the countryman (*contadino)* who holds them — he giving his labour, the crops, and tools — the owner the land, dwellings, and substantial repairs; the profits are divided, and the rent, for the most part, paid in kind — a circumstance which aids the farmer, and limits the fortune of the owner. The country-people labour hard — very hard, and live poorly, but they do not suffer want; and if there are no farmers so rich as with us, there is no absolute agricultural distress.

In Florence itself the common people are well to do. They are, perhaps, the least agreeable people to deal with in Italy; self-opiniated, independent, and lazy, they can often scarcely be brought to work at all; and, when they do, it is in their own way and at their own time. They love their ease, and they enjoy it: they are full of humour and intelligence, though their conceit too often acts as a drawback on the latter. I speak especially of the Florentines, as they are represented to me; for conceit is not a usual fault among the Italians.

As I have said, an English person, accustomed to heart-piercing accounts of suffering, hard labour, and starvation among our poor, gladly hails a sort of golden age in this happy country. We must look on the state of society from a wholly different point of view — we must think of the hunger of the mind; of the nobler aspirations of the soul, held in check and blighted — of the tendency of man to improve, here held down — of the peculiar and surpassing gifts of genius appertaining to this people, who are crushed and trod under foot by the jealousy of government — to understand, with how dead and intolerable a weight King Log hangs round the necks of those among them, who regret the generous passions and civic virtues of bygone times. The Florentine reads of Filippo Strozzi, of Ferruccio Ferruccini, of Michael Angelo. He remembers the pure and sacred spirit that Savanarola lighted up among the free and religious citizens; he thinks of the slavery that followed, when genius and valour left the land indignant, and

“For deeds of violence
Done in broad day; and more than half redeemed
By many a great and generous sacrifice of self to others,”
what has come? The poet speaks of —

“the unpledged bowl,
The stab of the stiletto.”

But those days, too, are gone; there has come such life as the flocks lead on the mountain sides — such life as the idle, graceful fallow-deer may spend, from sping-tide to rainy autumn, under the noble trees of some abundant park; but where is the soul of man? In the hands of those who teach him to fast and tell his beads — to bend the neck to the yoke — to obey the church, not God.

Nor is this all; especially among the rich; far — far from it; for men, unless tamed by labour, can never lead the innocent lives of the beasts of the field: if darker crimes are unfrequent, yet vice flourishes, rank and unchecked: the sense of honour is destroyed; the nobler affections are crushed; mental culture is looked on with jealousy, and dies blighted. In the young may be found gleams of inextinguishable genius — a yearning for better things, which terrifies the parents, who see in such the seeds of discontent and ruin: they prefer for their sons the safer course of intrigue, play, idleness — the war of the passions, rather than the aspirations of virtue.

To do nothing has been long the motto of the Tuscan government; had it been strictly observed, still much might be said against it. Leopold I. was a good sovereign, a clever and liberal man; Ferdinand, who succeeded to him, suffered many vicissitudes of fortune during the period of the empire of Napoleon; but he was not, like his namesake of Naples, driven by adversity to cruelty and arbitrary violence. When he was restored to his throne, still it was his wish to keep his people happy and contented. It is his praise, that if authority sheathed its sword and veiled its terrors, nor even used the wholesome restraint of the law to punish crime, it acted simply as a torpedo on the energies of the land, nor used any concealed weapons. Ferdinand constantly and resolutely refused to institute a *secret police* in Tuscany. It was a story I remember, told at the time, during the revolutionary period of 1821, that the Austrian minister at Florence presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, and begged that they might be arrested. "I do not know whether these men are Carbonari," said Ferdinand; "but I am sure, if I imprison them, I shall make them such," and rejected the list. His successor, Leopold II., has not had the wisdom to pursue the same course. The bane of Italy is the absence of truth, of honour, of straightforwardness; the vices opposite to these nobler virtues have now the additional culture which must ensue from the circulation of a system of *secret police,* of spies, of traitors.

Yet still the government is mild. In 31 — 32, the throne of Leopold II. was shaken by several conspiracies; and the revolutionary spirit of Romagna, which tended to unite all Italy in one bond, had numerous proselytes in Tuscany. But for a traitor, it is supposed, that on one occasion the person of the Grand Duke would have fallen into the hands of the conspirators: at the eleventh hour the leader took fright, and discovered all. On this, and on other occasions, the arrests were not numerous; the sentences (to us to whom treason and the gallows are quick following cause and effect,) mild; and these even, after a few months, softened. Leopold wishes his people to be quiet and happy — he hates violence: to pay a traitor to betray, and so to crush a conspiracy noiselessly, appears to him wise and judicious policy. In all respects he is averse to strong measures. For many years no capital punishment has been inflicted in Tuscany; a fact, which of itself demands our admiration, and must be replete with good effects.

“All this is true,” said an Italian to me; “and yet I, who wish my countrymen to cultivate manly habits of thought and action, regard our state as almost worse than any other. Tyranny is, with us, a serpent hid among flowers; and I, for one, sympathise with the sentiment of a Florentine poet — *odio il tiranno che col sonno uccide*. There are other evils besides those which press upon the *material* part of our nature, and the new generation in Tuscany feels wrongs of another description. The better spirits of our country pine for the intellectual food of which they are deprived. Thus they tend towards a new and better order of things, the more difficult to realise, because a timid and absurd policy endeavours to throw every obstacle in the way to its attainment.”

LETTER XVI.

Italian Literature. — Manzoni. — Niccolini. — Collett". — Amari.

ITALIAN literature claims, at present, a very high rank in Europe. If the writers are less numerous, yet in genius they equal, and in moral taste they surpass, France and England. In these countries everybody reads, and there is a great demand for books of amusement. M. de Custine remarks, that the French write now for *"les concierges et les forçats"* the ignorant and depraved; we write for the frivolous. The uneducated and idle in Italy do not read at all; and an Italian author writes for readers whom he respects, or wishes to instruct: I speak of the lighter literature. In the higher walks we are lamentably deficient, while France boasts of admirable historians. The Italians possess modem histories to compete with France.

There has been a great revolution in Italian poetry of late years; and it has, to a great extent, returned to the nature and character that marked its outset. When poetry first assumed a form in the Peninsula, Europe was still, if not in a barbarous state, at least in the very infancy of civilisation; and Italy alone, among European nations, taught arts, science, and letters. The character of the youth of modern European civilisation, with all its defects and all its charms, is indelibly impressed on the literature of that age. The poetry of the first great Italian poets sprang from the complicated feelings which a new æra awoke in them. When you read their best productions, you feel that they are animated by the epergy proper to the young; and even when they appear to guide themselves by ancient rules, the true soul of poetry, the youth of the spirit, breaks its way through every obstacle. The first Italian poets never obeyed, but on the contrary resisted, Aristotelian rules. Dante, the greatest of all — Petrarch and Ariosto, abandoned themselves to the genuine impulse of their minds, and were great; — great, because free. The history of Italian poetry confirms the truth, that the poet follows the real and the sublimest scope of art when he keeps in mind the character of his country and of his age. The highest Italian poetry is truly national.

The poets who followed were, with few exceptions, imitators; they bowed to the rules of Aristotle, and produced no great works. Since the fall of the republic of Florence, poetry and eloquence, which ought to have waited on the changes and advancement of civilisation, and to have harmonised with the thoughts and manners of the country, failed to do so. Italian painting left no path untried so to arrive at perfection, and sought originality by a thousand different roads; while poets were afraid of novelty. This is not strange. The creations of genius and the inventions of the imagination are derived from, and depend on, the moral culture of the intellect, and this culture was shackled. After the sixteenth century Italy never enjoyed political liberty, and the intellect of the country was unable to develope itself with freedom. On this account the Italians ceased to contemplate man and nature in an original manner: they were imitators of the ancients, and in the sequel, imitators of imitators, their literature even became influenced by that of the French. No attempt was made to enlarge its limits or to renovate its spirit; for such an attempt, from political reasons, would have been dangerous. Governments who are not strengthened by public opinion, always shackle the free exercise of the intellectual faculties. Writers both in prose and verse, thus grew to aim at grace of diction and beauty of imagery, unsustained by daring and original thought, or even by variety of invention, which is more nearly allied to the enjoyment of freedom than is usually supposed. Yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, Italian poetry of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, possesses high merit; and such, so to speak, is its exterior beauty, that, had it greater intrinsic power, it would surpass every other in the world.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the dawn of a reform in every branch of human knowledge may be perceived. Every one felt the need of having recourse to the real source of inspiration, the hopes and fears which form the national spirit of the age; among others Alfieri rose. There can be no doubt that he was the writer who best knew how to echo the passions and hopes of his contemporaries. I pass over the names of the great writers who, on every subject, shed lustre over Italy at that time, and come at once to the authors of the present day, who sprung up at the close of the wars of the French empire, and may be said to be the offspring of a bitter contest that arose at that time among the literary men of Italy: and even among these, I shall confine myself to the two who possess the highest and most durable influence, Manzoni and Niccolini; men who, in common with other Italian writers of the present day, reject letters as a tribute to frivolity, or means to fortune; consecrating them to the advancement of the great interests of their fellow-creatures, desiring to make them, as Lord Bacon expresses himself, “a rich storehouse for the glory of the creator, and the relief of man’s estate.”

I have mentioned in another letter how, under Monti’s auspices, a great war of words began in Italy: about the same period another battle raged between what was called the classic and romantic schools. It began in 1818, when Berchet, a poet of merit, descended suddenly into the arena, throwing, by way of challenge, a translation of the Leonora of Burgher, accompanied by an essay, discarding the old models and planting a new banner, beneath the shadow of which the flower of the Italian youth eagerly crowded to contend — displaying the more enthusiasm, because under this literary discussion was hid the hope of regenerating the political opinions of Italy. The classists were not slow in meeting the attack; and when they found their authority, which had been respected for centuries, was in danger of being overthrown, they hurried to the rescue. Monti fought with them. Angry epithets, ridicule, abuse, were bandied about by both parties in the ardour of fight. Book succeeded to book; pamphlets and articles poured furiously down, each breathing the ire of an earlier and more uncivilised age. The Romanticists wished to banish the mythology — to make poetry patriotic — that is, founded on national faith, chronicles, and sympathies. They added example to precept; Berchet published a volume of odes which met with eminent success; the subjects were Italian, and breathed great force of passion and feeling. Grossi, the rival, or rather, as he calls himself, the pupil of Manzoni, commenced with “Ildegonda,” a tale in verse, founded on a Milanese story, which was received with immense applause. Manzoni published his “Carmagnola; “ Pellico his “Francesca da Rimini” and “Eufemio da Messina.” Pellico, afterwards so sadly celebrated for his misfortunes, was at this time tutor to the sons of Count Porro. He projected founding a periodical work which should serve as a common link between the writers of every state in Italy. Porro and Gonfalonieri seconded him, and hence arose a periodical publication named “Il Conciliatore “ (the Conciliator). Gioga, Romagnosi, Manzoni, Grossi, Berchet, and Montani contributed to its success, without mentioning the political contributions of Gonfalonieri, Porro, Pecchio, Arrivabene, and many others, who were then secretly conspiring against the govern ment, and preparing the ill-starred revolution of 1820-21. The first number of the "Conciliatore" was published Thursday, 3rd September, 1818 — it came to an end in 1820. From its birth the Austrian government had decreed its extinction; but its short life was yet glorious, since it excited the public mind to free discussion, and gave an impetus to letters.

Manzoni rose into notice as the poet of this party. His sacred hymns and his tragedy of "Carmagnola" appeared at the time when the literary war raged hottest. His poems were received with enthusiasm. "Carmagnola" and "Adelchi" were hailed as national and romantic dramas; their fame spread into Germany and France. Goëthe speaks of them as making "a serious and profound impression, such as great pictures of human nature must always create."

"Let the poet," he says, "continue to disdain the feeble and vulgar portions of human passion, and attempt only such high arguments as excite deep and generous emotions."

To us these tragedies appear, though eminently beautiful as poems, to be failures as dramas. It is not enough that passions and events are developed, we desire character also: they have not succeeded even on the Italian stage, on which several of Alfieri's have kept their place. In the "Carmagnola" the audience are at a loss on whom to expend their sympathy. A vague and uncertain tone keeps us in suspense — not that suspense arising from the mingled blame and admiration excited by the hero, which is the true foundation of dramatic interest, but caused by a sense that the writer has no determined object. The "Adelchi" is, in parts, more interesting; but even in that we find no real hero. Our sympathy is most excited by Ermengarda; but she is entirely episodical. These tragedies, however, breathe a spirit that renders them dear to every Italian. They have for their subject national events, which are treated in a powerful and original manner. Alfieri makes his Lombard princesses express themselves like Grecian heroines: Manzoni imbues himself with the spirit of the times; and his personages speak and feel in his dramas, as his creative imagination taught him that they did during life. More particularly this is found in the "Adelchi," where the veil is for the first time lifted from the intrigues of the Popes, who contrived the overthrow of the Longo Bardi, and the successful invasion of Charlemagne, not in the interests of Christianity, but in that of their own temporal power; and the vain struggle of the falling Lombards, with the insolence of the invader and the hypocrisy of the priest, is finely drawn. It is his odes, however, that give high rank to Manzoni as a poet. In these, his diction is exquisitely finished, and his conceptions rise to the sublime. No reader can fail of being carried away by the pathos and fire of the chorus in Carmagnola, describing the horrors of the wars of invasion in Italy, which became civil contests, as the various states adhered to one or other of the foreign powers, who poured down from the Alps for their destruction. The " Cinque Maggio" is, out of his own country, the most popular of Manzoni's odes, but this chorus and the sacred hymns obtain the greatest meed of praise in Italy.

The "Promessi Sposi" followed. This, to a certain degree, is an imitation of the romances of Walter Scott: it rises above in grandeur of description and in unity and nobility of purpose, though in inexhaustible fecundity of character, the Scotch writer surpasses the Italian. The historian Ripamonti suggested his subjects. The account of the Innominato is to be found in his pages, as well as that of the errors of a high-born nun — of a sedition, a famine, a pestilence — of the character and life of Federigo Borromeo; but these, though suggested by history, are treated with a poetic fire, an originality of idea, and a vitality, which belongs entirely to Manzoni himself. His tale is sustained by a moral, or rather religious scope. He desires in his romance to prove that society, both civil and political, is diseased, and that Catholicism must be the remedy. Manzoni is a devout Catholic. He paints, with peculiar fervour, the merits and uses of a pious clergy; and personifying it under the names of Father Cristofero and Cardinal Borromeo, he shows the beneficial influence it may obtain over the people and the nobility, of whom Renzo and Lucia, the Innominato and Don Rodrigo, are the representatives. It is not the vulgar notion of bringing forward the * Pope, with his army of priests and monks, as the regenerators of society, at which he aims; it is the Christian spirit of resignation and self-denial that he wishes to revive, and render the master-feeling of the world. Manzoni is eminently pious and resigned — this is the internal spirit; in form he adheres to ancient Catholicism, which he regards as the final tendency of humanity.

Manzoni was bora at Milan in 1784. I have heard that his father was a man totally without instruction; while his mother, the daughter of the Marchese Beccaria, author of the well-known work, “Dei de-litti e delle Pene,” was an accomplished and active-minded woman. Manzoni spent many of his early years on the Lake of Como, at the very spot where he places the scene of his romance. In his youth the Latin poets occupied his attention; he read Virgil and Tibullus with delight — while in Italian he studied the works of the ci*nquecentiste:* so that I have heard that his early unpublished verses are conceived in the spirit of those writers. But he soon broke away from such fetters. He read and admired Dante, with the deep-felt enthusiasm a poet naturally experiences for that sublime writer. At the beginning of the present century Manzoni visited France, and lived for some years with his mother in Paris. In 1808 he returned to Milan, and soon after, chiefly induced by the instigations of his relations, he married a Protestant lady, the daughter of Blondel, a banker of Geneva. They visited Rome, where the lady became a convert to Catholicism; and, as I am told, converted also her husband, who heretofore had been sceptical or careless on religious subjects — but who, from that hour, became an ardent and devout Catholic. He passes the greater portion of the year at his villa, five miles from Milan; he sees little society, being by disposition excessively shy. In 1831 he had the misfortune to lose his wife, whom he fondly loved and entirely trusted. I never had the happiness of seeing him: he is, I am told, of middle stature, of gentle aspect, resembling the portraits of Petrarch — and suffers somewhat from nervousness. He is profoundly versed in history, political economy, and agriculture; and it is said is now occupied on a history of Italian literature and a philosophical work. In his tastes with regard to poetry not Italian, he admires Schiller and Shakspeare; but, unlike almost every other foreigner, the scepticism of Lord Byron renders his poetry distasteful to him. His soul is filled with love of the beautiful, the elevated, and the pure. These qualities shine forth particularly in his odes, which, since Petrarch, are the most perfect lyrics in the language; and among them, the “Inni Sacri” are distinguished for the exquisite finish and poetic fire that adorns the fervent piety which they breathe.

It would be vain to attempt to say even a few words of the swarm of romance writers that have tried to follow in his steps, and who all deserve the same praise of writing to instruct and elevate, and not, as is too usual with writers of fiction, to amuse, and even corrupt. Out of Italy, Azeglio ranks highest. Like all Italian writers of the day, he is animated by a patriotic feeling. The desire of destroying the prejudices that separate state from state, made him, who is a Piedmontese, choose for his heroes Neapolitans and Florentines. In his first novel, "Ettore Fieramosca," he impresses on his readers the loveliness of the feminine character, depicting the purest struggles between passion and duty. In "Niccoli de' Lapi," aburning love of country, joined to a piety at war with the grosser superstitions of Rome, adorns his venerable hero. The Tuscans generally do not like his style, and prefer that of Grossi. Tommaso Grossi is the intimate friend of Manzoni, to whom he dedicated his popular romance of "Marco Visconti," calling him by the endearing name of "Master." He commenced his literary career by the publication of two beautiful tales in verse, "Ildegonda," and the "Fuggitiva;" in this species of composition there is no one to compare with him, and "Ildegonda," in the estimation of his countrymen, is quite inimitable. A Florentine, Guerrazzi, has published two romances, "L'Assedio di Firenze," and "La Battaglia di Benevento," popular in his own country, from the ardent, the almost frantic love of liberty which inspires their author. This is a spirit that ever finds a clear echo in hearts palpitating with the sense of wrong, and with the aspiration to independence. He is eloquent and passionate in his style, and has happy touches of situation and character which show him to be a man of genius — but he is diffuse, exaggerated, and sometimes incoherent.

A greater man than these, and in the eyes of his countrymen, equal to Manzoni, is the Florentine, Gian. Battista Niccolini. This poet, it is true, is not as celebrated as the author of the "Promessi Sposi" on this side of the Alps, but in Italy he has attained an equal, and indeed, in some respects, a higher reputation. Niccolini is a tragic and lyric poet, and a great prose writer. He commenced his career, as a dramatist, by tragedies on Greek and mythological subjects. His mind full of the verses of Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto, he reproduced on the stage, garbed in simple and sublime poetry, the theatre of the Greeks. His "Polixena" — his "Ino e Temisto," and his "OEdipus," might be said to be written on the model set by Alfieri, and equally liberal in sentiment. They were acted, and the beauty of the verses insured their success. Niccolini soon, however, became aware that his works did not meet the wants of modem society, and that he ought no longer to remain in the ways trodden by his masters; but that the time had arrived when to cease imitating the ancients. He resolved to seek the reputation of an original poet, and to create a new theatre. The "Foscarini," a national subject, in which he paints, in the liveliest and blackest colours, the dark tyranny of the Venetian aristocracy, had a success on the stage previously unexampled in Italy. The enthusiasm spread among every rank of society; country people, farmers and labourers from the environs of Florence, were seen mingled with the lower class of citizens, besieging the avenues of the theatre for hours before the opening of the doors. Animated by this success, Niccolini composed the "Sicilian Vespers," which is, in fact, a protest in favour of Italy. This drama was received with transports of enthusiasm. The French Secretary of Legation, M. de la Noue, had the folly to complain to the Tuscan government of certain expressions levelled against the French nation. The Austrian Minister laughed at his application, and saw through the artifice. *"Vous ne voyez pas"* he said, *"que si l'addresse est à vous*, *le contenu est pour moi"* An interesting and sad incident occurred on the first representation of this play. The mother of Niccolini, an aged woman, insisted on being present — the immense success and triumph of her son were too much for her — she was carried dying out of the theatre, and only survived two days.

The style of Niccolini's tragedies is looked upon by his countrymen as a perfect model for the romantic drama. It is elevated and yet natural. The poet rises to the height of his argument; his versification is harmonious yet severe — his imagery rich and choice; his tone is majestic, and through all there glows an ineffable love of his art. Niccolini is celebrated also as a lyric poet; but as far as I have read, he falls very short of Manzoni. As a prose writer he has as yet only published his speeches delivered in the Accademia delle belle Arti. They justify his reputation for research, and may be pointed out as models of style and eloquence; he proves himself in them to be an original thinker, and capable of understanding and judging the age in which he lives.

Niccolini joins to his intellectual greatness a character that makes him the darling of his native city. Devoid of vanity, of pure and exemplary life, he passes his days at Florence, surrounded by friends who respect and love him. He is at present busily occupied by an arduous work, the "History of the House of Swabia."

Italy, from the earliest times, has been renowned for its historians. From Dino Compagni and Villani until Botta, Colletta, and Amari, the Italians appear to inherit the art of narrating events, and describing men and countries, as well as of deducing philosophical conclusions from the experience of past ages.

Colletta's "History of the Kingdom of Naples, from the year 1734 till the year 1825," is a remarkable work, as not being the production of an author who spent his life among books, but of a man who bore a distinguished part in the political and military affairs of his time, and who was somewhat advanced in years when, exiled from his country, he dedicated himself to the study of his native language and the composition of his history.

The first publications of Colletta consisted of a "Narrative of the Revolution of Naples in 1820," and the "History of the Death of Murat." The vigour of his style, the truth that reigned in his narrative, and the warmth of enthusiasm that animated his pen, attracted attention, and received, applause. To a certain degree an adherent of the French rule in Naples, though fully aware of its faults and its injustice, he, in the account of the death of Murat, undertook, with just indignation, to defend the illustrious partizans of the fallen sovereign, whom the minister, Medici, falsely accused of having ensnared and betrayed him; throwing the blame where it was due, on the rashness of the victim and the baseness of his enemies. This narration is incorporated in his history, and forms one of its most striking passages. It seems to me one of the finest pieces of writing in the world — full of a mournful dignity, that renders its pathos touching, and gives grandeur to its scorn.

A few pages are prefixed to his history, written, I believe, by his friend Count Gino Capponi, which gives an account of his life. While yet a mere boy; he was imprisoned by Ferdinand on a slight suspicion of liberalism, and with difficulty escaped with his life. He, though his name is omitted by French writers, accompanied the soldiers of Murat in their attack upon Capri, and by his gallantry and sagacity mainly contributed to its success. Many important posts, both civil and military, were entrusted to him by Murat, and, on his return, by Ferdinand, and he acquitted himself in all with reputation. He acted at once a prudent, firm, and patriotic part, during the Neapolitan revolution. But though Ferdinand employed, frequently consulted, and often followed his advice, this did not save him after the

Austrian invasion. He was first imprisoned at Brünn, in Moravia, at the foot of the Castle of Spielburg, of infamous renown; afterwards, as his health failed, he was allowed to transfer himself to Tuscany. During his severer imprisonment and milder exile, ever ambitious of a noble fame, he meditated his future work. First, he applied himself to the study of his native tongue, forming his style on that of Tacitus; and then, armed with the strength of pictorial and vigorous language, he dedicated himself to the compilation of his history.

An eye witness of many of the events which he narrates, and frequently a prominent actor in them, he strives to be impartial both to friends and enemies. He has not, however, escaped the blame of undue bias. He expresses his opinions at times with too much passion, displaying excessive severity against his rivals or opponents in his military career. This, however, is not much; and, with very slight drawbacks, he may be esteemed worthy of the reader’s confidence. He knew the men whose character he draws, and these individual portraits give value to the work they contribute to adorn. Among them may be named, in especial, that of the infamous Canosa, and the youthful hero, Emanuel de Deo. Even more admirable are his striking descriptions, after the manner of Tacitus. If you shrink from undertaking the whole work, read the accounts of the earthquake in Calabria in 1783 — of the executions of 1799 — of the death of the unfortunate Murat — of the tragical fate of the Vardarelli — and the character of the reign of Ferdinand, at the conclusion. It will be difficult to find finer passages in any history.

He came to Florence in 1823, and died on 11th November, 1831. The interval was spent in composing his work, and rendered happy by his intimate friendship with two Italians, esteemed as the cleverest men of their time, Count Gino Capponi and Valeriani, translator of Tacitus. These friends assisted him with their counsels and criticisms — some Italians go so far as to consider Gino Capponi the writer of the history. But others, who associated with Colletta and his friends at Florence, have assured me that this supposition is entirely erroneous.

Quite lately, another historical work has appeared, the production of a young Sicilian, Michele Amari, who promises, from his talents, his industry, and the admirable spirit of his book, to add another illustrious name to Italy.

The Sicilian Vespers was a tremendous event, which astonished and confounded the nations, and even in Italy was ill understood by contemporary historians. It was supposed to be the result of a conspiracy formed by Giovanni da Procida, under the auspices of Don Pedro, King of Arragon, who reaped the fruits. Amari, on consulting the archives of Sicily, found reason at first to suspect the truth of, and afterwards entirely to reject, this explanation of an event, which, in this light, could only be regarded as a cruel massacre — but which, from the documents he adduces, he proves to have resulted, not from a treacherous conspiracy, but from the sudden impulse of a people maltreated and insulted to desperation; whose only defence was the knife, whose only safety rested in utterly rooting out their oppressors.

Fired with generous sympathy for a people who, against a fearful odds, resolved to liberate themselves from a barbarous foreign oppression, Amari relates the events of the war that followed the massacre with glowing eloquence. The history of the siege of Messina may take place beside the noble resistance of Numantia and Saragossa, with the more cheering result that it was successful. This portion of his work, and the subsequent chapters that describe the last war and death of Don Pedro of Arragon, are admirably written. You will scarcely find in any historian a more animated and graphic narration than that which tells how Don Pedro, deserted by all, hated by all, proudly and sternly, and at last successfully, stood his ground against his numerous and triumphant foes.

It is the work of a young man, and of a Sicilian, who had to learn and form the language in which he writes. The style wants elegance; the construction of the history is imperfect, and, at times, rambling; but it has the first and best merit of a work of genius — it is written from the heart. The enthusiasm of the author carries the reader along with him; you forget the imperfections in the justness of his reflections, and the sincerity of his convictions; you excuse the absence of methodical order as you are carried away by the interest which he throws over the facts he narrates.

LETTER XVII.

Voyage to Rome.

MARCH 20.

I left England, as you know, with very vague ideas of whither I should go. I did not dare entertain a hope that I should visit Rome. But, "Thought by thought, and step by step led on,"

We have reached what Dr. Johnson says is the aim of every man's desire.

My companions dreaded a long *veturino* journey, whose leisure is a false lure, since you always arrive too late, and set out too early, to see anything in the towns where you stop. I consented to go by sea, and Heaven rewarded the act of self-sacrifice.

We left Florence at twelve at night, in one of the most uncomfortable *veturino* carriages I ever had the ill fortune to enter. The moon was near its full, and its bright snow-like glare almost blinded my friends, who rode outside, and prevented them from sleeping. The morning dawned golden and still; and, although it was March, we anticipated a calm voyage. So it proved. We embarked on board the "Castor," a small, but well-built and quick steamer, and dropped down towards Elba. The view from the sea near Leghorn is not sufficiently praised. The Ligurian Alps

"Towards the North appeared,
Thro' mist, a heaven: sustaining bulwark, reared
Between the east and west."

The sun went down beneath the sea, and the full moon rose at the same moment from behind the promontory of Piombino — hazy at first, — but as she rose higher, assuming her place as radiant Queen of Night. We passed between the island of Elba, whose dark and distinct outline rose out of the calm water, and the shadowy form of distant Corsica; as we proceeded, other and other islands appeared studding the tranquil deep, and varying its sublime monotony. It was very difficult to consent to shut one's eyes on so very fair a scene.

At sunrise we were on deck again, and the steamer, with that sort of pride which a boat always seems to exhibit when it reaches its bourne, entered the harbour of Civita Vecchia. We were detained for *pratique* till eight o'clock, when the Governor got up, and for three hours we had full leisure to contemplate the growth of the morning on the sea, and to feel tired of conjectures about the towers and buildings on shore. As soon as we landed, and had breakfasted, and were refreshed, we set off in a separate diligence for the Eternal City.

The road for some miles bordered the sea. The shore is varied by little bays, inlets, and promontories — every five miles is a watch-tower, — the Maremma is spread around, deadly in its influence on man, but in appearance, a wild, verdant, varied pasture land, with here and there a grove of trees, and broken into hill and dale: the waves sparkled on our right; the land stretched out pleasant to the eye on the left; mountains showed themselves on the horizon. No one can look on this country as merely so much earth — every clod is a sacred relic — every stone is an object of curiosity — every name we hear satisfies some desire or awakens some cherished association. And thus, in a sort of trance of delight, we were whirled along, till the old walls appeared. We entered by the Janiculum, and skirted the Place of St. Peter's; then the pleasant spell was snapped, as we had to turn our thoughts to custom-houses, hotels, and all the worry of arrival.

Evening advanced; but what ailed the Romans? they were all looking up at the sky — it was an epidemic — in crowds or singly, not an eye looked straightforward; all were looking at the heavens; — at a turn in the street we looked too, and saw in the south a long trail of glowing light; we were the more surprised, as we had perceived nothing of the sort the previous night at sea. It was a comet, of course; — does it shine in your more northern hemisphere? here, it loses itself among the stars of Orion, while the nucleus is below the visible horizon; — it is bright, yet the stars shine through its web-like texture, which, composed of thin beams, is stretched out, and you may see delicate sea-weeds — or aquatic plants in a stream, through a large space of the heavens.

LETTER XVIII.

Raffaelle at Rome.

APRIL 5.

The multitude of pictures and statues at Rome is such, that it is quite impossible to give the most cursory account of the Galleries. I have been more struck even than I expected, by what I have seen; the limits of man's power appear enlarged to the uttermost verge of all that the imagination can conceive of beautiful and great.

The admirable proportion of the temple-like chambers in which the finest relics of ancient statuary are placed — the snatches of views that you catch, from open windows, of the papal gardens and the country around the city, renders a visit to the Vatican a step out of every-day life into a world adorned by the works of the highest genius of all countries and all times. It is a great pity that they are not arranged in a manner to instruct the spectator as to the age and schools to which they belong — the collection at the Vatican greatly needs to be regulated by enlightened criticism — but here, everything is done from paltry motives: a man, who in some way can command patronage, writes a catalogue of all the statues, and changes their numbers and places, to make it necessary that you should buy his book; so that those who go with the elaborate and learned works of German critics in their hands, find every reference a mistake, and get hopelessly embroiled, It is said that all the works of ancient Grecian sculpture bear the character of divine repose; and that those statues which are in attitudes of action, are the works of Greeks, indeed, but executed when Greece was a province, at the command of Roman masters. Among such, is the Apollo Belvidere, which is not adorned by the faultless perfection of Athenian art — yet who can criticise? As I entered the compartment in which he stands, a divine presence seemed to fill the chamber. The godlike archer is stepping forward; his gesture and look breathe the eagerness and gladness of victory. In some sort, this statue is the ideal of a youthful hero — but he is not human — there is no trace of the chivalrous feeling, that even in triumph honours the fallen. He is above fear and above pity.

From room to room the eye is so fed by sights of beauty, “that the sense aches at them;” truly the limbs unwillingly fail. From the halls of the statues you go through long galleries filled with funereal urns, ancient maps, and old tapestry worked from Raffaelle’s cartoons, into rooms where the paintings are. It is managed so, that when you have passed through all, you quit the rooms by the loggie of Raffaelle, and the Swiss on guard does not permit you to return; — there is no great harm in this — as it would be nearly impossible to walk the whole way back again. Visitors ought, nevertheless, to be allowed to enter by this door at choice, that they may at once reach the pictures without the extra labour of traversing the extensive galleries that lead to them. Of the oil paintings we see here, the San Geronimo by Domenichino is perhaps the finest. Of the Transfiguration I have before spoken: as a composition, it is esteemed the grandest picture in the world; but I turn from it to others (to the Madonna di Foligno, for instance) of an earlier date, in which there is a more heavenly grace; an expression of celestial and pure beauty, an emanation of the immortal soul, superior to any perfection of colouring or grouping.

But it is among the frescos of Raffaelle that I have lingered longest with the greatest delight. These were the first works of this matchless painter, when called to Rome. He had been soliciting leave to be associated with Leonardo da Vinci and Michaél Angelo in painting the halls of the Palazzo Vecchio, at Florence, when Pope Julios II. called him to Rome, and gave him in charge to adorn the walls of the Vatican.

At this time Michael Angelo was, I will not say, his rival; but, as he painted the Sistine Chapel while Raffaelle was engaged upon the Vatican, a passion of generous emulation rose in the heart of the latter that spurred him on to work with indefatigable ardour. As Lanzi tells us, the subjects chosen for these halls elevated his imagination. They were not scenes from old mythology, “but the mysteries of the noblest science—’the most august circumstances pertaining to religion, and military deeds whose result established peace and faith in the world.” None better than Raffaelle could achieve this work; for of all men he had firmest hold of “that golden chain which is let down from Heaven, and with a divine enthusiasm ravishes our souls, made to the image of God, and stirs us up to comprehend the innate and incorruptible beauty to which we were once created.”

He began by the figures of Theology, Philosophy, Poetry, and Jurisprudence, on the arched roof of one of the rooms. The figures of Theology and Poetry, particularly the latter, are in the highest style of mystic art. The picture named the Dispute of the Sacrament — if that be the name of a picture which is, after all, nameless — covers one of the walls. There is an assemblage of all the doctors of the church, and among them Raffaelle boldly placed Dante, with his laurel crown, and, still more boldly, Savanarola, who ten years before had been publicly burned at Florence as a heretic. Above these groups, heaven opens, and the Trinity and the Angels are congregated. By the lovers of the mystic school, this picture is preferred to every other; yet I was more struck by that which represents the Vision driving Heliodorus from the Temple. The story, as told in the Apocrypha, is fitted to excite the imagination. Through the relation of Simon, Seleucus sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to seize on the wealth of the Temple, laid up by Onias, the High Priest, for the relief of widows and fatherless children. When Heliodorus entered the Temple to execute the king’s command, “there was no small agony throughout the whole city. Then, whoso looked the high priest in the face, it would have wounded his heart; for his countenance, and the changing of his colour, declared the inward agony of his mind.” The whole city flocked, transported by indignation and grief. “And all, holding up their hands to heaven, made supplication.” Heliodorus, nevertheless, persisted; but when he presented himself at the treasury, “the Lord of Spirits, and the Prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid.”

It is deemed the triumph of art to adorn the real with something grander than meets the ordinary gaze; but to paint the superhuman, and convey to the eyes the image of that which surpasses the might of visible objects, and can scarcely be conceived by the strongest effort of the imagination, is that which Raffaelle only could achieve. In this fresco the vision of a “horse with a terrible rider “ fills the beholder with awe — the one shakes terror from his looks, while the horse may be seen to neigh and breathe destruction around. The figures of the two youths, “notable in strength, and excellent in beauty,” who are driving the spoiler with scourges from the Temple, are divine in swiftness and might. Celestial indignation animates their gestures, and motion was never painted so real, so impetuous, so uncontrollable.

This was among the latter works of Raffaelle. Whether it be, as M. Rio argues, that falling, from that high devotional state of mind which inspired his younger works, he could no longer rise to ideal perfection, or that the remains of antique art at Rome, and the simple and majestic pencil of Michael Angelo, in the Sistine Chapel, giving larger scope to his ideas of composition, he began a new styles and the powers of man being limited, the attaining something new, however excellent, occasioned him to lose a portion of that which he before possessed; there can be no doubt that his manner entirely changed, I am not always disposed to regret this alteration. It has been the cause of a variety in excellence; for if we miss in his latter pictures the portraiture of innocence, and divine love, represented in the Madonnas and saints of his first style, we have something else, which no one but Raffaelle could give. To understand me, let me ask you to call to mind the Madonna di Foligno in the Vatican, and the Descent from the Cross in the Palazzo Borghese. The first beams, with an adorable and beatified sweetness, all purity and love. In the second, do you remember, besides the many other pity-striking figures, the St. John? He is holding one end of the cloth which enfolds his dead master’s body. The expression of agony proper to the beloved disciple, struggles with the exertion of strength necessitated by the act on which he is employed; the resolution to perform the rites due to the dead, is mingled with yearning veneration for the corpse of him whom he passionately adored. These pictures are the triumph of Christian art. Then recollect the frescos of the history of Psyche in the Farnesina, and the youthful and nymph-like loveliness of the Galatea — these are specimens of his last style — and form your own opinion as to his improvement or otherwise. Whichever way you incline, there is one conclusion to which you must necessarily come, that Raffaelle in both styles, the Christian and the Pagan, is superior to every other painter—” high actions and high passions best describing.”

Day after day, often accompanied by our accomplished friend, whose taste and knowledge are invaluable, we visit the galleries of Rome. In one small chamber of the Barberini palace are three gems of art; and in these, expression appeared triumphant over skill, to the disadvantage of Raffaelle. A portrait of the Fornarina is contrasted with that of Beatrice Cenci, by

Guido. In vain I was told to compare the exquisite finish, the faultless painting of cheek and lip, of the disagreeable-looking beauty, with the comparatively imperfect touches of Guido's pencil. The innocent, tearful face of the young and lovely girl, whose look expresses the self-pity which must have swelled in her heart, as she thought, how she, from very horror of crime, was become a murderess, put to shame the dark eyes and pencilled brows of her, whose passion was devoid of tenderness. It is gratifying to see the work of an English painter in a Homan church. The picture by Mr. Severn in the Cathedral of San Paolo fuore delle Mura, is a beautiful composition, and shews to great advantage. It is the first work of a Protestant artist admitted into a Roman church. The high esteem in which Mr. Severn was held in Rome ensured him this distinction.

I have visited with great pleasure the studios of modern statuaries. They are mostly now employed in portraying or idealizing a Capuan peasant-woman, la Grazia, whose beauty is of an expressive, mobile, and grand cast. The best representation of her is as Hagar in the desert.

The angel of the day of judgment, by Tenerani, is very fine; and Mr. Gibson's studio contains statues admirably executed in that classic taste which he so successfully cultivates.

LETTER XIX.

Ruins of Rome. — The Holy Week. — Music and Illuminations.

TRINITA DE' MONTI, APRIL.

"What are the pleasures that I enjoy at Rome?" you ask. They are so many, that my mind is brimful of a sort of glowing satisfaction, mingled with tearful associations. Besides all that Rome itself affords of delightful to the eye and imagination, I revisit it as the bourne of a pious pilgrimage. The treasures of my youth lie buried here.

The sky is bright — the air impregnated with the soft odours of spring — we take our books and wile sway the morning among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, or the Coliseum. From the shattered walls of the former, the view over the city and the Campagna is very beautiful. The Palatine is near at hand, and majestic ruins guide the eye to where the golden palace spreads its vast extent. These ruins, chiefly piles of brick — remnants of massive walls or lofty archways — may not be beautiful in themselves; but overgrown with parasites and flowering shrubs, they are grouped in so picturesque a manner among broken ground and dark gigantic trees — the many towers of the city gathering near — the distant hills on the clear horizon, with clouds just resting in scattered clusters on the tops, and the sky above, deeply blue — that the whole scene is delightful to *feel,* as well as look at.

There is one view from the Coliseum that I am never tired of contemplating. Ascending to the second range of arches, and looking from the verge towards the tomb of Cestius — in the foreground is the Temple of Venus, the Palatine Mount, and the ruins of the Forum — the country, varied by woods and hills and ruins, is spread beyond — the tomb of Cestius, gleaming at a distance, is a resting place for the eye — and various trees seem placed expressly to give the scene the air of a landscape sitting for its picture — all grace and smiles and radiance.

The Forum used to be, long, long ago, before I ever saw it, a broken space of ground, with an avenue through the Campo Vacino leading to the Coliseum, with triumphal arches and tall columns half-buried in the soil.

Now the excavations are considerable. I have heard painters lament that the picturesque beauty has been spoilt; but as its appearance, such as time and neglect had left it, is changed, it is as well to complete the task of excavation. Much has been done since I was here last, and workmen are in constant employ. I wish you could see the chief among them. Imagine an Indian file of fifty old men in the last stage of decrepitude, grey-headed, bent-shouldered, and feeble-legged, each rolling a small wheelbarrow, creeping along so slow, and yet that extreme slowness appearing an exertion for them.

From the Forum we ascended the hill of the Capitol, and, with some trouble, got the custode, and mounted the tower of the Campidoglio. We looked round, and fancied how, from this height, the patricians and consuls of Old Rome watched the advance of marauding parties that wound out from the ravines of the hills, or whose spears and helmets glittered above the brow of the Janicular hill; and the cry of the Sabines, or fiercer and more terrible, of the Gauls, made the populace gather in the Forum below, and give their names to be inscribed as soldiers for instant fight. The Tiber glitters in the distance, and Soracte rising from out the plain,

“Heaves like a long-swept wave, about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing.”

I never look at the ridge of Sant’ Oreste, (as it is now called,) but these lines, which so admirably paint it, come into my mind.

I scarcely know what view of Rome to prefer. That from the ruined Baths of Caracalla, or from the verge of the Coliseum, or the panorama of the Capitol, or from the porch of the Lateran, which commands a different landscape. — You see nothing of the city, for your back is turned on it; you are on a height, the Campagna at your feet, spanned by a number of ruined aqueducts, whose grandeur and extent impress the mind, more than any other object, with a sense of Roman greatness. From the Lateran down to the Coliseum, nearly a mile, and in the adjoining space, was the most magnificent quarter of the old city. Now it is occupied by *Poderi*, divided by high walls, with here and there a ruin — a toppling wall or broken arch. When Pope Gregory VII. called in Robert Guiscard to drive Henry III. from his capital, the Saracens of Sicily, under the command of the Norman, sacked Rome, and this portion of the city was burned and levelled with the soil. So utter was the desolation, that the survivors found it more convenient to build nearly a new town at a distance, than to attempt to restore their homes among the smoking ruins of palaces, temples, and baths, which lay a black heap, till they crumbled away — and trees and flowers sprung up, and the peasantry came with the plough, and sowed seed and reaped corn.

We spent half a day rambling over the Palatine — the Contadino, our guide, told us that every July and August, the mal' aria reigned, and his sunken cheeky spoke of his having been a victim. He asked us if we had the mal' aria in England.—" Che bel paese," he said with a sigh on hearing our negative.

Often, as at Venice, we leave our home without any definite object, and wander about the deserted part of Rome — that which once was the centre of its magnificence. Thus we viewed the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built by Michael Angelo, with materials, columns and marbles, remnants of the Baths of Diocletian; it is one of the most striking and majestic of the Roman churches. Thus we found ourselves at the foot of the Capitol, and an inscription led us to visit the Mamertine prisons, a spot held sacred since St. Peter and other Christian martyrs were confined there. It is indubitably the oldest relic of the ancient republic, and the monument of its cruel and arrogant disdain for human life and suffering, impresses one painfully. How much of that has there ever been all over the world — and now! I used to pride myself on English humanity; but the boast is quenched in shame, since I read, last winter, the accounts of the cruelties practised in the Affghan war. We were injured, and, therefore, we revenge; such also was the tenet of old Rome.

The galleries of the Capitol often entice us. Here are some of the finest statues in the world. The Amazon, in whom a severe and martial expression is allied to feminine grace, and a something womanly softens the countenance in spite of sternness. The Venus of the Capitol is the only Queen of Beauty that can at all compete with the Goddess of the Tribune. The Cupid and Psyche is less tender and innocent than the Florentine group, but there is a passionate love in the caress that makes the marble appear tremulous with emotion.

April 20.

Holy Week is over. The ceremonies of the Church strike me as less majestic than when I was last here; perhaps this is to be attributed to the chief part being filled by another actor. Pius VII. was a venerable and dignified old man. Pope Gregory, shutting his eyes as he is carried round St. Peter's, because the motion of the chair makes him sea-sick, by no means excites respect. If I ever revisit Rome during the Holy Week, I shall not seek for tickets for the ceremonies; it will be quite enough to enter the Cathedral for half-an-hour while they were going on.

But a thousand times over I would go to listen to the Miserere in the Sistine Chapel; that spot made sacred by the most sublime works of Michael Angelo. I do not allude to the Last Judgment — which I do not admire — but to the paintings on the roof, which have that simple grandeur that Michael Angelo alone could confer on a single figure, making it complete in itself — enthroned in majesty — reigning over the souls of men.

The music, not only of the Miserere, but of the Lamentations, is solemn, pathetic, religious — the soul is rapt — carried away into another state of being. Strange that grief, and laments, and the humble petition of repentance, should fill us with delight — a delight that awakens these very emotions in the heart — and calls tears into the eyes, and yet which is dearer than any pleasure. It is one of the mysteries of our nature, that the feelings which most torture and subdue, yet, if idealized — elevated by the imagination — married harmoniously to sound or colour — turn those pains to happiness; inspiring adoration; and a tremulous but ardent aspiration for immortality. Such seems the sentient link between our heavenly and terrestrial nature; and thus, in Paradise, as Dante tells, — glory beatifies the sight, and seraphic harmony wraps the saints in bliss.

Another sight of this week, is the washing of the feet of the pilgrims. The ladies of Rome belong to a sisterhood who perform this service on Good Friday for the female pilgrims. The hospital of the Pelegrini was crowded; we could hardly make our way. In my life I never saw so much female beauty as among the sisterhood — their faces so perfect in contour; so lovely in expression; so noble, and so soft, that the recollection will haunt my memory for ever.

I went to mass at the Church of the Jesuits — as usual glittering with ornaments, precious stones, wax-lights, and all manner of finery. The music was in the same style — well suited for the Opera-house; it would there have enchanted; but it wanted that solemn, religious descant, which awed the spirit in the Sistine Chapel.

The illumination of St. Peter’s terminated the sights of the week — that and the fire-works of the Castel Sant’ Angelo. — There is more of creation in the first of these sights than in any other in *the* world. It is but a dim, and scant, and human imitation of the third verse of the first chapter of Genesis; but it *is* an imitation of the most sublime act of divine power; and though bearing but a very weak resemblance to what we imagine of the moment when, on a word, light disclosed the glories of creation, yet, there is darkness, and radiance sudden and dazzling bursts forth, and — it is very fine.

It is curious to see all these solemnities — many of them doubtless of Fagan origin — dear to the people, and therefore preserved and christianised by the Popes — and to reflect, that such, for many, many centuries, was the chief link fostered by religion between man and the Divinity. We have obliterated all this among ourselves. No doubt the impulse of piety in the heart is a truer and purer oblation; but Catholics reason that these are aids and supports to enable weak humanity — a creature half matter, half soul — to sustain itself in its pious ecstacies. Besides, God created in us not only the sense of, but also in some degree the power of creating the beautiful; and is it not well to dedicate to divine worship the glorious gifts which were bestowed for the purpose of raising the soul from earth and linking it to Heaven?

LETTER XX.

The Pontifical States.

MAY 3.

"WHEREVER the Catholic religion is established, I have uniformly observed indolence, with its concomitants, dirt and beggary, to prevail; and the more Catholic is the place, the more they abound." These are the words of a clever writer, well acquainted with Rome, *apropos* of Rome. It must be added, that wherever the Catholic religion prevails, great works of charity subsist. During the time of Catholicism, charitable institutions, as is well known, abounded all over England — in some few obscure comers such still survive, where the old may find a peaceful refuge — not in crowded receptacles, where they are looked on as useless burthens on a heavily-taxed parish — but in decent almshouses, bordering grassy enclosures, near gardens that supply their table; peaceful nooks, where the aged may converse with nature, and find the way to the grave soothed by that calm so dear to declining years. Jesus Christ so forcibly recommended the poor to all who professed his religion, that, in common with all other Christians, every good Catholic considers works of charity to be his paramount duty. One of the most enlightened, Pascal, gave a touching proof of this, when, on his death-bed, he only admitted his pains to be soothed by careful nursing, on condition that two paupers in the same state should receive the same attentions in an adjoining apartment. The poor were to him objects of real and tender affection.

As eleemosynary charity is an essential portion of Catholicism, we may expect that it should flourish in the capital of the Catholic world. There are many beggars, but there is no absolute want, at Rome. Beggary is a condition, and it becomes a matter of favour to be allowed to beg. Plates of metal are given to such as are permitted, and fastened to the arm of poor deformed objects, who are to be found in every corner of the city, asking alms. Many convents distribute food regularly at different hours, when all who ask may have. There is, besides, a house of industry, I hear, carried on on excellent principles. There are, to the destruction of the savings of the poor, state lotteries all over Italy. It was considered that this demoralising gambling ought not to be kept up in the capital of the head of the church: but it was argued that a love of putting in the lottery could not be rooted out, and while Naples, Tuscany, and Venice had lotteries, the Romans would send their money to those states, if they could not be indulged at home. A Roman lottery therefore exists, and the proceeds go to keep up a house of industry. Here a number of young people are taught various trades. Young men are apprenticed, and girls receive dowries, while the old people have a home that smoothes their passage to the grave. Besides these conventual aids and government institutions, there are many confraternities of citizens whose bond of duty is charity to the sick and poor. People of all classes of society belong to them, and meet on an equal footing. The city is divided into several quarters, and the various confraternities have each one assigned to them, which they visit and relieve.

Several of the persons I know remained in Rome during the visitation of the cholera in 1837, and they still vividly remember the horror of the time.

It was a conviction, a superstition, nourished by the church, that this fatal epidemic would spare the Holy City, and the arguments urged to prove its exemption were absurd, and yet horrible to hear. When the great heats of August set in, and a few cases began to be mentioned, the government, grown frantic through mingled terror and folly, thought only of convincing the people that Rome would be spared. The pest might be said to have been welcomed by illuminations and processions, and its virulence propagated and fixed by the poor people being encouraged to go about barefoot, while their last coin was drained from them to buy oil for lamps to burn in the churches. The stench and heat in these edifices became of itself pestilential, for the summer was more sultry even than usual, and the crowds that filled them were tremendous. Groups of persons were to be seen in the streets and churches, standing barefoot before the Madonnas and crucifixes, expecting to see the images open their eyes and shed blood, both of which miracles, it was averred, had taken place. But this absurd buffoonery sunk into insignificance compared with the dreadful ideas purposely put into the people’s minds about poison; in the early stage of the epidemic, several persons fell victims to the frenzy thus occasioned.

In the middle of August the most splendid illuminations had place all over Rome, — a thanksgiving to God for sparing the city. On the 15th, the

Pope set out in procession to accompany a famous black Madonna from the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore to St. Peter's. Thrice he was stopped by storms. People crowded in to join from all the towns and villages in a circuit of many miles. The vast concourse, the excitement of the procession, and the violent rains to which they were exposed, barefoot and bareheaded, tended only to exasperate the power of the epidemic. On that day many persons died: the illusion vanished — it was admitted that the cholera was in Rome. Strangers and nobles fled, and for two months the most fearful scenes had place. The dead-cart went all night — people fell down in the streets, convulsed by the frightful spasms of that terrible disease; 35,000 persons (about one in ten of the whole population, 150,000) died at Rome.

The Pope shut himself up in the Quirinal. Every one who entered the palace was obliged to undergo fumigation — a thing abhorrent to the Romans, who detest every kind of perfume. An imperative order was issued that the cardinals, the heads of government, and various *employés,* should not quit the city — but it was very ill obeyed — government was indeed paralysed, and great fears were entertained, especially at first, of the violence of the ignorant and wretchedly misguided people. *"*If you were to imagine the *devil insane"* wrote an English gentleman, *"*it might give you some notion of the state of things, and they already talk of sending for some Austrian troops." As the epidemic pursued its course, the people grew at first familiar with it, and then cowed. Their state was most horrible. I have heard, from one who was on the spot, that it was greatly to be doubted whether all who were borne nightly in the dead-carts to hideous, unhonoured sepulture, really died of cholera. There was reason to believe that many were victims of a virulent typhus, brought on by acts of superstition and excessive fear — and, worse still, that numbers died of starvation. The administrators of government having for the most part fled or shut themselves up — a strict cordon being drawn round the city, and the neighbourhood struck with inconceivable panic — food grew scarce, and the poor wretches who had spent their last in propitiating Heaven by lamps and candles, without money and without succour, died of want.

Yet there was not absent many redeeming touches in the dark picture of the times. The regular clergy fulfilled their duties unshrinkingly; and the conduct of the Jesuits was particularly admirable. They visited every corner of the city, watching by death-beds with unwearied zeal. They were seen taking, with gentle care, babes from the sides of their mothers, who lay dead in the streets, wrapping them tenderly in their black gowns, and carrying them to places appointed for their refuge. The confraternities also did not desert their post. A Roman told me he was one of three brothers; they removed their aged father to a safe place, at a distance from contagion, and remained themselves: they were employed at different quarters of the city. "I never felt happier," said my informant; "our father was in safety; we had no fears for ourselves. All day we were busied among the sick, and when we met in the evening, it was with light hearts; the employment gave us something to do and to think about; the dangers we might be supposed to run, endeared us to each other. I remember now with regret the sort of exhilaration with which we met, thanked God for our preservation, and then again went to our task, not only without fear, but with a feeling of gladness superior to every other happiness." The few English, also, who remained, displayed unshrinking courage. Lord C — , in particular, a Catholic nobleman, acted with a heroism that shamed the Cardinals and heads of the state. He earnestly strove to prove how erroneous was the fear of contagion; the succour he brought, and the example he displayed, were of the utmost utility, and saved many, many lives.

The country round Rome, each town and village within its cordon, was left pretty much to itself. No disturbances occurred, and the people showed themselves much more capable than could have been supposed, of self-government. One English family took refuge at Olèvano, a small town, some fifteen miles from Rome. They went thither without the intention of remaining; they took very little money with them, and could get nothing from Rome: the people of this little place showed them a kindness at once singular and touching. They not only provided them with provisions; but exerted themselves to please and amuse them. Each day some little fête was given by the mere country people for their diversion; so that they seemed, like the personages of the Decameron, to have escaped from a city of the pest, to enjoy the innocent pleasures of life with the greater zest.

Such is the amiable and courteous disposition of this people, except when their violent passions urge them to crimes, which they scarcely look on as wicked; for they are taught (for heresy, read any sin against the ordinances of the church)

“Il gran peccato è l’eresia! che gli altri
Pesan men d’una piuma, e se ne vanno
Con un segno di croce.”

Where men’s wants are few and easily supplied, where a benignant climate clothes the earth in abundance, and nature is the indulgent mother instead of the stem overseer of our species, men have leisure, and, if they are idle, they become vicious. The air of Rome inspires lassitude, and renders the inhabitants inert. The Romans who live in the healthy parts of the city are all inclined to grow fat; their language, unidiomatic, and, so to speak, long-winded in its expressions, is pronounced with a grace of accent, a slow and melodious emphasis, that renders it more agreeable than any other Italian to the ears of strangers, and is strangely in harmony with the dreamy contentment of their minds. Accustomed to receive and to gain by foreigners, they are courteous, amiable, and ready to serve; there is among them an air of easy indolence, which, though it militates against our notions of manly energy, yet is never brutalized into stupidity. The women are among the most beautiful of the Italians. You feel as if all lived under a spell; and so they do; for, troubled and unquiet as is the rest of the papal dominions, Rome and its immediate neighbourhood remains in a sort of hazy apathy. The Pope appreciates highly their passive submission, and does all he can to keep them from communicating with the discontented districts. For this reason he is opposed to the construction of railroads; that, as he says, his revolutionary subjects of the East may not corrupt his obedient children of the West.

To the outward eye, the papal government pays a slight tribute to the increased demands of the times. There is more decency in the lives of the clergy; there is more done for the poor. But it is not eleemosynary charity that is needed — it is the spirit of improvement, just laws and an upright administration — none of these exist; and even scientific knowledge, encouraged in other parts of the peninsula, is forbidden. Meanwhile, penal laws are slight, and seldom enforced. There is, some fifteen miles from the city, a miserable collection of huts, in the middle of a tract of country, the peculiar haunt of mal’ aria; it is called Campo Morto, and is an asylum of the Church. All criminals, who fear being taken, fly hither. The spot, consecrated as an asylum, is watched by soldiers. The fugitive who once enters the fatal bounds, never dares leave them. Three years is the extent to which a man can drag out existence in this pestilential atmosphere. So here the hardened criminal comes to die, in his desire to escape from death. He is soon struck by fever, grows feeble and emaciated; and at his appointed hour is gathered to the grave.

The papal government is considered the worst in Italy; and the temporal rule of the Church is looked upon as the chief source of the nation's misfortunes. This is no novel assertion. You may remember Dante's apostrophe: —

"Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote,
Che da te prese il primo ricco patre."

In the middle ages the temporal power of the Popes urged them on to many acts of unjustifiable aggression; yet, as the faith of nations in those days made them strong, the people were, for the most part, their friends; kings, their enemies — and often they made the latter tremble on their thrones, while they showed themselves the protectors of the former. The Popes were then Guelphs, and watched over civil liberty, till attachment to temporal riches turned them into Ghibellines, and led them to support the pretensions of sovereigns to absolute power. Savanorola denounced this unholy alliance as subversive of the purity, and even existence, of the Church. As faith decayed, and reform grew imminent, the compact between the head of a religion that preached equality, and the sovereigns who aimed at despotism, was sealed: while as the revenues of the Church, so lately swollen by tributes from all the Christian world, decreased, the pontiffs clung more tenaciously to the few miles of territory which they claimed as their own.

Before the first French Revolution, English travellers denounced the temporal rule of the Popes

"Ahi, la vedete;
Di porpora è vestita; oro, monili,
Gemme tutta l'aggravano; le bianche
Vesti, delizia del primier marito,

Che or sta nel cielo, ella perdé nel fango.
Perô di nomi e di blasfemi è piena,
E nella fronte sua scrisse; *Mistero.*
Ahi, la sua voce a consolar gli afflitti
Non s' ode più; tutti minaccia, e crea
Con perenni anatèmi all' alme incerte
InefFabili pene; gl'infelici,
Qui lo siam tutti, nel commun dolore
Correano ad abbracisarsi, e la crudele
Di Cristo in nome gli ha divisi; i padri
Inimica coi figli, e le consorti
Dai mariti disgiunge, e pon la guerra
Fra unanimi fratelli: è del Vangelo
Interprete crudel: l' odio s' impara
Nel libro dell' amor."

* * * * *

—" il mondo ignora
S' ella piu d' oro o più di sangue ha sete.
Perché sali costei dalle profonde
Viscere della terra al Campidoglio?
Fu bella e grande nelle sue prigioni."

Niccolini; *Amaldo da Brescia.* as corrupt and odious; it subsists now as it did then — only things are worse — partly, because all that docs not improve must deteriorate; partly, that the uses and end of government are better understood, and abuses become more torturing and intolerable; and partly, because the checks and restraints which time and custom opposed to their tyranny are now all swept away.

The Pope and his prelates, alone, are invested with political, legislative, and administrative authority, and constitute the State. From education and from system they are despotic, and repel every liberal notion, every social progress. The people pay and obey: all the offices, all the employments, great and small, are in the hands of the clergy. From the Pope to the lowest priestly magistrate, all live on the public revenues, whence springs a system of clients, which existing principally in Rome, yet extends over the whole of the papal dominions, and creates a crowd of dependants devoted to the clergy. Corruption is the mainspring of the State, which rests on the cupidity which the absence of all incentive to, or compensation for, honest labour inspires: yet nearly all are poor, and poorest is the Head of the whole; who, shrinking from all improvement, fearful if the closed valves were opened, he should admit in one rushing stream, with industry and knowledge, rebellion, yet finds that the fresh burthens which his necessities cause him to impose on the people fail to increase his revenue.

The Romans, themselves, submit without repining, their state has existed, such as it is, for centuries; the abode of the Pope and concourse of strangers enrich — the Church ceremonies amuse them. But out of Rome the cry has been loud, and will be repeated again and again. The Marches bordering the Adriatic, Romagna and the four legations, (four cities, each governed by a Cardinal legate), suffer evils comparatively new to them; and the memory of better days incites them to endeavour to recover their former independence. These states formed, it is true, a portion of the pontifical dominions before the French revolution; but they existed then on a different footing, and enjoyed privileges of which they are now deprived. Bologna in especial considers herself aggrieved.

During the reign of Pope Nicholas V., driven by the political necessities of the times, Bologna placed itself under the protection of the papal government. The city engaged to pay an annual tribute, and to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Pontiff, while he, on the other hand, guaranteed its independence, and a representative senate to rule the state. Such was its position till the French invasion of 1796. The Congress of Vienna, in 1814, among its other misdeeds, made over the four legations to the Pope. They became a part of the patrimony of St. Peter; their municipal rights were abolished, and, contrary to every stipulation, they were reduced to the same condition as the ancient subjects of the Pope. At first the Pontiffs thought it necessary to take some steps to reconcile them to the loss of their ancient privileges. They promised them laws in accordance with the improved notions of the times; and that the code of Napoleon should continue in force. These promises were never fulfilled, and a farrago of laws was imposed impossible to be understood, and for ever changing; as each new Pope, supported by his infallibility, makes new ones at pleasure, while the corrupt mode in which they are administered increases the vexation of the people. A diminution of their burthens was also promised, but they continued as high as ever, without those attendant circumstances, that, in the time of the French, compensated for heavy taxations. Money was then spent in constructing roads and other useful public works; now the whole treasure is employed to pension the clergy, and to support in splendour the state and luxury of the Cardinals.

LETTER XXI.

Insurrection of 1831. — Occupation of Ancona by the French.

IF a revolutionary spark is lighted up any where in Europe, the fire bursts forth in Italy. The misgovernment above mentioned is the cause that latterly Romagna has been the centre of these insurrectionary movements, but there has never been sufficient union or strength to secure success. When the French revolution of 1830 occurred, the surviving Carbonari and the heads of other secret societies believed that the moment was propitious to their designs. The government of Louis-Philippe, desirous of drawing away from France the storm that brooded over her from Russia and Austria, excited two unfortunate enslaved countries, Poland and Italy, to rebel. It proclaimed the principle of non-intervention. Marshal Soult exclaimed in the Chamber of Peers:—” The principle of nonintervention shall henceforth be ours; but on condition that it shall be respected by others.” These solemn declarations satisfied the Italian conspirators. Central Italy, that is, the northern pontifical states in chief, with the duchy of Modena, was to be the focus of their movement, and the chiefs believed that they would be strong enough, at least in Romagna, to cope with the armies of their sovereign, if Austria were not permitted to pour its tens of thousands beyond the boundaries of Lombardy.

I have asked Italians for some account of the troubles of those times. “I fear,” was the reply, “that it will be difficult to tell any thing worthy to be recorded. Horrible disasters, acts of incredible bravery, admirable instances of self-devotion, were found side by side with atrocious crimes; but all so scattered and individual, that it is scarcely possible to group the events together so as to form a narrative.”

Discontent, particularly among the upper classes, was general all over Italy; yet few were willing to risk life and fortune for a cause of which they despaired. The actual revolt was therefore confined to the heads of the secret societies — many of them in exile, and a few thousand young men. The want of talent in some, and of honesty in others among the leaders, led to every disaster. They roused and gathered together bands of ardent youths, holding out to them false hopes of a judicious and well-regulated insurrection, aided by the power of France. Five thousand lads, chiefly of good birth, taken from their boyish studies, withdrawn from the caresses of their mothers, from the pleasures of their homes, without experience, without forethought, who had scarcely reached the threshold of life — rash and untaught, embarked on the difficult and dangerous path of revolt. Their only tie in common was the desire of driving the stranger from their country. They had none to counsel, none to encourage, none to lead; they entrusted the conduct of their attempt to men who, either from timidity or treachery, hung back when they ought to have shewn boldness, and neutralised the small power of aggression which they possessed. They were confronted by a hundred thousand Imperialists, veteran soldiers, supported by all the material of war.

The result was such as might have been expected. As soon as Louis-Philippe felt secure on his throne, he was eager to see an end put to the commotions excited by the revolution of thirty. He deserted the Italian cause. The leaders had no boldness, no military skill — the youths whom they commanded showed bravery, but were too inefficient, few, and ill-armed, to cope with a large, disciplined, and veteran army. The end was defeat and surrender; then came the violation of treaties, death, and exile. It would strike with pity the coldest heart to draw but a slight sketch of the various misery that befel individuals. Many a domestic drama of harrowing tragic interest convulsed families, deprived of their noblest offspring; and whether the bereaved parents were base enough to disclaim and cast them forth, or whether they mourned in bitterness over their fate, the misery was the same. It is not yet ended: England and France still swarm with unfortunate exiles — the better portion of the insurgents, who sigh to return to their country, but who will not in hardship and banishment, make those sacrifices of principle which would at once restore them to rank and wealth.

The occupation of Ancona by the French is an event quite distinct from the insurrection of Romagna, though our vague recollections confuse them together. Abandoned by the French, hemmed in by an Austrian army, the insurgents had surrendered, and the pontifical flag again waved over the citadel of Ancona. Still Romagna was full of commotions, occasioned by their desire for some amelioration of the laws. The five Powers of Europe interfered to prevail on the Pope to yield in some degree to the desires of his subjects. His answer was an edict that overthrew all hope, and confirmed the worst abuses — the superiority of the ecclesiastical courts over the civil, the minor punishments for the clergy compared with the laity, and the continuation of the Inquisition. To enforce these edicts the Pope, helped by Austria, transacted a loan, and declared his intention of sending troops to occupy the four legations.

The account of this military occupation is one of the most frightful passages of modem history. The papal regiments were recruited from the prisons, and formed of bands of San Fedisti — the name of troops half brigands, half soldiers, formed by the priests in opposition to the Carbonari, whose frightful history you may find in the pages of Coletta. This soldiery committed every excess: whether they met with resistance, or, hoping to disarm their ferocity, they were welcomed in the towns as friends, the result was the same — outrage, rapine, massacre. The spirit of the people was roused, and Cardinal Albani’s army, stained by multiplied acts of barbarity, no longer sufficed for the mastery of the whole of Romagna. Succour was requested from Austria, and promptly afforded. Six thousand Austrians, dragging with them the five thousand brigands rather than troops, under the pay of the Head of the Catholic Church, entered Bologna a second time. The severest disciplinė was enjoined to the German soldiers, and strictly observed. Prince Metternich was praised for his interference; the result showed his secret intentions. The Italian populace compared the discipline and moderation of the Germans with the recent excesses of the papal soldiery, and it was hoped that an impression would be made of the preference that ought to be given to the Austrian over the pontifical sway, which hereafter might serve the former in good stead.

When the Pope declared his intention of a military occupation of the discontented provinces, the five Powers, whose ambassadors had just been urging milder measures, with one exception only, approved. England, represented by Sir George Seymour, expressed dissent, and her minister withdrew from the councils of the other diplomatic agents. On the other hand, France expressed her approbation in emphatic terms. The second occupation of Bologna by the Austrians, and the dexterity shown by Prince Metternich, however, made a deep impression cm Casimir Perrier, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. This was a step in advance made by the Austrian under cover of friendship; but if Romagna was to be lost to the

Pope, he saw no reason why the French should not divide the spoil, and he suddenly resolved to occupy Ancona. A ship and two frigates received orders to sail for that city, and carry thither eleven hundred men, under the command of a naval captain Gallois, and of Colonel Combes. General Cubières was named commander-in-chief of the expedition. He set out for Rome, by way of Leghorn, for the purpose of communicating with the Pope with regard to this seizure of one of his principal cities. The French government calculated that General Cubières would have time to see the Pope, and obtain his consent, and reach Ancona before Captain Gallois and Colonel Combes could arrive; but contrary winds delayed Cubières, while on the other hand, the little French fleet doubled the coasts of Italy with an expedition that could not be foreseen, and which indeed excited general surprise; so that when Cubières arrived at Rome he found the French ambassador in a violent rage; the tidings of the occupation of Ancona having reached Rome a few hours before; the Pontiff also was inexpressibly indignant.

Ancona was taken in the night of the 22-23d February, 1832. On their arrival, Colonel Combes and Captain Gallois did not find Cubières. He held the instructions of government, without which, strictly speaking, they could not commence the attack. They did not, however, hesitate to assume the responsibility of the assault — a resolution which they regarded due to the honour of their flag. The fleet cast anchor three miles distant from the city.

A portion of the French soldiers disembarked without impediment, and in a short time, by a hurried march, they arrived under the walls. The gates were closed; the papal troops would not open them. The sappers of the 66th regt broke one open with furious blows of the axe, and were aided in the work by some of the populace. The French dispersed themselves quickly in the city, disarming the posts. Colonel Lazzarini was made prisoner in his bed before he awoke; and thus, by a *coup-de-main,* the French possessed themselves of the city. At daybreak the rest of the troops were disembarked. Colonel Combes, at the head of a battalion, marched against the citadel. The pontifical troops, frightened, yielded immediately; the French were received as friends into the fortress, and the tri-coloured flag was hoisted. The people of Ancona co-operated actively with the French, and not a drop of blood was shed; the inhabitants looked on the occupation as the beginning of liberty, and rejoicing and gladness everywhere prevailed. The Italian tricolor floated in all the streets, and over every square. The French raised the cry of *Vive la liberté!* which was responded to by the Italians with tumults of joy. The governor of the province and the commandant of the piazza were made prisoners, but afterwards set at liberty; they left Ancona. The state prisons were thrown open, and several chiefs of the insurgents liberated. The city was that night illuminated, and the theatres resounded with patriotic songs. A staff officer got upon a bench in one of the principal cafés, and brandishing a naked sword, declared that the regiment occupying Ancona was merely a vanguard, which announced the liberty of Italy.

All Europe was astonished by this event. Austria, in its first movement of surprise, demanded categorical explanations; at the same time that the general of the Austrian troops stationed at Bologna, published a proclamation, in which he declared that the French had occupied Ancona through the same motives, and for the same ends, which had guided the Austrians in Romagna. The Pope gave immediate orders that his troops should retire from Ancona, and that the provincial government should be removed to Osimo: but this anger on the part of the Vatican was of short duration; it listened to the declarations and protestations of the French government, which had in truth no notion of favouring Italian liberty, but intended simply to check Austria, or at least obtain a part of the spoils, if the Pope lost Romagna. Sad were the conditions upon which the French were permitted to prolong their sojourn at Ancona. The part they filled afterwards redounded to their shame in the eyes of the Italians. They averred that the French soldiers, until the evacuation, only served as sbirri of the papal power. And while the government of France held language openly that made Europe believe that Ancona, while in their possession, was a place of refuge for the liberals, it by its acts proved to the various cabinets, that its views were in unison with those of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. A few years ago Ancona was made over again to the Pontiff, the French saving their credit by having the reputation of obtaining in exchange the pardon of some of the exiles of Lombardy; which, in fact, Austria only wanted a pretext and a fair occasion to grant.

At present the spirit of revolt is checked, but not quelled in the pontifical states. A volcanic fire smoulders near the surface, ready at every moment to burst forth in a flame. The whole of the country before disturbed, the Marches, Romagna, the four legations, together with the population of the mountains, are bound together by secret associations, and wait impatiently for the favourable moment when to break their chains. These secret societies, unfortunately, are bad means for seeking a good result; and it is to be feared that the country will never attain a high moral tone and a true feeling of independence, till the means used by their leaders are changed.

Secret associations ought to be particularly eschewed by the Italians, as tending to foster their principal defect — their cunning. The violence of their passions, which they are so little taught to control, is the source of much crime and unhappiness; but under better laws they would be checked. The cowardice of which they are accused, I regard as a mistake: mingled with other soldiers the Italians are as brave as they — it is the want of leaders which has occasioned this low estimation of their courage. No troops will hold together who have not confidence in their generals. In all instances of their defeat it seems evident that their disasters were not occasioned by cowardice in the soldiers, but absence of military skill among those in command.

The habit of deception is the worst fault of the Italians; accustomed to look on the dark side of human nature and to disbelieve in its virtues, they are ever awake to ward off covert injury by astuteness; while the purer virtues, stainless honour and unspotted truth, belong to few (yet to a few they do belong), among them.

The evil has been fostered by the bad use to which the confessional has been put during troubled times; by the institution of a secret police by the governments, and by the spread of secret societies. For what is held mysterious, concealed by oaths, and carried on in the dark, must use falsehood as a shield, and terror as a weapon.

Little good, I am afraid, has been operated by these associations on the character of the people; and the real interests of the country must result from the improvement of the moral sense. Meanwhile, they occasion frequent and partial insurrections, that keep the sovereigns in alarm, but do not advance their cause. It cannot be expected that Italy should be able to liberate itself in a time of lethargic peace like the present. And the attempts of the few who, from time to time, are driven by indignation and shame to take up arms, are but the occasion of tears and grief. They form a band of hidden and obscure victims, which each year that power devours that holds them in slavery. It may even be doubted whether an European commotion would give an occasion favourable to Italy.

Gli altrui peccati, e li sommesse, arcane
Parole mormorate ai proni orecchi
Sono alla nostra libertà fatali.
Perché nuda e tremante al lor corpetto
Ogni alma è tratta dalle sue lattèbre,
E assoluto non è chi si confessa
Se gli altri non accusa.”

Niccolini; Arnaldo da Brescia.

We must not forget that the people are demoralised and degenerate. The present affords no glimmering light by which we may perceive how the regeneration of Italy will be effected. It is one of the secrets of futurity at which it is vain to guess. Yet the hour must and will come. For there are noble spirits who live only in this hope; and every man of courage and genius throughout the country — and several such exist — consecrates his moral and intellectual faculties to this end only.

LETTER XXII.

Sorrento. — Capri. — Pompeii.

SORRENTO, JUNE 1.

IT seems to me as if I had never before visited Italy — as if now, for the first time, the charm of the country was revealed to me. At every moment the senses, lapped in delight, whisper — this is Paradise. Here I find the secret of Italian poetry: not of Dante; he belonged to Etruria and Cisalpine Gaul: Tuscany and Lombardy are beautiful — they are an improved France, an abundant, sunshiny England — but here only do we find another earth and sky. Here the poets of Italy tasted the sweets of those enchanted gardens which they describe in their poems — and we wonder at their bright imaginations; but they drew only from reality — the reality of Sorrento. Call to mind those stanzas of Tasso, those passages of Berni and Ariosto, which have most vividly transported you into gardens of delight, and in them you will find the best description of the charms of this spot. I had visited Naples before, but that was in winter — and beautiful as I thought it, I did not then guess what this land is in all the glory of its summer dress.

Here is the house in which Tasso was born — what wonder that the gardens of Armida convey to the mind the feeling that the poet had been carried away by enchantment to an Elysium, whose balmy atmosphere hung about him, and he wrote under its influence. — So indeed was it — here is the radiance, here the delights which he describes — here he passed his childhood; the fragrance of these bowers, the glory of this sky, haunted him in the dark cell of the convent of St. Anna.

I know not whether I should prefer the view of the bay which his house (now occupied as an hotel) commands, to our own from the Cocumella — the scene from his windows is certainly completer; situated more in the bend of the bay, turned northwards towards Vesuvius, he looked upon a circle of mountain crags, embracing the sea; our view is more turned to the west — it is less picturesque — perhaps more sublime.

The portion of the bay that belongs to Sorrento is singularly formed. For the most part steep cliffs rise from the water, with here and there a break, where there intervenes a short space of sands, hedged round by cliffs. The cliffs are perforated with caverns, some open to the air, and clothed with luxuriant vegetation; others scooped deep in the face of the rock. Many of them have been enlarged, and openings made for ventilation, and passages cut down to the sands, and up to the gardens above. Every house almost has one of these *calate* or descents, down from the heights above to the beach; some cut in the face of the cliffs — corkscrew galleries — some communicating with the caverns; most of them are walled up to prevent smuggling. I believe when the family to whom the house belongs resides on the spot, at their request the *calata* belonging to them is opened. One of the royal family had been staying at or near the Cocumella; the passage was opened for their convenience, and the keys were left at our inn; so we had full command of the descent from the garden of our house. Our *calata* is considered one of the best; it opens into a huge double cavern, which tradition or imagination has appropriated to Polyphemus. It is large enough for him and his flock, and within is an inner cave, where the giant-shepherd stored his cheeses, and against whose rough surface the luckless voyagers clung, hoping to escape: the rock he flung to sink the vessel of Ulysses still lies a furlong from the mouth of the cavern. In the morning nothing can be cooler than the sands shaded by the cliff; later in the day the sun descending to set behind Ischia, strikes on the rocks and beach, and they become burningly hot.

P — has got a nice sailing-boat over from Naples; too small, but still a wonderfully safe, good boat, considering its size, and we have a *marinaro* also from Naples, to whom it belongs; he takes care of it all day, and sleeps in it at night. He is a young fellow, and certainly never shows any signs of timidity, but considers his little skiff charmed from danger within the bay; beyond, the seas are far heavier; his father *ha timore* and will not let him venture. He tries to persuade us to go with him to Ischia and Capri. I am shy of this — the boat is so small; but P — and his friend often sail some miles from shore, and run down to Castelamare; and on calm days I go on exploring expeditions into the frequent and strange caves of the coast, or stretch across to the Temple of Neptune, and roam about the ruin-strewed shore. These caverns are mysterious recesses, which the fancy is excited to people with a thousand fairy tales. As I have said, some are like ours of the Cocumella, scooped out in the face of the rock — others, narrow clefts in the rock, open to the sky. Into the strangest you enter by narrow passages, just large enough to let the boat pass; they are covered at top, and paved by the waves, which play flickering with a turquoise tint quite peculiar and very beautiful. The plain of Sorrento, which is spread on the top of the cliffs that overlook the sea, is shut in all round by a belt of hills — intersected here and there by narrow ravines — clefts, as it were, in the soil, thickly clothed with various trees and underwood. The plain itself is planted with orange trees. These gardens being shut in by high walls, the walks near us are not at all agreeable; therefore, when we leave our terrace, and our beach, and our cavern, it is in a boat or on mules — the rides are delightful. To Capo del Monte, which those who live nearer to Sorrento than ourselves can reach by a walk, and therefore to live nearer has advantages — but I like our greater retirement better; or to the Calmaldoli, or to the Conti delle Fontanelle, a height whence we command a view of the Gulf of Salerno, the rocks of the Syrens, and the long line of coast that runs southward, on which Pæstum is situated; and of Capri rising abrupt and dark. I can only compare the difference between these enchanting scenes and those of other countries which have heretofore delighted me, by saying, that in all others it was like seeing a lovely countenance behind a dusky veil; here the veil is withdrawn, and the senses ache with the effulgent beauty which is revealed.

JUNE 3.

To-day we visited Capri. The winds here are so regular, that with the exception of a scirocco which will sometimes intervene, you know exactly in summer-time on what you may depend. At noon the Ponente rises — a west wind, brisk and fresh, which crisps the sea into sparkling waves, that dance beneath the sun. This wind goes on increasing till about five or six in the afternoon, and then dies away; at about nine or ten an air comes off from Vesuvius — a land-wind, in fact — which lasts till morning. Thus to go to Capri, it was necessary to set out early to profit by this breeze, which wafted us southward to the island. I do not know anything more striking than the manner in which, as we stretch out from our bay, the island of Capri, with its two peaks and beetling cliffs, rises upon us. As we ran down towards it, headland after headland opened, and disclosed the bays between.

In two hours we reached the island, and ran into the little bay in which the town of Capri is situated. We then transferred ourselves to two small boats, for the purpose of visiting the Grotto Azzurro. We were rowed under the high, dark, bare, perpendicular cliffs, and with anxious curiosity I looked for the opening to the grotto. The mountains grew higher, the precipices more abrupt and black, as we rowed slowly in the deep calm water beneath their shadow. At length we came to a small opening; it was necessary to sit at the bottom of the boat, as it shot through the narrow, low, covered entrance; within, the strangest sight is revealed: we entered a large cavern, formed by the sea; the hue resembles that which I mentioned as belonging to the caves of the Sorrentine coast; only here it is brighter — a turquoise, milky, pellucid, living azure. The white roof and walls of the cave reflect the tints, and the shimmering motion of the waves being also mirrored on the rock, the effect is more fairy-like and strange than can be conceived. This cave was discovered by two Englishmen, who went to swim under the cliffs, and penetrated by chance its narrow opening. It deserves the renown it has gained. I cannot explain from what effect of the laws of light this singular and beautiful hue proceeds. Partly it is the natural azure of the waves of this bright sea, which, entering, reflects the snow-white cavern, and is turned as it were into transparent milk; another cause may be, that the walls of the cavern do not reach deeper than the surface of the water; they just touch it — and the sea flows beneath. The water is icy cold, and the adventure would be perilous; but a good swimmer might be excited to dive beneath the paving water, strike out under the cave, and seek for wonders beyond.

After lingering some time in this favourite grotto of the Nereids, which they have, since the creation till the present time, kept sacred from our intrusion, we returned to Capri, and hired donkeys for our ascent to the palace of Tiberius, which is situated on the summit of one of the mountain-peaks of the island. We had several guides; the woman that accompanied me attracted me by her extreme beauty. She had that noble contour of countenance that I so particularly admire; a beauty at once full of dignity and expression. The sun burnt bright above, and the way was fatiguing. We clambered up through vineyards that clothe the mountains’ sides, and *podere,* or small farms, sown with grain, and prolific in the huge prickly pear, which grow as giants. We reached at last the remains of the palace of

Tiberius; a part of the walls and many portions of mosaic pavement remain, as well as the relics of a way down to the sea, of very solid yet elaborate workmanship. The view from the summit, where a portion of the ruins has been turned into a little church, is more grand than anything I ever saw. The Bay of Naples on one side; that of Salerno on the other; with the coast on which Pæstum is situated, bounding the eastern horizon. There is a peculiarity in the way in which the steep promontories of the southern Italian coast abut into the sea, and in the hues of ocean, as it embraces the rocky shores, which those who have not visited the South cannot conceive; which I never saw till I came here, but which satisfies the mind that this is beauty; that here, God has let fall upon earth the mantle of glory which otherwise is gathered up among the angels!

We had brought provisions with us, and dined on the sort of platform at the summit; and here, in one of the ruined chambers, where the mosaic pavement is entire, the peasants danced the Tarantella. On mainland, this dance is forbidden, at least, for the two sexes to dance it together; — why, I cannot guess: as far as we saw, it is more decent than the waltz. The couples *set* and turn round each other, but without touching even each other's hands, for these are occupied by the castanets. Two or three of the women were handsome; but none so attractive as the woman who was my guide.

As we descended, I talked to her. The wretched lot of these poor people is very sad. In England we see and read of the squalid condition of the poor; and when it is contrasted with the luxury of the rich, we feel deeply, "That there is something rotten in the state." But while we are aware that our climate fearfully increases the sufferings of the poor, we know that to keep-out cold and hunger is costly, and the suffering does not appear so causeless and arbitrary as in this fairy island; here, where the sun in all his splendour kisses earth, which, well cultivated and fertile, yields plenty; and where, moreover, the sea is abundant in fish; the heart rebels yet more vehemently against the hungry poverty of the hard-working peasants. Fish and meat they never touch: all that is caught of the former is taken to Naples. Maccaroni they get on festivals: at other times, they live on vegetables — nothing so wholesome as the potato — the prickly pear chiefly. The better off among them indulge now and then in *polenta,* the flour of Indian corn made into porridge. They have no milk; weak sour wine, or water, is their drink. One result of this bad fare is the mortality among the children. My

Juno-looking guide had had four children: one only survived. Poor little fellow! he ran beside his mother; and she looked on him with anxious fondness, for his complexion and figure all spoke disease.

To suffer is a different thing under this sky. They have bad food, they work hard; but Nature is their friend; they are not pinched with cold nor racked by rheumatic pains. Thus my poor woman, in whom I grew interested, had nothing morose — scarcely anything plaintive — about her. *"Sono sempre allegra"* she said. "I am gay — we ought to be gay."

"*Siamo come Dio vuole."*

*"*We live as God pleases, and must not complain. My heart aches when I remember my poor children now in Paradise; I cry when I think of them; and that little fellow," and she cast an anxious, maternal glance on him—*"* he is not well" (heaven knows, he was not). *"Ma, allegra, Signora*"—"the Virgin will help us;" and she began, in a sweet voice, to sing a plaintive hymn to the Virgin. Poor people! their religion is hung round with falsehood; but it is a great, a real comfort, to them. Sickness and all evil comes from God, and must be borne, therefore, with patience; and the great duty is to be gay under all, and to serve God with a cheerful, as well as a pure, heart. I should have liked to have tried, at least, to have done some real good to this woman, whose countenance, and voice, and conversation, gave her distinction. Nothing could be more simple and unpretending than her talk; but it had a stamp of heart, joined to that touch of the imaginative, peculiar to the Italian peasantry.

English tourists get very angry at the perpetual demands made on their purses during their excursions. *"Dammi qualche co',"* salutes our ear too often. But, poor people, who can wonder! I have told you how they fare. At Sorrento oranges are the staple of the place — that and hewn stones; the poor man who has a mule considers himself comparatively well off; he and his mule carrying oranges and stones, support his family. They often work all night, lading the boats going to Naples with oranges, and by day they labour at the quarries. The nobles do not reside on their estates, and there is no help for the poor; there are many convents, but none among them are charitably disposed, so that, except the archbishop, there is not a single individual or community that turns a pitying eye on the ill-paid, overworked labourers of the soil; while the abundant riches that flow from this soil and from their ceaseless industry, are drained away to Naples. The people are particularly handsome; even the old are good-looking: they say there is something in the soil and air particularly good for health and comeliness. I have seen no *hags*. Old women, with happy-looking faces, graced by the placid picturesque beauty of age, sit at their doors spinning.

No one can talk to them without perceiving latent; under ignorance and superstition, great natural abilities, and that heartfelt piety which springs (as our higher virtues do,) from the imagination which warms and colours their faith. Poor people! how I long for a fairy wand which would make them proprietors of the earth which they till, but must not reap. How sad a thing is human society: yet it is comforting, even where we find the laws by which it is said to be held together — but which ought rather to be likened to an iron yoke, pressing it down and depriving it of its native strength and elasticity — yet, I say, it warms my heart when I find the individuals that compose a population, poor, humble, ignorant, misguided, yet endowed with some of the brightest gifts of our nature, and bearing in their faces the stamp of intelligence and feeling. I never lived among a people I liked so well as these Sorrentines. I hope I am not deceived: but Mr. Cooper, who sojourned here a few months, and Mrs. Starke, who lived here for years, evidently regard them with more liking and esteem than the poorer classes usually inspire.

JUNE 15TH.

Our way of life is regular enough, as in hot countries it always must be. The mornings are cool and pleasant: my bed-room window, with a balcony, looks on the northern mountains; and the first opening of my eyes is upon orange gardens, shadowy groves, and green mountain-tops, with peeps of the sea between. At noon, when the sea-breeze rises, my friends sail; sometimes, when the breeze is not too *stiff,* I join them, and we stretch out till the whole of Capri opens on us. When I am not there they venture further, and they bathe: the sea is so inviting, that they spend an hour or two in the water. We dine (and our cook being good and the viands excellent, we dine well) at two. At four or five we either betake ourselves to the boat, and cross the bay to the Temple of Neptune, which is at the point of the first headland — or the mules come to the door, and we take various rides; or, if we at times repeat the same, its beauty always seems new. We are shut out from walks in the immediate vicinity — as to trudge between high stone walls is not pleasant; but in our excursions we find plenty of occasion to clamber up and down the steep mountain-paths. The hills are bright with the broom in full flower, and the myrtle begins to show its stars among its bright-pointed leaves. On the plains, which are often found near the summits of the hills — the rocky crags rising higher round as a hedge and shelter, wheat is sown, and flourishes.

One of our favourite rides is to the other side of the promontory, where a natural arch once stood, resembling the Presbisch Thor of the Saxon Switzerland; it is now broken and ruined. Once, going there, my Mends thought that they could easily reach the sands beneath and bathe, or find a boat to take them to the rocks of the Syrens; but after a rough precipitous descent of some length, they found the way grow on them: they were apparently as far off as ever from the sea, and they returned.

I spend the evenings on our terrace. The nights here are wonderful; and I am never weary of observing the loveliness of the skies. Twenty-four o'clock, a moveable hour which is fixed for half an hour after sunset, never, in this climate, falls later than half-past eight. By that time it is night; but the extreme purity of the atmosphere gives to darkness a sort of brilliancy, such as a black shining object has. The sea is dark and bright at the same time; the high coast around does not assume that gigantic, misty appearance, hills do in the North during dusk, but they stand out as well defined as by day. If there be a moon, we see it floating in mid-air. We perceive at once that it is not a shining shape, plastered, as it were, against the sky; but a ball which, all bright, or partly dusky, hangs pendant. Its light is painfully bright; the extreme glittering whiteness fatigues the eye more than daylight. In the North, we often repine that we have not two moons, so always to enjoy the use of our eyes in the absence of the sun; in the South, the interlunar nights are an agreeable change, at times almost a relief. By the moonlight we can perceive the smoke ascend from the crater of Vesuvius; if she desert the night, a lambent flame shoots up at intervals. I may have wearied you by my various accounts of the evening hours which, to a lover of nature, are so enchanting. In other places a sense of tenderness, a softening influence, has fallen on my heart at that time; but here, the glory of absolute immeasurable beauty mantles all things at all times.

JUNE 20.

— Yet not so. Lo! a scirocco comes to blot the scene. Nothing can be stranger than this scirocco: at its first breath, the sea grows dull, leaden, slate-coloured — all its transparency is gone. The view of the opposite shore is hidden in mist. The near mountains wear a deeper green, but have lost all brightness and cast wierd shadows on the dull waters. This wind coming from the south-east is with us a land wind. It rolls huge waves on the beach of Naples; but beneath our cliffs the sea is calm — such a calm! — it looks so treacherous, that even if you did not hear of the true state of things, you would hesitate to trust yourself to it. At a short distance from the shore the wind plays wild pranks; here and there it seizes the water as a whirlwind, and you see circles emerge from a centre, spread round and fade away. P — went out in his boat about a hundred yards from our cavern; even there, though in apparent calm, the skiff was whirled round, and nothing but letting go the sheet on the instant prevented her from being capsized.

The heat is excessive. Every one appears to be seized with feverish illness: nobody wishes to eat or move. The early setting and late rising of the sun in this high latitude, making the nights long, gives the earth and atmosphere time to cool; and it is thus that the heat of summer is often not so oppressive as in the North; otherwise it would be intolerable. Imagine our Dresden length of day with a Neapolitan temperature: no one could bear it and live. But our nights are cool; our early mornings even chill, and thus nature is refreshed: only, this does not occur during the periods of scirocco; then, night and day, the heat lies like a heavy garment round our limbs. Fortunately, three days is its utmost, one or two its usual, extent; it vanishes as it came, no one knows how. Nature and our human spirits come forth as after an eclipse; the world revived looks up and resumes its natural healthy appearance.

June 23.

We have visited Pompeii. A greater extent of the city has been dug out and laid open since I was there before, so that it has now much more the appearance of a town of the dead. You may ramble about and lose yourself in the many streets. Bulwer, too, has peopled its silence. I have been reading his book, and I have felt on visiting the place much more as if *really* it had been once full of stirring life, now that he has attributed names and possessors to its houses, passengers to its streets. Such is the power of the imagination. It can not only give "a local habitation and a name" to the airy creations of the fancy and the abstract ideas of the mind, but it can put a soul into stones, and hang the vivid interest of our passions and our hopes upon objects otherwise vacant of name or sympathy. Not indeed that Pompeii could be such, but the account of its "Last Days" has cast over it a more familiar garb, and peopled its desert streets with associations that greatly add to their interest.

LETTER XXIII.

Excursion to Amalfi.

July 10TH.

I HAVE always had a great desire to penetrate into the south of Italy, which I believe to be the most beautiful country in the world; joining the rich aspect of culture to the graces of nature,

"In all her wildness, all her majesty,
As in that elder time, ere man was made."

If I were a man, I know of no enterprise that would please my imagination more than seeking, in this district, for the traces of lost wealth, science, and civilisation. These blessings flourished in this neighbourhood at two distinct periods, apparently widely separated from each other; yet, if examined, we might find that the link had never been broken. Magna Grecia was the mother of many philosophers, and the richest portion of ancient Italy; and there is nothing violent in the supposition, that Amalfi, hemmed in by mountains, and Salerno, almost equally sheltered, should have preserved and extended, rather than originated, the trade and science which rendered them famous at a time when, all around, every effort of human enterprise was merged in offensive and defensive wars.

Amalfi was the first republic of modem Italy.

As the power of the Roman Empire waxed weak, and the transplanting of the seat of empire to Constantinople, placed Italy in the novel position of a distant neglected province, frequently invaded by barbarians, the fabric of national government fell to pieces, while municipal communities remained.

Two of these, from their happy position on the sea, and the great traffic there carried on by means of the Mediterranean, were eminently prosperous.

One in the north, Venice, acquired power, and preserved its independence for centuries; the other in the south, Amalfi, was swallowed up by the kingdom of Naples, after having been pillaged by the Pisans in 1137 — for thus early did municipal rivalry, the bane of Italy, begin to divide and ravage the peninsula. It seems to me that sound knowledge of the results of political institutions might be gathered from studying the state of society in a town whose citizens were, when free, intelligent and courageous — whose maritime laws, instituted at a time (the ninth century) when Europe was sunk in barbarism, has served as a basis for every subsequent commercial code — who covered the sea with their ships — who almost discovered the mariner's compass. What are they now?

Their intelligence, their capacities, I am sure remain; their affections also must warm their hearts as kindly; must we not seek in their political history for the causes wherefore superstition and vice have replaced ardour for science and the virtues of industrious and brave citizens?

Though I could not fulfil in any way a favourite design of visiting Calabria, yet we have crept on as far as Amalfi. It had been my idea to spend a month in this town, when I could have told you more of the present state of its inhabitants. I was not able to do this; so, can only mention the impression made by the visit of a day.

We had secured a boat to be ready for us at the Marinella, on the other side of the promontory, and set out on mules for the Scaricatojo, the name given to the descent from the mountain that overhangs the eastern sea. We reached the height which we had often before visited, whence a view is commanded of the two seas. To the west the Bay of Naples, landlocked, as we looked on it, by the islands of Ischia and Procida, and the promontory of Misenum; while, more to the north, the shining edifices of the city of Naples are distinctly visible, and in the depth of the bay, Vesuvius rises up immediately from the shore. On the other side, the eye plunged down from the height of the myrtle-clothed mountain on which we stood, to the sea far below, gleaming at the foot of the precipices — vexing itself against the rocks of the Syrens: eastward, the coast that runs in a long line to the south; the lowlands on which Pæstum is situated, with the back-ground of lofty mountains, was this day — as it almost always is — hidden in mist.

The descent of the Scaricatojo is very steep, and long and fatiguing. At first we made light of it; but as we went on under a burning sun, the path grew more craggy and precipitous: sometimes it was formed only of a rough sort of steps cut in the mountain-side, or constructed of shattered masses of rock; or of zigzags, which grew shorter, more numerous, more precipitous, and more slippery, till we despaired of ever reaching the beach.

But all things human end; and at last — most agreeable change! — we were seated in a boat beneath the lofty inaccessible hills that rise almost sheer from the water, with here and there a little break, where a brief space of beach intervenes, and a town or village rises beside it. The voyage was not quite as agreeable as it might have been, for there was a swell of the sea, and our little boat was deeply laden with people. We were glad to see Amalfi open on us. Salvator Rosa best represents the peculiar beauty of the southern Italian coast; its steep promontories, the varied breaks of its mountainous shores, all green with forest-trees, adorned by isolated ruins, and clothed with a radiance which is the peculiar gift of the atmosphere of this clime; encircled by the lucid transparency of the tideless sea — for it was here that he often retreated, leading,, some have said, a bandit's life, but most surely a lover and studier of nature; his landscapes are so many exquisite views taken from this part of the country. Look at them, wherever you can, and learn in what its loveliness consists. The landing-place of the town is open, busy, and cheerful. There is a Capuchin convent most beautifully situated near the sea; it was secularised by the French, and long served for an hotel. The mother of the present King of Naples often visited Amalfi, and slept at this inn. The expelled monks gathered round her, and led her to consider it a matter of conscience that they should be reinstated. She obtained this favour from her son before she died; the Capuchins are come back; and travellers are turned out from what may be fairly named the *most* beautiful inn in the world. The present house, however, is by no means bad, and overlooks the Marina. We obtained good rooms and a tolerable dinner, being waited on by three sons of the host — handy little fellows, from ten to fifteen, who performed their duties promptly and quietly.

As soon as we had rested and were refreshed, we wished, though still much fatigued, to see something of the place. We visited the cathedral, an ancient edifice, built upon the site of a pagan temple, and rambled about the town, which is busy. Though fallen from the commercial prosperity it enjoyed twelve centuries ago, Amalfi carries on considerable traffic, and its citizens are well to do. There is a large manufacture of maccaroni, another of paper, another for working the iron of Elba. Every one can find work, living is cheap, and want is happily unknown.

The paper-mills are picturesquely situated in a ravine, shut in by lofty mountains, beside a cascade; it was not so far but that we might visit them during the evening. Two donkeys were brought to carry os thither. Accustomed to the excellent moles of Sorrento, we were not prepared for the poor little creatures, with things on their backs which it was ridiculous to call saddles. However, I and a young lady who accompanied me mounted. If you have the book, look at the vignette to "Italy" of Amalfi; you will perceive its situation, and how just behind the town the mountains are cloven and divided by a deep ravine — our way led up this narrow pass, down which sped a torrent, whose "inland murmur," or rather dashing, was grateful to our ears, long accustomed only to the roaring of the surges of the sea.

The scene was wholly different from anything near Sorrento. The valley and the mountain-sides were beautifully green and fresh — grassy uplands shone between groves of forest trees, and villages with their churches here and there peeped out — while the torrent dashed over the rocks, sparkling and foaming — and dressing its banks, which grew higher and more rocky as we ascended the pass, in luxuriant and bright verdure. Our first visit was to a paper-mill, whence a view of the ravine is commanded — and then we clambered up the hill-side to the road above. Golden evening gave a refreshing coolness to the air, and picturesque shadows to the hills. It was a scene, — an hour, — when Nature imparts a quick and living enjoyment akin to the transports of love and the ecstacy of music — it touches a chord whose vibration is happiness. Faint from excessive weariness, yet with regret I consented to return. Night with her stars gathered round us, and with much difficulty our poor little Stumbling animals carried us back to the town.

This same evening we wished to prepare for our excursion on the morrow; the plan of which was to visit Ravello, and then to descend the mountain to the sea-shore — take boat, and sail to Salerno, and after dinner to drive back to Sorrento.

Our evening's experience showed that the poor little asses were not fit for such an expedition — we must have recourse to the other alternative, *portantini,* — arm-chairs placed on poles, borne by two men; we required three, for the three ladies of the party. P — , and his friend, were to walk.

We were told — but, remember, I consider all that we heard as very problematical as regards truth — we had no time to learn the real state of things, and I relate the story more to show the sort of wild excuses the Italians make when they want to carry a point profitable to themselves — losing to us. We were told that the bearers of the *portantini* all belonged to a village, Vettici, some miles up the mountain — that when these were wanted they were sent for the previous evening — locked up all night at Amalfi, to prevent them from being enticed away, I don't why or by whom. We were told that we had arrived too late to get these men; that we must engage some of the townspeople. We ought to have four bearers to each chair; thirty men came forward to claim the employment — and the *polizia* begged us to choose twelve from among them. My friends went to the *polizia* for this purpose — the scene was highly comic. Thirty men vociferating, insisting, supplicating — eager. Among these was the master of the boat who was to take us to Salerno, and his three sons — they were evidently respectable men, and at once selected — but among the rest who could choose? My friends could only laugh; they pointed out a dozen as possessing the best physiognomies.

We were to set out early, and therefore retired early. Night scarcely veiled the sea. The quay had been busy all day, lading ships with grain; several parties of men were still at work. It was a lively scene compared with the quiet of the Cocumella, yet so unlike were the tiny barks in the offing, and appearance of the men at work, lading and unlading vessels, from anything one is accustomed to that the ancient times of Magna Græcia, when the busy ports sent corn to Rome, occurred; or rather, I confess, that with me another association was awakened. When excited, the mind is apt to recur to the impressions of childhood — like sympathetic ink exposed to fire — the covert but not expunged pictures which the soul first received, revive and become visible. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* recurred to my mind. I was haunted by the description therein given of the busy sea-ports of Tyre and Crete. The broad luminous sea before, the jutting headlands, the not inharmonious cries of the men at work, the frequent tread of their feet, formed a sort of picture which it seemed to me I had seen in childhood drawn by the pen of Fénelon. I went to sleep while it still flitted, as it were, beneath my closed eyelids.

The morrow came, and with it our guide, our chairs, our bearers — such a crowd. The thirty men had been disputing all night as to which among them had been chosen; the conclusion they came to was, that they would all go. Travellers often (I among the number) have had the whole pleasure of an excursion marred by a struggle with guides, muleteers, &c. It is often necessary to contest a thousand points, and to resist exactions, and the temper gets soured, and the divine influence of nature on the mind is marred. I was determined that I would not lose the pleasure I might snatch during my hasty visit to the outskirts of Calabria, by tormenting myself with these people; for being the one of our party most conversant with Italian, the brunt of the battle must fall upon me. I made up my mind at once that these fellows should have their way, and I would be entertained instead of annoyed by exactions of all kinds.

We had our guide — an erect old man, loquacious enough, with a very amusing assumption of dignity towards the other men. We had our thirty bearers, and in addition (recommended by the police, to keep so large a band in order) two police-officers, with unloaded muskets and cartouche-boxes innocent of ammunition. Eight men devoted themselves to my chair — the best of the number, I believe; and away we went, up the rocky path through the ravine, beside the torrent, beneath the chesnut woods, climbing higher and higher up the mountain-side, the bright golden morning sun flinging long shadows from the hills.

The scenery is quite unlike Sorrento; as far as earth is concerned, it is far more sublime. The mountains are loftier, and more picturesque, parted by deeper and wider ravines, terminated in abrupter peaks, their sides clothed by magnificent forest-trees; and when we reached a summit and looked around — travellers visit Switzerland and speak of the sublime works of creation among seas of ice and avalanches and towering Alps, bare and craggy, crested with perpetual snow; there, nature is sublime, but she shows the power and the will to harm; here she is gracious as well as glorious; she is our friend, or rather our exalted and munificent queen and benefactress.

From the height of Ravello we gazed on a wide and various panorama of vale and mountain, spread in picturesque and infinite variety around; deep below was a sunny beach, shut in by steep headlands, and a placid, wide-spread southern sea, basking in the noontide heat. The cathedral of Ravello is an ancient, venerable edifice. In the sacristy were some old paintings of what may be called the seraphic school, such as I had admired at Florence. Saints, whose countenances show that they are blessed; virgins, whose gentleness is full of majesty, whose humility is that of one who, placing herself last, shall be first. Since those days men have lost the power of portraying the passion of adoration in the countenance. Either in venerable age or beautiful youth, what specimens there are in the first painters of great and good beings absorbed by grateful, joyful worship of the greatest and best of all. One of the most charming of the pictures at Ravello was an Annunciation; — the beaming sweetness of the angel, the chaste joy of Mary, spread a halo over the canvas. They told us that an Englishman had wished to buy these pictures, but the Bishop had very properly refused to commit the sacrilege of selling them.

The unclouded sun shone hotly above; there was a breeze, however, and the landscape showed green and fresh. Sometimes our numerous party were clamorous among one another, disputing how their pay should be shared; when the confusion grew high, our old guide — sovereign over all in his own conceit — cried, *"Silenzio! silenzio!"* in an authoritative voice, and the stream of sound was, for a moment, checked. They were all well-behaved towards us. We asked our good-natured sbirri, with their harmless guns, whether there were any banditti now in Calabria? All, they assured us, was safe and quiet; or if there was any disturbance, they were sent, and order was restored — by what means I cannot guess, except that the aspects of these men were peculiarly placid and peaceful.

The descent was very precipitous, much of it being down flight after flight of steep steps, cut in the rock. It was far too warm and fatiguing to think of walking, and rather frightful to be carried down. However, by turning the chair, and riding backwards, we got through it without much alarm.

The Ponente had risen as we reached the beach. The sea sparkled fresh and free. The boat was large and commodious. The master-boatman had a great sense of his own respectability and that of his sons, and of the excellence of his vessel. He spoke his own praises in a sonorous voice, keeping time to his speech with the strokes of his oar:—" Sarete contenti di me, Signori. Io sono un' galant' uomo: miei figli sono galant' uomini: la mia barca è bnona e bella. Tutti i Signori forestieri sono contenti di me."

As soon as we had made something of an offing, the sails were set, and we changed our marinaro's rhapsody of self-eulogy to some national airs sung by his sons. Their voices were good, and our navigation was prosperous and pleasant.

We were thoroughly tired out when we arrived at Salerno, which is less picturesquely situated than Amalfi, the shore around being low. When Amalfi was a great commercial sea-port, the medical school of Salerno was famous for its knowledge of the healing art. The students went to study in Arabia and Spain; and they returned to their native town to dispense, among crowds of rich and noble patients, the treasures of their skill. Salerno in those days was regarded as illustrious among the cities of modem Italy — the women were beautiful, and the men were honest; thus Gibbon transcribes the praise of William of Apulia —

> "Urbs Latii non est hac delitiosor urbe:
> Frugibus, arboribus, vinoque rednndat; et unde
> Non tibi poma, nuces, non pulchra palatia desunt
> Non species muliebris abest probitasque virorum."

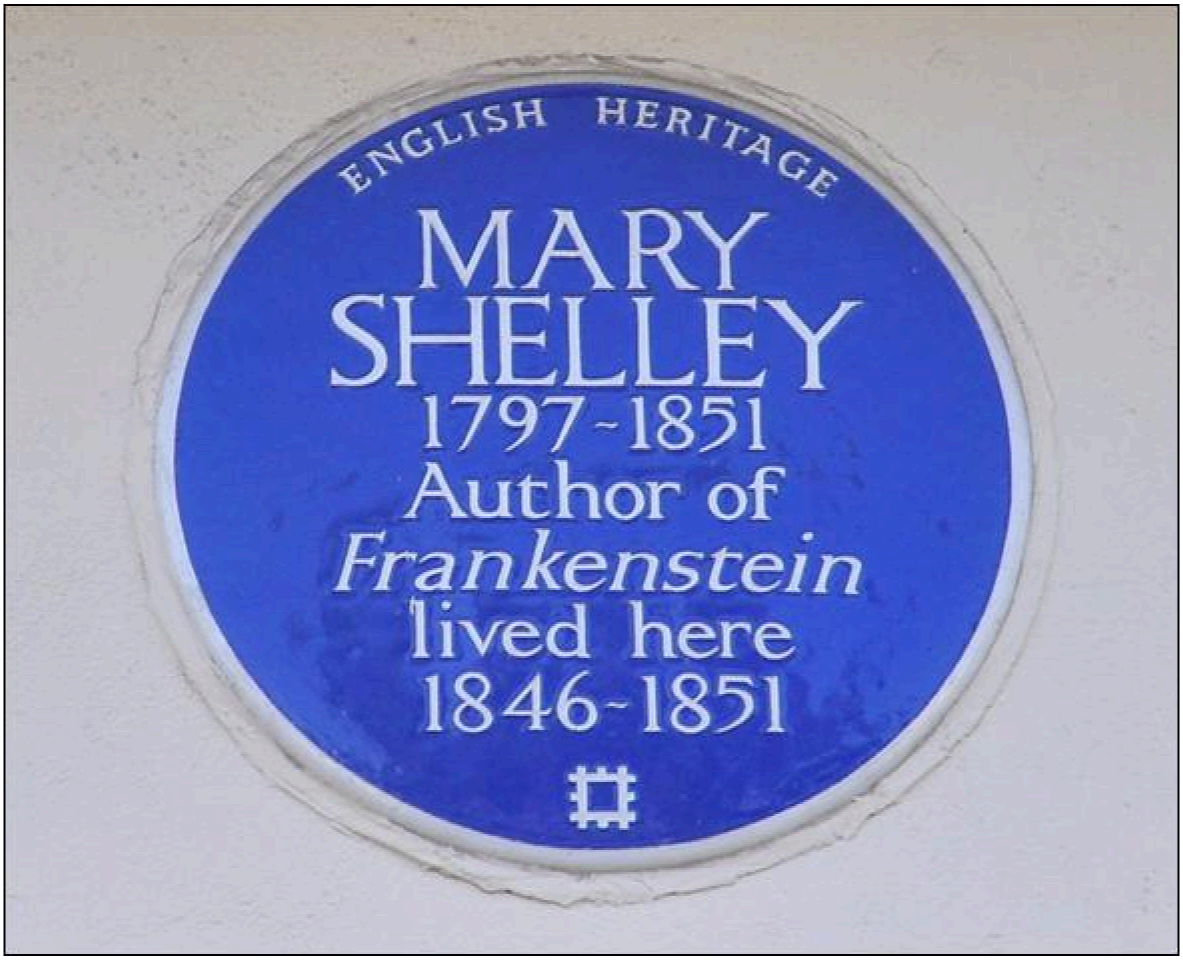
But we saw less of the remnants of this magnificence than even of Amalfi, for we arrived fatigued; and after a few hours' repose and dinner, we set out in a carriage homewards. We drove through a beautiful valley towards Castelamare, between wooded hills. There is a very pretty hotel at Cava, where travellers often remain several weeks. I should prefer, however, the sea-shore at Amalfi. Castelamare is a busy town on the beach, in the very depth of the bay. Numbers of villas are scattered over the wooded sides of the mountains and through the shady valley. There is a good railroad to Naples: the distance, rather more than twenty miles, is performed in about an hour and a half. Castelamare is a more fashionable resort than Sorrento. The villas are more numerous and more elegant; the rides more diversified; the intercourse with the capital easier. It is not so well suited for a short stay, for the hotels are all in the midst of a noisy town; and the villas, which let at a high price, can only be taken for the season — six, or at least, four months. On the other hand, for excursions on the sea, Sorrento is very far to be preferred. Castelamare, at the depth of the bay, affords only a small lake-like basin for boating. To view the shores, or visit the islands, east or west, you must first reach Sorrento or Naples. In the former, you seem happily placed, as in a centre, to diverge at will in excursions on the water. Sorrento is in every way cheaper and more practicable for those who are not rich.

The road from Castelamare to Sorrento, about twenty miles, is excellent, constructed on the edge of the cliffs overhanging the sea. As we proceeded we gladly hailed our return to a familiar scene, and welcomed various glimpses of views which we looked on as peculiarly our own. We passed Vico — halfway — and then turning the shoulder of a headland, rattled down towards the populous plain of Sorrento — with its many villages, its orange gardens and sheltering hills — and reached our quiet hotel, where we were gladly welcomed. The Cocumella has become a home — it is a joy to return to our terrace, to breathe the fragrance of the orange-flowers — to see the calm sea spread out at our feet, as we look over the bay to Naples — while above us bends a sky — in whose pure depths ship-like clouds glide — and the moon hangs luminous, a pendant sphere of silver fire.

THE END

The Non-Fiction

Shelley spent the last years of her life with her son Percy and his wife Jane St John. She died in London of a probable brain tumour in 1851, at 24 Chester Square, Belgravia.


ENGLISH HERITAGE
MARY SHELLEY
1797-1851
Author of
Frankenstein
lived here
1846-1851

The plaque commemorating Shelley's residence

NOTES TO THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

CONTENTS

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839.
POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839.
PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1824.
NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON “ALASTOR”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON THE “REVOLT OF ISLAM”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON ROSALIND AND HELEN BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON “PROMETHEUS UNBOUND”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1819, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY.
NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839.

Obstacles have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley’s Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty, — that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprang, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had ought to find extenuation among his fellows, since they prove him to be human; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were, — First, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

These characteristics breathe throughout his poetry. The struggle for human weal; the resolution firm to martyrdom; the impetuous pursuit, the glad triumph in good; the determination not to despair; — such were the features that marked those of his works which he regarded with most complacency, as sustained by a lofty subject and useful aim.

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes, — the purely imaginative, and those which sprang from the emotions of his heart. Among the former may be classed the “Witch of Atlas”, “Adonais”, and his latest composition, left imperfect, the “Triumph of Life”. In the first of these particularly he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life — a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form — a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

The second class is, of course, the more popular, as appealing at once to emotions common to us all; some of these rest on the passion of love; others on grief and despondency; others on the sentiments inspired by natural objects. Shelley’s conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when highly idealized; and many of his more beautiful effusions he had cast aside unfinished, and they were never seen by me till after I had lost him. Others, as for instance “Rosalind and Helen” and “Lines written among the Euganean Hills”, I found among his papers by chance; and with some difficulty urged him to complete them. There are others, such as the “Ode to the Skylark and The Cloud”, which, in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted: listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames.

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain; to escape from such, he delivered up his soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself, from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the to agathon kai to kalon of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this, Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and tangible. This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his “Symposium” and his “Ion”; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato’s Praise of Love translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself (as a child burdens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them), often showed itself in his verses: they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that characterizes much of what he has written was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure (which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty), no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

A wise friend once wrote to Shelley: ‘You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so.’ It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his nine-and-twentieth year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill-health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, he had gone through more experience of sensation than many whose existence is protracted. ‘If I die to-morrow,’ he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, ‘I have lived to be older than my father.’ The weight of thought and feeling burdened him heavily; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

He died, and his place, among those who knew him intimately, has never been filled up. He walked beside them like a spirit of good to comfort and benefit — to enlighten the darkness of life with irradiations of genius, to cheer it with his sympathy and love. Any one, once attached to Shelley, must feel all other affections, however true and fond, as wasted on barren soil in comparison. It is our best consolation to know that such a pure-minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him; — although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him.

In the notes appended to the poems I have endeavoured to narrate the origin and history of each. The loss of nearly all letters and papers which refer to his early life renders the execution more imperfect than it would otherwise have been. I have, however, the liveliest recollection of all that was done and said during the period of my knowing him. Every impression is as clear as if stamped yesterday, and I have no apprehension of any mistake in my statements as far as they go. In other respects I am indeed incompetent: but I feel the importance of the task, and regard it as my most sacred duty. I endeavour to fulfil it in a manner he would himself approve; and hope, in this publication, to lay the first stone of a monument due to Shelley’s genius, his sufferings, and his virtues: —

Se al seguir son tarda,
Forse avverra che ‘l bel nome gentile
Consacrero con questa stanca penna.

POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839.

In revising this new edition, and carefully consulting Shelley's scattered and confused papers, I found a few fragments which had hitherto escaped me, and was enabled to complete a few poems hitherto left unfinished. What at one time escapes the searching eye, dimmed by its own earnestness, becomes clear at a future period. By the aid of a friend, I also present some poems complete and correct which hitherto have been defaced by various mistakes and omissions. It was suggested that the poem "To the Queen of my Heart" was falsely attributed to Shelley. I certainly find no trace of it among his papers; and, as those of his intimate friends whom I have consulted never heard of it, I omit it.

Two poems are added of some length, "Swellfoot the Tyrant" and "Peter Bell the Third". I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

At my request the publisher has restored the omitted passages of "Queen Mab". I now present this edition as a complete collection of my husband's poetical works, and I do not foresee that I can hereafter add to or take away a word or line.

Putney, November 6, 1839.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1824.

In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fibre,
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta. — PETRARCA.

It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr. Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr. Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr. Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr. Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that on some other occasion he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

His life was spent in the contemplation of Nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician; without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits; those beautiful and affecting "Lines written in Dejection near Naples" were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. "Prometheus Unbound" was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed the "Witch of Atlas", "Adonais", and "Hellas". In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the "Triumph of Life", the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest which he had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him; but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn: — but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known, — a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost, — not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and ‘the world’s sole monument’ is enriched by his remains.

I must add a few words concerning the contents of this volume. “Julian and Maddalo”, the “Witch of Atlas”, and most of the “Translations”, were written some years ago; and, with the exception of the “Cyclops”, and the Scenes from the “Magico Prodigioso”, may be considered as having received the author’s ultimate corrections. The “Triumph of Life” was his last work, and was left in so unfinished a state that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. All his poems which were scattered in periodical works are collected in this volume, and I have added a reprint of

“Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude”: the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied. I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among them; but I frankly own that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the lovers of Shelley’s poetry (who know how, more than any poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me: I consecrate this volume to them.

The size of this collection has prevented the insertion of any prose pieces. They will hereafter appear in a separate publication.

MARY W. SHELLEY.
London, June 1, 1824.

NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley was eighteen when he wrote “Queen Mab”; he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a ‘judge of controversies’; and he was desirous of acquiring ‘that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism.’ But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and, in printing and privately distributing “Queen Mab”, he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that escape the ordinary reader; and the change his opinions underwent in many points would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that, having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them. The notes also are reprinted entire — not because they are models of reasoning or lessons of truth, but because Shelley wrote them, and that all that a man at once so distinguished and so excellent ever did deserves to be preserved. The alterations his opinions underwent ought to be recorded, for they form his history.

A series of articles was published in the “New Monthly Magazine” during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent, a fellow-collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, endowed with the keenest sensibility and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere; too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth, and too resolute in carrying out his own sense of good and justice, not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt for individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill-fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. ‘During my existence,’ he wrote to a friend in 1812, ‘I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read.’ His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers: as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith that, if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize paradise. He looked upon religion, as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen, fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy, — he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained to be true. And he loved truth with a martyr’s love; he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose their fellows and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his UNWORLDLINESS. The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise, of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds and its most solid advantages were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is burning. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood which he thought the proper state of mankind as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill-health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed “Queen Mab”.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature, but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources — the romances and chivalry of the middle ages — but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days. Under the influence of these he, at the age of fifteen, wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus — being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands, and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth — the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge’s poetry — and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey — composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of “Queen Mab” was founded on that of “Thalaba”, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of “Gebir” by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification, which he carried into another language; and his Latin school-verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes, and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing “Queen Mab”, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of Nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish “Queen Mab” as it stands; but a few years after, when printing “Alastor”, he extracted a small portion which he entitled “The Daemon of the World”. In this he changed somewhat the versification, and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of “Queen Mab” as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in the “Examiner” newspaper — with which I close this history of his earliest work.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘EXAMINER.’

‘Sir,

‘Having heard that a poem entitled “Queen Mab” has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair, as it relates to me.

‘A poem entitled “Queen Mab” was written by me at the age of eighteen, I daresay in a sufficiently intemperate spirit — but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but, after the precedent of Mr. Southey's "Wat Tyler" (a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hope of success.

'Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity or the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation and imprisonment, and invective and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of Nature and society.

'SIR,

'I am your obliged and obedient servant,
'PERCY B. SHELLEY.
'Pisa, June 22, 1821.'

NOTE ON “ALASTOR”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

“Alastor” is written in a very different tone from “Queen Mab”. In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth — all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he considers the proper destiny of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. “Alastor”, on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley’s hopes, though he still thought them well-grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say that, in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad, and to make, as in “Queen Mab”, the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the Spring of 1815, an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. The river-navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of “Thalaba”, his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopsgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were warm and dry.

Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Crichlade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written on that occasion. “Alastor” was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest scenery we find in the poem.

None of Shelley’s poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet’s heart in solitude — the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts — give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

NOTE ON THE “REVOLT OF ISLAM”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley possessed two remarkable qualities of intellect — a brilliant imagination, and a logical exactness of reason. His inclinations led him (he fancied) almost alike to poetry and metaphysical discussions. I say ‘he fancied,’ because I believe the former to have been paramount, and that it would have gained the mastery even had he struggled against it. However, he said that he deliberated at one time whether he should dedicate himself to poetry or metaphysics; and, resolving on the former, he educated himself for it, discarding in a great measure his philosophical pursuits, and engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, Italy, and England. To these may be added a constant perusal of portions of the old Testament — the Psalms, the Book of Job, the Prophet Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight.

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill-health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the banks of the Lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat — sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of Nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine — full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower prison, and tends on him in sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things, — for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in answer to one of these friends. It best details the impulses of Shelley's mind, and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.

'Marlowe, December 11, 1817.

'I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of "The Revolt of Islam"; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling — as real, though not so prophetic — as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about “Mandeville”, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes’ thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which grew as it were from “the agony and bloody sweat” of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.

[Shelley to Godwin.]

NOTE ON ROSALIND AND HELEN BY MRS. SHELLEY.

"Rosalind and Helen" was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside — till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind, and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts, and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

"Rosalind and Helen" was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the Baths of Lucca.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

From the Baths of Lucca, in 1818, Shelley visited Venice; and, circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a pergola, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the “Prometheus”; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote “Julian and Maddalo”. A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley’s impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward.

NOTE ON “PROMETHEUS UNBOUND”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

On the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying:

‘My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, IT WOULD BE MY DUTY to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake — I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.’

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of Nature and Art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the Book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the "Prometheus Unbound". The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Aeschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato's "Symposium". But, though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the Prometheus. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful Spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry and delicacy and truth of description which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley’s theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

‘Brought death into the world and all our woe.’

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all — even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus — she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation — such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real — to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the "Oedipus Tyrannus", which show at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explain his apprehension of those 'minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the "Revolt of Islam", to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Pollas d' odous elthonta phrontidos planois:

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed!

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

If the words odous and planois had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say "WAYS and means," and "wanderings" for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city — as Oedipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol; a world within a world which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.'

In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating the Greek in this species of imagery; for, though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the "Prometheus Unbound", Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the "Revolt of Islam". (While correcting the proof-sheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, "Scenes of Spanish Life", translated by Lieutenant

Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the "Revolt of Islam".) The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this — it fills the mind as the most charming picture — we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

'cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.'

Through the whole poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own — with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And, as he wandered among the ruins made one with Nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the "Prometheus" which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours; and he wrote from Rome, 'My "Prometheus Unbound" is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of "Prometheus" are made from a list of errata written by Shelley himself.

NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot, — or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote The Cenci.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following-up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination: it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others, though he laid great store by it as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract, too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself; for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I: and he had written to me: ‘Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of “St. Leon” begins with this proud and true sentiment: “There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute.” Shakespeare was only a human being.’ These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley’s imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began, and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth (never, alas, through his untimely death, worked to its depths) — his richly gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss. (Such feelings haunted him when, in “The Cenci”, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

‘that fair blue-eyed child
Who was the lodestar of your life:’ — and say —
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.’)

Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a podere; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed: this one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed. This Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water-spouts that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of “The Cenci”. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgement and originality that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of “The Cenci”; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes as suggested by one in “El Purgatorio de San Patricio”.

Shelley wished “The Cenci” to be acted. He was not a playgoer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling-up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O’Neil several times. She was then in the zenith of her glory; and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, the sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote: and, when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:

‘The object of the present letter us to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it. (In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words — the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse beginning—"That, if she have a child," etc.)

'I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this — that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of "Remorse"; that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope for such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

'What I want you to do is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her (God forbid that I should see her play it — it would tear my nerves to pieces); and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play. That is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.'

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped "The Cenci" as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, "words, words".' There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Though Shelley’s first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during ‘the good old times’ had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature; the necessaries of life when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism that looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing “The Cenci”, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the “Mask of Anarchy”, which he sent to his friend Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the Examiner, of which he was then the Editor.

‘I did not insert it,’ Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, ‘because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.’ Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day. But they rose when human life was respected by the Minister in power; such was not the case during the Administration which excited Shelley’s abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual: portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired, those beginning

‘My Father Time is old and gray,’

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; it might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

In this new edition I have added “Peter Bell the Third”. A critique on Wordsworth’s “Peter Bell” reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of “Peter Bell” is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth’s poetry more; — he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet — a man of lofty and creative genius — quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of “Peter Bell”, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written as a warning — not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth, or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal; — it contains something of criticism on the compositions of those great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley’s peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of “Swellfoot”, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry — so much of HIMSELF in it — that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino — a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the "Witch of Atlas". This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes — wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of "The Cenci" had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the "Witch of Atlas". It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following: —

‘Alas! this is not what I thought Life was.
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass
Untouched by suffering through the rugged glen.
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
The hearts of others...And, when
I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate — a woful mass!’

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods, — which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which Nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the “Witch of Atlas”: it is a brilliant congregation of ideas such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

In the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August, 1820, Shelley ‘begins “Swellfoot the Tyrant”, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano.’ This was the period of Queen Caroline’s landing in England, and the struggles made by George IV to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the “Green Bag” on the table of the House of Commons, demanding in the King’s name that an enquiry should be instituted into his wife’s conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his “Ode to Liberty”; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the ‘chorus of frogs’ in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus — and “Swellfoot” was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first. But I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote; for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race, and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the outworn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

‘from the pale-faced moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep
Where fathom-line would never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned’

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word than in the waters of Lethe which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woe. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination; which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secrete societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundusium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821 the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the conge to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, ‘I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.’ But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the South of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending, these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and, if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said — in 1821 — Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vacca, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia; who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of “Hellas” is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes dictated by the warmest enthusiasm; he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprise of the descendants of that people whose works he regarded with deep admiration, and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. “Hellas” was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular, purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks, and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

"Hellas" was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato: —

'But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity.'

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth —

'Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents are,
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.'

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind — and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The remainder of Shelley’s Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as “Early Poems”, the greater part were published with “Alastor”; some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning ‘Oh, there are spirits in the air’ was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest; and his life was spent under its shades or on the water, meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in

England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English, Milton's poems, Wordsworth's "Excursion", Southey's "Madoc" and "Thalaba", Locke "On the Human Understanding", Bacon's "Novum Organum". In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the "Reveries d'un Solitaire" of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travel. He read few novels.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley wrote little during this year. The poem entitled “The Sunset” was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage by reading the “Nouvelle Heloise” for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervade this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley’s own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

“Mont Blanc” was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the “History of a Six Weeks’ Tour, and Letters from Switzerland”: ‘The poem entitled “Mont Blanc” is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.’

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek, Theocritus, the “Prometheus” of Aeschylus, several of Plutarch’s “Lives”, and the works of Lucian. In Latin, Lucretius, Pliny’s “Letters”, the “Annals” and “Germany” of Tacitus. In French, the “History of the French Revolution” by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne’s “Essays”, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works: Locke’s “Essay”, “Political Justice”, and Coleridge’s “Lay Sermon”, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, “Paradise Lost”, Spenser’s “Faery Queen”, and “Don Quixote”.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appear to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The “Revolt of Islam”, written and printed, was a great effort—”Rosalind and Helen” was begun — and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book and without implements of writing, I find many such, in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley’s mind, and desire to trace its workings.

He projected also translating the “Hymns” of Homer; his version of several of the shorter ones remains, as well as that to Mercury already published in the “Posthumous Poems”. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the “Hymns” of Homer and the “Iliad”, he read the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the “Symposium” of Plato, and Arrian’s “Historia Indica”. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the “Faerie Queen”; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action — he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy or politics or taste were the subjects of conversation. He was playful; and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others — not in bitterness, but in sport. The author of “Nightmare Abbey” seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to ‘port or madeira,’ but in youth he had read of ‘Illuminati and Eleutherarchs,’ and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness — or repeating with wild energy “The Ancient Mariner”, and Southey’s “Old Woman of Berkeley”; but those who do will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father’s love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart. I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in “Rosalind and Helen”. When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, a propos of the English burying-ground in that city: ‘This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent’s heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections.’

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley’s case. The aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms, of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy.

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of “Marenghi” and “The Woodman and the Nightingale”, which he afterwards threw aside. At this time, Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy, — and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that, had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed. And yet, enjoying as he appeared to do every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he showed was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude. And such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers, — it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better. He was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one whom to know was to love and to revere! How many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived! and, of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved — more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but, even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood — his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory. All these as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

‘Ahi orbo mondo ingrato!
Gran cagion hai di dever pianger meco;
Che quel ben ch’ era in te, perdut’ hai seco.’

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1819, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley loved the People; and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and therefore more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs. He wrote a few; but, in those days of prosecution for libel, they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heart-felt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury — that oppression is detestable as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph: such is the scope of the "Ode to the Assertors of Liberty". He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steamboat, undertaken by a friend, an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vacca as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to Nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end; but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends who were absent on a journey to England. It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers: he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind after a life of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father, we had sought her with eagerness; and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

Our stay at the Baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the Square of the Baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the Baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the Square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us strangely enough on this quiet half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley. Its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy, and a hotter climate, on account of our child; our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand lilliputian ties that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate, and each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connection with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet, who could

‘peep and botanize
Upon his mother’s grave,’

does not appear to me more inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the Baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone; friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead, and, when Memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs. The genius, with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley’s ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley’s society, and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction, and solace; have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting — death alone has no cure. It shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread; it destroys its beauty; it casts down our shelter; it exposes us bare to desolation. When those we love have passed into eternity, ‘life is the desert and the solitude’ in which we are forced to linger — but never find comfort more.

There is much in the “Adonais” which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake or stream or sea near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-boats on the Arno; and the shallowness of its waters (except in winter-time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating) rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests, — a boat of laths and pitched canvas. It held three persons; and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger, and could not understand how anyone could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. 'Ma va per la vita!' they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured, with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast to Leghorn, which, by keeping close in shore, was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea, and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said —

'I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows.'

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the Baths. Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of Ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon-day kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country were chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country: or settling still farther in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still, Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy: Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and, Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea, but Shelley suggested an excursion to Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him. We saw no house to suit us; but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchained as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society; and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work: partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and also because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their outermost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might meanwhile, either really or supposedly, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts; and this evil he resolved to avoid.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

This morn thy gallant bark
Sailed on a sunny sea:
‘Tis noon, and tempests dark
Have wrecked it on the lee.
Ah woe! ah woe!
By Spirits of the deep
Thou’rt cradled on the billow
To thy eternal sleep.

Thou sleep’st upon the shore
Beside the knelling surge,
And Sea-nymphs evermore
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.
They come, they come,
The Spirits of the deep, —
While near thy seaweed pillow
My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea
I hear a loud lament,
By Echo’s voice for thee
From Ocean’s caverns sent.
O list! O list!
The Spirits of the deep!
They raise a wail of sorrow,
While I forever weep.

With this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy, and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the beloved and the lost; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past, full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings. (I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness; but I believe that it is nearly free from error. Some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of "Posthumous Poems", either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made.)

The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early, and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, the "Triumph of Life", on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors. His favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the "Bolivar" for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

The Bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of San Terenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had (and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness) rooted up the olives on the hillside, and planted forest trees. These were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty. The blue extent of waters, the almost landlocked bay, the near castle of Lerici shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle, formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only. Sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged — the 'ponente' the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing, or rather howling; the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves farther from civilisation and comfort; but, where the sun shines, the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: ‘Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley’s boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her: and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.’ — It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed Death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa. They had engaged one of the seamen who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the "Triumph of Life" was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot. But the sea-breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits. A long drought had preceded the heat; and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours, even, trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor-boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place and genial summer with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions — they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear; and, a fine breeze rising at twelve, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half. The "Bolivar" was in port; and, the regulations of the Health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet, if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible but not unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess: the distance we were at from all signs of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears, — all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us; and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped; it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt — of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless — was changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but, by the quarantine-laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them — the law with respect to everything cast on land by the sea being that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our Charge d’Affaires at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral-pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world — whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good, — to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the “Adonais” pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley’s ashes were conveyed; and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is

‘the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy! —
...
And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven’s smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.’

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley’s fate to mitigate pangs which yet, alas! could not be so mitigated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still, though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and, when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunder-storm, as it was last seen upon the purple sea, and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been (Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the lighthouse of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via

Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba or Corsica, and so be saved. The observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her; but she proved not seaworthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.) — who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the "Adonais"?

'The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.'

Putney, May 1, 1839.

An Adaptation

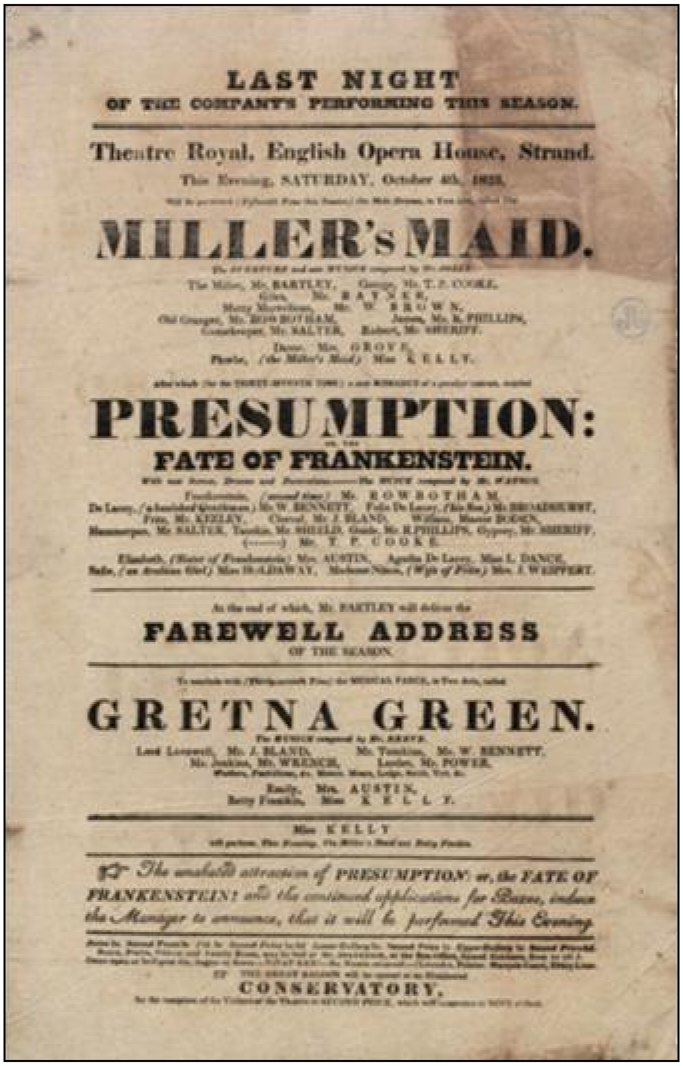
LYCEUM
LYCEUM THEATRE
1834
THE LION KING

The English Opera House, now the Lyceum Theatre, where Shelley and her father attended a performance of Peake's popular Frankenstein play on 29 August 1823.

PRESUMPTION; OR, THE FATE OF FRANKENSTEIN by Richard Brinsley Peake

Richard Brinsley Peake (1792-1847) was a dramatist of the early nineteenth century, who is best remembered today for this 1823 play, which is based on Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. Throughout his career, Peake wrote burlesques, farces, comedies, melodramatic and musical romances, and an operatic romance.

Presumption; or, the Fate of Frankenstein was seen by Mary Shelley and her father William Godwin on 29 August 1823 at the English Opera House, shortly after her return to England. Reportedly, Shelley approved of the portrayal of the Creature, played by T.P. Cooke. To capitalise on the success of the play, Godwin immediately arranged for his daughter's novel to be reprinted in two volumes with emendations by himself.



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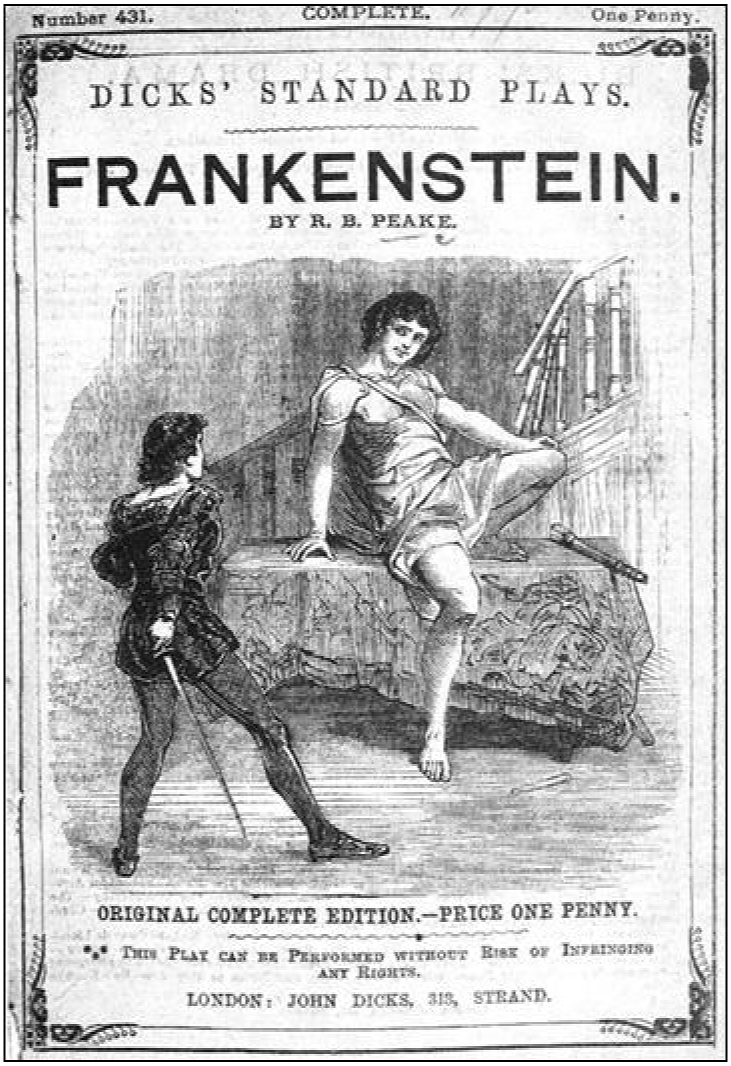
CONTENTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE
ACT I
ACT II
ACT III



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LONDON: JOHN DICKS, 313, STRAND.

A later Victorian edition of the play

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

English Opera House, 28 July, 1823
Frankenstein: Mr. Wallack
Clerval (his friend, in love with Elizabeth): Mr. Bland
William (brother of Frankenstein): Master Boden
Fritz (servant of Frankenstein): Mr. Keeley
DeLacey (a banished gentleman-blind): Mr. Rowbotham
Felix DeLacey (his son): Mr. Pearman
Tanskin (a gipsy): Mr. Shield
Hammerpan (a tinker): Mr. Salter
First Gipsy
A Guide (an old man): Mr. R. Phillips
Elizabeth (sister of Frankenstein): Mrs. Austin
Agatha (daughter of DeLacey): Miss L. Dance
Safie (an Arabian girl, betrothed to Felix): Miss Povey
Madame Ninon (wife to Fritz): Mrs. T. Weippert
Gipsies, Peasants, Choristers, and Dancers (Male and Female)

ACT I

SCENE I: *A Gothic Chamber in the house of Frankenstein.*

Fritz discovered in a Gothic arm-chair, nodding asleep. During the Symphony of the Song, he starts, rubs his eyes, and comes forward.

AIR – FRITZ

Oh, dear me! what's the matter?
How I shake at each clatter.
  My Marrow
  They harrow.
Oh, dear me! what's the matter?
If Mouse squeaks, or cat sneezes,
Cricket chirps, or cock wheezes,
  Then I fret
  In cold sweat.
Every noise my nerves teazes;
Bless my heart – heaven preserve us!
I declare I'm so nervous.
  Ev'ry Knock
  Is a shock.
I declare I'm so nervous!
I'm so nervous.

FRITZ. Oh, Fritz, Fritz, Fritz! What is it come to! you are frighten'd out of your wits. Why did you ever leave your native village! why couldn't you be happy in your native Village with an innocent cow for your companion (bless its sweet breath!) instead of coming here to the City of Geneva to be hired as a servant! *(Starts.)* What's that? – nothing. And then how complimentary! Master only hired me because he thought I looked so stupid! Stupid! ha, ha, ha! but am I stupid though? To be sure Mr. Frankenstein is a kind man, and I should respect him, but that I thinks as how he holds converse with somebody below with a long tail, horns and hoofs, who shall be nameless. *(Starts again.)* What's that! Oh, a gnat on my nose! Ah, anything frightens me now – I'm so nervous! I spill all my bread and milk when I feed myself at breakfast! Lord! Lord! In the country, if a dog bray'd, or a donkey bark'd ever so loud, it had no effect upon me. *(Two distinct loud knocks – Fritz jumps.)* Oh, mercy! I jump like a maggot out of cheese!* How my heart beats!

CLER. *(Without.)* Fritz, Fritz!

[FRITZ. It's a human being however –]

CLER. *(Without.)* Open the door, Fritz!

FRITZ. Yes. It's only Mr. Clerval, master's friend, who is going to marry Miss Elizabeth, master's sister. *(Opens the door.)*

Enter Clerval.

How d'ye do, sir!

CLER. Good morrow, Fritz! Is Mr. Frankenstein to be seen?

FRITZ. I fear not, Sir, he has as usual been fumi – fumi – fumigating all night at his chemistry. I have not dared to disturb him.

CLER. Mr. Frankenstein pursues his studies with too much ardour.

FRITZ. And what can be the use of it, Mr. Clerval? Work, work, work – always at it. Now, putting a case to you. Now, when I was in the country, with my late cow (she's no more now, poor thing!) if I had sat to and milked her for a fortnight together, day and night, without stopping, do you think I should be any the better for it? I ask you as a gentleman and a scholar.

CLER. Ha, ha, ha! Certainly not!

FRITZ. Nor my cow neither, poor creter. *(Wipes his eyes.)* Excuse my crying – she's defunct, and I always whimper a little when I think on her; and my wife lives away from me, but I don't care so much for that. Oh! Mr. Clerval, between ourselves – hush! didn't you hear a noise! – between ourselves, I want to unbosom my confidence.

CLER. Well?

FRITZ. Between ourselves – there's nobody at the door, is there? – (Crosses to door.) – No! well, between ourselves, Mr. Clerval, I have been so very nervous since I came to this place –

CLER. Pshaw!

FRITZ. "Nay," don't 'Pshaw!' till you've heard me out. – My poor Master – I know you are his friend, but he has dealings with the Gentleman in black!

[CLER. Yes, I know – the Notary who comes to consult him on my marriage contract –

FRITZ. Notary – no – somebody deeper than that – Oh, Mr. Clerval! I'll tell you. One night Mr. Frankenstein did indulge himself by going to bed. He was worn with fatigue and study. I had occasion to go into his chamber. He was asleep, but frightfully troubled; he groaned and ground his teeth, setting mine on edge. 'It is accomplished!' said he. *Accomplished!* I knew that had nothing to do with me, but I listened. He started up in his sleep, though his eyes were opened and dead as oysters, he cried, 'It is animated – it rises – walks!' Now, my shrewd guess, sir, is that, like Doctor Faustus, my master is raising the Devil.

CLER. Fritz, you are simple; drive such impressions from your mind, you must not misconstrue your Master's words in a dream. Do you never dream?

FRITZ. *(Mournfully.)* I dream about my Cow sometimes.

CLER. Your master is a studious Chemist – nay, as I sometimes suspect, an alchemist.

FRITZ. Eh! Ah, I think he is. What is an alchemist Mr. Clerval?

CLER. Does he not sometimes speak of the art of making gold?

FRITZ. Lord, sir! do you take Mr. Frankenstein for a coiner?

CLER. Did you never hear him make mention of the grand elixer, which can prolong life to immortality.

FRITZ. Never in all my life!

CLER. Well go – find out if it is possible I can see him. I will not detain him.

FRITZ. Yes, sir. Oh, that laboratory! I've got two loose teeth, and I am afraid I shall loose them, for whenever I go towards that infernal place my head shakes like a dice-box. *(Goes to door.)* Oh, mercy! what's that? Two shining eyes – how they glisten! Dear, dear, why I declare it's only the cat on the stairs. Puss, puss, pussy! How you frighten'd me, you young *dog,* when you know I am so very nervous!

CLER. Frankenstein, friend of my youth, how extraordinary and secret are thy pursuits! how art thou altered by study! Strange, what a hold has philosophy taken of thy mind – but thou wert always enthusiastic and of boundless ambition. But "Elizabeth" – the fair Elizabeth, his sister – what a difference in disposition! Everyone adores her. Happy Clerval, to be now the possessor of Elizabeth, who, unconscious of her beauty, stole thy heart away!

SONG – CLERVAL

Ere witching love my heart possest,
  And bade my sighs the nymph pursue,
Calm as the infant's smiling rest,
  No anxious hope nor fear it knew.

But doom'd – ah! doom'd at last to mourn,
  What tumults in that heart arose!
An ocean trembling, wild, and torn
  By tempests from its deep repose.

Yet let me not the virgin blame,
  As tho' she wish'd my heart despair,

How could the maid suspect a flame,
  Who never knew that she was fair.

– But Frankenstein approaches.

Enter Frankenstein, thoughtfully, shown in by Fritz, who exits.

CLER. My dear friend!

FRANK. Clerval!

CLER. Frankenstein, how ill you appear – So [thin and] pale! You look as if your night-watchings had been long and uninterrupted.

FRANK. [You have guessed rightly! –] I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest. But how left you my sister, Elizabeth?

CLER. Well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that she sees you so seldom.

FRANK. Aye, I am engaged heart and soul in the pursuit of a discovery – a grand, unheard of wonder! None but those who have experienced can conceive the enticement of Science; he who looks into the book of nature, finds an inexhaustible source of novelty, of wonder, and delight. What hidden treasures are contained in her mighty volume – what strange, undreamed-of mysteries!

CLER. But some little respite – your health should he considered.

FRANK. *(Abstracted.)* After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires, would be indeed a glorious consummation of my toils.

CLER. How wild and mysterious his abstractions – he heeds me not! *(Aside.)*

FRANK. *(Apart.)* This discovery will be so vast, so overwhelming, that all the steps by which I have been progressively led will be obliterated, and I shall behold only the astonishing result.

CLER. Frankenstein!

FRANK. Ha! *(To Clerval.)* I see by your eagerness that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted. That cannot be.

CLER. I do not wish to pry into your secrets, Frankenstein. I am no natural philosopher; my imagination is too vivid for the details of science. If I contemplate, let it be the charms of your fair sister, Elizabeth. My message hither now – I wish to fix the day for our nuptials. But we must be certain on so important and happy an event, that we shall enjoy the society of our Frankenstein.

FRANK. Pardon me, Clerval! My first thoughts should recur to those dear friends whom I most love, and who are so deserving of my love – name the day?

CLER. On the morn after to-morrow, may I lead the charming Elizabeth to the altar?

FRANK. E'en as you will – e'en as you will! *(Aside.)* My wonderful task will be ere that completed. It will be animated! It will live – will think! *(Crosses in* deep *reflection – afterwards turns up the stage.)*

CLER. *(Apart.)* Again in reverie! this becomes alarming – surely his head is affected. I am bound in duty to counteract this madness, and discover the secret of his deep reflections.

Frankenstein sits down – musing.

Farewell, Frankenstein! He heeds me not – 'tis in vain to claim his notice – but I will seek the cause, and, if possible, effect his cure. No time must be lost. Fritz must assist me, and this way he went.

(Exit Clerval)

FRANK. Every moment lost, fevers me. What time have I devoted? *(Rises.)* Had I not been heated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome, disgusting, and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life – I have had recourse to death – I have seen how the fine form of man has been wasted and degraded – have beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life! I have seen how the worm inherits the wonders of the eye and brain – I paused – analysing all the minutiae of causation as exemplified in the change of life from death – until from the midst of this darkness the sudden light broke in upon me! A light so brilliant and dazzling, some miracle must have produced the flash! The vital principle! The cause of life! – Like Prometheus of old, have I daringly attempted the formation – the animation of a Being! To my task – away with reflection – to my task – to my task!

(Exit)

Enter Clerval and Fritz.

FRITZ. Now he's going to blow up his fire again!

CLER. And thus you say for whole days and nights together, without repose, and almost without food he has immured himself in his study.

FRITZ. Yes – there he is – amongst otamies* and phials and crucibles, and retorts, and charcoal, and fire, and the Devil – for I'm sure *he's* at the bottom of it, and that makes me so nervous.

CLER. Fritz, you love your master, and are, I know, a discreet servant – but his friends and relations are all unhappy on his account. His health is rapidly sinking under the fatigue of his present labours – will you not assist to call him back to life and to his family?

FRITZ. La! I'd call out all day long, if that would do any good.

CLER. I know his mind has been devoted to obstruse and occult sciences – that his brain has been bewildered with the wild fancies of Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus –

FRITZ. Oh! Mr. Clerval! how can you mention such crazy tooth-breaking names? There sounds something wicked in them.

CLER. Wicked? Psha, man! they are the renowned names of the earliest experimental philosophers. The sages who promised to the hopes of the laborious alchymist the transmutation of metals and the elixer of life.

FRITZ. 0! Ah! indeed! Lack a daisy me!

CLER. Do you understand me!

FRITZ. Not particularly –

CLER. Fritz – tho' simple, you are an excellent fellow – have you any idea what is the strange object of which your master is in search?

FRITZ. I have my suspicions truly.

CLER. What are they?

FRITZ. *(Looks round.)* Hush – no – nothing but the wind – To tell you the truth, I suspect that the grand object is –

CLER. What?

FRITZ. A secret – there now the murder's out.

CLER. *(Aside.)* This fellow is more knave than fool – he wants a bribe. Now, sirrah! answer me with candour. What is it you like best in the world?

FRITZ. Milk!

CLER. Simpleton! I mean what station of Life would you covet?

FRITZ. Station?

CLER. Yes. Would you like to be master of a cottage?

FRITZ. What, and keep a cow? – the very thing. Why, Mr. Clerval, you're a conjuror, and know my thoughts by art.

CLER. Fritz, I want to discover – but you must be prudent – *(Takes out purse and gives a florin to Fritz.)* Here's an earnest of my future intentions touching the cow and cottage.

FRITZ. Bodikins! a florin! *(Examining money.)*

CLER. Friend Fritz, you must some time, when Mr. Frankenstein is absent from home, admit me into his study.

FRITZ. Oh, dear, I can't! – don't take your florin back again [sir] *(Puts up money.)* – for he always locks the door. To be sure, there's a little window – on the gallery – I can see when he puffs up his fire.

CLER. Well, they say the end justifies the means; and in this case I admit the maxim. You can peep through that window, and inform me minutely of what you see.

FRITZ. But what is to become of my nerves?

CLER. Remember your cottage –

FRITZ. And the Cow!

CLER. Put me in possession of the secret, and both shall be secured to you. Some one approaches.

FRITZ. Mr. Clerval, I'm your man. I'm nervous, and the devil sticks in my gizzard; but the cow will drive it out again. *(Starts.)* What's that? Oh, nothing – oh, dear, I'm so nervous.

(Exeunt Fritz and Clerval)

SCENE II: *Part of the Villa Residence of Elizabeth at Belrive. – Garden Terrace – Sunset – William discovered sleeping on a garden bench – Enter Elizabeth from the house.*

SONG – ELIZABETH

The summer sun shining on tree and on tower,
  And gilding the landscape with radiance divine,
May give joy to the heart o'er which pleasure has power,
  But eve's pensive beauties are dearer to mine.

Through trees gently sighing, the cool breeze of even
  Seems sympathy's voice to the ear of despair;
And the dew-drops (like tears shed by angels of heaven),
  Revive the frail hopes in the bosom of care.

During this scene the stage becomes progressively dark.

MAD. NINON. *(Within.)* William! little William!

ELIZ. Where can our little favorite have secreted himself?

Enter Madame Ninon, from the house.

NIN. Heaven bless Mont Blanc and all the neighbouring hills! Why, where is the boy? How angry shall I be with him for staying out so late.

ELIZ. Why, Ninon, assuage your friendly wrath – yonder is William.

NIN. *(Goes to child.)* Fast asleep, I declare, the pretty boy – how like his poor mother, who is gone. La, La, I daresay my Fritz was just such another, only his hair was red. Pretty William – he was the pin basket. Bless the thirteen cantons, I nursed him. William – *(Kisses him.)* – a pair of gloves, Sir! *(William waking.)* Fie, you idle urchin, sleeping so early this beautiful evening.

William rises. All come forward.

WILL. Indeed, dear Ninon, I know not how I fell asleep; but I rose with the sun, and thinking I would lie down with it, I closed my eyes, and –

NIN. Slumbered like a young dormouse?

ELIZ. But, William, you have not neglected your books?

WILL. Oh, no; for then I should not be such a scholar as my elder brother, Victor Frankenstein.

(Runs to end of terrace.)

ELIZ. Alas, poor Frankenstein! he studies indeed too deeply; but love — blighted love, drove him to solitude and abstruse research.

NIN. Ah, Madame, may love make you happy! Mr. Clerval was here this morning, and looked as handsome –

ELIZ. Peace, Ninon! And yet, why should I check your Cheerfulness? Ninon, I have given orders to my milliner to make you a handsome new cap. When your husband, Fritz, comes from Geneva, he may call and bring it.

NIN. Thank you, dear madam; but see –

Re-Enter William from terrace, and runs, crossing behind.)

WILL. Oh, sister – oh, Madame Ninon! two travellers are coming up the hill – such a beautiful lady – but her guide, I think, has fallen from his horse. See – here's the lady, helping the poor man.

Melo-Music. Enter Safie, supporting the Guide, from terrace.

ELIZ. Madame, allow me to offer my assistance.

SAFIE. Thanks – thanks, fair Lady; it is not for myself I require rest or help, for I am young. But this aged man, my faithful follower, is completely worn with fatigue.

ELIZ. Ninon, see him conveyed into the house. Give him your support, and assist to welcome our guests.

NIN. *(Crossing to guide.)* Lean on me, old sir – aye, as heavy as you like; bless you my arm is strong, tho' I am little. Come, gently – gently – there – there –

Ninon leads the guide into house, William following them. By this time the wing lights are turned off .

SAFIE. I can only weep my thanks, of late I have been unused to kindness.

ELIZ. Your garb and manner denote you a stranger here – yet you are acquainted with our language, and you appear to have travelled a great distance.

SAFIE. From Leghorn, – a wearisome journey. How far am I distant from the Valley of the Lake?

ELIZ. But a few leagues.

SAFIE. Then tonight I probably could reach it? *(Animated.)*

ELIZ. I would not advise the attempt till the morning – the sun is down now; you are distant from any inn; your horses are fatigued; permit me to offer in my house refreshment and repose.

SAFIE. No, no; no repose until my purpose is accomplished. Yet my poor follower needs rest; generous stranger, I gratefully accept your hospitality.

ELIZ. And be assured such comfort as Eliza Frankenstein can offer shall be freely yours.

SAFIE. You – you mention the name of Frankenstein!

ELIZ. I bear that appellation.

SAFIE. How fortunate! happy chance that brought me to your hospitable door. Know you the family of DeLacey?

ELIZ. I knew it well, but years have elapsed since I have heard of them.

SAFIE. I seek their retreat. Exiled from France, they now exist in the Valley of the Lake.

ELIZ. So near, and I not acquainted with their residence! Does the gentle Agatha DeLacey yet live?

SAFIE. Tomorrow's morn I trust will find me locked in her embrace.

ELIZ. What rapturous news for my dear brother, Frankenstein – night approaches – let us in and converse further on this subject, which is of deep interest to me – hark! – the sweet nightingale is pouring forth its evening melody.

DUETT – ELIZABETH AND SAFIE

Hark how it floats upon the dewy air!
Oh! what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis harmony from yon sequester'd bower,
Sweet harmony that soothes the midnight hour!

(Exeunt into house)

SCENE III:*The sleeping Apartment of Frankenstein. Dark. The Bed is within a recess between the wings, enclosed by dark green curtains. A Sword (to break) hanging. A Large French Window; between the wings a staircase leading to a Gallery across the stage, on which is the Door of the Laboratory above. A small high Lattice in centre of scene, next the Laboratory Door. A Gothic Table on stage, screwed. A Gothic Chair in centre, and Footstool. Music expressive of the rising of a storm. Enter Frankenstein, with a Lighted Lamp, which he places on the table. Distant thunder heard.*

FRANK. This evening – this lowering evening, will, in all probability, complete my task. Years have I laboured, and at length discovered that to which so many men of genius have in vain directed their inquiries. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I have become master of the secret of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter. With so astonishing a power in my hands, long, long did I hesitate how to employ it. The object of my experiments lies there *(Pointing up to the laboratory.)* – A huge automaton in human form. Should I succeed in animating it, Life and Death would appear to me as ideal bounds, which I shall break through and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. I have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. *(Storm.)* A storm has hastily arisen! – 'Tis a dreary night – the rain patters dismally against the panes – 'tis a night for such a task – I'll in and attempt to infuse the spark of life. –

Music. – Frankenstein takes up lamp, cautiously looks around him, ascends the stairs, crosses the gallery above, and exits into door of laboratory. Enter Fritz, trembling, with a candle.

FRITZ. Master isn't here – dare I peep. Only think of the reward Mr. Clerval promised me, a cow and a cottage, milk and a mansion. Master is certainly not come up yet. My candle burns all manner of colours, and spits like a roasted apple. *(Runs against the chair and drops his light, which goes out.)* There, now, I'm in the dark. Oh my nerves.

A blue flame appears at the small lattice window above, as from the laboratory.

What's that? 0 lord; there he is, kicking up the devil's own flame!* Oh my Cow! I'll venture up – oh my cottage! I'll climb to the window – it will be only one peep to make my fortune.

Music. – Fritz takes up footstool, he ascends the stairs, when on the gallery landing place, he stands on the footstool tiptoe to look through the small high lattice window of the laboratory, a sudden combustion is heard within. The blue flame changes to one of a reddish hue.

FRANK. *(Within.)* It lives! it lives!

FRITZ. *(Speaks through music.)* Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!

Fritz, greatly alarmed, jumps down hastily, totters tremblingly down the stairs in vast hurry; when in front of stage, having fallen flat in fright, with difficulty speaks.

FRITZ. There's a hob – hob-goblin, 20 feet high! wrapp'd in a mantle – mercy – mercy –

[Falls down.]

Music. – Frankenstein rushes from the laboratory, without lamp, fastens the door in apparent dread, and hastens down the stairs, watching the entrance *of the laboratory.*

FRANK. It lives! [It lives.] I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open, it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs. What a wretch have I formed, [his legs are in proportion and] I had selected his features as beautiful – beautiful! Ah, horror! his cadaverous skin scarcely covers the work of muscles and arteries beneath, his hair lustrous, black, and flowing – his teeth of pearly whiteness – but these luxuriances only form more horrible contrasts with the deformities of the Demon.

Music. – He listens at the foot of the staircase.

[It is yet quiet –] What have I accomplished? the beauty of my dream has vanished! and breathless horror and disgust fill my heart. For this I have deprived myself of rest and health, have worked my brain to madness; and when I looked to reap my great reward, a flash breaks in upon my darkened soul, and tells me my attempt was impious, and that its fruition will be fatal to my peace for ever. *(He listens again.)* All is still! The dreadful spectre of a human form – no mortal could withstand the horror of that countenance – a mummy endued with animation could be so hideous as the wretch I have endowed with life! – miserable and impious being that I am! [– lost – lost] Elizabeth! brother! Agatha! – faithful Agatha! never more dare I look upon your virtuous faces. Lost! lost! lost!

Music – Frankenstein sinks on a chair.

[FRITZ. *(Looks up once or twice before he speaks.)* Oh my nerves; I feel as if I had just come out of strong fits, and nobody to throw water in my face – Master sleeps, so I'll, if my legs won't lap up under me – just – make my escape.

Sudden combustion heard, and smoke issues, the door of the laboratory breaks to pieces with a loud crash – red fire within.

FRITZ. Oh – Oh. *(Runs out hastily)*

Music. The Demon discovered at door entrance in smoke, which evaporates – the red flame continues visible. The Demon advances forward, breaks through the balustrade or railing of gallery immediately facing the door of laboratory, jumps on the table beneath, and from thence leaps on the stage, stands in attitude before Frankenstein, who had started up in terror; they gaze for a moment at each other.

FRANK. The demon corpse to which I have given life!

Music. – The Demon looks at Frankenstein most intently, approaches him with gestures of conciliation. Frankenstein retreats, the Demon pursuing him.

Its unearthly ugliness renders it too horrible for human eyes! *[The Demon approaches him.]*

Fiend! do not dare approach me – avaunt, or dread the fierce vengeance of my arm wrecked on your miserable head –

Music. – Frankenstein takes the sword from the nail, points with it at the Demon, who snatches the sword, snaps it in two and throws it on stage. The Demon then seizes Frankenstein – loud thunder heard – throws him violently on the floor, ascends the staircase, opens the large window, and disappears through the casement. Frankenstein remains motionless on the ground. – Thunder and lightning until the drop falls.

ACT II

SCENE I: *An apartment in the House of Elizabeth, at Belrive. – Table and chairs. The hurried music from the close of the First Act to play in continuance until this scene is discovered, and Frankenstein enters, hastily, to centre of stage. Music ceases.*

FRANK. At length in my sister's house! – and safe! I have paced with quick steps, but at every turn feared to meet the wretch – my heart palpitates with the sickness of fear! [He does not pursue me – dreams that have been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space, are now become a hell to me – the change so rapid, the overthrow so complete –] What have I cast on the world? a creature powerful in form, of supernatural and gigantic strength, but with the mind of an infant. Oh, that I could recall my impious labour, or suddenly extinguish the spark which I have so presumptuously bestowed. – Yet that were murder – murder in its worse and most horrid form – for he is mine – my own formation. Ha! who approaches?

Enter Elizabeth, they embrace.

ELIZ. My dear Victor! my dear brother!

FRANK. Elizabeth! [My love, how sweet is this embrace –]

ELIZ. You [are] come to stay, I hope, until our wedding is over. Clerval will be here presently. Alas! Frankenstein! your cheek is pallid – your eye has lost its wonted lustre. Oh, Victor, what are the secrets that prey upon your mind and form? – The pernicious air of your laboratory will be fatal to you.

FRANK. *(Apart.)* Fatal indeed!

ELIZ. I pray you, for my sake, cease – I understand upon one subject you have laboured incessantly.

FRANK. One subject! *(Aside.)* Am I discovered?

ELIZ. You change colour, my dear brother. I will not mention it – I – there is a wildness in your eyes for which I cannot account.

FRANK. *(Starts.)* See – see – he is there!

ELIZ. Dearest Frankenstein – what is the cause of this?

FRANK. Do not ask me. I – I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room.

ELIZ. Calm your mind, Victor.

FRANK. Pardon me, Elizabeth. I know not what you will think of me.

ELIZ. I have intelligence of one dear to you and for whom, prior to your close attention to study, you had the tenderest regard. – Say, Victor, will you not be glad to hear that I have a clue to lead you to your lost love, Agatha DeLacey!

FRANK. Agatha! dearest Agatha! her name recalls my sinking spirits – where – where is she to be found? Oh, would that I ne'er had been robbed of her! 'Twas her loss that drove me to deep and fatal experiments!

ELIZ. A traveller! a beautiful Arabian girl, was here but last night; she was seeking Felix DeLacey, the brother of Agatha, to whom she had been betrothed – she gave me the information that the family are but a short distance from hence – the Valley of the Lake.

FRANK. And Agatha there? – Agatha! there is yet life and hope for me – Ah no. *(Aside.)* The dreadful monster I have formed! – away with thought! Elizabeth, I will instantly seek her. Agatha's smiles shall move this heavy pressure – to the Valley of the Lake. – Farewell, sister, farewell!

(Embraces Elizabeth, and Exit hastily)

[ELIZ. Unfortunate Frankenstein! – what can thus agitate him? – he will not hint the mysterious calamity to his affectionate sister – but he flies now to seek her who possessed his first love, and Agatha will sooth his mind to its former peaceful state – Ah love! All potent love! – If care or misfortune prey on my heart, I have only to think of Clerval, and be happy. –

SONG – ELIZABETH

When evening breezes mildly blow,
  And all day's tumults cease;
Where streams in gentle murmurs flow;
  And all around breathes peace –
What shall my pensive mind employ,
  From ev'rything free?
I'll turn to life's best dearest joy,
  And think of love and Thee!

When pleasure's smile no longer gleams,
  And sorrow weighs my breast
When hope withdraws its placid beams

I sink with care opprest –
Ah whither shall my heart then turn,
To what sweet refuge flee?
With passion's fire then shall burn
And throb with love and thee. *(Exit)*

SCENE II:*A wood in the neighbourhood of Geneva. A Bush – A Gypsy's fire flaming, over which hangs a cauldron. A group of Gypsies discovered surrounding the fire in various positions. All laugh as the scene discovers them. When Tanskin, Hammerpan, with others (male and female) advance to sing the following*

CHORUS

Urge the slow rising smoke,
Give the faggot a poke,
For unroof'd rovers are we;
Whilst our rags flutt'ring fly,
We the brown skin espy,
Our vellum of pedigree.
Behold each tawney face
Of our hard-faring race,
Which the cold blast ne'er can feel;
See our glossy hair wave,
Hear us, loud, as we crave
But dumb only when we steal!

TANS. I tell you it was even so, friend Hammerpan – a giant creature with something of a human shape; but ugly and terrible to behold as you would paint the Devil.

HAM. And does this monster any mischief, or is he a pacific monster?

TANS. I never heard of any being harmed by him!

HAM. Then why are you so frightened, Master Tanskin? For my part, should he come across my path, let who will fly, I'll stand my ground like an anvil!

TANS. And get well beat like one for your pains.

(Flute heard.)

What sounds are those?

HAM. *(Returning to the fire.)* Why, 'tis Felix, the son of old DeLacey. The young fellow is much famed for his excellence upon the flute, as the father for his piety, charities, and twanging on the harp, which, together with the beauty of his daughter, seems to have turned the heads and won the hearts of all the surrounding country. Now my merry wanderers, our meal is smoking. I'faith, I'm in a rare relishing humour for it, so, prithee, Dame, ladle us our porridge, with a whole dead sheep in it. Fegs, it scents rarely! *(Sniffs.)*

Music. – The gipsies crowd round the fire with their bowls. The Demon rapidly crosses the platform at the back – Disappears.

1ST GYP. Hilliho! – what tall bully's that? the steeple of Ingoldstadt taking a walk. See yonder, comrades!

HAM. See what?

TANS. *(Trembling.)* As I'm a living rogue, 'tis he!

HAM. One of the Devil's grenadier's, mayhap! Pooh, pooh! Old Tanskin, we all know you are a living rogue, but you won't frighten us with your ten feet. Come, give me a drink, I say.

One of the gipsies gives him a wooden bowl.

Gentlemen Gipsies, here's all your good – ha! ha! ha! –

Music. – The Demon appears on an eminence of the bush, or a projecting rock.

Help! murder! wouns! 'tis the Devil himself! away with the porridge!

Music. Throws bowl away. Hammerpan and all the Gipsies shriek and run off The Demon descends, portrays by action his sensitiveness of light and air, perceives the gipsies's fire, which excites his admiration – thrusts his hand into the flame, withdraws it hastily in pain. Takes out a lighted piece of stick, compares it with another faggot which has not been ignited. Takes the food expressive of surprise and pleasure. A flute is heard, without. The Demon, breathless with delight, eagerly listens. It ceases – he expresses disappointment. Footsteps heard and the Demon retreats behind the rock.

Enter Agatha, followed by Felix, his flute slung at his back.

AGA. Those sweet sounds recall happier days to my memory. – In the midst of [our] poverty, how consoling it is to possess such a brother as you are. Dear, thoughtful Felix, the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground you brought, because you thought it would give pleasure to your poor Agatha.

FELIX. We are the children of misfortune; [Agatha –] poverty's chilling grasp nearly annihilates us. Our poor blind father, now the inmate of yon cottage – he who has been blessed with prosperity to be thus reduced – the noble-minded old DeLacey. Wretched man that I am, to have been the cause of ruin to both father and sister.

AGA. Why, Felix, we suffered in a virtuous cause! Poor Safie, thy beloved –

FELIX. Is, I fear, lost to me for ever. The treacherous Mahometan, her father, whose escape I aided from a dungeon in Paris (where he was confined as a State prisoner), that false father has doubtless arrived at Constantinople, and is triumphing at the fate of his wretched dupes.

AGA. Nay, Felix –

FELIX. Alas, Agatha! for aiding that escape, my family – my beloved family – are suffering exile and total confiscation of fortune.

AGA. But Safie still loves you?

FELIX. That thought is the more maddening! Safie! fairest Safie! – and she was my promised reward for liberating her faithless father – dragged away with him and forced to comply with his obdurate wishes. Oh, she is lost – lost to me for ever!

AGA. Let not hope forsake you, Felix –

FELIX. [Agatha! It requires resignation to bear our heavy woes.] The early passion of each of us has been blighted, our rigorous imprisonment and sudden banishment have driven all trace of thee from thy admirer, young Frankenstein.

AGA. Dear Felix, press not more wretched recollections on my mind. I consider Frankenstein lost to me for ever. In abject poverty, dare I hope that the brilliant and animated student could e'er think of the unfortunate Agatha. *(Weeps.)* Let me dry these unworthy tears and exert a woman's firmest fortitude. My soul is henceforth devoted exclusively to the service of my poor dark father.

FELIX, you shall behold me no longer unhappy.

DUET – FELIX AND AGATHA

Of all the knots which Nature ties,
The secret, sacred sympathies,
That, as with viewless chains of gold,
The heart a happy prisoner hold,
None is more chaste – more bright – more pure,
Stronger, stern trials to endure;
None is more pure of earthly leaven,
More like the love of highest heaven,
Than that which binds, in bonds how blest
A daughter to a father's breast.

(Exeunt)

Music. – The Demon cautiously ventures out – his mantle having been caught by the bush, he disrobes himself leaving the mantle attached to the rock; he watches Felix and Agatha with wonder and rapture, appears irresolute whether he dares to follow them; he hears the flute of Felix, stands amazed and pleased, looks around him, snatches at the empty air, and with clenched hands puts them to each ear – appears vexed at his disappointment in not possessing the sound; rushes forward afterwards, again listens, and, delighted with the sound, steals off catching at it with his hands.

SCENE III: *Exterior of the Cottage of Old DeLacey. On right, a hovel, with a low door, near which are two or three large logs of wood and a hatchet; a small basket with violets on a stool at the right side of the cottage door, and a stool also on the left side of the cottage, whereon DeLacey is discovered seated, leaning on his cane, a common harp at his side. – Music.*

DEL. Another day is added to the life of banished DeLacey! *(Rises and comes forward.)* But how will it be passed – like the preceding days – in wretched poverty, hopeless grief, and miserable darkness! *(Calls.)* Agatha! Felix! Alas! I am alone! Hark – no – I thought I heard footsteps – my children come. They must not suppose me cheerless – my lute is here – 'tis a fair deceit on them – this lute which has so oft been damped with the tears from my sightless eyes – the sound of it is the only indication I can give that I am contented with my lot!

Music. – DeLacey returns to his seat and plays several chords. The Demon enters, attracted by the lute, suddenly perceives DeLacey, and approaches towards him – expresses surprise by action that DeLacey does not avoid him – discovers his loss of sight, which the Demon appears to understand by placing his hand over his own eyes, and feeling his way. At the conclusion of the music on the lute – occasioned, as it were, by the Demon having placed his hand on the instrument – a short pause, and during which the Demon, having lost the sound, appears to he looking for it, when the *lute music is again resumed. In the midst of the music (without ceasing) a voice is heard.*

FELIX. *(Within.)* This way, Agatha.

The Demon, alarmed, observes the little door of hovel, which he pushes open, signifies that he wishes for shelter, and retreats into this hovel or wood-house by the ending of the lute music by DeLacey, when Enter Felix and Agatha.

FELIX. *(Apart to Agatha.)* Observe his countenance, beaming with benevolence and love – behold those silver hairs – and, Agatha, I – I have reduced him to this pitiable state of poverty!

AGA. Cease, Felix – this self reproach? *(Goes to DeLacey.)* We have returned, dear father. Have you wanted us?

Agatha leads her father forward.

DEL. No, no, Agatha! You anticipate all my wants, and perform every little office of affection with gentleness.

AGA. Is it not my duty, and am I not rewarded by your kind smiles?

DEL. Amiable girl, let thy poor father kiss thee. *(They embrace.)* Felix, my son, where are you? *(Felix comes forward, and takes his hand.)* Now I am cheerful – I am happy! – indeed I am, my children. Let me encourage you to cast off your gloom. What – a tear, Agatha!

AGA. Nay, dear sir!

DEL. ‘Tis on my hand. *(Pressing her hand to his lips, which he had held in his while speaking to Felix.)*

The Demon appears watching them with attention and interest.

FELIX. *(Apart.)* At first my father’s countenance was illuminated with pleasure – but thoughtfulness and sadness have again succeeded – *(Assuming gaiety.)* Now must I to labour again. Our [stock of] fuel is nearly exhausted. My time has been lately so occupied I have omitted my task in the forest.

Music. – Felix takes up a hatchet and chops a log of wood.

AGA. And I, too, have been neglectful – these flowers of which you are so fond, my dear father, have wither’d – they must be replaced –

[Music – she takes them from the basket – Felix is busied cutting the wood –]

SAFIE. *(At a distance.)* Felix!

AGA. What voice was that?

FELIX. It cannot be – no – it was but fancy!

Music resumed. – Felix chops the log in continuance – at a similar break in the tune the same voice heard again, nearer.

SAFIE. *(Without.)* Felix!

No music.

FELIX. That magic sound! Alas! no – there is no such happiness in store for me!

SAFIE. *(Without, louder.)* Felix! Felix!

Music. – Felix drops the hatchet, rushes forward. – At the same instant Safie enters, and falls into the arms of Felix – pronouncing “Felix.”

FELIX. ‘Tis she! – Safie! Beloved of my soul! – Ah! revive!

DEL. Safie, the traitor’s daughter? Impossible!

AGA. ‘Tis, indeed, our sweet Safie!

FELIX. We never will part more! Father! father! would that you could behold her! It is my dear, lost Safie.

Music. – Safie revives, and crosses to old DeLacey, kneels, and kisses his hand, during which the Demon appears at the little hovel, watching them, and then retires within again.

DEL. Bless you, my child! where is your father – where the treacherous friend who devoted us to ignominy?

SAFIE. *(Rises.)* I have fled from him; he would have sacrificed his daughter, loathing the idea that I should be united to one of Christian faith. Sickening at the prospect of again returning to Asia and being immured in a harem – ill suited to the temper of my soul now accustomed to a nobler emulation – I – I have sought the love and protection of my Felix!

FELIX. Faithful girl! Your constancy shall be crowned by eternal love and gratitude.

AGA. But Safie, you are fatigued. Come, dear girl, and on my lowly couch, seek repose.

Music. – Safie affectionately kisses and presses DeLacey's hand, embraces Felix, crosses back to Agatha, and is led into the cottage by Agatha and Felix.

FELIX. *(Who returns with a gun from the cottage-door.)* Father, I am wild with joy! – no longer the sad, pining Felix. The sun of prosperity again gleams on us – Safie is returned! I am rich! – happy! But hold! I must procure refreshment for our guest. Our larder is not too much encumbered with provision. I'll to the village – I'll cross the forest – I'll hunt, shoot – and all in ecstasy! Farewell, father! I'll soon be back. Farewell!

[Music. – Exit Felix. – The Demon ventures out, and looks with a kind expression on DeLacey.

DEL. Good Felix! Now, by the return of Safie will his hopes be rewarded – yet must he remain in perpetual poverty and unceasing labour. But this instant, did he complain that our store of fuel was consumed – unless he possessed superhuman strength his day's employment must be doubled – where are my favorite violets?

Music. – DeLacey feels for the Basket which contained them – the Demon apppears to comprehend his wish, and rushes off.

DEL. My flower basket not yet replenished. – My dear children amply repay my former anxious care – they have toiled for my support thoughout our misfortunes –

Music. – The Demon re-enters cautiously and tremblingly with a handful of flowers, which he gently places in the basket.

DEL. Thanks dear Agatha! – ever watchful of your poor father's comfort –

Music. – DeLacey turns up the stage, and again seats himself on the cottage stool. – The Demon examines log of wood, takes up hatchet, points to the wood, intimating he understands the use of it – Agatha appearing at the window – The Demon rushes off with the hatchet. – Music ceases.

DEL. Agatha!

Enter Agatha from cottage.

AGA. Did you call, father?

DEL. Sleeps your sweet guest?

AGA. Fatigue will soon lull her to repose. I should not have left her had I not thought I heard you call me. Ah, father, some one has punished my negligence by replenishing your basket of violets.

DEL. Did you not fill it, Agatha?

AGA. No, dear sir. – Ah, Felix has forestalled me.

Exit Agatha into cottage again.

DEL. [No person has been here since the departure of Felix.] *(DeLacey rises and takes up the basket of flowers from the stool. Smelling the violets.)* How delightful is the perfume! – more exquisite because I am debarred the pleasure of beholding these sweet emblems of spring! The touch and scent elevate my spirits! How ungrateful am I to complain! In the contemplation of thee, oh, Nature, the past will be blotted from my memory! – the present is tranquil, and the future gilded by bright rays of hope and anticipated joy.

Music. – DeLacey replaces the basket of flowers, and returns to his seat, leaning pensively on his cane. – The Demon enters with a pile of green faggots with foliage on his shoulders and throws them loosely on the stage. – Smiles with gratulation at that which he has accomplished. – Approaches DeLacey, falls flat at his feet, then kneels to him, and is about to press his hand. – DeLacey feels around him with his cane and hand, without the knowledge of anyone being near him, and seated all the time – then calls.

DEL. Agatha! Agatha!

Music. – The Demon instantly retreats into hovel, and Agatha enters from cottoge door.

Agatha, child, I pray you lead me in. *(Rises from his seat and comes forward.)*

AGA. Yes, father. Good Heavens! why, Felix could not have returned from the forest so quickly? What a quantity of wood!

DEL. How?

AGA. Here is fuel to last us for a long time. [– Surely some kind spirit [watches over us – or] how could we have been so bountifully supplied? Come, father, to the cottage – come!

Music. – Agatha leads De Lacy into cottage, afterwards comes forward.

– Frankenstein! vain is the endeavour to drive you from my recollection. Each bird that sings, each note of music that I hear, reminds me of the sweet moments of my former love!

SONG – AGATHA

(Flute accompaniment, behind the scenes.)

In vain I view the landscapes round,
  Or climb the highest hill;
In vain, in vain, I listen to the sound
  Of ev’ry murmuring rill.
For vain is all I hear or see,
When Victor dear is far from me. *(Thrice)*
But hark, hark, hark,
My love, my love is near,
His well-known dulcet notes I hear. *(Thrice)*

Oh, yes, my love is near,
  I hear him in the grove;
Soon will he be here,
  And breathe soft vows of love.
Oh, fly not yet, ye blissful hours,
  Oh, fly not yet away;
While love its soft enchanting pours,
  Prolong, prolong your stay! *(Thrice)*
Oh, yes, my love is near,
  I hear him in the grove,
Soon will he be here,
  And breathe soft vows of love!

(Exit Agatha into cottage)

SCENE IV: *A Wild Forest.*

Enter Felix, with his gun.

FELIX. Not a shot yet – and, egad, joy has made my hand so unsteady, that were a fine pheasant to get up, I could not bring it down again. Thy return, sweet Safie, has restored me to existence. When I thought I had lost thee for ever, I was occupied by gloomy thoughts, and neither heeded the descent of the evening star nor the golden sunrise reflected on the lake; but now my love fills my imagination, and all is enjoyment!

SONG – FELIX

Thy youthful charms, bright maid, inspire
  And grace my fav'rite theme,
Whose person kindles soft desire,
  Whose mind secures esteem.

Oh, hear me then my flame avow,
  And fill my heart with joy –
A flame which taught by time to grow,
  No time can e'er destroy.
My tender suit with smiles approve,
  And share the sweets of mutual love.

When autumn yields her ripen'd corn,
  Or winter, darkening, lowers,
With tenderest care I'll soothe thy morn,
  And cheer thy evening hours.
Again, when smiling spring returns,
  We'll breathe the vernal air;
And still when summer sultry burns,
  To woodland walks repair –
There seek retirement's sheltered grove,
  And share the sweets of mutual love.

Felix retires up stage. Enter Frankenstein.

FRANK. In vain do I seek a respite from these dreadful thoughts – where'er I turn my eyes, I expect to behold the supernatural Being! – to see him spring from each woody recess – but on, on to Agatha, and repose.

FELIX. A traveller! and surely I know his air and manner. *(Comes forward.)*

FRANK. Good stranger, can you direct me to the habitation of old DeLacey?

FELIX. Better than most persons, I trust.

FRANK. How! Felix DeLacey!

FELIX. The same! the same! Frankenstein! You know, my friend – ‘tis long since we have met.

FRANK. Your strange and sudden disappearance from Paris –

FELIX. Makes as strange a story, with which I shall not now detain you. Come to our humble cottage. [– Ah, Frankenstein, we have been as poor as mice, and our dwelling is not much larger than a trap –] Egad! I’m overjoyed to see you!

FRANK. And Agatha?

FELIX. Is queen of the Castle! – and between ourselves Frankenstein has still a warm corner of her heart for you. Come, we have only to cross the wood. [– I’m in high spirits, my friend – I’ve this day recover’d my mistress – but that will make another strange story. – This is indeed a lucky day – Safie is restored – and I ramble out to kill a Pheasant, and pop upon a philosopher who is likely to become a brother-in-law –]

HAM. *(Without.)* Any good Christians in the neighbourhood?

FELIX. What have we here?

Enter Hammerpan, with a long pole, tinker’s utensils, fire kettle, &c.

HAM. Real Christians! human beings! Oh, good Gentlemen, have you seen it?

FELIX. It! – what?

HAM. Ah! that's it! As I live, I saw it an hour ago in the forest!

FELIX. What do you mean by *it?*

HAM. My hair stood on end like mustard and cress, and so will yours when you see it!

FELIX. Get you gone! you are tipsy!

HAM. I wish I was. As I take it, you are Master Felix, of the Valley of the Lake; we've done business together before now.

FELIX. I know you not!

HAM. I mended your kettle t'other day. You did me a good turn – one good turn deserves another – I'll put you on your guard – the very devil is abroad.

FRANK. *(Aside.)* How!

FELIX. *(Laughs.)* Ha! ha! ha! You romancing tinker! [– and pray how was his worship dressed?

HAM. [Dress'd – why it was stark undressed all but a cloak.] You may laugh, but the other gentleman don't laugh. You may perceive *he* believes it . *(To Frankenstein.)* I saw it – I saw with *this one eye*.

FELIX. One eye!

HAM. Yes, I'm blind of the other – a little boy threw a pebble at it, so I've been *stone* blind ever since, gentlemen. He was ten foot six long, *(Holds his pole high up.)* with a head of black lanky locks down to his very elbows.

FRANK. 'Tis the Demon! *(Apart to himself)*

HAM. I lifted up my hammer to strike it but I was so tremulous that I knock'd my own head instead.

FRANK. What did this strange object? *(To Hammerpan.)*

HAM. It didn't speak to me, nor I to it. I saw it at first in the forest picking acorns and berries – and then, after it had dispersed our tribe, like a ferret among the rats – it took a drink at our broth, and burnt its fingers in our fire.

FRANK. And what became of this creature?

HAM. I wasn't curious enough to inquire. My wife was in fits at the sight of the devil – so I was obliged to keep my one eye upon her.

FELIX. Your one eye has been pretty well employed. Come, come, gipsy, we'll cross the wood and see if this man mountain is to be met.

HAM. The good genius of wandering tinkers forbid!

FELIX. *(To Frankenstein.)* And now, my friend, we'll on to the cottage.

FRANK. So, so! *(Apart.)* I will follow ye!

(Exeunt Felix and Hammerpan)

So! the peasants have already been terrified by the ungainly form! Ambitious experimentalist! The consciousness of the crime I have committed eternally haunts me! I have indeed drawn a horrible curse on my head! He may be malignant, and delight [for its own sake] in murder and wretchedness! a whole country may execrate me as their pest! Every thought that bears towards my baneful project causes my lips to quiver and [my] heart to palpitate. [But, away with these wretched reflections –] I must now to the cottage of Felix. Agatha, fairest Agatha, [fairest Agatha,] instead of smiles, your lover will meet you with dark and hopeless despondency! *(Exit Frankenstein)*

SCENE V: *Evening. – Interior of the cottage of DeLacey. – The thatched roof in sight. A woodfire. – Through an open rustic porch are visible a rivulet, and small wooden bridge – a wooden couch – Music. – DeLacey discovered seated thereon, with Agatha next him in attendance. The Demon appears through the portico, watching them, and regards Agatha with rapture. – Agatha kisses her father's hand, takes a small pail or hand bucket, and trips through the portico on to the bridge to procure water. The Demon having retreated on Agatha's approach, pursues her on the bridge. Agatha, turning suddenly perceives the Demon, screams loudly, and swoons, falling into the rivulet.*

DEL. Gracious Heaven – that cry of horror! Agatha!

The Demon leaps from the bridge and rescues her.

DEL. Gracious Heaven – that cry of Horror! – Agatha! My sweet child, where art thou? – Agatha, Agatha!

Music – The Demon places Agatha, insensible, on a bench near DeLacey.

DEL. This silence – this suspense is dreadful!

The Demon tenderly guides the hand of DeLacey and places it on Agatha.

DEL. My child – cold, cold, and insensible! – this mystery – cruel fate – Dead? – no, no, no, her heart still beats. – Kind Heaven has saved me that pang! – Felix, Felix, where art thou? My dear daughter, for your poor father's sake revive!

Music. – Agatha recovers. – The Demon hangs over them, with fondness. Felix and Frankenstein suddenly enter.

FRANK. Misery! The Demon!

FELIX. What horrid monster is this? – Agatha, my father is in danger? *The Demon retreats.*

Music. – Felix discharges his gun and wounds the Demon, who writhes under the wound. – In desperation pulls a burning branch from the fire – rushes at them – beholds Frankenstein – in agony of feeling dashes through the portico. Safie Enters to Agatha. – Hurried Music.

FINALE

Tell us – tell us – what form was there?
(With anxious fear enquiring)

Saw you its Eye – the hideous glare
Terrific dread inspiring!

The Demon is seen climbing the outside of the Portico. He bursts through the thatch with burning brand.

The fiend of Sin
With ghastly grin!
Behold the Cottage firing!

The Demon hangs to the Rafters, setting light to the thatch and Rafters, with malignant joy – as parts of the building fall – groups of gypsies appear on the bridge, and through the burning apertures – who join in the Chorus.

FULL CHORUS OF GYPSIES

Beware! Beware!
The hideous glare,
The fiend of Sin
With ghastly grin –
Behold the cottage firing.

Felix forces his way through the flames with his father and Safie – Frankenstein rushes out with Agatha.

ACT III

SCENE I: *The Garden of Elizabeth, at Belrive. – Morning. (Same as Act I, Scene II.)*

Enter Clerval from terrace entrance.

CLER. What a delightful morning! It is an auspicious commencement of the day which is to make me happy in the possession of my love! Elizabeth yet sleeps, peaceful be her slumbers! [Love has awakened me – the freshness of the air, and the beauty of the scenery animate me to the height of cheerfulness –] Soft, she approaches.

Enter Elizabeth from the house.

Elizabeth, my love, why that look of anxiety?

ELIZ. Oh, Clerval! We have had strange occurrences since you quitted me yesternight, our house is full of guests, my brother has brought here the family of DeLacey of whom you have heard me so often speak –

CLER. The family of DeLacey, the relatives of Agatha.

ELIZ. By some extraordinary mystery, which is yet unexplained to me, the Cottage in which Frankenstein discovered his mistress and her family was destroyed by fire; they arrived late last night and all appear overcome with fatigue and terror; some dreadful calamity hangs about my dear brother.

CLER. How astonishing is his conduct. Alas! my sweet Elizabeth, in the midst of all this misery I am selfish – I trust these singular occurrences will not postpone our marriage. Consider, our friends are invited, the church is prepared.

ELIZ.. A few hours may explain all. See now *(Looks towards house.)* Frankenstein approaches – observe his agitated countenance and restless step; he has not slept since his return – he has armed himself with pistols and appears continually watching.

CLER. We will retire and avoid him for the present. This way, love.*(Exeunt)*

Music – Enter Frankenstein from house.

FRANK. How am I to avoid the powerful vengeance of the monster formed by my cursed ambition. I gave him energy and strength, to crush my own guilty head! My hours pass in dread, and soon the bolt may fall which will deprive me of existence! [The diabolical act I have committed in raising a being, recurs each moment and conscience stricken – I shudder to think — Agatha! Agatha! gladly would I sacrifice my own life to preserve yours –] Yet the Demon preserved the life of Agatha – he had some feeling of affection – [and] how were those feelings requited! – by detestation, scorn, and wounds! – his look of everlasting malice! He will watch with the wiliness of a serpent, that he may sting with its venom! There is no hope but in the destruction of the Demon. *(Takes out his pistol.)* I must not cease to guard and protect my friends. *(Going to the door.)* Agatha has arisen. *(Conceals pistol.)*

Enter Agatha, a locket round her neck, from the house.

AGA. Frankenstein, I behold you unhappy – fleeing to solitude – and I cannot help supposing that you might regret the renewal of our connexion. [Do you love another?

FRANK. Agatha! Can you forgive my cold neglect? At the sight of you, my long smothered passion bursts out anew – but I thought you lost – receive me once again with smiles and bring me back to life and hope.

AGA. These transports ill accord with the heavy gloom which pervades you –] Dear Frankenstein, I still love you, and confess that in my airy dreams of futurity you have been my constant friend and companion.

FRANK. [Blessed sounds –] Agatha, you shall be mine! I will then divulge to you the secret which disturbs – nay, distracts me.

Music, the Harmonica. – Distant church bells.

Those cheerful chimes announce the wedding day of Elizabeth and Clerval! [This way – Agatha –] My care-worn looks will but damp their merriment.

(Music. – Exeunt Frankenstein and Agatha)

Enter Felix and Safie from house.

FELIX. Listen, Safie, to those merry village bells; they ring a rare contrast to our last night's misery. Soon, my eastern Rose, will they chime for us; and then away with care. This kiss – *(Embracing her.)*

SAFIE. Fie, Felix! In open daylight. You will deepen the blush of your Eastern rose.

DUET – SAFIE AND FELIX

Come with me, dear, to my mountain home,
And Hymen shall hallow the peaceful dome.
Leave all the world for love and for me,
And I will be all the world to thee.
Our life shall be all holiday –
Shall be all holiday.
Come o’er the dew-bespangled vale,
Where the violet blue and primrose pale
Peep from the verdant shade.
Come o’er the dew-bespangled vale,
Where the violet blue and primrose pale,
Where the violet blue and primrose pale
Peep from the verdant shade.
Come o’er the dew, &c., &c.

We’ll fly to the shady grove,
And sign and whisper, love,
Till day begins to fade,
Till day begins, &c., &c.
We’ll roam, and I will woo thee, love,
Where birds sing sweetly through the grove –
Where birds sing sweetly thro’ the grove
Till day begins to fade.

We’ll roam, and I will woo thee, love,
Where birds sing sweetly thro’ the grove –
While birds sing, &c., &c., &c.

Music, with the bells. – Enter Madame Ninon, leading a group of Dancing Villagers, from the terrace entrance, and Elizabeth, with Clerval, re-enter.

NIN. Now, Madame Elizabeth – now, Mr. Clerval – we are all ready, and the priest is in waiting.

Music resumed. – Elizabeth and Clerval, as also Safie and Felix, join the procession, and all the villagers dance off to music along the terrace, except Madame Ninon.

NIN. There they go to be coupled, pretty dears! *(Calls.)* Fritz! Fritz! Where is my stupid husband? I've stretched my neck out of joint looking for him. I expect him from the market at Geneva with a cargo of eatables and my new-fashioned beehive cap – all for our wedding festival of Mr. Frankenstein, who has brought his bride and family here in consequence, as I am told, of their cottage being accidentally destroyed by fire last night. Oh! here the fellow comes, with a basket on his back, creeping like a snail.

Enter Fritz, from the terrace entrance, with hamper at his back containing various articles, a lady's cap, and a live duck.

FRITZ. Here I am, spousy. I've brought your list of articles.

Ninon assists him in putting down his basket.

There's the trout, and the sugar-loaf, and the melons, and the nutmegs.

NIN. But dear Fritz, where's my new beehive [cap] you were to bring from the milliner's at Geneva?

FRITZ. Somewhere, I know. *(Looking and examining the contents of the hamper, cautiously opening the top.)* The three live ducks are lying a top of the maccaroni, squeezed up under the large Gruyere cheese.

NIN. I hope to goodness my cap is not squeezed up!

FRITZ. It's quite safe, I tell you. I put it at the very bottom of the basket.

NIN. It will be in a nice state for my head, then!

FRITZ. lord, here's a rummaging fuss for the cap. I was so nervous about it – you cautioned me so, you know. *(Still kneeling and searching the hamper.)* Oh, dear, where is it now? Oh, la, to be sure, spousy – here it is at last; la, I knew it was safe. *(He pulls the cap out, with a live duck in it.)*

NIN. *(Takes her cap from him.)* Oh, Fritz, it's spoiled! That duck has been *laying* in it.

FRITZ. Not an egg, I hope, Ninon!

NIN. Alas! see how it is rumpled. *(She takes from the cap two or three of the duck's small feathers, which fall on the stage.)*

FRITZ. *(Aside.)* Ha! – he! he! Cap and feathers!

NIN. You careless, good-for-nothing dog!

FRITZ. *(Aside.)* Dog and Duck!

NIN. Take the basket in, you sinner! *(Having first replaced her cap in the hamper.)*

FRITZ. Oh! *(To the duck.)* You look very jolly, my fine fellow, considering you are going to be killed for dinner. Wait till the peas are ready! I never seen such a piece of *quackery* as that cap in all my life!

Draws the basket after him into the house, and comes forward during the duet.

NIN. My finery destroyed by that varlet! But even *that* shall not disconcert me. My sweet mistress is united to-day to the man of her heart, and in spite of my cap I will be merry, and dance till [I'm so old] I can dance no longer.

DUET– NINON AND FRITZ

(Welsh air.)

NIN. Oh! I'll hail the wedding day,
And be the gayest of the gay,
Till age has tripp'd my steps away.

FRITZ. *(Re-entering from house.)* Away!

NIN. Your manners were not taught in France.

FRITZ. La, wife! when you're too old to Dance –
A horse at sixty – *(Aside.)* – cannot prance –
Ah, nay!

NIN. While pipes and tabors playing sweetly,
With all my soul I'll foot it featly,

FRITZ.. Yes, I guess you'll hobble neatly.
Wife!

NIN. Don't wife me, you saucy fellow!
Sure you're tipsy –

FRITZ. Only mellow.
We'll all be so, for that is fun and life!

TOGETHER. Don't wife me, you saucy fellow.
I won't wife you, I'm only mellow.

NIN. I ne'er was tipsy.

FRITZ. You ne'er was tipsy, only mellow.
Wife!

Fritz dances her up to the house, Ninon turns, boxes his ear, and they exeunt into house.

Music. – The Demon appears from terrace entrance, watching about, and retreats as Fritz re-enters from house.

FRITZ. Oh! (Rubbing his cheek.) What's the use of a fine cap to her? she's so short, unless she stood upon a chair, in the crowd – no one would see her, or her new-fashioned bee-hive either.

During the above speech, William comes from the house, behind Fritz on tiptoe, and gives Fritz a smart smack on the back, who being fearfully alarmed, cries out lustily.

Oh, bless my soul! There now, that’s just the way to make me nervous again. What do you want, Master William?

WILL. I can’t get a soul to speak to me in the house – some are busy – some are going to be married – will you play with me, Fritz?

FRITZ. I like a game of play – it’s so relaxing. When work was over I used to play with my cow.

WILL. (Throwing a ball.) Run and fetch that ball –

FRITZ. Lord, my dear, that’s very fatiguing. – What a way you’ve thrown it – right among the cauliflowers.

Music – Goes off. Demon suddenly appears at the railing – watches the Child – Fritz returns.

FRITZ. Here it is, Master Willy! There’s your ball, William Frankenstein.

WILL. Now again.

FRITZ. La – no – you give me more trouble than your brother used in his laboratory – when he –

William throws the ball behind the balustrade.

I won’t fetch it – you may find it yourself –

Demon points to William – intimating that the boy must be dear to Frankenstein.

WILL. If you are too idle to go – I’m not –

FRITZ. I shan’t look –

William goes to the balustrade. – The Demon suddenly seizes him.

WILL. Help! help! help!

FRITZ. Ah – that won’t do – that won’t do, young master – I’m not to be had –

WILL. Help! help!

Music. The Demon stops the boy’s mouth – and throws him across his shoulder – Fritz turns – sees them – utters a cry of horror – the Demon rushes off.

FRITZ. Help! help! murder – wife! wife! the devil – oh my nerves!

(Runs off)

SCENE II:*A Country View. Rustic Church in the distance. A large Yew Tree, spread plentifully with boughs. Music. – A Foreground with pathway behind it. The procession, as before, returning from the marriage ceremony. The corps de ballet, Villagers, preceding, dancing, followed by Felix, Safie, Clerval, and Elizabeth.*

[CONGRATULATORY SESTETTO

[Agatha – Safie – Elizabeth – Felix – Clerval and Bass

[Since all to beauty's rip'ning bloom
[Their cheerful homage pay,
[Be not displeas'd that we presume
[To hail thy bridal day.

[But if, by Time's all conquering hand,
[Thy bloom must wear away,
[The roses of thy mind shall stand
[And never more decay.]

NIN. *(heard without.)* Oh, mistress! Oh!

FRITZ. I couldn't help it – murder!

Ninon and Fritz enter.

NIN. But where did you leave him?

FRITZ. He left me – Oh dear – *(Cries.)* Murder!

NIN. Oh wretched fate!

ELIZ. What is the matter, good Ninon?

NIN. William, your brother William is the matter; the boy is lost. I sent him to that Fritz, that he might be out of the way.

FRITZ. Yes; and now he’s out of everybody’s way.

ELIZ. This is most extraordinary – a frolic of the little rogue.

FRITZ. No, no, it isn’t; I saw – my nerves! Oh, dear! I saw – a great something snatch him up. *(Cries.)* I – oh dear – oh dear. Oh! murder!

CLER. Here’s Frankenstein.

Enter Frankenstein, with a pistol.

ELIZ. My dear Victor, know you aught of William? The child has been missed in a most unaccountable manner.

FRANK. My brother missing!

NIN. Fritz was with him.

FRITZ. Oh, master! a great creature – [wrapped in a mantle] oh! oh! oh! [*(Cries.)* murder!]

FRANK. *[(Aside.)* No sooner has the idea crossed my imagination than I am convinced of its truth – the horrible Demon!]

CLER. Hasten, my friends, one and all – all search. Our pastime is marr'd till the boy is found.

Music. – All exeunt in consternation at different entrances, excepting Frankenstein, who appears lost in desponding reverie. – He turns; the boughs of the yew tree are pulled apart, and the Demon is discovered behind it, with William in his grasp. – Frankenstein draws a pistol, and points it – the Demon holds forth the child, when Frankenstein lowers his pistol, and kneels. – The Demon again shoulders the child, and rushes off within the path. – Frankenstein rises, and pursues them in despair.

SCENE III: *An Apartment in the Villa Belrive. – A wide folding window opening to the Garden, closed. A table with red baize covering.*

Enter Agatha and Ninon.

NIN. The most unaccountable disappearance of my dear little boy, at such a moment – on such a day – when we should have been so merry!

AGA. It is indeed strange and fearful; let us hope that William will soon be discovered, and brought home. *(Aside.)* The wild phantom that fired our cottage, surely, is not concerned.

NIN. I can do nothing but think of William – that is your room, ma'am – *(Pointing to the* door.) – you will find it well furnished – with such sweet blue eyes – everything is comfortable – unhappy little boy! There's a fire grate in the room – with two little dimples on each cheek! There's a cabinet in the corner – curly locks! Forgive me, ma'am; I fostered the pretty child, and I cannot get him out of my head.

AGA. Pray leave me, Ninon, and give me the earliest intelligence of Mr. Frankenstein's return.

NIN. All the festivities of the wedding-day destroyed, till this dear unlucky urchin is found. [Bless me the large looking glass, with the curtain undrawn – well, it may e'en remain so – for we cannot be gay till the truant comes back.] *(Sobbing.)* The sweet little, naughty, rosy-cheek'd rogue! how I will whip him when he comes home. *(Exit Ninon)*

During the above the Demon is seen at the window watching, and disappears.

AGA. Frankenstein! what a singular fatality is attached to you – with wealth and friends, doomed to be miserable! – This mystery! – I feel a heavy foreboding of mischance! a presentiment of evil pervades my mind. I may regret the day that I have again met Frankenstein – I may rue the hour that I left our humble hut.

(Exit Agatha to Room)

Afterwards, enter Frankenstein, reflecting – two pistols in his belt.

FRANK. One sudden and desolating change has taken place – the fangs of remorse tear my bosom and will not forgo their hold! – pursue the Demon! One might as well attempt to overtake the winds, or confine a mountain torrent. My poor Brother – I – I am thy murderer – the author of unalterable evils. [I live in momentary fear lest the monster I have created should still commit some signal crime which by its enormity will almost efface the recollection of the past.] There is scope for fear, so long as anything I love remains. *(Goes to door.)* Agatha! she reclines sleeping on yon sofa [– yesternight's fatigue.]

Music. – The Demon during the above soliloquy reappears on the balcony of the window – and while Frankenstein is looking in at the door, the Demon creeps in at the window, crouching beneath the table, unseen.

Sleep on, sweet innocence! I dare not leave you; I will stay and guard your slumber, or the remorseless Demon will snatch your breath away.

Music. – Frankenstein takes out a pistol and primes it – lays it on the table.

The wretch ev'n now may be haunting the room – let me search around.

[Searches – The Demon eludes him – Frankenstein goes to the curtain which covers the glass.

This Drapery which covers the glass may conceal the monster.

Frankenstein feels the drapery fearfully with the point of the sword – while Frankenstein is thus employed – Demon creeps along the floor into Agatha's room – Frankenstein draws the curtain – Agatha's door is reflected in the glass.]

Oh, Agatha! would that I had banished myself for ever from my native country, and wandered a friendless outcast over the earth, rather than I had again met you – perhaps to bring you in the grasp of my fiendish adversary – perhaps to – *(A piercing scream.)* – My blood curdles! that shriek! Ah! What do I behold!

In the large glass – Agatha appears on her knees with a veil over her head. – The Demon with his hand on her throat – she falls – the Demon disappears after tearing a locket from Agatha's neck.

My last, last hope! *(Rushes into room.)*

The figure of Frankenstein appears in the glass, kneeling over the body of Agatha. The Demon crosses by the window in a boat with great swiftness – exulting.

SCENE IV:*An Ante-chamber in Belrive.*

Enter Elizabeth, hastily, meeting Ninon. – Music ceases.

ELIZ. Whence is this fresh alarm?

NIN. I know not madam. Oh, wretched day for poor Ninon! Mr. Frankenstein is stark mad; he ran but out this instant, jumped into his boat, and rowed off rapidly.

Enter Fritz, alarmed.

FRITZ. Oh, oh, oh! – I've seen it – seen it again! The great monster, it got out of one of our windows and scudded off in a boat, and there's Mr. Frankenstein got another boat, and is going after the great creature like lightning.

ELIZ. Where – where are our friends?

FRITZ. Mr. Clerval and Mr. Felix have followed Mr. Frankenstein.

SAFIE. *(Without.)* Help! ah, help!

Enter Safie hastily, throws herself into the arms of Elizabeth.

SAFIE. Ah Madam! Agatha, my sister – the gentle Agatha – I fear, is no more!

OMNES. Agatha!

ELIZ. Gracious Heaven! what horrible destiny hangs over us?

SAFIE. Stretched on the ground she lies! [a livid mark on her neck!) Ah! Elizabeth, the spark of life may yet not be extinct.

ELIZ. Hasten – hasten to the room. *(Exeunt hastily)*

Hurried Music.

SCENE V: *Wild Border of the Lake. At the extremity of the stage, a lofty over-hanging mountain of snow.*

Music. – All the Gipsies discovered in various groups. A pistol shot is heard. The Gipsies start up alarmed. A second pistol is fired nearer. The Demon rushes on with the locket worn by Agatha, during the piece. The Gipsies scream out and fly in all directions. Hammerpan is on the point of *escaping, when the Demon seizes him, and Hammerpan falls down on being dragged back. The Demon points off to intimate that Frankenstein is approaching, throws down the locket, commands the gipsy, Hammerpan, to show it to Frankenstein – the Demon threatens him, and rushing up the mountain, climbs, and disappears. Enter Frankenstein, with two loaded pistols and a musket unloaded. – At the same time Hammerpan rises and gets near first wing.*

FRANK. In vain do I pursue the wretch, in vain have I fired on him. *(Throws his gun from him.)* He eludes the bullet. Say, fellow, have you seen aught pass here?

HAM. The giant creature, who aroused us in the forest, rushed upon me but this instant, and pointing to the path by which you came, intimated that I should give you this. *(Presents locket to Frankenstein.)*

FRANK. 'Tis Agatha's – the murdered Agatha! Malicious fiend! it will joy you to know that my lacerated heart bleeds afresh. Revenge shall henceforth be the devouring and only passion of my soul. I have but one resource – I devote myself either in my life or death to the destruction of the Demon. Agatha! William! you shall be avenged!

HAM. See yonder *(Points.)* the monster climbs the snow.

FRANK. Then this rencontre shall terminate his detested life or mine.

Music. – Frankenstein draws his pistol – rushes off at back of stage. – The gipsies return at various entrances. – At the same time, enter Felix and Clerval with pistols, and Safie, Elizabeth, and Ninon following. – The Demon appears at the base of the mountain, Frankenstein pursuing.

CLER. Behold our friend and his mysterious enemy.

FELIX. See – Frankenstein aims his musket at him – let us follow and assist him.*(Is going up stage with Clerval.)*

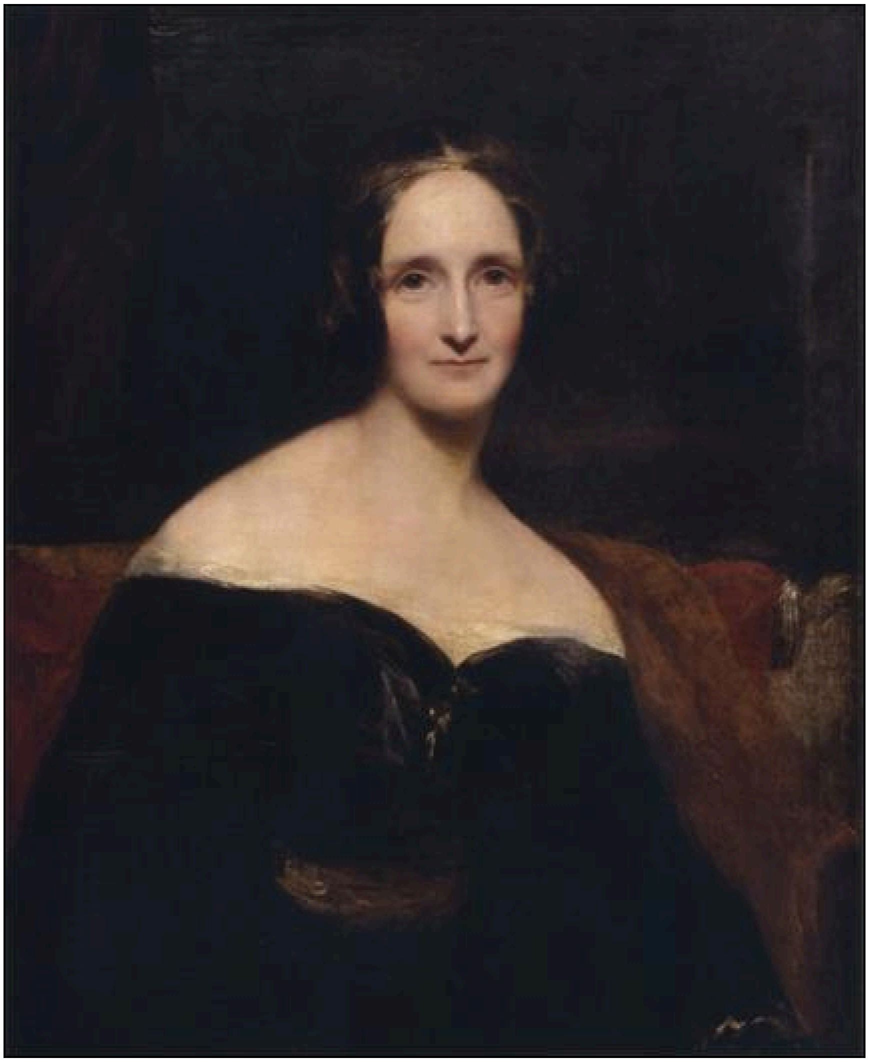
HAM. Hold master! if the gun is fired, it will bring down a mountain of snow [on their heads.] Many an avalanche has fallen there.

[FELIX. He fires –]

Music. – Frankenstein discharges his musket. – The Demon and Frankenstein meet at the very extremity of the stage. – Frankenstein fires – the avalanche falls and annihilates the Demon and Frankenstein. – A heavy fall of snow succeeds. – Loud thunder heard, and all the characters form a picture as the curtain falls.

Finis

The Biographies



Richard Rothwell's portrait of Mary Shelley was shown at the Royal Academy in 1840, accompanied by lines from Percy Shelley's poem 'The Revolt of Islam' describing her as a "child of love and light".

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY by Florence A. Thomas Marshall

In 1889 Florence Ashton Thomas Marshall published *The Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.* Marshall was an English writer and composer, who was born in Italy in 1843 and studied at the Royal Academy of Music. She and her husband Julian Marshall were founding members of the British charity The Royal Musical Association.

CONTENTS

PREFACE
CHAPTER I
CHAPTER II
CHAPTER III
CHAPTER IV
CHAPTER V
CHAPTER VI
CHAPTER VII
CHAPTER VIII
CHAPTER IX
CHAPTER X
CHAPTER XI
CHAPTER XII
CHAPTER XIII
CHAPTER XIV
CHAPTER XV
CHAPTER XVI
CHAPTER XVII
CHAPTER XVIII
CHAPTER XIX
CHAPTER XX
CHAPTER XXI
CHAPTER XXII
CHAPTER XXIII
CHAPTER XXIV
POSTSCRIPT

PREFACE

The following biography was undertaken at the request of Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, and has been compiled from the MS. journals and letters in their possession, which were entrusted to me, without reserve, for this purpose.

The earlier portions of the journal having been placed also at Professor Dowden's disposal for his *Life of Shelley*, it will be found that in my first volume many passages indispensable to a life of Mary Shelley have already appeared, in one form or another, in Professor Dowden's pages. This fact I have had to ignore, having indeed settled on the quotations necessary to my narrative before the *Life of Shelley* appeared. They are given without comment or dilution, just as they occur; where omissions are made it is in order to avoid repetition, or because the everyday entries refer to trivial circumstances uninteresting to the general reader.

Letters which have previously been published are shortened when they are only of moderate interest; unpublished letters are given complete wherever possible.

Those who hope to find in these pages much new circumstantial evidence on the vexed subject of Shelley's separation from his first wife will be disappointed. No contemporary document now exists which puts the case beyond the reach of argument. Collateral evidence is not wanting, but even were this not beyond the scope of the present work it would be wrong on the strength of it to assert more than that Shelley himself felt certain of his wife's unfaithfulness. Of that there is no doubt, nor of the fact that all such evidence as did afterwards transpire went to prove him more likely to have been right than wrong in his belief.

My first thanks are due to Sir Percy and Lady Shelley for the use of their invaluable documents, — for the photographs of original pictures which form the basis of the illustrations, — and last, not least, for their kindly help and sympathy during the fulfilment of my task.

I wish especially to express my gratitude to Mrs. Charles Call for her kind permission to me to print the letters of her father, Mr. Trelawny, which are among the most interesting of my unpublished materials.

I have to thank Miss Stuart, from whom I obtained important letters from Mr. Baxter and Godwin; and Mr. A. C. Haden, through whom I made the acquaintance of Miss Christy Baxter.

To Professor Dowden, and, above all, to Mr. Garnett, I am indebted for much valuable help, I may say, of all kinds.

Florence A. Marshall.

CHAPTER I

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
I wonder not, for one then left the earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory: still her fame
Shines on thee thro' the tempest dark and wild
Which shakes these latter days; and thou canst claim
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.
Shelley.

"So you really have seen Godwin, and had little Mary in your arms! the only offspring of a union that will certainly be matchless in the present generation." So, in 1798, wrote Sir Henry Taylor's mother to her husband, who had travelled from Durham to London for the purpose of making acquaintance with the famous author of *Political Justice*.

This "little Mary," the daughter of William and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, was destined herself to form a union the memory of which will live even longer than that of her illustrious parents. She is remembered as *Mary Shelley*, wife of the poet. In any complete account of his life she plays, next to his, the most important part. Young as she was during the few years they passed together, her character and her intellect were strong enough to affect, to modify, in some degree to mould his. That he became what he did is in great measure due to her. This, if nothing more were known of her, would be sufficient to stamp her as a remarkable woman, of rare ability and moral excellence, well deserving of a niche in the almost universal biographical series of the present day. But, besides this, she would have been eminent among her sex at any time, in any circumstances, and would, it cannot be doubted, have achieved greater personal fame than she actually did but for the fact that she became, at a very early age, the wife of Shelley. Not only has his name overshadowed her, but the circumstances of her association with him were such as to check to a considerable extent her own sources of invention and activity. Had that freedom been her lot in which her mother's destiny shaped itself, her talents must have asserted themselves as not inferior, as in some respects superior, to those of Mary Wollstonecraft. This is the answer to the question, sometimes asked, — as if, in becoming Shelley's wife, she had forfeited all claim to individual consideration, — why any separate Life of her should be written at all. Even as a completion of Shelley's own story, Mary's Life is necessary. There remains the fact that her husband's biographers have been busy with her name. It is impossible now to pass it over in silence and indifference. She has been variously misunderstood. It has been her lot to be idealised as one who gave up all for love, and to be condemned and anathematised for the very same reason. She has been extolled for perfections she did not possess, and decried for the absence of those she possessed in the highest degree. She has been lauded as a genius, and depreciated as one overrated, whose talent would never have been heard of at all but for the name of Shelley. To her husband she has been esteemed alternately a blessing and the reverse.

As a fact, it is probable that no woman of like endowments and promise ever abdicated her own individuality in favour of another so transcendently greater. To consider Mary altogether apart from Shelley is, indeed, not possible, but the study of the effect, on life and character, of this memorable union is unique of its kind. From Shelley's point of view it has been variously considered; from Mary's, as yet, not at all.

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin was born on the 30th of August 1797.

Her father, the philosopher and philosophical novelist, William Godwin, began his career as a Dissenting minister in Norfolk, and something of the preacher's character adhered to him all his life. Not the apostolic preacher. No enthusiasm of faith or devotion, no constraining fervour, eliciting the like in others, were his, but a calm, earnest, philosophic spirit, with an irresistible impulse to guide and advise others.

This same calm rationalism got the better, in no long time, of his religious creed, which he seems to have abandoned slowly, gradually, and deliberately, without painful struggle. His religion, of the head alone, was easily replaced by other views for which intellectual qualities were all-sufficient. Of a cool, unemotional temperament, safe from any snares of passion or imagination, he became the very type of a town philosopher. Abstractions of the intellect and the philosophy of politics were his world. He had a true townsman's love of the theatre, but external nature for the most part left him unaffected, as it found him. With the most exalted opinion of his own genius and merit, he was nervously susceptible to the criticism of others, yet always ready to combat any judgment unfavourable to himself. Never weary of argument, he thought that by its means, conducted on lines of reason, all questions might be finally settled, all problems satisfactorily and speedily solved. Hence the fascination he possessed for those in doubt and distress of mind. Cool rather than cold-hearted, he had a certain benignity of nature which, joined to intellectual exaltation, passed as warmth and fervour. His kindness was very great to young men at the "storm and stress" period of their lives. They for their part thought that, as he was delighted to enter into, discuss and analyse their difficulties, he must, himself, have felt all these difficulties and have overcome them; and, whether they followed his proffered advice or not, they never failed to look up to him as an oracle.

Friendships Godwin had, but of love he seems to have kept absolutely clear until at the age of forty-three he met Mary Wollstonecraft. He had not much believed in love as a disturbing element, and had openly avowed in his writings that he thought it usurped far too large a place in the ordinary plan of human life. He did not think it needful to reckon with passion or emotion as factors in the sum of existence, and in his ideal programme they played no part at all.

Mary Wollstonecraft was in all respects his opposite. Her ardent, impulsive, Irish nature had stood the test of an early life of much unhappiness. Her childhood's home had been a wretched one; suffering and hardship were her earliest companions. She had had not only to maintain herself, but to be the support of others weaker than herself, and many of these had proved unworthy of her devotion. But her rare nature had risen superior to these trials, which, far from crushing her, elicited her finest qualities.

The indignation aroused in her by injustice and oppression, her revolt against the consecrated tyranny of conventionality, impelled her to raise her voice in behalf of the weak and unfortunate. The book which made her name famous, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, won for her then, as it has done since, an admiration from half of mankind only equalled by the reprobation of the other half. Yet most of its theories, then considered so dangerously extreme, would to-day be contested by few, although the frankness of expression thought so shocking now attracted no special notice then, and indicated no coarseness of feeling, but only the habit of calling things by their names.

In 1792, desiring to become better acquainted with the French language, and also to follow on the spot the development of France's efforts in the cause of freedom, she went to Paris, where, in a short time, owing to the unforeseen progress of the Revolution, she was virtually imprisoned, in the sense of being unable to return to England. Here she met Captain Gilbert Imlay, an American, between whom and herself an attachment sprang up, and whose wife, in all but the legal and religious ceremony, she became. This step she took in full conscientiousness. Had she married Imlay she must have openly declared her true position as a British subject, an act which would have been fraught with the most dangerous, perhaps fatal consequences to them both. A woman of strong religious feeling, she had upheld the sanctity of marriage in her writings, yet not on religious grounds. The heart of marriage, and reason for it, with her, was love. She regarded herself as Imlay's lawful wife, and had perfect faith in his constancy. It wore out, however, and after causing her much suspense, anxiety, and affliction, he finally left her with a little girl some eighteen months old. Her grief was excessive, and for a time threatened to affect her reason. But her healthy temperament prevailed, and the powerful tie of maternal love saved her from the consequences of despair. It was well for her that she had to work hard at her literary occupations to support herself and her little daughter.

It was at this juncture that she became acquainted with William Godwin. They had already met once, before Mary's sojourn in France, but at this first interview neither was impressed by the other. Since her return to London he had shunned her because she was too much talked about in society. Imagining her to be obtrusively "strong-minded" and deficient in delicacy, he was too strongly prejudiced against her even to read her books. But by degrees he was won over. He saw her warmth of heart, her generous temper, her vigour of intellect; he saw too that she had suffered. Such susceptibility as he had was fanned into warmth. His critical acumen could not but detect her rare quality and worth, although the keen sense of humour and Irish charm which fascinated others may, with him, have told against her for a time. But the nervous vanity which formed his closest link with ordinary human nature must have been flattered by the growing preference of one so widely admired, and whom he discovered to be even more deserving of admiration and esteem than the world knew. As to her, accustomed as she was to homage, she may have felt that for the first time she was justly appreciated, and to her wounded and smarting susceptibilities this balm of appreciation must have been immeasurable. Her first freshness of feeling had been wasted on a love which proved to have been one-sided and which had recoiled on itself. To love and be loved again was the beginning of a new life for her. And so it came about that the coldest of men and the warmest of women found their happiness in each other. Thus drawn together, the discipline afforded to her nature by the rudest realities of life, to his by the severities of study, had been such as to promise a growing and a lasting companionship and affection.

In the short memoir of his wife, prefixed by Godwin to his published collection of her letters, he has given his own account, a touching one, of the growth and recognition of their love.

The partiality we conceived for each other was in that mode which I have always considered as the purest and most refined style of love. It would have been impossible for the most minute observer to have said who was before and who was after. One sex did not take the priority which long-established custom has awarded it, nor the other overstep that delicacy which is so severely imposed. I am not conscious that either party can assume to have the agent or the patient, the toil spreader or the prey, in the affair. When in the course of things the disclosure came, there was nothing in a manner for either party to disclose to the other....

There was no period of throes and resolute explanation attendant on the tale. It was friendship melting into love.

They did not, however, marry at once. Godwin’s opinion of marriage, looked on as indissoluble, was that it was “a law, and the worst of all laws.” In accordance with this view, the ceremony did not take place till their union had lasted some months, and when it did, it was regarded by Godwin in the light of a distinct concession. He expresses himself most decisively on this point in a letter to his friend, Mr. Wedgwood of Etruria (printed by Mr. Kegan Paul in his memoirs of Godwin), announcing his marriage, which had actually taken place a month before, but had been kept secret.

Some persons have found an inconsistency between my practice in this instance and my doctrines. But I cannot see it. The doctrine of my *Political Justice* is, that an attachment in some degree permanent between two persons of opposite sexes is right, but that marriage, as practised in European countries, is wrong. I still adhere to that opinion. Nothing but a regard for the happiness of the individual, which I have no right to ignore, could have induced me to submit to an institution which I wish to see abolished, and which I would recommend to my fellow-men never to practise but with the greatest caution. Having done what I thought was necessary for the peace and respectability of the individual, I hold myself no otherwise bound than I was before the ceremony took place.

It is certain that he did not repent his concession. But their wedded happiness was of short duration. On 30th August 1797 a little girl was born to them.

All seemed well at first with the mother. But during the night which followed alarming symptoms made their appearance. For a time it was hoped that these had been overcome, and a deceptive rally of two days set Godwin free from anxiety. But a change for the worst supervened, and after four days of intense suffering, sweetly and patiently borne, Mary died, and Godwin was again alone.

CHAPTER II

August 1797-June 1812

Alone, in the sense of absence of companionship, but not alone in the sense that he was before, for, when he lost his wife, two helpless little girl-lives were left dependent on him. One was Fanny, Mary Wollstonecraft's child by Imlay, now three and a half years old; the other the newly-born baby, named after her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, and the subject of this memoir.

The tenderness of her mother's warm heart, her father's ripe wisdom, the rich inheritance of intellect and genius which was her birthright, all these seemed to promise her the happiest of childhoods. But these bright prospects were clouded within a few hours of her birth by that change in her mother's condition which, ten days later, ended in death.

The little infant was left to the care of a father of much theoretic wisdom but profound practical ignorance, so confirmed in his old bachelor ways by years and habit that, even when love so far conquered him as to make him quit the single state, he declined family life, and carried on a double existence, taking rooms a few doors from his wife's home, and combining the joys — as yet none of the cares — of matrimony with the independence, and as much as possible of the irresponsibility, of bachelorhood. Godwin's sympathies with childhood had been first elicited by his intercourse with little Fanny Imlay, whom, from the time of his union, he treated as his own daughter, and to whom he was unvaryingly kind and indulgent.

He moved at once after his wife's death into the house, Polygon, Somers Town, where she had lived, and took up his abode there with the two children. They had a nurse, and various lady friends of the Godwins, Mrs. Reveley and others, gave occasional assistance or superintendence. An experiment was tried of a lady-housekeeper which, however, failed, as the lady in becoming devoted to the children showed a disposition to become devoted to Godwin also, construing civilities into marked attentions, resenting fancied slights, and becoming at last an insupportable thorn in the poor philosopher's side. His letters speak of his despondency and feeling of unfitness to have the care of these young creatures devolved on him, and with this sense there came also the renewed perception of the rare maternal qualities of the wife he had lost.

"The poor children!" he wrote, six weeks after his bereavement. "I am myself totally unfitted to educate them. The scepticism which perhaps sometimes leads me right in matters of speculation is torment to me when I would attempt to direct the infant mind. I am the most unfit person for this office; she was the best qualified in the world. What a change! The loss of the children is less remediless than mine. You can understand the difference."

The immediate consequence of this was that he, who had passed so many years in contented bachelorhood, made, within a short time, repeated proposals of marriage to different ladies, some of them urged with a pertinacity nothing short of ludicrous, so ingenuously and argumentatively plain does he make it that he found it simply incredible any woman should refuse him to whom he had condescended to propose. His former objections to marriage are never now alluded to and seem relegated to the category of obsolete theories. Nothing testifies so strongly to his married happiness as his constant efforts to recover any part of it, and his faith in the possibility of doing so. In 1798 he proposed again and again to a Miss Lee whom he had not seen half a dozen times. In 1799 he importuned the beautiful Mrs. Reveley, who had, herself, only been a widow for a month, to marry him. He was really attached to her, and was much wounded when, not long after, she married a Mr. Gisborne.

During Godwin's preoccupations and occasional absences, the kindest and most faithful friend the children had was James Marshall, who acted as Godwin's amanuensis, and was devotedly attached to him and all who belonged to him.

In 1801 Godwin married a Mrs. Clairmont, his next-door neighbour, a widow with a son, Charles, about Fanny's age, and a daughter, Jane, somewhat younger than little Mary. The new Mrs. Godwin was a clever, bustling, second-rate woman, glib of tongue and pen, with a temper undisciplined and uncontrolled; not bad-hearted, but with a complete absence of all the finer sensibilities; possessing a fund of what is called "knowledge of the world," and a plucky, enterprising, happy-go-lucky disposition, which seemed to the philosophic and unpractical Godwin, in its way, a manifestation of genius. Besides, she was clever enough to admire

Godwin, and frank enough to tell him so, points which must have been greatly in her favour.

Although her father's remarriage proved a source of lifelong unhappiness to Mary, it may not have been a bad thing for her and Fanny at the time. Instead of being left to the care of servants, with the occasional supervision of chance friends, they were looked after with solicitous, if not always the most judicious care. The three little girls were near enough of an age to be companions to each other, but Fanny was the senior by three years and a half. She bore Godwin's name, and was considered and treated as the eldest daughter of the house.

Godwin's worldly circumstances were at all times most precarious, nor had he the capability or force of will to establish them permanently on a better footing. His earnings from his literary works were always forestalled long before they were due, and he was in the constant habit of applying to his friends for loans or advances of money which often could only be repaid by similar aid from some other quarter.

In the hope of mending their fortunes a little, Mrs. Godwin, in 1805, induced her husband to make a venture as a publisher. He set up a small place of business in Hanway Street, in the name of his foreman, Baldwin, deeming that his own name might operate prejudicially with the public on account of his advanced political and social opinions, and also that his own standing in the literary world might suffer did it become known that he was connected with trade.

Mrs. Godwin was the chief practical manager in this business, which finally involved her husband in ruin, but for a time promised well enough. The chief feature in the enterprise was a "Magazine of Books for the use and amusement of children," published by Godwin under the name of Baldwin; books of history, mythology, and fable, all admirably written for their special purpose. He used to test his juvenile works by reading them to his children and observing the effect. Their remark would be (so he says), "How easy this is! Why, we learn it by heart almost as fast as we read it." "Their suffrage," he adds, "gave me courage, and I carried on my work to the end." Mrs. Godwin translated, for the business, several childrens' books from the French. Among other works specially written, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* owes its existence to "M. J. Godwin & Co.," the name under which the firm was finally established.

New and larger premises were taken in Skinner Street, Holborn, and in the autumn of 1807 the whole family, which now included five young ones, of whom Charles Clairmont was the eldest, and William, the son of Godwin and his second wife, the youngest, removed to a house next door to the publishing office. Here they remained until 1822.

No continuous record exists of the family life, and the numerous letters of Godwin and Mrs. Godwin when either was absent from home contain only occasional references to it. Both parents were too much occupied with business systematically to superintend the children's education. Mrs. Godwin, however, seems to have taken a bustling interest in ordering it, and scrupulously refers to Godwin all points of doubt or discussion. From his letters one would judge that, while he gave due attention to each point, discussing *pros* and *cons* with his deliberate impartiality, his wife practically decided everything. Although they sometimes quarrelled (on one occasion to the extent of seriously proposing to separate) they always made it up again, nor is there any sign that on the subject of the children's training they ever had any real difference of opinion. Mrs. Godwin's jealous fussiness gave Godwin abundant opportunities for the exercise of philosophy, and to the inherent untruthfulness of her manner and speech he remained strangely and philosophically blind. From allusions in letters we gather that the children had a daily governess, with occasional lessons from a master, Mr. Burton. It is often asserted that Mrs. Godwin was a harsh and cruel stepmother, who made the children's home miserable. There is nothing to prove this. Later on, when moral guidance and sympathy were needed, she fell short indeed of what she might have been. But for the material wellbeing of the children she cared well enough, and was at any rate desirous that they should be happy, whether or not she always took the best means of making them so. And Godwin placed full confidence in her practical powers.

In May 1811 Mrs. Godwin and all the children except Fanny, who stayed at home to keep house for Godwin, went for sea-bathing to Margate, moving afterwards to Ramsgate. This had been urged by Mr. Cline, the family doctor, for the good of little Mary, who, during some years of her otherwise healthy girlhood, suffered from a weakness in one arm. They boarded at the house of a Miss Petman, who kept a ladies' school, but had their sleeping apartments at an inn or other lodging. Mary, however, was sent to stay altogether at Miss Petman’s, in order to be quiet, and in particular to be out of the way of little William, “he made so boisterous a noise when going to bed at night.”

The sea-breezes soon worked the desired effect. “Mary’s arm is better,” writes Mrs. Godwin on the 10th of June. “She begins to move and use it.” So marked and rapid was the improvement that Mrs. Godwin thought it would be as well to leave her behind for a longer stay when the rest returned to town, and wrote to consult Godwin about it. His answer is characteristic.

When I do not answer any of the lesser points in your letters, it is because I fully agree with you, and therefore do not think it necessary to draw out an answer point by point, but am content to assent by silence.... This was the case as to Mary’s being left in the care of Miss Petman. It was recommended by Mr. Cline from the first that she should stay six months; to this recommendation we both assented. It shall be so, if it can, and undoubtedly I conceived you, on the spot, most competent to select the residence.

Mary accordingly remained at Miss Petman’s as a boarder, perhaps as a pupil also, till 19th December, when, from her father’s laconic but minute and scrupulously accurate diary, we learn that she returned home. For the next five months she was in Skinner Street, participating in its busy, irregular family life, its ups and downs, its anxieties, discomforts, and amusements, its keen intellectual activity and lively interest in social and literary matters, in all of which the young people took their full share. Entries are frequent in Godwin’s diary of visits to the theatre, of tea-drinkings, of guests of all sorts at home. One of these guests affords us, in his journal, some agreeable glimpses into the Godwin household.

This was the celebrated Aaron Burr, sometime Vice-President of the United States, now an exile and a wanderer in Europe.

At the time of his election he had got into disgrace with his party, and, when nominated for the Governorship of New York, he had been opposed and defeated by his former allies. The bitter contest led to a duel between him and Alexander Hamilton, in which the latter was killed. Disfranchised by the laws of New York for having fought a duel, and indicted (though acquitted) for murder in New Jersey, Burr set out on a journey through the Western States, nourishing schemes of sedition and revenge. When he purchased 400,000 acres of land on the Red River, and gave his adherents to understand that the Spanish Dominions were to be conquered, his proceedings excited alarm. President Jefferson issued a proclamation against him, and he was arrested on a charge of high treason. Nothing could, however, be positively proved, and after a six months' trial he was liberated. He at once started for Europe, having planned an attack on Mexico, for which he hoped to get funds and adherents. He was disappointed, and during the four years which he passed in Europe he often lived in the greatest poverty.

On his first visit to England, in 1808, Burr met Godwin only once, but the entry in his journal, besides bearing indirect witness to the great celebrity of Mary Wollstonecraft in America, gives an idea of the kind of impression made on a stranger by the second Mrs. Godwin.

"I have seen the two daughters of Mary Wollstonecraft," he writes. "They are very fine children (the eldest no longer a child, being now fifteen), but scarcely a discernible trace of the mother. Now Godwin has been seven or eight years married to a second wife, a sensible, amiable woman."

For the next four years Burr was a wanderer in Holland and France. His journal, kept for the benefit of his daughter Theodosia, to whom he also addressed a number of letters, is full of strange and stirring interest. In 1812 he came back to England, where it was not long before he drifted to Godwin's door. Burr's character was licentious and unscrupulous, but his appearance and manners were highly prepossessing; he made friends wherever he went. The Godwin household was full of hospitality for such Bohemian wanderers as he. Always itself in a precarious state of fortune, it held out the hand of fellowship to others whose existence from day to day was uncertain. A man of brains and ideas, of congenial and lively temperament, was sure of a fraternal welcome. And though many of Godwin's older friends were, in time, estranged from him through their antipathy to his wife, she was full of patronising good-nature for a man like Burr, who well knew how to ingratiate himself.

Burr's Journal, February 15, 1812. — Had only time to get to Godwin's, where we dined. In the evening William, the only son of William Godwin, a lad of about nine years old, gave his weekly lecture: having heard how Coleridge and others lectured, he would also lecture, and one of his sisters (Mary, I think) writes a lecture which he reads from a little pulpit which they have erected for him. He went through it with great gravity and decorum. The subject was "The influence of government on the character of a people." After the lecture we had tea, and the girls danced and sang an hour, and at nine came home.

Nothing can give a pleasanter picture of the family, the lively-minded children keenly interested in all the subjects and ideas they heard freely discussed around them; the elders taking pleasure in encouraging the children's first essays of intellect; Mary at fourteen already showing her powers of thought and inborn vocation to write, and supplying her little brother with ideas. The reverse of the medal appears in the next entry, for the genial unconventional household was generally on the verge of ruin, and dependent on some expected loan for subsistence in the next few months. When once the sought-for assistance came they revelled in momentary relief from care.

Journal, February 18. — Have gone this evening to Godwin's. They are in trouble. Some financial affair.

It did not weigh long on their spirits.

February 24. — Called at Godwin's to leave the newspapers which I borrowed yesterday, and to get that of to-day. *Les goddesses* (so he habitually designates the three girls) kept me by acclamation to tea with *la printresse* Hopwood. I agreed to go with the girls to call on her on Friday.

February 28. — Was engaged to dine to-day at Godwin's, and to walk with the four dames. After dinner to the Hopwoods. All which was done.

March 7. — To Godwin's, where I took tea with the children in their room.

March 14. — To Godwin's. He was out. Madame and *les enfans* upstairs in the bedroom, where they received me, and I drank tea with his *enfans*.... Terribly afraid of vigils to-night, for Jane made my tea, and, I fear, too strong. It is only Fan that I can trust.

March 17. — To Godwin's, where took tea with the children, who always have it at 9. Mr. and Madame at 7.

March 22. — On to Godwin's; found him at breakfast and joined him. Madame a-bed.

Later. — Mr. and Mrs. Godwin would not give me their account, which must be five or six pounds, a very serious sum for them. They say that when I succeed in the world they will call on me for help.

This probably means that the Godwins had lent him money. He was well-nigh penniless, and Mrs. Godwin exerted herself to get resources for him, to sell one or two books of value which he had, and to get a good price for his watch. She knew a good deal of the makeshifts of poverty, and none of the family seemed to have grudged time or trouble if they could do a good turn to this companion in difficulties. It is a question whether, when they talked of his succeeding in the world, they were aware of the particular form of success for which he was scheming; in any case they seem to have been content to take him as they found him. They were the last friends from whom he parted on the eve of sailing for America. His entry just before starting is —

Called and passed an hour with the Godwins. That family does really love me. Fanny, Mary, and Jane, also little William: you must not forget, either, Hannah Hopwood, *la printresse*.

These few months were, very likely, the brightest which Mary ever passed at home. Her rapidly growing powers of mind and observation were nourished and developed by the stimulating intellectual atmosphere around her; to the anxieties and uncertainties which, like birds of ill-omen, hovered over the household and were never absent for long together, she was well accustomed, besides which she was still too young to be much affected by them. She was fond of her sisters, and devoted to her father. Mrs. Godwin's temperament can never have been congenial to hers, but occasions of collision do not appear to have been frequent, and Fanny, devoted and unselfish, only anxious for others to be happy and ready herself to serve any of them, was the link between them all. Mary's health was, however, not yet satisfactory, and before the summer an opportunity which offered itself of change of air was willingly accepted on her behalf by Mr. and Mrs. Godwin. In 1809 Godwin had made the acquaintance of Mr. William Baxter of Dundee, on the introduction of Mr. David Booth, who afterwards became Baxter's son-in-law. Baxter, a man of liberal mind, independence of thought and action, and kindly nature, shared to the full the respect entertained by most thinking men of that generation for the author of *Political Justice*. Godwin, always accessible to sympathetic strangers, was at once pleased with this new acquaintance.

"I thank you," he wrote to Booth, "for your introduction of Mr. Baxter. I dare swear he is an honest man, and he is no fool." During Baxter's several visits to London they became better acquainted. Charles Clairmont too, went to Edinburgh in 1811, as a clerk in Constable's printing office, where he met and made friends with Baxter's son Robert, who, as well as his father, visited the Skinner Street household in London, and through whom the intimacy was cemented. In this way it was that Mary was invited to come on a long visit to the Baxters at their house, "The Cottage," on the banks of the Tay, just outside Dundee, on the road to Broughty Ferry. The family included several girls, near Mary's own age, and with true Scotch hospitality they pressed her to make one of their family circle for an indefinite length of time, until sea-air and sea-bathing should have completed the recovery begun the year before at Ramsgate, but which could not be maintained in the smoky air and indoor life of London. Accordingly, Mary sailed for Dundee on the 8th of June 1812.

CHAPTER III

June 1812-May 1814
Godwin to Baxter.

Skinner Street, London.
8th June 1812.

My dear Sir — I have shipped off to you by yesterday's packet, the *Osnaburgh*, Captain Wishart, my only daughter. I attended her, with her two sisters, to the wharf, and remained an hour on board, till the vessel got under way. I cannot help feeling a thousand anxieties in parting with her, for the first time, for so great a distance, and these anxieties were increased by the manner of sending her, on board a ship, with not a single face around her that she had ever seen till that morning. She is four months short of fifteen years of age. I, however, spoke to the captain, using your name; I beside gave her in charge to a lady, by name I believe Mrs. Nelson, of Great St. Helen's, London, who was going to your part of the island in attendance upon an invalid husband. She was surrounded by three daughters when I spoke to her, and she answered me very agreeably. "I shall have none of my own daughters with me, and shall therefore have the more leisure to attend to yours."

I daresay she will arrive more dead than alive, as she is extremely subject to sea-sickness, and the voyage will, not improbably, last nearly a week. Mr. Cline, the surgeon, however, decides that a sea-voyage would probably be of more service to her than anything.

I am quite confounded to think what trouble I am bringing on you and your family, and to what a degree I may be said to have taken you in when I took you at your word in your invitation upon so slight an acquaintance. The old proverb says, "He is a wise father who knows his own child," and I feel the justness of the apothegm on the present occasion.

There never can be a perfect equality between father and child, and if he has other objects and avocations to fill up the greater part of his time, the ordinary resource is for him to proclaim his wishes and commands in a way somewhat sententious and authoritative, and occasionally to utter his censures with seriousness and emphasis.

It can, therefore, seldom happen that he is the confidant of his child, or that the child does not feel some degree of awe or restraint in intercourse with him. I am not, therefore, a perfect judge of Mary's character. I believe she has nothing of what is commonly called vices, and that she has considerable talent. But I tremble for the trouble I may be bringing on you in this visit. In my last I desired that you would consider the first two or three weeks as a trial, how far you can ensure her, or, more fairly and impartially speaking, how far her habits and conceptions may be such as to put your family very unreasonably out of their way; and I expect from the frankness and ingenuousness of yours of the 29th inst. (which by the way was so ingenuous as to come without a seal) that you will not for a moment hesitate to inform me if such should be the case. When I say all this, I hope you will be aware that I do not desire that she should be treated with extraordinary attention, or that any one of your family should put themselves in the smallest degree out of their way on her account. I am anxious that she should be brought up (in this respect) like a philosopher, even like a cynic. It will add greatly to the strength and worth of her character. I should also observe that she has no love of dissipation, and will be perfectly satisfied with your woods and your mountains. I wish, too, that she should be *excited* to industry. She has occasionally great perseverance, but occasionally, too, she shows great need to be roused.

You are aware that she comes to the sea-side for the purpose of bathing. I should wish that you would inquire now and then into the regularity of that. She will want also some treatment for her arm, but she has Mr. Cline's directions completely in all these points, and will probably not require a professional man to look after her while she is with you. In all other respects except her arm she has admirable health, has an excellent appetite, and is capable of enduring fatigue. Mrs. Godwin reminds me that I ought to have said something about troubling your daughters to procure a washerwoman. But I trust that, without its being necessary to be thus minute, you will proceed on the basis of our being earnest to give you as little trouble as the nature of the case will allow. — I am, my dear sir, with great regard, yours,

William Godwin.

At Dundee, with the Baxters, Mary remained for five months. She was treated as a sister by the Baxter girls, one of whom, Isabella, afterwards the wife of David Booth, became her most intimate friend. An elder sister, Miss Christian Baxter, to whom the present writer is indebted for a few personal reminiscences of Mary Godwin, only died in 1886, and was probably the last survivor of those who remembered Mary in her girlhood. They were all fond of their new companion. She was agreeable, vivacious, and sparkling; very pretty, with fair hair and complexion, and clear, bright white skin. The Baxters were people of education and culture, active minded, fond of reading, and alive to external impressions. The young people were well and carefully brought up. Mary shared in all their studies.

Music they did not care for, but all were fond of drawing and painting, and had good lessons. A great deal of time was spent in touring about, in long walks and drives through the moors and mountains of Forfarshire. They took pains to make Mary acquainted with all the country round, besides which it was laid on her as a duty to get as much fresh air as she could, and she must greatly have enjoyed the well-ordered yet easy life, the complete change of scene and companionship. When, on the 10th of November, she arrived again in Skinner Street, she brought Christy Baxter with her, for a long return visit to London. If Mary had enjoyed her country outing, still more keenly did the homely Scotch girl relish her first taste of London life and society. At ninety-two years old the impression of her pleasure in it, of her interest in all the notable people with whom she came in contact, was as vivid as ever.

The literary and artistic circle which still hung about the Skinner Street philosophers was to Christy a new world, of which, except from books, she had formed no idea. Books, however, had laid the foundation of keenest interest in all she was to see. She was constantly in company with Lamb, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Constable, and many more, hitherto known to her only by name. Of Charles Lamb especially, of his wit, humour, and quaintness she retained the liveliest recollection, and he had evidently a great liking for her, referring jokingly to her in his letters as “Doctor Christy,” and often inviting her, with the Godwin family, to tea, to meet her relatives, when up in town, or other friends.

On 11th November, the very day after the two girls arrived in London, a meeting occurred of no special interest to Christy at the time, and which she would have soon forgotten but for subsequent events. Three guests came to dinner at Godwin's. These were Percy Bysshe Shelley with his wife Harriet, and her sister, Eliza Westbrook. Christy Baxter well remembered this, but her chief recollection was of Harriet, her beauty, her brilliant complexion and lovely hair, and the elegance of her purple satin dress. Of Shelley, how he looked, what he said or did, what they all thought of him, she had observed nothing, except that he was very attentive to Harriet. The meeting was of no apparent significance and passed without remark: little indeed did any one foresee the drama soon to follow. Plenty of more important days, more interesting meetings to Christy, followed during the next few months. She shared Mary's room during this time, but her memory, in old age, afforded few details of their everyday intercourse. Indeed, although they spent so much time together, these two were never very intimate. Isabella Baxter, afterwards Mrs. Booth, was Mary's especial friend and chief correspondent, and it is much to be regretted that none of their girlish letters have been preserved.

The four girls had plenty of liberty, and, what with reading and talk, with constantly varied society enjoyed in the intimate unconstrained way of those who cannot afford the *appareil* of convention, with tolerably frequent visits at friends' houses and not seldom to the theatre, when Godwin, as often happened, got a box sent him, they had plenty of amusement too. Godwin's diary keeps a wonderfully minute skeleton account of all their doings. Christy enjoyed it all as only a novice can do. All her recollections of the family life were agreeable; if anything had left an unpleasing impression it had faded away in 1883, when the present writer saw her. For Godwin she entertained a warm respect and affection. They did not see very much of him, but Christy was a favourite of his, and he would sometimes take a quiet pleasure, not unmixed with amusement, in listening to their girlish talks and arguments. One such discussion she distinctly remembered, on the subject of woman's vocation, as to whether it should be purely domestic, or whether they should engage in outside interests. Mary and Jane upheld the latter view, Fanny and Christy the other.

Mrs. Godwin was kind to Christy, who always saw her best side, and never would hear a word said against her. Her deficiencies were not palpable to an outsider whom she liked and chose to patronise, nor did Christy appear to have felt the inherent untruthfulness in Mrs. Godwin's character, although one famous instance of it was recorded by Isabella Baxter, and is given at length in Mr. Kegan Paul's *Life of Godwin*.

The various members of the family had more independence of habits than is common in English domestic life. This was perhaps a relic of Godwin's old idea, that much evil and weariness resulted from the supposed necessity that the members of a family should spend all or most of their time in each other's company. He always breakfasted alone. Mrs. Godwin did so also, and not till mid-day. The young folks had theirs together. Dinner was a family meal, but supper seems to have been a movable feast. Jane Clairmont, of whose education not much is known beyond the fact that she was sometimes at school, was at home for a part if not all of this time. She was lively and quick-witted, and probably rather unmanageable. Fanny was more reflective, less sanguine, more alive to the prosaic obligations of life, and with a keen sense of domestic duty, early developed in her by necessity and by her position as the eldest of this somewhat anomalous family. Godwin, by nature as undemonstrative as possible, showed more affection to Fanny than to any one else. He always turned to her for any little service he might require. It seemed, said Christy, as though he would fain have guarded against the possibility of her feeling that she, an orphan, was less to him than the others. Christy was of opinion that Fanny was not made aware of her real position till her quite later years, a fact which, if true, goes far towards explaining much of her after life. It seems most likely, at any rate, that at this time she was unacquainted with the circumstances of her birth. To Godwin she had always seemed like his own eldest child, the first he had cared for or who had been fond of him, and his dependence on her was not surprising, for no daughter could have tended him with more solicitous care; besides which, she was one of those people, ready to do anything for everybody, who are always at the beck and call of others, and always in request. She filled the home, to which Mary, so constantly absent, was just now only a visitor.

It must have been at about this time that Godwin received a letter from an unknown correspondent, who expressed much curiosity to know whether his children were brought up in accordance with the ideas, by some considered so revolutionary and dangerous, of Mary Wollstonecraft, and what the result was of reducing her theories to actual practice. Godwin's answer, giving his own description of her two daughters, has often been printed, but it is worth giving here.

Your inquiries relate principally to the two daughters of Mary Wollstonecraft. They are neither of them brought up with an exclusive attention to the system of their mother. I lost her in 1797, and in 1801 I married a second time. One among the motives which led me to choose this was the feeling I had in myself of an incompetence for the education of daughters. The present Mrs. Godwin has great strength and activity of mind, but is not exclusively a follower of their mother; and indeed, having formed a family establishment without having a previous provision for the support of a family, neither Mrs. Godwin nor I have leisure enough for reducing novel theories of education to practice, while we both of us honestly endeavour, as far as our opportunities will permit, to improve the minds and characters of the younger branches of the family.

Of the two persons to whom your inquiries relate, my own daughter is considerably superior in capacity to the one her mother had before. Fanny, the eldest, is of a quiet, modest, unshowy disposition, somewhat given to indolence, which is her greatest fault, but sober, observing, peculiarly clear and distinct in the faculty of memory, and disposed to exercise her own thoughts and follow her own judgment. Mary, my daughter, is the reverse of her in many particulars. She is singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind. Her desire of knowledge is great, and her perseverance in everything she undertakes almost invincible. My own daughter is, I believe, very pretty. Fanny is by no means handsome, but, in general, prepossessing.

On the 3d of June Mary accompanied Christy back to Dundee, where she remained for the next ten months.

No account remains of her life there, but there can be doubt that her mental and intellectual powers matured rapidly, and that she learned, read, and thought far more than is common even with clever girls of her age. The girl who at seventeen is an intellectual companion for a Shelley cannot often have needed to be “excited to industry,” unless indeed when she indulged in day-dreams, as, from her own account given in the preface to her novel of *Frankenstein*, we know she sometimes did. Proud of her parentage, idolising the memory of her mother, about whom she gathered and treasured every scrap of information she could obtain, and of whose history and writings she probably now learned more than she had done at home, accustomed from her childhood to the daily society of authors and literary men, the pen was her earliest toy, and now the attempt at original composition was her chosen occupation.

"As a child," she says, "I scribbled; and my favourite pastime, during the hours given me for recreation, was to 'write stories.' Still I had a dearer pleasure than this, which was the formation of castles in the air, — the indulging in waking dreams, — the following up trains of thought which had for their subject the formation of a succession of imaginary incidents. My dreams were at once more fantastic and agreeable than my writings. In the latter I was a close imitator, rather doing as others had done than putting down the suggestions of my own mind. What I wrote was intended at least for one other eye — my childhood's companion and friend" (probably Isabel Baxter)—"but my dreams were all my own. I accounted for them to nobody; they were my refuge when annoyed, my dearest pleasure when free.

"I lived principally in the country as a girl, and passed a considerable time in Scotland. I made occasional visits to the more picturesque parts; but my habitual residence was on the blank and dreary northern shores of the Tay, near Dundee. Blank and dreary on retrospection I call them; they were not so to me then. They were the eyry of freedom, and the pleasant region where unheeded I could commune with the creatures of my fancy. I wrote then, but in a most commonplace style. It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered. I did not make myself the heroine of my tales. Life appeared to me too commonplace an affair as regarded myself. I could not figure to myself that romantic woes or wonderful events would ever be my lot; but I was not confined to my own identity, and I could people the hours with creations far more interesting to me, at that age, than my own sensations."

From the entry in Godwin's diary, "M. W. G. at supper," for 30th March 1814, we learn that Mary returned to Skinner Street on that day. She now resumed her place in the home circle, a very different person from the little Mary who went to Ramsgate in 1811. Although only sixteen and a half she was in the bloom of her girlhood, very pretty, very interesting in appearance, thoughtful and intelligent beyond her years. She did not settle down easily into her old place, and probably only realised gradually how much she had altered since she last lived at home. Perhaps, too, she saw that home in a new light. After the well-ordered, cheerful family life of the Baxters, the somewhat Bohemianism of Skinner Street may have seemed a little strange. A household with a philosopher for one of its heads, and a fussy, unscrupulous woman of business for the other, may have its amusing sides, and we have seen that it had; but it is not necessarily comfortable, still less sympathetic to a young and earnest nature, just awakening to a consciousness of the realities of life, at that transition stage when so much is chaotic and confusing to those who are beginning to think and to feel. One may well imagine that all was not smooth for poor Mary. Her stepmother's jarring temperament must have grated on her more keenly than ever after her long absence. Years and anxieties did not improve Mrs. Godwin's temper, nor bring refinement or a nice sense of honour to a nature singularly deficient in both. Mary must have had to take refuge from annoyance in day-dreams pretty frequently, and this was a sure and constant source of irritation to her stepmother. Jane Clairmont, wilful, rebellious, witty, and probably a good deal spoilt, whose subsequent conduct shows that she was utterly unamenable to her mother's authority, was, at first, away at school. Fanny was the good angel of the house, but her persistent defence of every one attacked, and her determination to make the best of things and people as they were, seemed almost irritating to those who were smarting under daily and hourly little grievances. Compliance often looks like cowardice to the young and bold. Nor did Mary get any help from her father. A little affection and kindly sympathy from him would have gone a long way with her, for she loved him dearly. Long afterwards she alluded to his "calm, silent disapproval" when displeased, and to the bitter remorse and unhappiness it would cause her, although unspoken, and only instinctively felt by her. All her stepmother's scoldings would have failed to produce a like effect. But Godwin, though sincerely solicitous about the children's welfare, was self-concentrated, and had little real insight into character. Besides, he was, as usual, hampered about money matters; and when constant anxiety as to where to get his next loan was added to the preoccupation of authorship, and the unavoidable distraction of such details as reached him of the publishing business, he had little thought or attention to bestow on the daughter who had arrived at so critical a time of her mental and moral history. He welcomed her home, but then took little more notice of her. If she and her stepmother disagreed, Godwin, when forced to take part in the matter, probably found it the best policy to side with his wife. Yet the situation would have been worth his attention. Here was this girl, Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, who had left home a clever, unformed child, who had returned to it a maiden in her bloom, pretty and attractive, with ardour, ability, and ambition, with conscious powers that had not found their right use, with unsatisfied affections seeking an object. True, she might in time have found threads to gather up in her own home. But she was young, impatient, and unhappy. Mrs. Godwin was repellent, uncongenial, and very jealous of her. All that a daughter could do for Godwin seemed to be done by Fanny. When Jane came home it was on her that Mary was chiefly thrown for society. Her lively spirits and quick wit made her excellent company, and she was ready enough to make the most of grievances, and to head any revolt. Fanny, far more deserving of sisterly sympathy and far more in need of it, seemed to belong to the opposite camp.

Time, kindly judicious guidance, and sustained effort on her own part might have cleared Mary's path and made things straight for her. Her heart was as sound and true as her intellect, but this critical time was rendered more dangerous, it may well be, by her knowledge of the existence of many theories on vexed subjects, making her feel keenly her own inexperience and want of a guide.

The guide she found was one who himself had wandered till now over many perplexing paths, led by the light of a restless, sleepless genius, and an inextinguishable yearning to find, to know, to do, to be the best.

Godwin's diary records on the 5th of May "Shelley calls." As far as can be known this was the first occasion since the dinner of the 11th of November 1812, when Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin saw Percy Bysshe Shelley.

CHAPTER IV

April-June 1814

Although she had seen Shelley only once, Mary had heard a good deal about him. More than two years before this time Godwin had received a letter from a stranger, a very young man, desirous of becoming acquainted with him. The writer had, it said, been under the impression that the great philosopher, the object of his reverential admiration, whom he now addressed, was one of the mighty dead. That such was not the case he had now learned for the first time, and the most ardent wish of his heart was to be admitted to the privilege of intercourse with one whom he regarded as "a luminary too bright for the darkness which surrounds him." "If," he concluded, "desire for universal happiness has any claim upon your preference, that desire I can exhibit."

Such neophytes never knelt to Godwin in vain. He did not, at first, feel specially interested in this one; still, the kindly tone of his reply led to further correspondence, in the course of which the new disciple, Mr. Percy Bysshe Shelley, gave Godwin a sketch of the events of his past life. Godwin learned that his correspondent was the son of a country squire in Sussex, was heir to a baronetcy and a considerable fortune; that he had been expelled from Oxford for publishing, and refusing to deny the authorship of, a pamphlet called "The Necessity of Atheism"; that his father, having no sympathy either with his literary tastes or speculative views, and still less with his method of putting the latter in practice, had required from him certain concessions and promises which he had declined to make, and so had been cast off by his family, his father refusing to communicate with him, except through a solicitor, allowing him a sum barely enough for his own wants, and that professedly to "prevent his cheating strangers." That, undeterred by all this, he had, at nineteen, married a woman three years younger, whose "pursuits, hopes, fears, and sorrows" had been like his own; and that he hoped to devote his life and powers to the regeneration of mankind and society.

There was something remarkable about these letters, something that bespoke a mind, ill-balanced it might be, but yet of no common order.

Whatever the worth of the writer’s opinions, there could be no doubt that he had the gift of eloquence in their expression. Half interested and half amused, with a vague perception of Shelley’s genius, and a certain instinctive deference of which he could not divest himself towards the heir to £6000 a year, Godwin continued the correspondence with a frequency and an unreserve most flattering to the younger man.

Not long after this, the disciple announced that he had gone off, with his wife and her sister, to Ireland, for the avowed purpose of forwarding the Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Union. His scheme was “the organisation of a society whose institution shall serve as a bond to its members for the purposes of virtue, happiness, liberty, and wisdom, by the means of intellectual opposition to grievances.” He published and distributed an “Address to the Irish People,” setting before them their grievances, their rights, and their duties.

This object Godwin regarded as an utter mistake, its practical furtherance as extremely perilous. Dreading the contagion of excitement, its tendency to prevent sober judgment and promote precipitate action, he condemned associations of men for any public purpose whatever. His calm temperament would fain have dissevered impulse and action altogether as cause and effect, and he had a shrinking, constitutional as well as philosophic, from any tendency to “strike while the iron is hot.”

“The thing most to be desired,” he wrote, “is to keep up the intellectual, and in some sense the solitary fermentation, and to procrastinate the contact and consequent action.” “Shelley! you are preparing a scene of blood,” was his solemn warning.

Nothing could have been further from Shelley’s thoughts than such a scene. Surprised and disappointed, he ingenuously confessed to Godwin that his association scheme had grown out of notions of political justice, first generated by Godwin’s own book on that subject; and the mentor found himself in the position of an involuntary illustration of his own theory, expressed in the *Enquirer* (Essay XX), “It is by no means impossible that the books most pernicious in their effects that ever were produced, were written with intentions uncommonly elevated and pure.”

Shelley, animated by an ardent enthusiasm of humanity, looked to association as likely to spread a contagion indeed, but a contagion of good. The revolution he preached was a Millennium.

If you are convinced of the truth of your cause, trust wholly to its truth; if you are not convinced, give it up. In no case employ violence; the way to liberty and happiness is never to transgress the rules of virtue and justice.

Before anything can be done with effect, habits of sobriety, regularity, and thought must be entered into and firmly resolved on.

I will repeat, that virtue and wisdom are necessary to true happiness and liberty.

Before the restraints of government are lessened, it is fit that we should lessen the necessity for them. Before government is done away with, we must reform ourselves. It is this work which I would earnestly recommend to you. O Irishmen, reform yourselves.

Whatever evil results Godwin may have apprehended from Shelley's proceedings, these sentiments taken in the abstract could not but enlist his sympathies to some extent on behalf of the deluded young optimist, nor did he keep the fact a secret. Shelley's letters, as well as the Irish pamphlet, were eagerly read and discussed by all the young philosophers of Skinner Street.

"You cannot imagine," Godwin wrote to him, "how much all the females of my family — Mrs. Godwin and three daughters — are interested in your letters and your history."

Publicly propounded, however, Shelley's sentiments proved insufficiently attractive to those to whom they were addressed. At a public meeting where he had ventured to enjoin on Catholics a tolerance so universal as to embrace not only Jews, Turks, and Infidels, but Protestants also, he narrowly escaped being mobbed. It was borne in upon him before long that the possibility, under existing conditions, of realising his scheme for associations of peace and virtue, was doubtful and distant. He abandoned his intention and left Ireland, professedly in submission to Godwin, but in fact convinced by what he had seen. Godwin was delighted.

"Now I can call you a friend," he wrote, and the good understanding of the two was cemented.

After repeated but fruitless invitations from the Shelleys to the whole Godwin party to come and stay with them in Wales, Godwin, early in the autumn of this year (1812) actually made an expedition to Lynmouth, where his unknown friends were staying, in the hope of effecting a personal acquaintance, but his object was frustrated, the Shelleys having left the place just before he arrived.

They first met in London, in the month of October, and frequent, almost daily intercourse took place between the families. On the last day of their stay in town the Shelleys, with Eliza Westbrook, dined in Skinner Street. Mary Godwin, who had been for five months past in Scotland, had returned, as we know, with Christy Baxter the day before, and was, no doubt, very glad not to miss this opportunity of seeing the interesting young reformer of whom she had heard so much. His wife he had always spoken of as one who shared his tastes and opinions. No doubt they all thought her a fortunate woman, and Mary in after years would well recall her smiling face, and pink and white complexion, and her purple satin gown.

During the year and a half that had elapsed since that time Mary had been chiefly away, and had heard little if anything of Shelley. In the spring of 1814, however, he came up to town to see her father on business, — business in which Godwin was deeply and solely concerned, about which he was desperately anxious, and in which Mary knew that Shelley was doing all in his power to help him. These matters had been going on for some time, when, on the 5th of May, he came to Skinner Street, and Mary and he renewed acquaintance. Both had altered since the last time they met. Mary, from a child had grown into a young, attractive, and interesting girl. Hers was not the sweet sensuous loveliness of her mother, but with her well-shaped head and intellectual brow, her fine fair hair and liquid hazel eyes, and a skin and complexion of singular whiteness and purity, she possessed beauty of a rare and refined type. She was somewhat below the medium height; very graceful, with drooping shoulders and swan-like throat. The serene eloquent eyes contrasted with a small mouth, indicative of a certain reserve of temperament, which, in fact, always distinguished her, and beneath which those who did not know her might not have suspected her vigour of intellect and fearlessness of thought.

Shelley, too, was changed; why, was in his case not so evident. Mary would have heard how, just before her return home, he had been remarried to his wife; Godwin, the opponent of matrimony, having, mysteriously enough, been instrumental in procuring the licence for this superfluous ceremony; superfluous, as the parties had been quite legally married in Scotland three years before. His wife was not now with him in London. He was alone, and appeared saddened in aspect, ailing in health, unsettled and anxious in mind. It was impossible that Mary should not observe him with interest. She saw that, although so young a man, he not only could hold his own in discussion of literary, philosophical, or political questions with the wisest heads and deepest thinkers of his generation, but could throw new light on every subject he touched. His glowing imagination transfigured and idealised what it dwelt on, while his magical words seemed to recreate whatever he described. She learned that he was a poet. His conversation would call up her old day-dreams again, though, before it, they paled and faded like morning mists before the sun. She saw, too, that his disposition was most amiable, his manners gentle, his conversation absolutely free from suspicion of coarseness, and that he was a disinterested and devoted friend.

Before long she must have become conscious that he took pleasure in talking with her. She could not but see that, while his melancholy and disquiet grew upon him every day, she possessed the power of banishing it for the time. Her presence illumined him; life and hopeful enthusiasm would flash anew from him if she was by. This intercourse stimulated all her intellectual powers, and its first effect was to increase her already keen desire of knowledge. To keep pace with the electric mind of this companion required some effort on her part, and she applied herself with renewed zeal to her studies. Nothing irritated her stepmother so much as to see her deep in a book, and in order to escape from Mrs. Godwin's petty persecution Mary used, whenever she could, to transport herself and her occupations to Old St. Pancras Churchyard, where she had been in the habit of coming to visit her mother's grave. There, under the shade of a willow tree, she would sit, book in hand, and sometimes read, but not always. The day-dreams of Dundee would now and again return upon her. How long she seemed to have lived since that time! Life no longer seemed "so commonplace an affair," nor yet her own part in it so infinitesimal if Shelley thought her conversation and companionship worth the having.

Before very long he had found out the secret of her retreat, and used to meet her there. He revered the memory of Mary Wollstonecraft, and her grave was to him a consecrated shrine of which her daughter was the priestess.

By June they had become intimate friends, though Mary was still ignorant of the secret of his life.

On the 8th of June occurred the meeting described by Hogg in his *Life of Shelley*. The two friends were walking through Skinner Street when Shelley said to Hogg, “I must speak with Godwin; come in, I will not detain you long.” Hogg continues —

I followed him through the shop, which was the only entrance, and upstairs we entered a room on the first floor; it was shaped like a quadrant. In the arc were windows; in one radius a fireplace, and in the other a door, and shelves with many old books. William Godwin was not at home. Bysshe strode about the room, causing the crazy floor of the ill-built, unowned dwelling-house to shake and tremble under his impatient footsteps. He appeared to be displeased at not finding the fountain of Political Justice.

“Where is Godwin?” he asked me several times, as if I knew. I did not know, and, to say the truth, I did not care. He continued his uneasy promenade; and I stood reading the names of old English authors on the backs of the venerable volumes, when the door was partially and softly opened. A thrilling voice called “Shelley!” A thrilling voice answered “Mary!” and he darted out of the room, like an arrow from the bow of the far-shooting king. A very young female, fair and fair-haired, pale indeed, and with a piercing look, wearing a frock of tartan, an unusual dress in London at that time, had called him out of the room. He was absent a very short time, a minute or two, and then returned.

“Godwin is out, there is no use in waiting.” So we continued our walk along Holborn.

“Who was that, pray?” I asked, “a daughter?”

“Yes.”

“A daughter of William Godwin?”

“The daughter of Godwin and Mary.”

Hogg asked no more questions, but something in this momentary interview and in the look of the fair-haired girl left an impression on his mind which he did not at once forget.

Godwin was all this time seeking and encouraging Shelley’s visits. He was in feverish distress for money, bankruptcy was hanging over his head; and Shelley was exerting all his energies and influence to raise a large sum, it is said as much as £3000, for him. It is a melancholy fact that the philosopher had got to regard those who, in the thirsty search for truth and knowledge, had attached themselves to him, in the secondary light of possible sources of income, and, when in difficulties, he came upon them one after another for loans or advances of money, which, at first begged for as a kindness, came to be claimed by him almost as a right.

Shelley's own affairs were in a most unsatisfactory state. £200 a year from his father, and as much from his wife's father was all he had to depend upon, and his unsettled life and frequent journeys, generous disposition and careless ways, made fearful inroads on his narrow income, notwithstanding the fact that he lived with Spartan frugality as far as his own habits were concerned. Little as he had, he never knew how little it was nor how far it would go, and, while he strained every nerve to save from ruin one whom he still considered his intellectual father, he was himself sorely hampered by want of money.

Visits to lawyers by Godwin, Shelley, or both, were of increasingly frequent occurrence during May; in June we learn of as many as two or three in a day. While this was going on, Shelley, the forlorn hope of Skinner Street, could not be lost sight of. If he seemed to find pleasure in Mary's society, this probably flattered Mary's father, who, though really knowing little of his child, was undoubtedly proud of her, her beauty, and her promise of remarkable talent. Like other fathers, he thought of her as a child, and, had there been any occasion for suspicion or remark, the fact of Shelley's being a married man with a lovely wife, would take away any excuse for dwelling on it. The Shelleys had not been favourites with Mrs. Godwin, who, the year before, had offended or chosen to quarrel with Harriet Shelley. The respective husbands had succeeded in smoothing over the difficulty, which was subsequently ignored. No love was lost, however, between the Shelleys and the head of the firm of M. J. Godwin & Co., who, however, was not now likely to do or say anything calculated to drive from the house one who, for the present, was its sole chance of existence.

From the 20th of June until the end of the month Shelley was at Skinner Street every day, often to dinner.

By that time he and Mary had realised, only too well, the depth of their mutual feeling, and on some one day, what day we do not know, they owned it to each other. His history was poured out to her, not as it appears in the cold impartial light of after years perhaps, but as he felt it then, aching and smarting from life's fresh wounds and stings. She heard of his difficulties, his rebuffs, his mistakes in action, his disappointments in friendship, his fruitless sacrifices for what he held to be the truth; his hopes and his hopelessness, his isolation of soul and his craving for sympathy. She guessed, for he was still silent on this point, that he found it not in his home. She faced her feelings then; they were past mistake. But it never occurred to her mind that there was any possible future but a life's separation to souls so situated. She could be his friend, never anything more to him.

As a memento of that interview Shelley gave or sent her a copy of *Queen Mab*, his first published poem. This book (still in existence) has, written in pencil inside the cover, the name "Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin," and, on the inner flyleaf, the words, "You see, Mary, I have not forgotten you." Under the printed dedication to his wife is the enigmatic but suggestive remark, carefully written in ink, "Count Slobendorf was about to marry a woman, who, attracted solely by his fortune, proved her selfishness by deserting him in prison." On the flyleaves at the end Mary wrote in July 1814 —

This book is sacred to me, and as no other creature shall ever look into it, I may write what I please. Yet what shall I write? That I love the author beyond all powers of expression, and that I am parted from him. Dearest and only love, by that love we have promised to each other, although I may not be yours, I can never be another's. But I am thine, exclusively thine.

By the kiss of love, the glance none saw beside,
The smile none else might understand,
The whispered thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand.

I have pledged myself to thee, and sacred is the gift. I remember your words. "You are now, Mary, going to mix with many, and for a moment I shall depart, but in the solitude of your chamber I shall be with you." Yes, you are ever with me, sacred vision.

But ah! I feel in this was given
A blessing never meant for me,

Thou art too like a dream from heaven
For earthly love to merit thee.

With this mutual consciousness, yet obliged inevitably to meet, thrown constantly in each other's way, Mary obliged too to look on Shelley as her father's benefactor and support, their situation was a miserable one. As for Shelley, when he had once broken silence he passed rapidly from tender affection to the most passionate love. His heart and brain were alike on fire, for at the root of his deep depression and unsettlement lay the fact, known as yet only to himself, of complete estrangement between himself and his wife.

CHAPTER V

June-August 1814

Perhaps of all the objects of Shelley's devotion up to this time, Harriet, his wife, was the only one with whom he had never, in the ideal sense, been in love. Possibly this was one reason that against her alone he never had the violent revulsion, almost amounting to loathing, which was the usual reaction after his other passionate illusions. He had eloped with her when they were but boy and girl because he found her ready to elope with him, and because he was persuaded that she was a victim of tyranny and oppression, which, to this modern knight-errant, was tantamount to an obligation laid on him to rescue her. Having eloped with her, he had married her, for her sake, and from a sense of chivalry, only with a quaint sort of apology to his friend Hogg for this early departure from his own principles and those of the philosophic writers who had helped to mould his views. His affection for his wife had steadily increased after their marriage; she was fond of him and satisfied with her lot, and had made things very easy for him. She could not give him anything very deep in the way of love, but in return she was not very exacting; accommodating herself with good humour to all his vagaries, his changes of mood and plan, and his romantic friendships. Even the presence of her elder sister Eliza, who at an early period established herself as a member of their household, did not destroy although it did not add to their peace. It was during their stay in Scotland, in 1813, that the first shadow arose between them, and from this time Harriet seems to have changed. She became cold and indifferent. During the next winter, when they lived at Bracknell, she grew frivolous and extravagant, even yielding to habits of self-indulgence most repugnant to one so abstemious as Shelley. He, on his part, was more and more drawn away from the home which had become uncongenial by the fascinating society of his brilliant, speculative friend, Mrs. Boinville (the white-haired "Maimuna"), her daughter and sister. They were kind and encouraging to him, and their whole circle was cheerful, genial, and intellectual. This intimacy tended to widen the breach between husband and wife, while supplying none of the moral help which might have braced Shelley to meet his difficulty. His letters and the stanza addressed to Mrs. Boinville show the profound depression under which he laboured in April and May. His pathetic poem to Harriet, written in May, expresses only too plainly what he suffered from her alienation, and also his keen consciousness of the moral dangers that threatened him from the loosening of old ties, if left to himself unsupported by sympathy at home. But such feeling as Harriet had was at this time quite blunted. She had treated his unsettled depression and gloomy abstraction as coldness and sullen discontent, and met them with careless unconcern. Always a puppet in the hands of some one stronger than herself, she was encouraged by her elder sister, “the ever-present Eliza,” the object of Shelley’s abhorrence, to meet any want of attention on his part by this attitude of indifference; presumably on the assumption that men do not care for what they can have cheaply, and that the best way for a wife to keep a husband’s affection is to show herself independent of it. Good-humoured and shallow, easy-going and fond of amusement, she probably yielded to these counsels without difficulty. She was much admired by other men, and accepted their admiration willingly. From evidence which came to light not many years later, it appears Shelley thought he had reason to believe she had been misled by one of these admirers, and that he became aware of this in June 1814. No word of it was breathed by him at the time, and the painful story might never have been divulged but for subsequent events which dragged into publicity circumstances which he intended should be buried in oblivion. This is not a life of Shelley, and the evidence of all this matter, — such evidence, that is, as has escaped destruction, — must be looked for elsewhere. In the lawsuit which he undertook after Harriet’s death to obtain possession of his children by her, he was content to state, “I was united to a woman of whom delicacy forbids me to say more than that we were disunited by incurable dissensions.”

That time only confirmed his conviction of 1814 is clearly proved by his letter, written six years afterwards, to Southey, who had accused him of guilt towards both his first and second wives.

I take God to witness, if such a Being is now regarding both you and me, and I pledge myself if we meet, as perhaps you expect, before Him after death, to repeat the same in His presence, that you accuse me wrongfully. I am innocent of ill, either done or intended, the consequences you allude to flowed in no respect from me. If you were my friend, I could tell you a history that would make you open your eyes, but I shall certainly never make the public my familiar confidant.

It is quite certain that in June 1814 Shelley, who had for months found his wife heartless, became convinced that she had also been faithless. A breach of the marriage vow was not, now or at any other time, regarded by him in the light of a heinous or unpardonable sin. Like his master Godwin, who held that right and wrong in these matters could only be decided by the circumstances of each individual case, he considered the vow itself to be the mistake, superfluous where it was based on mutual affection, tyrannic or false where it was not. Nor did he recognise two different laws, for men and for women, in these respects. His subsequent relations with Harriet show that, deeply as she had wounded him, he did not consider her criminally in fault. Could she indeed be blamed for applying in her own way the dangerous principles of which she had heard so much? But she had ceased to care for him, and the death of mutual love argued, to his mind, the loosening of the tie. He had been faithful to her; her faithlessness cut away the ground from under his feet and left him defenceless against a new affection.

No wonder that when his friend Peacock went, by his request, to call on him in London, he

showed in his looks, in his gestures, in his speech, the state of a mind, "suffering like a little kingdom, the nature of an insurrection." His eyes were bloodshot, his hair and dress disordered. He caught up a bottle of laudanum and said, "I never part from this!" He added, "I am always repeating to myself your lines from Sophocles —

Man's happiest lot is not to be,
And when we tread life's thorny steep
Most blest are they, who, earliest free,
Descend to death's eternal sleep."

Harriet had been absent for some time at Bath, but now, growing anxious at the rarity of news from her husband, she wrote up to Hookham, his publisher, entreating to know what had become of him, and where he was.

Godwin, who called at Hookham's the next day, heard of this letter, and began at last to awaken to the consciousness that something he did not understand was going on between Shelley and his daughter. It is strange that Mrs. Godwin, a shrewd and suspicious woman, should not before now have called his attention to the fact. His diary for 8th July records a "Talk with Mary." What passed has not transpired. Probably Godwin "restricted himself to uttering his censures with seriousness and emphasis," probably Mary said little of any sort.

On the 14th of July Harriet Shelley came up to town, summoned thither by a letter from her husband. He informed her of his determination to separate, and of his intention to take immediate measures securing her a sufficient income for her support. He fully expected that Harriet would willingly concur in this arrangement, but she did no such thing; perhaps she did not believe he would carry it out. She never at any time took life seriously; she looked on the rupture between herself and Shelley as trivial and temporary, and had no wish to make it otherwise. Godwin called on her two or three times; he was aware of the estrangement, and probably hoped by argument and discussion to restore matters to their old footing and bring peace and equanimity to his own household. But although Harriet was quite aware of Shelley's love for Godwin's daughter, and knew, too, that deeds were being prepared to assure her own separate maintenance, she said nothing to Godwin, nor did her family give him any hint. The impending elopement, with all its consequences to Godwin, were within her power to prevent, but she allowed matters to take their course. Godwin, evidently very uncomfortable, chronicles a "Talk with P. B. S.," and, on 22d July, a "Talk with Jane." But circumstances moved faster than he expected, and these many talks and discussions and complicated moves and counter-moves only made the position intolerable, and precipitated the final crisis. Towards the close of that month Shelley's confession was wrung from him: he told Mary the whole truth, and how, though legally bound, he held himself morally free to offer himself to her if she would be his.

To her, passionately devoted to the one man who was and was ever to remain the sun and centre of her existence, the thought of a wife indifferent to him, hard to him, false to him, was sacrilege; it was torture. She had not been brought up to look on marriage as a divine institution; she had probably never even heard it discussed but on grounds of expediency. Harriet was his legal wife, so he could not marry Mary, but what of that, after all? if there was a sacrifice in her power to make for him, was not that the greatest joy, the greatest honour that life could have in store for her?

That her father would openly condemn her she knew, for she must have known that Godwin's practice did not move on the same lofty plane as his principles. Was he not at that moment making himself debtor to a man whose integrity he doubted? Had he not, in twice marrying, taken care to proclaim, both to his friends and the public, that he did so *in spite* of his opinions, which remained unchanged and unretracted, until some inconvenient application of them forced from him an expression of disapproval?

Her mother too, had she not held that ties which were dead should be buried? and though not, like Godwin, condemning marriage as an institution, had she not been twice induced to form a connection which in one instance never was, in the other was not for some time consecrated by law? Who was Mary herself, that she should withstand one whom she felt to be the best as well as the cleverest man she had ever known? To talent she had been accustomed all her life, but here she saw something different, and what of all things calls forth most ardent response from a young and pure-minded girl, *a genius for goodness*; an aspiration and devotion such as she had dreamed of but never known, with powers which seemed to her absolutely inspired. She loved him, and she appreciated him, — as time abundantly showed, — rightly. She conceived that she wronged by her action no one but herself, and she did not hesitate. She pledged her heart and hand to Shelley for life, and she did not disappoint him, nor he her.

To the end of their lives, tried as they were to be by every kind of trouble, neither one nor the other ever repented the step they now took, nor modified their opinion of the grounds on which they took it. How Shelley regarded it in after years we have already seen. Mary, writing during her married life, when her judgment had been matured and her youthful buoyancy of spirit only too well sobered by stern and bitter experience, can find no harder name for it than "an imprudence." Many years after, in 1825, alluding to Shelley's separation from Harriet, she remarks, "His justification is, to me, obvious." And at a later date still, when she had been seventeen years a widow, she wrote in the preface to her edition of Shelley's *Poems* —

I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth, and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary.

But they never "made the public their familiar confidant." They screened the erring as far as it was in their power to do so, although their reticence cost them dear, for it lent a colouring of probability to the slanders and misconstruction of all kinds which it was their constant fate to endure for others' sake, which pursued them to their lives' end, and beyond it.

Life, which is to no one what he expects, had many clouds for them. Mary's life reached its zenith too suddenly, and with happiness came care in undue proportion. The future of intellectual expansion and creation which might have been hers was not to be fully realised, but perfections of character she might never have attained developed themselves as her nature was mellowed and moulded by time and by suffering.

Shelley's rupture with his first wife marks the end of his boyhood. Up to that time, thanks to his poetic temperament, his were the strong and simple, but passing impulses and feelings of a child. "A being of large discourse" he assuredly was, but not as yet "looking before and after." Now he was to acquire the doubtful blessing of that faculty. Like Undine when she became endued with a soul, he gained an immeasurable good, while he lost a something that never returned.

Early in the morning of 28th July 1814 Mary Godwin secretly left her father's house, accompanied by Jane Clairmont, and they started with Shelley in a post-chaise for Dover.

CHAPTER VI

August 1814-January 1816

From the day of their departure a joint journal was kept by Shelley and Mary, which tells their subsequent adventures and vicissitudes with the utmost candour and *naïveté*. A great deal of the earlier portion is written by Shelley, but after a time Mary becomes the principal diarist, and the latter part is almost entirely hers. Its account of their first wanderings in France and Switzerland was put into narrative form by her two or three years later, and published under the title *Journal of a Six Weeks' Tour*. But the transparent simplicity of the journal is invaluable, and carries with it an absolute conviction which no studied account can emulate or improve upon. Considerable portions are, therefore, given in their entirety.

That 28th of July was a hotter day than had been known in England for many years. Between the sultry heat and exhaustion from the excitement and conflicting emotions of the last days, poor Mary was completely overcome.

"The heat made her faint," wrote Shelley, "it was necessary at every stage that she should repose. I was divided between anxiety for her health and terror lest our pursuers should arrive. I reproached myself with not allowing her sufficient time to rest, with conceiving any evil so great that the slightest portion of her comfort might be sacrificed to avoid it.

"At Dartford we took four horses, that we might outstrip pursuit. We arrived at Dover before four o'clock."

"On arriving at Dover," writes Mary, "I was refreshed by a sea-bath. As we very much wished to cross the Channel with all possible speed, we would not wait for the packet of the following day (it being then about four in the afternoon), but hiring a small boat, resolved to make the passage the same evening, the seamen promising us a voyage of two hours.

"The evening was most beautiful; there was but little wind, and the sails flapped in the flagging breeze; the moon rose, and night came on, and with the night a slow, heavy swell and a fresh breeze, which soon produced a sea so violent as to toss the boat very much. I was dreadfully sea-sick, and, as is usually my custom when thus affected, I slept during the greater part of the night, awaking only from time to time to ask where we were, and to receive the dismal answer each time, ‘Not quite halfway.’

“The wind was violent and contrary; if we could not reach Calais the sailors proposed making for Boulogne. They promised only two hours’ sail from shore, yet hour after hour passed, and we were still far distant, when the moon sunk in the red and stormy horizon and the fast-flashing lightning became pale in the breaking day.

“We were proceeding slowly against the wind, when suddenly a thunder squall struck the sail, and the waves rushed into the boat: even the sailors acknowledged that our situation was perilous; but they succeeded in reefing the sail; the wind was now changed, and we drove before the gale directly to Calais.”

Journal (Shelley). — Mary did not know our danger; she was resting between my knees, that were unable to support her; she did not speak or look, but I felt that she was there. I had time in that moment to reflect, and even to reason upon death; it was rather a thing of discomfort and disappointment than horror to me. We should never be separated, but in death we might not know and feel our union as now. I hope, but my hopes are not unmixed with fear for what may befall this inestimable spirit when we appear to die.

The morning broke, the lightning died away, the violence of the wind abated. We arrived at Calais, whilst Mary still slept; we drove upon the sands. Suddenly the broad sun rose over France.

Godwin’s diary for 28th July runs,

“*Five in the morning.* M. J. for Dover.”

Mrs. Godwin, in fact, started in pursuit of the fugitives as soon as they were missed. Neither Shelley nor Mary were the objects of her anxiety, but her own daughter. Jane Clairmont, who cared no more for her mother than she did for any one else, had guessed Mary’s secret or insinuated herself into her confidence some time before the final *dénouement* of the love-affair. Wild and wayward, ready for anything in the shape of a romantic adventure, and longing for freedom from the restraints of home, she had sympathised with, and perhaps helped Shelley and Mary. She was in no wise anxious to be left to mope alone, nor to be exposed to cross-questioning she could ill have met. She claimed to escape with them as a return for her good offices, and whatever Mary may have thought or wished, Shelley was not one to leave her behind “in slavery.” Mrs. Godwin arrived at Calais by the very packet the fugitives had refused to wait for.

Journal (Shelley). — In the evening Captain Davidson came and told us that a fat lady had arrived who said I had run away with her daughter; it was Mrs. Godwin. Jane spent the night with her mother.

July 30. — Jane informs us that she is unable to withstand the pathos of Mrs. Godwin’s appeal. She appealed to the Municipality of Paris, to past slavery and to future freedom. I counselled her to take at least half an hour for consideration. She returned to Mrs. Godwin and informed her that she resolved to continue with us.

Mrs. Godwin departed without answering a word.

It is difficult to understand how this mother had so little authority over her own girl of sixteen. She might rule Godwin, but she evidently could not influence, far less rule her daughter. Shelley’s influence, as far as it was exerted at all, was used in favour of Jane’s remaining with them, and he paid dearly in after years for the heavy responsibility he now assumed.

The travellers proceeded to Paris, where they were obliged to remain longer than they intended, finding themselves so absolutely without money, nothing having been prearranged in their sudden flight, that Shelley had to sell his watch and chain for eight napoleons. Funds were at last procured through Tavernier, a French man of business, and they were free to put into execution the plan they had resolved upon, namely, to *walk* through France, buying an ass to carry their portmanteau and one of them by turns.

Journal, August 8 (Mary). — Jane and Shelley go to the ass merchant; we buy an ass. The day spent in preparation for departure.

Their landlady tried to dissuade them from their design.

She represented to us that a large army had been recently disbanded, that the soldiers and officers wandered idle about the country, and that *les dames seroient certainement enlevées*. But we were proof against her arguments, and, packing up a few necessaries, leaving the rest to go by the diligence, we departed in a *fiacre* from the door of the hotel, our little ass following.

Journal (Mary). — We set out to Charenton in the evening, carrying the ass, who was weak and unfit for labour, like the Miller and his Son.

We dismissed the coach at the barrier. It was dusk, and the ass seemed totally unable to bear one of us, appearing to sink under the portmanteau, though it was small and light. We were, however, merry enough, and thought the leagues short. We arrived at Charenton about ten. Charenton is prettily situated in a valley, through which the Seine flows, winding among banks variegated with trees. On looking at this scene C... (Jane) exclaimed, “Oh! this is beautiful enough; let us live here.” This was her exclamation on every new scene, and as each surpassed the one before, she cried, “I am glad we did not live at Charenton, but let us live here.”

August 9 (Shelley). — We sell our ass and purchase a mule, in which we much resemble him who never made a bargain but always lost half. The day is most beautiful.

(Mary). — About nine o’clock we departed; we were clad in black silk. I rode on the mule, which carried also our portmanteau. S. and C. (Jane) followed, bringing a small basket of provisions. At about one we arrived at Gros-Bois, where, under the shade of trees, we ate our bread and fruit, and drank our wine, thinking of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

Thursday, August 11 (Mary). — From Provins we came to Nogent. The town was entirely desolated by the Cossacks; the houses were reduced to heaps of white ruins, and the bridge was destroyed. Proceeding on our way we left the great road and arrived at St. Aubin, a beautiful little village situated among trees. This village was also completely destroyed. The inhabitants told us the Cossacks had not left one cow in the village. Notwithstanding the entreaties of the people, who eagerly desired us to stay all night, we continued our route to Trois Maisons, three long leagues farther, on an unfrequented road, and which in many places was hardly perceptible from the surrounding waste....

As night approached our fears increased that we should not be able to distinguish the road, and Mary expressed these fears in a very complaining tone. We arrived at Trois Maisons at nine o’clock. Jane went up to the first cottage to ask our way, but was only answered by unmeaning laughter. We, however, discovered a kind of an *auberge*, where, having in some degree satisfied our hunger by milk and sour bread, we retired to a wretched apartment to bed. But first let me observe that we discovered that the inhabitants were not in the habit of washing themselves, either when they rose or went to bed.

Friday, August 12. — We did not set out from here till eleven o’clock, and travelled a long league under the very eye of a burning sun. Shelley, having sprained his leg, was obliged to ride all day.

Saturday, August 13 (Troyes). — We are disgusted with the excessive dirt of our habitation. Shelley goes to inquire about conveyances. He sells the mule for forty francs and the saddle for sixteen francs. In all our bargains for ass, saddle, and mule we lose more than fifteen napoleons. Money we can but little spare now. Jane and Shelley seek for a conveyance to Neufchâtel.

From Troyes Shelley wrote to Harriet, expressing his anxiety for her welfare, and urging her in her own interests to come out to Switzerland, where he, who would always remain her best and most disinterested friend, would procure for her some sweet retreat among the mountains. He tells her some details of their adventures in the simplest manner imaginable; never, apparently, doubting for a moment but that they would interest her as much as they did him. Harriet, it is needless to say, did not come. Had she done so, she would not have found Shelley, for, as the sequel shows, he was back in London almost as soon as she could have got to Switzerland.

Journal, August 14 (Mary). — At four in the morning we depart from Troyes, and proceed in the new vehicle to Vandeuvres. The village remains still ruined by the war. We rest at Vandeuvres two hours, but walk in a wood belonging to a neighbouring chateau, and sleep under its shade. The moss was so soft; the murmur of the wind in the leaves was sweeter than Æolian music; we forgot that we were in France or in the world for a time.

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August 17. — The *voiturier* insists upon our passing the night at the village of Mort. We go out on the rocks, and Shelley and I read part of *Mary*, a fiction. We return at dark, and, unable to enter the beds, we pass a few comfortless hours by the kitchen fireside.

Thursday, August 18. — We leave Mort at four. After some hours of tedious travelling, through a most beautiful country, we arrive at Noè. From the summit of one of the hills we see the whole expanse of the valley filled with a white, undulating mist, over which the piny hills pierced like islands. The sun had just risen, and a ray of the red light lay on the waves of this fluctuating vapour. To the west, opposite the sun, it seemed driven by the light against the rock in immense masses of foaming cloud until it becomes lost in the distance, mixing its tints with the fleecy sky. At Noè, whilst our postillion waited, we walked into the forest of pines; it was a scene of enchantment, where every sound and sight contributed to charm.

Our mossy seat in the deepest recesses of the wood was enclosed from the world by an impenetrable veil. On our return the postillion had departed without us; he left word that he expected to meet us on the road. We proceeded there upon foot to Maison Neuve, an *auberge* a league distant. At Maison Neuve he had left a message importing that he should proceed to Pontarlier, six leagues distant, and that unless he found us there he should return. We despatched a boy on horseback for him; he promised to wait for us at the next village; we walked two leagues in the expectation of finding him there. The evening was most beautiful; the horned moon hung in the light of sunset that threw a glow of unusual depth of redness above the piny mountains and the dark deep valleys which they included. At Savrine we found, according to our expectation, that M. le Voiturier had pursued his journey with the utmost speed. We engaged a *voiture* for Pontarlier. Jane very unable to walk. The moon becomes yellow and hangs close to the woody horizon. It is dark before we arrive at Pontarlier. The postillion tells many lies. We sleep, for the first time in France, in a clean bed.

Friday, August 19. — We pursue our journey towards Neufchâtel. We pass delightful scenes of verdure surpassing imagination; here first we see clear mountain streams. We pass the barrier between France and Switzerland, and, after descending nearly a league, between lofty rocks covered with pines and interspersed with green glades, where the grass is short and soft and beautifully verdant, we arrive at St. Sulpice. The mule is very lame; we determined to engage another horse for the remainder of the way. Our *voiturier* had determined to leave us, and had taken measures to that effect. The mountains after St. Sulpice become loftier and more beautiful. Two leagues from Neufchâtel we see the Alps; hill after hill is seen extending its craggy outline before the other, and far behind all, towering above every feature of the scene, the snowy Alps; they are 100 miles distant; they look like those accumulated clouds of dazzling white that arrange themselves on the horizon in summer. This immensity staggers the imagination, and so far surpasses all conception that it requires an effort of the understanding to believe that they are indeed mountains. We arrive at Neufchâtel and sleep.

Saturday, August 20. — We consult on our situation. There are no letters at the *bureau de poste*; there cannot be for a week. Shelley goes to the banker's, who promises an answer in two hours; at the conclusion of the time he sends for Shelley, and, to our astonishment and consolation, Shelley returns staggering under the weight of a large canvas bag full of silver. Shelley alone looks grave on the occasion, for he alone clearly apprehends that francs and écus and louis d'or are like the white and flying cloud of noon, that is gone before one can say "Jack Robinson." Shelley goes to secure a place in the diligence; they are all taken. He meets there with a Swiss who speaks English; this man is imbued with the spirit of true politeness. He endeavours to perform real services, and seems to regard the mere ceremonies of the affair as things of very little value. He makes a bargain with a *voiturier* to take us to Lucerne for eighteen écus.

We arrange to depart at four the next morning. Our Swiss friend appoints to meet us there.

Sunday, August 21. — Go from Neufchâtel at six; our Swiss accompanies us a little way out of town. There is a mist to-day, so we cannot see the Alps; the drive, however, is interesting, especially in the latter part of the day. Shelley and Jane talk concerning Jane's character. We arrive before seven at Soleure. Shelley and Mary go to the much-praised cathedral, and find it very modern and stupid.

Monday, August 22. — Leave Soleure at half-past five; very cold indeed, but we now again see the magnificent mountains of Le Valais. Mary is not well, and all are tired of wheeled machines. Shelley is in a jocosely horrible mood. We dine at Zoffingen, and sleep there two hours. In our drive after dinner we see the mountains of St. Gothard, etc. Change our plan of going over St. Gothard. Arrive tired to death; find at the room of the inn a horrible spinet and a case of stuffed birds. Sup at *table d'hôte*.

Tuesday, August 23. — We leave at four o'clock and arrive at Lucerne about ten. After breakfast we hire a boat to take us down the lake. Shelley and Mary go out to buy several needful things, and then we embark. It is a most divine day; the farther we advance the more magnificent are the shores of the lake — rock and pine forests covering the feet of the immense mountains. We read part of L'Abbé Barruel's *Histoire du Jacobinisme*. We land at Bessen, go to the wrong inn, where a most comical scene ensues. We sleep at Brunnen. Before we sleep, however, we look out of window.

Wednesday, August 24. — We consult on our situation. We cannot procure a house; we are in despair; the filth of the apartment is terrible to Mary; she cannot bear it all the winter. We propose to proceed to Fluelen, but the wind comes from Italy, and will not permit. At last we find a lodging in an ugly house they call the Château for one louis a month, which we take; it consists of two rooms. Mary and Shelley walk to the shore of the lake and read the description of the Siege of Jerusalem in Tacitus. We come home, look out of window and go to bed.

Thursday, August 25. — We read Abbé Barruel. Shelley and Jane make purchases; we pack up our things and take possession of our house, which we have engaged for six months. Receive a visit from the *Médecin* and the old Abbé, whom, it must be owned, we do not treat with proper politeness. We arrange our apartment, and write part of Shelley's romance.

Friday, August 26. — Write the romance till three o'clock. Propose crossing Mount St. Gothard. Determine at last to return to England; only wait to set off till the washerwoman brings home our linen. The little Frenchman arrives with tubs and plums and scissors and salt. The linen is not dry; we are compelled to wait until to-morrow. We engage a boat to take us to Lucerne at six the following morning.

Saturday, August 27. — We depart at seven; it rains violently till just the end of our voyage. We conjecture the astonishment of the good people at Brunnen. We arrive at Lucerne, dine, then write a part of the romance, and read *Shakespeare*. Interrupted by Jane's horrors; pack up. We have engaged a boat for Basle.

Sunday, August 28. — Depart at six o'clock. The river is exceedingly beautiful; the waves break on the rocks, and the descents are steep and rapid. It rained the whole day. We stopped at Mettingen to dine, and there surveyed at our ease the horrid and slimy faces of our companions in voyage; our only wish was to absolutely annihilate such uncleanly animals, to which we might have addressed the boatman's speech to Pope: "'Twere easier for God to make entirely new men than attempt to purify such monsters as these." After a voyage in the rain, rendered disagreeable only by the presence of these loathsome "creepers," we arrive, Shelley much exhausted, at Dettingen, our resting-place for the night.

It never seems to have occurred to them before arriving in Switzerland that they had no money wherewith to carry out their further plans, that it was more difficult to obtain it abroad than at home, and that the remainder of their little store would hardly suffice to take them back to England. No sooner thought, however, than done. They gave themselves no rest after their long and arduous journey, but started straight back viâ the Rhine, arriving in Rotterdam on 8th September with only twenty écus remaining, having been "horribly cheated." "Make arrangements, and talk of many things, past, present, and to come."

Journal, Friday, September 9. — We have arranged with a captain to take us to England — three guineas a-piece; at three o'clock we sail, and in the evening arrive at Marsluys, where a bad wind obliges us to stay.

Saturday, September 10. — We remain at Marsluys, Mary begins *Hate*, and gives Shelley the greater pleasure. Shelley writes part of his romance. Sleep at Marsluys. Wind contrary.

Sunday, September 11. — The wind becomes more favourable. We hear that we are to sail. Mary writes more of her *Hate*. We depart, cross the bar; the sea is horribly tempestuous, and Mary is nearly sick, nor is Shelley much better. There is an easterly gale in the night which almost kills us, whilst it carries us nearer our journey's end.

Monday, September 12. — It is calm; we remain on deck nearly the whole day. Mary recovers from her sickness. We dispute with one man upon the slave trade.

The wanderers arrived at last at Gravesend, not only penniless, but unable even to pay their passage money, or to discharge the hackney coach in which they drove about from place to place in search of assistance. At the time of Shelley's sudden flight, the deeds by which part of his income was transferred to Harriet were still in preparation only, and he had, without thinking of the consequences of his act, written from Switzerland to his bankers, directing them to honour her calls for money, as far as his account allowed of it. She must have availed herself so well of this permission that now he found he could only obtain the sum he wanted by applying for it to her.

The relations between Shelley and Harriet, must, at first, have seemed to Mary as incomprehensible as they still do to readers of the *Journal*. Their interviews, necessarily very frequent in the next few months, were, on the whole, quite friendly. Shelley was kind and perfectly ingenuous and sincere; Harriet was sometimes "civil" and good tempered, sometimes cross and provoking. But on neither side was there any pretence of deep pain, of wounded pride or bitter constraint.

Journal, Tuesday, September 13. — We arrive at Gravesend, and with great difficulty prevail on the captain to trust us. We go by boat to London; take a coach; call on Hookham. T. H. not at home. C. treats us very ill. Call at Voisey's. Henry goes to Harriet. Shelley calls on her, whilst poor Mary and Jane are left in the coach for two whole hours. Our debt is discharged. Shelley gets clothes for himself. Go to Strafford Hotel, dine, and go to bed.

Wednesday, September 14. — Talk and read the newspaper. Shelley calls on Harriet, who is certainly a very odd creature; he writes several letters; calls on Hookham, and brings home Wordsworth's *Excursion*, of which we read a part, much disappointed. He is a slave. Shelley engages lodgings, to which we remove in the evening.

Shelley now lost no time in putting himself in communication with Skinner Street, and on the first day after they settled in their new lodgings he addressed a letter to Godwin.

CHAPTER VII

September 1814-May 1816

Whatever may have been Godwin's degree of responsibility for the opinions which had enabled Shelley to elope in all good faith with his daughter, and which saved her from serious scruple in eloping with Shelley, it would be impossible not to sympathise with the father's feelings after the event.

People do not resent those misfortunes least which they have helped to bring on themselves, and no one ever derived less consolation from his own theories than did Godwin from his, as soon as they were unpleasantly put into practice. He had done little to win his daughter's confidence, but he was keenly wounded by the proof she had given of its absence. His pride, as well as his affection, had suffered a serious blow through her departure and that of Jane. For a philosopher like him, accustomed to be looked up to and consulted on matters of education, such a failure in his own family was a public stigma. False and malicious reports got about, which had an additional and peculiar sting from their originating partly in his well-known impecuniosity. It was currently rumoured that he had sold the two girls to Shelley for £800 and £700 respectively. No wonder that Godwin, accustomed to look down from a lofty altitude on such minor matters as money and indebtedness, felt now that he could not hold up his head. He shunned his old friends, and they, for the most part, felt this and avoided him. His home was embittered and spoilt. Mrs. Godwin, incensed at Jane's conduct, vented her wrath in abuse and invective on Shelley and Mary.

No one has thought it worth while to record how poor Fanny was affected by the first news of the family calamity. It must have reached her in Ireland, and her subsequent return home was dismal indeed. The loss of her only sister was a bitter grief to her; and, strong as was her disapproval of that sister's conduct, it must have given her a pang to feel that the culpable Jane had enjoyed Shelley's and Mary's confidence, while she who loved them with a really unselfish love, had been excluded from it. What could she now say or do to cheer Godwin? How parry Mrs. Godwin's inconsiderate and intemperate complaints and innuendos? No doubt Fanny had often stood up for Mary with her stepmother, and now Mary herself had cut the ground from under her feet.

Charles Clairmont was at home again; ostensibly on the plea of helping in the publishing business, but as a fact idling about, on the lookout for some lucky opening. He cared no more than did Jane for the family (including his own mother) in Skinner Street: like every Clairmont, he was an adventurer, and promptly transferred his sympathies to any point which suited himself. To crown all, William, the youngest son, had become infected with the spirit of revolt, and had, as Godwin expresses it, "eloped for two nights," giving his family no little anxiety.

The first and immediate result of Shelley's letter to Godwin was *a visit to his windows* by Mrs. Godwin and Fanny, who tried in this way to get a surreptitious peep at the three truants. Shelley went out to them, but they would not speak to him. Late that evening, however, Charles Clairmont appeared. He was to be another thorn in the side of the interdicted yet indispensable Shelley. He did not mind having a foot in each camp, and had no scruples about coming as often and staying as long as he liked, or in retailing a large amount of gossip. They discussed William's escapade, and the various plans for the immuring of Jane, if she could be caught. This did not predispose Jane to listen to the overtures subsequently made to her from time to time by her relatives.

Godwin replied to Shelley's letter, but declined all further communication with him except through a solicitor. Mrs. Godwin's spirit of rancour was such that, several weeks later, she, on one occasion, forbade Fanny to come down to dinner because she had received a lock of Mary's hair, probably conveyed to her by Charles Clairmont, who, in return, did not fail to inform Mary of the whole story. In spite, however, of this vehement show of animosity, Shelley was kept through one channel or another only too well informed of Godwin's affairs. Indeed, he was never suffered to forget them for long at a time. No sign of impatience or resentment ever appears in his journal or letters. Not only was Godwin the father of his beloved, but he was still, to Shelley, the fountain-head of wisdom, philosophy, and inspiration. Mary, too, was devoted to her father, and never wavered in her conviction that his inimical attitude proceeded from no impulse of his own mind, but that he was upheld in it by the influence and interference of Mrs. Godwin.

The journal of Shelley and Mary for the next few months is, in its extreme simplicity, a curious record of a most uncomfortable time; a medley of lodgings, lawyers, money-lenders, bailiffs, wild schemes, and literary pursuits. Penniless themselves, they were yet responsible for hundreds and thousands of pounds of other people's debts; there was Harriet running up bills at shops and hotels and sending her creditors on to Shelley; Godwin perpetually threatened with bankruptcy, refusing to see the man who had robbed him of his daughter, yet with literally no other hope of support but his help; Jane Clairmont now, as for years to come, entirely dependent on them for everything; Shelley's friends quartering themselves on him all day and every day, often taking advantage of his love of society and intellectual friction, of Mary's youth and inexperience and compliant good-nature, to live at his expense, and, in one case at least, to obtain from him money which he really had not got, and could only borrow, at ruinous interest, on his expectations. He had frequently to be in hiding from bailiffs, change his lodgings, sleep at friends' houses or at different hotels, getting his letters when he could make a stealthy appointment to meet Mary, perhaps at St. Paul's, perhaps at some street corner or outside some coffee-house, — anywhere where he might escape observation. He was not always certain how far he could rely on those whom he had considered his friends, such as the brothers Hookham. Rightly or wrongly, he was led to imagine that Harriet, from motives of revenge, was bent on ruining Godwin, and that for this purpose she would aid and abet in his own arrest, by persuading the Hookhams in such a case to refuse bail. The rumour of this conspiracy was conveyed to the Shelleys in a note from Fanny, who, for Godwin's sake and theirs, broke through the stern embargo laid on all communication.

Yet through all these troubles and bewilderments there went on a perpetual under-current of reading and study, thought and discussion. The actual existence was there, and all these external accidents of circumstance, the realities in ordinary lives were, in these extraordinary lives, treated really as accidents, as passing hindrances to serious purpose, and no more.

Nothing but Mary's true love for Shelley and perfect happiness with him could have tided her over this time. Youth, however, was a wonderful helper, added to the unusual intellectual vigour and vivacity which made it possible for her, as it would be to few girls of seventeen, to forget the daily worries of life in reading and study. Perhaps at no time was the even balance of her nature more clearly manifested than now, when, after living through a romance that will last in story as long as the name of Shelley, her existence revolutionised, her sensibilities preternaturally stimulated, having taken, as it were, a life's experiences by cumulation in a few months; weak and depressed in health, too, she still had sufficient energy and self-control to apply herself to a solid course of intellectual training.

Jane's presence added to their unsettlement, although at times it may have afforded them some amusement. Wilful, fanciful, with a sense of humour and many good impulses, but with that decided dash of charlatanism which characterised the Clairmonts, and little true sensibility, she was a willing disciple for any wild flights of fancy, and a keen participator in all impossible projects and harum-scarum makeshifts. Her presence stimulated and enlivened Shelley, her whims and fancies did not seriously affect, beyond amusing him, and she was an indefatigable companion for him in his walks and wanderings, now that Mary was becoming less and less able to go about. To Mary, however, she must often have been an incubus, a perpetual *third*, and one who, if sometimes useful, often gave a great deal of trouble too. She did not bring to Mary, as she did to Shelley, the charm of novelty; nor does the unfolding of one girl's character present to another girl whose character is also in process of development such attractive problems as it does to a young and speculative man. Mary was too noble by nature and too perfectly in accord with Shelley to indulge in actual jealousy of Jane's companionship with him; still, she must often have had a weary time when those two were scouring the town on their multifarious errands; misunderstandings, also, would occur, only to be removed by long and patient explanation. Jane (or "Clara," as about this time she elected to call herself, in preference to her own less romantic name) was hardly more than a child, and in some respects a very childish child. Excitable and nervous, she had no idea of putting constraint upon herself for others' sake, and gave her neighbours very little rest, as she preferred any amount of scenes to humdrum quiet. She and Shelley would sit up half the night, amusing themselves with wild speculations, natural and supernatural, till she would go off into hysterics or trances, or, when she had at last gone to bed, would walk in her sleep, see phantoms, and frighten them all with her terrors. In the end she was invariably brought to poor Mary, who, delicate in health, had gone early to rest, but had to bestir herself to bring Jane to reason, and to "console her with her all-powerful benevolence," as Shelley describes it.

Every page of the journal testifies to the extreme youth of the writers; likely and unlikely events are chronicled with equal simplicity. Where all is new, one thing is not more startling than another; and the commonplaces of everyday life may afford more occasion for surprise than the strangest anomalies. Specimens only of the diary can be given here, and they are best given without comment.

Sunday, September 18. — Mary receives her first lesson in Greek. She reads the *Curse of Kehama*, while Shelley walks out with Peacock, who dines. Shelley walks part of the way home with him. Curious account of Harriet. We talk, study a little Greek, and go to bed.

Tuesday, September 20. — Shelley writes to Hookham and Tavernier; goes with Hookham to Ballachy's. Mary reads *Political Justice* all the morning. Study Greek. In the evening Shelley reads *Thalaba* aloud.

Monday, September 26. — Shelley goes with Peacock to Ballachy's, and engages lodgings at Pancras. Visit from Mrs. Pringer. Read *Political Justice* and the *Empire of the Nairs*.

Tuesday, September 21. — Read *Political Justice*; finish the *Nairs*; pack up and go to our lodgings in Somers Town.

Friday, September 30. — After breakfast walk to Hampstead Heath. Discuss the possibility of converting and liberating two heiresses; arrange a plan on the subject.... Peacock calls; talk with him concerning the heiresses and Marian, arrange his marriage.

Sunday, October 2. — Peacock comes after breakfast; walk over Primrose Hill; sail little boats; return a little before four; talk. Read *Political Justice* in the evening; talk.

Monday, October 3. — Read *Political Justice*. Hookham calls. Walk with Peacock to the Lake of Nangis and set off little fire-boats. After dinner talk and let off fireworks. Talk of the west of Ireland plan.

Wednesday, October 5. — Peacock at breakfast. Walk to the Lake of Nangis and sail fire-boats. Read *Political Justice*. Shelley reads the *Ancient Mariner* aloud. Letter from Harriet, very civil. £400 for £2400.

Friday, October 7 (Shelley). — Read *Political Justice*. Peacock calls. Jane, for some reason, refuses to walk. We traverse the fields towards Hampstead. Under an expansive oak lies a dead calf; the cow, lean from grief, is watching it. (Contemplate subject for poem.) The sunset is beautiful. Return at 9. Peacock departs. Mary goes to bed at half-past 8; Shelley sits up with Jane. Talk of oppression and reform, of cutting squares of skin from the soldiers' backs. Jane states her conception of the subterranean community of women. Talk of Hogg, Harriet, Miss Hitchener, etc. At 1 o'clock Shelley observes that it is the witching time of night; he inquires soon after if it is not horrible to feel the silence of night tingling in our ears; in half an hour the question is repeated in a different form; at 2 they retire awestruck and hardly daring to breathe. Shelley says to Jane, "Good-night;" his hand is leaning on the table; he is conscious of an expression in his countenance which he cannot repress. Jane hesitates. "Good-night" again. She still hesitates.

"Did you ever read the tragedy of *Orra*?" said Shelley.

"Yes. How horribly you look! — take your eyes off."

"Good-night" again, and Jane runs to her room. Shelley, unable to sleep, kissed Mary, and prepared to sit beside her and read till morning, when rapid footsteps descended the stairs. Jane was there; her countenance was distorted most unnaturally by horrible dismay — it beamed with a whiteness that seemed almost like light; her lips and cheeks were of one deadly hue; the skin of her face and forehead was drawn into innumerable wrinkles — the lineaments of terror that could not be contained; her hair came prominent and erect; her eyes were wide and staring, drawn almost from the sockets by the convulsion of the muscles; the eyelids were forced in, and the eyeballs, without any relief, seemed as if they had been newly inserted, in ghastly sport, in the sockets of a lifeless head. This frightful spectacle endured but for a few moments — it was displaced by terror and confusion, violent indeed, and full of dismay, but human. She asked me if I had touched her pillow (her tone was that of dreadful alarm). I said, "No, no! if you will come into the room I will tell you." I informed her of Mary's pregnancy; this seemed to check her violence. She told me that a pillow placed upon her bed had been removed, in the moment that she turned her eyes away to a chair at some distance, and evidently by no human power. She was positive as to the facts of her self-possession and calmness. Her manner convinced me that she was not deceived. We continued to sit by the fire, at intervals engaging in awful conversation relative to the nature of these mysteries. I read part of *Alexy*; I repeated one of my own poems. Our conversation, though intentionally directed to other topics, irresistibly recurred to these. Our candles burned low; we feared they would not last until daylight. Just as the dawn was struggling with moonlight, Jane remarked in me that unutterable expression which had affected her with so much horror before; she described it as expressing a mixture of deep sadness and conscious power over her. I covered my face with my hands, and spoke to her in the most studied gentleness. It was ineffectual; her horror and agony increased even to the most dreadful convulsions. She shrieked and writhed on the floor. I ran to Mary; I communicated in few words the state of Jane. I brought her to Mary. The convulsions gradually ceased, and she slept. At daybreak we examined her apartment and found her pillow on the chair.

Saturday, October 8 (Mary). — Read *Political Justice*. We walked out; when we return Shelley talks with Jane, and I read *Wrongs of Women*. In the evening we talk and read.

Tuesday, October 11. — Read *Political Justice*. Shelley goes to the Westminster Insurance Office. Study Greek. Peacock dines. Receive a refusal about the money....

Have a good-humoured letter from Harriet, and a cold and even sarcastic one from Mrs. Boinville. Shelley reads the *History of the Illuminati*, out of Barruel, to us.

Wednesday, October 12. — Read *Political Justice*. A letter from Marshall; Jane goes there. When she comes home we go to Cheapside; returning, an occurrence. Deliberation until 7; burn the letter; sleep early.

Thursday, October 13. — Communicate the burning of the letter. Much dispute and discussion concerning its probable contents. Alarm. Determine to quit London; send for £5 from Hookham. Change our resolution. Go to the play. The extreme depravity and disgusting nature of the scene; the inefficacy of acting to encourage or maintain the delusion. The loathsome sight of men personating characters which do not and cannot belong to them. Shelley displeased with what he saw of Kean. Return. Alarm. We sleep at the Stratford Hotel.

Friday, October 14 (Shelley). — Jane's insensibility and incapacity for the slightest degree of friendship. The feelings occasioned by this discovery prevent me from maintaining any measure in security. This highly incorrect; subversion of the first principles of true philosophy; characters, particularly those which are unformed, may change. Beware of weakly giving way to trivial sympathies. Content yourself with one great affection — with a single mighty hope; let the rest of mankind be the subjects of your benevolence, your justice, and, as human beings, of your sensibility; but, as you value many hours of peace, never suffer more than one even to approach the hallowed circle. Nothing should shake the truly great spirit which is not sufficiently mighty to destroy it.

Peacock calls. I take some interest in this man, but no possible conduct of his would disturb my tranquillity.... Converse with Jane; her mind unsettled; her character unformed; occasion of hope from some instances of softness and feeling; she is not entirely insensible to concessions, new proofs that the most exalted philosophy, the truest virtue, consists in an habitual contempt of self; a subduing of all angry feelings; a sacrifice of pride and selfishness. When you attempt benefit to either an individual or a community, abstain from imputing it as an error that they despise or overlook your virtue. These are incidental reflections which arise only indirectly from the circumstances recorded.

Walk with Peacock to the pond; talk of Marian and Greek metre. Peacock dines. In the evening read Cicero and the *Paradoxa*. Night comes; Jane walks in her sleep, and groans horribly; listen for two hours; at length bring her to Mary. Begin *Julius*, and finish the little volume of Cicero.

The next morning the chimney board in Jane’s room is found to have walked leisurely into the middle of the room, accompanied by the pillow, who, being very sleepy, tried to get into bed again, but sat down on his back.

Saturday, October 15 (Mary). — After breakfast read *Political Justice*. Shelley goes with Peacock to Ballachy’s. A disappointment; it is put off till Monday. They then go to Homerton. Finish *St. Leon*. Jane writes to Marshall. A letter from my Father. Talking; Jane and I walk out. Shelley and Peacock return at 6. Shelley advises Jane not to go. Jane’s letter to my Father. A refusal. Talk about going away, and, as usual, settle nothing.

Wednesday, October 19. — Finish *Political Justice*, read *Caleb Williams*. Shelley goes to the city, and meets with a total failure. Send to Hookham. Shelley reads a part of *Comus* aloud.

Thursday, October 20. — Shelley goes to the city. Finish *Caleb Williams*; read to Jane. Peacock calls; he has called on my father, who will not speak about Shelley to any one but an attorney. Oh! philosophy!...

Saturday, October 22. — Finish the *Life of Alfieri*. Go to the tomb (Mary Wollstonecraft's), and read the *Essay on Sepulchres* there. Shelley is out all the morning at the lawyer's, but nothing is done....

In the evening a letter from Fanny, warning us of the Hookhams. Jane and Shelley go after her; they find her, but Fanny runs away.

Monday, October 24. — Read aloud to Jane. At 11 go out to meet Shelley. Walk up and down Fleet Street; call at Peacock's; return to Fleet Street; call again at Peacock's; return to Pancras; remain an hour or two. People call; I suppose bailiffs. Return to Peacock's. Call at the coffee-house; see Shelley; he has been to Ballachy's. Good hopes; to be decided Thursday morning. Return to Peacock's; dine there; get money. Return home in a coach; go to bed soon, tired to death.

Thursday, October 25. — Write to Shelley. Jane goes to Fanny.... Call at Peacock's; go to the hotel; Shelley not there. Go back to Peacock's. Peacock goes to Shelley. Meet Shelley in Holborn. Walk up and down Bartlett's Buildings.... Come with him to Peacock's; talk with him till 10; return to Pancras without him. Jane in the dumps all evening about going away.

Wednesday, October 26. — A visit from Shelley's old friends; they go away much disappointed and very angry. He has written to T. Hookham to ask him to be bail. Return to Pancras about 4. Read all the evening.

Thursday, October 27. — Write to Fanny all morning. We had received letters from Skinner Street in the morning. Fanny is very doleful, and C. C. contradicts in one line what he had said in the line before. After two go to St. Paul's; meet Shelley; go with him in a coach to Hookham's; H. is out; return; leave him and proceed to Pancras. He has not received a definitive answer from Ballachy; meet a money-lender, of whom I have some hopes. Read aloud to Jane in the evening. Jane goes to sleep. Write to Shelley. A letter comes enclosing a letter from Hookham consenting to justify bail. Harriet has been to work there against my Father.

Tuesday, November 1. — Learn Greek all morning. Shelley goes to the 'Change. Jane calls. People want their money; won't send up dinner, and we are all very hungry. Jane goes to Hookham. Shelley and I talk about her character. Jane returns without money. Writes to Fanny about coming to see her; she can't come. Writes to Charles. Goes to Peacock to send him to us with some eatables; he is out. Charles promises to see her. She returns to Pancras; he goes there, and tells the dismal state of the Skinner Street affairs. Shelley goes to Peacock's; comes home with cakes. Wait till T. Hookham sends money to pay the bill. Shelley returns to Pancras. Have tea, and go to bed. Shelley goes to Peacock's to sleep.

These are two specimens of the notes constantly passing between them.

Mary to Shelley.

25th October.

For what a minute did I see you yesterday. Is this the way, my beloved, we are to live till the 6th? In the morning when I wake I turn to look on you. Dearest Shelley, you are solitary and uncomfortable. Why cannot I be with you, to cheer you and press you to my heart? Ah! my love, you have no friends; why, then, should you be torn from the only one who has affection for you? But I shall see you to-night, and this is the hope I shall live on through the day. Be happy, dear Shelley, and think of me! I know how tenderly you love me, and how you repine at your absence from me. When shall we be free of treachery? I send you the letter I told you of from Harriet, and a letter we received yesterday from Fanny; the history of this interview I will tell you when I come. I was so dreadfully tired yesterday that I was obliged to take a coach home. Forgive this extravagance, but I am so very weak at present, and I had been so agitated through the day, that I was not able to stand; a morning's rest, however, will set me quite right again; I shall be well when I meet you this evening. Will you be at the door of the coffee-house at 5 o'clock, as it is disagreeable to go into those places. I shall be there exactly at that time, and we can go into St. Paul's, where we can sit down.

I send you *Diogenes*, as you have no books. Hookham was so ill-tempered as not to send the book I asked for. So this is the end of my letter, dearest love.

What do they mean? I detest Mrs. Godwin; she plagues my father out of his life; and these —— Well, no matter. Why will Godwin not follow the obvious bent of his affections, and be reconciled to us? No; his prejudices, the world, and *she* — all these forbid it. What am I to do? trust to time, of course, for what else can I do. Good-night, my love; to-morrow I will seal this blessing on your lips. Press me, your own Mary, to your heart. Perhaps she will one day have a father; till then be everything to me, love; and, indeed, I will be a good girl, and never vex you. I will learn Greek and —— but when shall we meet when I may tell you all this, and you will so sweetly reward me? But good-night; I am wofully tired, and so sleepy. One kiss — well, that is enough — to-morrow!

Shelley to Mary.
28th October.

My beloved Mary — I know not whether these transient meetings produce not as much pain as pleasure. What have I said? I do not mean it. I will not forget the sweet moments when I saw your eyes — the divine rapture of the few and fleeting kisses. Yet, indeed, this must cease; indeed, we must not part thus wretchedly to meet amid the comfortless tumult of business; to part I know not how.

Well, dearest love, to-morrow — to-morrow night. That eternal clock! Oh! that I could "fright the steeds of lazy-paced Time." I do not think that I am less impatient now than formerly to repossess — to entirely engross — my own treasured love. It seems so unworthy a cause for the slightest separation. I could reconcile it to my own feelings to go to prison if they would cease to persecute us with interruptions. Would it not be better, my heavenly love, to creep into the loathliest cave so that we might be together.

Mary, love, we must be united; I will not part from you again after Saturday night. We must devise some scheme. I must return. Your thoughts alone can waken mine to energy; my mind without yours is dead and cold as the dark midnight river when the moon is down. It seems as if you alone could shield me from impurity and vice. If I were absent from you long, I should shudder with horror at myself; my understanding becomes undisciplined without you. I believe I must become in Mary's hands what Harriet was in mine. Yet how differently disposed — how devoted and affectionate — how, beyond measure, reverencing and adoring — the intelligence that governs me! I repent me of this simile; it is unjust; it is false. Nor do I mean that I consider you much my superior, evidently as you surpass me in originality and simplicity of mind. How divinely sweet a task it is to imitate each other's excellences, and each moment to become wiser in this surpassing love, so that, constituting but one being, all real knowledge may be comprised in the maxim ³½É¸¹ Ãµ±ÅÄ¿½ — (know thyself) — with infinitely more justice than in its narrow and common application. I enclose you Hookham's note; what do you think of it? My head aches; I am not well; I am tired with this comfortless estrangement from all that is dear to me. My own dearest love, good-night. I meet you in Staples Inn at twelve to-morrow — half an hour before twelve. I have written to Hooper and Sir J. Shelley.

Journal, Thursday, November 3 (Mary). — Work; write to Shelley; read Greek grammar. Receive a letter from Mr. Booth; so all my hopes are over there. Ah! Isabel; I did not think you would act thus. Read and work in the evening. Receive a letter from Shelley. Write to him.

[Letter not transcribed here.]

Sunday, November 6. — Talk to Shelley. He writes a great heap of letters. Read part of *St. Leon*. Talk with him all evening; this is a day devoted to Love in idleness. Go to sleep early in the evening. Shelley goes away a little before 10.

Wednesday, November 9. — Pack up all morning; leave Pancras about 3; call at Peacock's for Shelley; Charles Clairmont has been for £8. Go to Nelson Square. Jane gloomy; she is very sullen with Shelley. Well, never mind, my love — we are happy.

Thursday, November 10. — Jane is not well, and does not speak the whole day. We send to Peacock's, but no good news arrives. Lambert has called there, and says he will write. Read a little of *Petronius*, a most detestable book. Shelley is out all the morning. In the evening read Louvet's *Memoirs* — go to bed early. Shelley and Jane sit up till 12, talking; Shelley talks her into a good humour.

Sunday, November 13. — Write in the morning; very unwell all day. Fanny sends a letter to Jane to come to Blackfriars Road; Jane cannot go. Fanny comes here; she will not see me; hear everything she says, however. They think my letter cold and *indelicate*! God bless them. Papa tells Fanny if she sees me he will never speak to her again; a blessed degree of liberty this! He has had a very impertinent letter from Christy Baxter. The reason she comes is to ask Jane to Skinner Street to see Mrs. Godwin, who they say is dying. Jane has no clothes. Fanny goes back to Skinner Street to get some. She returns. Jane goes with her. Shelley returns (he had been to Hookham's); he disapproves. Write and read. In the evening talk with my love about a great many things. We receive a letter from Jane saying she is very happy, and she does not know when she will return. Turner has called at Skinner Street; he says it is too far to Nelson Square. I am unwell in the evening.

Journal, November 14 (Shelley). — Mary is unwell. Receive a note from Hogg; cloth from Clara. I wish this girl had a resolute mind. Without firmness understanding is impotent, and the truest principles unintelligible. Charles calls to confer concerning Lambert; walk with him. Go to ‘Change, to Peacock’s, to Lambert’s; receive £30. In the evening Hogg calls; perhaps he still may be my friend, in spite of the radical differences of sympathy between us; he was pleased with Mary; this was the test by which I had previously determined to judge his character. We converse on many interesting subjects, and Mary’s illness disappears for a time.

Thursday, November 15 (Shelley). — Disgusting dreams have occupied the night.

(Mary). — Very unwell. Jane calls; converse with her. She goes to Skinner Street; tells Papa that she will not return; comes back to Nelson Square with Shelley; calls at Peacock’s. Shelley read aloud to us in the evening out of Adolphus’s *Lives*.

Wednesday, November 16. — Very ill all day. Shelley and Jane out all day shopping about the town. Shelley reads *Edgar Huntley* to us. Shelley and Jane go to Hookham’s. Hogg comes in the meantime; he stops all the evening. Shelley writes his critique till half-past 3.

Saturday, November 19. — Very ill. Shelley and Jane go out to call at Mrs. Knapp’s; she receives Jane kindly; promises to come and see me. I go to bed early. Charles Clairmont calls in the evening, but I do not see him.

Sunday, November 20. — Still very ill; get up very late. In the evening Shelley reads aloud out of the *Female Revolutionary Plutarch*. Hogg comes in the evening.... Get into an argument about virtue, in which Hogg makes a sad bungle; quite muddled on the point, I perceive.

Tuesday, November 29. — Work all day. Heigh ho! Clara and Shelley go before breakfast to Parker’s. After breakfast, Shelley is as badly off as I am with my work, for he is out all day with those lawyers. In the evening Shelley and Jane go in search of Charles Clairmont; they cannot find him. Read *Philip Stanley* — very stupid.

Tuesday, December 6. — Very unwell. Shelley and Clara walk out, as usual, to heaps of places. Read *Agathon*, which I do not like so well as

Peregrine.... A letter from Hookham, to say that Harriet has been brought to bed of a son and heir. Shelley writes a number of circular letters of this event, which ought to be ushered in with ringing of bells, etc., for it is the son *of his wife*. Hogg comes in the evening; I like him better, though he vexed me by his attachment to sporting. A letter from Harriet confirming the news, in a letter from a *deserted wife*!! and telling us he has been born a week.

Wednesday, December 7. — Clara and Shelley go out together; Shelley calls on the lawyers and on Harriet, who treats him with insulting selfishness; they return home wet and very tired. Read *Agathon*. I like it less to-day; he discovers many opinions which I think detestable. Work. In the evening Charles Clairmont comes. Hear that Place is trying to raise £1200 to pay Hume on Shelley's *post obit*; affairs very bad in Skinner Street; afraid of a call for the rent; all very bad. Shelley walks home with Charles Clairmont; goes to Hookham's about the £100 to lend my Father. Hookham out. He returns; very tired. Work in the evening.

Thursday, December 8. — Shelley and Clara go to Hookham's; get the £90 for my father; they are out, as usual, all morning. Finish *Agathon*. I do not like it; Wieland displays some most detestable opinions; he is one of those men who alter all their opinions when they are about forty, and then think it will be the same with every one, and that they are themselves the only proper monitors of youth. Work. When Shelley and Clara return, Shelley goes to Lambert's; out. Work. In the evening Hogg comes; talk about a great number of things; he is more sincere this evening than I have seen him before. Odd dreams.

Friday, December 16. — Still ill; heigh ho! Finish *Jane Talbot*. Hume calls at half-past 12; he tells of the great distress in Skinner Street; I do not see him. Hookham calls; hasty little man; he does not stay long. In the evening Hogg comes. Shelley and Clara are at first out; they have been to look for Charles Clairmont; they find him, and walk with him some time up and down Ely Place. Shelley goes to sleep early; very tired. We talk about flowers and trees in the evening; a country conversation.

Saturday, December 17. — Very ill. Shelley and Clara go to Pike's; when they return, Shelley goes to walk round the Square. Talk with Shelley in the evening; he sleeps, and I lie down on the bed. Jane goes to Pike's at 9. Charles Clairmont comes, and talks about several things. Mrs. Godwin did not allow Fanny to come down to dinner on her receiving a lock of my hair. Fanny of course behaves slavishly on the occasion. He goes at half-past 11.

Sunday, December 18. — Better, but far from well. Pass a very happy morning with Shelley. Charles Clairmont comes at dinner-time, the Skinner Street folk having gone to dine at the Kennie's. Jane and he take a long walk together. Shelley and I are left alone. Hogg comes after Clara and her brother return. C. C. flies from the field on his approach. Conversation as usual. Get worse towards night.

Monday, December 19 (Shelley). — Mary rather better this morning. Jane goes to Hume's about Godwin's bills; learn that Lambert is inclined, but hesitates. Hear of a woman — supposed to be the daughter of the Duke of Montrose — who has the head of a hog. *Suetonius* is finished, and Shelley begins the *Historia Augustana*. Charles Clairmont comes in the evening; a discussion concerning female character. Clara imagines that I treat her unkindly; Mary consoles her with her all-powerful benevolence. I rise (having already gone to bed) and speak with Clara; she was very unhappy; I leave her tranquil.

Tuesday, December 20 (Mary). — Shelley goes to Pike's; take a short walk with him first. Unwell. A letter from Harriet, who threatens Shelley with her lawyer. In the evening read *Emilia Galotti*. Hogg comes. Converse of various things. He goes at twelve.

Wednesday, December 21 (Shelley). — Mary is better. Shelley goes to Pike's, to the Insurance Offices, and the lawyer's; an agreement entered into for £3000 for £1000. A letter from Wales, offering *post obit*. Shelley goes to Hume's; Mary reads Miss Baillie's plays in the evening. Shelley goes to bed at 8; Mary at 11.

Saturday, December 24 (Mary). — Read *View of French Revolution*. Walk out with Shelley, and spend a dreary morning waiting for him at Mr. Peacock's. In the evening Hogg comes. I like him better each time; it is a pity that he is a lawyer; he wasted so much time on that trash that might be spent on better things.

Sunday, December 25. — Christmas Day. Have a very bad side-ache in the morning, so I rise late. Charles Clairmont comes and dines with us. In the afternoon read Miss Baillie's plays. Hogg spends the evening with us; conversation, as usual.

Monday, December 26 (Shelley). — The sweet Maie asleep; leave a note with her. Walk with Clara to Pike's, etc. Go to Hampstead and look for a house; we return in a return-chaise; find that Laurence has arrived, and consult for Mary; she has read Miss Baillie's plays all day. Mary better this evening. Shelley very much fatigued; sleeps all the evening. Read *Candide*.

Tuesday, December 27 (Mary). — Not very well; Shelley very unwell. Read *De Montfort*, and talk with Shelley in the evening. Read *View of the French Revolution*. Hogg comes in the evening; talk of heaps of things. Shelley's odd dream.

Wednesday, December 28. — Shelley and Clara out all the morning. Read *French Revolution* in the evening. Shelley and I go to Gray's Inn to get Hogg; he is not there; go to Arundel Street; can't find him. Go to Garnerin's. Lecture on electricity; the gases, and the phantasmagoria; return at half-past 9. Shelley goes to sleep. Read *View of French Revolution* till 12; go to bed.

Friday, December 30. — Shelley and Jane go out as usual. Read Bryan Edwards's *Account of West Indies*. They do not return till past seven, having been locked into Kensington Gardens; both very tired. Hogg spends the evening with us.

Saturday, December 31 (Shelley). — The poor Maie was very weak and tired all day. Shelley goes to Pike's and Humes' and Mrs. Peacock's; return very tired, and sleeps all the evening. The Maie goes to sleep early. New Year's Eve.

In January 1815 Shelley's grandfather, Sir Bysshe, died, and his father, Mr. Timothy Shelley, succeeded to the baronetcy and estate. By an arrangement with his father, according to which he relinquished all claim on a certain portion of his patrimony, Shelley now became possessed of £1000 a year (£200 a year of which he at once set apart for Harriet), as well as a considerable sum of ready money for the relief of his present necessities. £200 of this he also sent to Harriet to pay her debts. The next few entries in the journal were, however, written before this event.

Thursday, January 5 (Mary). — Go to breakfast at Hogg's; Shelley leaves us there and goes to Hume's. When he returns we go to Newman Street; see the statue of Theoclea; it is a divinity that raises your mind to all virtue and excellence; I never beheld anything half so wonderfully beautiful. Return home very ill. Expect Hogg in the evening, but he does not come. Too ill to read.

Friday, January 6. — Walk to Mrs. Peacock's with Clara. Walk with Hogg to Theoclea; she is ten thousand times more beautiful to-day than ever; tear ourselves away. Return to Nelson Square; no one at home. Hogg stays a short time with me. Shelley had stayed at home till 2 to see Ryan; he does not come. Goes out about business. In the evening Shelley and Clara go to Garnerin's.... Very unwell. Hogg comes. Shelley and Clara return at ten. Conversation as usual. Shelley reads "Ode to France" aloud, and repeats the poem to "Tranquillity." Talk with Shelley afterwards for some time; at length go to sleep. Shelley goes out and sits in the other room till 5; I then call him. Talk. Shelley goes to sleep; at 8 Shelley rises and goes out.

The next entry is made during Shelley's short absence in Sussex, after his grandfather's death. Clara had accompanied him on his journey.

(*Date between January 7 and January 13*). — Letter from Peacock to say that he is in prison.... His debt is £40.... Write to Peacock and send him £2. Hogg dines with me and spends the evening; letter from Hookham.

Friday, January 13. — A letter from Clara. While I am at breakfast Shelley and Clara arrive. The will has been opened, and Shelley is referred to Whitton. His father would not allow him to enter Field Place; he sits before the door and reads *Comus*. Dr. Blocksome comes out; tells him that his father is very angry with him. Sees my name in Milton.... Hogg dines, and spends the evening with us.

Sunday, January 24. — In the evening Shelley, Clara, and Hogg sleep. Read Gibbon.... Hogg goes at half-past 11. Shelley and Clara explain as usual.

Monday, January 30. — Work all day. Shelley reads Livy. In the evening Shelley reads *Paradise Regained* aloud, and then goes to sleep. Hogg comes at 9. Talk and work. Hogg sleeps here.

Wednesday, February 1. — Read Gibbon (end of vol. i.) Shelley reads Livy in the evening. Work. Shelley and Clara sleep. Hogg comes and sleeps here. Mrs. Hill calls.

Sunday, February 5. — Read Gibbon. Take a long walk in Kensington Gardens and the Park; meet Clairmont as we return, and hear that my father wishes to see a copy of the codicil, because he thinks Shelley is acting rashly. All this is very odd and inconsistent, but I never quarrel with inconsistency; folks must change their minds. After dinner talk. Shelley finishes Gibbon's *Memoirs* aloud. Clara, Shelley, and Hogg sleep. Read Gibbon. Shelley writes to Longdill and Clairmont. Hogg ill, but we cannot persuade him to stay; he goes at half-past 11.

Wednesday, February 8. — Ash Wednesday. So Hogg stays all day. We are to move to-day, so Shelley and Clara go out to look for lodgings. Hogg and I pack, and then talk. Shelley and Clara do not return till 3; they have not succeeded; go out again; they get apartments at Hans Place; move. In the evening talk and read Gibbon. Letters. Pike calls; insolent plague. Hogg goes at half-past 11.

Tuesday, February 14 (Shelley). — Shelley goes to Longdill's and Hayward's, and returns feverish and fatigued. Maie finishes the third volume of Gibbon. All unwell in the evening. Hogg comes and puts us to bed. Hogg goes at half-past 11.

In this month, probably on the 22d (but that page of the diary is torn), when they had been hardly more than a week in their last new lodgings, a little girl was born. Although her confinement was premature, Mary had a favourable time; the infant, a scarcely seven months' child, was not expected to live; it survived, however, for some days. It might possibly have been saved, had it had an ordinary chance of life given it, but, on the ninth day of its existence, the whole family moved yet again to new lodgings. How the young mother ever recovered from the fatigues, risks, and worries she had to go through at this critical time may well be wondered. It is more than probable that the unreasonable demands made on her strength and courage during this month and those which preceded it laid the foundation of much weak health later on. The child was sacrificed. Four days after the move it was found in the morning dead by its mother's side. The poor little thing was a mere passing episode in Shelley's troubled, hurried existence. Only to Mary were its birth and death a deep and permanent experience. Apart from her love for Shelley, her affections had been chiefly of the intellectual kind, and even in her relation with him mental affinity had played a great part. A new chord in her temperament was set vibrating by the advent of this baby, the maternal one, quite absent from her disposition before, and which was to assert itself at last as the keynote of her nature.

Hogg, who was almost constantly with them at this time, seems to have been kind, helpful, and sympathetic.

The baby's birth was too much for Fanny Godwin's endurance and fortitude. Up to this time she had, in accordance with what she conceived to be her duty, held aloof from the Shelleys, but, the barrier once broken down, she came repeatedly to see them. Mrs. Godwin showed that she had a soft spot in her heart by sending Mary, through Fanny, a present of linen, no doubt most welcome at this unprepared-for crisis. Beyond this she was unrelenting. Her pride, however, was not so strong as her feminine curiosity, which she indulged still by parading before the windows and trying to get peeps at the people behind them. She was annoyed with Fanny, who now, however, held her own course, feeling that her duty could not be all on one side while her family consented to be dependent, and that every moment of her father's peace and safety were due entirely to this Shelley whom he would not see.

Journal, February 22 (Shelley) (after the baby's birth). — Maie perfectly well and at ease. The child is not quite seven months; the child not expected to live. Shelley sits up with Maie, much exhausted and agitated. Hogg sleeps here.

Thursday, February 23. — Mary quite well; the child unexpectedly alive, but still not expected to live. Hogg returns in the evening at half-past 7. Shelley writes to Fanny requesting her to come and see Maie. Fanny comes and remains the whole night, the Godwins being absent from home. Charles comes at 11 with linen from Mrs. Godwin. Hogg departs at 11. £30 from Longdill.

Friday, February 24. — Maie still well; favourable symptoms in the child; we may indulge some hopes. Hogg calls at 2. Fanny departs. Dr. Clarke calls; confirms our hopes of the child. Shelley finishes second volume of Livy, p. 657. Hogg comes in the evening. Shelley very unwell and exhausted.

Saturday, February 25. — The child very well; Maie very well also; drawing milk all day. Shelley is very unwell.

Sunday, February 26 (Mary). — Maie rises to-day. Hogg comes; talk; she goes to bed at 6. Hogg calls at the lodgings we have taken. Read *Corinne*. Shelley and Clara go to sleep. Hogg returns; talk with him till past 11. He goes. Shelley and Clara go down to tea. Just settling to sleep when a knock comes to the door; it is Fanny; she came to see how we were; she stays talking till half-past 3, and then leaves the room that Shelley and Mary may sleep. Shelley has a spasm.

Monday, February 27. — Rise; talk and read *Corinne*. Hogg comes in the evening. Shelley and Clara go out about a cradle....

Tuesday, February 28. — I come downstairs; talk, nurse the baby, read *Corinne*, and work. Shelley goes to Pemberton about his health.

Wednesday, March 1. — Nurse the baby, read *Corinne*, and work. Shelley and Clara out all morning. In the evening Peacock comes. Talk about types, editions, and Greek letters all the evening. Hogg comes. They go away at half-past 11. Bonaparte invades France.

Thursday, March 2. — A bustle of moving. Read *Corinne*. I and my baby go about 3. Shelley and Clara do not come till 6. Hogg comes in the evening.

Friday, March 3. — Nurse my baby; talk, and read *Corinne*. Hogg comes in the evening.

Saturday, March 4. — Read, talk, and nurse. Shelley reads the *Life of Chaucer*. Hogg comes in the evening and sleeps.

Sunday, March 5. — Shelley and Clara go to town. Hogg here all day. Read *Corinne* and nurse my baby. In the evening talk. Shelley finishes the *Life of Chaucer*. Hogg goes at 11.

Monday, March 6. — Find my baby dead. Send for Hogg. Talk. A miserable day. In the evening read *Fall of the Jesuits*. Hogg sleeps here.

Tuesday, March 7. — Shelley and Clara go after breakfast to town. Write to Fanny. Hogg stays all day with us; talk with him, and read the *Fall of the Jesuits* and *Rinaldo Rinaldini*. Not in good spirits. Hogg goes at 11. A fuss. To bed at 3.

Wednesday, March 8. — Finish *Rinaldini*. Talk with Shelley. In very bad spirits, but get better; sleep a little in the day. In the evening net. Hogg comes; he goes at half-past 11. Clara has written for Fanny, but she does not come.

Thursday, March 9. — Read and talk. Still think about my little baby. ‘Tis hard, indeed, for a mother to lose a child. Hogg and Charles Clairmont come in the evening. C. C. goes at 11. Hogg stays all night. Read Fontenelle, *Plurality of Worlds*.

Friday, March 10. — Hogg's holidays begin. Shelley, Hogg, and Clara go to town. Hogg comes back soon. Talk and net. Hogg now remains with us. Put the room to rights.

Saturday, March 11. — Very unwell. Hogg goes to town. Talk about Clara's going away; nothing settled; I fear it is hopeless. She will not go to Skinner Street; then our house is the only remaining place, I see plainly. What is to be done? Hogg returns. Talk, and Hogg reads the *Life of Goldoni* aloud.

Sunday, March 4. — Talk a great deal. Not well, but better. Very quiet all the morning, and happy, for Clara does not get up till 4. In the evening read Gibbon, fourth volume; go to bed at 12.

Monday, March 13. — Shelley and Clara go to town. Stay at home; net, and think of my little dead baby. This is foolish, I suppose; yet, whenever I am left alone to my own thoughts, and do not read to divert them, they always come back to the same point — that I was a mother, and am so no longer. Fanny comes, wet through; she dines, and stays the evening; talk about many things; she goes at half-past 9. Cut out my new gown.

Tuesday, March 14. — Shelley calls on Dr. Pemberton. Net till breakfast. Shelley reads *Religio Medici* aloud, after Hogg has gone to town. Work; finish Hogg's purse. Shelley and I go upstairs and talk of Clara's going; the prospect appears to me more dismal than ever; not the least hope. This is, indeed, hard to bear. In the evening Hogg reads Gibbon to me. Charles Clairmont comes in the evening.

Sunday, March 19. — Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived. Awake and find no baby. I think about the little thing all day. Not in good spirits. Shelley is very unwell. Read Gibbon. Charles Clairmont comes. Hogg goes to town till dinner-time. Talk with Charles Clairmont about Skinner Street. They are very badly off there. I am afraid nothing can be done to save them. C. C. says that he shall go to America; this I think a rather wild project in the Clairmont style. Play a game of chess with Clara. In the evening Shelley and Hogg play at chess. Shelley and Clara walk part of the way with Charles Clairmont. Play chess with Hogg, and then read Gibbon.

Monday, March 20. — Dream again about my baby. Work after breakfast, and then go with Shelley, Hogg, and Clara to Bullock's Museum;

spend the morning there. Return and find more letters for A. Z. — one from a "Disconsolate Widow."

Wednesday, March 22. — Talk, and read the papers. Read Gibbon all day. Charles Clairmont calls about Shelley lending £100. We do not return a decisive answer.

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Thursday, March 23. — Read Gibbon. Shelley reads Livy. Walk with Shelley and Hogg to Arundel Street. Read *Le Diable Boiteux*. Hear that Bonaparte has entered Paris. As we come home, meet my father and Charles Clairmont.... C. C. calls; he tells us that Papa saw us, and that he remarked that Shelley was so beautiful, it was a pity he was so wicked.

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Tuesday, March 28. — Work in the morning and then walk out to look at house.

Saturday, April 8. — Peacock comes at breakfast-time; Hogg and he go to town. Read *L'Esprit des Nations*. Settle to go to Virginia Water.

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Sunday, April 9. — Rise at 8. Charles Clairmont comes to breakfast at 10. Read some lines of Ovid before breakfast; after, walk with Shelley, Hogg, Clara, and C. C. to pond in Kensington Gardens; return about 2. C. C. goes to Skinner Street. Read Ovid with Hogg (finish second fable). Shelley reads Gibbon and *Pastor Fido* with Clara. In the evening read *L'Esprit des Nations*. Shelley reads Gibbon, *Pastor Fido*, and the story of Myrrha in Ovid.

Monday, April 10. — Read Voltaire before breakfast. After breakfast work. Shelley passes the morning with Harriet, who is in a surprisingly good humour. Mary reads third fable of Ovid: Shelley and Clara read *Pastor Fido*. Shelley reads Gibbon. Mrs. Godwin after dinner parades before the windows. Talk in the evening with Hogg about mountains and lakes and London.

Tuesday, April 11. — Work in the morning. Receive letters from Skinner Street to say that Mamma had gone away in the pet, and had stayed out all night. Read fourth and fifth fables of Ovid.... After tea, work. Charles Clairmont comes.

Saturday, April 15. — Read Ovid till 3. Shelley and Clara finish *Pastor Fido*, and then go out about Clara's lottery ticket; draws. Clara's ticket comes up a prize. She buys two desks after dinner. Read Ovid (ninety-five lines). Shelley and Clara begin *Orlando Furioso*. A very grim dream.

Friday, April 21. — After breakfast go with Shelley to Peacock's. Shelley goes to Longdill's. Read third canto of the *Lord of the Isles*. Return about 2. Shelley goes to Harriet to procure his son, who is to appear in one of the courts. After dinner look over W. W.'s poems. After tea read forty lines of Ovid. Fanny comes and gives us an account of Hogan's threatened arrest of my Father. Shelley walks home part of the way with her. Very sleepy. Shelley reads one canto of Ariosto.

Saturday, April 22. — Read a little of Ovid. Shelley goes to Harriet's about his son. Work. Fanny comes. Shelley returns at 4; he has been much teased with Harriet. He has been to Longdill's, Whitton's, etc., and at length has got a promise that he shall appear Monday. After dinner Fanny goes. Read sixty lines of Ovid. Shelley and Clara read to the middle of the fourteenth canto of Ariosto.

Shortly after this several leaves of the journal are lost.

Friday, May 5. — After breakfast to Marshall's, but do not see him. Go to the Tomb. Shelley goes to Longdill's. Return soon. Read Spenser; construe Ovid.... After dinner talk with Shelley; then Shelley and Clara go out.... Fanny comes; she tells us of Marshall's servant's death. Papa is to see Mrs. Knapp to-morrow. Read Spenser. Walk home with Fanny and with Shelley.... Shelley reads Seneca.

Monday, May 8. — Go out with Shelley to Mrs. Knapp; not at home. Buy Shelley a pencil-case. Return at 1. Read Spenser. Go again with Shelley to Mrs. Knapp; she cannot take Clara. Read Spenser after dinner. Clara goes out with Shelley. Talk with Jefferson (Hogg); write to Marshall. Read Spenser. They return at 8. Very tired; go to bed early. Jefferson scolds.

Wednesday, May 10. — Not very well; rise late. Walk to Marshall's, and talk with him for an hour. Go with Jefferson and Shelley to British Museum — attend most to the statues; return at 2. Construe Ovid. After dinner construe Ovid (100 lines); finish second book of Spenser, and read two cantos of the third. Shelley reads Seneca every day and all day.

Friday, May 12. — Not very well. After breakfast read Spenser. Shelley goes out with his friend; he returns first. Construe Ovid (90 lines); read Spenser. Jefferson returns at half-past 4, and tells us that poor Sawyer is to be hung. These blessed laws! After dinner read Spenser. Read over the Ovid to Jefferson, and construe about ten lines more. Read Spenser. Shelley and the lady walk out. After tea, talk; write Greek characters. Shelley and his friend have a last conversation.

Saturday, May 13. — Clara goes; Shelley walks with her. C. C. comes to breakfast; talk. Shelley goes out with him. Read Spenser all day (finish Canto 8, Book V.) Jefferson does not come till 5. Get very anxious about Shelley; go out to meet him; return; it rains. Shelley returns at half-past 6; the business is finished. After dinner Shelley is very tired, and goes to sleep. Read Ovid (60 lines). C. C. comes to tea. Talk of pictures.

(Mary). — A tablespoonful of the spirit of aniseed, with a small quantity of spermaceti.

(Shelley) — 9 drops of human blood, 7 grains of gunpowder, ½ oz. of putrified brain, 13 mashed grave worms — the Pecksie’s doom salve.

The Maie and her Elfin Knight.

I begin a new journal with our regeneration.

CHAPTER VIII

May 1815-September 1816

“Our regeneration” meant, in other words, the departure of Jane or “Clara” Clairmont who, on the plea of needing change of air, went off by herself into cottage lodgings at Lynmouth, in North Devon. She had never shown any very great desire to go back to her family in Skinner Street, but even had it been otherwise, objections had now been raised to her presence there which made her return difficult if not impossible. Fanny Godwin’s aunts, Everina Wollstonecraft and Mrs. Bishop, were Principals of a select Ladies’ School in Dublin, and intended that, on their own retirement, their niece should succeed them in its management. They strongly objected now to her associating with Miss Clairmont, pointing out that, even if her morals were not injured, her professional prospects must be marred by the fact being generally known of her connection and companionship with a girl who undoubtedly had run away from home, and who was, untruly but not groundlessly, reported to be concerned in a notorious scandal.

Her continued presence in the Shelley household, a thing probably never contemplated at the time of their hurried flight, was manifestly undesirable, on many grounds. To Mary it was a perpetual trial, and must, in the end, have tended towards disagreement between her and Shelley, while it put Clara herself at great and unjust social disadvantage. Not that she heeded that, or regretted the barrier that divided her from Skinner Street, where poverty and anxiety and gloom reigned paramount, and where she would have been watched with ceaseless and unconcealed suspicion. She had heard that her relations had even discussed the advisability of immuring her in a convent if she could be caught, — but she did not mean to be caught. She advertised for a situation as companion; nothing, however, came of this. An idea of sending her to board in the family of a Mrs. Knapp seems to have been entertained for some months both by Godwins and Shelleys, Charles Clairmont probably acting as a medium between the two households. But, after appearing well disposed at first, Mrs. Knapp thought better of the plan. She did not want, and would not have Clara. The final project, that of the Lynmouth lodgings, was a sudden idea, suddenly carried out, and devised with the Shelleys independently of the Godwins, who were not consulted, nor even informed, until it had been put into execution. So much is to be gathered from the letter which Clara wrote to Fanny a fortnight after her arrival.

Clara to Fanny.

Sunday, 28th May 1815.

My Dear Fanny — Mary writes me that you thought me unkind in not letting you know before my departure; indeed, I meant no unkindness, but I was afraid if I told you that it might prevent my putting a plan into execution which I preferred before all the Mrs. Knapps in the world. Here I am at liberty; there I should have been under a perpetual restraint. Mrs. Knapp is a forward, impertinent, superficial woman. Here there are none such; a few cottages, with little, rosy-faced children, scolding wives, and drunken husbands. I wish I had a more amiable and romantic picture to present to you, such as shepherds and shepherdesses, flocks and madrigals; but this is the truth, and the truth is best at all times. I live in a little cottage, with jasmine and honeysuckle twining over the window; a little downhill garden full of roses, with a sweet arbour. There are only two gentlemen's seats here, and they are both absent. The walks and shrubberies are quite open, and are very delightful. Mr. Foote's stands at top of the hill, and commands distant views of the whole country. A green tottering bridge, flung from rock to rock, joins his garden to his house, and his side of the bridge is a waterfall. One tumbles directly down, and then flows gently onward, while the other falls successively down five rocks, and seems like water running down stone steps. I will tell you, so far, that it is a valley I live in, and perhaps one you may have seen. Two ridges of mountains enclose the village, which is situated at the west end. A river, which you may step over, runs at the foot of the mountains, and trees hang so closely over, that when on a high eminence you sometimes lose sight of it for a quarter of a mile. One ridge of hills is entirely covered with luxuriant trees, the opposite line is entirely bare, with long pathways of slate and gray rocks, so that you might almost fancy they had once been volcanic. Well, enough of the valleys and the mountains.

You told me you did not think I should ever be able to live alone. If you knew my constant tranquillity, how cheerful and gay I am, perhaps you would alter your opinion. I am perfectly happy. After so much discontent, such violent scenes, such a turmoil of passion and hatred, you will hardly believe how enraptured I am with this dear little quiet spot. I am as happy when I go to bed as when I rise. I am never disappointed, for I know the extent of my pleasures; and let it rain or let it be fair weather, it does not disturb my serene mood. This is happiness; this is that serene and uninterrupted rest I have long wished for. It is in solitude that the powers concentre round the soul, and teach it the calm, determined path of virtue and wisdom. Did you not find this — did you not find that the majestic and tranquil mountains impressed deep and tranquil thoughts, and that everything conspired to give a sober temperature of mind, more truly delightful and satisfying than the gayest ebullitions of mirth?

The foaming cataract and tall rock
Haunt me like a passion.

Now for a little chatting. I was quite delighted to hear that Papa had at last got £1000. Riches seem to fly from genius. I suppose, for a month or two, you will be easy — pray be cheerful. I begin to think there is no situation without its advantages. You may learn wisdom and fortitude in adversity, and in prosperity you may relieve and soothe. I feel anxious to be wise; to be capable of knowing the best; of following resolutely, however painful, what mature and serious thought may prescribe; and of acquiring a prompt and vigorous judgment, and powers capable of execution. What are you reading? Tell Charles, with my best love, that I will never forgive him for having disappointed me of Wordsworth, which I miss very much. Ask him, likewise, to lend me his Coleridge's poems, which I will take great care of. How is dear Willy? How is every one? If circumstances get easy, don't you think Papa and Mamma will go down to the seaside to get up their health a little? Write me a very long letter, and tell me everything. How is your health? Now do not be melancholy; for heaven's sake be cheerful; so young in life, and so melancholy! The moon shines in at my window, there is a roar of waters, and the owls are hooting. How often do I not wish for a curfew!—"swinging slow with sullen roar!" Pray write to me. Do, there's a good Fanny. — Affectionately yours,

M. J. Clairmont.

Miss Fanny Godwin,
41 Skinner Street, Snow Hill, London.

How long this delightful life of solitude lasted is not exactly known. For a year after this time both Clara's journal and that of Shelley and Mary are lost, and the next thing we hear of Clara is her being in town in the spring of 1816, when she first made Lord Byron's acquaintance.

Mary, at any rate, enjoyed nearly a year of comparative peace and *tête-à-tête* with Shelley, which, after all she had gone through, must have been happiness indeed. Had she known that it was the only year she would ever pass with him without the presence of a third person, it may be that — although her loyalty to Shelley stood every test — her heart might have sunk within her. But, happily for her, she could not foresee this. Her letter from Clifton shows that Clara's shadow haunted her at times. Still she was happy, and at peace. Her health, too, was better; and, though always weighed down by Godwin's anxieties, she and Shelley were, themselves, free for once from the pinch of actual penury and the perpetual fear of arrest.

In June they made a tour in South Devon, and very probably paid Clara a visit in her rural retirement; after which Mary stayed for some time at Clifton, while Shelley travelled about looking for a country house to suit them. It was during one of his absences that Mary wrote to him the letter referred to above.

Mary to Shelley.

Clifton, *27th July 1815*.

My beloved Shelley — What I am now going to say is not a freak from a fit of low spirits, but it is what I earnestly entreat you to attend to and comply with.

We ought not to be absent any longer; indeed we ought not. I am not happy at it. When I retire to my room, no sweet love; after dinner, no Shelley; though I have heaps of things *very particular* to say; in fine, either you must come back, or I must come to you directly. You will say, shall we neglect taking a house — a dear home? No, my love, I would not for worlds give up that; but I know what seeking for a house is, and, trust me, it is a very, *very* long job, too long for one love to undertake in the absence of the other. Dearest, I know how it will be; we shall both of us be put off, day after day, with the hopes of the success of the next day’s search, for I am frightened to think how long. Do you not see it in this light, my own love? We have been now a long time separated, and a house is not yet in sight; and even if you should fix on one, which I do not hope for in less than a week, then the settling, etc. Indeed, my love, I cannot bear to remain so long without you; so, if you will not give me leave, expect me without it some day; and, indeed, it is very likely that you may, for I am quite sick of passing day after day in this hopeless way.

Pray, is Clara with you? for I have inquired several times and no letters; but, seriously, it would not in the least surprise me, if you have written to her from London, and let her know that you are without me, that she should have taken some such freak.

The Dormouse has hid the brooch; and, pray, why am I for ever and ever to be denied the sight of my case? Have you got it in your own possession? or where is it? It would give me very great pleasure if you would send it me. I hope you have not already appropriated it, for if you have I shall think it un-Pecksie of you, as Maie was to give it you with her own hands on your birthday; but it is of little consequence, for I have no hope of seeing you on that day; but I am mistaken, for I have hope and certainty, for if you are not here on or before the 3d of August, I set off on the 4th, in early coach, so as to be with you in the evening of that dear day at least.

To-morrow is the 28th of July. Dearest, ought we not to have been together on that day? Indeed we ought, my love, as I shall shed some tears to think we are not. Do not be angry, dear love; your Pecksie is a good girl, and is quite well now again, except a headache, when she waits so anxiously for her love’s letters.

Dearest, best Shelley, pray come to me; pray, pray do not stay away from me! This is delightful weather, and you better, we might have a delightful excursion to Tintern Abbey. My dear, dear love, I most earnestly, and with tearful eyes, beg that I may come to you if you do not like to leave the searches after a house.

It is a long time to wait, even for an answer. To-morrow may bring you news, but I have no hope, for you only set off to look after one in the afternoon, and what can be done at that hour of the day? You cannot.

They finally settled on a house at Bishopsgate just outside Windsor Park, where they passed several months of tranquillity and comparative health;

perhaps the most peacefully happy time that Shelley had ever known or was ever to know. Shadows he, too, had to haunt him, but he was young, and the reaction from the long-continued strain of anxiety, fear, discomfort, and ill-health was so strong that it is no wonder if he yielded himself up to its influence. The summer was warm and dry, and most of the time was passed out of doors. They visited the source of the Thames, making the voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade. Charles Clairmont was of the party, and Peacock also, who gives a humorous account of the expedition, and of the cure he effected of Shelley's ailments by his prescription of "three mutton chops, well peppered." Shelley was at this time a strict vegetarian. Mary, Peacock says, kept a diary of the excursion, which, however, has been lost. Shelley's "Stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade" were an enduring memento of the occasion. At Bishopsgate, under the oak shades of Windsor Great Park, he composed *Alastor*, the first mature production of his genius, and at Bishopsgate Mary's son William was born, on 24th January 1816.

The list of books read during 1815 by Shelley and Mary is worth appending, as giving some idea of their wonderful mental activity and insatiable thirst for knowledge, and the singular sympathy which existed between them in these intellectual pursuits.

LIST OF BOOKS READ IN 1815.

MARY.
*Those marked * Shelley read also.*

Posthumous Works. 3 vols.
Sorrows of Werter.
Don Roderick. By Southey.
*Gibbon's Decline and Fall 12 vols.
*Gibbon's Life and Letters. 1st Edition. 2 vols.
*Lara.
New Arabian Knights. 3 vols.
Corinna.
Fall of the Jesuits.
Rinaldo Rinaldini.
Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds.

Hermsprong.
Le Diable Boiteux.
Man as he is.
Rokeby.
Ovid’s Metamorphoses in Latin.
*Wordsworth’s Poems.
*Spenser’s Fairy Queen.
*Life of the Phillips.
*Fox’s History of James II.
The Reflector.
Fleetwood.
Wieland.
Don Carlos.
*Peter Wilkins.
Rousseau’s Confessions.
Leonora: a Poem.
Emile.
*Milton’s Paradise Lost.
*Life of Lady Hamilton.
De l’Allemagne. By Madame de Staël.
Three vols, of Barruet.
*Caliph Vathek.
Nouvelle Heloise.
*Kotzebue’s Account of his Banishment to Siberia.
Waverley.
Clarissa Harlowe.
Robertson’s History of America.
*Virgil.
*Tale of a Tub.
*Milton’s Speech on Unlicensed Printing.
*Curse of Kehama.
*Madoc.
La Bible Expliquée.
Lives of Abelard and Heloise.
*The New Testament.
*Coleridge’s Poems.

First vol. of Système de la Nature.
Castle of Indolence.
Chatterton's Poems.
*Paradise Regained.
Don Carlos.
*Lycidas.
*St. Leon.
Shakespeare's Plays (part of which Shelley read aloud).
*Burke's Account of Civil Society.
*Excursion.
Pope's Homer's Illiad.
*Sallust.
Micromejas.
*Life of Chaucer.
Canterbury Tales.
Peruvian Letters.
Voyages round the World.
Plutarch's Lives.
*Two vols, of Gibbon.
Ormond.
Hugh Trevor.
*Labaume's History of the Russian War.
Lewis's Tales.
Castle of Udolpho.
Guy Mannering.
*Charles XII by Voltaire.
Tales of the East.

SHELLEY.

Pastor Fido.
Orlando Furioso.
Livy's History.
Seneca's Works.
Tasso's Gerusalemme Liberata.

Tasso's Aminta.
Two vols. of Plutarch in Italian.
Some of the Plays of Euripides.
Seneca's Tragedies.
Reveries of Rousseau.
Hesoid.
Novum Organum.
Alfieri's Tragedies.
Theocritus.
Ossian.
Herodotus.
Thucydides.
Homer.
Locke on the Human Understanding.
Conspiration de Rienzi.
History of Arianism.
Ockley's History of the Saracens.
Madame de Staël sur la Literature.

These months of rest were needed to fit them for the year of shocks, of blows, of conflicting emotions which was to follow. As usual, the first disturbing cause was Clara Clairmont. Early in 1816 she was in town, possibly with her brother Charles, with whom she kept up correspondence, and with whom (thanks to funds provided by Shelley) she had in the autumn been travelling, or paying visits. She now started one of her "wild projects in the Clairmont style," which brought as its consequence the overshadowing of her whole life. She thought she would like to go on the stage, and she applied to Lord Byron, then connected with the management of Drury Lane Theatre, for some theatrical employment. The fascination of Byron's poetry, joined to his very shady social reputation, surrounded him with a kind of romantic mystery highly interesting to a wayward, audacious young spirit, attracted by anything that excited its curiosity. Clara never went on the stage. But she became Byron's mistress. Their connection lasted but a short time. Byron quickly tired of her, and when importuned with her or her affairs, soon came to look on her with positive antipathy. Nothing in Clara's letters to him goes to prove that she was very deeply in love with him. The episode was an excitement and an adventure: one, to him, of the most trivial nature, but fraught with tragic indirect results to her, and, through her, to the Shelleys. They, although they knew of her acquaintance with Byron, were in complete and unsuspecting ignorance of its intimate nature. It might have been imagined that Clara would confide in them, and would even rejoice in doing so. But she had, on the contrary, a positive horror and dread of their finding out anything about her secret. She told Byron who Mary was, one evening when she knew they were to meet, but implored him beforehand to talk only on general subjects, and, if possible, not even to mention her name.

This introduction probably took place in March, when Shelley and Mary were, for a short time, staying up in town. Shelley was occupied in transacting business, which had reference, as usual, to Godwin's affairs. A suit in Chancery was proceeding, to enable him to sell, to his father, the reversion of a portion of his estates. Short of obtaining this permission, he could not assist Godwin to the full extent demanded and expected by this latter, who chose to say, and was encouraged by his man of business to think that, if Shelley did not get the money, it was owing to slackness of effort or inclination on his part. The suit was, however, finally decided against Shelley. The correspondence between him and Godwin was painful in the highest degree, and must have embittered Mary's existence.

Godwin, while leaving no stone unturned to get as much of Shelley's money as possible, and while exerting himself with feverish activity to control and direct to his own advantage the legal negotiations for disposal of part of the Shelley estates, yet declined personal communication with Shelley, and wrote to him in insulting terms, carrying sophistry so far as to assert that his dignity (save the mark!) would be compromised, not by taking Shelley's money, but by taking it in the form of a cheque made out in his, Godwin's, own name. Small wonder if Shelley was wounded and indignant. More than any one else, Godwin had taught and encouraged him to despise what he would have called prejudice.

"In my judgment," wrote Shelley, "neither I, nor your daughter, nor her offspring, ought to receive the treatment which we encounter on every side. It has perpetually appeared to me to have been your especial duty to see that, so far as mankind value your good opinion, we were dealt justly by, and that a young family, innocent, and benevolent, and united should not be confounded with prostitutes and seducers. My astonishment — and I will confess, when I have been treated with most harshness and cruelty by you, my indignation — has been extreme, that, knowing as you do my nature, any consideration should have prevailed on you to be thus harsh and cruel. I lamented also over my ruined hopes, of all that your genius once taught me to expect from your virtue, when I found that for yourself, your family, and your creditors, you would submit to that communication with me which you once rejected and abhorred, and which no pity for my poverty or sufferings, assumed willingly for you, could avail to extort. Do not talk of *forgiveness* again to me, for my blood boils in my veins, and my gall rises against all that bears the human form, when I think of what I, their benefactor and ardent lover, have endured of enmity and contempt from you and from all mankind."

That other, ordinary, people should resent his avowed opposition to conventional morality was, even to Shelley, less of an enigma than that Godwin, from whom he expected support, should turn against him. Yet he never could clearly realise the aspect which his relations with Mary bore to the world, who merely saw in him a married man who had deserted his wife and eloped with a girl of sixteen. He thought people should understand all he knew, and credit him with all he did not tell them; that they should sympathise and fraternise with him, and honour Mary the more, not the less, for what she had done and dared. Instead of this, the world accepted his family's estimate of its unfortunate eldest son, and cut him. It is no wonder that, as Peacock puts it, "the spirit of restlessness came over him again," and drove him abroad once more. His first intention was to settle with Mary and their infant child in some remote region of Scotland or Northern England. But he was at all times delicate, and he longed for balmy air and sunny skies. To these motives were added Clara's wishes, and, as she herself states, her pressing solicitations. Byron, she knew, was going to Geneva, and she persuaded the Shelleys to go there also, in the hope and intention of meeting him. Shelley had read and admired several of Byron's poems, and the prospect of possible companionship with a kindred mind was now and at all times supremely attractive to him. He had made repeated, but fruitless efforts to get a personal interview with Godwin, in the hope, probably, of coming to some definite understanding as to his hopelessly involved and intricate affairs. Godwin went off to Scotland on literary business and was absent all April. Before he returned Shelley, Mary, and Clara had started for Switzerland. The Shelleys were still ignorant and unsuspecting of the intrigue between Byron and Clara. Byron, knowing of Clara's wish to follow him to Geneva, enjoined her on no account to come alone or without protection, as he knew she was capable of doing; hence her determinate wish that the Shelleys should come. She wrote to Byron from Paris to tell him that she was so far on her way, accompanied by "the whole tribe of Otaheite philosophers," as she styles her friends and escort. Just before sailing from Dover Shelley wrote to Godwin, who was still in Scotland, telling him finally of the unsuccessful issue to his Chancery suit, of his doubtful and limited prospects of income or of ability to pay more than £300 for Godwin, and that only some months hence. He referred again to his painful position in England, and his present determination to remain abroad, — perhaps for ever, — with the exception of a possible, solitary, visit to London, should business make this inevitable. He touched on his old obligations to Godwin, assuring him of his continued respect and admiration in spite of the painful past, and of his regret for any too vehement words he might have used.

It is unfortunate for me that the part of your character which is least excellent should have been met by my convictions of what was right to do. But I have been too indignant, I have been unjust to you — forgive me — burn those letters which contain the records of my violence, and believe that however what you erroneously call fame and honour separate us, I shall always feel towards you as the most affectionate of friends.

The travellers reached Geneva by the middle of May; their arrival preceding that of Byron by several days. A letter written by Mary Shelley from their first resting-place, the Hôtel de Sécheron, the descriptive portions of which were afterwards published by her, with the *Journal of a Six Weeks Tour*, gives a graphic account of their journey and their first impressions of Geneva.

Hôtel de Sécheron, Geneva,
17th May 1816.

We arrived at Paris on the 8th of this month, and were detained two days for the purpose of obtaining the various signatures necessary to our passports, the French Government having become much more circumspect since the escape of Lavalette. We had no letters of introduction, or any friend in that city, and were therefore confined to our hotel, where we were obliged to hire apartments for the week, although, when we first arrived, we expected to be detained one night only; for in Paris there are no houses where you can be accommodated with apartments by the day.

The manners of the French are interesting, although less attractive, at least to Englishmen, than before the last invasion of the Allies; the discontent and sullenness of their minds perpetually betrays itself. Nor is it wonderful that they should regard the subjects of a Government which fills their country with hostile garrisons, and sustains a detested dynasty on the throne, with an acrimony and indignation of which that Government alone is the proper object. This feeling is honourable to the French, and encouraging to all those of every nation in Europe who have a fellow-feeling with the oppressed, and who cherish an unconquerable hope that the cause of liberty must at length prevail.

Our route after Paris as far as Troyes lay through the same uninteresting tract of country which we had traversed on foot nearly two years before, but on quitting Troyes we left the road leading to Neufchâtel, to follow that which was to conduct us to Geneva. We entered Dijon on the third evening after our departure from Paris, and passing through Dôle, arrived at Poligny. This town is built at the foot of Jura, which rises abruptly from a plain of vast extent. The rocks of the mountain overhang the houses. Some difficulty in procuring horses detained us here until the evening closed in, when we proceeded by the light of a stormy moon to Champagnolles, a little village situated in the depth of the mountains. The road was serpentine and exceedingly steep, and was overhung on one side by half-distinguished precipices, whilst the other was a gulf, filled by the darkness of the driving clouds. The dashing of the invisible streams announced to us that we had quitted the plains of France, as we slowly ascended amidst a violent storm of wind and rain, to Champagnolles, where we arrived at twelve o’clock the fourth night after our departure from Paris. The next morning we proceeded, still ascending among the ravines and valleys of the mountain. The scenery perpetually grows more wonderful and sublime; pine forests of impenetrable thickness and untrodden, nay, inaccessible expanse spread on every side. Sometimes the dark woods descending follow the route into the valleys, the distorted trees struggling with knotted roots between the most barren clefts; sometimes the road winds high into the regions of frost, and then the forests become scattered, and the branches of the trees are loaded with snow, and half of the enormous pines themselves buried in the wavy drifts. The spring, as the inhabitants informed us, was unusually late, and indeed the cold was excessive; as we ascended the mountains the same clouds which rained on us in the valleys poured forth large flakes of snow thick and fast. The sun occasionally shone through these showers, and illuminated the magnificent ravines of the mountains, whose gigantic pines were, some laden with snow, some wreathed round by the lines of scattered and lingering vapour; others darting their spires into the sunny sky, brilliantly clear and azure.

As the evening advanced, and we ascended higher, the snow, which we had beheld whitening the overhanging rocks, now encroached upon our road, and it snowed fast as we entered the village of Les Rousses, where we were threatened by the apparent necessity of passing the night in a bad inn and dirty beds. For, from that place there are two roads to Geneva; one by Nion, in the Swiss territory, where the mountain route is shorter and comparatively easy at that time of the year, when the road is for several leagues covered with snow of an enormous depth; the other road lay through Gex, and was too circuitous and dangerous to be attempted at so late an hour in the day. Our passport, however, was for Gex, and we were told that we could not change its destination; but all these police laws, so severe in themselves, are to be softened by bribery, and this difficulty was at length overcome. We hired four horses, and ten men to support the carriage, and departed from Les Rousses at six in the evening, when the sun had already far descended, and the snow pelting against the windows of our carriage assisted the coming darkness to deprive us of the view of the lake of Geneva and the far-distant Alps.

The prospect around, however, was sufficiently sublime to command our attention — never was scene more awfully desolate. The trees in these regions are incredibly large, and stand in scattered clumps over the white wilderness; the vast expanse of snow was chequered only by these gigantic pines, and the poles that marked our road; no river nor rock-encircled lawn relieved the eye, by adding the picturesque to the sublime. The natural silence of that uninhabited desert contrasted strangely with the voices of the men who conducted us, who, with animated tones and gestures, called to one another in a *patois* composed of French and Italian, creating disturbance where, but for them, there was none. To what a different scene are we now arrived! To the warm sunshine, and to the humming of sun-loving insects. From the windows of our hotel we see the lovely lake, blue as the heavens which it reflects, and sparkling with golden beams. The opposite shore is sloping and covered with vines, which, however, do not so early in the season add to the beauty of the prospect. Gentlemen's seats are scattered over these banks, behind which rise the various ridges of black mountains, and towering far above, in the midst of its snowy Alps, the majestic Mont Blanc, highest and queen of all. Such is the view reflected by the lake; it is a bright summer scene without any of that sacred solitude and deep seclusion that delighted us at Lucerne. We have not yet found out any very agreeable walks, but you know our attachment to water excursions. We have hired a boat, and every evening, at about six o'clock, we sail on the lake, which is delightful, whether we glide over a glassy surface or are speeded along by a strong wind. The waves of this lake never afflict me with that sickness that deprives me of all enjoyment in a sea-voyage; on the contrary, the tossing of our boat raises my spirits and inspires me with unusual hilarity. Twilight here is of short duration, but we at present enjoy the benefit of an increasing moon, and seldom return until ten o'clock, when, as we approach the shore, we are saluted by the delightful scent of flowers and new-mown grass, and the chirp of the grasshoppers, and the song of the evening birds.

We do not enter into society here, yet our time passes swiftly and delightfully.

We read Latin and Italian during the heats of noon, and when the sun declines we walk in the garden of the hotel, looking at the rabbits, relieving fallen cockchafers, and watching the motions of a myriad of lizards, who inhabit a southern wall of the garden. You know that we have just escaped from the gloom of winter and of London; and coming to this delightful spot during this divine weather, I feel as happy as a new-fledged bird, and hardly care what twig I fly to, so that I may try my new-found wings. A more experienced bird may be more difficult in its choice of a bower; but, in my present temper of mind, the budding flowers, the fresh grass of spring, and the happy creatures about me that live and enjoy these pleasures, are quite enough to afford me exquisite delight, even though clouds should shut out Mont Blanc from my sight. Adieu!

M. S.

On the 25th of May Byron, accompanied by his young Italian physician, Polidori, and attended by three men-servants, arrived at the Hôtel de Sécheron. It was now that he and Shelley became for the first time personally acquainted; an acquaintance which, though it never did and never could ripen quite into friendship, developed with time and circumstances into an association more or less familiar which lasted all Shelley's life. After the arrival of the English Milord and his retinue, the hotel quarters probably became less quiet and comfortable, and before June the Shelleys, with Clare (who, while her secret remained a secret, must have found it inexpedient to live under the same roof with Byron) moved to a cottage on the other side of the lake, near Coligny; known as Maison Chapuis, but sometimes called Campagne Mont Alègre.

Campagne Chapuis, near Coligny,
1st June.

You will perceive from my date that we have changed our residence since my last letter. We now inhabit a little cottage on the opposite shore of the lake, and have exchanged the view of Mont Blanc and her snowy *aiguilles* for the dark frowning Jura, behind whose range we every evening see the sun sink, and darkness approaches our valley from behind the Alps, which are then tinged by that glowing rose-like hue which is observed in England to attend on the clouds of an autumnal sky when daylight is almost gone. The lake is at our feet, and a little harbour contains our boat, in which we still enjoy our evening excursions on the water. Unfortunately we do not now enjoy those brilliant skies that hailed us on our first arrival to this country. An almost perpetual rain confines us principally to the house; but when the sun bursts forth it is with a splendour and heat unknown in England. The thunderstorms that visit us are grander and more terrific than I have ever seen before. We watch them as they approach from the opposite side of the lake, observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged figures upon the piny heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging clouds, while perhaps the sun is shining cheerily upon us. One night we *enjoyed* a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up, the pines on Jura made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful bursts over our heads amid the darkness.

But while I still dwell on the country around Geneva, you will expect me to say something of the town itself; there is nothing, however, in it that can repay you for the trouble of walking over its rough stones. The houses are high, the streets narrow, many of them on the ascent, and no public building of any beauty to attract your eye, or any architecture to gratify your taste. The town is surrounded by a wall, the three gates of which are shut exactly at ten o'clock, when no bribery (as in France) can open them. To the south of the town is the promenade of the Genevese, a grassy plain planted with a few trees, and called Plainpalais. Here a small obelisk is erected to the glory of Rousseau, and here (such is the mutability of human life) the magistrates, the successors of those who exiled him from his native country, were shot by the populace during that revolution which his writings mainly contributed to mature, and which, notwithstanding the temporary bloodshed and injustice with which it was polluted, has produced enduring benefits to mankind, which not all the chicanery of statesmen, nor even the great conspiracy of kings, can entirely render vain. From respect to the memory of their predecessors, none of the present magistrates ever walk in Plainpalais. Another Sunday recreation for the citizens is an excursion to the top of Mont Salère. This hill is within a league of the town, and rises perpendicularly from the cultivated plain. It is ascended on the other side, and I should judge from its situation that your toil is rewarded by a delightful view of the course of the Rhone and Arne, and of the shores of the lake. We have not yet visited it. There is more equality of classes here than in England. This occasions a greater freedom and refinement of manners among the lower orders than we meet with in our own country. I fancy the haughty English ladies are greatly disgusted with this consequence of republican institutions, for the Genevese servants complain very much of their *scolding*, an exercise of the tongue, I believe, perfectly unknown here. The peasants of Switzerland may not however emulate the vivacity and grace of the French. They are more cleanly, but they are slow and inapt. I know a girl of twenty who, although she had lived all her life among vineyards, could not inform me during what month the vintage took place, and I discovered she was utterly ignorant of the order in which the months succeed one another. She would not have been surprised if I had talked of the burning sun and delicious fruits of December, or of the frosts of July. Yet she is by no means deficient in understanding.

The Genevese are also much inclined to puritanism. It is true that from habit they dance on a Sunday, but as soon as the French Government was abolished in the town, the magistrates ordered the theatre to be closed, and measures were taken to pull down the building.

We have latterly enjoyed fine weather, and nothing is more pleasant than to listen to the evening song of the wine-dressers. They are all women, and most of them have harmonious although masculine voices. The theme of their ballads consists of shepherds, love, flocks, and the sons of kings who fall in love with beautiful shepherdesses. Their tunes are monotonous, but it is sweet to hear them in the stillness of evening, while we are enjoying the sight of the setting sun, either from the hill behind our house or from the lake.

Such are our pleasures here, which would be greatly increased if the season had been more favourable, for they chiefly consist in such enjoyments as sunshine and gentle breezes bestow. We have not yet made any excursion in the environs of the town, but we have planned several, when you shall again hear of us; and we will endeavour, by the magic of words, to transport the ethereal part of you to the neighbourhood of the Alps, and mountain streams, and forests, which, while they clothe the former, darken the latter with their vast shadows. — Adieu!

M.

Less than a fortnight after this Byron also left the hotel, annoyed beyond endurance by the unbounded curiosity of which he was the object. He established himself at the Villa Diodati, on the hill above the Shelleys' cottage, from which it was separated by a vineyard. Both he and Shelley were devoted to boating, and passed much time on the water, on one occasion narrowly escaping being drowned. Visits from one house to the other were of daily occurrence. The evenings were generally spent at Diodati, when the whole party would sit up into the small hours of the morning, discussing all possible and impossible things in earth and heaven. In temperament Shelley and Byron were indeed radically opposed to each other, but the intellectual intercourse of two men, alike condemned to much isolation from their kind by their gifts, their dispositions, and their misfortunes, could not but be a source of enjoyment to each. Despite his deep grain of sarcastic egotism, Byron did justice to Shelley's sincerity, simplicity, and purity of nature, and appreciated at their just value his mental powers and literary accomplishments. On the other hand, Shelley's admiration of Byron's genius was simply unbounded, while he apprehended the mixture of gold and clay in Byron's disposition with singular acuteness. His was the "pure mind that penetrateth heaven and hell." But at Geneva the two men were only finding each other out, and, to Shelley at least, any pain arising from difference of feeling or opinion was outweighed by the intense pleasure and refreshment of intellectual comradeship.

Naturally fond of society, and indeed requiring its stimulus to elicit her best powers, Mary yet took a passive rather than an active share in these *symposia*. Looking back on them many years afterwards she wrote: "Since incapacity and timidity always prevented my mingling in the nightly conversations of Diodati, they were, as it were, entirely *tête-à-tête* between my Shelley and Albè." But she was a keen, eager listener. Nothing escaped her observation, and none of this time was ever obliterated from her memory.

To the intellectual ferment, so to speak, of the Diodati evenings, working with the new experiences and thoughts of the past two years, is due the conception of the story by which, as a writer, she is best remembered, the ghastly but powerful allegorical romance of *Frankenstein*. In her introduction to a late edition of this work (part of which has already been quoted here) Mary Shelley has herself told the history of its origin.

In the summer of 1816 we visited Switzerland, and became the neighbours of Lord Byron. At first we spent our pleasant hours on the lake, or wandering on its shores, and Lord Byron, who was writing the third canto of *Childe Harold*, was the only one among us who put his thoughts upon paper. These, as he brought them successively to us, clothed in all the light and harmony of poetry, seemed to stamp as divine the glories of heaven and earth, whose influences we partook with him.

But it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French, fell into our hands. There was the history of the

Inconstant Lover, who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted. There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise. His gigantic shadowy form, clothed, like the ghost in Hamlet, in complete armour, but with the beaver up, was seen at midnight, by the moon's fitful beams, to advance slowly along the gloomy avenue. The shape was lost beneath the shadow of the castle walls; but soon a gate swung back, a step was heard, the door of the chamber opened, and he advanced to the couch of the blooming youths, cradled in healthy sleep. Eternal sorrow sat upon his face as he bent down and kissed the forehead of the boys, who from that hour withered like flowers snapt upon the stalk. I have not seen these stories since then, but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I had read them yesterday. "We will each write a ghost story," said Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. The noble author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end of his poem of Mazeppa. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery, and in the music of the most melodious verse that adorns our language, than to invent the machinery of a story, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady, who was so punished for peeping through a keyhole — what to see I forget — something very shocking and wrong of course; but when she was reduced to a worse condition than the renowned Tom of Coventry he did not know what to do with her, and he was obliged to despatch her to the tomb of the Capulets, the only place for which she was fitted. The illustrious poets also, annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished their ungrateful task. I busied myself to *think of a story*, — a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One that would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror — one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not accomplish these things my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and wondered — vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations.

“*Have you thought of a story?*” I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.

Everything must have a beginning, to speak in Sanchean phrase: and that beginning must be linked to something that went before. The Hindoos give the world an elephant to support it, but they make the elephant stand upon a tortoise. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself. In all matters of discovery and invention, even of those that appertain to the imagination, we are continually reminded of the story of Columbus and his egg. Invention consists in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and, among others, the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin (I speak not of what the doctor really did, or said that he did, but, as more to my purpose, of what was then spoken of as having been done by him), who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse would be reanimated; galvanism had given token of such things; perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.

Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by, before we retired to rest. When I placed my head upon my pillow I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw — with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, — I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together — I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horrorstricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter; and he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench for ever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.

I opened mine in terror. The idea so possessed my mind that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around. I see them still; the very room, the dark *parquet*, the closed shutters, with the moonlight struggling through, and the sense I had that the glassy lake and white high Alps were beyond. I could not so easily get rid of my hideous phantom; still it haunted me. I must try to think of something else. I recurred to my ghost story — my tiresome unlucky ghost story. O! if I could only contrive one which would frighten my reader as I myself had been frightened that night!

Swift as light and as cheering was the idea that broke in upon me. “I have found it! What terrified me will terrify others; and I need only describe the spectre which had haunted my midnight pillow.” On the morrow I announced that I had *thought of a story*. I began that day with the words, *It was on a dreary night of November*, making only a transcript of the grim terrors of my waking dream.

At first I thought of but a few pages — of a short tale; but Shelley urged me to develop the idea at greater length. I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet, but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world. From this declaration I must except the preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him.

Every one now knows the story of the “Modern Prometheus,” — the student who, having devoted himself to the search for the principle of life, discovers it, manufactures an imitation of a human being, endows it with vitality, and having thus encroached on divine prerogative, finds himself the slave of his own creature, for he has set in motion a force beyond his power to control or annihilate. Aghast at the actual and possible consequences of his own achievement, he recoils from carrying it out to its ultimate end, and stops short of doing what is necessary to render this force independent. The being has, indeed, the perception and desire of goodness; but is, by the circumstances of its abnormal existence, delivered over to evil, and Frankenstein, and all whom he loves, fall victims to its vindictive malice. Surely no girl, before or since, has imagined, and carried out to its pitiless conclusion so grim an idea.

Mary began her rough sketch of this story during the absence of Shelley and Byron on a voyage round the lake of Geneva; the memorable excursion during which Byron wrote the *Prisoner of Chillon* and great part of the third canto of *Childe Harold*, and Shelley conceived the idea of that "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," which may be called his confession of faith. When they returned they found Mary hard at work on the fantastic speculation which possessed her mind and exerted over it a fascination and a power of excitement beyond that of the sublime external nature which inspired the two poets.

When, in July, she set off with Shelley and Clare on a short tour to the Valley of Chamounix, she took her MS. with her. They visited the Mer de Glace, and the source of the Arveiron. The magnificent scenery which inspired Shelley with his poem on "Mont Blanc," and is described by Mary in the extracts from her journal which follow, served her as a fitting background for the most preternatural portions of her romance.

Tuesday, July 23 (Chamounix). — In the morning, after breakfast, we mount our mules to see the source of the Arveiron. When we had gone about three parts of the way, we descended and continued our route on foot, over loose stones, many of which were an enormous size. We came to the source, which lies (like a stage) surrounded on the three sides by mountains and glaciers. We sat on a rock, which formed the fourth, gazing on the scene before us. An immense glacier was on our left, which continually rolled stones to its foot. It is very dangerous to be directly under this. Our guide told us a story of two Hollanders who went, without any guide, into a cavern of the glacier, and fired a pistol there, which drew down a large piece on them. We see several avalanches, some very small, others of great magnitude, which roared and smoked, overwhelming everything as it passed along, and precipitating great pieces of ice into the valley below.

This glacier is increasing every day a foot, closing up the valley. We drink some water of the Arveiron and return. After dinner think it will rain, and Shelley goes alone to the glacier of Boison. I stay at home. Read several tales of Voltaire. In the evening I copy Shelley's letter to Peacock.

Wednesday, July 24. — To-day is rainy; therefore we cannot go to Col de Balme. About 10 the weather appears clearing up. Shelley and I begin our journey to Montanvert. Nothing can be more desolate than the ascent of this mountain; the trees in many places having been torn away by avalanches, and some half leaning over others, intermingled with stones, present the appearance of vast and dreadful desolation. It began to rain almost as soon as we left our inn. When we had mounted considerably we turned to look on the scene. A dense white mist covered the vale, and tops of scattered pines peeping above were the only objects that presented themselves. The rain continued in torrents. We were wetted to the skin; so that, when we had ascended halfway, we resolved to turn back. As we descended, Shelley went before, and, tripping up, fell upon his knee. This added to the weakness occasioned by a blow on his ascent; he fainted, and was for some minutes incapacitated from continuing his route.

We arrived wet to the skin. I read *Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and write my story. Shelley writes part of letter.

....

Saturday, July 27. — It is a most beautiful day, without a cloud. We set off at 12. The day is hot, yet there is a fine breeze. We pass by the Great Waterfall, which presents an aspect of singular beauty. The wind carries it away from the rock, and on towards the north, and the fine spray into which it is entirely dissolved passes before the mountain like a mist.

The other cascade has very little water, and is consequently not so beautiful as before. The evening of the day is calm and beautiful. Evening is the only time I enjoy travelling. The horses went fast, and the plain opened before us. We saw Jura and the Lake like old friends. I longed to see my pretty babe. At 9, after much inquiring and stupidity, we find the road, and alight at Diodati. We converse with Lord Byron till 12, and then go down to Chapuis, kiss our babe, and go to bed.

Circumstances had modified Shelley's previous intention of remaining permanently abroad, and the end of August found him moving homeward.

The following extracts from Mary's diary give a sketch of their life during the few weeks preceding their return to England.

Sunday, July 28 (Montalègre). — I read Voltaire's *Romans*. Shelley reads Lucretius, and talks with Clare. After dinner he goes out in the boat with Lord Byron, and we all go up to Diodati in the evening. This is the second anniversary since Shelley's and my union.

Monday, July 29. — Write; read Voltaire and Quintus Curtius. A rainy day, with thunder and lightning. Shelley finishes Lucretius, and reads Pliny's *Letters*.

Tuesday, July 30. — Read Quintus Curtius. Shelley read Pliny's *Letters*. After dinner we go up to Diodati, and stay the evening.

Thursday, August 1. — Make a balloon for Shelley, after which he goes up to Diodati, to dine and spend the evening. Read twelve pages of Curtius. Write, and read the *Reveries of Rousseau*. Shelley reads Pliny's *Letters*.

Friday, August 2. — I go to the town with Shelley, to buy a telescope for his birthday present. In the evening Lord Byron and he go out in the boat, and, after their return, Shelley and Clare go up to Diodati; I do not, for Lord Byron did not seem to wish it. Shelley returns with a letter from Longdill, which requires his return to England. This puts us in bad spirits. I read *Rêveries* and *Adèle et Théodore de Madame de Genlis*, and Shelley reads Pliny's *Letters*.

Saturday, August 3. — Finish the first volume of *Adèle*, and write. After dinner write to Fanny, and go up to Diodati, where I read the *Life of Madame du Deffand*. We come down early and talk of our plans. Shelley reads Pliny's *Letters*, and writes letters.

Sunday, August 4. — Shelley's birthday. Write; read *Tableau de famille*. Go out with Shelley in the boat, and read to him the fourth book of Virgil. After dinner we go up to Diodati, but return soon. I read Curtius with Shelley, and finish the first volume, after which we go out in the boat to set up the balloon, but there is too much wind; we set it up from the land, but it takes fire as soon as it is up. I finish the *Rêveries of Rousseau*. Shelley reads and finishes Pliny's *Letters*, and begins the *Panegyric of Trajan*.

Wednesday, August 7. — Write, and read ten pages of Curtius. Lord Byron and Shelley go out in the boat. I translate in the evening, and afterwards go up to Diodati. Shelley reads Tacitus.

Friday, August 9. — Write and translate; finish *Adèle*, and read a little Curtius. Shelley goes out in the boat with Lord Byron in the morning and in the evening, and reads Tacitus. About 3 o'clock we go up to Diodati. We receive a long letter from Fanny.

Fanny to Mary.

London, *29th July 1816.*

My dear Mary — I have just received yours, which gave me great pleasure, though not quite so satisfactory a one as I could have wished. I plead guilty to the charge of having written in some degree in an ill humour; but if you knew how I am harassed by a variety of trying circumstances, I am sure you would feel for me. Besides other plagues, I was oppressed with the most violent cold in my head when I last wrote you that I ever had in my life. I will now, however, endeavour to give as much information from England as I am capable of giving, mixed up with as little spleen as possible. I have received Jane's letter, which was a very dear and a very sweet one, and I should have answered it but for the dreadful state of mind I generally labour under, and which I in vain endeavour to get rid of. From your and Jane's description of the weather in Switzerland, it has produced more mischief abroad than here. Our rain has been as constant as yours, for it rains every day, but it has not been accompanied by violent storms. All accounts from the country say that the corn has not yet suffered, but that it is yet perfectly green; but I fear that the sun will not come this year to ripen it. As yet we have had fires almost constantly, and have just got a few strawberries. You ask for particulars of the state of England. I do not understand the causes for the distress which I see, and hear dreadful accounts of, every day; but I know that they really exist. Papa, I believe, does not think much, or does not inquire, on these subjects, for I never can get him to give me any information. From Mr. Booth I got the clearest account, which has been confirmed by others since. He says that it is the "Peace" that has brought all this calamity upon us; that during the war the whole Continent were employed in fighting and defending their country from the incursions of foreign armies; that England alone was free to manufacture in peace; that our manufactories, in consequence, employed several millions, and at higher wages, than were wanted for our own consumption. Now peace is come, foreign ports are shut, and millions of our fellow-creatures left to starve. He also says that we have no need to manufacture for ourselves — that we have enough of the various articles of our manufacture to last for seven years — and that the going on is only increasing the evil. They say that in the counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire there are 26,000 men out of employment, and without the means of getting any. A few weeks since there were several parties of colliers, who came as far as St. Albans and Oxford, dragging coals in immense waggons, without horses, to the Prince Regent at Carlton House; one of these waggons was said to be conducted by a hundred colliers. The Ministers, however, thought proper, when these men had got to the distance from London of St. Albans, to send Magistrates to them, who paid them handsomely for their coals, and gave them money besides, telling them that coming to London would only create disturbance and riot, without relieving their misery; they therefore turned back, and the coals were given away to the poor people of the neighbourhood where they were met. This may give you some idea of the misery suffered. At Glasgow, the state of wretchedness is worse than anywhere else. Houses that formerly employed two or three hundred men now only employ three or four individuals. There have been riots of a very serious nature in the inland counties, arising from the same causes. This, joined to this melancholy season, has given us all very serious alarm, and helped to make me write so dismally. They talk of a change of Ministers; but this can effect no good; it is a change of the whole system of things that is wanted. Mr. Owen, however, tells us to cheer up, for that in two years we shall feel the good effect of his plans; he is quite certain that they will succeed. I have no doubt that he will do a great deal of good; but how he can expect to make the rich give up their possessions, and live in a state of equality, is too romantic to be believed. I wish I could send you his Address to the People of New Lanark, on the 1st of January 1816, on the opening of the Institution for the Formation of Character. He dedicates it “To those who have no private ends to accomplish, who are honestly in search of truth for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of society, and who have the firmness to follow the truth, wherever it may lead, without being turned aside from the pursuit by the *prepossessions or prejudices of any part of mankind*.”

This dedication will give you some idea of what sort of an Address it is. This Address was delivered on a Sunday evening, in a place set apart for the purposes of religion, and brought hundreds of persons from the regular clergymen to hear his profane Address, — against all religions, governments, and all sorts of aristocracy, — which, he says, was received with the greatest attention and highly approved. The outline of his plan is this: "That no human being shall work more than two or three hours every day; that they shall be all equal; that no one shall dress but after the plainest and simplest manner; that they be allowed to follow any religion, as they please; and that their [studies] shall be Mechanics and Chemistry." I hate and am sick at heart at the misery I see my fellow-beings suffering, but I own I should not like to live to see the extinction of all genius, talent, and elevated generous feeling in Great Britain, which I conceive to be the natural consequence of Mr. Owen's plan. I am not either wise enough, philosophical enough, nor historian enough, to say what will make man plain and simple in manners and mode of life, and at the same time a poet, a painter, and a philosopher; but this I know, that I had rather live with the Genevese, as you and Jane describe, than live in London, with the most brilliant beings that exist, in its present state of vice and misery. So much for Mr. Owen, who is, indeed, a very great and good man. He told me the other day that he wished our Mother were living, as he had never before met with a person who thought so exactly as he did, or who would have so warmly and zealously entered into his plans. Indeed, there is nothing very promising in a return to England at least for some time to come, for it is better to witness misery in a foreign country than one's own, unless you have the means of relieving it. I wish I could send you the books you ask for. I should have sent them, if Longdill had not said he was not sending — that he expected Shelley in England. I shall send again immediately, and will then send you *Christabel* and the "Poet's" *Poems*. Were I not a dependent being in every sense of the word, but most particularly in money, I would send you other things, which perhaps you would be glad of. I am much more interested in Lord Byron since I have read all his poems. When you left England I had only read *Childe Harold* and his smaller poems. The pleasure he has excited in me, and gratitude I owe him for having cheered several gloomy hours, makes me wish for a more finished portrait, both of his *mind* and *countenance*. From *Childe Harold* I gained a very ill impression of him, because I conceived it was *himself*, — notwithstanding the pains he took to tell us it was an imaginary being. The *Giaour*, *Lara*, and the *Corsair* make me justly style him a poet. Do in your next oblige me by telling me the minutest particulars of him, for it is from the *small things* that you learn most of character. Is his face as fine as in your portrait of him, or is it more like the other portrait of him? Tell me also if he has a pleasing voice, for that has a great charm with me. Does he come into your house in a careless, friendly, dropping-in manner? I wish to know, though not from idle curiosity, whether he was capable of acting in the manner that the London scandal-mongers say he did? You must by this time know if he is a profligate in principle — a man who, like Curran, gives himself unbounded liberty in all sorts of profligacy. I cannot think, from his writings, that he can be such a *detestable being*. Do answer me these questions, for where I love the poet I should like to respect the man. Shelley's boat excursion with him must have been very delightful. I think Lord Byron never writes so well as when he writes descriptions of water scenes; for instance, the beginning of the *Giaour*. There is a fine expressive line in *Childe Harold*: "Blow, swiftly blow, thou keen compelling gale," etc. There could have been no difference of sentiment in this divine excursion; they were both poets, equally alive to the charms of nature and the eloquent writing of Rousseau. I long very much to read the poem the "Poet" has written on the spot where Julie was drowned. When will they come to England? Say that you have a friend who has few pleasures, and is very impatient to read the poems written at Geneva. If they are not to be published, may I see them in manuscript? I am angry with Shelley for not writing himself. It is impossible to tell the good that POETS do their fellow-creatures, at least those that can feel. Whilst I read I am a poet. I am inspired with good feelings — feelings that create perhaps a more permanent good in me than all the everyday preachments in the world; it counteracts the dross which one gives on the everyday concerns of life, and tells us there is something yet in the world to aspire to — something by which succeeding ages may be made happy and perhaps better. If Shelley cannot accomplish any other good, he can this divine one. Laugh at me, but do not be angry with me, for taking up your time with my nonsense. I have sent again to Longdill, and he has returned the same answer as before. I can [not], therefore, send you *Christabel*. Lamb says it ought never to have been published; that no one understands it; and *Kubla Khan* (which is the poem he made in his sleep) is nonsense. Coleridge is living at Highgate; he is living with an apothecary, to whom he pays £5 a week for board, lodging, and medical advice. The apothecary is to take care that he does not take either opium or spirituous liquors. Coleridge, however, was tempted, and wrote to a chemist he knew in London to send a bottle of laudanum to Mr. Murray's in Albemarle Street, to be enclosed in a parcel of books to him; his landlord, however, felt the parcel outside, and discovered the fatal bottle. Mr. Morgan told me the other day that Coleridge improved in health under the care of the apothecary, and was writing fast a continuation of *Christabel*.

You ask me if Mr. Booth mentioned Isabel's having received a letter from you. He never mentioned your name to me, nor I to him; but he told Mamma that you had written a letter to her from Calais. He is gone back, and promises to bring Isabel next year. He has given us a volume of his *poetry — true, genuine poetry* — not such as Coleridge's or Wordsworth's, but Miss Seward's and Dr. Darwin's —

Dying swains to sighing Delias.

You ask about old friends; we have none, and see none. Poor Marshal is in a bad way; we see very little of him. Mrs. Kenny is going immediately to live near Orleans, which is better for her than living in London, afraid of her creditors. The Lambs have been spending a month in the neighbourhood of Clifton and Bristol; they were highly delighted with Clifton. Sheridan is dead. Papa was very much grieved at his death. William and he went to his funeral. He was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, attended by all the high people. Papa has visited his grave many times since. I am too young to remember his speeches in Parliament. I never admired his style of play-writing. I cannot, therefore, sympathise in the elegant tributes to his memory which have been paid by all parties. Those things which I have heard from all parties of his drunkenness I cannot admire. We have had one great pleasure since your departure, in viewing a fine collection of the Italian masters at the British Institution. Two of the Cartoons are there. Paul preaching at Athens is the finest picture I ever beheld.... I am going again to see this Exhibition next week, before it closes, when I shall be better able to tell you which I most admire of Raphael, Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, Domenichino, Claude, S. Rosa, Poussin, Murillo, etc., and all of which cannot be too much examined. I only wish I could have gone many times. Charles's letter has not yet arrived. Do give me every account of him when you next hear from him. I think it is of great consequence the mode of life he now pursues, as it will most likely decide his future good or ill doing. You ask what I mean by "plans with Mr. Blood?" I meant a residence in Ireland. However, I will not plague you with them till I understand them myself. My Aunt Everina will be in London next week, when my future fate will be decided. I shall then give you a full and clear account of what my unhappy life is to be spent in, etc. I left it to the end of my letter to call your attention most seriously to what I said in my last letter respecting Papa's affairs. They have now a much more serious and threatening aspect than when I last wrote to you. You perhaps think that Papa has gained a large sum by his novel engagement, which is not the case. He could make no other engagement with Constable than that they should share the profits equally between them, which, if the novel is successful, is an advantageous bargain. Papa, however, prevailed upon him to advance £200, to be deducted hereafter out of the part he is to receive; and if two volumes of the novel are not forthcoming on the 1st of January 1817, Constable has a promissory note to come upon papa for the £200. This £200 I told you was appropriated to Davidson and Hamilton, who had lent him £200 on his *Caleb Williams* last year; so that you perceive he has as yet gained nothing on his novel, and all depends upon his future exertions. He has been very unwell and very uneasy in his mind for the last week, unable to write; and it was not till this day I discovered the cause, which has given me great uneasiness. You seem to have forgotten Kingdon's £300 to be paid at the end of June. He has had a great deal of plague and uneasiness about it, and has at last been obliged to give Kingdon his promissory note for £300, payable on demand, so that every hour is not safe. Kingdon is no friend, and the money Government money, and it cannot be expected he will show Papa any mercy. I dread the effect on his health. He cannot sleep at night, and is indeed very unwell. This he concealed from Mamma and myself until this day. Taylor of Norwich has also come upon him again; he says, owing to the distress of the country, he must have the money for his children; but I do not fear him like Kingdon. Shelley said in his letter, some weeks ago, that the £300 should come the end of June. Papa, therefore, acted upon that promise. From your last letter I perceive you think I colour my statements. I assure you I am most anxious, when I mention these unfortunate affairs, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, as it is. I think it my duty to tell you the real state of the case, for I know you deceive yourself about things. If Papa could go on with his novel in good spirits, I think it would perhaps be his very best. He said the other day that he was writing upon a subject no one had ever written upon before, and that it would require great exertion to make it what he wished. Give my love to Jane; thank her for her letter. I will write to her next week, though I consider this long tiresome one as addressed to you all. Give my love also to Shelley; tell him, if he goes any more excursions, nothing will give me more pleasure than a description of them. Tell him I like your [ ] tour best, though I should like to visit *Venice* and *Naples*. Kiss dear William for me; I sometimes consider him as my child, and look forward to the time of my old age and his manhood. Do you dip him in the lake? I am much afraid you will find this letter much too long; if it affords you any pleasure, oblige me by a long one in return, but write small, for Mamma complains of the postage of a double letter. I pay the full postage of all the letters I send, and you know I have not a *sous* of my own. Mamma is much better, though not without rheumatism. William is better than he ever was in his life. I am not well; my mind always keeps my body in a fever; but never mind me. Do entreat J. to attend to her eyes. Adieu, my dear Sister. Let me entreat you to consider seriously all that I have said concerning your Father. — Yours, very affectionately,

Fanny.

Journal, Saturday, August 10. — Write to Fanny. Shelley writes to Charles. We then go to town to buy books and a watch for Fanny. Read Curtius after my return; translate. In the evening Shelley and Lord Byron go out in the boat. Translate, and when they return go up to Diodati. Shelley reads Tacitus. A writ of arrest comes from Polidori, for having "cassé ses lunettes et fait tomber son chapeau" of the apothecary who sells bad magnesia.

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Monday, August 12. — Write my story and translate. Shelley goes to the town, and afterwards goes out in the boat with Lord Byron. After dinner I go out a little in the boat, and then Shelley goes up to Diodati. I translate in the evening, and read *Le Vieux de la Montagne*, and write. Shelley, in coming down, is attacked by a dog, which delays him; we send up for him, and Lord Byron comes down; in the meantime Shelley returns.

Wednesday, August 14. — Read *Le Vieux de la Montagne*; translate. Shelley reads Tacitus, and goes out with Lord Byron before and after dinner. Lewis comes to Diodati. Shelley goes up there, and Clare goes up to copy. Remain at home, and read *Le Vieux de la Montagne*.

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Friday, August 16. — Write, and read a little of Curtius; translate; read *Walther* and some of *Rienzi*. Lord Byron goes with Lewis to Ferney. Shelley writes, and reads Tacitus.

Saturday, August 17. — Write, and finish *Walther*. In the evening I go out in the boat with Shelley, and he afterwards goes up to Diodati. Began one of Madame de Genlis's novels. Shelley finishes Tacitus. Polidori comes down. Little babe is not well.

Sunday, August 18. — Talk with Shelley, and write; read Curtius. Shelley reads Plutarch in Greek. Lord Byron comes down, and stays here an hour. I read a novel in the evening. Shelley goes up to Diodati, and Monk Lewis.

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Tuesday, August 20. — Read Curtius; write; read *Herman d'Unna*. Lord Byron comes down after dinner, and remains with us until dark. Shelley spends the rest of the evening at Diodati. He reads Plutarch.

Wednesday, August 21. — Shelley and I talk about my story. Finish *Herman d'Unna* and write. Shelley reads Milton. After dinner Lord Byron comes down, and Clare and Shelley go up to Diodati. Read *Rienzi*.

Friday, August 23. — Shelley goes up to Diodati, and then in the boat with Lord Byron, who has heard bad news of Lady Byron, and is in bad spirits concerning it.... Letters arrive from Peacock and Charles. Shelley reads Milton.

Saturday, August 24. — Write. Shelley goes to Geneva. Read. Lord Byron and Shelley sit on the wall before dinner. After I talk with Shelley, and then Lord Byron comes down and spends an hour here. Shelley and he go up together.

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Monday, August 26. — Hobhouse and Scroop Davis come to Diodati. Shelley spends the evening there, and reads *Germania*. Several books arrive, among others Coleridge’s *Christabel*, which Shelley reads aloud to me before going to bed.

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Wednesday, August 28. — Packing. Shelley goes to town. Work. Polidori comes down, and afterwards Lord Byron. After dinner we go upon the water; pack; and Shelley goes up to Diodati. Shelley reads *Histoire de la Révolution par Rabault*.

Thursday, August 29. — We depart from Geneva at 9 in the morning.

They travelled to Havre *viâ* Dijon, Auxerre, and Villeneuve; allowing only a few hours for visiting the palaces of Fontainebleau and Versailles, and the Cathedral of Rouen. From Havre they sailed to Portsmouth, where, for a short time, they separated. Shelley went to stay with Peacock, who was living at Great Marlow, and had been looking about there for a house to suit his friends. Mary and Clare proceeded to Bath, where they were to spend the next few months.

Journal, Tuesday, September 10. — Arrive at Bath about 2. Dine, and spend the evening in looking for lodgings. Read Mrs. Robinson’s *Valcenga*.

Wednesday, September 11. — Look for lodgings; take some, and settle ourselves. Read the first volume of *The Antiquary*, and work.

CHAPTER IX

September 1816-February 1817

Trouble had, for some time past, been gathering in heavy clouds. Godwin's affairs were in worse plight than ever, and the Shelleys, go where they might, were never suffered to forget them. Fanny constituted herself his special pleader, and made it evident that she found it hard to believe Shelley could not, if he chose, get more money than he did for Mary's father. Her long letters, bearing witness in every line to her great natural intelligence and sensibility, excite the deepest pity for her, and not a little, it must be added, for those to whom they were addressed. The poor girl's life was, indeed, a hard one, and of all her trials perhaps the most insurmountable was that inherited melancholy of the Wollstonecraft temperament which permitted her no illusions, no moments, even, of respite from care in unreasoning gaiety such as are incidental to most young and healthy natures. Nor, although she won every one's respect and most people's liking, had she the inborn gift of inspiring devotion or arousing enthusiasm. She was one of those who give all and take nothing. The people she loved all cared for others more than they did for her, or cared only for themselves. Full of warmth and affection and ideal aspirations; sympathetically responsive to every poem, every work of art appealing to imagination, she was condemned by her temperament and the surroundings of her life to idealise nothing, and to look at all objects as they presented themselves to her, in the light of the very commonest day.

Less pressing than Godwin, but still another disturbing cause, was Charles Clairmont, who was travelling abroad in search, partly of health, partly of occupation; had found the former, but not the latter, and, of course, looked to Shelley as the magician who was to realise all his plans for him. Of his discursive letters, which are immensely long, in a style of florid eloquence, only a few specimen extracts can find room here. One, received by Shelley and Mary at Geneva, openly confesses that, though it was a year since he had left England, he had abstained, as yet, from writing to Skinner Street, being as unsettled as ever, and having had nothing to speak of but his pleasures; — having in short been going on "just like a butterfly, — though still as a butterfly of the best intentions.” He proceeds to describe the country, his manner of living there, his health, — he details his symptoms, and sets forth at length the various projects he might entertain, and the marvellous cheapness of one and all of them, if only he could afford to have any projects at all. He enumerates items of expenditure connected with one of his schemes, and concludes thus —

I lay this proposal before you, without knowing anything of your finances, which, I fear, cannot be in too flourishing a situation. You will, I trust, consider of the thing, and treat it as frankly as it has been offered. I know you too well not to know you would do for me all in your power. Have the goodness to write to me as instantly as possible.

And Shelley did write, — so says the journal.

Last not least, there was Clare. At what point of all this time did her secret become known to Shelley and Mary? No document as yet has seen the light which informs us of this. Perhaps some day it may. Unfortunately for biographers and for readers of biography, Mary’s journal is almost devoid of personal gossip, or indeed of personalities of any kind. Her diary is a record of outward facts, and, occasionally, of intellectual impressions; no intimate history and no one else’s affairs are confided to it. No change of tone is perceptible anywhere. All that can be asserted is that they knew nothing of it when they went to Geneva. In the absence of absolute proof to the contrary it is impossible to believe that they were not aware of it when they came back. Clare was an expecting mother. For four months they had all been in daily intercourse with Byron, who never was or could be reticent, and who was not restrained either by delicacy or consideration for others from saying what he chose. But when and how the whole affair was divulged and what its effect was on Shelley and Mary remains a mystery. From this time, however, Clare resumed her place as a member of their household. It cannot have been a matter of satisfaction to Mary: domestic life was more congenial without Clare’s presence than with it, but now that there was a true reason for her taking shelter with them, Mary’s native nobility of heart was equal to the occasion, and she gave help, support, and confidence, ungrudgingly and without stint. Never in her journal, and only once in her letters does any expression of discontent appear. They settled down together in their lodgings at Bath, but on the 19th of September Mary set out to join Shelley at Marlow for a few days, leaving Clara in charge of little Willy and the Swiss nurse Elise. On the 25th both were back at Bath, where they resumed their quiet, regular way of life, resting and reading. But this apparent peace was not to be long unbroken. Letters from Fanny followed each other in quick succession, breathing nothing but painful, perpetual anxiety.

Fanny to Mary.

26th September 1816.

My dear Mary — I received your letter last Saturday, which rejoiced my heart. I cannot help envying your calm, contented disposition, and the calm philosophical habits of life which pursue you, or rather which you pursue everywhere. I allude to your description of the manner in which you pass your days at Bath, when most women would hardly have recovered from the fatigues of such a journey as you had been taking. I am delighted to hear such pleasing accounts of your William; I should like to see him, dear fellow; the change of air does him infinite good, no doubt. I am very glad you have got Jane a pianoforte; if anything can do her good and restore her to industry, it is music. I think I gave her all the music here; however, I will look again for what I can find. I am angry with Shelley for not giving me an account of his health. All that I saw of him gave me great uneasiness about him, and as I see him but seldom, I am much more alarmed perhaps than you, who are constantly with him. I hope that it is only the London air which does not agree with him, and that he is now much better; however, it would have been kind to have said so.

Aunt Everina and Mrs. Bishop left London two days ago. It pained me very much to find that they have entirely lost their little income from Primrose Street, which is very hard upon them at their age. Did Shelley tell you a singular story about Mrs. B. having received an annuity which will make up in part for her loss?

Poor Papa is going on with his novel, though I am sure it is very fatiguing to him, though he will not allow it; he is not able to study as much as formerly without injuring himself; this, joined to the plagues of his affairs, which he fears will never be closed, make me very anxious for him. The name of his novel is *Mandeville, or a Tale of the Seventeenth Century*. I think, however, you had better not mention the name to any one, as he wishes it not to be announced at present. Tell Shelley, as soon as he knows certainly about Longdill, to write, that he may be eased on that score, for it is a great weight on his spirits at present. Mr. Owen is come to town to prepare for the meeting of Parliament. There never was so devoted a being as he is; and it certainly must end in his doing a great deal of good, though not the good he talks of.

Have you heard from Charles? He has never given us a single line. I am afraid he is doing very ill, and has the conscience not to write a parcel of lies. Beg the favour of Shelley, to copy for me his poem on the scenes at the foot of Mont Blanc, and tell him or remind him of a letter which you said he had written on these scenes; you cannot think what a treasure they would be to me; remember you promised them to me when you returned to England. Have you heard from Lord Byron since he visited those sublime scenes? I have had great pleasure since I saw Shelley in going over a fine gallery of pictures of the Old Masters at Dulwich. There was a St. Sebastian by Guido, the finest picture I ever saw; there were also the finest specimens of Murillo, the great Spanish painter, to be found in England, and two very fine Titians. But the works of art are not to be compared to the works of nature, and I am never satisfied. It is only poets that are eternal benefactors of their fellow-creatures, and the real ones never fail of giving us the highest degree of pleasure we are capable of; they are, in my opinion, nature and art united, and as such never fading.

Do write to me immediately, and tell me you have got a house, and answer those questions I asked you at the beginning of this letter.

Give my love to Shelley, and kiss William for me. Your affectionate Sister,

Fanny.

When Shelley sold to his father the reversion of a part of his inheritance, he had promised to Godwin a sum of £300, which he had hoped to save from the money thus obtained. Owing to certain conditions attached to the transaction by Sir Timothy Shelley, this proved to be impossible. The utmost Shelley could do, and that only by leaving himself almost without resources, was to send something over £200; a bitter disappointment to Godwin, who had given a bill for the full amount. Shelley had perhaps been led by his hopes, and his desire to serve Godwin, to speak in too sanguine a tone as to his prospect of obtaining the money, and the letter announcing his failure came, Fanny wrote, “like a thunderclap.” In her disappointment she taxed Shelley with want of frankness, and Shelley and Mary both with an apparent wish to avoid the subject of Godwin's affairs.

"You know," she writes, "the peculiar temperature of Papa's mind (if I may so express myself); you know he cannot write when pecuniary circumstances overwhelm him; you know that it is of the utmost consequence, for *his own* and the *world's sake* that he should finish his novel; and is it not your and Shelley's duty to consider these things, and to endeavour to prevent, as far as lies in your power, giving him unnecessary pain and anxiety?"

To the Shelleys, who had strained every nerve to obtain this money, unmindful of the insulting manner in which such assistance was demanded and received by Godwin, these appeals to their sense of duty must have been exasperating. Nor were matters mended by hearing of sundry scandalous reports abroad concerning themselves — reports sedulously gathered by Mrs. Godwin, and of which Fanny thought it her duty to inform them, so as to put them on their guard. They, on their part, were indignant, especially with Mrs. Godwin, who had evidently, they surmised, gone out of her way to collect this false information, and had helped rather than hindered its circulation; and they expressed themselves to this effect. Fanny stoutly defended her stepmother against these attacks.

Mamma and I are not great friends, but, always alive to her virtues, I am anxious to defend her from a charge so foreign to her character.... I told Shelley these (scandalous reports), and I still think they originated with your servants and Harriet, whom I know has been very industrious in spreading false reports about you. I at the same time advised Shelley always to keep French servants, and he then seemed to think it a good plan. You are very careless, and are for ever leaving your letters about. English servants like nothing so much as scandal and gossip; but this you know as well as I, and this is the origin of the stories that are told. And this you choose to father on Mamma, who (whatever she chooses to say in a passion to me alone) is the woman the most incapable of such low conduct. I do not say that her inferences are always the most just or the most amiable, but they are always confined to myself and Papa. Depend upon it you are perfectly safe as long as you keep your French servant with you.... I have now to entreat you, Shelley, to tell Papa exactly what you can and what you cannot do, for he does not seem to know what you mean in your letter. I know that you are most anxious to do everything in your power to complete your engagement to him, and to do anything that will not ruin yourself to save him; but he is not convinced of this, and I think it essential to his peace that he should be convinced of this. I do not on any account wish you to give him false hopes. Forgive me if I have expressed myself unkindly. My heart is warm in your cause, and I am *anxious, most anxious*, that Papa should feel for you as I do, both for your own and his sake.... All that I have said about Mamma proceeds from the hatred I have of talking and petty scandal, which, though trifling in itself, often does superior persons much injury, though it cannot proceed from any but vulgar souls in the first instance.

This letter was crossed by Shelley's, enclosing more than £200 — insufficient, however, to meet the situation or to raise the heavy veil of gloom which had settled on Skinner Street. Fanny could bear it no longer. Despairing gloom from Godwin, whom she loved, and who in his gloom was no philosopher; sordid, nagging, angry gloom from "Mamma," who, clearly enough, did not scruple to remind the poor girl that she had been a charge and a burden to the household (this may have been one of the things she only "chose to say in a passion, to Fanny alone"); her sisters gone, and neither of them in complete sympathy with her; no friends to cheer or divert her thoughts! A plan had been under consideration for her residing with her relatives in Ireland, and the last drop of bitterness was the refusal of her aunt, Everina Wollstonecraft, to have her. What was left for her? Much, if she could have believed it, and have nerved herself to patience. But she was broken down and blinded by the strain of over endurance. On the 9th of October she disappeared from home. Shelley and Mary in Bath suspected nothing of the impending crisis. The journal for that week is as follows —

Saturday, October 5 (Mary). — Read Clarendon and Curtius; walk with Shelley. Shelley reads Tasso.

Sunday, October 6 (Shelley). — On this day Mary put her head through the door and said, "Come and look; here's a cat eating roses; she'll turn into a woman; when beasts eat these roses they turn into men and women."

(Mary). — Read Clarendon all day; finish the eleventh book. Shelley reads Tasso.

Monday, October 7. — Read Curtius and Clarendon; write. Shelley reads *Don Quixote* aloud in the evening.

Tuesday, October 8. — Letter from Fanny (this letter has not been preserved). Drawing lesson. Walk out with Shelley to the South Parade; read Clarendon, and draw. In the evening work, and Shelley reads *Don Quixote*; afterwards read *Memoirs of the Princess of Bareith* aloud.

Wednesday, October 9. — Read Curtius; finish the *Memoirs*; draw. In the evening a very alarming letter comes from Fanny. Shelley goes immediately to Bristol; we sit up for him till 2 in the morning, when he returns, but brings no particular news.

Thursday, October 10. — Shelley goes again to Bristol, and obtains more certain trace. Work and read. He returns at 11 o'clock.

Friday, October 11. — He sets off to Swansea. Work and read.

Saturday, October 12. — He returns with the worst account. A miserable day. Two letters from Papa. Buy mourning, and work in the evening.

From Bristol Fanny had written not only to the Shelleys, but to the Godwins, accounting for her disappearance, and adding, "I depart immediately to the spot from which I hope never to remove."

During the ensuing night, at the Mackworth Arms Inn, Swansea, she traced the following words —

I have long determined that the best thing I could do was to put an end to the existence of a being whose birth was unfortunate, and whose life has only been a series of pain to those persons who have hurt their health in endeavouring to promote her welfare. Perhaps to hear of my death may give you pain, but you will soon have the blessing of forgetting that such a creature ever existed as....

This note and a laudanum bottle were beside her when, next morning, she was found lying dead.

The persons for whose sake it was — so she had persuaded herself — that she committed this act were reduced to a wretched condition by the blow. Shelley's health was shattered; Mary profoundly miserable; Clare, although by her own avowal feeling less affection for Fanny than might have been expected, was shocked by the dreadful manner of her death, and infected by the contagion of the general gloom. She was not far from her confinement, and had reasons enough of her own for any amount of depression.

Godwin was deeply afflicted; to him Fanny was a great and material loss, and the last remaining link with a happy past. As usual, public comment was the thing of all others from which he shrank most, and in the midst of his first sorrow his chief anxiety was to hide or disguise the painful story from the world. In writing (for the first time) to Mary he says —

Do not expose us to those idle questions which, to a mind in anguish, is one of the severest of all trials. We are at this moment in doubt whether, during the first shock, we shall not say that she is gone to Ireland to her aunt, a thing that had been in contemplation. Do not take from us the power to exercise our own discretion. You shall hear again to-morrow.

What I have most of all in horror is the public papers, and I thank you for your caution, as it may act on this.

We have so conducted ourselves that not one person in our home has the smallest apprehension of the truth. Our feelings are less tumultuous than deep. God only knows what they may become.

Charles Clairmont was not informed at all of Fanny's death; a letter from him a year later contains a message to her. Mrs. Godwin busied herself with putting the blame on Shelley. Four years later she informed Mrs. Gisborne that the three girls had been simultaneously in love with Shelley, and that Fanny's death was due to jealousy of Mary! This shows that the Shelleys' instinct did not much mislead them when they held Mary's stepmother responsible for the authorship and diffusion of many of those slanders which for years were to affect their happiness and peace. Any reader of Fanny's letters can judge how far Mrs. Godwin's allegation is borne out by actual facts; and to any one knowing aught of women and women's lives these letters afford clue enough to the situation and the story, and further explanation is superfluous. Fanny was fond of Shelley, fond enough even to forgive him for the trouble he had brought on their home, but her part was throughout that of a long-suffering sister, one, too, to whose lot it always fell to say all the disagreeable things that had to be said — a truly ungrateful task. Her loyalty to the Godwins, though it could not entirely divide her from the Shelleys, could and did prevent any intimacy of friendship with them. Her enlightened, liberal mind, and her generous, loving heart had won Shelley's recognition and his affection, and in a moment a veil was torn from his eyes, revealing to him unsuspected depths of suffering, sacrifice, and heroism — now it was too late. How much more they might have done for Fanny had they understood what she endured! There was he, Shelley, offering sympathy and help to the oppressed and the miserable all the world over, and here, — here under his very eyes, this tragic romance was acted out to the death.

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, — and I departed,
Heeding not the words then spoken —
Misery, ah! misery!
This world is all too wide for thee.

If the echo of those lines reached Fanny in the world of shadows, it may have calmed the restless spirit with the knowledge that she had not lived for nothing after all.

During the next two months another tragedy was silently advancing towards its final catastrophe. Shelley was anxious for intelligence of Harriet and her children; she had, however, disappeared, and he could discover no clue to her whereabouts. Mr. Peacock, who, during June, had been in communication with her on money matters, had now, apparently, lost sight of her. The worry of Godwin's money-matters and the fearful shock of Fanny's self-sought death, followed as it was by collapse of his own health and nerves, probably withdrew Shelley's thoughts from the subject for a time. In November, however, he wrote to Hookham, thinking that he, to whom Harriet had once written to discover Shelley's whereabouts, might now know or have the means of finding out where she was living. No answer came, however, to these inquiries for some weeks, during which Shelley, Mary, and Clare lived in their seclusion, reading Lucian and Horace, Shakespeare, Gibbon, and Locke; in occasional correspondence with Skinner Street, through Mrs. Godwin, who was now trying what she could do to obtain money loans (probably raised on Shelley's prospects), requisite, not only to save Godwin from bankruptcy, but to repay Shelley a small fraction of what he had given and lent, and without which he was unable to pay his own way.

The plan for settling at Marlow was still pending, and on the 5th of December Shelley went there again to stay with Mr. Peacock and his mother, and to look about for a residence to suit him. Mary during his absence was somewhat tormented by anxiety for his fragile health; fearful, too, lest in his impulsive way he should fall in love with the first pretty place he saw, and burden himself with some unsuitable house, in the idea of settling there "for ever," Clare and all. To that last plan she probably foresaw the objections more clearly than Shelley did. But her cheery letters are girlish and playful.

5th December 1816.

Sweet Elf — I got up very late this morning, so that I could not attend Mr. West. I don't know any more. Good-night.

New Bond Street, Bath,
6th December 1816.

Sweet Elf — I was awakened this morning by my pretty babe, and was dressed time enough to take my lesson from Mr. West, and (thank God) finished that tedious ugly picture I have been so long about. I have also finished the fourth chapter of *Frankenstein*, which is a very long one, and I think you would like it. And where are you? and what are you doing? my blessed love. I hope and trust that, for my sake, you did not go outside this wretched day, while the wind howls and the clouds seem to threaten rain. And what did my love think of as he rode along — did he think about our home, our babe, and his poor Pecksie? But I am sure you did, and thought of them all with joy and hope. But in the choice of a residence, dear Shelley, pray be not too quick or attach yourself too much to one spot. Ah! were you indeed a winged Elf, and could soar over mountains and seas, and could pounce on the little spot. A house with a lawn, a river or lake, noble trees, and divine mountains, that should be our little mouse-hole to retire to. But never mind this; give me a garden, and *absentia* Claire, and I will thank my love for many favours. If you, my love, go to London, you will perhaps try to procure a good Livy, for I wish very much to read it. I must be more industrious, especially in learning Latin, which I neglected shamefully last summer at intervals, and those periods of not reading at all put me back very far.

The *Morning Chronicle*, as you will see, does not make much of the riots, which they say are entirely quelled, and you would be almost inclined to say, “Out of the mountain comes forth a mouse,” although, I daresay, poor Mrs. Platt does not think so.

The blue eyes of your sweet Boy are staring at me while I write this; he is a dear child, and you love him tenderly, although I fancy that your affection will increase when he has a nursery to himself, and only comes to you just dressed and in good humour; besides when that comes to pass he will be a wise little man, for he improves in mind rapidly. Tell me, shall you be happy to have another little squaller? You will look grave on this, but I do not mean anything.

Leigh Hunt has not written. I would advise a letter addressed to him at the *Examiner* Office, if there is no answer to-morrow. He may not be at the Vale of Health, for it is odd that he does not acknowledge the receipt of so large a sum. There have been no letters of any kind to-day.

Now, my dear, when shall I see you? Do not be very long away; take care of yourself and take a house. I have a great fear that bad weather will set in. My airy Elf, how unlucky you are! I shall write to Mrs. Godwin to-morrow; but let me know what you hear from Hayward and papa, as I am greatly interested in those affairs. Adieu, sweetest; love me tenderly, and think of me with affection when anything pleases you greatly. — Your affectionate girl

Mary.

I have not asked Clare, but I dare say she would send her love, although I dare say she would scold you well if you were here. Compliments and remembrances to Dame Peacock and Son, but do not let them see this.

Sweet, adieu!

Percy B. Shelley, Esq.,
Great Marlow, Bucks.

On 6th December the journal records —

Letter from Shelley; he has gone to visit Leigh Hunt.

This was the beginning of a lifelong intimacy.

On the 14th Shelley returned to Bath, and on the very next day a letter from Hookham informed him that on the 9th Harriet’s body had been taken out of the Serpentine. She had disappeared three weeks before that time from the house where she was living. An inquest had been held at which her name was given as Harriet Smith; little or no information about her was given to the jury, who returned a verdict of "Found drowned."

Life and its complications had proved too much for the poor silly woman, and she took the only means of escape she saw open to her. Her piteous story was sufficiently told by the fact that when she drowned herself she was not far from her confinement. But it would seem from subsequent evidence that harsh treatment on the part of her relatives was what finally drove her to despair. She had lived a fast life, but had been, nominally at any rate, under her father's protection until a comparatively short time before her disappearance, when some act or occurrence caused her to be driven from his house. From that moment she sank lower and lower, until at last, deserted by one — said to be a groom — to whom she had looked for protection, she killed herself.

It is asserted that she had had, all her life, an avowed proclivity to suicide. She had been fond, in young and happy days, of talking jocosely about it, as silly girls often do; discoursing of "some scheme of self-destruction as coolly as another lady would arrange a visit to an exhibition or a theatre." But it is a wide dreary waste that lies between such an idea and the grim reality, — and poor Harriet had traversed it.

Shelley's first thought on receiving the fatal news was of his children. His sensations were those of horror, not of remorse. He never spoke or thought of Harriet with harshness, rather with infinite pity, but he never regarded her save in the light of one who had wronged him and failed him, — whom he had left, indeed, but had forgiven, and had tried to save from the worst consequences of her own acts. Her dreadful death was a shock to him of which he said (to Byron) that he knew not how he had survived it; and he regarded her father and sister as guilty of her blood. But Fanny's death caused him acuter anguish than Harriet's did.

As for Mary, she regarded the whole Westbrook family as the source of grief and shame to Shelley. Harriet she only knew for a frivolous, heartless, faithless girl, whom she had never had the faintest cause to respect, hardly even to pity. Poor Harriet was indeed deserving of profound commiseration, and no one could have known and felt this more than Mary would have done, in later years. But she heard one side of the case only, and that one the side on which her own strongest feelings were engaged. She was only nineteen, with an exalted ideal of womanly devotion; and at nineteen we may sternly judge what later on we may condemn indeed, but with a depth of pity quite beyond the power of its object to fathom or comprehend.

No comment whatever on the occurrence appears in her journal. She threw herself ardently into Shelley's eagerness to get possession of his elder children; ready, for his sake, to love them as her own.

It could not but occur to her that her own position was altered by this event, and that nothing now stood between her and her legal marriage to Shelley and acknowledgment as his wife. So completely, however, did they regard themselves as united for all time by indissoluble ties that she thought of the change chiefly as it affected other people.

Mary to Shelley.

Bath, *17th December 1816.*

My beloved Friend — I waited with the greatest anxiety for your letter. You are well, and that assurance has restored some peace to me.

How very happy shall I be to possess those darling treasures that are yours. I do not exactly understand what Chancery has to do in this, and wait with impatience for to-morrow, when I shall hear whether they are with you; and then what will you do with them? My heart says, bring them instantly here; but I submit to your prudence. You do not mention Godwin. When I receive your letter to-morrow I shall write to Mrs. Godwin. I hope, yet I fear, that he will show on this occasion some disinterestedness. Poor, dear Fanny, if she had lived until this moment she would have been saved, for my house would then have been a proper asylum for her. Ah! my best love, to you do I owe every joy, every perfection that I may enjoy or boast of. Love me, sweet, for ever. I hardly know what I mean, I am so much agitated. Clare has a very bad cough, but I think she is better to-day. Mr. Carn talks of bleeding if she does not recover quickly, but she is positively resolved not to submit to that. She sends her love. My sweet love, deliver some message from me to your kind friends at Hampstead; tell Mrs. Hunt that I am extremely obliged to her for the little profile she was so kind as to send me, and thank Mr. Hunt for his friendly message which I did not hear.

These Westbrooks! But they have nothing to do with your sweet babes; they are yours, and I do not see the pretence for a suit; but to-morrow I shall know all.

Your box arrived to-day. I shall send soon to the upholsterer, for now I long more than ever that our house should be quickly ready for the reception of those dear children whom I love so tenderly. Then there will be a sweet brother and sister for my William, who will lose his pre-eminence as eldest, and be helped third at table, as Clare is continually reminding him.

Come down to me, sweetest, as soon as you can, for I long to see you and embrace.

As to the event you allude to, be governed by your friends and prudence as to when it ought to take place, but it must be in London.

Clare has just looked in; she begs you not to stay away long, to be more explicit in your letters, and sends her love.

You tell me to write a long letter, and I would, but that my ideas wander and my hand trembles. Come back to reassure me, my Shelley, and bring with you your darling Ianthe and Charles. Thank your kind friends. I long to hear about Godwin. — Your affectionate

Mary.

Have you called on Hogg? I would hardly advise you. Remember me, sweet, in your sorrows as well as your pleasures; they will, I trust, soften the one and heighten the other feeling. Adieu.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley,
5 Gray's Inn Square, London.

No time was lost in putting things on their legal footing. Shelley took Mary up to town, where the marriage ceremony took place at St. Mildred's Church, Broad Street, in presence of Godwin and Mrs. Godwin. On the previous day he had seen his daughter for the first time since her flight from his house two and a half years before.

Both must have felt a strange emotion which, probably, neither of them allowed to appear.

Mary for a fortnight left a blank in her journal. On her return to Clifton she thus shortly chronicled her days —

I have omitted writing my journal for some time. Shelley goes to London and returns; I go with him; spend the time between Leigh Hunt's and Godwin's. A marriage takes place on the 29th of December 1816. Draw; read Lord Chesterfield and Locke.

Godwin's relief and satisfaction were great indeed. His letter to his brother in the country, announcing his daughter's recent marriage with a baronet's eldest son, can only be compared for adroit manipulation of facts with a later letter to Mr. Baxter of Dundee, in which he tells of poor Fanny's having been attacked in Wales by an inflammatory fever "which carried her off."

He now surpassed himself "in polished and cautious attentions" both to Shelley and Mary, and appeared to wish to compensate in every way for the red-hot, righteous indignation which, owing to wounded pride rather than to offended moral sense, he had thought it his duty to exhibit in the past.

Shelley's heart yearned towards his two poor little children by Harriet, and to get possession of them was now his feverish anxiety. On this business he was obliged, within a week of his return to Bath, to go up again to London. During his absence, on the 13th of January, Clare's little girl, Byron's daughter, was born. "Four days of idleness," are Mary's only allusion to this event. It was communicated to the absent father by Shelley, in a long letter from London. He quite simply assumes the event to be an occasion of great rejoicing to all concerned, and expects Byron to feel the same. The infant, who afterwards developed into a singularly fascinating and lovely child, was described in enthusiastic terms by Mary as unusually beautiful and intelligent, even at this early stage. Their first name for her was Alba, or "the Dawn"; a reminiscence of Byron's nickname, "Albé."

Most of this month of January, while Mary had Clare and the infant to look after, was of necessity spent by Shelley in London. Harriet's father, Mr. Westbrook, and his daughter Eliza had filed an appeal to the Court of Chancery, praying that her children might be placed in the custody of guardians to be appointed by the Court, and not in that of their father. On 24th January, poor little William's first birthday, the case was heard before Lord Chancellor Eldon. Mary, expecting that the decision would be known at once, waited in painful suspense to hear the result.

Journal, Friday, January 24. — My little William's birthday. How many changes have occurred during this little year; may the ensuing one be more peaceful, and my William's star be a fortunate one to rule the decision of this day. Alas! I fear it will be put off, and the influence of the star pass away. Read the *Arcadia* and *Amadis*; walk with my sweet babe.

Her fears were realised, for two months were to elapse ere judgment was pronounced.

Saturday, January 25. — An unhappy day. I receive bad news and determine to go up to London. Read the *Arcadia* and *Amadis*. Letter from Mrs. Godwin and William.

Accordingly, next day, Mary went up to join her husband in town, and notes in her diary that she was met at the inn by Mrs. Godwin and William. Well might Shelley say of the ceremony that it was “magical in its effects.”

As it turned out, this was her final departure from Bath: she never returned there. On her arrival in London she was warmly welcomed by Shelley’s new friends, the Leigh Hunts, at whose house most of her time was spent, and whose genial, social circle was most refreshing to her. The house at Marlow had been taken, and was now being prepared for her reception. Little William and his nurse, escorted by Clare, joined her at the Hunts on the 18th of February, but Clare herself stayed elsewhere. At the end of the month they all departed for their new home, and were established there early in March.

CHAPTER X

March 1817-March 1818

The Shelleys' new abode, although situated in a lovely part of the country, was cold and cheerless, and, at that bleak time of year, must have appeared at its worst. Albion House stood (and, though subdivided and much altered in appearance, still stands) in what is now the main street of Great Marlow, and at a considerable distance from the river. At the back the garden-plot rises gradually from the level of the house, terminating in a kind of artificial mound, overshadowed by a spreading cedar; a delightfully shady lounge in summer, but shutting off sky and sunshine from the house. There are two large, low, old-fashioned rooms; one on the ground floor, somewhat like a farmhouse kitchen; the other above it; both facing towards the garden. In one of these Shelley fitted up a library, little thinking that the dwelling, which he had rashly taken on a more than twenty years' lease, would be his home for only a year. The rest of the house accommodated Mary, Clare, the children and servants, and left plenty of room for visitors. Shelley was hospitality itself, and though he never was in greater trouble for money than during this year, he entertained a constant succession of guests. First among these was Godwin; next, and most frequent, the genial but needy Leigh Hunt, with all his family. With Mary, as with Shelley, he had quickly established himself on a footing of easy, affectionate friendliness, as may be inferred from Mary's letter, written to him during her first days at Marlow.

Marlow, *1 o'clock, 5th March 1817*.

My Dear Hunt — Although you mistook me in thinking I wished you to write about politics in your letters to me — as such a thought was very far from me, — yet I cannot help mentioning your last week's *Examiner*, as its boldness gave me extreme pleasure. I am very glad to find that you wrote the leading article, which I had doubted, as there was no significant hand. But though I speak of this, do not fear that you will be teased by *me* on these subjects when we enjoy your company at Marlow. When there, you shall never be serious when you wish to be merry, and have as many nuts to crack as there are words in the Petitions to Parliament for Reform — a tremendous promise.

Have you never felt in your succession of nervous feelings one single disagreeable truism gain a painful possession of your mind and keep it for some months? A year ago, I remember, my private hours were all made bitter by reflections on the certainty of death, and now the flight of time has the same power over me. Everything passes, and one is hardly conscious of enjoying the present until it becomes the past. I was reading the other day the letters of Gibbon. He entreats Lord Sheffield to come with all his family to visit him at Lausanne, and dwells on the pleasure such a visit will occasion. There is a little gap in the date of his letters, and then he complains that this solitude is made more irksome by their having been there and departed. So will it be with us in a few months when you will all have left Marlow. But I will not indulge this gloomy feeling. The sun shines brightly, and we shall be very happy in our garden this summer. — Affectionately yours,

Marina.

Not only did Shelley keep open house for his friends; his kindliness and benevolence to the distressed poor in Marlow and the surrounding country was unbounded. Nor was he content to give money relief; he visited the cottagers; and made himself personally acquainted with them, their needs, and their sufferings.

In all these labours of love and charity he was heartily and constantly seconded by Mary.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
Although (he) trod the paths of high intent,
(He) journeyed now.

From the time of her union with him Mary had been his consoler, his cherished love, all the dearer to him for the thought that she was dependent on him and only on him for comfort and support, and enlightenment of mind; but yet she was a child, — a clever child, — sedate and thoughtful beyond her years, and full of true womanly devotion, — but still one whose first and only acquaintance with the world had been made by coming violently into collision with it, a dangerous experience, and hardening, especially if prolonged. From the time of her marriage a maturer, mellower tone is perceptible throughout her letters and writings, as though, the unnatural strain removed, and, above all, intercourse with her father restored, she glided naturally and imperceptibly into the place Nature intended her to fill, as responsible woman and wife, with social as well as domestic duties to fulfil.

The suffering of the past two or three years had left her wiser if also sadder than before; already she was beginning to look on life with a calm liberal judgment of one who knew both sides of many questions, yet still her mind retained the simplicity and her spirit much of the buoyancy of youth. The unquenchable spring of love and enthusiasm in Shelley's breast, though it led him into errors and brought him grief and disillusionment, was a talisman that saved him from Byronic sarcasm, from the bitterness of recoil and the death of stagnation. He suffered from reaction, as all such natures must suffer, but Mary was by his side to steady and balance and support him, and to bring to him for his consolation the balm she had herself received from him. Well might he write —

Now has descended a serener hour,
And, with inconstant fortune, friends return;
Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
Which says: Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.

And consolation and support were sorely needed. In March Lord Chancellor Eldon pronounced the judgment by which he was deprived, on moral and religious grounds, of the custody of his two elder children. How bitterly he felt, how keenly he resented, this decree all the world knows. The paper which he drew up during this celebrated case, in which he declared, as far as he chose to declare them, his sentiments with regard to his separation from Harriet and his union with Mary, is the nearest approach to self-vindication Shelley ever made. But the decision of the Court cast a slur on his name, and on that of his second wife. The final arrangements about the children dragged on for many months. They were eventually given over to the guardianship of a clergyman, a stranger to their father, who had to set aside £200 a year of his income for their maintenance in exile.

Meanwhile Godwin's exactions were incessant, and his demands, sometimes impossible to grant, were harder than ever to deal with now that they were couched in terms of friendship, almost of affection. On 9th March we find Shelley writing to him —

It gives me pain that I cannot send you the whole of what you want. I enclose a cheque to within a few pounds of my possessions.

On 22d March (Godwin has been begging again, but this time in behalf of his old assistant and amanuensis, Marshall) —

Marshall's proposal is one in which, however reluctantly, I must refuse to engage. It is that I should grant bills to the amount of his debts, which are to expire in thirty months.

On 15th April Godwin writes on his own behalf —

The fact is I owe £400 on a similar score, beyond the £100 that I owed in the middle of 1815; and without clearing this, my mind will never be perfectly free for intellectual occupations. If this were done, I am in hopes that the produce of *Mandeville*, and the sensible improvement in the commercial transactions of Skinner Street would make me a free man, perhaps, for the rest of my life....

My life wears away in lingering sorrow at the endless delays that attend on this affair.... Once every two or three months I throw myself prostrate beneath the feet of Taylor of Norwich, and my other discounting friends, protesting that this is absolutely for the last time. Shall this ever have an end? Shall I ever be my own man again?

One can imagine how such a letter would work on his daughter's feelings.

Nor was Charles Clairmont backward about putting in his claims, although his modest little requests require, like gems, to be extracted carefully from the discursive raptures, the eloquent flights of fancy and poetic description in which they are embedded. In January he had written from Bagnères de Bigorre, where he was "acquiring the language" —

Sometimes I hardly dare believe, situated as I am, that I ought for a moment to nourish the feelings of which I am now going to talk to you; at other times I am so thoroughly convinced of their infinite utility with regard to the moral existence of a being with strong sensations, or at all events with regard to mine, that I fly to this subject as to a tranquillising medicine, which has the power of so arranging and calming every violent and illicit sensation of the soul as to spread over the frame a deep and delightful contentment, for such is the effect produced upon me by a contemplation of the perfect state of existence, the perfect state of social domestic happiness which I propose to myself. My life has hitherto been a tissue of irregularity, which I assure you I am little content to reflect upon.... I have been always neglectful of one of the most precious possessions which a young man can hold — of my character.... You will now see the object of this letter.... I desire strongly to marry, and to devote myself to the temperate, rational duties of human life.... I see, I confess, some objections to this step.... I am not forgetful of what I owe to Godwin and my Mother, but we are in a manner entirely separated.... It is true my feelings towards my Mother are cold and inactive, but my attachment and respect for Godwin are unalterable, and will remain so to the last moment of my existence.... The news of his death would be to me a stroke of the severest affliction; that of my own Mother would be no more than the sorrow occasioned by the loss of a common acquaintance.

... Unless every obstacle on the part of the object of my affection were laid aside, you may suppose I should not speak so decisively. She is perfectly acquainted with every circumstance respecting me, and we feel that we love and are suited to each other; we feel that we should be exquisitely happy in being devoted to each other.

... I feel that I could not offer myself to the family without assuring them of my capability of commanding an annual sufficiency to support a little *ménage* — that is to say, as near as I can obtain information, 2000 francs, or about £80.... Do I dream, my dear Shelley, when a gleam of gay hope gives me reason to doubt of the possibility of my scheme?... Pray lose no time in writing to me, and be as explicit as possible.

The following extract is from a letter to Mary, written in August (the matrimonial scheme is now quite forgotten) —

I will begin by telling you that I received £10 some days ago, minus the expenses.... I also received your letter, but not till after the money.... I am most extremely vexed that Shelley will not oblige me with a single word. It is now nearly six months that I have expected from him a letter about my future plans.

Do, my dear Mary, persuade him to talk with you about them; and if he always persists in remaining silent, I beg you will write for him, and ask him what he would be inclined to approve.... Had I a little fortune of £200 or £300 a year, nothing should ever tempt me to make an effort to increase this golden sufficiency....

Respecting money matters.... I still owe (on the score of my *pension*) nearly £15, this is all my debt here. Another month will accumulate before I can receive your answer, and you will judge of what will be necessary to me on the road, to whatever place I may be destined. I cannot spend less than 3s. 6d. per day.

If Papa's novel is finished before you write, I wish to God you would send it. I am now absolutely without money, but I have no occasion for any, except for washing and postage, and for such little necessaries I find no difficulty in borrowing a small sum.

If I knew Mamma's address, I should certainly write to her in France. I have no heart to write to Skinner Street, for they will not answer my letters. Perhaps, now that this haughty woman is absent, I should obtain a letter. I think I shall make an effort with Fanny. As for Clare, she has entirely forgotten that she has a brother in the world.... Tell me if Godwin has been to visit you at Marlow; if you see Fanny often; and all about the two Williams. What is Shelley writing?

Shelley, when this letter arrived, was writing *The Revolt of Islam*. To this poem, in spite of duns, sponges, and law's delays, his thoughts and time were consecrated during his first six months at Marlow; in spite, too, of his constant succession of guests; but society with him was not always a hindrance to poetic creation or intellectual work. Indeed, a congenial presence afforded him a kind of relief, a half-unconscious stimulus which yet was no serious interruption to thought, for it was powerless to recall him from his abstraction.

Mary's life at Marlow was very different from what it had been at Bishopsgate and Bath. Her duties as house-mistress and hostess as well as Shelley's companion and helpmeet left her not much time for reverie. But her regular habits of study and writing stood her in good stead. *Frankenstein* was completed and corrected before the end of May. It was offered to Murray, who, however, declined it, and was eventually published by Lackington.

The negotiations with publishers calling her up to town, she paid a visit to Skinner Street. Shelley accompanied her, but was obliged to return to

Marlow almost immediately, and as Mrs. Godwin also appears to have been absent, Mary stayed alone with her father in her old home. To him this was a pleasure.

"Such a visit," he had written to Shelley, "will tend to bring back years that are passed, and make me young again. It will also operate to render us more familiar and intimate, meeting in this snug and quiet house, for such it appears to me, though I daresay you will lift up your hands, and wonder I can give it that appellation."

To Mary every room in the house must have been fraught with unspeakable associations. Alone with the memories of those who were gone, of others who were alienated; conscious of the complete change in herself and transference of her sphere of sympathy, she must have felt, when Shelley left her, like a solitary wanderer in a land of shadows.

"I am very well here," she wrote, "but so intolerably restless that it is painful to sit still for five minutes. Pray write. I hear so little from Marlow that I can hardly believe that you and Willman live there."

Another train of mingled recollections was awakened by the fact of her chancing, one evening, to read through that third canto of *Childe Harold* which Byron had written during their summer in Switzerland together.

Do you remember, Shelley, when you first read it to me one evening after returning from Diodati. The lake was before us, and the mighty Jura. That time is past, and this will also pass, when I may weep to read these words.... Death will at length come, and in the last moment all will be a dream.

What Mary felt was crystallised into expression by Shelley, not many months later —

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by,
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

On the last day of May, Mary returned to Marlow, where the Hunts were making a long stay. Externally life went quietly on. The summer was hot and beautiful, and they passed whole days in their boat or their garden, or in the woods. Their studies, as usual, were unremitting. Mary applied herself to the works of Tacitus, Buffon, Rousseau, and Gibbon. Shelley's reading at this time was principally Greek: Homer, Æschylus, and Plato. His poem was approaching completion. Mary, now that *Frankenstein* was off her hands, busied herself in writing out the journal of their first travels. It was published, in December, as *Journal of a Six Weeks' Tour*, together with the descriptive letters from Geneva of 1816.

But her peace and Shelley's was threatened by an undercurrent of ominous disturbance which gained force every day.

Byron remained abroad. But Clare and Clare's baby remained with the Shelleys. At Bath she had passed as "Mrs." Clairmont, but now resumed her former style, while Alba was said to be the daughter of a friend in London, sent for her health into the country. As time, however, went by, and the infant still formed one of the Marlow household, curiosity, never long dormant, became aroused. Whose was this child? And if, as officious gossip was not slow to suggest, it was Clare's, then who was its father? As month after month passed without bringing any solution of this problem, the vilest reports arose concerning the supposed relations of the inhabitants of Albion House — false rumours that embittered the lives of Alba's generous protectors, but to which Shelley's unconventionality and unorthodox opinions, and the stigma attached to his name by the Chancery decree, gave a certain colour of probability, and which in part, though indirectly, conduced to his leaving England again, — as it proved, for ever.

Again and again did he write to Byron, pointing out with great gentleness and delicacy, but still in the plainest terms, the false situation in which they were placed with regard to friends and even to servants by their effort to keep Clare's secret; suggesting, almost entreating, that, if no permanent decision could be arrived at, some temporary arrangement should at least be made for Alba's boarding elsewhere. Byron, at this time plunged in dissipation at Venice, shelved or avoided the subject as long as he could. Clare was friendless and penniless, and her chances of ever earning an honest living depended on her power of keeping up appearances and preserving her character before the world. But the child was a remarkably beautiful, intelligent, and engaging creature, and its mother, impulsive, uncontrolled, and reckless, was at no trouble to conceal her devotion to it, regardless of consequences, and of the fact that these consequences had to be endured by others.

Those who had forfeited the world's kindness seemed, as such, to be the natural *protégés* of Shelley; and even Mary, who, not long before, had summed up all her earthly wishes in two items,—"a garden, *et absentia Claire*," — stood by her now in spite of all. But their letters make it perfectly evident that they were fully alive to the danger that threatened them, and that, though they willingly harboured the child until some safe and fitting asylum should be found for it, they had never contemplated its residing permanently with them.

To Mary Shelley this state of things brought one bitter personal grief and disappointment in the loss of her earliest friend, Isabel or Isobel Baxter, now married to Mr. David Booth, late brewer and subsequently schoolmaster at Newburgh-on-Tay, a man of shrewd and keen intellect, an immense local reputation for learning, and an estimation of his own gifts second to that of none of his admirers.

The Baxters, as has already been said, were people of independent mind, of broad and liberal views; full of reverence and admiration for the philosophical writings of Godwin. Mary, in her extreme youth and inexperience, had quite expected that Isabel would have upheld her action when she first left her father's house with Shelley. In that she was disappointed, as was, after all, not surprising.

Now, however, her friend, whose heart must have been with her all along, would surely feel justified in following that heart's dictates, and would return to the familiar, affectionate friendship which survives so many differences of opinion. And her hope received an encouragement when, in August, Mr. Baxter, Isabel's father, accepted an invitation to stay at Marlow. He arrived on the 1st of September, full of doubts as to what sort of place he was coming to, — apprehensions which, after a very short intercourse with Shelley, were changed into surprise and delight.

But his visit was cut short by the birth, on the very next day, of Mary's little girl, Clara. He found it expedient to depart for a time, but returned later in the month for a longer stay.

This second visit more than confirmed his first impression, and he wrote to his daughter in warm, nay, enthusiastic praise of Shelley, against whom

Isabel was, not unnaturally, much prejudiced, so much so, it seems, as to blind her even to the merits of his writings.

After a warm panegyric of Shelley as

A being of rare genius and talent, of truly republican frugality and plainness of manners, and of a soundness of principle and delicacy of moral tact that might put to shame (if shame they had) many of his detractors, — and withal so amiable that you have only to be half an hour in his company to convince you that there is not an atom of malevolence in his whole composition.

Mr. Baxter proceeds —

Is there any wonder that I should become attached to such a man, holding out the hand of kindness and friendship towards me? Certainly not. Your praise of his book put me in mind of what Pope says of Addison —

Damn with faint praise; assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, others teach to sneer.

[You say] “some parts appear to be well written, but the arguments appear to me to be neither new nor very well managed.” After Hume such a publication is quite puerile! As to the arguments not being new, it would be a wonder indeed if any new arguments could be adduced in a controversy which has been carried on almost since ever letters were known. As to their not being well managed, I should be happy if you would condescend on the particular instances of their being ill managed; it was the first of Shelley’s works I had read. I read it with the notion that it *could* only contain silly, crude, undigested and puerile remarks on a worn-out subject; and yet I was unable to discover any of that want of management which you complain of; but, God help me, I thought I saw in it everything that was opposite. As to its being puerile to write on such a subject after David Hume, I by no means think that he has exhausted the subject. I think rather that he has only proposed it — thrown it out, as it were, for a matter of discussion to others who might come after him, and write in a less bigoted, more liberal, and more enlightened age than the one he lived in. Think only how many great men’s labours we should decree to be puerile if we were to hold everything puerile that has been written on this subject since the days of Hume! Indeed, my dear, the remark altogether savours more of the envy and illiberality of one jealous of his talents than the frankness and candour characteristic of my Isobel. Think, my dear, think for a moment what you would have said of this work had it come from Robert, who is as old as Shelley was when he wrote it, or had it come from me, or even from —— O! I must not say David: he, to be sure, is far above any such puerility.

Her father's letter made Isabel waver, but in vain. It had no effect on Mr. Booth, who had been at the trouble of collecting and believing all the scandals about Alba, or "Miss Auburn," as she seems to have been called. He was not one to be biassed by personal feelings or beguiled by fair appearances, in the face of stubborn, unaccountable facts. He preferred to take the facts and draw his own inference — an inference which apparently seemed to him no improbable one.

For a long time nothing decisive was said or done, but while the fate of her early friendship hung in the balances, Mary's anxiety for some settlement about Alba became almost intolerable to her, weighing on her spirits, and helping, with other depressing causes, to retard her restoration to health.

On the 19th of September she summed up in her journal the heads of the seventeen days after Clara's birth during which she had written nothing.

I am confined Tuesday, 2d. Read *Rhoda*, Pastor's *Fireside*, *Missionary*, *Wild Irish Girl*, *The Anaconda*, *Glenarvon*, first volume of Percy's *Northern Antiquities*. Bargain with Lackington concerning *Frankenstein*.

Letter from Albé (Byron). An unamiable letter from Godwin about Mrs. Godwin's visits. Mr. Baxter returns to town. Thursday, 4th, Shelley writes his poem; his health declines. Friday, 19th, Hunts arrive.

As the autumn advanced it became evident that the sunless house at Marlow was exceedingly cold, and far too dreary a winter residence to be desirable for one of Shelley's feeble constitution, or even for Mary and her infant children. Shelley's health grew worse and worse. His poem was finished and dedicated to Mary in the beautiful lines beginning —

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become

A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

But the reaction from the “agony and bloody sweat of intellectual travail,” the troubles and griefs of the past year, and the ceaseless worry about money, all told injuriously on his physical state. He had to be constantly away from his home, up in town, on business; and his thoughts turned longingly again towards Italy. Byron had signified his consent to receive and provide for his daughter, subject to certain stringent conditions, chief among which was the child’s complete separation from its mother, from the time it passed into his keeping. In writing to him on 24th September, Shelley adverts to his own wish to winter at Pisa, and the possibility in this case of his being himself Alba’s escort to Italy.

“Now, dearest, let me talk to you,” he writes to Mary. “I think we ought to go to Italy. I think my health might receive a renovation there, for want of which perhaps I should never entirely overcome that state of diseased action which is so painful to my beloved. I think Alba ought to be with her father. This is a thing of incredible importance to the happiness, perhaps, of many human beings. It might be managed without our going there. Yes; but not without an expense which would, in fact, suffice to settle us comfortably in a spot where I might be regaining that health which you consider so valuable. It is valuable to you, my own dearest. I see too plainly that you will never be quite happy till I am well. Of myself I do not speak, for I feel only for you.”

He goes on to discuss the practicability of the plan from the financial point of view, calculating what sum they may hope to get by the sale of their lease and furniture, and how much he may be able to borrow, either from his kind friend Horace Smith, or from money-lenders on *post obits*, a ruinous process to which he was, all his life, forced to resort.

Poor Mary in the chilly house at Marlow, with her three-weeks-old baby, her strength far from re-established, and her house full of guests, who made themselves quite at home, was not likely to take the most sanguine view of affairs.

25th September 1817.

You tell me, dearest, to write you long letters, but I do not know whether I can to-day, as I am rather tired. My spirits, however, are much better than they were, and perhaps your absence is the cause. Ah! my love! you cannot guess how wretched it was to see your languor and increasing illness. I now say to myself, perhaps he is better; but then I watched you every moment, and every moment was full of pain both to you and to me. Write, my love, a long account of what Lawrence says; I shall be very anxious until I hear.

I do not see a great deal of our guests; they rise late, and walk all the morning. This is something like a contrary fit of Hunt's, for I meant to walk to-day, and said so; but they left me, and I hardly wish to take my first walk by myself; however, I must to-morrow, if he still shows the same want of *tact*. Peacock dines here every day, *uninvited*, to drink his bottle. I have not seen him; he morally disgusts me; and Marianne says that he is very ill-tempered.

I was much pained last night to hear from Mr. Baxter that Mr. Booth is ill-tempered and jealous towards Isabel; and Mr. Baxter thinks she half regrets her marriage; so she is to be another victim of that ceremony. Mr. Baxter is not at all pleased with his son-in-law; but we can talk of that when we meet.

... A letter came from Godwin to-day, very short. You will see him; tell me how he is. You are loaded with business, the event of most of which I am anxious to learn, and none so much as whether you can do anything for my Father.

Marlow, *26th September 1817*.

You tell me to decide between Italy and the sea. I think, dearest, if — what you do not seem to doubt, but which I do, a little — our finances are in sufficiently good a state to bear the expense of the journey, our inclination ought to decide. I feel some reluctance at quitting our present settled state, but as we *must* leave Marlow, I do not know that stopping short on this side the Channel would be pleasanter to me than crossing it. At any rate, my love, do not let us encumber ourselves with a lease again.... By the bye, talking of authorship, do get a sketch of Godwin's plan from him. I do not think that I ought to get out of the habit of writing, and I think that the thing he talked of would just suit me. I am glad to hear that Godwin is well.... As to Mrs. Godwin, something very analogous to disgust arises whenever I mention her. That last accusation of Godwin's adds bitterness to every feeling I ever felt against her.... Mr. Baxter thinks that Mr. Booth keeps Isabel from writing to me. He has written to her to-day warmly in praise of us both, and telling her by all means not to let the acquaintance cool, and that in such a case her loss would be much greater than mine. He has taken a prodigious fancy to us, and is continually talking of and praising "Queen Mab," which he vows is the best poem of modern days.

Marlow, *28th September 1817*.

Dearest Love — Clare arrived yesterday night, and whether it might be that she was in a croaking humour (in ill spirits she certainly was), or whether she represented things as they really were, I know not, but certainly affairs did not seem to wear a very good face. She talks of Harriet's debts to a large amount, and something about Longdill's having undertaken for them, so that they must be paid. She mentioned also that you were entering into a *post obit* transaction. Now this requires our serious consideration on one account. These things (*post obits*), as you well know, are affairs of wonderful length; and if you must complete one before you settle on going to Italy, Alba's departure ought certainly not to be delayed.... You have not mentioned yet to Godwin your thoughts of Italy; but if you determine soon, I would have you do it, as these things are always better to be talked of some days before they take place. I took my first walk to-day. What a dreadfully cold place this house is! I was shivering over a fire, and the garden looked cold and dismal; but as soon as I got into the road, I found, to my infinite surprise, that the sun was shining, and the air warm and delightful.... I will now tell you something that will make you laugh, if you are not too teased and ill to laugh at anything. Ah! dearest, is it so? You know now how melancholy it makes me sometimes to think how ill and comfortless you may be, and I so far away from you. But to my story. In Elise's last letter to her *chere amie*, Clare put in that Madame Clairmont was very ill, so that her life was in danger, and added, in Elise's person, that she (Elise) was somewhat shocked to perceive that Mademoiselle Clairmont's gaiety was not abated by the *douloureuse* situation of her amiable sister. Jenny replies —

"Mon amie, avec quel chagrin j'apprends la maladie de cette jolie et aimable Madame Clairmont; pauvre chère dame, comme je la plains. Sans doute elle aime tendrement son mari, et en être séparée pour toujours — en avoir la certitude elle sentir — quelle cruelle chose; qu'il doit être un méchant homme pour quitter sa femme. Je ne sais ce qu'il y a, mais cette jeune et jolie femme me tient singulièrement au cœur; je l'avoue que je n'aime point mademoiselle sa sœur. Comment! avoir à craindre pour les jours d'une si charmante sœur, et n'en pas perdre un grain de gaîté; elle me met en colere."

Here is a noble resentment thrown away! Really I think this *mystification* of Clare's a little wicked, although laughable. I am just now surrounded by babes. Alba is scratching and crowing, William is amusing himself with wrapping a shawl round him, and Miss Clara staring at the fire.... Adieu, dearest love. I want to say again, that you may fully answer me, how very, *very* anxious I am to know the whole extent of your present difficulties and pursuits; and remember also that if this *post obit* is to be a long business, Alba must go before it is finished. Willy is just going to bed. When I ask him where you are, he makes me a long speech that I do not understand. But I know my own one, that you are away, and I wish that you were with me. Come soon, my own only love. — Your affectionate girl,

M. W. S.

P.S. — What of *Frankenstein*? and your own poem — have you fixed on a name? Give my love to Godwin when Mrs. Godwin is not by, or you must give it her, and I do not love her.

5th October 1817.

... How happy I shall be, my own dear love, to see you again. Your last was so very, very short a visit; and after you were gone I thought of so many things I had to say to you, and had no time to say. Come Tuesday, dearest, and let us enjoy some of each other's company; come and see your sweet babes and the little Commodore; she is lively and an uncommonly interesting child. I never see her without thinking of the expressions in my mother's letters concerning Fanny. If a mother's eyes were not partial, she seemed like this Alba. She mentions her intelligent eyes and great vivacity; but this is a melancholy subject.

But Shelley's enforced absences became more and more frequent; brief visits to his home were all that he could snatch. As the desire to escape grew stronger, the fair prospect only seemed to recede. New complications appeared in the shape of Harriet’s creditors, who pressed hard on Shelley for a settlement of their hitherto unknown and unsuspected claims. So perilous with regard to them was his position that Mary herself was fain to caution him to stay away and out of sight for fear of arrest. It was almost more than she could do to keep up the mask of cheerfulness, yet her letters of counsel and encouragement were her husband’s mainstay.

“Dearest and best of living beings,” he wrote in October, “how much do your letters console me when I am away from you. Your letter to-day gave me the greatest delight; so soothing, so powerful and quiet are your expressions, that it is almost like folding you to my heart.... My own Mary, would it not be better for you to come to London at once? I think we could quite as easily do something with the house if you were in London — that is to say, all of you — as in the country.”

The next two letters were written in much depression. She could not get up her strength; she dared not indulge in the hope of going abroad, for she realised, as Shelley could not do, how little money they would have and how much they already owed. Their income, and more, went in supporting and paying for other people, and left them nothing to live on! Clare was unsettled, unhappy, and petulant. Godwin, ignorant like the rest of the world of her story and her present situation, unaware of Shelley’s proposed move, and certain to oppose it with the energy of despair when he heard of it, was an impending visitor.

16th October 1817.

So you do not come to-night love, nor any night; you are always away, and this absence is long and becomes each day more dreary. Poor Curran! so he is dead, and a sod on his breast, as four years ago I heard him prophesy would be the case within that year.

Nothing is done, you say in your letter, and indeed I do not expect anything will be done these many months. This, if you continued well, would not give me so much pain, except on Alba’s account. If she were with her father, I could wait patiently, but the thought of what may come “between the cup and the lip” — between now and her arrival at Venice — is a heavy burthen on my soul. He may change his mind, or go to Greece, or to the devil; and then what happens?

My dearest Shelley, be not, I entreat you, too self-negligent; yet what can you do? If you were here, you might retort that question upon me; but when

I write to you I indulge false hopes of some miraculous answer springing up in the interval. Does not Longdill treat you ill? he makes out long bills and does nothing. You say nothing of the late arrest, and what may be the consequences, and may they not detain you? and may you not be detained many months? for Godwin must not be left unprovided. All these things make me run over the months, and know not where to put my finger and say — during this year your Italian journey shall commence. Yet when I say that it is on Alba's account that I am anxious, this is only when you are away, and with too much faith I believe you to be well. When I see you, drooping and languid, in pain, and unable to enjoy life, then on your account I ardently wish for bright skies and Italian sun.

You will have received, I hope, the manuscript that I sent yesterday in a parcel to Hookham. I am glad to hear that the printing goes on well; bring down all that you can with you.

If we were free and had no anxiety, what delight would Godwin's visit give me; as it is, I fear that it will make me dreadfully miserable. Cannot you come with him? By the way you write I hardly expect you this week, but is it really so?

I think Alba's remaining here exceedingly dangerous, yet I do not see what is to be done. Your babes are well. Clara already replies to her nurse's caresses by smiles, and Willy kisses her with great tenderness. — Your affectionate

Mary.

P.S. — I wish you would purchase a gown for Milly, with a little note with it from Marianne, that it may appear to come from her. You can get one, I should think, for 12s. or 14s.; but it must be *stout*; such a kind of one as we gave to the servant at Bath.

Willy has just said good-night to me; he kisses the paper and says good-night to you. Clara is asleep.

Marlow, *Saturday, 18th October 1817*.

Mr. Wright has called here to-day, my dearest Shelley, and wished to see you. I can hardly have any doubt that his business is of the same nature as that which made him call last week. You will judge, but it appears to me that an arrest on Monday will follow your arrival on Sunday.

My love, you ought not to come down. A long, long week has passed, and when at length I am allowed to expect you, I am obliged to tell you not to come. This is very cruel. You may easily judge that I am not happy; my spirits sink during this continued absence. Godwin, too, will come down; he will talk as if we meant to stay here; and I must — must I? — tell fifty prevarications or direct *lies*. When I thought that you would be here also, I knew that your presence would lead to general conversation; but Clare will absent herself. We shall be alone, and he will talk of your private affairs. I am sure that I shall never be able to support it.

And when is this to end? Italy appears to me farther off than ever, and the idea of it never enters my mind but Godwin enters also, and makes it lie heavy at my heart. Had you not better speak? you might relieve me from a heavy burden. Surely he cannot be blind to the many heavy reasons that urge us. Your health, the indispensable one, if every other were away. I assure you that if my Father said, "Yes, you must go; do what you can for me; I know that you will do all you can;" I should, far from writing so melancholy a letter, prepare everything with a light heart; arrange our affairs here; and come up to town, to await patiently the effect of your efforts. I know not whether it is early habit or affection, but the idea of his silent quiet disapprobation makes me weep as it did in the days of my childhood.

I shall not see you to-morrow. God knows when I shall see you! Clare is for ever wearying with her idle and childish complaints. Can you not send me some consolation? — Ever your affectionate

Mary.

The fears of an arrest were not realised. Early in November Shelley came for three days to Marlow, after which Mary went up to stay with him in London.

During this fortnight's visit the question of renewed intercourse with Isabel Booth was practically decided, and decided against Mary. She had written on the 4th of November to Mr. Baxter inviting Christy to come on a visit. Subsequently a plan was started for Isabel Booth's accompanying the Shelleys in their Italian trip, — they little dreaming that when they left England it would be for the last time.

Apparently Mr. Baxter made some effort to bring Mr. Booth round to his way of thinking. The two passed an evening with the Shelleys at their lodgings. But it availed nothing, and in the end poor Mr. Baxter was driven himself to write to Shelley, breaking off the acquaintance. The letter was written much against the grain, and contrary to the convictions of the writer, who seems to have been much put to it to account for his action, the true grounds for which he could not bring himself to give. Shelley, however, was not slow to divine the real instigator in the affair, and wrote back a letter which, by its temperance, simplicity, and dignity, must have pricked Baxter to the heart. Mary added a playful postscript, showing that she still clung to hope —

My dear Sir — You see I prophesied well three months ago, when you were here. I then said that I was sure Mr. Booth was averse to our intercourse, and would find some means to break it off. I wish I had you by the fire here in my little study, and it might be "double, double, toil and trouble," but I could quickly convince you that your girls are not below me in station, and that, in fact, I am the fittest companion for them in the world, but I postpone the argument until I see you, for I know (pardon me) that *viva voce* is all in all with you.

Two or three times more Mary wrote to Isabel, but the correspondence dropped and the friends met no more for many years.

The preparations for their migration extended over two or three months more. During January Shelley suffered much from the renewal of an attack of ophthalmia, originally caught while visiting the poor people at Marlow. The house there was finally sold, and on the 10th of February they quitted it and went up to London. Their final departure from England did not take place until March. They made the most of their time of waiting, seeing as much of their friends and of objects of interest as circumstances allowed.

Journal, Thursday, February 12 (Mary). — Go to the Indian Library and the Panorama of Rome. On Friday, 13th, spend the morning at the British Museum looking at the Elgin marbles. On Saturday, 14th, go to Hunt's. Clare and Shelley go to the opera. On Sunday, 15th, Mr. Bransen, Peacock, and Hogg dine with us.

Wednesday, February 18. — Spend the day at Hunt's. On Thursday, 19th, dine at Horace Smith's, and copy Shelley's Eclogue. On Friday, 20th, copy Shelley's critique on *Rhododaphne*. Go to the Apollonicon with Shelley. On Saturday, 21st, copy Shelley's critique, and go to the opera in the evening. Spend Sunday at Hunt's. On Monday, 23d February, finish copying

Shelley's critique, and go to the play in the evening — *The Bride of Abydos*. On Tuesday go to the opera — *Figaro*. On Wednesday Hunt dines with us. Shelley is not well.

Sunday, March 1. — Read Montaigne. Spend the evening at Hunt's. On Monday, 2d, Shelley calls on Mr. Baxter. Isabel Booth is arrived, but neither comes nor sends. Go to the play in the evening with Hunt and Marianne, and see a new comedy damned. On Thursday, 5th, Papa calls, and Clare visits Mrs. Godwin. On Sunday, 8th, we dine at Hunt's, and meet Mr. Novello. Music.

Monday, March 9. — Christening the children.

This was doubtless a measure of precaution, lest the omission of any such ceremony might in some future time operate as a civil disadvantage towards the children. They received the names of William, Clara Everina, and Clara Allegra.

Tuesday, March 10. — Packing. Hunt and Marianne spend the day with us. Mary Lamb calls. Papa in the evening. Our adieus.

Wednesday, March 11. — Travel to Dover.

Thursday, March 12. — France. Discussion of whether we should cross. Our passage is rough; a sick lady is frightened and says the Lord's Prayer. We arrive at Calais for the third time.

Mary little thought how long it would be before she saw the English shores again, nor that, when she returned, it would be alone.

CHAPTER XI

March 1818-June 1819

The external events of the four Italian years have been repeatedly told and profusely commented on by Shelley's various biographers. Summed up, they are the history of a long strife between the intellectual and creative stimulus of lovely scenes and immortal works of art on the one hand, and the wearing friction of vexatious outward events and crushing afflictions on the other. For Shelley they were a period of rapid, of exotic, mental growth and development, interspersed with intervals of exhaustion and depression, of restlessness, or unnatural calm. For Mary they were years of courageous effort, of heroic resistance to overpowering odds. She endured, and she overcame; but some victories are obtained at such cost as to be at the time scarcely distinguishable from defeats, and the story of hers survives in no one act or work of her own, but in the *Cenci*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Epipsychidion*, and *Adonais*.

The travellers proceeded, *viâ* Lyons and Chambéry, to Milan, whence Shelley and Mary made an expedition to Como in search of a house. After looking at several, — one "beautifully situated, but too small," another "out of repair, with an excellent garden, but full of serpents," a third which seemed promising, but which they failed to get, — they appear to have given up the scheme altogether, and to have returned to Milan. For the next week they were in frequent correspondence with Byron on the subject of Allegra. This had to be carried on entirely by Shelley, as Byron refused all communication with Clare, and undertook to provide for his child on the sole condition that, from the day it left her, its mother entirely relinquished it, and never saw it again.

This appeared to Shelley cruelly and needlessly harsh. His own paternal heart was still bleeding from fresh wounds, and although, as he again pointed out, his interest in the matter was entirely on the opposite side to Clare's, he pleaded her cause with earnestness. He did not touch on the question of Byron's attitude towards Clare herself, he contended only for the mother and child, in letters as remarkable for their simple good sense as for their perfect delicacy and courtesy of expression, and every line of which is inspired with the unselfish ardour of a heart full of love.

Poor Clare herself was dreadfully unhappy. Any illusion she may ever have had about Byron had long been over, but she had possibly not realised before coming to Italy the perfect horror he had of seeing her; an event, as he told his friends the Hoppners, which would make it necessary for him instantly to quit Venice. The reports about his present mode of life, which, even at Milan did not fail to reach them, were, to say the least, not encouraging; and from a later letter of Shelley's it would seem that he warned Clare now, at the last minute, to pause and reflect before she sent Allegra away to such a father. She, however, was determined that till seven years old, at least, the child should be with one or other of its parents, and Byron would only consent to be that one on condition that it grew up in ignorance of its mother. It appears to have been assumed by all parties that, in refusing to hand Allegra altogether over to her father, they would be sacrificing for her the prospect of a brilliant position and fortune. Even supposing that this had been so, it is impossible to think that such a consideration would have weighed, at any rate with the Shelleys, but for the impossibility of keeping Clare's secret if Allegra remained with them, and the constant danger of worse scandal to which her unexplained presence must expose them. Clare, distracted with grief as she was, yet dreaded discovery acutely, and firmly believed she was acting for Allegra's best interests in parting from her.

It ended in the little girl's being sent to Venice on the 28th of April in the care of Elise, the Swiss nurse, with whom Mary Shelley, for Allegra's sake, consented to part, though she valued her very much, but who, not long afterwards, returned to her.

As soon as they had gone, the Shelleys and Clare left Milan; and travelling leisurely through Parma, Modena, Bologna, and Pisa (where a letter from Elise reached them), they arrived on the 9th of May at Leghorn. Here they made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne. The lady, formerly Mrs. Reveley, had been an intimate friend of Mary Wollstonecraft's (when Mary Godwin), and had been so warmly admired by Godwin before his first marriage as to arouse some jealousy in Mr. Reveley. Indeed, his admiration had been returned by so warm a feeling of friendship on her part that Godwin was frankly surprised when on his pressing her, shortly after her widowhood, to become his second wife, she refused him point blank, nor, by all his eloquence, was to be persuaded to change her mind. A beautiful girl, and highly accomplished, she had married very young, and had one son of her first marriage, Henry Reveley, a young civil engineer, who was now living in Italy with her and her second husband.

This Mr. Gisborne struck Mary as being the reverse of intelligent, and is described in Shelley's letters in most uncomplimentary terms. His appearance cannot certainly have been in his favour, but that there must have been more in him than met the eye seems also beyond a doubt, as, at a later time, Shelley addressed to him some of his most interesting and most intimate letters.

To Mrs. Gisborne they bore a letter of introduction from Godwin, and it was not long before her acquaintance with Mrs. Shelley ripened into friendship. "Reserved, yet with easy manners;" so Mary described her at their first meeting. On the next day the two had a long conversation about Mary's father and mother. Of her mother, indeed, Mary learned more from Mrs. Gisborne than from any one else. She wrote her father an immediate account of these first interviews, and his answer is unusually demonstrative in expression.

I received last Friday a delightful letter from you. I was extremely gratified by your account of Mrs. Gisborne. I have not seen her, I believe, these twenty years; I think not since she was Mrs. Gisborne; and yet by your description she is still a delightful woman. How inexpressibly pleasing it is to call back the recollection of years long past, and especially when the recollection belongs to a person in whom one deeply interested oneself, as I did in Mrs. Reveley. I can hardly hope for so great a pleasure as it would be to me to see her again.

At the Bagni di Lucca, where they settled themselves for a time, Mary heard from her father of the review of *Frankenstein* in the *Quarterly*. Peacock had reported it to be unfavourable, so it was probably a relief to find that the reviewers "did not pretend to find anything blasphemous in the story."

They say that the *gentleman* who has written the book is a *man of talents*, but that he employs his powers in a way disagreeable to them.

All this, however, tended to keep Mary's old ardour alive. She never was more strongly impelled to write than at this time; she felt her powers fresh and strong within her; all she wanted was some motive, some suggestion to guide her in the choice of a subject. While at Leghorn Shelley had come upon a manuscript account, which Mary transcribed, of that terrible story of the *Cenci* afterwards dramatised by himself. His first idea was that Mary should take it for the subject of a play. He was convinced that she had dramatic talent as a writer, and that he had none; two erroneous conclusions, as the sequel showed. But such an assurance from such a source could not but be flattering to Mary's ambition, and stimulating to her innate love of literary work. During all the early part of their time in Italy their thoughts were busy with some subject for Mary's tragedy. One proposed and strongly urged by Shelley was *Charles the First*. It was partially carried out by himself before his death, and perhaps occurred to him now in connection with a suggestion of Godwin's for a book very different in scope and character, and far better suited to Mary's genius than the drama. It would have been a series of *Lives of the Commonwealth's Men*; "our calumniated Republicans," as Shelley calls them.

She was immensely attracted by the idea, but was forced to abandon it at the time, for lack of the necessary books of reference. But Shelley, who believed her powers to be of the highest order, was as eager as she herself could be for her to undertake original work of some kind, and was constantly inciting her to effort in this direction.

More than two months were spent at the Bagni di Lucca — reading, writing, riding, and enjoying to the full the balmy Italian skies. Shelley, in whom the creative mood was more or less dormant, and who "despaired of providing anything original," translated the *Symposium* of Plato, partly as an exercise, partly to "give Mary some idea of the manners and feelings of the Athenians, so different on many subjects from that of any other community that ever existed." Together they studied Italian, and Shelley reported Mary's progress to her father.

Mary has just finished Ariosto with me, and indeed has attained a very competent knowledge of Italian. She is now reading Livy.

She also transcribed his translation of the *Symposium*, and his Eclogue *Rosalind and Helen*, which, begun at Marlow, had been thrown aside till she found it and persuaded him to complete it.

Meanwhile Clare hungered and thirsted for a sight of Allegra, of whom she heard occasionally from Elise, and who was not now under Byron's roof, but living, by his permission, with Mrs. Hoppner, wife of the British Consul at Venice, who had volunteered to take temporary charge of her. Her distress moved Shelley to so much commiseration that he resolved or consented to do what must have been supremely disagreeable to him. He went himself to Venice, hoping by a personal interview to modify in some degree Byron's inexorable resolution. Clare accompanied him, unknown, of course, to Byron. They started on the 17th of August. On that day Mary wrote the following letter to Miss Gisborne —

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Bagni di Lucca, *17th August 1818*.

My dear Madam — It gave me great pleasure to receive your letter after so long a silence, when I had begun to conjecture a thousand reasons for it, and among others illness, in which I was half right. Indeed, I am much concerned to hear of Mr. R.'s attacks, and sincerely hope that nothing will retard his speedy recovery. His illness gives me a slight hope that you might now be induced to come to the baths, if it were even to try the effect of the hot baths. You would find the weather cool; for we already feel in this part of the world that the year is declining, by the cold mornings and evenings. I have another selfish reason to wish that you would come, which I have a great mind not to mention, yet I will not omit it, as it might induce you. Shelley and Clare are gone; they went to-day to Venice on important business; and I am left to take care of the house. Now, if all of you, or any of you, would come and cheer my solitude, it would be exceedingly kind. I daresay you would find many of your friends here; among the rest there is the Signora Felichi, whom I believe you knew at Pisa. Shelley and I have ridden almost every evening. Clare did the same at first, but she has been unlucky, and once fell from her horse, and hurt her knee so as to knock her up for some time. It is the fashion here for all the English to ride, and it is very pleasant on these fine evenings, when we set out at sunset and are lighted home by Venus, Jupiter, and Diana, who kindly lend us their light after the sleepy Apollo is gone to bed. The road which we frequent is raised somewhat above, and overlooks the river, affording some very fine points of view amongst these woody mountains.

Still, we know no one; we speak to one or two people at the Casino, and that is all; we live in our studious way, going on with Tasso, whom I like, but who, now I have read more than half his poem, I do not know that I like half so well as Ariosto. Shelley translated the *Symposium* in ten days. It is a most beautiful piece of writing. I think you will be delighted with it. It is true that in many particulars it shocks our present manners; but no one can be a reader of the works of antiquity unless they can transport themselves from these to other times, and judge, not by our, but their morality.

Shelley is tolerably well in health; the hot weather has done him good. We have been in high debate — nor have we come to any conclusion — concerning the land or sea journey to Naples. We have been thinking that when we want to go, although the equinox will be past, yet the equinoctial winds will hardly have spent themselves; and I cannot express to you how I fear a storm at sea with two such young children as William and Clara. Do you know the periods when the Mediterranean is troubled, and when the wintry halcyon days come? However, it may be we shall see you before we proceed southward.

We have been reading Eustace's *Tour through Italy*; I do not wonder the Italians reprinted it. Among other select specimens of his way of thinking, he says that the Romans did not derive their arts and learning from the Greeks; that Italian ladies are chaste, and the lazzaroni honest and industrious; and that, as to assassination and highway robbery in Italy, it is all a calumny — no such things were ever heard of. Italy was the garden of Eden, and all the Italians Adams and Eves, until the blasts of hell (*i.e.* the French — for by that polite name he designates them) came. By the bye, an Italian servant stabbed an English one here — it was thought dangerously at first, but the man is doing better.

I have scribbled a long letter, and I daresay you have long wished to be at the end of it. Well, now you are; so my dear Mrs. Gisborne, with best remembrances, yours, obliged and affectionately,

Mary W. Shelley.

From Florence, where he arrived on the 20th, Shelley wrote to Mary, telling her that Clare had changed her intention of going in person to Venice, and had decided on the more politic course of remaining herself at Fusina or Padua, while Shelley went on to see Byron.

"Well, my dearest Mary," he went on, "are you very lonely? Tell me truth, my sweetest, do you ever cry? I shall hear from you once at Venice and once on my return here. If you love me, you will keep up your spirits; and at all events tell me truth about it, for I assure you I am not of a disposition to be flattered by your sorrow, though I should be by your cheerfulness, and above all by seeing such fruits of my absence as was produced when I was at Geneva."

It was during Shelley's absence with Byron on their voyage round the lake of Geneva that Mary had begun to write *Frankenstein*. But on the day when she received this letter she was very uneasy about her little girl, who was seriously unwell from the heat. On writing to Shelley she told him of this; and, from his answer, one may infer that she had suggested the advisability of taking the child to Venice for medical advice.

Padua, Mezzogiorno.

My best Mary — I found at Mount Selica a favourable opportunity for going to Venice, when I shall try to make some arrangement for you and little Ca to come for some days, and shall meet you, if I do not write anything in the meantime, at Padua on Thursday morning. Clare says she is obliged to come to see the Medico, whom we missed this morning, and who has appointed as the only hour at which he can be at leisure, 8 o'clock in the morning. You must, therefore, arrange matters so that you should come to the Stella d'Oro a little before that hour, a thing only to be accomplished by setting out at half-past 3 in the morning. You will by this means arrive at Venice very early in the day, and avoid the heat, which might be bad for the babe, and take the time when she would at least sleep great part of the time. Clare will return with the return carriage, and I shall meet you, or send to you, at Padua. Meanwhile, remember *Charles the First*, and do you be prepared to bring at least some of *Mirra* translated; bring the book also with you, and the sheets of *Prometheus Unbound*, which you will find numbered from 1 to 26 on the table of the Pavilion. My poor little Clara; how is she to-day? Indeed, I am somewhat uneasy about her; and though I feel secure there is no danger, it would be very comfortable to have some reasonable person's opinion about her. The Medico at Padua is certainly a man in great practice; but I confess he does not satisfy me. Am I not like a wild swan, to be gone so suddenly? But, in fact, to set off alone to Venice required an exertion. I felt myself capable of making it, and I knew that you desired it.... Adieu, my dearest love. Remember, remember *Charles the First* and *Mirra*. I have been already imagining how you will conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment —

"There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute." Shakespeare was only a human being. Adieu till Thursday. — Your ever affectionate,

P. B. S.

His next letter, however, announced yet another revolution in Clare's plans. Her heart failed her at the idea of remaining to endure her suspense all alone in a strange place; and so, braving the possible consequences of Byron's discovering her move before he was informed of it, she went on with Shelley to Venice, and, the morning after their arrival, proceeded to Mr. Hoppner's house. Here she was kindly welcomed by him and his wife, a pretty Swiss woman, with a sympathetic motherly heart, who knew all about her and Allegra. They insisted, too, on Shelley's staying with them, and he was nothing loth to accept the offer, for Byron's circle would not have suited him at all.

He was pleased with his hostess, something in whose appearance reminded him of Mary. "She has hazel eyes and sweet looks, rather Maryish," he wrote. And in another letter he described her as

So good, so beautiful, so angelically mild that, were she wise too, she would be quite a Mary. But she is not very accomplished. Her eyes are like a reflection of yours; her manners are like yours when you know and like a person.

He could enjoy no pleasure without longing for Mary to share it, and from the moment he reached Venice he was planning impatiently for her to follow him, to experience with him the strange emotions aroused by the first sight of the wonderful city, and to make acquaintance with his new friends.

He lost no time in calling on Byron, who gave him a very friendly reception. Shelley's intention on leaving Lucca was to go with his family to Florence, and the plan he urged on Byron was that Allegra should come to spend some time there with her mother. To this Byron objected, as likely to raise comment, and as a reopening of the whole question. He was, however, in an affable mood, and not indisposed to meet Shelley halfway. He had heard of Clare's being at Padua, but nothing of her subsequent change of plan; and, assuming that the whole party were staying there, he offered to send Allegra as far as that, on a week's visit. Finding that things were not as he supposed, and that Mrs. Shelley was likely to come presently to Venice, he proposed to lend them for some time a villa which he rented at Este, and to let Allegra stay with them. The offer was promptly and gratefully accepted by Shelley. The fact of Clare’s presence in Venice had, perforce, to be kept dark; for that there was no help; the great thing was to get her and Allegra away as soon as possible. He sent directions to Mary to pack up at once and travel with the least possible delay to Este. There he would meet her with Clare, Allegra, and Elise, who were to be established, with Mary’s little ones, at Byron’s villa, Casa Cappucini, while she and he proceeded to Venice.

When the letter came, Mary had the Gisbornes staying with her on a visit. For that reason, and on account of little Clara’s indisposition, the summons to depart so suddenly can hardly have been welcome; she obeyed it, however, and left the Bagni di Lucca on the 31st of August. Owing to delays about the passport, her journey took rather longer than they had expected. The intense heat of the weather, added to the fatigue of travelling and probably change of diet, seriously affected the poor baby, who, by the time they got to Este on 5th September, was dangerously ill. Shelley, who had been waiting for them impatiently, was also far from well, and their visit to Venice had to be deferred for more than a fortnight, during which Mary had time to hear enough of Venetian society to horrify and disgust her.

Journal, Saturday, September 5. — Arrive at Este. Poor Clara is dangerously ill. Shelley is very unwell, from taking poison in Italian cakes. He writes his drama of *Prometheus*. Read seven cantos of Dante. Begin to translate *A Cajo Graccho* of Monti, and *Measure for Measure*.

Wednesday, September 16. — Read the *Filippo* of Alfieri. Shelley and Clare go to Padua. He is very ill from the effects of his poison.

To Mrs. Gisborne she wrote as follows —

September 1818.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — I hasten to write to you to say that we have arrived safe, and yet I can hardly call it safe, since the fatigue has given my poor *Ca* an attack of dysentery; and although she is now somewhat recovered from that disorder, she is still in a frightful state of weakness and fever, and is reduced to be so thin in this short time that you would hardly know her again.

The physician of Este is a stupid fellow; but there is one come from Padua, and who appears clever; so I hope under his care she will soon get well, although we are still in great anxiety concerning her. I found Mr. Shelley very anxious for our non-arrival, for, besides other delays, we were detained a whole day at Florence for a signature to our passport. The house at Este is exceedingly pleasant, with a large garden and quantities of excellent fruit. I have not yet been to Venice, and know not when I shall, since it depends upon the state of Clara's health. I hope Mr. Reveley is quite recovered from his illness, and I am sure the baths did him a great deal of good. So now I suppose all your talk is how you will get to England. Shelley agrees with me that you could live very well for your £200 per annum in Marlow or some such town; and I am sure you would be much happier than in Italy. How all the English dislike it! The Hoppners speak with the greatest acrimony of the Italians, and Mr. Hoppner says that he was actually driven from Italian society by the young men continually asking him for money. Everything is saleable in Venice, even the wives of the gentry, if you pay well. It appears indeed a most frightful system of society. Well! when shall we see you again? Soon, I daresay. I am so much hurried that you will be kind enough to excuse the abruptness of this letter. I will write soon again, and in the meantime write to me. Shelley and Clare desire the kindest remembrances. — My dear Mrs. Gisborne, affectionately yours,

Mary W. S.

Casa Capuccini, Este.
Send our letters to this direction.

No more of the journal was written till the 24th, and in the meantime great trouble had fallen on the writers. Shelley was impatient for Clara to be within reach of better medical advice, and anxious to get Mary to Venice. He went forward himself on the 22d, returning next day as far as Padua to meet Mary and Clara, with Clare, who, however, only came over to Padua to see the Medico. The baby was very ill, and was getting worse every hour, but they judged it best to press on. In their hurry they had forgotten their passport, and had some difficulty in getting past the *dogana* in consequence. Shelley's impetuosity carried all obstacles before it, and the soldiers on duty had to give way. On reaching Venice Mary went straight with her sick child to the inn, while Shelley hurried for the doctor. It was too late. When he got back (without the medical man) he found Mary well-nigh beside herself with distress. Another doctor had already been summoned, but little Clara was dying, and in an hour all was over.

This blow reduced Mary to "a kind of despair"; — the expression is Shelley's. Mr. Hoppner, on hearing what had happened, insisted on taking them away at once from the inn to his house. Four days she spent in Venice after that, the first of which was a blank; of the second she merely records —

An idle day. Go to the Lido and see Albé there.

After that she roused herself. There was Shelley to be comforted and supported, there was Byron to be interviewed. One of her objects in coming had been to try and persuade him after all to let Allegra stay. So she nerved herself to pay this visit, and to go about and see something of Venice with Shelley.

Sunday, September 27. — Read fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. It rains. Go to the Doge's Palace, Ponte dei Sospiri, etc. Go to the Academy with Mr. and Mrs. Hoppner, and see some fine pictures. Call at Lord Byron's and see the *Farmaretta*.

Monday, September 28. — Go with Mrs. Hoppner and Cavaliere Mengaldo to the Library. Shopping. In the evening Lord Byron calls.

Tuesday, September 29. — Leave Venice, and arrive at Este at night. Clare is gone with the children to Padua.

Wednesday, September 30. — The chicks return. Transcribe *Mazeppa*. Go to the opera in the evening.

A quiet, sad fortnight at Este followed. An idle one it was not, for Shelley not only wrote *Julian and Maddalo*, but worked on portions of his drama of *Prometheus Unbound*, the idea of which had haunted him ever since he came to Italy. Clare, for the time, was happy with her child. Mary read several plays of Shakespeare and the lives of Alfieri and Tasso in Italian.

On the 12th of October she arrived once more at Venice with Shelley. She passed the greater part of her time there with the Hoppners, who were exceedingly friendly. Shelley visited Byron several times, probably trying to get an extension of leave for Allegra. In this, however, he must have failed, as on the 24th he went to Este to fetch her, returning with her on the 29th. Having restored the poor little girl to the Hoppners' care, he and Mary went once more to Este, but this time only to prepare for departure. On the 5th of November the whole party, including Elise (who was not retained for

Allegra's service), left the Villa Capuccini and travelled by slow stages to Rome.

No further allusion to her recent bereavement is to be found in Mary's journal. She attempted to behave like the Stoic her father had wished her to be. She had written to him of her affliction, and received the following answer from the philosopher —

Skinner Street, *27th October 1818*.

My dear Mary — I sincerely sympathise with you in the affliction which forms the subject of your letter, and which I may consider as the first severe trial of your constancy and the firmness of your temper that has occurred to you in the course of your life; you should, however, recollect that it is only persons of a very ordinary sort, and of a pusillanimous disposition, that sink long under a calamity of this nature. I assure you such a recollection will be of great use to you. We seldom indulge long in depression and mourning except when we think secretly that there is something very refined in it, and that it does us honour.

Such a homily, at such a time, must have made Mary feel like a person of a very ordinary sort indeed. But she strove, only too hard, to carry out her father's principles; for, by doing violence to her sensitive nature, she might crush but could not kill it. The passionate impulses of her mother were curiously mated in her with her father's reflective temperament; and the noble courage which she inherited from Mary Wollstonecraft went hand in hand with somewhat of Godwin's constitutional shrinking from any manifestation of emotion. And the effect of determinate, excessive self-restraint on a heart like hers was to render the crushed feelings morbid in their acuteness, and to throw on her spirits a load of endurance which was borne, indeed, but at ruinous cost, and operated largely, among other causes, to make her seem cold when she was really suffering.

At such times it was not altogether well for her that she was Shelley's companion. For, when his health and spirits were good, he craved and demanded companionship, — personal, intellectual, playful, — companionship of all sorts; but when they ebbed, when his vitality was low, when the simultaneous exaltation of conception and labour of realisation — a tremendous expenditure of force — was over, and left him shattered, shaken, surprised at himself like one who in a dream falls from a height and awakens with the shock, — tired, and yet dull, — then the one panacea for him was animal spirits in some congenial acquaintance; whether a friend or a previous stranger mattered little, provided the personality was congenial and the spirits buoyant. Mary did her best, bravely and nobly. But the loss of a child was one thing to Shelley, another thing to her. She strove to overcome the low spirits from which she suffered. But endurance, though more heroic than spontaneous cheerfulness, is not to be compared with it in its benign effect on other people; nay, it may even have a depressing effect when a yielding to emotion "of the ordinary sort" may not. All these truths, however, do not become evident at once; like other life-experience they have to be spelled out by slow and painful degrees.

To seek for respite from grief or care in intellectual culture and the acquisition of knowledge was instinctive and habitual both in Shelley and in Mary. They visited Ferrara and Bologna, then travelled by a winding road among the Apennines to Terni, where they saw the celebrated waterfall —

It put me in mind of Sappho leaping from a rock, and her form vanishing as in the shape of a swan in the distance.

Friday, November 20. — We travel all day the Campagna di Roma — a perfect solitude, yet picturesque, and relieved by shady dells. We see an immense hawk sailing in the air for prey. Enter Rome. A rainy evening. Doganas and cheating innkeepers. We at length get settled in a comfortable hotel.

After one week in Rome, during which they visited as many of the wonders of the Eternal City as the time allowed, they journeyed on to Naples, reading Montaigne by the way.

At Naples they remained for three months. Of their life there Mary's journal gives no account; she confines herself almost entirely to noting down the books they read, and one or two excursions. They lived in very great seclusion, greater than was good for them, but Shelley suffered much from ill-health, and not a little from its treatment by an unskilful physician. They read incessantly, — Livy, Dante, Sismondi, Winkelmann, the Georgics and Plutarch's *Lives*, *Gil Blas*, and *Corinne*. They left no beautiful or interesting scene unvisited; they ascended Vesuvius, and made excursions to Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Paestum.

On the 8th of December Mary records —

Go on the sea with Shelley. Visit Capo Miseno, the Elysian Fields, Avernus, Solfatara. The Bay of Baiae is beautiful, but we are disappointed by the various places we visit.

The impression of the scene, however, remained after the temporary disappointment had been forgotten, and she sketched it from memory many years later in the fanciful introduction to her romance of *The Last Man*, the story of which purports to be a tale deciphered from sibylline leaves, picked up in the caverns.

Shelley, however, suffered from extreme depression, which, out of solicitous consideration for Mary, he disguised as much as possible under a mask of cheerfulness, insomuch that she never fully realised what he endured at this time until she read the mournful poems written at Naples, after he who wrote them had passed for ever out of sight.

She blamed herself then for what seemed to her her blindness, — for having perhaps let slip opportunities of cheering him which she would have sold her soul to recall when it was too late. That *he*, at the time, felt in her no such want of sympathy or help is shown by his concluding words in the advertisement of *Rosalind and Helen*, and *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, dated Naples, 20th December, where he says of certain lines “which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains,” that, if they were not erased, it was “at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.”

Much of this sadness was due to physical suffering, but external causes of anxiety and vexation were not wanting. One was the discovery of grave misconduct on the part of their Italian servant, Paolo. An engagement had been talked of between him and the Swiss nurse Elise, but the Shelleys, who thought highly of Elise and by no means highly of Paolo, tried to dissuade her from the idea. An illness of Elise’s revealed the fact that an illicit connection had been formed. The Shelleys, greatly distressed, took the view that it would not do to throw Elise on the world without in some degree binding Paolo to do his duty towards her, and they had them married. How far this step was well-judged may be a matter of opinion. Elise was already a mother when she entered the Shelleys service. Whether a woman already a mother was likely to do better for being bound for life to a man whom they "knew to be a rascal" may reasonably be doubted even by those who hold the marriage-tie, as such, in higher honour than the Shelleys did. But whether the action was mistaken or not, it was prompted by the sincerest solicitude for Elise's welfare, a solicitude to be repaid, at no distant date, by the basest ingratitude. Meanwhile Mary lost her nurse, and, it may be assumed, a valuable one; for any one who studies the history of this and the preceding years must see all three of the poor doomed children throve as long as Elise was in charge of them.

Clare was ailing, and anxious too; how could it be otherwise? Just before Allegra's third birthday, Mary received a letter from Mrs. Hoppner which was anything but reassuring. It gave an unsatisfactory account of the child, who did not thrive in the climate of Venice, and a still more unsatisfactory account of Byron.

Il faut espérer qu'elle se changera pour son mieux quand il ne sera plus si froid; mais je crois toujours que c'est très malheureux que Miss Clairmont oblige cette enfant de vivre à Venise, dont le climat est nuisible en tout au physique de la petite, et vraîment, pour ce que fera son père, je le trouve un peu triste d'y sacrifier l'enfant. My Lord continue de vivre dans une débauche affreuse qui tôt ou tard le menera a sà ruine....

Quant à moi, je voudrois faire tout ce qui est en mon pouvoir pour cette enfant, que je voudrois bien volontiers rendre aussi heureuse que possible le temps qu'elle restera avec nous; car je crains qu'après elle devra toujours vivre avec des étrangers, indifferents à son sort. My Lord bien certainement ne la rendra jamais plus à sa mère; ainsi il n'y a rien de bon à espérer pour cette chère petite.

This letter, if she saw it, may well have made Clare curse the day when she let Allegra go.

Still, after they returned to Rome at the beginning of March, a brighter time set in.

Journal, Friday, March 5. — After passing over the beautiful hills of Albano, and traversing the Campagna, we arrive at the Holy City again, and see the Coliseum again.

All that Athens ever brought forth wise,
All that Afric ever brought forth strange,
All that which Asia ever had of prize,

Was here to see. Oh, marvellous great change!
Rome living was the world's sole ornament;
And dead, is now the world's sole monument.

Sunday, March 7. — Move to our lodgings. A rainy day. Visit the Coliseum. Read the Bible.

Monday, March 8. — Visit the Museum of the Vatican. Read the Bible.

Tuesday, March 9. — Shelley and I go to the Villa Borghese. Drive about Rome. Visit the Pantheon. Visit it again by moonlight, and see the yellow rays fall through the roof upon the floor of the temple. Visit the Coliseum.

Wednesday, March 10. — Visit the Capitol, and see the most divine statues.

Not one of the party but was revived and invigorated by the beauty and overpowering interest of the surrounding scenes, and the delight of a lovely Italian spring. To Shelley it was life itself.

"The charm of the Roman climate," says Mrs. Shelley, "helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And as he wandered among the ruins, made one with nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself."

The visionary drama of *Prometheus Unbound*, which had haunted, yet eluded him so long, suddenly took life and shape, and stood before him, a vivid reality. During his first month at Rome he completed it in its original three-act form. The fourth act was an afterthought, and was added at a later date.

For a short, enchanted time — his health renewed, the deadening years forgotten, his susceptibilities sharpened, not paralysed, by recent grief — he gave himself up to the vision of the realisation of his life-dream; the disappearance of evil from the earth.

"He believed," wrote Mary Shelley, "that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none.... That man should be so perfectionised as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on, was the image of one warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all, even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity. A victim full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good."

"This poem," he himself says, "was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowers, glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama."

And while he wrought and wove the radiant web of his poem, Mary, excited to greatest enthusiasm by the treasures of sculpture at Rome, and infected by the atmosphere of art around her, took up again her favourite pursuit of drawing, which she had discontinued since going to Marlow, and worked at it many hours a day, sometimes all day. She was writing, too; a thoroughly congenial occupation, at once soothing and stimulating to her. She studied the Bible, with the keen fresh interest of one who comes new to it, and she read Livy and Montaigne.

Little William was thriving, and growing more interesting every day. His beauty and promise and angelic sweetness made him the pet and darling of all who knew him, while to his parents he was a perpetual source of ever fresh and increasing delight. And his mother looked forward to the birth in autumn of another little one who might, in some measure, fill the place of her lost Clara.

Clare, who, also, was in better health, was not behindhand in energy or industry. Music was her favourite pursuit; she took singing-lessons from a good master and worked hard.

They led a somewhat less secluded life than at Naples, and at the house of Signora Dionizi, a Roman painter and authoress (described by Mary Shelley as "very old, very miserly, and very mean"), Mary and Clare, at any rate, saw a little of Italian society. For this, however, Shelley did not care, nor was he attracted by any of the few English with whom he came in contact. Yet he felt his solitude. In April, when the strain of his work was over, his spirits drooped, as usual; and he longed then for some *congenial distraction*, some human help to bear the burden of life till the moment of weakness should have passed. But the fount of inspiration, the source of temporary elation and strength, had not been exhausted by *Prometheus*.

On the 22d of April Mary notes —

Visit the Palazzo Corunna, and see the picture of Beatrice Cenci.

The interest in the old idea was revived in him; he became engrossed in the subject, and soon after his "lyrical drama" was done, he transferred himself to this other, completely different work. There was no talk, now, of passing it on to Mary, and indeed she may well have recoiled from the unmitigated horrors of the tale. But, though he dealt with it himself, Shelley still felt on unfamiliar ground, and, as he proceeded, he submitted what he wrote to Mary for her judgment and criticism; the only occasion on which he consulted her about any work of his during its progress towards completion.

Late in April they made the acquaintance of one English (or rather, Irish) lady, who will always be gratefully remembered in connection with the Shelleys.

This was Miss Curran, a daughter of the late Irish orator, who had been a friend of Godwin's, and to whose death Mary refers in one of her letters from Marlow.

Mary may, perhaps, have met her in Skinner Street; in any case, the old association was one link between them, and another was afforded by similarity in their present interests and occupations. Mary was very keen about her drawing and painting. Miss Curran had taste, and some skill, and was vigorously prosecuting her art-studies in Rome. Portrait painting was her especial line, and each of the Shelley party, at different times, sat to her; so that during the month of May they met almost daily, and became well acquainted.

This new interest, together with the unwillingness to bring to an end a time at once so peaceful and so fruitful, caused them once and again to postpone their departure, originally fixed for the beginning of May. They stayed on longer than it is safe for English people to remain in Rome. Ah! why could no presentiment warn them of impending calamity? Could they, like the Scottish witch in the ballad, have seen the fatal winding-sheet creeping and clinging ever higher and higher round the wraith of their doomed child, they would have fled from the face of Death. But they had no such foreboding.

Not a fortnight after his portrait had been taken by Miss Curran, William showed signs of illness. How it was that, knowing him to be so delicate, — having learned by bitterest experience the danger of southern heat to an English-born infant, — having, as early as April, suspected the Roman air of causing “weakness and depression, and even fever” to Shelley himself, how, after all this, they risked staying in Rome through May is hard to imagine.

They were to pay for their delay with the best part of their lives. William sickened on the 25th, but had so far recovered by the 30th that his parents, though they saw they ought to leave Rome as soon as he was fit to travel, were in no immediate anxiety about him, and were making their summer plans quite in a leisurely way; Mary writing to ask Mrs. Gisborne to help them with some domestic arrangements, begging her to inquire about houses at Lucca or the Baths of Pisa, and to engage a servant for her.

The journal for this and the following days runs —

Sunday, May 30. — Read Livy, and *Persiles and Sigismunda*. Draw. Spend the evening at Miss Curran’s.

Monday, May 31. — Read Livy, and *Persiles and Sigismunda*. Draw. Walk in the evening.

Tuesday, June 1. — Drawing lesson. Read Livy. Walk by the Tiber. Spend the evening with Miss Curran.

Wednesday, June 2. — See Mr. Vogel’s pictures. William becomes very ill in the evening.

Thursday, June 3. — William is very ill, but gets better towards the evening. Miss Curran calls.

Mary took this opportunity of begging her friend to write for her to Mrs. Gisborne, telling her of the inevitable delay in their journey.

Rome, *Thursday, 3d June 1819*.

Dear Mrs. Gisborne — Mary tells me to write for her, for she is very unwell, and also afflicted. Our poor little William is at present very ill, and it will be impossible to quit Rome so soon as we intended. She begs you, therefore, to forward the letters here, and still to look for a servant for her, as she certainly intends coming to Pisa. She will write to you a day or two before we set out.

William has a complaint of the stomach; but fortunately he is attended by Mr. Bell, who is reckoned even in London one of the first English surgeons.

I know you will be glad to hear that both Mary and Mr. Shelley would be well in health were it not for the dreadful anxiety they now suffer.

Emelia Curran.

Two days after, Mary herself wrote a few lines to Mrs. Gisborne.

5th June 1819.

William is in the greatest danger. We do not quite despair, yet we have the least possible reason to hope.

I will write as soon as any change takes place. The misery of these hours is beyond calculation. The hopes of my life are bound up in him. — Ever yours affectionately,

M. W. S.

I am well, and so is Shelley, although he is more exhausted by watching than I am. William is in a high fever.

Sixty death-like hours did Shelley watch, without closing his eyes. Clare, her own troubles forgotten in this moment of mortal suspense, was a devoted nurse.

As for Mary, her very life ebbed with William's, but as yet she bore up. There was no real hope from the first moment of the attack, but the poor child made a hard struggle for life. Two more days and nights of anguish and terror and deadly sinking of heart, — and then, in the blank page following *June 4*, the last date entered in the diary, are the words —

The journal ends here. — P. B. S.

On Monday, the 7th of June, at noonday, William died.

CHAPTER XII

June 1819-September 1820

It was not fifteen months since they had all left England; Shelley and Mary with the sweet, blue-eyed "Willmouse," and the pretty baby, Clara, so like her father; Clare and the "bluff, bright-eyed little Commodore," Allegra; the Swiss nurse and English nursemaid; a large and lively party, in spite of cares and anxieties and sorrows to come. In one short, spiritless paragraph Mary, on the 4th of August, summed up such history as there was of the sad two months following on the blow which had left her childless.

Journal, Wednesday, August 4, 1819, Leghorn (Mary). — I begin my journal on Shelley's birthday. We have now lived five years together; and if all the events of the five years were blotted out, I might be happy; but to have won and then cruelly to have lost, the associations of four years, is not an accident to which the human mind can bend without much suffering.

Since I left home I have read several books of Livy, *Clarissa Harlowe*, the *Spectator*, a few novels, and am now reading the Bible, and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and Dante. Shelley is to-day twenty-seven years of age. Write; read Lucan and the Bible. Shelley writes the *Cenci*, and reads Plutarch's *Lives*. The Gisbornes call in the evening. Shelley reads *Paradise Lost* to me. Read two cantos of the *Purgatorio*.

Three days after William's death, Shelley, Mary, and Clare had left Rome for Leghorn. Once more they were alone together — how different now from the three heedless young things who, just five years before, had set out to walk through France with a donkey!

Shelley, then, a creature of feelings and theories, full of unbalanced impulses, vague aspirations and undeveloped powers; inexperienced in everything but uncomprehended pain and the dim consciousness of half-realised mistakes. Mary, the fair, quiet, thoughtful girl, earnest and impassioned, calm and resolute, as ignorant of practical life as precocious in intellect; with all her mind worshipping the same high ideals as Shelley's, and with all her heart worshipping him as the incarnation of them. Clare her very opposite; excitable and enthusiastic, demonstrative and capricious, clever, but silly; with a mind in which a smattering of speculative philosophy, picked up in Godwin's house, contended for the mastery with such social wisdom as she had picked up in a boarding school. Both of them mere children in years. Now poor Clare was older without being much wiser, saddened yet not sobered; suffering bitterly from her ambiguous position, yet unable or unwilling to put an end to it; the worse by her one great error, which had brought her to dire grief; the better by one great affection — for her child, — the source of much sorrow, it is true, but also of truest joy of self-devotion, and the only instrument of such discipline that ever she had.

Shelley had found what he wanted, the faithful heart which to his own afforded peace and stability and the balance which, then, he so much needed; a kindred mind, worthy of the best his had to give; knowing and expecting that best, too, and satisfied with nothing short of it. And his best had responded. In these few years he had realised powers the extent of which could not have been foretold, and which might, without that steady sympathy and support, have remained unfulfilled possibilities for ever. In spite of the far-reaching consequences of his errors, in spite of torturing memories, in spite of ill-health, anxiety, poverty, vexation, and strife, the Shelley of *Queen Mab* had become the Shelley of *Prometheus Unbound* and the *Cenci*.

Of this development he himself was conscious enough. In so far as he was known to his contemporaries, it was only by his so-called atheistic opinions, and his departures theoretical and actual, from conventional social morality; and even these owed their notoriety, not to his genius, but to the fact that they were such strange vagaries in the heir to a baronetcy. In his new life he had, indeed, known the deepest grief as well as the purest love, but those griefs which are memorial shrines of love did not paralyse him. They were rather among the influences which elicited the utmost possibilities of his nature; his lost children, as lovely ideals, were only half lost to him.

But with Mary it was otherwise. Her occupation was gone. When after the death of her first poor little baby, she wrote: "Whenever I am left alone to my own thoughts, and do not read to divert them, they always come back to the same point — that I was a mother, and am so no longer;" a new sense was dawning in her which never had waned, and which, since William's birth, had asserted itself as the key to her nature.

She had known very little of the realities of life when she left her father's house with Shelley, and he, her first reality, belonged in many ways more to the ideal than to the real world. But for her children, her association with him, while immeasurably expanding her mental powers, might have tended to develop these at the expense of her emotional nature, and to starve or to stifle her human sympathies. In her children she found the link which united her ideal love with the universal heart of mankind, and it was as a mother that she learned the sweet charities of human nature. This maternal love deepened her feelings towards her own father, it gave her sympathy with Clare and helped towards patience with her, it saved her from overmuch literary abstraction, and prevented her from pining when Shelley was buried in dreams or engrossed in work, and she loved these children with the unconscious passionate gratitude of a reserved nature towards anything that constrains from it the natural expression of that fund of tenderness and devotion so often hidden away under a perversely undemonstrative manner. Now, in one short year, all this was gone, and she sank under the blow of William's loss. She could not even find comfort in the thought of the baby to be born in autumn, for, after the repeated rending asunder of beloved ties, she looked forward to new ones with fear and trembling, rather than with hope. The physical reaction after the strain of long suspense and watching had told seriously on her health, never strong at these times; the efforts she had made at Naples were no longer possible to her. Even Clare with all her misery was, in one sense, better off than she, for Allegra *lived*. She tried to rise above her affliction, but her care for everything was gone; the whole world seemed dull and indifferent. Poor Shelley, only too liable to depression at all times, and suffering bitterly himself from the loss of his beloved child, tried to keep up his spirits for Mary's sake.

Thou sittest on the hearth of pale Despair,
Where,
For thine own sake, I cannot follow thee.

Perhaps the effort he thus made for her sake had a bracing effect on himself, but the old Mary seemed gone, — lost, — and even he was powerless to bring her back; she could not follow him; any approach of seeming forgetfulness in others increased her depression and gloom.

The letter to Miss Curran, which follows, was written within three weeks of William's death.

Leghorn, *27th June 1819*.

My dear Miss Curran — I wrote to you twice on our journey, and again from this place, but I found the other day that Shelley had forgotten to send the letter; and I have been so unwell with a cold these last two or three days that I have not been able to write. We have taken an airy house here, in the vicinity of Leghorn, for three months, and we have not found it yet too hot. The country around us is pretty, so that I daresay we shall do very well. I am going to write another stupid letter to you, yet what can I do? I no sooner take up my pen than my thoughts run away with me, and I cannot guide it except about *one* subject, and that I must avoid. So I entreat you to join this to your many other kindnesses, and to excuse me. I have received the two letters forwarded from Rome. My father's lawsuit is put off until July. It will never be terminated. I hear that you have quitted the pestilential air of Rome, and have gained a little health in the country. Pray let us hear from you, for both Shelley and I are very anxious — more than I can express — to know how you are. Let us hear also, if you please, anything you may have done about the tomb, near which I shall lie one day, and care not, for my own sake, how soon. I never shall recover that blow; I feel it more than at Rome; the thought never leaves me for a single moment; everything on earth has lost its interest to me. You see I told you that I could only write to you on one subject; how can I, since, do all I can (and I endeavour very sincerely) I can think of no other, so I will leave off. Shelley is tolerably well, and desires his kindest remembrances. — Most affectionately yours,

Mary W. Shelley.

Their sympathetic friend, Leigh Hunt, grieved at the tone of her letters and at Shelley's account of her, tried to convey to her a little kindly advice and encouragement.

8 York Buildings, New Road.
July 1819.

My dear Mary — I was just about to write to you, as you will see by my letter to Shelley, when I received yours. I need not say how it grieves me to see you so dispirited. Not that I wonder at it under such sufferings; but I know, at least I have often suspected, that you have a tendency, partly constitutional perhaps, and partly owing to the turn of your philosophy, to look over-intensely at the dark side of human things; and they must present double dreariness through such tears as you are now shedding. Pray consent to take care of your health, as the ground of comfort; and cultivate your laurels on the strength of it. I wish you would strike your pen into some more genial subject (more obviously so than your last), and bring up a fountain of gentle tears for us. That exquisite passage about the cottagers shows what you could do.

Mary received his counsels submissively, and would have carried them out if she could. But her nervous prostration was beyond her own power to cure or remove, and it was hard for others and impossible for herself to know how far her dejected state was due to mental and how far to physical causes.

Shelley was not, and dared not be, idle. He worked at his Tragedy and finished it; many of the Fragments, too, belong to this time. They are the speech of pain, but those who can teach in song what they learn in suffering have much, very much to be thankful for. Mary persisted in study; she even tried to write. But the spring of invention was low.

She exerted herself to send to Mrs. Hunt an account of their present life and surroundings.

Leghorn, *28th August 1819*.

My dear Marianne — We are very dull at Leghorn, and I can therefore write nothing to amuse you. We live in a little country house at the end of a green lane, surrounded by a *podere*. These *poderi* are just the things Hunt would like. They are like our kitchen-gardens, with the difference only that the beautiful fertility of the country gives them. A large bed of cabbages is very unpicturesque in England, but here the furrows are alternated with rows of grapes festooned on their supporters, and the hedges are of myrtle, which have just ceased to flower; their flower has the sweetest faint smell in the world, like some delicious spice. Green grassy walks lead you through the vines. The people are always busy, and it is pleasant to see three or four of them transform in one day a bed of Indian corn to one of celery. They work this hot weather in their shirts, or smock-frocks (but their breasts are bare), their brown legs nearly the colour, only with a rich tinge of red in it, of the earth they turn up. They sing, not very melodiously, but very loud, Rossini’s music, “Mi rivedrai, ti rivedrò,” and they are accompanied by the *cicala*, a kind of little beetle, that makes a noise with its tail as loud as Johnny can sing; they live on trees; and three or four together are enough to deafen you. It is to the *cicala* that Anacreon has addressed an ode which they call “To a Grasshopper” in the English translations.

Well, here we live. I never am in good spirits — often in very bad; and Hunt’s portrait has already seen me shed so many tears that, if it had his heart as well as his eyes, he would weep too in pity. But no more of this, or a tear will come now, and there is no use for that.

By the bye, a hint Hunt gave about portraits. The Italian painters are very bad; they might make a nose like Shelley’s, and perhaps a mouth, but I doubt it; but there would be no expression about it. They have no notion of anything except copying again and again their Old Masters; and somehow mere copying, however divine the original, does a great deal more harm than good.

Shelley has written a good deal, and I have done very little since I have been in Italy. I have had so much to see, and so many vexations, independently of those which God has kindly sent to wean me from the world if I were too fond of it. Shelley has not had good health by any means, and, when getting better, fate has ever contrived something to pull him back. He never was better than the last month of his stay in Rome, except the last week — then he watched sixty miserable death-like hours without closing his eyes; and you may think what good that did him.

We see the *Examiners* regularly now, four together, just two months after the publication of the last. These are very delightful to us. I have a word to say to Hunt of what he says concerning Italian dancing. The Italians dance very badly. They dress for their dances in the ugliest manner; the men in little doublets, with a hat and feather; they are very stiff; nothing but their legs move; and they twirl and jump with as little grace as may be. It is not for their dancing, but their pantomime, that the Italians are famous. You remember what we told you of the ballet of *Othello*. They tell a story by action, so that words appear perfectly superfluous things for them. In that they are graceful, agile, impressive, and very affecting; so that I delight in nothing so much as a deep tragic ballet. But the dancing, unless, as they sometimes do, they dance as common people (for instance, the dance of joy of the Venetian citizens on the return of Othello), is very bad indeed.

I am very much obliged to you for all your kind offers and wishes. Hunt would do Shelley a great deal of good, but that we may not think of; his spirits are tolerably good. But you do not tell me how you get on; how Bessy is, and where she is. Remember me to her. Clare is learning thorough bass and singing. We pay four crowns a month for her master, lessons three times a week; cheap work this, is it not? At Rome we paid three shillings a lesson and the master stayed two hours. The one we have now is the best in Leghorn.

I write in the morning, read Latin till 2, when we dine; then I read some English book, and two cantos of Dante with Shelley. In the evening our friends the Gisbornes come, so we are not perfectly alone. I like Mrs. Gisborne very much indeed, but her husband is most dreadfully dull; and as he is always with her, we have not so much pleasure in her company as we otherwise should....

The neighbourhood of Mrs. Gisborne, "charming from her frank and affectionate nature," and full of intellectual sympathy with the Shelleys, was a boon indeed at this melancholy time. Through her Shelley was led to the study of Spanish, and the appearance on the scene of Charles Clairmont, who had just passed a year in Spain, was an additional stimulus in this direction. Together they read several of Calderon's plays, from which Shelley derived the greatest delight, and which enabled him for a time to forget everyday life and its troubles. Another diversion to his thoughts was the scheme of a steamboat which should ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, to be constructed by Henry Reveley, mainly at Shelley's expense. He was elated at promoting a project which he conceived to be of great public usefulness and importance, and happy at being able to do a friend a good turn. He followed every stage of the steamer's construction with keen interest, and was much disappointed when the idea was given up, as, after some months, it was; not, however, until much time, labour, and money had been expended on it.

Mary, though she endeavoured to fill the blanks in her existence by assiduous reading, could not escape care. Clare was in perpetual thirst for news of her Allegra, and Godwin spared them none of his usual complaints. He, too, was much concerned at the depressed tone of Mary's letters, which seemed to him quite disproportionate to the occasion, and thought it his duty to convince her, by reasoning, that she was not so unhappy as she thought herself to be.

Skinner Street, *9th September 1819*.

My dear Mary — Your letter of 19th August is very grievous to me, inasmuch as you represent me as increasing the degree of your uneasiness and depression.

You must, however, allow me the privilege of a father and a philosopher in expostulating with you on this depression. I cannot but consider it as lowering your character in a memorable degree, and putting you quite among the commonalty and mob of your sex, when I had thought I saw in you symptoms entitling you to be ranked among those noble spirits that do honour to our nature. What a falling off is here! How bitterly is so inglorious a change to be deplored!

What is it you want that you have not? You have the husband of your choice, to whom you seem to be unalterably attached, a man of high intellectual attainments, whatever I and some other persons may think of his morality, and the defects under this last head, if they be not (as you seem to think) imaginary, at least do not operate as towards you. You have all the goods of fortune, all the means of being useful to others, and shining in your proper sphere. But you have lost a child: and all the rest of the world, all that is beautiful, and all that has a claim upon your kindness, is nothing, because a child of two years old is dead.

The human species may be divided into two great classes: those who lean on others for support, and those who are qualified to support. Of these last, some have one, some five, and some ten talents. Some can support a husband, a child, a small but respectable circle of friends and dependents, and some can support a world, contributing by their energies to advance their whole species one or more degrees in the scale of perfectibility. The former class sit with their arms crossed, a prey to apathy and languor, of no use to any earthly creature, and ready to fall from their stools if some kind soul, who might compassionate, but who cannot respect them, did not come from moment to moment and endeavour to set them up again. You were formed by nature to belong to the best of these classes, but you seem to be shrinking away, and voluntarily enrolling yourself among the worst.

Above all things, I entreat you, do not put the miserable delusion on yourself, to think there is something fine, and beautiful, and delicate, in giving yourself up, and agreeing to be nothing. Remember too, though at first your nearest connections may pity you in this state, yet that when they see you fixed in selfishness and ill humour, and regardless of the happiness of every one else, they will finally cease to love you, and scarcely learn to endure you.

The other parts of your letter afford me much satisfaction. Depend upon it, there is no maxim more true or more important than this; Frankness of communication takes off bitterness. True philosophy invites all communication, and withholds none.

Such a letter tended rather to check frankness of communication than to bind up a broken heart. Poor Mary's feelings appear in her letter to Miss Curran, with whom she was in correspondence about a monumental stone for the tomb in Rome.

The most pressing entreaties on my part, as well as Clare's, cannot draw a single line from Venice. It is now six months since we have heard, even in an indirect manner, from there. God knows what has happened, or what has not! I suppose Shelley must go to see what has become of the little thing; yet how or when I know not, for he has never recovered from his fatigue at Rome, and continually frightens me by the approaches of a dysentery. Besides, we must remove. My lying-in and winter are coming on, so we are wound up in an inextricable dilemma. This is very hard upon us; and I have no consolation in any quarter, for my misfortune has not altered the tone of my Father's letters, so that I gain care every day. And can you wonder that my spirits suffer terribly? that time is a weight to me? And I see no end to this. Well, to talk of something more interesting, Shelley has finished his tragedy, and it is sent to London to be presented to the managers. It is still a *deep secret*, and only one person, Peacock (who presents it), knows anything about it in England. With Shelley's public and private enemies, it would certainly fall if known to be his; his sister-in-law alone would hire enough people to damn it. It is written with great care, and we are in hopes that its story is sufficiently polished not to shock the audience. We shall see. Continue to direct to us at Leghorn, for if we should be gone, they will be faithfully forwarded to us. And when you return to Rome just have the kindness to inquire if there should be any stray letter for us at the post-office. I hope the country air will do you real good. You must take care of yourself. Remember that one day you will return to England, and that you may be happier there. — Affectionately yours,

M. W. S.

At the end of September they removed to Florence, where they had engaged pleasant lodgings for six months. The time of Mary's confinement was now approaching, an event, in Shelley's words, "more likely than any other to retrieve her from some part of her present melancholy depression."

They travelled by short, easy stages; stopping for a day at Pisa to pay a visit to a lady with whom from this time their intercourse was frequent and familiar. This was Lady Mountcashel, who had, when a young girl, been Mary Wollstonecraft's pupil, and between whom and her teacher so warm an attachment had existed as to arouse the jealousy and dislike of her mother, Lady Kingsborough. She had long since been separated from Lord Mountcashel, and lived in Italy with a Mr. Tighe and their two daughters, Laura and Nerina. As Lady Mountcashel she had entertained Godwin at her house during his visit to Ireland after his first wife's death. She is described by him as a remarkable person, "a republican and a democrat in all their sternness, yet with no ordinary portion either of understanding or good nature." In dress and appearance she was somewhat singular, and had that disregard for public opinion on such matters which is habitually implied in the much abused term "strong-minded." In this respect she had now considerably toned down. Her views on the relations of the sexes were those of William Godwin, and she had put them into practice. But she and the gentleman with whom she lived in permanent, though irregular, union had succeeded in constraining, by their otherwise exemplary life, the general respect and esteem. They were known as "Mr. and Mrs. Mason," and had so far lived down criticism that their actual position had come to be ignored or forgotten by those around them. Mr. Tighe, or "Tatty," as he was familiarly called by his few intimates, was of a retiring disposition, a lover of books and of solitude. Mrs. Mason was as remarkable for her strong practical common sense as for her talents and cultivation and the liberality of her views. She had a considerable knowledge of the world, and was looked up to as a model of good breeding, and an oracle on matters of deportment and propriety.

She had kept up correspondence with Godwin, and her acquaintance with the Shelleys was half made before she saw them. She conceived an immediate affection for Mary, as well for her own as for her mother's sake, and was to prove a constant and valuable friend, not to her only, but to Shelley, and most especially to Clare.

After a week in Florence, Mary's journal was resumed.

Saturday, October 9. — Arrive at Florence. Read Massinger. Shelley begins Clarendon; reads Massinger, and Plato's *Republic*. Clare has her first singing lesson on Saturday. Go to the opera and see a beautiful ballet

Monday, October 11. — Read Horace; work. Go to the Gallery. Shelley finishes the first volume of Clarendon. Read the *Little Thief*.

Wednesday, October 20. — Finish the First Book of Horace's Odes. Work, walk, read, etc. On Saturday letters are sent to England. On Tuesday one to Venice. Shelley visits the Galleries. Reads Spenser and Clarendon aloud.

Thursday, October 28. — Work; read; copy *Peter Bell*. Monday night a great fright with Charles Clairmont. Shelley reads Clarendon aloud and *Plato's Republic*. Walk. On Thursday the protest from the Bankers. Shelley writes to them, and to Peacock, Longdill, and H. Smith.

Tuesday, November 9. — Read Madame de Sevigné. Bad news from London. Shelley reads Clarendon aloud, and Plato. He writes to Papa.

On the 12th of November a son was born to the Shelleys, and brought the first true balm of consolation to his poor mother's heart.

"You may imagine," wrote Shelley to Leigh Hunt, "that this is a great relief and a great comfort to me amongst all my misfortunes.... Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled; for we have spent, as you may imagine, a miserable five months."

The child was healthy and pretty, and very like William. Neither Mary's strength nor her spirits were altogether re-established for some time, but the birth of "Percy Florence" was, none the less, the beginning of a new life for her. She turned, with the renewed energy of hope, to her literary work and studies. One of her first tasks was to transcribe the just written fourth act of *Prometheus Unbound*. She had work of her own on hand too; a historical novel, *Castruccio, Prince of Lucca* (afterwards published as *Valperga*), a laborious but very congenial task, which occupied her for many months.

And indeed all the solace of new and tender ties, all the animating interest of intellectual pursuits, was sorely needed to counteract the wearing effect of harassing cares and threatening calamities. Godwin was now being pressed for the accumulated unpaid house-rent of many years; so many that, when the call came, it was unexpected by him, and he challenged its justice. He had engaged in a law-suit on the matter, which he eventually lost. The only point which appeared to admit of no reasonable doubt was that Shelley would shortly be called upon to find a large sum of money for him, and this at a time when he was himself in unexpected pecuniary straits, owing to the non-arrival of his own remittances from England — a circumstance rendered doubly vexatious by the fact that a large portion of the money was pledged to Henry Reveley for the furtherance of his steamboat. A draft for £200, destined for this purpose, was returned, protested by Shelley's bankers. And though the money was ultimately recovered, its temporary loss caused no small alarm. Meanwhile every mail brought letters from Godwin of the most harrowing nature; the philosophy which he inculcated in a case of bereavement was null and void where impending bankruptcy was concerned. He well knew how to work on his daughter's feelings, and he did not spare her. Poor Shelley was at his wits' end.

"Mary is well," he wrote (in December) to the Gisbornes; "but for this affair in London I think her spirits would be good. What shall I, what can I, what ought I to do? You cannot picture to yourself my perplexity."

It appeared not unlikely that he might even have to go to England, a journey for which his present state of health quite unfitted him, and which he could not but be conscious would be no permanent remedy, but only a temporary alleviation, of Godwin's thoroughly unsound circumstances. Mary, in her grief for her father, began to think that the best thing for him might be to leave England altogether and settle abroad; an idea from which Mrs. Mason, with her strong sagacity, earnestly dissuaded her.

Her views on the point were expressed in a letter to Shelley Mary had written asking her if she could give Charles Clairmont any introductions at Vienna, where he had now gone to seek his fortune as a teacher of languages; and also begging for such assistance as she might be able to lend in the matter of obtaining access to historical documents or other MS. bearing on the subjects of Mary's projected novel.

Mrs. Mason to Shelley.

My dear Sir — I deferred answering your letter till this post in hopes of being able to send some recommendations for your friend at Vienna, in which I have been disappointed; and I have now also a letter from my dear Mary; so I will answer both together. It gives me great pleasure to hear such a good account of the little boy and his mother.... I am sorry to perceive that your visit to Pisa will be so much retarded; but I admire Mary's courage and industry. I sincerely regret that it is not in my power to be of service to her in this undertaking.... All I can say is, that when you have got all you can there (where I suppose the manuscript documents are chiefly to be found) and that you come to this place, I have scarcely any doubt of being able to obtain for you many books on the subject which interests you. Probably everything in print which relates to it is as easy to be had here as at Florence.... I am very sorry indeed to think that Mr. Godwin's affairs are in such a bad way, and think he would be much happier if he had nothing to do with trade; but I am afraid he would not be comfortable out of England. You who are young do not mind the thousand little wants that men of his age are not habituated to; and I, who have been so many years a vagabond on the face of the earth, have long since forgotten them; but I have seen people of my age much discomposed at the absence of long-accustomed trifles; and though philosophy supports in great matters, it seldom vanquishes the small everydayisms of life. I say this that Mary may not urge her father too much to leave England. It may sound odd, but I can't help thinking that Mrs. Godwin would enjoy a tour in foreign countries more than he would. The physical inferiority of women sometimes teaches them to support or overlook little inconveniences better than men.

"I am very sorry," she writes to Mary in another letter, "to find you still suffer from low spirits. I was in hopes the little boy would have been the best remedy for that. Words of consolation are but empty sounds, for to time alone it belongs to wear out the tears of affliction. However, a woman who gives milk should make every exertion to be cheerful on account of the child she nourishes."

Whether the plan for Godwin's expatriation was ever seriously proposed to him or not, it was, at any rate, never carried out. But none the less for this did the Shelleys live in the shadow of his gloom, which co-operated with their own pecuniary strait, previously alluded to, and with the nipping effects of an unwontedly severe winter, to make life still difficult and dreary for them.

"Shelley Calderonised on the late weather," wrote Mary to Mrs. Gisborne; "he called it an epic of rain with an episode of frost, and a few similes concerning fine weather. We have heard from England, although not from the Bankers; but Peacock's letter renders the affair darker than ever. Ah! my dear friend, you, in your slow and sure way of proceeding, ought hardly to have united yourself to our eccentric star. I am afraid that you will repent it, and it grieves us both more than you can imagine that all should have gone so ill; but I think we may rest assured that this is delay, and not loss; it can be nothing else. I write in haste — a carriage at the door to take me out, and *Percy* asleep on my knee. Adieu. Charles is at Vienna by this time."...

They had intended remaining six months at Florence, but the place suited Shelley so ill that they took advantage of the first favourable change in the weather, at the end of January, to remove to Pisa, where the climate was milder, and where they now had pleasant friends in the Masons at "Casa Silva." They wished, too, to consult the celebrated Italian surgeon, Vaccà, on the subject of Shelley's health. Vaccà's advice took the shape of an earnest exhortation to him to abstain from drugs and remedies, to live a healthy life, and to leave his complaint, as far as possible, to nature. And, though he continued liable to attacks of pain and illness, and on one occasion had a severe nervous attack, the climate of Pisa proved in the end more suitable to him than any other, and for more than two years he remained there or in the immediate neighbourhood. He and Mary were never more industrious than at this time; reading extensively, and working together on a translation of Spinoza they had begun at Florence, and which occupied them, at intervals, for many months. Little Percy, a most healthy and satisfactory infant, had in March an attack of measles, but so slight as to cause no anxiety. Once, however, during the summer they had a fright about him, when an unusually alarming letter from her father upset Mary so much as to cause in her nursling, through her, symptoms of an illness similar to that which had destroyed little Clara. On this occasion she authorised Shelley, at his earnest request, to intercept future letters of the kind, an authority of which he had to avail himself at no distant date, telling

Godwin that his domestic peace, Mary's health and happiness, and his child's life, could no longer be entirely at his mercy.

No wonder that his own nervous ailments kept their hold of him. And to make matters better for him and for Mary, Paolo, the rascally Italian servant whom they had dismissed at Naples, now concocted a plot for extorting money from Shelley by accusing him of frightful crimes. Legal aid had to be called in to silence him. To this end they employed an attorney of Leghorn, named Del Rosso, and, for convenience of communication, they occupied for a few weeks Casa Ricci, the Gisbornes' house there, the owners being absent in England. Shelley made Henry Reveley's workshop his study. Hence he addressed his poetical "Letter to Maria Gisborne," and here too it was that "on a beautiful summer evening while wandering among the lanes, whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fireflies (they) heard the carolling of the skylark, which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems."

If external surroundings could have made them happy they might have been so now, but Shelley, though in better health, was very nervous. Paolo's scandal and the legal affair embittered his life, to an extent difficult indeed to estimate, for it is certain that for some one else's sake, though *whose* sake has never transpired, he had accepted when at Naples responsibilities at once delicate and compromising. Paolo had knowledge of the matter, and used this knowledge partly to revenge himself on Shelley for dismissing him from his service, partly to try and extort money from him by intimidation. The Shelleys hoped they had "crushed him" with Del Rosso's help, but they could not be certain, because, as Mary wrote to Miss Curran, they "could only guess at his accomplices." With Shelley in a state of extreme nervous irritability, with Mary deprived of repose by her anguish on her father's account and her feverish anxiety to help him, with Clare unsettled and miserable about Allegra, venting her misery by writing to Byron letters unreasonable and provoking, though excusable, and then regretting having sent them, they were not likely to be the most cheerful or harmonious of trios.

The weather became intolerably hot by the end of August, and they migrated to Casa Prinni, at the Baths of S. Giuliano di Pisa. The beauty of this place, and the delightful climate, refreshed and invigorated them all. They spent two or three days in seeing Lucca and the country around, when

Shelley wrote the *Witch of Atlas*. Exquisite poem as it is, it was, in Mary's mood of the moment, a disappointment to her. Ever since the *Cenci* she had been strongly impressed with the conviction that if he could but write on subjects of universal *human* interest, instead of indulging in those airy creations of fancy which demand in the reader a sympathetic, but rare, quality of imagination, he would put himself more in touch with his contemporaries, who so greatly misunderstood him, and that, once he had elicited a responsive feeling in other men, this would be a source of profound happiness and of fresh and healthy inspiration to himself. "I still think I was right," she says, woman-like, in the *Notes to the Poems of 1820*, written long after Shelley's death. So from one point of view she undoubtedly was, but there are some things which cannot be constrained. Shelley was Shelley, and at the moment when he was moved to write a poem like the *Witch of Atlas*, it was useless to wish that it had been something quite different.

His next poem was to be inspired by a human subject, and perhaps then poor Mary would have preferred a second Witch of Atlas.

CHAPTER XIII

September 1820-August 1821

The baths were of great use to Shelley in allaying his nervous irritability. Such an improvement in him could not be without a corresponding beneficial effect on Mary. In the study of Greek, which she had begun with him at Leghorn, she found a new and wellnigh inexhaustible fund of intellectual pleasure. Their life, though very quiet, was somewhat more varied than it had been at Leghorn, partly owing to their being within easy reach of Pisa and of their friends at Casa Silva.

The Gisbornes had returned from England, and, during a short absence of Clare's, Mary tried, but ineffectually, to persuade Mrs. Gisborne to come and occupy her room for a time. Some circumstance had arisen which led shortly after to a misunderstanding between the two families, soon over, but painful while it lasted. It was probably connected with the abandonment of the projected steamboat; Henry Reveley, while in England, having changed his mind and reconsidered his future plans.

In October a curiously wet season set in.

Journal, Wednesday, October 18. — Rain till 1 o'clock. At sunset the arch of cloud over the west clears away; a few black islands float in the serene; the moon rises; the clouds spot the sky, but the depth of heaven is clear. The nights are uncommonly warm. Write. Shelley reads *Hyperion* aloud. Read Greek.

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude;
The verse that would invest them melts away
Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day.
How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,
Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl.

Friday, October 20. — Shelley goes to Florence. Write. Read Greek. Wind N.W., but more cloudy than yesterday, yet sometimes the sun shines out; the wind high. Read Villani.

Saturday, October 21. — Rain in the night and morning; very cloudy; not an air stirring; the leaves of the trees quite still. After a showery morning it clears up somewhat, and the sun shines. Read Villani, and ride to Pisa.

Sunday, October 22. — Rainy night and rainy morning; as bad weather as is possible in Italy. A little patience and we shall have St. Martin's summer. At sunset the arch of clear sky appears where it sets, becoming larger and larger, until at 7 o'clock the dark clouds are alone over Monte Nero; Venus shines bright in the clear azure, and the trunks of the trees are tinged with the silvery light of the rising moon. Write, and read Villani. Shelley returns with Medwin. Read *Sismondi*.

Of Tom Medwin, Shelley's cousin and great admirer, who now for the first time appeared on the scene, they were to see, if anything, more than they wished.

He was a lieutenant on half-pay, late of the 8th Dragoons; much addicted to literature, and with no mean opinion of his own powers in that line.

Journal, Tuesday, October 24. — Rainy night and morning; it does not rain in the afternoon. Shelley and Medwin go to Pisa. Walk; write.

Wednesday, October 25. — Rain all night. The banks of the Serchio break, and by dark all the baths are overflowed. Water four feet deep in our house. "The weather fine."

This flood brought their stay at the Baths to a sudden end. As soon as they could get lodgings they returned to Pisa. Here, not long after, Medwin fell ill, and was six weeks invalided in their house. They showed him the greatest kindness; Shelley nursing him like a brother. His society was, for a time, a tolerably pleasant change; he knew Spanish, and read with Shelley a great deal in that language, but he had no depth or breadth of mind, and his literary vanity and egotism made him at last what Mary Shelley described as a *seccatura*, for which the nearest English equivalent is, a bore.

Journal, Sunday, November 12. — Percy's birthday. A divine day; sunny and cloudless; somewhat cold in the evening. It would be pleasant enough living in Pisa if one had a carriage and could escape from one's house to the country without mingling with the inhabitants, but the Pisans and the Scolari, in short, the whole population, are such that it would sound strange to an English person if I attempted to express what I feel concerning them — crawling and crab-like through their sapping streets. Read *Corinne*. Write.

Monday, November 13. — Finish *Corinne*. Write. My eyes keep me from all study; this is very provoking.

Tuesday, November 14. — Write. Read Homer, Targione, and Spanish. A rainy day. Shelley reads Calderon.

Thursday, November 23. — Write. Read Greek and Spanish. Medwin ill. Play at chess.

Friday, November 24. — Read Greek, Villani, and Spanish with M.... Pacchiani in the evening. A rainy and cloudy day.

Friday, December 1. — Read Greek, *Don Quixote*, Calderon, and Villani. Pacchiani comes in the evening. Visit La Viviani. Walk. Sgricci is introduced. Go to a *funzione* on the death of a student.

Saturday, December 2. — Write an Italian letter to Hunt. Read *Œdipus*, *Don Quixote*, and Calderon. Pacchiani and a Greek prince call — Prince Mavrocordato.

In these few entries occur four new and remarkable names. Pacchiani, who had been, if he was not still, a university professor, but who was none the less an adventurer and an impostor; in orders, moreover, which only served as a cloak for his hypocrisy; clever withal, and eloquent; well knowing where, and how, to ingratiate himself. He amused, but did not please the Shelleys. He was, however, one of those people who know everybody, and through him they made several acquaintances; among them the celebrated Improvisatore, Sgricci, and the young Greek statesman and patriot, Prince Alexander Mavrocordato. With the improvisations of Sgricci, his eloquence, his *entrain*, both Mary and Clare were fairly carried away with excitement. Older, experienced folk looked with a more critical eye on his performances, but to these English girls the exhibition was an absolute novelty, and seemed inspired. Sgricci was during this winter a frequent visitor at “Casa Galetti.”

Prince Mavrocordato proved deeply interesting, both to Mary and Shelley. He “was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen,” and in the revolution which, shortly afterwards, broke out there, he was to play an important part, as one of the foremost of modern Greek statesmen. To him, at a somewhat later date, was dedicated Shelley’s lyrical drama of *Hellas*; “as an imperfect token of admiration, sympathy, and friendship.”

This new acquaintance came to Mary just when her interest in the Greek language and literature was most keen. Before long the prince had volunteered to help her in her studies, and came often to give her Greek lessons, receiving instruction in English in return.

"Do you not envy my luck," she wrote to Mrs. Gisborne, "that having begun Greek, an amiable, young, agreeable, and learned Greek prince comes every morning to give me a lesson of an hour and a half. This is the result of an acquaintance with Pacchiani. So you see, even the Devil has his use."

The acquaintance with Pacchiani had already had another and a yet more memorable result, which affected Mary none the less that it did so indirectly. Through him they had come to know Emilia Viviani, the noble and beautiful Italian girl, immured by her father in a convent at Pisa until such time as a husband could be found for her who would take a wife without a dowry. Shelley's acquaintance with Emilia was an episode, which at one time looked like an era, in his existence. An era in his poetry it undoubtedly was, since it is to her that the *Epipsychidion* is addressed.

Mary and Clare were the first to see the lovely captive, and were struck with astonishment and admiration. But on Shelley the impression she made was overwhelming, and took possession of his whole nature. Her extraordinary beauty and grace, her powers of mind and conversation, warmed by that glow of genius so exclusively southern, another variety of which had captivated them all in Sgricci, and which to northern minds seems something phenomenal and inspired, — these were enough to subdue any man, and, when added to the halo of interest shed around her by her misfortunes and her misery, made her, to Shelley, irresistible.

All his sentiments, when aroused, were passions; he pitied, he sympathised, he admired and venerated passionately; he scorned, hated, and condemned passionately too. But he never was swayed by any love that did not excite his imagination: his attachments were ever in proportion to the power of idealisation evoked in him by their objects. And never, surely, was there a subject for idealisation like Emilia; the Spirit of Intellectual Beauty in the form of a goddess; the captive maiden waiting for her Deliverer; the perfect embodiment of immortal Truth and Loveliness, held in chains by the powers of cruelty, tyranny, and hypocrisy.

She was no goddess, poor Emilia, as indeed he soon found out; only a lovely young creature of vivid intelligence and a temperament in which Italian ardour was mingled with Italian subtlety; every germ of sentiment magnified and intensified in outward effect by fervour of manner and natural eloquence; the very reverse of human nature in the north, where depth of feeling is apt to be in proportion to its inveterate dislike of discovery, where warmth can rarely shake off self-consciousness, and where many of the best men and women are so much afraid of seeming a whit better than they really are, that they take pains to appear worse. Rightly balanced, the whole sum of Emilia's gifts and graces would have weighed little against Mary's nobleness of heart and unselfish devotion; her talents might not even have borne serious comparison with Clare's vivacious intellect. But to Shelley, haunted by a vision of perfection, and ever apt to recognise in a mortal image "the likeness of that which is, perhaps, eternal," she seemed a revelation, and, like all revelations, supreme, unique, superseding for the time every other possibility. It was a brief madness, a trance of inspiration, and its duration was counted only by days. They met for the first time early in December. By the 10th she was corresponding with him as her *diletto fratello*. Before the month was over *Epipsychidion* had been written.

Before the middle of January he could write of her —

My conception of Emilia's talents augments every day. Her moral nature is fine, but not above circumstances; yet I think her tender and true, which is always something. How many are only one of these things at a time!...

There is no reason that you should fear any admixture of that which you call *love*....

This was written to Clare. She had very quickly become intimate and confidential with Emilia, and estimated her to a nicety at her real worth, admiring her without idealising her or caring to do so. She knew Shelley pretty intimately too, and, being personally unconcerned in the matter, could afford at once to be sympathetic and to speak her mind fearlessly; the consequence being that Shelley was unconstrained in communication with her.

That *Mary* should be his most sympathetic confidant at this juncture was not in the nature of things. She, too, had begun by idealising Emilia, but her affection and enthusiastic admiration were soon outdone and might well have been quenched by Shelley's rapt devotion. She did not misunderstand him, she knew him too well for that, but the better she understood him the less it was possible for her to feel with him; nor could it have been otherwise unless she had been really as cold as she sometimes appeared. Loyal herself, she never doubted Shelley's loyalty, but she suffered, though she did not choose to show it: her love, like a woman's, — perhaps even more than most women's — was exclusive; Shelley's, like a man's, — like many of the best of men's, — inclusive.

She did not allow her feelings to interfere with her actions. She continued to show all possible sympathy and kindness to Emilia, who in return would style her her dearest, loveliest friend and sister. No wonder, however, if at times Mary could not quite overcome a slight constraint of manner, or if this was increased when her dearest sister, with sweet unconsciousness, would openly probe the wound her pride would fain have hidden from herself; when Emilia, for instance, wrote to Shelley —

Mary does not write to me. Is it possible that she loves me less than the others do? I should indeed be inconsolable at that.

Or to be informed in a letter to herself that this constraint of manner had been talked over by Emilia with Shelley, who had assured her that Mary's apparent coldness was only "the ash which covered an affectionate heart."

He was right, indeed, and his words were the faithful echo of his own true heart. He might have added, of himself, that his transient enthusiasms resembled the soaring blaze of sparks struck by a hammer from a glowing mass of molten metal.

But, in everyday prose, the situation was a trying one for Mary, and surely no wife of two and twenty could have met it more bravely and simply than she did.

"It is grievous," she wrote to Leigh Hunt, "to see this beautiful girl wearing out the best years of her life in an odious convent, where both mind and body are sick from want of the appropriate exercise for each. I think she has great talent, if not genius; or if not an internal fountain, how could she have acquired the mastery she has of her own language, which she writes so beautifully, or those ideas which lift her so far above the rest of the Italians? She has not studied much, and now, hopeless from a five years' confinement, everything disgusts her, and she looks with hatred and distaste even on the alleviations of her situation. Her only hope is in a marriage which her parents tell her is concluded, although she has never seen the person intended for her. Nor do I think the change of situation will be much for the better, for he is a younger brother, and will live in the house with his mother, who they say is *molto seccante*. Yet she may then have the free use of her limbs; she may then be able to walk out among the fields, vineyards, and woods of her country, and see the mountains and the sky, and not as now, a dozen steps to the right, and then back to the left another dozen, which is the longest walk her convent garden affords, and that, you may be sure, she is very seldom tempted to take."

By the middle of February Shelley was sending his poem for publication, speaking of it as the production of "a part of himself already dead." He continued, however, to take an almost painful interest in Emilia's fate; she, poor girl, though not the sublime creature he had thought her, was infinitely to be pitied. Before their acquaintance ended, she was turning it to practical account, after the fashion of most of Shelley's friends, by begging for and obtaining considerable sums of money.

If Mary then indulged in a little retrospective sarcasm to her friend, Mrs. Gisborne, it is hardly wonderful. Indeed, later allusions are not wanting to show that this time was felt by her to be one of annoyance and bitterness.

Two circumstances were in her favour. She was well, and, therefore, physically able to look at things in their true light; and, during a great part of the time, Clare was away. In the previous October, during their stay at the Baths, she had at last resolved on trying to make out some sort of life for herself, and had taken a situation as governess in a Florentine family. She had come back to the Shelleys for the month of December (when it was that she became acquainted with Emilia Vivani), but had returned to Florence at Christmas.

She had been persuaded to this step by the judicious Mrs. Mason, who had soon perceived the strained relations existing between Mary and Clare, and had seen, too, that the disunion was only the natural and inevitable result of circumstances. It was not only that the two girls were of opposite and jarring temperament; there was also the fact that half the suspicious mistrust with Shelley was regarded by those who did not personally know him, and the shadow of which rested on Mary too, was caused by Clare's continued presence among them. As things were now, it might have passed without remark, but for the scandalous reports which dated back to the Marlow days, and which had recently been revived by the slanders of Paolo, although the extent of these slanders had not yet transpired. Shelley had been alive enough to the danger at one time, but had now got accustomed and indifferent to it. He had a great affection and a great compassion for Clare; her vivacity enlivened him; he said himself that he liked her although she teased him, and he certainly missed her teasing when she was away. But Mary, to whom Clare's perpetual society was neither a solace nor a change, and who, as the mother of children, could no longer look at things from a purely egotistic point of view, must have felt it positively unjust and wrong to allow their father's reputation to be sacrificed — to say nothing of her own — to what was in no wise a necessity. Shelley loved solitude — a mitigated solitude that is; — he certainly did not pine for general society. Yet many of his letters bear unmistakable evidence to the pain and resentment he felt at being universally shunned by his own countrymen, as if he were an enemy of the human race. But Mary, a woman, and only twenty-two, must have been self-sufficient indeed if, with all her mental resources, she had not required the renovation of change and contrast and varied intercourse, to keep her mind and spirit fresh and bright, and to fit her for being a companion and a resource to Shelley. That she and he were condemned to protracted isolation was partly due to Clare, and when Mary was weak and dejected, her consciousness of this became painful, and her feeling towards the sprightly, restless Miss Clairmont was touched with positive antipathy. Shelley, considering Clare the weaker party, supported her, in the main, and certainly showed no desire to have her away. He might have seen that to impose her presence on Mary in such circumstances was, in fact, as great a piece of tyranny as he had suffered from when Eliza Westbrook was imposed on him. But of this he was, and he remained, perfectly unconscious. Clare ought to have retired from the field, but her dependent condition, and her wretched anxiety about Allegra, were her excuse for clinging to the only friends she had.

All this was evident to Mrs. Mason, and it was soon shown that she had judged rightly, as the relations between Mary and Clare became cordial and natural once they were relieved from the intolerable friction of daily companionship.

During this time of excitement and unrest one new acquaintance had, however, begun, which circumstances were to develop into a close and intimate companionship.

In January there had arrived at Pisa a young couple of the name of Williams; mainly attracted by the desire to see and to know Shelley, of whose gifts and virtues and sufferings they had heard much from Tom Medwin, their neighbour in Switzerland the year before. Lieutenant Edward Elliker Williams had been, first, in the Navy, then in the Army; had met his wife in India, and, returning with her to England, had sold his commission and retired on half-pay. He was young, of a frank straightforward disposition and most amiable temper, modest and unpretentious, with some literary taste, and no strong prejudices. Jane Williams was young and pretty, gentle and graceful, neither very cultivated nor particularly clever, but with a comfortable absence of angles in her disposition, and an abundance of that feminine tact which prevents intellectual shortcomings from being painfully felt, and which is, in its way, a manifestation of genius. Not an uncommon type of woman, but quite new in the Shelleys' experience. At first they thought her rather wanting in animation, and Shelley was conscious of her lack of literary refinement, but these were more and more compensated for, as time went on, by her natural grace and her taste for music. "Ned" was something of an artist, and Mary Shelley sat more than once to him for her portrait. There was, in short, no lack of subjects in common, and the two young couples found a mutual pleasure in each other's society which increased in measure as they became better acquainted.

In March poor Clare received with bitter grief the intelligence that her child had been placed by Byron in a convent, at Bagnacavallo, not far from Ravenna, where he now lived. Under the sway of the Countess Guiccioli, whose father and brother were domesticated in his house, he was leading what, in comparison with his Venetian existence, was a life of respectability and virtue. His action with regard to Allegra was considered by the Shelleys as, probably, inevitable in the circumstances, but to Clare it was a terrible blow. She felt more hopelessly separated from her child than ever, and she had seen enough of Italian convent education and its results to convince her that it meant moral and intellectual degradation and death. Her despairing representations to this effect were, of course, unanswered by Byron, who contented himself with a Mephistophelian sneer in showing her letter to the Hoppners.

With the true "malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison, transforming all they touch to the malignity of their own natures," he had no hesitation in giving credit to the reports about Clare's life in the Shelleys' family, nor in openly implying his own belief in their probable truth.

But for this, and for one great alarm caused by the sudden and unaccountable stoppage of Shelley's income (through a mistake which happily was discovered and speedily rectified by his good friend, Horace Smith), the spring was, for Mary, peaceful and bright. She was assiduous in her Greek studies, and keenly interested in the contemporary European politics of that stirring time; as full of sympathy as Shelley himself could be with the numerous insurrectionary outbreaks in favour of liberty. And when the revolution in Greece broke out, and one bright April morning Prince Mavrocordato rushed in to announce to her the proclamation of Prince Hypsilantes, her elation and joy almost equalled his own.

In companionship with the Williams', aided and abetted by Henry Reveley, Shelley's old passion for boating revived. In the little ten-foot long boat procured for him for a few pauls, and then fitted up by Mr. Reveley, they performed many a voyage, on the Arno, on the canal between Pisa and Leghorn, and even on the sea. Their first trip was marked by an accident — Williams contriving to overturn the boat. Nothing daunted, Shelley declared next day that his ducking had added fire to, instead of quenching, the nautical ardour which produced it, and that he considered it a good omen to any enterprise that it began in evil, as making it more likely that it would end in good.

All these events are touched on in the few specimen extracts from Mary's journal and letters which follow —

Wednesday, January 31. — Read Greek. Call on Emilia Viviani. Shelley reads the *Vita Nuova* aloud to me in the evening.

Friday, February 2. — Read Greek. Write. Emilia Viviani walks out with Shelley. The Opera, with the Williams' (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*).

Tuesday, February 6. — Read Greek. Sit to Williams. Call on Emilia Viviani. Prince Mavrocordato in the evening. A long metaphysical argument.

Wednesday, February 7. — Read Greek. Sit to Williams. In the evening the Williams', Prince Mavrocordato, and Mr. Taafe.

Monday, February 12. — Read Greek (no lesson). Finish the *Vita Nuova*. In the afternoon call on Emilia Viviani. Walk. Mr. Taafe calls.

Thursday, February 27. — Read Greek. The Williams to dine with us. Walk with them. Il Diavolo Pacchiani calls. Shelley reads “The Ancient Mariner” aloud.

Saturday, March 4. — Read Greek (no lesson). Walk with the Williams’. Read Horace with Shelley in the evening. A delightful day.

Sunday, March 5. — Read Greek. Write letters. The Williams’ to dine with us. Walk with them. Williams relates his history. They spend the evening with us, with Prince Mavrocordato and Mr. Taafe.

Thursday, March 8. — Read Greek (no lesson). Call on Emilia Viviani. E. Williams calls. Shelley reads *The Case is Altered* of Ben Jonson aloud in the evening. A mizzling day and rainy night.... March winds and rains are begun, the last puff of winter’s breath, — the eldest tears of a coming spring; she ever comes in weeping and goes out smiling.

Monday, March 12. — Read Greek (no lesson). Finish the *Defence of Poetry*. Copy for Shelley; he reads to me the *Tale of a Tub*. A delightful day after a misty morning.

Wednesday, March 14. — Read Greek (no lesson). Copy for Shelley. Walk with Williams. Prince Mavrocordato in the evening. I have an interesting conversation with him concerning Greece. The second bulletin of the Austrians published. A sirocco, but a pleasant evening,

Friday, March 16. — Read Greek. Copy for Shelley. Walk with Williams. Mrs. Williams confined. News of the Revolution of Piedmont, and the taking of the citadel of Candia by the Greeks. A beautiful day, but not hot.

Sunday, March 18. — Read Greek. Copy for Shelley. A sirocco and mizzle. Bad news from Naples. Walk with Williams. Prince Mavrocordato in the evening.

Monday, March 26. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato. Finish the *Antigone*. A mizzling day. Spend the evening at the Williams’.

Wednesday, March 28. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato. Call on Emilia Viviani. Walk with Williams. Mr. Taafe in the evening. A fine day, though changeful as to clouds and wind. The State of Massa declares the Constitution. The Piedmontese troops are at Sarzana.

Sunday, April 1. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato calls with news about Greece. He is as gay as a caged eagle just free. Call on Emilia Viviani. Walk with Williams; he spends the evening with us.

Monday, April 2. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato calls with the proclamation of Ipsilanti. Write to him. Ride with Shelley into the Cascini. A divine day, with a north-west wind. The theatre in the evening. Tachinardi.

Wednesday, April 11. — Read Greek, and *Osservatore Fiorentino*. A letter that overturns us. Walk with Shelley. In the evening Williams and Alex. Mavrocordato.

Friday, April 13. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato calls. *Osservatore Fiorentino*. Walk with the Williams'. Shelley at Casa Silva in the evening. An explanation of our difficulty.

Monday, April 16. — Write. Targioni. Read Greek. Mrs. Williams to dinner. In the evening Mr. Taafe. A wet morning: in the afternoon a fierce maestrale. Shelley, Williams, and Henry Reveley try to come up the canal to Pisa; miss their way, are capsized, and sleep at a contadino's.

Tuesday, April 24. — Read Greek. Alex. Mavrocordato. Hume. Villani. Walk with the Williams'. Alex. M. calls in the evening, with good news from Greece. The Morea free.

They now migrated once more to the beautiful neighbourhood of the Baths of San Giuliano di Pisa; the Williams' established themselves at Pugnano, only four miles off: the canal fed by the Serchio ran between the two places, and the little boat was in constant requisition.

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast,
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The canal which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the *cicale*, at noonday, kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm, situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods and overlooking a wide extent of country; or of settling still further in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul, oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Journal, Thursday, May 3. — Read Villani. Go out in boat; call on Emilia Viviani. Walk with Shelley. In the evening Alex. Mavrocordato, Henry Reveley, Dancelli, and Mr. Taafe.

Friday, May 4. — Read Greek. (Alex. M.) Read Villani. Shelley goes to Leghorn by sea with Henry Reveley.

Tuesday, May 8. — Packing. Read Greek (Alex. Mavrocordato). Shelley goes to Leghorn. In the evening walk with Alex. M. to Pugnano. See the Williams; return to the Baths. Shelley and Henry Reveley come. The weather quite April; rain and sunshine, and by no means warm.

Saturday, June 23. — Abominably cold weather — rain, wind, and cloud — quite an Italian November or a Scotch May. Shelley and Williams go to Leghorn. Write. Read and finish Malthus. Begin the answer. Jane (Williams) spends the day here, and Edward returns in the evening. Read Greek.

Sunday, June 24. — Write. Read the *Answer to Malthus*. Finish it. Shelley at Leghorn.

Monday, June 25. — Little babe not well. Shelley returns. The Williams call. Read old plays. Vaccà calls.

Tuesday, June 26. — Babe well. Write. Read Greek. Shelley not well. Mr. Taafe and Granger dine with us. Walk with Shelley. Vaccà calls. Alex. Mavrocordato sails.

Thursday, June 28. — Write. Read Greek. Read Mackenzie’s works. Go to Pugnano in the boat. The warmest day this month. Fireflies in the evening.

They were near enough to Pisa to go over there from time to time to see Emilia and other friends, and for Prince Mavrocordato to come frequently and give them the latest political news: the Greek lessons had been voluntarily abjured by Mary when it seemed probable that the Prince might be summoned at any moment to play an active part in the affairs of his country, as actually happened in June. Shelley was still tormented by the pain in his side, but his health and spirits were insensibly improving, as he himself afterwards admitted. He was occupied in writing *Hellas*; his elegy on Keats's death, *Adonais* also belongs to this time. Ned Williams, infected by the surrounding atmosphere of literature, had tried his 'prentice hand on a drama. In the words of his own journal —

Went in the summer to Pugnano — passed the first three months in writing a play entitled *The Promise, or a year, a month, and a day*. S. tells me if they accept it he has great hopes of its success before an audience, and his hopes always enliven mine.

Mary was straining every nerve to finish *Valperga*, in the hope of being able to send it to England by the Gisbornes, who were preparing to leave Italy, — a hope, however, which was not fulfilled.

Mary to Mrs. Gisborne.

Baths of S. Giuliano,
30th June 1821.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — Well, how do you get on? Mr. Gisborne says nothing of that in the note which he wrote yesterday, and it is that in which I am most interested.

I pity you exceedingly in all the disagreeable details to which you are obliged to sacrifice your time and attention. I can conceive no employment more tedious; but now I hope it is nearly over, and that as the fruit of its conclusion you will soon come to see us. Shelley is far from well; he suffers from his side and nervous irritation. The day on which he returned from Leghorn he found little Percy ill of a fever produced by teething. He got well the next day, but it was so strong while it lasted that it frightened us greatly. You know how much reason we have to fear the deceitful appearance of perfect health. You see that this, your last summer in Italy, is manufactured on purpose to accustom you to the English seasons.

It is warmer now, but we still enjoy the delight of cloudy skies. The "Creator" has not yet made himself heard. I get on with my occupation, and hope to finish the rough transcript this month. I shall then give about a month to corrections, and then I shall transcribe it. It has indeed been a child of mighty slow growth since I first thought of it in our library at Marlow. I then wanted the body in which I might embody my spirit. The materials for this I found at Naples, but I wanted other books. Nor did I begin it till a year afterwards at Pisa; it was again suspended during our stay at your house, and continued again at the Baths. All the winter I did not touch it, but now it is in a state of great forwardness, since I am at page 71 of the third volume. It has indeed been a work of some labour, since I have read and consulted a great many books. I shall be very glad to read the first volume to you, that you may give me your opinion as to the conduct and interest of the story. June is now at its last gasp. You talked of going in August, I hope therefore that we may soon expect you. Have you heard anything concerning the inhabitants of Skinner Street? It is now many months since I received a letter, and I begin to grow alarmed. Adieu. — Ever sincerely yours,

Mary W. S.

On the 26th of July the Gisbornes came to pay their friends a short farewell visit; on the 29th they started for England; Shelley going with them as far as Florence, where he and Mary thought again of settling for the winter, and where he wished to make inquiries about houses. During his few days' absence the Williams' were almost constantly with Mary. Edward Williams was busy painting a portrait of her in miniature, intended by her as a surprise for Shelley on his birthday, the 4th of August. But when that day arrived Shelley was unavoidably absent. On his return to the Baths he had found a letter from Lord Byron, with a pressing invitation to visit him at Ravenna, whence Byron was on the point of departing to join Countess Guiccioli and her family, who had been exiled from the Roman States for Carbonarism, and who, for the present, had taken refuge at Florence.

Shelley's thoughts turned at once, as they could not but do, to poor little Allegra, in her convent of Bagnacavallo. What was to become of her? Where would or could she be sent? or was she to be conveniently forgotten and left behind? He was off next day, the 3d; paid a flying visit to Clare, who was staying for her health at Leghorn, and arrived at Ravenna on the 6th.

The miniature was finished and ready for him on his birthday. Mary, alone on that anniversary, was fain to look back over the past eventful seven years, — their joys, their sorrows, their many changes. Not long before, she had said, in a letter to Clare, “One is not gay, at least I am not, but peaceful, and at peace with all the world.” The same tone characterises the entry in her journal for 4th August.

Shelley’s birthday. Seven years are now gone; what changes! what a life! We now appear tranquil, yet who knows what wind —— but I will not prognosticate evil; we have had enough of it. When Shelley came to Italy I said, all is well, if it were permanent; it was more passing than an Italian twilight. I now say the same. May it be a Polar day, yet that, too, has an end.

CHAPTER XIV

August-November 1821

From Bologna Shelley wrote to Mary an amusing account of his journey, so far. But this letter was speedily followed by another, written within a few hours of his arrival at Ravenna; a letter, this second one, to make Mary's blood run cold, although it is expressed with all the calmness and temperance that Shelley could command.

Ravenna, *7th August 1821*.

My dearest Mary — I arrived last night at 10 o'clock, and sate up talking with Lord Byron until 5 this morning. I then went to sleep, and now awake at 11, and having despatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until 12, when the post departs, to you.

Lord Byron is very well, and was delighted to see me. He has, in fact, completely recovered his health, and lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of *liaison* with Contessa Guiccioli, who is now at Florence, and seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. She is waiting there until something shall be decided as to their emigration to Switzerland or stay in Italy, which is yet undetermined on either side. She was compelled to escape from the Papal territory in great haste, as measures had already been taken to place her in a convent, where she would have been unrelentingly confined for life. The oppression of the marriage contract, as existing in the laws and opinions of Italy, though less frequently exercised, is far severer than that of England. I tremble to think of what poor Emilia is destined to.

Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself in Venice; his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food; he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished, but for this attachment, which has reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself, from carelessness rather than taste. Poor fellow! he is now quite well, and immersed in politics and literature. He has given me a number of the most interesting details on the former subject, but we will not speak of them in a letter. Fletcher is here, and as if, like a shadow, he waxed and waned with the substance of his master, Fletcher also has recovered his good looks, and from amidst the unseasonable gray hairs a fresh harvest of flaxen locks has put forth.

We talked a great deal of poetry and such matters last night, and, as usual, differed, and I think more than ever. He affects to patronise a system of criticism fit for the production of mediocrity, and, although all his fine poems and passages have been produced in defiance of this system, yet I recognise the pernicious effects of it in the *Doge of Venice*, and it will cramp and limit his future efforts, however great they may be, unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather, he himself read them to me, and gave me the plan of the whole.

Allegra, he says, is grown very beautiful, but he complains that her temper is violent and imperious. He has no intention of leaving her in Italy; indeed, the thing is too improper in itself not to carry condemnation along with it. Contessa Guiccioli, he says, is very fond of her; indeed, I cannot see why she should not take care of it, if she is to live as his ostensible mistress. All this I shall know more of soon.

Lord Byron has also told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly, because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice, for which I am at a loss to account. When I hear such things my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding-place, where the countenance of man may never meet me more. It seems that *Elise*, actuated either by some inconceivable malice for our dismissing her, or bribed by my enemies, has persuaded the Hoppners of a story so monstrous and incredible that they must have been prone to believe any evil to have believed such assertions upon such evidence. Mr. Hoppner wrote to Lord Byron to state this story as the reason why he declined any further communications with us, and why he advised him to do the same. Elise says that Claire was my mistress; that is very well, and so far there is nothing new; all the world has heard so much, and people may believe or not believe as they think good. She then proceeds further to say that Claire was with child by me; that I gave her the most violent medicine to procure abortion; that this not succeeding she was brought to bed, and that I immediately tore the child from her and sent it to the Foundling Hospital, — I quote Mr. Hoppner's words, — and this is stated to have taken place in the winter after we left Este. In addition, she says that both Claire and I treated you in the most shameful manner; that I neglected and beat you, and that Claire never let a day pass without offering you insults of the most violent kind, in which she was abetted by me.

As to what Reviews and the world say, I do not care a jot, but when persons who have known me are capable of conceiving of me — not that I have fallen into a great error, as would have been the living with Claire as my mistress — but that I have committed such unutterable crimes as destroying or abandoning a child, and that my own! Imagine my despair of good! Imagine how it is possible that one of so weak and sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men! *You* should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe and know, and can prove that it is false, stating the grounds and proof of your belief. I need not dictate what you should say, nor, I hope, inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge which you only can effectually rebut. If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. Lord Byron is not up. I do not know the Hoppners' address, and I am anxious not to lose a post.

P. B. S.

Mary's feelings on the perusal of this letter may be faintly imagined by those who read it now, and who know what manner of woman she actually was. They are expressed, as far as they could be expressed, in the letter which, in accordance with Shelley's desire, and while still smarting under the first shock of grief and profound indignation, she wrote off to Mrs. Hoppner, and enclosed in a note to Shelley himself.

Mary to Shelley.

My dear Shelley — Shocked beyond all measure as I was, I instantly wrote the enclosed. If the task be not too dreadful, pray copy it for me; I cannot.

Read that part of your letter that contains the accusation. I tried, but I could not write it. I think I could as soon have died. I send also Elise's last letter: enclose it or not, as you think best.

I wrote to you with far different feelings last night, beloved friend, our barque is indeed "tempest tost," but love me as you have ever done, and God preserve my child to me, and our enemies shall not be too much for us. Consider well if Florence be a fit residence for us. I love, I own, to face danger, but I would not be imprudent.

Pray get my letter to Mrs. Hoppner copied for a thousand reasons. Adieu, dearest! Take care of yourself — all yet is well. The shock for me is over, and I now despise the slander; but it must not pass uncontradicted. I sincerely thank Lord Byron for his kind unbelief. — Affectionately yours,

M. W. S.

Do not think me imprudent in mentioning E.'s illness at Naples. It is well to meet facts. They are as cunning as wicked. I have read over my letter; it is written in haste, but it were as well that the first burst of feeling should be expressed.

Pisa, *10th August 1821.*

My dear Mrs. Hoppner — After a silence of nearly two years I address you again, and most bitterly do I regret the occasion on which I now write. Pardon me that I do not write in French; you understand English well, and I am too much impressed to shackle myself in a foreign language; even in my own my thoughts far outrun my pen, so that I can hardly form the letters. I write to defend him to whom I have the happiness to be united, whom I love and esteem beyond all living creatures, from the foulest calumnies; and to you I write this, who were so kind, and to Mr. Hoppner, to both of whom I indulged the pleasing idea that I have every reason to feel gratitude. This is indeed a painful task. Shelley is at present on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna, and I received a letter from him to-day, containing accounts that make my hand tremble so much that I can hardly hold the pen. It tells me that Elise wrote to you, relating the most hideous stories against him, and that you have believed them. Before I speak of these falsehoods, permit me to say a few words concerning this miserable girl. You well know that she formed an attachment with Paolo when we proceeded to Rome, and at Naples their marriage was talked of. We all tried to dissuade her; we knew Paolo to be a rascal, and we thought so well of her. An accident led me to the knowledge that without marrying they had formed a connection. She was ill; we sent for a doctor, who said there was danger of a miscarriage, I would not throw the girl on the world without in some degree binding her to this man. We had them married at Sir R. A. Court's. She left us, turned Catholic at Rome, married him, and then went to Florence. After the disastrous death of my child we came to Tuscany. We have seen little of them, but we have had knowledge that Paolo has formed a scheme of extorting money from Shelley by false accusations. He has written him threatening letters, saying that he would be the ruin of him, etc. We placed them in the hands of a celebrated lawyer here, who has done what he can to silence him. Elise has never interfered in this, and indeed the other day I received a letter from her, entreating, with great professions of love, that I would send her money. I took no notice of this, but although I know her to be in evil hands, I would not believe that she was wicked enough to join in his plans without proof. And now I come to her accusations, and I must indeed summon all my courage whilst I transcribe them, for tears will force their way, and how can it be otherwise?

You know Shelley, you saw his face, and could you believe them? Believe them only on the testimony of a girl whom you despised? I had hoped that such a thing was impossible, and that although strangers might believe the calumnies that this man propagated, none who had ever seen my husband could for a moment credit them.

He says Claire was Shelley's mistress, that — upon my word I solemnly assure you that I cannot write the words. I send you a part of Shelley's letter that you may see what I am now about to refute, but I had rather die than copy anything so vilely, so wickedly false, so beyond all imagination fiendish.

But that you should believe it! That my beloved Shelley should stand thus slandered in your minds — he, the gentlest and most humane of creatures — is more painful to me, oh! far more painful than words can express. Need I say that the union between my husband and myself has ever been undisturbed? Love caused our first imprudence — love, which, improved by esteem, a perfect trust one in the other, a confidence and affection which, visited as we have been by severe calamities (have we not lost two children?), has increased daily and knows no bounds. I will add that Claire has been separated from us for about a year. She lives with a respectable German family at Florence. The reasons for this were obvious: her connection with us made her manifest as the Miss Clairmont, the mother of Allegra; besides we live much alone, she enters much into society there, and, solely occupied with the idea of the welfare of her child, she wished to appear such that she may not be thought in after times to be unworthy of fulfilling the maternal duties. You ought to have paused before you tried to convince the father of her child of such unheard-of atrocities on her part. If his generosity and knowledge of the world had not made him reject the slander with the ridicule it deserved, what irretrievable mischief you would have occasioned her. Those who know me well believe my simple word — it is not long ago that my father said in a letter to me that he had never known me utter a falsehood, — but you, easy as you have been to credit evil, who may be more deaf to truth — to you I swear by all that I hold sacred upon heaven and earth, by a vow which I should die to write if I affirmed a falsehood, — I swear by the life of my child, by my blessed, beloved child, that I know the accusations to be false. But I have said enough to convince you, and are you not convinced? Are not my words the words of truth? Repair, I conjure you, the evil you have done by retracting your confidence in one so vile as Elise, and by writing to me that you now reject as false every circumstance of her infamous tale.

You were kind to us, and I will never forget it; now I require justice. You must believe me, and do me, I solemnly entreat you, the justice to confess you do so.

Mary W. Shelley.

I send this letter to Shelley at Ravenna, that he may see it, for although I ought, the subject is too odious to me to copy it. I wish also that Lord Byron should see it; he gave no credit to the tale, but it is as well that he should see how entirely fabulous it is.

Shelley, meanwhile, never far from her in thought, and knowing only too well how acutely she would suffer from all this, was writing to her again.

Shelley to Mary.

My dearest Mary — I wrote to you yesterday, and I begin another letter to-day without knowing exactly when I can send it, as I am told the post only goes once a week. I daresay the subject of the latter half of my letter gave you pain, but it was necessary to look the affair in the face, and the only satisfactory answer to the calumny must be given by you, and could be given by you alone. This is evidently the source of the violent denunciations of the *Literary Gazette*, in themselves contemptible enough, and only to be regarded as effects which show us their cause, which, until we put off our mortal nature, we never despise — that is, the belief of persons who have known and seen you that you are guilty of crimes. A certain degree and a certain kind of infamy is to be borne, and, in fact, is the best compliment which an exalted nature can receive from a filthy world, of which it is its hell to be a part, but this sort of thing exceeds the measure, and even if it were only for the sake of our dear Percy, I would take some pains to suppress it. In fact it shall be suppressed, even if I am driven to the disagreeable necessity of prosecuting him before the Tuscan tribunals....

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Write to me at Florence, where I shall remain a day at least, and send me letters, or news of letters. How is my little darling? and how are you, and how do you get on with your book? Be severe in your corrections, and expect severity from me, your sincere admirer. I flatter myself you have composed something unequalled in its kind, and that, not content with the honours of your birth and your hereditary aristocracy, you will add still higher renown to your name. Expect me at the end of my appointed time. I do not think I shall be detained. Is Claire with you? or is she coming? Have you heard anything of my poor Emilia, from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying that her marriage was deferred for a very short time, on account of the illness of her Sposo? How are the Williams', and Williams especially? Give my very kindest love to them.

Lord Byron has here splendid apartments in the house of his mistress's husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. *She* is divorced, with an allowance of 1200 crowns a year — a miserable pittance from a man who has 120,000 a year. Here are two monkeys, five cats, eight dogs, and ten horses, all of whom (except the horses) walk about the house like the masters of it. Tita, the Venetian, is here, and operates as my valet; a fine fellow, with a prodigious black beard, and who has stabbed two or three people, and is one of the most good-natured-looking fellows I ever saw.

We have good rumours of the Greeks here, and a Russian war. I hardly wish the Russians to take any part in it. My maxim is with Æschylus: Äx ´ÅÃÃµ²sÂ — ¼µÄp ¼r½ À»µw¿½± Äwº Äµ¹, ÃÆµÄsÁ³ ´¿µ0ºyÄ± ³s½½³.

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There is a Greek exercise for you. How should slaves produce anything but tyranny, even as the seed produces the plant? Adieu, dear Mary. — Yours affectionately,

S.

At Ravenna there was only a weekly post. Shelley had to wait a long time for Mary's answer, and before it could reach him he was writing to her yet a third time. His mind was now full of Allegra. She was not to be left alone in Italy. Shelley, enlightened by Emilia Viviani, had been able to give Byron, on the subject of convents, such information as to "shake his faith in the purity of these receptacles." But no conclusions of any sort had been arrived at as to her future; and Shelley entreated Mary to rack her brains, to inquire of all her friends, to leave no stone unturned, if by any possibility she could find some fitting asylum, some safe home for the lovely child. He had been to see the little girl at her convent, and all readers of his letters know the description of the fairy creature, who, with her "contemplative seriousness, mixed with excessive vivacity, seemed a thing of a higher and a finer order" than the children around her; happy and well cared for, as far as he could judge; pale, but lovelier and livelier than ever, and full of childish glee and fun.

At this point of his letter Mary's budget arrived, and Shelley continued as follows —

Ravenna, *Thursday*.

I have received your letter with that to Mrs. Hoppner. I do not wonder, my dearest friend, that you should have been moved. I was at first, but speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of anything or anybody, except our own consciousness, amply merits, and day by day shall more receive from me. I have not recopied your letter, such a measure would destroy its authenticity, but have given it to Lord Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners. People do not hesitate, it seems, to make themselves panders and accomplices to slander, for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from *me*: Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret, good or bad, but in openly confessing that he has not done so he must observe a certain delicacy, and therefore wished to send the letter himself, and, indeed, this adds weight to your representations. Have you seen the article in the *Literary Gazette* on me? They evidently allude to some story of this kind. However cautious the Hoppners have been in preventing the calumniated person from asserting his justification, you know too much of the world not to be certain that this was the utmost limit of their caution. So much for nothing.

Lord Byron is immediately coming to Pisa. He will set off the moment I can get him a house. Who would have imagined this?... What think you of remaining at Pisa? The Williams' would probably be induced to stay there if we did; Hunt would certainly stay, at least this winter, near us, should he emigrate at all; Lord Byron and his Italian friends would remain quietly there; and Lord Byron has certainly a very great regard for us. The regard of such a man is worth some of the tribute we must pay to the base passions of humanity in any intercourse with those within their circle; he is better worth it than those on whom we bestow it from mere custom.

The Masons are there, and, as far as solid affairs are concerned, are my friends. I allow this is an argument for Florence. Mrs. Mason's perversity is very annoying to me, especially as Mr. Tighe is seriously my friend. This circumstance makes me averse from that intimate continuation of intercourse which, once having begun, I can no longer avoid.

At Pisa I need not distil my water, if I *can* distil it anywhere. Last winter I suffered less from my painful disorder than the winter I spent in Florence. The arguments for Florence you know, and they are very weighty; judge (*I know you like the job*) which scale is overbalanced. My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the flood-gates of the world. I would read no reviews and talk with no authors. If I dared trust my imagination, it would tell me that there are one or two chosen companions besides yourself whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen. Where two or three are gathered together the devil is among them, and good far more than evil impulses, love far more than hatred, has been to me, except as you have been its object, the source of all sorts of mischief. So on this plan I would be *alone*, and would devote either to oblivion or to future generations the overflowings of a mind which, timely withdrawn from the contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object. But this it does not appear that we shall do. The other side of the alternative (for a medium ought not to be adopted) is to form for ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible, in intellect or in feelings, and to connect ourselves with the interests of that society. Our roots never struck so deeply as at Pisa, and the transplanted tree flourishes not. People who lead the lives which we led until last winter are like a family of Wahabee Arabs pitching their tent in the midst of London. We must do one thing or the other, — for yourself, for our child, for our existence. The calumnies, the sources of which are probably deeper than we perceive, have ultimately for object the depriving us of the means of security and subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to pretext, pretext to persecution, and persecution to the ban of fire and water. It is for this, and not because this or that fool, or the whole court of fools, curse and rail, that calumny is worth refuting or chastising.

P. B. S.

"So much for nothing," indeed. When Byron made himself responsible for Mary's letter, it was, probably, without any definite intention of withholding it from those to whom it was addressed. He may well have wished to add to this glowing denial of his own insinuations some palliating personal explanation. When, in the previous March, Clare had protested against an Italian convent education for Allegra, he had sent her letter to the Hoppners with a sneer at the "excellent grace" with which these representations came from a woman of the writer's character and present way of life. And yet he knew Shelley, — knew him as the Hoppners could not do; he knew what Shelley had done for him, for Clare, and Allegra; and to how much slander and misrepresentation he had voluntarily submitted that they might go scot-free. Byron was, — and he knew it, — the last person who should have accepted or allowed others to accept this fresh scandal without proof and without inquiry. He was ashamed of the part he had played, and reluctant to confess to the Hoppners that he had been wrong, and that his words, as often happened, had been far in advance of his knowledge or his solid convictions; but his intentions were to do the best he could. And, satisfying himself with good intentions, he put off the unwelcome day until the occasion was past, and till, finally, the friend whose honour had been entrusted to his keeping was beyond his power to help or to harm. Shelley was dead; and how then explain to the Hoppners why the letter had not been sent before? It was "not worth while," probably, to revive the subject in order to vindicate a mere memory, nor yet to remove an unjust and cruel stigma from the character of those who survived. However it may have been, one thing is undoubted. Mary Shelley never received any answer to her letter of protest, which, after Byron's death, was found safe among his papers.

One more note Shelley sent to Mary from Ravenna on the subject of the promised portrait. It would not seem that the miniature was actually despatched now, but as his return was so long delayed, the birthday plot had to be divulged.

Ravenna, *Tuesday, 15th August 1821*.

My dearest Love — I accept your kind present of your picture, and wish you would get it prettily framed for me. I will wear, for your sake, upon my heart this image which is ever present to my mind.

I have only two minutes to write; the post is just setting off. I shall leave the place on Thursday or Friday morning. You would forgive me for my longer stay if you knew the fighting I have had to make it so short. I need not say where my own feelings impel me.

It still remains fixed that Lord Byron should come to Tuscany, and, if possible, Pisa; but more of that to-morrow. — Your faithful and affectionate

S.

The foregoing painful episode was enough to fill Mary's mind during the fortnight she was alone. It was well for her that she was within easy reach of cheerful friends, yet, even as it was, she could not altogether escape from bitter thoughts. Clare was at Leghorn, and had to be told of everything. Mary could not but think of the relief it would be to them all if she were to marry; a remote possibility to which she probably alludes in the following letter, written at this time to Miss Curran —

Mary Shelley to Miss Curran.

San Giuliano, *17th August*.

My dear Miss Curran — It gives me great pain to hear of your ill-health. Will this hot summer conduce to a better state or not? I hope anxiously, when I hear from you again, to learn that you are better, having recovered from your weakness, and that you have no return of your disorder. I should have answered your letter before, but we have been in the confusion of moving. We are now settled in an agreeable house at the Baths of San Giuliano, about four miles from Pisa, under the shadow of mountains, and with delightful scenery within a walk. We go on in our old manner, with no change. I have had many changes for the worse; one might be for the better, but that is nearly impossible. Our child is well and thriving, which is a great comfort, and the Italian sky gives Shelley health, which is to him a rare and substantial enjoyment. I did [not] receive the letter you mention to have written in March, and you also have missed one of our letters in which Shelley acknowledged the receipt of the drawings you mention, and requested that the largest pyramid might be erected if they could case it with white marble for £25. However, the whole had better stand as I mentioned in my last; for, without the most rigorous inspection, great cheating would take place, and no female could detect them. When we visit Rome, we can do that which we wish. Many thanks for your kindness, which has been very great. I would send you on the books I mentioned, but we live out of the world, and I know of no conveyance. Mr. Purniance says that he sent the life of your father by sea to Rome, directed to you; so, doubtless, it is in the custom-house there.

How enraged all our mighty rulers are at the quiet revolutions which have taken place; it is said that some one said to the Grand Duke here: “Ma richiedono una constituzione qui?” “Ebene, la darò subito” was the reply; but he is not his own master, and Austria would take care that that should not be the case; they say Austrian troops are coming here, and the Tuscan ones will be sent to Germany. We take in *Galignani*, and would send them to you if you liked. I do not know what the expense would be, but I should think slight. If you recommence painting, do not forget Beatrice. I wish very much for a copy of that; you would oblige us greatly by making one. Pray let me hear of your health. God knows when we shall be in Rome; circumstances must direct, and they dance about like will-o’-the-wisps, enticing and then deserting us. We must take care not to be left in a bog. Adieu, take care of yourself. Believe in Shelley’s sincere wishes for your health, and in kind remembrances, and in my being ever sincerely yours,

M. W. Shelley.

Clare desires (not remembrances, if they are not pleasant), however she sends a proper message, and says she would be obliged to you, if you let her have her picture, if you could find a mode of conveying it....

Do you know we lose many letters, having spies (not Government ones) about us in plenty; they made a desperate push to do us a desperate mischief lately, but succeeded no further than to blacken us among the English; so if you receive a fresh batch (or green bag) of scandal against us, I assure you it is all a *lie*. Poor souls! we live innocently, as you well know; if we did not, ten to one God would take pity on us, and we should not be so unfortunate.

Shelley's absence, though eventful, was, after all, a short one. In about a fortnight he was back again at the Bagni, and for a few weeks life was quiet.

On the 18th of September Mary records —

Picnic on the Pugnano Mountains; music in the evening. Sleep there.

On another occasion, wishing to find some tolerably cool seaside place where they might spend the next summer, they went, — the Shelleys and Clare, — on a two or three days' expedition of discovery to Spezzia, and were enchanted with the beauty of the bay. Clare had, shortly after, to return to her situation at Florence, but the Shelleys decided to winter at Pisa. They took a top flat in the "Tre Palazzi di Chiesa," on the Lung' Arno, and spent part of October in furnishing it. They took possession about the 25th; the Williams' coming, not many days later, to occupy a lower flat in the same house. At Lord Byron's request, the Shelleys had taken for him Casa Lanfranchi, the finest palace in the Lung' Arno, just opposite the house where they themselves were established. This close juxtaposition of abodes was likely to prove somewhat inconvenient, in case of Clare's occasional presence at Tre Palazzi. Her first visit, however, to which the following characteristic letter refers, was to the Masons at Casa Silva, and it came to an end just before Byron's arrival in Pisa. Clare had been staying with the Williams' at Pugnano.

Clare to Mary.

My dear Mary — I arrived last night — won't you come and see me to-day? The Williams' wish you to forward them Mr. Webb's answer, if possible, to reach them by 2 o'clock afternoon to-day. If Mr. Webb says yes (you will open his note), send Dominico with it to them, and he passing by the Baths must order Pancani to be at Pugnano by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. If there comes no letter from Mr. Webb, they will equally come to you, and I wish you could also in that case contrive to get Pancani ordered for them, for we forgot to arrange how that could be done; if not, they will be there expecting, and perhaps get involved for the next month. I wish you to be so good as to send me immediately my large box and the clothes from the Busati, indeed all that you have of mine, for I must arrange my boxes to get them *bollate* immediately. Don't delay, and my band-box too. If you could of your great bounty give me a sponge, I should be infinitely obliged to you. Then, when it is dark, and the Williams' arrived, will you ask Mr. Williams to be so good as to come and knock at Casa Silva, and I will return to spend the evening with you? Shelley won't do to fetch me, because he looks singular in the streets. But I wish he would come now to give me some money, as I want to write to Livorno and arrange everything. Later will be inconvenient for me. Kiss the chick for me, and believe me, yours affectionately,

Clare.

Journal. — All October is left out, it seems. — We are at the Baths, occupied with furnishing our house, copying my novel, etc. etc.

Mary's intention was to devote any profits which might proceed from this work to the relief of her father's necessities, and the hope of being able to help him had stimulated her industry and energy while it eased her heart. She aimed at selling the copyright for £400, and Shelley opened negotiations to this effect with Ollier the publisher. His letter on the subject bears such striking testimony to the estimate he had formed of Mary's powers, and gives, besides, so complete a sketch of the novel itself, that it cannot be omitted here.

Shelley to Mr. Ollier.

Pisa, *25th September 1822*.

Dear Sir — It will give me great pleasure if I can arrange the affair of Mrs. Shelley's novel with you to her and your satisfaction. She has a specific purpose in the sum which she instructed me to require, and, although this purpose could not be answered without ready money, yet I should find means to answer her wishes in that point if you could make it convenient to pay one-third at Christmas, and give bills for the other two-thirds at twelve and eighteen months. It would give me peculiar satisfaction that you, rather than any other person, should be the publisher of this work; it is the product of no slight labour, and I flatter myself, of no common talent, I doubt not it will give no less credit than it will receive from your names. I trust you know me too well to believe that my judgment deliberately given in testimony of the value of any production is influenced by motives of interest or partiality.

The romance is called *Castruccio, Prince of Lucca*, and is founded, not upon the novel of Machiavelli under that name, which substitutes a childish fiction for the far more romantic truth of history, but upon the actual story of his life. He was a person who, from an exile and an adventurer, after having served in the wars of England and Flanders in the reign of our Edward the Second, returned to his native city, and liberating it from its tyrants, became himself its tyrant, and died in the full splendour of his dominion, which he had extended over the half of Tuscany. He was a little Napoleon, and with a dukedom instead of an empire for his theatre, brought upon the same all the passions and errors of his antitype. The chief interest of the romance rests upon Euthanasia, his betrothed bride, whose love for him is only equalled by her enthusiasm for the liberty of the Republic of Florence, which is in some sort her country, and for that of Italy, to which Castruccio is a devoted enemy, being an ally of the party of the Emperor. This character is a masterpiece; and the keystone of the drama, which is built up with admirable art, is the conflict between these passions and these principles. Euthanasia, the last survivor of a noble house, is a feudal countess, and her castle is the scene of the exhibition of the knightly manners of the time. The character of Beatrice, the prophetess, can only be done justice to in the very language of the author. I know nothing in Walter Scott's novels which at all approaches to the beauty and the sublimity of this — creation, I may say, for it is perfectly original; and, although founded upon the ideas and manners of the age which is represented, is wholly without a similitude in any fiction I ever read. Beatrice is in love with Castruccio, and dies; for the romance, although interspersed with much lighter matter, is deeply tragic, and the shades darken and gather as the catastrophe approaches. All the manners, customs of the age, are introduced; the superstitions, the heresies, and the religious persecutions are displayed; the minutest circumstance of Italian manners in that age is not omitted; and the whole seems to me to constitute a living and moving picture of an age almost forgotten. The author visited the scenery which she describes in person; and one or two of the inferior characters are drawn from her own observation of the Italians, for the national character shows itself still in certain instances under the same forms as it wore in the time of Dante. The novel consists, as I told you before, of three volumes, each at least equal to one of the *Tales of my Landlord*, and they will be very soon ready to be sent.

No arrangement, however, was come to at this time, and early in January Mary wrote to her father, offering the work to him, and asking him, if he accepted it, to make a bargain concerning it with a publisher.

Godwin accepted the offer, and undertook the responsibility, in a letter from which the following is an extract —

31st January 1822.

I am much gratified by your letter of the 11th, which reached me on Saturday last; it is truly generous of you to desire that I would make use of the produce of your novel. But what can I say to it? It is against the course of nature, unless, indeed, you were actually in possession of a fortune.

……..

I said in the preface to *Mandeville* there were two or three works further that I should be glad to finish before I died. If I make use of the money from you in the way you suggest, that may enable me to complete my present work.

The MS. was, accordingly, despatched to England, but was not published till many months later.

Valperga (as it was afterwards called) was a book of much power and more promise; very remarkable when the author's age is taken into consideration. Apart from local colouring, the interest of the tale turns on the development of the character — naturally powerful and disposed to good, but spoilt by popularity and success, and unguided by principle — of Castruccio himself; and on the contrast between him and Euthanasia, the noble and beautiful woman who sacrifices her possessions, her hopes, and her affections to the cause of fidelity and patriotism.

Beatrice, the prophetess, is one of those gifted but fated souls, who, under the persuasion that they are supernaturally inspired, mistake the ordinary impulses of human nature for Divine commands, and, finding their mistake, yet encourage themselves in what they know to be delusion till the end, — a tragic end.

There are some remarkable descriptive passages, especially one where the wandering Beatrice comes suddenly upon a house in a dreary landscape which she knows, although she has never seen it before except in a haunting dream; every detail of it is horribly familiar, and she is paralysed by the sense of imminent calamity, which, in fact, bursts upon her directly afterwards.

Euthanasia dies at sea, and the account of the running down and wreck of her ship is a curious, almost prophetic, foreshadowing of the calamity by which, all too soon, Shelley was to lose his life.

The wind changed to a more northerly direction during the night, and the land-breeze of the morning filled their sails, so that, although slowly, they dropt down southward. About noon they met a Pisan vessel, who bade them beware of a Genoese squadron, which was cruising off Corsica; so they bore in nearer to the shore. At sunset that day a fierce sirocco arose, accompanied by thunder and lightning, such as is seldom seen during the winter season. Presently they saw huge dark columns descending from heaven, and meeting the sea, which boiled beneath; they were borne on by the storm, and scattered by the wind. The rain came down in sheets, and the hail clattered, as it fell to its grave in the ocean; the ocean was lashed into such waves that, many miles inland, during the pauses of the wind, the hoarse and constant murmurs of the far-off sea made the well-housed landsman mutter one more prayer for those exposed to its fury.

Such was the storm, as it was seen from shore. Nothing more was ever known of the Sicilian vessel which bore Euthanasia. It never reached its destined port, nor were any of those on board ever after seen. The sentinels who watched near Vado, a town on the sea-beach of the Maremma, found on the following day that the waves had washed on shore some of the wrecks of a vessel; they picked up a few planks and a broken mast, round which, tangled with some of its cordage, was a white silk handkerchief, such a one as had bound the tresses of Euthanasia the night that she had embarked; and in its knot were a few golden hairs.

....

To follow the fate of Mary’s novel, it has been necessary somewhat to anticipate the history, which is resumed in the next chapter, with the journal and letters of the latter part of 1821.

CHAPTER XV

November 1821-April 1822

Journal, Thursday, November 1. — Go to Florence. Copy. Ride with the Guiccioli. Albé arrives.

Sunday, November 4. — The Williams' arrive. Copy. Call on the Guiccioli.

Thursday, November 15. — Copy. Read *Caleb Williams* to Jane. Ride with the Guiccioli. Shelley goes on translating Spinoza with Edward. Medwin arrives. Taafe calls. Argyropulo calls. Good news from the Greeks.

Tuesday, November 28. — Ride with the Guiccioli. Suffer much with rheumatism in my head.

Wednesday, November 29. — I mark this day because I begin my Greek again, and that is a study that ever delights me. I do not feel the bore of it, as in learning another language, although it be so difficult, it so richly repays one; yet I read little, for I am not well. Shelley and the Williams go to Leghorn; they dine with us afterwards with Medwin. Write to Clare.

Thursday, November 30. — Correct the novel. Read a little Greek. Not well. Ride with the Guiccioli. The Count Pietro (Gamba) in the evening.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Pisa, *30th November 1821.*

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — Although having much to do be a bad excuse for not writing to you, yet you must in some sort admit this plea on my part. Here we are in Pisa, having furnished very nice apartments for ourselves, and what is more, paid for the furniture out of the fruits of two years' economy, we are at the top of the Tre Palazzi di Chiesa. I daresay you know the house, next door to La Scoto's house on the north side of Lung' Arno; but the rooms we inhabit are south, and look over the whole country towards the sea, so that we are entirely out of the bustle and disagreeable *puzzi*, etc., of the town, and hardly know that we are so enveloped until we descend into the street. The Williams' have been less lucky, though they have followed our example in furnishing their own house, but, renting it of Mr. Webb, they have been treated scurvily. So here we live, Lord Byron just opposite to us in Casa Lanfranchi (the late Signora Felichi's house). So

Pisa, you see, has become a little nest of singing birds. You will be both surprised and delighted at the work just about to be published by him; his *Cain*, which is in the highest style of imaginative poetry. It made a great impression upon me, and appears almost a revelation, from its power and beauty. Shelley rides with him; I, of course, see little of him. The lady *whom he serves* is a nice pretty girl without pretensions, good hearted and amiable; her relations were banished Romagna for Carbonarism.

What do you know of Hunt? About two months ago he wrote to say that on 21st October he should quit England, and we have heard nothing more of him in any way; I expect some day he and six children will drop in from the clouds, trusting that God will temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Pray when you write, tell us everything you know concerning him. Do you get any intelligence of the Greeks? Our worthy countrymen take part against them in every possible way, yet such is the spirit of freedom, and such the hatred of these poor people for their oppressors, that I have the warmest hopes — ¼q½Ä¹Â µ4¼¿ Ã¸»É½ ³É½}½. Mavrocordato is there, justly revered for the sacrifice he has made of his whole fortune to the cause, and besides for his firmness and talents. If Greece be free, Shelley and I have vowed to go, perhaps to settle there, in one of those beautiful islands where earth, ocean, and sky form the paradise. You will, I hope, tell us all the news of our friends when you write. I see no one that you know. We live in our usual retired way, with few friends and no acquaintances. Clare is returned to her usual residence, and our tranquillity is unbroken in upon, except by those winds, sirocco or tramontana, which now and then will sweep over the ocean of one's mind and disturb or cloud its surface. Since this must be a double letter, I save myself the trouble of copying the enclosed, which was a part of a letter written to you a month ago, but which I did not send. Will you attend to my requests? Every day increases my anxiety concerning the desk. Do have the goodness to pack it off as soon as you can.

Shelley was at your hive yesterday; it is as dirty and busy as ever, so people live in the same narrow circle of space and thought, while time goes on, not as a racehorse, but a "six inside dilly," and puts them down softly at their journey's end; while they have slept and ate, and *ecco tutto*. With this piece of morality, dear Mrs. Gisborne, I end. Shelley begs every remembrance of his to be joined with mine to Mr. Gisborne and Henry. — Ever yours, Mary W. S.

And now, my dear Mrs. Gisborne, I have a great favour to ask of you. Ollier writes to say that he has placed our two desks in the hands of a merchant of the city, and that they are to come — God knows when! Now, as we sent for them two years ago, and are tired of waiting, will you do us the favour to get them out of his hands, and to send them without delay? If they can be sent without being opened, send them *in statu quo*; if they must be opened, do not send the smallest but get a key (being a patent lock a key will cost half a guinea) made for the largest and send it, and return the other to Peacock. If you send the desk, will you send with it the following things? — A few copies of all Shelley's works, particularly of the second edition of the *Cenci*, my mother's posthumous works, and *Letters from Norway* from Peacock, if you can, but do not delay the box for them.

Journal, Sunday, December 2. — Read the *History of Shipwrecks*. Read Herodotus with Shelley. Ride with La Guiccioli. Pietro and her in the evening.

Monday, December 3. — Write letters. Read Herodotus with Shelley. Finish *Caleb Williams* to Jane. Taafe calls. He says that his Turk is a very moral man, for that when he began a scandalous story he interrupted him immediately, saying, "Ah! we must never speak thus of our neighbours!" Taafe would do well to take the hint.

Thursday, December 6. — Read Homer. Walk with Williams. Spend the evening with them. Call on T. Guiccioli with Jane, while Taafe amuses Shelley and Edward. Read Tacitus. A dismal day.

Friday, December 7. — Letter from Hunt and Bessy. Walk with Shelley. Buy furniture for them, etc. Walk with Edward and Jane to the garden, and return with T. Guiccioli in the carriage. Edward reads the *Shipwreck of the Wager* to us in the evening.

Saturday, December 8. — Get up late and talk with Shelley. The Williams and Medwin to dinner. Walk with Edward and Jane in the garden. Return with T. Guiccioli. T. G. and Pietro in the evening. Write to Clare. Read Tacitus.

Sunday, December 9. — Go to church at Dr. Nott's. Walk with Edward and Jane in the garden. In the evening first Pietro and Teresa, afterwards go to the Williams'.

Monday, December 10. — Out shopping. Walk with the Williams and T. Guiccioli to the garden. Medwin at tea. Afterwards we are alone, and after reading a little Herodotus, Shelley reads Chaucer’s *Flower and the Leaf*, and then Chaucer’s *Dream* to me. A divine, cold, tramontana day.

Monday, January 14. — Read *Emile*. Call on T. Guiccioli and see Lord Byron. Trelawny arrives.

Edward John Trelawny, whose subsequent history was to be closely bound up with that of Shelley and of Mrs. Shelley, was of good Cornish family, and had led a wandering life, full of romantic adventure. He had become acquainted with Williams and Medwin in Switzerland a year before, since which he had been in Paris and London. Tired of a town life and of society, and in order to “maintain the just equilibrium between the body and the brain,” he had determined to pass the next winter hunting and shooting in the wilds of the Maremma, with a Captain Roberts and Lieutenant Williams. For the exercise of his brain, he proposed passing the summer with Shelley and Byron, boating in the Mediterranean, as he had heard that they proposed doing. Neither of the poets were as yet personally known to him, but he had lost no time in seeking their acquaintance. On the very evening of his arrival in Pisa he repaired to the Tre Palazzi, where, in the Williams’ room, he first saw Shelley, and was struck speechless with astonishment.

Was it possible this mild-looking beardless boy could be the veritable monster at war with all the world? Excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the founder of a Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax.

But presently, when Shelley was led to talk on a theme that interested him — the works of Calderon, — his marvellous powers of mind and command of language held Trelawny spell-bound: “After this touch of his quality,” he says, “I no longer doubted his identity.”

Mrs. Shelley appeared soon after, and the visitor looked with lively curiosity at the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Such a rare pedigree of genius was enough to interest me in her, irrespective of her own merits as an authoress. The most striking feature in her face was her calm, gray eyes; she was rather under the English standard of woman's height, very fair and light-haired; witty, social, and animated in the society of friends, though mournful in solitude; like Shelley, though in a minor degree, she had the power of expressing her thoughts in varied and appropriate words, derived from familiarity with the works of our vigorous old writers. Neither of them used obsolete or foreign words. This command of our language struck me the more as contrasted with the scanty vocabulary used by ladies in society, in which a score of poor hackneyed phrases suffice to express all that is felt or considered proper to reveal.

Mary's impressions of the new-comer may be gathered from her journal and her subsequent letter to Mrs. Gisborne.

Journal, Saturday, January 19. — Copy. Walk with Jane. The Opera in the evening. Trelawny is extravagant — *un giovane stravagante*, — partly natural, and partly, perhaps, put on, but it suits him well, and if his abrupt but not unpolished manners be assumed, they are nevertheless in unison with his Moorish face (for he looks Oriental yet not Asiatic), his dark hair, his Herculean form; and then there is an air of extreme good nature which pervades his whole countenance, especially when he smiles, which assures me that his heart is good. He tells strange stories of himself, horrific ones, so that they harrow one up, while with his emphatic but unmodulated voice, his simple yet strong language, he pourtrays the most frightful situations; then all these adventures took place between the ages of thirteen and twenty.

I believe them now I see the man, and, tired with the everyday sleepiness of human intercourse, I am glad to meet with one who, among other valuable qualities, has the rare merit of interesting my imagination. The *crew* and Medwin dine with us.

Sunday, January 27. — Read Homer. Walk. Dine at the Williams'. The Opera in the evening. Ride with T. Guiccioli.

Monday, January 28. — The Williams breakfast with us. Go down Bocca d'Arno in the boat with Shelley and Jane. Edward and E. Trelawny meet us there; return in the gig; they dine with us; very tired.

Tuesday, January 29. — Read Homer and Tacitus. Ride with T. Guiccioli. E. Trelawny and Medwin to dinner. The Baron Lutzerode in the evening.

But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

Read the first volume of the *Pirate*.

Sunday, February 3. — Read Homer. Walk to the garden with Jane. Return with Medwin to dinner. Trelawny in the evening. A wild day and night, some clouds in the sky in the morning, but they clear away. A north wind.

Monday, February 4. — Breakfast with the Williams'. Edward, Jane, and Trelawny go to Leghorn. Walk with Jane. Southey's letter concerning Lord Byron. Write to Clare. In the evening the Gambas and Taafe.

Thursday, February 7. — Read Homer, Tacitus, and *Emile*. Shelley and Edward depart for La Spezzia. Walk with Jane, and to the Opera with her in the evening. With E. Trelawny afterwards to Mrs. Beauclerc's ball. During a long, long evening in mixed society how often do one's sensations change, and, swiftly as the west wind drives the shadows of clouds across the sunny hill or the waving corn, so swift do sensations pass, painting — yet, oh! not disfiguring — the serenity of the mind. It is then that life seems to weigh itself, and hosts of memories and imaginations, thrown into one scale, make the other kick the beam. You remember what you have felt, what you have dreamt; yet you dwell on the shadowy side, and lost hopes and death, such as you have seen it, seem to cover all things with a funeral pall.

The time that was, is, and will be, presses upon you, and, standing the centre of a moving circle, you "slide giddily as the world reels." You look to heaven, and would demand of the everlasting stars that the thoughts and passions which are your life may be as ever-living as they. You would demand of the blue empyrean that your mind might be as clear as it, and that the tears which gather in your eyes might be the shower that would drain from its profoundest depths the springs of weakness and sorrow. But where are the stars? Where the blue empyrean? A ceiling clouds that, and a thousand swift consuming lights supply the place of the eternal ones of heaven. The enthusiast suppresses her tears, crushes her opening thoughts, and.... But all is changed; some word, some look excite the lagging blood, laughter dances in the eyes, and the spirits rise proportionably high.

The Queen is all for revels, her light heart,
Unladen from the heaviness of state,
Bestows itself upon delightfulness.

Friday, February 8. — Sometimes I awaken from my visionary monotony, and my thoughts flow until, as it is exquisite pain to stop the flowing of the blood, so is it painful to check expression and make the overflowing mind return to its usual channel. I feel a kind of tenderness to those, whoever they may be (even though strangers), who awaken the train and touch a chord so full of harmony and thrilling music, when I would tear the veil from this strange world, and pierce with eagle eyes beyond the sun; when every idea, strange and changeful, is another step in the ladder by which I would climb....

Read *Emile*. Jane dines with me, walk with her. E. Trelawny and Jane in the evening. Trelawny tells us a number of amusing stories of his early life. Read third canto of *L'Inferno*.

They say that Providence is shown by the extraction that may be ever made of good from evil, that we draw our virtues from our faults. So I am to thank God for making me weak. I might say, "Thy will be done," but I cannot applaud the permitter of self-degradation, though dignity and superior wisdom arise from its bitter and burning ashes.

Saturday, February 9. — Read *Emile*. Walk with Jane, and ride with T. Guiccioli. Dine with Jane. Taafe and T. Medwin call. I retire with E. Trelawny, who amuses me as usual by the endless variety of his adventures and conversation.

Mary to Mrs. Gisborne.

Pisa, *9th February 1822*.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — Not having heard from you, I am anxious about my desk. It would have been a great convenience to me if I could have received it at the beginning of the winter, but now I should like it as soon as possible. I hope that it is out of Ollier's hands. I have before said what I would have done with it. If both desks can be sent without being opened, let them be sent; if not, give the small one back to Peacock. Get a key made for the larger, and send it, I entreat you, by the very next vessel. This key will cost half a guinea, and Ollier will not give you the money, but give me credit for it, I entreat you. I pray now let me have the desk as soon as possible. Shelley is now gone to Spezzia to get houses for our colony for the summer.

It will be a large one, too large, I am afraid, for unity; yet I hope not. There will be Lord Byron, who will have a large and beautiful boat built on purpose by some English navy officers at Genoa. There will be the Countess Guiccioli and her brother; the Williams', whom you know; Trelawny, a kind of half-Arab Englishman, whose life has been as changeful as that of Anastasius, and who recounts the adventures as eloquently and as well as the imagined Greek. He is clever; for his moral qualities I am yet in the dark; he is a strange web which I am endeavouring to unravel. I would fain learn if generosity is united to impetuousness, probity of spirit to his assumption of singularity and independence. He is 6 feet high, raven black hair, which curls thickly and shortly, like a Moor's, dark gray expressive eyes, overhanging brows, upturned lips, and a smile which expresses good nature and kindheartedness. His shoulders are high, like an Oriental's, his voice is monotonous, yet emphatic, and his language, as he relates the events of his life, energetic and simple, whether the tale be one of blood and horror, or of irresistible comedy. His company is delightful, for he excites me to think, and if any evil shade the intercourse, that time will unveil — the sun will rise or night darken all. There will be, besides, a Captain Roberts, whom I do not know, a very rough subject, I fancy, — a famous angler, etc. We are to have a small boat, and now that those first divine spring days are come (you know them well), the sky clear, the sun hot, the hedges budding, we sitting without a fire and the windows open, I begin to long for the sparkling waves, the olive-coloured hills and vine-shaded pergolas of Spezzia. However, it would be madness to go yet. Yet as *ceppo* was bad, we hope for a good *pasqua*, and if April prove fine, we shall fly with the swallows. The Opera here has been detestable. The English Sinclair is the *primo tenore*, and acquits himself excellently, but the Italians, after the first, have enviously selected such operas as give him little or nothing to do. We have English here, and some English balls and parties, to which I (*mirabile dictu*) go sometimes. We have Taafe, who bores us out of our senses when he comes, telling a young lady that her eyes shed flowers — why therefore should he send her any? I have sent my novel to Papa. I long to hear some news of it, as, with an author's vanity, I want to see it in print, and hear the praises of my friends. I should like, as I said when you went away, a copy of *Matilda*. It might come out with the desk. I hope as the town fills to hear better news of your plans, we long to hear from you. What does Henry do? How many times has he been in love? — Ever yours,

M. W. S.

Shelley would like to see the review of the *Prometheus* in the *Quarterly*.

Thursday, February 14. — Read Homer and *Anastasius*. Walk with the Williams' in the evening.... "Nothing of us but what must suffer a sea-change."

This entry marks the day to which Mary referred in a letter written more than a year later, where she says —

A year ago Trelawny came one afternoon in high spirits with news concerning the building of the boat, saying, "Oh! we must all embark, all live aboard; we will all 'suffer a sea-change.'" And dearest Shelley was delighted with the quotation, saying that he would have it for the motto for his boat.

Little did they think, in their lightness of spirit, that in another year the motto of the boat would serve for the inscription on Shelley's tomb.

Journal, Monday, February 18. — Read Homer. Walk with the Williams'. Jane, Trelawny, and Medwin in the evening.

Monday, February 25. — What a mart this world is? Feelings, sentiments, — more invaluable than gold or precious stones is the coin, and what is bought? Contempt, discontent, and disappointment, unless, indeed, the mind be loaded with drearier memories. And what say the worldly to this? Use Spartan coin, pay away iron and lead alone, and store up your precious metal. But alas! from nothing, nothing comes, or, as all things seem to degenerate, give lead and you will receive clay, — the most contemptible of all lives is where you live in the world, and none of your passions or affections are brought into action. I am convinced I could not live thus, and as Sterne says that in solitude he would worship a tree, so in the world I should attach myself to those who bore the semblance of those qualities which I admire. But it is not this that I want; let me love the trees, the skies, and the ocean, and that all-encompassing spirit of which I may soon become a part, — let me in my fellow-creature love that which is, and not fix my affection on a fair form endued with imaginary attributes; where goodness, kindness, and talent are, let me love and admire them at their just rate, neither adorning nor diminishing, and above all, let me fearlessly descend into the remotest caverns of my own mind; carry the torch of self-knowledge into its dimmest recesses; but too happy if I dislodge any evil spirit, or enshrine a new deity in some hitherto uninhabited nook.

Read *Wrongs of Women* and Homer. Clare departs. Walk with Jane and ride with T. Guiccioli. T. G. dines with us.

Thursday, February 28. — Take leave of the Argyropolis. Walk with Shelley. Ride with T. Guiccioli. Read letters. Spend the evening at the Williams'. Trelawny there.

Friday, March 1. — An embassy. Walk. My first Greek lesson. Walk with Edward. In the evening work.

Sunday, March 3. — A note to, and a visit from, Dr. Nott. Go to church. Walk. The Williams' and Trelawny to dinner.

Mary's experiments in the way of church-going, so new a thing in her experience, and so little in accordance with Shelley's habits of thought and action, excited some surprise and comment. Hogg, Shelley's early friend, who heard of it from Mrs. Gisborne, now in England, was especially shocked. In a letter to Mary, Mrs. Gisborne remarked, "Your friend Hogg is *molto scandalizzato* to hear of your weekly visits to the *piano di sotto*" (the services were held on the ground floor of the Tre Palazzi).

The same letter asks for news of Emilia Viviani. Mrs. Gisborne had heard that she was married, and feared she had been sacrificed to a man whom she describes as "that insipid, sickening Italian mortal, Danieli the lawyer." She proceeds to say —

We invited Varley one evening to meet Hogg, who was curious to see a man really believing in astrology in the nineteenth century. Varley, as usual, was not sparing of his predictions. We talked of Shelley without mentioning his name; Varley was curious, and being informed by Hogg of his exact age, but describing his person as short and corpulent, and himself as a *bon vivant*, Varley amused us with the following remarks: "Your friend suffered from ill-fortune in May or June 1815. Vexatious affairs on the 2d and 14th of June, or perhaps latter end of May 1820. The following year, disturbance about a lady. Again, last April, at 10 at night, or at noon, disturbance about a bouncing stout lady, and others. At six years of age, noticed by ladies and gentlemen for learning. In July 1799, beginning of charges made against him. In September 1800, at noon, or dusk, very violent charges. Scrape at fourteen years of age. Eternal warfare against parents and public opinion, and a great blow-up every seven years till death," etc. etc. *Is all this true?*

Not a little amused, Mary answered her friend as follows —

Pisa, *7th March 1822*.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — I am very sorry that you have so much trouble with my commissions, and vainly, too! *ma che vuole?* Ollier will not give you the money, and we are, to tell you the truth, too poor at present to send you a cheque upon our banker; two or three circumstances having caused

That climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of our weekly bills.

But far more than that, we have not touched a quattrino of our Christmas quarter, since debts in England and other calls swallowed it entirely up. For the present, therefore, we must dispense with those things I asked you for. As for the desk, we received last post from Ollier (without a line) the bill of lading that he talks of, and, *si Dio vuole*, we shall receive it safe; the vessel in which they were shipped is not yet arrived. The worst of keeping on with Ollier (though it is the best, I believe, after all) is that you will never be able to make anything of his accounts, until you can compare the number of copies in hand with his account of their sale. As for my novel, I shipped it off long ago to my father, telling him to make the best of it; and by the way in which he answered my letter, I fancy he thinks he can make something of it. This is much better than Ollier, for I should never have got a penny from him; and, moreover, he is a very bad bookseller to publish with — *ma basta poi*, with all these *seccaturas*.

Poor dear Hunt, you will have heard by this time of the disastrous conclusion of his third embarkment; he is to try a third time in April, and if he does not succeed then, we must say that the sea is *un vero precipizio*, and let him try land. By the bye, why not consult Varley on the result? I have tried the *Sors Homeri* and the *Sors Virgilii*; the first says (I will write this Greek better, but I thought that Mr. Gisborne could read the Romaic writing, and I now quite forget what it was) —

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Which first seems to say that he will come, though his brother may be prosecuted for a libel. Of the second, I can make neither head nor tail; and the third is as oracularly obscure as one could wish, for who these great people are who sat in a wooden horse, *chi lo sa*? Virgil, except the first line, which is unfavourable, is as enigmatical as Homer —

Fulgores nunc horrificos, sonitumque, metumque
Tum leves calamos, et rasæ hastilia virgæ
Connexosque angues, ipsamque in pectore divæ.

But to speak of predictions or anteductions, some of Varley’s are curious enough: “Ill-fortune in May or June 1815.” No; it was then that he arranged his income; there was no ill except health, *al solito*, at that time. The particular days of the 2d and 14th of June 1820 were not ill, but the whole time was disastrous. It was then we were alarmed by Paolo’s attack and disturbance. About a lady in the winter of last year, enough, God knows! Nothing particular about a fat bouncing lady at 10 at night: and indeed things got more quiet in April. In July 1799 Shelley was only seven years of age. “A great blow-up every seven years.” Shelley is not at home; when he returns I will ask him what happened when he was fourteen. In his twenty-second year we made our *scappatura*; at twenty-eight and twenty-nine, a good deal of discomfort on a certain point, but it hardly amounted to a blow-up. Pray ask Varley also about me.

So Hogg is shocked that, for good neighbourhood’s sake, I visited the *piano di sotto*; let him reassure himself, since instead of a weekly, it was only a monthly visit; in fact, after going three times I stayed away until I heard he was going away. He preached against atheism, and, they said, against Shelley. As he invited me himself to come, this appeared to me very impertinent; so I wrote to him, to ask him whether he intended any personal allusion, but he denied the charge most entirely. This affair, as you may guess, among the English at Pisa made a great noise; the gossip here is of course out of all bounds, and some people have given them something to talk about. I have seen little of it all; but that which I have seen makes me long most eagerly for some sea-girt isle, where with Shelley, my babe, and books and horses, we may give the rest to the winds; this we shall not have for the present. Shelley is entangled with Lord Byron, who is in a terrible fright lest he should desert him. We shall have boats, and go somewhere on the sea-coast, where, I daresay, we shall spend our time agreeably enough, for I like the Williams' exceedingly, though there my list begins and ends.

Emilia married Biondi; we hear that she leads him and his mother (to use a vulgarism) a devil of a life. The conclusion of our friendship (*a la Italiana*) puts me in mind of a nursery rhyme, which runs thus —

As I was going down Cranbourne lane,
Cranbourne lane was dirty,
And there I met a pretty maid,
Who dropt to me a curtsey;

I gave her cakes, I gave her wine,
I gave her sugar-candy,
But oh! the little naughty girl,
She asked me for some brandy.

Now turn "Cranbourne Lane" into Pisan acquaintances, which I am sure are dirty enough, and "brandy" into that wherewithal to buy brandy (and that no small sum *però*), and you have the whole story of Shelley's Italian Platonics. We now know, indeed, few of those whom we knew last year. Pacchiani is at Prato; Mavrocordato in Greece; the Argyropolis in Florence; and so the world slides. Taafe is still here — the butt of Lord Byron's quizzing, and the poet laureate of Pisa. On the occasion of a young lady's birthday he wrote —

Eyes that shed a thousand flowers!
Why should flowers be sent to you?
Sweetest flowers of heavenly bowers,
Love and friendship, are what are due.

……

After some divine *Italian* weather, we are now enjoying some fine English weather; *cioè*, it does not rain, but not a ray can pierce the web aloft. — Most truly yours,

Mary W. S.

Mary Shelley to Mrs. Hunt.

5th March 1822.

My dearest Marianne — I hope that this letter will find you quite well, recovering from your severe attack, and looking towards your haven Italy with best hopes. I do indeed believe that you will find a relief here from your many English cares, and that the winds which waft you will sing the requiem to all your ills. It was indeed unfortunate that you encountered such weather on the very threshold of your journey, and as the wind howled through the long night, how often did I think of you! At length it seemed as if we should never, never meet; but I will not give way to such a presentiment. We enjoy here divine weather. The sun hot, too hot, with a freshness and clearness in the breeze that bears with it all the delights of spring. The hedges are budding, and you should see me and my friend Mrs. Williams poking about for violets by the sides of dry ditches; she being herself —

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye.

Yesterday a countryman seeing our dilemma, since the ditch was not quite dry, insisted on gathering them for us, and when we resisted, saying that we had no *quattrini* (*i.e.* farthings, being the generic name for all money), he indignantly exclaimed, *Oh! se lo faccio per interesse!* How I wish you were with us in our rambles! Our good cavaliers flock together, and as they do not like *fetching a walk with the absurd womankind*, Jane (*i.e.* Mrs. Williams) and I are off together, and talk morality and pluck violets by the way. I look forward to many duets with this lady and Hunt. She has a very pretty voice, and a taste and ear for music which is almost miraculous. The harp is her favourite instrument; but we have none, and a very bad piano; however, as it is, we pass very pleasant evenings, though I can hardly bear to hear her sing “Donne l’amore”; it transports me so entirely back to your little parlour at Hampstead — and I see the piano, the bookcase, the prints, the casts — and hear Mary’s *far-ha-ha-a*!

We are in great uncertainty as to where we shall spend the summer. There is a beautiful bay about fifty miles off, and as we have resolved on the sea, Shelley bought a boat. We wished very much to go there; perhaps we shall still, but as yet we can find but one house; but as we are a colony “which moves altogether or not at all,” we have not yet made up our minds. The apartments which we have prepared for you in Lord Byron’s house will be very warm for the summer; and indeed for the two hottest months I should think that you had better go into the country. Villas about here are tolerably cheap, and they are perfect paradises. Perhaps, as it was with me, Italy will not strike you as so divine at first; but each day it becomes dearer and more delightful; the sun, the flowers, the air, all is more sweet and more balmy than in the *Ultima Thule* that you inhabit.

M. W. S.

The journal for the next few weeks has nothing eventful to record. The preceding letter to Mrs. Hunt gives a simple and pleasing picture of their daily life. Perhaps Mary had never been quite so happy before; she wrote to the Hunts that she thought she grew younger. Both she and Shelley were occasionally ailing, and Shelley’s letters show that his spirits suffered depression at times, still, in this respect as well as in health, he was better than he had been in any former spring. The proximity of Byron and his circle was not, however, favourable to inspiration or to literary composition. Byron’s temperament acted as a damper to enthusiasm in others, and Shelley, though his estimate of Byron’s genius was very high, was perpetually jarred and crossed by his worldliness and his moral shallowness and vulgarity. He invariably, acted, however, as Byron’s true and disinterested friend; and Byron was fully aware of the value of his friendship and of his literary help and criticism.

Trelawny, to whom Byron had taken kindly enough, estimated the difference in the moral worth of the two poets with singular justice.

“I believed in many things then, and believe in some now,” he wrote, more than five and thirty years afterwards: “I could not sympathise with Byron, who believed in nothing.”

His friendship for Byron, nevertheless, was to be loyal and lasting. But his favourite resort in these Pisan days was the “hospitable and cheerful abode of the Shelleys.”

“There,” he says, “I found those sympathies and sentiments which the Pilgrim denounced as illusions, believed in as the only realities.”

At Byron’s social gatherings — riding-parties or dinner-parties — he made a point of getting Shelley if he could; and Shelley was very compliant, although the society of which Byron was the nucleus was neither congenial nor interesting to him, and he always took the first good opportunity of escaping. Daily intercourse of this kind tended gradually to estrange rather than unite the two poets: by accentuating differences it brought into evidence that gulf between their natures which, in spite of the one touch of kinship that certainly existed, was equally impassable by one and by the other. Besides, the subject of Clare and Allegra, never far below the surface, would occasionally come up, and this was a sore point on both sides. As has already been said, Byron appreciated Shelley, though he did not sympathise with him. In after days he bore public testimony to the purity and unselfishness of Shelley’s character and to the upright and disinterested motives which actuated him in all he did. But his respect for Shelley was not so strong as his antipathy to Clare, and Shelley’s feeling towards her was regarded by him with a cynical sneer which he had no care to hide, and of which its object could not always be unconscious. It is not wonderful that at times there swept across Shelley’s mind, like a black cloud, the conviction that neither a sense of honour nor justice restrained Byron from the basest insinuations. And then again this suspicion would pass away as too dreadful to be entertained.

Meanwhile Clare, in the pursuit of her newly-adopted profession, was thinking of going to Vienna, and she longed for a sight of her child first. She had been unusually long, or she fancied so, without news of Allegra, and she was growing desperately anxious, — with only too good cause, as the event showed. She wrote to Byron, entreating him to arrange for a visit or an interview. Byron took no notice of her letters. The Shelleys dared not annoy him unnecessarily on the subject, as he had been heard to threaten if they did so to immure Allegra in some secret convent where no one could get at her or even hear of her. Clare, working herself up into a state of half-frenzied excitement, sent them letter after letter, suggesting and urging wild plans (which Shelley was to realise) for carrying off the child by armed force; indeed, one of her schemes seems to have been to take advantage of the projected interview, if granted, for putting this design into execution. Some such proposed breach of faith must have been the occasion of Shelley's answering her —

I know not what to think of the state of your mind, or what to fear for you. Your late plan about Allegra seems to me in its present form pregnant with irremediable infamy to all the actors in it except yourself.

He did not think that in her present excited mental condition she was fit to go to Vienna, and he entreated her to postpone the idea. His advice, often repeated in different words, was, that she should not lose herself in distant and uncertain plans, but "systematise and simplify" her motions, at least for the present, and, if she felt in the least disposed, that she should come and stay with them —

If you like, come and look for houses with me in our boat; it might distract your mind.

He and Mary had resolved to quit Pisa as soon as the weather made it desirable to do so; but their plans and their anxieties were alike suspended by a temporary excitement of which Mary's account is given in the following letter —

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Pisa, *6th April 1822*.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — Not many days after I had written to you concerning the fate which ever pursues us at spring-tide, a circumstance happened which showed that we were not forgotten this year. Although, indeed, now that it is all over, I begin to fear that the King of Gods and men will not consider it a sufficiently heavy visitation, although for a time it threatened to be frightful enough. Two Sundays ago, Lord Byron, Shelley, Trelawny, Captain Hay, Count Gamba, and Taafe were returning from their usual evening ride, when, near the Porta della Piazza, they were passed by a soldier who galloped through the midst of them knocking up against Taafe. This nice little gentleman exclaimed, "Shall we endure this man's insolence?" Lord Byron replied, "No! we will bring him to an account," and Shelley (whose blood always boils at any insolence offered by a soldier) added, "As you please!" so they put spurs to their horses (*i.e.* all but Taafe, who remained quietly behind), followed and stopped the man, and, fancying that he was an officer, demanded his name and address, and gave their cards. The man who, I believe, was half drunk, replied only by all the oaths and abuse in which the Italian language is so rich. He ended by saying, "If I liked I could draw my sabre and cut you all to pieces, but as it is, I only arrest you," and he called out to the guards at the gate *arrestategli*. Lord Byron laughed at this, and saying *arrestateci pure*, gave spurs to his horse and rode towards the gate, followed by the rest. Lord Byron and Gamba passed, but before the others could, the soldier got under the gateway, called on the guard to stop them, and drawing his sabre, began to cut at them. It happened that I and the Countess Guiccioli were in a carriage close behind and saw it all, and you may guess how frightened we were when we saw our cavaliers cut at, they being totally unarmed. Their only safety was, that the field of battle being so confined, they got close under the man, and were able to arrest his arm. Captain Hay was, however, wounded in his face, and Shelley thrown from his horse. I cannot tell you how it all ended, but after cutting and slashing a little, the man sheathed his sword and rode on, while the others got from their horses to assist poor Hay, who was faint from loss of blood. Lord Byron, when he had passed the gate, rode to his own house, got a sword-stick from one of his servants, and was returning to the gate, Lung' Arno, when he met this man, who held out his hand saying, *Siete contento?* Lord Byron replied, "No! I must know your name, that I may require satisfaction of you." The soldier said, *Il mio nome è Masi, sono sargente maggiore*, etc. etc. While they were talking, a servant of Lord Byron's came and took hold of the bridle of the sergeant's horse. Lord Byron ordered him to let it go, and immediately the man put his horse to a gallop, but, passing Casa Lanfranchi, one of Lord Byron's servants thought that he had killed his master and was running away; determining that he should not go scot-free, he ran at him with a pitchfork and wounded him. The man rode on a few paces, cried out, *Sono ammazzato*, and fell, was carried to the hospital, the Misericordia bell ringing. We were all assembled at Casa Lanfranchi, nursing our wounded man, and poor Teresa, from the excess of her fright, was worse than any, when what was our consternation when we heard that the man's wound was considered mortal! Luckily none but ourselves knew who had given the wound; it was said by the wise Pisani, to have been one of Lord Byron's servants, set on by his padrone, and they pitched upon a poor fellow merely because *aveva lo sguardo fiero,* *quanto un assassino*. For some days Masi continued in great danger, but he is now recovering. As long as it was thought he would die, the Government did nothing; but now that he is nearly well, they have imprisoned two men, one of Lord Byron's servants (the one with the *sguardo fiero*), and the other a servant of Teresa's, who was behind our carriage, both perfectly innocent, but they have been kept *in segreto* these ten days, and God knows when they will be let out. What think you of this? Will it serve for our spring adventure? It is blown over now, it is true, but our fate has, in general, been in common with Dame Nature, and March winds and April showers have brought forth May flowers.

You have no notion what a ridiculous figure Taafe cut in all this — he kept far behind during the danger, but the next day he wished to take all the honour to himself, vowed that all Pisa talked of him alone, and coming to Lord Byron said, "My Lord, if you do not dare ride out to-day, I will alone." But the next day he again changed, he was afraid of being turned out of Tuscany, or of being obliged to fight with one of the officers of the sergeant's regiment, of neither of which things there was the slightest danger, so he wrote a declaration to the Governor to say that he had nothing to do with it; so embroiling himself with Lord Byron, he got between Scylla and Charybdis, from which he has not yet extricated himself; for ourselves, we do not fear any ulterior consequences.

10th April.

We received *Hellas* to-day, and the bill of lading. Shelley is well pleased with the former, though there are some mistakes. The only danger would arise from the vengeance of Masi, but the moment he is able to move, he is to be removed to another town; he is a *pessimo soggetto*, being the crony of Soldaini, Rosselmini, and Augustini, Pisan names of evil fame, which, perhaps, you may remember. There is only one consolation in all this, that if it be our fate to suffer, it is more agreeable, and more safe to suffer in company with five or six than alone. Well! after telling you this long story, I must relate our other news. And first, the Greek Ali Pashaw is dead, and his head sent to Constantinople; the reception of it was celebrated there by the massacre of four thousand Greeks. The latter, however, get on. The Turkish fleet of 25 sail of the line-of-war vessels, and 40 transports, endeavoured to surprise the Greek fleet in its winter quarters; finding them prepared, they bore away for Lante, and pursued by the Greeks, took refuge in the bay of Naupacto. Here they first blockaded them, and obtained a complete victory. All the soldiers on board the transports, in endeavouring to land, were cut to pieces, and the fleet taken or destroyed. I heard something about Hellenists which greatly pleased me. When any one asks of the peasants of the Morea what news there is, and if they have had any victory, they reply: “I do not know, but for us it is · Ä±½, · µÀ¹ Ä±Â,” being their Doric pronunciation of · Ä±½, · µÀ¹ Ä·Â, the speech of the Spartan mother, on presenting his shield to her son; “With this or on this.”

I wish, my dear Mrs. Gisborne, that you would send the first part of this letter, addressed to Mr. W. Godwin at Nash’s, Esq., Dover Street. I wish him to have an account of the fray, and you will thus save me the trouble of writing it over again, for what with writing and talking about it, I am quite tired. In a late letter of mine to my father, I requested him to send you *Matilda*. I hope that he has complied with my desire, and, in that case, that you will get it copied and send it to me by the first opportunity, perhaps by Hunt, if he comes at all. I do not mention commissions to you, for although wishing much for the things about which I wrote [we have], for the present, no money to spare. We wish very much to hear from you again, and to hear if there are any hopes of your getting on in your plans, what Henry is doing, and how you continue to like England. The months of February and March were with us as hot as an English June. In the first days of April we have had some very cold weather; so that we are obliged to light fires again. Shelley has been much better in health this winter than any other since I have known him, Pisa certainly agrees with him exceedingly well, which is its only merit, in my eyes. I wish fate had bound us to Naples instead. Percy is quite well; he begins to talk, Italian only now, and to call things *bello* and *buono*, but the droll thing is, that he is right about the genders. A silk *vestito* is *bello*, but a new *frusta* is *bella*. He is a fine boy, full of life, and very pretty. Williams is very well, and they are getting on very well. Mrs. Williams is a miracle of economy, and, as Mrs. Godwin used to call it, makes both ends meet with great comfort to herself and others. Medwin is gone to Rome; we have heaps of the gossip of a petty town this winter, being just in the *coterie* where it was all carried on; but now *Grazie a Messer Domenedio*, the English are almost all gone, and we, being left alone, all subjects of discord and clacking cease. You may conceive what a *bisbiglio* our adventure made. The Pisans were all enraged because the *maledetti inglesi* were not punished; yet when the gentlemen returned from their ride the following day (busy fate) an immense crowd was assembled before Casa Lanfranchi, and they all took off their hats to them. Adieu. *State bene e felice.* Best remembrances to Mr. Gisborne, and compliments to Henry, who will remember Hay as one of the Maremma hunters; he is a friend of Lord Byron's. — Yours ever truly,

Mary W. S.

This affair, and the consequent inquiry and examination of witnesses in connection with it took up several days, on one of which Mary and Countess Guiccioli were under examination for five hours.

In the meantime Byron decided to go to Leghorn for his summer boating; whereupon Shelley wrote and definitively proposed to Clare that she should accompany his party to Spezzia, promising her quiet and privacy, and immunity from annoyance, while she bided her time with regard to Allegra. Clare accepted the offer, and joined them at Pisa on the 15th of April in the expectation of starting very shortly. It turned out, however, that no suitable houses were, after all, to be had on the coast. This was an unexpected disappointment, and on the 23d she and the Williams' went off to Spezzia for another search. They were hardly on their way when letters were received by Shelley and Mary with the grievous news that Allegra had died of typhus fever in the convent of Bagnacavallo.

CHAPTER XVI

April-July 1882

"Evil news. Not well."

These few words are Mary's record of this frightful blow. She was again in delicate health, suffering from the same depressing symptoms as before Percy's birth, and for a like reason.

No wonder she was made downright ill by the shock, and by the sickening apprehension of the scene to follow when Clare should hear the news.

On the next day but one — the 25th of April — the travellers returned.

Williams says, in his diary for that day —

Meet S., his face bespoke his feelings. C.'s child was dead, and he had the office to break it to her, or rather not to do so; but, fearful of the news reaching her ears, to remove her instantly from this place.

Shelley could not tell Clare at once. Not while they were in Pisa, and with Byron close by. One, unfurnished, house was to be had, the Casa Magni, in the Bay of Lerici. Thither, on the chance of getting it, they must go, and instantly. Mary's indisposition must be ignored; she must undertake the negotiations for the house. Within twenty-four hours she was off to Spezzia, with Clare and little Percy, escorted by Trelawny; poor Clare quite unconscious of the burden on her friends' minds. Shelley remained behind another day, to pack up the necessary furniture; but, on the 27th, he with the whole Williams family left Pisa for Lerici. Thence, while waiting for the furniture to arrive by sea, he wrote to Mary at Spezzia.

Shelley to Mary.

Lerici, *Sunday, 28th April 1822*.

Dearest Mary — I am this moment arrived at Lerici, where I am necessarily detained, waiting the furniture, which left Pisa last night at midnight, and as the sea has been calm and the wind fair, I may expect them every moment. It would not do to leave affairs here in an *impiccio*, great as is my anxiety to see you. How are you, my best love? How have you sustained the trials of the journey? Answer me this question, and how my little babe and Clare are. Now to business —

Is the Magni House taken? if not, pray occupy yourself instantly in finishing the affair, even if you are obliged to go to Sarzana, and send a messenger to me to tell me of your success. I, of course, cannot leave Lerici, to which port the boats (for we were obliged to take two) are directed. But *you* can come over in the same boat that brings you this letter, and return in the evening. I hear that Trelawny is still with you. Tell Clare that, as I must probably in a few days return to Pisa for the affair of the lawsuit, I have brought her box with me, thinking she might be in want of some of its contents.

I ought to say that I do not think there is accommodation for you all at this inn; and that, even if there were, you would be better off at Spezzia; but if the Magni House is taken, then there is no possible reason why you should not take a row over in the boat that will bring this; but do not keep the men long. I am anxious to hear from you on every account. — Ever yours,

S.

Mary's answer was that she had concluded for Casa Magni, but that no other house was to be had in all that neighbourhood. It was in a neglected condition, and not very roomy or convenient; but, such as it was, it had to accommodate the Williams', as well as the Shelleys, and Clare. Considerable difficulty was experienced by Shelley in obtaining leave for the landing of the furniture; this obstacle got over, they at last took possession.

Edward Williams' Journal.

Wednesday, May 1. — Cloudy, with rain. Came to Casa Magni after breakfast, the Shelleys having contrived to give us rooms. Without them, heaven knows what we should have done. Employed all day putting the things away. All comfortably settled by 4. Passed the evening in talking over our folly and our troubles.

The worst trouble, however, was still impending. Finding how crowded and uncomfortable they were likely to be, Clare, after a day or two, decided that it was best for herself and for every one that she should return to Florence, and announced her intention accordingly. Compelled by the circumstances, Shelley then disclosed to her the true state of the case. Her grief was excessive, but was, after the first, succeeded by a calmness unusual in her and surprising to her friends; a reaction from the fever of suspense and torment in which she had lived for weeks past, and which were even a harder strain on her powers of endurance than the truth, grievous though that was, putting an end to all hope as well as to all fear. For the present she remained at the Villa Magni.

The ground floor of this habitation was appropriated, as is often done in Italy, for stowing the implements and produce of the land, as rent is paid in kind there. In the autumn you find casks of wine, jars of oil, tools, wood, occasionally carts, and, near the sea, boats and fishing-nets. Over this floor were a large saloon and four bedrooms (which had once been whitewashed), and nothing more; there was an out-building for cooking, and a place for the servants to eat and sleep in. The Williams had one room, and Shelley and his wife occupied two more, facing each other.

Facing the sea, and almost over it, a verandah or open terrace ran the whole length of the building; it was over the projecting ground floor, and level with the inhabited story.

The surrounding scenery was magnificent, but wild to the last degree, and there was something unearthly in the perpetual moaning and howling of winds and waves. Poor Mary now began to feel the ill effects of her enforced over-exertions. She became very unwell, suffering from utter prostration of strength and from hysterical affections. Rest, quiet, and freedom from worry were essential to her condition, but none of these could she have, nor even sleep at night. The absence of comfort and privacy, added to the great difficulty of housekeeping, and the melancholy with which Clare's misfortune had infected the whole party, were all very unfavourable to her.

After staying for three weeks, Clare returned for a short visit to Florence. Shelley's letters to her during her absence afford occasional glimpses, from which it is easy to infer more, into the state of affairs at Casa Magni. Mrs. Williams was "by no means acquiescent in the present system of things." The plan of having all possessions in common does not work well in the kitchen; the respective servants of the two families were always quarrelling and taking each other's things. Jane, who was a good housekeeper, had the defects of her qualities, and "pined for her own house and saucepans." "It is a pity," remarks Shelley, "that any one so pretty and amiable should be so selfish." Not that these matters troubled him much. Such little "squalls" gave way to calm, "in accustomed vicissitude" (to use his own words); and

Mrs. Williams had far too much tact to dwell on domestic worries to him. His own nerves were for a time shaken and unstrung, but he recovered, and, after the first, was unusually well. He was in love with the wild, beautiful place, and with the life at sea; for to his boat he escaped whenever any little breezes ruffled the surface of domestic life so that its mirror no longer reflected his own unwontedly bright spirits. At first he and Williams had only the small flat-bottomed boat in which they had navigated the Arno and Serchio, but in a fortnight there arrived the little schooner which Captain Roberts had built for Shelley at Genoa, and then their content was perfect.

For Mary no such escape from care and discomfort was open; she was too weak to go about much, and it is no wonder that, after the Williams' installation, she merely chronicles, "The rest of May a blank."

Williams' diary partly fills this blank; and it is so graphic in its exceeding simplicity that, though it has been printed before, portions may well be included here.

Extracts from Williams' Diary.

Thursday, May 2. — Cloudy, with intervals of rain. Went out with Shelley in the boat — fish on the rocks — bad sport. Went in the evening after some wild ducks — saw nothing but sublime scenery, to which the grandeur of a storm greatly contributed.

Friday, May 3. — Fine. The captain of the port despatched a vessel for Shelley's boat. Went to Lerici with S., being obliged to market there; the servant having returned from Sarzana without being able to procure anything.

Sunday, May 5. — Fine. Kept awake the whole night by a heavy swell, which made a noise on the beach like the discharge of heavy artillery. Tried with Shelley to launch the small flat-bottomed boat through the surf; we succeeded in pushing it through, but shipped a sea on attempting to land. Walk to Lerici along the beach, by a winding path on the mountain's side. Delightful evening, — the scenery most sublime.

Monday, May 6. — Fine. Some heavy drops of rain fell to-day, without a cloud being visible. Made a sketch of the western side of the bay. Read a little. Walked with Jane up the mountain.

After tea walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain. But he only answered by saying, “There it is again — there”! He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (Allegra) rise from the sea, and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him. This was a trance that it required some reasoning and philosophy entirely to awaken him from, so forcibly had the vision operated on his mind. Our conversation, which had been at first rather melancholy, led to this; and my confirming his sensations, by confessing that I had felt the same, gave greater activity to his ever-wandering and lively imagination.

Sunday, May 12. — Cloudy and threatening weather. Wrote during the morning. Mr. Maglian called after dinner, and, while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley’s boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday, but had been driven back by prevailing bad winds, a Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does, indeed, excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her, and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.

Monday, May 13. — Rain during night in torrents — a heavy gale of wind from S.W., and a surf running heavier than ever; at 4 gale unabated, violent squalls....

... In the evening an electric arch forming in the clouds announces a heavy thunderstorm, if the wind lulls. Distant thunder — gale increases — a circle of foam surrounds the bay — dark, evening, and tempestuous, with flashes of lightning at intervals, which give us no hope of better weather. The learned in these things say, that it generally lasts three days when once it commences as this has done. We all feel as if we were on board ship — and the roaring of the sea brings this idea to us even in our beds.

Wednesday, May 15. — Fine and fresh breeze in puffs from the land. Jane and Mary consent to take a sail. Run down to Porto Venere and beat back at 1 o’clock. The boat sailed like a witch. After the late gale, the water is covered with purple nautili, or as the sailors call them, Portuguese men-of-war. After dinner Jane accompanied us to the point of the Magra; and the boat beat back in wonderful style.

Wednesday, May 22. — Fine, after a threatening night. After breakfast Shelley and I amused ourselves with trying to make a boat of canvas and reeds, as light and as small as possible. She is to be 8½ feet long, and 4½ broad....

Wednesday, June 12. — Launched the little boat, which answered our wishes and expectations. She is 86 lbs. English weight, and stows easily on board. Sailed in the evening, but were becalmed in the offing, and left there with a long ground swell, which made Jane little better than dead. Hoisted out our little boat and brought her on shore. Her landing attended by the whole village.

Thursday, June 13. — Fine. At 9 saw a vessel between the straits of Porto Venere, like a man-of-war brig. She proved to be the *Bolivar*, with Roberts and Trelawny on board, who are taking her round to Livorno. On meeting them we were saluted by six guns. Sailed together to try the vessels — in speed no chance with her, but I think we keep as good a wind. She is the most beautiful craft I ever saw, and will do more for her size. She costs Lord Byron £750 clear off and ready for sea, with provisions and conveniences of every kind.

In the midst of this happy life one anxiety there was, however, which pursued Shelley everywhere; and neither on shore nor at sea could he escape from it, — that of Godwin's imminent ruin.

The first of the letters which follow had reached Mary while still at Pisa. The next letter, and that of Mrs. Godwin were, at Shelley's request, intercepted by Mrs. Mason and sent to him. He could not and would not show them to Mary, and wrote at last to Mrs. Godwin, to try and put a stop to them.

Godwin to Mary.

Skinner Street, *19th April 1822*.

My dearest Mary — The die, so far as I am concerned, seems now to be cast, and all that remains is that I should entreat you to forget that you have a father in existence. Why should your prime of youthful vigour be tarnished and made wretched by what relates to me? I have lived to the full age of man in as much comfort as can reasonably be expected to fall to the lot of a human being. What signifies what becomes of the few wretched years that remain?

For the same reason, I think I ought for the future to drop writing to you. It is impossible that my letters can give you anything but unmingled pain. A few weeks more, and the formalities which still restrain the successful claimant will be over, and my prospects of tranquillity must, as I believe, be eternally closed. — Farewell,

William Godwin.

Godwin to Mary.

Skinner Street, *3d May 1822*.

Dear Mary — I wrote to you a fortnight ago, and professed my intention of not writing again. I certainly will not write when the result shall be to give pure, unmitigated pain. It is the questionable shape of what I have to communicate that still thrusts the pen into my hand. This day we are compelled, by summary process, to leave the house we live in, and to hide our heads in whatever alley will receive us. If we can compound with our creditor, and he seems not unwilling to accept £400 (I have talked with him on the subject), we may emerge again. Our business, if freed from this intolerable burthen, is more than ever worth keeping.

But all this would, perhaps, have failed in inducing me to resume the pen, but for *one extraordinary accident*. Wednesday, 1st May, was the day when the last legal step was taken against me; and Wednesday morning, a few hours before this catastrophe, Willats, the man who, three or four years before, lent Shelley £2000 at two for one, called on me to ask whether Shelley wanted any more money on the same terms. What does this mean? In the contemplation of such a coincidence, I could almost grow superstitious. But, alas! I fear — I fear — I am a drowning man, catching at a straw. — Ever most affectionately, your father,

William Godwin.

Please to direct your letters, till you hear further, to the care of Mr. Monro, No. 60 Skinner Street.

Mrs. Mason to Shelley.

May 1822.

I send you in return for Godwin's letter one still worse, because I think it has more the appearance of truth. I was desired to convey it to Mary, but that I should not think right. At the same time, I don't well know how you can conceal all this affair from her; they really seem to want assistance at present, for their being turned out of the house is a serious evil. I rejoice in your good health, to which I have no doubt the boat and the Williams' much contribute, and wish there may be no prospect of its being disturbed.

Mary ought to know what is said of the novel, and how can she know that without all the rest? You will contrive what is best. In the part of the letter which I do send, she (Mrs. Godwin) adds, that at this moment Mr. Godwin does not offer the novel to any bookseller, lest his actual situation might make it be supposed that it would be sold cheap. Mrs. Godwin also wishes to correspond directly with Mrs. Shelley, but this I shall not permit; she says Godwin's health is much the worse for all this affair.

I was astonished at seeing Clare walk in on Tuesday evening, and I have not a spare bed now in the house, the children having outgrown theirs, and been obliged to occupy that which I had formerly; she proposed going to an inn, but preferred sleeping on a sofa, where I made her as comfortable as I could, which is but little so; however, she is satisfied. I rejoice to see that she has not suffered so much as you expected, and understand now her former feelings better than at first. When there is nothing to hope or fear, it is natural to be calm. I wish she had some determined project, but her plans seem as unsettled as ever, and she does not see half the reasons for separating herself from your society that really exist. I regret to perceive her great repugnance to Paris, which I believe to be the place best adapted to her. If she had but the temptation of good letters of introduction! — but I have no means of obtaining them for her — she intends, I believe, to go to Florence to-morrow, and to return to your habitation in a week, but talks of not staying the whole summer. I regret the loss of Mary's good health and spirits, but hope it is only the consequence of her present situation, and, therefore, merely temporary, but I dread Clare's being in the same house for a month or two, and wish the Williams' were half a mile from you. I must write a few lines to Mary, but will say nothing of having heard from Mrs. Godwin; you will tell her what you think right, but you know my opinion, that things which cannot be concealed are better told at once. I should suppose a bankruptcy would be best, but the Godwins do not seem to think so. If all the world valued obscure tranquillity as much as I do, it would be a happier, though possibly much duller, world than it is, but the loss of wealth is quite an epidemic disease in England, and it disturbs their rest more than the ... I should have a thousand things to say, but that I have a thousand other things to do, and you give me hope of conversing with you before long. — Ever yours very sincerely,

M. M.

Shelley to Mrs. Godwin.

Lerici, *29th May 1882*.

Dear Madam — Mrs. Mason has sent me an extract from your last letter to show to Mary, and I have received that of Mr. Godwin, in which he mentions your having left Skinner Street.

In Mary's present state of health and spirits, much caution is requisite with regard to communications which must agitate her in the highest degree, and the object of my present letter is simply to inform you that I thought it right to exercise this caution on the present occasion. Mary is at present about three months advanced in pregnancy, and the irritability and languor which accompany this state are always distressing, and sometimes alarming. I do not know even how soon I can permit her to receive such communications, or even how soon you or Mr. Godwin would wish they should be conveyed to her, if you could have any idea of the effect. Do not, however, let me be misunderstood. It is not my intention or my wish that the circumstances in which your family is involved should be concealed from her; but that the detail of them should be suspended until they assume a more prosperous character, or at least till letters addressed to her or intended for her perusal on that subject should not convey a supposition that she could do more than she does, thus exasperating the sympathy which she already feels too intensely for her Father's distress, which she would sacrifice all she possesses to remedy, but the remedy of which is beyond her power. She imagined that her novel might be turned to immediate advantage for him. I am greatly interested in the fate of this production, which appears to me to possess a high degree of merit, and I regret that it is not Mr. Godwin's intention to publish it immediately. I am sure that Mary would be delighted to amend anything that her Father thought imperfect in it, though I confess that if his objection relates to the character of Beatrice, *I* shall lament the deference which would be shown by the sacrifice of any portion of it to feelings and ideas which are but for a day. I wish Mr.

Godwin would write to her on that subject; he might advert to the letter (for it is only the last one) which I have suppressed, or not, as he thought proper.

I have written to Mr. Smith to solicit the loan of £400, which, if I can obtain in that manner, is very much at Mr. Godwin's service. The views which I now entertain of my affairs forbid me to enter into any further reversionary transactions; nor do I think Mr. Godwin would be a gainer by the contrary determination; as it would be next to impossible to effectuate any such bargain at this distance, nor could I burthen my income, which is only sufficient to meet its various claims, and the system of life in which it seems necessary I should live.

We hear you hear Jane's (Clare's) news from Mrs. Mason. Since the late melancholy event she has become far more tranquil; nor should I have anything to desire with regard to her, did not the uncertainty of my own life and prospects render it prudent for her to attempt to establish some sort of independence as a security against an event which would deprive her of that which she at present enjoys. She is well in health, and usually resides at Florence, where she has formed a little society for herself among the Italians, with whom she is a great favourite. She was here for a week or two; and although she has at present returned to Florence, we expect her on a visit to us for the summer months. In the winter, unless some of her various plans succeed, for she may be called *la fille aux mille projets*, she will return to Florence. Mr. Godwin may depend upon receiving immediate notice of the result of my application to Mr. Smith. I hope soon to have an account of your situation and prospects, and remain, dear Madam, yours very sincerely,

P. B. Shelley.

Mrs. Godwin.

We will speak another time, of what is deeply interesting both to Mary and to myself, of my dear William.

The knowledge of all this on Shelley's mind, — the consciousness that he was hiding it from Mary, and that she was probably more than half aware of his doing so, gave him a feeling of constraint in his daily intercourse with her. To talk with her, even about her father, was difficult, for he could neither help nor hide his feeling of irritation and indignation at the way in which Godwin persecuted his daughter after the efforts she had made in his behalf, and for which he had hardly thanked her.

It would have to come, the explanation; but for the present, as Shelley wrote to Clare, he was content to put off the evil day. Towards the end of the month Mary's health had somewhat improved, and the letter she then wrote to Mrs. Gisborne gives a connected account of all the past incidents.

Mary Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Casa Magni, Presso a Lerici,
2d June 1822.

My dear Mrs. Gisborne — We received a letter from Mr. Gisborne the other day, which promised one from you. It is not yet come, and although I think that you are two or three in my debt, yet I am good enough to write to you again, and thus to increase your debt. Nor will I allow you, with one letter, to take advantage of the Insolvent Act, and thus to free yourself from all claims at once. When I last wrote, I said that I hoped our spring visitation had come and was gone, but this year we were not quit so easily. However, before I mention anything else, I will finish the story of the *zuffa* as far as it is yet gone. I think that in my last I left the sergeant recovering; one of Lord Byron's and one of the Guiccioli's servants in prison on suspicion, though both were innocent. The judge or advocate, called a Cancelliere, sent from Florence to determine the affair, dislikes the Pisans, and, having *poca paga*, expected a present from Milordo, and so favoured our part of the affair, was very civil, and came to our houses to take depositions against the law. For the sake of the lesson, Hogg should have been there to learn to cross-question. The Cancelliere, a talkative buffoon of a Florentine, with "mille scuse per l'incomodo," asked, "Dove fu lei la sera del 24 marzo? Andai a spasso in carozza, fuori della Porta della Piaggia." A little clerk, seated beside him, with a great pile of papers before him, now dipped his pen in his ink-horn, and looked expectant, while the Cancelliere, turning his eyes up to the ceiling, repeated, "Io fui a spasso," etc. This scene lasted two, four, six, hours, as it happened. In the space of two months the depositions of fifteen people were taken, and finding Tita (Lord Byron's servant) perfectly innocent, the Cancelliere ordered him to be liberated, but the Pisan police took fright at his beard. They called him "il barbone," and, although it was declared that on his exit from prison he should be shaved, they could not tranquillise their mighty minds, but banished him. We, in the meantime, were come to this place, so he has taken refuge with us. He is an excellent fellow, faithful, courageous, and daring. How could it happen that the Pisans should be frightened at such a *mirabile mostro* of an Italian, especially as the day he was let out of *segreto*, and was a *largee* in prison, he gave a feast to all his fellow-prisoners, hiring chandeliers and plate! But poor Antonio, the Guiccioli's servant, the meekest-hearted fellow in the world, is kept in *segreto*; not found guilty, but punished as such, — *e chi sa* when he will be let out? — so rests the affair.

About a month ago Clare came to visit us at Pisa, and went with the Williams' to find a house in the Gulf of Spezzia, when, during her absence, the disastrous news came of the death of Allegra. She died of a typhus fever, which had been raging in the Romagna; but no one wrote to say it was there. She had no friends except the nuns of the Convent, who were kind to her, I believe; but you know Italians. If half of the Convent had died of the plague, they would never have written to have had her removed, and so the poor child fell a sacrifice. Lord Byron felt the loss at first bitterly; he also felt remorse, for he felt that he had acted against everybody's counsels and wishes, and death had stamped with truth the many and often-urged prophecies of Clare, that the air of the Romagna, joined to the ignorance of the Italians, would prove fatal to her. Shelley wished to conceal the fatal news from her as long as possible, so when she returned from Spezzia he resolved to remove thither without delay, with so little delay that he packed me off with Clare and Percy the very next day. She wished to return to Florence, but he persuaded her to accompany me; the next day he packed up our goods and chattels, for a furnished house was not to be found in this part of the world, and, like a torrent hurrying everything in its course, he persuaded the Williams' to do the same. They came here; but one house was to be found for us all; it is beautifully situated on the sea-shore, under the woody hills, — but such a place as this is! The poverty of the people is beyond anything, yet they do not appear unhappy, but go on in dirty content, or contented dirt, while we find it hard work to purvey miles around for a few eatables. We were in wretched discomfort at first, but now are in a kind of disorderly order, living from day to day as we can. After the first day or two Clare insisted on returning to Florence, so Shelley was obliged to disclose the truth. You may judge of what was her first burst of grief and despair; however she reconciled herself to her fate sooner than we expected; and although, of course, until she form new ties, she will always grieve, yet she is now tranquil — more tranquil than when prophesying her disaster; she was for ever forming plans for getting her child from a place she judged but too truly would be fatal to her. She has now returned to Florence, and I do not know whether she will join us again. Our colony is much smaller than we expected, which we consider a benefit. Lord Byron remains with his train at Montenero. Trelawny is to be the commander of his vessel, and of course will be at Leghorn. He is at present at Genoa, awaiting the finishing of this boat. Shelley's boat is a beautiful creature; Henry would admire her greatly; though only 24 feet by 8 feet she is a perfect little ship, and looks twice her size. She had one fault, she was to have been built in partnership with Williams and Trelawny. Trelawny chose the name of the *Don Juan*, and we acceded; but when Shelley took her entirely on himself we changed the name to the *Ariel*. Lord Byron chose to take fire at this, and determined that she should be called after the Poem; wrote to Roberts to have the name painted on the mainsail, and she arrived thus disfigured. For days and nights, full twenty-one, did Shelley and Edward ponder on her anabaptism, and the washing out the primeval stain. Turpentine, spirits of wine, buccata, all were tried, and it became dappled and no more. At length the piece had to be taken out and reefs put, so that the sail does not look worse. I do not know what Lord Byron will say, but Lord and Poet as he is, he could not be allowed to make a coal barge of our boat. As only one house was to be found habitable in this gulf, the Williams' have taken up their abode with us, and their servants and mine quarrel like cats and dogs; and besides, you may imagine how ill a large family agrees with my laziness, when accounts and domestic concerns come to be talked of. *Ma pazienza.* After all the place does not suit me; the people are *rozzi*, and speak a detestable dialect, and yet it is better than any other Italian sea-shore north of Naples. The air is excellent, and you may guess how much better we like it than Leghorn, when, besides, we should have been involved in English society — a thing we longed to get rid of at Pisa. Mr. Gisborne talks of your going to a distant country; pray write to me in time before this takes place, as I want a box from England first, but cannot now exactly name its contents. I am sorry to hear you do not get on, but perhaps Henry will, and make up for all. Percy is well, and Shelley singularly so; this incessant boating does him a great deal of good. I have been very unwell for some time past, but am better now. I have not even heard of the arrival of my novel; but I suppose for his own sake, Papa will dispose of it to the best advantage. If you see it advertised, pray tell me, also its publisher, etc.

We have heard from Hunt the day he was to sail, and anxiously and daily now await his arrival. Shelley will go over to Leghorn to him, and I also, if I can so manage it. We shall be at Pisa next winter, I believe, fate so decrees. Of course you have heard that the lawsuit went against my Father. This was the summit and crown of our spring misfortunes, but he writes in so few words, and in such a manner, that any information that I could get, through any one, would be a great benefit to me. Adieu. Pray write now, and at length. Remember both Shelley and me to Hogg. Did you get *Matilda* from Papa? — Yours ever,

Mary W. Shelley.

Continue to direct to Pisa.

Clare returned to the Casa Magni on the 6th of July. The weather had now become intensely hot, and Mary was again prostrated by it. Alarming symptoms appeared, and after a wretched week of ill health, these came to a crisis in a dangerous miscarriage. She was destitute of medical aid or appliances, and, weakened as she already was, they feared for her life. She had lain ill for several hours before some ice could be procured, and Shelley then took upon himself the responsibility of its immediate use; the event proved him right; and when at last a doctor came, he found her doing well. Her strength, however, was reduced to the lowest ebb; her spirits also; and within a week of this misfortune her recovery was retarded by a dreadful nervous shock she received through Shelley's walking in his sleep.

While Mary was enduring a time of physical and mental suffering beyond what can be told, and such as no man can wholly understand, Shelley, for his part, was enjoying unwonted health and good spirits. And such creatures are we all that unwonted health in ourself is even a stronger power for happiness than is the sickness of another for depression.

He was sorry for Mary's gloom, but he could not lighten it, and he was persistently content in spite of it. This has led to the supposition that there was, at this time, a serious want of sympathy between Shelley and Mary. His only want, he said in an often-quoted letter, was the presence of those who could feel, and understand him, and he added, “Whether from proximity, and the continuity of domestic intercourse, Mary does not.”

It would have been almost miraculous had it been otherwise. Perhaps nothing in the world is harder than for a person suffering from exhausting illness, and from the extreme of nervous and mental depression, to enter into the mood of temporary elation of another person whose spirits, as a rule, are uneven, and in need of constant support from others. But the context of this very letter of Shelley’s shows clearly enough that he meant nothing desperate, no shipwreck of the heart; for, as the people who could “feel, and understand him,” he instances his correspondents, Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, saying that his satisfaction would be complete if only *they* were of the party; although, were his wishes not limited by his hopes, Hogg would also be included. He would have liked a little intellectual stimulus and comradeship. As it was, he was well satisfied with an intercourse of which “words were not the instruments.”

I like Jane more and more, and I find Williams the most amiable of companions.

Jane’s guitar and her sweet singing were a new and perpetual delight to him, and she herself supplied him with just as much suggestion of an unrealised ideal as was necessary to keep his imagination alive. She, on her side, understood him and knew how to manage him perfectly; as a great man may be understood by a clever woman who is so far from having an intellectual comprehension of him that she is not distressed by the consciousness of its imperfection or its absence, but succeeds by dint of delicate social intuition, guided by just so much sense of humour as saves her from exaggeration, or from blunders; and who understands her great man on his human side so much better than the poor creature understands himself, as to wind him at will, easily, gracefully, and insensibly, round her little finger. And so, without sacrificing a moment’s peace of mind, Jane Williams won over Shelley an ascendency which was pleasing to both and convenient to every one. No better instance could be given of her method than the well-known episode of his sudden proposal to her to overturn the boat, and, together, to “solve the great mystery”; inimitably told by Trelawny. And so the month of June sped away.

“I have a boat here,” wrote Shelley to John Gisborne, ... “it cost me £80, and reduced me to some difficulty in point of money. However, it is swift and beautiful, and appears quite a vessel. Williams is captain, and we glide along this delightful bay, in the evening wind, under the summer moon, until earth appears another world. Jane brings her guitar, and if the past and the future could be obliterated, the present would content me so well that I could say with Faust to the present moment, ‘Remain; thou art so beautiful.’”

And now, like Faust, having said this, like Faust’s, his hour had come.

He heard from Genoa of the Leigh Hunts’ arrival, so far, on their journey, and wrote at once to Hunt a letter of warmest welcome to Italy, promising to start for Leghorn the instant he should hear of the Hunts’ vessel having sailed for that port.

Poor Mary, who sends you a thousand loves, has been seriously ill, having suffered a most debilitating miscarriage. She is still too unwell to rise from the sofa, and must take great care of herself for some time, or she would come with us to Leghorn. Lord Byron is in *villegiatura* near Leghorn, and you will meet besides with a Mr. Trelawny, a wild, but kind-hearted seaman.

The Hunts sailed; and, on the 1st of July, Shelley and Williams, with Charles Vivian, the sailor-lad who looked after their boat, started in the *Ariel* for Leghorn, where they arrived safely. Thence Shelley, with Leigh Hunt, proceeded to Pisa. It had not been their intention to stay long, but Shelley found much to detain him. Matters with respect to Byron and the projected magazine wore a most unsatisfactory appearance; Byron’s eagerness had cooled, and his reception of the Hunts was chilling in the extreme. Poor Mrs. Hunt was very seriously ill, and the letter which Mary received from her husband was mainly to explain his prolonged absence. She had let him go from her side with the greatest unwillingness; she was haunted by the gloomiest forebodings and a sense of unexplained misery which they all ascribed to her illness, and her letters were written in a tone of depression which made Shelley anxious on her account, and Edward Williams on that of his wife, who, he feared, might be unhappy during his absence from her.

But Jane wrote brightly, and gave an improved account of Mary.

Shelley to Mary.

Pisa, *4th July 1822*.

My dearest Mary — I have received both your letters, and shall attend to the instructions they convey. I did not think of buying the *Bolivar*; Lord Byron wishes to sell her, but I imagine would prefer ready money. I have as yet made no inquiries about houses near Pugnano — I have had no moment of time to spare from Hunt's affairs. I am detained unwillingly here, and you will probably see Williams in the boat before me, but that will be decided to-morrow.

Things are in the worst possible situation with respect to poor Hunt. I find Marianne in a desperate state of health, and on our arrival at Pisa sent for Vaccà. He decides that her case is hopeless, and, although it will be lingering, must end fatally. This decision he thought proper to communicate to Hunt, indicating at the same time with great judgment and precision the treatment necessary to be observed for availing himself of the chance of his being deceived. This intelligence has extinguished the last spark of poor Hunt's spirits, low enough before. The children are well and much improved. Lord Byron is at this moment on the point of leaving Tuscany. The Gambas have been exiled, and he declares his intention of following their fortunes. His first idea was to sail to America, which was changed to Switzerland, then to Genoa, and last to Lucca. Everybody is in despair, and everything in confusion. Trelawny was on the point of sailing to Genoa for the purpose of transporting the *Bolivar* overland to the Lake of Geneva, and had already whispered in my ear his desire that I should not influence Lord Byron against this terrestrial navigation. He next received *orders* to weigh anchor and set sail for Lerici. He is now without instructions, moody and disappointed. But it is the worse for poor Hunt, unless the present storm should blow over. He places his whole dependence upon the scheme of the journal, for which every arrangement has been made. Lord Byron must, of course, furnish the requisite funds at present, as I cannot; but he seems inclined to depart without the necessary explanations and arrangements due to such a situation as Hunt's. These, in spite of delicacy, I must procure; he offers him the copyright of the *Vision of Judgment* for the first number. This offer, if sincere, is *more* than enough to set up the journal, and, if sincere, will set everything right.

How are you, my best Mary? Write especially how is your health, and how your spirits are, and whether you are not more reconciled to staying at Lerici, at least during the summer. You have no idea how I am hurried and occupied; I have not a moment's leisure, but will write by next post. Ever, dearest Mary, yours affectionately,

S.

I have found the translation of the *Symposium*.

Shelley to Jane Williams.

Pisa, *4th July 1822*.

You will probably see Williams before I can disentangle myself from the affairs with which I am now surrounded. I return to Leghorn to-night, and shall urge him to sail with the first fair wind without expecting me. I have thus the pleasure of contributing to your happiness when deprived of every other, and of leaving you no other subject of regret but the absence of one scarcely worth regretting. I fear you are solitary and melancholy at the Villa Magni, and, in the intervals of the greater and more serious distress in which I am compelled to sympathise here, I figure to myself the countenance which has been the source of such consolation to me, shadowed by a veil of sorrow.

How soon those hours passed, and how slowly they return, to pass so soon again, and perhaps for ever, in which we have lived together so intimately, so happily! Adieu, my dearest friend. I only write these lines for the pleasure of tracing what will meet your eyes. Mary will tell you all the news.

S.

From Jane Williams to Shelley.

6th July.

My dearest Friend — Your few melancholy lines have indeed cast your own visionary veil over a countenance that was animated with the hope of seeing you return with far different tidings. We heard yesterday that you had left Leghorn in company with the *Bolivar*, and would assuredly be here in the morning at 5 o'clock; therefore I got up, and from the terrace saw (or I dreamt it) the *Bolivar* opposite in the offing. She hoisted more sail, and went through the Straits. What can this mean? Hope and uncertainty have made such a chaos in my mind that I know not what to think. My own Neddino does not deign to lighten my darkness by a single word. Surely I shall see him to-night. Perhaps, too, you are with him. Well, *pazienza*!

Mary, I am happy to tell you, goes on well; she talks of going to Pisa, and indeed your poor friends seem to require all her assistance. For me, alas! I can only offer sympathy, and my fervent wishes that a brighter cloud may soon dispel the present gloom. I hope much from the air of Pisa for Mrs. Hunt.

Lord B.'s departure gives me pleasure, for whatever may be the present difficulties and disappointments, they are small to what you would have suffered had he remained with you. This I say in the spirit of prophecy, so gather consolation from it.

I have only time left to scrawl you a hasty adieu, and am affectionately yours,

J. W.

Why do you talk of never enjoying moments like the past? Are you going to join your friend Plato, or do you expect I shall do so soon? *Buona notte.*

Mary was slowly getting better, and hoping to feel brighter by the time Shelley came back. On the 7th of July she wrote a few lines in her journal, summing up the month during which she had left it untouched.

Sunday, July 7. — I am ill most of this time. Ill, and then convalescent. Roberts and Trelawny arrive with the *Bolivar*. On Monday, 16th June, Trelawny goes on to Leghorn with her. Roberts remains here until 1st July, when the Hunts being arrived, Shelley goes in the boat with him and Edward to Leghorn. They are still there. Read *Jacopo Ortis*, second volume of *Geographica Fisica*, etc. etc.

Next day, Monday the 8th, when the voyagers were expected to return, it was so stormy all day at Lerici that their having sailed was considered out of the question, and their non-arrival excited no surprise in Mary or Jane. So many possibilities and probabilities might detain them at Leghorn or Pisa, that their wives did not get anxious for three or four days; and even then what the two women dreaded was not calamity at sea, but illness or disagreeable business on shore. On Thursday, however, getting no letters, they did become uneasy, and, but for the rough weather, Jane Williams would have started in a row-boat for Leghorn. On Friday they watched with feverish anxiety for the post; there was but one letter, and it turned them to stone. It was to Shelley, from Leigh Hunt, begging him to write and say how he had got home in the bad weather of the previous Monday. And then it dawned upon them — a dawn of darkness. There was no news; there would be no news any more.

One minute had untied the knot, and solved the great mystery. The *Ariel* had gone down in the storm, with all hands on board.

And for four days past, though they had not known it, Mary Shelley and Jane Williams had been widows.

CHAPTER XVII

July-September 1822

They set off at once, death in their hearts, yet clinging outwardly to any semblance of a hope. They crossed to Lerici, they posted to Pisa; they went first to Casa Lanfranchi. Byron was there; he could tell them nothing. It was midnight, but to rest or wait was impossible; they posted on to Leghorn. They went about inquiring for Trelawny or Roberts. Not finding the right inn they were forced to wait till next morning before prosecuting their search. They found Roberts; he only knew the *Ariel* had sailed on Monday; there had been a storm, and no more had been heard of her. Still they did not utterly despair. Contrary winds might have driven the boat to Corsica or elsewhere, and information was perhaps withheld.

"So remorselessly," says Trelawny, "are the quarantine laws enforced in Italy that, when at sea, if you render assistance to a vessel in distress, or rescue a drowning stranger, on returning to port you are condemned to a long and rigorous quarantine of fourteen or more days. The consequence is, should one vessel see another in peril, or even run it down by accident, she hastens on her course, and by general accord not a word is said or reported on the subject."

Trelawny accompanied the forlorn women back to Casa Magni, whence, for the next seven or eight days, he patrolled the coast with the coastguards, stimulating them to keep a good look-out by the promise of a reward. On Thursday, the 18th, he left for Leghorn, and on the next day a letter came to him from Captain Roberts with the intelligence that the bodies of Shelley and Williams had been washed ashore. The letter was received and opened by Clare Clairmont. To communicate its contents to Mary or Jane was more than she could do: in her distress she wrote to Leigh Hunt for help or counsel.

Friday Evening, 19th July 1822.

My dear Sir — Mr. Trelawny went for Livorno last night. There came this afternoon a letter to him from Captain Roberts — he had left orders with Mary that she might open it; I did not allow her to see it. He writes there is no hope, but they are lost, and their bodies found three miles from

Via Reggio. This letter is dated 15th July, and says he had heard this news 14th July. Outside the letter he has added, “I am now on my way to Via Reggio, to ascertain the facts or *no facts* contained in my letter.” This then implies that he doubts, and as I also doubt the report, because we had a letter from the captain of the port at Via Reggio, 15th July, later than when Mr. Roberts writes, to say nothing had been found, for this reason I have not shown his letter either to Mary or Mrs. Williams. How can I, even if it were true?

I pray you to answer this by return of my messenger. I assure you I cannot break it to them, nor is my spirit, weakened as it is from constant suffering, capable of giving them consolation, or protecting them from the first burst of their despair. I entreat you to give me some counsel, or to arrange some method by which they may know it. I know not what further to add, except that their case is desperate in every respect, and death would be the greatest kindness to us all. — Ever your sincere friend,

Clare.

This letter can hardly have been despatched before Trelawny arrived. He had seen the mangled, half-devoured corpses, and had identified them at once. It remained for him now to pronounce sentence of doom, as it were, on the survivors. This is his story, as he tells it —

I mounted my horse and rode to the Gulf of Spezzia, put up my horse, and walked until I caught sight of the lone house on the sea-shore in which Shelley and Williams had dwelt, and where their widows still lived. Hitherto in my frequent visits — in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary — I had buoyed up their spirits by maintaining that it was not impossible but that the friends still lived; now I had to extinguish the last hope of these forlorn women. I had ridden fast to prevent any ruder messenger from bursting in upon them. As I stood on the threshold of their house, the bearer or rather confirmer of news which would rack every fibre of their quivering frames to the uttermost, I paused, and, looking at the sea, my memory reverted to our joyous parting only a few days before. The two families then had all been in the verandah, overhanging a sea so clear and calm that every star was reflected on the water as if it had been a mirror; the young mothers singing some merry tune with the accompaniment of a guitar. Shelley’s shrill laugh — I heard it still — rang in my ears, with Williams’ friendly hail, the general *buona notte* of all the joyous party, and the earnest entreaty to me to return as soon as possible, and not to forget the commissions they had severally given me. I was in a small boat beneath them, slowly rowing myself on board the *Bolivar*, at anchor in the bay, loath to part from what I verily believed to have been at that time the most united and happiest set of human beings in the whole world. And now by the blow of an idle puff of wind the scene was changed. Such is human happiness.

My reverie was broken by a shriek from the nurse Caterina as, crossing the hall, she saw me in the doorway. After asking her a few questions I went up the stairs, and unannounced entered the room. I neither spoke nor did they question me. Mrs. Shelley's large gray eyes were fixed on my face. I turned away. Unable to bear this horrid silence, with a convulsive effort she exclaimed —

"Is there no hope?"

I did not answer, but left the room, and sent the servant with the children to them. The next day I prevailed on them to return with me to Pisa. The misery of that night and the journey of the next day, and of many days and nights that followed, I can neither describe nor forget.

There is no journal or contemporary record of the next three or four weeks; only from a few scattered hints in letters can any idea be gleaned of this dark time, when the first realisation of incredible misfortune was being lived out in detail. Leigh Hunt was almost broken-hearted.

"Dearest Mary," he wrote from Casa Lanfranchi on the 20th July, "I trust you will have set out on your return from that dismal place before you receive this. You will also have seen Trelawny. God bless you, and enable us all to be a support for one another. Let us do our best if it is only for that purpose. It is easier for me to say that I will do it than for you: but whatever happens, this I can safely say, that I belong to those whom Shelley loves, and that all which it is possible to me to do for them now and for ever is theirs. I will grieve with them, endure with them, and, if it be necessary, work for them, while I have life. — Your most affectionate friend,

Leigh Hunt.

Marianne sends you a thousand loves, and longs with myself to try whether we can say or do one thing that can enable you and Mrs. Williams to bear up a little better. But we rely on your great strength of mind."

Mary bore up in a way that surprised those who knew how ill she had been, how weak she still was, and how much she had previously been suffering in her spirits. It was a strange, tense, unnatural endurance. Except to Miss Curran at Rome, she wrote to no one for some time, not even to her father. This, which would naturally have been her first communication, may well have appeared harder to make than any other. Godwin's relations with Shelley had of late been strained, to say the least, — and then, Mary could not but remember his letters to her after Williams' death, and the privilege he had claimed "as a father and a philosopher" of rebuking, nay, of contemptuously deprecating her then excess of grief. How was she to write now in such a tone as to avert an answer of that sort? how write at all? She did accomplish it at last, but before her letter arrived Godwin had heard of the catastrophe through Miss Kent, sister of Mrs. Leigh Hunt. His fatherly feeling of anxiety for his daughter was aroused, and after waiting two days for direct news, he wrote to her as follows —

Godwin to Mary.

No. 195 Strand, *6th August 1822*.

Dear Mary — I heard only two days ago the most afflicting intelligence to you, and in some measure to all of us, that can be imagined — the death of Shelley on the 8th ultimo. I have had no direct information; the news only comes in a letter from Leigh Hunt to Miss Kent, and, therefore, were it not for the consideration of the writer, I should be authorised to disbelieve it. That you should be so overcome as not to be able to write is perhaps but too natural; but that Jane could not write one line I could never have believed; and the behaviour of the lady at Pisa towards us on the occasion is peculiarly cruel.

Leigh Hunt says you bear up under the shock better than could have been imagined; but appearances are not to be relied on. It would have been a great relief to me to have had a few lines from yourself. In a case like this, one lets one's imagination loose among the possibilities of things, and one is apt to rest upon what is most distressing and intolerable. I learned the news on Sunday. I was in hope to have had my doubts and fears removed by a letter from yourself on Monday. I again entertained the same hope to-day, and am again disappointed. I shall hang in hope and fear on every post, knowing that you cannot neglect me for ever.

All that I expressed to you about silence and not writing to you again is now put an end to in the most melancholy way. I looked on you as one of the daughters of prosperity, elevated in rank and fortune, and I thought it was criminal to intrude on you for ever the sorrows of an unfortunate old man and a beggar. You are now fallen to my own level; you are surrounded with adversity and with difficulty; and I no longer hold it sacrilege to trouble you with my adversities. We shall now truly sympathise with each other; and whatever misfortune or ruin falls upon me, I shall not now scruple to lay it fully before you.

This sorrowful event is, perhaps, calculated to draw us nearer to each other. I am the father of a family, but without children; I and my wife are falling fast into infirmity and helplessness; and in addition to all our other calamities, we seem destined to be left without connections and without aid. Perhaps now we and you shall mutually derive consolation from each other.

Poor Jane is, I am afraid, left still more helpless than you are. Common misfortune, I hope, will incite between you the most friendly feelings.

Shelley lived, I know, in constant anticipation of the uncertainty of his life, though not in this way, and was anxious in that event to make the most effectual provision for you. I am impatient to hear in what way that has been done; and perhaps you will make me your lawyer in England if any steps are necessary. I am desirous to call on Longdill, but I should call with more effect if I had authority and instructions from you. Mamma desires me to say how truly and deeply she sympathises in your affliction, and I trust you know enough of her to feel that this is the language of her heart.

I suppose you will hardly stay in Italy. In that case we shall be near to, and support each other. — Ever and ever affectionately yours,

William Godwin.

I have received your letter dated (it has no date) since writing the above; it was detained for some hours by being directed to the care of Monro, for which I cannot account. William wrote to you on the 14th of June, and I on the 23d of July. I will call on Peacock and Hogg as you desire. Perhaps Williams’ letter, and perhaps others, have been kept from you. Let us now be open and unreserved in all things.

This letter was doubtless intended to be kind and sympathetic, even in the persistent prominence given to the business aspect of recent events. Yet it was comical in its solemnity. For when had Godwin held it sacrilege to trouble his daughter with his adversities, or shown the slightest scruple in laying before her any misfortune or ruin that may have fallen on him? and what new prospect was afforded her in the future by his promise of doing so now? No; this privilege of a father and a philosopher had never been neglected by him.

Well indeed might he feel anxious as to what provision had been made for his daughter by her husband. In these matters he had long ceased to have a conscience, yet it was impossible he should be unaware that the utmost his son-in-law had been able to effect, and that at the expense of enormous sacrifices on the part of himself and his heirs, and of all the credit he possessed with publishers and the one or two friends who were not also dependents, had been to pay his, Godwin's, perpetual debts, and to keep him, as long as he could be kept, afloat.

Small opportunity had Shelley's "dear" friends allowed him as yet to make provision for his family in case of sudden misfortune!

Godwin, however, was really anxious about Mary, and his anxiety was perhaps increased by his letter; for in three days he wrote again, with out alluding to money.

Godwin to Mary.

9th August 1822.

My dear Mary — I am inexpressibly anxious to hear from you, and your present situation renders the reciprocation of letters and answers — implying an interval of a month between each letter I receive from you to the next — intolerable.

My poor girl, what do you mean to do with yourself? You surely do not mean to stay in Italy? How glad I should be to be near you, and to endeavour by new expedients each day to endeavour to make up your loss. But you are the best judge. If Italy is a country to which in these few years you are naturalised, and if England is become dull and odious to you, then stay!

I should think, however, that now that you have lost your closest friend, your mind would naturally turn homeward, and to your earliest friend. Is it not so? Surely we might be a great support to each other under the trials to which we are reserved. What signify a few outward adversities if we find a friend at home?

One thing I would earnestly recommend in our future intercourse, is perfect frankness. I think you are of a frank nature, I am sure I am so. We have now no battle to fight, — no contention to maintain, — that is over now.

Above all, let me entreat you to keep up your courage. You have many duties to perform; you must now be the father as well as the mother; and I trust you have energy of character enough to enable you to perform your duties honourably and well. — Ever and ever most affectionately yours,

W. Godwin.

The stunning nature of the blow she had endured, the uncertainty and complication of her affairs, and the absence of any one preponderating motive, made it impossible for Mary to settle at once on any scheme for the future. Her first idea was to return to England without delay, so as to avoid any possible risk to her boy from the Italian climate. Her one wish was to possess herself, before leaving, of the portrait of Shelley begun at Rome by Miss Curran, and laid aside in an unfinished state as a failure. In the absence of any other likeness it would be precious, and it might perhaps be improved. It was on this subject that she had written to Miss Curran in the quite early days of her misfortune; no answer had come, and she wrote again, now to request "that favour now nearer my heart than any other thing — the picture of my Shelley."

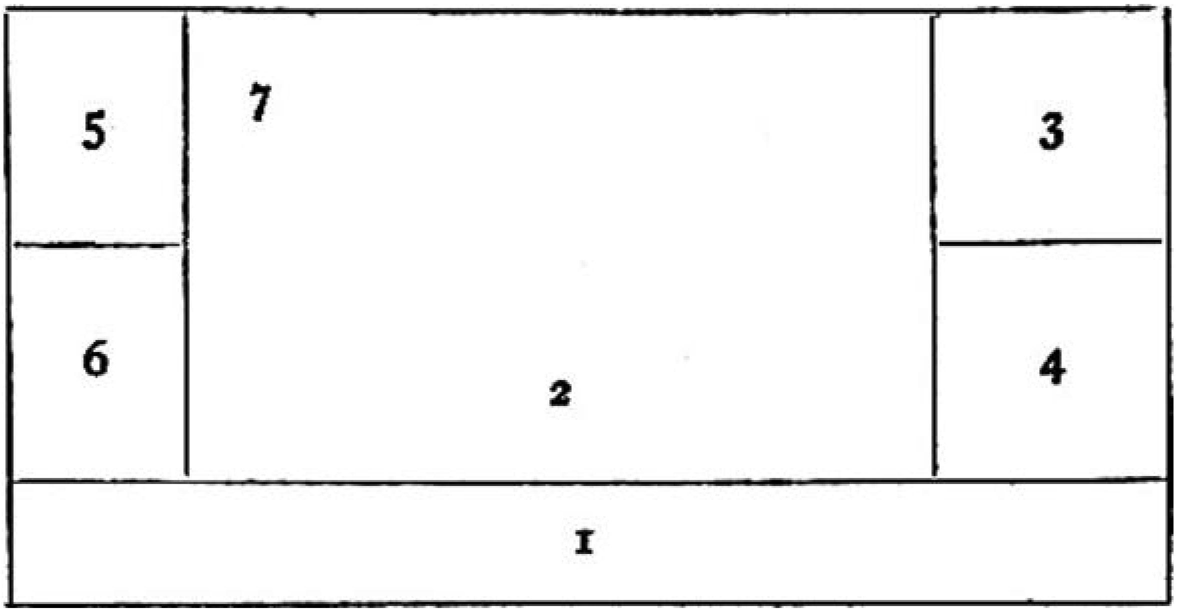
"We leave Italy soon," she continued, "so I am particularly anxious to obtain this treasure, which I am sure you will give me as soon as possible. I have no other likeness of him, and in so utter desolation, how invaluable to me is your picture. Will you not send it? Will you not answer me without delay? Your former kindness bids me hope everything."

She was awakening to life again; in other words, to pain: with keen anguish, like that of returning circulation to a limb which has been frozen and numb, her feelings, her forces, her intellect, began to respond to outward calls upon them, with a sensation, at times, of even morbid activity. It was a kind of relief, now, to write to Mrs. Gisborne that letter which contains the most graphic and connected of all accounts of the past tragedy.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

15th August 1822.

I said in a letter to Peacock, my dear Mrs. Gisborne, that I would send you some account of the last miserable months of my disastrous life. From day to day I have put this off, but I will now endeavour to fulfil my design. The scene of my existence is closed, and though there be no pleasure in retracing the scenes that have preceded the event which has crushed my hopes, yet there seems to be a necessity in doing so, and I obey the impulse that urges me. I wrote to you either at the end of May or the beginning of June. I described to you the place we were living in — our desolate house, the beauty yet strangeness of the scenery, and the delight Shelley took in all this. He never was in better health or spirits than during this time. I was not well in body or mind. My nerves were wound up to the utmost irritation, and the sense of misfortune hung over my spirits. No words can tell you how I hated our house and the country about it. Shelley reproached me for this — his health was good, and the place was quite after his own heart. What could I answer? That the people were wild and hateful, that though the country was beautiful yet I liked a more *countrified* place, that there was great difficulty in living, that all our Tuscans would leave us, and that the very jargon of these *Genovesi* was disgusting. This was all I had to say, but no words could describe my feelings; the beauty of the woods made me weep and shudder; so vehement was my feeling of dislike that I used to rejoice when the winds and waves permitted me to go out in the boat, so that I was not obliged to take my usual walk among the shaded paths, alleys of vine festooned trees — all that before I doated on, and that now weighed on me. My only moments of peace were on board that unhappy boat when, lying down with my head on his knee, I shut my eyes and felt the wind and our swift motion alone. My ill health might account for much of this. Bathing in the sea somewhat relieved me, but on the 8th of June (I think it was) I was threatened with a miscarriage, and after a week of great ill health, on Sunday, the 16th, this took place at 8 in the morning. I was so ill that for seven hours I lay nearly lifeless — kept from fainting by brandy, vinegar, and eau-de-Cologne, etc. At length ice was brought to our solitude; it came before the doctor, so Clare and Jane were afraid of using it, but Shelley overruled them, and by an unsparing application of it I was restored. They all thought, and so did I at one time, that I was about to die, I hardly wished that I had, — my own Shelley could never have lived without me; the sense of eternal misfortune would have pressed too heavily upon him, and what would have become of my poor babe? My convalescence was slow, and during it a strange occurrence happened to retard it. But first I must describe our house to you. The floor on which we lived was thus —



1 is a terrace that went the whole length of our house and was precipitous to the sea; 2, the large dining-hall; 3, a private staircase; 4, my bedroom; 5, Mrs. Williams' bedroom; 6, Shelley's; and 7, the entrance from the great staircase. Now to return. As I said, Shelley was at first in perfect health, but having over-fatigued himself one day, and then the fright my illness gave him, caused a return of nervous sensations and visions as bad as in his worst times. I think it was the Saturday after my illness, while yet unable to walk, I was confined to my bed — in the middle of the night I was awoke by hearing him scream and come rushing into my room; I was sure that he was asleep, and tried to waken him by calling on him, but he continued to scream, which inspired me with such a panic that I jumped out of bed and ran across the hall to Mrs. Williams' room, where I fell through weakness, though I was so frightened that I got up again immediately. She let me in, and Williams went to Shelley, who had been wakened by my getting out of bed — he said that he had not been asleep, and that it was a vision that he saw that had frightened him. But as he declared that he had not screamed, it was certainly a dream, and no waking vision. What had frightened him was this. He dreamt that, lying as he did in bed, Edward and Jane came in to him; they were in the most horrible condition; their bodies lacerated, their

bones starting through their skin, their faces pale yet stained with blood; they could hardly walk, but Edward was the weakest, and Jane was supporting him. Edward said, “Get up, Shelley, the sea is flooding the house, and it is all coming down.” Shelley got up, he thought, and went to his window that looked on the terrace and the sea, and thought he saw the sea rushing in. Suddenly his vision changed, and he saw the figure of himself strangling me; that had made him rush into my room, yet, fearful of frightening me, he dared not approach the bed, when my jumping out awoke him, or, as he phrased it, caused his vision to vanish. All this was frightful enough, and talking it over the next morning, he told me that he had had many visions lately; he had seen the figure of himself, which met him as he walked on the terrace and said to him, “How long do you mean to be content?” no very terrific words, and certainly not prophetic of what has occurred. But Shelley had often seen these figures when ill; but the strangest thing is that Mrs. Williams saw him. Now Jane, though a woman of sensibility, has not much imagination, and is not in the slightest degree nervous, neither in dreams nor otherwise. She was standing one day, the day before I was taken ill, at a window that looked on the terrace, with Trelawny. It was day. She saw, as she thought, Shelley pass by the window, as he often was then, without a coat or jacket; he passed again. Now, as he passed both times the same way, and as from the side towards which he went each time there was no way to get back except past the window again (except over a wall 20 feet from the ground), she was struck at her seeing him pass twice thus, and looked out and seeing him no more, she cried, “Good God, can Shelley have leapt from the wall? Where can he be gone?” “Shelley,” said Trelawny, “no Shelley has passed. What do you mean?” Trelawny says that she trembled exceedingly when she heard this, and it proved, indeed, that Shelley had never been on the terrace, and was far off at the time she saw him. Well, we thought no more of these things, and I slowly got better. Having heard from Hunt that he had sailed from Genoa, on Monday, 1st July, Shelley, Edward, and Captain Roberts (the gentleman who built our boat) departed in our boat for Leghorn to receive him. I was then just better, had begun to crawl from my bedroom to the terrace, but bad spirits succeeded to ill health, and this departure of Shelley’s seemed to add insufferably to my misery. I could not endure that he should go. I called him back two or three times, and told him that if I did not see him soon I would go to Pisa with the child. I cried bitterly when he went away. They went, and Jane, Clare, and I remained alone with the children. I could not walk out, and though I gradually gathered strength, it was slowly, and my ill spirits increased. In my letters to him I entreated him to return; "the feeling that some misfortune would happen," I said, "haunted me." I feared for the child, for the idea of danger connected with him never struck me. When Jane and Clare took their evening walk, I used to patrol the terrace, oppressed with wretchedness, yet gazing on the most beautiful scene in the world. This Gulf of Spezzia is subdivided into many small bays, of which ours was far the most beautiful. The two horns of the bay (so to express myself) were wood-covered promontories, crowned with castles; at the foot of these, on the farthest, was Lerici, on the nearest San Terenzo; Lerici being above a mile by land from us, and San Terenzo about a hundred or two yards. Trees covered the hills that enclosed this bay, and their beautiful groups were picturesquely contrasted with the rocks, the castle, and the town. The sea lay far extended in front, while to the west we saw the promontory and islands, which formed one of the extreme boundaries of the Gulf. To see the sun set upon this scene, the stars shine, and the moon rise, was a sight of wondrous beauty, but to me it added only to my wretchedness. I repeated to myself all that another would have said to console me, and told myself the tale of love, peace, and competence which I enjoyed; but I answered myself by tears — Did not my William die, and did I hold my Percy by a firmer tenure? Yet I thought when he, when my Shelley, returns, I shall be happy; he will comfort me, if my boy be ill he will restore him, and encourage me. I had a letter or two from Shelley, mentioning the difficulties he had in establishing the Hunts, and that he was unable to fix the time of his return. Thus a week passed. On Monday, 8th, Jane had a letter from Edward, dated Saturday; he said that he waited at Leghorn for Shelley, who was at Pisa; that Shelley's return was certain; "but," he continued, "if he should not come by Monday, I will come in a felucca, and you may expect me Tuesday evening at farthest." This was Monday, the fatal Monday, but with us it was stormy all day, and we did not at all suppose that they could put to sea. At 12 at night we had a thunderstorm; Tuesday it rained all day, and was calm — wept on their graves. On Wednesday the wind was fair from Leghorn, and in the evening several feluccas arrived thence; one brought word that they had sailed on

Monday, but we did not believe them. Thursday was another day of fair wind, and when 12 at night came, and we did not see the tall sails of the little boat double the promontory before us, we began to fear, not the truth, but some illness — some disagreeable news for their detention. Jane got so uneasy that she determined to proceed the next day to Leghorn in a boat, to see what was the matter. Friday came, and with it a heavy sea and bad wind. Jane, however, resolved to be rowed to Leghorn (since no boat could sail), and busied herself in preparations. I wished her to wait for letters, since Friday was letter day. She would not; but the sea detained her; the swell rose so that no boat could venture out. At 12 at noon our letters came; there was one from Hunt to Shelley; it said, "Pray write to tell us how you got home, for they say that you had bad weather after you sailed Monday, and we are anxious." The paper fell from me. I trembled all over. Jane read it. "Then it is all over," she said. "No, my dear Jane," I cried, "it is not all over, but this suspense is dreadful. Come with me, we will go to Leghorn; we will post to be swift, and learn our fate." We crossed to Lerici, despair in our hearts; they raised our spirits there by telling us that no accident had been heard of, and that it must have been known, etc., but still our fear was great, and without resting we posted to Pisa. It must have been fearful to see us — two poor, wild, aghast creatures driving (like Matilda) towards the sea, to learn if we were to be for ever doomed to misery. I knew that Hunt was at Pisa, at Lord Byron's house, but I thought that Lord Byron was at Leghorn. I settled that we should drive to Casa Lanfranchi, that I should get out, and ask the fearful question of Hunt, "Do you know anything of Shelley?" On entering Pisa, the idea of seeing Hunt for the first time for four years, under such circumstances, and asking him such a question, was so terrific to me, that it was with difficulty that I prevented myself from going into convulsions. My struggles were dreadful. They knocked at the door, and some one called out, *chi è?* It was the Guiccioli's maid. Lord Byron was in Pisa. Hunt was in bed; so I was to see Lord Byron instead of him. This was a great relief to me. I staggered upstairs; the Guiccioli came to meet me, smiling, while I could hardly say, "Where is he — Sapete alcuna cosa di Shelley?" They knew nothing; he had left Pisa on Sunday; on Monday he had sailed; there had been bad weather Monday afternoon. More they knew not. Both Lord Byron and the lady have told me since, that on that terrific evening I looked more like a ghost than a woman — light seemed to emanate from my features; my face was very white; I looked like marble. Alas! I had risen almost from a bed of sickness for this journey; I had travelled all day; it was now 12 at night, and we, refusing to rest, proceeded to Leghorn — not in despair — no, for then we must have died; but with sufficient hope to keep up the agitation of the spirits, which was all my life. It was past 2 in the morning when we arrived. They took us to the wrong inn; neither Trelawny nor Captain Roberts were there, nor did we exactly know where they were, so we were obliged to wait until daylight: we threw ourselves drest on our beds, and slept a little, but at 6 o'clock we went to one or two inns, to ask for one or the other of these gentlemen. We found Roberts at the "Globe." He came down to us with a face that seemed to tell us that the worst was true, and here we learned all that occurred during the week they had been absent from us, and under what circumstances they had departed on their return.

Shelley had passed most of the time at Pisa, arranging the affairs of the Hunts, and screwing Lord Byron's mind to the sticking place about the journal. He had found this a difficult task at first, but at length he had succeeded to his heart's content with both points. Mrs. Mason said that she saw him in better health and spirits than she had ever known him, when he took leave of her, Sunday, July 7, his face burnt by the sun, and his heart light, that he had succeeded in rendering the Hunts tolerably comfortable. Edward had remained at Leghorn. On Monday, July 8, during the morning, they were employed in buying many things, eatables, etc., for our solitude. There had been a thunderstorm early, but about noon the weather was fine, and the wind right fair for Lerici. They were impatient to be gone. Roberts said, "Stay until to-morrow, to see if the weather is settled;" and Shelley might have stayed, but Edward was in so great an anxiety to reach home, saying they would get there in seven hours with that wind, that they sailed; Shelley being in one of those extravagant fits of good spirits, in which you have sometimes seen him. Roberts went out to the end of the mole, and watched them out of sight; they sailed at 1, and went off at the rate of about seven knots. About 3, Roberts, who was still on the mole, saw wind coming from the Gulf, or rather what the Italians call *a temporale*. Anxious to know how the boat would weather the storm, he got leave to go up the tower, and, with the glass, discovered them about ten miles out at sea, off Via Reggio; they were taking in their topsails. "The haze of the storm," he said, "hid them from me, and I saw them no more. When the storm cleared, I looked again, fancying that I should see them on their return to us, but there was no boat on the sea."

This, then, was all we knew, yet we did not despair; they might have been driven over to Corsica, and not knowing the coast, have gone God knows where. Reports favoured this belief; it was even said that they had been seen in the Gulf. We resolved to return with all possible speed; we sent a courier to go from tower to tower, along the coast, to know if anything had been seen or found, and at 9 A.M. we quitted Leghorn, stopped but one moment at Pisa, and proceeded towards Lerici. When at two miles from Via Reggio, we rode down to that town to know if they knew anything. Here our calamity first began to break on us; a little boat and a water cask had been found five miles off — they had manufactured a *piccolissima lancia* of thin planks stitched by a shoemaker, just to let them run on shore without wetting themselves, as our boat drew four feet of water. The description of that found tallied with this, but then this boat was very cumbersome, and in bad weather they might have been easily led to throw it overboard, — the cask frightened me most, — but the same reason might in some sort be given for that. I must tell you that Jane and I were not alone. Trelawny accompanied us back to our home. We journeyed on and reached the Magra about half-past 10 P.M. I cannot describe to you what I felt in the first moment when, fording this river, I felt the water splash about our wheels. I was suffocated — I gasped for breath — I thought I should have gone into convulsions, and I struggled violently that Jane might not perceive it. Looking down the river I saw the two great lights burning at the *foce*; a voice from within me seemed to cry aloud, "That is his grave." After passing the river I gradually recovered. Arriving at Lerici we were obliged to cross our little bay in a boat. San Terenzo was illuminated for a festa. What a scene! The waving sea, the sirocco wind, the lights of the town towards which we rowed, and our own desolate hearts, that coloured all with a shroud. We landed. Nothing had been heard of them. This was Saturday, July 13, and thus we waited until Thursday July 18, thrown about by hope and fear. We sent messengers along the coast towards Genoa and to Via Reggio; nothing had been found more than the *Lancetta*; reports were brought us; we hoped; and yet to tell you all the agony we endured during those twelve days, would be to make you conceive a universe of pain —

each moment intolerable, and giving place to one still worse. The people of the country, too, added to one's discomfort; they are like wild savages; on festas, the men and women and children in different bands — the sexes always separate — pass the whole night in dancing on the sands close to our door; running into the sea, then back again, and screaming all the time one perpetual air, the most detestable in the world; then the sirocco perpetually blew, and the sea for ever moaned their dirge. On Thursday, 18th, Trelawny left us to go to Leghorn, to see what was doing or what could be done. On Friday I was very ill; but as evening came on, I said to Jane, "If anything had been found on the coast, Trelawny would have returned to let us know. He has not returned, so I hope." About 7 o'clock P.M. he did return; all was over, all was quiet now; they had been found washed on shore. Well, all this was to be endured.

Well, what more have I to say? The next day we returned to Pisa, and here we are still. Days pass away, one after another, and we live thus; we are all together; we shall quit Italy together. Jane must proceed to London. If letters do not alter my views, I shall remain in Paris. Thus we live, seeing the Hunts now and then. Poor Hunt has suffered terribly, as you may guess. Lord Byron is very kind to me, and comes with the Guiccioli to see me often. To-day, this day, the sun shining in the sky, they are gone to the desolate sea-coast to perform the last offices to their earthly remains, Hunt, Lord Byron, and Trelawny. The quarantine laws would not permit us to remove them sooner, and now only on condition that we burn them to ashes. That I do not dislike. His rest shall be at Rome beside my child, where one day I also shall join them. *Adonais* is not Keats', it is his own elegy; he bids you there go to Rome. I have seen the spot where he now lies, — the sticks that mark the spot where the sands cover him; he shall not be there, it is too near Via Reggio. They are now about this fearful office, and I live!

One more circumstance I will mention. As I said, he took leave of Mrs. Mason in high spirits on Sunday. "Never," said she, "did I see him look happier than the last glance I had of his countenance." On Monday he was lost. On Monday night she dreamt that she was somewhere, she knew not where, and he came, looking very pale and fearfully melancholy. She said to him, "You look ill; you are tired; sit down and eat." "No," he replied, "I shall never eat more; I have not a soldo left in the world." "Nonsense," said she, “this is no inn, you need not pay.” “Perhaps,” he answered, “it is the worse for that.” Then she awoke; and, going to sleep again, she dreamt that my Percy was dead; and she awoke crying bitterly — so bitterly, and felt so miserable — that she said to herself, “Why, if the little boy should die, I should not feel it in this manner.” She was so struck with these dreams, that she mentioned them to her servant the next day, saying she hoped all was well with us.

Well, here is my story — the last story I shall have to tell. All that might have been bright in my life is now despoiled. I shall live to improve myself, to take care of my child, and render myself worthy to join him. Soon my weary pilgrimage will begin. I rest now, but soon I must leave Italy, and then there is an end of all but despair. Adieu! I hope you are well and happy. I have an idea that while he was at Pisa, he received a letter from you that I have never seen; so not knowing where to direct, I shall send this letter to Peacock. I shall send it open; he may be glad to read it. — Yours ever truly,

Mary W. S.

Pisa, *15th August 1822*.

I shall probably write soon again. I have left out a material circumstance. A fishing-boat saw them go down. It was about 4 in the afternoon. They saw the boy at mast-head, when baffling winds struck the sails. They had looked away a moment, and, looking again, the boat was gone. This is their story, but there is little doubt that these men might have saved them, at least Edward, who could swim. They could not, they said, get near her; but three-quarters of an hour after passed over the spot where they had seen her. They protested no wreck of her was visible; but Roberts, going on board their boat, found several spars belonging to her: perhaps they let them perish to obtain these. Trelawny thinks he can get her up, since another fisherman thinks that he has found the spot where she lies, having drifted near shore. Trelawny does this to know, perhaps, the cause of her wreck; but I care little about it.

All readers know Trelawny’s graphic account of the burning of the bodies of Shelley and Williams. Subsequent to this ceremony a painful episode took place between Mary and Leigh Hunt. Hunt had witnessed the obsequies (from Lord Byron’s carriage), and to him was given by Trelawny the heart of Shelley, which in the flames had remained unconsumed. This precious relic he refused to give up to her who was its rightful owner, saying that, to induce him to part with it, her claim must be maintained by "strong and conclusive arguments." It was difficult to advance arguments strong enough if the nature of the case was not in itself convincing. He showed no disposition to yield, and Mary was desperate. Where logic, justice, and good feeling failed, a woman's tact, however, succeeded. Mrs. Williams "wrote to Hunt, and represented to him how grievous it was that Shelley's remains should become a source of dissension between his dearest friends. She obtained her purpose. Hunt said she had brought forward the only argument that could have induced him to yield."

Under the influence of a like feeling Mary seems to have borne Hunt no grudge for what must, at least, have appeared to her as an act of most gratuitous selfishness.

But Mary Shelley and Jane Williams had, both of them, to face facts and think of the future. Hardest of all, it became evident that, for the present, they must part. Their affection for each other, warm in happier times, had developed by force of circumstances into a mutual need; so much nearer, in their sorrow, were they to each other than either could be to any one else. But Jane had friends in England, and she required to enlist the interest of Edward's relations in behalf of his orphan children.

Meanwhile, if Mary had for the moment any outward tie or responsibility, it was towards the Leigh Hunts, thus expatriated at the request and desire of others, with a very uncertain prospect of permanent result or benefit. Byron, having helped to start the *Liberal* with contributions of his own, and thus fulfilled a portion of his bond, might give them the slip at any moment. Shelley, although little disposed toward the "coalition," had promised assistance, and any such promise from him would have been sure to mean, in practice, more, and not less, than it said. Mary had his MSS.; she knew his intentions; she was, as far as any mortal could be, his fitting literary representative. She had little to call her elsewhere. The Hunts were friendly and affectionate and full of pity for her; they were also poor and dependent. All tended to one result; she and they must for the present join forces, so saving expense; and she was to give all the help she could to the *Liberal*. Lord Byron was going to Genoa. Mary and the Hunts agreed to take a house together there for several months or a year.

Once more she wrote from Pisa to her friend.

Mary Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Pisa, *10th September 1822*.

And so here I am! I continue to exist — to see one day succeed the other; to dread night, but more to dread morning, and hail another cheerless day. My Boy, too, is alas! no consolation. When I think how he loved him, the plans he had for his education, his sweet and childish voice strikes me to the heart. Why should he live in this world of pain and anguish? At times I feel an energy within me to combat with my destiny; but again I sink. I have but one hope for which I live, to render myself worthy to join him, — and such a feeling sustains one during moments of enthusiasm, but darkness and misery soon overwhelm the mind when all near objects bring agony alone with them. People used to call me lucky in my star; you see now how true such a prophecy is! I was fortunate in having fearlessly placed my destiny in the hands of one who, a superior being among men, a bright "planetary" spirit enshrined in an earthly temple, raised me to the height of happiness. So far am I now happy, that I would not change my situation as his widow with that of the most prosperous woman in the world; and surely the time will at length come when I shall be at peace, and my brain and heart no longer be alive with unutterable anguish. I can conceive of but one circumstance that could afford me the semblance of content, that is the being permitted to live where I am now, in the same house, in the same state, occupied alone with my child, in collecting his manuscripts, writing his life, and thus to go easily to my grave. But this must not be! Even if circumstances did not compel me to return to England, I would not stay another summer in Italy with my child. I will at least do my best to render him well and happy, and the idea that my circumstances may at all injure him is the fiercest pang my mind endures.

I wrote you a long letter containing a slight sketch of my sufferings. I sent it directed to Peacock, at the India House, because accident led me to fancy that you were no longer in London. I said in that, that on that day (15th August) they had gone to perform the last offices for him; however, I erred in this, for on that day those of Edward were alone fulfilled, and they returned on the 16th to celebrate Shelley's. I will say nothing of the ceremony, since Trelawny has written an account of it, to be printed in the forthcoming journal. I will only say that all, except his heart (which was inconsumable), was burnt, and that two days ago I went to Leghorn and beheld the small box that contained his earthly dross; those smiles, that form — Great God! no, he is not there, he is with me, about me — life of my life, and soul of my soul; if his divine spirit did not penetrate mine I could not survive to weep thus.

I will mention the friends I have here, that you may form an idea of our situation. Mrs. Williams, Clare, and I live all together; we have one purse, and, joined in misery, we are for the present joined in life. She, poor girl, withers like a lily; she lives for her children, but it is a living death. Lord Byron has been very kind; the Guiccioli restrains him. She, being an Italian, is capable of being jealous of a living corpse, such as I. Of Hunt I will speak when I see you. But the friend to whom we are eternally indebted is Trelawny. I have, of course, mentioned him to you as one who wishes to be considered eccentric, but who was noble and generous at bottom. I always thought so, even when no fact proved it, and Shelley agreed with me, as he always did, or rather I with him. We heard people speak against him on account of his vagaries; we said to one another, "Still we like him — we believe him to be good." Once, even, when a whim of his led him to treat me with something like impertinence, I forgave him, and I have now been well rewarded. In my outline of events you will see how, unasked, he returned with Jane and me from Leghorn to Lerici; how he stayed with us poor miserable creatures five days there, endeavouring to keep up our spirits; how he left us on Thursday, and, finding our misfortune confirmed, then without rest returned on Friday to us, and again without rest returned to Pisa on Saturday. These were no common services. Since that he has gone through, by himself, all the annoyances of dancing attendance on Consuls and Governors for permission to fulfil the last duties to those gone, and attending the ceremony himself; all the disagreeable part, and all the fatigue, fell on him. As Hunt said, "He worked with the meanest and felt with the best." He is generous to a distressing degree. But after all these benefits to us, what I most thank him for is this. When on that night of agony, that Friday night, he returned to announce that hope was dead for us; when he had told me that his earthly frame being found, his spirit was no longer to be my guide, protector, and companion in this dark world, he did not attempt to console me — that would have been too cruelly useless, — but he launched forth into, as it were, an overflowing and eloquent praise of my divine Shelley, till I was almost happy that thus I was unhappy, to be fed by the praise of him, and to dwell on the eulogy that his loss thus drew from his friend. Of my friends I have only Mrs. Mason to mention; her coldness has stung me; yet she felt his loss keenly, and would be very glad to serve me; but it is not cold offers of service one wants; one's wounded spirit demands a number of nameless slight but dear attentions that are a balm, and wanting these, one feels a bitterness which is a painful addition to one's other sufferings.

God knows what will become of me! My life is now very monotonous as to outward events, yet how diversified by internal feeling! How often in the intensity of grief does one instant seem to fill and embrace the universe! As to the rest, the mechanical spending of my time: of course I have a great deal to do preparing for my journey. I make no visits, except one once in about ten days to Mrs. Mason. I have not seen Hunt these nine days. Trelawny resides chiefly at Leghorn, since he is captain of Lord Byron's vessel, the *Bolivar*; he comes to see us about once a week, and Lord Byron visits me about twice a week, accompanied by the Guiccioli; but seeing people is an annoyance which I am happy to be spared. Solitude is my only help and resource; accustomed, even when he was with me, to spend much of my time alone, I can at those moments forget myself, until some idea, which I think I would communicate to him, occurs, and then the yawning and dark gulph again displays itself, unshaded by the rainbow which the imagination had formed. Despair, energy, love, desponding and excessive affliction are like clouds driven across my mind, one by one, until tears blot the scene, and weariness of spirit consigns me to temporary repose.

I shudder with horror when I look back on what I have suffered, and when I think of the wild and miserable thoughts that have possessed me I say to myself, "Is it true that I ever felt thus?" and then I weep in pity of myself; yet each day adds to the stock of sorrow, and death is the only end. I would study, and I hope I shall. I would write, and when I am settled I may. But were it not for the steady hope I entertain of joining him, what a mockery would be this world! without that hope I could not study or write, for fame and usefulness (except as regards my child) are nullities to me. Yet I shall be happy if anything I ever produce may exalt and soften sorrow, as the writings of the divinities of our race have mine. But how can I aspire to that?

The world will surely one day feel what it has lost when this bright child of song deserted her. Is not *Adonais* his own elegy? and there does he truly depict the universal woe which should overspread all good minds since he has ceased to be their fellow-labourer in this worldly scene. How lovely does he paint death to be, and with what heartfelt sorrow does one repeat that line —

But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart.

How long do you think I shall live? as long as my mother? Then eleven long years must intervene. I am now on the eve of completing my five and twentieth year; how drearily young for one so lost as I. How young in years for one who lives ages each day in sorrow. Think you that these moments are counted in my life as in other people's? Oh no! The day before the sea closed over mine own Shelley he said to Marianne, "If I die to-morrow I have lived to be older than my father; I am ninety years of age." Thus, also, may I say. The eight years I passed with him was spun out beyond the usual length of a man's life, and what I have suffered since will write years on my brow and intrench them in my heart. Surely I am not long for this world; most sure should I be were it not for my boy, but God grant that I may live to make his early years happy.

Well, adieu! I have no events to write about, and can, therefore, only scrawl about my feelings; this letter, indeed, is only the sequel of my last. In that I closed the history of all events that can interest me; that letter I wish you to send my Father, the present one it is best not.

I suppose I shall see you in England some of these days, but I shall write to you again before I quit this place. Be as happy as you can, and hope for better things in the next world; by firm hope you may attain your wishes. Again, adieu! — Affectionately yours,

M. S.

Do not write to me again here, or at all, until I write to you.

Within a day or two after this letter was written, Mary, with Jane Williams and their children, quitted Pisa; Clare only remaining behind.

From a letter — a very indignant one — of Mrs. Mason's, it may be inferred that appeals for a little assistance had been made on Clare's behalf to Byron, who did not respond. He had been, unwittingly, contributing to her support during the last few weeks of Shelley's life; Shelley having undertaken to get some translations (from Goethe) made for Byron, and giving the work secretly to Clare. The truth now came out, and she found more difficulty than heretofore in getting paid. Dependent for the future on her own exertions, she was going, according to her former resolution, to Vienna, where Charles Clairmont was now established. Mary's departure left her dreadfully solitary, and within a few hours she despatched one of her characteristic epistles, touched with that motley of bitter cynicism and grotesque, racy, humour which developed in her later letters.

Half-past 2, Wednesday Morning.

My dear Mary — You have only been gone a few hours. I have been inexpressibly low-spirited. I hope dear Jane will be with you when this arrives. Nothing new has happened — what should? To me there seems nothing under the sun, except the old tale of misery, misery!

……

Thursday.

I am to begin my journey to Vienna on Monday. Mrs. Mason will make me go, and the consequence is that it will be double as much, as I am to go alone. Imagine all the lonely inns, the weary long miles, if I do. Observe, whatever befalls in life, the heaviest part, the very dregs of the misfortune fall on me.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Upon a wide, wide sea,
And Christ would take no mercy
Upon my soul in agony.

But I believe my Minerva is right, for I might wait to all eternity for a party. You may remember what Lord Byron said about paying for the translation; now he has mumbled and grumbled and demurred, and does not know whether it is worth it, and will only give forty crowns, so that I shall not be overstocked when I arrive at Vienna, unless, indeed, God shall spread a table for me in the wilderness. I mean to chew rhubarb the whole way, as the only diversion I can think of at all suited to my present state of feeling, and if I should write you scolding letters, you will excuse them, knowing that, with the Psalmist, “Out of the bitterness of my mouth have I spoken.”

……

Kiss the dear little Percy for me, and if Jane is with you, tell her how much I have thought of her, and that her image will always float across my mind, shining in my dark history like a ray of light across a cave. Kiss her children also with all a grandmother’s love. Accept my best wishes for your happiness. Dio ti da, Maria, ventura. — Your affectionate

Clare.

Mary answered this letter from Genoa.

From Mary to Clare.

Genoa, *15th September 1822*.

My dear Clare — I do not wonder that you were and are melancholy, or that the excess of that feeling should oppress you. Great God! what have we gone through, what variety of care and misery, all close now in blackest night. And I, am I not melancholy? here in this busy hateful Genoa, where nothing speaks to me of him, except the sea, which is his murderer. Well, I shall have his books and manuscripts, and in those I shall live, and from the study of these I do expect some instants of content. In solitude my imagination and ever-moving thoughts may afford me some seconds of exaltation that may render me both happier here and more worthy of him hereafter.

Such as I felt walking up a mountain by myself at sunrise during my journey, when the rocks looked black about me, and a white mist concealed all but them. I thought then, that, thinking of him and exciting my mind, my days might pass in a kind of peace; but these thoughts are so fleeting; and then I expect unhappiness alone from all the worldly part of my life — from my intercourse with human beings. I know that will bring nothing but unhappiness to me, if, indeed, I except Trelawny, who appears so truly generous and kind.

But I will not talk of myself, you have enough to annoy and make you miserable, and in nothing can I assist you. But I do hope that you will find Germany better suited to you in every way than Italy, and that you will make friends, and, more than all, become really attached to some one there.

I wish, when I was in Pisa, that you had said that you thought you should be short of money, and I would have left you more; but you seemed to think 150 francesconi plenty. I would not go on with Goethe except with a fixed price per sheet, to be paid regularly, and that price not less than five guineas. Make this understood fully through Hunt before you go, and then I will take care that you get the money; but if you do not *fix* it, then I cannot manage so well. You are going to Vienna — how anxiously do I hope to find peace; I do not hope to find it here. Genoa has a bad atmosphere for me, I fear, and nothing but the horror of being a burthen to my family prevents my accompanying Jane. If I had any fixed income I would go at least to Paris, and I shall go the moment I have one. Adieu, my dear Clare; write to me often, as I shall to you. — Affectionately yours,

Mary W. S.

I cannot get your German dictionary now, since I must have packed it in my great case of books, but I will send it by the first opportunity.

Jane and her children were the next to depart, and for a short time Mary Shelley and her boy were alone. Besides taking a house for the Hunts and herself, she had the responsibility of finding one for Lord Byron. People never scrupled to make her of use; but any object, any duty to fulfil, was good for her in her solitary misery, and she devoted some of her vacant time to sending an account of her plans to Mrs. Gisborne.

Mary Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Genoa, *17th September 1822*.

... I am here alone in Genoa; quite, quite alone! J. has left me to proceed to England, and, except my sleeping child, I am alone. Since you do not communicate with my Father, you will perhaps be surprised, after my last letter, that I do not come to England. I have written to him a long account of the arguments of all my friends to dissuade me from that miserable journey; Jane will detail them to you; and, therefore, I merely say now that, having no business there, I am determined not to spend that money which will support me nearly a year here, in a journey, the sole end of which appears to me the necessity I should be under, when arrived in London, of being a burthen to my Father. When my crowns are gone, if Sir Timothy refuses, I hope to be able to support myself by my writings and mine own Shelley's MSS. At least during many long months I shall have peace as to money affairs, and one evil the less is much to one whose existence is suffering alone. Lord Byron has a house here, and will arrive soon. I have taken a house for the Hunts and myself outside one of the gates. It is large and neat, with a *podere* attached; we shall pay about eighty crowns between us, so I hope that I shall find tranquillity from care this winter, though that may be the last of my life so free, yet I do not hope it, though I say so; hope is a word that belongs not to my situation. He — my own beloved, the exalted and divine Shelley — has left me alone in this miserable world; this earth, canopied by the eternal starry heaven — where he is — where, oh, my God! yes, where I shall one day be.

Clare is no longer with me. Jane quitted me this morning at 4. After she left me I again went to rest, and thought of Pugnano, its halls, its cypresses, the perfume of its mountains, and the gaiety of our life beneath their shadow. Then I dozed awhile, and in my dream saw dear Edward most visibly; he came, he said, to pass a few hours with us, but could not stay long. Then I woke, and the day began. I went out, took Hunt's house; but as I walked I felt that which is with me the sign of unutterable grief. I am not given to tears, and though my most miserable fate has often turned my eyes to fountains, yet oftener I suffer agonies unassuaged by tears. But during these last sufferings I have felt an oppression at my heart I never felt before. It is not a palpitation, but a *stringimento* which is quite convulsive, and, did I not struggle greatly, would cause violent hysterics. Looking on the sea, or hearing its roar, his dirge, it comes upon me; but these are corporeal sufferings I can get over, but that which is insurmountable is the constant feeling of despair that shadows me: I seem to walk on a narrow path with fathomless precipices all around me. Yet where can I fall? I have already fallen, and all that comes of bad or good is a mere mockery.

Those about me have no idea of what I suffer; none are sufficiently interested in me to observe that, though my lips smile, my eyes are blank, or to notice the desolate look that I cast up towards the sky. Pardon, dear friend, this selfishness in writing thus. There are moments when the heart must *sfogare* or be suffocated, and such a moment is this — when quite alone, my babe sleeping, and dear Jane having just left me, it is with difficulty I prevent myself from flying from mental misery by bodily exertion, when to run into that vast grave (the sea) until I sink to rest, would be a pleasure to me, and instead of this I write, and as I write I say, Oh God, have pity on me. At least I will have pity on you. Good-night, I will finish this when people are about me, and I am in a more cheerful mood. Good-night. I will go look at the stars. They are eternal, so is he, so am I.

You have not written to me since my misfortune. I understand this; you first waited for a letter from me, and that letter told you not to write. But answer this as soon as you receive it; talk to me of yourselves, and also of my English affairs. I am afraid that they will not go on very well in my absence, but it would cost more to set them right than they are worth. I will, however, let you know what I think my friends ought to do, that when you talk to Peacock he may learn what I wish. A claim should be made on the part of Shelley's executors for a maintenance for my child and myself from Sir Timothy. Lord Byron is ready to do this or any other service for me that his office of executor demands from him; but I do not wish it to be done separately by him, and I want to hear from England before I ask him to write to Whitton on the subject. Secondly, Ollier must be asked for all MSS., and some plan be reflected on for the best manner of republishing Shelley's works, as well as the writings he has left. Who will allow money to Ianthe and Charles?

As for you, my dear friends, I do not see what you can do for me, except to send me the originals or copies of Shelley's most interesting letters to you. I hope soon to get into my house, where writing, copying Shelley's MSS., walking, and being of some use in the education of Marianne's children will be my occupations. Where is that letter in verse Shelley once wrote to you? Let me have a copy of it. Is not Peacock very lukewarm and insensible in this affair? Tell me what Hogg says and does, and my Father also, if you have an opportunity of knowing. Here is a long letter all about myself, but though I cannot write, I like to hear of others. Adieu, dear friends. — Your sincerely attached,

Mary W. Shelley.

The fragment that follows is from Mrs. Williams' first letter, written from Geneva, where she and Edward had lived in such felicity, and where they had made friends with Medwin, Roberts, and Trelawny: a happy, light-hearted time on which it was torture to look back.

Jane Williams to Mary Shelley.

Geneva, *September 1822*.

I only arrived this day, my dearest Mary, and find your letter, the only friend who welcomes me. I will not detail all the misery I have suffered, let it be added to the heap that must be piled up; and when the measure is brimful, it needs must overflow; and then, peace! What have been my feelings to-day? I have gazed on that lake, still and ever the same, rolling on in its course, as if this gap in creation had never been made. I have passed that place where our little boat used to land, but where is the hand stretched out to meet mine, where the glad voice, the sweet smile, the beloved form? Oh! Mary, is my heart human that I endure scenes like this, and live? My arrival at the inn here has been one of the most painful trials I have yet undergone. The landlady, who came to the door, did not recognise me immediately, and when she did, our mutual tears prevented both interrogation and answer for some minutes. I then bore my sorrowful burden up these stairs he had formerly passed in all the pride of youth, hope, and love. When will these heartrending scenes be finished? Never! for, when they cease, memory will furnish others.

....

God bless you, dearest girl; take care of yourself. Remember me to the Hunts. — Ever yours,

Jane.

Not long after this Byron arrived at Genoa with his train, and the Hunts with their tribe.

“All that were now left of our Pisan circle,” writes Trelawny, “established themselves at Albaro, — Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs. Shelley. The fine spirit that had animated and held us together was gone. Left to our own devices, we degenerated apace.”

CHAPTER XVIII

September 1822-July 1823

An eminent contemporary writer, speaking of Trelawny's writings, has remarked: "So long as he dwells on Shelley, he is, like the visitants to the *Witch of Atlas*, 'imparadised.'" This was true, in fact not as to the writings, but the natures, of all who had friendly or intimate relations with Shelley. His personality was like a clear, deep lake, wherein the sky and the surrounding objects were reflected. Now and again a breeze, or even a storm, might sweep across the "watery glass," playing strange, grotesque pranks with the distorted reflections. But in general those who surrounded it saw themselves, and saw each other, not as they were, but as they appeared, — transfigured, idealised, glorified, by the impalpable, fluid, medium. And like a tree that overhangs the water's edge, whose branches dip and play in the clear ripples, nodding and beckoning to their own living likeness there, so Mary had grown up by the side of this, her own image in him, — herself indeed, but "imparadised" in the immortal unreality of the magic mirror.

Now the eternal frost had fallen: black ice and dreary snow had extinguished that reflection for ever, and the solitary tree was left to weather all storms in a wintry world, where no magic mirror was to be hers any more.

Mary Shelley's diary, now she was alone, altered its character. In her husband's lifetime it had been a record of the passing facts of every day; almost as concise in statement as that of her father. Now and then, in travelling, she would stereotype an impression of beautiful scenery by an elaborate description; sometimes, but very rarely, she had indulged (as at Pisa) on reflections on people or things in general.

The case was now exactly reversed. Alone with her child, with no one else to live for; having no companion-mind with which to exchange ideas, and having never known what it was to be without one before, her diary became her familiar, — or rather her shadow, for it took its sombre colouring from her and could give nothing back. The thoughts too monotonously sad, too harrowing in their eloquent self-pity to be communicated to other people, but which filled her heart, the more that heart was thrown back on itself, found here an outlet, inadequate enough, but still the only one they had. In thus recording her emotions for her own benefit, she had little idea that these melancholy self-communings would ever be gathered up and published for the satisfaction of the "reading world"; a world that loves nothing so well as personal details, and would rather have the object of its interest misrepresented than not represented at all. Outwardly uneventful as Mrs. Shelley's subsequent life was, its few occurrences are, as a rule, not even alluded to in her journal. Such things for the most part lost their intrinsic importance to her when Shelley disappeared; it was only in the world of abstractions that she felt or could imagine his companionship. Her journal, in reality, records her first essay in living alone. It was, to an almost incredible degree, a beginning.

Her existence, from its outset, had been offered up at the shrine of one man. To animate his solitude, to foster his genius, to help — as far as possible — his labours, to companion him in a world that did not understand him, — this had been her life-work, which lay now as a dream behind her, while she awakened to find herself alone with the solitude, the work, the cold unfriendly world, and without Shelley.

Could any woman be as lonely? All who share an abnormal lot must needs be isolated when cut adrift from the other life which has been their *raison d'être*; and Mary had begun so early, that she had grown, as it were, to this state of double solitude. She had not been unconscious of the slight hold they had on actualities.

"Mary," observed Shelley one day at Pisa, when Trelawny was present, "Trelawny has found out Byron already. How stupid we were; how long it took us!"

"That," she observed, "is because he lives with the living and we with the dead."

And as a fact, Shelley lived with the immortals; finite things were outside his world; in his contemporaries it was what he would have considered their immortal side that he cared for. There are conjurors who can be tied by no knot from which they cannot escape, and so the limitations of practical convention, those "ideas and feelings which are but for a day," had no power to hold Shelley.

And Mary knew no world but his. Now, young, — only twenty-five, — yet with the past experience of eight years of chequered married life, and of a simultaneous intellectual development almost perilously rapid, she stood, an utter novice, on the threshold of ordinary existence.

Journal, October 2. — On the 8th of July I finished my journal. This is a curious coincidence. The date still remains — the fatal 8th — a monument to show that all ended then. And I begin again? Oh, never! But several motives induce me, when the day has gone down, and all is silent around me, steeped in sleep, to pen, as occasion wills, my reflections and feelings. First, I have no friend. For eight years I communicated, with unlimited freedom, with one whose genius, far transcending mine, awakened and guided my thoughts. I conversed with him, rectified my errors of judgment; obtained new lights from him; and my mind was satisfied. Now I am alone — oh, how alone! The stars may behold my tears, and the wind drink my sighs, but my thoughts are a sealed treasure which I can confide to none. But can I express all I feel? Can I give words to thoughts and feelings that, as a tempest, hurry me along? Is this the sand that the ever-flowing sea of thought would impress indelibly? Alas! I am alone. No eye answers mine; my voice can with none assume its natural modulation. What a change! O my beloved Shelley! how often during those happy days — happy, though chequered — I thought how superiorly gifted I had been in being united to one to whom I could unveil myself, and who could understand me! Well, then, now I am reduced to these white pages, which I am to blot with dark imagery. As I write, let me think what he would have said if, speaking thus to him, he could have answered me. Yes, my own heart, I would fain know what to think of my desolate state; what you think I ought to do, what to think. I guess you would answer thus: “Seek to know your own heart, and, learning what it best loves, try to enjoy that.” Well, I cast my eyes around, and, looking forward to the bounded prospect in view, I ask myself what pleases me there. My child; — so many feelings arise when I think of him, that I turn aside to think no more. Those I most loved are gone for ever; those who held the second rank are absent; and among those near me as yet, I trust to the disinterested kindness of one alone. Beneath all this, my imagination never flags. Literary labours, the improvement of my mind, and the enlargement of my ideas, are the only occupations that elevate me from my lethargy: all events seem to lead me to that one point, and the courses of destiny having dragged me to that single resting-place, have left me. Father, mother, friend, husband, children — all made, as it were, the team which conducted me here, and now all, except you, my poor boy (and you are necessary to the continuance of my life), all are gone, and I am left to fulfil my task. So be it.

October 5. — Well, they are come; and it is all as I said. I awoke as from sleep, and thought how I had vegetated these last days; for feeling leaves little trace on the memory if it be, like mine, unvaried. I have felt for, and with myself alone, and I awake now to take a part in life. As far as others are concerned, my sensations have been most painful. I must work hard amidst the vexations that I perceive are preparing for me, to preserve my peace and tranquillity of mind. I must preserve some, if I am to live; for, since I bear at the bottom of my heart a fathomless well of bitter waters, the workings of which my philosophy is ever at work to repress, what will be my fate if the petty vexations of life are added to this sense of eternal and infinite misery?

Oh, my child! what is your fate to be? You alone reach me; you are the only chain that links me to time; but for you, I should be free. And yet I cannot be destined to live long. Well, I shall commence my task, commemorate the virtues of the only creature worth loving or living for, and then, may be, I may join him. Moonshine may be united to her planet, and wander no more, a sad reflection of all she loved on earth.

October 7. — I have received my desk to-day, and have been reading my letters to mine own Shelley during his absences at Marlow. What a scene to recur to! My William, Clara, Allegra, are all talked of. They lived then, they breathed this air, and their voices struck on my sense; their feet trod the earth beside me, and their hands were warm with blood and life when clasped in mine, where are they all? This is too great an agony to be written about. I may express my despair, but my thoughts can find no words.

……..

I would endeavour to consider myself a faint continuation of his being, and, as far as possible, the revelation to the earth of what he was, yet, to become this, I must change much, and, above all, I must acquire that knowledge and drink at those fountains of wisdom and virtue from which he quenched his thirst. Hitherto I have done nothing; yet I have not been discontented with myself. I speak of the period of my residence here. For, although unoccupied by those studies which I have marked out for myself, my mind has been so active that its activity, and not its indolence, has made me neglectful. But now the society of others causes this perpetual working of my ideas somewhat to pause; and I must take advantage of this to turn my mind towards its immediate duties, and to determine with firmness to commence the life I have planned. You will be with me in all my studies, dearest love! your voice will no longer applaud me, but in spirit you will visit and encourage me: I know you will. What were I, if I did not believe that you still exist? It is not with you as with another, I believe that we all live hereafter; but you, my only one, were a spirit caged, an elemental being, enshrined in a frail image, now shattered. Do they not all with one voice assert the same? Trelawny, Hunt, and many others. And so at last you quitted this painful prison, and you are free, my Shelley; while I, your poor chosen one, am left to live as I may.

What a strange life mine has been! Love, youth, fear, and fearlessness led me early from the regular routine of life, and I united myself to this being, who, not one of *us*, though like to us, was pursued by numberless miseries and annoyances, in all of which I shared. And then I was the mother of beautiful children, but these stayed not by me. Still he was there; and though, in truth, after my William’s death this world seemed only a quicksand, sinking beneath my feet, yet beside me was this bank of refuge — so tempest-worn and frail, that methought its very weakness was strength, and, since Nature had written destruction on its brow, so the Power that rules human affairs had determined, in spite of Nature, that it should endure. But that is gone. His voice can no longer be heard; the earth no longer receives the shadow of his form; annihilation has come over the earthly appearance of the most gentle creature that ever yet breathed this air; and I am still here — still thinking, existing, all but hoping. Well, I close my book. To-morrow I must begin this new life of mine.

October 19. — How painful all change becomes to one, who, entirely and despotically engrossed by [his] own feelings leads, as it were, an *internal* life, quite different from the outward and apparent one! Whilst my life continues its monotonous course within sterile banks, an under-current disturbs the smooth face of the waters, distorts all objects reflected in it, and the mind is no longer a mirror in which outward events may reflect themselves, but becomes itself the painter and creator. If this perpetual activity has power to vary with endless change the everyday occurrences of a most monotonous life, it appears to be animated with the spirit of tempest and hurricane when any real occurrence diversifies the scene. Thus, to-night, a few bars of a known air seemed to be as a wind to rouse from its depths every deep-seated emotion of my mind. I would have given worlds to have sat, my eyes closed, and listened to them for years. The restraint I was under caused these feelings to vary with rapidity; but the words of the conversation, uninteresting as they might be, seemed all to convey two senses to me, and, touching a chord within me, to form a music of which the speaker was little aware. I do not think that any person's voice has the same power of awakening melancholy in me as Albé's. I have been accustomed, when hearing it, to listen and to speak little; another voice, not mine, ever replied — a voice whose strings are broken. When Albé ceases to speak, I expect to hear *that other* voice, and when I hear another instead, it jars strangely with every association. I have seen so little of Albé since our residence in Switzerland, and, having seen him there every day, his voice — a peculiar one — is engraved on my memory with other sounds and objects from which it can never disunite itself. I have heard Hunt in company and in conversation with many, when my own one was not there. Trelawny, perhaps, is associated in my mind with Edward more than with Shelley. Even our older friends, Peacock and Hogg, might talk together, or with others, and their voices suggest no change to me. But, since incapacity and timidity always prevented my mingling in the nightly conversations of Diodati, they were, as it were, entirely *tête-à-tête* between my Shelley and Albé; and thus, as I have said, when Albé speaks and Shelley does not answer, it is as thunder without rain, — the form of the sun without light or heat, — as any familiar object might be shorn of its best attributes; and I listen with an unspeakable melancholy that yet is not all pain.

The above explains that which would otherwise be an enigma — why Albé, by his mere presence and voice, has the power of exciting such deep and shifting emotions within me. For my feelings have no analogy either with my opinion of him, or the subject of his conversation. With another I might talk, and not for the moment think of Shelley — at least not think of him with the same vividness as if I were alone; but, when in company with Albé, I can never cease for a second to have Shelley in my heart and brain with a clearness that mocks reality — interfering even by its force with the functions of life — until, if tears do not relieve me, the hysterical feeling, analogous to that which the murmur of the sea gives me, presses painfully upon me.

Well, for the first time for about a month, I have been in company with Albé for two hours, and, coming home, I write this, so necessary is it for me to express in words the force of my feelings. Shelley, beloved! I look at the stars and at all nature, and it speaks to me of you in the clearest accents. Why cannot you answer me, my own one? Is the instrument so utterly destroyed? I would endure ages of pain to hear one tone of your voice strike on my ear!

For nearly a year — not a happy one — Mary lived with the Hunts. A bruised and bleeding heart exposed to the cuffs and blows of everyday life, a nervous temperament — too recently strained to its utmost pitch of endurance — liable to constant, unavoidable irritation, a nature sensitive and reserved, accustomed to much seclusion and much independence, thrown into the midst of a large, noisy, and disorderly family, — these conditions could hardly result in happiness. Leigh Hunt was nervous, delicate, overworked, and variable in mood: his wife an invalid, condemned by the doctors on her arrival in Italy, now expecting her confinement in the ensuing summer, an event which she was told would be, for good or evil, the crisis of her fate. Six children they had already had, who were allowed — on principle — to do exactly as they chose, "until such time as they were of an age to be reasoned with."

The opening for activity and usefulness would, at another time, have been beneficial to Mary, and, to some extent, was so now; but it was too early, the change from her former state was too violent; she was not fit yet for such severe bracing. She met her trials bravely; but it was another case where buoyancy of spirits was indispensable to real success, and buoyancy of spirits she had not, nor was likely to acquire in her present surroundings.

There was another person to whom these surroundings were even more supremely distasteful than to her, and this was Byron. Small sympathy had he for domestic life or sentiment even in their best aspects, and this virtuous, slipshod, cockney Bohemianism had no attraction for him whatever. The poor man must have suffered many things while the Hunts were in possession of his *pian terreno* at Pisa; he was rid of them now, but the very sight of them was too much for him.

Lord Byron to Mrs. Shelley.

6th October 1822.

The sofa — which I regret is *not* of your furniture — it was purchased by me at Pisa since you left it.

It is convenient for my room, though of little value (about 12 pauls), and I offered to send another (now sent) in its stead. I preferred retaining the purchased furniture, but always intended that you should have as good or better in its place. I have a particular dislike to anything of Shelley's being within the same walls with Mrs. Hunt's children. They are dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos. What they can't destroy with their filth they will with their fingers. I presume you received ninety and odd crowns from the wreck of the *Don Juan*, and also the price of the boat purchased by Captain R., if not, you will have *both*. Hunt has these in hand.

With regard to any difficulties about money, I can only repeat that I will be your banker till this state of things is cleared up, and you can see what is to be done; so there is little to hinder you on that score. I was confined for four days to my bed at Lerici. Poor Hunt, with his six little blackguards, are coming slowly up; as usual he turned back once — was there ever such a *kraal* out of the Hottentot country before?

N. B.

Among those of their former acquaintance who now surrounded Mary, the one who by his presence ministered most to the needs of her fainting moral nature was Trelawny. Leigh Hunt, when not disagreeing from her, was affectionate, nay, gushing, and he had truly loved Shelley, but he was a feeble, facetious, feckless creature, — a hypochondriac, — unable to do much to help himself, still less another. Byron was by no means ill-disposed, especially just now, but he was egotistic and indolent, and too capricious, — as the event proved, — to be depended on.

Trelawny's fresh vigorous personality, his bright originality and rugged independence, and his unbounded admiration for Shelley, made him wonderfully reviving to Mary; he had the effect on her of a gust of fresh air in a close crowded room. He was unconventional and outspoken, and by no means always complimentary, but he had a just appreciation of Mary's real mental and moral superiority to the people around her, and a frank liking for herself. Their friendship was to extend over many years, during which Mary had ample opportunity of repaying the debt of obligation she always felt she owed him for his kindness to her and Mrs. Williams at the time of their great misery.

The letters which follow were among the earliest of a long and varied correspondence.

Mary Shelley to Trelawny.

November 1822.

My dear Trelawny — I called on you yesterday, but was too late for you. I was much pained to see you out of spirits the other night. I can in no way make you better, I fear, but I should be glad to see you. Will you dine with me Monday after your ride? If Hunt rides, as he threatens, with Lord Byron, he will also dine late and make one of our party. Remember, you will also do Hunt good by this, who pines in this solitude. You say that I know so little of the world that I am afraid I may be mistaken in imagining that you have a friendship for me, especially after what you said of Jane the other night; but besides the many other causes I have to esteem you, I can never remember without the liveliest gratitude all you said that night of agony when you returned to Lerici. Your praises of my lost Shelley were the only balm I could endure, and he always joined with me in liking you from the first moment we saw you. Adieu. — Your attached friend,

M. W. S.

Have you got my books on shore from the *Bolivar*? If you have, pray let me have them, for many are odd volumes, and I wish to see if they are too much destroyed to rank with those I have.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

November 1822.

Dear Mary — I will gladly dine on Monday with you. As to melancholy, I refer you to the good Antonio in Shylock. “Alas! I know now why I am so sad. It is time, I think.” You are not so learned in human dealings as Iago, but you cannot so sadly err as to doubt the extent or truth of my friendship. As to gain esteem, I do not think it a word applicable to such a lawless character. Ruled by impulse, not by reason, I am satisfied you should like me upon my own terms — impulse. As to gratitude for uttering my thoughts of him I so loved and admired, it was a tribute that all who knew him have paid to his memory. “But weeping never could restore the dead,” and if it could, hope would prevent our tears. You may remember I always in preference selected as my companion Edward, not Jane, and that I always dissented from your general voice of her being perfection. I am still of the same opinion; nothing more. But I have and ever shall feel deeply interested, and would do much to serve her, and if thinking on those trifles which diminish her lustre in my eyes makes me flag, Edward's memory and my perfect friendship for him is sufficient excitement to spur me on to anything. It is impossible to dislike Jane; but to have an unqualified liking, such as I had for Edward, no — no — no! Talking of gratitude, I really am and ought to be so to you, for bearing on, untired, with my spleen, humours, and violence; it is a proof of real liking, particularly as you are not of the sect who profess or practise meekness, humility, and patience in common.

T.

Mary had not as yet been successful in getting possession of the half-finished portrait of Shelley. Her letters had followed Miss Curran to Paris, whence, in October, a reply at last arrived.

"I am sorry," Miss Curran wrote, "I am not at Rome to execute your melancholy commission. I mean to return in spring, but it may be then too late. I am sure Mr. Brunelli would be happy to oblige you or me, but you may have left Pisa before this, so I know not what to propose. Your picture and Clare's I left with him to give you when you should be at Rome, as I expected, before you returned to England. The one you now write for I thought was not to be inquired for; it was so ill done, and I was on the point of burning it with others before I left Italy. I luckily saved it just as the fire was scorching, and it is packed up with my other pictures at Rome; and I have not yet decided where they can be sent to, as there are serious difficulties in the way I had not adverted to. I am very sorry indeed, dear Mary, but you shall have it as soon as I possibly can."...

This was the early history of that portrait, which was recovered a year or two later, and which has passed, and passes still, for Shelley's likeness, and which, bad or good, is the only authentic one in existence.

Mary now began to feel it a matter of duty as well as of expediency to resume literary work, but she found it hard at first.

"I am quite well, but very nervous," she wrote to Mrs. Gisborne; "my excessive nervousness (how new a disorder for me — my illness in the summer is the foundation of it) is the cause I do not write."

She made a beginning with an article for the *Liberal*. Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* was, also, to be published in the forthcoming number, and the MS. of this had to be got from England. She had reason to believe, too, that Ollier, the publisher, had in his keeping other MSS. of Shelley's, and she was restlessly desirous to get possession of all these, feeling convinced that among them there was nothing perfect, nothing ready for publication exactly as it stood. In her over-anxiety she wrote to several people on this subject, thereby incurring the censure of her father, whom she had also consulted about her literary plans. His criticisms on his daughter's style were not unsound; she had not been trained in a school of terseness, and, like many young authors, she was apt to err on the side of length, and not to see that she did so.

Godwin to Mary.

No. 195 Strand, *15th November 1822*.

My dear Mary — I have devoted the last two days to the seeing everybody an interview with whom would best enable me to write you a satisfactory letter. Yesterday I saw Hogg and Mrs. Williams, and to-day Peacock and Hanson junior. From Hogg I had, among other things, to learn Mrs. Williams' address, for, owing to your neglect, she had been a fortnight in London before I knew of her arrival. She appeared to be in better health and better spirits than I expected; she did not drop one tear; occasionally she smiled. She is a picturesque little woman, and, as far as I could judge from one interview, I like her.

Peacock has got Ollier's promise to deliver all Shelley's manuscripts, and as earnest, he has received *Peter Bell* and *A Curse on L.E.*, which he holds at your disposal. By the way, you should never give one commission but to one person; you commissioned me to recover these manuscripts from Ollier, you commissioned Peacock, and, I believe, Mrs. Gisborne. This puts us all in an awkward situation. I heard of Peacock's applying just in time to prevent me from looking like a fool. Peacock says he cannot make up a parcel for you till he has been a second time to Marlow on the question, which cannot be till about Christmas. He appears to me, not lukewarm, but assiduous. Mrs. Williams told me she should write to you by this day's post. She had been inquiring in vain for Miss Curran's address — you should have referred her to me for it, but you referred her to me for nothing. This, by the way, is another instance of your giving one commission to more than one person. You gave the commission about Miss Curran to Mrs. Williams and to me. I received your letter, inclosing one to Miss Curran, 21st October, which I immediately forwarded to her by a safe hand, through her brother. You have probably heard from her by this time; she is in Paris.... I have a plan upon the house of Longman respecting *Castruccio*, but that depends upon coincidences, and I must have patience.

You ask my opinion of your literary plans. If you expect any price, you must think of something new: *Manfred* is a subject that nobody interests himself about; the interest, therefore, must be made, and no bookseller understands anything about that contingency. A book about Italy as it is, written with any talent, would be sure to sell; but I am afraid you know very little about the present race of Italians.

As to my own affairs, nothing is determined. I expected something material to have happened this week, but as yet I have heard nothing. If the subscription fills, I shall perhaps be safe; if not, I shall be driven to sea on a plank.

Perhaps it may be of some use to you if I give you my opinion of *Castruccio*. I think there are parts of high genius, and that your two females are exceedingly interesting; but I am not satisfied. *Frankenstein* was a fine thing; it was compressed, muscular, and firm; nothing relaxed and weak; no proud flesh. *Castruccio* is a work of more genius; but it appears, in reading, that the first rule you prescribed to yourself was, I will let it be long. It contains the quantity of four volumes of *Waverley*. No hard blow was ever hit with a woolsack! Mamma desires me to remember her to you in the kindest manner, and to say that she feels a deep interest in everything that concerns you. She means to take the earliest opportunity to see Mrs. Williams, both as she feels an earnest sympathy in her calamity, and as she will be likely to learn a hundred particulars respecting the dispositions and prospects of yourself and Jane, which she might in vain desire to learn in any other quarter. You asked Mamma for some present, a remembrance of your mother. She has reserved for you a ring of hers, with Fanny Blood’s hair set round with pearls.

You will, of course, rely on it that I will send you the letters you ask for by Peacock’s parcel. Miss Curran’s address is Hotel de Dusseldorf Rue Petits St. Augustin, à Paris. — Believe me, ever your most affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

My last letter was dated 11th October.

Journal, November 10. — I have made my first probation in writing, and it has done me much good, and I get more calm; the stream begins to take to its new channel, insomuch as to make me fear change. But people must know little of me who think that, abstractedly, I am content with my present mode of life. Activity of spirit is my sphere. But we cannot be active of mind without an object; and I have none. I am allowed to have some talent — that is sufficient, methinks, to cause my irreparable misery; for, if one has genius, what a delight it is to be associated with a superior! Mine own Shelley! the sun knows of none to be likened to you — brave, wise, noble-hearted, full of learning, tolerance, and love. Love! what a word for me to write! yet, my miserable heart, permit me yet to love, — to see him in beauty, to feel him in beauty, to be interpenetrated by the sense of his excellence; and thus to love singly, eternally, ardently, and not fruitlessly; for I am still his — still the chosen one of that blessed spirit — still vowed to him for ever and ever!

November 11. — It is better to grieve than not to grieve. Grief at least tells me that I was not always what I am now. I was once selected for happiness; let the memory of that abide by me. You pass by an old ruined house in a desolate lane, and heed it not. But if you hear that that house is haunted by a wild and beautiful spirit, it acquires an interest and beauty of its own.

I shall be glad to be more alone again; one ought to see no one, or many; and, confined to one society, I shall lose all energy except that which I possess from my own resources; and I must be alone for those to be put in activity.

A cold heart! Have I a cold heart? God knows! But none need envy the icy region this heart encircles; and at least the tears are hot which the emotions of this cold heart forces me to shed. A cold heart! yes, it would be cold enough if all were as I wished it — cold, or burning in the flame for whose sake I forgive this, and would forgive every other imputation — that flame in which your heart, beloved, lay unconsumed. My heart is very full to-night.

I shall write his life, and thus occupy myself in the only manner from which I can derive consolation. That will be a task that may convey some balm. What though I weep? All is better than inaction and — not forgetfulness — that never is — but an inactivity of remembrance.

And you, my own boy! I am about to begin a task which, if you live, will be an invaluable treasure to you in after times. I must collect my materials, and then, in the commemoration of the divine virtues of your Father, I shall fulfil the only act of pleasure there remains for me, and be ready to follow you, if you leave me, my task being fulfilled. I have lived; rapture, exultation, content — all the varied changes of enjoyment — have been mine. It is all gone; but still, the airy paintings of what it has gone through float by, and distance shall not dim them. If I were alone, I had already begun what I had determined to do; but I must have patience, and for those events my memory is brass, my thoughts a never-tired engraver. France — Poverty — A few days of solitude, and some uneasiness — A tranquil residence in a beautiful spot — Switzerland — Bath — Marlow — Milan — the Baths of Lucca — Este — Venice — Rome — Naples — Rome and misery — Leghorn — Florence — Pisa — Solitude — The Williams' — The Baths — Pisa: these are the heads of chapters, and each containing a tale romantic beyond romance.

I no longer enjoy, but I love. Death cannot deprive me of that living spark which feeds on all given it, and which is now triumphant in sorrow. I love, and shall enjoy happiness again. I do not doubt that; but when?

These fragments of journal give the course of her inward reflections; her letters sometimes supply the clue to her outward life, *au jour le jour*.

Mary Shelley to Clare Clairmont.

20th December 1822.

My dear Clare — I have delayed writing to you so long for two reasons. First, I have every day expected to hear from you; and secondly, I wished to hear something decisive from England to communicate to you. But I have waited in vain for both things. You do not write, and I begin to despair of ever hearing from you again. A few words will tell you all that has been done in England. When I wrote to you last, I think that I told you that Lord Byron had written to Hanson, bidding him call upon Whitton. Hanson wrote to Whitton desiring an interview, which Whitton declined, requesting Hanson to make his application by letter, which Hanson has done, and I know no more. This does not look like an absolute refusal, but Sir Timothy is so capricious that we cannot trust to appearances.

And now the chapter about myself is finished, for what can I say of my present life? The weather is bitterly cold with a sharp wind, very unlike dear, *carissima* Pisa; but soft airs and balmy gales are not the attributes of Genoa, which place I daily and duly join Marianne in detesting. There is but one fireplace in the house, and although people have been for a month putting up a stove in my room, it smokes too much to permit of its being lighted. So I am obliged to pass the greater part of my time in Hunt's sitting-room, which is, as you may guess, the annihilation of study, and even of pleasure to a great degree. For, after all, Hunt does not like me: it is both our faults, and I do not blame him, but so it is. I rise at 9, breakfast, work, read, and if I can at all endure the cold, copy my Shelley's MSS. in my own room, and if possible walk before dinner. After that I work, read Greek, etc., till 10, when Hunt and Marianne go to bed. Then I am alone. Then the stream of thought, which has struggled against its *argine* all through the busy day, makes a *piena*, and sorrow and memory and imagination, despair, and hope in despair, are the winds and currents that impel it. I am alone, and myself; and then I begin to say, as I ever feel, "How I hate life! What a mockery it is to rise, to walk, to feed, and then go to rest, and in all this a statue might do my part. One thing alone may or can awake me, and that is study; the rest is all nothing." And so it is! I am silent and serious. Absorbed in my own thoughts, what am I then in this world if my spirit live not to learn and become better? That is the whole of my destiny; I look to nothing else. For I dare not look to my little darling other than as — not the sword of Damocles, that is a wrong simile, or to a wrecked seaman's plank — true, he stands, and only he, between me and the sea of eternity; but I long for that plunge! No, I fear for him pain, disappointment, — all, all fear.

You see how it is, it is near 11, and my good friends repose. This is the hour when I can think, unobtruded upon, and these thoughts, *malgré moi*, will stain this paper. But then, my dear Clare, I have nothing else except my nothingless self to talk about. You have doubtless heard from Jane, and I have heard from no one else. I see no one. The Guiccioli and Lord Byron once a month. Trelawny seldom, and he is on the eve of his departure for Leghorn....

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Marianne suffers during this dreadfully cold weather, but less than I should have supposed. The children are all well. So also is my Percy, poor little darling: they all scold him because he speaks loud *à l'Italien*. People love to, nay, they seem to exist on, finding fault with others, but I have no right to complain, and this unlucky stove is the sole source of all my *dispiacere*; if I had that, I should not tease any one, or any one me, or my only one; but after all, these are trifles. I have sent for another *ingeniere*, and I hope, before many days are elapsed, to retire as before to my hole.

I have again delayed finishing this letter, waiting for letters from England, that I might not send you one so barren of all intelligence. But I have had none. And nothing new has happened except Trelawny's departure for Leghorn, so that our days are more monotonous than ever. The weather is drearily cold, and an eternal north-east whistles through every crevice. Percy, however, is far better in this cold than in summer; he is warmly clothed, and gets on.

Adieu. Pray write. My love to Charles; I am ashamed that I do not write to him, but I have only an old story to repeat, and this letter tells that. — Affectionately yours,

Mary Shelley.

Journal, December 31. — So this year comes to an end. Shelley, beloved! the year has a new name from any thou knewest. When spring arrives leaves you never saw will shadow the ground, and flowers you never beheld will star it; the grass will be of another growth, and the birds sing a new song — the aged earth dates with a new number.

Sometimes I thought that fortune had relented towards us; that your health would have improved, and that fame and joy would have been yours, for, when well, you extracted from Nature alone an endless delight. The various threads of our existence seemed to be drawing to one point, and there to assume a cheerful hue.

Again, I think that your gentle spirit was too much wounded by the sharpness of this world; that your disease was incurable, and that in a happy time you became the partaker of cloudless days, ceaseless hours, and infinite love. Thy name is added to the list which makes the earth bold in her age and proud of what has been. Time, with unwearied but slow feet, guides her to the goal that thou hast reached, and I, her unhappy child, am advanced still nearer the hour when my earthly dress shall repose near thine, beneath the tomb of Cestius.

It must have been at about this time that Mary wrote the sad, retrospective poem entitled “The Choice.”

THE CHOICE.
My Choice! — My Choice, alas! was had and gone
With the red gleam of last autumnal sun;
Lost in that deep wherein he bathed his head,
My choice, my life, my hope together fled: —
A wanderer here, no more I seek a home,
The sky a vault, and Italy a tomb.
Yet as some days a pilgrim I remain,
Linked to my orphan child by love’s strong chain;
And, since I have a faith that I must earn,
By suffering and by patience, a return
Of that companionship and love, which first
Upon my young life’s cloud like sunlight burst,
And now has left me, dark, as when its beams,
Quenched in the might of dreadful ocean streams,
Leave that one cloud, a gloomy speck on high,
Beside one star in the else darkened sky; —
Since I must live, how would I pass the day,
How meet with fewest tears the morning’s ray,
How sleep with calmest dreams, how find delights,
As fireflies gleam through interlunar nights?

First let me call on thee! Lost as thou art,
Thy name aye fills my sense, thy love my heart.
Oh, gentle Spirit! thou hast often sung,
How fallen on evil days thy heart was wrung;
Now fierce remorse and unreplying death
Waken a chord within my heart, whose breath,

Thrilling and keen, in accents audible
A tale of unrequited love doth tell.
It was not anger, — while thy earthly dress
Encompassed still thy soul’s rare loveliness,
All anger was atoned by many a kind
Caress or tear, that spoke the softened mind. —
It speaks of cold neglect, averted eyes,
That blindly crushed thy soul’s fond sacrifice: —
My heart was all thine own, — but yet a shell
Closed in its core, which seemed impenetrable,
Till sharp-toothed misery tore the husk in twain,
Which gaping lies, nor may unite again.
Forgive me! let thy love descend in dew
Of soft repentance and regret most true; —
In a strange guise thou dost descend, or how
Could love soothe fell remorse, — as it does now? —
By this remorse and love, and by the years
Through which we shared our common hopes and fears,
By all our best companionship, I dare
Call on thy sacred name without a fear; —
And thus I pray to thee, my friend, my Heart!
That in thy new abode, thou’lt bear a part
In soothing thy poor Mary’s lonely pain,
As link by link she weaves her heavy chain! —
And thou, strange star! ascendant at my birth,
Which rained, they said, kind influence on the earth,
So from great parents sprung, I dared to boast
Fortune my friend, till set, thy beams were lost!
And thou, Inscrutable, by whose decree
Has burst this hideous storm of misery!
Here let me cling, here to the solitudes,
These myrtle-shaded streams and chestnut woods;
Tear me not hence — here let me live and die,
In my adopted land — my country — Italy.

A happy Mother first I saw this sun,
Beneath this sky my race of joy was run.
First my sweet girl, whose face resembled *his*,
Slept on bleak Lido, near Venetian seas.
Yet still my eldest-born, my loveliest, dearest,
Clung to my side, most joyful then when nearest.
An English home had given this angel birth,
Near those royal towers, where the grass-clad earth
Is shadowed o’er by England’s loftiest trees:
Then our companion o’er the swift-passed seas,
He dwelt beside the Alps, or gently slept,
Rocked by the waves, o’er which our vessel swept,
Beside his father, nurst upon my breast,
While Leman’s waters shook with fierce unrest.
His fairest limbs had bathed in Serchio’s stream;
His eyes had watched Italian lightnings gleam;
His childish voice had, with its loudest call,
The echoes waked of Este’s castle wall;
Had paced Pompeii’s Roman market-place;
Had gazed with infant wonder on the grace
Of stone-wrought deities, and pictured saints,
In Rome’s high palaces — there were no taints
Of ruin on his cheek — all shadowless
Grim death approached — the boy met his caress,
And while his glowing limbs with life’s warmth shone,
Around those limbs his icy arms were thrown.
His spoils were strewed beneath the soil of Rome,
Whose flowers now star the dark earth near his tomb:
Its airs and plants received the mortal part,
His spirit beats within his mother’s heart.
Infant immortal! chosen for the sky!
No grief upon thy brow’s young purity
Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might
The sunshine of thy smile’s celestial light; —
The image shattered, the bright spirit fled,
Thou shin’st the evening star among the dead.

And thou, his playmate, whose deep lucid eyes,
Were a reflection of these bluest skies;
Child of our hearts, divided in ill hour,
We could not watch the bud's expanding flower,
Now thou art gone, one guileless victim more,
To the black death that rules this sunny shore.

Companion of my griefs! thy sinking frame
Had often drooped, and then erect again
With shows of health had mocked forebodings dark; —
Watching the changes of that quivering spark,
I feared and hoped, and dared to trust at length,
Thy very weakness was my tower of strength.
Methought thou wert a spirit from the sky,
Which struggled with its chains, but could not die,
And that destruction had no power to win
From out those limbs the soul that burnt within.

Tell me, ye ancient walls, and weed-grown towers,
Ye Roman airs and brightly painted flowers,
Does not his spirit visit that recess
Which built of love enshrines his earthly dress? —
No more! no more! — what though that form be fled,
My trembling hand shall never write thee — dead —
Thou liv'st in Nature, Love, my Memory,
With deathless faith for aye adoring thee,
The wife of Time no more, I wed Eternity.

'Tis thus the Past — on which my spirit leans,
Makes dearest to my soul Italian scenes.
In Tuscan fields the winds in odours steeped
From flowers and cypresses, when skies have wept,
Shall, like the notes of music once most dear,
Which brings the unstrung voice upon my ear

Of one beloved, to memory display
Past scenes, past hopes, past joys, in long array.
Pugnano’s trees, beneath whose shade he stood,
The pools reflecting Pisa’s old pine wood,
The fireflies beams, the aziola’s cry
All breathe his spirit which can never die.
Such memories have linked these hills and caves,
These woodland paths, and streams, and knelling waves
Past to each sad pulsation of my breast,
And made their melancholy arms the haven of my rest.

Here will I live, within a little dell,
Which but a month ago I saw full well: —
A dream then pictured forth the solitude
Deep in the shelter of a lovely wood;
A voice then whispered a strange prophecy,
My dearest, widowed friend, that thou and I
Should there together pass the weary day,
As we before have done in Spezia’s bay,
As though long hours we watched the sails that neared
O’er the far sea, their vessel ne’er appeared;
One pang of agony, one dying gleam
Of hope led us along, beside the ocean stream,
But keen-eyed fear, the while all hope departs,
Stabbed with a million stings our heart of hearts.
The sad revolving year has not allayed
The poison of these bleeding wounds, or made
The anguish less of that corroding thought
Which has with grief each single moment fraught.
Edward, thy voice was hushed — thy noble heart
With aspiration heaves no more — a part
Of heaven-resumèd past thou art become,
Thy spirit waits with his in our far home.

Trelawny had departed for Leghorn and his favourite Maremma, *en route* for Rome, where, by his untiring zeal for the fit interment of Shelley's ashes, he once more earned Mary's undying gratitude. The ashes, which had been temporarily consigned to the care of Mr. Freeborn, British Consul at Rome, had, before Trelawny arrived, been buried in the Protestant cemetery: the grave was amidst a cluster of others. In a niche — formed by two buttresses — in the old Roman wall, immediately under an ancient pyramid, said to be the tomb of Caius Cestius, Trelawny (having purchased the recess) built two tombs. In one of these the box containing Shelley's ashes was deposited, and all was covered over with solid stone. The details of the transaction, which extended over several months, are supplied in his letters.

Trelawny to Mary Shelley.

Piombino, *7th* and *11th January 1823*.

Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we marched on without impediment.

Dear Mary Shelley — Pardon my tardiness in writing, which from day to day I have postponed, having no other cause to plead than idleness. On my arrival at Leghorn I called on Grant, and was much grieved to find our fears well founded, to wit, that nothing definitely had been done. Grant had not heard from his correspondent at Rome after his first statement of the difficulties; the same letter that was enclosed me and read by you he (Grant) had written, but not received a reply. I then requested Grant to write and say that I would be at Rome in a month or five weeks, and if I found the impediments insurmountable, I would resume possession of the ashes, if on the contrary, to personally fulfil your wishes, and in the meantime to deposit them secure from molestation, so that, without Grant writes to me, I shall say nothing more till I am at Rome, which will be early in February. In the meantime Roberts and myself are sailing along the coast, shooting, and visiting the numerous islands in our track. We have been here some days, living at the miserable hut of a cattle dealer on the marshes, near this wretched town, well situated for sporting. To-morrow we cross over to Elba, thence to Corsica, and so return along the Maremma, up the Tiber in the boat, to Rome....

... I like this Maremma, it is lonely and desolate, thinly populated, particularly after Genoa, where human brutes are so abundant that the air is dense with their garlic breath, and it is impossible to fly the nuisance. Here there is solitude enough: there are less of the human form here in midday than at Genoa midnight; besides, this vagabond life has restored my health. Next year I will get a tent, and spend my winter in these marshes....

... Dear Mary, of all those that I know of, or you have told me of, as connected with you, there is not one now living has so tender a friendship for you as I have. I have the far greater claims on you, and I shall consider it as a breach of friendship should you employ any one else in services that I can execute.

My purse, my person, my extremest means
Lye all unlocked to your occasion.

I hope you know my heart so well as to make all professions needless. To serve you will ever be the greatest pleasure I can experience, and nothing could interrupt the almost unmingled pleasure I have received from our first meeting but you concealing your difficulties or wishes from me. With kindest remembrances to my good friends the Hunts, to whom I am sincerely attached, and love and salaam to Lord Byron, I am your very sincere

Edward Trelawny.

“Indeed, I do believe, my dear Trelawny,” wrote Mary in reply, on the 30th of January 1823, “that you are the best friend I have, and most truly would I rather apply to you in any difficulty than to any one else, for I know your heart, and rely on it. At present I am very well off, having still a considerable residue of the money I brought with me from Pisa, and besides, I have received £33 from the *Liberal*. Part of this I have been obliged to send to Clare. You will be sorry to hear that the last account she has sent of herself is that she has been seriously ill. The cold of Vienna has doubtless contributed to this, — as it is even a dangerous aggravation of her old complaint. I wait anxiously to hear from her. I sent her fifteen napoleons, and shall send more if necessary and if I can. Lord B. continues kind: he has made frequent offers of money. I do not want it, as you see.”

Journal, February 2nd. — On the 21st of January those rites were fulfilled. Shelley! my own beloved! you rest beneath the blue sky of Rome; in that, at least, I am satisfied.

What matters it that they cannot find the grave of my William? That spot is sanctified by the presence of his pure earthly vesture, and that is sufficient — at least, it must be. I am too truly miserable to dwell on what at another time might have made me unhappy. He is beneath the tomb of Cestius. I see the spot.

February 3. — A storm has come across me; a slight circumstance has disturbed the deceitful calm of which I boasted. I thought I heard my Shelley call me — not my Shelley in heaven, but my Shelley, my companion in my daily tasks. I was reading; I heard a voice say, "Mary!" "It is Shelley," I thought; the revulsion was of agony. Never more....

Mrs. Shelley's affairs now assumed an aspect which made her foresee the ultimate advisability, if not necessity, of returning to England. Sir Timothy Shelley had declined giving any answer to the application made to him for an allowance for his son's widow and child; and Lord Byron, as Shelley's executor, had written to him directly for a decisive answer, which he obtained.

Sir Timothy Shelley to Lord Byron.

Field Place, *6th February 1823*.

My Lord — I have received your Lordship's letter, and my solicitor, Mr. Whitton, has this day shown me copies of certificates of the marriage of Mrs. Shelley and of the baptism of her little boy, and also, a short abstract of my son's will, as the same have been handed to him by Mr. Hanson.

The mind of my son was withdrawn from me and my immediate family by unworthy and interested individuals, when he was about nineteen, and after a while he was led into a new society and forsook his first associates.

In this new society he forgot every feeling of duty and respect to me and to Lady Shelley.

Mrs. Shelley was, I have been told, the intimate friend of my son in the lifetime of his first wife, and to the time of her death, and in no small degree, as I suspect, estranged my son's mind from his family, and all his first duties in life; with that impression on my mind, I cannot agree with your Lordship that, though my son was unfortunate, Mrs. Shelley is innocent; on the contrary, I think that her conduct was the very reverse of what it ought to have been, and I must, therefore, decline all interference in matters in which Mrs. Shelley is interested. As to the child, I am inclined to afford the means of a suitable protection and care of him in this country, if he shall be placed with a person I shall approve; but your Lordship will allow me to say that the means I can furnish will be limited, as I have important duties to perform towards others, which I cannot forget.

I have thus plainly told your Lordship my determination, in the hope that I may be spared from all further correspondence on a subject so distressing to me and my family.

With respect to the will and certificates, I have no observation to make. I have left them with Mr. Whitton, and if anything is necessary to be done with them on my part, he will, I am sure, do it. — I have the honour, my Lord, to be your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

T. Shelley.

Granting the point of view from which it was written, this letter, though hard, was not unnatural. The author of *Adonais* was, to Sir Timothy, a common reprobate, a prodigal who, having gone into a far country, would have devoured his father's living — could he have got it — with harlots; but who had come there to well-deserved grief, and for whose widow even husks were too good. To any possible colouring or modification of this view he had resolutely shut his eyes and ears. No modification of his conclusions was, therefore, to be looked for.

But neither could it be expected that his point of view should be intelligible to Mary. Nor did it commend itself to Godwin. It would have been as little for his daughter's interest as for her happiness to surrender the custody of her child.

Mary Shelley to Lord Byron.

My dear Lord Byron — ... It appears to me that the mode in which Sir Timothy Shelley expresses himself about my child plainly shows by what mean principles he would be actuated. He does not offer him an asylum in his own house, but a beggarly provision under the care of a stranger.

Setting aside that, I would not part with him. Something is due to me. I should not live ten days separated from him. If it were necessary for me to die for his benefit the sacrifice would be easy; but his delicate frame requires all a mother's solicitude; nor shall he be deprived of my anxious love and assiduous attention to his happiness while I have it in my power to bestow it on him; not to mention that his future respect for his excellent Father and his moral wellbeing greatly depend upon his being away from the immediate influence of his relations.

This, perhaps, you will think nonsense, and it is inconceivably painful to me to discuss a point which appears to me as clear as noonday; besides I lose all — all honourable station and name — when I admit that I am not a fitting person to take charge of my infant. The insult is keen; the pretence of heaping it upon me too gross; the advantage to them, if the will came to be contested, would be too immense.

As a matter of feeling, I would never consent to it. I am said to have a cold heart; there are feelings, however, so strongly implanted in my nature that, to root them out, life will go with it. — Most truly yours,

Mary Shelley.

Godwin to Mrs. Shelley.

Strand, *14th February 1823*.

My dear Mary — I have this moment received a copy of Sir Timothy Shelley's letter to Lord Byron, dated 6th February, and which, therefore, you will have seen long before this reaches you. You will easily imagine how anxious I am to hear from you, and to know the state of your feelings under this, which seems like the last, blow of fate.

I need not, of course, attempt to assist your judgment upon the proposition of taking the child from you. I am sure your feelings would never allow you to entertain such a proposition.

....

I requested you to let Lord Byron's letter to Sir Timothy Shelley pass through my hands, and you did so; but to my great mortification, it reached me sealed with his Lordship's arms, so that I remained wholly ignorant of its contents. If you could send me a copy, I should be then much better acquainted with your present situation.

Your novel is now fully printed and ready for publication. I have taken great liberties with it, and I fear your *amour propre* will be proportionately shocked. I need not tell you that all the merit of the book is exclusively your own. Beatrice is the jewel of the book; not but that I greatly admire Euthanasia, and I think the characters of Pepi, Binda, and the witch decisive efforts of original genius. I am promised a character of the work in the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Herald*, and was in hopes to have sent you the one or the other by this time. I also sent a copy of the book to the *Examiner* for the same purpose.

Tuesday, 18th February.

Do not, I entreat you, be cast down about your worldly circumstances. You certainly contain within yourself the means of your subsistence. Your talents are truly extraordinary. *Frankenstein* is universally known, and though it can never be a book for vulgar reading, is everywhere respected. It is the most wonderful work to have been written at twenty years of age that I ever heard of. You are now five and twenty, and, most fortunately, you have pursued a course of reading, and cultivated your mind, in a manner the most admirably adapted to make you a great and successful author. If you cannot be independent, who should be?

Your talents, as far as I can at present discern, are turned for the writing of fictitious adventures.

If it shall ever happen to you to be placed in sudden and urgent want of a small sum, I entreat you to let me know immediately; we must see what I can do. We must help one another. — Your affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

Mary felt the truth of what her father said, but, wounded and embittered as she was, she had little heart for framing plans.

Journal, February 24. — Evils throng around me, my beloved, and I have indeed lost all in losing thee. Were it not for my child, this would be rather a soothing reflection, and, if starvation were my fate, I should fulfil that fate without a sigh. But our child demands all my care now that you have left us. I must be all to him: the Father, death has deprived him of; the relations, the bad world permits him not to have. What is yet in store for me? Am I to close the eyes of our boy, and then join you?

The last weeks have been spent in quiet. Study could not give repose to, but somewhat regulated, my thoughts. I said: “I lead an innocent life, and it may become a useful one. I have talent, I will improve that talent; and if, while meditating on the wisdom of ages, and storing my mind with all that has been recorded of it, any new light bursts upon me, or any discovery occurs that may be useful to my fellows, then the balm of utility may be added to innocence.

What is it that moves up and down in my soul, and makes me feel as if my intellect could master all but my fate? I fear it is only youthful ardour — the yet untamed spirit which, wholly withdrawn from the hopes, and almost from the affections of life, indulges itself in the only walk free to it, and, mental exertion being all my thought except regret, would make me place my hopes in that. I am indeed become a recluse in thought and act; and my mind, turned heavenward, would, but for my only tie, lose all commune with what is around me. If I be proud, yet it is with humility that I am so. I am not vain. My heart shakes with its suppressed emotions, and I flag beneath the thoughts that oppress me.

Each day, as I have taken my solitary walk, I have felt myself exalted with the idea of occupation, improvement, knowledge, and peace. Looking back to my life as a delicious dream, I steeled myself as well as I could against such severe regrets as should overthrow my calmness. Once or twice, pausing in my walk, I have exclaimed in despair, “Is it even so?” yet, for the most part resigned, I was occupied by reflection — on those ideas you, my beloved, planted in my mind — and meditated on our nature, our source, and our destination. To-day, melancholy would invade me, and I thought the peace I enjoyed was transient. Then that letter came to place its seal on my prognostications. Yet it was not the refusal, or the insult heaped upon me, that stung me to tears. It was their bitter words about our Boy. Why, I live only to keep him from their hands. How dared they dream that I held him not far more precious than all, save the hope of again seeing you, my lost one. But for his smiles, where should I now be?

Stars that shine unclouded, ye cannot tell me what will be — yet I can tell you a part. I may have misgivings, weaknesses, and momentary lapses into unworthy despondency, but — save in devotion towards my Boy — fortune has emptied her quiver, and to all her future shafts I oppose courage, hopelessness of aught on this side, with a firm trust in what is beyond the grave.

Visit me in my dreams to-night, my beloved Shelley! kind, loving, excellent as thou wert! and the event of this day shall be forgotten.

March 19. — As I have until now recurred to this book to discharge into it the overflowings of a mind too full of the bitterest waters of life, so will I to-night, now that I am calm, put down some of my milder reveries; that, when I turn it over, I may not only find a record of the most painful thoughts that ever filled a human heart even to distraction.

I am beginning seriously to educate myself; and in another place I have marked the scope of this somewhat tardy education, intellectually considered. In a moral point of view, this education is of some years' standing, and it only now takes the form of seeking its food in books. I have long accustomed myself to the study of my own heart, and have sought and found in its recesses that which cannot embody itself in words — hardly in feelings. I have found strength in the conception of its faculties; much native force in the understanding of them; and what appears to me not a contemptible penetration in the subtle divisions of good and evil. But I have found less strength of self-support, of resistance to what is vulgarly called temptation; yet I think also that I have found true humility (for surely no one can be less presumptuous than I), an ardent love for the immutable laws of right, much native goodness of emotion, and purity of thought.

Enough, if every day I gain a profounder knowledge of my defects, and a more certain method of turning them to a good direction.

Study has become to me more necessary than the air I breathe. In the questioning and searching turn it gives to my thoughts, I find some relief to wild reverie; in the self-satisfaction I feel in commanding myself, I find present solace; in the hope that thence arises, that I may become more worthy of my Shelley, I find a consolation that even makes me less wretched than in my most wretched moments.

March 30. — I have now finished part of the *Odyssey*. I mark this. I cannot write. Day after day I suffer the most tremendous agitation. I cannot write, or read, or think. Whether it be the anxiety for letters that shakes a frame not so strong as hitherto — whether it be my annoyances here — whether it be my regrets, my sorrow, and despair, or all these — I know not; but I am a wreck.

A letter from Trelawny gladdened her heart. It said —

I must confess I am to blame in not having sooner written, particularly as I have received two letters from you here. Nothing particular has happened to me since our parting but a desperate assault of Maremma fever, which had nearly reunited me to my friends, or, as Iago says, removed me. On my arrival here, my first object was to see the grave of the noble Shelley, and I was most indignant at finding him confusedly mingled in a heap with five or six common vagabonds. I instantly set about removing this gross neglect, and selecting the only interesting spot. I enclosed it apart from all possibility of sacrilegious intrusion, and removed his ashes to it, placed a stone over it, am now planting it, and have ordered a granite to be prepared for myself, which I shall place in this beautiful recess (of which the enclosed is a drawing I took), for when I am dead, I have none to do me this service, so shall at least give one instance in my life of proficiency.

In reply Mary wrote informing him of her change of plan, and begging for all minute details about the tomb, which she was not likely, now, to see. Trelawny was expecting soon to rejoin Byron at Genoa, but he wrote at once.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Rome, *27th April 1823*.

Dear Mary — I should have sooner replied to your last, but that I concluded you must have seen Roberts, who is or ought to be at Genoa. He will tell you that the ashes are buried in the new enclosed Protestant burying-ground, which is protected by a wall and gates from every possible molestation, and that the ashes are so placed apart, and yet in the centre and most conspicuous spot of the burying-ground. I have just planted six young cypresses and four laurels, in front of the recess you see by the drawing is formed by two projecting parts of the old ruin. My own stone, a plain slab till I can decide on some fitting inscription, is placed on the left hand. I have likewise dug my grave, so that, when I die, there is only to lift up my coverlet and roll me into it. You may lie on the other side, if you like. It is a lovely spot. The only inscription on Shelley’s stone, besides the *Cor cordium* of Hunt, are the lines I have added from Shakespeare —

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

This quotation, by its double meaning, alludes both to the manner of his death and his genius, and I think the element on which his soul took wing, and the subtle essence of his being mingled, may still retain him in some other shape. The waters may keep the dead, as the earth may, and fire and air. His passionate fondness might have been from some secret sympathy in their natures. Thence the fascination which so forcibly attracted him, without fear or caution, to trust an element almost all others hold in superstitious dread, and venture as cautiously on as they would in a lair of lions. I have just compiled an epitaph for Keats and sent it to Severn, who likes it much better than the one he had designed. He had already designed a lyre with only two of the strings strung, as indicating the unaccomplished maturity and ripening of his genius. He had intended a long inscription about his death having been caused by the *neglect* of his countrymen, and that, as a mark of his displeasure, he said — thus and then. What I wished to substitute is simply thus —

Here lies the spoils
of a
Young English Poet,
“Whose master-hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung,”
And by whose desire is inscribed,
That his name was writ in water.

The line quoted, you remember, is in Shelley, *Adonais*, and the last Keats desired might be engraved on his tomb. Ask Hunt if he thinks it will do, and to think of something to put on my ante-dated grave. I am very anxious to hear how Marianne is getting on, and Hunt. You never mention a word of them or the *Liberal*.

I have been delayed here longer than I had intended, from want of money, having lent and given it away thoughtlessly. However, old Dunn has sent me a supply, so I shall go on to Florence on Monday. I will assuredly see you before you go, and, if my exchequer is not exhausted, go part of the way with you. However, I will write further on this topic at Florence. Do not go to England, to encounter poverty and bitter retrospections. Stay in Italy. I will most gladly share my income with you, and if, under the same circumstances, you would do the same by me, why then you will not hesitate to accept it. I know of nothing would give me half so much pleasure. As you say, in a few years we shall both be better off. Commend me to Marianne and Hunt, and believe me, yours affectionately,

E. Trelawny.

Poste Restante a Gènes.

……

You need not tell me that all your thoughts are concentrated on the memory of your loss, for I have observed it, with great regret and some astonishment. You tell me nothing in your letters of how the *Liberal* is getting on. Why do you not send me a number? How many have come out? Does Hunt stay at Genoa the summer, and what does Lord Byron determine on? I am told the *Bolivar* is lent to some one, and at sea. Where is Jane? and is Mrs. Hunt likely to recover? I shall certainly go on to Switzerland if I can raise the wind.

……

Mary Shelley to Trelawny.

10th May 1823.

My dear Trelawny — You appear to have fulfilled my entire wish in all you have done at Rome. Do you remember the day you made that quotation from Shakespeare in our living room at Pisa? Mine own Shelley was delighted with it, and thus it has for me a pleasing association. Some time hence I may visit the spot which, of all others, I desire most to see.

……

It is not on my own account, my excellent friend, that I go to England. I believe that my child’s interests will be best consulted by my return to that country....

Desiring solitude and my books only, together with the consciousness that I have one or two friends who, although absent, still think of me with affection, England of course holds out no inviting prospect to me. But I am sure to be rewarded in doing or suffering for my little darling, so I am resigned to this last act, which seems to snap the sole link which bound the present to the past, and to tear aside the veil which I have endeavoured to draw over the desolations of my situation. Your kindness I shall treasure up to comfort me in future ill. I shall repeat to myself, I have such a friend, and endeavour to deserve it.

Do you go to Greece? Lord Byron continues in the same mind. The G —— is an obstacle, and certainly her situation is rather a difficult one. But he does not seem disposed to make a mountain of her resistance, and he is far more able to take a decided than a petty step in contradiction to the wishes of those about him. If you do go, it may hasten your return hither. I remain until Mrs. Hunt's confinement is over; had it not been for that, the fear of a hot journey would have caused me to go in this month, — but my desire to be useful to her, and my anxiety concerning the event of so momentous a crisis has induced me to stay. You may think with what awe and terror I look forward to the decisive moment, but I hope for the best. She is as well, perhaps better, than we could in any way expect.

I had no opportunity to send you a second No. of the *Liberal*; we only received it a short time ago, and then you were on the wing: the third number has come out, and we had a copy by post. It has little in it we expected, but it is an amusing number, and L. B. is better pleased with it than any other....

I trust that I shall see you soon, and then I shall hear all your news. I shall see you — but it will be for so short a time — I fear even that you will not go to Switzerland; but these things I must not dwell upon, — partings and separations, when there is no circumstance to lessen any pang. I must brace my mind, not enervate it, for I know I shall have much to endure.

I asked Hunt's opinion about your epitaph for Keats; he said that the line from *Adonais*, though beautiful in itself, might be applied to any poet, in whatever circumstances or whatever age, that died; and that to be in accord with the two-stringed lyre, you ought to select one that alluded to his youth and immature genius. A line to this effect you might find in *Adonais*.

Among the fragments of my lost Shelley, I found the following poetical commentary on the words of Keats, — not that I recommend it for the epitaph, but it may please you to see it.

Here lieth one, whose name was writ in water,
But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,

Death, the immortalising winter, flew
Athwart the stream, and time's mouthless torrent grew
A scroll of crystal, emblazoning the name
Of Adonais.

I have not heard from Jane lately; she was well when she last wrote, but annoyed by various circumstances, and impatient of her lengthened stay in England. How earnestly do I hope that Edward's brother will soon arrive, and show himself worthy of his affinity to the noble and unequalled creature she has lost, by protecting one to whom protection is so necessary, and shielding her from some of the ills to which she is exposed.

Adieu, my dear Trelawny. Continue to think kindly of me, and trust in my unalterable friendship.

Mary Shelley.

Albaro, 10th May.

On his journey to Genoa, Trelawny stayed a night at Lerici, and paid a last visit to the Villa Magni. There, "sleeping still on the mud floor," its mast and oars broken, was Shelley's little skiff, the "Boat on the Serchio."

He mounted the "stairs, or rather ladder," into the dining-room.

As I surveyed its splotchy walls, broken floor, cracked ceiling, and poverty-struck appearance, while I noted the loneliness of the situation, and remembered the fury of the waves that in blowing weather lashed its walls, I did not marvel at Mrs. Shelley's and Mrs. Williams' groans on first entering it; nor that it had required all Ned Williams' persuasive powers to induce them to stop there.

But these things were all far away in the past.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute.

No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,

Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman’s knell.

At Genoa he found the “Pilgrim” in a state of supreme indecision. He had left him discontented when he departed in December. The new magazine was not a success. Byron had expected that other literary and journalistic advantages, leading to fame and power, would accrue to him from the coalition with Leigh Hunt and Shelley, but in this he was disappointed, and he was left to bear the responsibility of the partnership alone.

“The death of Shelley and the failure of the *Liberal* irritated Byron,” writes Trelawny; “the cuckoo-note, ‘I told you so,’ sung by his friends, and the loud crowing of enemies, by no means allayed his ill humour. In this frame of mind he was continually planning how to extricate himself. His plea for hoarding was that he might have a good round tangible sum of current coin to aid him in any emergency....

“He exhausted himself in planning, projecting, beginning, wishing, intending, postponing, regretting, and doing nothing: the unready are fertile in excuses, and his were inexhaustible.”

Since that time he had been flattered and persuaded into joining the Greek Committee, formed in London to aid the Greeks in their war of independence. Byron’s name and great popularity would be a tower of strength to them. Their proposals came to him at a right moment, when he was dissatisfied with himself and his position. He hesitated for months before committing himself, and finally summoned Trelawny, in peremptory terms, to come to him and go with him.

15th June 1823.

My Dear T. — You must have heard that I am going to Greece. Why do you not come to me? I want your aid and am extremely anxious to see you.... They all say I can be of use in Greece. I do not know how, nor do they; but, at all events, let us go. — Yours, etc., truly,

N. Byron.

And, always ready for adventure, the “Pirate” came. Before his arrival Mary’s journey had been decided on. Mrs. Hunt’s confinement was over: she and the infant had both done well, and she was now in a fair way to live, in tolerable health, for many years longer. Want of funds was now the chief obstacle in Mary’s way, but Byron was no longer ready, as he had been, with offers of help. Changeable as the wind, and utterly unable to put himself in another person's place, he, without absolutely declining to fulfil his promises, made so many words about it, and treated the matter as so great a favour on his own part, that Mary at last declined his assistance, although it obliged her to take advantage of Trelawny's often-repeated offers of help, which she would not rather have accepted, as he was poor, while Byron was rich. The whole story unfolds itself in the three ensuing letters.

Mary Shelley to Jane Williams.

Albaro, near Genoa, *July 1823*.

I write to you in preference to my Father, because you, to a great degree, understand the person I have to deal with, and in communicating what I say concerning him, you can, *viva voce*, add such comments as will render my relation more intelligible.

The day after Marianne's confinement, the 9th June, seeing all went on so prosperously, I told Lord Byron that I was ready to go, and he promised to provide means. When I talked of going post, it was because he said that I should go so, at the same time declaring that he would regulate all himself. I waited in vain for these arrangements. But, not to make a long story, since I hope soon to be able to relate the details — he chose to transact our negotiation through Hunt, and gave such an air of unwillingness and sense of the obligation he conferred, as at last provoked Hunt to say that there was no obligation, since he owed me £1000.

Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door!

Still keeping up an appearance of amity with Hunt, he has written notes and letters so full of contempt against me and my lost Shelley that I could stand it no longer, and have refused to receive his still proffered aid for my journey. This, of course, delays me. I can muster about £30 of my own. I do not know whether this is barely sufficient, but as the delicate constitution of my child may oblige me to rest several times on the journey, I cannot persuade myself to commence my journey with what is barely necessary. I have written, therefore, to Trelawny for the sum requisite, and must wait till I hear from him. I see you, my poor girl, sigh over these mischances, but never mind, I do not feel them. My life is a shifting scene, and my business is to play the part allotted for each day well, and, not liking to think of to-morrow, I never think of it at all, except in an intellectual way; and as to money difficulties, why, having nothing, I can lose nothing. Thus, as far as regards what are called worldly concerns, I am perfectly tranquil, and as free or freer from care as if my signature should be able to draw £1000 from some banker. The extravagance and anger of Lord Byron's letters also relieve me from all pain that his dereliction might occasion me, and that his conscience twinges him is too visible from his impatient kicks and unmannerly curvets. You would laugh at his last letter to Hunt, when he says concerning his connection with Shelley "that he let himself down to the level of the democrats."

In the meantime Hunt is all kindness, consideration, and friendship — all feeling of alienation towards me has disappeared even to its last dregs. He perfectly approves of what I have done. So I am still in Italy, and I doubt not but that its sun and vivifying geniality relieve me from those biting cares which would be mine in England, I fear, if I were destitute there. But I feel above the mark of Fortune, and my heart too much wounded to feel these pricks, on all occasions that do not regard its affections, *s'arma di se, e d'intero diamante*. Thus am I changed; too late, alas! for what ought to have been, but not too late, I trust, to enable me, more than before, to be some stay and consolation to my own dear Jane.

Mary.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Saturday.

Dear Mary — Will you tell me what sum you want, as I am settling my affairs? You must from time to time let me know your wants, that I may do my best to relieve them. You are sure of me, so let us use no more words about it. I have been racking my memory to remember some person in England that would be of service to you for my sake, but my rich friends and relations are without hearts, and it is useless to introduce you to the unfortunate; it would but augment your repinings at the injustice of Fortune. My knight-errant heart has led me many a weary journey foolishly seeking the unfortunate, the miserable, and the outcast; and when found, I have only made myself as one of them without redressing their grievances, so I pray you avoid, as you value your peace of mind, the wretched. I shall see you, I hope, to-day. — Yours very faithfully,

E. Trelawny.

Mary Shelley to Jane Williams.

Albaro, *23d July 1823*.

Dearest Jane — I have at length fixed with the *vetturino*. I depart on the 25th, my best girl. I leave Italy; I return to the dreariest reality after having dreamt away a year in this blessed and beloved country.

Lord Byron, Trelawny, and Pierino Gamba sailed for Greece on the 17th inst. I did not see the former. His unconquerable avarice prevented his supplying me with money, and a remnant of shame caused him to avoid me. But I have a world of things to tell you on that score when I see you. If he were mean, Trelawny more than balanced the moral account. His whole conduct during his last stay here has impressed us all with an affectionate regard, and a perfect faith in the unalterable goodness of his heart. They sailed together; Lord Byron with £10,000, Trelawny with £50, and Lord Byron cowering before his eye for reasons you shall hear soon. The Guiccioli is gone to Bologna — *e poi cosa farà? Chi lo sa? Cosa vuoi che lo dico?...*

I travel without a servant. I rest first at Lyons; but do you write to me at Paris, Hotel Nelson. It will be a friend to await me. Alas! I have need of consolation. Hunt's kindness is now as active and warm as it was dormant before; but just as I find a companion in him I leave him. I leave him in all his difficulties, with his head throbbing with overwrought thoughts, and his frame sometimes sinking under his anxieties. Poor Marianne has found good medicine, *facendo un bimbo*, and then nursing it, but she, with her female providence, is more bent by care than Hunt. How much I wished, and wish, to settle near them at Florence; but I must submit with courage, and patience may at last come and give opiate to my irritable feelings.

Both Hunt and Trelawny say that Percy is much improved since Maria left me. He is affectionately attached to Sylvan, and very fond of *Bimbo nuovo*. He kisses him by the hour, and tells me, *Come il Signore Enrico ha comprato un Baby nuovo — forse ti darà il Baby vecchio*, as he gives away an old toy on the appearance of a new one.

I will not write longer. In conversation, nay, almost in thought, I can, at this most painful moment, force my excited feelings to laugh at themselves, and my spirits, raised by emotion, to seem as if they were light, but the natural current and real hue overflows me and penetrates me when I write, and it would be painful to you, and overthrow all my hopes of retaining my fortitude, if I were to write one word that truly translated the agitation I suffer into language.

I will write again from Lyons, where I suppose I shall be on the 3d of August. Dear Jane, can I render you happier than you are? The idea of that might console me, at least you will see one that truly loves you, and who is for ever your affectionately attached

Mary Shelley.

If there is any talk of my accommodations, pray tell Mrs. Gisborne that I cannot sleep on any but a *hard* bed. I care not how hard, so that it be a mattress.

And now Mary's life in Italy was at an end. Her resolution of returning to England had been welcomed by her father in the letter which follows, and it was to his house, and not to Mrs. Gisborne's that she finally decided to go on first arriving.

Godwin to Mary.

No. 195 Strand, *6th May 1823*.

It certainly is, my dear Mary, with great pleasure that I anticipate that we shall once again meet. It is a long, long time now since you have spent one night under my roof. You are grown a woman, have been a wife, a mother, a widow. You have realised talents which I but faintly and doubtfully anticipated. I am grown an old man, and want a child of my own to smile on and console me. I shall then feel less alone than I do at present.

What William will be, I know not; he has sufficient understanding and quickness for the ordinary concerns of life, and something more; and, at any rate, he is no smiler, no consoler.

When you first set your foot in London, of course I and Mamma expect that it will be in this house. But the house is smaller, one floor less, than the house in Skinner Street. It will do well enough for you to make shift with for a few days, but it would not do for a permanent residence. But I hope we shall at least have you near us, within a call. How different from your being on the shores of the Mediterranean!

Your novel has sold five hundred copies — half the impression.

Peacock sent your box by the *Berbice*, Captain Wayth. I saw him a fortnight ago, and he said that he had not yet received the bill of lading himself, but he should be sure to have it in time, and would send it. I ought to have written to you sooner. Your letter reached me on the 18th ult., but I have been unusually surrounded with perplexities. — Your affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

On the 25th of July she left Genoa, Hunt accompanying her for the first twenty miles. If one thought more than any other sustained her in her unprotected loneliness, it was that of being reunited in England to her sister in misfortune, Jane Williams, to whom her heart turned with a singular tenderness, and to whom on her journey she addressed one more letter, full of grateful affection and of a touching humility, new in her character.

Mary Shelley to Jane Williams.

St. Jean de la Maurienne,
30th July 1823.

My best Jane — I wrote to you from Genoa the day before I quitted it, but I afterwards lost the letter. I asked the Hunts to look for it, and send it if found, but ten to one you will never receive it. It contained nothing, however, but what I can tell you in five minutes if I see you. It told you of the departure of Lord Byron and Trelawny for Greece, the former escaping with all his crowns, and the other disbursing until he had hardly £10 left. It went to my heart to borrow the sum from him necessary to make up my journey, but he behaved with so much quiet generosity that one was almost glad to put him to that proof, and witness the excellence of his heart. In this and in another trial he acquitted himself so well that he gained all our hearts, while the other — but more when we meet.

I left Genoa Thursday, 25th. Hunt and Thornton accompanied me the first twenty miles. This was much, you will say, for Hunt. But, thank heaven, we are now the best friends in the world. He set his heart on my quitting Italy with as comfortable feelings as possible, and he did so much that notwithstanding all the [bitterness] that such an event, joined to parting with a dear friend, occasioned me, yet I have borne up with better spirits than I could in any way have hoped. It is a delightful thing, my dear Jane, to be able to express one’s affection upon an old and tried friend like Hunt, and one so passionately attached to my Shelley as he was, and is. It is pleasant also to feel myself loved by one who loves me. You know somewhat of what I suffered during the winter, during his alienation from me. He was displeased with me for many just reasons, but he found me willing to expiate, as far as I could, the evil I had done, so his heart was again warmed; and if, my dear friend, when I return, you find me more amiable and more willing to suffer with patience than I was, it is to him that I owe this benefit, and you may judge if I ought not to be grateful to him. I am even so to Lord Byron, who was the cause that I stayed at Genoa, and thus secured one who, I am sure, can never change.

The illness of one of our horses detains me here an afternoon, so I write, and shall put the letter in the post at Chambéry. I have come without a servant or companion; but Percy is perfectly good, and no trouble to me at all. We are both well; a little tired or so. Will you tell my Father that you have heard from me, and that I am so far on my journey. I expect to be at Lyons in three days, and will write to him from that place. If there be any talk of my accommodations, pray put in a word for a *hard* bed, for else I am sure I cannot sleep.

So I have left Italy, and alone with my child I am travelling to England. What a dream I have had! and is it over? Oh no! for I do nothing but dream; realities seem to have lost all power over me, — I mean, as it were, mere tangible realities, — for, where the affections are concerned, calamity has only awakened greater sensitiveness.

I fear things do not go on well with you, my dearest girl! you are not in your mother’s house, and you cannot have settled your affairs in India, — mine too! Why, I arrive poor to nothingness, and my hopes are small, except from my own exertions; and living in England is dear. My thoughts will all bend towards Italy; but even if Sir Timothy Shelley should do anything, he will not, I am sure, permit me to go abroad. At any rate we shall be together a while. We will talk of our lost ones, and think of realising my dreams; who knows? Adieu, I shall soon see you, and you will find how truly I am your affectionate

Mary Shelley.

With the following fragment, the last of her Italian journal, this chapter may fitly close.

Journal, May 31. — The lanes are filled with fire-flies; they dart between the trunks of the trees, and people the land with earth-stars. I walked among them to-night, and descended towards the sea. I passed by the ruined church, and stood on the platform that overlooks the beach. The black rocks were stretched out among the blue waters, which dashed with no impetuous motion against them. The dark boats, with their white sails, glided gently over its surface, and the star-enlightened promontories closed in the bay: below, amid the crags, I heard the monotonous but harmonious voices of the fishermen.

How beautiful these shores, and this sea! Such is the scene — such the waves within which my beloved vanished from mortality.

The time is drawing near when I must quit this country. It is true that, in the situation I now am, Italy is but the corpse of the enchantress that she was. Besides, if I had stayed here, the state of things would have been different. The idea of our child's advantage alone enables me to keep fixed in my resolution to return to England. It is best for him — and I go.

Four years ago we lost our darling William; four years ago, in excessive agony, I called for death to free me from all I felt that I should suffer here. I continue to live, and *thou* art gone. I leave Italy and the few that still remain to me. That I regret less; for our intercourse is so much chequered with all of dross that this earth so delights to blend with kindness and sympathy, that I long for solitude, with the exercise of such affections as still remain to me. Away, I shall be conscious that these friends love me, and none can then gainsay the pure attachment which chiefly clings to them because they knew and loved you — because I knew them when with you, and I cannot think of them without feeling your spirit beside me.

I cannot grieve for you, beloved Shelley; I grieve for thy friends — for the world — for thy child — most for myself, enthroned in thy love, growing wiser and better beneath thy gentle influence, taught by you the highest philosophy — your pupil, friend, lover, wife, mother of your children! The glory of the dream is gone. I am a cloud from which the light of sunset has passed. Give me patience in the present struggle. *Meum cordium cor!* Good-night!

I would give all that I am to be as now thou art,
But I am chained to time, and cannot thence depart.

CHAPTER XIX

July 1823-December 1824

Mary's journey extended over a month, one week of which was passed in Paris and Versailles, for the sake of seeing the Horace Smiths and other old acquaintances now living there. Her letters to the Hunts, describing the incidents and impressions of her journey, were as lively and cheerful as she could make them. A few extracts follow here.

To Leigh Hunt.

Asti, *26th July*.

....

Percy is very good and does not in the least *annoy* me. In the state of mind I am now in, the motion and change is delightful to me: my thoughts run with the coach and wind, and double, and jerk, and are up and down, and forward, and most often backward, till the labyrinth of Crete is a joke in comparison to my intricate wanderings. They now lead me to you, Hunt. You rose early, wrote, walked, dined, whistled, sang and punned most outrageously, the worst puns in the world. My best Polly, you, full of your chicks and of your new darling, yet sometimes called "Henry" to see a beautiful new effect of light on the mountains.... Dear girl, I have a great affection for you, believe that, and don't talk or think sorrowfully, unless you have the toothache, and then don't think, but talk infinite nonsense mixed with infinite sense, and Hunt will listen, as I used. Thorny, you have not been cross yet. Oh, my dear Johnny (don't be angry, Polly, with this nonsense), do not let your impatient nature ever overcome you, or you may suffer as I have done — which God forbid! Be true to yourself, and talk much to your Father, who will teach you as he has taught me. It is the idea of his lessons of wisdom that makes me feel the affection I do for him. I profit by them, so do you: may you never feel the remorse of having neglected them when his voice and look are gone, and he can no longer talk to you; that remorse is a terrible feeling, and it requires a faith and a philosophy immense not to be destroyed by the stinging monster.

28th July.

... I was too late for the post yesterday at Turin, and too early this morning, so as I determined to put this letter in the post myself, I bring it with me to Susa, and now open it to tell you how delighted I am with my morning's ride — the scenery is so divine. The high, dark Alps, just on this southern side tipt with snow, close in a plain; the meadows are full of clover and flowers, and the woods of ash, elm, and beech descend and spread, and lose themselves in the fields; stately trees, in clumps or singly, arise on each side, and wherever you look you see some spot where you dream of building a home and living for ever. The exquisite beauty of nature, and the cloudless sky of this summer day soothe me, and make this 28th so full of recollections that it is almost pleasurable. Wherever the spirit of beauty dwells, *he* must be; the rustling of the trees is full of him; the waving of the tall grass, the moving shadows of the vast hills, the blue air that penetrates their ravines and rests upon their heights. I feel him near me when I see that which he best loved. Alas! nine years ago he took to a home in his heart this weak being, whom he has now left for more congenial spirits and happier regions. She lives only in the hope that she may become one day as one of them.

Absolutely, my dear Hunt, I will pass some three summer months in this divine spot, you shall all be with me. There are no gentlemen's seats at Palazzi, so we will take a cottage, which we will paint and refit, just as this country here is, in which I now write, clean and plain. We will have no servants, only we will give out all the needlework. Marianne shall make puddings and pies, to make up for the vegetables and meat which I shall boil and spoil. Thorny shall sweep the rooms, Mary make the beds, Johnny clean the kettles and pans, and then we will pop him into the many streams hereabouts, and so clean him. Swinny, being so quick, shall be our Mercury, Percy our gardener, Sylvan and Percy Florence our weeders, and Vincent our plaything; and then, to raise us above the vulgar, we will do all our work, keeping time to Hunt's symphonies; we will perform our sweepings and dustings to the March in *Alceste*, we will prepare our meats to the tune of the *Laughing Trio*, and when we are tired we will lie on our turf sofas, while all our voices shall join in chorus in *Notte e giorno faticar*. You see my paper is quite out, so I must say, for the last time, Adieu! God bless you.

Mary W. S.

Tuesday, 5th August.

I have your letter, and your excuses, and all. I thank you most sincerely for it: at the same time I do entreat you to take care of yourself with regard to writing; although your letters are worth infinite pleasure to me, yet that pleasure cannot be worth pain to you; and remember, if you must write, the good, hackneyed maxim of *multum in parvo*, and, when your temples throb, distil the essence of three pages into three lines, and my "fictitious adventure" will enable me to open them out and fill up intervals. Not but what three pages are best, but "you can understand me." And now let me tell you that I fear you do not rise early, since you doubt my *ore mattutine*. Be it known to you, then, that on the journey I always rise *before* 3 o'clock, that I *never* once made the *vetturino* wait, and, moreover, that there was no discontent in our jogging on on either side, so that I half expect to be a *Santa* with him. He indeed got a little out of his element when he got into France, — his good humour did not leave him, but his self-possession. He could not speak French, and he walked about as if treading on eggs.

When at Paris I will tell you more what I think of the French. They still seem miracles of quietness in comparison with Marianne's noisy friends. And the women's dresses afford the drollest contrast with those in fashion when I first set foot in Paris in 1814. Then their waists were between their shoulders, and, as Hogg observed, they were rather curtains than gowns; their hair, too, dragged to the top of the head, and then lifted to its height, appeared as if each female wished to be a Tower of Babel in herself. Now their waists are long (not so long, however, as the Genoese), and their hair flat at the top, with quantities of curls on the temples. I remember, in 1814, a Frenchman's pathetic horror at Clare's and my appearance in the streets of Paris in "Oldenburgh" (as they were called) hats; now they all wear machines of that shape, and a high bonnet would of course be as far out of the right road as if the earth were to take a flying leap to another system.

After you receive this letter, you must direct to me at my Father's (pray put William Godwin, Esq., since the want of that etiquette annoys him. I remember Shelley's unspeakable astonishment when the author of *Political Justice* asked him, half reproachfully, why he addressed him *Mr.* Godwin), 195 Strand.

On the 25th of August Mary met her father once more. At his house in the Strand she spent her first ten days in England. Consideration for others, and the old habit of repressing all show of feeling before Godwin helped to steel her nerves and heart to bear the stings and aches of this strange, mournful reunion.

And now again, too, she saw her friend Jane. But fondly as Mary ever clung to her, she must have been sensible of the difference between them. Mrs. Williams' situation was forlorn indeed; in some respects even more so than Mrs. Shelley's. But, though she had grieved bitterly, as well she might, for Edward's loss, her nature was not *impressible*, and the catastrophe which had fallen upon her had left her unaltered. Jane was unhappy, but she was not inconsolable; her grief was becoming to her, and lent her a certain interest which enhanced her attractions. And to men in general she was very attractive. Godwin himself was somewhat fascinated by the "picturesque little woman" who had called on him on her first arrival; who "did not drop one tear" and occasionally smiled. As for Hogg, he lost his heart to her at once.

All this Mary must have seen. But Jane was an attaching creature, and Mary loved her as the greater nature loves the lesser; she lavished on her a wealth of pent-up tenderness, content to get what crumbs she could in return. For herself a curious surprise was in store, which entertained, if it did not cheer her.

Just at the time of its author's return to England, *Frankenstein*, in a dramatised form, was having a considerable "run" at the English Opera House.

Mrs. Shelley to Leigh Hunt.

9th September 1823.

My dear Hunt — Bessy promised me to relieve you from any inquietude you might suffer from not hearing from me, so I indulged myself with not writing to you until I was quietly settled in lodgings of my own. Want of time is not my excuse; I had plenty, but, until I saw all quiet around me, I had not the spirit to write a line. I thought of you all — how much? and often longed to write, yet would not till I called myself free to turn southward; to imagine you all, to put myself in the midst of you, would have destroyed all my philosophy. But now I do so. I am in little neat lodgings, my boy in bed, I quiet, and I will now talk to you, tell you what I have seen and heard, and with as little repining as I can, try (by making the best of what I have, the certainty of your friendship and kindness) to rest half content that I am not in the "Paradise of Exiles." Well, first I will tell you, journalwise, the history of my sixteen days in London.

I arrived Monday, the 25th of August. My Father and William came for me to the wharf. I had an excellent passage of eleven hours and a half, a glassy sea, and a contrary wind. The smoke of our fire was wafted right aft, and streamed out behind us; but wind was of little consequence; the tide was with us, and though the engine gave a "short uneasy motion" to the vessel, the water was so smooth that no one on board was sick, and Persino played about the deck in high glee. I had a very kind reception in the Strand, and all was done that could be done to make me comfortable. I exerted myself to keep up my spirits. The house, though rather dismal, is infinitely better than the Skinner Street one. I resolved not to think of certain things, to take all as a matter of course, and thus contrive to keep myself out of the gulf of melancholy, on the edge of which I was and am continually peeping.

But lo and behold! I found myself famous. *Frankenstein* had prodigious success as a drama, and was about to be repeated, for the twenty-third night, at the English Opera House. The play-bill amused me extremely, for, in the list of *dramatis personæ*, came " —— , by Mr. T. Cooke." This nameless mode of naming the unnameable is rather good.

On Friday, 29th August, Jane, my Father, William, and I went to the theatre to see it. Wallack looked very well as Frankenstein. He is at the beginning full of hope and expectation. At the end of the first act the stage represents a room with a staircase leading to Frankenstein's workshop; he goes to it, and you see his light at a small window, through which a frightened servant peeps, who runs off in terror when Frankenstein exclaims "It lives!" Presently Frankenstein himself rushes in horror and trepidation from the room, and, while still expressing his agony and terror, " — —" throws down the door of the laboratory, leaps the staircase, and presents his unearthly and monstrous person on the stage. The story is not well managed, but Cooke played — —'s part extremely well; his seeking, as it were, for support; his trying to grasp at the sounds he heard; all, indeed, he does was well imagined and executed. I was much amused, and it appeared to excite a breathless eagerness in the audience. It was a third piece, a scanty pit filled at half-price, and all stayed till it was over. They continue to play it even now.

On Saturday, 30th August, I went with Jane to the Gisbornes. I know not why, but seeing them seemed more than anything else to remind me of Italy. Evening came on drearily, the rain splashed on the pavement, nor star nor moon deigned to appear. I looked upward to seek an image of Italy, but a blotted sky told me only of my change. I tried to collect my thoughts, and then, again, dared not think, for I am a ruin where owls and bats live only, and I lost my last *singing bird* when I left Albaro. It was my birthday, and it pleased me to tell the people so; to recollect and feel that time flies, and what is to arrive is nearer, and my home not so far off as it was a year ago. This same evening, on my return to the Strand, I saw Lamb, who was very entertaining and amiable, though a little deaf. One of the first questions he asked me was, whether they made puns in Italy: I said, "Yes, now Hunt is there." He said that Burney made a pun in Otaheite, the first that was ever made in that country. At first the natives could not make out what he meant, but all at once they discovered the *pun*, and danced round him in transports of joy....

... On the strength of the drama, my Father had published for my benefit a new edition of *Frankenstein*, for he despaired utterly of my doing anything with Sir Timothy Shelley. I wrote to him, however, to tell him of my arrival, and on the following Wednesday had a note from Whitton, where he invited me, if I wished for an explanation of Sir T. Shelley's intentions concerning my boy, to call on him. I went with my Father. Whitton was very polite, though long-winded: his great wish seemed to be to prevent my applying again to Sir T. Shelley, whom he represented as old, infirm, and irritable. However, he advanced me £100 for my immediate expenses, told me that he could not speak positively until he had seen Sir T. Shelley, but that he doubted not but that I should receive the same annually for my child, and, with a little time and patience, I should get an allowance for myself. This, you see, relieved me from a load of anxieties.

Having secured neat cheap lodgings, we removed hither last night. Such, dear Hunt, is the outline of your poor exile's history. After two days of rain, the weather has been *uncommonly* fine, *cioè*, without rain, and cloudless, I believe, though I trusted to other eyes for that fact, since the white-washed sky is anything but blue to any but the perceptions of the natives themselves. It is so cold, however, that the fire I am now sitting by is not the first that has been lighted, for my Father had one two days ago. The wind is east and piercing, but I comfort myself with the hope that softer gales are now fanning your *not* throbbing temples, that the climate of Florence will prove kindly to you, and that your health and spirits will return to you. Why am I not there? This is quite a foreign country to me, the names of the places sound strangely, the voices of the people are new and grating, the vulgar English they speak particularly displeasing. But for my Father, I should be with you next spring, but his heart and soul are set on my stay, and in this world it always seems one's duty to sacrifice one's own desires, and that claim ever appears the strongest which claims such a sacrifice.

……..

It is difficult to imagine *Frankenstein* on the stage; it must, at least, lose very much in dramatic representation. Like its modern successor, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, — that remarkable story which bears a certain affinity to *Frankenstein*, — its subtle allegorical significance would be overweighted, if not lost, by the effect of the grosser and more material incidents which are all that could be *played*, and which, as described, must have bordered on the ludicrous. Still the charm of life imparted by a human impersonation to any portion, even, of one's own idea, is singularly powerful; and so Mary felt it. She would have liked to repeat the experience. Her situation, looked at in the face, was unenviable. She was unprovided for, young, delicate, and with a child dependent on her. Her rich connections would have nothing to do with her, and her boy did not possess in their eyes the importance which would have attached to him had he been heir to the baronetcy. She had talent, and it had been cultivated, but with her sorely-tried health and spirits, the prospect of self-support by the compulsory production of imaginative work must, at the time, have seemed unpromising enough.

Two sheet-anchors of hope she had, and by these she lived. They were, her child — so friendless but for her — and the thought of Shelley's fame. The collecting and editing of his MSS., this was her work; no one else should do it. It seemed as though her brief life with him had had for its purpose to educate her for this one object.

Those who now, in naming Shelley, feel they name a part of everything beautiful, ethereal, and spiritual — that his words are so inextricably interwoven with certain phases of love and beauty as to be indistinguishable from the very thing itself — may well find it hard to realise how little he was known at the time when he died.

With other poets their work is the blossom and fruit of their lives, but Shelley's poetry resembles rather the perfume of the flower, that subtle quality pertaining to the bloom which can be neither described, nor pourtrayed, nor transmitted; an essence of immortality.

Not many months after this the news of Byron's early death struck a kind of remorseful grief into the hearts of his countrymen. A letter of Miss Welsh's (Mrs. Carlyle) gives an idea of the general feeling —

"I was told it," she says, "in a room full of people. Had I heard that the sun and moon had fallen out of their spheres it could not have conveyed to me the feeling of a more awful blank than did the simple words, 'Byron is dead.'"

How many, it may be asked, were conscious of any blank when the news reached them that Shelley had been "accidentally drowned"? Their numbers might be counted by tens.

The sale, in every instance, of Mr. Shelley's works has been very confined,

was his publishers' report to his widow. One newspaper dismissed his memory by the passing remark, "He will now find out whether there is a Hell or not."

The small number of those who recognised his genius did not even include all his personal friends.

"Mine is a life of failures;" so he summed it up to Trelawny and Edward Williams. "Peacock says my poetry is composed of day-dreams and nightmares, and Leigh Hunt does not think it good enough for the *Examiner*. Jefferson Hogg says all poetry is inverted sense, and consequently nonsense....

"I wrote, and the critics denounced me as a mischievous visionary, and my friends said that I had mistaken my vocation, that my poetry was mere rhapsody of words...."

Leigh Hunt, indeed, thought his own poetry more than equal to Shelley's or Byron's. Byron knew Shelley's power well enough, but cared little for the subjects of his sympathy. Trelawny was more appreciative, but his admiration for the poetry was quite secondary to his enthusiasm for the man. In Hogg's case, affection for the man may be said to have *excused* the poetry. All this Mary knew, but she knew too — what she was soon to find out by experience — that among his immediate associates he had created too warm an interest for him to escape posthumous discussion and criticism. And he had been familiar with some of those regarding whom the world's curiosity was insatiable, concerning whom any shred of information, true or false, was eagerly snapped up. His name would inevitably figure in anecdotes and gossip. His fame was Mary's to guard. During the years she lived at Albaro she had been employed in collecting and transcribing his scattered MSS., and at the end of this year, 1823, the volume of Posthumous Poems came out.

One would imagine that publishers would have bid against each other for the possession of such a treasure. Far from it. Among the little band of "true believers" three came forward to guarantee the expenses of publication. They were, the poet Thomas Lovell Beddoes, Procter, and T. F. Kelsall.

The appearance of this book was a melancholy satisfaction to Mary, though, as will soon be seen, she was not long allowed to enjoy it.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Hunt.

London, *27th November 1823*.

My dearest Polly — Are you not a naughty girl? How could you copy a letter to that "agreeable, unaffected woman, Mrs. Shelley," without saying a word from yourself to your loving...? My dear Polly, a line from you forms a better picture for me of what you are about than — alas! I was going to say three pages, but I check myself — the rare one page of Hunt. Do not think that I forget you — even Percy does not, and he often tells me to bid the Signor Enrico and you to get in a carriage and then into a boat, and to come to *questo paese* with *Baby nuovo*, Henry, Swinburne, *e tutti*. But that will not be, nor shall I see you at Mariano; this is a dreary exile for me. During a long month of cloud and fog, how often have I sighed for my beloved Italy, and more than ever this day when I have come to a conclusion with Sir Timothy Shelley as to my affairs, and I find the miserable pittance I am to have. Nearly sufficient in Italy, here it will not go half-way. It is £100 per annum. Nor is this all, for I foresee a thousand troubles; yet, in truth, as far as regards mere money matters and worldly prospects, I keep up my philosophy with excellent success. Others wonder at this, but I do not, nor is there any philosophy in it. After having witnessed the mortal agonies of my two darling children, after that journey from and to Lerici, I feel all these as pictures and trifles as long as I am kept out of contact with the unholy. I was upset to-day by being obliged to see Whitton, and the prospect of seeing others of his tribe. I can earn a sufficiency, I doubt not. In Italy I should be content: here I will not bemoan. Indeed I never do, and Mrs. Godwin makes *large eyes* at the quiet way in which I take it all. It is England alone that annoys me, yet sometimes I get among friends and almost forget its fogs. I go to Shacklewell rarely, and sometimes see the Novellos elsewhere. He is my especial favourite, and his music always transports me to the seventh heaven.... I see the Lambs rather often, she ever amiable, and Lamb witty and delightful. I must tell you one thing and make Hunt laugh. Lamb's new house at Islington is close to the New River, and George Dyer, after having paid them a visit, on going away at 12 at noonday, walked deliberately into the water, taking it for the high road. "But," as he said afterwards to Procter, "I soon found that I was in the water, sir." So Miss Lamb and the servant had to fish him out.... I must tell Hunt also a good saying of Lamb's, — talking of some one, he said, "Now some men who are very veracious are called matter-of-fact men, but such a one I should call a matter-of-lie man."

I have seen also Procter, with his "beautifully formed head" (it is beautifully formed), several times, and I like him. He is an enthusiastic admirer of Shelley, and most zealous in bringing out the volume of his poems; this alone would please me; and he is, moreover, gentle and gentlemanly, and apparently endued with a true poetic feeling. Besides, he is an invalid, and some time ago I told you, in a letter, that I have always a sneaking (for sneaking read open) kindness for men of literary and particularly poetic habits, who have delicate health. I cannot help revering the mind delicately attuned that shatters the material frame, and whose thoughts are strong enough to throw down and dilapidate the walls of sense and dikes of flesh that the unimaginative contrive to keep in such good repair....

After all, I spend a great deal of my time in solitude. I have been hitherto too fully occupied in preparing Shelley's MSS. It is now complete, and the poetry alone will make a large volume. Will you tell Hunt that he need not send any of the MSS. that he has (except the Essay on Devils, and some lines addressed to himself on his arrival in Italy, if he should choose them to be inserted), as I have recopied all the rest? We should be very glad, however, of his notice as quickly as possible, as we wish the book to be out in a month at furthest, and that will not be possible unless he sends it immediately. It would break my heart if the book should appear without it. When he does send a packet over (let it be directed to his brother), will he also be so good as to send me a copy of my "Choice," beginning after the line

Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might?

Perhaps, dear Marianne, you would have the kindness to copy them for me, and send them soon. I have another favour to ask of you. Miss Curran has a portrait of Shelley, in many things very like, and she has so much talent that I entertain great hopes that she will be able to make a good one; for this purpose I wish her to have all the aids possible, and among the rest a profile from you. If you could not cut another, perhaps you would send her one already cut, and if you sent it with a note requesting her to return it when she had done with it, I will engage that it will be most faithfully returned. At present I am not quite sure where she is, but if she should be there, and you can find her and send her this, I need not tell you how you would oblige me.

I heard from Bessy that Hunt is writing something for the *Examiner* for me. I *conjecture* that this may be concerning *Valperga*. I shall be glad, indeed, when that comes, or in lieu of it, anything else. John Hunt begins to despair.

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And now, dear Polly, I think I have done with gossip and business: with words of affection and kindness I should never have done. I am inexpressibly anxious about you all. Percy has had a similar though shorter attack to that at Albaro, but he is now recovered. I have a cold in my head, occasioned, I suppose, by the weather. Ah, Polly! if all the beauties of England were to have only the mirror that Richard III desires, a very short time would be spent at the looking-glass!

What of Florence and the gallery? I saw the Elgin marbles to-day; to-morrow I am to go to the Museum to look over the prints: that will be a great treat. The Theseus is a divinity, but how very few statues they have! Kiss the children. Ask Thornton for his forgotten and promised P.S., give my love to Hunt, and believe me, my dear Marianne, the exiled, but ever, most affectionately yours,

Mary W. Shelley.

Journal, January 18 (1824). — I have now been nearly four months in England, and if I am to judge of the future by the past and the present, I have small delight in looking forward. I even regret those days and weeks of intense melancholy that composed my life at Genoa. Yes, solitary and unbeloved as I was there, I enjoyed a more pleasurable state of being than I do here. I was still in Italy, and my heart and imagination were both gratified by that circumstance. I awoke with the light and beheld the theatre of nature from my window; the trees spread their green beauty before me, the resplendent sky was above me, the mountains were invested with enchanting colours. I had even begun to contemplate painlessly the blue expanse of the tranquil sea, speckled by the snow-white sails, gazed upon by the unclouded stars. There was morning and its balmy air, noon and its exhilarating heat, evening and its wondrous sunset, night and its starry pageant. Then, my studies; my drawing, which soothed me; my Greek, which I studied with greater complacency as I stole every now and then a look on the scene near me; my metaphysics, that strengthened and elevated my mind. Then my solitary walks and my reveries; they were magnificent, deep, pathetic, wild, and exalted. I sounded the depths of my own nature; I appealed to the nature around me to corroborate the testimony that my own heart bore to its purity. I thought of *him* with hope; my grief was active, striving, expectant. I was worth something then in the catalogue of beings. I could have written something, been something. Now I am exiled from these beloved scenes; its language is becoming a stranger to mine ears; my child is forgetting it. I am imprisoned in a dreary town; I see neither fields, nor hills, nor trees, nor sky; the exhilaration of enwrapt contemplation is no more felt by me; aspirations agonising, yet grand, from which the soul reposed in peace, have ceased to ascend from the quenched altar of my mind. Writing has become a task; my studies irksome; my life dreary. In this prison it is only in human intercourse that I can pretend to find consolation; and woe, woe, and triple woe to whoever seeks pleasure in human intercourse when that pleasure is not founded on deep and intense affection; as for the rest —

The bubble floats before,
The shadow stalks behind.

My Father's situation, his cares and debts, prevent my enjoying his society.

I love Jane better than any other human being, but I am pressed upon by the knowledge that she but slightly returns this affection. I love her, and my purest pleasure is derived from that source — a capacious basin, and but a rill flows into it. I love some one or two more, "with a degree of love," but I see them seldom. I am excited while with them, but the reaction of this feeling is dreadfully painful, but while in London I cannot forego this excitement. I know some clever men, in whose conversation I delight, but this is rare, like angels' visits. Alas! having lived day by day with one of the wisest, best, and most affectionate of spirits, how void, bare, and drear is the scene of life!

Oh, Shelley, dear, lamented, beloved! help me, raise me, support me; let me not feel ever thus fallen and degraded! my imagination is dead, my genius lost, my energies sleep. Why am I not beneath that weed-grown tower? Seeing Coleridge last night reminded me forcibly of past times; his beautiful descriptions reminded me of Shelley's conversations. Such was the intercourse I once daily enjoyed, added to supreme and active goodness, sympathy, and affection, and a wild, picturesque mode of living that suited my active spirit and satisfied its craving for novelty of impression.

I will go into the country and philosophise; some gleams of past entrancement may visit me there.

Lonely, poor, and dull as she was, these first months were a dreadful trial. She was writing, or trying to write, another novel, *The Last Man*, but it hung heavy; it did not satisfy her. Shrinking from company, yet recoiling still more from the monotony of her own thoughts, she was possessed by the restless wish to write a drama, perhaps with the idea that out of dramatic creations she might (Frankenstein-like) manufacture for herself companions more living than the characters of a novel. It may have been fortunate for her that she did not persevere in the attempt. Her special gifts were hardly of a dramatic order, and she had not the necessary experience for a successful playwright. She consulted her father, however, sending him at the same time some specimens of her work, and got some sound advice from him in return.

Godwin to Mary.

No. 195 Strand, *27th February 1824*.

My dear Mary — Your appeal to me is a painful one, and the account you give of your spirits and tone of mind is more painful. Your appeal to me is painful, because I by no means regard myself as an infallible judge, and have been myself an unsuccessful adventurer in the same field toward which, in this instance, you have turned your regards. As to what you say of your spirits and tone of mind, your plans, and your views, would not that much more profitably and agreeably be made the subject of a conversation between us? You are aware that such a conversation must be begun by you. So begun, it would be quite a different thing than begun by me. In the former case I should be called in as a friend and adviser, from whom some advantage was hoped for; in the latter I should be an intruder, forcing in free speeches and unwelcome truths, and should appear as if I wanted to dictate to you and direct you, who are well capable of directing yourself. You have able critics within your command — Mr. Procter and Mr. Lamb. You have, however, one advantage in me; I feel a deeper interest in you than they do, and would not mislead you for the world.

As to the specimens you have sent me, it is easy for me to give my opinion. There is one good scene — Manfred and the Two Strangers in the Cottage; and one that has some slight hints in it — the scene where Manfred attempts to stab the Duke. The rest are neither good nor bad; they might be endured, in the character of cement, to fasten good things together, but no more. Am I right? Perhaps not. I state things as they appear to my organs. Thus far, therefore, you afford an example, to be added to Barry Cornwall, how much easier it is to write a detached dramatic scene than to write a tragedy.

Is it not strange that so many people admire and relish Shakespeare, and that nobody writes or even attempts to write like him? To read your specimens, I should suppose that you had read no tragedies but such as have been written since the date of your birth. Your personages are mere abstractions — the lines and points of a mathematical diagram — and not men and women. If A crosses B, and C falls upon D, who can weep for that? Your talent is something like mine — it cannot unfold itself without elbow-room. As Gray sings, “Give ample room and verge enough the characters of hell to trace.” I can do tolerably well if you will allow me to explain as much as I like — if, in the margin of what my personage says, I am permitted to set down and anatomise all that he feels. Dramatic dialogue, in reference to any talent I possess, is the devil. To write nothing more than the very words spoken by the character is a course that withers all the powers of my soul. Even Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist that ever existed, often gives us riddles to guess and enigmas to puzzle over. Many of his best characters and situations require a volume of commentary to make them perspicuous. And why is this? Because the law of his composition confines him to set down barely words that are to be delivered.

For myself, I am almost glad that you have not (if you have not) a dramatic talent. How many mortifications and heart-aches would that entail on you. Managers are to be consulted; players to be humoured; the best pieces that were ever written negatived, and returned on the author’s hands. If these are all got over, then you have to encounter the caprice of a noisy, insolent, and vulgar-minded audience, whose senseless *non fiat* shall turn the labour of a year in a moment into nothing.

Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is ——
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares,
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.

It is laziness, my dear Mary, that makes you wish to be a dramatist. It seems in prospect a short labour to write a play, and a long one to write a work consisting of volumes; and as much may be gained by the one as by the other. But as there is no royal road to geometry, so there is no idle and self-indulgent activity that leads to literary eminence.

As to the idea that you have no literary talent, for God’s sake, do not give way to such diseased imaginations. You have, fortunately, ascertained that at a very early period. What would you have done if you had passed through my ordeal? I did not venture to face the public till I was seven and twenty, and for ten years after that period could not contrive to write anything that anybody would read; yet even I have not wholly miscarried.

Much of this was shrewd, and undeniable, but the *wish* to write for the stage continued to haunt Mary, and recurred two years later when she saw Kean play *Othello*. To the end of her life she expressed regret that she had not tried her hand at a tragedy.

Meanwhile, besides her own novel, she was at no loss for literary jobs and literary occupation; her friends took care of that. Her pen and her powers were for ever at their service, and they never showed any scruple in working the willing horse. Her disinterested integrity made her an invaluable representative in business transactions. The affairs of the *Examiner* newspaper, edited in England by Leigh Hunt’s brother John, were in an unsatisfactory condition; and there was much disagreement between the two brothers as to both pecuniary and literary arrangements. Mary had to act as arbiter between the two, softening the harsh and ungracious expressions which, in his annoyance, were used by John; looking after Leigh Hunt’s interests, and doing all she could to make clear to him the complicated details of the concern. In this she was aided by Vincent Novello, the eminent musician, and intimate friend of the Hunts, to whom she had had a letter of introduction on arriving in Italy. The Novellos had a large, old-fashioned house on Shacklewell Green; they were the very soul of hospitality and kindness, and the centre of a large circle of literary and artistic friends, they had made Shelley’s acquaintance in the days when the Leigh Hunts lived at the Vale of Health in Hampstead, and they now welcomed his widow, as well as Mrs. Williams, doing all in their power to shed a little cheerfulness over these two broken and melancholy lives.

“Very, very fair both ladies were,” writes Mrs. Cowden Clarke, then Mary Victoria Novello, who in her charming *Recollections of Writers* has given us a pretty sketch of Mary Shelley as she then appeared to a “damsel approaching towards the age of ‘sweet sixteen,’ privileged to consider herself one of the grown-up people.”

"Always observant as a child," she writes, "I had now become a greater observer than ever; and large and varied was the pleasure I derived from my observation of the interesting men and women around me at this time of my life. Certainly Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley was the central figure of attraction then to my young-girl sight; and I looked upon her with ceaseless admiration, — for her personal graces, as well as for her literary distinction.

"The daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, the wife of Shelley, the authoress of *Frankenstein*, had for me a concentration of charm and interest that perpetually excited and engrossed me while she continued a visitor at my parents' house."

Elsewhere she describes

... "Her well-shaped, golden-haired head, almost always a little bent and drooping; her marble-white shoulders and arms statuesquely visible in the perfectly plain black velvet dress, which the customs of that time allowed to be cut low, and which her own taste adopted (for neither she nor her sister-in-sorrow ever wore the conventional 'widow's weeds' and 'widow's cap'); her thoughtful, earnest eyes; her short upper lip and intellectually curved mouth, with a certain close-compressed and decisive expression while she listened, and a relaxation into fuller redness and mobility when speaking; her exquisitely formed, white, dimpled, small hands, with rosy palms, and plumply commencing fingers, that tapered into tips as slender and delicate as those in a Vandyke portrait."

And though it was not in the power of these kind genial people to change Mary's destiny, or even to modify very sensibly the tenour of her inner life and thought, still their friendship was a solace to her; she was grateful for it, and did her utmost to respond with cheerfulness to their kindly efforts on her behalf. To Leigh Hunt (from whom depression, when it passed into querulousness, met with almost as little quarter as it did from Godwin) she wrote —

I am not always in spirits, but if my friends say that I am good, contrive to fancy that I am so, and so continue to love yours most truly,

Mary Shelley.

The news of Lord Byron's death in Greece, which in May of this year created so profound a sensation in England, fell on Mary's heart as a fresh calamity. She had small reason, personally, to esteem or regret him.

Circumstances had made her only too painfully familiar with his worst side, and she might well have borne him more than one serious grudge. But he was associated in her mind with Shelley, and with early, happy days, and now he, like Shelley, was dead and gone, and his faults faded into distance, while all that was great and might have been noble in him — the hero that should have been rather than the man that was — survived, and stood out in greater clearness and beauty, surrounded by the tearful halo of memory. The tidings reached her at a time of unusual — it afterwards seemed of prophetic — dejection.

Journal, May 14. — This, then, is my English life; and thus I am to drag on existence; confined in my small room, friendless. Each day I string me to the task. I endeavour to read and write, my ideas stagnate and my understanding refuses to follow the words I read; day after day passes while torrents fall from the dark clouds, and my mind is as gloomy as this odious sky. Without human friends I must attach myself to natural objects; but though I talk of the country, what difference shall I find in this miserable climate. Italy, dear Italy, murderess of those I love and of all my happiness, one word of your soft language coming unawares upon me, has made me shed bitter tears. When shall I hear it again spoken, when see your skies, your trees, your streams? The imprisonment attendant on a succession of rainy days has quite overcome me. God knows I strive to be content, but in vain. Amidst all the depressing circumstances that weigh on me, none sinks deeper than the failure of my intellectual powers; nothing I write pleases me. Whether I am just in this, or whether the want of Shelley's (oh, my loved Shelley, it is some alleviation only to write your name!) encouragement I can hardly tell, but it seems to me as if the lovely and sublime objects of nature had been my best inspirers, and, wanting them, I am lost. Although so utterly miserable at Genoa, yet what reveries were mine as I looked on the aspect of the ravine, the sunny deep and its boats, the promontories clothed in purple light, the starry heavens, the fireflies, the uprising of spring. Then I could think, and my imagination could invent and combine, and self became absorbed in the grandeur of the universe I created. Now my mind is a blank, a gulf filled with formless mist.

The Last Man! Yes, I may well describe that solitary being's feelings: I feel myself as the last relic of a beloved race, my companions extinct before me.

And thus has the accumulating sorrow of days and weeks been forced to find a voice, because the word *lucena* met my eyes, and the idea of lost Italy sprang in my mind. What graceful lamps those are, though of base construction and vulgar use; I thought of bringing one with me; I am glad I did not. I will go back only to have a *lucena*.

If I told people so they would think me mad, and yet not madder than they seem to be now, when I say that the blue skies and verdure-clad earth of that dear land are necessary to my existence.

If there be a kind spirit attendant on me in compensation for these miserable days, let me only dream to-night that I am in Italy! Mine own Shelley, what a horror you had (fully sympathised in by me) of returning to this miserable country! To be here without you is to be doubly exiled, to be away from Italy is to lose you twice. Dearest, why is my spirit thus losing all energy? Indeed, indeed, I must go back, or your poor utterly lost Mary will never dare think herself worthy to visit you beyond the grave.

May 15. — This then was the coming event that cast its shadow on my last night's miserable thoughts. Byron had become one of the people of the grave — that miserable conclave to which the beings I best loved belong. I knew him in the bright days of youth, when neither care nor fear had visited me — before death had made me feel my mortality, and the earth was the scene of my hopes. Can I forget our evening visits to Diodati? our excursions on the lake, when he sang the Tyrolese Hymn, and his voice was harmonised with winds and waves. Can I forget his attentions and consolations to me during my deepest misery? — Never.

Beauty sat on his countenance and power beamed from his eye. His faults being, for the most part, weaknesses, induced one readily to pardon them.

Albé — the dear, capricious, fascinating Albé — has left this desert world! God grant I may die young! A new race is springing about me. At the age of twenty-six I am in the condition of an aged person. All my old friends are gone, I have no wish to form new. I cling to the few remaining; but they slide away, and my heart fails when I think by how few ties I hold to the world. "Life is the desert and the solitude — how populous the grave" — and that region — to the dearer and best beloved beings which it has torn from me, now adds that resplendent spirit whose departure leaves the dull earth dark as midnight.

June 18. — What a divine night it is! I have just returned from Kentish Town; a calm twilight pervades the clear sky; the lamp-like moon is hung out in heaven, and the bright west retains the dye of sunset. If such weather would continue, I should write again; the lamp of thought is again illumined in my heart, and the fire descends from heaven that kindles it. Such, my loved Shelley, now ten years ago, at this season, did we first meet, and these were the very scenes — that churchyard, with its sacred tomb, was the spot where first love shone in your dear eyes. The stars of heaven are now your country, and your spirit drinks beauty and wisdom in those spheres, and I, beloved, shall one day join you. Nature speaks to me of you. In towns and society I do not feel your presence; but there you are with me, my own, my unalienable!

I feel my powers again, and this is, of itself, happiness; the eclipse of winter is passing from my mind. I shall again feel the enthusiastic glow of composition, again, as I pour forth my soul upon paper, feel the winged ideas arise, and enjoy the delight of expressing them. Study and occupation will be a pleasure, and not a task, and this I shall owe to sight and companionship of trees and meadows, flowers and sunshine.

England, I charge thee, dress thyself in smiles for my sake! I will celebrate thee, O England! and cast a glory on thy name, if thou wilt for me remove thy veil of clouds, and let me contemplate the country of my Shelley and feel in communion with him!

I have been gay in company before, but the inspiriting sentiment of the heart’s peace I have not felt before to-night; and yet, my own, never was I so entirely yours. In sorrow and grief I wish sometimes (how vainly!) for earthly consolation. At a period of pleasing excitement I cling to your memory alone, and you alone receive the overflowing of my heart.

Beloved Shelley, good-night. One pang will seize me when I think, but I will only think, that thou art where I shall be, and conclude with my usual prayer, — from the depth of my soul I make it, — May I die young!

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Missolonghi, *30th April 1824*.

My dear Mary — My brain is already dizzy with business and writing. I am transformed from the listless being you knew me to one of all energy and fire. Not content with the Camp, I must needs be a great diplomatist, I am again, dear Mary, in my *element*, and playing no *second* part in Greece. If I live, the outcast Reginald will cut his name out on the Grecian hills, or set on its plains. I have had the merit of discovering and bringing out a noble fellow, a gallant *soldier*, and a man of most wonderful mind, with as little bigotry as Shelley, and nearly as much imagination; he is a glorious being. I have lived with him — he calls me brother — wants to connect me with his family. We have been inseparable now for eight months — fought side by side. But I am sick at heart with losing my friend, — for still I call him so, you know, with all his weakness, you know I loved him. I cannot live with men for years without feeling — it is weak, it is want of judgment, of philosophy, — but this is my weakness. Dear Mary, if you love me, — *write* — write — write, for my heart yearns after you. I certainly must have you and Jane out. I am serious.

This is the place after my own heart, and I am certain of our good cause triumphing. Believe nothing you hear; Gamba will tell you everything about me — about Lord Byron, but he knows nothing of Greece — nothing; nor does it appear any one else does by what I see published. Colonel Stanhope is here; he is a good fellow, and does much good. The loan is achieved, and that sets the business at rest, but it is badly done — the Commissioners are bad. A word as to your wooden god, Mavrocordato. He is a miserable Jew, and I hope, ere long, to see his head removed from his worthless and heartless body. He is a mere shuffling soldier, an aristocratic brute — wants Kings and Congresses; a poor, weak, shuffling, intriguing, cowardly fellow; so no more about him. Dear Mary, dear Jane, I am serious, turn you thoughts this way. No more a nameless being, I am now a Greek Chieftain, willing and able to shelter and protect you; and thus I will continue, or follow our friends to wander over some other planet, for I have nearly exhausted this. — Your attached

Trelawny.

Care of John Hunt, Esq., *Examiner* Office,
Catherine Street, London.

Tell me of Clare, do write me of her! This is written with the other in desperate haste. I have received a letter from you, one from Jane, and none from Hunt.

This letter reached Mary at about the same time as the fatal news. Trelawny also sent her his narrative of the facts (now so well known to every one) of Byron’s death. It had been intended for Hobhouse, but the writer changed his mind and entrusted it to Mrs. Shelley instead, adding, “Hunt may pick something at it if he please.”

Trelawny had been Byron’s friend, and clearly as he saw the Pilgrim’s faults and deficiencies, there would seem no doubt that he genuinely admired him, in spite of all. But his mercurial, impulsive temperament, ever in extremes, was liable to the most sudden revulsions of feeling, and retrospect hardened his feeling as much as it softened Mary Shelley’s towards the great man who was gone. Only four months later he was writing again, from Livadia —

I have much to say to you, Mary, both as regards myself and the part I am enacting here. I would give much that I could, as in times dead, look in on you in the evening of every day and consult with you on its occurrences, as I used to do in Italy. It is curious, but, considering our characters, natural enough, that Byron and I took the diametrically opposite roads in Greece — I in Eastern, he in Western. He took part with, and became the paltry tool of the weak, imbecile, cowardly being calling himself Prince Mavrocordato. Five months he dozed away. By the gods! the lies that are said in his praise urge one to speak the truth. It is well for his name, and better for Greece, that he is dead. With the aid of his name, his fame, his talents, and his fortune, he might have been a tower of strength to Greece, instead of which the little he did was in favour of the aristocrats, to destroy the republic, and smooth the road for a foreign King. But he is dead, and I now feel my face burn with shame that so weak and ignoble a soul could so long have influenced me. It is a degrading reflection, and ever will be. I wish he had lived a little longer, that he might have witnessed how I would have soared above him here, how I would have triumphed over his mean spirit. I would do much to see and talk to you, but as I am now too much irritated to disclose the real state of things, I will not mislead you by false statements.

With this fine flourish was enclosed a “Description of the Cavern Fortress of Mount Parnassus,” which he was commanding (and of which a full account is given in his *Recollections*), and then followed a P.S. to this effect —

Dear Mary — Will you make an article of this, as Leigh Hunt calls it, and request his brother to publish it in the *Examiner*, which will very much oblige me.

From Mary Shelley to Trelawny.
28th July 1824.
So, dear Trelawny, you remember still poor Mary Shelley; thank you for your remembrance, and a thousand times for your kind letter. It is delightful to feel that absence does not diminish your affection, excellent, warm-hearted friend, remnant of our happy days, of my vagabond life in beloved Italy, our companion in prosperity, our comforter in sorrow. You will not wonder that the late loss of Lord Byron makes me cling with greater zeal to those dear friends who remain to me. He could hardly be called a friend, but, connected with him in a thousand ways, admiring his talents, and (with all his faults) feeling affection for him, it went to my heart when, the other day, the hearse that contained his lifeless form — a form of beauty which in life I often delighted to behold — passed my windows going up Highgate Hill on his last journey to the last seat of his ancestors. Your account of his last moments was infinitely interesting to me. Going about a fortnight ago to the house where his remains lay, I found there Fletcher and Lega — Lega looking a most preposterous rogue, — Fletcher I expect to call on me when he returns from Nottingham. From a few words he imprudently let fall, it would seem that his Lord spoke of Clare in his last moments, and of his wish to do something for her, at a time when his mind, vacillating between consciousness and delirium, would not permit him to do anything. Did Fletcher mention this to you? It seems that this doughty Leporello speaks of his Lord to strangers with the highest respect; more than he did a year ago, — the best, the most generous, the most wronged of peers, — the notion of his leading an irregular life, — quite a false one. Lady B. sent for Fletcher; he found her in a fit of passionate grief, but perfectly implacable, and as much resolved never to have united herself again to him as she was when she first signed their separation. Mrs. Claremont (the governess) was with her.

His death, as you may guess, made a great sensation here, which was not diminished by the destruction of his Memoirs, which he wrote and gave to Moore, and which were burned by Mrs. Leigh and Hobhouse. There was not much in them, I know, for I read them some years ago at Venice, but the world fancied it was to have a confession of the hidden feelings of one concerning whom they were always passionately curious. Moore was by no means pleased: he is now writing a life of him himself, but it is conjectured that, notwithstanding he had the MS. so long in his possession, he never found time to read it. I breakfasted with him about a week ago, and he is anxious to get materials for his work. I showed him your letter on the subject of Lord Byron's death, and he wishes very much to obtain from you any anecdote or account you would like to send. If you know anything that ought to be known, or feel inclined to detail anything that you may remember worthy of record concerning him, perhaps you will communicate with Moore. You have often said that you wished to keep up our friend's name in the world, and if you still entertain the same feeling, no way is more obvious than to assist Moore, who asked me to make this request. You can write to him through me or addressed to Longmans....

……

Here then we are, Jane and I, in Kentish Town.... We live near each other now, and, seeing each other almost daily, for ever dwell on one subject.... The country about here is really pretty; lawny uplands, wooded parks, green lanes, and gentle hills form agreeable and varying combinations. If we had orange sunsets, cloudless noons, fireflies, large halls, etc. etc., I should not find the scenery amiss, and yet I can attach myself to nothing here; neither among the people, though some are good and clever, nor to the places, though they be pretty. Jane is my chosen companion and only friend. I am under a cloud, and cannot form near acquaintances among that class whose manners and modes of life are agreeable to me, and I think myself fortunate in having one or two pleasing acquaintances among literary people, whose society I enjoy without dreaming of friendship. My child is in excellent health; a fine, tall, handsome boy.

And then for money and the rest of those necessary annoyances, the means of getting at the necessaries of life; Jane's affairs are yet unsettled....

My prospects are somewhat brighter than they were. I have little doubt but that in the course of a few months I shall have an independent income of £300 or £400 per annum during Sir Timothy's life, and that with small sacrifice on my part. After his death Shelley's will secures me an income more than sufficient for my simple habits.

One of my first wishes in obtaining the independence I mention, will be to assist in freeing Clare from her present painful mode of life. She is now at Moscow; sufficiently uncomfortable, poor girl, unless some change has taken place: I think it probable that she will soon return to England. Her spirits will have been improved by the information I sent her that his family consider Shelley's will valid, and that she may rely upon receiving the legacy....

But Mary's hopes of better fortune were again and again deferred, and she now found that any concession on the part of her husband's family must be purchased by the suppression of his later poems. She was too poor to do other than submit.

Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt.

Kentish Town, *22d August 1824*.

... A negotiation has begun between Sir Timothy Shelley and myself, by which, on sacrificing a small part of my future expectations on the will, I shall ensure myself a sufficiency for the present, and not only that, but be able, I hope, to relieve Clare from her disagreeable situation at Moscow. I have been obliged, however, as an indispensable preliminary, to suppress the posthumous poems. More than 300 copies had been sold, so this is the less provoking, and I have been obliged to promise not to bring dear Shelley's name before the public again during Sir Timothy's life. There is no great harm in this, since he is above seventy; and, from choice, I should not think of writing memoirs now, and the materials for a volume of more works are so scant that I doubted before whether I could publish it. Such is the folly of the world, and so do things seem different from what they are; since, from Whitton's account, Sir Timothy writhes under the fame of his incomparable son, as if it were the most grievous injury done to him; and so, perhaps, after all it will prove.

All this was pending when I wrote last, but until I was certain I did not think it worth while to mention it. The affair is arranged by Peacock, who, though I seldom see him, seems anxious to do me all these kind of services in the best manner that he can.

It is long since I saw your brother, nor had he any news for me. I lead a most quiet life, and see hardly any one. The Gliddons are gone to Hastings for a few weeks. Hogg is on Circuit. Now that he is rich he is so very queer, so unamiable, and so strange, that I look forward to his return without any desire of shortening the term of absence.

Poor Pierino is now in London, *Non fosse male questo paese*, he says, *se vi vedesse mai il sole*. He is full of Greece, to which he is going, and gave us an account of our good friend, Trelawny, which was that he was not at all changed. Trelawny has made a hero of the Greek chief, Ulysses, and declares that there is a great cavern in Attica which he and Ulysses have provisioned for seven years, and to which, if the cause fails, he and this chieftain are to retire; but if the cause is triumphant, he is to build a city in the Negropont, colonise it, and Jane and I are to go out to be queens and chieftainesses of the island. When he first came to Athens he took to a Turkish life, bought twelve or fifteen women, *brutti mostri*, Pierino says, one a Moor, of all things, and there he lay on his sofa, smoking, these gentle creatures about him, till he got heartily sick of idleness, shut them up in his harem, and joined and combated with Ulysses....

....

One of my principal reasons for writing just now is that I have just heard Miss Curran's address (64 Via Sistina, Roma), and I am anxious that Marianne should (if she will be so very good) send one of the profiles already cut to her, of Shelley, since I think that, by the help of that, Miss Curran will be able to correct her portrait of Shelley, and make for us what we so much desire — a good likeness. I am convinced that Miss Curran will return the profile immediately that she has done with it, so that you will not sacrifice it, though you may be the means of our obtaining a good likeness.

Journal, September 3. — With what hopes did I come to England? I pictured little of what was pleasurable, the feeling I had could not be called hope; it was expectation. Yet at that time, now a year ago, what should I have said if a prophet had told me that, after the whole revolution of the year, I should be as poor in all estimable treasures as when I arrived.

I have only seen two persons from whom I have hoped or wished for friendly feeling. One, a poet, who sought me first, whose voice, laden with sentiment, passed as Shelley's, and who read with the same deep feeling as he; whose gentle manners were pleasing, and who seemed to a degree pleased; who once or twice listened to my sad plaints, and bent his dark blue eyes upon me. Association, gratitude, esteem, made me take interest in his long, though rare, visits.

The other was kind; sought me, was pleased with me. I could talk to him; that was much. He was attached to another, so that I felt at my ease with him. They have disappeared from my horizon. Jane alone remains; if she loved me as well as I do her it would be much; she is all gentleness, and she is my only consolation, yet she does not console me.

I have just completed my twenty-seventh year; at such a time hope and youth are still in their prime, and the pains I feel, therefore, are ever alive and vivid within me. What shall I do? Nothing. I study, that passes the time. I write; at times that pleases me, though double sorrow comes when I feel that Shelley no longer reads and approves of what I write; besides, I have no great faith in my success. Composition is delightful; but if you do not expect the sympathy of your fellow-creatures in what you write, the pleasure of writing is of short duration.

I have my lovely Boy, without him I could not live. I have Jane; in her society I forget time; but the idea of it does not cheer me in my griefful moods. It is strange that the religious feeling that exalted my emotions in happiness, deserts me in my misery. I have little enjoyment, no hope. I have given myself ten years more of life. God grant that they may not be augmented. I should be glad that they were curtailed. Loveless beings surround me; they talk of my personal attractions, of my talents, my manners.

The wisest and best have loved me. The beautiful, and glorious, and noble, have looked on me with the divine expression of love, till death, the reaper, carried to his overstocked barns my lamented harvest.

But now I am not loved! Never, oh, never more shall I love. Synonymous to such words are, never more shall I be happy, never more feel life sit triumphant in my frame. I am a wreck. By what do the fragments cling together? Why do they not part, to be borne away by the tide to the boundless ocean, where those are whom day and night I pray that I may rejoin.

I shall be happier, perhaps, in Italy; yet, when I sometimes think that she is the murderess, I tremble for my boy. We shall see; if no change comes, I shall be unable to support the burthen of time, and no change, if it hurt not his dear head, can be for the worse.

In the month of July Mary had received another request for literary help; this time from Medwin, who wanted her aid in eking out and correcting his notes of conversations with Lord Byron, shortly to be published.

"You must have been, as I was, very much affected with poor Lord Byron's death," he wrote to Mary. "All parties seem now writing in his favour, and the papers are full of his praise....

"How do you think I have been employing myself? With writing; and the subject I have chosen has been Memoirs of Lord Byron. Every one here has been disappointed in the extreme by the destruction of his private biography, and have urged me to give the world the little I know of him. I wish I was better qualified for the task. When I was at Pisa I made very copious notes of his conversations, for private reference only, and was surprised to find on reading them (which I have never done till his death, and hearing that his life had been burnt) that they contained so many anecdotes of his life. During many nights that we sat up together he was very confidential, and entered into his history and opinions on most subjects, and from them I have compiled a volume which is, I am told, highly entertaining. Shelley I have made a very prominent feature in the work, and I think you will be pleased with that part, at least, of the Memoir, and all the favourable sentiments of Lord Byron concerning him. But I shall certainly not publish the work till you have seen it, and would give the world to consult you in person about the whole; you might be of the greatest possible use to me, and prevent many errors from creeping in. I have been told it cannot fail of having the greatest success, and have been offered £500 for it — a large and tempting sum — in consequence of what has been said in its praise by Grattan....

"Before deciding finally on the publication there are many things to be thought of. Lady Byron will not be pleased with my account of the marriage and separation; in fact, I shall be assailed on all sides. Now, my dear friend, what do you advise? Let me have your full opinion, for I mean to be guided by it. I hear to-day that Moore is manufacturing five or six volumes out of the *burnt materials*, for which Longman advanced £2000, and is to pay £2000 more; *they* will be in a great rage. If I publish, promptitude is everything, so that I know you will answer this soon."

The idea of entertaining the world, however highly, at whatever price, with "tit-bits" from the private life and after-dinner talk of her late intimate friends, almost before those friends were cold in their graves, did not find favour with Mrs. Shelley. As an excuse for declining to have any hand in this work, she gave her own desire to avoid publicity or notice. In a later letter Medwin assured her that her name was not even mentioned in the book. He frankly owned that most of his knowledge of Byron had been derived from her and Shelley, but added, by way of excuse —

They tell me it is highly interesting, and there is at this moment a longing after and impatience to know something about the most extraordinary man of the age that must give my book a considerable success.

What Mary felt about this publication can be gathered from her allusion to it in the following letter —

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Hunt.

Kentish Town, *10th October 1824*.

... I write to you on the most dismal of all days, a rainy Sunday, when dreary church-going faces look still more drearily from under dripping umbrellas, and the poor plebeian dame looks reproachfully at her splashed white stockings, — not her gown, — that has been warily held high up, and the to-be-concealed petticoat has borne all the ill-usage of the mud. Dismal though it is, dismal though I am, I do not wish to write a discontented letter, but in a few words to describe things as they are with me. A weekly visit to the Strand, a monthly visit to Shacklewell (when we are sure to be caught in the rain) forms my catalogue of visits. I have no visitors; if it were not for Jane I should be quite alone. The eternal rain imprisons one in one's little room, and one's spirits flag without one exhilarating circumstance. In some things, however, I am better off than last year, for I do not doubt but that in the course of a few months I shall have an independence; and I no longer balance, as I did last winter, between Italy and England. My Father wished me to stay, and, old as he is, and wishing as one does to be of some use somewhere, I thought that I would make the trial, and stay if I could. But the joke has become too serious. I look forward to the coming winter with horror, but it *shall be* the last. I have not yet made up my mind to the where in Italy. I shall, if possible, immediately on arriving, push on to Rome. Then we shall see. I read, study, and write; sometimes that takes me out of myself; but to live for no one, to be necessary to none, to know that "Where is now my hope? for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the base of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust." But change of scene and the sun of Italy will restore my energy; the very thought of it smooths my brow. Perhaps I shall seek the heats of Naples, if they do not hurt my darling Percy. And now, what news?...

……

Hazlitt is abroad; he will be in Italy in the winter; he wrote an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the volume of poems I published. I do not know whether he meant it to be favourable or not; I do not like it at all; but when I saw him I could not be angry. I never was so shocked in my life, he has become so thin, his hair scattered, his cheek-bones projecting; but for his voice and smile I should not have known him; his smile brought tears into my eyes, it was like a sunbeam illuminating the most melancholy of ruins, lightning that assured you in a dark night of the identity of a friend's ruined and deserted abode....

Have you, my Polly, sent a profile to Miss Curran in Rome? Now pray do, and pray write; do, my dear girl. Next year by this time I shall, perhaps, be on my way to you; it will go hard but that I contrive to spend a week (that is, if you wish) at Florence, on my way to the Eternal City. God send that this prove not an airy castle; but I own that I put faith in my having money before that; and I know that I could not, if I would, endure the torture of my English life longer than is absolutely necessary. By the bye, I heard that you are keeping your promise to Trelawny, and that in due time he will be blessed with a namesake. How is *Occhi Turchini*, Thornton the reformed, Johnny the — what Johnny? the good boy? Mary the merry, Irving the sober, Percy the martyr, and dear Sylvan the good?

Percy is quite well; tell his friend he goes to school and learns to read and write, being very handy with his hands, perhaps having a pure anticipated cognition of the art of painting in his tiny fingers. Mrs. Williams' little girl, who calls herself Dina, is his wife. Poor Clare, at Moscow! at least she will be independent one day, and if I am so soon, her situation will be quickly ameliorated.

Have you heard of Medwin's book? Notes of conversations which he had with Lord Byron (when tipsy); every one is to be in it; every one will be angry. He wanted me to have a hand in it, but I declined. Years ago, when a man died, the worms ate him; now a new set of worms feed on the carcase of the scandal he leaves behind him, and grow fat upon the world's love of tittle-tattle. I will not be numbered among them. Have you received the volume of poems? Give my love to "Very," and so, dear, very patient, Adieu. — Yours affectionately,

Mary Shelley.

Journal, October 26. — Time rolls on, and what does it bring? What can I do? How change my destiny? Months change their names, years their cyphers. My brow is sadly trenched, the blossom of youth faded. My mind gathers wrinkles. What will become of me?

How long it is since an emotion of joy filled my once exulting heart, or beamed from my once bright eyes. I am young still, though age creeps on apace; but I may not love any but the dead. I think that an emotion of joy would destroy me, so strange would it be to my withered heart. Shelley had said —

Lift not the painted veil which men call life.

Mine is not painted; dark and enshadowed, it curtains out all happiness, all hope. Tears fill my eyes; well may I weep, solitary girl! The dead know you not; the living heed you not. You sit in your lone room, and the howling wind, gloomy prognostic of winter, gives not forth so despairing a tone as the unheard sighs your ill-fated heart breathes.

I was loved once! still let me cling to the memory; but to live for oneself alone, to read, and communicate your reflections to none; to write, and be cheered by none; to weep, and in no bosom; no more on thy bosom, my Shelley, to spend my tears — this is misery!

Such is the Alpha and Omega of my tale. I can speak to none. Writing this is useless; it does not even soothe me; on the contrary, it irritates me by showing the pitiful expedient to which I am reduced.

I have been a year in England, and, ungentle England, for what have I to thank you? For disappointment, melancholy, and tears; for unkindness, a bleeding heart, and despairing thoughts. I wish, England, to associate but one idea with thee — immeasurable distance and insurmountable barriers, so that I never, never might breathe thine air more.

Beloved Italy! you are my country, my hope, my heaven!

December 3. — I endeavour to rouse my fortitude and calm my mind by high and philosophic thoughts, and my studies aid this endeavour. I have pondered for hours on Cicero's description of that power of virtue in the human mind which render's man's frail being superior to fortune.

"Eadem ratio habet in re quiddam amplum at que magnificum ad imperandum magis quam ad parendum accommodatum; omnia humana non tolerabilia solum sed etiam levia ducens; altum quiddam et excelsum, nihil temens, nemini cedens, semper invictum."

What should I fear? To whom cede? By whom be conquered?

Little truly have I to fear. One only misfortune can touch me. That must be the last, for I should sink under it. At the age of seven and twenty, in the busy metropolis of native England, I find myself alone. The struggle is hard that can give rise to misanthropy in one, like me, attached to my fellow-creatures. Yet now, did not the memory of those matchless lost ones redeem their race, I should learn to hate men, who are strong only to oppress, moral only to insult. Oh ye winged hours that fly fast, that, having first destroyed my happiness, now bear my swift-departing youth with you, bring patience, wisdom, and content! I will not stoop to the world, or become like those who compose it, and be actuated by mean pursuits and petty ends. I will endeavour to remain unconquered by hard and bitter fortune; yet the tears that start in my eyes show pangs she inflicts upon me.

So much for philosophising. Shall I ever be a philosopher?

CHAPTER XX

January 1825-July 1827

At the beginning of 1825 Mrs. Shelley's worldly affairs were looking somewhat more hopeful. The following extract is from a letter to Miss Curran, dated 2d January —

... I have now better prospects than I had, or rather, a better reality, for my prospects are sufficiently misty. I receive now £200 a year from my Father-in-law, but this in so strange and embarrassed a manner that, as yet, I hardly know what to make of it. I do not believe, however, that he would object to my going abroad, as I daresay he considers that the first step towards kingdom come, whither, doubtless, he prays that an interloper like me may speedily be removed. I talk, therefore, of going next autumn, and shall be grateful to any power, divine or human, that assists me to leave this desert country. Mine I cannot call it; it is too unkind to me.

What you say of my Shelley's picture is beyond words interesting to me. How good you are! Send it, I pray you, for perhaps I cannot come, and, at least, it would be a blessing to receive it a few months earlier. I am afraid you can do nothing about the cameo. As you say, it were worth nothing, unless like; but I fancied that it might be accomplished under your directions. Would it be asking too much to lend me the copy you took of my darling William's portrait, since mine is somewhat injured? But from both together I could get a nice copy made.

You may imagine that I see few people, so far from the centre of bustling London; but, in truth, I found that even in town, poor, undinner-giving as I was, I could not dream of society. It was a great confinement for Percy, and I could not write in the midst of smoke, noise, and streets. I live here very quietly, going once a week to the Strand. My chief dependence for society is on Mrs. Williams, who lives at no great distance. As to theatres, etc., how can a "lone woman" think of such things? No; the pleasures and luxuries of life await me in divine Italy; but here, privation, solitude, and desertion are my portion. What a change for me! But I must not think of that. I contrive to live on as I am; but to recur to the past and compare it with the present is to deluge me in grief and tears.

My Boy is well; a fine tall fellow, and as good as I can possibly expect; he is improved in looks since he came here. Clare is in Moscow still, not very pleasantly situated; but she is in a situation, and being now well in health, waits with more patience for better times. The Godwins go on as usual. My Father, though harassed, is in good health, and is employed in the second volume of the *Commonwealth*.

The weather here is astonishingly mild, but the rain continual; half England is under water, and the damage done at seaports from storms incalculable. In Rome, doubtless, it has been different. Rome, dear name! I cannot tell why, but to me there is something enchanting in that spot. I have another friend there, the Countess Guiccioli, now unhappy and mournful from the death of Lord Byron. Poor girl! I sincerely pity her, for she truly loved him, and I cannot think that she can endure an Italian after him. You have there also a Mr. Taaffe, a countryman of yours, who translates Dante, and rides fine horses that perpetually throw him. He knew us all very well.

The English have had many a dose of scandal. First poor dear Lord Byron, from whom, now gone, many a poor devil of an author is now fearless of punishment, then Mr. Fauntleroy, then Miss Foote; these are now dying away. The fame of Mr. Fauntleroy, indeed, has not survived him; that of Lord Byron bursts forth every now and then afresh; whilst Miss Foote smokes most dismally still. Then we have had our quantum of fires and misery, and the poor exiled Italians and Spaniards have added famine to the list of evils. A subscription, highly honourable to the poor and middle classes who subscribed their mite, has relieved them.

Will you write soon? How much delight I anticipate this spring on the arrival of the picture! In all thankfulness, faithfully yours,

Mary W. Shelley.

The increase of allowance, from £100 to £200, had not been actually granted at the beginning of the year, but it appeared so probable an event that, thanks partly to the good offices of Mr. Peacock, Sir Timothy's lawyers agreed, while the matter was pending, to advance Mrs. Shelley the extra £100 on their own responsibility. The concession was not so great as it looks, for all money allowed to her was only advanced subject to an agreement that every penny was to be repaid, with interest, to Sir Timothy's executors at the time when, according to Percy Bysshe Shelley's will, she should come into the property; and every cheque was endorsed by her to this effect. But her immediate anxieties were in some measure relieved by this addition to her income. Not, indeed, that it set her free from pressing money cares, for the ensuing letter to Leigh Hunt incidentally shows that her father was a perpetual drain on her resources, that there was every probability of her having to support him partly — at times entirely — in the future, and that she was endeavouring, with Peacock's help, to raise a large sum, on loan, to meet these possible emergencies.

The main subject of the letter is an article of Hunt's about Shelley, the proof of which had been sent to Mary to read. It contained, in an extended form, the substance of that biographical notice, originally intended for a preface to the volume of Posthumous Poems.

Mrs. Shelley to Leigh Hunt.

8th April 1825.

My dear Hunt — I have just finished reading your article upon Shelley. It is with great diffidence that I write to thank you for it, because perceiving plainly that you think that I have forfeited all claim on your affection, you may deem my thanks an impertinent intrusion. But from my heart I thank you. You may imagine that it has moved me deeply. Of course this very article shows how entirely you have cast me out from any corner in your affections. And from various causes — none dishonourable to me — I cannot help wishing that I could have received your goodwill and kindness, which I prize, and have ever prized; but you have a feeling, I had almost said a prejudice, against me, which makes you construe foreign matter into detractation against me (I allude to the, to me, deeply afflicting idea you got upon some vague expression communicated to you by your brother), and insensible to any circumstances that might be pleaded for me. But I will not dwell on this. The sun shines, and I am striving so hard for a continuation of the gleams of pleasure that visit my intolerable state of regret for the loss of beloved companionship during cloudless days, that I will dash away the springing tears and make one or two necessary observations on your article.

I have often heard our Shelley relate the story of stabbing an upper boy with a fork, but never as you relate it. He always described it, in my hearing, as being an almost involuntary act, done on the spur of anguish, and that he made the stab as the boy was going out of the room. Shelley did not allow Harriet half his income. She received £200 a year. Mr. Westbrook had always made his daughter an allowance, even while she lived with

Shelley, which of course was continued to her after their separation. I think if I were near you, I could readily persuade you to omit all allusion to Clare. After the death of Lord Byron, in the thick of memoirs, scandal, and turning up of old stories, she has never been alluded to, at least in any work I have seen. You mention (having been obliged to return your MS. to Bowring, I quote from memory) an article in *Blackwood*, but I hardly think that this is of date subsequent to our miserable loss. In fact, poor Clare has been buried in entire oblivion, and to bring her from this, even for the sake of defending her, would, I am sure, pain her greatly, and do her mischief. Would you permit this part to be erased? I have, without waiting to ask your leave, requested Messrs. Bowring to leave out your mention that the remains of dearest Edward were brought to England. Jane still possesses this treasure, and has once or twice been asked by his mother-in-law about it, — once an urn was sent. Consequently she is very anxious that her secret should be kept, and has allowed it to be believed that the ashes were deposited with Shelley's at Rome. Such, my dear Hunt, are all the alterations I have to suggest, and I lose no time in communicating them to you. They are too trivial for me to apologise for the liberty, and I hope that you will agree with me in what I say about Clare — Allegra no more — she at present absent and forgotten. On Sir Timothy's death she will come in for a legacy which may enable her to enter into society, — perhaps to marry, if she wishes it, if the past be forgotten.

I forget whether such things are recorded by "Galignani," or, if recorded, whether you would have noticed it. My Father's complicated annoyances, brought to their height by the failure of a very promising speculation and the loss of an impossible-to-be-lost law-suit, have ended in a bankruptcy, the various acts of which drama are now in progress; that over, nothing will be left to him but his pen and me. He is so full of his *Commonwealth* that in the midst of every anxiety he writes every day now, and in a month or two will have completed the second volume, and I am employed in raising money necessary for my maintenance, and in which he must participate. This will drain me pretty dry for the present, but (as the old women say) if I live, I shall have more than enough for him and me, and recur, at least to some part of my ancient style of life, and feel of some value to others. Do not, however, mistake my phraseology; I shall not live with my Father, but return to Italy and economise, the moment God and Mr. Whitton will permit. My Percy is quite well, and has exchanged his constant winter occupation of drawing for playing in the fields (which are now useful as well as ornamental), flying kites, gardening, etc. I bask in the sun on the grass reading Virgil, that is, my beloved *Georgics* and Lord Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*. I begin to live again, and as the maids of Greece sang joyous hymns on the revival of Adonis, does my spirit lift itself in delightful thanksgiving on the awakening of nature.

Lamb is superannuated — do you understand? as Madame says. He has left the India House on two-thirds of his income, and become a gentleman at large — a delightful consummation. What a strange taste it is that confines him to a view of the New River, with houses opposite, in Islington! I saw the Novellos the other day. Mary and her new babe are well; he, Vincent all over, fat and flourishing moreover, and she dolorous that it should be her fate to add more than her share to the population of the world. How are all yours — Henry and the rest? Percy still remembers him, though occupied by new friendships and the feelings incident to his state of matrimony, having taken for better and worse to wife Mrs. Williams' little girl.

I suppose you will receive with these letters Bessy's new book, which she has done very well indeed, and forms with the other a delightful prize for plant and flower worshippers, those favourites of God, which enjoy beauty unequalled and the tranquil pleasures of growth and life, bestowing incalculable pleasure, and never giving or receiving pain. Have you seen Hazlitt's notes of his travels? He is going over the same road that I have travelled twice. He surprised me by calling the road from Susa to Turin dull; there, where the Alps sink into low mountains and romantic hills, topped by ruined castles, watered by brawling streams, clothed by magnificent walnut trees; there, where I wrote to you in a fit of enchantment, exalted by the splendid scene; but I remembered, first, that he travelled in winter, when snow covers all; and, besides, he went from what I approached, and looked at the plain of Lombardy with the back of the diligence between him and the loveliest scene in nature; so much can *relation* alter circumstances.

Clare is still, I believe, at Moscow. When I return to Italy I shall endeavour to enable her to go thither also. I shall not come without my Jane, who is now necessary to my existence almost. She has recourse to the cultivation of her mind, and amiable and dear as she ever was, she is in every way improved and become more valuable.

Trelawny is in the cave with Ulysses, not in Polypheme's cave, but in a vast cavern of Parnassus; inaccessible and healthy and safe, but cut off from the rest of the world. Trelawny has attached himself to the part of Ulysses, a savage chieftain, without any plan but personal independence and opposition to the Government. Trelawny calls him a hero. Ulysses speaks a word or two of French; Trelawny, no Greek! Pierino has returned to Greece.

Horace Smith has returned with his diminished family (little Horace is dead). He already finds London too expensive, and they are about to migrate to Tunbridge Wells. He is very kind to me.

I long to hear from you, and I am more tenderly attached to you and yours than you imagine; love me a little, and make Marianne love me, as truly I think she does. Am I mistaken, Polly? — Your affectionate and obliged,

Mary W. Shelley.

Outwardly, this year was uneventful. Mary was busily working at her novel, *The Last Man*. The occupation was good for her, and perhaps it was no bad thing that Necessity should stand at her elbow to stimulate her to exertion when her interest and energy flagged. For, in spite of her utmost efforts to the contrary, her heart and spirit were often faint at the prospect of an arduous and lonely life. And when, in early autumn, Shelley's portrait was at last sent to her by Miss Curran, the sight of it brought back the sense of what she had lost, and revived in all its irrecoverable bitterness that past happy time, than to remember which in misery there is no greater sorrow.

Journal, September 17 (1825). — Thy picture is come, my only one! Thine those speaking eyes, that animated look; unlike aught earthly wert thou ever, and art now!

If thou hadst still lived, how different had been my life and feelings!

Thou art near to guard and save me, angelic one! Thy divine glance will be my protection and defence. I was not worthy of thee, and thou hast left me; yet that dear look assures me that thou wert mine, and recalls and narrates to my backward-looking mind a long tale of love and happiness.

My head aches. My heart — my hapless heart — is deluged in bitterness. Great God! if there be any pity for human suffering, tell me what I am to do. I strive to study, I strive to write, but I cannot live without loving and being loved, without sympathy; if this is denied to me I must die. Would that the hour were come!

On the same day when Mary penned these melancholy lines, Trelawny was writing to her from Cephalonia.

He had been treacherously shot by an inmate of his mountain fortress, an Englishman newly arrived, whom he had welcomed as a guest. The true instigator of the crime was one Fenton, a Scotchman, who in the guise of a volunteer had ostensibly served under Trelawny for a twelvemonth past, and who by his capability and apparent zeal had so won his confidence as to be entrusted with secret missions. He was, in fact, an emissary of the Greek Government, foisted on Trelawny at Missolonghi to act as a spy on Odysseus, the insurgent Greek chieftain.

Through his machinations Odysseus was betrayed and murdered, and Trelawny narrowly escaped death.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Cephalonia, *17th September 1825*.

Dear Mary — I have just escaped from Greece and landed here, in the hopes of patching up my broken frame and shattered constitution. Two musket balls, fired at the distance of two paces, struck me and passed through my framework, which damn'd near finished me; but 'tis a long story, and my writing arm is rendered unfit for service, and I am yet unpractised with the left. But a friend of mine here, a Major Bacon, is on his way to England, and will enlighten you as to me. I shall be confined here some time. Write to me then at this place. I need rest and quiet, for I am shook to the foundation. Love to Jane and Clare, and believe me still your devoted friend,

Edward Trelawny.

It would seem that this letter was many months in reaching Mary, for in February 1826 she was writing to him in these terms —

I hear at last that Mr. Hodges has letters for me, and that prevents a thousand things I was about to say concerning the pain your very long silence had occasioned me. Consider, dear friend, that your last was in April, so that nearly a year has gone by, and not only did I not hear *from* you, but until the arrival of Mr. Hodges, many months had elapsed since I had heard of you.

Sometimes I flattered myself that the foundations of my little habitation would have been shaken by a "ship Shelley ahoy" that even Jane, distant a mile, would have heard. That dear hope lost, I feared a thousand things.

Hamilton Browne's illness, the death of many English, the return of every other from Greece, filled me with gloomy apprehensions.

But you live, — what kind of life your letters will, I trust, inform me, — what possible kind of life in a cavern surrounded by precipices, — inaccessible! All this will satisfy your craving imagination. The friendship you have for Odysseus, does that satisfy your warm heart?... I gather from your last letter and other intelligence that you think of marrying the daughter of your favourite chief, and thus will renounce England and even the English for ever. And yet, — no! you love some of us, I am sure, too much to forget us, even if you neglect us for a while; but truly, I long for your letters, which will tell all. And remember, dear friend, it is about yourself I am anxious. Of Greece I read in the papers. I see many informants, but I can learn your actions, hopes, and, above all valuable to me, the continuation of your affection for me, from your letters only.

....

27th February.

I now close my letter — I have not yet received yours.

Last night Jane and I went with Gamba and my Father to see Kean in *Othello*. This play, as you may guess, reminded us of you. Do you remember, when delivering the killing news, you awoke Jane, as Othello awakens Desdemona from her sleep on the sofa? Kean, abominably supported, acted divinely; put as he is on his mettle by recent events and a full house and applause, which he deserved, his farewell is the most pathetic piece of acting to be imagined. Yet, my dear friend, I wish we had seen it represented as was talked of at Pisa. Iago would never have found a better representative than that strange and wondrous creature whom one regrets daily more, — for who here can equal him? Adieu, dear Trelawny, take care of yourself, and come and visit us as soon as you can escape from the sorceries of Ulysses. — In all truth, yours affectionately,

M. W. S.

At Pisa, 1822, Lord Byron talked vehemently of our getting up a play in his great hall at the Lanfranchi; it was to be *Othello*. He cast the characters thus: Byron, Iago; Trelawny, Othello; Williams, Cassio; Medwin, Roderigo; Mrs. Shelley, Desdemona; Mrs. Williams, Emilia. “Who is to be our audience?” I asked. “All Pisa,” he rejoined. He recited a great portion of his part with great gusto; it exactly suited him, — he looked it, too.

All this time Miss Clairmont was pursuing her vocation as a governess in Russia, and many interesting glimpses into Russian family and social life are afforded by her letters to Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams. She was a voluminous letter-writer, and in these characteristic epistles she unconsciously paints, as no other hand could have done, a vivid portrait of herself. We can see her, with all her vivacity, versatility, and resource, her great cleverness, — never at a loss for a word, an excuse, or a good story, — her indefatigable energy, her shifting moods and wild caprices, the bewildering activity of her restless brain, and the astonishing facility with which she transferred to paper all her passing impressions. In narration, in description, in panegyric, and in complaint she is equally fluent. Unimpeachably correct as her conduct always was after her one miserable adventure, she had, from first to last, an innate affinity for anything in the shape of social gossip and scandal; her really generous impulses were combined with the worldliest of worldly wisdom, and the whole tinctured with the highest of high-flown sentiment.

Fill in the few details wanting, the flat, sleek, black hair, — eyes so black that the pupil was hardly to be distinguished from the iris (eyes which seemed unmistakably to indicate an admixture of Portuguese, if not of African, blood in her descent), — a complexion which may in girlhood have been olive, but in later life was sallow, — features not beautiful, and depending on expression for any charm they might have, — and she stands before the reader, the unmanageable, amusing, runaway schoolgirl; a stumbling-block first, then a bugbear, to Byron; a curse, which he persistently treated as a blessing, to Shelley; a thorn in the side of Mary and of every one who ever was responsible for her; yet liked by her acquaintance, admired in society, commiserated by her early friends, and regarded with well-deserved affection and gratitude by many of her pupils and *protégés*.

Clare to Jane.

Moscow, *27th October 1825.*

My dearest Jane — It is now so long since I heard from you that I begin to think you have quite forgotten me. I wrote twice to you during the summer; both letters went by private hand, and to neither of which have I received your answer. I enclosed also a letter or letters for Trelawny, and I hope very much you have received them. Whenever some time elapses without hearing from England, then I begin to grow miserable with fear. In a letter I received from Mary in the autumn, she mentions the approaching return of the Hunts from Italy, and I console myself with believing that you are both so much taken up with them that you have delayed from day to day to write to me. Be that as it may, I have never been in greater need of your letters than for these last two months, for I have been truly wretched. To convince you that I am not given to fret for trifles, I will tell you how they have been passed. I spent a very quiet time, if not a very agreeable one, until the 12th of August; then a French newspaper fell into my hands, in which it mentioned that Trelawny had been dangerously wounded in a duel on the 13th of June. You who have known the misery of anxiety for the safety and wellbeing of those dear to us may imagine what I suffered. At last a letter from Mary came, under date of 26th of July, not mentioning a word of this, and I allowed myself to hope that it was not true, because certainly she would have heard of it by the time she wrote. Then, a week after, another newspaper mentioned his being recovered. This was scarcely passed when our two children fell ill; one got better, but the other, my pupil, a little girl of six years and a half old, died. I was truly wretched at her loss, and our whole house was a scene of sorrow and confusion, that can only happen in a savage country, where a disciplined temper is utterly unknown. We came to town, and directly the little boy fell sick again of a putrid fever, from which he was in imminent danger for some time. At last after nights and days of breathless anxiety he did recover. By the death of the little girl, I became of little or no use in the house, and the thought of again entering a new house, and having to learn new dispositions, was quite abhorrent to me. Nothing is so cruel as to change from house to house and be perpetually surrounded by strangers; one feels so forlorn, so utterly alone, that I could not have the courage to begin the career over again; so I settled to remain in the same house, to continue the boy's English, and to give lessons out-of-doors. I do not know whether my plan will succeed yet, but, at any rate, I am bent upon trying it. It is not very agreeable to walk about in the snow and in a cold of twenty, sometimes thirty degrees; but anything is better than being a governess in the common run of Moscow houses. But you have not yet heard my greatest sorrow, and which I think might well have been spared. I had one Englishwoman here, to whom I was attached — a woman of the most generous heart, and whom misfortune, perhaps imprudence, had driven to Russia. She thought with me that nothing can equal the misery of our situation, and accordingly she went last spring to Odessa, hoping to find some means of establishing a boarding-house in order to have a home. If it succeeded, she was to have sent for me; but, however, she wrote to me that, after well considering everything, she found such a plan would not succeed, and that I might expect her shortly in Moscow, to resume her old manner of life. I expected her arrival daily, and began to grow uneasy, and at length some one wrote to another acquaintance of hers here that she had destroyed herself. I, who knew her thoughts, have no doubt the horror of entering again as governess made her resolve upon this as the only means to escape it. You see, dearest Jane, whether these last two months have been fruitful in woes. I cannot tell you what a consolation it would have been to have received a letter from you whilst I have been suffering under such extreme melancholy. The only amelioration in my present situation is that I can withdraw to my room and be much more alone than I could formerly, and this solitude is so friendly to my nature that it has been my only comfort. I have heard all about the change in my mother's situation, and am truly glad of it. I am sure she will be much better off than she was before. As for Mary, her affairs seem inexplicable. Nothing can ever persuade me that a will can dispose of estates which the maker of it never possessed. Do clear up this mystery to me. What a strange way of thinking must that be which can rely on such a hope! Yet my brother, my mother, and Mary never cease telling me that one day I shall be free, and the state of doubt, the contradiction between their assertions and my intimate persuasion of the contrary, that awakens in my mind, is very painful. You are almost quite silent upon the subject, but I wish, my dear Jane, that you would answer me the following questions. Has any professional man ever been consulted on the subject? What is Hogg's opinion? Why in this particular case should the law be set aside, which says that no man can dispose of what he has never possessed? Do have the goodness to ask these questions very clearly and to give me the answers, which no one has ever done yet. They simply tell me, “Whitton has come forward,” “Whitton thinks the will valid,” etc. etc., all of which cannot prove to me that it is so. I know you will excuse my giving you so much trouble, but really when you consider the painful uncertainty which hangs on my mind, you will think it very natural that I should wish to know the reasons of what is asserted to me. To say the truth, I daily grow more indifferent about the issue of the affair. The time is past when independence would have been an object of my desires, and I am now old enough to know that misery is the universal malady of the human race, and that there is no escaping from it, except by a philosophic indifference to all external circumstances, and by a disciplined mind completely absorbed in intellectual subjects. I fashion my life accordingly to this, and I often enjoy moments of serenest calm, which I owe to this way of thinking. Do not mistake and think that I am indifferent to seeing you again; so far from this, I dream of this as one dreams of Paradise after death, as a thing of another world, and not to be obtained here. It would be too much happiness for me to venture to hope it. I endeavour often to imagine the circle in which you live, but it is impossible, and I think it would be equally difficult for you to picture to yourself my mode of life. I often think what in the world Mary or Jane would do in the dull routine I tread; no talk of public affairs, no talk of books, no subject do I ever hear of except cards, eating, and the different manner of managing slaves. Now and then some heroic young man devotes himself like a second Marcus Curtius to the public good, and, in order to give the good ladies of Moscow something new to talk of, rouses them from their lethargic gossipings by getting himself shot in a duel; or some governess disputes with the mother of her pupils, and what they both said goes over the town. Mary mentioned in her last that she thought it very likely you might both go to Paris. I hope you may be there, for I am sure you would find the mode of life more cheerful than London. As I have told you so many of my sorrows, I must tell you the only good piece of news I have to communicate. I have lately made acquaintance with a German gentleman, who is a great resource to me. In such a country as Russia, where nothing but ignorant people are to be met, a cultivated mind is the greatest treasure. His society recalls our former circle, for he is well versed in ancient and modern literature, and has the same noble, enlarged way of thinking. You may imagine how delighted he was to find me so different from everything around him, and capable of understanding what has been so long sealed up in his mind as treasures too precious to be wasted on the coarse Russian soil. I talk to you thus freely about him, because I know you will not believe that I am in love, or that I have any other feeling than a most sincere and steady friendship for him. What you felt for Shelley I feel for him. I feel it also my duty to tell you I have a real friend, because, in case of sickness or death happening to me, you would at least feel the consolation of knowing that I had not died in the hands of strangers. I talk to him very often of you and Mary, until his desire to see you becomes quite a passion. He is, like all Germans, very sentimental, a very sweet temper, and uncommonly generous. His attachment to me is extreme, but I have taken the very greatest care to explain to him that I cannot return it in the same degree. This does not make him unhappy, and therefore our friendship is of the utmost importance to both. I hope, my dear Jane, that you will one day see him, and that both you and Mary may find such an agreeable friend in him as I have had. I must now turn from this subject to speak of Trelawny, which comes naturally into my mind with the idea of friendship; you cannot think how uneasy I am at not hearing from him. I am not afraid of his friendship growing cold for me, for I am sure he is unchangeable on that point, but I am afraid for his happiness and safety. Is it true that his friend Ulysses is dead? and if so, do pray write to him and prevail upon him to return. I should be at ease if I were to know him near you and Mary. Do think if you can do anything to draw him to you, my dearest Jane. It would render me the happiest of human beings to know him in the hands of two such friends. If this could be, how hard I should work to gain a little independence here, and return perhaps in ten years and live with you. As yet I have done nothing, notwithstanding my utmost exertions, towards such a plan, but I am turning over every possible means in my brain for devising some scheme to get money, and perhaps I may. That is my reason for staying in Russia, because there is no country so favourable to foreigners. Pray, my dear Jane, do write to me the moment you receive this, and answer very particularly the questions I have asked you. I have filled this whole letter, do you the same in your answer, and tell me every particular about Percy, Neddy, and Dina; they little guess how warm a friend they have in this distant land, who thinks perpetually of them, and wishes for nothing so much as to see them and to play with them. Give my love to Mary. I will write soon again to her. In the meantime do some of you pray write. These horrid long winters, and the sky, which is from month to month of the darkest dun colour, need some news from you to render life supportable. Kiss all the dear children for me, and tell me everything about them. — Ever your affectionate friend,

Clare.

Pray beg Mary to tell my mother that I wrote to her on or about the 22d of August; has she had this letter? and do tell me in yours what you know of her. I have just received your letter of the 3d of September, for which I thank you most cordially. Thank heaven, you are all well! What you say of Trelawny distresses me, as it seems to me that you are unwilling to say what you have heard, as it is of a disagreeable nature. You could do me a great benefit if you could make yourself mistress of the Logier's system of teaching music, and communicate it to me in its smallest details. I am sure it would take here. Do, pray, make serious inquiries of some one who has been taught by him. If any one would undertake to write me a very circumstantial account of his method, I would cheerfully pay them. It might be the means of my making a small independence here, and then I could join you soon in Italy without fear for the future. Do think seriously of this, my dear Jane, and do not take it into your head that it is an idle project, for it would be of the greatest use to me. As to your admirer, I think he is mad, and his society, which would otherwise be a relief, must now be a burthen. You are very right in saying you only find solace in mental occupation; it is the only thing that saves me from such a depression of spirits taking hold of me when I have an instant to reflect upon the past that I am ready for any rash act; but I am occupied from 6 in the morning until 10 at night, and then am so worn out I have no time for thinking. Once more farewell. My address is — Chez Monsieur Lenhold, Marchand de Musique, a Moscow.

The Last Man, Mrs. Shelley's third novel, was published early in 1826. It differed widely from its predecessors. *Frankenstein* was an allegorical romance; *Valperga* a historical novel, Italian, of the fifteenth century; the plot of the one depends for its interest chiefly on incident, that of the other on the development of character, but both have a definite purpose in the inculcation of certain moral or philosophical truths. The story of *The Last Man* is purely romantic and imaginary, probabilities and possibilities being entirely discarded. Its supposed events take place in the twenty-first century of our era, when a devouring plague depopulates by degrees the whole world, until the narrator remains, to his own belief, the only surviving soul. At the book's conclusion he is left, in a little boat, coasting around the shores of the sea-washed countries of the Mediterranean, with the forlorn hope of finding a companion solitary. He writes the history of his fate and that of his race on the leaves of trees, — supposed to be discovered and deciphered long afterwards in the Sibyl's Cave at Baiae, — the world having been (as we must infer) repeopled by that time. It is not difficult to understand the kind of fascination this curious, mournful fancy had for Mary in her solitude. Much other matter is, of course, interwoven with the leading idea. The characteristics of the hero, Adrian, his benevolence of heart, his winning aspect, his passion of justice and self-devotion, and his fervent faith in the possibilities of human nature and the future of the human race, are unmistakably sketched from Shelley, and the portrait was at once recognised by Shelley's earliest friend, the value of whose appreciation was, if anything, enhanced by the fact of the great unlikeness between his temperament and Shelley's.

T. J. Hogg to Mrs. Shelley.

York, *22d March 1826*.

My dear Mary — As I am about to send a frank to dearest Jane, I enclose a note to you to thank you for the pleasure you have given me. I read your *Last Man* with an intense interest and not without tears. I began it at Stamford yesterday morning as soon as it was light; I read on all day, even during the short time that was allowed us for dinner, and, if I had not finished it before it was dark, I verily believe that I should have bought a candle and held it in my hand in the mail. I think that it is a decided improvement, and that the character of Adrian is most happy and most just. — I am, dear Mary, yours ever faithfully,

T. J. Hogg.

The appearance of Mary's novel had for its practical consequence the stoppage of her supplies. The book was published anonymously, as "by the author of *Frankenstein*," but Mrs. Shelley's name found its way into some newspaper notices, and this misdemeanour (for which she was not responsible) was promptly punished by the suspension of her allowance. Peacock's good offices were again in request, to try and avert this misfortune, but it was not at once that he prevailed. He impressed on Whitton (the solicitor) that the name did not appear in the title-page, and that its being brought forward at all was the fault of the publisher and quite contrary to the wishes of the writer, who, solitary and despondent, could not be reasonably condemned for employing her time according to her tastes and talents, with a view to bettering her condition. This Whitton acknowledged, but said, “the name was the matter; it annoyed Sir Timothy.” He would promise nothing, and Peacock could only assure Mary that he felt little doubt of her getting the money at last, though she might be punished by a short delay.

It may be assumed that this turned out so. Late in the year, however, another turn was given to Mary’s affairs by the death of Shelley’s eldest boy.

Journal, September 1826. — Charles Shelley died during this month. Percy is now Shelley’s only son.

Mary’s son being now direct heir to the estates, and her own prospects being materially improved by this fact, she at once thought of others whom Shelley had meant to benefit by his will, and who, she was resolved, should not be losers by his early death, if she lived to carry out for him his unwritten intentions. She did not think, when she wrote to Leigh Hunt the letter which follows, that nearly twenty years more would elapse before the will could take effect.

Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt.

5 Bartholomew Place, Kentish Town,
30th October 1826.

My dear Hunt — Is it, or is it not, right that these few lines should be addressed to you now? Yet if the subject be one that you may judge better to have been deferred, set my *delay* down to the account of over-zeal in writing to relieve you from a part of the care which I know is just now oppressing you; too happy I shall be if you permit any act of mine to have that effect.

I told you long ago that our dear Shelley intended on rewriting his will to have left you a legacy. I think the sum mentioned was £2000. I trust that hereafter you will not refuse to consider me your debtor for this sum merely because I shall be bound to pay it you by the laws of honour instead of a legal obligation. You would, of course, have been better pleased to have received it immediately from dear Shelley's bequest; but as it is well known that he intended to make such an one, it is in fact the same thing, and so I hope by you to be considered; besides, your kind heart will receive pleasure from the knowledge that you are bestowing on me the greatest pleasure I am capable of receiving. This is no resolution of to-day, but formed from the moment I knew my situation to be such as it is. I did not mention it, because it seemed almost like an empty vaunt to talk and resolve on things so far off. But futurity approaches, and a feeling haunts me as if this futurity were not far distant. I have spoken vaguely to you on this subject before, but now, you having had a recent disappointment, I have thought it as well to inform you in express terms of the meaning I attached to my expressions. I have as yet made no will, but in the meantime, if I should chance to die, this present writing may serve as a legal document to prove that I give and bequeath to you the sum of £2000 sterling. But I hope we shall both live, I to acknowledge dear Shelley's intentions, you to honour me so far as to permit me to be their executor.

I have mentioned this subject to no one, and do not intend; an act is not aided by words, especially an act unfulfilled, nor does this letter, methinks, require any answer, at least not till after the death of Sir Timothy Shelley, when perhaps this explanation would have come with better grace; but I trust to your kindness to put my writing now to a good motive. — I am, my dear Hunt, yours affectionately and obliged,

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

It was admitted by the Shelley family that, Percy being now the heir, some sort of settlement should be made for his mother, yet for some months longer nothing was done or arranged. Apparently Mary wrote to Trelawny in low spirits, and to judge from his reply, her letter found him in little better plight than herself.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Zante, *16th December 1826*.

Dear Mary — I received your letter the other day, and nothing gives me greater pleasure than to hear from you, for however assured we are of a friend's durability of affection, it is soothing to be occasionally reassured of it. I sympathise in your distresses. I have mine, too, on the same score — a bountiful will and confined means are a curse, and often have I execrated my fortunes so ill corresponding with my wishes. But who can control his fate? Old age and poverty is a frightful prospect; it makes the heart sick to contemplate, even in the mind's eye the reality would wring a generous nature till the heart burst. Poverty is the vampyre which lives on human blood, and haunts its victims to destruction. Hell can fable no torment exceeding it, and all the other calamities of human life — wars, pestilence, fire — cannot compete with it. It is the climax of human ill. You may be certain that I could not write thus on what I did not feel. I am glad you say you have better hopes; when things are at the worst, they say, there is hope. So do I hope. Lord Cochrane and his naval expedition having so long and unaccountably been kept back, delayed me here from month to month till the winter has definitively set in, and I am in no state for a winter's voyage; my body is no longer weatherproof. But I must as soon as possible get to England, though my residence there will be transitory. I shall then most probably hurry on to Italy.

The frigate from America is at last arrived in Greece, but whether Cochrane is on board of her I know not. With the loss of my friend Odysseus, my enthusiasm has somewhat abated; besides that I could no longer act with the prospect of doing service, and toiling in vain is heartless work. But have I not done so all my life? The affairs of Greece are so bad that little can be done to make them worse. If Cochrane comes, and is supported with means sufficient, there is still room for hope. I am in too melancholy a mood to say more than that, whatever becomes of me. — I am always your true and affectionate

E. Trelawny.

Mary answered him at once, doing and saying, to console him, all that friendship could.

Kentish Town, *4th March 1827*.

[Direct me at W. Godwin, Esq., 44 Gower Place, Gower Street, London.]

My dear Trelawny — Your long silence had instilled into me the delusive hope that I should hear you sooner than from you. I have been silly enough sometimes to start at a knock, — at length your letter is come. [By] that indeed I entertain more reasonable hopes of seeing you. You will come — Ah, indeed you must; if you are ever the kind-hearted being you were — you must come to be consoled by my sympathy, exhilarated by my encouragements, and made happy by my friendship. You are not happy! Alas! who is that has a noble and generous nature? It is not only, my noble-hearted friend, that your will is bountiful and your means small, — were you richer you would still be tormented by ingratitude, caprice, and change. Yet I say Amen to all your anathema against poverty, it is beyond measure a torment and despair. I am poor, having once been richer; I live among the needy, and see only poverty around. I happen, as has always been my fate, to have formed intimate friendships with those who are great of soul, generous, and incapable of valuing money except for the good it may do — and these very people are all even poorer than myself, is it not hard? But turning to you who are dearest to me, who of all beings are most liberal, it makes me truly unhappy to find that you are hard pressed: do not talk of old age and poverty, both the one and the other are in truth far from you, — for the one it will be a miracle if you live to grow old, — this would appear a strange compliment if addressed to another, but you and I have too much of the pure spirit of fire in our souls to wish to live till the flickering beam waxes dim; — think then of the few present years only. I have no doubt you will do your fortunes great good by coming to this country. A too long absence destroys the interest that friends take, if they are only friends in the common acceptation of the word; and your relations ought to be reminded of you. The great fault to us in this country is its expensiveness, and the dreadful ills attendant here on poverty; elsewhere, though poor, you may live — here you are actually driven from life, and though a few might pity, none would help you were you absolutely starving. You say you shall stay here but a short time and then go to Italy — alas! alas!

It is impossible in a letter to communicate the exact state of one's feelings and affairs here — but there is a change at hand — I cannot guess whether for good or bad as far as regards me. This winter, whose extreme severity has carried off many old people, confined Sir Tim. for ten weeks by the gout — but he is recovered. All that time a settlement for me was delayed, although it was acknowledged that Percy now being the heir, one ought to be made; at length after much parading, they have notified to me that I shall receive a magnificent £250 a year, to be increased next year to £300. But then I am not permitted to leave this cloudy nook. My desire to get away is unchanged, and I used to look forward to your return as a period when I might contrive — but I fear there is no hope for me during Sir T.'s life. He and his family are now at Brighton. John Shelley, dear S.'s brother, is about to marry, and talks of calling upon me. I am often led to reflect in life how people situated in a certain manner with regard to me might make my life less drear than it is — but it is always the case that the people that might — won't, and it is a very great mistake to fancy that they will. Such thoughts make me anxious to draw tighter the cords of sympathy and friendship which are so much more real than those of the world's forming in the way of relationship or connection.

From the ends of the world we were brought together to be friends till death; separated as we are, this tie still subsists. I do not wonder that you are out of heart concerning Greece; the mismanagement here is not less than the misgovernment there, the discord the same, save that here ink is spilt instead of blood. Lord Cochrane alone can assist them — but without vessels or money how can he acquire sufficient power? at any rate except as the Captain of a vessel I do not see what good you can do them. But the mischief is this, — that while some cold, unimpressive natures can go to a new country, reside among a few friends, enter into the interests of an intimate and live as a brother among them for a time, and then depart, leaving small trace, retaining none, — as if they had ascended from a bath, they change their garments and pass on; — while others of subtler nature receive into their very essences a part of those with whom they associate, and after a while they become enchained, either for better or worse, and during a series of years they bear the marks of change and attachment. These natures indeed are the purest and best, and of such are you, dear friend; having you once, I ever have you; losing you once, I have lost you for ever; a riddle this, but true. And so life passes, year is added to year, the word youth is becoming obsolete, while years bring me no change for the better. Yet I said, change is at hand — I know it, though as yet I do not feel it — you will come, in the spring you will come and add fresh delight for me to the happy change from winter to summer. I cannot tell what else material is to change, but I feel sure the year will end differently from its beginning. Jane is quite well, we talk continually of you, and expect you anxiously. Her fortunes have been more shifting than mine, and they are about to conclude, — differently from mine, — but I leave her to say what she thinks best concerning herself, though probably she will defer the explanation until your arrival. She is my joy and consolation. I could never have survived my exile here but for her. Her amiable temper, cheerfulness, and never ceasing sympathy are all so much necessary value for one wounded and lost as I.

Come, dear friend, again I read your melancholy sentences and I say, come! let us try if we can work out good from ill; if I may not be able to throw a ray of sunshine on your path, at least I will lead you as best I may through the gloom. Believe me that all that belongs to you must be dear to me, and that I shall never forget all I owe to you.

Do you remember those pretty lines of Burns? —

A monarch may forget his crown
That on his head an hour hath been,
A bridegroom may forget his bride
Who was his wedded wife yest'reen,
A mother may forget her child
That smiles so sweetly on her knee,
But I'll remember thee, dear friend,
And all that thou hast done for me.

Such feelings are not the growth of the moment. They must have lived for years — have flourished in smiles, and retained their freshness watered by tears; to feel them one must have sailed much of life's voyage together — have undergone the same perils, and sympathised in the same fears and griefs; such is our situation; and the heartfelt and deep-rooted sentiments fill my eyes with tears as I think of you, dear friend, we shall meet soon. Adieu,

M. S.

... I cannot close this letter without saying a word about dear Hunt — yet that must be melancholy. To feed nine children is no small thing. His health has borne up pretty well hitherto, though his spirits sink. What is it in the soil of this green earth that is so ill adapted to the best of its sons? He speaks often of you with affection.

To Edward Trelawny, Esq.,
To the care of Samuel Barff, Esq.,
Zante, The Ionian Isles.

Seal — Judgment of Paris.
Endorsed — Received 10th April 1827.

Change was indeed at hand, though not of a kind that Mary could have anticipated. The only event in prospect likely to affect her much was a step shortly to be taken by Mrs. Williams. That intended step, vaguely foreshadowed in Jane's correspondence, aroused the liveliest curiosity in Clare Clairmont, as was natural.

Miss Clairmont to Mrs. Williams.

My dearest Jane — If I have not written to you before, it is owing to low spirits. I have not been able to take the pen, because it would have been dipped in too black a melancholy. I am tired of being in trouble, particularly as it goes on augmenting every day. I have had a hard struggle with myself lately to get over the temptation I had to lay down the burthen at once, and be free as spirits are, and leave this horrid world behind me. In order to let you understand what now oppresses me, I must tell you my history since I came to Moscow. I came here quite unknown. I was at first ill treated on that account, but I soon acquired a great reputation, because all my pupils made much more progress in whatever they undertook than those of other people. I had few acquaintances among the English; to these I had never mentioned a single circumstance of myself or fortunes, but took care, on the contrary, to appear content and happy, as if I had never known or seen any other society all my days. I sent you a letter by Miss F., because I knew your name would excite no suspicions; but it seems my mother got hold of Miss F., sought her out, and has thereby done me a most incalculable mischief. Miss F. came back full of my story here, and though she is very friendly to me, yet others who are not so have already done me injury. The Professor at the University here is a man of a good deal of talent, and was in close connection with Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, and all that party; he has a great deal of friendship for me, because, as he says, very truly, I am the only person here besides himself who knows how to speak English. He professes the most rigid principles, and is come to that age when it is useless to endeavour to change them. I, however, took care not to get upon the subject of principles, and so he was of infinite use to me both by counselling and by protecting me with the weight of his high approbation. You may imagine this man's horror when he heard who I was;

that the charming Miss Clairmont, the model of good sense, accomplishments, and good taste, was brought, issued from the very den of freethinkers. I see that he is in a complete puzzle on my account; he cannot explain to himself how I can be so extremely delightful, and yet so detestable. The inveteracy of his objections is shaken. This, however, has not hindered him from doing me serious mischief. I was to have undertaken this winter the education of an only daughter, the child of a very rich family where the Professor reigns despotic, because he always settles every little dispute with some unintelligible quotation or reference to a Latin or Greek author. I am extremely interested in the child, he used to say, and no one can give her the education she ought to have but Miss Clairmont. The father and the mother have been running after me these years to persuade me to enter when the child should be old enough. I consented, when now, all is broken off, because the scruples of my professor do not allow of it. God knows, he says, what Godwinish principles she might not instil. You may, therefore, think how teased I have been; more so from the uncertainty of my position, as I do not know how far this may extend. If this is only the beginning, what may be the end? I am not angry with this man, he only acts according to his conscience; nor am I surprised. I shall never cease feeling and thinking that if I had my choice, I had rather a thousand times have a child of mine resigned to an early grave, and lost for ever to me, than have it brought up in principles I abhor. If you ask me what I shall do, I can only answer you as did the Princess Mentimiletto, when buried under the ruins of her villa by an earthquake, “I await my fate in silence.” In the meantime, while the page of fate is unrolling, I feel a secret agitation which consumes me, the more so for being repressed. I am fallen again into a bad state of health, but this is habitual to me upon the recurrence of winter. What torments me the most is the restraint I am under of always appearing gay in society, which I am obliged to do to avoid their odious curiosity. Farewell awhile dismay and terror, and let us turn to love and happiness. Never was astonishment greater than mine on receiving your letter. I had somehow imagined to myself that you never would love again, and you may say what you like, dearest Jane, you won’t drive that out of my head. “Blue Bag” may be a friend to you, but he never can be a lover. A happy attachment that has seen its end leaves a void that nothing can fill up; therefore I counsel the timorous and the prudent to take the greatest care always to have an unhappy attachment, because with it you can veer about like a weathercock to every point of life. What would I not give to have an unhappy passion, for then one has full permission and a perfect excuse to fall into a happy one; one has something to expect, but a *happy passion*, like death, has *finis* written in such large characters in its face there is no hoping for any possibility of a change. You will allow me to talk upon this subject, for I am unhappily the victim of a *happy passion*. I had one; like all things perfect in its kind, it was fleeting, and mine only lasted ten minutes, but these ten minutes have discomposed the rest of my life. The passion, God knows for what cause, from no faults of mine, however, disappeared, leaving no trace whatever behind it except my heart wasted and ruined as if it had been scorched by a thousand lightnings. You will therefore, I hope, excuse my not following the advice you give me in your last letter, of falling in love, and you will readily believe me when I tell you that I am not in love, as you suspected, with my German friend Hermann. He went away last spring for five years to the country. I have a great friendship for him, because he has the most ardent love of all that is good and beautiful of any one I know. I feel interested for his happiness and welfare, but he is not the being who could make life feel less a burthen to me than it does. It would, however, seem that you are a little happier than you were, therefore I congratulate you on this change of life. I am delighted that you have some one to watch over you and guard you from the storms of life. Do pray tell me Blue Bag's name, (for what is a man without a name?), or else I shall get into the habit of thinking of him as Blue Bag, and never be able to divest myself of this disagreeable association all my life. You say Trelawny is coming home, but you have said so so long, I begin to doubt it. If he does come, how happy you will be to see him. Happy girl! you have a great many happinesses. I have written to him many times, but he never answers my letters; I suppose he does not wish to keep up the correspondence, and so I have left off. If he comes home I am sure he will fall ill, because the change of climate is most pernicious to the health. The first winter I passed in Russia I thought I should have died, but then a good deal was caused by extreme anxiety. So take care of Trelawny, and do not let him get his feet wet. You ask me to tell you every particular of my way of life. For these last six months I have been tormented to death; I am shut up with five hateful children; they keep me in a fever from morning till night. If they fall into their father's or mother's way, and are troublesome, they are whipped; but the instant they are with me, which is pretty nearly all the day, they give way to all their violence and love of mischief, because they are not afraid of my mild disposition. They go on just like people in a public-house, abusing one another with the most horrid names and fighting; if I separate them, then they roll on the ground, shrieking that I have broken their arm, or pretend to fall into convulsions, and I am such a fool I am frightened. In short, I never saw the evil spirit so plainly developed. What is worse, I cannot seriously be angry with them, for I do not know how they can be otherwise with the education they receive. Everything is a crime; they may neither jump, nor run, nor laugh. It is now two months they have never been out of the house, and the only thing they are indulged in is in eating, drinking, and sleeping, so that I look upon their defects as proceeding entirely from the pernicious lives they lead. This is a pretty just picture of all Russian children, because the Russians are as yet totally ignorant of anything like real education. You may, therefore, imagine what a life I have been leading. In the summer, and we had an Italian one, I bore up very well, because we were often in the garden, but since the return of winter, which always makes me ill, and their added tiresomeness, I am quite overpowered. The whole winter long I have a fever, which comes on every evening, and prevents my sleeping the whole night; sometimes it leaves me for a fortnight, but then it begins again, but in summer I am as strong and healthy as possible. The approach of winter fills me with horror, because I know I have eight long months of suffering and sickness. The only amusement I have is Sunday evening, to see Miss F. and some others like her, and the only subject of conversation is to laugh at the Russians, or dress. My God, what a life! But complaint is useless, and therefore I shall not indulge in it. I have said, so as those I love live, I will bear all without a murmur. If ever I am independent, I will instantly retire to some solitude; I will see no one, not even you nor Mary, and there I will live until the horrible disgust I feel at all that is human be somewhat removed by quiet and retirement. My heart is too full of hatred to be fit for society in its present mood. I am very sorry for the death of little Charles. The chances for succession are now so equally balanced — the life of an old man and the life of *one* young child — that I confess I see less hope than ever of the will's taking effect. It is frightful for the despairing to have their hopes suspended thus upon a single hair. Pray do not forget to write to me when Trelawny is come. How glad I shall be to know he is in England, and yet how frightened for fear he should catch cold. I wish you would tell me how you occupy your days; at what hour you do this, and at what hour that. From 11 till 4 I teach my children, then we dine; at 5 we rise from the table. They have half an hour's dawdling, for play it cannot be called, as they are in the drawing-room, and then they learn two hours more. At 8 we drink tea, and then they go to bed, which is never over till 11, because all must have their hair curled, which takes up an enormous time.

Since I have written the first part of my letter I have thought over my affairs. I must go to Petersburgh, because it is quite another town from Moscow, and being so much more foreign in their manners and ways of thinking, I shall be less tormented. I have decided to go, therefore I wish you very much to endeavour to procure me letters of introduction. If Trelawny comes home, beg him to do so for me, because, as he will be much in fashion, some of the numerous dear female friends he will instantly have will do it for him. If I could have a letter of recommendation, not a letter of introduction, to the English ambassador or his wife, I should be able to get over the difficulties which now beset my passage. Do think of this, Jane. My head is so completely giddy from worry and torment, that I am unable to think upon my own affairs; only this I know, that I am in a tottering situation. It is absolutely necessary that I should have letters of recommendation, and to people high in the world at Petersburgh, because it is very common in Russia for adventurers, such as opera dancers too old to dance any more, and milliners, and that class of women to come here. They are received with open arms by the Russians, who are very hospitable, and then naturally they betray themselves by their atrocious conduct, and are thrown off; and I have known since I have been here several lamentable instances of this, and I shall be classed with these people if I cannot procure letters to people whose countenance and protection must refute the possibility of such a supposition. I must confess to you that my pride never could stand this, for these adventurers are such detestable people that I have the utmost horror of them. What a miserable imposture is life, that such as follow philosophy, nature and truth, should be classed with the very refuse of mankind; that people who ought to be cited as models of virtue and self-sacrifice should be trampled under foot with the dregs of vice. It was not thus in the time of the Greeks; and this reflection makes me tired of life, for

I might have been understood in the time of Socrates, but never shall be by the moderns. For this reason I do not wish to live, as I cannot be understood; in order, therefore, not to be despised, I must renounce all worldly concerns whatever. I have long done so, and therefore you will not wonder that I have long since given my parting look to life. Do not be surprised I am so dull; I am surrounded by difficulties which I am afraid I never shall get out of, and after so many years of trouble and anguish it is natural I should wish it were over. Do not, my dearest Jane, mention to my mother the harm her indiscretion has done, for though I shall frankly tell her of it, yet it would wound her if she were to know I had told you, and there is already so much pain in the world it is frightful to add ever so little to the stock. You can merely say I have asked for letters of introduction at Petersburgh.

From the time of her first arrival in England after Edward's death, Hogg had been Jane Williams' persistent, devoted, and long-suffering admirer. Not many months after receiving Clare's letter, she changed her name and her abode, and was thenceforward known as Mrs. Hogg. Mary's familiar intercourse with her might, in any case, have been somewhat checked by this event, but such a change would have been a small matter compared to the bitter discovery she was soon to make, that, while accepting her affection, Jane had never really cared for her; that her feeling had been of the most superficial sort. Once independent of Mary, and under other protection, she talked away for the benefit and amusement of other people, — talked of their past life, prating of her power over Shelley and his devotion to her, — of Mary's gloom during those sad first weeks at Lerici, — intimating that jealousy of herself was the cause. Stories which lost nothing in the telling, wherein Jane Williams figured as a good angel, while Mary Shelley was made to appear in an unfavourable or even an absurd light.

Mary had no suspicion, no foreboding of the mine that was preparing to explode under her feet. She sympathised in her friend's happiness, for she could not regard it but as happiness for one in Jane's circumstances to be able to accept the love and protection of a devoted man. She herself could not do it, but she often felt a wish that she were differently constituted. She knew it was impossible; but no tinge of envy or bitterness coloured her words to Trelawny when she wrote to tell him of Jane's resolution.

... This is to be an eventful summer to us. Janey is writing to you and will tell her own tale best. The person to whom she unites herself is one of my oldest friends, the early friend of my own Shelley. It was he who chose to share the honour, as he generously termed it, of Shelley's expulsion from Oxford. (And yet he is unlike what you may conceive to be the ideal of the best friend of Shelley.) He is a man of talent, — of wit, — he has sensibility and even romance in his disposition, but his exterior is composed and, at a superficial glance, cold. He has loved Jane devotedly and ardently since she first arrived in England, almost five years ago. At first she was too faithfully attached to the memory of Edward, nor was he exactly the being to satisfy her imagination; but his sincere and long-tried love has at last gained the day.

... Nor will I fear for her in the risk she must run when she confides her future happiness to another's constancy and good principles. He is a man of honour, he longs for home, for domestic life, and he well knows that none could make such so happy as Jane. He is liberal in his opinions, constant in his attachments, if she is happy with him now she will be always.... Of course after all that has passed it is our wish that all this shall be as little talked of as possible, the obscurity in which we have lived favours this. We shall remove hence during the summer, for of course we shall still continue near each other. I, as ever, must derive my only pleasure and solace from her society.

Before the summer of 1827 was over the cloud burst.

Mary's journal in June is less mournful than usual. Congenial society always had the power of cheering her and making her forget herself. And in her acquaintance with Thomas Moore she found a novelty which yet was akin to past enjoyment.

Journal, June 26 (1827). — I have just made acquaintance with Tom Moore. He reminds me delightfully of the past, and I like him much. There is something warm and genuine in his feelings and manner which is very attractive, and redeems him from the sin of worldliness with which he has been charged.

July 2. — Moore breakfasted with me on Sunday. We talked of past times, — of Shelley and Lord Byron. He was very agreeable, and I never felt myself so perfectly at my ease with any one. I do not know why this is; he seems to understand and to like me. This is a new and unexpected pleasure. I have been so long exiled from the style of society in which I spent the better part of my life; it is an evanescent pleasure, but I will enjoy it while I can.

July 11. — Moore has left town; his singing is something new and strange and beautiful. I have enjoyed his visits, and spent several happy hours in his society. That is much.

July 13. — My friend has proved false and treacherous! Miserable discovery. For four years I was devoted to her, and earned only ingratitude. Not for worlds would I attempt to transfer the deathly blackness of my meditations to these pages. Let no trace remain save the deep, bleeding, hidden wound of my lost heart of such a tale of horror and despair. Writing, study, quiet, such remedies I must seek. What deadly cold flows through my veins! My head weighed down; my limbs sink under me. I start at every sound as the messenger of fresh misery, and despair invests my soul with trembling horror.

October 9. — Quanto bene mi rammento sette anni fa, in questa medesima stagione i pensieri, I sentimenti del mio cuore! Allora cominciai Valperga — allora sola col mio Bene fui felice. Allora le nuvole furono spinte dal furioso vento davanti alla luna, nuvole magnifiche, che in forme grandiose e bianche parevano stabili quanto le montagne e sotto la tirannia del vento si mostravano piu fragili che un velo di seta minutissima, scendeva allor la pioggia, gli albori si spogliavano. Autunno bello fosti allora, ed ora bello terribile, malinconico ci sei, ed io, dove sono?

By those who hold their hearts safe at home in their own keeping, these little breezes are called “storms in tea-cups.” The matter was of no importance to any one but Mary. The aspect of her outward life was unchanged by this heart-shipwreck over which the world’s waves closed and left no sign.

CHAPTER XXI

July 1827-August 1830

Many weary months passed away. Mary said nothing to the shallow-hearted woman who had so grievously injured her. Jane had been so dear to her, and was so inextricably bound up with a beloved past, that she shrank from disturbing the superficial friendship which she nevertheless knew to be hollow.

To one of Mary's temperament there was actual danger in living alone with such a sorrow, and it was a happy thing when, in August, an unforeseen distraction occurred to compel her thoughts into a new channel. She received from an unknown correspondent a letter, resulting in an acquaintance which, though it passed out of her life without leaving any permanent mark, was, at the time, not unfruitful of interest.

The letter was as follows —

Frances Wright to Mrs. Shelley.

Paris, *22d August 1827.*

I shall preface this letter with no apology; the motive which dictates it will furnish, as I trust, a sufficient introduction both for it and its writer. As the daughter of your father and mother (known to me only by their works and opinions), as the friend and companion of a man distinguished during life, and preserved in the remembrance of the public as one distinguished not by genius merely, but, as I imagine, by the strength of his opinions and his fearlessness in their expression; — viewed only in these relations you would be to me an object of interest and — permit the word, for I use it in no vulgar sense — of curiosity. But I have heard (vaguely indeed, for I have not even the advantage of knowing one who claims your personal acquaintance, nor have I, in my active pursuits and engagements in distant countries, had occasion to peruse your works), yet I have heard, or read, or both, that which has fostered the belief that you share at once the sentiments and talents of those from whom you drew your being. If you possess the opinions of your father and the generous feelings of your mother, I feel that I could travel far to see you. It is rare in this world, especially in our sex, to meet with those opinions united with those feelings, and with the manners and disposition calculated to command respect and conciliate affection. It is so rare, that to obtain the knowledge of such might well authorise a more abrupt intrusion than one by letter; but, pledged as I am to the cause of what appears to me moral truth and moral liberty, that I (should) neglect any means for discovering a real friend of that cause, I were almost failing to a duty.

In thus addressing my inquiries respecting you to yourself, it were perhaps fitting that I should enter into some explanations respecting my own views and the objects which have fixed my attention. I conceive, however, the very motive of this letter as herein explained, with the printed paper I shall enclose with it, will supply a sufficient assurance of the heterodoxy of my opinions and the nature of my exertions for their support and furtherance. It will be necessary to explain, however, what will strike you but indistinctly in the deed of Nashoba, that the object of the experiment has in view an association based on those principles of moral liberty and equality heretofore advocated by your father. That these principles form its base and its cement, and that while we endeavour to undermine the slavery of colour existing in the North American Republic, we essay equally to destroy the slavery of mind now reigning there as in other countries. With one nation we find the aristocracy of colour, with another that of rank, with all perhaps those of wealth, instruction, and sex.

Our circle already comprises a few united co-operators, whose choice of associates will be guided by their moral fitness only; saving that, for the protection and support of all, each must be fitted to exercise some useful employment, or to supply 200 dollars per annum as an equivalent for their support. The present generation will in all probability supply but a limited number of individuals suited in opinion and disposition to such a state of society; but that that number, however limited, may best find their happiness and best exercise their utility by uniting their interests, their society, and their talents, I feel a conviction. In this conviction I have devoted my time and fortune to laying the foundations of an establishment where affection shall form the only marriage, kind feeling and kind action the only religion, respect for the feelings and liberties of others to the only restraint, and union of interest the bond of peace and security. With the protection of the negro in view, whose cruel sufferings and degradation had attracted my special sympathy, it was necessary to seek the land of his bondage, to study his condition and imagine a means for effecting his liberation; with the emancipation of the human mind in view, from the shackles of moral and religious superstition, it was necessary to seek a country where political institutions should allow free scope for experiment; and with a practice in view in opposition to all the laws of public opinion, it was necessary to seek the seclusion of a new country, and build up a city of refuge in the wilderness itself. Youth, a good constitution, and a fixed purpose enabled me to surmount the fatigues, difficulties, and privations of the necessary journeys, and the first opening of a settlement in the American forests. Fifteen months have placed the establishment in a fair way of progress, in the hands of united and firm associates, comprising a family of colour from New Orleans. As might be expected, my health gave way under the continued fatigues of mind and body [incidental] to the first twelvemonth. A brain fever, followed by a variety of sufferings, seemed to point to a sea-voyage as the only chance of recovery. Accordingly I left Nashoba in May last, was placed on board a steamboat on the Mississippi for Orleans, then on board a vessel for Havre, and landed in fifty days almost restored to health. I am now in an advanced state of convalescence, but still obliged to avoid fatigue either bodily or mental. The approaching marriage of a dear friend also retains me in Paris, and as I shall return by way of New Orleans to my forest home in the month of November, or December, I do not expect to visit London. The bearer of this letter, should he, as I trust, be able to deliver it, will be able to furnish any intelligence you may desire respecting Nashoba and its inhabitants. In the name of Robert Dale Owen you will recognise one of the trustees, and a son of Robert Owen of Lanark.

Whatever be the fate of this letter, I wish to convey to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley my respect and admiration of those from whom she holds those names, and my fond desire to connect her with them in my esteem, and in the knowledge of mutual sympathy to sign myself her friend,

Frances Wright.

My address while in Europe — Aux soins du General Lafayette, Rue d’Anjou, and 7 St. Honoré, à Paris.

The bearer of this letter would seem to have been Robert Dale Owen himself. His name must have recalled to Mary’s mind the letter she had received at Geneva, long, long ago, from poor Fanny, describing and commenting on the schemes for social regeneration of his father, Robert Owen.

Mary Shelley's feeling towards Frances Wright's schemes in 1827 may have been accurately expressed by Fanny Godwin's words in 1816.

... "The outline of his plan is this: 'That no human being shall work more than two or three hours every day; that they shall be all equal; that no one shall dress but after the plainest and simplest manner; that they be allowed to follow any religion, or no religion, as they please; and that their studies shall be Mechanics and Chemistry.' I hate and am sick at heart at the misery I see my fellow-beings suffering, but I own I should not like to live to see the extinction of all genius, talent, and elevated generous feeling in Great Britain, which I conceive to be the natural consequence of Mr. Owen's plan."

But any plan for human improvement, any unselfish effort to promote the common weal, commanded the sure sympathy of Shelley's widow and Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, whether her judgment accorded perfectly or not with that of its promoters. She responded warmly to the letter of her correspondent, who wrote back in almost rapturous terms —

Frances Wright to Mary Shelley.

Paris, *15th September 1827*.

My Friend, my dear Friend — How sweet are the sentiments with which I write that sacred word — so often prostituted, so seldom bestowed with the glow of satisfaction and delight with which I now employ it! Most surely will I go to England, most surely to Brighton, to wheresoever you may be. The fond belief of my heart is realised, and more than realised. You are the daughter of your mother. I opened your letter with some trepidation, and perused it with more emotion than now suits my shattered nerves. I have read it again and again, and acknowledge it before I sleep. Most fully, most deeply does my heart render back the sympathy yours gives. It fills up the sad history you have sketched of blighted affections and ruined hopes. I too have suffered, and we must have done so perhaps to feel for the suffering. We must have loved and mourned, and felt the chill of disappointment, and sighed over the moral blank of a heartless world ere we can be moved to sympathy for calamity, or roused to attempt its alleviation. The curiosity you express shall be most willingly answered in (as I trust) our approaching meeting. You will see then that I have greatly pitied and greatly dared, only because I have greatly suffered and widely observed. I have sometimes feared lest too early affliction and too frequent disappointment had blunted my sensibilities, when a *rencontre* with some one of the rare beings dropt amid the dull multitude, like oases in the desert, has refreshed my better feelings, and reconciled me with others and with myself. That the child of your parents should be one among these sweet visitants is greatly soothing and greatly inspiring. But have we only discovered each other to lament that we are not united? I cannot, will not think it. When we meet, — and meet we must, and I hope soon, — how eagerly, and yet tremblingly, shall I inquire into all the circumstances likely to favour an approach in our destinies. I am now on the eve of separation from a beloved friend, whom marriage is about to remove to Germany, while I run back to my forests. And I must return without a bosom intimate? Yes; our little circle has mind, has heart, has right opinions, right feelings, co-operates in an experiment having in view human happiness, yet I do want one of my own sex to commune with, and sometimes to lean upon in all the confidence of equality of friendship. You see I am not so disinterested as you suppose. Delightful indeed it is to aid the progress of human improvement, and sweet is the peace we derive from aiding the happiness of others. But still the heart craves something more ere it can say — I am satisfied.

I must tell, not write, of the hopes of Nashoba, and of all your sympathising heart wishes to hear. On the 28th instant I shall be in London, where I must pass some days with a friend about to sail for Madeira. Then, unless you should come to London, I will seek you at Brighton, Arundel, anywhere you may name. Let me find directions from you. I will not say, use no ceremony with me — none can ever enter between us. Our intercourse begins in the confidence, if not in the fulness of friendship. I have not seen you, and yet my heart loves you.

I cannot take Brighton in my way; my sweet friend, Julia Garnett, detaining me here until the latest moment, which may admit of my reaching London on the 28th. I must not see you in passing. However short our meeting, it must have some repose in it. The feelings which draw me towards you have in them I know not what of respect, of pitying sympathy, of expectation, and of tenderness. They must steal some quiet undivided hours from the short space I have yet to pass in Europe. Tell me when they shall be, and where. I expect to sail for America with Mr. Owen and his family early in November, and may leave London to visit a maternal friend in the north of England towards the 20th of October. Direct to me to the care of Mr. Robert Bayley, 4 Basinghall Street, London.

Permit me the assurance of my respect and affection, and accord me the title, as I feel the sentiments, of a friend,

Frances Wright.

Circumstances conspired to postpone the desired meeting for some weeks, but the following extract from another letter of Fanny Wright's shows how friendly was the correspondence.

Yes, I do "understand the happiness flowing from confidence and entire sympathy, independent of worldly circumstances." I know the latter compared to the former are nothing.

A delicate nursling of European luxury and aristocracy, I thought and felt for myself, and for martyrised humankind, and have preferred all hazards, all privations in the forests of the New World to the dear-bought comforts of miscalled civilisation. I have made the hard earth my bed, the saddle of my horse my pillow, and have staked my life and fortune on an experiment having in view moral liberty and human improvement. Many of course think me mad, and if to be mad mean to be one of a minority, I am so, and very mad indeed, for our minority is very small. Should that few succeed in mastering the first difficulties, weaker spirits, though often not less amiable, may carry forward the good work. But the fewer we are who now think alike, the more we are of value to each other. To know you, therefore, is a strong desire of my heart, and all things consistent with my engagements (which I may call duties, since they are connected with the work I have in hand) will I do to facilitate our meeting.

Soon after this Mary made Frances Wright's acquaintance, and heard from herself all the story of her stirring life. She was not of American, but of Scottish birth (Dundee), and had been very early left an orphan. Her father had been a man of great ability and culture, of advanced liberal opinions, and independent fortune. Fanny had been educated in England by a maternal aunt, and in 1818, when twenty-three years of age, had gone with her younger sister to the United States. Since that time her life had been as adventurous as it was independent. Enthusiastic, original, and handsome, she found friends and adherents wherever she went. Two years she spent in the States, where she found sympathy and stimulus for her speculative energies, and free scope for her untried powers. She had written a tragedy, forcible and effective, which was published at Philadelphia and acted at New York. After that she had been three years in Paris, where she enjoyed the friendship and sympathy of Lafayette and other liberal leaders. In 1824 she was once more in America, fired with the idea of solving the slavery question. She purchased a tract of land on the Nashoba river (Tennessee), and settled negroes there, assuming, in her impetuosity, that to convert slaves into freemen it was only necessary to remove their fetters, and that they would soon work out their liberty. She found out her error. In Shelley's words, slightly varied, "How should slaves produce anything but idleness, even as the seed produces the plant?" The slaves, freed from the lash, remained slaves as before, only they did very little work. Fanny Wright was disappointed; but, as her letters plainly show, her schemes went much farther than negro emancipation; she aimed at nothing short of a complete social reconstruction, to be illustrated on a small scale at the Nashoba settlement.

Overwork, exposure to the sun, and continuous excitement, told, at last, on her constitution. As she informed Mrs. Shelley in her first letter, she had broken down with brain fever, and, when convalescent, had been ordered to Europe.

In Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter she found a friend, hardly an adherent. Fundamentally, their principles were alike, but their natures were differently attuned. Neither mentally nor physically had Mary Shelley the temperament of a revolutionary innovator. She had plenty of moral courage, but she was too scrupulous, too reflective, and too tender. The cause of liberty was sacred to her, so long as it bore the fruit of justice, self-sacrifice, fidelity to duty. Fanny Wright worshipped liberty for its own sake, confident that every other good would follow it, with the generous, unpractical certainty of conviction that proceeds as much from a sanguine disposition as from a set of opinions. Experience and disappointment have little power over these temperaments, and so they never grow old — or prudent. It may well be that all the ideas, all the great changes, in which is summed up the history of progress, have originated with natures like these. They are the salt of the earth; but man cannot live by salt alone, and their ideas are carried out for them in detail, and the actual everyday work of the world is unconsciously accomplished, by those who, having put their hand to the plough, do not look back, nor yet far forward.

Still, it was a remarkable meeting, that of these two women. Fanny Wright was a person who, once seen, was not easily forgotten. “She was like Minerva;” such is the recollection of Mrs. Shelley’s son. Mrs. Trollope has described her personal appearance when, three years later, she was creating a great sensation by lecturing in the chief American cities —

She came on the stage surrounded by a bodyguard of Quaker ladies in the full costume of their sect.... Her tall and majestic figure, the deep and almost solemn expression of her eyes, the simple contour of her finely-formed head, her garment of plain white muslin, which hung around her in folds that recalled the drapery of a Grecian statue, — all contributed to produce an effect unlike anything that I had ever seen before, or ever expect to see again.

On the other hand the following is Robert Dale Owen’s sketch of Mary Shelley.

... In person she was of middle height and graceful figure. Her face, though not regularly beautiful, was comely and spiritual, of winning expression, and with a look of inborn refinement as well as culture. It had a touch of sadness when at rest. She impressed me as a person of warm social feelings, dependent for happiness on living encouragement, needing a guiding and sustaining hand.

It is certain that Mary felt a warm interest in her new friend. She made her acquainted with Godwin, and lost no opportunity of seeing and communing with her during her stay in England; nor did they part till Fanny Wright was actually on board ship.

“Dear love,” wrote Fanny, from Torbay, “how your figure lives in my mind’s eye as I saw you borne away from me till I lost sight of your little back among the shipping!”

From Nashoba, a few months later, she addressed another letter to Mary, which, though slightly out of place, is given here. There had, apparently, been some passing discord between her and the founder of the “New Harmony” colony.

Frances Wright to Mrs. Shelley.

Nashoba, *20th March 1828*.

Very, very welcome was your letter of the 16th November, which awaited my return from a little excursion down the Mississippi, undertaken soon after my arrival. Bless your sweet kind heart, my sweet Mary! Your little enclosure, together with a little billet brought me by Dale, and which came to the address of Mr. Trollope's chambers just as he left London, is all the news I have yet received of or from our knight-errant. Once among Greeks and Turks, correspondence must be pretty much out of the question, so unless he address to you some more French compliments from Toulon, I shall not look to hear of him for some months. Ay, truly, they are incomprehensible animals, these same *soi-disant* lords of this poor planet! Like their old progenitor, Father Adam, they walk about boasting of their wisdom, strength, and sovereignty, while they have not sense so much as to swallow an apple without the aid of an Eve to put it down their throats. I thank thee for thine attempt to cram caution and wisdom into the cranium of my wandering friend. Thy good offices may afford a chance for his bringing his head on his shoulders to these forests, which otherwise would certainly be left on the shores of the Euxine, on the top of Caucasus, or at the sources of the Nile.

I wrote thee hastily of my arrival and all our wellbeing in my last, and of Dale's *amende honorable*, and of Fanny's departure up the Western waters, nor have I now leisure for details too tedious for the pen, though so short to give by the tongue. Dale arrived, his sweet kind heart all unthawed, and truly when he left us for Harmony I think the very last thin flake of Scotch ice had melted from him. Camilla and Whitby leave me also in a few days for Harmony, from whence the latter will probably travel back with Dale, and Whitby go up the Ohio to engage a mechanic for the building of our houses. I hoped to have sent you, with this, the last communication of our little knot of trustees, in which we have stated the modification of our plan which we have found it advisable to adopt, with the reasons of the same. We have not been able to get it printed at Memphis, so Dale is to have it thrown off at Harmony, from whence you will receive it. The substance of it is, that we have reduced our co-operation to a simple association, each throwing in from our private funds 100 dollars per annum for the expenses of the table, including those of the cook, whom we hire from the Institution, she being one of the slaves gifted to it. All other expenses regard us individually, and need not amount to 100 dollars more. Also, each of us builds his house or room, the cost of which, simple furniture included, does not surpass 500 dollars. The property of the trust will stand thus free of all burden whatsoever, to be devoted to the foundation of a school, in which we would fain attempt a thorough co-operative education, looking only to the next generation to effect what we in vain attempted ourselves. You see that the change consists in demanding as a requisite for admission an independent income of 200 dollars, instead of receiving labour as an equivalent.

Yes, dear Mary, I do find the quiet of these forests and our ill-fenced cabins of rough logs more soothing to the spirit, and now no less suited to the body than the warm luxurious houses of European society. Yet that it would be so with you, or to any less broken in by enthusiastic devotion to human reform and mental liberty than our little knot of associates, I cannot judge. I now almost forget the extent of the change made in the last few years in my habits, yet more than in my views and feelings; but when I recall it, I sometimes doubt if many could imitate it without feeling the sacrifices almost equal to the gains; to me sacrifices are nothing. I have not felt them as such, and now forget that there were any made.

Farewell, dear Mary. Recall me affectionately and respectfully to the memory of your Father. You will wear me in your own, I know. Camilla sends her affectionate wishes. — Yours fondly,

F. Wright.

It was probably in connection with Fanny Wright’s visit that Mrs. Shelley had, in October of 1827, contemplated the possibility of a flying trip to the Continent; an idea which alarmed her father (for his own sake) not a little, although she had taken care to assure him of her intended speedy return. He was in as bad a way, financially, and as dependent as ever, but proud of the fact that he kept up his good spirits through it all, and sorry for Mary that she could not say as much.

Godwin to Mary.

Gower Place, *9th October 1827*.

Dear Mary — We received your letter yesterday, and I sent you the *Examiner*.

Nothing on earth, as you may perceive, could have induced me to break silence respecting my circumstances, short of your letter of the 1st instant, announcing a trip to the Continent, without the least hint when you should return. It seems to me so contrary to the course of nature that a father should look for supplies to his daughter, that it is painful to me at any time to think of it.

You say that [as] you had announced some time ago that you must be in town in November, I should have inferred that that was irreversible. All I can answer is, that I did not so infer.

I called yesterday, agreeably to your suggestion, upon young Evans; but all I got from him was, that the thing was quite out of his way; to which he added (and I reproved him for it accordingly) that we had better go to the Jews. I called on Hodgetts on the 7th of September, and asked him to lend me £20 or £30. He said, "Would a month hence do? he could then furnish £20." Last Saturday he supped here, and brought me £10, adding that was all he could do. I have heard nothing either from Peacock or from your anonymous friend. I wrote to you, of course, at Brighton on Saturday (before supper-time), which letter I suppose you have received.

How differently you and I are organised. In my seventy-second year I am all cheerfulness, and never anticipate the evil day (with distressing feelings) till to do so is absolutely unavoidable. Would to God you were my daughter in all but my poverty! But I am afraid you are a Wollstonecraft. We are so curiously made that one atom put in the wrong place in our original structure will often make us unhappy for life. But my present cheerfulness is greatly owing to *Cromwell*, and the nature of my occupation, which gives me an object *omnium horarum* — a stream for ever running, and for ever new. Do you remember Denham's verses on the Thames at Cooper's Hill? —

Oh! could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong, without rage; without o'erflowing, full.

Though I cannot attain this in my *Commonwealth*, you, perhaps, may in your *Warbeck*.

May blessings shower on you as fast as the perpendicular rain at this moment falls by my window! prays your affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

During most of this autumn Mrs. Shelley and her boy were staying at Arundel, in Sussex, with, or in the near neighbourhood of her friends, the Miss Robinsons. There were several sisters, to one of whom, Julia, Mrs. Shelley was much attached.

While at Arundel another letter reached her from Trelawny, who was contemplating the possibility of a return to England.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Zante, Ionian Islands, *24th October 1827.*

Dearest Mary — I received your letter dated July, and replied to both you and Hunt; but I was then at Cerigo, and as the communication of the islands is carried on by a succession of boats, letters are sometimes lost. I have now your letter from Arundel, 9th September. It gives me pleasure to hear your anxieties as to money matters are at an end; it is one weighty misery off your heart. You err most egregiously if you think I am occupied with women or intrigues, or that my time passes pleasantly. The reverse of all this is the case; neither women nor amusements of any sort occupy my time, and a sadder or more accursed kind of existence I never in all my experience of life endured, or, I think, fell to the lot of human being. I have been detained here for these last ten months by a villainous law-suit, which may yet endure some months longer, and then I shall return to you as the same unconnected, lone, and wandering vagabond you first knew me. I have suffered a continual succession of fevers during the summer; at present they have discontinued their attack; but they have, added to what I suffered in Greece, cut me damnably, and I fancy now I must look like an old patriarch who has outlived his generation. I cannot tell whether to congratulate Jane or not; the foundation she has built on for happiness implies neither stability nor permanent security; for a summer bower ‘tis well enough to beguile away the summer months, but for the winter of life I, for my part, should like something more durable than a fabric made up of vows and promises. Nor can I say whether it would be wise or beneficial to either should Clare consent to reside with you in England; in any other country it might be desirable, but in England it is questionable.

The only motive which has deterred me from writing to Jane and Clare is that I have been long sick and ill at ease, daily anticipating my return to the Continent, and concocting plans whereby I might meet you all, for one hour after long absence is worth a thousand letters. And as to my heart, it is pretty much as you left it; no new impressions have been made on it or earlier affections erased. As we advance in the stage of life we look back with deeper recollections from where we first started; at least, I find it so. Since the death of Odysseus, for whom I had the sincerest friendship, I have felt no private interest for any individual in this country. The Egyptian fleet, and part of the Turkish, amounting to some hundred sail, including transports, have been totally destroyed by the united squadron of England, France, and Russia in the harbour of Navarino; so we soon expect to see a portion of Greece wrested from the Turks, and something definitely arranged for the benefit of the Greeks. — Dearest Mary, I am ever your

Edward Trelawny.

To Jane and Clare say all that is affectionate from me, and forget not Leigh Hunt and his Mary Ann. *I* would write them all, but I am sick at heart.

All these months the gnawing sorrow of her friend's faithlessness lay like an ambush at Mary's heart. In responding to Fanny Wright's overtures of friendship she had sought a distraction from the bitter thoughts and deep dejection which had been mainly instrumental in driving her from town. But in vain, like the hunted hare, she buried her head and hoped to be forgotten. Slanderous gossip advances like a prairie-fire, laying everything waste, and defying all attempts to stop or extinguish it. Jane Williams' stories were repeated, and, very likely, improved upon. They got known in a certain set. Mary Shelley might still have chosen not to hear or not to notice, had she been allowed. But who may ignore such things in peace? As the French dramatist says in *Nos Intimes*, "*Les amis sont toujours là*." *Les amis* are there to enlighten you — if you are ignorant — as to your enemies in disguise, to save you from illusions, and to point out to you — should you forget it — the duty of upholding, at any sacrifice, your own interests and your own dignity.

Journal, February 12, 1828. — Moore is in town. By his advice I disclosed my discoveries to Jane. How strangely are we made! She is horror-struck and miserable at losing my friendship; and yet how unpardonably she trifled with my feelings, and made me all falsely a fable to others.

The visit of Moore has been an agreeable variety to my monotonous life. I see few people — Lord Dillon, G. Paul, the Robinsons, *voilà tout*.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Hogg.

Since Monday I have been ceaselessly occupied by the scene begun and interrupted, which filled me with a pain that now thrills me as I revert to it. I then strove to speak, but your tears overcame me, whilst the struggle gave me an appearance of coldness.

If I revert to my devotion to you, it is to prove that no worldly motives could estrange me from the partner of my miseries. Often, having you at Kentish Town, I have wept from the overflow of affection; often thanked God who had given you to me. Could any but yourself have destroyed such engrossing and passionate love? And what are the consequences of the change?

When first I heard that you did not love me, every hope of my life deserted me. The depression I sank under, and to which I am now a prey, undermines my health. How many hours this dreary winter I have paced my solitary room, driven nearly to madness, and I could not expel from my mind the memories of harrowing import that one after another intruded themselves! It was not long ago that, eagerly desiring death, though death should only be oblivion, I thought that how to purchase oblivion of what was revealed to me last July, a tortuous death would be a bed of roses.

....

Do not ask me, I beseech you, a detail of the revelations made to me. Some of those most painful you made to several; others, of less import, but which tended more, perhaps, than the more important to show that you loved me not, were made only to two.

I could not write of these, far less speak of them. If any doubt remain on your mind as to what I know, write to Isabel, and she will inform you of the extent of her communication to me. I have been an altered being since then; long I thought that almost a deathblow was given, so heavily and unremittingly did the thought press on and sting me; but one lives on through all to be a wreck.

Though I was conscious that, having spoken of me as you did, you could not love me, I could not easily detach myself from the atmosphere of light and beauty that ever surrounded you. Now I tried to keep you, feeling the while that I had lost you; but you penetrated the change, and I owe it to you not to disguise the cause. What will become of us, my poor girl?

....

This explains my estrangement. While with you I was solely occupied by endeavouring not to think or feel, for had I done either I should not have been so calm as I daresay I appeared.... Nothing but my Father could have drawn me to town again; his claims only prevent me now from burying myself in the country. I have known no peace since July. I never expect to know it again. Is it not best, then, that you forget the unhappy

M. W. S.?

We hear no more of this painful episode. It did not put a stop to Jane's intercourse with Mary. Friendship, in the old sense, could never be. But, to the end of Mary's life, her letters show the tenderness, the half-maternal solicitude she ever felt for the companion and sharer of her deepest affliction.

Another distraction came to her now in the shape of an invitation to Paris, which she accepted, although she was feeling far from well, a fact which she attributed to depression of spirits, but which proved to have quite another cause.

Journal, April 11 (1828). — I depart for Paris, sick at heart, yet pining to see my friend (Julia Robinson).

A lady, an intimate friend of hers at this time, who, in a little book called *Traits of Character*, has given a very interesting (though, in some details, inaccurate) sketch of Mary Shelley, says that her visit to Paris was eagerly looked forward to by many. "Honour to the authoress and admiration for the woman awaited her." But, directly after her arrival, she was prostrated on a sick — it was feared, death-bed. Her journal, three months later, tells the sequel.

Journal, July 8, Hastings. — There was a reason for my depression: I was sickening of the small-pox. I was confined to my bed the moment I arrived in Paris. The nature of my disorder was concealed from me till my convalescence, and I am so easily duped. Health, buoyant and bright, succeeded to my illness. The Parisians were very amiable, and, a monster to look at as I was, I tried to be agreeable, to compensate to them.

The same authoress asserts that neither when she recovered nor ever after was she in appearance the Mary Shelley of the past. She was not scarred by the disease ("which in its natural form she had had in childhood"), but the pearly delicacy and transparency of her skin and the brightness and luxuriance of her soft hair were grievously dimmed.

She bore this trial to womanly vanity well and bravely, for she had that within which passeth show — high intellectual endowments, and, better still, a true, loving, faithful heart.

The external effects of her illness must, to a great degree, have disappeared in course of time, for those who never knew her till some twenty years later than this revert to their first impression of her in words almost identical with those used by Christy Baxter when, at ninety years of age, she described Mary Godwin at fifteen as "white, bright, and clear."

If, however, she had any womanly vanity at all, it must have been a trial to her that, just now, her old friend Trelawny should return for a few months to England. She did not see him till November, when Clare also arrived, on a flying visit to her native land. But, before their meeting, she had received some characteristic letters from Trelawny.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Southampton, *8th July 1828*.

Dear Mary — My moving about and having had much to do must be my excuse for not writing as often as I should do. That it is but an excuse I allow; the truth would be better, but who nowadays ever thinks of speaking truth? The true reason, then, is that I am getting old, and writing has become irksome. You cannot plead either, so write on, dear Mary. I love you sincerely, no one better. Time has not quenched the fire of my nature; my feelings and passions burn fierce as ever, and will till they have consumed me. I wear the burnished livery of the sun.

To whom am I a neighbour? and near whom? I dwell amongst tame and civilised human beings, with somewhat the same feelings as we may guess the lion feels when, torn from his native wilderness, he is tortured into domestic intercourse with what Shakespeare calls "forked animals," the most abhorrent to his nature.

You see by this how little my real nature is altered, but now to reply to yours. I cannot decidedly say or fix a period of our meeting. It shall be soon, if you stay there, at Hastings; but I have business on hand I wish to conclude, and now that I can see you when I determine to do so, I, as you see, postpone the engagement because it is within my grasp. Such is the perverseness of human nature! Nevertheless, I will write, and I pray you to do so likewise. You are my dear and long true friend, and as such I love you. — Yours, dear,

Trelawny.

I shall remain ten or twelve days here, so address Southampton; it is enough.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Trewithen, *September 1828*.

Dear Mary — I really do not know why I am everlastingly boring you with letters. Perhaps it is to prevent you forgetting me; or to prove to you that I do not forget you; or I like it, which is a woman's reason....

How is Jane (Hogg)? Do remember me kindly to her. I hope you are friends, and that I shall see her in town. I have no right to be discontented or fastidious when she is not. I trust she is contented with her lot; if she is, she has an advantage over most of us. Death and Time have made sad havoc amongst my old friends here; they are never idle, and yet we go on as if they concerned us not, and thus dream our lives away till we wake no more, and then our bodies are thrown into a hole in the earth, like a dead dog's, that infects the atmosphere, and the void is filled up, and we are forgotten.

Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, without our special wonder?...

Trelawny's visit to England was of short duration. Before the end of the next February (1829) he was in Florence, overflowing with new plans, and, as usual, imparting them eagerly, certain of sympathy, to Mrs. Shelley. His renewed intercourse with her had led to no diminution of friendship. He may have found her even more attractive than when she was younger; more equable in spirits, more lenient in her judgments, her whole disposition mellowed and ripened in the stern school of adversity.

Their correspondence, which for two or three years was very frequent, opened, however, with a difference of opinion. Trelawny was ambitious of writing Shelley's biography, and wanted Mary to help him by giving him the facts for it.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Poste Restante, Florence, *11th March 1829*.

Dear Mary — I arrived here some sixteen or seventeen days back. I travelled in a very leisurely way; whilst on the road I used expedition, but I stayed at Lyons, Turin, Genoa, and Leghorn. I have taken up my quarters with Brown. I thought I should get a letter here from you or Clare, but was disappointed. The letter you addressed to Paris I received; tell Clare I was pained at her silence, yet though she neglects to write to me, I shall not follow her example, but will write her in a few days.

My principal object in writing to you now is to tell you that I am actually writing my own life. Brown and Landor are spurring me on, and are to review it sheet by sheet, as it is written; moreover, I am commencing as a tribute of my great love for the memory of Shelley his life and moral character. Landor and Brown are in this to have a hand, therefore I am collecting every information regarding him. I always wished you to do this, Mary; if you will not, as of the living I love him and you best, incompetent as I am, I must do my best to show him to the world as I found him. Do you approve of this? Will you aid in it? without which it cannot be done. Will you give documents? Will you write anecdotes? or — be explicit on this, dear — give me your opinion; if you in the least dislike it, say so, and there is an end of it; if on the contrary, set about doing it without loss of time. Both this and my life will be sent you to peruse and approve or alter before publication, and I need not say that you will have free scope to expunge all you disapprove of.

I shall say no more till I get your reply to this.

The winter here, if ten or twelve days somewhat cold can be called winter, has been clear, dry, and sunny; ever since my arrival in Italy I have been sitting without fire, and with open windows. Come away, dear Mary, from the horrible climate you are in; life is not endurable where you are.

Florence is very gay, and a weight was taken from my mind, and body too, in getting on this side of the Alps. Heaven and hell cannot be very much more dissimilar....

You may suppose I have now writing enough without scrawling long letters, so pardon this short one, dear Mary, from your affectionate

E. J. Trelawny.

P.S. — Love to Clare.

Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

April 1829.

My dear Trelawny — Your letter reminded me of my misdeeds of omission, and of not writing to you as I ought, and it assured me of your kind thoughts in that happy land where as angels in heaven you can afford pity to us Arctic islanders. It is too bad, is it not, that when such a Paradise does exist as fair Italy, one should be chained here, without the infliction of such absolutely cold weather? I have never suffered a more ungenial winter. Winter it is still; a cold east wind has prevailed the last six weeks, making exercise in the open air a positive punishment. This is truly English; half a page about the weather, but here this subject has every importance; is it fine? you guess I am happy and enjoying myself; is it as it always is? you know that one is fighting against a domestic enemy which saps at the very foundations of pleasure.

I am glad that you are occupying yourself, and I hope that your two friends will not cease urging you till you really put to paper the strange wild adventures you recount so well. With regard to the other subject, you may guess, my dear Friend, that I have often thought, often done more than think on the subject. There is nothing I shrink from more fearfully than publicity. I have too much of it, and, what is worse, I am forced by my hard situation to meet it in a thousand ways. Could you write my husband's life without naming me, it would be something; but even then I should be terrified at the rousing the slumbering voice of the public; — each critique, each mention of your work might drag me forward. Nor indeed is it possible to write Shelley's life in that way. Many men have his opinions, — none heartily and conscientiously act on them as he did, — it is his act that marks him.

You know me, or you do not — in which case I will tell you what I am — a silly goose, who, far from wishing to stand forward to assert myself in any way, now that I am alone in the world, have but the time to wrap night and the obscurity of insignificance around me. This is weakness, but I cannot help it; to be in print, the subject of men's observations, of the bitter hard world's commentaries, to be attacked or defended, this ill becomes one who knows how little she possesses worthy to attract attention, and whose chief merit — if it be one — is a love of that privacy which no woman can emerge from without regret.

Shelley's life must be written. I hope one day to do it myself, but it must not be published now. There are too many concerned to speak against him; it is still too sore a subject. Your tribute of praise, in a way that cannot do harm, can be introduced into your own life. But remember, I pray for omission, for it is not that you will not be too kind, too eager to do me more than justice. But I only seek to be forgotten.

Clare has written to you she is about to return to Germany. She will, I suppose, explain to you the circumstances that make her return to the lady she was before with desirable. She will go to Carlsbad, and the baths will be of great service to her. Her health is improved, though very far from restored. For myself, I am as usual well in health and longing for summer, when I may enjoy the peace that alone is left me. I am another person under the genial influence of the sun; I can live unrepining with no other enjoyment but the country made bright and cheerful by its beams; till then I languish. Percy is quite well; he grows very fast and looks very healthy.

It gives me great pleasure to hear from you, dear friend, so write often. I have now answered your letter, though I can hardly call this one. So you may very soon expect another. How are your dogs? and where is Roberts? Have you given up all idea of shooting? I hear Medwin is a great man at Florence, so Pisa and economy are at an end. Adieu. — Yours,

M. S.

The fiery "Pirate" was much disappointed at Mary's refusal to collaborate with him, and quite unable to understand her unwillingness to be the instrument of making the facts of her own and Shelley's life the subject of public discussion. His resentment soon passed away, but his first wrath was evidently expressed with characteristic vigour.

Mary Shelley to Trelawny.

15th December 1829.

... Your last letter was not at all kind. You are angry with me, but what do you ask, and what do I refuse? You talk of writing Shelley's life, and ask me for materials. Shelley's life, as far as the public have to do with it, consisted of few events, and these are publicly known; the private events were sad and tragical. How would you relate them? As Hunt has, slurring over the real truth? Wherefore write fiction? and the truth, any part of it, is hardly for the rude cold world to handle. His merits are acknowledged, his virtues; — to bring forward actions which, right or wrong (and that would be a matter of dispute), were in their results tremendous, would be to awaken calumnies and give his enemies a voice.

....

As to giving Moore materials for Lord Byron's life, I thought — I think — I did right. I think I have achieved a great good by it. I wish it to be kept secret — decidedly I am averse to its being published, for it would destroy me to be brought forward in print. I commit myself on this point to your generosity. I confided the fact to you as I would anything I did, being my dearest friend, and had no idea that I was to find in you a harsh censor and public denouncer....

Did I uphold Medwin? I thought that I had always disliked him. I am sure I thought him a great annoyance, and he was always borrowing crowns which he never meant to pay and we could ill spare. He was Jane's friend more than any one's.

To be sure, we did not desire a duel, nor a horsewhipping, and Lord Byron and Mrs. B. ... worked hard to promote peace. — Affectionately yours,

M. W. S.

During this year Mrs. Shelley was busily employed on her own novel, *Perkin Warbeck*, the subject of which may have occurred to her in connection with the historic associations of Arundel Castle. It is a work of great ingenuity and research, though hardly so spontaneous in conception as her earlier books. In spite of her retired life she had come to be looked on as a celebrity, and many distinguished literary people sought her acquaintance. Among these was Lord Dillon, conspicuous by his good looks, his conversational powers, his many rare qualities of head and heart, and his numerous oddities. Between him and Mrs. Shelley a strong mutual regard existed, and the following letter is of sufficient interest to be inserted here. The writer had desired Mary's opinion on the subject of one of his poems.

Lord Dillon to Mrs. Shelley.

Ditchley, *18th March 1829.*

My dear Mrs. Shelley — I return you many thanks for your letter and your favourable opinion. It is singular that you should have hit upon the two parts that I almost think the best of all my poem. I fear that my delineations of women do not please you, or persons who think as you do. I have a classic feeling about your sex — that is to say, I prefer nature to what is called delicacy.... I must be excused, however; I have never loved or much liked women of refined sentiment, but those of strong and blunt feelings and passions.... Pray tell me candidly, for I believe you to be sincere, though at first I doubted it, for your manner is reserved, and that put me on my guard; but now I admit you to my full confidence, which I seldom give. Is not Eccelino considered as too free? Tell me then truly — I never quote whenever I write to a person. You may trust me. You might tell me all the secrets in the world; they would never be breathed. I shall see you in May, and then we may converse more freely, but I own you look more sly than I think you are, and therefore I never was so candid with you as I think I ought to be. Have not people who did not know you taken you for a cunning person? You have puzzled me very much. Women always feel flattered when they are told they have puzzled people. I will tell you what has puzzled me. Your writings and your manner are not in accordance. I should have thought of you — if I had only read you — that you were a sort of my Sybil, outpouringly enthusiastic, rather indiscreet, and even extravagant; but you are cool, quiet, and feminine to the last degree — I mean in delicacy of manner and expression. Explain this to me. Shall I desire my brother to call on you with respect to Mr. Peter in the Tower? He is his friend, not mine. He is very clever, and I think you would like him. Pray tell Miss G. to write to me. — Yours most truly,

Dillon.

Journal, October 8 (1829). — I was at Sir Thomas Lawrence’s to-day whilst Moore was sitting, and passed a delightful morning. We then went to the Charter House, and I saw his son, a beautiful boy.

January 9 (1830). — Poor Lawrence is dead.

Having seen him so lately, the suddenness of this event affects me deeply. His death opens all wounds. I see all those I love die around me, while I lament.

January 22. — I have begun a new kind of life somewhat, going a little into society and forming a variety of acquaintances. People like me, and flatter and follow me, and then I am left alone again, poverty being a barrier I cannot pass. Still I am often amused and sometimes interested.

March 23. — I gave a *soirée*, which succeeded very well. Mrs. Hare is going, and I am very sorry. She likes me, and she is gentle and good. Her husband is clever and her set very agreeable, rendered so by the reunion of some of the best people about town.

Mrs. Shelley now resided in Somerset Street, Portman Square. Her occasional "at homes," though of necessity simple in character, were not on that account the less frequented. Here might be met many of the most famous and most charming men and women of their day, and here Moore would thrill all hearts and bring tears to all eyes by his exquisitely pathetic singing of his own melodies.

The hostess herself, gentle and winning, was an object of more admiration than would ever be suspected from the simple, almost deprecatory tone of her scraps of journal. Among her MSS. are numerous anonymous poems addressed to her, some sentimental, others high-flown in compliment, though none, unfortunately, of sufficient literary merit to be, in themselves, worth preserving. But, whether they afforded her amusement or gratification, it is probable that she had to work too hard and too continuously to give more than a passing thought to such things. From the following letter of Clare's it may be inferred that *Perkin Warbeck*, which appeared in 1830, was, in a pecuniary sense, something of a disappointment, and that this was the more vexatious as Mary had lent Clare money during her visit to England, and would have been glad, now, to be repaid, not, however, on her own account, but that of Marshall, Godwin's former amanuensis and her kind friend in her childhood, whom, it is evident, she was helping to support in his old age.

Clare to Mrs. Shelley.

Dresden, *28th March 1830*.

My dear Mary — At last I take up the pen to write to you. At least thus much can I affirm, that I take it up, but whether I shall ever get to the end of my task and complete this letter is beyond me to decide. One of the causes of my long delay has been the hope of being able to send you the money for Marshall. I was to have been paid in February, but as yet have received neither money nor notice from Mrs. K. ... By this I am led to think she does not intend to do so until her return here in May. I am vexed, for I have been reproaching myself the whole winter with this debt. Of this be sure, the instant I am paid I will despatch what I owe you to London.... Here I was interrupted, and for two days have been unable to continue. How delighted I was with the news of Percy's health, as also with his letter, though I am afraid it was written unwillingly and cost him a world of pains. Poor child! he little thinks how much I am attached to him! When I first saw him I thought him cold, but afterwards he discovered so much intellect in all his speeches, and so much originality in his doings, that I willingly pardoned him for not being interested in anything but himself. In some weeks he will again be at home for Easter. But what is this to me, since I shall not see him, nor perhaps even ever again. It seems settled that my destination is Vienna. The negotiation with Mrs. K. ... has been broken off on my showing great unwillingness to go to Italy; that it may not be renewed I will not say. She now talks of going to Nice, to which place I have no objection in the world to accompany her. But nothing of this can be settled till she comes, for as neither of us can speak frankly in our letters, owing to their being subject to her husband's inspection, we have as yet done nothing but mutually misinterpret the circumspect and circuitous phraseology in which our real meaning was wrapped. Nothing can equal the letters she has written to me; they were detached pieces of agony. How she lived at all after bringing such productions into the world I cannot guess. Instruments of torture are nothing to them. She favoured me with one every week, which was a very clever contrivance on her part to keep us in an agitation equal to the one she suffered at Moghileff. Thanks to her and Natalie's perpetual indisposition, I have passed a tolerably disagreeable winter. At home I was employed in rubbings, stretchings, putting on trusses, dressing ulcers, applying leeches, and bandaging swollen glands. Out-of-doors our recreations were [all] baths, baths of bullock's blood, mud baths, steam baths, soap baths, and electricity. If I had served in a hospital I should not have been more constantly employed with sickness and its appendages. I could understand this order of things pretty well, and even perhaps from custom find some beauty in their deformity if the sky were pitch black and the stars red; but when I see them so beautiful I cannot help imagining that they were made to look down upon a life more consonant with their own natures than the one I lead, and I am filled with the most bitter dislike of it. I ought to confess, however, that it is a great mitigation of my disagreeable life to live in Dresden; such is the structure of existence here that a thousand alleviations to misery are offered. Here, as in Italy, you cannot walk the streets without meeting with some object which affords ready and agreeable occupation to the mind. I never yet was in a place where I met so much to please and so little to shock me. In vain I endeavour to recollect anything I could wish otherwise; not a fault presents itself. The more I become acquainted with the town and see its smallness, the more I am struck with the uncommon resources in literature *e le belle arti* it possesses. With what regret shall I leave it for Vienna. Farewell, then, a long farewell to Mount Olympus and its treasures of wisdom, science, poetry, and skill; the vales may be green and many rills trill through them, and many flocks pasture there, but the inhabitants will be as vile and miserable to me as were the shepherds of Admetus to Apollo when he kept their company. At any rate Vienna is better than Russia. I trust and hope when I am there you will make some little effort to procure the newspapers and reviews and new works; this alone can soften the mortification I shall feel in being obliged to live in that city. Already I have lost the little I had gained in my English, and I can only write with an effort that is painful to me; it precludes the possibility of my finding any pleasure in composition. I pause a hundred times and lean upon my hand to endeavour to find words to express the idea that is in my mind. It is a vain endeavour; the idea is there, but no words, and I leave my task unfinished. Another favour I have to ask you, which is, if I should require your mediation to get a book published at Paris, you will write to your friends there, and otherwise interest yourself as warmly as you can about it. Promise me this, and give me an answer upon it as quick as you can. I have had many letters from Charles. His affairs have taken the most favourable turn at Vienna. Everything is *couleur de rose*. More employment than he can accept seems likely to be offered to him; this is consolatory. He talks with rapture of his future plans, has taken a charming house, painted and furnished a pretty room for me, and will send Antonia and the babes to the lovely hills at some miles from the town so soon as they arrive.

Mamma has written to me everything concerning Colburn; this is indeed a disappointment, and the more galling because odiously unjust. Let me hear if your plan of writing the *Memoirs of Josephine* is likely to be put into execution. This perhaps would pay you better. I tremble for the anxiety of mind you suffer about Papa and your own pecuniary resources.

……

What says the world to Moore's *Lord Byron*? I saw some extracts in a review, and cannot express the pleasure I experienced in finding it was sad stuff. It was the journal of the Noble Lord, and I should say contained as fine a picture of indigestion as one could expect to meet with in Dr. Paris, Graham, or Johnson. Of Trelawny I know little. He wrote to me, describing where he was living and what kind of life he was leading. I have not yet answered him, although I make a sacred promise every day not to let it go over my head without so doing. But there is a certain want of sympathy between us which makes writing to him extremely disagreeable to me. I admire, esteem, and love him; some excellent qualities he possesses in a degree that is unsurpassed, but then it is exactly in another direction from my centre and my impetus. He likes a turbid and troubled life, I a quiet one; he is full of fine feelings and has no principles, I am full of fine principles but never had a feeling; he receives all his impressions through his heart, I through my head. *Que voulez vous? Le moyen de se recontrer* when one is bound for the North Pole and the other for the South?

What a terrible description you give of your winter. Ours, though severe, was an exceedingly fine one. From the time I arrived here until now there has not been a day that was not perfectly dry and clear. Within this last week we have had a great deal of rain. I well understand how much your spirits must have been affected by three months' incessant foggy raw weather. In my mind nothing can compensate for a bad climate. How I wish I could draw you to Dresden. You would go into society and would see a quantity of things which, treated by your pen, would bring you in a good profit. Life is very cheap here, and in the summer you might take a course of Josephlitz or Carlsbad, which would set up your health and enable you to bear the winter of London with tolerable philosophy. Forgive me if I don't write descriptions. It is impossible, situated as I am. I have not one moment free from annoyance from morning till night. This state of things depresses my mind terribly. When I have a moment of leisure it is breathed in a prayer for death. You will not wonder, therefore, that I think the Miss Booths right in their manner of acting; what is the use of trifling or mincing the matter with so despotic a ruler as the Disposer of the Universe? The one who is left is much to be pitied, for now she must die by herself, and that I think is as disagreeable as to live by oneself. In your next pray mention something about politics and how the London University is getting on. The accounts here of the distress in England are awful. Foreigners talk of that country as they would of Torre del Greco or Torre dell' Annunciata at the announcement of an eruption of Vesuvius. I should think my mother must be delighted to be no more plagued with us; it was really a great bother and no pleasure for her. She writes me a delightful account of Papa's health and spirits. Heaven grant it may continue. I am reading *Political Justice*, and am filled with admiration at the vastness of the plan, and the clearness and skill, nothing less than immortal, with which it is executed.

Farewell! write to me about your novel and particularly the opinion it creates in society. Pray write. The letters of my acquaintances (friends I have none) are my only pleasure. Natalie is pretty well; the knee is better, inasmuch as the swelling is smaller, but the weakness is as great as ever. We sit opposite to one another in perfect wretchedness; I because I am obliged to entreat her all day to do what she does not like, and she because she is entreated.

C. C.

My love to William.

During the next five years the "Author of *Frankenstein*" wrote several short tales (some of which were published in the *Keepsake*, an annual periodical, the precursor of the *Book of Beauty*), but no new novel. She was to have abundant employment in furthering the work of another.

CHAPTER XXII

August 1830-October 1831

To all who know Trelawny's curious book, the following correspondence, which tells the story of its publication and preparation for the press, will in itself be interesting. To readers of Mary Shelley's life it has a strong additional interest as illustrating, better than any second-hand narrative can do, the unique kind of friendship subsisting between her and Trelawny, and which, based on genuine mutual regard and admiration, and a common devotion to the memory of Shelley and of a golden age which ended at his death, proved stronger than all obstacles, and, in spite of occasional eclipses through hasty words and misunderstandings, in spite of wide differences in temperament, in habits, in opinions, and morals, yet survived with a kind of dogged vitality for years.

Shelley said of *Epipsychidion* that it was "an idealised history of his life and feelings." *The Adventures of a Younger Son* is an idealised history of Trelawny's youth and exploits, and very amusing it is, though rather gruesome in some of its details; a romance of adventures, of hair-breadth escapes by flood and field. As will be seen, the original MS. had to be somewhat toned down before it was presented to the public, but it is, as it stands, quite sufficiently forcible, as well as blood-curdling, for most readers.

The letters may now be left to tell their own tale.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

16th August 1830.

My dear Mary — That my letter may not be detained, I shall say nothing about Continental politics.

My principal motive in writing is to inform you that I have nearly completed the first portion of *my History*, enough for three ordinary volumes, which I wish published forthwith. The Johnsons, as I told you before, are totally ruined by an Indian bankruptcy; the smallness of my income prevents my supporting them. Mr. Johnson is gone to India to see if he can save aught from the ruin of his large fortune. In the meantime his wife is almost destitute; this spurs me on. Brown, who is experienced in these matters, declares I shall have no difficulty in getting a very considerable sum for the MS. now. I shall want some friend to dispose of it for me. My name is not to appear or to be disclosed to the bookseller or any other person. The publisher who may purchase it is to be articled down to publish the work without omitting or altering a single word, there being nothing actionable, though a great deal objectionable, inasmuch as it is tinctured with the prejudices and passions of the author's mind. However, there is nothing to prevent women reading it but its general want of merit. The opinion of the two or three who have read it is that it will be very successful, but I know how little value can be attached to such critics. I'll tell you what I think — that it is good, and might have been better; it is [filled] with events that, if not marred by my manner of narrating, must be interesting. I therefore plainly foresee it will be generally read or not at all. Who will undertake to, in the first place, dispose of it, and, in the second, watch its progress through the press? I care not who publishes it: the highest bidder shall have it. Murray would not like it, it is too violent; parsons and *Scots*, and, in short, also others are spoken of irreverently, if not profanely. But when I have your reply I shall send the MS. to England, and your eyes will be the judge, so tell me precisely your movements. — Your attached

E. J. T.

Poste Restante, Florence.

When does Moore conclude his *Life of Byron*? If I knew his address I could give him a useful hint that would be of service to the fame of the Poet.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Florence, *28th October 1830*.

Dearest Mary — My friend Baring left Florence on the 25th to proceed directly to London, so that he will be there as soon as you can get this letter. He took charge of my MSS., and promised to leave them at Hookham's, Bond Street, addressed to you. I therefore pray you lose no time in inquiring about them; they are divided into chapters and volumes, copied out in a plain hand, and all ready to go to press. They have been corrected with the greatest care, and I do not think you will have any trouble with them on that score. All I want you to do is to read them attentively, and then show them to Murray and Colburn, or any other publisher, and to hear if they will publish them and what they will give. You may say the author cannot at present be *named*, but that, when the work goes forth in the world, there are many who will recognise it. Besides the second series, which treats of Byron, Shelley, Greece, etc., will at once remove the veil, and the publisher who has the first shall have that. Yet at present I wish the first series to go forth strictly anonymous, and therefore you must on no account trust the publisher with my name. Surely there is matter enough in the book to make it interesting, if only viewed in the light of a *romance*. You will see that I have divided it into very short chapters, in the style of Fielding, and that I have selected mottoes from the only three poets who were the staunch advocates of liberty, and my contemporaries. I have left eight or nine blanks in the mottoes for you to fill up from the work of one of those poets. Brown, who was very anxious about the fame of Keats, has given many of his MSS. for the purpose. Now, if you could find any from the MSS. of Shelley or Byron, they would excite much interest, and their being strictly applicable is not of much importance. If you cannot, why, fill them up from the published works of Byron, Shelley, or Keats, but no others are to be admitted. When you have read the work and heard the opinion of the booksellers, write to me before you settle anything; only remember I am very anxious that no alterations or omissions should be made, and that the mottoes, whether long or short, double or treble, should not be curtailed. Will not Hogg assist you? I might get other people, but there is no person I have such confidence in as you, and the affair is one of confidence and trust, and are we not bound and united together by ties stronger than those which earth has to impose? Dearest friend, I am obliged hastily to conclude. — Yours affectionately,

E. J. Trelawny.

George Baring, Esq., who takes my book, is the brother of the banker; he has read it, and is in my confidence, and will be very ready to see and confer with you and do anything. He is an excellent person. I shall be very anxious till I hear from you.

Mrs. Shelley To Trelawny.

33 Somerset Street,
27th December 1830.

My dear Trelawny — At present I can only satisfy your impatience with the information that I have received your MS. and read the greater part of it. Soon I hope to say more. George Baring did not come to England, but after considerable delay forwarded it to me from Cologne.

I am delighted with your work; it is full of passion, energy, and novelty; it concerns the sea, and that is a subject of the greatest interest to me. I should imagine that it must command success.

But, my dear friend, allow me to persuade you to permit certain omissions. In one of your letters to me you say that "there is nothing in it that a woman could not read." You are correct for the most part, and yet without the omission of a few words here and there — the scene before you go to school with the mate of your ship — and above all the scene of the burning of the house, following your scene with your Scotch enemy — I am sure that yours will be a book interdicted to women. Certain words and phrases, pardoned in the days of Fielding, are now justly interdicted, and any gross piece of ill taste will make your booksellers draw back.

I have named all the objectionable passages, and I beseech you to let me deal with them as I would with Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, when I omitted all that hurt my taste. Without this yielding on your part I shall experience great difficulty in disposing of your work; besides that I, your partial friend, strongly object to coarseness, now wholly out of date, and beg you for my sake to make the omissions necessary for your obtaining feminine readers. Amidst so much that is beautiful and imaginative and exalting, why leave spots which, believe me, are blemishes? I hope soon to write to you again on the subject.

The burnings, the alarms, the absorbing politics of the day render booksellers almost averse to publishing at all. God knows how it will all end, but it looks as if the autocrats would have the good sense to make the necessary sacrifices to a starving people.

I heard from Clare to-day; she is well and still at Nice. I suppose there is no hope of seeing you here. As for me, I of course still continue a prisoner. Percy is quite well, and is growing more and more like Shelley. Since it is necessary to live, it is a great good to have this tie to life, but it is a wearisome affair. I hope you are happy. — Yours, my dearest friend, ever,

Mary Shelley.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Firenze, *19th January 1831*.

My dearest Mary — For, notwithstanding what you may think of me, you every day become dearer to me. The men I have linked myself to in my wild career through life have almost all been prematurely cut off, and the only friends which are left me are women, and they are strange beings. I have lost them all by some means or other; they are dead to me in being married, or (for you are all slaves) separated by obstacles which are insurmountable, and as Lord Chatham observes, "Friendship is a weed of slow growth in aged bosoms." But now to your letter. I to-day received yours of the 27th of December; you say you have received my MS. It has been a painful and arduous undertaking narrating my life. I have omitted a great deal, and avoided being a pander to the public taste for the sake of novelty or effect. Landor, a man of superior literary acquirements; Kirkup, an artist of superior taste; Baring, a man of the world and very religious; Mrs. Baring, moral and squeamish; Lady Burghersh, aristocratic and proud as a queen; and lastly, Charles Brown, a plain downright Cockney critic, learned in the trade of authorship, and has served his time as a literary scribe. All these male and female critics have read and passed their opinions on my narrative, and therefore you must excuse my apparent presumption in answering your objections to my book with an appearance of presumptuous dictation. Your objections to the coarseness of those scenes you have mentioned have been foreseen, and, without further preface or apology, I shall briefly state my wishes on the subject. Let Hogg or Horace Smith read it, and, without your *giving any* opinion, hear theirs; then let the booksellers, Colburn or others, see it, and then if it is their general opinion that there are *words* which are better omitted, why I must submit to their being omitted; but do not prompt them by prematurely giving your opinion. My life, though I have sent it you, as the dearest friend I have, is not written for the amusement of women; it is not a novel. If you begin clipping the wings of my true story, if you begin erasing words, you must then omit sentences, then chapters; it will be pruning an Indian jungle down to a clipped French garden. I shall be so appalled at my MS. in its printed form, that I shall have no heart to go on with it. Dear Mary, I love women, and you know it, but my life is not dedicated to them; it is to men I write, and my first three volumes are principally adapted to sailors. England is a nautical nation, and, if they like it, the book will amply repay the publisher, and I predict it will be popular with sailors, for it is true to its text. By the time you get this letter the time of publishing is come, and we are too far apart to continue corresponding on the subject. Let Hogg, Horace Smith, or any one you like, read the MS.; or the booksellers; if they absolutely object to any particular words or short passages, why let them be omitted by leaving blanks; but I should prefer a first edition as it now stands, and then a second as the bookseller thought best. In the same way that *Anastasius* was published, the suppression of the first edition of that work did not prevent its success. All men lament that *Don Juan* was not published as it was written, as under any form it would have been interdicted to women, and yet under any form they would have unavoidably read it.

Brown, who is learned in the bookselling trade, says I should get £200 per volume. Do not dispose of it under any circumstances for less than £500 the three volumes. Have you seen a book written by a man named Millingen? He has written an article on me, and I am answering it. My reply to it I shall send you. The *Literary Gazette*, which published the extract regarding me, I have replied to, and to them I send my reply; the book I have not seen. If they refuse, as the article I write is amusing, you will have no difficulty in getting it admitted in some of the London magazines. It will be forwarded to you in a few days, so you see I am now fairly coming forward in a new character. I have laid down the sword for the pen. Brown has just called with the article in question copied, and I send it together.

I have spoken to you about filling up the mottoes; the title of my book I wish to be simply thus — *The Life of a Man*, and not *The Discarded Son*, which looks too much like romance or a common novel....

Florence is very gay, and there are many pretty girls here, and balls every night. Tell Mrs. Paul not to be angry at my calling her and her sisters by their Christian names, for I am very lawless, as you know, in that particular, and not very particular on other things.

Brown talks of writing to you about the mottoes to my book, as he is very anxious about those of his friend Keats. Have you any MS. of Shelley’s or Byron’s to fill up the eight or ten I left blank? Remember the short chapters are to be adhered to in its printed form. I shall have no excitement to go on writing till I see what I have already written in print. By the bye, my next volumes will to general readers be far more interesting, and published with my name, or at least called Treloen, which is our original family name.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Poste Restante, Firenze,
5th April 1831.

My dear Mary — Since your letter, dated December 1830, I have not had a single line from you, yet in that you promised to write in a few days. Why is this? or have you written, and has your letter miscarried, or have not my letters reached you? I was anxious to have published the first part of my life this year, and if it had succeeded in interesting general readers, it would have induced me to have proceeded to its completion, for I cannot doubt that if the first part, published anonymously, and treating of people, countries, and things little known, should suit the public palate, that the latter, treating of people that everybody knows, and of things generally interesting, must be successful. But till I see the effect of the first part, I cannot possibly proceed to the second, and time is fleeting, and I am lost in idleness. I cannot write a line, and thus six months, in which I had leisure to have finished my narrative, are lost, and I am now deeply engaged in a wild scheme which will lead me to the East, and it is firmly my belief that when I again leave Europe it will be for ever. I have had too many hair-breadth escapes to hope that fortune will bear me up. My present Quixotic expedition is to be in the region wherein is still standing the column erected by Sardanapalus, and on it by him inscribed words to the effect: *Il faut jouir des plaisirs de la vie; tout le reste n'est rien*.

At present I can only say, if nothing materially intervenes to prevent me, that in the autumn of this year I shall bend my steps towards the above-mentioned column, and try the effect of it.

I am sick to death of the pleasureless life I lead here, and I should rather the tinkling of the little bell, which I hear summoning the dead to its last resting-place, was ringing for my body than endure the petty vexations of what is called civilised life, and see what I saw a few days back, the Austrian tyrants trampling on their helot Italians; but letters are not safe. — Your affectionate friend,

E. J. T.

Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

Somerset Street, *22d March 1831*.

My dear Trelawny — What can you think of me and of my silence? I can guess by the contents of your letters and your not having yet received answers. Believe me that if I am at all to blame in this it arises from an error in judgment, not from want of zeal. Every post-day I have waited for the next, expecting to be able to communicate something definitive, and now still I am waiting; however, I trust that this letter will contain some certain intelligence before I send it. After all, I have done no more than send your manuscripts to Colburn, and I am still in expectation of his answer. In the first place, they insist on certain parts being expunged, — parts of which I alone had the courage to speak to you, but which had before been remarked upon as inadmissible. These, however (with trifling exceptions), occur only in the first volume. The task of deciding upon them may very properly be left to Horace Smith, if he will undertake it — we shall see. Meanwhile, Colburn has not made up his mind as to the price. He will not give £500. The terms he will offer I shall hope to send before I close this letter, so I will say no more except to excuse my having conceded so much time to his dilatoriness. In all I have done I may be wrong; I commonly act from my own judgment; but alas! I have great experience. I *believe* that, if I sent your work to Murray, he would return it in two months unread; simply saying that he does not print novels. Your end part would be a temptation, did not your intention to be severe on Moore make it improbable that he would like to engage in it; and he would keep me as long as Colburn in uncertainty; still this may be right to do, and I shall expect your further instructions by return of post. However, in one way you may help yourself. You know Lockhart. He reads and judges for Murray; write to him; your letter shall accompany the MS. to him. Still, this thing must not be done hastily, for if I take the MS. out of Colburn's hands, and, failing to dispose of it elsewhere, I come back to him, he will doubtless retreat from his original proposal. There are other booksellers in the world, doubtless, than these two, but, occupied as England is by political questions, and impoverished miserably, there are few who have enterprise at this juncture to offer a price. I quote examples. My father and myself would find it impossible to make any tolerable arrangement with any one except Colburn. He at least may be some guide as to what you may expect. Mr. Brown remembers the golden days of authors. When I first returned to England I found no difficulty in making agreements with publishers; they came to seek me; now money is scarce, and readers fewer than ever. I leave the rest of this page blank. I shall fill it up before it goes on Friday.

Friday, 25th March.

At length, my dear friend, I have received the ultimatum of these great people. They offer you £300, and another £100 on a second edition; as this was sent me in writing, and there is no time for further communication before post-hour, I cannot *officially* state the number of the edition. I should think 1000. I think that perhaps they may be brought to say £400 at once, or £300 at once and £200 on the second edition. There can be no time for parleying, and therefore you must make up your mind whether after doing good battle, if necessary, I shall accept their terms. Believe *my experience* and that of those about me; you will not get a better offer from others, because money is not to be had, and Bulwer and other fashionable and selling authors are now obliged to content themselves with half of what they got before. If you decline this offer, I will, if you please, try Murray; he will keep me two months at least, and the worst is, if he won't do anything, Colburn will diminish his bargain, and we shall be in a greater mess than ever. I know that, as a woman, I am timid, and therefore a bad negotiator, except that I have perseverance and zeal, and, I repeat, experience of things as they are. Mr. Brown knows what they were, but they are sadly changed. The omissions mentioned must be made, but I will watch over them, and the mottoes and all that shall be most carefully attended to, depend on me.

Do not be displeased, my dear friend, that I take advantage of this enormous sheet of paper to save postage, and ask you to tear off one half sheet, and to send it to Mrs. Hare. You talk of my visiting Italy. It is impossible for me to tell you how much I repine at my imprisonment here, but I dare not anticipate a change to take me there for a long time. England, its ungenial clime, its difficult society, and the annoyances to which I am subjected in it weigh on my spirits more than ever, for every step I take only shows me how impossible [it is], situated as I am, that I should be otherwise than wretched. My sanguine disposition and capacity to endure have borne me up hitherto, but I am sinking at last; but to quit so stupid a topic and to tell you news, did you hear that Medwin contrived to get himself gazetted for full pay in the Guards? I fancy that he employed his connection with the Shelleys, who are connected with the King through the Fitz Clarences. However, a week after he was gazetted as retiring. I suppose the officers cut him at mess; his poor wife and children! how I pity them! Jane is quite well, living in tranquillity. Hogg continues all that she can desire....

She lives where she did; her children are well, and so is my Percy, who grows more like Shelley. I hear that your old favourite, Margaret Shelley, is prettier than ever; your Miss Burdett is married. I have been having lithographed your letter to me about Caroline. I wish to disperse about 100 copies among the many hapless fair who imagine themselves to have been the sole object of your tenderness. Clare is to have a first copy. Have you heard from poor dear Clare? She announced a little time ago that she was to visit Italy with the Kaisaroff to see you. I envied her, but I hear from her brother Charles that she has now quarrelled with Madame K., and that she will go to Vienna. God grant that her sufferings end soon. I begin to anticipate it, for I hear that Sir Tim is in a bad way. I shall hear more certain intelligence after Easter. Mrs. P. spends her Easter with Caroline, who lives in the neighbourhood, and will dine at Field Place. I have not seen Mrs. Aldridge since her marriage; she has scarcely been in town, but I shall see her this spring, when she comes up as she intends. You know, of course, that Elizabeth St. Aubyn is married, so you know that your ladies desert you sadly. If Clare and I were either to die or marry you would be left without a Dulcinea at all, with the exception of the sixscore new objects for idolatry you may have found among the pretty girls in Florence. Take courage, however; I am scarcely a Dulcinea, being your friend and not the Lady of your love, but such as I am, I do not think that I shall either die or marry this year, whatever may happen the next; as it is only spring you have some time before you.

We are all here on the *qui vive* about the Reform Bill; if it pass, and Tories and all expect it, well, — if not, Parliament is dissolved immediately, and they say that the new writs are in preparation. The Whigs triumphed gloriously in the boldness of their measure. England will be free if it is carried. I have had very bad accounts from Rome, but you are quiet as usual in Florence. I am scarcely wicked enough to desire that you should be driven home, nor do I expect it, and yet how glad I should be to see you. You never mention Zella. Adieu, my dear Trelawny. — I am always affectionately yours,

Mary W. Shelley.

Hunt has set up a little 2d. paper, the *Tatler*, which is succeeding; this keeps him above water. I have not seen him very lately. He lives a long way off. He is the same as ever, a person whom all must love and regret.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Poste Restante, Firenze,
8th April 1831.

Dear Mary — The day after I had despatched a scolding letter to you, I received your Titanic letter, and sent Mrs. Hare her fathom of it....

Now, let's to business. I thank you for the trouble you have taken about the MS. Let Colburn have it, and try to get £400 down, for as to what may be promised on a second edition, I am told is mere humbug. When my work is completed I have no doubt the first part will be reprinted, but get what you can paid down at once; as to the rest, I have only to say that I consent to Horace Smith being the sole arbitrator of what is necessary to be omitted, but do not let him be prompted, and tell him only to omit what is *absolutely indispensable*. Say to him that it is a friend of Shelley's who asks him this favour, but do not let him or any other individual know that I am the author. If my name is known, and the work can be brought home to me, the consequences will be most disastrous. I beseech you bear this in mind. Let all the mottoes appear in their respective chapters without any omission, regardless of their number to each chapter, for they are all good, and fill up the eight or ten I left blank from Byron and Shelley; if from MS. so much the better. The changes in the opinions of all mankind on political and other topics are favourable to such writers as I and the Poets of Liberty whom I have selected. We shall no longer be hooted at; it is our turn to triumph now. Would those glorious spirits, to whose genius the present age owes so much, could witness the triumphant success of these opinions. I think I see Shelley's fine eyes glisten, and faded cheek glow with fire unearthly. England, France, and Belgium free, the rest of Europe must follow; the theories of tyrants all over the world are shaken as by an earthquake; they may be propped up for a time, but their fall is inevitable. I am forgetting the main business of my letter. I hope, Mary, that you have not told Colburn or any one else that I am the author of the book. Remember that I must have the title simply *A Man's Life*, and that I should like to have as many copies for my friends as you can get from Colburn — ten, I hope — and that you will continue to report progress, and tell me when it is come out. You must have a copy, Horace Smith one, and Jane and Lady Burghersh; she is to be heard of at Apsley House — Duke of Wellington's — and then I have some friends here; you must send me a parcel by sea. If the time is unfavourable for publication, from men's minds being engrossed with politics, yet it is so far an advantage that my politics go with the times, and not as they would have been some years back, obnoxious and premature. I decide on Colburn as publisher, not from liberality of his terms, but his courage, and trusting that as little as possible will be omitted; and, by the bye, I wish you to keep copies, for I have none, of those parts which are omitted. Enough of this. Of Clare I have seen nothing. Do not you, dear Mary, abandon me by following the evil examples of my other ladies. I should not wonder if fate, without our choice, united us; and who can control his fate? I blindly follow his decrees, dear Mary. — Your

E. J. T.

Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

Somerset Street, *14th June 1831*.

My dear Trelawny — Your work is in progress at last, and is being printed with great rapidity. Horace Smith undertook the revision, and sent a very favourable report of it to the publishers; to me he says: "Having written to you a few days ago, I have only to annex a copy of my letter to Colburn and Bentley, whence you will gather my opinion of the MS.; it is a most powerful, but rather perilous work, which will be much praised and much abused by the liberal and bigoted. I have read it with great pleasure and think it admirable, in everything but the conclusion;" by this he means, as he says to Colburn and Bentley, "The conclusion is abrupt and disappointing, especially as previous allusions have been made to his later life which is not given. Probably it is meant to be continued, and if so it would be better to state it, for I have no doubt that his first part will create a sufficient sensation to ensure the sale of a second."

In his former letter to me H. S. says: "Any one who has proved himself the friend of yourself and of him whom we all deplore I consider to have strong claims on my regard, and I therefore willingly undertake the revision of the MS. Pray assure the author that I feel flattered by this little mark of his confidence in my judgment, and that it will always give me pleasure to render him these or any other services." And now, my dear Trelawny, I hope you will not be angry at the title given to your book; the responsibility of doing anything for any one so far away as you is painful, and I have had many qualms, but what could I do? The publishers strongly objected to the *History of a Man* as being no title at all, or rather one to lead astray. The one adopted is taken from the first words of your MS., where you declare yourself a younger son — words pregnant of meaning in this country, where to be the younger son of a man of property is to be virtually discarded, — and they will speak volumes to the English reader; it is called, therefore, *The Adventures of a Younger Son*. If you are angry with me for this I shall be sorry, but I knew not what to do. Your MS. will be preserved for you; and remember, also, that it is pretty well known whom it is by. I suppose the persons who read the MS. in Italy have talked, and, as I told you, your mother speaks openly about it. Still it will not appear in print, in no newspaper accounts over which I have any control as emanating from the publisher. Let me know immediately how I am to dispose of the dozen copies I shall receive on your account. One must go to H. Smith, another to me, and to whom else? The rest I will send to you in Italy.

There is another thing that annoys me especially. You will be paid in bills dating from the day of publication, now not far distant; three of various dates. To what man of business of yours can I consign these? the first I should think I could get discounted at once, and send you the cash; but tell me what I am to do. I know that all these hitches and drawbacks will make you vituperate womankind, and had I ever set myself up for a woman of business, or known how to manage my own affairs, I might be hurt; but you know my irremediable deficiencies on those subjects, and I represented them strongly to you before I undertook my task; and all I can say in addition is, that as far as I have seen, both have been obliged to make the same concessions, so be as forgiving and indulgent as you can.

We are full here of reform or revolution, whichever it is to be; I should think something approaching the latter, though the first may be included in the last. Will you come over and sit for the new parliament? what are you doing? Have you seen Clare? how is she? She never writes except on special occasions, when she wants anything. Tell her that Percy is quite well.

You tell me not to marry, — but I will, — any one who will take me out of my present desolate and uncomfortable position. Any one, — and with all this do you think that I shall marry? Never, — neither you nor anybody else. Mary Shelley shall be written on my tomb, — and why? I cannot tell, except that it is so pretty a name that though I were to preach to myself for years, I never should have the heart to get rid of it.

Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be very anxious to hear from you; to hear that you are not angry about all the *contretemps* attendant on your publication, and to receive your further directions. — Yours very truly,

M. W. Shelley.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Poste Restante, Firenze,
29th June 1831.

Dear Mary — Your letter, dated 14th June, I have received, after a long interval, and your letter before that is dated 22d March. It would appear by your last that you must have written another letter between March and June, by allusions in this last respecting my Mother. If so, it has never reached me, so that if it contained anything which is necessary for me to know, I pray you let me have a transcript, so far as your memory will serve to give it me. I am altogether ignorant of what arrangements you have made with Colburn; and am only in possession of the facts contained in the second, to wit, that Horace Smith is revising the work for publication. I trust he will not be too liberal with the pruning-knife. When will the cant and humbug of these costermonger times be reformed? Nevertheless tell H. Smith that the author is fully sensible of his kindness and (for once, at least, in his life) with all his heart joins his voice to that of the world in paying tribute to the sterling ability of Mr. Horace Smith; and I remember Shelley and others speaking of him as one often essayed on the touchstone of proof, and never found wanting. Horace Smith's criticism on the *Life* is flattering, and as regards the perilous part — why I never have, and never shall, crouch to those I utterly despise, to wit, the bigoted. The Roman Pontiff might as well have threatened me with excommunication when on board the *Grub*, if I failed to strike my top-sails, and lower my proud flag to the lubberly craft which bore his silly banner, bedaubed with mitres, crosses, and St. Peter's Keys.

I did not mean to call my book *The History of a Man*, but simply thus, *A Man's Life*; "Adventures" and "Younger Son" are commonplace, and I don't like it; but if it is to be so, why, I shall not waste words in idle complaints: would it were as I had written it. By the bye, you say justly the MS. ends abruptly; the truth is, as you know, it is only the first part of my life, and to conclude it will fill three more volumes: that it is to be concluded, I thought I had stated in a paragraph annexed to the last chapter of that which is now in the press, which should run thus —

"I am, or rather have, continued this history of my life, and it will prove I have not been a passive instrument of despotism, nor shall I be found consorting with those base, sycophantic, and mercenary wretches who crouch and crawl and fawn on kings, and priests, and lords, and all in authority under them. On my return to Europe, its tyrants had gathered together all their helots and gladiators to restore the cursed dynasty of the Bourbons, and thousands of slaves went forth to extinguish and exterminate liberty, truth, and justice. I went forth, too, my hand ever against them, and when tyranny had triumphed, I wandered an exile in the world and leagued myself with men worthy to be called so, for they, inspired by wisdom, uncoiled the frauds contained in lying legends, which had so long fatally deluded the majority of mankind. Alas! those apostles have not lived to see the tree they planted fructify; would they had tarried a little while to behold this new era of 1830-31, how they would have rejoiced to behold the leagued conspiracy of kings broken, and their bloodhound priests and nobles muzzled, their impious confederacy to enslave and rob the people paralysed by a blow that has shaken their usurpation to the base, and must inevitably be followed by their final overthrow. Yes, the sun of freedom is dawning on the pallid slaves of Europe," etc.

The conclusion of this diatribe I am certain you have, and if you have not the beginning, why put it in beginning with the words: “I have continued the history of my life.”

If I thought there was a probability that I could get a seat in the reformed House of Commons, I would go to England, or if there was a probability of revolution. I was more delighted with your resolve not to change your name than with any other portion of your letter. Trelawny, too, is a good name, and sounds as well as Shelley; it fills the mouth as well and will as soon raise a spirit. By the bye, when you send my books, send me also Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Rights of Women*, and Godwin’s new work on *Man*, and tell me what you are now writing. The Hares are at Lucca Baths. Never omit to tell me what you know of Caroline. Do you think there is any opening among the demagogues for me? It is a bustling world at present, and likely so to continue. I must play a part. Write, Mary mine, speedily.

Is my book advertised? If so, the motto from Byron should accompany it.

Clare only remained in Florence about ten days; some sudden death of a relative of the family she resides with recalled them to Russia. I saw her three or four times. She was very miserable, and looked so pale, thin, and haggard. The people she lived with were bigots, and treated her very badly. I wished to serve her, but had no means. Poor lady, I pity her; her life has been one of continued misery. I hope on Sir Timothy’s death it will be bettered; her spirits are broken, and she looks fifty; I have not heard of her since her departure. Mrs. Hare once saw her, but she was so prejudiced against her, from stories she had heard against her from the Beauclercs, that she could hardly be induced to notice her. You are aware that I do not wish my book to appear as if written for publication, and therefore have avoided all allusions which might induce people to think otherwise. I wish all the mottoes to be inserted, as they are a selection of beautiful poetry, and many of them not published.

The bills, you say, Colburn and Bentley are to give you; perhaps Horace Smith may further favour me by getting them negotiated. I am too much indebted to him to act so scurvily as not to treat him with entire confidence, so with the injunction of secrecy you may tell him my name. If he dislikes the affair of the bills, as I cannot employ any of my people of business, why give the bills, or rather place them in the hands of a man who keeps a glover’s shop (I know him well). His name is Moon, and his shop is corner one in Orange Street, Bloomsbury Square. When I get your reply, I will, if necessary, write to him on the subject. I pray you write me on receipt of this. My child Zella is growing up very pretty, and with a soul of fire. She is living with friends of mine near Lucca.

The only copies of the book I wish you to give away are to Horace Smith, Mary Shelley, Lady Burghersh, No. 1 Hyde Park Terrace, Oxford Road, and Jane Williams, to remind her that she is not forgotten. Shelley's tomb and mine in Rome, is, I am told, in a very dilapidated state. I will see to its repair. Send me out six copies by sea; one if you can sooner. Address them to Henry Dunn, Leghorn.

E. J. Trelawny.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Poste Restante, Firenze,
19th July 1831.

……

By the bye, Mary, if it is not too late, I should wish the name of Zella to be spelt in the correct Arabic, thus, *Zellâ*, in my book. I changed it in common with several others of the names to prevent my own being too generally recognised; with regard to hers, if not too late, I should now wish it to appear in its proper form, besides which, in the chapter towards the conclusion, wherein I narrate an account of a pestilence which was raging in the town of Batavia, I wish the word Java fever to be erased, and cholera morbus substituted. For we alone had the former malady on board the schooner, having brought it into the Batavia Roads with us, but on our arrival there we found the cholera raging with virulence, most of those attacked expiring in the interval of the setting and rising of the sun. Luis, our steward, I thought died from fever, as we had had it previously on board, but the medicals pronounced it or denounced it cholera. If the alteration can be made, it will be interesting, as in the history of the cholera I see published, they only traced the origin to 1816, when the fact is, it was in 1811 that I am speaking of, and no doubt it has existed for thousands of years before, but it is only of late, like the natives of Hindoostan, it has visited Europe. It is sent by Nemesis, a fitting retribution for the gold and spices we have robbed them of. The malediction of my Malayan friends has come to pass, for I have no doubt the Russian caravans which supply that empire with tea, silks, and spices introduced the cholera, or gave it into the bargain, or as *bona mano*. I wish you would write, for I am principally detained here by wishing to get a letter from you ere I go to some other place. — Yours, and truly,

E. T.

Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

Somerset Street, *26th July 1831.*

My dear Trelawny — Your third volume is now printing, so I should imagine that it will very soon be published; everything shall be attended to as you wish. The letter to which I alluded in my former one was a tiny one enclosed to Clare, which perhaps you have received by this time. It mentioned the time of the agreement; £300 in bills of three, six, and eight months, dated from the day of publication, and £100 more on a second edition. The mention I made of your mother was, that she speaks openly in society of your forthcoming memoirs, so that I should imagine very little real secrecy will attend them. However, you will but gain reputation and admiration through them.

I hope you are going on, for your continuation will, I am sure, be ardently looked for. I am so sorry for the delay of all last winter, yet I did my best to conclude the affair; but the state of the nation has so paralysed bookselling that publishers were very backward, though Colburn was in his heart eager to get at your book. As to the price, I have taken pains to ascertain; and you receive as much as is given to the best novelists at this juncture, which may console your vanity if it does not fill your pocket.

The Reform Bill will pass, and a considerable revolution in the government of the country will, I imagine, be the consequence.

You have talents of a high order. You have powers; these, with industry and discretion, would advance you in any career. You ought not, indeed you ought not to throw away yourself as you do. Still, I would not advise your return on the speculation, because England is so sad a place that the mere absence from it I consider a peculiar blessing.

My name will *never* be Trelawny. I am not so young as I was when you first knew me, but I am as proud. I must have the entire affection, devotion, and, above all, the solicitous protection of any one who would win me. You belong to womenkind in general, and Mary Shelley will *never* be yours.

I write in haste, but I will write soon again, more at length. You shall have your copies the moment I receive them. Believe me, with all gratitude and affection, yours,

M. W. Shelley.

Jane thanks you for the book promised. I am infinitely chagrined at what you tell me concerning Clare. If the B.'s spoke against her, that means Mrs. B. and her stories were gathered from Lord Byron, who feared Clare and did not spare her; and the stories he told were such as to excuse the prejudice of any one.

The Same to the Same.

Somerset Street, *2d October 1831.*

My dear Trelawny — I suppose that I have now some certain intelligence to send you, though I fear that it will both disappoint and annoy you. I am indeed ashamed that I have not been able to keep these people in better order, but I trusted to honesty, when I ought to have ensured it; however, thus it stands: your book is to be published in the course of the month, and then your bills are to be dated. As soon as I get them I will dispose of them as you direct, and you will receive notice on the subject without delay. I cannot procure for you a copy until then; they pretend that it is not all printed. If I can get an opportunity I will send you one by private hand, at any rate I shall send them by sea without delay. I will write to Smith about negotiating your bills, and I have no doubt that I shall be able somehow or other to get you money on them. I will go myself to the City to pay Barr's correspondent as soon as I get the cash. Thus your *pretty dear* (how fascinating is flattery) will do her best, as soon as these tiresome people fulfil their engagements. In some degree they have the right on their side, as the day of publication is a usual time from which to date the bills, and that was the time which I acceded to; but they talked of such hurry and speed that I expected that that day was nearer at hand than it now appears to be. November *is* the publishing month, and no new things are coming out now. In fact, the Reform Bill swallows up every other thought. You have heard of the Lords' majority against it, much longer than was expected, because it was not imagined that so many bishops would vote against Government....

Do whenever you write send me news of Clare. She never writes herself, and we are all excessively anxious about her. I hope she is better. God knows when fate will do anything for us. I despair. Percy is well, I fancy that he will go to Harrow in the spring; it is not yet finally arranged, but this is what I wish, and therefore I suppose it will be, as they have promised to increase my allowance for him, and leave me pretty nearly free, only with Eton prohibited; but Harrow is now in high reputation under a new head-master. I am delighted to hear that Zella is in such good hands, it is so necessary in this world of woe that children should learn betimes to yield to necessity; a girl allowed to run wild makes an unhappy woman.

Hunt has set up a penny daily paper, literary and theatrical; it is succeeding very well, but his health is wretched, and when you consider that his sons, now young men, do not contribute a penny towards their own support, you may guess that the burthen on him is very heavy. I see them very seldom, for they live a good way off, and when I go he is out, she busy, and I am entertained by the children, who do not edify me. Jane has just moved into a house about half a mile further from town, on the same road; they have furnished it themselves. Dina improves, or rather she always was, and continues to be, a very nice child.

....

The *Adventures* did not reach a second edition in their original form; the first edition failed, indeed, to repay its expenses; but they were afterwards republished in *Colburn's Family Library*. The second part of Trelawny's Autobiography took the chatty and discursive form, so popular at the present day, of "Reminiscences." It is universally known as *Recollections of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*.

So long as Shelley and Byron survive as objects of interest in this world, so long must this fascinating book share their existence. As originally published, it has not a dull page. Life-like as if written at the moment it all happened, it yet has the pictorial sense of proportion which can rarely exist till a writer stands at such a distance (of time) from the scenes he describes that he can estimate them, not only as they are, but in their relation to surrounding objects. It would seem as if, for the conversations at least, Trelawny must sometimes have drawn on his imagination as well as his memory; if so, it can only be replied that, by his success, he has triumphantly vindicated his artistic right to do so. Terse, original, and characteristic, each speech paints its speaker in colours which we know and feel to be true. Nothing seems set down for effect; it is spontaneous, unstudied, everyday reality. And if the history of Trelawny's own exploits in Greece somewhat recall the "tarasconnades" of his early adventures, it at least puts a thrilling finish to a book it was hard to conclude without falling into bathos. As a writer on Shelley, Trelawny surely stands alone. Many authors have praised Shelley, others have condemned and decried him, others again have tried to pity and "excuse" him. No one has apprehended as happily as Trelawny the peculiar *timbre*, if it may be so described, of his nature, or has brought out so vividly, and with so few happy touches, his moral and social characteristics. Saint or sinner, the Shelley of Trelawny is no lay figure, no statue even, no hero of romance; it is *Shelley*, the man, the boy, the poet. Trelawny assures us that Hogg's picture of Shelley as a youth is absolutely faithful. But Hogg's picture only shows us Shelley in his "salad days," and even that we are never allowed to contemplate without the companion-portrait of the biographer, smiling with cynical amusement while he yields his tribute of heartfelt, but patronising praise.

The conclusions to which Hogg had come by observation Trelawny arrived at by intuition. Fiery and imaginative, his nature was by far the more sympathetic of the two; though it may be that, in virtue of very unlikeness, Hogg would have proved, in the long run, the fitter companion for Shelley.

Between Trelawny and Mary there existed the same kind of adjustable difference. His descriptions of her have been largely drawn upon in earlier chapters of the present work, and need not be reverted to here. She had been seven years dead when the *Recollections* were published. Twenty years later, when Mary Shelley had been twenty-seven years in her grave, there appeared a second edition of the book. In those twenty years, what change had come over the spirit of its pages? An undefinable difference, like that which comes over the face of Nature when the wind changes from west to east, — and yet not so undefinable either, for it had power to reverse some very definite facts. Byron's feet, for instance, which — as the result of an investigation after death — were described, in 1858, as having, both, been "clubbed and withered to the knee," "the feet and legs of a sylvan satyr," are, in 1878, pronounced to have been *faultless*, but for the contraction of the back sinews (the "Tendon Achilles"), which prevented his heels from resting on the ground. "Unfortunately," to quote Mr. Garnett's comment on this discrepancy, in his article on *Shelley's Last Days*, "as in the natural world the same agencies that are elevating one portion of the earth's surface are at the same time depressing another, so, in the microcosm of Mr. Trelawny's memory and judgment, the embellishment of Lord Byron's feet has been accompanied by a corresponding deterioration of Mrs. Shelley's heart and head."

Yes; the Mary Shelley with whom, in early days, even Trelawny could find no fault, save perhaps for a tendency to mournfulness in solitude and an occasional fit of literary abstraction when she might have been looking after the commissariat — who in later years was his trusty friend, his sole correspondent, his literary editor, his man of business — and withal his "pretty dear" "every day dearer" to him, "Mary — my Mary" — superior surely to the rest of her sex, with whom at one time it seems plain enough that he would have been nothing loth to enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, for life, would she but have preferred the name of Trelawny to that of Shelley, — this Mary whose voice had been silent for seven and twenty years, and to whom he himself had raised a monument of praise, rises from her tomb as conventional and commonplace, unsympathetic and jealous, narrow, orthodox, and worldly.

Yet she had borne with his exactions and scoldings and humours for friendship's sake, and with full faith in the loyalty and generosity of his heart. A pure and delicate-minded woman, she had not been scandalised by his lawless morals. She had had the courage to withstand him when he was wrong, working for him the while like a devoted slave. Never was a more true and disinterested friendship than hers for him; and he, who knew her better than most people did, was well aware of it.

Where then was the change? Alas! It was in himself. In this revolving world, where "Time that gave doth now his gift confound," and where "nought may endure but mutability," the "flourish set on youth" is soon transfixed.

Greek fevers and gunshot wounds told on the “Pirate’s” disposition as well as on his constitution. The habits of mind he had cultivated and been proud of, — combativeness, opposition to all authority as such — finally became his masters; he could not even acquiesce in his own experience. Age and the ravages of Time were to blame for his morbid censoriousness; Time — that “feeds on the rarities of Nature’s truth.” These later recollections are but the distorted images of a blurred mirror. But, none the less, the tale is a sad one. We can but echo Trelawny’s own words to Mary —”Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, without our especial wonder?”

CHAPTER XXIII

October 1831-October 1839

Trelawny's book was only one among many things which claimed Mrs. Shelley's attention during these three years.

In 1830 Godwin published his *Thoughts on Man*. The relative positions of father and daughter had come to be reversed, and Mary now negotiated with the publishers for the sale of his work, as he had formerly done for her. Godwin himself set a high value, even for him, on this book, and anticipated for it a future and an influence which were not to be realised.

Godwin to Mary.

15th April 1830.

Dear Mary — If you do me the favour to see Murray, I know not how far you can utter the following things; or if you do, how far they will have any weight with his highness; yet I cannot but wish you should have them in your mind.

The book I offer is a collection of ten new and interesting truths, illustrated in no unpopular style. They are the fruit of thirty years' meditation (it being so long since I wrote the *Enquirer*), in the full maturity of my understanding.

The book, therefore, will be very far from being merely one book more added to the number of books already existing in English literature. It must, as I conceive, when published make a deep impression, and cause the thinking part of the public to perceive — There are here laid before us ten interesting truths never before delivered.

Whether it is published during my life or after my death it is a light that cannot be extinguished—"the precious life-blood of a discerning spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

In the following amusing letter Clare gives Mary a few commissions. She was to interest her literary acquaintance in Paris in the publication and success of a French poem by a friend of Clare's at Moscow, the greatest wish of whose heart was to appear in print. She was also to find a means of preventing the French translatress of Moore's *Life of Byron* from introducing Clare's name into her elucidatory footnotes. This was indeed all-important to Clare, as any revival of scandal about her might have robbed her of the means of subsistence, but it was also an extremely difficult and delicate task for Mary. But no one ever hesitated to make her of use. Her friends estimated her power by her goodwill, and her goodwill by their own need of her services; and they were generally right, for the will never failed, and the way was generally found.

Clare to Mrs. Shelley.

Nice, *11th December 1830*.

My dear Mary — Your last letter, although so melancholy, gave me much pleasure, merely, therefore, because it came from you.

I intended to have written to all and each of you, but until now have not been able to put my resolution into execution. It must seem to you that I am strangely neglectful of my friends, or perhaps you think since I am so near Trelawny that I have been taking a lesson from him in the art of cultivating one’s friendships; but neither of these is the case, my silence is quite on another principle than this.

I am not desperately in love, nor just risen from my bed at four in the afternoon in order to write my millionth love letter, nor am I indifferent to those whom time and the malice of fortune have yet spared to me, but simply I have been too busy.

Since I have been at Nice I have had to change lodgings four times; besides this, we were a long time without a maid, and received and paid innumerable visits. My whole day was spent in shifting my character. In the morning I arose a waiting-maid, and, having attended to the toilette of Natalie, sank into a house-maid, a laundry-maid, and, after noon, I fear me, a cook, having to look to the cleaning of the rooms, the getting up of linen, and the preparation of various pottages fit for the patient near me. At mid-day I turned into a governess, gave my lessons, and at four or five became a fine lady for the rest of the day, and paid visits or received them, for at Nice it is the custom, so soon as a stranger arrives, that everybody *comme il faut* in the place comes to call upon you; nor can you shut your doors against them even if you were dying, for as Nice is the resort of the sick, and as everybody either is sick or has been sick, nursing has become the common business.

So we went on day after day. We had *dejeuners dansants*, *soirées dansantes* (*dîners dansants* are considered as *de trop* by order of the physicians), *bals parés*, *théatres*, *opéras*, *grands dîners*, *petits soupers*, *concerts*, *visites de matin*, *promenades à âne*, *parties de campagne*, *réunions littéraires*, *grands cercles*, *promenades en bateau*, *coteries choisies*, *thunder-storms* from the sea, and *political storms* from France; in short, if we had only had an earthquake, or the shock of one, we should have run through the whole series of modifications of which human existence is susceptible. *Voilà Paris, Voilà Paris*, as the song says.

You may perhaps expect that the novelty of society should have suggested to me remarks and observations as multifarious as the forms under which I observed it. Sorry I am to say that either from its poverty, or from my own poverty of intellect, I have not gathered from it anything beyond the following couple of conclusions, that people of the world, disguise themselves as they may, possess but two qualities, a great want of understanding, and a vast pretension to sentiment. From this duplexity arises the duplicity with which they are so often charged, and no wonder, for with hearts so heavy, and heads so light, how is it possible to keep anything like a straightforward course? In alleviation of this, I must confess that wherever I went I carried about with me my own identity (that unhappy identity which has cost me so dear, and of which, with all my pains, I have never been able to lose a particle), and contemplated the people I judge through the medium of its rusty atoms.

I must speak to you of an affair that interests me deeply. M. Gambs has informed me that he has sent to Paris a poem of his in manuscript called *Möise*. He gave it to the Prince Nicolas Scherbatoff at Moscow, just upon his setting out for Paris; this is many months ago. Whether the Prince gave any promise to endeavour to get it published I do not know; but if he did, he is such a very indolent and selfish man that his efforts would never get the thing done. M. Gambs has written to me to ask if you have any literary friends in Paris who would be kind enough to interest themselves about it. The address of the Prince is as follows: Son Excellence Le Prince Nicolas Scherbatoff, Rue St. Lazare, No. 17, à Paris. Can you not get some one to call upon him to ask about the manuscript, and to propose it to some bookseller?

This some one may enter into a direct correspondence with M. Gambs by addressing him Chez M. Lenhold, Marchand de Musique, à Moscow. I should be highly delighted if you could settle things in this way, as I know my friend has nothing more at heart than to appear in print, and that I should be glad to be the means of communicating some pleasure to an existence which I know is almost utterly without it, and of showing my gratitude for the kindness and goodness he has showered upon me; nor, as far as my poor judgment goes, is the work unworthy of inspiring interest, and of being saved from oblivion. It pleased me much when it was read to me; but then it is true I was in a desert, and there a drop of water will often seem to us more precious than the finest jewel.

Another subject connected with Paris also presses itself on my mind. In Moore's *Life of Lord Byron* only the most distant allusion was made to Lady Caroline Lamb; yet, in the French translation, its performer, Madame Sophie Bellay (or some such name) had the indelicacy to unveil the mystery in a note, and to expose it in distinct and staring characters to the public. This piece of impudence was harmless to Lady Caroline, since her independence of others was assured beyond a doubt; but to any one whose bread depends upon the public a printed exposure of their conduct will infallibly bring on destitution, and reduce them to the necessity of weighing upon their relations for support.

I know the subject is a disagreeable one, and that you do not like disagreeable subjects. I know nothing of business or whether there exists any means of averting this blow; perhaps a representation to the translator of the evils that would follow would be sufficient; but as I have no means of trying this, I am reduced to suggest the subject to your attention, with the firm hope that you will find some method of warding off the threatened mischief.

What you tell me of the state of family resources has naturally depressed my spirits. Will the future never cease unrolling new shapes of misery? Stair above stair of wretchedness is all we know; the present, bad as it is, is always better than what comes after. Of all the crowd of eager inquirers at the Delphic shrine was there ever found one who thanked, or had any reason to thank, the Pythia for what she disclosed to him? For me, I have long abandoned hope and the future, and am now diligently pursuing and retracing the past, going the back way as it were to eternity in order to avoid the disappointments and perplexities of an unknown course. But I must beg pardon for my cowardice and disagreeableness, and leave it, or else I shall be recollected with as much reluctance as the Pythia.

I wish I could give you any idea of the beauty of Nice. So long as I can walk about beside the sounding sea, beneath its ambient heaven, and gaze upon the far hills enshrined in purple light, I catch such pleasure from their loveliness that I am happy without happiness; but when I come home, then it seems to me as if all the phantasmagoria of hell danced before my eyes.

Mrs. K. has arrived and in no very amiable humour. The only conversation I hear is, first, the numberless perfections of herself, husband, and child; this, as it is true, would be well enough, but still upon repetition it tires; second, the infinite superiority of Russia over all other countries, since it is an established truth that liberty and civilisation are the most dreadful of all evils. I, to avoid ill-temper, assent to all they say; then in company, when opposed in their doctrines, they drag me forward, and the tacit consent I have given, as an argument in favour of their way of thinking, and I am at once set down by everybody either as a fawning creature or an utter fool. However, I am glad she has come, as the responsibility of Natalie's health was too much. For heaven's sake excuse me to dear Jane that I have not written. My first moment shall be given to do so.

I think of England and my friends all day long. Entreat everybody to write to me. Do pray do so yourself. My love to my Mother and Papa, and William and everybody. How happy was I that Percy was well. — In haste, ever yours,

C. Clairmont.

Mrs. Shelley's mind was much occupied during 1831 by the serious question of sending her son to a public school. She wished to give him the best possible education, and she wished, too, to give it him in such a form as would place him at no disadvantage among other young men when he took his place in English society.

Shelley (she mentions in one of her letters) had expressed himself in favour of a public school, but Shelley's family had also to be consulted, and she seems to have had reason to hope they would help in the matter.

They quite concurred in her views for Percy, only putting a veto on Eton, where legends of his father's school-days might still be lingering about. Nothing was better than that she should send him to a public school — *if she could*. These last words were implied, not expressed. But a public school education in England is not to be given on a very limited income.

Funds had to be found; and Mrs. Shelley made, through the lawyer, a direct request to Sir Timothy for assistance.

She received the following answer —

Mr. Whitton to Mrs. Shelley.

Stone Hall, *6th November 1831*.

Dear Madam — I have been, from the time I received your last favour to the present, in correspondence with Sir Timothy Shelley as to your wishes of an advance upon the £300 per annum he now makes to you, and I recommended him to consult his friend and solicitor, Mr. Steadman, of Horsham, thereon, and which he did.

You have not perhaps well put together and estimated on the great amount of the charges upon the estate by the late Mr. Shelley, and on the legacies given by his will; but looking at all these, and the very limited interest of the estate now vested in you, Sir Timothy has paused in his consideration thereof, and in the result has brought his mind, that, having regard to the other provisions he is bound to make for his other children, he ought not to increase the allowance to you, and upon that ground he declines so doing; and therefore feels the necessity of your making such arrangements as you may find necessary to make the £300 per annum answer the purposes for yourself and for your son, and he has this morning stated to me his fixed determination to abide thereby; and I lose not a moment, after I receive this communication from him, to make it known to you, and I trust and hope you will find it practicable to give him a good education out of the £300 a year. — I remain, Madam, your very obedient servant,

Wm. Whitton.

The seeming brutality of the concluding sentence must in fairness be ascribed to the writer and not to those he represented.

To Mrs. Shelley, knowing the impossibility of carrying out the public school plan on her own income, the wishes and hopes must have sounded a mockery. It had to be done, however, if it was the best thing for the boy. The money must be earned, and she worked on.

One day she received from her father a new kind of petition, which, showing the effect on him of advancing years, must have struck a pang to her heart. She was accustomed to his requests for money, but now he wrote to her for *an idea*.

Godwin to Mrs. Shelley.

13th April 1832.

My dear Mary — You desire me to write to you, if I have anything particular to say.

I write, then, to say that I am still in the same dismaying predicament in which I have been for weeks past — at a loss for materials to make up my third volume. This is by no means what I expected.

I knew, and I know, that incidents of hair-breadth escapes and adventures are innumerable, and that without having fixed on any one of them, I took for granted they would come when I called for them. Such is the mischievous effect, the anxious expectation, that is produced by past success.

I believe that when I came to push with all my force against the barriers that seemed to shut me in they would give way, and place all the treasures of invention before me.

Meanwhile, it unfortunately happens that I cannot lay my present disappointment to the charge of advancing age.

I find all my faculties and all my strength in full bloom about me. My disappointment has put that to a sharp trial. I thought that the severe stretch of my faculties would cause them to yield, and subside into feebleness and torpor. No such thing. Day after day, week after week, I apply to this one question, without remission and with discernment. But I cannot please myself. If I make the round of all my thoughts, and come home empty-handed, it would seem that in the flower and vigour of my youth I should have done the same.

Meanwhile, my situation is deplorable. I am not free to choose the thing I would do. I have written two volumes and a quarter, and have received five-sixths of the price of my work.

I am afraid you will think I am useless, by teasing you with “conceptions only proper to myself.” But it is not altogether so. A bystander may see a point of game which a player overlooks. Though I cannot furnish myself with satisfactory incidents I have disciplined my mind into a tone that would enable me to improve them, if offered to me.

My mind is like a train of gunpowder, and a single spark, now happily communicated, might set the whole in motion and activity.

Do not tease yourself about my calamity; but give it one serious thought. Who knows what such a thought may produce? — Your affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

In the spring of 1832 the cholera appeared in London. Clare, at a distance, was torn to pieces between real apprehension for the safety of her friends, and distracting fears lest the disease should select among them for its victim some one on whose life depended the realisation of Shelley's will. For Percy especially she was solicitous. Mary must take him away at once, to the seaside — anywhere: if money was an obstacle she, Clare, was ready to help to defray the cost out of her salary.

Mrs. Shelley did leave London, although, it may safely be asserted, at no one's expense but her own. She stayed for a month at Southend, and afterwards for a longer time at Sandgate.

Besides contributing tales and occasionally verses to the *Keepsake*, she was employed now and during the next two or three years in preparing and writing the Italian and Spanish Lives of Literary Men for Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia*. These included, among the Italians — Petrarch, Boccaccio, Bojardo, Macchiavelli, Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, Ugo Foscolo, etc.; among the Spanish and Portuguese — Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderon, Camoens, and a host of others, besides notices of the Troubadours, the "Romances Moriscos," and the early poets of Portugal.

Clare, too, tried her hand at a story, to which she begged Mary to be a kind of godmother.

I have written a tale, which I think will do for the *Keepsake*. I shall send it home for your perusal. Will you correct it? Do write and let me know where I may send it, so as to be sure to find you. Will you be angry with me if I beg you to write the last scene of it? I am now so unwell I can't.

My only time for writing is after 10 at night; the rest of the tale was composed at that hour, after having been scolding and talking and giving lessons from 7 in the morning.

It was very near its end when I got so ill, I gave it up. If you cannot do anything with it you can at least make curl-papers of it, and that is always something. Do not mention it to anybody; should it be printed one can speak of it, and if you judge it not worthy, then it is no use mortifying my vanity.

The truth, is I should never think of writing, knowing well my incapacity for it, but I want to gain money. What would one not do for that, since it is the only key of freedom? One is even impudent enough to ask a great authoress to finish one's tale for one. I think, in your hands, it might get into the *Keepsake*, for it is about a Pole, and that is the topic of the day.

If it should get any money, half will naturally belong to you. Should you have the kindness to arrange it, Julia would perhaps also be so kind as to copy it out for me, that the alterations in your hand may not be seen. I wish it to be signed "Mont Obscur."...

Mary did what was asked of her. Trelawny, now in England again, had influence in some literary quarters, and, at her request, willingly consented to exert it on Clare's behalf.

Meanwhile he requested her to receive his eldest daughter on a visit of considerable length.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

17th July 1832.

My dear Mary — I am awaiting an occasion of sending —— to Italy, my friend, Lady D., undertaking the charge of her.

It may be a month before she leaves England. At the end of this month Mrs. B. leaves London, and you will do me a great service if you will permit my daughter to reside with you till I can make the necessary arrangements for going abroad; she has been reared in a rough school, like her father. I wish her to live and do as you do, and that you will not put yourself to the slightest inconvenience on her account.

As we are poor, the rich are our inheritance, and we are justified on all and every occasion to rob and use them.

But we must be honest and just amongst ourselves, therefore —— must to the last fraction pay her own expenses, and neither put you to expense nor inconvenience. For the rest, I should like —— to learn to lean upon herself alone — to see the practical part of life: to learn housekeeping on trifling means, and to benefit by her intercourse with a woman like you; but I am ill at compliments.

If you will permit —— to come to you, I will send or bring her to you about the 25th of this month. I should like you and —— to know each other before she leaves England, and thus I have selected you to take charge of her in preference to any other person; but say if it chimes in with your wishes.

Adieu, dear Mary. — Your attached friend,

Edward Trelawny.

By the bye, tell me where the Sandgate coach starts from, its time of leaving London, and its time of arrival at Sandgate, and where you are, and if they will give you another bedroom in the house you are lodging in; and if you have any intention of leaving Sandgate soon.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

27th July 1832.

My dear Mary — You told me in your letter that it would be more convenient for you to receive —— on the last of the month, so I made my arrangements accordingly. I now find it will suit me better to come to you on Wednesday, so that you may expect —— on the evening of that day by the coach you mention. I shall of course put up at the inn.

As to your style of lodging or living, —— is not such a fool as to let that have any weight with her; if you were in a cobbler's stall she would be satisfied; and as to the dulness of the place, why, that must mainly depend on ourselves. Brompton is not so very gay, and the reason of my removing —— to Italy is that Mrs. B. was about sending her to reside with strangers at Lincoln; besides —— is acting entirely by her own free choice, and she gladly preferred Sandgate to Lincoln. At all events, come we shall; and if you, by barricading or otherwise, oppose our entrance, why I shall do to you, not as I would have others do unto me, but as I do unto others, — make an onslaught on your dwelling, carry your tenement by assault, and give the place up to plunder.

So on Wednesday evening (at 5, by your account) you must be prepared to quietly yield up possession or take the consequences. So as you shall deport yourself, you will find me your friend or foe,

Trelawny.

Mary's guest stayed with her over a month. During this time she was saddened by the sudden death of her friendly acquaintance, Lord Dillon. She was anxious, too, about her father, whose equable spirits had failed him this year. No assistance seemed to avail much to ease his circumstances; he was not far from his eightieth year, and still his hopes were anchored in a yet-to-be-written novel.

"I feel myself able and willing to do everything, and to do it well," so he wrote, "and nobody disposed to give me the requisite encouragement. If I can agree with these tyrants" (his publishers) "for £300, £400, or £500 for a novel, and to be subsisted by them while I write it, I probably shall not starve for a twelvemonth to come ... but this dancing attendance wears my spirits and destroys my tranquillity. 'Hands have I, but I handle not; I have feet, but I walk not; neither is there any breath in my nostrils.'

"Meanwhile my life wears away, and 'there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither I go.' But, indeed, I am wrong in talking of that, for I write now, not for marble to be placed over my remains, but for bread to put into my mouth."

Mary tried in the summer to tempt him down to Sandgate for a change. But the weather was very cold, and he declined.

28th August 1832.

Dear Mary —

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train —
Vapours, and clouds, and storms.

I am shivering over a little fire at the bottom of my grate, and have small inclination to tempt the sea-breezes and the waves; we must therefore defer our meeting till it comes within the walls of London.

……

Au revoir! To what am I reserved? I know not.

The wide (no not) the unbounded prospect lies before me,
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.

A new shadow was now to fall upon the poor old man, in the death from cholera of his only son, Mary's half-brother, William. This son in his early youth had given some trouble and caused some anxiety, but his character, as he grew up, had become steadier and more settled. He was happily married, and seemed likely to be a source of real comfort and satisfaction to his parents in their old age. By profession he was a reporter, but he had his hereditary share of literary ability and of talent “turned for the relation of fictitious adventures,” and left in MS. a novel called *Transfusion*, published by his father after his death, with the motto —

Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
May yet conjecture what I might have been.

Although inevitably somewhat hardened against misfortune of the heart by his self-centred habits of mind and anxiety about money, Godwin was much saddened by this loss, and to Mrs. Godwin it was a very great and bitter grief indeed.

Clare saw at once in this the beginning of fresh troubles; the realisation of all the gloomy forebodings in which she had indulged. She wrote to Jane Hogg —

That nasty year, 1832, could not go over without imitating in some respects 1822, and bringing death and misfortune to us. From the time it came in till it went out I trembled, expecting at every moment to hear the most gloomy tidings.

William’s death came, and fulfilled my anticipations; misfortune as it was, it was not such a heavy one to me as the loss of others might have been. I, however, was fond of him, because I did not view his faults in that desponding light which his other relations did. I have seen more of the world, and, comparing him with other young men, his frugality, his industry, his attachment to his wife, and his talents, raised him, in my opinion, considerably above the common par.

But in our family, if you cannot write an epic poem or novel that by its originality knocks all other novels on the head, you are a despicable creature, not worth acknowledging. What would they have done or said had their children been fond of dress, fond of cards, drunken, profligate, as most people’s children are?

To Mary she wrote in a somewhat different tone, assuming that she, Clare, was the victim on whom all misfortune really fell, and wondering at Mary’s incredible temerity in allowing her boy, that all-important heir-apparent, to face the perils of a public school.

And then, losing sight for a moment of her own feverish anxiety, she gives a vivid sketch of Mrs. Mason's family.

Miss Clairmont to Mrs. Shelley.

Pisa, *26th October 1832*.

My dear Mary — Though your last letter was on so melancholy a subject, yet I am so destitute of all happiness that to receive it was one to me.

I have not yet got over the shock of William's death; from the moment I heard of it until now I have been in a complete state of annihilation. How long it will last I am sure I cannot tell; I hope not much longer, or perhaps I shall go mad.

A horrible and most inevitable future is the image that torments me, just as it did ten years ago, in this very city. But I won't torment you, who have a thousand enjoyments that veil it from you, and need not feel the blow till it comes. Our fates were always different; mine is to feel the shadow of coming misfortunes, and to sicken beneath it. There seems to have been great imprudence on William's part: my Mother says he went to Bartholomew Fair the day before he was taken ill; then he did not have medical assistance so soon as ill, which they say is of the highest importance in the cholera, so altogether I suppose his life was thrown away — a most lucky circumstance for himself, but God knows what it will be for the Godwins.

His death changed my plans. I had settled to go to Vienna, but as the cholera is still there, I no longer considered myself free to offer another of my Mother's children to be its victim. Mrs. Mason represented the imprudence of it, considering my weak health, the depressed state of my spirits for the last twelve years, the fatigue of the long journey, and the chilliness of the season of the year, which are all things that predispose excessively to the disease, and I yielded out of regard to my Mother. I thought she would prefer anything to my dying, or else at Vienna, Charles tells me, I could earn more than I am likely to earn here. For the same reason Paris was abandoned. I beg you will tell her this, and hope she will think I have done well.

In the meantime I stay with Mrs. Mason, and have got an engagement as day governess with an English family, which will supply me with money for my own expenses, but nothing more. In the spring they wish to take me entirely, but the pay is not brilliant. When I know more about them I will tell you. Nothing can equal Mrs. Mason's kindness to me. Hers is the only house, except my Mother's, in which all my life I have always felt at home. With her, I am as her child; from the merest trifle to the greatest object, she treats me as if her happiness depended on mine. Then she understands me so completely. I have no need to disguise my sentiments; to barricade myself up in silence, as I do almost with everybody, for fear they should see what passes in my mind, and hate me for it, because it does not resemble what passes in theirs. This ought to be a great happiness to me, and would, did not her unhappiness and her precarious state of health darken it with the torture of fear. It is too bitter, after a long life passed in unbroken misery, to find a good only that you may lose it.

Laurette's marriage is to take place at the end of November. Mrs. Mason having tried every means to hinder it, and seeing that she cannot, is now impatient it should be over. Their present state is too painful. She cannot disguise her dislike of Galloni; he having nearly killed her with his scenes, and Laurette cannot sympathise with her; being on the point of marrying him, and feeling grateful for his excessive attachment, she wishes to think as well of him as she can. It is the first time the mother and daughter have ever divided in opinion, and galls both in a way that seems unreasonable to those who live in the world, and are accustomed to meet rebuffs in their dearest feelings at every moment. But our friends live in solitude, and have nursed themselves into a height of romance about everything. They both think their destinies annihilated, because the union of their minds has suffered this interruption. However, no violence mingles with this sentiment and excites displeasure; on the contrary, I wish it did, for it would be easier to heal than the tragic immutable sorrow with which they take it.

While these two dissolve in quiet grief, Nerina, the Italian, agitates herself on the question; she forgets all her own love affairs, and all the sabre slashes and dagger stabs of her own poor heart, to fall into fainting fits and convulsions every time she sees Laurette and her mother fix their eyes mournfully upon each other; then she talks and writes upon the subject incessantly, even till 3 o'clock in the morning. She has a band of young friends of both sexes, and with them, either by word of mouth or by letter, she *sfogares* herself of her hatred of Galloni, of the unparalleled cruelty of Laurette's fate, and of the terrific grave that is yawning for her mother; her mind is discursive, and she introduces into her lamentations observations upon the faulty manner in which she and her sister have been educated, strictures upon the nature of love, objurgations against the whole race of man, and eloquent appeals to the female sex to prefer patriotism to matrimony.

All the life that is left in the house is now concentrated in Nerina, and I am sure she cannot complain of a dearth of sensations, for she takes good care to feel with everything around her, for if the chair does but knock the table, she shudders and quakes for both, and runs into her own study to write it down in her journal. Into this small study she always hurries me, and pours out her soul, and I am well pleased to listen, for she is full of genius; when the tide has flowed so long, it has spent itself, we generally pause, and then begin to laugh at the ridiculous figures human beings cut in struggling all their might and main against a destiny which forces millions and millions of enormous planets on their way, and against which all struggling is useless.

8th November.

My letter has been lying by all this time, I not having time to write. I am afraid this winter I shall scarcely be able to keep up a correspondence at all. I must be out at 9 in the morning, and am not home before 10 at night. I inhabit at Mrs. Mason’s a room without a fire, so that when I get home there is no sitting in it without perishing with cold. I cannot sit with the Masons, because they have a set of young men every night to see them, and I do not wish to make their acquaintance. I walk straight into my own room on my return. Writing either letters or articles will be a matter of great difficulty. The season is very cold here. My health always diminishes in proportion to the cold.

I am very glad to hear that Percy likes Harrow, but I shudder from head to foot when I think of your boldness in sending him there. I think in certain things you are the most daring woman I ever knew. There are few mothers who, having suffered the misfortunes you have, and having such advantages depending upon the life of an only son, would venture to expose that life to the dangers of a public school.

As for me, it is not for nothing that my fate has been taken out of my own hands and put into those of people who have wantonly torn it into miserable shreds and remnants; having once endured to have my whole happiness sacrificed to the gratification of some of their foolish whims, why I can endure it again, and so my mind is made up and my resolution taken. I confess, I could wish there were another world in which people were to answer for what they do in this! I wish this, because without it I am afraid it will become a law that those who inflict must always go on inflicting, and those who have once suffered must always go on suffering.

I hope nothing will happen to Percy; but the year, the school itself that you have chosen, and the ashes that lie near it, and the hauntings of my own mind, all seem to announce the approach of that consummation which I dread.

I am very glad you are delighted with Trelawny. My affections are entirely without jealousy; the more those I love love others, and are loved by them, the better pleased am I. I am in a vile humour for writing a letter; you would not wonder at it if you knew how I am plagued. I can say from experience that the wonderful variety there is of miseries in this world is truly astonishing; if some Linnæus would class them as he did flowers, the number of their kinds would far surpass the boasted infinitude of the vegetable creation. Not a day nor hour passes but introduces me to some new pain, and each one contains within itself swarms of smaller ones — animalculæ pains which float up and down in it, and compose its existence and their own. What Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse was for love, I am for pain, — all my letters are on the same subject, and yet I hope I do not repeat myself, for truly, with such diversity of experience, I ought not.

Our friends here send their best love to you, and are interested in your perilous destiny. I have just received a letter from my Mother, and in obedience to her representations draw my breath as peacefully as I can till the month of January. Will you explain to me one phrase of her letter? Talking of the chances of their getting money, she says: "Then Miss Northcote is not expected to live over the winter," and not a word beside. Who in the world is Miss Northcote? and what influence can her death have in bettering their prospects?

Notwithstanding my writing such a beastly letter as this to you, pray do write. I work myself into the most dreadful state of irritation when I am long without letters from some of you. Tell Jane I entreat her to write, and tell my Mother that the bill of lading of the parcel for me is come, but Mrs. Mason sent it off to Leghorn without my seeing it, and was too ill herself to look at the date, so I know not when it was shipped, but as Mr. Routh has the bill, I suppose I shall hear when it has arrived and performed quarantine.

Thank Trelawny for me for his kindness about the article. Pisa is very dull yet. I am told there are seven or eight English families arrived, but I have not seen them.

Farewell, my dear Mary. Be well and happy, and excuse my dulness. — Yours ever affectionately,

C. Clairmont.

One term’s experience was enough to convince Mrs. Shelley that she could only afford to continue her son’s school education by leaving London herself and settling with him at Harrow for some years.

In January 1833 she wrote an account of her affairs to her old friend, Mrs. Gisborne —

Never was poor body so worried as I have been ever since I last wrote, I think; worries which plague and press on one, and keep one fretting. Money, of course, is the Alpha and Omega of my tale. Harrow proves so fearfully expensive that I have been sadly put to it to pay Percy’s bill for one quarter (£60, *soltanto*), and, to achieve it, am hampered for the whole year. My only resource is to live at Harrow, for in every other respect I like the school, and would not take him from it. He will become a home boarder, and school expenses will be very light. I shall take a house, being promised many facilities for furnishing it by a kind friend.

To go and live at pretty Harrow, with my boy, who improves each day and is everything I could wish, is no bad prospect, but I have much to go through, and am so poor that I can hardly turn myself. It is hard on my poor dear Father, and I sometimes think it hard on myself to leave a knot of acquaintances I like; but that is a fiction, for half the times I am asked out I cannot go because of the expense, and I am suffering now for the times when I do go, and so incur debt.

No, Maria mine, God never intended me to do other than struggle through life, supported by such blessings as make existence more than tolerable, and yet surrounded by such difficulties as make fortitude a necessary virtue, and destroy all idea of great and good luck. I might have been much worse off, and I repeat this to myself ten thousand times a day to console myself for not being better.

My Father's novel is printed, and, I suppose, will come out soon. Poor dear fellow! It is hard work for him.

I am in all the tremor of fearing what I shall get for my novel, which is nearly finished. His and my comfort depend on it. I do not know whether you will like it. I cannot guess whether it will succeed. There is no writhing interest; nothing wonderful nor tragic — will it be dull? *Chi lo sa?* We shall see. I shall, of course, be very glad if it succeeds.

Percy went back to Harrow to-day. He likes his school much. Have I any other news for you? Trelawny is gone to America; he is about to cross to Charlestown directly there is a prospect of war — war in America. I am truly sorry. Brothers should not fight for the different and various portions of their inheritance. What is the use of republican principles and liberty if peace is not the offspring? War is the companion and friend of monarchy; if it be the same of freedom, the gain is not much to mankind between a sovereign and president.

……

Not long after taking up her residence at Harrow, which she did in April 1833, Mrs. Shelley was attacked by influenza, then prevailing in a virulent form. She did not wholly recover from its effects till after the Midsummer holidays, which she spent at Putney for change of air. She found the solitude of her new abode very trying. Her boy had, of course, his school pursuits and interests to occupy him, and, though her literary work served while it lasted to ward off depression, the constant mental strain was attended with an inevitable degree of reaction for which a little genial and sympathetic human intercourse would have been the best — indeed, the only — cure.

As for her father, now she had gone he missed her sadly.

Godwin to Mrs. Shelley.

July 1833.

Dear Mary — I shall certainly not come to you on Monday. It would do neither of us good. I am a good deal of a spoiled child. And were I not so, and could rouse myself, like Diogenes, to be independent of all outward comforts, you would treat me as if I could not, so that it would come to the same thing.

What a while it is since I saw you! The last time was the 10th of May, — towards two months, — we who used to see each other two or three times a week! But for the scale of miles at the bottom of the map, you might as well be at Timbuctoo or in the deserts of Arabia.

Oh, this vile Harrow! Your illness, for its commencement or duration, is owing to that place. At one time I was seriously alarmed for you.

And now that I hope you are better, with what tenaciousness does it cling to you! If I ever see you again I wonder whether I shall know you. I am much tormented by my place, by my book, and hardly suppose I shall ever be tranquil again.

I am disposed to adopt the song of Simeon, and to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!" At seventy years of age, what is there worth living for? I have enjoyed existence, been active, strenuous, proud, but my eyes are dim, and my energies forsake me. — Your affectionate Father,

William Godwin.

The next letter is addressed to Trelawny, now in America,

Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

Harrow, *7th May 1834*.

Dear Trelawny — I confess I have been sadly remiss in not writing to you. I have written once, however, as you have written once (but once) to me. I wrote in answer to your letter. I am sorry you did not get it, as it contained a great deal of gossip. It was misdirected by a mistake of Jane's.... It was sent at the end of last September to New York. I told you in it of the infidelity of several of your womankind, — how Mrs. R. S. was flirting with Bulwer, to the infinite jealousy of Mrs. Bulwer, and making themselves the talk of the town.... Such and much tittle-tattle was in that letter, all old news now.... The S.'s (Captain Robert and wife, I mean) went to Paris and were ruined, and are returned under a cloud to rusticate in the country in England.

Bulwer is making the amiable to his own wife, who is worth in beauty all the Mrs. R. S.'s in the world....

Jane has been a good deal indisposed, and has grown very thin. Jeff had an appointment which took him away for several months, and she pined and grew ill on his absence; she is now reviving under the beneficent influence of his presence.

I called on your mother a week or two ago; she always asks after you with *empressement*, and is very civil indeed to me. She was looking well, but —— tells me, in her note enclosing your letter, that she is ill of the same illness as she had two years ago, but not so bad. I think she lives too well.

—— is expecting to be confined in a very few weeks, or even days. She is very happy with B.... He is a thoroughly good-natured and estimable man; it is a pity he is not younger and handsomer; however, she is a good girl, and contented with her lot; we are very good friends.... I should like much to see your friend, Lady Dorothea, but, though in Europe, I am very far from her. I live on my hill, descending to town now and then. I should go oftener if I were richer. Percy continues quite well, and enjoys my living at Harrow, which is more than I do, I am sorry to say, but there is no help.

My Father is in good health. Mrs. Godwin has been very ill lately, but is now better.

I thought Fanny Kemble was to marry and settle in America: what a singular likeness you have discovered! I never saw her, except on the stage.

So much for news. They say it is a long lane that has no turning. I have travelled the same road for nearly twelve years; adversity, poverty, and loneliness being my companions. I suppose it will change at last, but I have nothing to tell of myself except that Percy is well, which is the beginning and end of my existence.

I am glad you are beginning to respect women's feelings.... You have heard of Sir H.'s death. Mrs. B. (who is great friends with S., now Sir William, an M.P.) says that it is believed that he has left all he could to the Catholic members of his family. Why not come over and marry Letitia, who in consequence will be rich? and, I daresay, still beautiful in your eyes, though thirty-four.

We have had a mild, fine winter, and the weather now is as warm, sunny, and cheering as an Italian May. We have thousands of birds and flowers innumerable, and the trees of spring in the fields.

Jane's children are well. The time will come, I suppose, when we may meet again more (richly) provided by fortune, but youth will have flown, and that in a woman is something....

I have always felt certain that I should never again change my name, and that is a comfort, it is a pretty and a dear one. Adieu, write to me often, and

I will behave better, and as soon as I have accumulated a little news, write again. — Ever yours,

M. W. S.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

17th July 1834.

I am satisfied with my plan as regards him (Percy). I like the school, and the affection thus cultivated for me will, I trust, be the blessing of my life.

Still there are many drawbacks; this is a dull, inhospitable place. I came counting on the kindness of a friend who lived here, but she died of the influenza, and I live in a silence and loneliness not possible anywhere except in England, where people are so *islanded* individually in habits; I often languish for sympathy, and pine for social festivity.

Percy is much, but I think of you and Henry, and shrink from binding up my life in a child who may hereafter divide his fate from mine. But I have no resource; everything earthly fails me but him; except on his account I live but to suffer. Those I loved are false or dead; those I love, absent and suffering; and I, absent and poor, can be of no use to them. Of course, in this picture, I subtract the enjoyment of good health and usually good spirits, — these are blessings; but when driven to think, I feel so desolate, so unprotected, so oppressed and injured, that my heart is ready to break with despair. I came here, as I said, in April 1833, and 9th June was attacked by the influenza, so as to be confined to my bed; nor did I recover the effects for several months.

In September, during Percy's holidays, I went to Putney, and recovered youth and health; Julia Robinson was with me, and we spent days in Richmond Park and on Putney Heath, often walking twelve or fourteen miles, which I did without any sense of fatigue. I sorely regretted returning here. I am too poor to furnish. I have lodgings in the town, — disagreeable ones, — yet often, in spite of care and sorrow, I feel wholly compensated by my boy.... God help me if anything was to happen to him — I should not survive it a week. Besides his society I have also a good deal of occupation.

I have finished a novel, which, if you meet with, read, as I think there are parts which will please you. I am engaged writing the lives of some of the Italian *literati* for Dr. Lardner's *Cyclopædia*. I have written those of

Petrarch, Boccaccio, etc., and am now engaged on Macchiavelli; this takes up my time, and is a source of interest and pleasure.

My Father, I suppose you know, has a tiny, shabby place under Government. The retrenchments of Parliament endanger and render us anxious. He is quite well, but old age takes from his enjoyments. Mrs. Godwin, after influenza, has been suffering from the tic-doloreux in her arm most dreadfully; they are trying all sorts of poisons on her with little effect. Their discomfort and low spirits will force me to spend Percy's holidays in town, to be near them. Jane and Jeff are well; he was sent last autumn and winter by Lord Brougham as one of the Corporation Commissioners; he was away for months, and Jane took the opportunity to fall desperately in love with him — she pined and grew ill, and wasted away for him. The children are quite well. Dina spent a week here lately; she is a sweet girl. Edward improves daily under the excellent care taken of his education. I leave Jane to inform you of their progress in Greek. Dina plays wonderfully well, and has shown great taste for drawing, but this last is not cultivated.

I did not go to the Abbey, nor the Opera, nor hear Grisi; I am shut out from all things — like you — by poverty and loneliness. Percy's pleasures are not mine; I have no other companion.

What effect Paganini would have had on you, I cannot tell; he threw me into hysterics. I delight in him more than I can express. His wild, ethereal figure, rapt look, and the sounds he draws from his violin are all superhuman — of human expression. It is interesting to see the astonishment and admiration of Spagnoletti and Nervi as they watch his evolutions.

Bulwer is a man of extraordinary and delightful talent. He went to Italy and Sicily last winter, and, I hear, disliked the inhabitants. Yet, notwithstanding, I am sure he will spread inexpressible and graceful interest over the *Last Days of Pompeii*, the subject of his new novel. Trelawny is in America, and not likely to return. Hunt lives at Chelsea, and thrives, I hear, by his London pursuit. I have not seen him for more than a year, for reasons I will not here detail — they concern his family, not him.

Clare is in a situation in Pisa, near Mrs. Mason. Laurette and Nerina are married; the elder badly, to one who won her at the dagger's point — a sad unintelligible story; Nerina, to the best and most delightful Pistoiese, by name Bartolomeo Cini — both to Italians. Laurette lives at Genoa, Nerina at Livorno; the latter is only newly a bride, and happier than words can express. My Italian maid, Maria, says to Clare, *Non vedrò ora mai la mia Padrona ed il mio Bimbo?* her Bimbo — as tall as I am and large in proportion — has good health withal....

Pray write one word of information concerning your health before I attribute your silence to forgetfulness; but you must not trifle now with the anxiety you have awakened. I will write again soon. With kindest regards to your poor, good husband, the fondest hopes that your health is improved, and anxious expectation of a letter, believe me, ever affectionately yours,

M. W. Shelley.

Mrs. Shelley To Mrs. Gisborne.

Harrow, *30th October 1834*.

My dearest Maria — Thank you many times for your kind dear letter. God grant that your constitution may yet bear up a long time, and that you may continue impressed with the idea of your happiness. To be loved is indeed necessary. Sympathy and companionship are the only sweets to make the nauseous draught of life go down; and I, who feel this, live in a solitude such as, since the days of hermits in the desert, no one was ever before condemned to! I see no one, speak to no one — except perhaps for a chance half-hour in the course of a fortnight. I never walk beyond my garden, because I cannot walk alone. You will say I ought to force myself; so I thought once, and tried, but it would not do. The sense of desolation was too oppressive. I only find relief from the sadness of my position by living a dreamy existence from which realities are excluded; but going out disturbed this; I wept; my heart beat with a sense of injury and wrong; I was better shut up. Poverty prevents me from visiting town; I am too far for visitors to reach me; I must bear to the end. Twelve years have I spent, the currents of life benumbed by poverty; life and hope are over for me, but I think of Percy!

Yet for the present something more is needed — something not so *unnatural* as my present life. Not that I often feel *ennui* — I am too much employed — but it hurts me, it destroys the spring of my mind, and makes me at once over-sensitive with my fellow-creatures, and yet their victim and their dupe. It takes all strength from my character, and makes me — who by nature am too much so — timid. I used to have one resource, a belief in my *good fortune*; this is exchanged after twelve years — one adversity, blotted and sprinkled with many adversities; a dark ground, with sad figures painted on it — to a belief in my ill fortune.

Percy is spared to me, because I am to live. He is a blessing; my heart acknowledges that perhaps he is as great an one as any human being possesses; and indeed, my dear friend, while I suffer, I do not repine while he remains. He is not all you say; he has no ambition, and his talents are not so transcendent as you appear to imagine; but he is a fine, spirited, clever boy, and I think promises good things; if hereafter I have reason to be proud of him, these melancholy days and weeks at Harrow will brighten in my imagination — and they are not melancholy. I am seldom so, but they are not right, and it will be a good thing if they terminate happily soon.

At the same time, I cannot in the least regret having come here: it was the only way I had of educating Percy at a public school, of which institution, at least here at Harrow, the more I see the more I like; besides that, it was Shelley's wish that his son should be brought up at one. It is, indeed, peculiarly suited to Percy; and whatever he may be, he will be twice as much as if he had been brought up in the narrow confinement of a private school.

The boys here have liberty to the verge of licence; yet of the latter, save the breaking of a few windows now and then, there is none. His life is not quite what it would be if he did not live with me, but the greater scope given to the cultivation of the affections is surely an advantage.

……..

You heard of the dreadful fire at the Houses of Parliament. We saw it here from the commencement, raging like a volcano; it was dreadful to see, but, fortunately, I was not aware of the site. Papa lives close to the Speaker's, so you may imagine my alarm when the news reached me, fortunately without foundation, as the fire did not gain that part of the Speaker's house near them, so they were not even inconvenienced. The poor dear Speaker has lost dreadfully; what was not burnt is broken, soaked, and drenched — all their pretty things; and imagine the furniture and princely chambers — the house was a palace. For the sake of convenience to the Commons, they are to take up their abode in the ruins. With kindest wishes for you and S. G., ever dearest friend, your affectionate

Mary W. Shelley.

The Same to the Same.

February 1835.

... I must tell you that I have had the offer of £600 for an edition of Shelley's works, with *Life and Notes*. I am afraid it cannot be arranged, yet at least, and the *Life* is out of the question; but in talking over it the question of letters comes up. You know how I shrink from all private detail for the public; but Shelley's letters are beautifully written, and everything private might be omitted.

Would you allow the publisher to treat with you for their being added to my edition? If I could arrange all as I wish, they might be an acquisition to the books, and being transacted through me, you could not see any inconvenience in receiving the price they would be worth to the bookseller. This is all *in aria* as yet, but I should like to know what you think about it. I write all this, yet am very anxious to hear from you; never mind postage, but do write.

Percy is reading the *Antigone*; he has begun mathematics. Mrs. Cleveland and Jane dined with me the other day. Mrs. Cleveland thought Percy wonderfully improved.

The volume of Lardner's *Cyclopædia*, with my *Lives*, was published on the first of this month; it is called *Lives of Eminent Literary Men*, vol. i. The lives of Dante and Ariosto are by Mr. Montgomery, the rest are mine.

Do write, my dearest Maria, and believe me ever and ever, affectionately yours,

M. W. Shelley.

Lodore, Mrs. Shelley's fifth novel, came out in 1835. It differs from the others in being a novel of society, and has been stigmatised, rather unjustly, as weak and colourless, although at the time of its publication it had a great success. It is written in a style which is now out of date, and undoubtedly fails to fulfil the promise of power held out by *Frankenstein* and to some extent by *Valperga*, but it bears on every page the impress of the refinement and sensibility of the author, and has, moreover, a special interest of its own, due to the fact that some of the incidents are taken from actual occurrences in her early life, and some of the characters sketched from people she had known.

Thus, in the description of Clorinda, it is impossible not to recognise Emilia Viviani. The whole episode of Edward Villier's arrest and imprisonment for debt, and his young wife's anxieties, is an echo of her own experience at the time when Shelley was hiding from the bailiffs and meeting her by stealth in St. Paul's or Holborn. Lodore himself has some affinity to Byron, and possibly the account of his separation from his wife and of their daughter's girlhood is a fanciful train of thought suggested by Byron's domestic history. Most of Mary's novels present the contrast of the Shelleyan and Byronic types. In this instance the latter was recognised by Clare, and drew from her one of those bitter tirades against Byron, which, natural enough in her at the outset, became in the course of years quite morbidly venomous. Not content with laying Allegra's death to his charge, she, in her later letters, accuses him of treacherously plotting and conspiring, out of hatred to herself, to do away with the child, an allegation unjust and false. In the present instance, however, she only entered an excited protest against his continual reappearance as the hero of a novel.

Mrs. Hare admired *Lodore* amazingly; so do I, or should I, if it were not for that modification of the beastly character of Lord Byron of which you have composed Lodore. I stick to *Frankenstein*, merely because that vile spirit does not haunt its pages as it does in all your other novels, now as Castruccio, now as Raymond, now as Lodore. Good God! to think a person of your genius, whose moral tact ought to be proportionately exalted, should think it a task befitting its powers to gild and embellish and pass off as beautiful what was the merest compound of vanity, folly, and every miserable weakness that ever met together in one human being! As I do not want to be severe on the poor man, because he is dead and cannot defend himself, I have only taken the lighter defects of his character, or else I might say that never was a nature more profoundly corrupted than his became, or was more radically vulgar than his was from the very outset. Never was there an individual less adapted, except perhaps Alcibiades, for being held up as anything but an object of commiseration, or as an example of how contemptible is even intellectual greatness when not joined with moral greatness. I shall be anxious to see if the hero of your new novel will be another beautified Byron. Thank heaven! you have not taken to drawing your women upon the same model. Cornelia I like the least of them; she is the most like him, because she is so heartlessly proud and selfish, but all the others are angels of light.

Euthanasia is Shelley in female attire, and what a glorious being she is! No author, much less the ones — French, English, or German — of our day, can bring a woman that matches her. Shakespeare has not a specimen so perfect of what a woman ought to be; his, for amiability, deep feeling, wit, are as high as possible, but they want her commanding wisdom, her profound benevolence.

I am glad to hear you are writing again; I am always in a fright lest you should take it into your head to do what the warriors do after they have acquired great fame, — retire and rest upon your laurels. That would be very comfortable for you, but very vexing to me, who am always wanting to see women distinguishing themselves in literature, and who believe there has not been or ever will be one so calculated as yourself to raise our sex upon that point. If you would but know your own value and exert your powers you could give the men a most immense drubbing! You could write upon metaphysics, politics, jurisprudence, astronomy, mathematics — all those highest subjects which they taunt us with being incapable of treating, and surpass them; and what a consolation it would be, when they begin some of their prosy, lying, but plausible attacks upon female inferiority, to stop their mouths in a moment with your name, and then to add, "and if women, whilst suffering the heaviest slavery, could out-do you, what would they not achieve were they free?"

With this manifesto on the subject of women's genius in general and of Mary's in particular — perhaps just redeemed by its tinge of irony from the last degree of absurdity — it is curious to contrast Mrs. Shelley's own conclusions, drawn from weary personal experience, and expressed, towards the end of the following letter, in a mood which permitted her no illusions and few hopes.

Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne.

Harrow, *11th June 1835*.

My dearest Friend — It is so inexpressibly warm that were not a frank lying before me ready for you, I do not think I should have courage to write. Do not be surprised, therefore, at stupidity and want of connection. I cannot collect my ideas, and this is a goodwill offering rather than a letter.

Still I am anxious to thank S. G. for the pleasure I have received from his tale of Italy — a tale all Italy, breathing of the land I love. The descriptions are beautiful, and he has shed a charm round the concentrated and undemonstrative person of his gentle heroine. I suppose she is the reality of the story; did you know her?

It is difficult, however, to judge how to procure for it the publication it deserves. I have no personal acquaintance with the editors of any of the annuals — I had with that of the *Keepsake*, but that is now in Mrs. Norton's hands, and she has not asked me to write, so I know nothing about it; but there arises a stronger objection from the length of the story. As the merit lies in the beauty of the details, I do not see how it could be cut down to *one quarter* of its present length, which is as long as any tale printed in an annual. When I write for them, I am worried to death to make my things shorter and shorter, till I fancy people think ideas can be conveyed by intuition, and that it is a superstition to consider words necessary for their expression.

I was so very delighted to get your last letter, to be sure the "Wisest of Men" said no news was good news, but I am not apt to think so, and was uneasy. I hope this weather does not oppress you. What an odd climate! A week ago I had a fire, and now it is warmer than Italy; warmer at least in a box pervious to the sun than in the stone palaces where one can breathe freely. My Father is well. He had a cough in the winter, but after we had persuaded him to see a doctor it was easily got rid of. He writes to me himself, "I am now well, now nervous, now old, now young." One sign of age is, that his horror is so great of change of place that I cannot persuade him ever to visit me here. One would think that the sight of the fields would refresh him, but he likes his own nest better than all, though he greatly feels the annoyance of so seldom seeing me.

Indeed, my kind Maria, you made me smile when you asked me to be civil to the brother of your kind doctor. I thought I had explained my situation to you. You must consider me as one buried alive. I hardly ever go to town; less often I see any one here. My kind and dear young friends, the Misses Robinson, are at Brussels. I am cut off from my kind. What I suffer! What I have suffered! I, to whom sympathy, companionship, the interchange of thought is more necessary than the air I breathe, I will not say. Tears are in my eyes when I think of days, weeks, months, even years spent alone — eternally alone. It does me great harm, but no more of so odious a subject. Let me speak rather of my Percy; to see him bright and good is an unspeakable blessing; but no child can be a companion. He is very fond of me, and would be wretched if he saw me unhappy; but he is with his boys all day long, and I am alone, so I can weep unseen. He gets on very well, and is a fine boy, very stout; this hot weather, though he exposes himself to the sun, instead of making him languid, heightens the colour in his cheeks and brightens his eyes. He is always gay and in good humour, which is a great blessing.

You talk about my poetry and about the encouragement I am to find from Jane and my Father. When they read all the fine things you said they thought it right to attack me about it, but I answered them simply, "She exaggerates; you read the best thing I ever wrote in the *Keepsake* and thought nothing of it." I do not know whether you remember the verses I mean. I will copy it in another part; it was written for music. Poor dear Lord Dillon spoke of it as you do of the rest; but "one swallow does not make a summer." I can never write verses except under the influence of strong sentiment, and seldom even then. As to a tragedy, Shelley used to urge me, which produced his own. When I returned first to England and saw Kean, I was in a fit of enthusiasm, and wished much to write for the stage, but my Father very earnestly dissuaded me. I think that he was in the wrong. I think myself that I could have written a good tragedy, but not now. My good friend, every feeling I have is blighted, I have no ambition, no care for fame. Loneliness has made a wreck of me. I was always a dependent thing, wanting fosterage and support. I am left to myself, crushed by fortune, and I am nothing.

You speak of woman's intellect. We can scarcely do more than judge by ourselves. I know that, however clever I may be, there is in me a vacillation, a weakness, a want of eagle-winged resolution that appertains to my intellect as well as to my moral character, and renders me what I am, one of broken purposes, failing thoughts, and a heart all wounds. My mother had more energy of character, still she had not sufficient fire of imagination. In short, my belief is, whether there be sex in souls or not, that the sex of our material mechanism makes us quite different creatures, better, though weaker, but wanting in the higher grades of intellect.

I am almost sorry to send you this letter, it is so querulous and sad; yet, if I write with any effusion, the truth will creep out, and my life since you left has been so stained by sorrow and disappointments. I have been so barbarously handled both by fortune and my fellow-creatures, that I am no longer the same as when you knew me. I have no hope. In a few years, when I get over my present feelings and live wholly in Percy, I shall be happier. I have devoted myself to him as no mother ever did, and idolise him; and the reward will come when I can forget a thousand memories and griefs that are as yet alive and burning, and I have nothing to do but brood.

Percy is gone two miles off to bathe; he can swim, and I am obliged to leave the rest to fate. It is no use coddling, yet it costs me many pangs; but he is singularly trustworthy and careful. Do write, and believe me ever your truly attached friend,

M. W. S.

A DIRGE

I
This morn thy gallant bark, love,
Sailed on a stormy sea;
‘Tis noon, and tempests dark, love,
Have wrecked it on the lee.
Ah woe! ah woe! ah woe!
By spirits of the deep
He’s cradled on the billow
To his unwaking sleep.

II
Thou liest upon the shore, love,
Beside the knelling surge,
But sea-nymphs ever more, love,
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.
Oh come! oh come! oh come!
Ye spirits of the deep;

While near his seaweed pillow
My lonely watch I keep.

III
From far across the sea, love,
I hear a wild lament,
By Echo's voice for thee, love,
From ocean's caverns sent.
Oh list! oh list! oh list!
Ye spirits of the deep,
Loud sounds their wail of sorrow,
While I for ever weep.

P.S. — Do you not guess why neither these nor those I sent you could please those you mention? Papa loves not the memory of Shelley, because he feels that he injured him; and Jane — do you not understand enough of her to be convinced of the thoughts that make it distasteful to her that I should feel, and above all be thought by others to feel, and to have a right to feel? Oh! the human heart! It is a strange puzzle.

The weary, baffled tone of this letter was partly due to a low state of health, which resulted in a severe attack of illness. During her boy's Midsummer holidays she went to Dover in search of strength, and, while there, received a letter from Trelawny, who had returned from America, as vivacious and irrepressible as ever.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Bedford Hotel, Brighton,
12th September 1835.

Mary, dear — Six days I rest, and do all that I have to do on the seventh, because it is forbidden. If they would make it felony to obey the Commandments (without benefit of clergy), don't you think the pleasures of breaking the law would make me keep them?

……

I cannot surmise *one* of the "thousand reasons" which you say are to prevent my seeing you. On the contrary, your being "chained to your rock" enables me to play the vulture at discretion. It is well for you, therefore, that I am "the most prudent of men." What a host of virtues I am gifted with! When I am dead, lady mine, build a temple over me and make pilgrimages. Talking of tombs, let it be agreed between you and me that whichever *first* has *five hundred pounds* at his disposal shall dedicate it to the placing a fitting monument over the ashes of Shelley.

We will go to Rome together. The time, too, cannot be far distant, considering all things. Remember me to Percy. I shall direct this to Jane's, not that I think you are there. Adieu, Mary! — Your

E. Trelawny.

During the latter part of Mary's residence in London she had seen a great deal of Mrs. Norton, who was much attracted by her and very fond of her society, finding in her a most sympathetic friend and confidant at the time of those domestic troubles, culminating in the separation from her children, which afterwards obtained a melancholy publicity. Mrs. Shelley never became wholly intimate with her brilliant contemporary. Reserve, and a certain pride of poverty, forbade it, but she greatly admired her, and they constantly corresponded.

1835.

... "I do not wonder," Mary wrote to Trelawny, "at your not being able to deny yourself the pleasure of Mrs. Norton's society. I never saw a woman I thought so fascinating. Had I been a man I should certainly have fallen in love with her; as a woman, ten years ago, I should have been spellbound, and, had she taken the trouble, she might have wound me round her finger. Ten years ago I was so ready to give myself away, and being afraid of men, I was apt to get *tousy-mousy* for women; experience and suffering have altered all that. I am more wrapt up in myself, my own feelings, disasters, and prospects for Percy. I am now proof, as Hamlet says, both against man and woman.

"There is something in the pretty way in which Mrs. Norton's witticisms glide, as it were, from her lips, that is very charming; and then her colour, which is so variable, the eloquent blood which ebbs and flows, mounting, as she speaks, to her neck and temples, and then receding as fast; it reminds me of the frequent quotation of 'eloquent blood,' and gives a peculiar attraction to her conversation — not to speak of fine eyes and open brow.

"Now do not in your usual silly way show her what I say. She is, despite all her talents and sweetness, a London lady. She would quiz me — not, perhaps, to you — well do I know the London *ton* — but to every one else — in her prettiest manner."

The day after this she was writing again to Mrs. Gisborne.

13th October 1835.

Of myself, my dearest Maria, I can give but a bad account. Solitude, many cares, and many deep sorrows brought on this summer an illness, from which I am only now recovering. I can never forget, nor cease to be grateful to Jane for her excessive kindness to me, when I needed it most, confined, as I was, to my sofa, unable to move. I went to Dover during Percy's holidays, and change of air and bathing made me so much better that I thought myself well, but on my return here I had a relapse, from which now this last week I am, I trust, fast recovering. Bark and port wine seem the chief means of my getting well. But in the midst of all this I had to write to meet my expenses. I have published a second volume of Italian Lives in Lardner's *Encyclopædia*. All in that volume, except Galileo and Tasso, are mine. The last is chief, I allow, and I grieve that it had been engaged to Mr. M. before I began to write. I am now about to write a volume of Spanish and Portuguese Lives. This is an arduous task, from my own ignorance, and the difficulty of getting books and information. The booksellers want me to write another novel, *Lodore* having succeeded so well, but I have not as yet strength for such an undertaking.

Then there is no Spanish circulating library. I cannot, while here, read in the Museum if I would, and I would not if I could. I do not like finding myself a stray bird alone among men, even if I knew them. One hears how happy people will be to lend me their books, but when it comes to the point it is very difficult to get at them. However, as I am rather persevering, I hope to conquer these obstacles after all. Percy grows; he is taller than I am, and very stout. If he does not turn out an honour to his parents, it will be through no deficiency in virtue or in talents, but from a dislike of mingling with his fellow-creatures, except the two or three friends he cannot do without. He may be the happier for it; he has a good understanding, and great integrity of character. Adieu, my dear friend.-Ever affectionately yours,

Mary W. Shelley.

In April 1836 poor old Godwin died, and with him passed away a large part of Mary's life. Of those in whose existence her own was summed up only her son now remained, and even he was not more dependent on her than her father had been. Godwin had been to his daughter one of those lifelong cares which, when they disappear, leave a blank that nothing seems to fill, too often because the survivor has borne the burden so long as to exhaust the power and energy indispensable to recovery. But she had also been attached to him all her life with an "excessive and romantic attachment," only overcome in one instance by a stronger devotion still — a defection she never could and never did repent of, but for which her whole subsequent life had been passed in attempting to make up. If she confided any of her feelings to her diary, no fragment has survived.

She busied herself in trying to obtain from Government some assistance — an annuity if possible — for Mrs. Godwin. It was very seldom in her life that Mary asked anybody for anything, and the present exception was made in favour of one whom she did not love, and who had never been a good friend to her. But had Mrs. Godwin been her own mother instead of a disagreeable, jealous, old stepmother, she could not have made greater exertions in her behalf. Mrs. Norton was ready and willing to help by bringing influence to bear in powerful quarters, and gave Mary some shrewd advice as to the wording of her letter to Lord Melbourne. She wrote —

... Press *not* on the politics of Mr. Godwin (for God knows how much gratitude for that ever survives), but on his *celebrity*, the widow's *age* and *ill health*, and (if your proud little spirit will bear it) on your own *toils*; for, after all, the truth is that you, being generous, will, rather than see the old creature starve, work your brains and your pen; and you have your son and delicate health to hinder you from having *means* to help her.

As to petitioning, no one dislikes begging more than I do, especially when one begs for what seems mere justice; but I have long observed that though people will resist *claims* (however just), they like to do *favours*. Therefore, when *I* beg, I am a crawling lizard, a humble toad, a brown snake in cold weather, or any other simile most feebly *rampante* — the reverse of *rampant*, which would be the natural attitude for petitioning, — but which must never be assumed except in the poodle style, standing with one's paws bent to catch the bits of bread on one's nose.

Forgive my jesting; upon my honour I feel sincerely anxious for your anxiety, and sad enough on my own affairs, but Irish blood *will* dance. My meaning is, that if one asks *at all*, one should rather think of the person written to than one's own feelings. He is an indolent man — talk of your literary labours; a kind man — speak of her age and infirmities; a patron of all *genius* — talk of your father's *and your own*; a prudent man — speak of the likelihood of the pension being a short grant (as you have done); lastly, he is a *great* man — take it all as a personal favour. As to not apologising for the intrusion, we ought always to kneel down and beg pardon for daring to remind people we are not so well off as they are.

What was asked was that Godwin's small salary, or a part of it, should be continued to Mrs. Godwin for her life. As the nominal office Godwin had held was abolished at his death, this could not be; but Lord Melbourne pledged himself to do what he could to obtain assistance for the widow in some form or other, so it is probable that Mary effected her purpose.

Trelawny to Mrs. Shelley.

Hastings, *25th September 1836*.

Mary, dear — Your letter was exceedingly welcome; it was honoured accordingly. You divine truly; I am leading a vegetable sort of a life. They say the place is pretty, the air is good, the sea is fine. I would willingly exchange a pretty place for a pretty girl. The air is keen and shrewish, and as to the sea, I am satisfied with a bath of less dimensions. Notwithstanding the want of sun, and the abundance of cold winds, I lave my sides daily in the brine, and thus I am gradually cooling down to the temperature — of the things round about me — so that the thinnest skinned feminine may handle me without fear of consequences. Possibly you may think that I am like the torpid snake that the forester warmed by his hearth. No, I am not. I am steeling myself with Plato and Platonics; so now farewell to love and womankind. "Othello's occupation's gone."

……

From an allusion in one of Mrs. Norton's letters to Mary, it appears likely that what follows refers to Fanny Kemble (Mrs. Butler).

You say, "Had I seen those eyes you saw the other day." Yes, the darts shot from those eyes are still rankling in my body; yet it is a pleasing pain. The wound of the scorpion is healed by applying the scorpion to the wound. Is she not a glorious being? Have you ever seen such a presence? Is she not dazzling? There is enchantment in all her ways. Talk of the divine power of music, why, she is all melody, and poetry, and beauty, and harmony. How envious and malignant must the English be not to do her homage universal. They never had, or will have again, such a woman as that. I would rather be her slave than king of such an island of Calibans. You have a soul, and sense, and a deep feeling for your sex, and revere such "cunning patterns of excelling nature," therefore — besides, I owe it you — I will transcribe what she says of you: "I was nervous, it was my first visit to any one, and there is a gentle frankness in her manner, and a vague remembrance of the thought and feeling in her books which prevents my being as with a 'visiting acquaintance.'"

....

Zella is doing wondrous well, and chance has placed her with a womankind that even I (setting beauty aside) am satisfied with. By the bye, I wish most earnestly you could get me some good *morality* in the shape of Italian and French. It is indispensable to the keeping alive her remembrance of those languages, and not a book is to be had here, nor do I know exactly how to get them by any other means, so pray think of it.

....

I am inundated with letters from America, and am answering them by Mrs. Jameson; she sailing immediately is a very heavy loss to me. She is the friendliest-hearted woman in the world. I would rather lose anything than her....

I don't think I shall stay here much longer; it is a bad holding ground; my cable is chafing. I shall drift somewhere or other. It is well for Mamma Percy has so much of her temperate blood. When us three meet, we shall be able to ice the wine by placing it between us; that will be nice, as the girls say.

A glance from Mrs. Nesbitt has shaken my firm nerves a little. There is a mystery — a deep well of feeling in those star-like eyes of hers. It is strange that actresses are the only true and natural people; they only act in the proper season and place, whilst all the rest seem eternally playing a part, and like dilettanti acting, damn'd absurdly.

J. Trelawny.

From Brighton, at New Year, Mrs. Shelley sent Trelawny a cheery greeting.

From Mrs. Shelley to Trelawny.

Brighton, *3d January 1837*.

My dear Trelawny — This day will please you; it is a thaw; what snow we had! Hundreds of people have been employed to remove it during the last week; at first they cut down deep several feet as if it had been clay, and piled it up in glittering pyramids and masses; then they began to cart it on to the beach; it was a new sort of Augean stable, a never-ending labour. Yesterday, when I was out, it was only got rid of in a very few and very circumscribed spots. Nature is more of a Hercules; she puts out a little finger in the shape of gentle thaw, and it recedes and disappears.

……

Percy arrived yesterday, having rather whetted than satisfied his appetite by going seven times to the play. He plays like Apollo on the flageolet, and like Apollo is self-taught. Jane thinks him a miracle! it is very odd. He got a frock-coat at Mettes, and, if you had not disappointed us with your handkerchief, he would have been complete; he is a good deal grown, though not tall enough to satisfy me; however, there is time yet. He is quite a child still, full of theatres and balloons and music, yet I think there is a gentleness about him which shows the advent of the reign of petticoats — how I dread it!

……

Poor Jane writes dismally. She is so weak that she has frequent fainting fits; she went to a physician, who ordered her to wean the child, and now she takes three glasses of wine a day, and every other strengthening medicament, but she is very feeble, and has a cough and tendency to inflammation on the chest. I implored her to come down here to change the air, and Jeff gave leave, and would have given the money; but fear lest his dinner should be overdone while she was away, and lest the children should get a finger scratched, makes her resolve not to come; what bad bogie is this? If she got stronger how much better they would be in consequence! I think her in a critical state, but she will not allow of a remedy.

....

Poor dear little Zella. I hope she is well and happy.... Thank you for your offer about money. I have plenty at present, and hope to do well hereafter. You are very thoughtful, which is a great virtue. I have not heard from your mother or Charlotte since you left; a day or two afterwards I saw Betsy Freeman; she was to go to her place the next day. I paid her for her work; she looked so radiantly happy that you would have thought she was going to be married rather than to a place of hardship. I never saw any one look so happy. I told her to let me know how she got on, and to apply to me if she wanted assistance.... I am glad you are amused at your brother's. I really imagined that Fanny Butler had been the attraction, till, sending to the Gloucester, I found you were gone by the Southampton coach, and then I suspected another magnet — till I find that you are in all peace, or rather war, at Sherfield House — much better so.

I am better a great deal; quite well, I believe I ought to call myself, only I feel a little odd at times. I have seen nothing of the S.'s. I have met with scarce an acquaintance here, which is odd; but then I do not look for them. I am too lazy. I hope this letter will catch you before you leave your present perch. — Believe me always, yours truly,

M. W. Shelley.

Will this be a happy New Year? Tell me; the last I can't say much for, but I always fear worse to come. Nobody's mare is dead, — if this frost does not kill, — my own (such as it will be) is far enough off still.

The next letter is dated only three weeks later. What happened in that short time to account for its complete change of tone does not appear, except that from one allusion it may be inferred that Mrs. Shelley was overtaken by unexpected money difficulties at a moment when she had fancied herself tolerably at ease on that score. Nothing more likely, for in the matter of helping others she never learnt prudence or the art of self-defence. Probably, however, there was a deeper cause for her sombre mood. She was being pressed on all sides to write the biography of her father. The task would have been well suited to her powers; she looked on it, moreover, in the light of a duty which she wished and intended to perform. Fragments and sketches of hers for this book have been published, and are among the best specimens of her writing. But circumstances — scruples — similar to those which had hindered her from writing Shelley's life stood between her and the present fulfilment of the task. There were few people to whom she could bring herself to explain her reasons, and those few need not have required, still less insisted on any such explanation. But Trelawny, hot and vehement, could and would not see why Mary did not rush into the field at once, to immortalise the man whose system of philosophy, more than any other writer's, had moulded Shelley's. He never spared words, and he probably taxed her with cowardice or indolence, time-serving and "worldliness."

Shaken by her father's loss, and saddened by that of her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, who had died within a short time of each other shortly before this, exhausted by work, her feelings warped by solitude, struggle, and disappointment, this challenge to explain her conduct evoked the most mournful of all her letters, as explicit as any one could wish; true in its bitterness, and most bitter in its truth.

Mrs. Shelley To Trelawny.

Brighton, *Thursday, 27th January 1837*.

Dear Trelawny — I am very glad to hear that you are amused and happy; fate seems to have turned her sunny side to you, and I hope you will long enjoy yourself. I know of but one pleasure in the world — sympathy with another, or others, rather; leaving out of the question the affections, the society of agreeable, gifted, congenial-minded beings is the only pleasure worth having in the world. My fate has debarred me from this enjoyment, but you seem in the midst of it.

With regard to my Father's life I certainly could not answer it to my conscience to give it up. I shall therefore do it, but I must wait. This year I have to fight my poor Percy's battle, to try and get him sent to College without further dilapidation of his ruined prospects, and he has now to enter life at College. That this should be undertaken at a moment when a cry was raised against his mother, and that not on the question of *politics* but *religion*, would mar all. I must see him fairly launched before I commit myself to the fury of the waves.

A sense of duty towards my Father, whose passion was posthumous fame, makes me ready, as far as I am concerned, to meet the misery that must be mine if I become an object of scurrility and attack; for the rest, for my own private satisfaction, all I ask is obscurity. What can I care for the parties that divide the world, or the opinions that possess it? What has my life been? What is it? Since I lost Shelley I have been alone, and worse. I had my Father's fate for many a year pressing me to the earth; I had Percy's education and welfare to guard over, and in all this I had no one friendly hand stretched out to support me. Shut out from even the possibility of making such an impression as my personal merits might occasion, without a human being to aid or encourage, or even to advise me, I toiled on my weary solitary way. The only persons who deigned to share those melancholy hours, and to afford me the balm of affection, were those dear girls whom you chose so long to abuse. Do you think that I have not felt, that I do not feel all this? If I have been able to stand up against the breakers which have dashed against my stranded, wrecked bark, it has been by a sort of passive, dogged resistance, which has broken my heart, while it a little supported my spirit. My happiness, my health, my fortunes, all are wrecked. Percy alone remains to me, and to do him good is the sole aim of my life. One thing I will add; if I have ever found kindness, it has not been from liberals; to disengage myself from them was the first act of my freedom. The consequence was that I gained peace and civil usage, which they denied me; more I do not ask; of fate I only ask a grave. I know not what my future life is, and shudder, but it must be borne, and for Percy's sake I must battle on.

If you wish for a copy of my novel you shall have one, but I did not order it to be sent to you, because, being a rover, all luggage burthens. I have told them to send it to your mother, at which you will scoff, but it was the only way I had to show my sense of her kindness. You may pick and choose those from whom you deign to receive kindness; you are a man at a feast, champagne and comfits your diet, and you naturally scoff at me and my dry crust in a corner. Often have you scoffed and sneered at all the aliment of kindness or society that fate has afforded me. I have been silent, for the hungry cannot be dainty, but it is useless to tell a pampered man this. Remember in all this, except in one or two instances, my complaint is not against *persons*, but *fate*. Fate has been my enemy throughout. I have no wish to increase her animosity or her power by exposing [myself] more than I possibly can to her venomous attacks.

You have sent me no address, so I direct this to your Mother; give her and Charlotte my love, and tell them I think I shall be in town at the beginning of next month; my time in this house is up on the 3d, and I ought to be in town with Percy to take him to Sir Tim's solicitors, and so begin my attack. I should advise you, by the bye, not to read my novel; you will not like it. I cannot *teach*; I can only paint — such as my paintings are, — and you will not approve of much of what I deem natural feeling, because it is not founded on the new light.

I had a long letter from Mrs. N[orton]. I admire her excessively, and I *think* I could love her infinitely, but I shall not be asked nor tried, and shall take very good care not to press myself. I know what her relations think.

If you are still so rich, and can lend me £20 till my quarter, I shall be glad. I do not know that I absolutely [need] it here now, but may run short at last, so, if not inconvenient, will you send it next week?

I shall soon be in town, I suppose; *where*, I do not yet know. I dread my return, for I shall have a thousand worries.

Despite unfavourable weather, quiet and ease have much restored my health, but mental annoyance will soon make me as ill as ever. Only writing this letter makes me feel half dead. Still, to be thus at peace is an expensive luxury, and I must forego it for other duties, which I have been allowed to forget for a time, but my holiday is past.

Happy is Fanny Butler if she can shed tears and not be destroyed by them; this luxury is denied me. I am obliged to guard against low spirits as my worst disease, and I do guard, and usually I am not in low spirits. Why then do you awaken me to thought and suffering by forcing me to explain the motives of my conduct? Could you not trust that I thought anxiously, decided carefully, and from disinterested motives, not to save myself, but my child, from evil. Pray let the stream flow quietly by, as glittering on the surface as it may, and do not awaken the deep waters which are full of briny bitterness. I never wish any one to dive into the secret depths; be content, if I can render the surface safe sailing, that I do not annoy you with clouds and tempests, but turn the silvery side outward, as I ought, for God knows I would not render any living creature so miserable as I could easily be; and I would also guard myself from the sense of woe which I tie hard about, and sink low, low, out of sight and fathom line.

Adieu. Excuse all this; it is your own fault; speak of yourself. Never speak of me, and you will never again be annoyed with so much stupidity. — Yours truly,

M. S.

The painful mood of this letter was not destined to find present relief. From her father's death in 1836 till the year 1840 was to be perhaps the hardest, dreariest, and most laborious time she had ever known. No chance had she now to distract her mind or avoid the most painful themes. Her very occupation was to tie her down to these. She was preparing her edition of Shelley's works, with notes. The prohibition as to bringing his name before the public seems to have been withdrawn or at any rate slackened; it had probably become evident, even to those least disposed to see, that the undesirable publicity, if not given by the right person, would inevitably be given by the wrong one. Much may also have been due to the fact that Mr. Whitton, Sir Timothy's solicitor, was dead, and had been replaced by another gentleman who, unlike his predecessor, used his influence to promote milder counsels and a better mutual understanding than had prevailed hitherto.

This task was accepted by Mary as the most sacred of duties, but it is probable that if circumstances had permitted her to fulfil it in the years which immediately followed Shelley's death she would have suffered from it less than now. It might not have been so well done, she might have written at too great length, or have indulged in too much expression of personal feeling; and in the case of omissions from his writings, the decision might have been even harder to make. Still it would have cost her less. Her heart, occupied by one subject, would have found a kind of relief in the necessity for dwelling on it. But seventeen years had elapsed, and she was forty-two, and very tired. Seventeen years of struggle, labour, and loneliness; even the mournful satisfaction of retrospect poisoned and distorted by Jane Williams' duplicity. She could no longer dwell on the thought of that affection which had consoled her in her supreme misfortune.

Mary had had many and bitter troubles and losses, but nothing entered into her soul so deeply as the defection of this friend. Alienation is worse than bereavement. Other sorrows had left her desolate; this one left her different.

Hence the fact that an undertaking which would once have been a painful pleasure was too often a veritable martyrdom. Who does not remember Hans Andersen's little princess, in his story of the *White Swans*, who freed her eleven brothers from the evil enchantment which held them transformed, by spinning shirts of stinging-nettles? Such nettle-shirts had Mary now to weave and spin, to exorcise the evil spirits which had power of misrepresenting and defaming Shelley's memory, and to save Percy for ever from their sinister spells.

Her health was weak, her heart was sore, her life was lonely, and, in spite of her undaunted efforts, she was still so badly off that she was, as the last letter shows, reduced to accepting Trelawny's offer of a loan of money. Nor was it only her work that she had on her mind; she was also very anxious about her son's future. He had, at this time, an idea of entering the Diplomatic Service, and his mother overcame her diffidence so far as to try and procure an opening for him — no easy thing to find. Among the people she consulted and asked was Lytton Bulwer; his answer was not encouraging.

Sir E. L. Bulwer to Mrs. Shelley.

Hertford Street, *17th March 1839*.

My dear Mrs. Shelley — Many thanks for your kind congratulations. I am delighted to find you like *Richelieu*.

With regard to your son, with his high prospects, the diplomacy may do very well; but of all professions it is the most difficult to rise in. The first steps are long and tedious. An Attaché at a small Court is an exile without pay, and very little opening to talent. However, for young men of fortune and expectations it fills up some years agreeably enough, what with flirting, dressing, dancing, and perhaps, if one has good luck, a harmless duel or two!

To be serious, it is better than being idle, and one certainly learns languages, knowledge of the world, and good manners. Perhaps I may send my son, some seventeen years hence, if my brother is then a minister, into that career. But it will depend on his prospects. Are you sure that you can get an attachéship? It requires a good deal of interest, and there are plenty of candidates among young men of rank, and, I fear, claims more pressing and urging than the memory of genius. I could not procure that place for a most intimate friend of mine a little time ago. I will take my chance some evening, but I fear not Thursday; in fact, I am so occupied just at present that till after Easter I have scarcely a moment to myself, and at Easter I must go to Lincoln. — Yours ever,

E. L. Bulwer.

Mrs. Norton interested herself in the matter. She could not effect much, but she was sympathetic and kind.

"You have your troubles," she wrote, "struggling for one who, I trust, will hereafter repay you for every weary hour and years of self-denial, and I shall be glad to hear from you now and then how all goes on with you and him, so do not forget me when you have a spare half hour, and if ever I have any good news to send, do not doubt my then writing by the first post, for I think my happiest moments now are when, in the strange mixture of helplessness and power which has made the warp and woof of my destiny, I can accidentally serve some one who has had more of the world's buffets than its good fortune."

Some scraps of journal belonging to 1839 afford a little insight into Mrs. Shelley's difficulties while editing her husband's MSS.

Journal, February 12 (1839). — I almost think that my present occupation will end in a fit of illness. I am editing Shelley's Poems, and writing notes for them. I desire to do Shelley honour in the notes to the best of my knowledge and ability; for the rest, they are or are not well written; it little matters to me which. Would that I had more literary vanity, or vanity of any kind; I were happier. As it is, I am torn to pieces by memory. Would that all were mute in the grave!

I *much* disliked the leaving out any of *Queen Mab*. I dislike it still more than I can express, and I even wish I had resisted to the last; but when I was told that certain portions would injure the copyright of all the volumes to the publisher, I yielded. I had consulted Hunt, Hogg, and Peacock; they all said I had a right to do as I liked, and offered no one objection. Trelawny sent back the volume to Moxon in a rage at seeing parts left out....

Hogg has written me an insulting letter because I left out the dedication to Harriet....

Little does Jefferson, how little does any one, know me! When Clarke's edition of *Queen Mab* came to us at the Baths of Pisa, Shelley expressed great pleasure that these verses were omitted. This recollection caused me to do the same. It was to do him honour. What could it be to me? There are other verses I should well like to obliterate for ever, but they will be printed; and any to her could in no way tend to my discomfort, or gratify one ungenerous feeling. They shall be restored, though I do not feel easy as to the good I do Shelley. I may have been mistaken. Jefferson might mistake me and be angry; that were nothing. He has done far more, and done his best to give another poke to the poisonous dagger which has long rankled in my heart. I cannot forgive any man that insults any woman. She cannot call him out, — she disdains words of retort; she must endure, but it is never to be forgiven; not, "indeed, cherished as matter of enmity" — that I never feel, — but of caution to shield oneself from the like again.

In so arduous a task, others might ask for encouragement and kindness from their friends, — I know mine better. I am unstable, sometimes melancholy, and have been called on some occasions imperious; but I never did an ungenerous act in my life. I sympathise warmly with others, and have wasted my heart in their love and service.

All this together is making me feel very ill, and my holiday at Woodlay only did me good while it lasted.

March. ... Illness did ensue. What an illness! driving me to the verge of insanity. Often I felt the cord would snap, and I should no longer be able to rule my thoughts; with fearful struggles, miserable relapses, after long repose I became somewhat better.

October 5, 1839. — Twice in my life I have believed myself to be dying, and my soul being alive, though the bodily functions were faint and perishing, I had opportunity to look Death in the face, and I did not fear it — far from it. My feelings, especially in the first and most perilous instance, was, I go to no new creation. I enter under no new laws. The God that made this beautiful world (and I was then at Lerici, surrounded by the most beautiful manifestation of the visible creation) made that into which I go; as there is beauty and love here, such is there, and I feel as if my spirit would when it left my frame be received and sustained by a beneficent and gentle Power.

I had no fear, rather, though I had no active wish but a passive satisfaction in death. Whether the nature of my illness — debility from loss of blood, without pain — caused this tranquillity of soul, I cannot tell; but so it was, and it had this blessed effect, that I have never since anticipated death with terror, and even if a violent death (which is the most repugnant to human nature) menaced me, I think I could, after the first shock, turn to the memory of that hour, and renew its emotion of perfect resignation.

The darkest moment is that which precedes the dawn. These unhappy years were like the series of "clearing showers" which often concludes a stormy day. The clouds were lifting, and though Mary Shelley could never be other than what sorrow and endurance had made her, the remaining years of her life were to bring alleviations to her lot, — slanting rays of afternoon sunshine, powerless, indeed, to warm into life the tender buds of morning, but which illumined the landscape and lightened her path, and shed over her a mild radiance which she reflected back on others, affording to them the brightness she herself could know no more, and diffusing around her that sensation of peace which she was to know now, perhaps, for the first time.

CHAPTER XXIV

October 1839-February 1851

Mrs. Shelley's annotated edition of Shelley's works was completed by the appearance, in 1840, of the collected prose writings; along with which was republished the *Journal of a Six Weeks' Tour* (a joint composition) and her own two letters from Geneva, reprinted in the present work.

Mary's correspondence with Carlyle on the subject of a motto for her book was the occasion of the following note —

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea,
3d December 1839.

Dear Mrs. Shelley — There does some indistinct remembrance of a sentence like the one you mention hover in my head; but I cannot anywhere lay hand on it. Indeed, I rather think it was to this effect: "Treat men as what they should be, and you help to make them so." Further, is it not rather one of Wilhelm's kind speeches than of the Uncle's or the Fair Saint's? James Fraser shall this day send you a copy of the work; you, with your own clear eyes, shall look for yourself.

I have no horse now; the mud forced me to send it into the country till dry weather came again. Layton House is so much the farther off. *Tant pis pour moi.* — Yours always truly,

T. Carlyle.

The words ultimately prefixed to the collection are the following, from Carlyle —

That thou, O my Brother, impart to me truly how it stands with thee in that inner heart of thine; what lively images of things past thy memory has painted there; what hopes, what thoughts, affections, knowledge, do now dwell there. For this and no other object that I can see was the gift of hearing and speech bestowed on us two.

The proceeds of this work were such as to set her for some time at comparative ease on the score of money; the Godwin quicksand was no longer there to engulf them.

Journal, June 1, 1840 (Brighton). — I must mark this evening, tired as I am, for it is one among few — soothing and balmy. Long oppressed by care, disappointment, and ill health, which all combined to depress and irritate me, I felt almost to have lost the spring of happy reverie. On such a night it returns — the calm sea, the soft breeze, the silver bow new bent in the western heaven — Nature in her sweetest mood, raised one's thoughts to God and imparted peace.

Indeed I have many, many blessings, and ought to be grateful, as I am, though the poison lurks among them; for it is my strange fate that all my friends are sufferers — ill health or adversity bears heavily on them, and I can do little good, and lately ill health and extreme depression have even marred the little I could do. If I could restore health, administer balm to the wounded heart, and banish care from those I love, I were in myself happy, while I am loved, and Percy continues the blessing that he is. Still, who on such a night must not feel the weight of sorrow lessened? For myself, I repose in gentle and grateful reverie, and hope for others. I am content for myself. Years have — how much! — cooled the ardent and swift spirit that at such hours bore me freely along. Yet, though I no longer soar, I repose. Though I no longer deem all things attainable, I enjoy what is; and while I feel that whatever I have lost of youth and hope, I have acquired the enduring affection of a noble heart, and Percy shows such excellent dispositions that I feel that I am much the gainer in life.

Fate does indeed visit some too heavily — poor R. for instance, God restore him! God and good angels guard us! surely this world, stored outwardly with shapes and influences of beauty and good, is peopled in its intellectual life by myriads of loving spirits that mould our thoughts to good, influence beneficially the course of events, and minister to the destiny of man. Whether the beloved dead make a portion of this company I dare not guess, but that such exist I feel — far off, when we are worldly, evil, selfish; drawing near and imparting joy and sympathy when we rise to noble thoughts and disinterested action. Such surely gather round one on such an evening, and make part of that atmosphere of love, so hushed, so soft, on which the soul reposes and is blest.

These serene lines were written by Mrs. Shelley within a few days of leaving England on the first of those tours described by her in the series of letters published as *Rambles in Germany and Italy*. It had been arranged that her son and two college friends, both of whom, like him, were studying for their degree, should go abroad for the Long Vacation, and that Mrs. Shelley should form one of the reading party. Paris was to be the general rendezvous. Mrs. Shelley, who was staying at Brighton, intended travelling *viâ* Dieppe, but her health was so far from strong that she shrank from the long crossing, and started from Dover instead. She was now accompanied by a lady's-maid, a circumstance which relieved her from some of the fatigue incidental to a journey. They travelled by diligence; a new experience to her, as, in her former wanderings with Shelley, they had had their own carriage (save indeed on the first tour of all, when they set off to walk through France with a donkey); and in more recent years she had travelled, in England, by the newly-introduced railroads —

"To which, whatever their faults may be, I feel eternally grateful," she says; adding afterwards, "a pleasant day it will be when there is one from Calais to Paris."

So recent a time, and yet how remote it seems! Mary had never been a good traveller, but she found now, to her surprise and satisfaction, that in spite of her nervous suffering she was better able than formerly to stand the fatigue of a journey. She had painful sensations, but

> the fatigue I endured seemed to take away weariness instead of occasioning it. I felt light of limb and in good spirits. On the shores of France I shook the dust of accumulated cares from off me: I forgot disappointment and banished sorrow: weariness of body replaced beneficially weariness of soul — so much heavier, so much harder to bear.

Change, in short, did her more good than travelling did her harm.

"I feel a good deal of the gipsy coming upon me," she wrote a few days later, "now that I am leaving Paris. I bid adieu to all acquaintances, and set out to wander in new lands, surrounded by companions fresh to the world, unacquainted with its sorrows, and who enjoy with zest every passing amusement. I myself, apt to be too serious, but easily awakened to sympathy, forget the past and the future, and am ready to be amused by all I see as much or even more than they."

From Paris they journeyed to Metz and Trèves, down the Moselle and the Rhine, by Schaffhausen and Zurich, over the Splugen Pass to Cadenabbia on the Lake of Como. Here they established themselves for two months. Mrs. Shelley occupied herself in the study of Italian literature, while the young men were busy with their Cambridge work. Her son's friends were devoted to her, and no wonder. Indeed, her amiability and sweetness, her enjoyment of travelling, her wide culture and great store of knowledge, her acuteness of observation, and the keen interest she took in all she saw, must have made her a most fascinating companion. On leaving Como they visited Milan, and, on their way home, passing through Genoa, Mary looked again on the Villa Diodati, and the little Maison Chapuis nestling below, where she had begun to write *Frankenstein*. All unaltered; but in her, what a change! Shelley, Byron, the blue-eyed William, where were they? Where was Fanny, whose long letters had kept them informed of English affairs? Mary herself, and Clare, were they the same people as the two girls, one fair, one dark, who had excited so much idle and impertinent speculation in the tourists from whose curiosity Byron had fled?

But where are the snows of yester-year?

In autumn Mrs. Shelley and her son returned to England; but the next year they again went abroad, and this time for a longer sojourn.

They were now better off than they had ever been, for, after Percy had attained his majority and taken his degree, his grandfather made him an allowance of £400 a year; a free gift, not subject to the condition of repayment. This welcome relief from care came not a day too soon. Mrs. Shelley's strength was much shaken, her attacks of nervous illness were more frequent, and, had she had to resume her life of unvaried toil, the results might have been serious.

It is probably to this event that Mrs. Norton refers in the following note of congratulation —

Mrs. Norton to Mrs. Shelley.

Dear Mrs. Shelley — I cannot tell you how sincerely glad I was to get a note so cheerful, and cheerful on such good grounds as your last. I hope it is the *dawn*, that your day of struggling is over, and nothing to come but gradually increasing comfort. With tolerable prudence, and abroad, I should hope Percy would find his allowance quite sufficient, and I think it will be a relief that may lift your mind and do your health good to see him properly provided for.

I am too ill to leave the sofa or I should (by rights) be at Lord Palmerston's this evening, but, when I see any one likely to support the very modest request made to Lord P., I will speak about it to them; I have little doubt that, since they are not asked for a paid attachéship, you will succeed.

... In three weeks I am to set up the magnificence of a "one 'orse chay" myself, and then Fulham and the various streets of London where friends and foes live will become attainable; at present I have never stirred over the threshold since I came up from Brighton. — Ever yours very truly,

Car. Norton.

They began their second tour by a residence at Kissingen, where Mrs. Shelley had been advised to take the waters for her health. The "Cur" over (by which she benefited a good deal), they proceeded to Gotha, Weimar, Leipzig, Berlin, and Dresden — all perfectly new ground to Mary. Dresden and its treasures of art were a delight to her, only marred by the overwhelming heat of the summer.

Through Saxon Switzerland they travelled to Prague, and Mary was roused to enthusiasm by the intense romantic interest of the Bohemian capital, as she was afterwards by the magnificent scenery of the approach to Linz (of which she gives in her letters a vivid description), and of Salzburg and the Salzkammergut.

Through the Tyrol, over the Brenner Pass, by the Lake of Garda, they came to Verona, and finally to Venice — another place fraught to Mary with associations unspeakable.

Many a scene which I have since visited and admired has faded in my mind, as a painting in a diorama melts away, and another struggles into the changing canvass; but this road was as distinct in my mind as if traversed yesterday. I will not here dwell on the sad circumstances that clouded my first visit to Venice. Death hovered over the scene. Gathered into myself, with my "mind's eye" I saw those before me long departed, and I was agitated again by emotions, by passions — and those the deepest a woman's heart can harbour — a dread to see her child even at that instant expire, which then occupied me. It is a strange, but, to any person who has suffered, a familiar circumstance, that those who are enduring mental or corporeal agony are strangely alive to immediate external objects, and their imagination even exercises its wild power over them.... I have experienced it; and the particular shape of a room, the progress of shadows on a wall, the peculiar flickering of trees, the exact succession of objects on a journey, have been indelibly engraved in my memory, as marked in and associated with hours and minutes when the nerves were strung to their utmost tension by endurance of pain, or the far severer infliction of mental anguish. Thus the banks of the Brenta presented to me a moving scene; not a palace, not a tree of which I did not recognise, as marked and recorded, at a moment when life and death hung upon our speedy arrival at Venice.

And at Fusina, as then, I now beheld the domes and towers of the Queen of Ocean arise from the waves with a majesty unrivalled upon earth.

They spent the winter at Florence, and by April were in Rome. This indeed was the Holy Land of Mary Shelley's pilgrimage. There was the spot where William lay; there the tomb which held the heart of Shelley. Mary may well have felt as if standing by her own graveside. Was not her heart of hearts buried with them? And there, too, was the empty grave where now Trelawny lies; the touching witness to that undying devotion of his to Shelley's memory which Mary never forgot.

None of this is touched upon — it could not be — in the published letters. The Eternal City itself filled her with such emotions and interests as not even she had ever felt before. It is curious to compare some of these with her earlier letters from abroad, and to notice how, while her power of observation was undiminished, the intellectual faculties of thought and comparison had developed and widened, while her interest was as keen as in her younger days, nay keener, for her attention now, poor thing, was comparatively undivided.

Scenery, art, historical associations, the political and social state of the countries she visited, and the characteristics of the people, nothing was lost on her, and on all she saw she brought to bear the ripened faculties of a reflective and most appreciative mind. Some of her remarks on Italian politics are almost prophetic in their clear-sighted sagacity. That after all she had suffered she should have retained such keen powers of enjoyment as she did may well excite wonder. Perhaps this enjoyment culminated at Sorrento, where she and her son positively revelled in the luxuriant beauty and witchery of a perfect southern summer.

Her impressions of these two tours were published in the form of letters, and entitled *Rambles in Germany and Italy*, and were dedicated to Samuel Rogers in 1844.

He thus acknowledged the copy of the work she sent him —

St. James's Place,
30th July 1844.

What can I say to you in return for the honour you have done me — an honour so undeserved! If some feelings make us eloquent, it is not so with others, and I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart, and assure you how highly I shall value and how carefully I shall preserve the two precious volumes on every account — for your sake and for their own. — Ever yours most sincerely,

S. Rogers.

In the spring of 1844 it became evident that Sir Timothy Shelley's life was drawing to a close. In anticipation of what was soon to happen, Mary, always mindful of her promise to Leigh Hunt, wrote to him as follows —

Putney, *20th April 1844*.

My dear Hunt — The tidings from Field Place seem to say that ere long there will be a change; if nothing untoward happens to us till then, it will be for the better. Twenty years ago, in memory of what Shelley's intentions were, I said that you should be considered one of the legatees to the amount of £2000. I need scarcely mention that when Shelley talked of leaving you this sum he contemplated reducing other legacies, and that one among them is (by a mistake of the solicitor) just double what he intended it to be.

Twenty years have, of course, much changed my position. Twenty years ago it was supposed that Sir Timothy would not live five years. Meanwhile a large debt has accumulated, for I must pay back all on which Percy and I have subsisted, as well as what I borrowed for Percy's going to college. In fact, I scarcely know how our affairs will be. Moreover, Percy shares now my right; that promise was made without his concurrence, and he must concur to render it of avail. Nor do I like to ask him to do so till our affairs are so settled that we know what we shall have — whether Shelley's uncle may not go to law; in short, till we see our way before us.

It is both my and Percy's great wish to feel that you are no longer so burdened by care and necessity; in that he is as desirous as I can be; but the form and the degree in which we can do this must at first be uncertain. From the time of Sir Timothy's death I shall give directions to my banker to honour your quarterly cheques for £30 a quarter; and I shall take steps to secure this to you, and to Marianne if she should survive you.

Percy has read this letter, and approves. I know your *real* delicacy about money matters, and that you will at once be ready to enter into my views; and feel assured that if any present debt should press, if we have any command of money, we will take care to free you from it.

With love to Marianne, affectionately yours,

Mary Shelley.

Sir Timothy died in this year, and Mary’s son succeeded to the baronetcy and estates. The fortune he inherited was much encumbered, as, besides paying Shelley’s numerous legacies and the portions of several members of the family, he had also to refund, with interest, all the money advanced to his mother for their maintenance for the last twenty-one years, amounting now to a large sum, which he met by means of a mortgage effected on the estates. But all was done at last. Clare was freed from the necessity for toil and servitude; she was, indeed, well off, as she inherited altogether £12,000. Hers is the legacy to which Mrs. Shelley alludes as being, by a mistake, double what had been intended. When Shelley made his will, he bequeathed to her £6000. Not long before the end of his life he added a codicil, to the effect that *these* £6000 should be invested for her benefit, intending in this way (it is supposed) to secure to her the interest of this sum, and to protect her against recklessness on her own part or needy rapacity on the part of others. Through the omission in the lawyer’s draft of the word “these” this codicil was construed into a second bequest of £6000, which she received. The Hunts, by Shelley’s bounty and the generosity of his wife and son, were made comparatively easy in their circumstances. Byron had declined to be numbered among Shelley’s legatees; not so Mr. Hogg, whose letter on the occasion is too characteristic to omit.

Hogg to Mrs. Shelley.

Dear Mary — I have just had an interview with Mr. Gregson. He spoke of your affairs cheerfully, and thinks that, with prudence and economy, you and your baronet-boy will do well; and such, I trust and earnestly hope, will be the result of this long turmoil of worldly perplexity.

Mr. Gregson paid me the noble tribute of the most generous and kind and munificent affection of our incomparable friend. He not only paid the legacy, but very obligingly offered me some interest; for which offer, and for such prompt payment, I return my best thanks to yourself and to Percy.

I was glad to hear from Mr. Gregson, for the honour of poesy, that Lord Byron had declined to receive his legacy. How much I wish that my scanty fortunes would justify the like refusal on my part!

I daresay you wish that you were a good deal richer — that this had happened and not that — and that a great deal, which was quite impossible, had been done, and so on! I should be sorry to believe that you were quite contented; such a state of mind, so preposterous and unnatural, especially in any person whose circumstances were affluent, would surely portend some great calamity.

I hope that I may venture to look forward to the time when the Baronet will inhabit Field Place in a style not unworthy of his name. My desire grows daily in the strength to keep up *families*, for it is only from these that Shelleys and Byrons proceed.

THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG,
AS HE SAT PLAYING AT CHESS AT BOSCOMBE.
FROM A SKETCH BY R. EASTON.

To face Page 305 (Vol. ii.)

If low people sometimes effect a little in some particular line, they always show that they are poor, creeping creatures in the main and in general.

However this may be, and whatever you or yours may take of Shelley property, “either by heirship or conquest,” as they say in Scotland, I hope that you may not be included in the unbroken entail of gout, which takes so largely from the comforts, and adds so greatly to the irritability natural to yours, dear Mary, very faithfully,

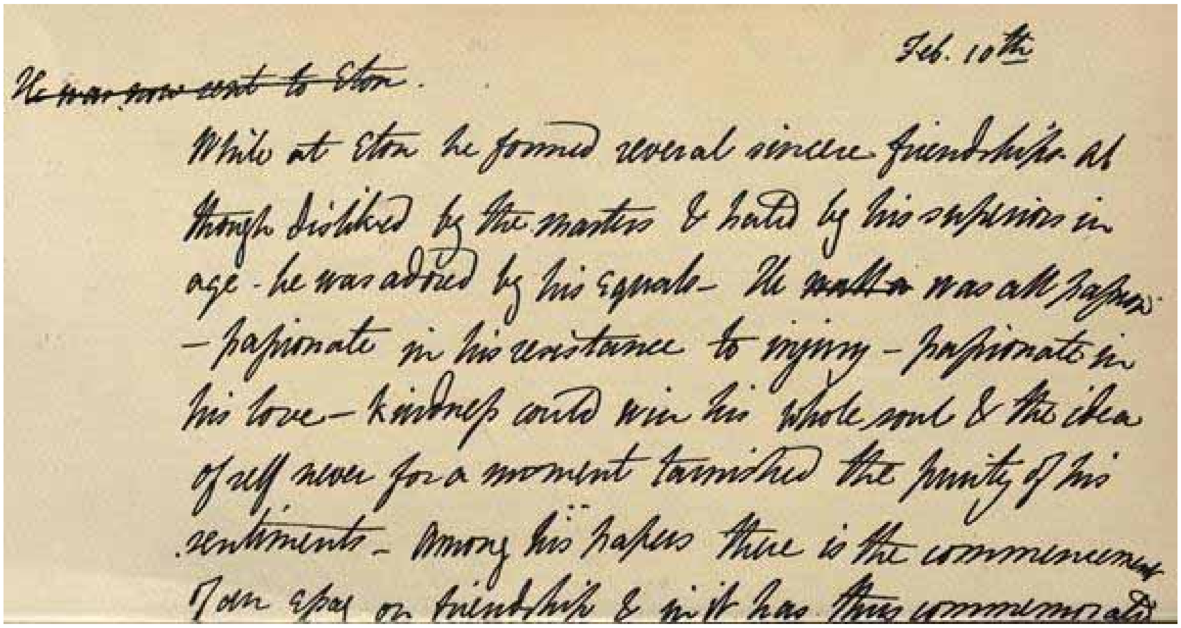
T. J. Hogg.

For many and good reasons there could be little real sympathy between Hogg and Mary Shelley. In lieu of it she willingly accepted his genuine enthusiasm for Shelley, and she was a better friend to him than he was to her. The veiled impertinence of his tone to her must have severely tried her patience, if not her endurance. Indeed, the mocking style of his ironical eulogies of her talents, and her fidelity to the memory of her husband are more offensive to those who know what she was than any ill-humoured tirade of Trelawny’s.

The high esteem in which Mrs. Shelley was held by the eminent literary men who were her contemporaries is pleasantly attested in a number of letters and notes addressed to her by T. Moore, Samuel Rogers, Carlyle, Bulwer, Prosper Merimée, and others; letters for the most part of no great importance except in so far as they show the familiar and friendly terms existing between the writers and Mrs. Shelley. One, however, from Walter Savage Landor, deserves insertion here for its intrinsic interest —

Dear Mrs. Shelley — It would be very ungrateful in me to delay for a single post an answer to your very kind letter. If only three or four like yourself (supposing there are that number in one generation) are gratified by my writings, I am quite content. Hardly do I know whether in the whole course of fifty years I have been so fortunate. For one of my earliest resolutions in life was never to read what was written about me, favourable or unfavourable; and another was, to keep as clear as possible of all literary men, well knowing their jealousies and animosities, and so little did I seek celebrity, or even renown, that on making a present of my Gebir and afterwards of my later poems to the bookseller, I insisted that they should not even be advertised. Whatever I have written since I have placed at the disposal and discretion of some friend. Are not you a little too enthusiastic in believing that writers can be much improved by studying my writings? I mean in their style. The style is a part of the mind, just as feathers are part of the bird. The style of Addison is admired — it is very lax and incorrect. But in his manner there is the shyness of the Loves; there is the graceful shyness of a beautiful girl not quite grown up! People feel the cool current of delight, and never look for its source. However, he wrote the Vision of Mirza, and no prose man in any age of the world had written anything so delightful. Alas! so far from being able to teach men how to write, it will be twenty years before I teach them how to spell. They will write simil*e*, for*ei*gn, sover*ei*gn, therefo*re*, imp*el*, comp*el*, reb*el*, etc. I wish they would turn back to Hooker, not for theology — the thorns of theology are good only to heat the oven for the reception of wholesome food. But Hooker and Jonson and Milton spelt many words better than we do. We need not wear their coats, but we may take the gold buttons off them and put them on smoother stuff. — Believe me, dear Mrs. Shelley, very truly yours,

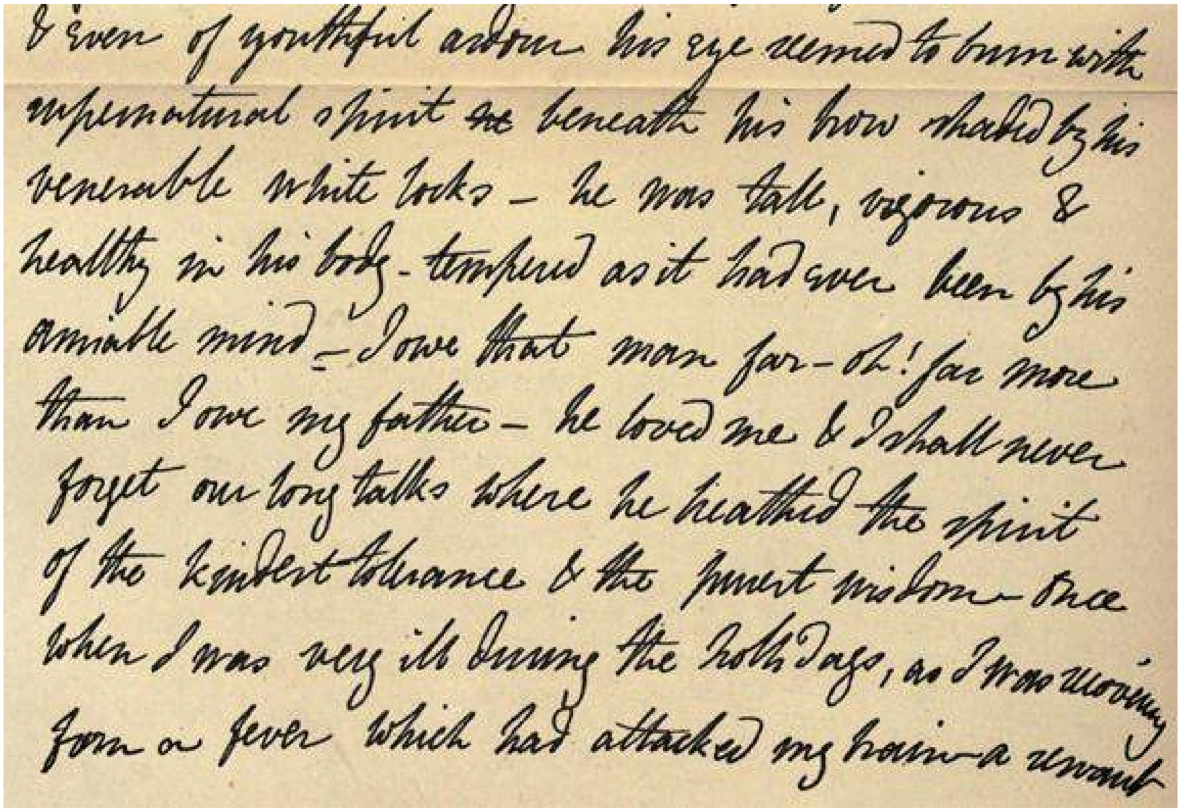
W. S. Landor.



Feb. 10th

~~He was now sent to Eton~~.

While at Eton he formed several sincere friendships al-
though disliked by the masters & hated by his superiors in
age - he was adored by his equals - He ~~made~~ was all passion
- passionate in his resistance to injury - passionate in
his love - kindness could win his whole soul & the idea
of self never for a moment tarnished the purity of his
sentiments - Among his papers there is the commencement
of an essay on friendship & in it he has thus commemorated



& even of youthful ardour his eye seemed to burn with
supernatural spirit ~~se~~ beneath his brow shaded by his
venerable white locks – he was tall, vigorous &
healthy in his body – tempered as it had ever been by his
amiable mind – I owe that man far – oh! far more
than I owe my father – he loved me & I shall never
forget our long talks where he breathed the spirit
of the kindest tolerance & the purest wisdom – Once
when I was very ill during the holidays, as I was recovering
from a fever which had attacked my brain – a servant

Of individuals as of nations, it may be true that those are happiest who have no history. The later years of Mrs. Shelley, which offer no event of public interest, were tranquil and comparatively happy. She brought out no new work after 1844. It had been her intention, now that the prohibition which constituted the chief obstacle was removed, to undertake the long-projected *Life of Shelley*. It seemed the more desirable as there was no lack of attempts at biography. Chief among these was the series of articles entitled "Shelley Papers," contributed by Mr. Hogg to the *New Monthly* magazine during 1832. They were afterwards incorporated with that so-called *Life of Shelley* which deals only with Shelley's first youth, and which, though it consists of one halfpennyworth of Shelley to an intolerable deal of Hogg, is yet a classic, and one of the most amusing classics in the world; so amusing, indeed, that, for its sake, we might address the author somewhat as Sterne is said to have apostrophised Mrs. Cibber, after hearing her sing a pathetic air of Handel, "Man, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee!" The second chapter of the book includes some fragments of biography by Mary, a facsimile of one of which, in her handwriting, is given here.

Medwin's *Life of Shelley*, inaccurate and false in facts, distasteful in style and manner, had caused Mrs. Shelley serious annoyance. The author, who wrote for money chiefly, actually offered to suppress the book *for a consideration*; a proposal which Mrs. Shelley treated with the silent contempt it deserved. These were, however, strong arguments in favour of her undertaking the book herself. She summoned up her resolution and began to collect her materials.

But it was not to be. Her powers and her health were unequal to the task. The parallel between her and the Princess of the nettle-shirts was to be carried out to the bitter end, for the last nettle-shirt lacked a sleeve, and the youngest brother always retained one swan's wing instead of an arm. The last service Mary could have rendered to Shelley was never to be completed, and so the exact details of certain passages of Shelley's life must remain for ever, to some extent, matters of speculation. No one but Mary could have supplied the true history and, as she herself had said, in the introductory note to her edition of his poems, it was not yet time to do that. Too many were living who might have been wounded or injured; nay, there still are too many to admit of a biographer's speaking with perfect frankness. But, although she might have furnished to some circumstances a key which is now for ever lost, it is equally true that there was much to be said, which hardly could, and most certainly never would have been told by her. Of his earliest youth and his life with Harriet she could, herself, know nothing but by hearsay. But the chief difficulty lay in the fact that too much of her own history was interwoven with his. How could she, now, or at any time, have placed herself, as an observer, so far outside the subject of her story as to speak of her married life with Shelley, of its influence on the development of his character and genius, of the effect of that development, and of her constant association with it on herself? Yet any life of him which left this out of account would have been most incomplete. More than that, no biography of such a man as Shelley can be completely successful which is written under great restrictions and difficulties. To paint a life-like picture of a nature like his requires a genius akin to his, aglow with the fervour of confident enthusiasm.

It was, then, as well that Mary never wrote the book. The invaluable notes which she did write to Shelley's poems have done for him all that it was in her power to accomplish, and all that is necessary. They put the reader in possession of the knowledge it concerns him to have; that of the scenes or the circumstances which inspired or suggested the poems themselves.

In 1847 she became acquainted with the lady to whom her son was afterwards married, and who was to be to Mrs. Shelley a kind of daughter and sister in one. No one, except her son, is living who knew Mary so well and loved her so enthusiastically. A mutual friend had urged them to become acquainted, assuring them both "they ought to know each other, they would suit so perfectly." Some people think that this course is one which tends oftener to postpone than to promote the desired intimacy. In the present case it was justified by the result. Mrs. Shelley called. Her future daughter-in-law, on entering the room, beheld something utterly unlike what she had imagined or expected in the famous Mrs. Shelley, — a fair, lovely, almost girlish-looking being, "as slight as a reed," with beautiful clear eyes, who put out her hand as she rose, saying half timidly, "I'm Mary Shelley." From that moment — we have her word for it — the future wife of Sir Percy had lost her heart to his mother! Their intercourse was frequent, and soon became necessary to both. The younger lady had had much experience of sorrow, and this drew the bond all the closer.

Not for some time after this meeting did Sir Percy appear on the scene. His engagement followed at no distant date, and after his marriage he, with his wife and his mother, who never during her life was to be parted from them, again went abroad.

The cup of such happiness as in this world was possible to Mary Shelley seemed now to be full, but the time was to be short during which she could taste it. She only lived three years longer, years chequered by very great anxiety (on account of illness), yet to those who now look back on them they seem as if lived under a charm. To live with Mary Shelley was indeed like entertaining an angel. Perfect unselfishness, *selflessness* indeed, characterised her at all times.

One illustration of this is afforded by her repression of the terror she felt when she saw Shelley's passion for the sea asserting itself in his son. Her own nerves had been shaken and her life darkened by a catastrophe, but not for this would she let it overshadow the lives of others. Not even when her son, with a friend, went off to Norway in a little yacht, and she was dependent for news of them on a three weeks' post, would she ever let him know the mortal anxiety she endured, but after his marriage she told it to her daughter-in-law, saying, "Now he will never wish to go to sea."

But of herself she never seemed to think at all; she lived in and for others. Her gifts and attainments, far from being obtruded, were kept out of sight; modest almost to excess as she was, she yet knew the secret of putting others at their ease. She was ready with sympathy and help and gentle counsel for all who needed them, and to the friends of her son she was such a friend as they will never forget.

The thought of Shelley, the idea of his presence, never seemed to leave her mind for a moment. She would constantly refer to what he might think, or do, or approve of, almost as if he had been in the next room. Of his history, or her own, she never spoke, nor did she ever refer to other people connected with their early life, unless there was something good to be said of them. Of those who had behaved ill to her, no word — on the subject of their behaviour — passed her lips. Her daughter-in-law had so little idea of what her associations were with Clare, that on one occasion when Miss Clairmont was coming to stay at Field Place, and Lady Shelley, who did not like her, expressed a half-formed intention of being absent during her visit and leaving Mrs. Shelley to entertain her, she was completely taken aback by the exclamation which escaped Mary's lips, "Don't go, dear! don't leave me alone with her! she has been the bane of my life ever since I was three years old!"

No more was ever said, but this was enough, even to those who did not know all, to reveal a long history of endurance.

Clare came, and more than once, to stay at Field Place, but her excitability and eccentricity had so much increased as, at times, to be little if at all under her own control, and after one unmistakable proof of this, it was deemed (by those who cared for Mrs. Shelley) desirable that she should go and return no more.

She died at Florence in 1878.

Mary Shelley's strength was ebbing, her nervous ailments increased, and the result was a loss of power in one side. Life at Field Place had had to be abandoned on grounds of health (not her own), and Sir Percy Shelley had purchased Boscombe Manor for their country home, anticipating great pleasure from his mother's enjoyment of the beautiful spot and fine climate. But she became worse, and never could be moved from her house in Chester Square till she was taken to her last resting-place. She died on the 21st of February 1851.

She died, "and her place among those who knew her intimately has never been filled up. She walked beside them, like a spirit of good, to comfort and benefit, to lighten the darkness of life, to cheer it with her sympathy and love."

These, her own words about Shelley, may with equal fitness be applied to her.

Her grave is in Bournemouth Churchyard, where, some time after, her father and mother were laid by her side.

As an author Mary Shelley did not accomplish all that was expected of her. Her letters from abroad, both during her earlier and later tours, the descriptive fragments intended for her father's biography, and above all her notes on Shelley's works, are indeed valuable and enduring contributions to literature. But it was in imaginative work that she had aspired to excel, and in which both Shelley and Godwin had urged her to persevere, confident that she could achieve a brilliant success. None of her novels, however, except *Frankenstein*, can be said to have survived the generation for which they were written. Only in that work has she left an abiding mark on literature. Yet her powers were very great, her culture very extensive, her ambition very high.

The friend whose description of her has been quoted in an earlier chapter tries to account for this. She says —

I think a partial solution for the circumscribed fame of Mrs. Shelley as a writer may be traced to her own shrinking and sensitive retiringness of nature. If, as Thackeray, perhaps justly, observes, "Persons, to succeed largely in this world, must assert themselves," most assuredly Mary Shelley never tried that path to distinction....

I never knew, in my life, either man or woman whose whole character was so entirely in harmony: no jarring discords — no incongruous, anomalous, antagonistic opposites met to disturb the perfect unity, and to counteract one day the impressions of the former. Gentleness was ever and always her distinguishing characteristic. Many years' friendship never showed me a deviation from it. But with this softness there was neither irresolution nor feebleness....

Many have fancied and accused her of being cold and apathetic. She was no such thing. She had warm, strong affections: as daughter, wife, and mother she was exemplary and devoted. Besides this, she was a faithful, unswerving friend.

••••••••

She was not a mirthful — scarcely could be called a cheerful person; and at times was subject to deep and profound fits of despondency, when she would shut herself up, and be quite inaccessible to all. Her undeviating love of truth was ever acted on — never swerved from. Her worst enemy could never charge her with falsification — even equivocation. Truth — truth — truth — was the governing principle in all the words she uttered, the thoughts and judgments she expressed. Hence she was most intolerant to deceit and falsehood, in any shape or guise, and those who attempted to practise it on her aroused as much bitter indignation as her nature was capable of....

It is too often the case that authors talk too much of their writings, and all thereunto belonging. Mrs. Shelley was the extremest reverse of this. In fact, she was almost morbidly averse to the least allusion to herself as an authoress. To call on her and find her table covered with all the accessories and unmistakable traces of *book-making*, such as copy, proofs for correction, etc., made her nearly as nervous and unselfpossessed as if she had been detected in the commission of some offence against the conventionalities of society, or the code of morality....

I really think she deemed it unwomanly to print and publish; and had it not been for the hard cash which, like so many of her craft, she so often stood in need of, I do not think she would ever have come before the world as an authoress....

Like all raised in supremacy above their fellows, either mentally or physically, Mrs. Shelley had her enemies and detractors. But none ever dared to impugn the correctness of her conduct. From the hour of her early widowhood to the period of her death, she might have married advantageously several times. But she often said, “I know not what temptation could make me change the name of Shelley.”

But the true cause lay deeper still, and may afford a clue to more puzzles than this one. What Mary Godwin might have become had she remained Mary Godwin for six or eight years longer it is impossible now to do more than guess at. But the free growth of her own original nature was checked and a new bent given to it by her early union with Shelley. Two original geniuses can rarely develop side by side, certainly not in marriage, least of all in a happy marriage. Two minds may, indeed, work consentaneously, but one, however unconsciously, will take the lead; should the other preserve its complete independence, angles must of necessity develop, and the first fitness of things disappear. And in a marriage of enthusiastic devotion and mutual admiration, the younger or the weaker mind, however candid, will shirk or stop short of conclusions which, it instinctively feels, may lead to collision. On the other hand, strong and pronounced views or peculiarities on the part of one may tend to elicit their exact opposite on the part of the other; both results being equally remote from real independence of thought. However it may be, either in marriage or in any intellectual partnership, it is a general truth that from the moment one mind is penetrated by the influence of another, its own native power over other minds has gone, and for ever. And Mary parted with this power at sixteen, before she knew what it was to have it. When she left her father’s house with Shelley she was but a child, a thing of promise, everything about her yet to be decided. Shelley himself was a half-formed creature, but of infinite possibilities and extraordinary powers, and Mary’s development had not only to keep pace with his, but to keep in time and tune with his. Sterne said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings that “to have loved her was a liberal education.” To love Shelley adequately and worthily was that and more — it was a vocation, a career, — enough for a life-time and an exceptional one.

Every reader of the present biography must see too that in Mary Shelley’s case physical causes had much to do with the limit of her intellectual achievements. Between seventeen and twenty-five she had drawn too largely on the reserve funds of life. Weak health and illness, a roving unsettled life, the birth and rearing, and then the loss, of children; great joys and great griefs, all crowded into a few young years, and coinciding with study and brain-work and the constant call on her nervous energy necessitated by companionship with Shelley, these exhausted her; and when he who was the beginning and end of her existence disappeared, “and the light of her life as if gone out,” she was left, — left what those eight years had made her, to begin again from the beginning all alone. And nobly she began, manfully she struggled, and wonderfully, considering all things, did she succeed. No one, however, has more than a certain, limited, amount of vitality to express in his or her life; the vital force may take one form or another, but cannot be used twice over. The best of Mary’s power spent itself in active life, in ministering to another being, during those eight years with Shelley. What she gained from him, and it was much, was paid back to him a hundredfold. When he was gone, and those calls for outward activity were over, there lay before her the life of literary labour and thought for which nature and training had pre-eminently fitted her. But she could not call back the freshness of her powers nor the wholeness of her heart. She did not fully know, or realise, then, the amount of life-capital she had run through. She did realise it at a later time, and the very interesting entry in her journal, dated October 21, 1838, is a kind of profession of faith; a summary of her views of life; the result of her reflections and of her experience —

Journal, October 21. — I have been so often abused by pretended friends for my lukewarmness in “the good cause,” that I disdain to answer them. I shall put down here a few thoughts on this subject. I am much of a self-examiner. Vanity is not my fault, I think; if it is, it is uncomfortable vanity, for I have none that teaches me to be satisfied with myself; far otherwise — and, if I use the word disdain, it is that I think my qualities (such as they are) not appreciated from unworthy causes. In the first place, with regard to “the good cause” — the cause of the advancement of freedom and knowledge, of the rights of women, etc. — I am not a person of opinions. I have said elsewhere that human beings differ greatly in this. Some have a passion for reforming the world, others do not cling to particular opinions. That my parents and Shelley were of the former class makes me respect it. I respect such when joined to real disinterestedness, toleration, and a clear understanding. My accusers, after such as these, appear to me mere drivellers. For myself, I earnestly desire the good and enlightenment of my fellow-creatures, and see all, in the present course, tending to the same, and rejoice; but I am not for violent extremes, which only bring on an injurious reaction. I have never written a word in disfavour of liberalism: that I have not supported it openly in writing arises from the following causes, as far as I know —

That I have not argumentative powers: I see things pretty clearly, but cannot demonstrate them. Besides, I feel the counter-arguments too strongly. I do not feel that I could say aught to support the cause efficiently; besides that, on some topics (especially with regard to my own sex) I am far from making up my mind. I believe we are sent here to educate ourselves, and that self-denial, and disappointment, and self-control are a part of our education; that it is not by taking away all restraining law that our improvement is to be achieved; and, though many things need great amendment, I can by no means go so far as my friends would have me. When I feel that I can say what will benefit my fellow-creatures, I will speak; not before. Then, I recoil from the vulgar abuse of the inimical press. I do more than recoil: proud and sensitive, I act on the defensive — an inglorious position. To hang back, as I do, brings a penalty. I was nursed and fed with a love of glory. To be something great and good was the precept given me by my Father; Shelley reiterated it. Alone and poor, I could only be something by joining a party; and there was much in me — the woman's love of looking up, and being guided, and being willing to do anything if any one supported and brought me forward — which would have made me a good partisan. But Shelley died and I was alone. My Father, from age and domestic circumstances, could not *me faire valoir*. My total friendlessness, my horror of pushing, and inability to put myself forward unless led, cherished and supported — all this has sunk me in a state of loneliness no other human being ever before, I believe, endured — except Robinson Crusoe. How many tears and spasms of anguish this solitude has cost me, lies buried in my memory.

If I had raved and ranted about what I did not understand, had I adopted a set of opinions, and propagated them with enthusiasm; had I been careless of attack, and eager for notoriety; then the party to which I belonged had gathered round me, and I had not been alone.

It has been the fashion with these same friends to accuse me of worldliness. There, indeed, in my own heart and conscience, I take a high ground. I may distrust my own judgment too much — be too indolent and too timid; but in conduct I am above merited blame.

I like society; I believe all persons who have any talent (who are in good health) do. The soil that gives forth nothing may lie ever fallow; but that which produces — however humble its product — needs cultivation, change of harvest, refreshing dews, and ripening sun. Books do much; but the living intercourse is the vital heat. Debarred from that, how have I pined and died!

My early friends chose the position of enemies. When I first discovered that a trusted friend had acted falsely by me, I was nearly destroyed. My health was shaken. I remember thinking, with a burst of agonising tears, that I should prefer a bed of torture to the unutterable anguish a friend's falsehood engendered. There is no resentment; but the world can never be to me what it was before. Trust and confidence, and the heart's sincere devotion are gone.

I sought at that time to make acquaintances — to divert my mind from this anguish. I got entangled in various ways through my ready sympathy and too eager heart; but I never crouched to society — never sought it unworthily. If I have never written to vindicate the rights of women, I have ever befriended women when oppressed. At every risk I have befriended and supported victims to the social system; but I make no boast, for in truth it is simple justice I perform; and so I am still reviled for being worldly.

God grant a happier and a better day is near! Percy — my all-in-all — will, I trust, by his excellent understanding, his clear, bright, sincere spirit and affectionate heart, repay me for sad long years of desolation. His career may lead me into the thick of life or only gild a quiet home. I am content with either, and, as I grow older, I grow more fearless for myself — I become firmer in my opinions. The experienced, the suffering, the thoughtful, may at last speak unrebuked. If it be the will of God that I live, I may ally my name yet to "the Good Cause," though I do not expect to please my accusers.

Thus have I put down my thoughts. I may have deceived myself; I may be in the wrong; I try to examine myself; and such as I have written appears to me the exact truth.

Enough of this! The great work of life goes on. Death draws near. To be better after death than in life is one's hope and endeavour — to be so through self-schooling. If I write the above, it is that those who love me may hereafter know that I am not all to blame, nor merit the heavy accusations cast on me for not putting myself forward. I cannot do that; it is against my nature. As well cast me from a precipice and rail at me for not flying.

The true success of Mary Shelley's life was not, therefore, the intellectual triumph of which, during her youth, she had loved to dream, and which at one time seemed to be actually within her grasp, but the moral success of beauty of character. To those people — a daily increasing number in this tired world — who erect the natural grace of animal spirits to the rank of the highest virtue, this success may appear hardly worth the name. Yet it was a very real victory. Her nature was not without faults or tendencies which, if undisciplined, might have developed into faults, but every year she lived seemed to mellow and ripen her finer qualities, while blemishes or weaknesses were suppressed or overcome, and finally disappeared altogether.

As to her theological views, about which the most contradictory opinions have been expressed, it can but be said that nothing in Mrs. Shelley's writings gives other people the right to formulate for her any dogmatic opinions at all. Brought up in a purely rationalistic creed, her education had of course, no tinge of what is known as "personal religion," and it must be repeated here that none of her acts and views were founded, or should be judged as if they were founded on Biblical commands or prohibitions. That the temper of her mind, so to speak, was eminently religious there can be no doubt; that she believed in God and a future state there are many allusions to show. Perhaps no one, having lived with the so-called atheist, Shelley, could have accepted the idea of the limitation, or the extinction of intelligence and goodness. Her liberality of mind, however, was rewarded by abuse from some of her acquaintance, because her toleration was extended even to the orthodox.

Her moral opinions, had they ever been formulated, which they never were, would have approximated closely to those of Mary Wollstonecraft, limited, however, by an inability, like her father's, *not* to see both sides of a question, and also by the severest and most elevated standard of moral purity, of personal faith and loyalty. To be judged by such a standard she would have regarded as a woman's highest privilege. To claim as a "woman's right" any licence, any lowering of the standard of duty in these matters, would have been to her incomprehensible and impossible. But, with all this, she discriminated. Her standard was not that of the conventional world.

At every risk, as she says, she befriended those whom she considered "victims to the social system." It was a difficult course; for, while her acquaintance of the "advanced" type accused her of cowardice and worldliness for not asserting herself as a champion of universal liberty, there were more who were ready to decry her for her friendly relations with Countess Guiccioli, Lady Mountcashel, and others not named here; to say nothing of Clare, to whom much of her happiness had been sacrificed. She refrained from pronouncing judgment, but reserved her liberty of action, and in all doubtful cases gave others the benefit of the doubt, and this without respect of persons. She would not excommunicate a humble individual for what was passed over in a man or woman of genius; nor condemn a woman for what, in a man, might be excused, or might even add to his social reputation. Least of all would she secure her own position by shunning those whose case had once been hers, and who in their after life had been less fortunate than she. Pure herself, she could be charitable, and she could be just.

The influence of such a wife on Shelley's more vehement, visionary temperament can hardly be over-estimated. Their moods did not always suit or coincide; each, at times, made the other suffer. It could not be otherwise with two natures so young, so strong, and so individual. But, if forbearance may have been sometimes called for on the one hand, and on the other a charity which is kind and thinks no evil, it was only a part of that discipline from which the married life of geniuses is not exempt, and which tests the temper and quality of the metal it tries; an ordeal from which two noble natures come forth the purer and the stronger.

The indirect, unconscious power of elevation of character is great, and not even a Shelley but must be the better for association with it, not even he but must be the nobler, "yea, three times less unworthy" through the love of such a woman as Mary. He would not have been all he was without her sustaining and refining influence; without the constant sense that in loving him she loved his ideals also. We owe him, in part, to her.

Love — the love of Love — was Shelley's life and creed. This, in Mary's creed, was interpreted as love of Shelley. By all the rest she strove to do her duty, but, when the end came, that survived as the one great fact of her life — a fact she might have uttered in words like his —

And where is Truth? On tombs; for such to thee
Has been my heart; and thy dead memory
Has lain from (girlhood), many a changeful year,
Unchangingly preserved, and buried there.

F. D. & Co.

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POSTSCRIPT

Since this book was printed, a series of letters from Harriet Shelley to an Irish friend, Mrs. Nugent, containing references to the separation from Shelley, has been published in the New York *Nation*. These letters, however, add nothing to what was previously known of Harriet's history and life with Shelley. After November 1813 the correspondence ceases. It is resumed in August 1814, after the separation and Shelley's departure from England. Harriet's account of these events — gathered by her at second-hand from those who can, themselves, have had no knowledge of the facts they professed to relate — embodies all the slanderous reports adverted to in the seventh chapter of the present work, and all the gratuitous falsehoods circulated by Mrs. Godwin; — falsehoods which Professor Dowden, in the Appendix to his *Life of Shelley*, has been at the trouble directly to disprove, statement by statement; — falsehoods of which the Author cannot but hope that an amply sufficient, if an indirect, refutation may be found in the present Life of Mary Shelley.

MRS. SHELLEY by Lucy M. Rossetti

CONTENTS

PREFACE.
CHAPTER I. PARENTAGE.
CHAPTER II. GIRLHOOD OF MARY — PATERNAL TROUBLES.
CHAPTER III. SHELLEY.
CHAPTER IV. MARY AND SHELLEY.
CHAPTER V. LIFE IN ENGLAND.
CHAPTER VI. DEATH OF SHELLEY'S GRANDFATHER, AND BIRTH OF A CHILD.
CHAPTER VII. "FRANKENSTEIN."
CHAPTER VIII. RETURN TO ENGLAND.
CHAPTER IX. LIFE IN ITALY.
CHAPTER X. MARY'S DESPONDENCY AND BIRTH OF A SON.
CHAPTER XI. GODWIN AND "VALPERGA."
CHAPTER XII. LAST MONTHS WITH SHELLEY.
CHAPTER XIII. WIDOWHOOD.
CHAPTER XIV. LITERARY WORK.
CHAPTER XV. LATER WORKS.
CHAPTER XVI. ITALY REVISITED.
CHAPTER XVII. LAST YEARS.

PREFACE.

I have to thank all the previous students of Shelley as poet and man — not last nor least among whom is my husband — for their loving and truthful research on all the subjects surrounding the life of Mrs. Shelley. Every aspect has been presented, and of known material it only remained to compare, sift, and use with judgment. Concerning facts subsequent to Shelley's death, many valuable papers have been placed at my service, and I have made no new statement which there are not existing documents to vouch for.

This book was in the publishers' hands before the appearance of Mrs. Marshall's *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, and I have had neither to omit, add to, nor alter anything in this work, in consequence of the publication of hers. The passages from letters of Mrs. Shelley to Mr. Trelawny were kindly placed at my disposal by his son-in-law and daughter, Colonel and Mrs. Call, as early as the summer of 1888.

Among authorities used are Prof. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, Mr. W. M. Rossetti's *Memoir* and other writings, Mr. Jeaffreson's *Real Shelley,* Mr. Kegan Paul's *Life of William Godwin*, Godwin's *Memoir of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Mrs. Pennell's *Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin*, &c. &c.

Among those to whom my special thanks are due for original information and the use of documents, &c., are, foremost, Mr. H. Buxton Forman, Mr. Cordy Jeaffreson, Mrs. Call, Mr. Alexander Ireland, Mr. Charles C. Pilfold, Mr. J. H. Ingram, Mrs. Cox, and Mr. Silsbee, and, for friendly counsel, Prof. Dowden; and I must particularly thank Lady Shelley for conveying to me her husband's courteous message and permission to use passages of letters by Mrs. Shelley, interspersed in this biography.

LUCY MADOX ROSSETTI.

CHAPTER I. PARENTAGE.

The daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and Godwin, the wife of Shelley: here, surely, is eminence by position, for those who care for the progress of humanity and the intellectual development of the race. Whether this combination conferred eminence on the daughter and wife as an individual is what we have to enquire. Born as she was at a time of great social and political disturbance, the child, by inheritance, of the great French Revolution, and suffering, as soon as born, a loss certainly in her case the greatest of all, that of her noble-minded mother, we can imagine the kind of education this young being passed through — with the abstracted and anxious philosopher-father, with the respectable but shallow-minded step-mother provided by Godwin to guard the young children he so suddenly found himself called upon to care for, Mary and two half-sisters about her own age. How the volumes of philosophic writings, too subtle for her childish experience, would be pored over; how the writings of the mother whose loving care she never knew, whose sad experiences and advice she never heard, would be read and re-read. We can imagine how these writings, and the discourses she doubtless frequently heard, as a child, between her father and his friends, must have impressed Mary more forcibly than the respectable precepts laid down in a weak way for her guidance; how all this prepared her to admire what was noble and advanced in idea, without giving her the ballast needful for acting in the fittest way when a time of temptation came, when Shelley appeared. He appeared as the devoted admirer of her father and his philosophy, and as such was admitted into the family intimacy of three inexperienced girls.

Picture these four young imaginative beings together; Shelley, half-crazed between youthful imagination and vague ideas of regenerating mankind, and ready at any incentive to feel himself freed from his part in the marriage ceremony. What prudent parents would have countenanced such a visitor? And need there be much surprise at the subsequent occurrences, and much discussion as to the right or wrong in the case? How the actors in this drama played their subsequent part on the stage of life;

whether they did work which fitted them to be considered worthy human beings remains to be examined.

* * * * *

As no story or life begins with itself, so, more especially with this of our heroine, we must recall the past, and at least know something of her parents.

Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the most remarkable and misunderstood women of even her remarkable day, was born in April 1759, in or near London, of parents of whose ancestors little is known. Her father, son of a Spitalfields manufacturer, possessed an adequate fortune for his position; her mother was of Irish family. They had six children, of whom Mary was the second. Family misery, in her case as in many, seems to have been the fountainhead of her genius. Her father, a hot-tempered, dissipated man, unable to settle anywhere or to anything, naturally proved a domestic tyrant. Her mother seems little to have understood her daughter's disposition, and to have been extremely harsh, harassed no doubt by the behaviour of her husband, who frequently used personal violence on her as well as on his children; this, doubtless, under the influence of drink.

Such being the childhood of Mary Wollstonecraft, it can be understood how she early learnt to feel fierce indignation at the injustice to, and the wrongs of women, for whom there was little protection against such domestic tyranny. Picture her sheltering her little sisters and brother from the brutal wrath of a man whom no law restricted, and can her repugnance to the laws made by men on these subjects be wondered at? Only too rarely do the victims of such treatment rise to be eloquent of their wrongs.

The frequent removals of her family left little chance of forming friendships for the sad little Mary; but she can scarcely have been exactly lonely with her small sisters and brothers, possibly a little more positive loneliness or quiet would have been desirable. As she grew older her father's passions increased, and often did she boldly interpose to shield her mother from his drunken wrath, or waited outside her room for the morning to break. So her childhood passed into girlhood, her senses numbed by misery, till she had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of a Mr. and Mrs. Clare, a clergyman and his wife, who were kind to the friendless girl and soon found her to have undeveloped good qualities. She spent much time with them, and it was they who introduced her to Fanny Blood, whose friendship henceforth proved one of the chief influences of her life; this it was that first roused her intellectual faculty, and, with the gratitude of a fine nature, she never after forgot where she first tasted the delight of the fountain which transmutes even misery into the source of work and poetry.

Here, again, Mary found the story of a home that might have been ruined by a dissipated father, had it not been for the cheerful devotion of this daughter Fanny, who kept the family chiefly by her work, painting, and brought up her young brothers and sisters with care. A bright and happy example at this moment to stimulate Mary, and raise her from the absorbing and hopeless contemplation of her own troubles; she then, at sixteen, resolved to work so as to educate herself to undertake all that might and would fall on her as the stay of her family. Fresh wanderings of the restless father ensued, and finally she decided to accept a situation as lady's companion; this her hard previous life made a position of comparative ease to her, and, although all the former companions had left the lady in despair, she remained two years with her till her mother's illness required her presence at home. Mrs. Wollstonecraft's hard life had broken her constitution, and in death she procured her first longed-for rest from sorrow and toil, counselling her daughters to patience. Deprived of the mother, the daughters could no longer remain with their father; and Mary, at eighteen, had again to seek her fortune in a hard world — Fanny Blood being, as ever, her best friend. One of her sisters became housekeeper to her brother; and Eliza married, but by no means improved her position by this, for her marriage proved another unhappy one, and only added to Mary's sad observation of the marriage state. A little later she had to help this sister to escape from a life which had driven her to madness. When her sister's peace of mind was restored, they were enabled to open a school together at Stoke Newington Green, for a time with success; but failure and despondency followed, and Mary, whose health was broken, accepted a pressing invitation from her friend Fanny, who had married a Mr. Skeys, to go and stay with her at Lisbon, and nurse her through her approaching confinement. This sad visit — for during her stay there she lost her dearly loved friend — broke the monotony of her life, and perhaps the change, with sea voyage which was beneficial to her health, helped her anew to fight the battle of life on her return. But fresh troubles assailed her. Some friend suggested to her to try literature, and a pamphlet, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, was her first attempt. For this she received ten guineas, with which she was able to help her friends the Bloods.

She shortly afterwards accepted a situation as governess in Lord Kingsborough's family, where she was much loved by her pupils; but their mother, who did little to gain their affection herself, becoming jealous of the ascendency of Mary over them, found some pretext for dismissing her. Mary's contact, while in this house, with people of fashion inspired her only with contempt for their small pleasures and utterly unintellectual discourse. These surroundings, although she was treated much on a footing of equality by the family, were a severe privation for Mary, who was anxious to develop her mind, and to whom spiritual needs were ever above physical.

On leaving the Kingsboroughs, Mary found work of a kind more congenial to her disposition, as Mr. Johnson, the bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard who had taken her pamphlet, now gave her regular work as his "reader," and also in translating. Now began the happiest part of Mary's life. In the midst of books she soon formed a circle of admiring friends. She lived in the simplest way, in a room almost bare of furniture, in Blackfriars. Here she was able to see after her sisters and to have with her her young brother, who had been much neglected; and in the intervals of her necessary work she began writing on the subjects which lay nearest to her heart; for here, among other work, she commenced her celebrated *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a work for which women ought always to be grateful to her, for with this began in England the movement which, progressing amidst much obloquy and denunciation, has led to so many of the reforms in social life which have come, and may be expected to lead to many which we still hope for. When we think of the nonsense which has been talked both in and out of Parliament, even within the last decade, about the advanced women who have worked to improve the position of their less fortunate sisters, we can well understand in what light Mary Wollstonecraft was regarded by many whom fortunately she was not bound to consider. Her reading, which had been deep and constant, together with her knowledge of life from different points of view, enabled her to form just opinions on many of the great reforms needed, and these she unhesitatingly set down. How much has since been done which she advocated for the education of women, and how much they have already benefited both by her example and precept, is perhaps not yet generally enough known. Her religious tone is always striking; it was one of the moving factors of her life, as with all seriously thinking beings, though its form became much modified with the advance in her intellectual development.

Her scheme in the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* may be summed up thus: —

She wished women to have education equal to that of men, and this has now to a great extent been accorded.

That trades, professions, and other pursuits should be open to women.
This wish is now in progress of fulfilment.

That married women should own their own property as in other European countries. Recent laws have granted this right.

That they should have more facilities for divorce from husbands guilty of immoral conduct. This has been partially granted, though much still remains to be effected.

That, in the case of separation, the custody of children should belong equally to both parents.

That a man should be legally responsible for his illegitimate children. That he should be bound to maintain the woman he has wronged.

Mary Wollstonecraft also thought that women should have representatives in Parliament to uphold their interests; but her chief desires are in the matter of education. Unlike Rousseau, she would have all children educated together till nine years of age; like Rousseau, she would have them meet for play in a common play-ground. At nine years their capacities might be sufficiently developed to judge which branch of education would be then desirable for each; girls and boys being still educated together, and capacity being the only line of demarcation.

Thus it will be seen that Mary’s primary wish was to make women responsible and sensible companions for men; to raise them from the beings they were made by the frivolous fashionable education of the time; to make them fit mothers to educate or superintend the education of their children, for education does not end or begin with what may he taught in schools. To make a woman a reasoning being, by means of Euclid if necessary, need not preclude her from being a charming woman also, as proved by the descriptions we have of Mary Wollstonecraft herself. Doubtless some of the most crying evils of civilisation can only be cured by raising the intellectual and moral status of woman, and thus raising that of man also, so that he, regarding her as a companion whose mind reflects the beauties of nature, and who can appreciate the great reflex of nature as transmitted through the human mind in the glorious art of the world, may really be raised to the ideal state where the sacrilege of love will be unknown. We know that this great desire must have passed through Mary Wollstonecraft's mind and prompted her to her eloquent appeal for the "vindication of the rights of woman."

With Mary's improved prospects, for she fortunately lived in a time when the strong emotions and realities of life brought many influential people admiringly around her, she was able to pay a visit to Paris in 1792. No one can doubt her interest in the terrible drama there being enacted, and her courage was equal to the occasion; but even this journey is brought up in disparagement of her, and this partly owing to Godwin's naïve remark in his diary, that "there is no reason to doubt that if Fuseli had been disengaged at the period of their acquaintance he would have been the man of her choice." As the little *if* is a very powerful word, of course this amounts to nothing, and it is scarcely the province of a biographer to say what might have taken place under other circumstances, and to criticise a character from that standpoint. If Mary was attracted by Fuseli's genius, and this would not have been surprising, and if she went to Paris for change of scene and thought, she certainly only set a sensible example. As it was, she had ample matter of interest in the stirring scenes around her — she with a heart to feel the woes of all: the miseries however real and terrible of the prince did not blind her to those of the peasant; the cold and calculating torture of centuries was not to be passed over because a maddened people, having gained for a time the right of power by might, brought to judgment the representatives, even then vacillating and treacherous, of ages of oppression. Her heart bled for all, but most for the longest suffering; and she was struck senseless to the ground by the news of the execution of the "twenty-one," the brave Girondins. Would that another woman, even greater than herself, had been untrammelled by her sex, and could have wielded at first hand the power she had to exercise through others; and might not France have been thus again saved by a Joan of Arc — not only France, but the Revolution in all its purity of idea, not in its horror.

In France, too, the women's question had been mooted; Condorcet having written that one of the greatest steps of progress of the human intellect would be the freedom from prejudice that would give equality of right to both sexes: and the *Requête des Dames à l'Assemblée Nationale* 1791, was made simultaneously with the appearance of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. These were strong reasons to attract Mary to France, strange as the time was for such a journey; but even then her book was translated and read both in France and Germany. So here was Mary settled for a time, the English scarcely having realised the turmoil that existed. She arrived just before the execution of Louis XVI., and with a few friends was able to study the spirit of the time, and begin a work on the subject, which, unfortunately, never reached more than its first volume. Her account, in a letter to Mr. Johnson, shows how acutely she felt in her solitude on the day of the King's execution; how, for the first time in her life, at night she dared not extinguish her candle. In fact, the faculty of feeling for others so acutely as to gain courage to uphold reform, does not necessarily evince a lack of sensitiveness on the part of the individual, as seems often to be supposed, but the very reverse. We can well imagine how Mary felt the need of sympathy and support, separated as she was from her friends and from her country, which was now at war with France. Alone at Neuilly, where she had to seek shelter both for economy and safety, with no means of returning to England, and unable to go to Switzerland through her inability to procure a passport, her money dwindling, still she managed to continue her literary work; and as well as some letters on the subject of the Revolution, she wrote at Neuilly all that was ever finished of her *Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*. Her only servant at this time was an old gardener, who used to attend her on her rambles through the woods, and more than once as far as Paris. On one of these occasions she was so sickened with horror at the evidence of recent executions which she saw in the streets that she began boldly denouncing the perpetrators of such savagery, and had to be hurried away for her life by some sympathetic onlookers. It was during this time of terror around and depression within that Mary met Captain Gilbert Imlay, an American, at the house of a mutual friend.

Now began the complication of reasons and deeds which caused bitter grief in not only one generation. Mary was prompted by loneliness, love, and danger on all hands. There was risk in proclaiming herself an English subject by marriage, if indeed there was at the time the possibility of such a marriage as would have been valid in England, though, as the wife of an American citizen, she was safe. Thus, at a time when all laws were defied, she took the fatal step of trusting in Imlay's honour and constancy; and, confident of her own pure motives, entered into a union which her letters to him, full of love, tenderness, and fidelity, proved that she regarded as a sacred marriage; all the circumstances, and, not least, the pathetic way she writes to him of their child later on, prove how she only wished to remain faithful to him. It was now that the sad experiences of her early life told upon her and warped her better judgment; she who had seen so much of the misery of married life when love was dead, regarded that side, not considering the sacred relationship, the right side of marriage, which she came to understand later — too late, alas!

So passed this *année terrible*, and with it Mary's short-lived happiness with Imlay, for before the end we find her writing, evidently saddened by his repeated absences. She followed him to Havre, where, in April, their child Fanny was born, and for a while happiness was restored, and Mary lived in comfort with him, her time fully occupied between work and love for Imlay and their child; but this period was short, for in August he was called to Paris on business. She followed him, but another journey of his to England only finished the separation. Work of some sort having been ever her one resource, she started for Norway with Fanny and a maid, furnished with a letter of Imlay's, in which he requested "all men to know that he appoints Mary Imlay, his wife, to transact all his business for him." Her letters published shortly after her return from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, divested of the personal details, were considered to show a marked advance in literary style, and from the slow modes of travelling, and the many letters of introduction to people in all the towns and villages she visited, she was enabled to send home characteristic details of all classes of people. The personal portions of the letters are to be found among her posthumous works, and these, with letters written after her return, and when she was undoubtedly convinced of Imlay's baseness and infidelity, are terrible and pathetic records of her misery — misery which drove her to an attempt at suicide. This was fortunately frustrated, so that she was spared to meet with a short time of happiness later, and to prove to herself and Godwin, both previous sceptics in the matter, that lawful marriage can be happy. Mary, rescued from despair, returned to work, the restorer, and refused all assistance from Imlay, not degrading herself by receiving a monetary compensation where faithfulness was wanting. She also provided for her child Fanny, as Imlay disregarded entirely his promises of a settlement on her.

As her literary work brought her again in contact with the society she was accustomed to, so her health and spirits revived, and she was able again to hold her place as one of its celebrities. And now it was that her friendship was renewed with that other celebrity, whose philosophy ranged beyond his age and century, and probably beyond some centuries to come. His advanced ideas are, nevertheless, what most thinking people would hope that the race might attain to when mankind shall have reached a higher status, and selfishness shall be less allowed in creeds, or rather in practice; for how small the resemblance between the founder of a creed and its followers is but too apparent.

So now Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, the author of *Political Justice*, have again met, and this time not under circumstances as adverse as in November 1790, when he dined in her company at Mr. Johnson's, and was disappointed because he wished to hear the conversation of Thomas Paine, who was a taciturn man, and he considered that Mary engrossed too much of the talk. Now it was otherwise; her literary style had gained greatly in the opinion of Godwin, as of others, and, as all their subjects of interest were similar, their friendship increased, and melted gently into mutual love, as exquisitely described by Godwin himself in a book now little known; and this love, which ended in marriage, had no after-break.

But we must now again retrace our steps, for in the father of Mary Shelley we have another of the representative people of his time, whose early life and antecedents must not be passed over.

William Godwin, the seventh of thirteen children, was born at Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, on March 3, 1756. His parents, both of respectable well-to-do families, were well known in their native place, his great-great-grandfather having been Mayor of Newbury in 1706. The father, John Godwin, became a dissenting minister, and William was brought up in all the strictness of a sectarian country home of that period. His mother was equally strict in her views; and a cousin, who became one of the family — a Miss Godwin, afterwards Mrs. Sotheran, with whom William was an especial favourite — brought in aid her strongly Calvinistic tendencies. His first studies began with an “Account of the Pious Deaths of many Godly Children”; and often did he feel willing to die if he could, with equal success, engage the admiration of his friends and the world. His mother devoutly believed that all who differed from the basis of her own religious views would endure the eternal torments of hell; and his father seriously reproved his levity when, one Sunday, he happened to take the cat in his arms while walking in the garden. All this naturally impressed the child at the time, and his chief amusement or pleasure was preaching sermons in the kitchen every Sunday afternoon, unmindful whether the audience was duly attentive or not. From a dame’s school, where, by the age of eight, he had read through the whole of the Old and New Testament, he passed to one held by a certain Mr. Akers, celebrated as a penman and also moderately efficient in Latin and Mathematics. Godwin next became the pupil of Mr. Samuel Newton, whose Sandemanian views, surpassing those of Calvin in their wholesale holocaust of souls, for a time impressed him, till later thought caused him to detest both these views and the master who promulgated them. Indeed, it is not to be wondered at that so thinking a person as Godwin, remembering the rules laid down by those he loved and respected in his childhood, should have wandered far into the abstract labyrinths of right and wrong, and, wishing to simplify what was right, should have travelled in his imagination into the dim future, and have laid down a code beyond the scope of present mortals. Well for him, perhaps, and for his code, if this is yet so far beyond that it is not taken up and distorted out of all resemblance to his original intention before the time for its possible practical application comes. For Godwin himself it was also well that, with these uncongenial early surroundings, he, when the time came to think, was of the calm — most calm and unimpassioned philosophic temperament, instead of the high poetic nature; not that the two may not sometimes overlap and mingle; but with Godwin the downfall of old ideas led to reasoning out new theories in clear prose; and even this he would not give to be rashly and indiscriminately read at large, but published in three-guinea volumes, knowing well that those who could expend that sum on books are not usually inclined to overthrow the existing order of things. In fact, he felt it was the rich who wanted preaching to more than the poor.

Apart from sectarian doctrines, his tutor, Mr. Newton, seems to have given Godwin the advantage of the free range of his library; and doubtless this was excellent education for him at that time. After he had acted as usher for over a year, from the age of fifteen, his mother, at his father's death in 1772, wished him to enter Homerton Academy; but the authorities would not admit him on suspicion of Sandemanianism. He, however, gained admittance to Hoxton College. Here he planned tragedies on Iphigenia and the death of Cæsar, and also began to study Sandeman's work from a library, to find out what he was accused of. This probably caused, later, his horror of these ideas, and also started his neverending search after truth.

In 1777 he became, in his turn, a dissenting minister; until, with reading and fresh acquaintances ever widening his views, gradually his profession became distasteful to him, and in 1788, on quitting Beaconsfield, he proposed opening a school. His *Life of Lord Chatham*, however, gained notice, and he was led to other political writing, and so became launched on a literary career. With his simple tastes he managed not only for years to keep himself till he became celebrated, but he was also a great help to different members of his family; several of these did not come as well as William out of the ordeal of their strict education, but caused so little gratification to their mother and elder brother — a farmer who resided near the mother — that she destroyed all their correspondence, nearly all William's also, as it might relate to them. Letters from the cousin, Mrs. Sotheran, show, however, that William Godwin's novel-writing was likewise a sore point in his family.

In the midst of his literary work and philosophic thought, it was natural that Godwin should get associated with other men of advanced opinions. Joseph Fawcet, whose literary and intellectual eminence was much admired in his day, was one of the first to influence Godwin — his declamation against domestic affections must have coincided well with Godwin's unimpassioned justice; Thomas Holcroft, with his curious ideas of death and disease, whose ardent republicanism led to his being tried for his life as a traitor; George Dyson, whose abilities and zeal in the cause of literature and truth promised much that was unfortunately never realised: these, and later Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were acknowledged by Godwin to have greatly influenced his ideas. Godwin acted according to his own theories of right in adopting and educating Thomas Cooper, a second cousin, whose father died, ruined, in India. The rules laid down in his diary show that Godwin strove to educate him successfully, and he certainly gained the youth's confidence, and launched him successfully in his own chosen profession as an actor. Godwin seems always to have adhered to his principles, and after the success of his *Life of Chatham*, when he became a contributor to the *Political Herald*, he attracted the attention of the Whig Party, to whose cause he was so useful that Fox proposed, through Sheridan, to set a fund aside to pay him as Editor. This, however, was not accepted by Godwin, who would not lose his independence by becoming attached to any party.

He was naturally, to a great extent, a follower of Rousseau, and a sympathiser with the ideas of the French Revolution, and was one of the so-called "French Revolutionists," at whose meetings Horne Tooke, Holcroft, Stanhope, and others figured. Nor did he neglect to defend, in the *Morning Chronicle*, some of these when on their trial for high treason; though, from his known principles, he was himself in danger; and without doubt his clear exposition of the true case greatly modified public opinion and helped to prevent an adverse verdict. Among Godwin's multifarious writings are his novels, some of which had great success, especially *Caleb Williams*; also his sketch of English History, contributed to the *Annual Register*. His historical writing shows much research and study of old documents. On comparing it with the contemporary work of his friends, such as Coleridge, it becomes evident that his knowledge and learning were utilized by them. But these works were anonymous; by his *Political Justice* he became famous. This work is a philosophical treatise based on the assumption, that man, as a reasoning being, can be guided wholly by reason, and that, were he educated from this point of view, laws would be unnecessary. It must be observed here that Godwin could not then take into consideration the laws of heredity, now better understood; how the criminal has not only the weight of bad education and surroundings against him, but also how the very formation of the head is in certain cases an almost insuperable evil. He considered many of the laws relating to property, marriage, &c., unnecessary, as people guided by reason would not, for instance, wish for wealth at the expense of starving brethren. Far in the distance as the realisation of this doctrine may seem, it should still be remembered that, as with each physical discovery, the man of genius must foresee. As Columbus imagined land where he found America; as a planet is fixed by the astronomer before the telescope has revealed it to his mortal eye; so in the world of psychology and morals it is necessary to point out the aim to be attained before human nature has reached those divine qualifications which are only shadowed forth here and there by more than usually elevated natures. In fact Godwin, who sympathised entirely with the theories of the French Revolution, and even surpassed French ideas on most subjects, disapproved of the immediate carrying out of these ideas and views; he wished for preaching and reasoning till people should gradually become convinced of the truth, and the rich should be as ready to give as the poor to receive. Even in the matter of marriage, though strongly opposed to it personally (on philosophical grounds, not from the ordinary trite reasoning against it), he yielded his opinion to the claim of individual justice towards the woman whom he came to love with an undying affection, and for whom, fortunately for his theories, he needed not to set aside the impulse of affection for that of justice; and these remarks bring us again to the happy time in the lives of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, when friendship melted into love, and they were married shortly afterwards, in March 1797, at old St. Pancras Church, London.

This new change in her life interfered no more with the energy for work with Mary Wollstonecraft than with Godwin. They adopted the singular, though in their case probably advantageous, decision to continue each to have a separate place of abode, in order that each might work uninterruptedly, though, as pointed out by an earnest student of their character, they probably wasted more time in their constant interchange of notes on all subjects than they would have lost by a few conversations. On the other hand, as their thoughts were worth recording, we have the benefit of their plan. The short notes which passed between Mary and Godwin, as many as three and four in a day, as well as letters of considerable length written during a tour which Godwin made in the midland counties with his friend Basil Montague, show how deep and simple their affection was, that there was no need of hiding the passing cloud, that they both equally disliked and wished to simplify domestic details. There was, for instance, some sort of slight dispute as to who should manage a plumber, on which occasion Mary seems to have been somewhat hurt at its being put upon her, as giving an idea of her inferiority. This, with the tender jokes about Godwin's icy philosophy, and the references to a little "William" whom they were both anxiously expecting, all evince the tender devotion of husband and wife, whose relationship was of a nature to endure through ill or good fortune. Little Fanny was evidently only an added pleasure to the two, and Godwin's thought of her at a distance and his choice of the prettiest mug at Wedgewood's with "green and orange-tawny flowers," testify to the fatherly instinct of Godwin. But, alas! this loving married friendship was not to last long, for the day arrived, August 30, 1797, which had been long expected; and the hopeful state of the case is shown in three little letters written by Mary to her husband, for she wished him to be spared anxiety by absence. And there was born a little girl, not the William so quaintly spoken of; but the Mary whose future life we must try and realise. Even now her first trouble comes, for, within a few hours of the child's birth, dangerous symptoms began with the mother; ten days of dread anxiety ensued, and not all the care of intelligent watchers, nor the constant waiting for service of the husband's faithful intimate friends, nor the skill of the first doctors could save the life which was doomed: Fate must wreak its relentless will. Her work remains to help many a struggling woman, and still to give hope of more justice to follow; perchance at one important moment it misled her own child. And so the mysteries of the workings of Fate and the mysteries of death joined with those of a new life.

CHAPTER II. GIRLHOOD OF MARY — PATERNAL TROUBLES.

And now with the beginning of this fragile little life begin the anxieties and sorrow of poor Godwin. The blank lines drawn in his diary for Sunday 10th September 1797, show more than words how unutterable was his grief. During the time of his wife's patient agony he had managed to ask if she had any wishes concerning Fanny and Mary. She was fortunately able to reply that her faith in his wisdom was entire.

On the very day of his wife's death Godwin himself wrote some letters he considered necessary, nor did he neglect to write in his own characteristic plain way to one who he considered had slighted his wife. His friends Mr. Basil Montague and Mr. Marshall arranged the funeral, and Mrs. Reveley, who had with her the children before the mother's death, continued her care till they returned to the father on the 17th. Mrs. Fenwick, who had been in constant attendance on Mary, then took care of them for a time. Indeed, Mary's fame and character brought forward many willing to care for the motherless infant, whose life was only saved from a dangerous illness by this loving zeal. Among others Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson appeared with offers of help, and as early as September 18 we find that Godwin had requested Mr. Nicholson to give an opinion as to the infant's physiognomy, with a view to her education, which he (with Trelawny later) considered could not begin too soon, or as the latter said: "Talk of education beginning at two years! Two months is too late."

Thus we see Godwin conscientiously trying to bring in an imperfect science to assist him in the difficult task of developing his infant's mind, in place of the watchful love of an intelligent mother, who would check the first symptoms of ill-temper, be firm against ill-placed determination, encourage childish imagination, and not let the idea of untruth be presented to the child till old enough to discriminate for itself. A hard task enough for any father, still harder for Godwin, beset by all kinds of difficulties, and having to work in the midst of them for his and the two children's daily sustenance. Friends, and good friends, he certainly had; but most people will recognise that strength in these matters does not rest in numbers. The wet nurse needed by little Mary, though doubtless the essential necessity of the time, would not add to the domestic comfort, especially to that of Miss Louisa Jones, a friend of Harriet Godwin, who had been installed to superintend Godwin's household. This latter arrangement, again, did not tend to Godwin's comfort, as from Miss Jones's letters it is evident that she wished to marry him. Her wish not being reciprocated, she did not long remain an inmate of his house, and the nurse, who was fortunately devoted to the baby, was then over-looked from time to time by Mrs. Reveley and other ladies.

Of anecdotes of Mary's infancy and childhood there are but few, but from the surroundings we can picture the child. Her father about this time seems to have neglected all his literary work except the one of love — writing his wife's "Memoirs" and reading her published and unpublished work. In this undertaking he was greatly assisted by Mr. Skeys. Her sisters, on the contrary, gave as little assistance as possible, and ended all communication with Godwin at this difficult period of his life, and for a long while utterly neglected their poor sister's little children, when they might have repaid to some extent the debt of gratitude they owed to her.

All these complicated and jarring circumstances must have suggested to Godwin that another marriage might he the best expedient, and he accordingly set to work in a systematic way this time to acquire his end. Passion was not the motive, and probably there was too much system, for he was unsuccessful on two occasions. The first was with Miss Harriet Lee, the authoress of several novels and of *The Canterbury Tales*. Godwin seems to have been much struck by her, and, after four interviews at Bath, wrote on his return to London a very characteristic and pressing letter of invitation to her to stay in his house if she came to London, explaining that there was a lady (Miss Jones) who superintended his home. As this letter met with no answer, he tried three additional letters, drafts of all being extant. The third one was probably too much considered, for Miss Lee returned it annotated on the margin, expressing her disapproval of its egotistical character. Godwin, however, was not to be daunted, and made a fourth attempt, full of many sensible and many quaint reasons, not all of which would be pleasing to a lady; but he succeeded in regaining Miss Lee's friendship, though he could not persuade her to be his wife. This was from April to August 1798.

About the same time there was a project of Godwin and Thomas Wedgewood keeping house together; but as they seem to have much differed when together, the plan was wisely dropped. Godwin's notes in his plan of work for the year 1798 are interesting, as showing how he was anxious to modify some of his opinions expressed in *Political Justice*, especially those bearing on the affections, which he now admits must naturally play an important part in human action, though he avers his opinion that none of his previous conclusions are affected by these admissions. Much other work was planned out during this time, and many fresh intellectual acquaintances made, Wordsworth and Southey among others. His mother's letters to Godwin show what a constant drain his family were upon his slender means, and how nobly he always strove to help them when in need. These letters are full of much common sense, and though quaintly illiterate are, perhaps, not so much amiss for the period at which they were written, when many ladies who had greater social and monetary advantages were, nevertheless, frequently astray in these matters.

Godwin's novel of *St. Leon*, published in 1799, was another attempt to give the domestic affections their due place in his scheme of life; and the description of Marguerite, drawn from Mary Wollstonecraft, and that of her wedded life with St. Leon, are beautiful passages illustrative of Godwin's own happy time of marriage.

In July 1799, the death of Mr. Reveley suggested a fresh attempt at marriage to Godwin; but now he was probably too prompt, for, knowing that Mr. Reveley and his wife had not always been on the best of terms, although his sudden death had driven her nigh frantic, Godwin, relying on certain previous expressions of affection for himself by Mrs. Reveley, proposed within a month after her husband's death, and begged her to set aside prejudices and cowardly ceremonies and be his. As in the previous case, a second and a third lengthy letter, full of subtle reasoning, were ineffectual, and did not even bring about an interview till December 3rd, when Godwin and Mrs. Reveley met, in company with Mr. Gisborne. To this gentleman Mrs. Reveley was afterwards married. We shall meet them both again later on.

All this time there is little though affectionate mention of Mary Godwin in her father's diary. Little Fanny, who had always been a favourite, used to accompany Godwin on some of his visits to friends.

Many of Godwin’s letters at this time show that he was not too embarrassed to be able to assist his friends in time of need; twenty pounds sent to his friend Arnot, ten pounds shortly afterwards through Mrs. Agnes Hall to a lady in great distress, whose name is unknown, prove that he was ready to carry out his theories in practice. It is interesting to observe these frequent instances of generosity, as they account to some extent for his subsequent difficulties. In the midst of straits and disappointments Godwin managed to have his children well taken care of, and there was evidently a touching sympathy and confidence between himself and them, as shown in Godwin’s letters to his friend Marshall during a rare absence from the children occasioned by a visit to friends in Ireland. His thought and sincere solicitude and messages, and evident anxiety to be with them again, are all equally touching; Fanny having the same number of kisses sent her as Mary, with that perfect justice which is so beneficial to the character of children. We can now picture the scarcely three year old Mary and little Fanny taken to await the return of the coach with their father, and sitting under the Kentish Town trees in glad expectancy.

But this time of happy infancy was not to last long; for doubtless Godwin felt it irksome to have to consider whether the house-linen was in order, and such like details, and was thus prepared, in 1801, to accept the demonstrative advances of Mrs. Clairmont, a widow who took up her residence next door to him in the Polygon, Somers Town. She had two children, a boy and a girl, the latter somewhat younger than Mary. The widow needed no introduction or admittance to his house, as from the balcony she was able to commence a campaign of flattery to which Godwin soon succumbed. The marriage took place in December 1801, at Shoreditch Church, and was not made known to Godwin’s friends till after it had been solemnised. Mrs. Clairmont evidently did her best to help Godwin through the pecuniary difficulties of his career. She was not an ignorant woman, and her work at translations proves her not to have been without cleverness of a certain kind; but this probably made more obvious the natural vulgarity of her disposition. For example, when talking of bringing children up to do the work they were fitted to, she discovered that her own daughter Jane was fitted for accomplishments, while little Mary and Fanny were turned into household drudges. These distinctions would naturally engender an antipathy to her, which later on would help in estranging Mary from her father’s house; but occasionally we have glimpses of the little ones making themselves happy, in childlike fashion, in the midst of difficulties and disappointments on Godwin’s part. On one occasion Mary and Jane had concealed themselves under a sofa in order to hear Coleridge recite *The Ancient Mariner*. Mrs. Godwin, unmindful of the delight they would have in listening to poetry, found the little ones and was banishing them to bed; when Coleridge with kind-heartedness, or the love ever prevalent in poets of an audience, however humble, interceded for the small things who could sit under a sofa, and so they remained up and heard the poet read his poem. The treat was never afterwards forgotten, and one cannot over-estimate such pleasures in forming the character of a child. Nor were such the only intellectual delights the children shared in, for Charles Lamb was among Godwin’s numerous friends at this period, and a frequent visitor at his house; and we can still hear in imagination the merry laughter of children, old and young, whom he gathered about him, and who brightened at his ever ready fun. One long-remembered joke was how one evening, at supper at Godwin’s, Lamb entered the room first, seized a leg of mutton, blew out the candle, and placed the mutton in Martin Burney’s hand, and, on the candle being relit, exclaimed, “Oh, Martin! Martin! I should never have thought it of you.”

This and such like whimsies (as when Lamb would carry off a small cruet from the table, making Mrs. Godwin go through a long search, and would then quietly walk in the next day and replace it as if it were the most natural thing for a cruet to find its way into a pocket), would break the monotony of the children’s days. It was infinitely more enlivening than the routine in some larger houses, where poor little children are frequently shut up in a back room on a third floor and left for long hours to the tender mercies of some nurse, whose small slaves or tyrants they become, according to their nature. And when we remember that the Polygon at that time was touching fields and lanes, we know that little Mary must have had one of the delights most prized by children, picking buttercups and daisies, unmolested by a gardener. But during this happy age, when the child would probably have infinitely more pleasure in washing a cup and saucer than in playing the scales, however superior the latter performance may be, Godwin had various schemes and hopes frustrated. At times his health was very precarious, with frequent fainting fits, causing grave anxiety for the future. In 1803 his son William was born, making the fifth member of his miscellaneous family. At times Mrs. Godwin's temper seems to have been very much tried or trying, and on one occasion she expressed the wish for a separation; but the idea appears to have been dropped on Godwin's writing one of his very calm and reasonable letters, saying that he had no obstacle to oppose to it, and that, if it was to take place, he hoped it would not be long in hand; he certainly went on to say that the separation would be a source of great misery to himself. Either this reason mollified Mrs. Godwin, or else the apparent ease with which she might have carried out her project, made her hesitate, as we hear no more of it. Godwin, however, had occasion to write her philosophically expostulatory letters on her temper, which we must hope, for the children's sake, produced a satisfactory effect; for surely nothing can be more injurious to the happiness of children than to witness the ungovernable temper of their elders; but with Godwin's calm disposition, quarrels must have been one-sided, and consequently less damaging.

Godwin superintended the education of his children himself, and wrote many books for this purpose, which formed part of his juvenile library later on. "Baldwin's" fables and his histories for children were published by Godwin under this cognomen, owing to his political views having prejudiced many people against his name. His chief aim appears to have been to keep a certain moral elevation before the minds of children, as in the excellent preface to the *History of Rome*, where he dwells on the fact of the stories of Mucius, Curtius, and Regulus being disputed; but considers that stories — if they be no more — handed down from the great periods of Roman history are invaluable to stimulate the character of children to noble sentiments and actions. But in Godwin's case, as in many others, it must have been a difficult task counteracting the effect of example; for we cannot imagine the influence of a woman to have been ennobling who could act as Mrs. Godwin did at an early period of her married life; who, when one of her husband's friends, whom she did not care about, called to see Godwin, explained that it was impossible, as the kettle had just fallen off the hob and scalded both his legs. When the same friend met Godwin the next day in the street, and was surprised at his speedy recovery, the philosopher replied that it was only an invention of his wife. The safe-guard in such cases is often in the quick apprehension of children themselves, who are frequently saved from the errors of their elders by their perception of the consequences. Unfortunately, Mrs. Godwin's influence must have been lessened in other matters where her feeling for propriety, if with her only from a conventional and time-serving point of view, might have averted the fatal consequences which ensued later. Could she have gained the love and respect of the children instead of making them, as afterwards expressed by Mary, hate her, her moral precepts would have worked to more effect. It may have appeared to the girls, who could not appreciate the self-devotion of Godwin in acting against theories for the sake of individual justice, that the cause of all their unhappiness (and doubtless at times they felt it acutely) was owing to their father not having adhered to his previous anti-matrimonial opinions, and they were thus prepared to disregard what seemed to them social prejudices.

In the meantime Godwin struggled on to provide for his numerous family, not necessarily losing his enthusiasm through his need of money as might be supposed, for, fortunately, there are great compensations in nature, and not unfrequently what appears to be done for money is done really for love of those whom money will relieve; and so through this necessity the very love and anguish of the soul are transfused into the work. On the other hand, we see not infrequently, after the first enthusiasm of youth wears off, how the poetic side of a man's nature deteriorates, and the world and his work lose through the very ease and comfort he has attained to, so that the real degradation of the man or lowering of his nature comes more from wealth than poverty: thus what are spoken of as degrading circumstances, are, truly, the very reverse — a fact felt strongly by Shelley and such like natures who feel their ease is to be shared. We find Godwin working at his task of Chaucer, with love, daily at the British Museum, and corresponding with the Keeper of Records in the Exchequer Office and Chapter of Westminster, and Herald College, and the Librarian of the Bodleian Library; also writing many still extant letters pertaining to the subject. The sum of three hundred pounds paid to Godwin for this work was considered very small by him, though it scarcely seems so now.

Godwin found means and time occasionally to pay a visit to the country, as in September 1803, when he visited his mother and introduced his wife to her, as also to his old friends in Norwich; and during the sojourn of Mrs. Godwin and some of the children at Southend, a deservedly favourite resort of Mrs. Godwin, and later of Mrs. Shelley (for the sweet country and lovely

Essex lanes, of even so late as thirty or forty years ago, made it a resort loved by artists) Godwin superintended the letter-writing of his children. We ascertain, also, from their letters to him during absence, that they studied history and attended lectures with him; so that in all probability his daughter Mary's mind was really more cultivated and open to receive impressions in after life than if she had passed through a "finishing" education at some fashionable school. It is no mere phrase that to know some people is a liberal education; and if she was only saved from perpetrating some of the school-girl trash in the way of drawing, it was a gain to her intellect, for what can be more lowering to intelligence of perception than the utterly inartistic frivolities which are supposed to inculcate art in a country out of which the sense of it had been all but eradicated in Puritan England, though some great artists had happily reappeared! Mary at least learnt to love literature and poetry, and had, by her love of reading, a universe of wealth opened to her — surely no mean beginning. In art, had she shown any disposition to it, her father could undoubtedly have obtained some of the best advice of his day, as we see that Mulready and Linnell were intimate enough to spend a day at Hampstead with the children and Mrs. Godwin during Godwin's absence in Norfolk in 1808; in fact, Charles Clairmont, as seen in his account written to his step-father, was at this time having lessons from Linnell. Perhaps Mrs. Godwin had not discovered the same gift in Mary.

At this same date we have the last of old Mrs. Godwin's letters to her son. She speaks of the fearful price of food owing to the war, says that she is weary, and only wishes to be with Christ. Godwin spent a few days with her then, and the next year we find him at her funeral, as she died on August 13, 1809. His letter to his wife on that occasion is very touching, from its depth of feeling. He mourns the loss of a superior who exercised a mysterious protection over him, so that now, at her death, he for the first time feels alone.

Another severance from old associations had occurred this year in the death of Thomas Holcroft who, in spite of occasional differences, had always known and loved Godwin well, and whose last words when dying and pressing his hands were, "My dear, dear friend." Godwin, however, did not at all approve of Hazlitt, in bringing out Holcroft's life, using all his private memoranda and letters about his friends, and wrote expostulatory letters to Mrs. Holcroft on the subject. He considered it pandering to the worst passion of the malignity of mankind.

There do not appear to be many records of the Godwin family kept during the next two or three years. Mary was intimate with the Baxters. It was Mr. Baxter whom Mrs. Godwin tried to put off by the story of Godwin's scalded legs. We also find Mary at Ramsgate with Mrs. Godwin and her brother William, in May 1811, when she was nearly fourteen years old. As Mary and Mrs. Godwin were evidently unsuited to live together, these visits, though desirable for her health, were probably not altogether pleasant times to either, to judge by remarks in Godwin's letters to his wife. He hopes that, in spite of unfavourable appearances, Mary will still become a wise, and, what is more, a good and happy woman; this, evidently, in answer to some complaint of his wife. During these years many fresh acquaintances were made by Godwin; but as they had little or no apparent influence on Mary's after career, we may pass them over and notice at once the first communications which took place between Godwin and another personage, by far the greatest in this life drama, even great in the world's drama, for now for the first time in this story we come across the name of Shelley, with the words in Godwin's diary, "Write to Shelley." Having arrived at a name so full of import to all concerned in this Life, we must yet again retrace the past.

CHAPTER III. SHELLEY.

Shelley, a name dear to so many now, who are either drawn to him by his lyrics, which open an undreamed-of fountain of sympathy to many a silent and otherwise solitary heart, or who else are held spell-bound by his grand and eloquent poetical utterances of what the human race may aspire to. A being of this transcendent nature seems generally to be more the outcome of his age, of a period, the expression of nature, than the direct scion of his own family. So in Shelley's case there appears little immediate intellectual relation between himself and his ancestors, who seem for nearly two centuries preceding his birth to have been almost unknown, except for the registers of their baptisms, deaths, and marriages.

Prior to 1623, a link has been hitherto missing in the family genealogy — a link which the scrupulous care of Mr. Jeaffreson has brought to light, and which his courtesy places at the service of the writer. This connects the poet's family with the Michel Grove Shelleys, a fact hitherto only surmised. The document is this: —

SHELLEY'S CASE AND COKE'S REPORT, 896.

25 Sept. 1 & 2 Philip and Mary. Between Edward Shelley of Worminghurst, in the county of Sussex, Esqre., of the one part, and Rd. Cowper and Wm. Martin of the other part.

90a. Covt. to suffer recovery to enure as to Findon Manor, etc.

90b. To the use of him the said Edward Shelley and of the heirs male of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of such issue.

To the use of the heirs male of the body of John Shelley, Esqre., sometime of Michael Grove, deceased, father to the said Edward Shelley, etc.

It will be obvious to all readers of this important document that the last clause carries us back unmistakably from the Worminghurst Shelleys to the Michel Grove Shelleys, establishing past dispute the relationship of father and son.

The poet's great grandfather Timothy, who died twenty-two years before Shelley's birth, seems to have gone out of the beaten track in migrating to

America, and practising as an apothecary, or, as Captain Medwin puts it, "quack doctor," probably leaving England at an early age; he may not have found facilities for qualifying in America, and we may at least hope that he would do less harm with the simple herbs used by the unqualified than with the bleeding treatment in vogue before the Brunonian system began. Anyway, he made money to help on the fortunes of his family. His younger son, Bysshe, who added to the family wealth by marrying in succession two heiresses, also gained a baronetcy by adhering to the Whig Party and the Duke of Norfolk. He appears to have increased in eccentricity with age and became exceedingly penurious. He was evidently not regarded as a desirable match for either of his wives, as he had to elope with both of them; and his marriage with the first, Miss Michell, the grandmother of the poet, is said to have been celebrated by the parson of the Fleet. This took place the year before these marriages were made illegal. These facts about Shelley's ancestors, though apparently trivial, are interesting as proving that his forerunners were not altogether conventional, and making the anomaly of the coming of such a poet less strange, as genius is not unfrequently allied with eccentricity.

Bysshe's son Timothy seems to have conformed more to ordinary views than his father, and he married, when nearly forty, Elizabeth Pilfold, reputed a great beauty. The first child of this marriage, born on August 4, 1792, was the poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, born to all the ease and comfort of an English country home, but with the weird imaginings which in childhood could people the grounds and surroundings with ancient snakes and fairies of all forms, and which later on were to lead him far out of the beaten track. Shelley's little sisters were the confidants of his childhood, and their sympathy must have made up then for the lack of it in his parents. Some of their childish games at diabolical processions, making a little hell of their own by burning a fagot stack, &c., shows how early his searching mind dispersed the terrors, while it delighted in the picturesque or fantastic images, of superstition. Few persons realise to themselves how soon highly imaginative children may be influenced by the superstitions they hear around them, and assuredly Shelley's brain never recovered from some of these early influences: the mind that could so quickly reason and form inferences would naturally be of that sensitive and susceptible kind which would bear the scar of bad education. Shelley's mother does not appear so much to have had real good sense, as what is generally called common sense, and thus she was incapable of understanding a nature like that of her son; and thought more of his bringing home a well-filled game bag (a thing in every way repulsive to Shelley's tastes) than of trying to understand what he was thinking; so Shelley had to pass through childhood, his sisters being his chief companions, as he had no brother till he was thirteen. At ten years of age he went to school at Sion House Academy, and thence to Eton, before he was turned twelve. At both these schools, with little exception, he was solitary, not having much in common with the other boys, and consequently he found himself the butt for their tormenting ingenuity. He began a plan of resistance to the fagging system, and never yielded; this seems to have displeased the masters as much as the boys. At Eton he formed one of his romantic attachments for a youth of his own age. He seems now, as ever after, to have felt the yearning for perfect sympathy in some human being; as one idol fell short of his self-formed ideal, he sought for another. This was not the nature to be trained by bullying and flogging, though sympathy and reason would never find him irresponsive. His unresentful nature was shown in the way he helped the boys who tormented him with their lessons; for though he appeared to study little in the regular way, learning came to him naturally.

It must not, however, be supposed that Shelley was quite solitary, as the records of some of his old schoolfellows prove the contrary; nor was he averse to society when of a kind congenial to his tastes; but he always disliked coarse talk and jokes. Nature was ever dear to him; the walks round Eton were his chief recreation, and we can well conceive how he would feel in the lovely and peaceful churchyard of Stoke Pogis, where undoubtedly he would read Gray's Elegy. These feelings would not be sympathised with by the average of schoolboys; but, on the other hand, it is not apparent why Shelley should have changed his character, as the embryo poet would also necessarily not care for all their tastes. In short, the education at a public school of that day must have been a great cruelty to a boy of Shelley's sensitive disposition.

One great pleasure of Shelley's while at Eton was visiting Dr. Lind, who assisted him with chemistry, and whose kindness during an illness seems to have made a lasting impression on the youth; but generally those who had been in authority over him had only raised a spirit of revolt. One great gain for the world was the passionate love of justice and freedom which this aroused in him, as shown in the stanzas from *The Revolt of Islam* —

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear friend, when first
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.

There can be no doubt that these verses are truly autobiographical; they indicate a first determination to war against tyranny. The very fact of his great facility in acquiring knowledge must have been a drawback to him at school where time on his hands was, for lack of better material, frequently spent in reading all the foolish romances he could lay hold of in the neighbouring book-shops. His own early romances showed the influence of this bad literature. Of course, then as now, fine art was a sealed book to the young student. It is difficult to fancy what Shelley might have been under different early influences, and whether perchance the gain to himself might not have been a loss to the world. Fortunately, Shelley's love of imagination found at last a field of poetry for itself, and an ideal future for the world instead of turning to ruffianism, high or low, which the neglect of the legitimate outlet for imagination so frequently induces. How little this moral truth seems to be considered in a country like ours, where art is quite overlooked in the system of government, and where the hereditary owners of hoarded wealth rest content, as a rule, with the canvases acquired by some ancestor on a grand tour at a date when Puritan England had already obliterated perception; so that frequently a few *chefs d'oeuvre* and many daubs are hung indiscriminately together, giving equal pleasure or distaste for art. This is apposite to dwell on as showing the want of this influence on Shelley and his surroundings. From a tour in Italy made by Shelley's own father the chief acquisition is said to have been a very bad picture of Vesuvius.

It is becoming difficult to realise at present, when flogging is scarcely permitted in schools, what the sufferings of a boy like Shelley must have been; sent to school by his father with the admonition to his master not to spare the rod, and where the masters left the boy, who was undoubtedly unlike his companions, to treatment of a kind from which one case of death at least has resulted quite recently in our own time. Such proceedings which might have made a tyrant or a slave of Shelley succeeded only in making a rebel; his inquiring mind was not to be easily satisfied, and must assuredly have been a difficulty in his way with a conservative master; already, at Eton, we find him styled Mad Shelley and Shelley the Atheist.

In 1810 Shelley removed to University College, Oxford, after an enjoyable holiday with his family, during which he found time for an experiment in authorship, his father authorising a stationer to print for him. If only, instead of this, his father had checked for a time these immature productions of Shelley's pen, the youth might have been spared banishment from Oxford and his own father's house, and all the misfortune and tragedy which ensued. Shelley also found time for a first love with his cousin, Harriet Grove. This also the unfortunate printing facilities apparently quashed. There is some discussion as to whether he left Eton in disgrace, but any way the matter must have been a slight affair, as no one appears to have kept any record of it; and should one of the masters have recommended the removal of Shelley from such uncongenial surroundings, it would surely have been very sensible advice.

Oxford was, in many respects, much to Shelley's taste. The freedom of the student life there suited him, as he was able to follow the studies most to his liking.

The professional lectures chiefly in vogue, on divinity, geometry, and history, were not the most to his liking — history in particular seemed ever to him a terrible record of misery and crime — but in his own chambers he could study poetry, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. The outcome of these studies, advanced speculative thought, was not, however, to be tolerated within the University precincts, and, unfortunately for Shelley, his favourite subjects of conversation were tabooed, had it not been for one light-hearted and amusing friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, a gentleman whose acquaintance Shelley made shortly after his settling in Oxford in the Michaelmas term of 1810. This friendship, like all that Shelley entered on, was intended to endure "for ever," and, as usual, Shelley impulsively for a time threw so much of his own personality into his idea of the character of his friend as to prepare the way for future disappointment.

Hogg was decidedly intellectual, but with a strong conservative tendency, making him quite content with the existing state of things so long as he could take life easily and be amused. His intellect, however, was clear enough to make him perceive that it is the poet who raises life from the apathy which assails even the most worldly-minded and contented, so that he in his turn was able to love Shelley with the love which is not afraid of a laugh, without the possibility of which no friendship, it has been said, can be genuine. Many are the charming stories giving a living presence to Shelley while at Oxford, preserved by this friend; here we meet with him taking an infant from its mother's arms while crossing the bridge with Hogg, and questioning it as to its previous existence, which surely the babe had not had time to forget if it would but speak — but alas, the mother declared she had never heard it speak, nor any other child of its age; here comes also the charming incident of the torn coat, and Shelley's ecstasy on its having been fine drawn. These and such-like amusing anecdotes show the genuine and unpedantic side of Shelley's character, the delightfully natural and loveable personality which is ever allied to genius. With the fun and humour were mixed long readings and discussions on the most serious and solemn subjects. Plato was naturally a great delight to him; he had a decided antipathy to Euclid and mathematical reasoning, and was consequently unable to pursue scientific researches on a system; but his love of chemistry and his imaginative faculty led him to wish in anticipation for the forces of nature to be utilised for human labour, &c. Shelley's reading and reading powers were enormous. He was seldom without a pocket edition of one of his favourite great authors, whose works he read with as much ease as the modern languages.

This delightful time of study and ease was not to endure. Shelley's nature was impelled onwards as irresistibly as the mountain torrent, and as with it all obstacles had to yield. He could not rest satisfied with reading and discussions with Hogg on theological and moral questions, and, being debarred debate on these subjects in the university, he felt he must appeal to a larger audience, the public, and consequently he brought out, with the cognisance of Hogg, a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. This work actually got into circulation for about twenty minutes, when it was discovered by one of the Fellows of the College, who immediately convinced the booksellers that an *auto-da-fé* was necessary, and all the pamphlets were at once consigned to the back kitchen fire; but the affair did not end there. Shelley's handwriting was recognised on some letters sent with copies of the work, and consequently both he and Hogg were summoned before a meeting in the Common room of the College. First

Shelley, and then Hogg, declined to answer questions, and refused to disavow all knowledge of the work, whereupon the two were summarily expelled from Oxford. Shelley complained bitterly of the ungentlemanly way they were treated, and the authorities, with equal reason, of the rebellious defiance of the students; yet once more we must regret that there was no one but Hogg who realised the latent genius of Shelley, that there was no one to feel that patience and sympathy would not be thrown away upon a young man free from all the vices and frivolities of the time and place, whose crime was an inquiring mind, and rashness in putting his views into print. Surely the dangers which might assail a young man thus thrown on the world and alienated from his family by this disgrace might have received more consideration. This seems clear enough now, when Shelley's ideas have been extolled even in as well as out of the pulpit.

So now we find Shelley expelled from Oxford and arrived in London in March 1811, when only eighteen years of age, alone with Hogg to fight the battle of life, with no previous experience of misfortune to give ballast to his feelings, but with a brain surcharged with mysteriously imbibed ideas of the woes of others and of the world — a dangerous age and set of conditions for a youth to be thrown on his own resources. Admission to his father's house was only to be accorded on the condition of his giving up the society of Hogg; this condition, imposed at the moment when Shelley considered himself indebted to Hogg for life for the manner in which he stood by him in the Oxford ordeal, was refused. Shelley looked out for lodgings without result, till a wall paper representing a trellised vine apparently decided him. With twenty pounds borrowed from his printer to leave Oxford, Shelley is now settled in London, unaided by his father, a small present of money sent by his mother being returned, as he could not comply with the wishes which she expressed on the same occasion. From this time the march of events or of fate is as relentless as in a Greek drama, for already the needful woman had appeared in the person of Harriet Westbrook, a schoolfellow of his sisters at their Clapham school. During the previous January Shelley had made her acquaintance by visiting her at her father's house, with an introduction and a present from one of his sisters. There seems no reason to doubt that Shelley was then much attracted by the beautiful girl, smarting though he was at the time from his rupture with

Harriet Grove; but Shakespeare has shown us that such a time is not exempt from the potency of love shafts.

This visit of Shelley was followed by his presenting Harriet Westbrook with a copy of his new romance, *St. Irvyne*, which led to some correspondence. It was now Harriet's turn to visit Shelley, sent also by his sisters with presents of their pocket money. Shelley moreover visited the school on different occasions, and even lectured the schoolmistress on her system of discipline. There is no doubt that Harriet's elder sister, with or without the cognisance of their father, a retired hotel-keeper, helped to make meetings between the two; but Shelley, though young and a poet, was no child, and must have known what these dinners and visits and excursions might lead to; and although the correspondence and conversation may have been more directly upon theological and philosophical questions, it seems unlikely that he would have discoursed thus with a young girl unless he felt some special interest in her; besides, Shelley need not have felt any great social difference between himself and a young lady brought up and educated on a footing of equality with his own sisters. It is true that her family acted and encouraged him in a way incompatible with old-fashioned ideas of gentility, but Shelley was too prone at present to rebel against everything conventional to be particularly sensitive on this point.

In May Shelley was enabled to return to his father's house, through the mediation of his uncle, Captain Pilfold, and henceforth an allowance of two hundred a year was made to him. But there had been work done in the two months that no reconciliations or allowances afterwards could undo; for while Shelley was bent on proselytising Harriet Westbrook, not less for his sisters' sake than for his own, Harriet, in a school-girl fashion, encouraged by her sister and not discouraged by her father, was falling in love with Shelley. How were the *bourgeois* father and sister to comprehend such a character as Shelley's, when his own parents and all the College authorities failed to do so? If Shelley were not in love he must have appeared so, and Harriet's family did their best by encouraging and countenancing the intimacy to lead to a marriage, they naturally having Harriet's interests more at heart than Shelley's.

However, the fact remains that Shelley was a most extraordinary being, an embryo poet, with all a poet's possible inconsistencies, the very brilliancy of the intellectual spark in one direction apparently quelling it for a time in another. In most countries and ages a poet seems to have been accepted as a heaven-sent gift to his nation; his very crimes (and surely Shelley did not surpass King David in misdoing?) have been the *lacrymæ rerum* giving terrible vitality to his thoughts, and so reclaiming many others ere some fatal deed is done; but in England the convention of at least making a show of virtues which do not exist (perhaps a sorry legacy from Puritanism) will not allow the poet to be accepted for what he really is, nor his poetry to appeal, on its own showing, to the human heart. He must be analysed, and vilified, or whitewashed in turn.

At any rate Shelley was superior to some of the respectable vices of his class, and one alleged concession of his father was fortunately loathsome to him, viz. — that he (Sir Timothy) would provide for as many illegitimate children as Percy chose to have, but he would not tolerate a *mésalliance*. To what a revolt of ideas must such a code of morality have led in a fermenting brain like Shelley's! Were the mothers to be provided for likewise, and to be considered more by Shelley's respectable family than his lawful wife? We fear not.

A visit to Wales followed, during which Shelley's mind was in so abstracted a state that the fine scenery, viewed for the first time, had little power to move him, while Harriet Westbrook, with her sister and father, was only thirty miles off at Aberystwith; a hasty and unexplained retreat of this party to London likewise hastened the return of Shelley. Probably the father began to perceive that Shelley did not come forward as he had expected, and so he wished to remove Harriet from his vicinity. Letters from Harriet to Shelley followed, full of misery and dejection, complaining of her father's decision to send her back to school, where she was avoided by the other girls, and called "an abandoned wretch" for sympathising or corresponding with Shelley; she even contemplated suicide. It is curious how this idea seems to have constantly recurred to her, as in the case of some others who have finally committed the act.

Shelley wrote, expostulating with the father. This probably only incensed him more. He persisted. Harriet again addressed Shelley in despair, saying she would put herself under his protection and fly with him; a difficult position for any young man, and for Shelley most perplexing, with his avowed hostility to marriage, and his recent assertions that he was not in love with Harriet. But it must be put to Shelley's credit that, having intentionally or otherwise led Harriet on to love him, he now acted as a gentleman to his sister's school friend, and, influenced to some extent by Hogg's arguments in a different case in favour of marriage, he at once determined to make her his wife. He wrote to his cousin, Charles Grove, announcing his intention and impending arrival in London, saying that as his own happiness was altogether blighted, he could now only live to make that of others, and would consequently marry Harriet Westbrook.

On his arrival in London, Shelley found Harriet looking ill and much changed. He spent some time in town, during which Harriet's spirits revived; but Shelley, as he described in a letter to Hogg, felt much embarrassment and melancholy. Not contemplating an immediate marriage, he went into Sussex to pay a visit to Field Place and to his uncle at Cuckfield. While here he renewed the acquaintance of Miss Kitchener, a school mistress of advanced ideas, who had the care of Captain Pilfold's children. To this acquaintance we owe a great number of letters which throw much light on Shelley's *exalté* character at this period, and which afford most amusing reading. As usual with Shelley, he threw much of his own personality into his ideas of Miss Hitchener, who was to be his "eternal inalienable friend," and to help to form his lovely wife's character on the model of her own. All these particulars are given in letters from Shelley to his friends, Charles Grove, Hogg, and Miss Hitchener; to the latter he is very explanatory and apologetic, but only after the event.

Shelley had scarcely been a week away from London when he received a letter from Harriet, complaining of fresh persecution and recalling him. He at once returned, as he had undertaken to do if required, and then resolved that the only thing was for him to marry at once. He accordingly went straight to his cousin Charles Grove, and with twenty-five pounds borrowed from his relative Mr. Medwin, a solicitor at Horsham, he entered on one of the most momentous days of his life — the 24th or 25th August 1811. After passing the night with his cousin, he waited at the door of the coffee-house in Mount Street, watching for a girlish figure to turn the corner from Chapel Street. There was some delay; but what was to be could not be averted, and soon Harriet, fresh as a rosebud, appeared. The coach was called, and the two cousins and the girl of sixteen drove to an inn in the city to await the Edinburgh mail. This took the two a stage farther on the fatal road, and on August 28 their Scotch marriage is recorded in Edinburgh. The marriage arrangements were of the quaintest, Shelley having to explain his position and want of funds to the landlord of some handsome rooms which he found. Fortunately the landlord undertook to supply what was needed, and they felt at ease in the expectation of Shelley’s allowance of money coming; but this never came, as Shelley’s father again resented his behaviour, and took that easy means of showing as much.

Shelley’s wife had had the most contradictory education possible for a young girl of an ordinary and unimaginative nature — the conventional surface education of a school of that time followed by the talks with Shelley, which were doubtless far beyond her comprehension. What could be the outcome of such a marriage? Had Shelley, indeed, been a different character, all might have gone smoothly, married as he was to a beautiful girl who loved him; but at present all Shelley’s ideas were unpractical. Without the moral treadmill of work to sober his opinions, whence was the ballast to come when disappointment ensued — disappointment which he constantly prepared for himself by his over-enthusiastic idea of his friends? Troubles soon followed the marriage, in the nonarrival of the money; and after five weeks in Edinburgh, where Hogg had joined the Shelleys, followed by a little over a week in York, the need became so pressing that Shelley felt obliged to take a hurried journey to his uncle’s at Cuckfield, in order to try and mollify his father; in this he did not succeed. Though absent little over a week, he prepared the way by his absence, and by leaving Harriet under the care of Hogg, for a series of complications and misunderstandings which never ended till death had absolved all concerned. Harriet’s sister, Eliza, was to have returned to York with Shelley; but hearing of her sister’s solitary state with Hogg in the vicinity, she hurried alone to York, and from this time she assumed an ascendency over the small *ménage* which, though probably useful in trifles, had undoubtedly a bad effect in the long run. Eliza, rightly from her point of view, thought it necessary to stand between Hogg and her sister. It seems far more likely that Hogg’s gentlemanly instincts would have led him to treat his friend’s wife with respect than that he should have really given cause for the grave suspicions which Shelley writes of in subsequent letters to Miss Hitchener. Might not Eliza be inclined to take an exaggerated view of any attention shown by Hogg to her sister, and have persuaded Harriet to the same effect? Harriet having seen nothing of the world as yet, and Eliza’s experience before her father's retirement from his tavern not having been that in which ladies and gentlemen stand on a footing of equality. It is true that Shelley writes of an interview with Hogg before leaving York, in which he describes Hogg as much confused and distressed; but perhaps allowance ought to be made for the fanciful turn of Shelley's own mind. However this may have been, they left York for Keswick, where they delighted in the glorious scenery. At this time we see in letters to Miss Hitchener how Shelley felt the necessity of intellectual sympathy, and how he seemed to consider this friend in some way necessary for the accomplishment of various speculative and social ideas. Here at Chestnut Cottage novels were commenced and much work planned, left unfinished, or lost. While at Keswick he made the acquaintance of Southey and wrote his first letter to William Godwin, whose works had already had a great influence on him, and whose personal acquaintance he now sought. The often quoted letter by which Shelley introduced himself to Godwin was followed by others, and led up to the subsequent intimacy which had such important results.

Shelley with his wife and sister-in-law paid a visit to the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke; this led to a quasi reconciliation with Shelley's father, owing to which the allowance of two hundred a year was renewed, Harriet's father making her a similar allowance, it is presumed, owing to feeling flattered by his daughter's reception by the Duchess. Shortly afterwards some restless turn in the trio caused a further move to be contemplated, and now Shelley entered on what must have appeared one of the strangest of his fancies — a visit to Ireland to effect Catholic Emancipation and to procure the repeal of the Union Act. Hogg pretends to believe that Shelley did not even understand the meaning of the phrases, and most probably many English would not have cared to do so. In any case Shelley's enthusiasm for an oppressed people must be admired, and it is noticeable that our greatest statesman of the present day has come to agree with Shelley after eighty years of life and of conflicting endeavour.

The plan adopted by Shelley caused infinite amusement to Harriet, who entered with animation into the fun of distributing her husband's pamphlets on Irish affairs, and could not well understand his seriousness on the subject. The pamphlets and the speeches which he delivered were not likely to conciliate the different Irish parties. The Catholics were not to be attracted by an Atheist or Antichristian, however tolerant he might be of them, and of all religions which tend to good. Lord Fingal and his adherents were not inclined to follow the Ardent Republican and teacher of Humanitarianism; nor were the extreme party likely to be satisfied with appeals, however eloquent, for the pursuit and practice of virtue before any political changes were to be expected. Shelley's exposition of the failure of the French Revolution by the fact that although it had been ushered in by people of great intellect, the moral side of intellect had been wanting, was not what Irish Nationalists then wished to consider. In fact, Shelley had not much pondered the character of the people he went to help and reform, if he thought a week of these arguments could have much effect. Shelley was much sought after by the poor Irish, during another month of his stay in Dublin, on account of his generosity. Here, also, they met Mrs. Nugent. Harriet's correspondence with her has recently been published. With the views which she expresses, those of the present writer coincide in not casting all the blame of the future separation on Shelley; Harriet naturally feels Mary most at fault, and does not perceive her own mistakes. Failing in his aim, and being disheartened by the distress on all sides which he could not relieve, and more especially owing to the strong remonstrance of Godwin, who considered that if there were any result it could only be bloodshed, the poet migrated to Nantgwilt in Wales. Here the Shelleys contemplated receiving Godwin and his family, Miss Hitchener with her American pupils; and why not Miss Hitchener's father, reported to have been an old smuggler? Here Shelley first met Thomas Love Peacock. They were unable to remain at Nantgwilt owing to various mishaps, and migrated to that terrestrial paradise in North Devon, Lynmouth. This lovely place, with its beautiful and romantic surroundings loved and exquisitely described by more than one poet, cannot fail to be dear to those who know it with and through them. Here, in a garden in front of their rose and myrtle covered cottage, within near sound of the rushing Lynn, would Shelley stand on a mound and let off his fire-balloons in the cool evening air. Here Miss Hitchener joined them. What talks and what rambles they must have had, none but those who have known a poet in such a place could imagine; but perhaps Shelley, though a poet, was not sufficient for the three ladies in a neighbourhood where the narrow winding paths may have caused one or other to appear neglected and left behind. Poor Shelley, recalled from heaven to earth by such-like vicissitudes, naturally held by his wife; and forthwith disagreements began which ended in Miss Hitchener's being called henceforth the "Brown Demon." What a fall from the ideal reformer of the world! — another of Shelley's self-made idols shattered.

The Shelleys wished Fanny Godwin to join their party at Lynmouth; but this Godwin would not permit without more knowledge of his friends, although Shelley wrote affecting letters to the sage, trusting that he might be the stay of his declining years. Amid the romantic scenery of Lynmouth, Shelley wrote much of his *Queen Mab*; he also addressed a sonnet, and a longer poem, to Harriet, in August. These poems certainly evince no falling off in affection, although they are not like the glowing love-poems of a later period.

From Lynmouth Shelley, with his party, moved to Swansea, and thence to Tremadoc, where they agreed to take a house named Tanyrallt, and then they moved on to London to meet Godwin, who, in the meanwhile, had paid a visit to Lynmouth just after their flitting. Here Shelley had the delight of seeing the philosopher face to face, and now visits were exchanged, and walks and dinners followed, and, among other friends of Godwin, Shelley met Clara de Boinville and Mrs. Turner, who is said to have inspired his first great lyric, "Away the moor is dark beneath the moon," but whose husband strongly objected to Shelley visiting their house.

On this occasion Fanny Godwin was the most seen; Mary Godwin, who was just fifteen, only arriving towards the end of Shelley's stay in London from a visit to her friends, the Baxters, in Scotland. No mention is made of her by Shelley, though she must have dined in his company about November 5, 1812. During this visit to London Shelley became reconciled with Hogg, calling on him and begging him to come to see him and his wife. This certainly does not look as if Shelley still thought seriously of his former difference with Hogg — scarcely a year before. Shortly after, on the 8th, we find the poor "Brown Demon" leaving the Shelleys, with the promise of an annuity of one hundred pounds. She reopened a school later on at Edmonton, and was much loved by her pupils. Shelley now returned to Tremadoc, where he passed the winter in his house at Tanyrallt, helping the poor through this severe season of 1812-13. Here one of Shelley's first practical attempts for humanity was assisting to reclaim some land from the sea; but Shelley's early effort, unlike the last one of Göthe's *Faust*, did not satisfy him, and shortly afterwards another real or fancied attempt on his life, on February 26th, 1813, obliged the party to leave the neighbourhood, this time again for Ireland. He spent a short time on the Lake of Killarney, with his wife and Eliza. In April we again find him in London, in an hotel in Albemarle Street; thence he passed to Half Moon Street, where in June their first child, Ianthe, was born. The baby was a great pleasure to Shelley, who, however, objected to the wet nurse. He wrote a touching sonnet to his wife and child three months later. All this time there is no apparent change of affection suggested. Soon afterwards, while at Bracknell, near Windsor, they kept up the acquaintance of the De Boinville family, and Shelley began the study of Italian with them while Harriet relinquished hers of Latin. From Bracknell Shelley paid his last visit to Field Place to see his mother, in the absence of his father and the younger children. An interview with his father followed, and a journey to Edinburgh, and then in December a return to London; certainly an ominous restlessness, caused, no doubt, considerably by want of money, but moving about did not seem the way to save or to make it. Shelley visited Godwin several times during his stay in London. At this time Shelley had to raise ruinous post-obits on the family property, and for legal reasons he now thought it desirable to follow the Scotch marriage by one in the English church, and he and Harriet were remarried on March 22, 1814, at St. George's Church.

But even now little rifts seem to have been growing, small enough apparently, and yet, like the small cloud in the sky, indicating the coming storm. This very time of trials, through want of money, seems to have been chosen by Harriet to show a hankering after luxuries which their present income could not warrant. A carriage was purchased, and was with its accompanying expenses added to the small *ménage*; silver plate was also considered a necessity; and, perhaps the thing most distasteful to Shelley's natural tastes, the wet nurse was retained, although Harriet had always appeared to be a strong young woman capable of undertaking her maternal duty. This fact was considered by Peacock to have chiefly alienated Shelley's affection.

Apart from this, poor Harriet, with the birth of her child, seems to have given up her studies, which she had evidently pursued to please Shelley, and to have awakened to the fact that it was a difficult task to take up the whole cause of suffering humanity and aid it with their slender purse, and keep their wandering household going. It is difficult to imagine the genius that could have sufficed, and it certainly needed genius, or something very like it, to keep the Faust-like mind of Shelley in any peace.

There is a letter from Fanny Godwin to Shelley, after his first visit, speaking of his wife as a fine lady. From this accusation Shelley strongly defended her, but now he felt that this disaster might really be impending. Poor pretty Harriet could not understand or talk philosophy with Shelley, and, what was worse, her sister was ever present to prevent any spontaneous feeling of dependence on her husband from endearing her to him. Even before his second ceremony of marriage with Harriet we find him writing a letter in great dejection to Hogg. He seemed really in the poet's "premature old age," as he expressed it, though none like the poet have the power of rejuvenescence. His detestation of his sister-in-law at this time was extreme, but he appears to have been incapable of sending her away. It was a perfect torture to him to see her kiss his baby. He writes thus from Mrs. de Boinville's at Bracknell, where he had a month's rest with philosophy and sweet converse. Talking was easier than acting philosophy at this juncture, and planning the amelioration of the world pleasanter than struggling to keep one poor soul from sinking to degradation; but who shall judge the strength of another's power, or feel the burden of another's woe? We can only tell how the expression of his agony may help ourselves; but surely it is worthy of admiration to find Shelley, four days after writing this most heart-broken letter to Hogg, binding his chains still firmer by remarrying, so that, come what would, no slur should be cast on Harriet.

Harriet, who had never understood anything of housekeeping, and whose *ménage*, according to Hogg, was of the funniest, now that the novelty of Shelley's talk and ways was over, and when even the constant changes were beginning to satiate her, apparently spent a time of intolerable *ennui*. It is still remembered in the Pilfold family how Harriet appeared at their house late one night in a ball dress, without shawl or bonnet, having quarrelled with Shelley. A doctor who had to perform some operation on her child was struck with astonishment at her demeanour, and considered her utterly without feeling, and Shelley's poem, "Lines, April 1814," written, according to Claire Clairmont's testimony, when Mr. Turner objected to his visiting his wife at Bracknell, gives a touching picture of the comfortless home which he was returning to; in fact, they seem to have no sooner been together again than Harriet made a fresh departure. There is one imploring poem by Shelley, addressed to Harriet in May 1814, begging her to relent and pity, if she cannot love, and not to let him endure “The misery of a fatal cure”; but Harriet had not generosity, if it was needed, and, according to Thornton Hunt, she left Shelley and went to Bath, where she still was in July. What Harriet really aimed at by this foolish move is doubtful; it was certainly taken at the most fatal moment. To leave Shelley alone, near dear friends, when she had been repelling his advances to regain her affection, and making his home a place for him to dread to come into, was anything but wise; but wisdom was not Harriet’s *forte*; she needed a husband to be wise for her. Shelley, however, had most gifts, except such wisdom at this time.

Beyond these facts, there seems little but surmises to judge by. It may always be a question how much Shelley really knew, or believed, of certain ideas of infidelity on his wife’s part in connection with a Major Ryan — ideas which, even if believed, would not have justified his subsequent mode of action.

But here, for a time, we must leave poor Harriet — all her loveliness thrown away upon Shelley — all Shelley’s divine gifts worthless to her. What a strange disunion to pass through life with! Only the sternest philosophy or callousness could have achieved it — and Shelley was still so young, with his philosophy all in theory.

CHAPTER IV. MARY AND SHELLEY.

We left Godwin about to write in answer to the letter referred to from Shelley. The correspondence which followed, though very interesting in itself, is only important here as it led to the increasing intimacy of the families. These letters are full of sound advice from an elderly philosopher to an over-enthusiastic youth; and one dated March 14, 1812, begging Shelley to leave Ireland and come to London, ends with the pregnant phrase, “You cannot imagine how much all the females of my family, Mrs. Godwin and *three* daughters, are interested in your letters and your history.” So here, at fourteen, we find Mary deeply interested in all concerning Shelley; poor Mary, who used to wander forth, when in London, from the Skinner Street Juvenile Library northwards to the old St. Pancras Cemetery, to sit with a book beside her mother’s grave to find that sympathy so sadly lacking in her home.

About this time Godwin wrote a letter concerning Mary’s education to some correspondent anxious to be informed on the subject. We cannot do better than quote from it: —

Your inquiries relate principally to the two daughters of Mary Wollstonecraft. They are neither of them brought up with an exclusive attention to the system and ideas of their mother. I lost her in 1797, and in 1801 I married a second time. One among the motives which led me to choose this was the feeling I had in myself of an incompetence for the education of daughters. The present Mrs. Godwin has great strength and activity of mind, but is not exclusively a follower of the notions of their mother; and, indeed, having formed a family establishment without having a previous provision for the support of a family, neither Mrs. Godwin nor I have leisure enough for reducing novel theories of education to practice; while we both of us honestly endeavour, as far as our opportunities will permit, to improve the mind and characters of the younger branches of our family.

Of the two persons to whom your inquiries relate, my own daughter is considerably superior in capacity to the one her mother had before. Fanny, the eldest, is of a quiet, modest, unshowy disposition, somewhat given to indolence, which is her greatest fault, but sober, observing, peculiarly clear and distinct in the faculty of memory, and disposed to exercise her own thoughts and follow her own judgment. Mary, my daughter, is the reverse of her in many particulars. She is singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind. Her desire of knowledge is great, and her perseverance in everything she undertakes almost invincible. My own daughter is, I believe, very pretty. Fanny is by no means handsome, but, in general, prepossessing.

By this letter necessity appears to have been the chief motor in the education of the children. Constantly increasing difficulties surrounded the family, who were, however, kept above the lowering influences of narrow circumstances by the intellect of Godwin and his friends. Even the speculations into which Mrs. Godwin is considered to have rashly drawn her husband in the Skinner Street Juvenile Library, perhaps, for a time, really assisted in bringing up the family and educating the sons.

Before the meeting with Shelley, Mary was known as a young girl of strong poetic and emotional nature. A story is still remembered by friends, proving this: just before her last return from the Highlands preceding her eventful meetings with Shelley, she visited, while staying with the Baxters, some of the most picturesque parts of the Highlands, in company with Mr. Miller, a bookseller of Edinburgh; and he told of her passionate enthusiasm when taken into a room arranged with looking-glasses round it to reflect the magic view without of cascade and cloud-capped mountains; how she fell on her knees, entranced at the sight, and thanked Providence for letting her witness so much beauty. This was the nature, with its antecedents and surroundings, to come shortly into communion with Shelley, at the time of his despondency at his wife’s hardness and supposed desertion; Shelley then, so far from self-sufficiency, yearning after sympathy and an ideal in life, with all his former idols shattered. Godwin’s house became for him the home of intellectual intercourse. Godwin, surrounded by a cultivated family, was not thought less of by Shelley, owing to the accident of his then having a book-shop to look after — Shelley, whose childhood, though passed in the comforts of an English country house, yet lacked the riches of the higher culture. Through two months of various trials Shelley remained on terms of great intimacy, visiting Godwin’s house and constantly dining there. This was during his wife’s voluntary withdrawal to Bath, from May — when he seems to have entreated her to be reconciled to him — till July, when she, in her turn, becoming anxious at a four days' cessation of news, wrote an imploring letter to Hookham, the Bond Street bookseller, for information about her husband.

In the meantime, what had been passing in Godwin's house? The Philosopher, whom Shelley loved and revered, was becoming inextricably involved in money matters. What was needed but this to draw still closer the sympathies of the poet, who had not been exempt from like straits? He was thus in the anomalous position of an heir to twenty thousand a year, who could wish to raise three thousand pounds on his future expectations, not for discreditable gambling debts, or worse extravagances, but to save his beloved master and his family from dire distress.

What a coil of circumstances to be entangling all concerned! Mary returning from the delights of her Scottish home to find her father, whom she always devotedly loved, on the verge of bankruptcy, with all the hopeless vista which her emotional and highly imaginative nature could conjure up; and then to find this dreaded state of distress relieved, and by her hero — the poet who, for more than two years, "all the women of her family had been profoundly interested in."

And for Shelley, the contrast from the desolate home, where sulks and ill-humour assailed him, and which, for a time, was a deserted home for him; where facts, or his fitful imagination, ran riot with his honour, to the home where all showed its roseate side for him; where all vied to please the young benefactor, who was the humble pupil of its master; where Mary, in the expanding glow of youth and intellect, could talk on equal terms with the enthusiastic poet.

Were not the eyes of Godwin and his wife blinded for the time, when still reconciliation with Harriet was possible? Surely gratitude came in to play honour false. The one who — were it only from personal feeling — might have tried to turn the course of the rushing torrent was not there. Fanny, who had formerly written of Shelley as a hero of romance, was in Wales during this period.

So, step by step, and day by day, the march of fate continued, till, by the time that Hookham apparently unbandaged Godwin's eyes, on receiving Harriet's letter on July 7, 1814, passion seemed to have subdued the power of will; and the obstacle now imposed by Godwin only gave added impetus to the torrent, which nothing further could check.

Such times as these in a life seem to exemplify the contrasting doctrines of Calvin and of Schopenhauer; of two courses, either is open. But at that time Shelley was more the being of emotion than of will — unless, indeed, will be confounded with emotion.

We have seen enough to gather that Shelley did not need to enter furtively the house of his benefactor to injure him in his nearest tie, but that circumstances drew Shelley to Mary with equal force as her to him. The meetings by her mother's grave seemed to sanctify the love which should have been another's. They vaguely tried to justify themselves with crude principles. But self-deception could not endure much longer; and when Godwin forbade Shelley his house on July 8, Shelley, ever impetuous and headstrong, whose very virtues became for the time vices, thrust all barriers aside.

What deceptions beside self-deception must have been necessary to carry out so wild a project can be imagined; for certainly neither Godwin nor, still less, his wife, was inclined to sanction so illegal and unjust an act. We see, from Hogg's description, how impassioned was a meeting between Mary and Shelley, which he chanced to witness; and later on Shelley is said to have rushed into her room with laudanum, threatening to take it if she would not have pity on him. These and such like scenes, together with the philosophical notions which Mary must have imbibed, led up to her acting at sixteen as she certainly would not have done at twenty-six; but now her knowledge of the world was small, her enthusiasm great — and evidently she believed in Harriet's faithlessness — so that love added to the impatience of youth, which could not foresee the dreadful future. Without doubt, could they both have imagined the scene by the Serpentine three years later, they would have shrunk from the action which was a strong link in the chain that conduced to it.

But now all thoughts but love and self, or each for the other, were set aside, and on July 20, 1814, we find Mary Godwin leaving her father's house before five o'clock in the morning, much as Harriet had left her home three years earlier.

An entry made by Mary in a copy of *Queen Mab* given to her by Shelley, and dated in July 1814, shows us how a few days before their departure they had not settled on so desperate a move. The words are these:—"This book is sacred to me, and as no other creature shall ever look into it, I may write in it what I please. Yet what shall I write — that I love the author beyond all powers of expression, and that I am parted from him? Dearest and only love, by that love we have promised to each other, although I may not be yours I can never be another's. But I am thine, exclusively thine."

Mary in her novel of *Lodore*, published in 1835, gave a version of the differences between Harriet and Shelley. Though Lord Lodore is more an impersonation of Mary's idea of Lord Byron than of Shelley, Cornelia Santerre, the heroine, may be partly drawn from Harriet, while Lady Santerre, her match-making mother, is taken from Eliza Westbrook. Lady Santerre, when her daughter is married, still keeps her under her influence. She is described as clever, though uneducated, with all the petty manoeuvring which frequently accompanies this condition. When differences arise between Lodore and his wife the mother, instead of counselling conciliation, advises her daughter to reject her husband's advances. Under these circumstances estrangements lead to hatred, and Cornelia declares she will never quit her mother, and desires her husband to leave her in peace with her child. This Lodore will not consent to, but takes the child with him to America. The mother-in-law speaks of desertion and cruelty, and instigates law proceedings. By these proceedings all further hope is lost. We trace much of the history of Shelley and Harriet in this romance, even to the age of Lady Lodore at her separation, which is nineteen, the same age as Harriet's. Lady Lodore henceforth is regarded as an injured and deserted wife. This might apply equally to Lady Byron; but there are traits and descriptions evidently applicable to Harriet. Lady Santerre encourages her to expect submission later from her husband, but the time for that is passed. We here trace the period when Shelley also begged his wife to be reconciled to him in May, and likewise Harriet's attempt at reconciliation with Shelley, all too late, in July, when Shelley had an interview with his wife and explanations were given, which ended in Harriet apparently consenting to a separation. The interview resulted in giving Harriet an illness very dangerous in her state of health; she was even then looking forward to the birth of a child. It is true that Shelley is said to have believed that this child was not his, though later he acknowledged this belief was not correct. The name of a certain Major Ryan figures in the domestic history of the Shelleys at this time; but certainly there seems no evidence to convict poor Harriet upon, although Godwin at a later date informed Shelley that he had evidence of Harriet having been false to him four months before he left her. This evidence is not forthcoming, and the position of his daughter Mary may have made slender evidence seem more weighty at the time to Godwin; in fact, the small amount of evidence of any kind respecting Shelley's and Harriet's disagreements and separation seems to point to the curious anomaly in Shelley's character, that while he did not hesitate to act upon his avowed early and crude opinions as to the duration of marriage — opinions which he later expressed disapproval of in his own criticism of *Queen Mab* — yet the innate feeling of a gentleman forbade him to talk of his wife's real or supposed defects even to his intimate friends. Thus when Peacock cross-questioned him about his liking for Harriet, he only replied, "Ah, but you do not know how I hated her sister."

However more or less faulty, or sinned against, or sinning, we must now leave Harriet for a while and accompany Shelley and Mary on that 28th of July when she left her father's house with Jane, henceforth called "Claire" Clairmont, to meet Shelley near Hatton Garden about five in the morning. Of the subsequent journey we have ample records, for with this tour Mary also began a life of literary work, in which she was fortunately able to confide much to the unknown friend, the public, which though not always directly grateful to those who open their hearts to it, is still eager for their works and influenced by them. And so from Mary herself we learn all that she cared to publish from her journal in the *Six Weeks' Tour*, and now we have the original journal by Mary and Shelley, as given by Professor Dowden. We must repeat for Mary the oft-told tale of Shelley; for henceforth, till death separates them, their lives are together.

On July 27, 1814, having previously arranged a plan with Mary, which must have been also known to Claire in spite of her statement that she only thought of taking an early walk, Shelley ordered the postchaise, and, as Claire says, he and Mary persuaded her to go too, as she knew French, with which language they were unfamiliar. Shelley gives the account of the subsequent journey to Dover and passage to Calais, of the first security they felt in each other in spite of all risk and danger. Mary suffered much physically, and no doubt morally, having to pause at each stage on the road to Dover in spite of the danger of being overtaken, owing to the excessive heat causing faintness. On reaching Dover they found the packet already gone at 4 o'clock, so, after bathing in the sea and dining, they engaged a sailing boat to take them to Calais, and once more felt security from their pursuers; for, undoubtedly, had they been found in England, Shelley would have been unable to carry out his plan.

They were not allowed to pass the Channel together without danger, for after some hours of calm, during which they could make no progress, a violent squall broke, and the sails of the little boat were well nigh shattered, the lightning and thunder were incessant, and the imminent danger gave Shelley cause for serious thought, as he with difficulty supported the sleeping form of Mary in his arms. Surely all this scene is well described in "The Fugitives" —

While around the lashed ocean.

Though Mary woke to hear they were still far from land, and might be forced to make for Boulogne if they could not reach Calais, still with the dawn of a fresh day the lightning paled, and at length they were landed on Calais sands, and walked across them to their hotel. The fresh sights and sounds of a new language soon restored Mary, and she was able to remark the different costumes; and the salient contrast from the other side of the Channel could not fail to charm three young people so open to impressions. But before night they were reminded that there were others whom their destiny affected, for they were informed that a "fat lady" had been inquiring for them, who said that Shelley had run away with her daughter. It was poor Mrs. Godwin who had followed them through heat and storm, and who hoped at least to induce her daughter Claire to return to the protection of Godwin's roof; but this, after mature deliberation, which Shelley advised, she refused to do. Having escaped so far from the routine and fancied dulness of home life, the impetuous Claire was not to be so easily debarred from sharing in the magic delight of seeing new countries and gaining fresh experience. So Mrs. Godwin returned alone, to make the best story she could so as to satisfy the curious about the strange doings in her family.

Meanwhile the travellers proceeded by diligence on the evening of the 30th to Boulogne, and then, as Mary was far from well, hastened on their journey to Paris, where by a week's rest, in spite of many annoyances through want of money and difficulty in procuring it, Mary regained sufficient strength to enjoy some of the interesting sights. A pedestrian tour was undertaken across France into Switzerland. In Paris the entries in the diary are chiefly Shelley's; he makes some curious remarks about the pictures in the Louvre, and mentions with pleasure meeting a Frenchman who could speak English who was some help, as Claire's French does not seem to have stood the test of a lengthy discussion on business at that time. At length a remittance of sixty pounds was received, and they forthwith settled to buy an ass to carry the necessary portmanteau and Mary when unable to walk; and so they started on their journey in 1814, across a country recently devastated by the invading armies of Europe. They were not to be deterred by the harrowing tales of their landlady, and set out for Charenton on the evening of August 8, but soon found their ass needed more assistance than they did, which necessitated selling it at a loss and purchasing a mule the next day. On this animal Mary set out dressed in black silk, accompanied by Claire in a like dress, and by Shelley who walked beside. This primitive way of travelling was not without its drawbacks, especially after the disastrous wars. Their fare was of the coarsest, and their accommodation frequently of the most squalid; but they were young and enthusiastic, and could enter with delight into the fact that Napoleon had slept in their room at one inn. And the picturesque though frequently ruined French towns, with their ramparts and old cathedrals, gave them happiness and content; on the other hand, the dirt, discomfort, and ignorance they met with were extreme. At one wretched village, Echemine, people would not rebuild their houses as they expected the Cossacks to return, and they had not heard that Napoleon was deposed; while two leagues farther, at Pavillon, all was different, showing the small amount of communication between one town and another in France at that time.

Shelley was now obliged to ride the mule, having sprained his ankle, and on reaching Troyes Mary and Claire were thoroughly fatigued with walking. There they had to reconsider ways and means; the mule, no longer sufficing, was sold and a *voiture* bought, and a man and a mule engaged for eight days to take them to Neuchatel. But their troubles did not end here, for the man turned out far more obstinate than the mule, and was determined to enjoy the sweets of tyranny: he stopped where he would, regardless of accommodation or no accommodation, and went on when he chose, careless whether his travellers were in or out of the carriage. Mary describes how they had to sit one night over a wretched kitchen fire in the village of Mort, till they were only too glad to pursue their journey at 3 A.M. In fact, in those days Mary was able, in the middle of France, to experience the same discomforts which tourists have now to go much farther to find out. Their tour was far different from a later one described by Mary, when comfortable hotels are chronicled; but, oh! how she then looked back to the happy days of this time. The trio would willingly have prolonged the present state of things; but, alas! money vanished in spite of frugal fare, and they decided, on arriving in Switzerland, and with difficulty raising about thirty-eight pounds in silver, that their only expedient was to return to England in the least expensive way possible. They first tried, however, to live cheaply in an old chateau on the lake of Arx, which they hired at a guinea a month; but the discomfort and difficulties were too great, and even the customary resources of reading and writing failed to induce them to remain in these circumstances. They at one time contemplated a journey south of the Alps, but, only twenty-eight pounds remaining to live on from September till December, they naturally felt it would be safer to return to England, and decided to travel the eight hundred miles by water as the cheapest mode of transit. They proceeded from Lucerne by the Reuss, descending several falls on the way, but had to land at Loffenberg as the falls there were impassable. The next day they took a rude kind of canoe to Mumph, when they were forced to continue their journey in a return cabriolet; but this breaking down, they had to walk some distance to the nearest place for boats, and were fortunate in meeting with some soldiers to carry their box. Having procured a boat they reached Basle by the evening, and leaving there for Mayence the next morning in a boat laden with merchandise. This ended their short Swiss tour; but they passed the time delightfully, Shelley reading Mary Wollstonecraft’s letters from Norway, and then, again, perfectly entranced, as night approached, with the magic effects of sunset sky, hills surmounted with ruined castles, and the reflected colours on the changing stream. They proceeded in this manner, staying for the night at inns, and taking whatever boat could be found in the morning. Thus they reached Cologne, passing the romantic scenery of the Rhine, recalled to them later when reading *Childe Harold*. From this point they proceeded through Holland by diligence, as they found travelling by the canals and winding rivers would be too slow, and consequently more expensive. Mary does not appear to have been impressed with the picturesque flat country of Holland, and gladly reached Rotterdam; but they were unfortunately detained two days at Marsluys by contrary winds, spending their last guinea, but feeling triumphant in having travelled so far for less than thirty pounds.

The captain, being an Englishman, ventured to cross the bar of the Rhine sooner than the Dutch would have done, and consequently they returned to England in a severe squall, which must have recalled the night of their departure and banished tranquillity from their minds, if they had for a time been soothed by the changing scenes and their trust in each other.

This account, taken chiefly from Mary's *Six Weeks' Tour*, published in 1817 first, differs in some details from the diary made at the time. In the published edition the names are suppressed. Nor does Mary refer to the extraordinary letter written by Shelley from Troyes on August 13, to the unfortunate Harriet, inviting her to come and stay with them in Switzerland, writing to her as his "dearest Harriet," and signing himself "ever most affectionately yours." Fortunately the proposal was not carried out; probably neither Harriet nor Mary desired the other's company, and Shelley was saved the ridicule, or worse, of this arrangement.

CHAPTER V. LIFE IN ENGLAND.

On leaving the vessel at Gravesend, they engaged a boatman to take them up the Thames to Blackwall, where they had to take a coach, and the boatman with them, to drive about London in search of money to pay him. There was none at Shelley's banker, nor elsewhere, so he had to go to Harriet, who had drawn every pound out of the bank. He was detained two hours, the ladies having to remain under the care of the boatman till his return with money, when they bade the boatman a friendly farewell and proceeded to an hotel in Oxford Street.

With Shelley and Mary's return to England their troubles naturally were not at an end. Instead of money and security, debts and overdue bills assailed Shelley on all sides; so much so, that he dared not remain with Mary at this critical moment of their existence, when she, unable to return to her justly indignant father, had to stay in obscure lodgings with Claire, while Shelley, from some other retreat, ransacked London for money from attorneys and on post obits at gigantic interest. We have now letters which passed between Mary and Shelley at this time; also Mary's diary, which recounts many of their misadventures.

Day after day we have such phrases as (October 22) "Shelley goes with Peacock to the lawyers, but nothing is done," till on December 21 we find that an agreement is entered into to repay by three thousand pounds a loan of one thousand. Godwin, even if he would have helped, could not have done so, as his own affairs were now in their perennial state of distress; and before long, one of Shelley's chief anxieties was to raise two hundred pounds to save Mary's father from bankruptcy, although apparently they only communicated through a lawyer. It is curious to note how Mary complains of the selfishness of Harriet; poor Harriet who, according to Mrs. Godwin, still hoped for the return of her husband's affection to herself, and who sent for Shelley, after passing a night of danger, some time before her confinement. At one time Mary entertained an idea, rightly or wrongly conceived, that Harriet had a plan for ruining her father by dissuading Hookham from bailing him out from a menaced arrest. And so we find, in the extracts from the joint diary of Mary and Shelley, Harriet written of as selfish, as indulging in strange behaviour, and even, when she sends her creditors to Shelley, as the nasty woman who compels them to change their lodgings.

Before this entry of January 2, 1815, Harriet had given birth (November 30) to a second child, a son and heir, which fact Mary notes a week later as having been communicated to them in a letter from a *deserted* wife. What recriminations and heart-burnings, neglect felt on one side and “insulting selfishness” on the other! In April, Mary writes, “Shelley passes the morning with Harriet, who is in a surprisingly good humour;” and then we hear how Shelley went to Harriet to procure his son who is to appear in one of the courts; and yet once more Mary writes, “Shelley goes to Harriet about his son, returns at four; he has been much teased by Harriet”; and then a blank as to Harriet, for the diary is lost from May 1815 to July 1816.

In the meantime we see in the diary how Mary, far from well at times, is happy in her love of Shelley — how they enjoy intellectual pleasures together. They fortunately were satisfied with each other’s company, as most of their few friends fell from them, Mrs. Boinville writing a “cold and even sarcastic letter;” the Newtons were considered to hold aloof; and Mrs. Turner, whom they saw a little, told Shelley her brother considered “you’ve been playing a German tragedy.” Shelley replied, “Very severe, but very true.” About this time Hogg renewed his acquaintance with Shelley and made that of Mary, though at first his answer to Shelley’s letter was far from sympathetic. On his first visit they also were disappointed with him; but a little later (November 14) Hogg called at his friend’s lodging in Nelson Square, when he made a more favourable impression on Shelley by being himself pleased with Mary. She in return found him amusing when he jested, but far astray in his opinions when discussing serious matters — in fact, on a later visit of his, she finds Hogg makes a sad bungle, quite muddled on the point when in an argument on virtue. In spite of being shocked by Hogg in matters of philosophy and ethics, she gets to like him better daily, and he helps them to pass the long November and December evenings with his lively talk. On one occasion he would describe an apparition of a lady whom he had loved, and who, he averred, visited him frequently after her death. They were all much interested, but annoyed by the interruption of Claire’s childish superstitions. In fact, Hogg glides back to the old friendship of the university days, and his witticisms must have beguiled many a leisure hour, while he would also help Mary with her Latin studies now commenced. Claire frequently accompanied Shelley in his walks to the lawyers and other business engagements, as Mary's health not infrequently prevented her taking long walks, and Claire stated later that Shelley had a positive fear of being alone in London, as he was haunted by the fear of an attack from Leeson, the supposed Tanyrallt assassin.

Claire's cleverness and liveliness made her a pleasant companion at times for Shelley and Mary; but even had they been sisters — and they had been brought up together as such — Mary might have found her constant presence in confined lodgings irksome, especially as Claire tormented herself with superstitious alarms which at times, even in reading Shakespeare, quite overcame her. Her fanciful imagination also conjured up causes of offence where none were intended, and magnified slight changes of mood on Shelley's or Mary's part into intentional affronts, when she ought rather to have taken Mary's delicate health and difficult position into consideration. Mary, by all accounts, seems naturally to have had a sweet and unselfish disposition, although she had sufficient character to be self-absorbed in her work, without which no work is worth doing. It is true that her friend Trelawny later appeared to consider her somewhat selfishly indifferent to some of Shelley's caprices or whims; but this was with the pardonable weakness of a man who, although he liked character in a woman, still considered it was her first duty to indulge her husband in all his freaks. However this may be, we have constantly recurring such entries in the joint diary as:—"Nov. 9. — Jane gloomy; she is very sullen with Shelley. Well, never mind, my love, we are happy. Nov. 10. — Jane is not well, and does not speak the whole day…. Go to bed early; Shelley and Jane sit up till twelve talking; Shelley talks her into good humour." Then —"Shelley explains with Clara." Again—"Shelley and Clara explain as usual."

Mary writes—"Nov. 26. — Work, &c. &c. Clara in ill humour. She reads *The Italian*. Shelley sits up and talks her into humour." Dec. 19. — A discussion concerning female character. Clara imagines that I treat her unkindly. Mary consoles her with her all-powerful benevolence. "I rise (having already gone to bed) and speak with Clara. She was very unhappy; I leave her tranquil." Clara herself writes as early as October—"Mary says things which I construe into unkindness. I was wrong. We soon became friends; but I felt deeply the imaginary cruelties I conjured up."

It is clear that where such constant explaining is necessary there could not be much satisfaction in perpetual intimacy.

Mary is amused at the way Shelley and Claire sit up and "frighten themselves" by different reasons or forms of superstition, and on one occasion we have their two accounts of the miraculous removal of a pillow in Claire's room, Claire avowing it had moved while she did not see it; and Shelley attesting the miracle because the pillow was on a chair, much as Victor Hugo describes the peasants of Brittany declaring that "the frog *must* have talked on the stone because there was the stone it talked upon." The result might certainly have been injurious to Mary, who was awakened by the excited entrance of Claire into her room. Shelley had to interpose and get her into the next room, where he informed Claire that Mary was not in a state of health to be suddenly alarmed. They talked all night, till the dawn, showing Shelley in a very haggard aspect to Claire's excited imagination (Shelley had been quite ill the previous day, as noted by Mary). She excited herself into strong convulsions, and Mary had finally to be called up to quiet her. The same effect tried a little later fortunately fell flat; but there seemed no end to the vagaries of Claire's "unsettled mind" as Shelley calls it, for she takes to walking in her sleep and groaning horribly, Shelley watching for two hours, finally having to take her to Mary. Certainly philosophy did not seem to have a calming effect on Claire Claremont's nature, and often must Shelley and Mary have bemoaned the fatal step of letting her leave her home with them. It was more difficult to induce her to return, if indeed it was possible for her to do so, with the remaining sister, Fanny, still under Godwin's roof. Fanny's reputation was jealously looked after by her aunts Everina and Eliza, who contemplated her succeeding in a school they had embarked in in Ireland. But it is not to be wondered at that the excitable, lively Clara should have groaned and bemoaned her fate when transferred from the exhilaration of travel and the beauties of the Rhine and Switzerland to the monotony of London life in her anomalous position; and although both Mary and Shelley evidently wished to be kind to her, she felt more her own wants than their kindness. Want of occupation and any settled purpose in life caused pillows and fire-boards to walk in poor Claire's room, much as other uninteresting objects have to assume a fictitious interest in the houses and lives of many fashionably unoccupied ladies of the present day, who divide their interest between a twanging voice or a damp hand and the last poem of the last fashionable poet. Shelley is not the only imaginative and simple-minded poet who could apparently believe in such a phenomenon as a faded but supernatural flower slipped under his hand in the dark, other people in whom he has faith being present, and perchance helping in the performance. Genius is often very confiding.

Peacock was perhaps the one other friend who, during these sombre, if not altogether unhappy, days of Mary, visited them in their lodgings. Shelley, through him, hears of some of the movements of his family, and at one time Mary enters with delight into the romantic idea of carrying off two heiresses (Shelley's sisters) to the west coast of Ireland. This idea occupies them for some days through many delightful walks and talks with Hogg. Peacock also frequently accompanied Shelley to a pond touching Primrose Hill, where the poet would take a fleet of paper boats, prepared for him by Mary, to sail in the pond, or he would twist paper up to serve the purpose — it must have been a relaxation from his projects of Reform.

We must not leave this delightfully unhappy time without making reference to the series of letters exchanged between Mary and Shelley during an enforced separation. Unseen meetings had to be arranged to avoid encounters with bailiffs, at a time when the landlady refused to send them up dinner, as she wanted her money, and Shelley, after a hopeless search for money, could only return home — with cake. During this time some of their most precious letters were written to each other. We cannot refrain from quoting some touching passages after Mary had received letters from Shelley expressing the greatest impatience and grief at his separation from her, appointing vague meeting-places where she had to walk backwards and forwards from street to street, in the hopes of a meeting, and fearful animosity against the whole race of lawyers, money-lenders, &c., though all his hopes depended on them at the time. The London Coffee House seemed to be the safest meeting-place.

Mary, not very clear about business matters at the time, felt most the separation from her husband: the dangers that surrounded them she only felt in a reflected way through him. They must have confidence in each other, she thinks, and their troubles cannot but pass, for there is certainly money which must come to them!

She thus writes (October 25):

For what a minute did I see you yesterday! Is this the way, my beloved, we are to live till the 6th? In the morning when I wake, I turn to look for you. Dearest Shelley, you are solitary and uncomfortable. Why cannot I be with you, to cheer you and press you to my heart? Ah! my love, you have no friends. Why then should you be torn from the only one who has affection for you? But I shall see you to-night, and this is the hope that I shall live on through the day. Be happy, dear Shelley, and think of me! Why do I say this, dearest and only one? I know how tenderly you love me, and how you repine at your absence from me. When shall we be free from fear of treachery? I send you the letter I told you of from Harriet, and a letter we received yesterday from Fanny (this letter made an appointment for a meeting between Fanny and Clara); the history of this interview I will tell you when I come, but, perhaps as it is so rainy a day, Fanny will not be allowed to come at all. I was so dreadfully tired yesterday that I was obliged to take a coach home. Forgive this extravagance; but I am so very weak at present, and I had been so agitated through the day, that I was not able to stand; a morning's rest, however, will set me quite right again; I shall be well when I meet you this evening. Will you be at the door of the coffee-house at five o'clock, as it is disagreeable to go into such places? I shall be there exactly at that time, and we can go into St. Paul's, where we can sit down.

I send you "Diogenes," as you have no books; Hookham was so ill-tempered as not to send the book I asked for.

Two more distracted letters from Shelley follow, showing how he had been in desperation trying to get money from Harriet; how pistols and microscope were taken to a pawnshop; Davidson, Hookham, and others are the most hopeless villains, but must be propitiated. Trying letters also arrive from Mrs. Godwin, who was naturally much incensed with Mary, and of whom Mary expresses her detestation in writing to Shelley. One more short letter:

October 27.

MY OWN LOVE,

I do not know by what compulsion I am to answer you, but your letter says I must; so I do.

By a miracle I saved your £5, and I will bring it. I hope, indeed, oh, my loved Shelley, we shall indeed be happy. I meet you at three, and bring heaps of Skinner St. news.

Heaven bless my love and take care of him.

HIS OWN MARY.

As many as three and four letters in a day pass between Shelley and Mary at this time. Another tender, loving letter on October 28, and then they decide on the experiment of remaining together one night. Warned by Hookham, who regained thus his character for feeling, they dared not return to the London Tavern, but took up their abode for a night or two at a tavern in St. John Street. Soon the master of this inn also became suspicious of the young people, and refused to give more food till he received money for that already given; and again they had to satisfy their hunger with cakes, which Shelley obtained money from Peacock to purchase. Another day in the lodgings where the landlady won't serve dinner, cakes again supplying the deficiency. Still separation, Shelley seeking refuge at Peacock's. Fresh letters of despair and love, Godwin's affairs causing great anxiety and efforts on Shelley's part to extricate him. A Sussex farmer gives fresh hope. On November 3 Mary writes very dejectedly. She had been *nearly* two days without a letter from Shelley, that is, she had received one of November 2 early in the morning, and that of November 3 late in the evening. That day had also brought Mary a letter from her old friends the Baxters, or rather from Mr. David Booth, to whom her friend Isabel Baxter was engaged, desiring no further communication with her. This was a great blow to Mary, as, Isabel having been a great admirer of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary had hoped she would remain her friend. Mary writes:—"She adores the shade of my mother. But then a married man! It is impossible to knock into some people's heads that Harriet is selfish and unfeeling, and that my father might be happy if he chose. By that cant of selling his daughter, I should half suspect that there has been some communication between the Skinner Street folks and them."

But now the separation was approaching its end, and the danger of being arrested past, they move from their lodgings in Church Terrace, St. Pancras, to Nelson Square, where we have already seen Hogg in their company and heard of the sulks, fears, and bemoanings of poor Claire.

Mary Shelley’s novel of *Lodore* gives a good account of the sufferings of this time, as referred to later. The great resource of intellectual power is manifested during all this period. During a time of ill-health, anxieties of all kinds, constant moves from lodgings where landladies refused to send up dinner, while she was discarded by all her friends, while she had to walk weary distances, dodging creditors, to get a sight from time to time of her loved Shelley, while Claire bemoaned her fate and seems to have done her best to have the lion’s share of Shelley’s intellectual attention (for she partook in all the studies, was able to take walks, and kept him up half the night “explaining”), Mary indefatigably kept to her studies, read endless books, and made progress with Latin, Greek, and Italian. In fact, she was educating herself in a way to subsist unaided hereafter, to bring up her son, and to fit him for any position that might come to him in this world of changing fortunes. Whatever faults Mary may have had, it is not the depraved who prepare themselves for, and honestly fight out, the battle of life as she did.

CHAPTER VI. DEATH OF SHELLEY'S GRANDFATHER, AND BIRTH OF A CHILD.

After Shelley had freed himself, for a time, of some of his worst debts towards the close of 1814, the year 1815, with the death of his grandfather on January 6, brought a prospect of easier circumstances, as he was now his father's immediate heir.

Although Shelley was not invited to the funeral, and only knew of the death through the papers, he determined at once to go into Sussex, with Claire as travelling companion, as Mary was not well enough for the journey. Shelley left Claire at Slinfold, and proceeded alone to his father's house, where he was refused admittance; so he adopted the singular plan of sitting in the garden, before the door, passing the time by reading *Comus*. One or two friends come out to see him, and tell him his father is very angry with him, and the will is most extraordinary; finally he is referred to Sir Timothy's solicitor — Whitton. From him, Mary writes in her diary, Shelley hears that if he will entail the estate he is to have the income of one hundred thousand pounds.

The property was really left in this way, as explained by Professor Dowden. Sir Bysshe's possessions did not, probably, fall short of £200,000. One portion, valued at £80,000, consisted of certain entailed estates, but without Shelley's concurrence the entail could not be prolonged beyond himself; the rest consisted of unentailed landed property and personal property amounting to £120,000. Sir Bysshe desired that the whole united property should pass from eldest son to eldest son for generations. This arrangement, however, could not be effected without Shelley. Sir Bysshe, in his will, offered his grandson not only the rentals, but the income of the great personal property, if he would renew the entail of the settled property and would also consent to entail the unsettled property; otherwise he should only receive the entailed property, which was bound to come to him, and which he could dispose of at his pleasure, should he survive his father. He had one year to make his choice in.

Shelley is considered to have been business-like in his negotiations; but to have retained his original distaste of 1811 to entailing large estates to descend to his children — in fact, he appears to have considered too little the contingency of what would come to them or to Mary in the event of his death prior to that of his father. Pressing present needs being paramount at this time, he agreed to an arrangement by which a portion of the estate valued at £18,000 could be disposed of to his father for £11,000, and an income of £1,000 a year secured to Shelley during his and his father's life. At one time there was an idea of disposing of the entailed estate to his father, as a reversion, but this was not sanctioned by the Court of Chancery. Money was also allowed by his father to pay his debts.

So now we see Mary and Shelley with one thousand pounds a year, less two hundred pounds which, as Shelley ordered, was to be paid to Harriet in quarterly instalments.

Now that the money troubles were over, which for a time absorbed their whole attention, Mary began to perceive signs of failing health in Shelley, and one doctor asserted that he had abscesses on the lungs, and was rapidly dying of consumption. Whatever these symptoms were really attributable to they rapidly disappeared, although Shelley was a frequent sufferer in various ways through his life.

In February, we see also the effect of the mental strain and fatigue on Mary, as she gave birth, about the 22nd of that month, to a seven-months' child, a little girl, who only lived a few days, but long enough to win her mother's and father's love, and leave the first blank in their lives. The diary of this time, kept up first by Claire, and then by Mary, gives some details of the baby's short life. On February 22 —

Mary is well and at ease, the child not expected to live, Shelley sits up with Mary. Much agitated and exhausted. Hogg sleeps here.

23. — Mary well; child unexpectedly alive. Fanny comes and stays the night…. 24. — Mary still well; favourable symptoms of the child. Dr. Clarke confirms our hope…. Hogg comes in evening. Shelley unwell and exhausted. 25. — Child and Mary very well. Shelley is very unwell. 26. — Mary rises to-day. Hogg calls; talk. Mary retires at 6 o'clock…. Shelley has a spasm. On 27 Shelley and Clara go about a cradle. 28. — Mary goes down-stairs; nurses the baby, and reads *Corinne* and works. Shelley goes to consult Dr. Pemberton. On March 1st nurse baby, read *Corinne*, and work. Peacock and Hogg call; stay till half-past eleven.

On March 2 they move to fresh lodgings. It is uncertain whether it was to 26 Marchmont Street, from which place letters are addressed in April and May. or whether they were in some other lodgings in the interval. This early move was probably detrimental to Mary and the baby, for on March 6 we find the entry: “Find my baby dead. Send for Hogg. Talk. A miserable day.”

Mary thinks, and talks, and dreams of her little baby, and finds reading the best palliative to her grief.

March 19. — Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived. Awake to find no baby. I think about the little thing all day. Not in good spirits. Shelley is very unwell.

March 20. — Dream again about my little baby.

Mrs. Godwin had sent a present of linen for the infant, and Fanny Godwin repeated her visits; but the little baby, who might have been a link towards peace with the Godwins, has escaped from a world of sorrow, where, in spite of a mother’s love, she might later on have met with a cold reception.

Godwin at this time was in the anomalous position of communicating with Shelley on his business matters; but for the very reason that Shelley lent him, or gave him, money, he felt it the more necessary to hold back from friendly intercourse, or from seeing his daughter — a curious result of philosophic reasoning, which appears more like worldly wisdom.

From this time the company of Claire was becoming insufferable to Mary and Shelley. At least for a time, it was desirable to have a change. We find Mary sorely puzzled in her diary at times, as on March 11 she writes —”Talk about Clara’s going away; nothing settled. I fear it is hopeless. She will not go to Skinner Street; then our house is the only remaining place I plainly see. What is to be done?

March 12.—”Talk a great deal. Not well, but better. Very quiet in the morning and happy, for Clara does not get up till four….” Again on the 14th March—”The prospect appears more dismal than ever; not the least hope. This is, indeed, hard to bear.”

At one time Godwin, Shelley, and Mary tried to induce Mrs. Knapp to take her, but she refused. Claire also tried to get a place as companion, but that fell through, till at length the bright idea occurred to them of sending her into Devonshire, under the excuse of her needing change of air; and there, according to a letter from Mrs. Godwin to Lady Mountcashell, she was placed with a Mrs. Bicknall, the widow of a retired Indian officer. Two more entries in Mary’s journal, of this time, show with what feelings of relief she contemplates the departure of Shelley’s friend, as she now calls Claire. Noting that Shelley and his friend have their last talk, the next day, May 13, Shelley walks with her, and she is gone! and Mary begins “a new diary with our regeneration.”

There is a letter from Claire to Fanny Godwin, of May 28, apparently from Lynmouth, describing the scenery in a very picturesque manner, and saying how she delights in the peace and quiet of the country after the turmoil of passion and hatred she had passed through. She also expresses delight that their father had received one thousand pounds — this was evidently part of what Shelley had undertaken to pay for him, and was included in the sum which Sir Timothy paid for his debts. Claire — or Jane, as she was still called in Skinner Street — supposed her family would be comfortable for a month or two.

Shelley and Mary now yearned for the country, and truly their eight months’ experience in London had been a trying period, from various causes, but redeemed by their love and intellectual conversation. Now they felt unencumbered by pressing money troubles, and free from the burden of Claire’s still more trying presence, at least to Mary. In June we find them together at Torquay, and we can imagine the delight of the poet and his loved Mary in their first unshared companionship — the quiet rambles by sea and cliff in the long June evenings, the sunsets, the quiet and undisturbed peace which surrounded them. They were able to give each other quaint pet names, which no one could or need understand — which would have sounded silly in the presence of a third person. This was a time in which they could grow really to know each other without reserve, when there need be no jealous competition as to who was most proficient in Greek or Latin; when Shelley was drawn to poetry, and *Alastor* was contemplated, the melancholy strain of which seems to indicate love as the only redeeming element of life, and which might well follow the time of turmoil in Shelley’s career. May not this poem have been his self-vindication as exhibiting what he might have become had he not followed the dictates of his heart? “Pecksie” and the “Elfin Knight” were the names which still stand written at the end of the first journal, ending with Claire’s departure. Mary added some useful receipts for future use. One is: "A tablespoonful of the spirit of aniseed, with a small quantity of spermaceti;" to which Shelley adds the following: "9 drops of human blood, 7 grains of gunpowder, 1/2 oz. of putrified brain, 13 mashed grave-worms — the Pecksie's doom salve. The Maie and her Elfin Knight."

We next find Mary at Clifton, July 27, 1815, writing in much despondency at being alone while Shelley is house-hunting in South Devon. Although she wishes to have a home of her own, she dreads the time it will take Shelley to find it. He ought to be with her the next day, the anniversary of their journey to Dover; without him it will be insupportable. And then the 4th of August will be his birthday, when they must be together. They might go to Tintern Abbey. If Shelley does not come to her, or give her leave to join him, she will leave in the morning and be with him before night to give him her present with her own hand. And then, is not Claire in North Devon? If Shelley has let her know where he is, is she not sure to join him if she think he is alone? Insufferable thought! As Professor Dowden shows, Mary must have been very soon joined by Shelley after this touching appeal. In all probability a house was fixed on, but in a very opposite direction, before the end of the week, and the lease or arrangements made by August 3, as the following year he writes from Geneva to Langdill to give up possession of his house at Bishopsgate by August 3, 1816. So here, far from Devonshire, by the gates of Windsor Forest, near the familiar haunts of his Eton days, we again find Shelley and Mary. Here Peacock was not far distant at Marlow, and Hogg could arrive from London, and here they were within reach of the river. No long time elapsed before they were tempted to experience again the delights of a holiday on the Thames. So Mary and Shelley, with Peacock and Charles Clairmont to help him with an oar, embarked and went up the river. They passed Reading and Oxford, winding through meadows and woods, till arriving at Lechlade, fourteen miles from the source of the Thames, they still strove to help the boat to reach this point if the boat would not help them. This proved impossible. After three miles, as cows had taken possession of the stream, which only covered their hoofs, the party had perforce to return, still contemplating proceeding by canal and river, even as far as the Clyde, the poet ever yearning forwards. But this, money and prudence forbade, as twenty pounds was needed to pass the first canal; so they returned to their pleasant furnished house at

Bishopsgate. On this trip Mary saw Shelley’s old quarters at Oxford, where they spent a night, and they must have lingered in Lechlade Churchyard, as the sweet verses there written indicate. Shelley and Mary were now settled for the first time in a home of their own: she was making rapid progress with Latin, having finished the fifth book of the Aeneid, much to Shelley’s satisfaction, as recounted in a letter to Hogg. Hogg was expected to stay with them in October, and in the meanwhile, under the green shades of Windsor Forest, Shelley was writing his *Alastor*, and, as his wife describes in her edition of his poems, “The magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest scenery we find in the poem.” She writes: —

None of Shelley’s poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that exists throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, and the breedings of a poet’s heart in solitude — the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspire with the sad and trying pangs which human passion imparts — give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near, he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout; it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative; it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

Poetry was theirs, Nature their mutual love: Nature and two or three friends, if we may include the Quaker, Dr. Pope, who called on Shelley and wished to discuss theology with him, and when Shelley said he feared his views would not be to the Doctor’s taste replied “I like to hear thee talk, friend Shelley. I see thou art very deep.” But beyond these all friends had fallen off, and certainly Godwin’s conduct seems to have been most extraordinary. He did not hesitate to put Shelley to considerable inconvenience for money, for not long after the one thousand pounds had been given, we find Shelley having to sell an annuity to help him with more money. Yet Godwin all this time treated Shelley and Mary with great haughtiness, much to their annoyance, though neither let it interfere with the duty they owed Godwin as father and philosopher. These perpetual worries helped to keep them in an unsettled state in their home. Owing perhaps to the loss of the diary at this period, we have no information about Harriet. Already in January, we find there is an idea of residing in Italy, both for the sake of health, and on account of the annoyance they experienced from their general treatment. Shelley had the poet's yearning for sympathy, and Mary must have suffered with and for him, especially when her father, for whom he did so much, treated him with haughty severity by way of thanks. Mary attributed Godwin's conduct to the influence of his wife, whom she cordially disliked at this time. She was loth to recognise inconsistency in her father, whom she always revered. Godwin on his side was by no means anxious for his daughter and Shelley to leave for Italy in a few weeks' time, as intimated to him by Shelley as possible on the 16th February. We thus see that a trip to the Continent was contemplated some months prior to the journey to Geneva. This idea arose after the birth of Mary's first son, William, born January 24, 1816, who was destined to be only for a few short years the joy of his parents, and then to rest in Rome, where Shelley was not long in following him.

It is evident from Godwin's diary that Claire must have been on a visit or in direct communication with Mary at the beginning of January, as Godwin notes "Write to P.B.S. inviting Jane"; and it does not seem to have been possible for Shelley and Mary to have borne resentment. The facts of this meeting early in the year, and that Mary and Shelley contemplated another of their restless journeys abroad, certainly take off from the abruptness of their departure for Geneva in May with Claire Claremout. Undoubtedly Shelley was in a worried and excited state at this period, and he acted so as to rouse the doubts of Peacock as to the reason of the hurried journey. The story of Williams of Tremadock suddenly appearing at Bishopsgate, to warn Shelley that his father and uncle were engaged in a plot to lock him up, seems without foundation. But when, in addition to this story, we consider Claire's history, we can well understand that, in spite of Shelley's love of sincerity and truth, circumstances were too strong for him. At a time when he and Mary were being avoided by society for openly defying its laws, they might well reflect whether they could afford to avow the new complication which had sprung up in their small circle. Claire, in hopes of finding some theatrical engagement, had called upon Lord Byron at Drury Lane Theatre, apparently about March 1816, during the distressing period of his rupture with his wife. The result of this acquaintance is too well known, and has been too much a source of obloquy to all concerned in it, to need much comment here, and it is only as the facts affect Mary that we need refer to them at all.

At this time Byron was about to leave England, pursued, justly or unjustly, by the hatred of the British mob for a poet who dared to quarrel with his wife and follow the low manners of some of the leaders of fashion whom he had been intimate with. Their obscurity has sheltered *them* from opprobrium. He was accompanied by the young physician, Dr. John Polidori, who has somehow passed with Byron's readers as a fool; yet he certainly could have been no fool in the ordinary sense of the word, as he had taken full degrees as a doctor at an earlier age perhaps than had ever been known before. His family, a simple and highly educated family (his father was Italian, and had been secretary to Alfieri), caring very much for poetry and intellectual intercourse, were delighted at the prospect of the young physician having such an opening to his career, as his sister, the mother of poets, has told the writer. It is true that this exciting short period with Byron must have had an injurious effect on the young physician's after career, though he was still able to obtain the deep interest of Harriet Martineau at Norwich. It might be added that his nephew, not only a poet but a leader in poetic thought, deeply resented the insulting terms in which Byron wrote of Polidori, and, although h deeply admired the genius of Byron, did not fail to note where any weakness of form could be found in his work — such is human nature, and so is poetic justice meted out. This might appear to be a slight digression from our subject, if it were not for the fact that when Mary wrote *Frankenstein* at Sécheron, as one of the tales of horror that were projected by the assembled party, it was only John Polidori's story of *The Vampire* which was completed along with Mary's *Frankenstein*, *The Vampire*, published anonymously, was at first extolled everywhere under the idea that it was Byron's, and when this idea was found to be a mistake the tale was slighted in proportion, and its author with it. The fact is that as an imaginative tale of horror *The Vampire* holds its place beside Mary's *Frankenstein*, though not so fully developed as a literary performance or as an invention.

So on the eve of Byron's starting for Switzerland, we find Shelley and Mary contemplating a journey with Claire in the same direction by another route, but to the same place and hotel, previously settled on and engaged by Byron. It certainly might appear that Shelley and Mary in this dilemma did not feel justified in acting towards another in a way contrary to their own conduct in life. In all probability Claire confided her belief in Byron's attachment to herseif, after his wife had discarded him, to Mary or even to Shelley. Mary, however distasteful the subject must have been to her, would not perhaps allow herself to stand in the way of what, from her own experience, might appear to be a prospect of a settlement in life for Claire, especially as she must deeply have felt their responsibility in having induced or allowed her to accompany them in their own elopement. In fact, the feeling of responsibility in this most trying case might, to a highly imaginative mind, almost conjure up the invention of a Frankenstein.

We now (May 3, 1816) find Shelley, Mary, and Claire at Dover, again on a journey to Switzerland. From Dover Shelley wrote a kind letter to Godwin, explaining money matters, and promising to do all he could to help him. They pass by Paris, then by Troyes, Dijon, and Dôle, through the Jura range. This time is graphically described by Shelley in letters appended to the *Six Weeks' Tour*; the journey and the eight days' excursion in Switzerland. We read of the terrific changes of nature, the thunderstorms, one of which was more imposing than all the others, lighting up lake and pine forests with the most vivid brilliancy, and then nothing but blackness with rolling thunder. These letters are addressed to Peacock, but in them we have no reference to the intimacy with Byron now being carried on; how he arrived at the Hotel Sécheron, nor their removal to the Maison Chapuis to avoid the inquisitive English.

There is, fortunately, no further reason to refer to the rumours which scandal-mongers promulgated — rumours which undoubtedly hastened the rupture between Byron and Claire; although evil rumours, like fire smouldering in a hold, are difficult to extinguish, and, as Mr. Jeaffreson shows, the slanders of this time were afterwards a trouble to Shelley at Ravenna, in 1821, when his wife had to take his part. These rumours were the source of certain poems, and also, later, stories about Byron. All lovers of Shelley owe a debt of deep gratitude to Mr. Jeaffreson, who, although, severe to a fault on many of the blemishes in his character (as if he considered that poets ought to be almost superhuman in all things), nevertheless proves in so clear a way the utter groundlessness of the rumours as to relieve all future biographers from considering the subject. At the same time he shows how distasteful Claire's presence must have become to Byron, who was hoping for reconciliation with his wife, and who naturally construed fresh obduracy on her part as the result of reports that were becoming current. Anyway, it is manifest that Byron did not regard Claire in the light that Mary may have hoped for — namely, that he would consider her as a wife, taking the place of her who had left him. Byron had no such new idea of the nature of a wife, but only accepted Claire as she allowed herself to be taken, with the addition that he grew to dislike her intensely.

So after Shelley and Byron had made their eight days' tour of the lake, from June 23, unaccompanied by Mary and Claire, we find a month later Shelley taking them for an eight days' tour to Chamouni, unaccompanied by Byron. Of this tour Shelley each day writes long descriptive letters to Peacock, who is looking out for a house for them somewhere in the neighbourhood of Windsor. They return by July 28 to Montalègre, where he writes of the collection of seeds he has been making, and which Mary intends cultivating in her garden in England.

For another month these young restless beings enjoy the calm of their cottage by the lake, close to the Villa Diodati, while the poets breathe in poetry on all sides, and give it to the world in verse. Mary notes the books they read, and their visits in the evening to Diodati, where she became accustomed to the sound of Byron's voice, with Shelley's always the answering echo, for she was too awed and timid to speak much herself. These conversations caused her, subsequently, when hearing Byron's voice, to feel a sad want for "the sound of a voice that is still."

It is during this sojourn by the Swiss Lake that Mary began her first serious attempt at literature. Being asked each day by Shelley whether she had found a story, she answered "No," till one evening after listening to a conversation between Byron and Shelley on the principle of life — whether it would be discovered, and the power of communicating life be acquired —"perhaps a corpse might be reanimated; galvanism had given tokens of such things" — she lay awake, and with the sound of the lake and the sight of the moonlight gleaming through chinks in the shutters, were blended the idea and the figure of a student engaged in the ghastly work of creating a man, until such a horror came to light that he shrank in fear from his own performance. Such was the original idea for this imaginative work of a girl of nineteen, which has held its place among conspicuous works of fiction to the present day. *Frankenstein* was the outcome of the project before mentioned of writing tales of horror. One night, when pouring rain detained Shelley's party at the Villa Diodati over a blazing fire, they told strange stories, till Byron, leading to poetic ideas, recited the witch's scene from "Christabel," which so excited Shelley's imagination that he shrieked, and ran from the room; and Polidori writes that he brought him to by throwing water in his face. Upon his reviving, they agreed to write each a supernatural tale. Matthew Gregory Lewis, the author of *The Monk*, who visited at Diodati, assisted them with these weird fancies.

CHAPTER VII. “FRANKENSTEIN.”

That a work by a girl of nineteen should have held its place in romantic literature so long is no small tribute to its merit; this work, wrought under the influence of Byron and Shelley, and conceived after drinking in their enthralling conversation, is not unworthy of its origin. A more fantastically horrible story could scarcely be conceived; in fact, the vivid imagination, piling impossible horror upon horror, seems to claim for the book a place in the company of a Poe or a Hoffmann. Its weakness appears to be that of placing such an idea in the annals of modern life; such a process invariably weakens these powerful imaginative ideas, and takes away from, instead of adding to, the apparent truth, and cannot fail to give an affectation to the work. True, it might add to the difficulty to imagine a different state of society, past or future, but this seems a *sine quâ non*. The story of *Frankenstein* begins with a series of letters of a young man, Robert Walton, writing to his sister, Mrs. Saville in England, from St. Petersburg, where he is about to embark on a voyage in search of the North Pole. He is bent on discovering the secret of the magnet, and is deluded with the hope of a *never* absent sun. When advanced some distance towards his longed-for goal, Walton writes of a most strange adventure which befalls them in the midst of the ice regions — a gigantic being, of human shape, being drawn over the ice in a sledge by dogs. Not many hours after this strange sight a fresh discovery was made of another man in another sledge, with only one living dog to it: this time the man was seen to be a European, whom the sailors tried to persuade to enter their ship. On seeing Walton the stranger, speaking English, asked whither they were bound before he would consent to enter the ship. This naturally caused intense excitement, as the man, reduced to a skeleton, seemed to have but a short time to live. However, on hearing that the vessel was bound northwards, he consented to enter, and with great care he was restored for the time. In answer to an inquiry as to his object in thus exposing himself, he replied, “To seek one who fled from me.” An affection springs up and increases between Walton and the stranger, till the latter promises to tell his sad and strange story, which he had hitherto intended should die with him.

This commencement leads to the story being told in the form (which might with advantage have been avoided) of a long narrative by the dying man. The stranger describes himself as of a Genevese family of high distinction, and gives an interesting account of his father and juvenile surroundings, including a playfellow, Elizabeth Lavenga, whom we encounter much later in his history. All his studies are pursued with zest, till coming upon the works of Cornelius Agrippa he is led with enthusiasm into the ideas of experimental philosophy; a passing remark of “trash” from his father, who does not explain the difference between past and modern science, is not enough to deter him and prevent the fatal consequence of the study he persists in, and thus a pupil of Albertus Magnus appears in the eighteenth century. The effects of a thunderstorm, described from those Mary had recently witnessed, decided him in his resolution, for electricity now was the aim of his research. After having passed his youth in his happy Swiss home with his parents and dear friends, on the death of his loved mother he starts for the University of Ingolstadt. Here he is much reprehended by the professors for his useless studies, until one, a Mr. Waldeman, sympathises with him, and explains how Cornelius Agrippa and others, although their studies did not bring the immediate fruit they expected, nevertheless helped on science in other directions, and he advises Frankenstein to pursue his studies in natural philosophy, including mathematics. The upshot of this advice is that two years are spent in intense study and thought, till he becomes thin and haggard in appearance. He is contemplating a visit to his home, when, making some fresh experiment, he finds that he has discovered the principle of life; this so overcomes him for a time that, oblivious of all else, he is bent on making use of his discovery. After much perplexing thought he determines to create a being superior to man, so that future generations shall bless him. In the first place, by the help of chemistry, he has to construct the form which is to be animated. The grave has to be ransacked in the attempt, and Frankenstein describes with loathing some of the details of his work, and shows the danger of overstraining the mind in any one direction — how the virtuous become vicious, and how virtue itself, carried to excess, lapses into vice.

The form is created in nervous fear and fever. Frankenstein being the ideal scientist, devoid of all feeling for art (whose ideas of it, indeed, might be limited to the elevation and section of a pot), without any ideal of proportion or beauty, reaches the point where he considers nothing but the infusion of life necessary. All is ready, and in the first hour of the morning he applies his fatal discovery. Breath is given, the limbs move, the eyes open, and the colossal being or monster, as he is henceforth called, becomes animated; though copied from statues, its fearful size, its terrible complexion and drawn skin, scarcely concealing arteries and muscles beneath, add to the horror of the expression. And this is the end of two years work to the horrified Frankenstein. Overwhelmed by disgust, he can only rush from the room, and finally falls exhausted on his bed, only to wake to find his monster grinning at him. He runs forth into the street, and here, in Mary's first work, we have a reminiscence of her own infant days, when she and Claire hid themselves under the sofa to hear Coleridge read his poem, for the following stanza from the *Ancient Mariner* might seem almost the key-note of *Frankenstein*: —

Like one who on a lonely road,
  Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
  And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a fearful fiend
  Doth close behind him tread.

Frankenstein hurries on, but coming across his old friend Henri Clerval at the stage coach, he recalls to mind his father, Elizabeth, his former life and friends. He returns to his rooms with his friend. Reaching his door, he trembles, but opening it, finds himself delivered from his self-created fiend. His frenzy of delight being attributed to madness from overwork, Clerval induces Frankenstein to leave his studies, and, finally (after he had for months endured a terrible illness), to accompany him to his native village. Various delays occurring, they are detained too late in the year to pass the dangerous roads on their way home.

Health and peace of mind returning to some degree, Frankenstein is about to proceed on his journey homewards, when a letter arrives from his father with the fatal news of the mysterious death of his young brother. This event hastens still further his return, and gives a renewed gloomy turn to his mind; not only is his loved little brother dead, but the extraordinary event points to some unknown power. From this time Frankenstein's life is one agony. One after another all whom he loves fall victims to the demon he has created; he is never safe from his presence; in a storm on the Alps he encounters him; in the fearful murders which annihilate his family he always recognises his hand. On one occasion his creation wished to have a truce and to come to terms with his creator. This, after his most fearful treachery had caused the innocent to be sentenced as the perpetrator of his fearful deeds. On meeting Frankenstein he recounts the most pathetic story of his falling away from sympathy with humanity: how, after saving the life of a girl from drowning, he is shot by a young man who rushes up and rescues her from him. He became the unknown benefactor of a family for some period of time by doing the hard work of the household while they slept. Having taking refuge in a hovel adjoining a corner of their cottage, he hears their pathetic and romantic story, and also learns the language and ways of men; but on his wishing to make their acquaintance the family are so horrified at his appearance that the women faint, the men drive him off with blows, and the whole family leave a neigbourhood, the scene of such an apparition. After these experiences he retaliates, till meeting Frankenstein he proposes these terms: that Frankenstein shall create another being as repulsive as himself to be his companion — in fact, he desires a wife as hideous as he is. These were the conditions, and the lives of all those whom Frankenstein held most dear were in the balance; he hesitated long, but finally consented.

Everything now had to be put aside to carry out this fearful task — his love of Elizabeth, his father's entreaties that he should marry her, his hopes, his ambitions, go for nothing. To save those who remain, he must devote himself to his work. To carry out his aim he expresses a wish to visit England, and, with his friend Clerval, descends the Rhine, which is described with the knowledge gained in Mary's own journey, and the same route is pursued which she, Shelley, and Claire had taken through Holland, embarking for England from Rotterdam, and thence reaching the Thames. After passing London and Oxford and various places of interest, he expresses a desire to be left for a time in solitude, and selects a remote island of the Orkneys, where an uninhabited hut answers the purpose of his laboratory. Here he works unmolested till his fearful task is nearly accomplished, when a fear and loathing possess his soul at the possible result of this second achievement. Although the demon already created has sworn to abandon the haunts of man and to live in a desert country with his mate, what hold will there be over this second being with an individuality and will of its own? What might be the future consequences to humanity of the existence of such monsters? He forms a resolution to abandon his dreaded work, and at that moment it is confirmed by the sight of his monster grinning at him through the window of the hut in the moonlight. Not a moment is lost. He tears his just completed work limb from limb. The monster disappears in rage, only to return to threaten eternal revenge on him and his; but the time of weakness is passed; better encounter any evils that may be in store, even for those he loves, than leave a curse to humanity. From that time there is no truce. Clerval is murdered and Frankenstein is seized as the murderer, but respited for worse fate; he is married to Elizabeth, and she is strangled within a few hours. When goaded to the verge of madness by all these events, and seeing his beloved father reduced to imbecility through their misfortunes, he can make no one believe his self-accusing story; and if they did, what would it avail to pursue a being who could scale the Alps, live among glaciers, and pass unfathomable seas? There is nothing left but a pursuit till death, single-handed, when one might expire and the other be appeased — onward, with a deluding sight from time to time of his avenging demon. Only in sleep and dreams did Frankenstein find forgetfulness of his self-imposed torture, for he lived again with those he had loved; he endured life in his pursuit by imagining his waking hours to be a horrible dream and longing for the night, when sleep should bring him life. When hopes of meeting his demon failed, some fresh trace would appear to lead him on through habited and uninhabited countries; he tracks him to the verge of the eternal ice, and even there procures a sledge from the wretched and horrified inhabitants of the last dwelling-place of men to pursue the monster, who, on a similar vehicle, had departed, to their delight. Onwards, onwards, over the eternal ice they pass, the pursued and the pursuer, till consciousness is nearly lost, and Frankenstein is rescued by those to whom he now narrates his history; all except his fatal scientific secret, which is to die with him shortly, for the end cannot be far off.

The story is told; and the friend — for he feels the utmost sympathy with the tortures of Frankenstein — can only attempt to soothe his last days or hours, for he, too, feels the end must be near; but at this crisis in Frankenstein's existence the expedition cannot proceed northward, for the crew mutiny to return. Frankenstein determines to proceed alone; but his strength is ebbing, and Walton foresees his early death. But this is not to pass quietly, for the demon is in no mood that his creator should escape unmolested from his grasp. Now the time is ripe, and, during a momentary absence, Walton is startled by fearful sounds, and then, in the cabin of his dying friend, a sight to appal the bravest; for the fiend is having the death struggle with him — then all is over. Some last speeches of the demon to Walton are explanatory of his deed, and of his present intention of self-immolation, as he has now slaked his thirst to wreak vengeance for his existence. Then he disappears over the ice to accomplish this last task.

Surely there is enough weird imagination for the subject. Mary in this work not merely intended to depict the horror of such a monster, but she evidently wished also to show what a being, with no naturally bad propensities, might sink to when under the influence of a false position — the education of Rousseau's natural man not being here possible.

Some weak points, some incongruities, it would be unreasonable not to expect. Whether the *eternal* light expected at the North Pole, if of the sun, was a misapprehension of the author or a Shelleyan application of the word eternal (as applied by him to certain friendships, or duration of residence in houses) may be questioned. The question as to the form used for the narrative has already been referred to. The difficulty of such a method is strangely exemplified in the long letters which are quoted by Frankenstein to his friend while dying, and which he could not have carried with him on his deadly pursuit. Mary's facility in writing was great, and having visited some of the most interesting places in the world, with some of the most interesting people, she is saved from the dreary dulness of the dull. Her ideas, also, though sometimes affected, are genuine, not the outcome of some fashionable foible to please a passing faith or superstition, which ought never to be the *raison d'etre* of a romance, though it may be of a satire or a sermon.

The last passage in the book is perhaps the weakest. It is scarcely the climax, but an anticlimax. The end of Frankenstein is well conceived, but that of the Demon fails. It is ridiculous to conceive anyone, demon or human, having ended his vengeance, fleeing over the ice to burn himself on a funeral pyre where no fuel could be found. Surely the tortures of the lowest pit of Dante's Inferno might have sufficed for the occasion. The youth of the authoress of this remarkable romance has raised comparison between it and the first work of a still younger romancist, the author of *Gabriel Denver*, written at seventeen, who died before he had completed his twentieth year.

While this romance was being planned during the latter part of the stay of the Shelley party in Switzerland, after their return from Chamouni, the diary gives us a charming idea of their life in their cottage of Montalègre. We have the books they read, as usual; and well did Mary, no less than Shelley, make use of that happy reading-time of life — youth. The Latin authors read by Shelley were also studied by Mary. We find her reading "Quintus Curtius," ten and twelve pages at a time; also on Shelley's birthday, August 4, she reads him the fourth book of Virgil, while in a boat with him on the lake. Also the fire-balloon is not forgotten, which Mary had made two or three days in advance for the occasion. They used generally to visit Diodati in the evening, after dinner, though occasionally Shelley dined with Byron, and accompanied him in his boat. On one occasion Mary wrote: "Shelley and Claire go up to Diodati; I do not, for Lord Byron did not seem to wish it." Rousseau, Voltaire, and other authors cause the time to fly, until their spirits are damped by a letter arriving from Shelley's solicitor, requiring his return to England. While in Switzerland Mary received some letters from Fanny, her half-sister; these letters are interesting, showing a sweet, gentle disposition, very affectionate to both Shelley and Mary. One letter asks Mary questions about Lord Byron. There are also details as to the unfortunate state of the finances of Godwin, who seemed in a perennial state of needing three hundred pounds. Fanny also writes of herself, on July 29, 1816, as not being well — being in a state of mind which always keeps her body in a fever — her lonely life, after her sister's departure, with all the money anxieties, and her own dependence, evidently weighed upon her mind, and led to a state of despondency, although her letters would scarcely give the idea of a tragedy being imminent. She writes to Shelley and Mary that Mrs. Godwin — mamma she calls her — tells her that she is the laughing-stock of Mary and Shelley, and the constant "beacon of their satire." She shows much affection for little William, as well as for his parents; but there is certainly no word in these letters showing more than sisterly and friendly feeling; no word showing jealousy or envy. Claire afterwards alleged that Fanny had been in love with Shelley. Mr. Kegan Paul states the reverse most strongly. It is not easy to conceive how either should have been sure of the fact. Even Shelley's beautiful verses to her memory do not indicate any special reason for her sadness, as far as he was concerned.

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
  Yet knew I not that heart was broken
 From which it came, and I departed,
  Heeding not the words then spoken.
    Misery — oh Misery!
    This world is all too wide for thee.

From these lines we see that Fanny was in a very depressed state of mind when her sister left England for her second Continental tour in 1816. This being two years from the time when Mary had first left her home, it does not seem probable that Shelley was to blame, or rather was the indirect cause of Fanny's sadness. She felt herself generally useless and unneeded in the world, and this idea weighed her down.

CHAPTER VIII. RETURN TO ENGLAND.

On leaving the Lake of Geneva on August 28, without having accomplished anything in the way of a settlement for Claire, but with pleasant reminiscences of Rousseau's surroundings, and the grandeur of the Alps, the party of three returned towards England by way of Dijon, and thence by a different route from that by which they had gone, returning by Rouvray, Auxerre, Fontainebleau, and Versailles. Here Mary and Shelley visited the palace and town, which a few years hence she would revisit under far different circumstances. Travelling — in those days so very unlike what it is in ours, when Europe can be crossed without being examined — allowed them to become acquainted with the towns they passed through. Rouen was visited; but for some reason they were disappointed with the cathedral. Prom Havre they sailed for Portsmouth, when, with their usual fate, they encountered a stormy passage of twenty-seven hours. It must have been a trying journey for them in more ways than one, for if there was any uncertainty as to Claire's position on leaving England, Mary could now no longer have been in any doubt. On arriving in England she proceeded, with Claire and her little William, with his Swiss nurse Elise, to Bath, where Claire passed as Mrs. Clairemont. Shelley addressed her as such at 5 Abbey Churchyard, Bath. During this time Shelley was again house-hunting, while staying with Peacock on the banks of the Thames; and Mary paid a visit to Peacock at the same time, leaving little William to the care of Elise and Claire at Bath. From here Claire writes to Mary about the "Itty Babe's" baby ways, and how she and Elise puzzled and puzzled over the little night-gowns, or, quoting Albè, as they called Byron (it has been suggested a condensation of L. B.), "they mused and coddled" without effect. Claire certainly did her best to take care of the baby, walking out with it, and so forth.

Now the three hundred pounds written of by Fanny was falling due. Mary must also have been kept in great apprehension, as we see by a letter from Shelley to Godwin, dated October 2, 1816, that the money was not forthcoming, as hoped. So the fatal Rhine gold is again helping to a tragedy, which the romantic prefer to impute to a still more fatal cause; for, so short a time after the 2nd as October 10, we find Fanny already at Bristol, writing to Godwin that she is about to depart immediately to the place whence she hopes never to return. On October 3 there is a long letter from her to Mary, written just after Shelley's letter had reached Godwin, when she had read its contents on Godwin's countenance as he perused it. Her letter is most clear-sighted, noble, and single-minded; she complains of Mary's way of exaggerating Mrs. Godwin's resentment to herself, explaining that whatever Mrs. Godwin may say in moments of extreme irritation to her, she is quite incapable of making the worst of Mary's behaviour to others. She shows Mary her own carelessness in leaving letters about for the servants to read, so that they and Harriet spread the reports she complains of rather than Mrs. Godwin. She tells how she had tried to convince Shelley that he should only keep French servants, and she endeavours to persuade Mary how important it is that they should prevent bad news coming to Godwin in a way to give a sudden shock, as he is so sensitive. She saw through certain subterfuges of Shelley, and wrote in a calm, affectionate way, trying to set everything right, with a wonderful clearness of vision; for everyone but herself — for herself there was no outlet but despair, no rest but the grave; she, the utterly unselfish one, was useless — all that remained was to smooth her way to the grave. Not for herself, but others, she managed to die where she was unknown, travelling for this purpose to Swansea, where only a few shillings remained to her, and a little watch Mary had brought her from Geneva. She wrote of herself in a letter she left, which neither compromised anyone nor indicated who she was, as one whose birth was unfortunate, but whose existence would soon be forgotten. Poor Fanny! Is she not rather likely to be remembered as a type of self-abnegation? Certainly hers was not the nature to cause her sister a moment's jealous pang, even though her death called forth one of Shelley's sweetest lyrics.

There was nothing to be done. Godwin paid a brief visit to the scene, and ascertained that all was too true. The door that had had to be forced, the laudanum bottle, and her letter told all that need be known. Shelley visited Bristol to obtain information; but there was no use in giving publicity to this fresh family sorrow — discretion was the only sympathy that could be shown. Mary bought mourning, and worked at it. Claire envied for herself Fanny's rest; but life had to proceed, awaiting fresh events.

Work was the great resource. Mary was writing her *Frankenstein*. She persisted with the utmost fortitude in intellectual employment, as poor Fanny wrote to Mary on September 26:—"I cannot help envying your calm, contented disposition, and the calm philosophical habits of life which pursue yon; or, rather, which you pursue everywhere; I allude to your description of the manner in which you pass your days at Bath, when most women would hardly have recovered from the fatigues of such a journey as you had been taking."

This is, indeed, the key-note of Mary's character, which, with her sensitive, retiring nature, enabled her to live through the stormy times of her life with equanimity.

Mary had Shelley's company through November, but at the beginning of December she writes to Shelley, who is again staying with Peacock house-hunting. Mary tells him what she would *like*: "A house (with a lawn) near a river or lake, noble trees, or divine mountains"; but she would be content if Shelley would give her "a garden and absentia Claire." This is very different from her way of thinking of Fanny, who, she says, might now have had a home with her. This expression occurs in a letter to Shelley when she was on the point of marrying him, and might have had Fanny with her. Mary also speaks of her drawing lessons, and how (thank God!) she had finished "that tedious, ugly picture" she had been so long about. This points to that terrible way of teaching Art, by accustoming its students to hideousness and vulgarity, till Art itself might become an unknown quantity. Mary also tells, what is more interesting, that she has finished the fourth chapter, a very long one, of her *Frankenstein*, which she thinks Shelley will like. She wishes for his return. On December 13 Mary receives a letter from Shelley, who is with Leigh Hunt. On December 15, 1816, he is back with Mary at Bath, when a letter from Hookham, who had been requested by Shelley to obtain information about Harriet for him, brought further fatal news — for Harriet had now committed suicide, and had been found drowned in the Serpentine. Unknown, she was called Harriet Smith; uncared for, she had gone to her grave beneath the water — unloved, the lovely Harriet cared not to live. What may have happened, it is not for those who may not have been tried to question; of cause and effect it is not for us to judge; but that her memory must have been a haunting shadow to Shelley and to Mary no one would wish to think them heartless enough to deny.

Surely the lovely “Lines,” with no name affixed, must be the dirge to Harriet’s fate, and Shelley’s life’s failure: —

The cold earth slept below;
Above, the cold sky shone;
And all around
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black;
The green grass was not seen;
The birds did rest
On the bare thorn’s breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway-track,
Had bound their folds o’er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon’s dying light.
As a fen-fire’s beam
On a sluggish stream
Gleams dimly, so the moon shone there;
And it yellowed the strings of thy tangled hair,
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved;
The wind made thy bosom chill:
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

These lines are dated 1815 by Mary in her edition, but she says she cannot answer for the accuracy of all the dates of minor poems.

The death of Harriet was necessarily quickly followed by the marriage of Shelley and Mary. The most sound opinions were ascertained as to the desirability of an early marriage, or of postponing the ceremony for a year after the death of Harriet; all agreed that the wedding ought to take place without delay, and it was fixed for December 30, 1816, at St. Mildred's Church in the City, where Godwin and his wife were present, to their no little satisfaction, as described by Shelley to Claire. Mary notes her marriage thus in her diary: "I have omitted writing my journal for some time. Shelley goes to London, and returns; I go with him; spend the time between Leigh Hunt's and Godwin's. A marriage takes place on the 30th December 1816. Draw. Read Lord Chesterfield and Locke."

No sooner was the marriage over than their one anxiety was to return to Bath; for now the time of Claire's trial was approaching, and on January 13 a little girl was born, not destined to remain long in a world so sad for some. Little Allegra, a child of rare beauty, was welcomed by Shelley and Mary with all the benevolence they were capable of, and Byron's duty to his child devolved, for the time at least, on Shelley.

During this period, Shelley's and Mary's chief anxiety was to welcome and care for the little children left by poor Harriet. They had been placed, before her death, under the care of a clergyman who kept a school in Warwick, the Rev. John Kendall, vicar of Budbrooke. Shelley had hoped that his marriage with Mary would remove all difficulty, and Mary was waiting to welcome Ianthe and Charles; but in this matter they were doomed to disappointment.

On January 8 a Bill was filed in the Court of Chancery, on the part of the infants Charles and Ianthe Shelley, John Westbrook, their maternal grandfather, acting on their behalf, praying that they might not be transferred to the care of their father, Percy Bysshe Shelley, who had deserted their mother; who was the author of *Queen Mab*, and an avowed atheist, who wrote against the institution of marriage, and who had been living unlawfully with a woman whom Eliza Westbrook (as Shelley had written to her) might excusably regard as the cause of her sister's ruin. Shelley filed his answer on the 18th, denying the desertion of his wife, as she and he had separated with mutual consent, owing to various causes. He had wished for his children on parting with her, but left them with her at her urgent entreaty. He had given her two hundred pounds to pay her debts, and an allowance of a fifth of his income. As to his theological opinions, he understands that they are abandoned as not applicable to the case. His views on matrimony, he alleged, were only in accordance with the ideas of some of the greatest thinkers that divorce ought to be possible under various conditions.

Lord Eldon gave his judgment on March 27, 1817. In fifteen carefully worded paragraphs he showed his reasons for depriving Shelley of his children. He insists through all that it is Shelley's avowed and published opinions, as they affected his *conduct* in life, which unfitted him to be the guardian of his children.

The wording in some passages caused grave anxiety to Shelley and Mary (as shown in their letters) as to whether they would be deprived of their own children; and they were prepared to abandon everything, property, country, all, and to escape with the infants. The poem "To William" was written under this misapprehension, although when he left England in 1818, Shelley's chief reason, as given in his letter to Godwin, was on account of his health. Undoubtedly the judgment, and all the trying circumstances they had been passing through ever since their return from Geneva, helped to decide them in this determination.

Charles and Ianthe were finally placed under the care of Dr. and Mrs. Hume, who were to receive two hundred pounds a year — eighty pounds settled on them by Westbrook, and one hundred and twenty pounds to be paid by Shelley for the charge. Shelley might see them twelve times a year in the presence of the Humes, the Westbrooks twelve times alone, and Sir Timothy and his family when they chose.

While these proceedings were progressing, Mary with Claire and the two children had moved to Marlow, having previously joined Shelley in London on January 26, as she feared to leave him in his depressed state alone. The intellectual society they met at Hunt's and at Godwin's helped to pass over this trying period. One evening Mary saw together the "three poets" — Hunt, Shelley, and Keats; Keats not being much drawn towards Shelley, while Hazlitt, who was also present, was unfavourably impressed by his worn and sickly appearance, induced by the terrible anxieties and trials which be had recently passed through. Horace Smith also proved a staunch friend: Shelley once remarked it was odd that the only truly generous wealthy person he ever met should be a stockbroker, and that he should write and care for poetry, and yet make money. In the midst of her anxieties, Mary Shelley enjoyed more social intercourse and amusement than before. We find her noting in her diary, in February, dining with the Hunts and Horace Smith, going to the opera of *Figaro*, music, &c. But now they had found their Marlow retreat — a house with a garden as Mary desired, not with a river view, but a shady little orchard, a kitchen garden, yews, cypresses, and a cedar tree. Here Mary was able to live unsaddened for a time; the Swiss nurse for the children, a cook and man-servant, sufficed for in-door and out-door work, and Mary, true to her name, was able to occupy herself with spiritual and intellectual employment, not to the neglect of domestic, as the succession of visitors entertained must prove; study, drawing, and her beloved work of *Frankenstein* were making rapid progress. Nor could Mary have been indifferent to the woes of the poor, for Shelley would scarcely have been so actively benevolent as recorded during the residence at Marlow without the co-operation of his wife. While Shelley enquired into cases of distress and gave written orders for money, Mary dispensed the latter. Here Godwin paid them his first visit, and the Hunts passed a pleasant time. Shelley wrote his *Revolt of Islam* under the Bisham Beeches, and Mary had the pleasure of welcoming her old friend Mr. Baxter, of Dundee, although his daughter Isabel, married to Mr. Booth, still held aloof. Peacock, Horace Smith, and Hogg were also among the guests. We find constant references to Godwin having been irritated and querulous with Mary or Shelley. A forced, unnatural, equanimity during one period of his life seems to have resulted in a querulous irritability later — a not unusual case — and he had to vent it on those who loved and revered him most, or in fact, on those who would alone endure it from amiability of disposition, a quality not remarkable in his second wife.

On May 14 we find Mary has finished and corrected her *Frankenstein*, and she decides to go to London and stay with her father while carrying on the negotiations with Murray whom she wishes to publish it. Shelley accompanies Mary for a few days at Godwin’s invitation, but returns to look after “Blue Eyes,” to whom he is charged with a million kisses from Mary. But Mary returns speedily to Shelley and “Blue Eyes,” having felt very restless while absent. She soon falls into a plan of Shelley's for partially adopting a little Polly who frequently spent the day or slept in their house, and Mary would find time to tell her before she went to bed whatever she or Shelley had been reading that day, always asking her what she thought of it.

Mary, who was expecting another child in the autumn, was not long idle after the completion of *Frankenstein*, but set to work copying and revising her *Six Weeks' Tour*. This work, begun in August, she completed after the birth of her baby Clara on September 2. In October the book was bought and published by Hookham.

She tells, in her notes on this year 1817, how she felt the illness and sorrows which Shelley passed through had widened his intellect, and how it was the source of some of his noblest poems, but that he had lost his early dreams of changing the world by an idea, or, at least, he no longer expected to see the result.

A letter from Mary to her husband, written soon after the birth of her baby, shows how anxious she was at that time about his health. It had been a positive pain to her to see him languid and ill, and she counselled him obtaining the best advice. Change being recommended by the physician, Mary has to decide between going to the seaside or Italy. With all the reasons for and against Italy, Mary asks Shelley to let her know distinctly his wish in the matter, as she can be well anywhere. One strong reason for their going to Italy is that Alba, as Allegra was then called, should join her father. Evidently the embarrassment was too great to settle how to account for the poor child longer in England; and had not she a just claim upon Byron?

In another letter, September 28, Mary speaks of Claire's return to Marlow in a croaking state — everything wrong; Harriet's debts enormous. She had just been out for her first walk after the birth of Clara, and was surprised to find how much warmer it was out than in. Shelley is commissioned to buy a seal-skin fur hat for Willy, and to take care that it is a round fashionable shape for a boy. She is surrounded by babies while writing — William, Alba, and little Clara. Her love is to be given to Godwin when Mrs. Godwin is not there, as she does not love her. *Frankenstein* is still undisposed of.

The house at Marlow is soon found to be far too cold for a winter residence. Italy or the sea must speedily be settled on. Alba is the great consideration in favour of Italy, Mary feels she will not be safe except with them; Byron is so difficult to fix in any way, and the one hope seems to be to get him to provide for the child. Anxiety for Alba's future ruled their present, so impossible is it to foretell the future, which, read and judged as our past, is easy to be severe upon. This dream of health and rest in Italy was not to be so easily realised. Instead of being there, they were still dispensing charity at Marlow at the end of December, in spite of various negotiations for money in October and November. Horace Smith had lent two hundred pounds, and, Shelley thought, would lend more. Mary continued extremely anxious on Alba's account. If she could only be got to her father! Who could tell how he might change his mind if there be much delay? Might he not "change his mind, or go to Greece, or to the devil; and then what happens?" The lawyers' delays were heavy trials, and they could not go and leave Godwin unprovided for; he was a great anxiety to Mary at this time. It was not till December 7 that Shelley wrote to tell Godwin how he felt bound to go to Italy, as he had been informed that he was in a consumption.

Owing to a visit of Mr. Baxter to them at Marlow, when he wrote a most enthusiastic letter about Shelley and Mary to his daughter Isabel Booth, Mary had hoped for a renewal of the friendship which had afforded her so much pleasure as a girl, and she invited Isabel to accompany them to Italy; but this Mr. Booth would not allow, and, in fact, he appears to have treated his father-in-law, Mr. Baxter, who was six years younger than himself, with much severity, and wished him to stop all intimacy with Shelley. He did not, however, prevent him having a friendly parting with Shelley on March 2, although he would not allow his wife to have any communication with Mary — much to their sorrow. Mary was in constant anxiety about Shelley in the last months of 1817, writing of his suffering and the distress she feels in seeing him in such pain and looking so ill. In January 1818, the month before they left Marlow, his sufferings became very great. But two thousand pounds being borrowed on the promise of four thousand five hundred pounds on his father's death, and the house at Marlow being sold on January 25th, we find the packing and flitting taking place soon after. By February 7, Shelley leaves for London, and on Tuesday 10th Mary follows. Godwin, as usual now, had been beseeching for money, and then, feeling his dignity wounded by the effort, retaliated on the giver with haughtiness and insulting demands. In a biography, unfortunately, characters cannot always be made the consistent beings they frequently become in romances.

One more happy month Mary is to pass in England with Shelley. We, again, have accounts of visits to the opera, to museums, plays, dinners, and pleasant evenings spent with friends. Keats is again met, and Shelley calls on Mr. Baxter, who is not allowed by his son-in-law to say farewell to Mary Shelley: such a martinet may a Scotch schoolmaster be. Mary Lamb calls, and visits are paid and received till the last evening arrives, when Shelley, exhausted with ill-health, fatigue, and excitement, fell into one of his profound sleeps on the sofa before some of his friends left the lodgings in Great Russell Street, and thus the Hunts were unable to exchange with him their farewells. This small band of literary friends were all to bid Shelley and Mary farewell on his last few days in England. The contrast is indeed marked between that time and this, when Shelley societies are found in various parts of the world, when enthusiasts write from the most remote regions and form friendships in his name, when, churches, including Westminster Abbey, have rung in praise of his ideal yearnings, and when, not least, some have certainly tried to lead pure unselfish lives in memory of the godlike part of the man in him; but he now left his native shores, never to return, with Claire and Allegra, and his own two little children, and certainly a true wife willing to follow him through weal or woe.

CHAPTER IX. LIFE IN ITALY.

A third time, on March 11, 1818, Shelley, Mary, and Claire are on the road to Dover, this time with three young lives to care for — Willie, aged two years and two months; Clara, six months; and Allegra, one year and two months. These small beings kept well during their journey, and it is touching to note how Claire Clairmont, in her part of the diary recording their progress, mentions bathing her darling at Dover, and then cancels the passage from her diary, as many others where her name is given — surely one of the saddest of things for a mother to fear to mention her child's name! After another stormy passage the party again reached Calais, which they found as delightful as ever, and where they stayed at the Grand Cerf Hotel.

Mary continues to note the journey. They took a different route this time — by Douai, La Fère, Rheims, Berri-le-bac, and St. Dizier, the road winding by the Marne. They sleep at Langres, which ramparted town surely ought to have left a pleasant reminiscence; but they had hitherto found the route uninteresting and fatiguing. Mary finds more interest in the country after Langres, and with the help of Schlegel, from whom Shelley read out loud to her, the time passed pleasantly; no long weary evenings in hotels; no complaints when a carriage broke down and they were kept three hours at Macon for it to be repaired: they had with them the friends of whom they never tired.

At Lyons they rested three days. Mary much admired the city, and they visited the theatre, where they saw *L'homme gris et le Physionomiste*; and on Wednesday, March 25, they set out towards the mountains whose white tops were seen at a distance.

In crossing the frontier there was a difficulty in getting their books allowed to enter Sardinian territory, until a Canon, who had met Shelley's father at the Duke of Norfolk's, helped to get them through. After leaving Chambéry, where Mary stayed to allow her nurse Elise to see her child, they crossed Mont Cenis and dined on the top. The beauty of the scenery greatly raised Shelley's spirits, causing him to sing with exultation. They stayed one night at Turin, visiting the opera; and after reaching Milan, Shelley and

Mary went to Lake Como for a few days, having some idea of spending the summer on its banks; but not being able to suit themselves with a house they returned to Milan on April 12 and rejoined Claire, who had remained with the children. During the stay at Milan till the end of April there had been frequent letters from Claire to Byron. These were evidently far from satisfactory, as we find Shelley writing letters of caution to Claire in 1822, with regard to Byron and Allegra: he mentions having warned her against letting Byron get possession of Allegra in the spring of 1818, but Claire thought it for the interest of the child, whom she undoubtedly loved, to let her go to her father. Walks in the public gardens with the "Chicks" are noted by Claire several times, and the last entry in her diary, before April 28, when Allegra was taken by the nurse Elise to Byron, mentions a walk with the "Chicks" in the morning and drive in the evening with them, Mary and Shelley. Mary had sent her own trusted nurse Elise with the little Allegra, feeling that she would remain and in some degree replace the mother; and Claire believed that the child would stay with its father, though certainly this did not seem desirable or likely to last for long.

A change of scene being needed after these trying emotions, Mary, with her husband and two children, and Claire, now left for Pisa and Leghorn. They slept on the way at Piacenza, Parma, Modena, and then passed a night at a little inn among the Apennines, the fifth at Barberino, the sixth at La Scala, and on the seventh reached Pisa, where they lodged at Le Tre Donzelle. On this journey Mary was able to enjoy the Italian scenery under the unclouded Italian sky — the vine-festooned trees amid the fields of corn, the hedges full of flowers; all these seen from the carriage convey a lasting impression, and poor Claire remarks that, driving in a long, straight road, she always hopes it will take her to some place where she will be happier. They pass through beautiful chestnut woods on the southern side of the Apennines, and along the fertile banks of the Arno to Pisa. After a few days' stay at Pisa, where the cathedral, "loaded with pictures and ornaments," and the leaning tower are visited, and where, perhaps, the quiet Campo Santo, with its chapel covered with the beautiful frescos of Orcagna and Gozzoli, &c., was enjoyed, they proceed to Leghorn; here, after a few days at L'Aquila Nera, they move into apartments. They meet and see much of Mary's mother's friend, Mrs. Gisborne, who grew much attached to both Shelley and Mary, and who, from her acquaintance with literary people, must have been a pleasant companion to them. They had letters of introduction to the Gisbornes from Godwin. While here Mary made progress with Italian, reading Ariosto with her husband. Leghorn was not a sufficiently interesting place to detain the wandering Shelleys long, in spite of the attractions of the Gisbornes. On June 11 Mary, with her two children and Claire, follows Shelley to Bagni di Lucca, where he had taken a house. Here Mary much enjoyed the quiet after noisy Leghorn, as she wrote to Mrs. Gisborne, hoping to attract her to visit them. Mary was in her element in shady woods within the sound of running waters; her only annoyance was the number of English she came in contact with in her walks, where the English nursery-maid flourished, "a kind of animal I by no means like" she wrote; neither was she pleased by "the dashing, staring Englishwomen, who surprise the Italians (who always are carried about in sedan chairs) by riding on horseback."

Mary and Claire used to visit the Casino with Shelley, and look on at the dancing in which they did not join. Mary, however, did not agree with Shelley in admiring the Italian style of dancing; but those things on which they were ever of the same mind they had in plenty, for their beloved books arrived after being scrutinised by the Church authority; and while Shelley revelled in the delights of Greek literature, Mary shared those of English with him, for who can estimate the advantage of hearing Shakespeare and other poets read by Shelley! It was at the baths of Lucca also that Mary found her husband's unfinished *Rosalind and Helen*, and prevailed on him to complete it, for, as she says in her notes, "Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind and develop some high or abstruse truth." Without doubt, Mary was the ideal wife for Shelley. At this stage in the career of the poet one can but deplore that relentless destiny should only bring Mary to Shelley when a victim had already been sacrificed on the altar of fate; and the more one realises the sympathetic and intellectual nature of Claire, the less possible is it to help wasting a regret that Byron could not have met with the philosopher bookseller's adopted daughter earlier, instead of ruining his nature and his life by the fashionable follies he tampered with. But who would alter the workings of destiny? Does not the finest Lacryma Christi grow on the once devastated slopes of Vesuvius? Life, too, has its earthquakes, and the eruptions of its hidden depths seen through the minds of its poets, though causing at times agony to those who come in contact with them, work surely for the good of the whole. Mary had the years of pleasure, which are inestimable to those who can appreciate them, of contact with a great mind; but few among poets' wives have had the gifts which allow them fully to participate in such pleasures. Well for Mary that she also inherited much of her father's philosophic nature, which enabled her to endure some of the trials inherent in her position. What Shelley wrote Mary would transcribe — no mere task for her — for did she not, through Shelley, enjoy Plato's *Symposium*, a translation of which he was employed upon at Lucca? How could the fashionable idlers at the Baths find time to drink in inspiration from the poet and his wife? The poet gives the depths of his nature, but it is not he who writes with the fever or the tear of emotion who can stoop to be his own interpreter to the uninitiated, which seems to be a necessity of modern times, with few exceptions. Mary's education, defective though it may have been in some details, made her a fitting companion for some of the greatest of her day, and this quality in a woman could scarcely exist without a refinement of manner and tastes which, at times, might be misleading as to her disposition.

The spirit of wandering now came over Claire, and by the middle of August her desire to see her child again could no longer be suppressed. Accordingly she set out with Shelley on August 19, and reached Florence the next day, when Shelley wrote to Mary the impression the lovely city made on him, begging her, at the same time, not to let little William forget him before his return — little Clara could not remember. Claire thought at one time of remaining at Padua, but on reaching that city could not endure being left alone, and they reached Venice in the middle of the night, during a violent storm, which Shelley did not fail to write an account of to his wife. He also told her how the Hoppners, whom they called on (Mr. Hoppner being the British Consul in Venice), advised them to act with regard to Byron. By their advice Shelley called alone on him, and Byron proposed to send Allegra to Padua for a week on a visit; he would not like her to remain longer, as the Venetians would think he had grown tired of her. He afterwards offered them his villa at Este, thinking they were all at Padua. Shelley accepted this proposal, and wrote requesting Mary to join him there with the children, not knowing whether he was acting for good or harm, but looking forward to be scolded if he had done wrong, or kissed if right —

the event would prove. The event did prove; but it was out of their power to rule it.

Mary had invited the Gisbornes to stay with her at the Baths. They arrived on August 25, but the circumstances seemed imperative for Mary to go to Este, and she left on the 31st with a servant, Paolo, as attendant. They were detained a day at Florence, and did not reach Este till poor little Clara was dangerously ill from dysentery, which reduced her to a state of fever and weakness. Mary endured the misery of an incompetent doctor at Este; neither had they confidence in the Paduan physician. Shelley proceeded to Venice to obtain further advice, and prepare for the arrival of his wife and child, writing from there that he felt somewhat uneasy, but trusted there was no cause for real anxiety. This arrangement made, Mary set out with her baby and Claire to meet Shelley at Padua, and then proceeded to Venice, Claire returning to mind William and Allegra at Este; and now Mary had to endure that terrible tension of mind, with her dying child in her arms, driving to Venice, the time remembered by her so well when, on the same route, nearly a quarter of a century later, each turn in the road and the very trees seemed as the most familiar objects of her daily life; for had they not been impressed on her mental vision by the strength of despair? The Austrian soldiers at the frontier could not detain them, though without passports, for even they would not prevent a dying child from being conveyed on a forlorn hope. Such grief could scarcely be rendered more or less acute by circumstances. They arrived at their inn in a gondola, but only for Clara to die in her mother’s arms within an hour.

In this trial the Hoppners proved most kind friends, taking Mary to their house, and relieving the first hopelessness of grief by kindness, which it seemed ingratitude not to respond to. Mary, whatever she may have felt, knew that no expression of her feelings in her diary would nerve her to endure. She went about her daily occupations as usual. One idle day elapsed, after her little Clara had been buried on the Lido; we find her as usual reading, shopping, and seeing Byron, with whom she hoped to make better terms for Claire with regard to Allegra. There is a curious passage in a letter from Godwin to his daughter, illustrative of his own turn of mind, and not without some general truth:—”We seldom indulge long in depression and mourning except when we think secretly that there is something very refined in it, and that it does us honour.”

On September 29, Shelley and Mary return to Este. Claire had taken the children to Padua, but returned the next day to the Villa I Cappuccini. In the evening they went to the Opera. Their house was most beautifully situated. Here Shelley wrote his "Lines among the Euganean Hills," for no intense feeling could come to the poet without the necessity of expressing himself in poetry; and it was during this September month that Shelley wrote the first act of his *Prometheus Unbound*. Mary revisited Venice with her husband, little William, and the nurse Elise, on October 12. The impression then formed of Byron and his surroundings was so painful as to render it a matter of surprise that they could think of returning Allegra to him; but her extreme youth was her safeguard in this respect, and Shelley returned to Este on September 24, to take Allegra a second time from her mother who, with all her love for her "darling," as she always wrote of her in the effaced passages of her diary, could not get over the insuperable difficulties of her birth. On January 22 of this same year Claire had entered in her diary the fact of its being Byron's (Albé's) birthday; a note carefully effaced soon after. Shelley and Mary having decided to spend the winter further south, after a few days of preparation they left Este on November 5, and spent the night at Ferrara, where they visited the relics of Ariosto and Tasso, and the dungeon where the latter was incarcerated. Thence to Bologna, where they endured much fatigue in the picture galleries, poor Shelley being obliged to confess he did not pretend to taste. From Bologna, by Faenza and Cesena, they followed the coast from Rimmi to Fano, and passed an uncomfortable night at an inn at Fossombrone among the Apennines. Mary was greatly impressed by the beauty and grandeur of Spoleto. The impressive falls at Terni are duly chronicled by her; and November 19 and 20 are spent in winding through the Apennines, and then crossing the solitude of the Roman Campagna, and then Rome is reached.

In Italy, where wonder succeeds wonder, and where no place is a mere repetition of another, Mary may well have been impressed by her first visit to the Eternal City. Here, in November, she was able to sit and sketch in the Coliseum with her child and her husband, who found the wonderful ruin a source of inspiration. But Rome was now only a resting-place on their road to still sunnier Naples; and on November 27 Shelley set out a day in advance of Mary and her child to secure rooms in Naples, where Mary arrived on December 1. In the best part of the city, facing the royal gardens in front of the marvellous bay, with Shelley for her guide, who himself made use of Madame de Staël's *Corinne* as a handbook, Livy for the antiquities, and Winckelmann for art, Mary could enjoy the sights of Naples as no ordinary sightseer would. December was devoted to expeditions — Baiæ, Vesuvius, and Pompeii. The day at Baiæ was perhaps the most delightful, with the return by moonlight in the boat to Naples. Vesuvius, with its stupendous spectacle as of heaven and hell made visible, naturally produced a profound impression, but it was a very tiring expedition, as apparently it was only Claire who had a *chaise à porteurs* for the ascent of the cone; Mary and Shelley rode on mules as far as they could go, and Claire was carried all the way in a chair — though this seems scarcely possible — from Resina. How Mary could walk through the cinders up the cone seems incomprehensible. She must have had great strength, as it is a trying task for a man, and no wonder Shelley, in spite of his pedestrian strength, was exhausted when they arrived at the hermitage of San Salvador. The winter at Naples seems to have been a trying one to Mary, in spite of sunshine and the beauties of Nature; for Shelley was in a state of depression, as is exemplified in the "Stanzas written in dejection near Naples." What the immediate cause of this was cannot be said; it seems to be one of the mysteries, or perhaps rather the one mystery, of Shelley's life. He asserted to Medwin that a lady, young, married, and of noble connections, had become infatuated with him, and declared her love of him on the eve of his departure for the Continent in 1816; that he had gently but firmly repulsed her; that she arrived in Naples on the day he did, and had soon afterwards died. It is suggested that a little girl who was left under his guardianship in Naples, and whom he spoke of as his poor Neapolitan, might possibly be the child of this lady; others doubt the story altogether, which is not to be wondered at, although nothing can be declared impossible in a life where truth is frequently so much stranger than romance.

Mary was also troubled while at Naples by her servants, an unusual subject with her; but Paolo, having gone far beyond the limits of cheating, was detected by Mary, and also obliged by her to marry Elise, whom he had betrayed. They left for Rome, but Paolo declared he would be revenged on the Shelleys, and wrote threatening letters, which a lawyer disposed of for a time. This is known to be the origin of later calumnies, which Mr. Jeaffreson has now carefully and finally refuted.

Mary, later, with the regret of love that would be all sufficient, wished that at Naples she had entered more into the cause of the grief, which Shelley had kept from her, in order not to add to the melancholy she was then feeling with regard to her father.

Before leaving Naples they succeeded in visiting the Greek ruins at Paestum, which give still a fresh impression in Italy; and then, on February 28, 1819, Mary takes leave of Naples, never to revisit it with any of her companions of that time.

In Rome they found rooms in the Villa Parigi, but removed from them to the Palazzo Verospi on the Corso, and we soon find them busy exploring the treasures of Rome the inexhaustible. Here they had not to take fatiguing journeys as in Naples to visit the chief points of interest, for they were to be found at every turn. Visits to St. Peter's and the museum of the Vatican are mentioned; walks with Shelley to the Forum, the Capitol, and the Coliseum, which is visited and re-visited. Frequent visits are paid in the evening to the Signora Marianna Dionigi, and with her they hear Mass in St. Peter's, where the poor old Pope Pius VII was nearly dying. The Palazzo Doria and its picture gallery are examined, where the landscapes of Claude Lorraine particularly strike them. Then to the baths of Caracalla, where the romantic beauty of the ruins forms one of their chief attractions in Rome. They also take walks and drives in the Borghese Gardens. The statue of Pompey, at the base of which Cæsar fell, is not passed over — but it would be impossible to tell of all they saw and enjoyed in Rome. Mary made more acquaintances in Rome, nor did the English altogether neglect to call on Shelley. Mary also recommenced lessons in drawing, while Claire had singing lessons, and they met some celebrities at the Signora Dionigi's conversazioni. Altogether this early part of their stay in Rome was happy, but Shelley's health always fluctuating made them contemplate taking a house for the summer at Castellamare, as a doctor recommended this for him. But the days were hurrying towards a fresh calamity, for little William now fell ill, and we find the visits of a physician, Dr. Bell, chronicled, and on June 2nd three visits are noted. Claire helps to her utmost; Shelley does not close his eyes for sixty hours, and Mary, the hopes of whose life were bound up with the child, could only endure, watch the wasting of fever, and see the last of three perish on “Monday, June 7th, at noonday,” as Claire enters in her diary. Mary and Shelley were deprived of their gentle, blue-eyed darling, by a stronger hand than that of the Court of Chancery, and little William was buried where Shelley was soon to follow, in the cemetery which “might make one in love with death.”

CHAPTER X. MARY'S DESPONDENCY AND BIRTH OF A SON.

Before the fatal illness of her child Willie, Mary had encountered an old friend in Rome, and had renewed her acquaintance with Miss Curran whom she had formerly known at her father's. Congenial tastes in drawing and painting drew these ladies together, and Miss Curran did or began portraits of Mary, Shelley, and, what was of more importance to them at the time, of little Willie. The portraits of Mary and of Shelley, unfinished, and by an amateur, are by no means satisfactory; certainly not giving in Mary's case an idea of the beauty and charm which are constantly referred to by her friends, and which seem to have endured up to the time when, much later, an attack of small-pox altered her appearance. The portrait of Mary, although not artistic, is interesting as painted from life. Her oval face is here given with the high forehead. The complexion described as delicate and white was not in the gift of Miss Curran, who was not a colourist. To depict the eyes grey, tending to brown near the iris, agrees with Shelley's, "brown" and Trelawny's "grey" eyes, but the beauty of expression is wanting. The mouth, thin and hard, might have caught a passing look, but certainly not what an artist would have wished to portray; while a certain stiffness of pose is not what one would expect in the high-strung, sensitive Mary Shelley. The beauty of gold-brown hair was not in the painter's power to catch. Mary was of middle height, tending towards short; her hands were considered very beautiful, and by some she was supposed to be given to displaying them, although concealing them would have been difficult and unnecessary. Her arms and neck were also beautiful. Leigh Hunt refers to her at the opera, *décolletée*, with white, gleaming, sloping shoulders. Her "voice the sweetest ever heard," added to her gifts of conversation, described as resembling her father's with an added softness of manner and charm of description, with elegance and correctness, devoid of reserve or affectation. Cyrus Redding, who much admired and esteemed her, obtained her opinion about Miss Curran's portrait of her husband, for his article in the Galignani edition of Shelley. She considered it by no means a good one, as unfinished, but with some striking points of resemblance. She consented to superintend the engraving from it for Galignani's volume, which was regarded as far more successful. Miss Curran kindly assisted with advice.

While these portraits were being executed Mary was gaining the sympathy of the painter, a boon soon much needed, for after the death of her third child her courage for a while broke down entirely. In a very delicate state of health at the time, she could not rouse herself to think of anything but her losses. With no other child needing her care, she could only abandon herself to inconsolable grief. Shelley felt that he was out of her life for the first time; that her heart was in Rome in the grave with her child. They revisited the Falls of Terni, but the spirit had fled from the waters. They pass through bustling Leghorn, and visit the Gisbornes, but the noise is intolerable, and Shelley, ever attentive in such matters, finds a house at a short distance in the country, the Villa Valsovano, down a quiet lane surrounded by a market garden. Olives, fig trees, peach trees, myrtles, alive at night with fire-flies, must have been soothing surroundings to the wounded Mary, to whom nature was ever a kind friend. Nor were they in solitude, for they were within visiting distance of friends at Leghorn.

Two months after her loss she recommences her diary on Shelley's birthday, this time not without a wail. She writes to Mrs. Hunt of the tears she constantly sheds, and confesses she has done little work since coming to Italy. She had read, however, several books of Livy, Antenor, Clarissa, some novels, the Bible, Lucan's Pharsalia, and Dante. Shelley is reading her *Paradise Lost*, and he is writing the *Cenci*, where

That fair, blue-eyed boy,
Who was the lodestar of your life,

Mary tells us refers to William. Shelley wrote that their house was a melancholy one, and only cheered by letters from England.

On September 18 Mary wrote to her friend, Miss Curran, that they were about to move, she knew not whither. Then Shelley, with Charles Clairmont, went to Florence and engaged rooms for six months, and at the end of September Shelley returned and took his wife by slow and easy stages to the Tuscan capital, for her health was then in a very delicate state for travelling. There, in the lovely city of Florence, on November 12, 1819, she gave birth to her son Percy Florence, who first broke the spell of unhappiness which had hung for the last five months like a cloud over them; he, as events proved, was to be her one comfort with her memories, when the supreme calamity of her life fell on her, and he was mercifully spared to be the solace of her later years.

CHAPTER XI. GODWIN AND “VALPERGA.”

At this time while political events were absorbing England, and Shelley was weaving them into poetry in Italy during the remainder of his residence in Florence, Godwin’s personal difficulties were reaching their climax. When he lost, in an action for the rent of his house, Shelley came to his help, but in some way Godwin expected more than he received, and became very unpleasant in his correspondence, so much so that Shelley had to beg him not to write to Mary on these subjects, as her health was not then, in October 1819, able to bear the strain, and the subject of money was not a fitting one to be pressed on her by him. Mary had not the disposal of money; if she had she would give it all to her father. He assured Godwin that the four or five thousand pounds already expended on him might have made him comfortable for the remainder of his life. Mrs. Godwin, naturally, would not hear of abandoning the Skinner Street business, as being the only provision for herself when Godwin should die. It is extremely painful at this stage of Godwin’s career to witness the lowering effects of his wife’s smaller nature upon him, as he certainly allowed himself to be unduly influenced by her excited and not always truthful views, as known since the early days of their married life. We have Mrs. Gisborne’s diary showing how Mrs. Godwin could not endure to see anyone in 1820 who had an attachment for Mary, whom (as Godwin told Mrs. Gisborne) she considered her greatest enemy; and although he described his wife as of “the most irritable disposition possible,” he listened to, and repeated her conjectures to the disparagement of Shelley and Mary at the time when she did not hesitate to accept with her husband the large sums of money which Shelley with difficulty raised for them. All the facts shown in this diary prove that Mary and Fanny must have had a sufficiently trying life at home to account for the result in either case, especially when we consider that Claire and her brother Charles both preferred to leave Godwin’s house on the first possible occasion, Charles having left for France immediately after Mary’s and Claire’s departure with Shelley. William alone remained at home, but four years passed in a boarding school at Greenwich, from 1814, must have helped him to endure the discomforts of the time. Before Mrs. Gisborne’s return to Italy Godwin gave her a detailed account, in writing, of his money transactions with Shelley, which had become very painful to both. In January, 1820, Florence proving unsuitable for Shelley's health, they left for Pisa, the mild climate of which city made it a favourite resort of the poet during most of the short remainder of his life. Mary, ever hospitable, although, as Shelley said, the bills for printing his poems must be paid for by stinting himself in meat and drink, hoped that Mrs. Gisborne would have stayed with them during her husband's visit to England in 1820, as they had moved into a pleasant apartment in March. This idea was not carried out. About this time Mary and Claire, both with their own absorbing anxieties, became again irksome to each other. Mary found relief when Claire was absent, and Claire notes how "the Claire and the Mai find something to fight about every day," a way of putting it which indicates differences, but certainly no grave cause of disturbance. This was after their removal to Leghorn, where they went towards the end of June to be near the lawyer on account of Paolo. At the beginning of August the heat at Leghorn caused the Shelleys to migrate to the baths of San Giuliano, where Shelley found a very pleasant house, Casa Prini. The moderate rent suited their slender purse, which had so many outside calls upon it.

In October Claire's departure for Florence, as governess in the family of Professor Bojti, where she went by the advice of her friend Mrs. Mason, formerly Lady Mountcashell, brought an end to her permanent residence with the Shelleys, although she was still to look upon their house as her home, and she visited them either for her pleasure or to assist them. Her absence from her friends gives us the advantage of letters from them, letters full of a certain exaggeration of affection and sympathy from Shelley, who felt more acutely than Mary that Claire might be unhappy under a strange roof. Mary, less anxious on those grounds, writes about the operas she has seen, giving good descriptions of them. One of her letters is full of anxiety as to Allegra, who has been placed in the convent of Bagnacavallo by Byron. She feels that the child ought, as soon as possible, to be taken out of the hands of so "remorseless and unprincipled a man"; but advises caution and waiting for a favourable opportunity. She hopes that he may be returning to England. "He may be reconciled with his wife." At any rate, Bagnacavallo is high and in a healthy position, quite different from the dirty canals of Venice, which might injure any child's health. Mary thus tries to console Claire, who is planning, in her imagination, various ways of getting at her child, and corresponding with and seeing Shelley on the subject. Mary dissuades Claire from attempting anything in the spring — their unlucky time. It was in the second spring Claire met L. B., &c.; the third they went to Marlow — no wise thing, at least; the fourth, uncomfortable in London; fifth, their Roman misery; the sixth, Paolo at Pisa; the seventh, a mixture of Emilia and a Chancery suit. Mary acknowledges this superstitious feeling is more in Claire's line than her own, but thinks it worth considering; but this letter to Claire carries us a year in advance.

During the summer of 1820 Mary had some of the delightful times she loved so dearly, of poetic wanderings with Shelley through woods and by the river, one of which she remembers long afterwards, when, making her note to the "Skylark," she recalls how she and Shelley, wandering through the lanes whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the firefly, heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. Precious memories which helped her through many after years devoid of the sympathy she yearned for. At the Baths they had the pleasure of a visit from Medwin, who gave a description of how Shelley, his wife and child, had to escape from the upper windows of their house in a boat when the canal overflowed and inundated the valley. Mary speaks of it as a very picturesque sight, with the herdsmen driving their cattle.

During the short absence of Shelley, when he took Claire to Florence, Mary was occupied planning her novel of *Valperga*, for which she studied Villani's chronicle and Sismondi's history.

On leaving the baths of San Giuliano, after the floods, the Shelleys returned to Pisa, where they passed the late autumn and winter of 1820 and the spring of 1821. Here they made more acquaintances than heretofore, Professor Pacchiani, called also "Il Diavolo," introducing them to the Prince Mavrocordato, the Princess Aigiropoli, the *improvisatore* Sgricci, Taafe, and last, not least, to Emilia Viviani. Here Mary continued to write *Valperga*, and pursued her Latin, Spanish, and Greek studies; the latter the Prince Mavrocordato assisted her with, as Mary writes to Mrs. Gisborne: "Do not you envy me my luck? that, having begun Greek, an amiable, young, agreeable, and learned Greek prince comes every morning to give me a lesson of an hour and a half."

But the person of most moment at this time was undoubtedly the Contessina Emilia Viviani, whom, accompanied by Pacchiani, Claire, then Mary, and then Shelley, visited at the Convent of Sant' Anna. This beautiful girl, with profuse black hair, Grecian profile, and dreamy eyes, placed in the convent till she should be married, to satisfy the jealousy of her stepmother, became naturally an object of extreme interest to the Shelleys. Many visits were paid, and Mary invited her to stay with them at Christmas. Shelley was convinced that she had great talent, if not genius. Shelley and Mary sent her books, and Claire gave her English lessons at her convent, while she was taking a holiday from the Bojtis. Many letters are preserved from the beautiful Emilia to Shelley and Mary, letters which, translated into English, seem overflowing with sentiment and affection, but which to Italians would indicate rather the style cultivated by Italian ladies, which, to this day, seems one of their chief accomplishments if they are not gifted with a voice to sing. To Mary she complains of a certain coldness, but certainly this could not be brought to the charge of Shelley, who was now inspired to write his *Epipsychidion*. To him Emilia was as the Skylark, an emanation of the beautiful; but to Mary for a time, during Shelley's transitory adoration, the event evidently became painful, with all her philosophy and belief in her husband. She could not regard the lovely girl who took walks with him as the skylark that soared over their heads; and the *Epipsychidion* was evidently not a favourite poem of Mary. Surely we may ascribe to this time, in the spring of 1821, the poem written by Shelley to Lieutenant Williams, whose acquaintance he had made in January. There is no month affixed to —

The Serpent is cast out from Paradise….

and it might well apply, with its reference to "my cold home," to the time when Mary, in depression and pique, did not always give her likewise sensitive husband all the welcome he was accustomed to, and Shelley took refuge in a poem by way of letter; for this is the time referred to by Mary in her letter to Claire as their seventh unfortunate spring — a mixture of Emilia and a Chancery suit! It was not till the next spring that Emilia was married, and led her husband and mother-in-law, as Mary puts it, "a devil of a life." *We* have only to be grateful to Emilia for having inspired one of the most wondrous poems in any language.

The Williamses, to whom Shelley's poem is addressed, were met by them in January. Mary writes of the fascinating Jane (Mrs. Williams) that she is certainly very pretty, but wants animation; while Shelley writes that she is extremely pretty and gentle, but apparently not very clever; that he liked her much, but had only seen her for an hour.

Mary, among her multifarious reading, notes an article by Medwin on Animal Magnetism, and Shelley, who suffered severely at this time, shortly afterwards tried its effect through Medwin. The latter bored Mary excessively; possibly she found the magnetising a wearisome operation, although Shelley is said to have been relieved by it. His highly nervous temperament was evidently impressed. When Medwin left, Mrs. Williams undertook to carry on the cure.

The Chancery suit referred to by Mary was an attempt between Sir Timothy's attorney and Shelley's to throw their affairs into Chancery, causing great alarm to them in Italy, till Horace Smith came to their rescue in England, and with indignant letters settled the inconsiderate litigation.

Mrs. Shelley, in her Notes to Poems in 1821, recounts how Shelley was nearly drowned, by a flat boat which he had recently acquired being overturned in the canal near Pisa, when returning from Leghorn. Williams upset the boat by standing up and holding the mast. Henry Reveley, Mrs. Gisborne's son, rescued Shelley and brought him to land, where he fainted with the cold. At this same time, at Pisa, Mary had to consider with Shelley a matter of great importance to Claire.

Byron, now at Ravenna, had placed Allegra, as already stated, in the convent of Bagnacavallo. He told Mrs. Hoppner that she had become so unmanageable by servants that it was necessary to have her under better care than he could secure, and he considered that it would be preferable to bring her up as a Roman Catholic with an Italian education, as in that way, with a fortune of five or six thousand pounds, she would marry an Italian and be provided for, whereas she would always hold an anomalous position in England. At this proposal Claire was extremely indignant; but Shelley and Mary took the opposite view, and considered that Byron acted for the best, as the convent was in a healthy position, and the nuns would be kind to the child. This idea of Mary would naturally be agreed with by some, and disapproved of by others; but at that time there was certainly no cause to indicate that Bagnacavallo would be more fatal to Allegra than any other place, although Claire's apprehensions were cruelly realised. From this time Claire and Byron wrote letters of recrimination to each other, which, considering Byron's obduracy against the feelings of the mother, Shelley and Mary came to hold as tyrannically unfeeling.

In May, Shelley and his wife and son returned to the baths of San Giuliano, and while here Shelley's *Adonais* was published. In 1820, when the Shelleys heard of Keats's fatal illness from Mrs. Gisborne, she having met him the day after he had received his death warrant from the doctor, they were the first to beg him to join them at Pisa. A small touch of poetical criticism, however, appears to have weighed more with the sensitive Keats than these friendly considerations for his health, and as he was about to accompany his friend Mr. Severn to Rome, he did not accept their kind offer, though in all probability Pisa would have been better for him.

During this summer at the baths Mary had finished her romance of *Valperga*, and read it to her husband, who admired it extremely. He considered it to be a "living and moving picture of an age almost forgotten, a profound study of the passions of human nature."

Valperga, published in 1823, the year after Shelley's death, is a romance of the 14th century in Italy, during the height of the struggle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, when each state and almost each town was at war with the other; a condition of things which lends itself to romance. Mary Shelley's intimate acquaintance with Italy and Italians gives her the necessary knowledge to write on this subject. Her zealous Italian studies came to her aid, and her love of nature give life and vitality to the scene. Valperga, the ancestral castle home of Euthanasia, a Florentine lady of the Guelph faction, is most picturesquely described, on its ledge of projecting rock, overlooking the plain of Lucca; the dependent peasants around happy under the protection of their good Signora. That this beautiful and high-minded lady should be affianced to a Ghibelline leader is a natural combination; but when her lover Castruccio, prince of Lucca, carries his political enthusiasm the length of making war on her native city of Florence, whose Republican greatness and love of art are happily described, Euthanasia cannot let love stand in the way of duty and gratitude to all those dearest to her. The severe struggle is well described, for Euthanasia has loved Castruccio from their childhood. When they played about the mountain grounds of her home at Valperga, Castruccio learnt the secret paths to the Castle, which knowledge later helped him to take the fortress when Euthanasia refused to yield it to him. Castruccio's character is also well described: his devoted attachment to Euthanasia from which nothing could turn him, till the passions of the conqueror and party faction are still stronger; and the irresistible force which impels him to make war and subdue the Guelphs, which by her is regarded as murder and rapine, disunites beings seemingly formed for each other. All these different emotions are portrayed with great beauty and simplicity.

The Italian superstitions are well shown, as how the Florentines ascribed all good and evil fortune to conjunction of stars. The power of the Inquisition in Rome comes likewise into play, when the beautiful prophetess Beatrice (the child of the prophetess Wilhelmina) who had to be given to the Leper for protection, as even his filthy and deserted hut was safer for her than that it should be known to the Inquisition that she existed. She is rescued from the Leper by a bishop who heard her story from the deathbed of the woman to whom her mother when dying had confided her. She was then brought up by the bishop's sister. Her mother's spirit of prophecy was inherited by the daughter; and as the mother believed herself to be an emanation of the Holy Spirit, so Beatrice thought herself the Ancilla Dei. These mystical fancies and their working are depicted with much beauty and strength.

These Donne Estatiche first appear in Italy after the 12th century, and had continued to the time which Mary Shelley selected for her romance. After giving an account of their pretensions, Muratori gravely observes: "We may piously believe that some were distinguished by supernatural gifts and admitted to the secrets of heaven, but we may justly suspect that the source of many of their revelations was their ardent imagination filled with ideas of religion and piety." Beatrice, on prophesying the Ghibelline rule in Ferrara, is seized by the emissaries of the Pope, and has to undergo the ordeal of the white hot ploughshares, through which she passes unscathed, there having apparently been connivance to help her through. Her exultation and enthusiasm become intense, and it is only after a great shock that she grows conscious of the falseness of her position; for, having met Castruccio on his mission to Ferrara, she is irresistibly attracted by him, and, mixing up her infatuation with her mystical ideas, does not hesitate to make secret appointments with him, never doubting that her love is returned, and that they are one at heart. When at length Castruccio has to return to Lucca, and to his betrothed, Euthanasia, the shock to the poor mystical Beatrice is terrible. Finally she is met as a pilgrim wending her weary way to Rome. Assuredly, Shelley was justified in admiring this character. There is a straightforwardness in the plot into which the stormy history of the period is clearly introduced, which gives much interest to this romance, and it is a decided advance upon *Frankenstein*, though her age when that was written must not be forgotten. A book of this kind shows forcibly the troubles to which a lovely country like Italy is exposed through disunion, and must fill the hearts of all lovers of this beautiful land with gratitude to the noble men who willingly sacrificed themselves to help in the cause of united Italy; those whose songs roused the people, and carried hope into the hearts of even the prisoners in the pozzi of Venice; for the man of idea who can rouse the nation by his songs does not help less than the brave soldier who can aid with his arms, though alas! he does not always live to see the triumph he has helped to achieve. [Footnote: Gabriele Rossetti, whom Mary Shelley knew, and to whom she referred for information while writing her lives of Italian poets, has been said to have been the first who in modern times had the idea of a united Italy under a constitutional monarch, for which idea and for his rousing songs he was forced to leave Italy by Ferdinand I. of Naples in 1821, and remained an exile in England till his death in 1854, at the age of 71. How Mary Shelley, with her husband, must have sympathised in these ideas with their love of Italy can be understood, although it was the climate and beauty of Italy more than the people that charmed Shelley; but then was he not also an exile from his native land?]

This work, when completed, was sent to her father by Mary, for it had been a labour of love, and the sum of four hundred pounds which Godwin obtained for it was devoted to help him in his difficulties. Unhappily, the romance was not published till the year after her husband’s death.

CHAPTER XII. LAST MONTHS WITH SHELLEY.

IN July 1821, Shelley left his wife at the baths while he went to seek a house at Florence for the winter; but he returned in three days unsuccessful. He then received a letter from Byron begging him to go straight to Ravenna, various matters having to be talked over. Shelley left at two in the afternoon, on his birthday, August 4th. Here he had to go through the Paolo-Hoppner scandal, which we have referred to. Shelley had to write letters to Mary on the subject, and Mary wrote the most indignant and decisive denial of the imputation, on her husband and Claire. She writes: "I swear by the life of my child, by my blessed beloved child, that I know the accusations to be false." If more were needed, the clear exposition by Mr. Jeaffreson and later Professor Dowden, leave nothing to be said. Shelley wrote to Mary describing his visit to Allegra at the convent, where he found her prettily dressed in white muslin with an apron of black silk. She was a most graceful, airy child; she took Shelley all over the convent, and began ringing the nun's call-bell, without being reprimanded — although the prioress had considerable trouble to prevent the nuns assembling dressed or undressed — which struck Shelley as showing that she was kindly treated. Before leaving Ravenna, about August 17th, he wrote to thank his wife for her promise of her miniature, done by Williams, which he received a few days later from her at the Baths of Pisa. Mary and Shelley both were of those who, wherever they found a friend, found also a pensioner, or person to be benefited by them; as they did not seek their friends for personal advantage, and were among those who hold it more blessed to give than to receive. In January 1821, Mrs. Leigh Hunt wrote to Mary Shelley, begging her to help her husband and family to come to Italy — he was ill and depressed, and surrounded by all his children sick and suffering. While Shelley was at Ravenna he brought up this subject with Byron, who proposed that he, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt should start a periodical for their joint works, and share the profits. Shelley did not agree to this for himself, as he was not popular, and could only gain advantage from the others; but for Hunt it was different, and Shelley joyfully wrote to him from Pisa, on his return from Ravenna, to join them as soon as possible. Delays occurred in Hunt’s departure, and Byron received letters from England warning him against joining with Shelley and Hunt. Byron arrived in Pisa with the Countess Guiccioli and her brother Pietro Gamba, on November the 1st, at the Lanfranchi Palace, and the Shelleys had apartments at the top of I Tre Palazzi di Chiesa, opposite. Claire, who had been staying with them, and accompanied them on a trip to Spezzia, had now returned to Professor Bojti’s at Florence.

Mary had the task of furnishing the ground floor of Byron’s Lanfranchi Palace for the Hunts, although Byron insisted on paying for it. Hunt, meanwhile, was unable to proceed beyond Plymouth that winter, where they were obliged to stay by stress of weather and Mrs. Hunt’s illness. Thus some months passed by, during which time Byron lost the first ardour of the enterprise, and became very lukewarm. It must have been when Mary had good reason to foresee this result that she wrote to Hunt thus: —

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I know that S. has some idea of persuading you to come here. I am too ill to write the reasonings, only let me entreat you let no persuasions induce you to come; selfish feelings you may be sure do not dictate me, but it would be complete madness to come. I wish I could write more. I wish I were with you to assist you. I wish I could break my chains and leave this dungeon. Adieu, I shall hear about yon and Marianne’s health from S.

Ever your M.

Shelley was forced to apply to Byron to help him with money to lend Hunt, and Byron had ceased to care about the *Liberal*, the projected magazine.

While staying near Byron the Shelleys came in for a large influx of visitors, often much to Shelley’s annoyance, and Mary wrote of their wish, if Greece were liberated, of settling in one of the lovely islands.

The middle of January brought one visitor to the Shelleys, who, introduced by the Williams, became more than a passing figure in Mary’s life. In Edward John Trelawny she found a staunch friend ever after. Trelawny, who had led a wild life from the time he left the navy in mere boyhood, was a conspicuous character wherever known. With small reverence for the orthodox creeds, he must have had some of the traits of the ancient Vikings, before meeting Shelley; but from that time he became his devoted admirer, or, as one has observed who knew him, as Ahab at Elijah's feet, so Trelawny at Shelley's was ready to humble himself for the first time; nor did he afterwards, to the end of a long life, ever speak of him without veneration. Shelley's exalted ideas touched a chord in the strong man's heart, and within a few weeks of his death he rejoiced in hearing of a crowded assembly in Glasgow, enthusiastic in hearing a lecture on Shelley, and asserted it is the "spirit of poetry which needs spreading now; science is popular to the exclusion of poetry as a regenerator."

The day after their first meeting with Trelawny, Mary notes in her diary how Trelawny discussed with Williams and Shelley about building a boat which they desired to have, and which Captain Roberts was to build at Genoa without delay. A year later Mary added a note to this entry, to the effect how she and Jane Williams then laughed at the way their husbands decided without consulting them, though they agreed in hating the boat. She adds: "How well I remember that night! How short-sighted we are! And now that its anniversary is come and gone, methinks I cannot be the wretch I too truly am." This winter, at Pisa, Mary, with popular and strong men to protect her, was not neglected so much as hitherto. She went to Mrs. Beauclerc's ball with Trelawny; but she refers to a strange feeling of depression in the midst of a gay assembly.

On February 8 Shelley started, with Williams, to seek for houses in the neighbourhood of Spezzia; the idea being that the Shelleys, the Williamses, Trelawny and Captain Roberts, Byron, Countess Guiccioli and her brother, should all spend the summer there, although Mary feared the party would be too large for unity. Only one suitable house could be found; but Shelley was not to be stopped by such a trifle, and the house must do for all.

In the early spring of this year, Mary wrote to Mrs. Hunt how she and Mrs. Williams went violet-hunting, while the men went on longer expeditions. The Shelleys and their surroundings must have kept the English assembled in Pisa in a pleasing state of excitement. At one time Mary caused a commotion by attending Dr. Nott's Sunday service, which was held on the ground floor of her house. On one occasion he preached against Atheism, and, having specially asked Mary to attend, it was taken as a marked attack on Shelley, and it was considered that Mary had taken part against her husband.

Mary wrote a pathetic letter to Mrs. Gisborne that she had only been three times to church, and now longed to be in some sea-girt isle with Shelley and her baby, but that Shelley was entangled with Byron and could not get away. She was longing for the time by the sea when she would have boats and horses.

While Mary was yearning for sympathy with her kind, or solitude with Shelley, he for a time was wasting regrets that she did not sympathise with or feel his poetry. It was the old story of the Skylark. While he was seeking inspiration at some fresh source, Mary did not become equally enthusiastic about the new idea. But most probably, in spite of Trelawny's later notion and her own self-reproaches of not having done all possible things to sympathise with Shelley, Mary's behaviour was really the best calculated for his comfort. A man who did not like regular meals and conventional habits in this respect, would not have liked his wife to worry him constantly on the subject, and the plate of cold meat and bread placed on a shelf, as his table was probably covered with papers — which Trelawny found there forgotten, towards the end of a "lost day" as Shelley called it — was not inappropriate for one who forgot his meals and did not like being teased. Mary was not of the nature to make, nor Shelley of the nature to require, a docile slave; and during the time at Naples, for which Mary felt most regret, Shelley wrote of her as "a dear friend with whom added years old intercourse adds to my appreciation of its value, and who would have more right than anyone to complain that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness."

During this time the English visitors believed and manufactured all kinds of stories about the eccentric English then at Pisa. Trelawny had been murdered — Byron wounded — and Taaffe was guarded by bulldogs in Byron's house! These rumours were laughed over by the people concerned.

On one occasion Mrs. Shelley, with the Countess Guiccioli, witnessed from their carriage the affair with the dragoon Masi, when he jostled against Taaffe. Byron, Shelley, and Gamba pursued him; Shelley, coming up with him first, was knocked down, but was rescued by Captain Hay. The dragoon was finally wounded by one of Byron's servants, under the idea that he had wounded Byron.

During this exciting time at Pisa, Claire was eating her heart at Florence with longings and regrets for Allegra; and Mary and Shelley were trying to calm her by letters, and growing themselves more and more dissatisfied at Byron's treatment of the mother. There are entries in Claire's diary as to her cough, and the last entry before the day she left Florence for Pisa — April l3 — is erased. Then there is one of her ominous blanks from April till September.

While Claire travelled with Williams and his wife to Spezzia to look for a house, news came from Bagnacavallo which verified her worst fears. Typhus fever had ravaged the convent and district, and the fragile blossom had succumbed. Shelley and Mary determined to keep this "evil news," as Mary calls it, from Claire till she is away from the neighbourhood of Byron. So, on her return from the unsuccessful visit to Spezzia, they have to conceal their sorrow and their feelings. Shelley, ever anxious for Claire's distress, persuaded her to accompany Mary to Spezzia, saying they must take any house they could get. Claire had thought of returning to Florence, but was overruled by Shelley, who, as Mary wrote to Mrs. Gisborne, carried all like a torrent before him and sent Mary and Claire with Trelawny to Spezzia. Shelley followed with their furniture in boats; and so, on April 26, they were hurried by Shelley, or fate, from misfortune to misfortune, in taking Claire to a haven where she might be helped to bear her sore trouble. Mary, with her companions, secured the only available house — Casa Magui, at San Terenzio, near Lerici — in which it was settled that they and the Williamses must find room and bring their furniture. Difficulties of all kinds had to be overcome from the dogana. The furniture arrived in boats, and they were told the dues upon it would amount to three hundred pounds, but the harbour-master kindly allowed it to be removed to the villa as to a depôt till further orders arrived. Then there were the difficulties of Mrs. Williams, of whom Shelley wrote that she was pining for her saucepans. Claire felt the necessity of returning to Florence, the space being so small. This, however, was not to be thought of. Claire still had to have the news of her child's death broken to her, and Mrs. Williams's room had to be used for secret consultations. Claire, entering the room and seeing the agitated silence on her approach, at once realised the state of the case. She felt her Allegra was dead, and it only devolved on Shelley to tell the sad tale of a fever-ravaged district, and a fever-tossed child dying among the kind nuns, who are ever good nurses. Claire's grief was intense; but all that she now wanted was a sight of her child's coffin, a likeness of her, and a lock of her golden hair (a portion of which last is now in the writer's possession). The latter Shelley helped to obtain for her; but Claire never after forgave him who had consigned her child to the convent in the Romagna, nor allowed her another sight of her little one.

On May 21 Claire left for Florence, and Mary remained with her husband and the Williamses at Casa Magni. These rapidly succeeding troubles, together with Mary's being again in a delicate state of health, left the circle in an unhinged and nervous state of apprehension. Shelley saw visions of Allegra rising from the sea, clapping her hands and smiling at him. Mrs. Williams saw Shelley on the balcony, and then he was nowhere near, nor had he been there. Shelley ranged from wild delight with the beauty around him, to such fits of despondency as when he most culpably proposed to Mrs. Williams, while in a boat with him and her babies, in the bay—"Now let us together solve the great mystery." But she managed to get him to turn shorewards, and escaped at the first opportunity from the boat.

Mary was not without her prophetic periods — a deep melancholy settled on her amid the lovely scenery. Generally at home with mountain and water, she now only felt oppressed by their proximity. Shelley was at work on the *Triumph of Life*, one of his grandest poems; but Mary was always apprehensive except when with her husband, least so when lying in a boat with her head on his knees. If Shelley were absent, she feared for Percy, her son, so that, in spite of the oasis of peace and rest and beauty around them, she was weak and nervous; and Shelley, for fear of hurting her, had to conceal such matters as might trouble her, especially the again critical state of the affairs of her father, who was in want of four hundred pounds to compound with his creditors. These alarms for Mary's health and tranquillity of mind, and the consequent necessity of keeping any trying subject from her, may have induced Shelley in writing to Claire to adopt a confidential tone not otherwise advisable.

While at Casa Magni, the fatal boat which had been discussed on the first evening Trelawny spent with the Shelleys, arrived. The "perfect plaything for the summer" had been built against the advice of Trelawny, by a Genoese ship-builder, after a model obtained by Lieutenant Williams from one of the royal dockyards in England. Originally it was intended to call it the *Don Juan*, but recent circumstances had caused a break in the intimacy of Shelley with Byron, and Shelley felt that this would be eternal. He, therefore, no longer wished any name to remind him of Byron, and gave the name *Ariel*, proposed by Trelawny, to the small craft. With considerable difficulty the name *Don Juan* was taken from the sail, where Byron had manoeuvred to have it painted.

Towards the end of May, Mary was seriously suffering; the difficulties of housekeeping for the Williamses as well as themselves were no trifle. Provisions had to be fetched from a distance of over three miles. Shelley writes to Claire, hoping she will be able to find them a man-cook. As Mary was somewhat better when Shelley wrote, he feared he should have to speak to her about Godwin's affairs, but put off the evil day.

On June 6 we find Shelley setting out with Williams in the *Ariel* to meet Claire on her way from Florence to Casa Magni. A calm having delayed them till the evening, they were too late to meet Claire, who travelled on by land for Via Reggio. Shelley and Williams, returning by sea, arrived home a short time before her. Their return and her arrival were none too soon; for, on the 8th or 9th, Mary fell dangerously ill, as she wrote in August to Mrs. Gisborne: "I was so ill that for seven hours I lay nearly lifeless — kept from fainting by brandy, vinegar, eau-de-cologne, &c. At length ice was brought to our solitude; it came before the doctor, so Claire and Jane were afraid of using it; but Shelley over-ruled them, and, by an unsparing application of it, I was restored. They all thought, and so did I at one time, that I was about to die."

Shelley, equal to the occasion, felt the strain on his nerves afterwards, and a week after his wife was out of danger he alarmed her greatly, as she relates: "While yet unable to walk, I was confined to my bed. In the middle of the night I was awoke by hearing him scream, and come rushing into my room; I was sure that he was asleep, and tried to waken him by calling on him; but he continued to scream, which inspired me with such a panic that I jumped out of bed and ran across the hall to Mrs. Williams's room, where I fell through weakness, though I was so frightened that I got up again immediately. She let me in, and Williams went to Shelley who had been wakened by my getting out of bed. He said that he had not been asleep, and that it was a vision that he saw that had frightened him. But as he declared that he had not screamed, it was certainly a dream, and no waking vision."

And so the lovely summer months passed by with all these varying emotions, with thoughts soaring to the highest pinnacles of imagination as in the *Triumph of Life*, and with the enjoyment of the high ideals of others, as in reading the Spanish dramas: music also gave enchantment when Jane Williams played her guitar. With the intense beauty of the scenery, and the wildness of the natives who used sometimes to dance all night on the sands in front of their house; the emotions of life seemed compressed into this time, spent in what would be considered by many great dulness, in the company of Trelawny and the Williamses. And now an event, long hoped for, arrived, for the Hunts were in the harbour of Genoa, and Shelley was to meet them at Leghorn, as Hunt's letter, which reached them on June 19, had been delayed too long to allow of Shelley joining them at Genoa. On July I intelligence came of the Hunts' departure from Genoa; and at noon a breeze rising from the west decided the desirability of at once starting for Leghorn. Shelley, with Captain Roberts who had joined him at Lerici, arrived by nine in the evening, after the officers of health had left their office. The voyagers were thus unable to land that evening, but spent the time alongside of Byron's yacht, the *Bolivar*, from which they received coverings for the night.

The next morning news arrived from Byron's villa, which already began to verify Mary's forebodings in her letter to Hunt, and proved the clear-sightedness of her forecast. Disturbances having taken place at his house at Monte Nero, Count Gamba and his family were banished by the Government from Tuscany, and there were rumours that Byron might be leaving immediately for America or Switzerland. This was indeed trying news for Shelley to have to break to the Hunts on their first meeting in the hotel at Leghorn, where, after four years, the two friends again met. The encounter was most touching, as remembered years later by Thornton Hunt. Shelley had plenty of work on hand for a few days; he procured Vacca, the physician, for Mrs. Hunt; and had to sustain his friend during his anxiety as to his wife's health and the uncertainty as to Byron's conduct. Shelley would not think of leaving him till he had seen him comfortably installed in the Lanfranchi Palace, in the rooms which Mary had prepared for him at Byron's request. The still more difficult task of fixing Byron to some promise of assistance with regard to the *Liberal* was likewise carried out; and after one or two days of dejection, during which Shelley wrote to Mrs.

Williams on July 4 to relieve his own despondency, and to his wife to relieve hers, as her depression of spirits required more cheering than adding to, he wrote:—”How are you, my best Mary? Write especially how is your health and how your spirits are, and whether you are not more reconciled to staying at Lerici, at least during the summer. You have no idea how I am hurried and occupied. I have not a moment’s leisure, but will write by the next post.”

Soon after writing these letters, Shelley found with exultation that his work was done. As usual, he had carried ail before him, and secured Byron’s “Vision of Judgment” for the first number of the *Liberal*, and by July 7 he was able to show his friends the ever-delightful sights of Pisa. Thus one day of rest and pleasure remained to Shelley after doing his utmost to assist his friend Hunt. To the last Shelley was faithful to his aim — that of doing all he could for others. His interviews with Byron had secured a return of the friendly feeling which nought but death was henceforth to sever, and the two great names, which nothing can divide, are linked by the unbreakable chain of genius — genius, the fire of the universe, which at times may flicker low, but which, bursting into flame here and there, illumines the dark recesses of the soul of the universe — genius which has made the world we know, which, never absent, though dormant, has changed the stone to the flower, the flower to animal, and, gaining ever in degree through the various stages of life, is the divine attribute, the will, the idea. Genius manifest in the greatest and best of humanity, shown indeed, as the Word of God, or as he who holds the mirror up to nature, or by the great power which in colour or monotone can display the love and agony of a dying Christ; by the loving poet, who can soar beyond his age to uphold an unselfish aim of perfection to the world; by all those who, throwing off their mortal attributes at times, can live the true life free from the too absorbing pleasures of the flesh, which can only he enjoyed by dividing.

But now Shelley’s mortal battle was nearly over; he who had not let his talent or myriad talents lie dormant was to rest, his work of life was nearly done. Not that the good is ever ended; verily, through thousands of generations, through eternity, it endures; while the bad — perhaps not useless — is the chaff which is dispersed, and which has no result unless to hurry on the divine will. Our life is double. Shelley’s atoms were to return to their primal elements. The unknown atoms or attributes of them were undoubtedly to carry on their work; he had added to the eternal intellect.

The last facts of Shelley’s life are related by Trelawny and by Mrs. Shelley. On the morning of July 8, having finished his arrangements for the Hunts and spent one day in showing the noble sights of Pisa, Shelley, after making purchases for their house and obtaining money from his banker, accompanied by Trelawny during the forenoon, was ready by noon to embark on the *Ariel* with Edward Williams and the sailor-boy, Charles Vivian. Captain Roberts was not without apprehensions as to the weather, and urged Shelley to delay his departure for a day; but Williams was anxious to rejoin his wife, and Shelley not in a humour to frustrate his wishes. Trelawny, who desired to accompany them in the *Bolivar* into the offing, was prevented, not having obtained his health order, and so could only reluctantly remain behind and watch his friends’ small craft through a ship’s glass.

Mistakes were noted, the ship’s mate of the *Bolivar* remarking they ought to have started at daybreak instead of after one o’clock; that they were too near shore; that there would soon be a land breeze; the gaff top-sail was foolish in a boat with no deck and no sailor on board; and then, pointing to the southwest, “Look at those black lines and dirty rags hanging on them out of the sky; look at the smoke on the water; the devil is brewing mischief.”

The approaching storm was watched also by Captain Roberts from the light-house, whence he saw the topsail taken in; then the vessel freighted with such precious life was seen no more in the mist of the storm. For a time the sea seemed solidified and appeared as of lead, with an oily scum; the wind did not ruffle it. Then sounds of thunder, wind, and rain filled the air; these lasted with fury for twenty minutes; then a lull, and anxious looks among the boats which had rushed into the harbour for Shelley’s hark. No glass could find it on the horizon. Trelawny landed at eight o’clock; inquiries were useless. An oar was seen on a fishing boat: it might be English — it might be Shelley’s; but this was denied. Nothing to do but wait, till the third day, when he returned to Pisa to tell his fears to Hunt and Byron, who could only listen with quivering lips and speak with faltering voice.

While these friends were agitated between hope and fear, the time was passing wearily at San Terenzio. Jane Williams received a letter from her husband on that day (written on Saturday from Leghorn), where he was waiting for Shelley. It stated that if they did not return on Monday, he certainly would be back at the latest on Thursday in a felucca by himself if necessary. The fatal Monday passed amid storm and rain, and no idea was entertained by Mrs. Shelley or Mrs. Williams that their husbands had started in such weather as they experienced. Mary, who had then scarcely recovered from her dangerous illness, and was unable to join Claire and Jane Williams in their evening walks, could only pace up and down in the verandah and feel oppressed by the very beauty which surrounded her. So till Wednesday these days of storm and oppression and undefined fears passed; then, some feluccas arriving from Leghorn, they were informed that their husbands had left on Monday; but that could not be believed. Thursday came and passed, *the* Thursday which should be the latest for Williams's arrival. The wind had been fair, but midnight arrived, and still Mary and Jane were alone; then sad hope gave place to fearful anxiety preceding despair; but Friday was letter day — wait for that — and no boat could leave. Noon of Friday and letters came, but *to*, not *from* Shelley. Hunt wrote to him: "Pray write to tell us how you got home, for they say that you had bad weather after you sailed on Monday, and we are anxious." Mary read so far when the paper fell from her hands and she trembled all over. Jane read it, and said, "It is all over." Mary replied, "No, my dear Jane, it is not all over; but this suspense is dreadful. Come with me; we will go to *Leghorn*; we will post, to be swift and learn our fate."

Thus, as Mary Shelley herself describes, they crossed to Lerici, despair in their hearts, two poor, wild, aghast creatures driving, "like Matilda," towards the sea to know if they were to be for ever doomed to misery. The idea of seeing Hunt for the first time after four years, to ask "Where is he?" nearly drove Mary into convulsions. On knocking at the door of the Casa Lanfranchi they found Lord Byron was in Pisa and. Hunt being in bed, their interview was to be with Byron, only to hear, "They knew nothing. He had left Pisa on Sunday; on Monday he had sailed. There had been bad weather Monday afternoon; more they knew not." Mary, who had risen from, a bed of sickness for the journey, and had travelled all day, had now at midnight to proceed to Leghorn in search of Trelawny; for what rest could there be with such a terrible doubt hanging over their lives? They could not despair, for that would have been death; they had to pass through longer hours and days of anguish to subdue their souls to bear the inevitable.

They reached Leghorn, and were driven to the wrong inn. Nothing to do but wait till the morning — but wait dressed till six o'clock — when they proceeded to other inns and found Captain Roberts. His face showed that the worst was true. They only heard how their husbands had set out. Still hope was not dead; might not their husbands be at Corsica or Elba? It was said they had been seen in the Gulf. They resolved to return; but now not alone, for Trelawny accompanied them. Agony succeeded agony; the water they crossed told Mary it was his grave.

While crossing the bay they saw San Terenzio illuminated for a festa, while despair was in their hearts. The days passed, a week ever counted as two by Mary, and then, when she was very ill, Trelawny, who had been long expected from his search, returned, and now they knew that all was over, for the bodies had been cast on shore. One was a tall, slight figure, with Sophocles in one pocket of the jacket, and Keats's last poems in the other; the poetry he loved remained; his body a mere mutilated corpse, which for a while had enshrined such divine intellect. Williams's corpse, also, was found some miles distant, still more unrecognisable, save for the black silk handkerchief tied sailor-fashion round his neck; and after some ten days a third body was found, a mere skeleton., supposed to be the sailor-boy, Charles Vivian.

"Is there no hope?" Mary asked, when Trelawny reappeared on July 19. He could not answer, but left the room, and sent the servant to take the children to their widowed mothers. He then, on the 20th, took them from the sound of the cruel waves to the Hunts at Pisa.

Naught remained now but to perform the last funeral rites. Mary decided that Shelley should rest with his dearly-loved son in the English cemetery in Rome. With some little difficulty, Trelawny obtained permission, with the kind assistance of the English Chargé d'Affaires at Florence, Mr. Dawkins, to have the bodies burned on the shore, according to the custom of bodies cast up from the sea, so that the ashes could be removed without fear of infection. The iron furnace was made at Leghorn, of the dimensions of a human body, according to Trelawny's orders; and on August 15 the body of Lieutenant Williams was disinterred from the sand where it had been buried when cast up. Byron recognised him by his clothes and his teeth. The funeral rites were performed by Trelawny by throwing incense, salt, and wine on the pyre, according to classic custom; and when nothing remained but some black ashes and small pieces of white bone, these were placed by Trelawny in one of the oaken boxes he had provided for the purpose, and then consigned to Byron and Hunt. The next day another pyre was raised, and again the soldiers had to dig for the body, buried in lime. When placed in the furnace it was three hours before the consuming body showed the still unconsumed heart, which Trelawny saved from the furnace, snatching it out with his hand; and there, amidst the Italian beauty, on the Italian shore, was consumed the body of the poet who held out immortal hope to his kind, who, in advance of the scientists, held it as a noble fact that humanity was progressive; who, more for this than for his unfortunate first marriage and its unhappy sequel, was banished by his countrymen, and held as nothing by his generation. But, as Claire wrote later in her diary, “It might be said of him, as Cicero said of Rome, ‘Ungrateful England shall not possess my bones.’”

The ashes of the body were placed in the oaken box; those of the heart, handed by Trelawny to Hunt, were afterwards given into the possession of Mary, who jealously guarded them during her life, in a place where they were found at her death, in a silken case, in which was kept a Pisan copy of the *Adonais*. The ashes of Shelley’s body were finally buried in the cemetery in Rome, where the grave of the English poet is now one of the strongest links between the present and the past world; and there beside him rest now the ashes of his faithful friend, Trelawny, who survived him nearly sixty years.

CHAPTER XIII. WIDOWHOOD.

The last ceremony was over, hope, fear, despair, were past, and Mary Shelley had to recommence her life, or death in life, her one solace her little son, her one resource for many years her work. Fortunately for her, her education and her studious habits were a shield against the cold world which she had to encounter, and her accustomed personal economy, which had fitted her to be the worthy companion to her generous husband, whom she had encouraged rather than thwarted in his constantly recurring acts of philanthropy, would help her in her present struggle; and one friend was ready to assist with advice and out of his then slender means, Mr. Trelawny. But from England no help was forthcoming. Godwin's affairs having reached the climax of bankruptcy already referred to, were not likely to settle down easily now that the ever-ready supply was suddenly cut short.

Sir Timothy Shelley was not inclined to continue the terms he made with his son, nor was anything to be arranged but on conditions which Mrs. Shelley could never consent to. Of her despondent state of misery we can judge in her letters of 1822 to Claire, as when she writes from Genoa, September 15, "This hateful Genoa"; and, describing her misery on her husband's death, she exclaims: "Well, I shall have his books and his MSS., and in these I shall live, and from the study of these I do expect some instants of content…. some seconds of exaltation that may render me both happier here, and more worthy of him hereafter." Then, "There is nothing but unhappiness to me, if indeed I except Trelawny, who appears so truly generous and kind…. Nothing but the horror of being a burden to my family prevents my accompanying Jane (to England). If I had any fixed income, I should go at least to Paris, and I shall go the moment I have one." And again in December of the same year she writes to Claire, addressing her as Mdlle. de Clairmont, *chez* Mdme. de Hennistein, Vienna. She mentions an approach to Sir Timothy, through lawyers, abortive as yet; how she detests Genoa; "Hunt does not like me." Her daily routine is copying Shelley's manuscripts and reading Greek; in her despair, study is her only relief. She sees no one but Lord Byron, and the Guiccioli once a mouth, Trelawny seldom, and he is on the eve of his departure for Leghorn.

Thus we find Mary Shelley going on from day to day, too poor to travel so far as Paris, as yet her child and her work of love on her husband's MS. filling up her time, till in February she had to undergo the mortification of her father-in-law proposing that she should give her son up entirely to him, and in return receive a settled income. But Mary was not of those who can be either bought or sold, and, having the means of subsistence in herself, she could be independent; a letter from her father shows how they were at one on this important subject, and it must have been a great encouragement to her in her loneliness, as she was always diffident of her own powers. However, now her work lay in arranging and copying her husband's MSS., and saving treasures which but for her loving care might have been lost. In the spring of this year, 1823, Trelawny was in Rome arranging Shelley's grave, which he bought with the adjoining ground for himself, and he had the massive slab of stone placed there which still tells of the "*Cor cordium*" In the autumn of the same year Mary found means for leaving the hated Genoa, and, travelling through France; she stayed for a time at Versailles with her father's old friends, the Kennys, and of this visit one of the daughters, now Mrs. Cox, then a child of about six years, retains a lively and pleasing recollection. Brought up in France and imbued with the idea and pictures of the Madonna and child, the little girl, on seeing Mrs. Shelley arrive with her small son, became impressed with the idea that the pale, sweet, oval-laced lady was the Madonna come to visit them; and this idea was not dispelled by the gentle manner and kind way that she had with the children, reminding one who had been punished by mistake that the next time she was naughty she would have had her punishment in advance. This visit was followed later by the intimacy and friendship of the two families. In London (as we learn from a letter to Miss Holcroft, Mrs. Kenny's daughter, by her previous marriage with Holcroft) Mrs. Shelley was settled at 14, Sheldhurst Street, Brunswick Square. She was then hoping that her father-in-law would make her an allowance sufficient for her to live comfortably in dear Italy; and, at all events, she had received "a present supply, so that much good at least has been accomplished by my journey." She felt quite lost in London, and Percy had not yet learnt English. She had seen Lamb, but he did not remark on her being altered. She would then have returned to Italy, but her father did not like the idea.

Among other work at this time Mary Shelley attempted a drama, but in this her father did not encourage her, as he writes to her in February 1824 that her personages are mere abstractions, not men and women. Godwin does not regret that she has not dramatic talent, as the want of it will save her much trouble and mortification.

This disappointment did not discourage Mary, for in the next year she published, with Henry Colburn of New Burlington Street, her novel *The Last Man*, of which a second edition appeared in the succeeding year. This must have been a great help to Mary's limited means: she had received four hundred pounds for her previous romance.

During this year we find Mrs. Shelley living in Kentish Town, as she writes from that address to Trelawny in July 1824. She is much cheered by finding her old friend still remembers her. She speaks of him as her warm-hearted friend, the remnant of the happy days of her vagabond life in beloved Italy, and now, shortly before writing, she had seen another link in her past life disappear; for the hearse containing the body of Lord Byron had passed her window going up Highgate Hill, on his last journey to the seat of his ancestors. Mary had been much interested in the account Trelawny had sent her of Byron's latest moments. She had been to see the poet's remains at the house where they lay in London. She saw his valet, Fletcher, and "from a few words he imprudently let fall, it would seem that his Lordship spoke of C —— in his last moments, and of his wish to do something for her, at a time when his mind, vacillating between consciousness and delirium, would not permit him to do anything." She describes how Fletcher found Lady Byron in great grief, but inexorable, and how Byron's memoirs had been destroyed by Mrs. Leigh and Hobhouse, but adds: "There was not much in them, I know, for I read them some years ago at Venice; but the world fancied that it was to have a confession of the hidden feelings of one concerning whom they were always passionately curious." She says that Moore was much disgusted. He was writing a life of Byron, but it was considered that although he had had the MSS. so long in his hands, he had not found time to read them. She asks Trelawny to help Moore with any facts or details. Mary thanks Trelawny for his wish that she and Jane Williams, who see each other and little else every day, should join him in Greece. That is impossible, but she looks for him to come in the winter to England. She speaks of July as fatal to her for good and ill. "On this very very day" — she is writing July 28—"I went to France with my Shelley. How young, heedless, and happy and poor we were then, and now my sleeping boy is all that is left to me of that time — my boy and a thousand recollections which never sleep." She describes the pretty country lanes round Kentish Town. If only there were cloudless skies and orange sunsets, she would not mind the scenery; but she can attach herself to no one. She and Jane live alone; her child is in excellent health, a tall, fine, handsome boy. She is still in hopes that she will get an income of three or four hundred a year from Sir Timothy in a few months; one of her chief wishes in being independent would be to help Claire, who is in Russia. Of this time Claire wrote a good account in her diary.

These letters to Trelawny give much insight into the present life of Mary Shelley, and refer to much of interest in her past. On February 25 she tells how she had been with Jane, her father, and Count Gamba to see Kean in Othello, but she adds: "Yet, my dear friend, I wish we had seen it represented as was talked of at Pisa. Iago would never have found a better representative than that strange and wondrous creature whom one regrets daily more; for who can equal him?" Trelawny adds a note that in 1822 Byron had contemplated that he, Trelawny, Williams, Medwin, Mary Shelley, and Mrs. Williams were to take the several parts: — Byron, Iago; Trelawny, Othello; Mary, Desdemona. Trelawny adds that Byron recited a great portion of his part with great gusto, and looked it too. Byron said that all Pisa were to be the audience. Letters from Trelawny from Zante in 1826, carry on the correspondence. He regrets that poverty keeps them apart; speaks of the difficulty of travelling without money; he rejoices that he still holds a place in her affections, and says, "You know, Mary, that I always loved you impetuously and sincerely." In 1827, still writing from Kentish Town, on Easter Sunday, but saying that in future her address will be at her father's, 44, Gower Place, Bedford Square, we have another of her charming letters to her friend, full of good reflections. In this letter she tells how Jane Williams has united her life with that of Shelley's early friend, Mr. Jefferson Hogg. He had loved her devotedly since her arrival in England five years earlier, but till now she had been too constant to Williams's memory to accept him. Claire was still in Russia. Mary writes: —"I wrote to you last while I entertained the hope that my money cares were diminishing, but shabby as the best of these shabby people was, I am not to arrive at that best without due waiting and anxiety. Nor do I yet see the end of this worse than tedious uncertainty." Mary was to see Shelley's younger brother, who was just married, but she had small hope of reaping any good from his visit. She adds, "Adieu, my ever dear friend; while hearts such as yours beat, I will not wholly despond." Mary refers with great kindness to Hunt, and is most anxious as to his future. She also notices with high satisfaction that the Whigs with Canning are in the ascendant, and that they may be favourable to Greece. While Mary Shelley was residing in Kentish Town, before she joined her father in Gower Place after the winding up of his affairs, a letter from Godwin to his wife at the sea-side shows that the latter considered he did not need her society as Mrs. Shelley was with him; he explains that he sees her about twice a week, but is feeling lonely every day.

After Mary removed to Gower Place in 1827, among other work, she was occupied by her *Lives of Eminent Literary Men*, for *Lardner's Cyclopædia*. About the same year Godwin writes to his daughter who is evidently in very low spirits, wishing that she resembled him in temperament rather than the Wollstonecrafts, but explains that his present good spirits may be owing to his work on Cromwell. A little later we find Godwin writing to Mary, himself in depression. He is troubled by publishers who will not decide to take a novel. "Three, four, or five hundred pounds, and to be subsisted by them while I write it," is what he hoped to get. Mrs. Shelley was at Southend for change of air, and wishing her father to join her; but this he could not decide on. Every day lost is taking away from his means of subsistence; for he is writing now, not for marble to be placed over his remains, but for bread to be put into his mouth.

In April 1829, Mrs. Shelley, writing still from her father's address, 44, Grower Street, complains to Trelawny in a truly English way, as she says, of the weather. She rejoices that her friend has taken to work, and hopes that his friends will keep him to recording his own adventures; but she strongly dissuades him from writing a life of Shelley, for how could that be done without bringing her into publicity? which she shrinks from fearfully, though she is forced by her hard situation to meet it in a thousand ways; or as she expresses it, "I will tell you what I am, a silly goose, who, far from wishing to stand forward to assert myself in any way, now that I am alone in the world have but the desire to wrap night and the obscurity of insignificance around me. This is weakness, but I cannot help it." Neither does Mary consider that the time has come to write Shelley's life, though she her-self hopes to do so some day.

Towards the end of 1830 we find Mary in Somerset Street, Portman Square, from which place she writes to Trelawny on the subject of his MS. of *The Adventures of a Younger Son,* which he had consigned to her hands to place with a publisher, make the best terms for that she could, and see through the press; a task distasteful to Trelawny to the last. Mrs. Shelley much admired the work, considering it full of passion and interest. But she does not hesitate to point out the blemishes, certain coarsenesses, which she begs him to allow her to deal with, as she would have dealt with parts of Lord Byron's *Don Juan*. She is sure that without this she will have great difficulty in disposing of the book.

Mary finds the absorbing politics of the day a great hindrance to publishing, and says: "God knows how it will all end, but it looks as if the aristocrats would have the good sense to make the necessary sacrifices to a starving population."

The worry of awaiting the decision of the publisher was felt by Mrs. Shelley more for Trelawny than for herself; she finds it difficult to make the terms she wishes for him, and, writing to her friend on March 22 of the next year, she regrets that she cannot make Colburn, the best publisher she knows of, give five hundred pounds as she wishes, but trusts to get three hundred pounds for first edition and two hundred pounds for second; but times have changed since she first returned to England, neither she nor her father can command the same prices which they did then. At that time "publishers came to seek me," she writes; "now money is scarcer and readers fewer than ever."

Three days later she is able to add the news that she has received "the ultimatum of these great people," three hundred pounds down and one hundred pounds on second edition, she thinks, for 1,000 copies. She advises acceptance, but will try other publishers if he wish it.

Mary again regrets that it is impossible for her to go to Italy. She expresses herself as wretched in England, and in spite of her sanguine disposition and capacity to endure, which have borne her up hitherto, she feels sinking at last; situated as she is, it is impossible for her not to be wretched.

Mary does not give way long to despondency, she goes on to tell news as to Medwin, Hogg, Jane, &c.; she can even tease Trelawny about the different ladies who believe themselves the sole object of his affection, and tells him she is having a certain letter of his about "Caroline" lithographed, and thinks of dispensing 100 copies among "the many hapless fair."

A third letter on the subject of the hook, on June 14, 1831, tells Trelawny how his work is in progress, and Horace Smith, who much admires it, has promised to revise it. Again, in July of the same year, she writes that the third volume is in print, and his book will soon be published; but that as his mother talks openly of his memoirs in society, he must not hope for secrecy. In this letter, also, we have a fact which redounds to the credit of both Mary Shelley and Trelawny, as she clearly tells him she cannot marry him; but remains in "all gratitude and friendship" his M. S. Trelawny had evidently made her an offer of marriage, moved perhaps by gratitude for her help, as well as probably, in his case, a passing love; for she writes to him: "My name will never be Trelawny. I am not so young as I was when you first knew me, but I am as proud. I must have the entire affection, devotion, and, above all, the solicitous protection of any one who would win me. You belong to womenkind in general, and Mary S. will *never* be yours. I write in haste," &c. &c.

Trelawny would never have offered his name thus to a woman he could not respect, and perhaps few know better than those of his reckless class who are most worthy of respect. Mary Shelley, who dreaded men's looks or words, by her own knowledge and her intimate friends' accounts had no fear of him; he had the instincts of a gentleman for a true lady, who may be found in any class.

Four years later, we have Mary again writing to Mr. Trelawny with regard to his book, a second edition being called for, when, to her confusion, she finds that through her not having read over the agreement, and having taken for granted that the proposal of three hundred pounds on first edition with one hundred pounds more on second was inserted, she had signed the contract; but now it turned out that what was proposed by letter was not inserted by Oilier in the agreement, and she knew not what to do. In a second letter a few days later from Harrow, where she lived for a while to be near her son at school, she wrote in answer to Trelawny, proposing Peacock as umpire, because, she writes, "he would not lean to the strongest side, which Jefferson, as a lawyer, is inclined, I think, to do.” Oilier, she writes, devoutly wished she had read the agreement, as the clause ought to have been in it.

Again, a few months later, on April 7, 1836, there is another letter asking Trelawny if he would like to attend her father’s funeral, and if he would go with the undertaker to choose the spot nearest to her mother’s, in St. Pancras Churchyard, and, if he could do this, to write to Mrs. Godwin, at the Exchequer, to tell her so. The last few years of Godwin’s life had not ended, as he had so bitterly apprehended, in penury; as his friends in power had obtained for him the post of Yeoman Usher of the Exchequer, with residence in New Palace Yard, in 1833. The office was in fact a sinecure, and was soon abolished; but it was arranged that no change should be made in the old philosopher’s position. His old friends had died, but his work had its reward for him, as well as its place in the thought of the world, for such people as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Melbourne had used their influence for him. Mary had been his constant devoted daughter to the last. In 1834 he writes to his wife of Mrs. Shelley, as he always called his daughter to Mrs. Godwin, of various meetings and dinners with each other, though he cannot attend her evenings as he would wish, since the walk across the park to reach Somerset Street, where she then lived, was by no means pleasant after dark: and now we find Mary honouring Trelawny with the last service for her father, apologising, but adding, “Are you not the best and most constant of friends?”

Godwin’s last grief was the loss of his son. William in 1832; he had been settled in a literary career and left a widow. One of Mary’s first acts of generosity later on was to settle a pension on her.

CHAPTER XIV. LITERARY WORK.

Having traced Mary's life, as far as space will allow, to the death of her father, we must now retrace our steps to show the work she did, which gives the *raison-d'être* for this biography. It has already been shown that her second book, *Valperga*, much admired by Shelley, was written to assist her father in his distress before his bankruptcy. After her husband's death, while arranging his MSS., and noting facts in connection with them, she planned and wrote her third romance, *The Last Man*.

This highly imaginative work of Mary Shelley's twenty-sixth year contains some of the author's most powerful ideas; but is marred in the commencement by some of her most stilted writing.

The account of the events recorded professes to be found in the cave of the Cumsean Sibyl, near Naples, where they had remained for centuries, outlasting the changes of nature and, when found, being still two hundred and fifty years in advance of the time foretold. The accounts are all written on the sibylline leaves; they are in all languages, ancient and modern; and those concerning this story are in English.

We find ourselves in England, in 2073, in the midst of a Republic, the last king of England having abdicated at the quietly expressed wish of his subjects. This book, like all Mrs. Shelley's, is full of biographical reminiscences; the introduction gives the date of her own visit to Naples with Shelley, in 1818; the places they visited are there indicated; the poetry, romance, the pleasures and pains of her own existence, are worked into her subjects; while her imagination carries her out of her own surroundings. We clearly recognise in the ideal character of the son of the abdicated king an imaginary portrait of Shelley as Mary would have him known, not as she knew him as a living person. To give an adequate idea of genius with all its charm, and yet with its human imperfections, was beyond Mary's power. Adrian, the son of kings, the aristocratic republican, is the weakest part, and one cannot help being struck by Mary Shelley's preference for the aristocrat over the plebeian. In fact, Mary's idea of a republic still needed kings' sons by their good manners to grace it, while, at the same time, the king's son had to be transmuted into an ideal Shelley. This strange confusion of ideas allowed for, and the fact that over half a century of perhaps the earth's most rapid period of progress has passed, the imaginative qualities are still remarkable in Mary. Balloons, then dreamed of, were attained; but naturally the steam-engine and other wonders of science, now achieved, were unknown to Marv. When the-pi ague breaks out she has scope for her fancy, and she certainly adds vivid pictures of horror and pathos to a subject which has been handled by masters of thought at different periods. In this time of horror it is amusing to note how the people's candidate, Ryland, represented as a vulgar specimen of humanity, succumbs to abject fear. The description of the deserted towns and grass-grown streets of London is impressive. The fortunes of the family, to whom the last man, Lionel Verney, belongs, are traced through their varying phases, as one by one the dire plague assails them, and Verney, the only man who recovers from the disease, becomes the leader of the remnant of the English nation. This small handful of humanity leaves England, and wanders through France on its way to the favoured southern countries where human aid, now so scarce, was less needed. On this journey Mrs. Shelley avails herself of reminiscences of her own travelling with Shelley some few years before; and we pass the places noted in her diary; but strange grotesque figures cross the path of the few wanderers, who are decimated each day. At one moment a dying acrobat, deserted by his companions, is seen bounding in the air behind a hedge in the dusk of evening. At another, a black figure mounted on a horse, which only shows itself after dark, to cause apprehensions soon calmed by the death of the poor wanderer, who wished only for distant companionship through dread of contagion. Dijon is reached and passed, and here the old Countess of Windsor, the ex-Queen of England, dies: she had only been reconciled to her changed position by the destruction of humanity. Once, near Geneva, they come upon the sound of divine music in a church, and find a dying girl playing to her blind father to keep up the delusion to the last. The small party, reduced by this time to five, reach Chamouni, and the grand scenes so familiar to Mary contrast with the final tragedy of the human race; yet one more dies, and only four of one family remain; they bury the dead man in an ice cavern, and with this last victim find the pestilence has ended, after a seven years' reign over the earth. A weight is lifted from the atmosphere, and the world is before them; but now alone they must visit her ruins; and the beauty of the earth and the love of each other, bear them up till none but the last man remains to complete the Cumsæan Sibyl’s prophecy.

Various stories of minor importance followed from Mrs. Shelley’s pen, and preparations were made for the lives of eminent literary men. But it was not till the year preceding her father’s death that we have *Lodore*, published in 1835. Of this novel we have already spoken in relation to the separation of Shelley and Harriet.

Mary had too much feeling of art in her work to make an imaginary character a mere portrait, and we are constantly reminded in her novels of the different wonderful and interesting personages whom she knew intimately, though most of their characters were far too subtle and complex to be unravelled by her, even with her intimate knowledge. Indeed, the very fact of having known some of the greatest people of her age, or of almost any age, gives an appearance of affectation to her novels, as it fills them with characters so far from the common run that their place in life cannot be reduced to an ordinary fashionable level. Romantic episodes there may be, but their true place is in the theatre of time of which they are the movers, not the Lilliputians of life who are slowly worked on and moulder by them, and whose small doings are the material of most novels. We know of few novelists who have touched at all successfully on the less known characters. This accomplishment seems to need the great poet himself.

The manner in which Lady Lodore is influenced seems to point to Harriet; but the unyielding and revengeful side of her character has certainly more of Lady Byron. She is charmingly described, and shows a great deal of insight on Mary’s part into the life of fashionable people of her time, which then, perhaps more than now, was the favourite theme with novelists. This must be owing to a certain innate Tory propensity in the English classes or masses for whom Mary Shelley had to work hard, and for whose tendencies in this respect she certainly had a sympathy. Mary’s own life, at the point we have now reached, is also here touched on in the character of Ethel, Lord and Lady Lodore’s daughter, who is brought up in America by her father, and on his death entrusted to an aunt, with injunctions in his will that she is not to be allowed to be brought in contact with her mother. Her character is sweetly feminine and trusting, and in her fortunate love and marriage (in all but early money matters) might be considered quite unlike Mary’s own less fortunate experiences; but in her perfect love and confidence in her husband, her devotion and unselfishness through the trials of poverty in London, the descriptions of which were evidently taken from Mary's own experiences, there is no doubt of the resemblance, as also in her love and reverence for all connected with her father. There are also passages undoubtedly expressive of her own inner feelings — such as this when describing the young husband and wife at a *tête-à-tête* supper: —

Mutual esteem and gratitude sanctified the unreserved sympathy which made each so happy in the other. Did they love the less for not loving "in sin and fear"? Far from it. The certainty of being the cause of good to each other tended to foster the most delicate of all passions, more than the rough ministrations of terror and the knowledge that each was the occasion of injury. A woman's heart is peculiarly unfitted to sustain this conflict. Her sensibility gives keenness to her imagination and she magnifies every peril, and writhes beneath every sacrifice which tends to humiliate her in her own eyes. The natural pride of her sex struggles with her desire to confer happiness, and her peace is wrecked.

What stronger expression of feeling could be needed than this, of a woman speaking from her heart and her own experiences? Does it not remind one of the moral on this subject in all George Eliot's writing, where she shows that the outcome of what by some might be considered minor transgressions against morality leads even in modern times to the Nemesis of the most terrible Greek Dramas?

The complicated money transactions carried on with the aid of lawyers were clearly a reminiscence of Shelley's troubles, and of her own incapacity to feel all the distress contingent so long as she was with him, and there was evidently money somewhere in the family, and it would come some time. In this novel we also perceive that Mary works off her pent-up feelings with regard to Emilia Viviani. It cannot be supposed that the corporeal part of Shelley's creation of *Epipsychidion* (so exquisite in appearance and touching in manner and story as to give rise, when transmitted through the poet's brain, to the most perfect of love ideals) really ultimately became the fiery-tempered worldly-minded virago that Mary Shelley indulges herself in depicting, after first, in spite of altering some relations and circumstances, clearly showing whom the character was intended for. It is true that Shelley himself, after investing her with divinity to serve the purposes of art, speaks later of her as a very commonplace worldly-minded woman; but poets, like artists, seem at times to need lay figures to attire with their thoughts. Enough has been shown to prove that there is genuine subject of interest in this work of Mary's thirty-seventh year.

The next work, *Falkner*, published in 1837, is the last novel we have by Mary Shelley; and as we see from her letter she had been passing through a period of ill-health and depression while writing it, this may account for less spontaneity in the style, which is decidedly more stilted; but, here again, we feel that we are admitted to some of the circle which Mary had encountered in the stirring times of her life, and there is undoubted imagination with some fine descriptive passages.

The opening chapter introduces a little deserted child in a picturesque Cornish village. Her parents had died there in apartments, one after the other, the husband having married a governess against the wishes of his relations; consequently, the wife was first neglected on her husband's death; and on her own sudden death, a few months later, the child was simply left to the care of the poor people of the village — a dreamy, poetic little thing, whose one pleasure was to stroll in the twilight to the village churchyard and be with her mamma. Here she was found by Falkner, the principal character of the romance, who had selected this very spot to end a ruined existence; in which attempt he was frustrated by the child jogging his arm to move him from her mother's grave. His life being thus saved by the child's instrumentality, he naturally became interested in her. He is allowed to look through the few remaining papers of the parents. Among these he finds an unfinished letter of the wife, evidently addressed to a lady he had known, and also indications who the parents were. He was much moved, and offered to relieve the poor people of the child and to restore her to her relations.

The mother's unfinished letter to her friend contains the following passage, surely autobiographical: —

When I lost Edwin (the husband), I wrote to Mr. Raby (the husband's father) acquainting him with the sad intelligence, and asking for a maintenance for myself and my child. The family solicitor answered my letter. Edwin's conduct had, I was told, estranged his family from him, and they could only regard me as one encouraging his disobedience and apostasy. I had no claim on them. If my child were sent to them, and I would promise to abstain from all intercourse with her, she should be brought up with her cousins, and treated in all respects like one of the family. I declined their barbarous offer, and haughtily and in few words relinquished every claim on their bounty, declaring my intention to support and bring up my child myself. This was foolishly done, I fear; but I cannot regret it, even now.

I cannot regret the impulse that made me disdain these unnatural and cruel relatives, or that led me to take my poor orphan to my heart with pride as being all my own. What had they done to merit such a treasure? And did they show themselves capable of replacing a fond and anxious mother? This reminds the reader of the correspondence between Mary and her father on Shelley's death.

It suffices to say that Falkner became so attached to the small child, that by the time he discovered her relations he had not the heart to confide her to their hard guardianship, and as he was compelled to leave England shortly, he took her with him, and through all difficulties he contrived that she should be well guarded and brought up. There is much in the character of Falkner that reminds the reader of Trelawny, the gallant and generous friend of Byron and Shelley in their last years, the brave and romantic traveller. The description of Falkner's face and figure must have much resembled that of Trelawny when young, though, of course, the incidents of the story have no connection with him. In the meantime the little girl is growing up, and the nurses are replaced by an English governess, whom Falkner engages abroad, and whose praises and qualifications he hears from everyone at Odessa. The story progresses through various incidents foreshadowing the cause of Falkner's mystery. Elizabeth, the child, now grown up, passes under his surname. While travelling in Germany they come across a youth of great personal attraction, who appears, however, to be of a singularly reckless and misanthropical disposition for one so young. Elizabeth seeming attracted by his daring and beauty, Falkner suddenly finds it necessary to return to England. Shortly afterwards, he is moved to go to Greece during the War of Independence, and wishes to leave Elizabeth with her relations in England; but this she strenuously opposes so far as to induce Falkner to let her accompany him to Greece, where he places her with a family while he rushes into the thick of the danger, only hoping to end his life in a good cause. In this he nearly succeeds, but Elizabeth, hearing of his danger, hastens to his side, and nurses him assiduously through the fever brought on from his wounds and the malarious climate. By short stages and the utmost care, she succeeds in reaching Malta on their homeward journey, and Falkner, a second time rescued from death by his beloved adopted child, determines not again to endanger recklessly the life more dear to her than that of many fathers. Again, at Malta, during a fortnight's quarantine, the smallness of the world of fashionable people brings them in contact with an English party, a Lord and Lady Cecil, who are travelling with their family. Falkner is too ill to see anyone, and when Elizabeth finally gets him on board a vessel to proceed to Genoa, he seems rapidly sinking. In his despair and loneliness, feeling unable to cope with all the difficulties of burning sun and cold winds, help unexpectedly comes: a gentleman whom Elizabeth has not before perceived, and whom now she is too much preoccupied to observe, quietly arranges the sail to shelter the dying man from sun and wind, places pillows, and does all that is possible; he even induces the poor girl to go below and rest on a couch for a time while he watches. Falkner becomes easier in the course of the night; he sleeps and gains in strength, and from this he progresses till, while at Marseilles, he hears the name, Neville, of the unknown friend who had helped to restore him to life. He becomes extremely agitated and faints. On being restored to consciousness he begs Elizabeth to continue the journey with him alone, as he can bear no one but her near him. The mystery of Falkner's life seems to be forcing itself to the surface.

The travellers reach England, and Elizabeth is sought out by Lady Cecil, who had been much struck by her devotion to her father. Elizabeth is invited to stay with Lady Cecil, as she much needs rest in her turn. During a pleasant time of repose near Hastings, Elizabeth hears Lady Cecil talk much of her brother Gerard; but it is not till he, too, arrives on a visit, that she acknowledges to herself that he is really the same Mr. Neville whom she had met, and from whom she had received such kindness. Nor had Gerard spoken of Elizabeth; he had been too much drawn towards her, as his life also is darkened by a mystery. They spend a short tranquil time together, when a letter announces the approaching arrival of Sir Boyvill Neville, the young man's father (although Lady Cecil called Gerard her brother, they were not really related; Sir Boyvill had married the mother of Lady Cecil, who was the offspring of a previous marriage).

Gerard Neville at once determines to leave the house, but before going refers Elizabeth to his sister, Lady Cecil, to hear the particulars of the tragedy which surrounds him. The story told is this. Sir Boyvill Neville was a man of the world with all the too frequent disbelief in women and selfishness. This led to his becoming very tyrannical when he married, at the age of 45, Alethea, a charming young woman who had recently lost her mother, and whose father, a retired naval officer of limited means, would not hear of her refusing so good an offer as Sir Boyvill's. After their marriage Sir Boyvill, feeling himself too fortunate in having secured so charming and beautiful a wife, kept out of all society, and after living abroad for some years took her to an estate he possessed in Cumberland. They lived there shut out from all the world, except for trips which he took himself to London, or elsewhere, whenever *ennui* assailed him. They had, at the time we are approaching, two charming children, a beautiful boy of some ten years and a little girl of two. At this time while Alethea was perfectly happy with her children, and quite contented with her retirement, which she perceived took away the jealous tortures of her husband, he left home for a week, drawn out to two months, on one of his periodical visits to the capital. Lady Neville's frequent letters concerning her home and her children were always cheerful and placid, and the time for her husband's return was fixed. He arrived at the appointed hour in the evening. The servants were at the door to receive him, but in an instant alarm prevailed; Lady Neville and her son Gerard were not with him. They had left the house some hours before to walk in the park, and had not since been seen or heard of, an unprecedented occurrence. The alarm was raised; the country searched in all directions, but ineffectually, during a fearful tempest. Ultimately the poor boy was found unconscious on the ground, drenched to the skin. On his being taken home, and his father questioning him, all that could be heard were his cries "Come back, mamma; stop, stop for me!" Nothing else but the tossings of fever. Once again, "Then she has come back," he cried, "that man did not take her quite away; the carriage drove here at last." The story slowly elicited from the child on his gaining strength was this. On his going for a walk with his mother in the park, she took the key of a gate which led into a lane. A gentleman was waiting outside. Gerard had never seen him before, but he heard his mother call him Rupert. They walked together through the lane accompanied by the child, and talked earnestly. She wept, and the boy was indignant. When they reached a cross-road, a carriage was waiting. On approaching it the gentleman pulled the child's hands from hers, lifted her in, sprang in after, and the coachman drove like the wind, leaving the child to hear his mother shriek in agony, "My child — my son!" Nothing more could be discovered; the country was ransacked in vain. The servants only stated that ten days ago a gentleman called, asked for Lady Neville and was shown in to her; he remained some two hours, and on his leaving it was remarked that she had been weeping. He had called again but was not admitted. One letter was found, signed "Rupert," begging for one more meeting, and if that were granted he would leave her and his just revenge for ever; otherwise, he could not tell what the consequences might be on her husband's return that night. In answer to this letter she went, but with her child, which clearly proved her innocent intention. Months passed with no fresh result, till her husband, beside himself with wounded pride, determined to be avenged by obtaining a Bill of Divorce in the House of Lords, and producing his son Gerard as evidence against his lost mother, whom he so dearly loved. The poor child by this time, by dint of thinking and weighing every word he could remember, such as "I grieve deeply for you, Rupert: my good wishes are all I have to give you," became more and more convinced that his mother was taken forcibly away, and would return at any moment if she were able. He only longed for the time when he should be old enough to go and seek her through the world. His father was relentless, and the child was brought before the House of Lords to repeat the evidence he had innocently given against her; but when called on to speak in that awful position, no word could be drawn from him except "She is innocent." The House was moved by the brave child's agony, and resolved to carry on the case without him, from the witnesses whom he had spoken to, and finally they pronounced a decree of divorce in Sir Boyvill's favour. The struggle and agony of the poor child are admirably described, as also his subsequent flight from his father's house, and wanderings round his old home in Cumberland. In his fruitless search for his mother he reached a deserted sea-coast. After wandering about for two months barefoot, and almost starving but for the ewe's milk and bread given him by the cottagers, he was recognized. His father, being informed, had him seized and brought home, where he was confined and treated as a criminal. His state became so helpless that even his father was at length moved to some feeling of self-restraint, and finally took Gerard with him abroad, where he was first seen at Baden by Elizabeth and Palkner. There also he first met his sister by affinity, Lady Cecil. With her he lost somewhat his defiant tone, and felt that for his mother's sake he must not appear to others as lost in sullenness and despair. He now talked of his mother, and reasoned about her; but although he much interested Lady Cecil, he did not convince her really of his mother's innocence, so much did all circumstances weigh against her. But now, during Elizabeth's visit to Lady Cecil, a letter is received by Gerard and his father informing them that one Gregory Hoskins believed he could give some information; he was at Lancaster. Sir Boyvill, only anxious to hush up the matter by which his pride had suffered, hastened to prevent his son from taking steps to re-open the subject. This Hoskins was originally a native of the district round Dromoor, Neville's home, and had emigrated to America at the time of Sir Boyvill's marriage. At one time — years ago — he met a man named Osborne, who confided to him how he had gained money before coming to America by helping a gentleman to carry off a lady, and how terribly the affair ended, as the lady got drowned in a river near which they had placed her while nearly dead from fright, on the dangerous coast of Cumberland. On returning to England, and hearing the talk about the Nevilles in his native village, this old story came to his mind, and he wrote his letter. Neville, on hearing this, instantly determined to proceed to Mexico, trace out Osborne, and bring him to accuse his mother's murderer.

All these details were written by Elizabeth to her beloved father. After some delay, one line entreated her to come to him instantly for one day.

Falkner could not ignore the present state of things — the mutual attraction of his Elizabeth and of Gerard. Yet how, with all he knew, could that be suffered to proceed? Never, except by eternal separation from his adored child; but this should be done. He would now tell her his story. He could not speak, but he wrote it, and now she must come and receive it from him. He told of all his solitary, unloved youth, the miseries and tyranny of school to the unprotected — a reminiscence of Shelley; how, on emerging from, childhood, one gleam of happiness entered his life in the friendship of a lady, an old friend of his mother's, who had one lovely daughter; of the happy, innocent time spent in their cottage during holidays; of the dear lady's death; of her daughter's despair; then how he was sent off to India; of letters he wrote to the daughter Alethea, letters unanswered, as the father, the naval officer, intercepted all; of his return, after years, to England, his one hope that which had buoyed him up through years of constancy, to meet and marry his only love, for that he felt she was and must remain. He recounted his return, and the news he received; his one rash visit to her to judge for himself whether she was happy — this, from her manner, he could not feel, in spite of her delight in her children; his mad request to see her; mad plot, and still madder execution of it, till he had her in his arms, dashing through the country, through storm and thunder, unable to tell whether she lived or died; the first moment of pause; the efforts to save the ebbing life in a ruined hut; the few minutes' absence to seek materials for fire; the return, to find her a floating corpse in the wild little river flowing to the sea; the rescue of her body from the waves; her burial on the sea-shore; and his own subsequent life of despair, saved twice by Elizabeth. All this was told to the son, to whom Falkner denounced himself as his mother's destroyer. He named the spot where the remains would be found. And now what was left to be done? Only to wait a little, while Sir Boyvill and Gerard Neville proved his words, and traced out the grave. An inquest was held, and Falkner apprehended. A few days passed, and then Elizabeth found her father gone; and by degrees it was broken to her that he was in Carlisle gaol on the charge of murder. She, who had not feared the dangers in Greece of war and fever, was not to be deterred now; she, who believed in his innocence. No minutes were needed to decide her to go straight to Carlisle, and remain as near as she could to the dear father who had rescued and cared for her when deserted. Gerard, who was with his father when the bones were exhumed at the spot indicated, soon realised the new situation. His passion for justice to his mother did not deaden his feeling for others. He felt that Falkner's story was true, and though nothing could restore his mother's life, her honour was intact. Sir Boyvill would leave no stone unturned to be revenged, rightly or wrongly, on the man who had assailed his domestic peace; but Gerard saw Elizabeth, gave what consolation he could, and determined to set off at once to America to seek Osborne, as the only witness who could exculpate Falkner from the charge of murder. After various difficulties Osborne was found in England, where he had returned in terror of being taken in America as accomplice in the murder. With great difficulty he is brought to give evidence, for all his thoughts and fears are for himself; but at length, when all hopes seem failing, he is induced by Elizabeth to give his evidence, which fully confirms Falkner's statement.

At length the day of trial came. The news of liberty arrived. "Not Guilty!" Who can imagine the effect but those who have passed innocently through the ordeal? Once more all are united. Gerard has to remain for the funeral of his father, who had died affirming his belief, which in fact he had always entertained, in Falkner's innocence. Lady Cecil had secured for Elizabeth the companionship of Mrs. Raby, her relation on the father's side. She takes Falkner and Elizabeth home to the beautiful ancestral Belleforest. Here a time of rest and happiness ensues. Those so much tried by adversity would not let real happiness escape for a chimera; honour being restored love and friendship remained, and Gerard, Elizabeth and Falkner felt that now they ought to remain, together, death not having disunited them. Too much space may appear to be here given to one romance; but it seems just to show the scope of Mary's imaginative conception. There are certainly both imagination and power in carrying it out. It is true that the idea seems founded, to some extent, on Godwin's Caleb Williams, the man passing through life with a mystery; the similar names of Falkner and Falkland may even be meant to call attention to this fact. The three-volume form, in this as in many novels, seems to detract from the strength of the work in parts, the second volume being noticeably drawn out here and there. It may be questioned, also, whether the form adopted in this as in many romances of giving the early history by way of narrative told by one of the *dramatis personæ* to another, is the desirable one — a point to which we have already adverted in relation to *Frankenstein*. Can it be true to nature to make one character give a description, over a hundred pages long, repeating at length, word for word, long conversations which he has never heard, marking the changes of colour which he has not seen — and all this with a minuteness which even the firmest memory and the most loquacious tongue could not recall? Does not this give an unreality to the style incompatible with art, which ought to be the mainspring of all imaginative work? This, however, is not Mrs. Shelley's error alone, but is traceable through many masterpieces. The author, the creator, who sees the workings of the souls of his characters, has, naturally, memory and perception for all. Yet Mary Shelley, in this as in most of her work, has great insight into character. Elizabeth's grandfather in his dotage is quite a photograph from life; old

Oswig Raby, who was more shrivelled with narrowness of mind than with age, but who felt himself and his house, the oldest in England, of more importance than aught else he knew of. His daughter-in-law, the widow of his eldest son, is also well drawn; a woman of upright nature who can acknowledge the faults of the family, and try to retrieve them, and who finally does her best to atone for the past.

CHAPTER XV. LATER WORKS.

The writing of these novels, with other literary work we must refer to, passed over the many years of Mrs. Shelley's life until 1837, and saved her from the ennui of a quiet life in London with few friends. Certainly in Mary's case there had been a reason for the neglect of "Society," which at times she bitterly deplored; and as she had little other than intellectual and amiable qualities to recommend her for many years, she was naturally not sought after by the more successful of her contemporaries. There are instances even of her being cruelly mortified by marked rudeness at some receptions she attended; in one case years later, when her fidelity to her husband and his memory might have appeased the sternest moralist. During these early years, which she writes of afterwards as years of privation which caused her to shed many bitter tears at the time, though they were frequently gilded by imagination, Mrs. Shelley was cheered by seeing her son grow up entirely to her satisfaction, passing through the child's stage and the school-boy's at Harrow, from which place he proceeded to Cambridge; and many and substantially happy years must have been passed, during which Claire was not forgotten. Poor Claire, who passed through much severe servitude, from which Mary would fain have spared her, as she wrote once to Mr. Trelawny that this was one of her chief reasons for wishing for independence; but "Old Time," or "Eternity," as she called Sir Timothy, who certainly had no reason to claim her affection, was long in passing; and though a small allowance before 1831 of three hundred pounds a year had increased to four hundred pounds a year when her only child reached his majority in 1841, for this, on Sir Timothy's death, she had to repay thirteen thousand pounds. It had enabled her to make a tour in Germany with her son; of this journey we will speak after referring to her *Lives of Eminent Literary Men*.

These lives, written for *Lardner's Cyclopedia*, and published in 1835, are a most interesting series of biographies written by a woman who could appreciate the poet's character, and enter into the injustices and sorrows from which few poets have been exempt. They show careful study, her knowledge of various countries gives local colour to her descriptions, and her love of poetry makes her an admirable critic. She is said to have written all the Italian and Spanish lives with the exception of Galileo and Tasso; and certainly her writing contrasts most favourably with the life of Tasso, to whomever this may have been assigned. Mary was much disappointed at not having this particular sketch to write.

To her life of Dante she affixes Byron’s lines from *The Prophecy of Dante* —

'Tis the doom
Of spirits of my order to be racked
In life; to wear their hearts out, and consume
Their days in endless strife, and die alone.
Then future thousands crowd around their tomb,
And pilgrims, come from climes where they have known
The name of him who now is but a name,
Spread his, by him unheard, unheeded fame.

Mary felt how these beautiful lines were appropriate to more than one poet. Freedom from affectation, and a genuine love of her subject, make her biographies most readable, and for the ordinary reader there is a fund of information. The next life — that of Petrarch — is equally attractive; in fact, there is little that can exceed the interest of lives of these immortal beings when written — with the comprehension here displayed. Even the complicated history of the period is made clear, and the poet, whose tortures came from the heart, is as feelingly touched on as he who suffered from the political factions of the Bianchi and the Neri, and who felt the steepness of other’s stairs and the salt savour of other’s bread. Petrarch’s banishment through love is not less feelingly described, and we are taken to the life and the homes of the time in the living descriptions given by Mary. One passage ought in fairness to be given to show her enthusiastic understanding and appreciation of the poet she writes of: —

Dante, as hath been already intimated, is the hero of his own poem; and the Divina Commedia is the only example of an attempt triumphantly achieved, and placed beyond the reach of scorn or neglect, wherein from beginning to end the author discourses concerning himself individually. Had this been done in any other way than the consummately simple, delicate, and unobtrusive one which he has adopted, the whole would have been insufferable egotism, disgusting coxcombry, or oppressive dulness. Whereas, this personal identity is the charm, the strength, the soul of the book; he lives, he breathes, he moves through it; his pulse beats or stands still, his eye kindles or fades, his cheek grows pale with horror, colours with shame, or burns with indignation; we hear his voice, his step, in every page; we see his shape by the flame of hell; his shadow in the land where there is no *other* shadow (*Purgatoria*) and his countenance gaining angelic elevation from “colloquy sublime” with glorified intelligence in the paradise above. Nor does he ever go out of his natural character. He is, indeed, the lover from infancy of Beatrice, the aristocratic magistrate of a fierce democracy, the valiant soldier in the field of Campaldino, the fervent patriot in the feuds of Guelphs and Ghibellines, the eloquent and subtle disputant in the school of theology, the melancholy exile wandering from court to court, depending for bread and shelter on petty princes who knew not his worth, except as a splendid captive in their train; and above all, he is the poet anticipating his own assured renown (though not obtrusively so), and dispensing at his will honour or infamy to others, whom he need but to name, and the sound must be heard to the end of time and echoed from all regions of the globe. Dante in his vision is Dante as he lived, as he died, and as he expected to live in both worlds beyond death — an immortal spirit in the one, an unforgotten poet in the other.

You feel this is written from the heart of the woman who herself felt as she wrote. We would fain go through her different biographies, tracing her feelings, her appreciation, and poetic enthusiasm throughout, but that is impossible. She takes us through Boccaccio’s life, and, as by the reflection of a sunset from a mirror, we are warmed with the glow and mirth from distant and long-past times in Italy. One feels through her works the innate delicacy of her mind. Through Boccaccio’s life, as through all the others, the history of the times and the noteworthy facts concerning the poets are brought forward — such as the sums of money Boccaccio spent, though poor, to promote the study of Greek, so long before the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. In the friendship of Petrarch and Boccaccio, she shows how great souls can love, and makes you love them in return, and you feel the riches of the meetings of such people, these dictators of mankind — not of a faction-tossed country or continent. How paltry do the triumphs of conquerors which end with the night, the feasts of princes which leave still hungry, appear beside the triumphs of intellect, the symposium of souls.

After Boccaccio, Mary rapidly ran over the careers of Lorenzo de' Medici, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Politian, and the Pulci, exhibiting again, after the lapse of a century, the study in Italy of the Greek language. The story of the truly great prince with his circle of poet friends, one of whom, Politian, died of a broken heart at the death of his beloved patron, is well told. From these she passes on to the followers of the romantic style begun by Pulci, Cieco da Ferrara, Burchiello, Bojardo; then Berni, born at the end of the fifteenth century, who carried on or recast Bojardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, which was followed by Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, the delight of Italy. In Ariosto's life Mary, as ever, delights in showing the filial affection and fine traits of the poet's nature. She quotes his lines —

Our mother's years with pity fill my heart,
For without infamy she could not be
By all of us at once forsaken.

But with these commendations she strongly denounces the profligacy of his writing as presumably of his life. She says: "An author may not be answerable to posterity for the evil of his mortal life; but for the profligacy of that life which he lives through after ages, contaminating by irrepressible and incurable infection the minds of others, he is amenable even in his grave."

Through the intricacies of Machiavelli Mary's clear head and conscientious treatment lead the reader till light appears to gleam. The many-sided character of the man comes out, the difficulties of the time he wrote in, while advising Princes how to act in times of danger, and so admonishing the people how to resist. Did he not foresee tyranny worked out and resistance complete, and his own favourite republic succeeding to the death of tyrants? One remark of Mary's with regard to the time when Machiavelli considered himself most neglected is worth recording: "He bitterly laments the inaction of his life, and expresses an ardent desire to be employed. Meanwhile he created occupation for himself, and it is one of the lessons that we may derive from becoming acquainted with the feelings and actions of celebrated men, to learn that this very period during which Machiavelli repined at the neglect of his contemporaries, and the tranquillity of his life, was that during which his fame took root, and which brought his name down to us. He occupied his leisure in writing those works which have occasioned his immortality."

A short life of Guicciardini follows; then Mrs. Shelley comes to the congenial subject of Vittoria Colonna, the noble widow of the Marquis of Pescara, the dear friend in her latter years of Michael Angelo, the woman whose writings, accomplishments, and virtues have made her the pride of Italy. With her Mary Shelley gives a few of the long list of names of women who won fame in Italy from their intellect: — the beautiful daughter of a professor, who lectured behind a veil in Petrarch's time; the mother of Lorenzo de' Medici, Ippolita Sforza; Alessandra Scala; Isotta of Padua; Bianca d'Este; Damigella Torella; Cassandra Fedele. We next pass to the life of Guarini, and missing Tasso, whose life Mary Shelley did not write, we come to Chiabrera, who tried to introduce the form of Greek poetry into Italian. Tassoni, Marini, Filicaja are agreeable, but shortly touched on. Then Metastasio is reached, whose youthful genius as an improvisatore early gained him applause, which was followed up by his successful writing of three-act dramas for the opera, and a subsequent calm and prosperous life at Vienna, under the successive protection of the Emperor Charles VI., Maria Theresa, and Joseph II. The contrast of the even prosperity of Metastasio's life with that of some of the great poets is striking. Next Goldoni claims attention, whose comedies of Italian manners throw much light upon the frivolous life in society before the French Revolution, his own career adding to the pictures of the time. Then Alfieri's varied life-story is well told, his sad period of youth, when taken from his mother to suffer much educational and other neglect, the difficulties he passed through owing to his Piedmontese origin and consequent ignorance of the pure Italian language. She closes the modern Italian poets with Monti and Ugo Foscolo, whose sad life in London is exhibited.

Mary's studies in Spanish enabled her to treat equally well the poets of Spain and of Portugal. Her introduction is a good essay on the poetry and poets of Spain, and some of the translations, which are her own, are very happily given. The poetic impulse in Spain is traced from the Iberians through the Romans, Visigoths, Moors, and the early unknown Spanish poets, among whom there were many fine examples. She leads us to Boscan at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Boscan seems to have been one of those rare beings, a poet endowed with all the favours of fortune, including contentment and happiness. His friends Garcilaso di Vega and Mendoza aided greatly in the formation of Spanish poetry, all three having studied the Italian school and Petrarch. This century, rich in poets, gives us also Luis de Leon, Herrera, Saade Miranda, Jorge de Montemayor, Castillejo, the dramatists; and Ercilla, the soldier poet, who, in the expedition for the conquest of Peru went to Arauco, and wrote the poem named *Araucana*. From him we pass to one of the great men of all time, Cervantes, to one who understood the workings of the human heart, and was so much raised above the common level as to be neglected in the magnitude of his own work. Originally of noble family, and having served his country in war, losing his left hand at the battle of Lepanto, he received no recognition of his services after his return from a cruel captivity among the Moors. Instead of reward, Cervantes seems to have met with every indignity that could be devised by the multitudes of pigmies to lower a great man, were that possible. Mary, as ever, rises with her subject. She remarks:—"It is certainly curious that in those days when it was considered part of a noble's duties to protect and patronise men of letters, Cervantes should have been thus passed over; and thus while his book was passing through Europe with admiration, Cervantes remained poor and neglected. So does the world frequently honour its greatest, as if jealous of the renown to which they can never attain."

From Cervantes we pass on to Lope de Vega, of whose thousand dramas what remains? and yet what honours and fortune were showered upon him during his life! A more even balance of qualities enabled him to write entertaining plays, and to flatter the weakness of those in power. From Gongora and Quevedo Mary passes to Calderon, whom she justly considers the master of Spanish poetry. She deplores the little that is known of his life, and that after him the fine period of Spanish literature declines, owing to the tyranny and misrule which were crushing and destroying the spirit and intellect of Spain; for, unfortunately, art and poetry require not only the artist and the poet, but congenial atmosphere to survive in.

Writing for this Cyclopædia was evidently very apposite work for Mrs. Shelley. She wrote also for it lives of some of the French poets. Some stories were also written. In these she was less happy, as likewise in her novel, *Perkin Warbeck*, a pallid imitation of Walter Scott, which does not call for any special comment.

Shortly after her father's death, Mrs. Shelley wrote from 14 North Bank, Regent's Park, to Moxon, wishing to arrange with him about the publication of Godwin's autobiography, letters, &c. But some ten years later we find her still expressing the wish to do some work of the kind as a solemn duty if her health would permit. Probably the very numerous notes which Mrs. Shelley made about her father and his surroundings were towards this object.

Mrs. Shelley's health caused her at times considerable trouble from this period onwards. Harrow had not suited her, and in 1839 she moved to Putney; and the next year, 1840, she was able to make the tour above mentioned, which we cannot do better than refer to at once.

CHAPTER XVI. ITALY REVISITED.

In Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy* in 1840-42-43, published in 1844, we have not only a pleasing account of herself with her son and friends during a pleasure trip, but some very interesting and charming descriptions of continental life at that time.

Mary, with her son and two college friends, decided in June 1840 to spend their vacation on the banks of the Lake of Como. The idea of again visiting a country where she had so truly lived, and where she had passed through the depths of sorrow, filled her with much emotion. Her failing health made her feel the advantage that travelling and change of country would be to her. After spending an enjoyable two months of the spring at Richmond, visiting Raphael's cartoons at Hampton Court, she went by way of Brighton and Hastings. On her way to Dover she noticed how Hastings, a few years ago a mere fishing village, had then become a new town. They were delayed at Dover by a tempest, but left the next morning, the wind still blowing a gale; reaching Calais they were further delayed by the tide. At length Paris was arrived at, and we find Mary making her first experience at a *table d'hote*. Mary was now travelling with a maid, which no doubt her somewhat weakened health made a necessity to her. They went to the Hotel Chatham at Paris. She felt all the renovating feeling of being in a fresh country out of the little island; the weight of cares seemed to fall from her; the life in Paris cheered her, though the streets were dirty enough then — dirtier than those of London; whereas the contrast is now in the opposite direction.

After a week here they went on towards Como by way of Frankfort. They were to pass Metz, Treves, the Moselle, Coblentz, and the Rhine to Mayence. The freedom from care and, worries in a foreign land, with sufficient means, and only in the company of young people open to enjoyment, gave new life to Mary. After staying a night at Metz, the clean little town on the Moselle, they passed on to Treves. At Thionville, the German frontier, they were struck by the wretched appearance of the cottages in contrast to the French. From Treves they proceeded by boat up the Moselle. The winding banks of the Moselle, with the vineyards sheltered by mountains, are well described. The peasants are content and prosperous, as, after the French Revolution, they bought up the confiscated estates of the nobles, and so were able to cultivate the land. The travellers rowed into the Rhine on reaching Coblentz, and rested at the Bellevue; and now they passed by the grander beauties of the Rhine. These made Mary wish to spend a summer there, exploring its recesses. They reached Mayence at midnight, and the next morning left by rail for Frankfort, the first train they had entered on the Continent. Mary much preferred the comfort of railway travelling. From Frankfort they engaged a voiturier to Schaffhausen, staying at Baden-Baden. The ruined castles recall memories of changed times, and Mary remarks how, except in England and Italy, country houses of the rich seem unknown. At Darmstadt, where they stopped to lunch, they were annoyed and amused too by the inconvenience and inattention they were subjected to from the expected arrival of the Grand Duke. On reaching Heidelberg, she remarks how, in travelling, one is struck by the way that the pride of princes for further dominion causes the devastation of the fairest countries. From the ruined castle they looked over the Palatinate which had been laid waste owing to the ambition of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of our James I. Mary could have lingered long among the picturesque weed-grown walls, but had to continue the route to their destination. At Baden they visited the gambling saloon, and saw *Rouge et Noir* played. They were much struck by the Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen; and, on reaching Chiavenna, Mary had again the delight of hearing and speaking Italian. After crossing the blank mountains, who has not experienced the delight of this sensation has not yet known one of the joys of existence. On arriving at their destination at Lake Como, their temporary resting-place, a passing depression seized the party, the feeling that often comes when shut in by mountains away from home. No doubt Mary having reached Italy, the land she loved, with Shelley, the feeling of being without him assailed her.

At Cadenabia, on Lake Como, they had to consider ways and means. It turned out that apartments, with all their difficulties, would equal hotel expenses without the same amount of comfort. So they decided on accepting the moderate terms offered by the landlord, and were comfortably or even luxuriously installed, with five little bedrooms and large private salon. In one nook of this Mrs. Shelley established her embroidery frame, desk, books, and such things, showing her taste for order and elegance. So for some weeks she and her son and two companions were able to pass their time free from all household worries. The lake and neighbourhood are picturesquely described. One drawback to Mary's peace of mind was the arrival of her son's boat. He seemed to have inherited his father's love of boating, and this naturally filled her with apprehension. They made many pleasant excursions, of which she always gives good descriptions, and also enters clearly into any historical details connected with the country. At times she was carried by the beauty and repose of the scene into rapt moods which she thus describes: —

It has seemed to me, and on such an evening I have felt it, that the world, endowed as it is outwardly with endless shapes and influences of beauty and enjoyment, is peopled also in its spiritual life by myriads of loving spirits, from whom, unaware, we catch impressions which mould our thoughts to good, and thus they guide beneficially the course of events and minister to the destiny of man. Whether the beloved dead make a portion of this holy company, I dare not guess; but that such exist, I feel. They keep far off while we are worldly, evil, selfish; but draw near, imparting the reward of heaven-born joy, when we are animated by noble thoughts and capable of disinterested actions. Surely such gather round me to-night, part of that atmosphere of peace and love which it is paradise to breathe.

I had thought such ecstasy dead in me for ever, but the sun of Italy has thawed the frozen stream.

Such poetic feelings were the natural outcome of the quiet and repose after the life of care and anxiety poor Mary had long been subjected to. She always seems more in her element when describing mountain cataracts, Alpine storms, water lashed into waves and foam by the wind, all the changes of mountain and lake scenery; but this quiet holiday with her son came to an end, and they had to think of turning homewards. Before doing so, they passed by Milan, enjoyed the opera there, and went to see Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," which Mary naturally much admires; she mentions the Luinis without enthusiasm. While here, the non-arrival of a letter caused great anxiety to Mary, as they were now obliged to return on account of Percy's term commencing, and there was barely enough money for him to travel without her; however, that was the only thing possible, and so it had to be done. Percy returned to England with his two friends, and his mother had to remain at Milan awaiting the letter. Days pass without any letter coming to hand, lost days, for Mary was too anxious and worried to be able to take any pleasure in her stay. Nor had she any acquaintances in the place; she could scarcely endure to go down alone to *table d'hôte* dinner, although she overcame this feeling as it was her only time of seeing anyone. Ten days thus passed by, days of storm and tempest, during which her son and his companions recrossed the Alps. They had left her on the 20th September, and it was not till she reached Paris on the 12th October that she became aware of the disastrous journey they had gone through, and how impossible it would have been for them to manage even as they did, had she been with them; indeed, she hardly could have lived through it. The description of this journey was written to Mrs. Shelley in a most graphic and picturesque letter by one of her son's companions. They were nearly drowned while crossing the lake in the diligence on a raft, during a violent storm. Next they were informed that the road of the Dazio Grande to Airolo was washed away sixty feet under the present torrent. They, with a guide, had to find their way over an unused mountain track, rendered most dangerous by the storm. They all lost shoes and stockings, and had to run on as best they could. Percy, with some others, had lost the track; but they, providentially, met the rest of the party at an inn at Piota, and from there managed to reach Airolo; and so they crossed the stupendous St. Gothard Pass, one of the wonders of the world.

Mrs. Shelley having at last recovered the letter from the Post Office, returned with her maid and a vetturino who had three Irish ladies with him, by way of Geneva, staying at Isola Bella. After passing the Lago Maggiore, a turn in the road shut the lake and Italy from her sight, and she proceeded on her journey with a heavy heart, as many a traveller has done and many more will do, the fascination of Italy under most circumstances being intense. Mary then describes one of the evils of Italy in its then divided state. The southern side of the Simplon belonged to the King of Sardinia, but its road led at once into Austrian boundary. The Sardinian sovereign, therefore, devoted this splendid pass to ruin to force people to go by Mont Cenis, and thus rendered the road most dangerous for those who were forced to traverse it. The journey over the Simplon proved most charming, and Mrs. Shelley was very much pleased with the civility of her vetturino, who managed everything admirably. Now, on her way to Geneva, she passed the same scenes she had lived first in with Shelley. She thus describes them: —

The far Alps were hid, the wide lake looked drear. At length I caught a glimpse of the scenes among which I had lived, when first I stepped out from childhood into life. There on the shores of Bellerive stood Diodati; and our humble dwelling, Maison Ohapuis, nestled close to the lake below. There were the terraces, the vineyards, the upward path threading them, the little port where our boat lay moored. I could mark and recognise a thousand peculiarities, familiar objects then, forgotten since — now replete with recollections and associations. Was I the same person who had lived there, the companion of the dead — for all were gone? Even my young child, whom I had looked upon as the joy of future years, had died in infancy. Not one hope, then in fair bud, had opened into maturity; storm and blight and death had passed over, and destroyed all. While yet very young, I had reached the position of an aged person, driven back on memory for companionship with the beloved, and now I looked on the inanimate objects that had surrounded me, which survived the same in aspect as then, to feel that all my life since is an unreal phantasmagoria — the shades that gathered round that scene were the realities, the substances and truth of the soul's life which I shall, I trust, hereafter rejoin.

Mary digresses at some length on the change of manners in the French since the revolution of 1830, saying that they had lost so much of their pleasant agreeable manner, their Monsieur and Madame, which sounded so pretty. From Geneva by Lyons, through Chalons, the diligence slowly carries her to Paris, and thence she shortly returned to England in October.

Mary's next tour with her son was in 1842, by way of Amsterdam, through Germany and Italy. From Frankfort she describes to a friend her journey with its various mishaps. After spending a charming week with friends in Hampshire, and then passing a day or two in London to bid farewell to old friends, Mrs. Shelley, her son, and Mr. Knox embarked for Antwerp on June 12, 1842. After the sea passage, which Mary dreaded, the pleasure of entering the quiet Scheldt is always great; but she does not seem to have recognised the charm of the Belgian or Dutch quiet scenery. With her love of mountains, these picturesque aspects seem lost on her; at least, she remarks that, "It is strange that a scene, in itself uninteresting, becomes agreeable to look at in a picture, from the truth with which it is depicted, and a perfection of colouring which at once contrasts and harmonizes the hues of sky and water.” Mary does not seem to understand that the artist who does this selects the beauties of nature to represent. A truthful representation of a vulgarised piece of nature would be very painful for an artist to look on or to paint. The English or Italian villas of Lake Como, or the Riviera, would require a great deal of neglect by the artist not to vulgarize the glorious scenes round them; but this lesson has yet to be widely learnt in modern times, that beauty can never spoil nature, however humble; but no amount of wealth expended on a palace or mansion can make it fit for a picture, without the artist’s feeling, any more than the beauties of Italy on canvas can be other than an eyesore without the same subtle power.

At Liège, fresh worries assailed the party. The difficulty of getting all their luggage, as well as a theft of sixteen pounds from her son’s bedroom in the night, did not add to the pleasures of the commencement of their tour; but, as Mary said, the discomfort was nothing to what it would have been in 1840, when their means were far narrower, and she feels, “Welcome this evil so that it be the only one,” for, as she says, one whose life had been so stained by tragedy could never regain a healthy tone, if that is needed not to fear for those we love. On reaching Cologne, the party went up the Rhine to Coblentz. As neither Mary nor her companions had previously done this, they were again much imposed upon by the steward. She recalls her former voyage with Shelley and Claire, when in an open boat they passed the night on the rapid river, “tethered” to a willow on the bank. When Frankfort is at length reached, they have to decide where to pass the summer. Kissingen is decided on, for Mrs. Shelley to try the baths. Here they take lodgings, and all the discomforts of trying to get the necessaries of life and some order, when quite ignorant of the language of the place, are amusingly described by Mrs. Shelley. The treatment and diet at the baths seem to have been very severe, nearly every usual necessary of life being forbidden by the Government in order to do justice to the efficacy of the baths.

Passing through various German towns their way to Leipsic, they stay at Weimar, where Mary rather startles the reader by remarking that she is not sure she would give the superiority to Goethe; that Schiller had always appeared to her the greater man, so complete. It is true she only knew the poets by translations, but the wonderful passages translated from Goethe by

Shelley might have impressed her more. Mary is much struck on seeing the tombs of the poets by their being placed in the same narrow chamber as the Princes, showing the genuine admiration of the latter for those who had cast a lustre on their kingdom, and their desire to share even in the grave the poet's renown. Mary, when in the country of Frederic the Great, shows little enthusiasm for that great monarch, so simple in his own life, so just, so beloved, and so surrounded by dangers which he overcame for the welfare of the country. What Frederic might have been in Napoleon's place after the Revolution it is difficult to conceive, or how he might have acted. Certainly not for mere self aggrandizement. But the tyrannies of the petty German Princes Mary justly does not pass over, such as the terrible story told in Schiller's *Cabal and Love*. She recalls how the Duke of Hesse-Cassel sold his peasants for the American war, to give with their pay jewels to his mistress, and how, on her astonishment being expressed, the servant replied they only cost seven thousand children of the soil just sent to America. On this Mary remarks:—"History fails fearfully in its duty when it makes over to the poet the record and memory of such an event; one, it is to be hoped, that can never be renewed. And yet what acts of cruelty and tyranny may not be reacted on the stage of the world which we boast of as civilised, if one man has uncontrolled power over the lives of many, the unwritten story of Russia may hereafter tell."

This seems to point to reminiscences of Claire's life in Russia. Mrs. Shelley also remarks great superiority in the comfort, order, and cleanliness in the Protestant over the Catholic parts of Germany, where liberty of conscience has been gained, and is profoundly touched on visiting Luther's chamber in the castle of Wartburg overlooking the Thuringian Forest.

Her visits to Berlin and Dresden, during the heat of summer, do not much strike the reader by her feeling for pictorial art. She is impressed by world-renowned pictures; but her remarks, though those of a clever woman, show that the love of nature, especially in its most majestic forms, does not give or imply love of art. The feeling for plastic art requires the emotion which runs through all art, and without which it is nothing, to be distinctly innate as in the artist, or to have been cultivated by surroundings and influence. True, it is apparently difficult always to trace the influence. There is no one step from the contemplation of the Alps to the knowledge of plastic art. Literary art does not necessarily understand pictorial art: it may profess to expound the latter, and the reader, equally or still more ignorant, fancies that he appreciates the pictorial art because he relishes its literary exposition. Surely a piece of true plastic art, constantly before a child for it to learn to love, would do more than much after study. The best of all ought to be given to children — music, poetry, art — for it is easier then to instil than later to eradicate. It is true these remarks may seem unnecessary with regard to Mary Shelley, as, with all her real gifts and insight into poetry, she is most modest about her deficiencies in art knowledge, and is even apologetic concerning the remarks made in her letters, and for this her truth of nature is to be commended. In music, also, she seems more really moved by her own emotional nature than purely by the music; how, otherwise, should she have been disappointed at hearing *Masaniello*, while admiring German music, when Auber's grand opera has had the highest admiration from the chief German musicians? But she had not been previously moved towards it; that is the great difference between perception and acquired knowledge, and why so frequently the art of literature is mistaken for perception. But Mary used her powers justly, and drew the line where she was conscious of knowledge; she had real imagination of her own, and used the precious gift justifiably, and thus kept honour and independence, a difficult task for a woman in her position. She expresses pity for the travellers she meets, who simply are anxious to have "done" everything. She truly remarks:—"We must become a part of the scenes around us, and they must mingle and become a portion of us, or we see without seeing, and study without learning. There is no good, no knowledge, unless we can go out from and take some of the external into ourselves. This is the secret of mathematics as well as of poetry."

Their trip to Prague, and its picturesque position, afforded great pleasure to her. The stirring and romantic history is well described — history, as Shelley truly says, is a record of crime and misery. The first reformers sprang up in Bohemia. The martyrdom of John Huss did not extinguish his enlightening influence; and while all the rest of Europe was enslaved in darkness, Bohemia was free with a pure religion. But such a bright example might not last, and Bohemia became a province of the Empire, and not a hundred Protestants remain in the country now. The interesting story of St. John Nepomuk, the history of Wallenstein, with Schiller's finest tragedy, all lend their interest to Prague. In the journey through Bohemia and southern

Germany, dirty and uncomfortable inns were conspicuous. The Lake of Gemünden much struck Mary with its poetic beauty, and she felt it was the place she should like to retreat to for a summer. From Ischl they went over the Brenner Pass of the Lago di Garda on to Italy. Mary was particularly struck by the beauties of Salzburg, with the immense plain half encircled by mountains crowned by castles, with the high Alps towering above all. She considered all this country superior to the Swiss Alps, and longed to pass months there some time. By this beautiful route they reached Verona, and then Venice. On the road to Venice Mary became aware (as we have already noted) of an intimate remembrance of each object, and each turn in the road. It was by this very road she entered Venice twenty-five years before with her dying child. She remarks that Shakspeare knew the feeling and endued the grief of Queen Constance with terrible reality; and, later, the poem of "The Wood Spurge" enforces the same sentiment. It was remarked by Holcroft that the notice the soul takes of objects presented to the eye in its hour of agony is a relief afforded by nature to permit the nerves to endure pain. On reaching Venice a search for lodgings was not successful; but two gentlemen, to whom they had introductions, found for the party an hotel within their still limited means; their bargain came to £9 a month each for everything included. They visited again the Rialto, and Mrs. Shelley observes:—"Often when here before, I visited this scene at this hour, or later, for often I expected Shelley's return from Palazzo Mocenigo till two or three in the morning. I watched the glancing of the oars, and heard the far song, and saw the palaces sleeping in the light of the moon, which veils by its deep shadows all that grieved the eye and hurt the heart in the decaying palaces of Venice; then I saw, as now I see, the bridge of the Rialto spanning the canal. All, all is the same; but, as the poet says,—'The difference to me.'"

She notices many of the most celebrated of the pictures in the Academia; and she had the good fortune of seeing St. Peter Martyr, which she misnames St. Peter the Hermit, out of its dark niche in the Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. She gives a very good description of Venetian life at the time, and much commends its family affection and family life as being of a much less selfish nature than in England; as she remarks truly, if a traveller gets into a vicious or unpleasant set in any country, it would not do to judge all the rest of the nation, by that standard — as she considered Shelley did when staying in Venice with Byron. The want of good education in Italy at that time she considers the cause of the ruling indolence, love-making with the young and money-keeping with the elder being the chief occupation. She gives a very good description of the noble families and their descent. Many of the Italian palaces preserved their pictures, and in the Palazzo Pisani Mary saw the Paul Veronese, now in the National Gallery, of "The family of Darius at the feet of Alexander." Mary's love of Venice grew, and she seems to have entertained serious ideas of taking a palace and settling there; but all the fancies of travellers are not realised. One moonlit evening she heard an old gondoliere challenge a younger one to alternate with him the stanzas of the *Gerusalemme*. The men stood on the Piazzetta beside the Laguna, surrounded by other gondolieri in the moonlight. They chanted "The death of Clorinda" and other favourite passages; and though, owing to Venetian dialect Mary could not follow every word, she was much impressed by the dignity and beauty of the scene. The Pigeons of St. Mark's existed then as now. Mary ended her stay in Venice by a visit to the Opera, and joined a party, by invitation, to accompany the Austrian Archduke to the Lido on his departure.

Mrs. Shelley much admired the expression in the early masters at Padua, though she does not mention Giotto. In Florence, the expense of the hotels again obliged her to go through the tiresome work of seeking apartments. They fortunately found sunny rooms, as the cold was intense. To cold followed rain, and she remarks:—"Walking is out of the question; and driving-how I at once envy and despise the happy rich who have carriages, and who use them only to drive every afternoon in the Cascine. If I could, I would visit every spot mentioned in Florentine history — visit its towns of old renown, and ramble amid scenes familiar to Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Machiavelli."

The descriptions of Ghirlandajo's pictures in Florence are very good. Mary now evidently studies art with great care and intelligence, and makes some very clever remarks appertaining to it. She is also able to call attention to the fact that Mr. Kirkup had recently made the discovery of the head of Dante Alighieri, painted by Giotto, on the wall of the Chapel of the Palace of the Podestà at Florence. The fact was mentioned by Vasari, and Kirkup was enabled to remove the whitewash and uncover this inestimable treasure. Giotto, in the act of painting this portrait, is the subject of one of the finest designs of the English school — alas! not painted in any form of fresco on an English wall.

From the art of Florence Mrs. Shelley turns to its history with her accustomed clear-headed method. Space will not admit all the interesting details, but her account of the factions and of the good work and terrible tragedies of the Carbonari is most interesting. The great equality in Florence is well noticed, accounting for the little real distress among the poor, and the simplicity of life of the nobles. She next enters into an account of modern Italian literature, which she ranks high, and hopes much from. The same struggle between romanticists and classicists existed as in other countries; and she classes Manzoni with Walter Scott, though admitting that he has not the same range of character. Mary and her party next proceeded by sea to Rome. Here, again, the glories of Italy and its art failed not to call forth eloquent remarks from Mary's pen; and her views, though at times somewhat contradictory, are always well expressed. She, at least, had a mind to appreciate the wonders of the Stanze, and to feel that genius and intellect are not out of their province in art. She only regrets that the great Italian art which can express so perfectly the religious sentiment and divine ecstasy did not attempt the grand feelings of humanity, the love which is faithful to death, the emotions such as Shakespeare describes. While this wish exists, and there are artists who can carry it out, art is not dead. After a very instructive chapter on the modern history of the Papal States, we again find Mary among the scenes dearest to her heart and her nature: her next letter is dated from Sorrento. She feels herself to be in Paradise; and who that has been in that wonderful country would not sympathise with her enthusiasm! To be carried up the heights to Ravello, and to see the glorious panorama around, she considered, surpassed all her previous most noble experiences. Ravello, with its magnificent cathedral covered with mosaics, is indeed a sight to have seen; the road to Amalfi, the ruinous paper mills in the ravine, the glorious picturesqueness, are all "well expressed and understood." Mrs. Shelley seems to have considered June (1844) the perfection of weather for Naples.

CHAPTER XVII. LAST YEARS.

This last literary work by Mrs. Shelley, of which she herself speaks slightingly as a poor performance, was noticed about the time of its publication as an interesting and truthful piece of writing by an authority on the subject. Mrs. Shelley's very modest and retiring disposition gave her little confidence in herself, and she seems to have met, with various discouraging remarks from acquaintances; she used to wonder afterwards that she was not able to defend herself and suppress impertinence. This last book is spoken of by Mary as written to help an unfortunate person whose acquaintance Claire had made in Paris while staying in some capacity in that city with Lady Sussex Lennox. A title has a factitious prestige with some people, and certainly in this case the acquaintance which at first seemed advantageous to Mary proved to be much the contrary, both in respect of money and of peace of mind; but, before referring further to this subject, we must explain that the year 1844 brought with it a perhaps questionable advantage for her.

Sir Timothy Shelley, who had been ailing for some while, and whom Percy Shelley had visited from time to time at Field Place, having become rather a favourite with the old gentleman, now reached the bourne of life — he was ninety. His death in April 1844 brought his grandson Percy Florence to the baronetcy. That portion of the estate which had been entailed previous to Sir Bysshe's proposed rearrangement of the entire property now came to Mrs. Shelley by her husband's will. Owing to the poet's having refused to join in the entail, the larger portion of the property would not under any circumstances, as we have before mentioned, have devolved on him.

A sum of £80,000 is mentioned by the different biographers of Shelley as the probable value of the minor estate entailed on him, of which he had the absolute right of disposal. This estate, on Sir Timothy's death, was found to be burdened to the extent of £50,000, which Mary borrowed on mortgage at 3-1/2 per cent. This large sum included £13,000 due to Lady Shelley for "the pittance" Mary had received; £4,500 to John Shelley for a mortgage Shelley signed to pay his debts, probably for the £2,000 borrowed on leaving Marlow, when he paid all his debts there; so that if any trifle was left unpaid on that occasion, it must have been from oversight and want of dunning, as he undoubtedly left there with sufficient money, having also resold his house for £1,000. A jointure had to be paid Lady Shelley of £500 a year. The different legacies still due in 1844 were £6,000 to Ianthe, two sums of £6,000 each to Claire, £2,000 to Hogg, £2,500 to Peacock. These various sums mounting up to £40,000, the remaining £10,000 can easily have been swallowed up by other post-obits and legal expenses. Two sums of £6,000 each left to his two sons who died, and £2,000 left to Lord Byron, had lapsed to the estate. Mrs. Shelley's first care was to raise the necessary money and pay all the outstanding obligations. Her chief anxiety through her struggles had always been not to incur debts; her next thought was to give an annual pension of £50 to her brother's widow, and £200 a year (afterwards reduced to £120) to Leigh Hunt. This was her manner of deriving immediate pleasure from her inheritance. By her husband's will, executed in 1817, everything, "whether in possession, reversion, remainder, or expectancy," was left to her; but as she always mentioned her son, Sir Percy, as acting with herself, and said that owing to the embarrassed condition of the estate they intended to share all in common for a time, it is evident that Mary had made her son's interest her first duty.

The estate had brought £5,000 the previous year, and this would agree, deducting £1,750 for interest on mortgage, and £500 Lady Shelley's jointure, in reducing their income to a little below £3,000 a year, as Mrs. Shelley stated. Field Place was let in the first instance for sixty pounds a year, it was so damp. Mrs. Shelley continued with, her son to live at Putney till 1846. They had tried Putney in 1839, and towards the end of 1843 she took a house there, the White Cottage, Lower Richmond Road, Putney. Mary thus describes it:—"Our cot is on the banks of the Thames, not looking on it, but the garden-gate opens on the towing-path. It has a nice little garden, but sadly out of order. It is shabbily furnished, and has no spare room, except by great contrivance, if at all; so, perforce, economy will be the order of the day. It is secluded but cheerful, at the extreme verge of Putney, close to Barnes Common; just the situation Percy desired. He has bought a boat."

Mrs. Shelley moved into this house shortly after the visit to Claire in Paris, referred to at the commencement of this chapter.

Her life in London, in spite of a few very good friends, often appeared solitary to her; for, as she herself observes, those who produce and give original work to the world require the social contact of their fellow-beings. Thus, saddened by the neglect which she experienced, she tried to counteract it by sympathising with those less fortunate than herself; but this, also, is at times a very difficult task to carry out single-handed beyond a certain point.

During this visit to Paris in 1843 she had the misfortune to meet, at the house of Lady Sussex Lennox, an Italian adventurer of the name of Gatteschi. They had known some people of that name formerly in Florence, as noted in Claire's diary of 1820; and this may have caused them to take a more special interest in him. Suffice it to say, that he appeared to be in the greatest distress, and at the same time was considered by Mary and Claire to have the *éclat* of "good birth," and also to have talents, which, if they got but a fair chance, might raise him to any post of eminence. These ideas continued for some time; on one occasion he helped Mrs. Shelley with her literary work, finding the historical passages for *Rambles in Germany and Italy*. She and Claire used to contrive to give him small sums of money, in some delicate way, so as not to wound his feelings, as he would die of mortification. He was invited over to England in 1844, under the idea that he might obtain some place as tutor in a family, and he brought over MSS. of his own, which were thought highly of. While in England Gatteschi lodged with Mr. Knox, who had travelled with Mrs. Shelley and her son, as a friend of the latter. Mr. Knox seems to have been at that time on friendly terms with Gatteschi, though Mrs. Shelley regretted that her son did not take to him. With all the impulse of a generous nature, she spared no pains to be of assistance to the Italian, and evidently must have written imprudently gushing letters at times to this object of her commiseration. Whilst Mary was poor Gatteschi must have approached sentimental gratitude; she says later, "He cannot now be wishing to marry me, or he would not insult me." In fact he had proposed to marry her when she came into her money. Gatteschi waited his time, he aimed at larger sums of money. Failing to get these by fair means, the scoundrel began to use threats of publishing her correspondence with him. In 1845 he was said to be "ravenous for money," and, knowing how Mary had yielded to vehement letters on former occasions, and had at first answered him imprudently, instead of at once putting his letters into legal hands, the villain made each fresh letter a tool to serve his purpose. He thus worked upon her sensitive nature and dread of ridicule, especially at a time when she more than ever wished to stand well with the world and the society which she felt it her son's right to belong to — her son, who had never failed in his duty, and who, she said, was utterly without vice, although at times she wished he had more love of reading and steady application.

It is easy to see now how perfectly innocent, although Quixotically generous, Mary Shelley was; but it can also be discerned how difficult it would have been to stop the flood of social mirth and calumny, had more of this subject been, made public. Mary, knowing this only too well, bitterly deplored it, and accused herself of folly in a way that might even now deceive a passing thinker; but it has been the pleasant task of the writer to make this subject perfectly clear to herself, and some others.

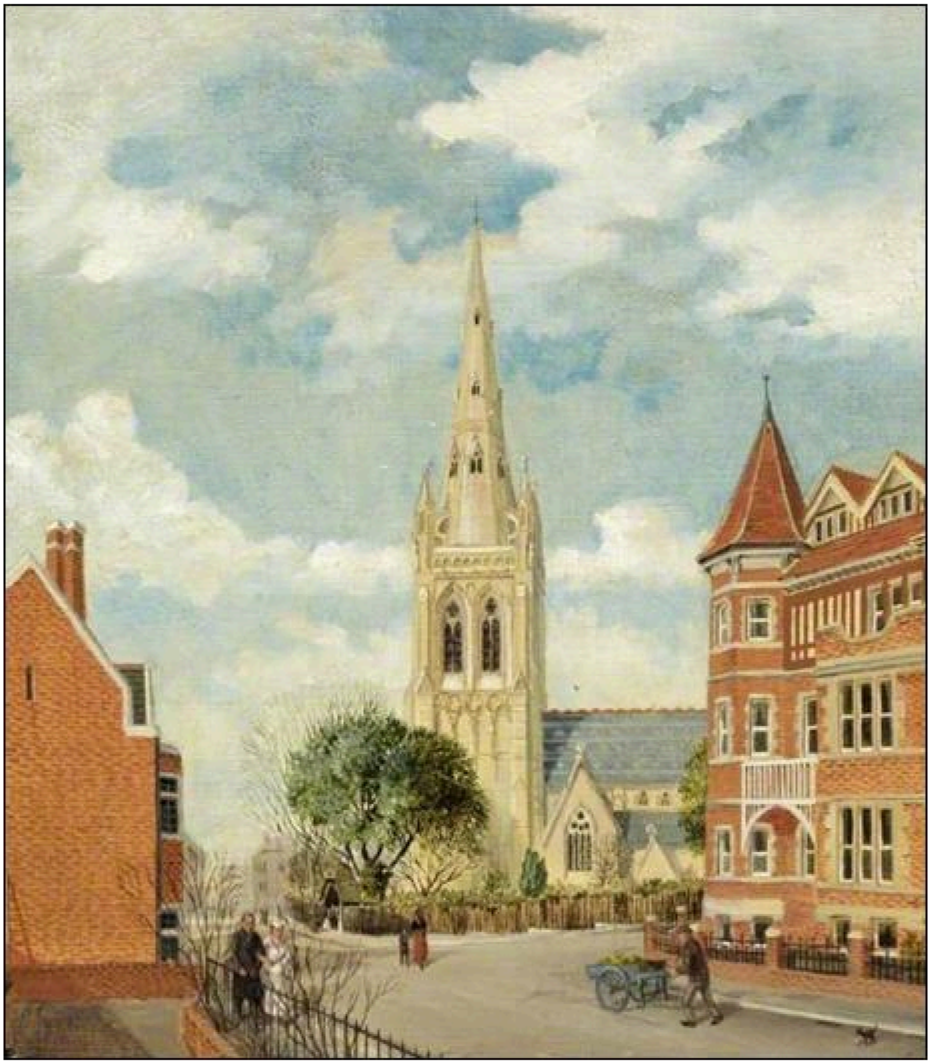
It must be added that the letters in question, written by Mrs. Shelley to Gatteschi, were obtained by a requisition of the French police under the pretext of political motives: Gatteschi had been known to be mixed up with an insurrection in Bologna. Mr. Knox, who managed this affair for Mrs. Shelley, showed the talents of an incipient police magistrate.

The whole of Mary's correspondence with Claire Clairmont is very cordial. Mary did her best to help her from time to time in her usual generous manner, and evidently gave her the best advice in her power. We find her regretting at times Claire's ill-health, sending her carriage to her while in Osnaburgh Street, and so on. She strongly urged her to come to England to settle about the investment of her money, telling her that one £6,000 she cannot interfere with, as Shelley had left it for an annuity which could not be lost or disposed of; but that the other £6,000 she can invest where she likes. At one time Mary tells her of a good investment she has heard of in an opera-box, but that she must act for herself, as it is too dangerous a matter to give advice in.

In 1845 Mary Shelley visited Brighton for her health, her nerves having been much shaken by the anxiety she had gone through. While there she mentioned seeing Mr. and Mrs. John Shelley at the Theatre, but they took no notice of her. When Mrs. Shelley went over Field Place after Sir Timothy's death, Lady Shelley had expressed herself to a friend as being much pleased with her, and said she wished she had known her before:

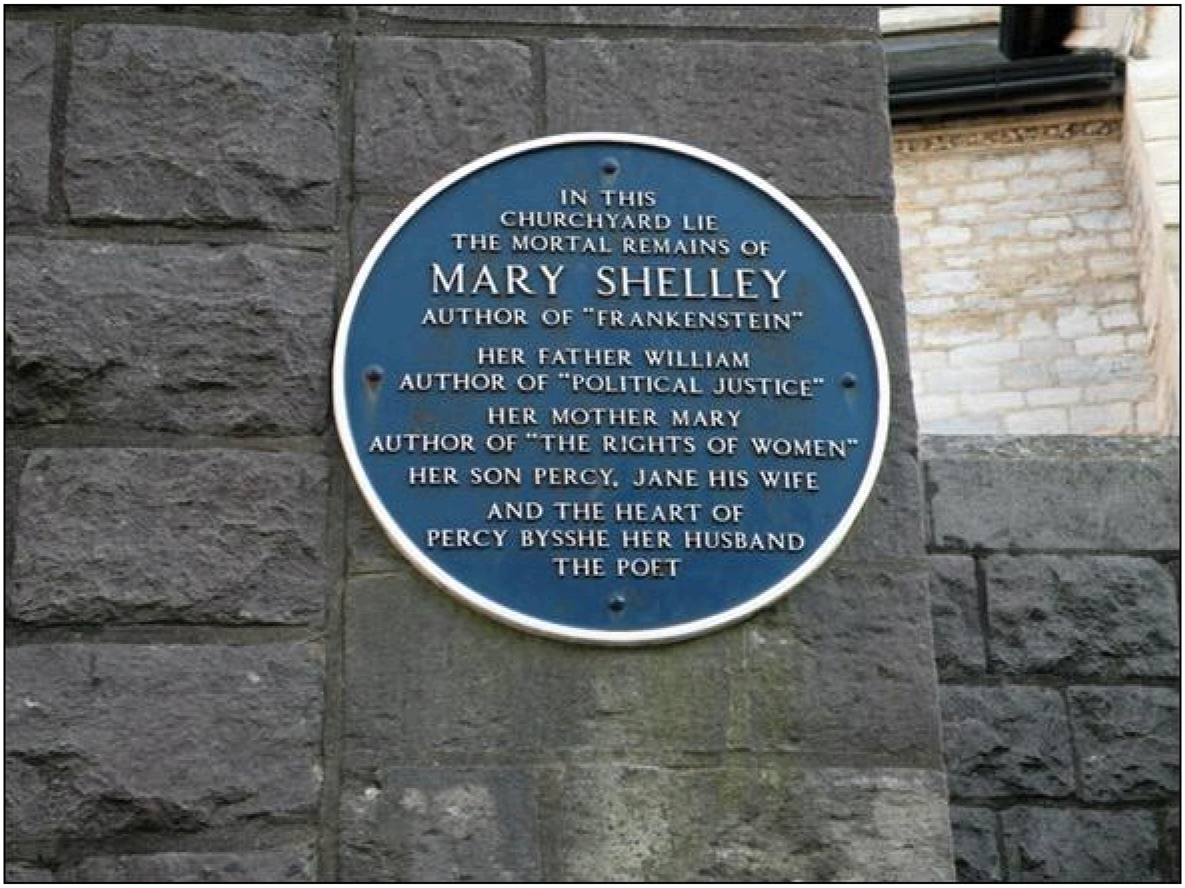
Mary on hearing this exclaimed, "Then why on earth didn't she?" In 1846 they moved from Putney to Chester Square, and in the summer Mary went to Baden for her health. From here again she wrote how glad she was to be away from the mortifications of London, and that she detested Chester Square. Her health from this time needed frequent change. In 1847, she moved to Field Place; she found it damp, but visits to Brighton and elsewhere helped to keep up her gradually failing health. The next year she had the satisfaction of seeing her son married to a lady (Mrs. St. John) in every way to her liking. A letter received by Mrs. Shelley from her daughter-in-law while on her wedding tour, and enclosed to Claire, shows how she wished the latter to partake in the joy she felt at the happy marriage of her son. Mary now had not only a son to love, but a daughter to care for her, and the pleasant duty was not unwillingly performed, for the lady speaks of her to this day with emotion.

From this time there is little to record. We find Mary in 1849 inviting Willie Clairmont, Claire's nephew, to see her at Field Place, where she was living with her son and his wife. In the same year they rather dissuaded Claire, who was then at Maidstone, from a somewhat wild project which she entertained, that of going to California. The ground of dissuasion was still wilder than the project, for it was just now said the hoped-for gold had turned out to be merely sulphate of iron. The house in Chester Square had been given up in 1848, and another was taken at 77, Warwick Square, before the marriage of Sir Percy, and thence at the end of that year Mary writes of an improvement in her health, but there was still a tendency to neuralgic rheumatism. The life-long nerve strain for a time was relaxed, but without doubt the tension had been too strong, and loving care could not prevail beyond a certain point. The next year the son and his wife took the drooping Mary to Nice for her health, and a short respite was given; but the pressure could not much longer remain. The strong brain, and tender, if once too impassioned heart, failed on February 21, 1851, and nothing remained but a cherished memory of the devoted daughter and mother, and the faithful wife of Shelley.

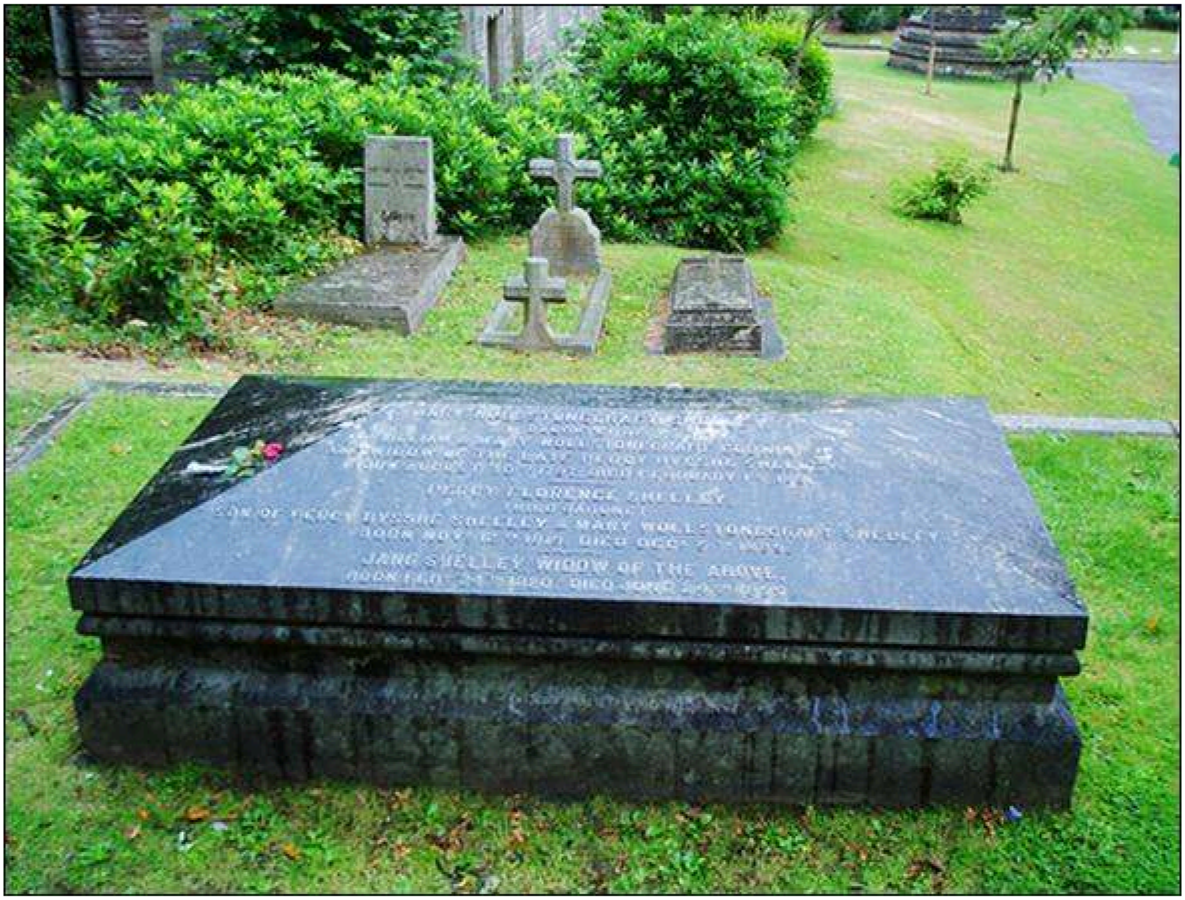


St Peter Churchyard, Bournemouth — Shelley's final resting place

The church today


IN THIS
CHURCHYARD LIE
THE MORTAL REMAINS OF
MARY SHELLEY
AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN"
HER FATHER WILLIAM
AUTHOR OF "POLITICAL JUSTICE"
HER MOTHER MARY
AUTHOR OF "THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN"
HER SON PERCY, JANE HIS WIFE
AND THE HEART OF
PERCY BYSSHE HER HUSBAND
THE POET

The plaque commemorating her burial


PERCY FLORENCE SHELLEY
JANE SHELLEY WIDOW OF THE ABOVE

Shelley’s grave

Table of Contents

The Novels
FRANKENSTEIN (1818 version)
FRANKENSTEIN (1831 version)
MATHILDA
VALPERGA
THE LAST MAN
THE FORTUNES OF PERKIN WARBECK
LODORE
FALKNER
The Short Stories
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
The Children’s Fiction
PROSERPINE
MIDAS
The Poems
LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
The Travel Writing
HISTORY OF A SIX WEEKS’ TOUR THROUGH A PART OF FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY, AND HOLLAND
RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY, IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843
The Non-Fiction
NOTES TO THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
An Adaptation
PRESUMPTION; OR, THE FATE OF FRANKENSTEIN by Richard Brinsley Peake
The Biographies
THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY by Florence A. Thomas Marshall
MRS. SHELLEY by Lucy M. Rossetti